



Cornelius Bolsem

September 2, 1916 - May 4, 2016

Cornelius “Cornie” Bolsem, 99, of Eldridge, Iowa and formerly of Oskaloosa, Iowa, passed away Wednesday evening, May 4, 2016, at Genesis West Wing Place in DeWitt, Iowa.

Cornie Bolsem, son of Bastian and Minnie (Van Arkel) Bolsem, was born in 1916 in rural Oskaloosa. Cornie graduated from Oskaloosa High School in 1934. Shortly after graduation, he was employed by D.S. Barr Co. of Oskaloosa in the glass and millwork fabrication trade. After serving in the Iowa National Guard in the pre-war years, Cornie entered active military service in the Army Air Corps on April 1, 1943. On April 24, 1943, he married Bernetta G. Davis in Clovis, NM. Upon Completion of air crew training, he served as a bombardier on B-24 aircraft in the 15th Air Force 761st Bombing Squadron based in Italy. He safely completed 37 bombing missions (receiving 47 mission credits) in the European theatre during 1944, eventually attaining the rank of Captain. For his efforts, he was awarded the EAME with five battle stars, the Air Medal with three clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Presidential Unit Citation.

After military discharge, Cornie and Bernetta returned to Oskaloosa where Cornie continued his employment with D.S. Barr Co. His career took a turn in 1950 when Cornie founded Oskaloosa Glass and Millwork Co. in partnership with Harold Morgan. In 1955, Cornie sold his interest in this business to Mr. Morgan and relocated to Oelwein, IA, where he purchased Oelwein Glass and Paint Co. In 1973, he and his son formed a partnership known as Oelwein Glass and Mirror, Inc. Cornie continued fulltime in this enterprise until his retirement in 1981.

Bernetta passed on to eternity, April 18, 1988, a devoted and loving wife of almost 45 years, who always stood by and supported her husband in all his endeavors. Cornie later married a former high school friend, Ruth Dillard Bassett, August 8, 1989. Cornie and Ruth divided their time between Cornie's home in Iowa and Ruth's home in Sacramento, CA, until Ruth's death on March 23, 2009. In retirement, Cornie pursued the hobbies of woodworking, stained glass fabrication, gardening and volunteering in service at his church. Cornie became a resident of Grandhaven Assisted Living in Eldridge, IA in 2009. With his easy going personality, he made many new friends at Grandhaven. He was a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Masons.

Cornie was well known and respected during his long business career for his work ethic, honesty, diligent craftsmanship in his trade, willingness to always help another person in need and his desire to share with others the skills he knew so well. He was also very creative in the millwork, glass, and glazing trade as he often designed and fabricated tooling to enhance the operation of his business. For the last two years, Cornie's resided at Genesis West Wing Place in DeWitt, a long-term care facility. He was cared for by a kind and compassionate staff. Those that knew Cornie intimately can also attest to his

faith in God and his trust in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord. Cornie will long be remembered and loved by those that knew him well and for the legacy and example, he left for them to follow.

Cornie is survived by his children and their spouses: Richard and Sarah Bolsem of Eldridge, IA, and Deborah and Tom Donald of Eldora, IA. Cornie was also blessed with four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Cornie was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Bernetta, his wife Ruth, an older brother, Matthew "Bud" Bolsem and a sister, Margaret Fortney Carr.

Funeral Services for Cornie will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, May 14, 2016, at Garland-Van Arkel-Langkamp Funeral Chapel in Oskaloosa, Iowa with Reverend Steven Brumbaugh of Crossroads Independent Baptist Church in Davenport officiating. Burial will be in Forest Cemetery in Oskaloosa. Visitation will begin at 10 a.m., Saturday prior to the funeral service. Memorials may be made to the Mayo Clinic.

Tribute Wall



“ *Cornelius Bolsem*

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