

**James G. Verges**

Oct. 29, 1920 - March 22, 2009

SOUTH BEND - James G. Verges, 88, died Sunday afternoon, March 22, 2009, in the Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center following an extended illness. Mr. Verges was born October 29, 1920, in Bayard, Nebraska, to the late Gust G. and Helen Verges, both of whom immigrated from Greece in the early 20th century. Mr. Verges was preceded in death by his wife, Juanita, wife, Mary, and by two brothers, Chris G. Verges and Dr. Peter G. Verges. Mr. Verges is also survived by his two sisters, Mary K. Miller (the late Eli D. Miller) of South Bend and Frances Nichols (the late Gust Nichols) of Skokie, Illinois; two brothers, Attorney Conrad G. Verges of Glenview, Illinois, and Dr. Frank Verges of Fullerton, California; seven nephews, George E. Miller (Kathy) of Lombard, Illinois, Jimmy Miller (Sharon) of South Bend, Gary Nichols (Mary Ann) of Naperville, Illinois, Attorney Scott Verges of Berkeley, California, Deno Verges (Bobbie) of Danville, California, Jim Verges (Beverly) of Ceres, California, and Alex Frankel of Alhambra, California; six nieces, Chrisann Verges (Rickey Jay) of Beverly Hills, California, Diana Nikkolas (Abdel Berraha) of New York City, New York, Penny Kezios (George) of Skokie, Illinois, Samantha Havens of Davis, California, Dr. Sonia Verges (Dr. Matt Hyser) of Deerfield, Illinois, and Dr. Denise Verges (Dr. George Hefner) of Lincolnshire, Illinois. James Verges was a fond great-uncle to many, and a dear friend to all who knew him. James G. Verges was raised on a farm in Bayard, Nebraska, and moved with his entire family to East Moline, Illinois, at age six. He attended John Deere Elementary School and later United Township High School, where he excelled in football and baseball. During his high school years, he loved the game of golf and caddied for top players at a local country club where he once met the late Babe Didrickson Zaharias, the legendary hall of fame professional woman golfer. Following graduation from high school, James worked as an apprentice meat cutter at the Tri City Packing Company in Moline where he learned his lifelong trade. He worked for several years, until the onset of World War II. James was drafted into the U.S. Army on September 19, 1942, and was trained to be a medic prior to his departure for the European Theatre of Operation (E.T.O.). Mr. Verges was part of the famed 103rd Infantry Division, also named the "Cactus" Division. Mr. Verges was attached to the 7th Army, Company B, 410th infantry regiment of the 103rd Division, and landed in Marseilles, France, on October 20, 1944. From there his division participated in three battle campaigns, Rhineland, Central Europe and the Ardennes-Alsace campaign. Mr. Verges sustained shrapnel wounds during fighting in Germany, when his unit was shelled by German gun emplacements in a town through which they were advancing. He spent 14 days in a field hospital near Munich, Germany. Mr. Verges' 103rd Infantry Division was diverted by order of General Eisenhower to support General George Patton's 3rd Army during the "Battle of the Bulge," and he participated in the famous 100-mile troop movement, that at that time was a record for movement of entire divisions across the battlefield in such a short time. This strategy and order by Eisenhower "Won" "The Battle of the Bulge" and stopped Hitler from prolonging the war in Europe. He also witnessed the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps, having been allowed to see the camp at Dachau with other members of his division, to bear witness to the horror of the "Holocaust." James was transferred to the 157th "Thunderbird" Division in July 1945, which was part of the 45th Division of the Army, and returned home to East Moline, Illinois, in the fall of 1945. He was preparing for training to begin for the invasion of Japan when the Enola Gay, flown by Paul Tibbet's, dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and effectively ended the war in the Pacific. During his service to his country, Mr. Verges was awarded three Bronze Battle Stars, a Good Conduct Medal, a Victory Medal, and an Occupation Medal for the European Theatre, for his participation in the United States Army during World War II. He also received an Oak Leaf Cluster award for being a combat rifleman during the conflict in Europe, and was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained in combat. For the rest of his working years, James Verges managed many large meat departments in, among other stores, the Kroger chain, and owned several wholesale meat businesses from Chicago to South Bend, where for several years he owned and operated the "Jay Vee" market near the old Drewry's Beer Plant on Elwood Avenue in South Bend, Indiana. Mr. Verges was a devout member of several Greek Orthodox churches during his lifetime, and many times volunteered his time and talents to help others when called upon. He was a member of the 103rd Infantry Division Association of World War II until the time of his death. Funeral services for Mr. Verges will be held in St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church in South Bend, on Ironwood Road, at 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, 2009. The Reverend George Konstantopoulos will officiate and burial will follow at St. Joseph Valley Memorial Park next to University Park Mall. The family of Mr. Verges requests that contributions be made to St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church of South Bend, Indiana, in memory of their beloved brother and uncle, James G. Verges. **May his memory be eternal** The Welsheimer Funeral Home assisted the family with arrangements.

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