

Russell D. Rasmussen G.H-R
4-29-10



Following World War II he served as a platoon sergeant with the 45th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in the Panama Canal Zone, participating in the jungle rescue mission of a plane downed in the Amazon Jungle Basin of Peru.

Using his GI Bill, he attended Park College in Missouri. He was united in marriage with Mary Parker in the Park College Chapel on the day after he graduated. He then graduated from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He served a brief time in a Methodist church in Harlan, Ind., later serving as pastor of United Church of Christ churches in Arrow Rock, Mo.; Hiawatha, Olds, Gilman and Winthrop, Iowa, and Dubois, Ind. In 1984 he retired and moved to Grinnell where he was a member of the United Church of Christ-Congregational.

He is survived by his wife Mary of Grinnell; one daughter Kay Wettlaufer of Marshall, Mo; three sons, Mark Rasmussen of Kansas City, Mo., David Rasmussen of Newton and Paul Rasmussen of Grinnell; and three grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents.

The Rev. Russell D. Rasmussen 87, of the Mayflower Community died Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at Mayflower Health Care Center.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 1, at 2 p.m. in the Carman Center at Mayflower with the Rev. Dr. Susan K. Weier, pastor of Grinnell United Church of Christ-Congregational, officiating. A graveside service will be held Saturday at 1 p.m. at Hazlewood Cemetery. Arrangements are by Smith Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to the Mayflower Human Needs Fund or to the United Church of Christ-Congregational.

He was born June 15, 1922, in Grand Island, Neb., the son of Peter and Laura Lee Higginbotham Rasmussen. He grew up during the depression and dust bowl near Hazard, Neb. Following his graduation from Hazard High School in 1940, he attended business college for 15 months.

Drafted during World II, he trained and served as a squadron leader in the 17th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 12th Armored Division. He served in the Battle of the Rhineland and the Battle of Central Europe. He was wounded and captured on Jan. 20, 1945, and spent the rest of the war in Stalag V-A and 317-C. A chapter in "Our War: Stories from Poweshiek County's Greatest Generation" tells his story as a POW.