

FALL RIVER -- Joseph D. Bessette, 76, of Buxton Avenue, Shawomet Gardens, Somerset, died Thursday, May 6, 1999, at St. Anne's Hospital. He was the husband of Theresa (Oliver) Bessette and widower of Imelda (Bonin) Bessette.

Born in Fall River, a son of the late Joseph and Anita (Monast) Bessette, he lived in Somerset for 74 years. He was a communicant of St. Louis de France Church in Swansea and was a member of its St. Vincent de Paul and Holy Name societies.

An Army veteran of World War II who fought in the Pacific Rim, he was a member of the James L. and John E. Lynch Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8500 in Somerset.

He was employed as a tow operator at Duro Manufacturing in Fall River for 38 years until he retired in 1988. He was a member of the Textile Workers Union while employed there.

Survivors include his widow; a son, Vincent J. Bessette of Somerset; a stepdaughter, Donna Isa of Vermont; three stepsons, Lawrence Mello of South Carolina, William Mello of Dighton and Robert Mello of Indiana; three sisters, Rita LaBonte of Hamden, Conn., Germaine Bouchard of Somerset and Lauraine Dufour of Fall River; a brother, Roland Bessette, formerly of Swansea; and 10 grandchildren.

He was the stepfather of the late Paul Mello and brother of the late Lillian Long and Florence St. Laurant.