



**Michael Chwastiak**  
**U.S. Army**  
**17 February 1943 – 19 November 1945**

Michael was born on 1 October 1923, in Frackville, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. He was the second of five children born to **Iwan John Chwastiak II** (11 December 1894 – 10 December 1954), an immigrant from Kulaszne, Podkarpackie, Poland, and **Mary Andruch Andrews** (5 August 1896 – 5 October 1987), an immigrant from Ropenka, Austria-Hungary. They emigrated in 1913. Michael's father initially worked as a miner in Lower Macungie Township. In 1930 Steve's parents purchased the Vellas farm at



Iwan & Mary



Chwastiak Farm & Barn  
ca. 1950

what is now 3454 Indian Creek Road in Lower Macungie Township. Michael grew up there helping his father farm. After graduating from Emmaus High School in 1941, Michael worked at Bethlehem Steel Company until he enlisted in the Army. He was inducted on 17 February 1943, at New Cumberland Army Depot, Pennsylvania. After basic training, he was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division "Screaming Eagles" at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for airborne training, where he earned his Parachutist Badge. In September 1943, the division embarked aboard ship at Camp Shanks, New York, for transport to England for training and preparation for the invasion of Normandy, France. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, they jumped into Normandy, seven miles behind German lines at Utah Beach. Right after jumping, Michael was wounded in his right ankle while taking evasive action from the Germans. He was evacuated and admitted to a hospital for about a month. He then rejoined his unit in England, where the division had relocated from France to prepare for future airborne operations. On 17 September 1944, they jumped into Holland during Operation "Market Garden", spending a total of 72 days in combat to assist in the Allied liberation of Holland. In November 1944, the 101st returned to France for a rest before they were called to action again on 26 December 1944, to assist in the Battle of the Bulge (16 December 1944 to 25 January 1945). After that, they advanced with the ground troops through Alsace and the Ruhr Valley into Germany and captured Hitler's mountain retreat at Berchtesgaden as the war came to an end in early May 1945. Michael returned to the States on 15 November 1945, and was discharged on 19 November 1945, at Indiantown Gap Separation Center, Pennsylvania. Among the awards Michael received for his service are the Purple Heart Medal, European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal (w/3 bronze stars), World War II Victory Medal, and the Presidential Unit Citation ribbon. After returning home, Michael initially worked for Harold M. Peters, a contractor in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, before becoming a self-employed cookware salesman until he retired. Michael married **Althea A. Gogel** (6 September 1923 – 22 September 2011) of Catasauqua, Pennsylvania, on 30 November 1946, in Catasauqua. They initially lived at 38 Main Street in Macungie, Pennsylvania, and later made their permanent home at 561 Seem Street in Emmaus. Michael and Althea raised two daughters, **Anita** and **Michele**, and they were blessed with a grandson and two great-grandchildren. Michael became a life member of Macungie Fire Company and the Macungie Veterans of Foreign Wars. He died at the age of 84 on 8 April 2008, and is buried in Fairview Cemetery in Macungie, along with Althea. Michael's brother, **Stephen Chwastiak**, also served in the Army with the Post-WWII Philippines Occupation Forces, and later in Korea with the Japan Occupation Forces.

