



Ralph C. Cupper

October 9, 2020

Ralph C. Cupper, 94, of Brecksville, Ohio, died on October 8, 2020, with his family at his side. He is survived by a son, R. Daniel Cupper (Shirley), of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and a daughter, Kathleen Ann Hill (Wayne), of Brecksville, with whom he lived during summer months; four grandsons, Scott Cupper (Tracy), Ryan Cupper (Heather), R. Adam Obert, and Curtis Obert (Andi and a great-grandson, Noah Cupper. Other survivors include nephews Larry and Ralph Cupper of Louisiana and Bill Louder of Marysville, Pennsylvania; and nieces Doreen Gratz of Levittown, Pennsylvania, Barb Murphy of Cincinnati, Ohio, Sue Hannon of Leesburg, Florida, and Lisa Shellenberger of New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. Ralph was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Alta Elizabeth Cupper; by three brothers, Homer, Harry, and Frank; and by two sisters, Alice and Mildred. Ralph's life was shaped by three major influences ?? the Great Depression, World War II and ?? most importantly ?? his wife and family. He was born June 16, 1926, at Granville, Pennsylvania. He was reared by his Grandmother Anna Clemens and his sister (Alice) after his mother died when he was nine and his father had left the family. His early life was hardscrabble, as the impact of the Depression was felt particularly strongly in that area of Pennsylvania. The times of "not knowing where the next meal was coming from" instilled in him lifelong practices of thrift and savings, as he was never one to pass up something that was "free" even if it was not needed. That frugality enabled him to provide a stable and better life for his future family. For someone to

whom life had dealt hard times early on, he was both remarkably optimistic and unfailingly feisty for the balance of his life. He was a 1944 graduate of Derry Township High School in Yeagertown, Pennsylvania. In 1944, he enlisted in the Army before even graduating from high school because "It was just the right thing to do." As an infantryman, he fought in front-line duty on the island of Okinawa in the Pacific Theater, where he was wounded and awarded a Purple Heart. It was only many decades later that his family learned that he also was awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding valor in combat, as he ?? like so many WWII veterans ?? did not share most of his wartime experiences. In 2012, Ralph participated in a daylong journey to Washington, D.C., organized by Honor Flight Cleveland. This travel to celebrate his service and that of so many other veterans was particularly moving for him. While visiting the national World War II Memorial, he was interviewed by a Department of Defense video crew and shared some of his memories and perspectives on this video:??https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=771N6jr_j44A After recovering from his wounds and returning to Lewistown, Pennsylvania, Ralph's first job was loading bricks on a truck as part of a project to construct dormitories for Penn State, requiring him to travel back and forth across the mountain daily to State College. His next job ?? as a self-described "soda jerk" at the Royale Dairy in Lewistown ?? was particularly fortuitous, as it was there where he met the love of his life, Alta Orzechowski Guinivan. He was inside cleaning up after hours with the doors locked one night when she came to the entrance, but then turned away. However, Ralph somehow knew he could not let her get away, so he whistled for her, catching her attention and she turned around and came back. Years later she would joke, "A nice girl wouldn't have done that." They were married in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, on October 23, 1949, after which his mother-in-law, Anna "Honey" Guinivan, lovingly treated him as a son. The couple lived in Lewistown until he got a job offer in the Pittsburgh area and they moved first to Perrysville, Pennsylvania, in 1956, and then to Wexford, Pennsylvania, in 1960. In 1976, they moved to Hudson, Ohio, where they lived for more than 30 years. If there ever was a

"natural born salesman," Ralph was the epitome of one. He was friendly and outgoing to everyone, able to make connections and build relationships that helped him in his career and throughout his life. A salesman/estimator in the steel forgings industry, he worked for a succession of firms over his long career: Standard Steel Corporation of Burnham, Pennsylvania; American Forge & Manufacturing of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania; Commercial Forgings of Cleveland, Ohio; and Ellwood City Forge of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. He retired from Ellwood City Forge in 1992. His devotion to his family was paramount in his life. While still living in Wexford, he had to take a job based in Cleveland, Ohio. Rather than uprooting his family and causing daughter Kathleen to have to transfer during high school, he commuted weekly to Cleveland so she could remain in school in Wexford. Even though he and Alta never attended college, they valued higher education, scrimping and saving so that both of their children were able to earn college degrees and secure professional careers. One particular family highlight in later years was a two-week cruise to Alaska to celebrate 50 years of marriage to Alta. Other meaningful family occasions included birthday celebrations (both 80th and 90th) and a Labor Day gathering in 2020, which brought together the 13 members of his immediate family, including all four grandsons and his great-grandson. Ralph and Alta became seasonal residents of Tara Village in Leesburg, Florida following his retirement in 1992. Together, they made many friends in the community who helped sustain him following Alta's death in 2001. He enjoyed fishing, golf, pool, travel, repairing bicycles and playing cards ?? euchre, Texas Hold ??Ems, pinochle, and bridge. After card games, he would proudly proclaim that he had "kicked their a\$\$es" most of the time. During summers, when he was a resident of Brecksville, Ohio, he spent much of his time at the Brecksville Community Center, swimming, playing cards, and participating in other Center activities. Interment and graveside services will be held at Saint John's Cemetery in Belleville, Pennsylvania at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, the family requests charitable contributions be

made to Honor Flight Cleveland, designated "In memory of Ralph Cupper"
and mailed to Honor Flight Cleveland, 724 Coralberry Lane, Madison, Ohio
44057.