Verne Harold Grife, 87, of Montezuma, died Friday, Oct. 3, 2008, at his home. A memorial service was held at the Holland-Coble Funeral Home in Montezuma on Tuesday, Oct. 7. Burial was at the Jackson Township Cemetery in Montezuma.

Verne was born the son of Chancy Hoyt and Anna Jones on Aug. 22, 1921, near Ball Club, Minn. He attended school until the eighth grade. After his father died in a drowning accident, Verne assumed the responsibility of helping his mother raise their family. At the age of 17 he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, helping build the roadway through Itasca State Park. Then in 1944, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps. After completing his training his battalion was sent to Iwo Jima, however Verne was forced to return back to the states because he had contracted the mumps virus. Classified as an expert marksman Verne then was stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Base in North Chicago, Ill. where he served as a Military Police Officer.

After WWII he married Phyllis Stanford in Montezuma on Oct. 14, 1947. He worked for International Harvester in the parts department for 13 years before becoming a car salesman. After losing his wife on May 19, 1991, he retired from his 30 year career with Vannoy Chevrolet. On Aug. 5, 1993, he married Mildred McClure in Brainerd, Minn. Verne was a member of the Blackley-Stevens American Legion Post No. 169 and the V.F.W. Post No. 8876.

Verne’s family includes his wife, Mildred; three sons: Russell (Betty) Grife of Ankeny, Robert (Mary Ann) Grife of Montezuma and James Grife of Mitchellville; two daughters: Mary (Mack) Purdum of Montezuma and Billie (Dale) McKegg of Solon; and a sister, Mary (Clayton) Oberg of Baxter, Minn. His grandchildren are Christy Enga, Eric and Chancy Grife, Danielle (Andreas) Bedford, Christopher, Nicholas and Scott McKegg; also two great grandchildren, Spencer and Zoey Enga. His stepchildren are Patricia (James) Amos Essex of Colorado Springs, Colo. and David (Sylvia) Smith of Broomfield, Colo. Verne also had 19 step-grandchildren and 31 step-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Phyllis; a son Richard; two sisters and their husbands, Mildred (Fred) Kelsey and Margaret (Roger) Meredith; his brother and his wife, John (Carla) Grife; stepdaughter Marlys Morrell and stepson Stephen Stout.

Memorials may be directed to the Montezuma Fire Dept. Condolence may be given to the family at www.hollandcobefuneralhome.com.