



### Joseph Gene Thomas

Aug. 24, 1932 - Dec. 31, 2016

*Record 1-12-2017*  
Joseph Gene Thomas, 83 of Delta, died Dec. 31 at the Serenity House in Oskaloosa. Services were Jan. 4 in What Cheer, with burial following in the Rice Cemetery near What Cheer. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the What Cheer Fire & Rescue.

Joseph Gene Thomas was born Aug. 24, 1932 to Joe and Audrey Fear Thomas three miles southwest of What Cheer in the house that he resided in for 83 years. He grew up helping on the family farm. Joe was graduated from What Cheer High School in 1951. He, along with his lifetime friend, Dick Utt, joined the U.S. Navy in 1953. Joe spent most of his deployment on the USS Blue where he traveled the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii, Australia, Japan and Taiwan during the Korean War. He was honorably discharged from the Navy in the spring of 1957. One of his Navy buddies introduced Joe to his stepdaughter, Patricia Moore and On August 30, 1957 Joe was united in marriage to Patricia (Tricia) in San Diego, Calif. The couple moved to Iowa and ran the Thomas family farm. They raised corn, oats, hay, and soybeans over the many years they farmed. Joe also raised hogs, cattle, sheep and still has cattle even though he claimed he had retired several years ago. He devoted much of his time to farming, family and occasionally hunting and fishing. Joe worked hard and had very little time for other pursuits. He did look forward to attending his annual Navy reunion with his wife all over the United States and Joe never missed an opportunity to spend time with his grandkids.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his beloved grandson, Nick Thomas Jones; a niece and a nephew and a lifetime friend and buddy, Dick Utt.

Joe is survived by his wife, Tricia; his two daughters, Renee (Steve) Gatton of rural What Cheer and Jodi (Jason) Frederick of Sahuarita, Ariz.; three grandchildren, Ben (Becki) Gatton, Austin Braun and Courtney (Dana) Banks; eight great grandchildren, Cade and Cooper Banks, Sydney, Jake, Eli and Ella Gatton and Mason and Morgan Ford. He also leaves behind three sisters Virginia, Catherine, Patsy as well as several nieces and nephews.