

Joseph "Ronnie" Boucher

April 27, 1933 - January 1, 2020

Joseph "Ronnie" Boucher, age 86, rural Algoma, departed this life and went to his everlasting rest surrounded by his family on Jan. 1, 2020.

He was born April 27, 1933, the son of the late Fred and Mary (Dellis) Boucher. Dad graduated from St. Mary's grade school in Algoma and attended Algoma High School. He enlisted in the US Army when he was 17 years-old in May 1950.

Dad was especially proud of his military service to this country. After he completed basic training at Fort Riley, KS, he was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division and stationed in Japan. A week later, his gunnery sergeant walked up to him and said, "Today is your lucky day, boy, you get to go to war."

The "First to Fight" or Taro leaf division, the 24th were the first US troops deployed to Korea at the outbreak of the Korean War. Dad was initially assigned to a rear support role, but the 24th sustained 90% casualties during the initial North Korean advance. Dad never talked much about what took place, but bit by bit parts of his story came out over the years. He ended up serving in a combat role seeing front-line action for many consecutive months including against the Chinese.

He told his good friend Kenny Haack recently, "I didn't think I would make 19 (years old). Now I am almost 86. I ain't got any kicks (complaints)."

Dad was honorably discharged in October 1952 at the rank of Staff Sergeant, earning 4 battle stars. He was a member of the VFW and American Legion.

On Sept 10, 1955, he married Beverly Rose Dandois. They were married for 64 years. The couple had 2 sons, Mike and Pat.

Dad worked for the Algoma Lumber Company as a logging truck driver for many years, retiring in 1998. He enjoyed the work, being in the woods, and working alongside a great friend, Bob Blahnik.

Bob was one of Dad's solid wingmen, along with Jerome "Gordy" Melchoir and Big John Kostichka. When Bob and Dad were a bit younger and weren't working, you could find them making wood together or working on dad's caterpillar, among other things.

Gordy was dad's lifelong friend. Growing up during the depression, they would scavenge empty pop bottles and turn them in using the few cents they received to buy a handful of shotgun shells. The two would then spend the whole day walking around the outskirts of the city with their shotguns looking to shoot something to take home for supper. Gordie used to laugh that he had to wait until Dad was out of shells before he could get a shot – and dad didn't miss.

That carried over into later in life when Dad was the best trap shot around. In his prime, on most days, he was unbeatable. But Big John always gave him a good run for his money.

Dad enjoyed hunting and fishing. Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings in the fall and winter were spent rabbit hunting with his young sons and listening to Badger football games on the radio during rides between potholes. The hunting was good, the Badgers weren't.

Dad never saw a buck he didn't shoot.

Dad, his brother Bob, and Gordie got into commercial fishing when they were kids, well, sort of anyway. They would take parts of a stick of dynamite, put a fuse in it, light it, and throw it into the hole below



Stoller's Dam on Silver Creek. They would try to time it to go off when the noon whistle at the Plywood sounded, and then gather all of the fish that were "shocked" to the surface. One time they took turns diving into the water to retrieve the dynamite when the fuse didn't go off. Seriously Dad?

Dad was a good swimmer – if you count the dog paddle anyway. And kind of acrobatic. One July 4th he was doing somersaults off the diving board into his son's pool. There might have been a little alcohol involved. Maybe.

Dad and Mom enjoyed going to their son's athletic events. Both sons lettered in multiple sports in high school and held numerous records. They also attended their athletic events in college, where both sons also were lettermen in multiple sports including track and field.

Dad was a good runner too. Like the time he had to run across the street in only his blue jeans to grab his dog Jock who was shaking an elderly woman's poodle like a "toy." Jock had been in the house but had busted through the screen door. Fortunately, the poodle wasn't hurt and Dad apologized up and down to the lady. Dad loved his hunting dogs Jock and Freckles, who were afraid of nothing. Thanks to Elroy and John Bitzan for those gifts.

Dad was first and last, a family man. He was a quiet man, mostly, who usually had a smile on his face. He enjoyed spending deer season at the cabin and time with friends including Lee and Mary Sibilsky plus the Mennonite families who visited their home.

Because of leaving school to enlist in the Army and serve in the Korean War, he was awarded his high school diploma in 2000.

He is survived by his wife Beverly; sons Mike (Debra) of Casco and Patrick (Debra), Collierville TN. Dad especially loved his grandchildren, Adam (Alyssa), Caleb, Ethan, Joseph and Micaela. He is also survived by his great-nephew Craig. He was preceded in death by 3 brothers and 4 sisters.

The family wants to thank the medical staff at Door County Memorial Hospital for their excellent care. His nurse the final day, Jamie, told us he must have been a strong man because his will to survive had carried him for days longer than he should have lasted. Strong and "Belgian" stubborn – like the time he ruptured both Achilles tendons a few years ago. Mom noticed Dad wasn't anywhere in the house one day in early Spring. She found him, in the outside garage a distance from the house, taking the snowplow off his truck with his walker off to the side.

We also want to thank his niece Lori for her support.

During his last moments at the hospital, a flight for life helicopter landed and took off just as dad passed. One of Mom's nieces said that God had just provided Dad's ride home. Let's just hope Gordie wasn't the pilot because Heaven only knows where those two ended up.

If you knew Joseph "Ronnie" Boucher, please join us to celebrate his life and memory at a funeral mass Saturday, Jan 11 at 11 am at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Algoma with Fr. Anthony Birdsall and Deacon Mark Hibbs. Visitation at 9 am with a lunch to follow the service including a military honor guard. Online condolence messages may be shared at www.wiesnermassart.com.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to your favorite charity.



Funeral Homes

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