

LaVern Leo Schmitz,

86

Nov. 10, 1930 - March 20, 2017

DEFIANCE – LaVern Leo Schmitz, son of Bernard and Eleanor (Gubbles) Schmitz was born November 10, 1930. He grew up in Westphalia with his ten siblings. LaVern was baptized and confirmed at the St. Boniface Catholic Church in Westphalia. He attended school to the ninth grade until he was needed to help on the family farm.

On February 25, 1952, LaVern was drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He served his country honorably until

being discharged February 20, 1954. During his time in the service, LaVern was awarded with a Korean Service Medal with three Bronze Service Stars, Good Conduct Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal and two Overseas Bars.

LaVern met the love of his life at a dance in Defiance, Mary Ellen Henkelman and was united in marriage on April 22, 1954 in St. Peter's Catholic Church. They were blessed with seven children and raised their family in Defiance. LaVern got started in the bee business with his father-in-law. He was very involved in his community and church, serving on the City Council, Parish Council, Defiance Volunteer Fire Department, as a Eucharistic Minister and singing in the choir. He retired at the age of 65 and remained in Defiance until moving to Elm Crest Retirement Community in Harlan on January 23, 2014.

LaVern enjoyed dancing and spending his time woodworking. He loved being with his family, especially his grandchildren.

LaVern died Monday, March 20, 2017 at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan, attaining the age of 86 years, four months and 10 days. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife Mary, siblings Eugene Schmitz, Eldred Schmitz; Bernadette Conkel, Luella Hull, Marcelene Bissen and Luanna Schmitz.

LaVern leaves behind to cherish his memory, his children Rick Schmitz and his wife Cris of Gillette, WY; Sally and her husband Ron Weihs of Four Seasons, MO; Doug Schmitz and his wife Cindy of Defiance; Ed Schmitz and his wife Susan of Defiance; Rosemary and her husband Mike McCoy of Urbandale; Cindy and her husband John Auffart of Council Bluffs; Paul Schmitz and his wife Shelley of Council Bluffs; 22 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren; siblings Sr. Bernice Schmitz of Milwaukee, WI; Lester Schmitz of Harlan; Arlene and her husband Bob Hodapp of Denver, CO; Sr. Loraine Schmitz of Milwaukee, WI; nieces and nephews; other family members and friends.

An 11 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. Guthrie Dolan Thursday, March 23, 2017 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Defiance. Rick Schmitz, Doug Schmitz, Ed Schmitz, Paul Schmitz, Ron Weihs, Mike McCoy and John Auffart served as casket bearers. Military Rites were provided by Defiance Westphalia American Legion Post No. 707 and Iowa National Guard Funeral Honor Team at Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Defiance.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.



Pauley Jones
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

(712) 755-3135 • (800) 831-6805

www.pauleyjones.com

Baldwin at 9th, Harlan, IA

1304 N. Sawmill Rd., Avoca, IA