

Rex B. Pitman, 79

Rex B. Pitman, 79, of Montezuma, died Wednesday, February 18, 1998 at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines.

Funeral services were February 22 at Watts Funeral Home in Montezuma. The Rev. Dr. George M. Salnave of First Presbyterian Church of Montezuma officiated.

Mrs. Rhonda Minner sang "Amazing Grace," "He Grew The Tree" and "The Old Lamplighter." Accompanying her on the organ was Mrs. Kathleen Ramsay.

Casket bearers were Scott Pitman, Shaun Pitman, C.J. Fry, Joe Steele, Mike Fry, Chris Fry, Ed Evans and Greg Steele. Honorary casket bearers were Donald McKee, Roy Baird, R.D. Rosenburg, Raymond Johnson, Frank Bryan, Claire Simmons, Bill Goudy and Marion Johnson.

Military graveside rites were performed by members of Blakley-Stevens Legion Post No. 169 and V.F.W. Post No. 8876.

Jackson Township Cemetery in Montezuma was the place of interment.

Rex was born September 28, 1918 on a farm east of Montezuma, the son of Joe L. and Hazel (Blakely) Pitman. He graduated from Barnes City High School in 1937 and attended Iowa State College in Ames for three years.

He enlisted in the Air Force in October 1941. He left Des Moines in January 1942 for California as an aviation cadet. He received his primary training at Santa Maria, his basic at Lemore and his advanced at Stockton.

After graduating, he went to Will Rogers Field in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. There, he and his high school classmate, Evelyn Dee, were married on August 12, 1942 at the Methodist Church.

After a short time, he went to Barksdale

Field to train in B-26s. From there, he went to Offut Field, picked up a new B-26 and then went on to the Bauer Field in Indiana.

Rex took the southern route to Africa, where he completed 47 missions before rotating back to the states in October 1943. He was assigned to Barksdale as a flight instructor, training crews in the B-26.

There he changed to B-29 training and instructed crew training until the end of the war.

Rex later joined the Ferry command, ferrying war-weary B-29s. He spent a short time in the 47th BG flying A-26s before going to Japan where conditions were such that he decided to return to the family farm.

Captain Pitman was honorably discharged as a pilot, 95th Bomber Squad in August 1949.

A farmer most of his life, he and Evelyn raised three sons and one daughter.

He was a member of the Blakley-Steven American Legion Post No. 169, V.F.W. Post No. 8876, 17th Bomber Group and the Farm Bureau.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother in infancy.

Rex is survived by his wife, Evelyn and their family, Scotty Pitman of Kansas City, Mo., Robert W. Pitman of Tishomingo, Okla., Sandy and Charles Fry of Barnes City and Joe Pitman and Cindy Zapp of Malcom, six grandchildren, Shaun Pitman, Scott Pitman, Michael J. Fry, Christopher R. Fry, C.J. Fry and Evelyn Sue Pitman; one brother and his wife, Wayne and Shirley Pitman of Barnes City and other relatives and many friends.

Memorials may be made to American Cancer Research.

MR February 25, 1998