

## Leo H. Drouin

Belmont-----Leo H. Drouin, 88, of 386 Bean Hill Road, died at his home on Saturday, February 17, 2007 surrounded by family members.

Mr. Drouin was born January 3, 1919 in Laconia, NH, the son of Valere and Kilda (Fillion) Drouin.

Mr. Drouin graduated from Laconia High School in 1937. Growing up he worked at his family's farm known as Ladd Hill Dairy in Belmont. Mr. Drouin owned and operated a grocery market on Charles St. in Laconia prior to entering the service. He was employed for 34 years by the US Postal Service and for 20 years during that time he and his wife owned and operated Bay Shore Cottages on Lake Winnisquam. He was a member of the VFW.

His knack of storytelling and his sense of humor will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Mr. Drouin enlisted in the US Army in March of 1942 and was assigned to the 77<sup>th</sup> Div. He was in the Aviation Cadet Program, went to Gunnery School at Ft. Meyer, then became an instructor. In May 1944 as a Technical Sergeant he went overseas to join the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 346<sup>th</sup> Squadron. He was a member of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and the DiamondBacks. His awards include the Silver Star, Air Medal with clusters, Purple Heart with OLC and EAME Ribbon with 3 Battle Stars. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action as engineer and top turret gunner of a B-17 type aircraft. On December 2, 1944, Sgt. Drouin participated in a bombing mission against strategically important enemy oil installations in Germany. Approaching the target, his aircraft encountered intense, heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire.

A few seconds after bombs away a direct hit shattered his left leg above the knee and at the same time severed electric wires, shot out his oxygen and destroyed his turret. Despite the shock and pain resulting from this serious wound, Sgt. Drouin had the remarkable presence of mind to extinguish a fire caused from sparks emitted by the severed wires and to turn off the switch causing them. Through the long return flight, he assisted in first aid measures and in a semi-conscious condition gallantly remained on the interphone to

instruct the members of his crew in preparations for landing by manually lowering the wing flaps. By his conspicuous courage and intense devotion to duty, together with his outstanding combat record of fifty (50) missions against the enemy, Sgt. Drouin has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Survivors include his wife of 61 years, Florence (Jacques) Drouin of Belmont; a son Francis Leo Drouin and his wife Debra of Litchfield NH; three daughters, Elaine Porter and her husband Geraldo of Belmont, Claire Perrier of Belmont, and Gail Drouin of Laconia; a brother Larry Drouin of Belmont; three sisters, Joan Shaw of Belmont, Edith Willbraham and Patricia Hollingshead both of Ohio; five grandchildren, Jonathan Luneau, Samantha Hanover, Jacinda Lemay, Rebecca Luneau and Melissa Lee Drouin; four great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Mr. Drouin was predeceased by three sisters Dora McEslin, Alice Laurent, and Rita Flack and two brothers, Maurice Drouin and John Drouin, and a son-in-law William Perrier.