

Leo Albert Descoteaux, 73, of Barnet, Vt. adored husband, father and friend, died at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2008, following an extremely brief illness. He was born in St. Johnsbury on Dec. 27, 1934, a son of the late Napoleon and Anna (Whitman) Descoteaux. Leo was the youngest of 13 children. He attended St. Gabriel Catholic School and graduated from St. Johnsbury Trade School. On July 28, 1953, he was united in marriage to Ruth Esther Cheney of Barnet. Leo served in the Vermont National Guard for 38 years and retired with the rank of Command Sergeant Major. After his retirement he became a highly sought after skilled woodworker and furniture maker. During retirement, he was called upon by the State of Vermont to become a leader in the Vermont State Guard and attained the rank of Brigadier General. He was to have retired that position this coming May. Leo was also named Sub-Chief for the Koasek Abenaki Nation to which he and his family belong. He also looked forward to when the snow melted each spring because that meant that it was time to go fishing, one of his favorite past times. Leo was a leader who was truly honored and respected by the men and women in the National Guard who served under him, because that was how he treated them, with honor and respect. Leo is survived by his loving wife, Ruth Descoteaux of Barnet; two sons, Roland and wife Pok Yo of Michigan, and their children Nancy and Dennis, and Richard and his companion Debbie Valley of Barton, and his daughter Crystal; a daughter, Marina Utecht and husband Daniel of Florida, and daughters Elizabeth, Sarah and Ilia; three Great-grandchildren: Isaiah, Jonathan and Logan, and another due in June; a sister, Jeane Lamothe of St. Johnsbury; a sister in-law, Priscilla Hendricks and her companion Clyde Rivers of Sutton; a brother in-law, Louis Cheney

and wife Irene of Peacham; and many nieces and nephews. Leo was predeceased by two sisters, Rita Davis and Beatrice Johnson; three brothers, Robert, Roland, and Henry Descoteaux; and other siblings that died in infancy. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Monday March 3, at 11 a.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church in St. Johnsbury with the Rev. Patrick Forman celebrant. Friends may call on the family Sunday afternoon from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Sayles Funeral Home. Spring burial will be in the Vermont Veteran's Cemetery in Randolph Center. Memorial donations made in Leo's memory may be directed to the American Lung Association of Vermont, 372 Hurricane Lane, Suite 101, Williston, VT 05495.