



**S**am DeBoer of Manhattan, Montana, at age 88 went to be with his Lord on Wednesday, April 15, 2009. Sam was born on November 28, 1920, to Jennie and Barney DeBoer of Corsica, South Dakota. He was preceded in death by his parents, his son Victor, his sisters Elizabeth and Anne, and his brothers George and Lyle. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Viola DeBoer, sons Douglas of Billings, Dave (Karen) of Billings, and Sam (Chris) of Bozeman. Grandchildren are Craig (Taryn) DeBoer of Manhattan, Mark (Shana) DeBoer of Helena, Joshua DeBoer of Billings, Dustin (Teshina) DeBoer of San Diego, California, and step-grandchildren Amanda Malley and Samantha (Doug) Schneider of Miles City. Sam is survived by seven great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. He is also survived by a sister, Joanne DeJong of Grand Rapids, Michigan, a brother, Alvin DeBoer of Elko, Nevada, and a brother-in-law Harlan (Jerri) Rus of Pierre,

South Dakota.

After graduating from Corsica High School, Sam went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to find work. He married his high school sweetheart, Viola Rus, on December 7, 1940. Exactly one year later Pearl Harbor was bombed and early in 1942 Sam received his draft notice. Basic training was in Oregon where Vi was able to join him until he was shipped overseas headed to Africa. After three weeks training, his unit was sent to Naples, Italy, where his outfit joined forces already there. Sam often remarked how the terrain there reminded him of the area north of Bozeman. He was in the 91st Infantry Division and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He received a certificate "Commendation for Meritorious Service" for outstanding service of duty from July 2, 1944, to May, 1945, in the Italian campaign. Quoting from the document, "Many times while under fire, Sam had to make repairs or succor guns and vehicles, always extricating them before they could be destroyed by enemy fire. His level headed judgment and cool courage made him a large asset to his company...reflect the greatest credit upon himself, his Company, and the Armed Forces of the United States of America", signed by Wm. G. Livesay, Major General.

His outfit, fought Germans from Rome to Milan and were waiting to be shipped to Japan when the atomic bomb was dropped. Their orders were changed and they were on their way home. Sam often said that his Commanding Officer was a Christian and prayed not only for them, but with them, and that he felt that God was always with him and was protecting him.

Home for Sam was Corsica, South Dakota, where he and Vi had lived before and where son Douglas was born. He worked with his Dad in the Corsica Hatchery during which time two more sons were added to the family, Victor and David. However, Sam always had a love for Montana where he had worked summers while in high school, so they moved to Bozeman where another son, Sam, Jr., was born. After various jobs and moves, Sam farmed near Churchill where Vi taught in first grade. This was followed by a sales job for PV along with farming and owning and helping manage the Manhattan Camper Court. Sam said these were the happiest years of his life. In 1980 he suffered a heart attack, then sold the Camper Court in 1983 and started his own business, the S&V Feed Company, which continues today as the Gallatin Feed Company under ownership of his son, Sam.

Sam's favorite hobbies included hunting, cards, horseshoes and bowling. Both he and Vi always loved the local Manhattan Christian High School basketball games. He also enjoyed his grandsons and the great-grandchildren. As a Deacon, Sam became aware of where he could be of service and the Yellowstone Boys Ranch became the recipient of many pickup loads of potatoes donated by local farmers and delivered by Sam. He also collected clothing at his house which he delivered to the Montana Rescue Mission.

Visitation will be held at Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service, Monday, April 20, at Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Interment will take place Tuesday, April 21, at Churchill Cemetery at 10 a.m. followed by a celebration of life at Bethel Christian Reformed Church at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be made to Manhattan Christian School, 8000 Churchill Road Manhattan, MT 59741.