

Lewis E. (Buster) Thorne Jr.

Lewis E. (Buster) Thorne Jr., 84, of Winona died Thursday, May 28, 2009, at Lake Winona Manor.

He was born Jan. 8, 1925, to Lewis E. and Louise (Guler) Thorne.

On Sep. 11, 1981, he married his present wife, Mary L. (Kohner) Rusert.



Buster graduated from Champion High School in Prairie du Chien, Wis., and completed a 2-year course in civil engineering at the Winona Area Technical Institute in 1970.

He honorably served with the United States Navy during WW II. His service for his country took him to many foreign ports. Buster had 22 months of combat service. He took part in two of the main naval battles of WW II in the liberation of the Philippines — Sarigayo Straits and San Bernardino Straits — and three diversionary attacks prior to the Philippines Liberation from bases in the Aleutian Islands.

Buster operated Louise's Tavern and was employed by the Oaks Nite Club; Dakota County Highway Department; Henningson, Duram & Richardson Architectural & Engineering Firm; City of Helena as building inspector; and Thorne Construction.

He was an active member of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Buster was a born-again Christian since 1976 and to the best of his ability walked in the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus was his closest friend. He served as a eucharistic minister at the cathedral, and up to the time of his illness, spent one hour per week at his scheduled Hour of Adoration. He also ministered to the members of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and St. Casimir Church who lived at Lake Winona Manor by distributing Holy Communion on designated Sundays. He was also available to be of assistance in helping with the kitchen duty at funerals and other social functions.

Buster has been a kind, patient, devoted and thoughtful husband. In his more active years, he spent his free time as an avid hunter and fisherman. During his high school years, he took part in various sports, including swimming, ice skating, hockey, boxing, wrestling and football. He also enjoyed dancing and listening to the music of the big band era. His hobbies included gun stocking, and building model airplanes and boats.

Buster was a Mr. Fix-it person all of his life, especially in his later years. He took great pride in the fact that he could fix just about anything. After leaving his position as building inspector for the City of Helena, he devoted his time to remodeling jobs, both large and small.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; sons, Lewis (Marlene) Thorne, William (Fonda) Thorne, Steve (Marichu) Thorne, Paul (Janet) Thorne and Karl (Jennifer) Thorne; daughters, Bobby Lou (Paul) Morin, Karen Austin, Kim Draper, Kris Thorne, Kathy (Tom) Hanson and Konnie (Tim) Wilson; stepchildren, Richard (Betty) Rusert, Deborah Rusert, Lori (Bill) Quandahl, Robert Rusert and Karen (Gary) Collins; 30 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren; as well as other relatives and friends.

Buster was preceded in death by his first wife, Billye Harris; second wife, Carol Pesch; and his parents.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at noon Tuesday, June 2, 2009, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

The Rev. Richard Colletti will officiate.

Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery, where the American Legion Leon J. Wetzel Post #9 of Winona will provide full military honors.

A visitation will be held at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Tuesday, June 2, 2009, from 10 a.m. until the time of the Mass. Online condolences or memories may be left for Buster's family at www.watkowski-mulyck.com

Entrusted to our care - Watkowski-Mulyck Funeral Home.