

Parish Rosary/Vigil

Sunday, March 9, 2025; 3:00 PM
Buehler-Larson Funeral Home, Mandan, ND

Presider

Deacon Kevin Leingang

Funeral Liturgy

Monday, March 10, 2025; 10:30 AM
Spirit of Life Catholic Church, Mandan, ND

Celebrant

Fr. Keith Streifel

Musicians

Wendy Steidler & Michelle Friedt

Prelude

“Lord I Need You” & “The Old Rugged Cross”

Opening Song

“Here I Am Lord”

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

Job 19:1, 23-27

Lector

Mary Berger

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 27

“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Lector

Chloe Rothstein

Gospel Reading

John 14:1-6

Homily

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of Gifts Song

“Prayer of St. Francis”

Presentation of Gifts

Aiden Rothstein & Gary Flohr

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Song

“The Bread of Life”

Communion Meditation

“You Are Near”

Final Commendation

“Song of Farewell”

Closing Song

“Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone”

Urn Bearers

Greg Kraft ~ Pat Kraft ~ Bruce Kraft

Graveside Service

North Dakota Veterans Cemetery
Mandan, ND

Military Honors

Mandan Honor Guard

Taps

Morgan Rush

The family invites you for lunch and fellowship in the church activity center following the graveside service.





Frank Anton Kraft, 96, Mandan ND, died March 1, 2025, at St Alexius Hospital, Bismarck, after a brief illness (and frankly, ice fishing season had ended).

He was born in Walker, SD on August 23, 1928, living on the farm, northwest of Selfridge with his parents Jacob and Anna (Mosset) Kraft, big brother to 5 brothers and 3 sisters, the youngest sister born when he was overseas in Korea. After finishing 8th grade, he stayed home to work on the farm. He continued his education by taking many correspondence courses, including Taxidermy. He mounted two pheasants at the request of his mother, which she proudly displayed in their home for many years.

He was drafted into the US Army Feb 21, 1951, and was stationed at Ft Worden & Ft Flagler WA for 10 months for Winch Operator training with the 369th EASR, Company D

Shore Battalion and was moved to Camp Desert Rock, Nevada. After 45 days he received his overseas orders, was sent to Ft Lewis to process. He enjoyed a short leave at home and left Seattle on the ship Hugh Gaffie for 9-day voyage to Tokyo. There, he had several weeks of Tank Maintenance School. Then on to Korea with the Tank Co 223 Infantry Regiment. They maintained M4 & M46 tanks in the Punchbowl area; his camp 3 miles from the front line. The M46 Patton was a 50-ton tank with the ability of 55 mph, but they were in poor shape. Out of 21 tanks only 3 didn't need work. Four tanks were always on the front line, using 30-ton tank retrievers to move them back and forth to their camp. He had more training for four weeks in Seoul.

He had a few close calls: a fire in a tank needed to be extinguished by scooping snow into the tank while avoiding shelling from the enemy; being overcome with carbon monoxide while the crew was towing a tank with the retriever, his crew discovered he was in danger and pulled him out to revive him in fresh air. Another time he left his helmet atop the tank while he worked inside only to discover a bullet hole in it when he retrieved it later! Once when moving a tank, his Sgt decided to drive it instead but really had no idea how to do it, so Frank had to hit the brakes before they crashed. The Sgt then told him to drive! "I found out what COLD was like sleeping in a tent with no heat at 12 below!" Ever since he could take any kind of hot weather but hated being cold, except for his lifelong love of ice fishing in his hut!

He received his discharge orders; he was sent to Japan to wait for a ship home. The one night he could go shopping to buy gifts for family back home, Frank was put on fire duty patrol in the barracks. Sleeping in bed was a court-martial offense, but when he caught an offending officer, he made a quick decision not to report it because he did not want to stay 2 more weeks for a subsequent court martial. He was ready to go home!

He sailed back via San Francisco, then flew to Seattle to process out at Ft Lewis on Feb 21, 1953, having been overseas 10 months and 9 days. He traveled back to Selfridge with sister Ann, brother-in-law Leroy and baby nephew Tommy. The heater in Leroy's car did not work well and the baby was crying from the cold. They stopped in Montana; Frank used his Army earnings to buy a car with a working heater so they could go the rest of the way home in comfort.

After getting to know new baby sister Arlene, he worked at the Mandan Creamery for 2 months, enjoying new friends with frequent butter fights until a surprise inspection put an end to it when they were almost caught with butter all over their backs.

He went to Spearfish, SD, and worked in masonry construction until November when he enrolled in radio and tv repair at Coyne Electric School in Chicago, IL. He liked working part-time in an electric fan factory and as a cab driver. The cabbie stint ended when a cabbie who had traded shifts with Frank was shot and killed.

When his course was finished and no jobs were available in the repair trade, he went back to masonry work in Spearfish. Sometimes, sleeping in his car to afford food & washing his face in the cold Spearfish Creek or staying in a boarding house with a kind lady feeding him well.

In Sept 1953 at a dance in Reeder ND he met Frances Poljansek, introduced by her sister Agnes. Their first dance together was "The Blue Skirt Waltz," instantly Frances liked him for warm, friendly demeanor, and he was a great dancer. They married

June 28, 1955, in Hailey ND, beginning a life together raising a family of 3 sons and 3 daughters. Living in Spearfish, Aberdeen, McIntosh, Mobridge and settling in Watertown, SD, buying their small hobby farm of 9½ acres NW of town.

Frank's masonry career continued becoming a bricklayer apprentice in March 1960 until 1963 when he became a Journeyman Bricklayer for a career spanning 51 years, working in six states and even volunteer bricklaying in Mexico at a children's dental clinic after retirement.

Frank was always busy in their three gardens, caring for farm animals: cows, chickens, ponies, and sheep. After all their children graduated from WHS, they moved back to Mobridge in 1996, enjoying retirement, traveling, and spending winters in Texas for 13 years. Frank enjoyed volunteering hundreds of hours at the South Tx Natl Wildlife Refuge Complex. Frank enjoyed many hobbies: year-round fishing (after catching his 1st fish at age 7, his favorite was catching walleye), hunting, gardening, woodworking (he once built a small wooden speed boat in an extra bedroom during the winter), restoring small engines, skeet/trap shooting, camping, boating, beer and wine making, Amateur Radio (participating in events communicating with other Hams all over the world).

He was an active member in several fraternal organizations, frequently serving as an officer in: JayCees, Moose, Eagles, VFW, American Legion, Knights of Columbus, and the Bricklayers Union.

The greatest joys of his life were his family. He loved his wife of nearly 70 years, taking immense pride in his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He loved playing games with them, walking along the shorelines, sharing his love of camping and fishing. Never wanting to miss being there for special milestones of those little ones. He was already ready to share his wit and laughter. There are memories we will treasure for eternity of the fun we shared with him.

Most recently, at his 96th birthday celebration, Aug 24, 2024, he was the surprised recipient of the first Honorary High School Diploma for Selfridge High School, being awarded by former Superintendent Jim Gross. He became a celebrity overnight when his story was told by KFYR's Jody Kerzman's Good News spotlight two days later. It was quite a fitting honor for a veteran and life-long learner.

Frank is preceded in death by his parents, sisters: Anna Nielsen and husband Leroy, Edith Flohr and husband John; brother: Tony and wife Jean; sisters-in-law: Karen (Willy) Kraft; Agnes Peterson and husband Tollof; brothers-in-law: Russell Walch, Anton Poljansek and wife Paula; Dan Poljansek; Sam Poljansek and wife Sandy; Michael Kinnard, Paul Besselievre; nephews: Dennis Kraft, Kevin Kraft, Wade Donner, Mark Besselievre; niece: Marilyn Nielsen Crombie; daughter in law Becky Smith Kraft; Great Grandson AJ Wiblshouser.

Frank is succeeded by wife Frances, 6 children: Gregory (Susan), Alpharetta GA; Karen (Jay) Bramman, Council Bluffs IA; Elizabeth (Robert) Rush, Little Rock, AR; Patrick (Dana), Falls City NE; Bruce (Angie) Navarre FL; Sheila (Mathew) Rothstein Dickinson ND; Grandchildren: Jordan (Jessica) McCarthy, Matthew (Sarah) McCarthy, Ryan (Stephanie) Bramman, Sarah (Jason) King, Crystal Kraft Cannon, Nicholas Kraft, Nathan Kraft, Jacob Kraft, Macey Kraft, Christopher (Gabby) Cunningham, Alecia (Ian) Hogleund, Morgan (Kimberly) Rush, Aiden Rothstein, Chloe Rothstein. Great-Grandchildren: Kala Bramman, Kason Wiblshouser, Juliet McCarthy, James McCarthy, Jonah McCarthy, Joey McCarthy, Jude McCarthy, Emmy King, Evan King, Isla King, Ellie King, Mackenzie Brozena, Landon Brozena, Noah Brozena, Landis Smith, Ashley Matteson, George Hogleund.

Great-Great Grandchild: Mara Smith Siblings: William (friend Pauline) Kraft, Jacob (Vernetta) Kraft, Victor (Kathy) Kraft, Alvin (Betty) Kraft, Arlene (friend Jim) Walch; Sisters-in-law & brothers-in-law: Carol Besselievre, Andy (Betty) Poljansek, Kathy (Doug) Donner, Tess Kinnard, Susan Poljansek. Many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In lieu of floral tributes, the family requests memorials to Fraternal Order of the Eagles Aerie, VFW, American Legion, or a charity of your choice.



A HERO'S WELCOME

*Time to come home dear brother
Your tour of duty is through
You've given as much as anyone
Could be expected to do
Just a few steps further
The smoke will start to clear
Others here will guide you
You have no need of fear
You will not failed your brothers
You clearly gave it all
And through your selfless actions
Others will hear the call
So take your place of honor
Among those who have gone before
And know you will be remembered
For now and evermore*

*Those we love must someday pass
beyond our present sight...
Must leave us and the world we know
without their radiant light.
But we know that like a candle
their lovely light will shine
To brighten up another place
more perfect ... more divine.
And in the realm of Heaven
Where they shine so warm and bright,
Our loved ones live forevermore
In God's eternal light.*



Scan to watch Frank's
Celebration of Life video.