William Simon Mericle Jr.

William Simon Mericle Jr., 85, of Lake Charles died Thursday, March 17, 2011, after being overwhelmed by the omnipresent malady of old age.

A member of the “Greatest Generation,” he was born in Starks to Edna and William S. Merical Sr., on April 5, 1925. From humble means, he quickly learned the lessons and the value of hard work and perseverance. He attended and ultimately graduated from Sulphur High School. As many before him, he interrupted high school to enlist in the Army during World War II. He served in the Pacific theater under his hero, Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He piloted a landing craft (LCVP) during several Pacific island-hopping campaigns from New Guinea to the Southern Philippines. He completed his tour with the witnessing of the surrender of Japan and participating in its occupation. After the war, he attended McNeese Junior College, where he played football, a sport he continued to enjoy throughout his life.

Bill or “Rip,” as he was known by all, was employed by Cities Service and Cit-Con, where he worked as a lab technician for almost 50 years. In pursuit of the American Dream for his family, he always held part-time positions, primarily at Borden’s as a facility maintenance man.

He was an ordinary man of his generation, which makes him extraordinary by today’s standard. He was a living example of a well-defined work ethic, personal sacrifice, humility, and a genuine respect for others. He truly loved his family and was deeply sorry for his shortcomings.

When time allowed, Bill found pleasure in officiating high school football, playing golf and bird hunting. He was a member of St. Margaret Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus.

Bill is survived by the mother of his children, Angie Niel Mericle; sons, Mike Mericle and wife Sandy of Durango, Colo., William “BB” Mericle III, Bruce Mericle, Robert Mericle of Pembroke Pines, Fla., and Paul Mericle of Houston; daughters, Charlotte Maxcy and husband Bill, Kathy Tawes and husband Greg of Panama City Beach, Fla., Tina Spell and husband Tony and Connie Schnepf of Waterloo, Ill.

Bill’s grandchildren include Kimen Colgan, Ty Mericle, Molly Sappington, LeLe Mericle, Tony Benoit, Jonathan Benoit, Trent Romero, Michael Mericle, Aaron Tawes, Curtis Mericle, Daniel Spell, Victoria Schnepf, Jacob Mericle, and Megan Mericle; and his great grandchildren, of whom he was most proud, Justin Mericle, Ella Colgan, Bentley Benoit, Josephine Mericle, Jullien Romero, Charlie Colgan, Madeline Sappington and Luciahna Romero.

His funeral will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 22, in the Johnson Funeral Home chapel. The Rev. Emanuel Tanu will officiate. Interment will be at Port Hudson National Cemetery in Zachary at a later date.

Visitation will be Monday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., with a rosary being recited at 6 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, visit the elderly, especially those confined to nursing homes.

The family would like to express a special thanks to Jeune Sias Jr., Bill’s caregiver and friend.

Words of comfort to the family may be expressed at www.johnsonfuneralhome.net.