

Verner M. Schmitz, 81

Aug. 28, 1918 - Feb. 24, 2000



HARLAN -- Verner Michael Schmitz, son of John and Anna (Klepper) Schmitz, was born Aug. 28, 1918, in Westphalia. He received his first communion and was confirmed at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Westphalia, and graduated from St. Boniface Catholic High School in 1936. After graduation, he farmed until Aug. 28, 1942, when he enlisted in the Marine Corp serving his country in the South Pacific during WW II with the 6th Marine Division. He served proudly with the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. He participated in the 1st wave of invasions in the Marshall Islands, Guam and Okinawa, and received a medal for each of the invasions. Following his honorable discharge Dec. 8, 1945, he returned to Westphalia and continued farming.

Aug. 16, 1960, he married Luann Schmitz in Westphalia. After Luann's death Oct. 6, 1960, he remained on the farm until 1967, when he moved to Harlan and began working for Western Engineering. He was employed by Western Engineering until his retirement in 1982.

Nov. 29, 1975, he married Helen Wilson at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan. He was a member of St. Boniface Catholic Church before moving to Harlan, and then a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church. He became a member of the Knights of Columbus in 1942, a member of the V.F.W. Post 941 in 1945, and a member of the American Legion Post 150 in 1943. He was also a member of the Amvets. He volunteered for 25 years as a scorekeeper for the Westphalia Athletic Club basketball and baseball games. He died Feb. 24, 2000, at age 81 years, five months and 27 days at St. Joseph Hospital, Omaha.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Luann; his brothers, Alvin, Cyril, Alphonse and Alex; and his sister, Fern Schwarte. He is survived by his wife, Helen of Harlan; stepson, Jerry Wilson (Beverly) of Des Moines, WA; stepdaughter, Janice (Bob) Book of Atlantic; seven grandchildren; 19 great grandchildren; sister, Val Wilke of Omaha, NE; sister-in-law, Til Schmitz of Harlan; brother-in-law, Bill Schwarte of Panama, and other relatives.

A Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated Feb. 28, 2000, at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Harlan, with Rev. Howard Fitzgerald celebrant and Msgr. Edward Kelly and Rev. Cornelius Gaul concelebrating. Military rites were conducted in St. Boniface Cemetery in Westphalia by the United States Marine Corps with Jim Book, Robert Hamor, Mike Book, Tom Schmitz, Wade Plant and Bob Schmitz casket bearers. Pauley Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.