

## Ralph Charles Pesek: Black Hills National Cemetery

The Pesek family has many family members interred at Black Hills National Cemetery. Ralph Charles Pesek is one of many Pesek boys who established a successful military career. Ralph was born on April 3, 1920, to Christina and Adolph Pesek in White River, South Dakota.<sup>1</sup> He was the oldest Pesek boy with five younger brothers and a younger sister. They moved to Rapid City, South Dakota, shortly after his dad Adolph passed away in a farming accident.<sup>2</sup> Ralph spoke Czech until he learned English in school; he also developed a strong work ethic. He and his brothers enjoyed riding their motorcycles and getting into trouble. His mother often peered out her window to see upwards of six motorcycles in her yard.<sup>3</sup> Ralph was drafted into the Army after he graduated from Rapid City High School, and he entered the Pacific Theater around the same time as his brothers Red and Paul entered the European theater.<sup>4</sup> He was an engineer for the Army.<sup>5</sup> During the war he often wrote letters home to his mother asking about her and his younger siblings at home as well as his brothers overseas; Christina received letters from all the boys overseas and worried constantly about their health and safety. He returned from the war with his passion for motorcycles still intact, joining Rushmore's Motorcycle Club to participate in one of the first Sturgis Motorcycle Rallies with his brothers.<sup>6</sup> He settled down, as much as he could, and married Aleatha Murner on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1948. She blessed him with six children.

Aleatha was born in 1928 in Sturgis, South Dakota. She worked for the telephone company Northwestern Bell for twenty-eight years. After becoming an advocate for labor unions she ran for the House of Representatives in South Dakota in 1994. Even though she was not elected she continued to dedicate her life to helping others. She also co-owned and managed Eighth Street Liquor Store and managed the casino while she raised six children and cared for her husband.<sup>7</sup>

Ralph loved hunting, fishing, sports and socializing almost as much as Aleatha enjoyed caring for others. Ralph worked for the city of Rapid City as a surveyor and draftsman. Although he enjoyed his work, one of Ralph's favorite things to do was take his family to the VFW Sunday pancake breakfast.<sup>8</sup> Ralph passed on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004, at his home. He left behind his wife, six children, twelve grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Ralph Pesek is buried in

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<sup>1</sup> "Ralph Pesek," Rapid City Journal, May 2004, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article\\_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html).

<sup>2</sup> Sidney May, "Red Pesek," <https://bhveterans.org/2018/06/07/red-pesek/>.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney May, "Red Pesek," <https://bhveterans.org/2018/06/07/red-pesek/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Ralph Pesek," Rapid City Journal, May 2004, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article\\_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html).

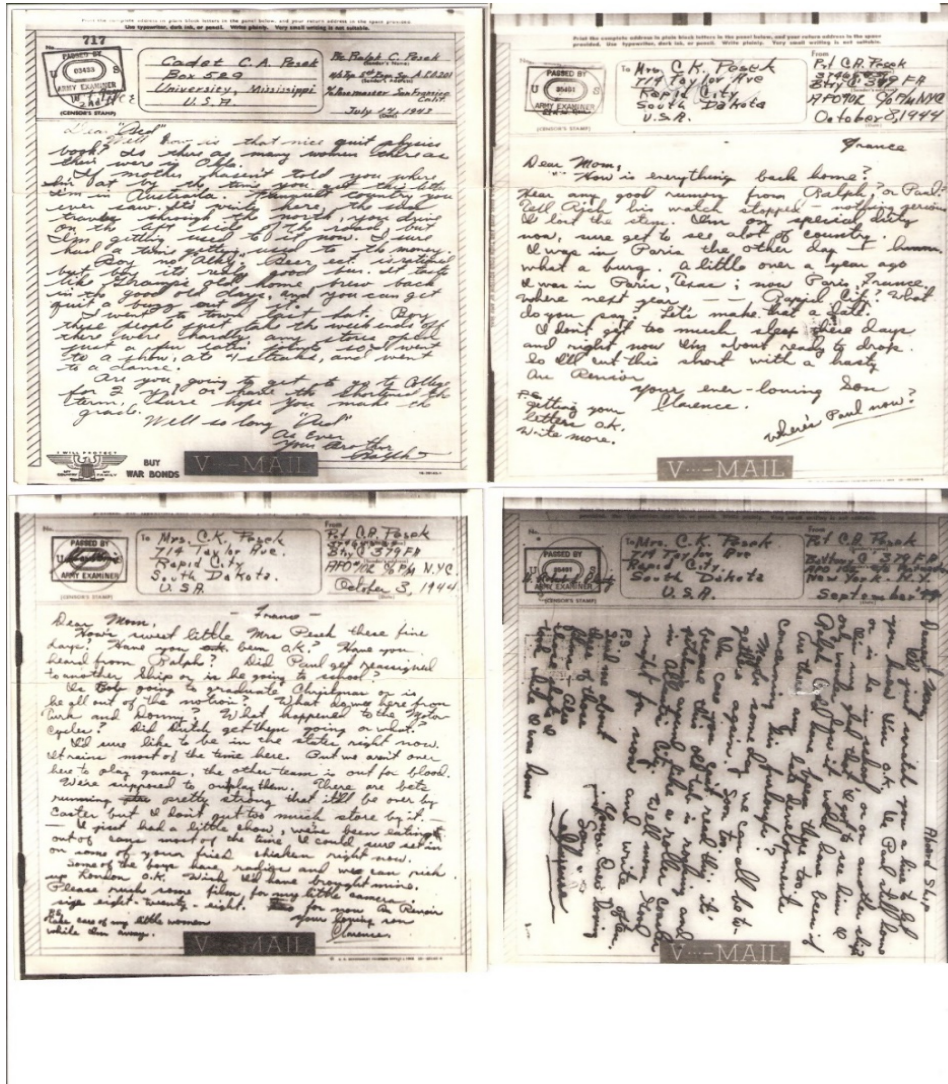
<sup>5</sup> "Ralph Pesek," Rapid City Journal, May 2004, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article\\_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html).

<sup>6</sup> "Ralph Pesek," Rapid City Journal, May 2004, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article\\_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html).

<sup>7</sup> "Aleatha Pesek," Rapid City Journal, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/obits/pesek-aleatha-m/article\\_2a22f4fb-5afa-54f7-ab24-6e18ebd66ec0.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/obits/pesek-aleatha-m/article_2a22f4fb-5afa-54f7-ab24-6e18ebd66ec0.html).

<sup>8</sup> "Ralph Pesek," Rapid City Journal, May 2004, [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article\\_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/obituaries-for-may/article_a49fc152-e751-57a1-abde-bb63be9dd0d1.html).

Black Hills National Cemetery with many of his family members and friends who proudly served beside him.



Photograph of letters sent home provided by Jim Pesek and Deb Tieszen

## Bibliography

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