



## Rudolph "Rudy" Skok

March 29, 1922 - July 17, 2016

A funeral Mass for Rudolph "Rudy" Skok, 94, of Mentor, will be held 11 a.m. Thursday at St. John Vianney Church, 7575 Bellflower Rd., Mentor. Mr. Skok died July 17, 2016, at Lake West Hospital. Born March 29, 1922 in Betula, PA, he lived in Mentor for the past 48 years. He was a graduate of Otto/Otto-Eldred High School, Duke Center, PA, Class of 1940, and a graduate of Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics. He was a member of Eaton Corp.'s flight crew as a pilot and as a technician, for 21 years until his retirement in 1988. Prior to his employment at Eaton, Rudy was a pilot and aircraft technician for Joy Manufacturing, Franklin, PA; Hanna Mining Co. at Cleveland Hopkins Airport; a helicopter pilot for Cleveland Air Taxi at Burke Lakefront Airport and Miller Aviation in Pittsburgh. In his earlier years he was also a flight instructor.

Many news articles were written concerning his experiences as a helicopter pilot in the 1950's, notably flying the "whirlybirds" in Utah to carry seismograph surveyors (for the government) on top of mesas where no man had set foot; flying political candidates during their campaigns in Pt. Barrow, Alaska (above the tree line) and as a helicopter flight instructor in Egypt. He was one of the fortunate few who was paid to do what he loved most.

He was a World War II veteran, serving his country as a U.S. Army Airforce B-25 pilot in the 13th Air Force, 70th Bombardment Squadron, and 42nd Bomb Group. He was stationed in Palawan, New Guinea and flew missions over the

Philippines to rout out any remaining Japanese positions after the recapture of the islands. In early August of 1945, one of his missions was an assignment to strafe the coast of Japan with the knowledge that he most likely would not return to base. This was to be the invasion of Japan. It was then, on August 6, 1945, that President Harry S. Truman ordered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, thus scrapping the strafing mission. Rudy was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon with 2 battle stars; Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 battle star; Japan Occupation Ribbon; Victory Ribbon for WW II; and American Theater Ribbon.

He was proud of his Slovenian heritage and he loved polka music. He enjoyed watching the birds at the feeders while scolding the squirrels for invading the feeders. He tried many ways to keep the squirrels out of the feeders, but the squirrels always seemed to outsmart him. Rudy was a founding member of St. John Vianney Church, Mentor; a member of the Slovenian Club of Gowanda, NY; a former member of the American Slovenian Club of Fairport Harbor, and a member of the Quiet Birdmen.

In 2003 Rudy and his wife, his brothers and their wives, traveled to the village of Narin, Slovenia where they visited the homesteads of his father and his mother. They met many cousins on that journey to Slovenia; a dream brought to reality. He was a bicycle rider and, up until the last few years, he rode his bike every morning in the summer to get his daily newspaper. Our smiling, happy Slovenian will be dearly missed. He was loved and admired by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife of almost 62 years, Phyllis (Pine); children, Betsey (Jeffrey) Severn of Grass Valley, CA., and son, Robert S.; four grandchildren: Kimberly (Grant) Salerno, Emilee (Sean Chapman) Skok, Robert M.; and Blake Severn of Grass Valley, CA.; great-grandson, Collin Chapman and great-granddaughter, Olivia Salerno; brother, Dr. Joseph (Anna) Skok of

Towson, MD, sister-in-law, Phyllis S. of Camp Hill, PA; brother-in-law, Robert (Norma) Pine of Dayton, NY; nieces, Susan (Gene) Wesner and Mary Jo Biggane of Tonawanda, NY; Nancy (Bruce) Shaw of Ontario, Canada; Jennifer (Steve) Helfrich of Shrewsbury, PA; Kathryn (Gerard) Whitmore of Sparks-Glencoe, MD; Dr. Deborah Skok of Conway, AR; and nephews, Andrew (Virginia) Skok of Monroe, CT, and Michael (Debra) Biggane of Buffalo, NY; many great-nieces and great-nephews and cousins here and in Italy, Croatia and in Slovenia.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Andrew and Amalja (Kaluza) Skok; infant daughter; sister, Jennie Biggane Gordon; brother, Dr. James Skok; stepmother, Mary (Hoffman); sister-in-law Anna M. Sage and brothers-in-law, Michael Biggane, Harry Gordon and Esly Sage.

Public gathering prior to the funeral mass will be held from 10 a.m. until the time of the mass on Thursday at the church. Burial with military honors will take place Friday at Pine Hill Cemetery, Gowanda, New York.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Rudy's memory to Wounded Warriors Project, 4899 Belfort Rd., Suite 300, Jacksonville, FL 32256 or the American Cancer Society, 10501 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, Ohio 44106 or Hospice of the Western Reserve, 17876 St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland 44110-2602, donate online at [www.hospicewr.org](http://www.hospicewr.org)

Arrangements entrusted to the Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor. Offer condolences at [www.brunners.com](http://www.brunners.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Pine Hill Cemetery

2217 Cemetery Rd  
Gowanda, NY 14070

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church  
7575 Bellflower Road  
Mentor, OH 44060  
(440) 255-0600

## Funeral Mass

JUL 21. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church  
7575 Bellflower Road  
Mentor, OH 44060  
(440) 255-0600

# Tribute Wall



“ We are so sorry for your loss. Sending Prays to all in your time of sorrow.

*The Frank Pachinger Family*

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**Pamela Pachinger** - July 24, 2016 at 06:01 PM



“ *Andy & Ginny, Jennifer & Steve and Families, Kathryn & Jerry purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Rudolph "Rudy" Skok.*



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**Andy & Ginny, Jennifer & Steve and Families, Kathryn & Jerry** - July 20, 2016 at 12:07 PM



“ *Joe and Ann purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Rudolph "Rudy" Skok.*



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**Joe and Ann** - July 20, 2016 at 12:07 PM