James "Joe" Pierce, 85, of Grinnell, died Nov. 29, 2008, at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines.

A funeral mass was held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 3, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Grinnell, with the Rev. Nick Adam officiating. The Rev. Walt and John Clausen were eulogists. Marilyn Kriegel was organist and Mark Dunnick vocalist. Pallbearers were Jessica Pierce, Erica Kelderman, Leslie Nehring, Myra Hangartner, Aaron Walker, Michael Hangartner, and Adam Walker. Burial was in Hazelwood Cemetery.

A scripture service was held Tuesday, evening at Smith Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Kellogg Historical Society.

Joe was born Nov. 18, 1923, in Grinnell, the son of Robert and Addie Reavis Pierce. He was a 1941 graduate of Grinnell High School. He was a veteran of the United States Army Air Force during World War II, having served with the 8th Air Force, 303rd Bomb Group in Molesworth, England. He was a ball turret gunner on a B-17, and was a member of the Caterpillar Club for having to bail out of his bomber safely during a mission.

On Jan. 1, 1950, he was married to Mary Patricia Hotchkint, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church Rectory in Grinnell. The couple made their home in Grinnell. He was employed for nearly 22 years as a meat cutter at McNally’s Grocer Store. He then was employed for six years at Grinnell College and retired from there in 1989. During his retirement he enjoyed working as a greenskeeper at Grinnell Country Club.

Joe was a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Newburg American Legion, and the Grinnell VFW, where he was acting commander. He was an avid sports fan and particularly enjoyed following the Iowa Hawkeyes.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Floyd and Francis Pierce; and two sisters, Pauline Claussen and Patty Barron.