On April 18, 2016, Paul Michael Matus, Sr. passed away peacefully at home, on the farm where he was raised, surrounded by family. He was 94 years of age. On December 20th, 1921, in Lakewood, he was born to Paul P. and Mary (Molchan) Matus, the third of five brothers and three sisters. He was preceded in death by brothers, Martin, Steve and Edward; sisters, Mary (Matus) Leslie and Irene (Matus) Wohleber.

In 1930, during the Great Depression, through hard work and savings, his father purchased a farm in Camden Township and moved his family there. Paul graduated from Camden High School (1941) in a class of nine and was the first of his family to go to college. He hitchhiked to Columbus, to enroll at the Ohio State University in Agricultural Engineering. His first love was playing high school baseball but when he saw a notice for football recruits, he decided to walk-on and give it a try. Out of 110 recruits, Paul was able to earn a position on the team. He played for the legendary Paul Brown and was on the 1942 National Championship Team.
After Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, he ultimately enlisted into the Army Air Force, becoming a 1st Lieutenant and B-26 Marauder Bomber pilot with the 391st Bomb Group 9th Air Force. He flew many missions over northern Europe. On a later mission towards the end of the war, his plane was shot down near Trier, Germany on December 23, 1944 in the Battle of the Bulge. Severely wounded, he parachuted out of his plane, was captured and taken to a prisoner of war camp in the town of Barth, Germany, on a peninsula in the Baltic Sea. In May of 1945, his Stalag Luft I camp was liberated by Russian Cossacks, wielding swords and riding in on horses. He received a Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star, a Silver Star, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters and numerous other medals.

He was tremendously talented, not only in agriculture, but also in the building trades, from digging and laying foundations, to wiring, plumbing, plastering and finish carpentry. When he returned from the war, he married Eleanor Grimmer in 1947 and built his home on the original family farmstead, where he and his wife raised six children.

He was employed at the Ridge Tool Company in Elyria for 38 years, beginning in the factory and retiring in 1983 from the data processing division, where he had helped to develop a system utilizing these new machines called computers. Throughout his working life, he donated his talents to building a little league baseball field, the grandstand at Firelands High School and helping his children with their home projects. He took pride in his fruit and vegetable gardens, enjoyed traveling and visiting his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One of his favorite hobbies was following the stock market. He was also famous for sharing stories from his OSU and WWII days.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Eleanor (Grimmer) Matus; children, Paula (Bill) Cousins, Marsha (Ed) von Hofen, Dr. Paul (Linda) Matus, Craig (Deb) Matus, Jean (Mike) Paskert and Debbie Davidson (Pete Yaworsky); loving brother, Robert (Germaine) Matus and dear sister, Theresa Wukie; sister-in law, Grace Matus; brother-in-law, Robert Wohleber, 11 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

He was a lifetime parishioner of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Wakeman.

According to his wishes, there will be a private family Mass and Memorial Service at a later date. Arrangements provided by Blackburn Duke Funeral Home.

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