



## Ralph and Martha Wisner

It was Christmas Eve, 1945 when Martha came into the Post Office where Ralph was helping out to get her mail that they met. Martha said it was love at first sight. Both were in the Army Air Corps stationed at the Castle Field Army Air Base in Merced, California. Far from home, Martha grew up in a small town in Missouri near Springfield in a military family. Her father was very active in the American Legion, her mother was one of the Gray Ladies who volunteered with the American Red Cross and supplied non-medical care to our military. She also had a brother who served both in WW II and in Korea.

Ralph was born and raised on a family farm on Black Rock Road; he was third in line of 4 children; two older brothers, Herb and John and a younger sister, Georgia. Ralph graduated from Franklin High School in 1942. He never enjoyed farming as a boy and had never gone any farther than to Harrisburg until he joined the service on November 10, 1943. While in the service he studied and later taught how to use the 50 caliber machine guns used on the B-17 and B-24 planes. Ralph was discharged in April of 1946.

Martha was up for a promotion to Sgt., but was denied because it wasn't right to be a higher rank than your husband. She was transferred to Fort Myer, near Washington, D.C. and worked as a secretary at the Pentagon before being mustered out at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Ralph and Martha were married on July 13, 1946. They have 2 sons and a daughter.

Out of the service, Ralph worked at Dell Crest Farm where he learned how to run a bulldozer. In those days the county would rely on farmers to help plow snow on the roads and Ralph got to help keep the roads open. His experience with heavy equipment while at home on the farm led him to work for 50 years in construction, most times working very long hours. Ralph joined the American Legion at the request of Albert Phillips and is one of a few remaining charter members. Martha, however at the urging of Mazie Rohrbaugh, served as the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of our Auxiliary.

There is a bugle in a case in the back room at the legion, donated by Ralph many years ago. He played "Taps" at several funerals; one that he remembers well was for the brother of a good friend.

Ralph and Martha traveled extensively and took up golfing after the children grew up. Ralph admits that Martha was a pretty good golfer. A world map at their home shows all the places they have been. When asked what their favorite place was, they said that each was unique and interesting, but Australia and New Zealand stood out in their minds. They were in Scotland when 9/11 happened and they remember how Air Lingus was so kind and helpful in getting them back home.

Both continue to be active in their church and Ralph has been on the Board of Directors at Farmers and Merchants Bank for 40 years. Now when Ralph spends time on the family farm, it is therapeutic and relaxing as he marvels at nature's miracles that abound.