



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Ralph Kring

STEPHEN M. SALAND June 1, 2010



Ralph Kring

**Award:** Veterans' Hall of Fame

**Year:** 2010

Ralph Raymond Kring was born on January 9, 1926 to Ira Raymond and Helen M. Darrow Kring. He graduated from Hudson High School and then volunteered for service in the Army in 1944. Upon completion of infantry basic training, paratroop training and advanced training in demolition, he was shipped to the Philippines in 1945. While landing in the Philippines, his troop's records were lost when they came under fire and two landing craft were sunk.

The remaining troop lived in a replacement depot, unassigned, for several months. Upon verification for placement, the troop was sent to Luzon, where Ralph was promoted to

Corporal. In December 1945, Ralph was sent to Sendai, Japan, with his detail posted to the mountains of Northern Japan. He left the military in April 1947 as a Sergeant and joined the National Guard and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in Hudson, New York. Ralph retired from the Guard in 1962 as a Master Sergeant. In January of 1950, Ralph was assigned the position of Color Guard Commander of Company B, 152nd Combat Engineer Battalion.

Later that year he married Florence Schrader. He and his wife moved to Ghent in 1959 with three small children and he transferred his VFW membership to the Ghent VFW Post 5933, progressing through various chair positions to Post Commander. The VFW Post 5933 Color Guard was the first to include women in their drilling formations, and was awarded numerous military Color Guard trophies and plaques. Prior to his Post Commander position he began the Christmas Toy and Relief Project, later known as the Marion Stegman Fund. With the assistance of fellow members, Ralph helped create a team that volunteered their time, vehicles and a strong desire to help the local community.

This team organized donations of food from local stores, toys and clothing, and delivered them to the community during the week before Christmas. Ralph also proposed an addition to the VFW building and had a sign with 'Santa's Workshop' placed over the entrance. Over the span of a ten-year period, the program grew and merged with the Elks Lodge 2530 in Kinderhook. This program currently serves over 400 families and three nursing homes in the northern half of Columbia County. It continues to distribute a week's supply of food to each family along with toys and clothing for the children. At 84 years of age, Ralph remains active with the Marion Stegman Fund and also as Commander of the Ladies' and Men's Color Guard.

He and his wife Florence raised five children and have ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren. His goals are to continue his endeavors of giving to his community. He also reflects a strong love of his country and his fellow Veterans of Foreign War comrades

through his representation in parades and in community-related affairs. Ralph has served as a role model to his children.

His youngest son, Sergeant Mark David Kring, is presently stationed in Basra, Iraq. Both daughters are members of the Daughters of the American Revolution and one is an Associate Member of NY2 Blue Star Mothers of the Capital Region. Their activities reflect their father's principles of participation, patriotism and giving.