

Ralph L. Merrow Sr., 91, of Stockbridge and formerly of Sky Valley, died Tuesday, May 6, 2008, in Stockbridge.

He was born May 19, 1916, in Philadelphia to Leon and Beatrice Weston Merrow. He married Bertha Cagnon Merrow in 1940. He was drafted into the U.S. Army six months later. He served as a military policeman and later volunteered as an aviation cadet with the Army Air Corps. He was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant at George Field in Lawrenceville, Ill., in 1943. He completed his training as a B-24 pilot in Fresno, Calif., and to Italy in February 1944. He served with the 15th Army Air Force, 49th Bomb Wing, 461st Bomb Group, 764th Bomber Squadron. His crew flew 41 bombing missions over Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy, Austria, France, Hungary and Germany. He received the European Theater of Operations Ribbon with two Battle Stars, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and a Presidential Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster. He returned to the U.S. in September 1944 and served as a combat pilot instructor at Maguire Field at Fort Dix, N.J. He was discharged in August 1945 but remained in the Air Force Reserve until 1953.

He worked in the textile industry, which took him to Providence, R.I., Norristown, Pa., and finally to Rabun County. He was involved in Sky Valley politics and the formation of St. James Episcopal Church.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Bertha Cagnon Merrow.

Survivors include: a son and daughter-in-law, Ralph Merrow Jr. and Karen Merrow; four grandchildren, Christina Kautz and husband Randy of Safety Harbor, Fla., Anthony Merrow and wife Nadine of Lawrenceville, Jill Crawford and husband Jim of Jefferson and Courtney Merrow of Athens; and four great-grandchildren.

The body was cremated, and a memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, May 23, at St. James Episcopal Church.

Memorial contributions can be made to St. James Episcopal Church or St. Simon Episcopal Church in Conyers. The Cremation Society of Georgia was in charge of arrangements.

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