RONALD FERNS  
Ronald Ferns, 78, of What Cheer died Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at the VA Medical Center in Iowa City. A graveside service was held at the Sixteen Cemetery near Thornburg on Friday, October 16, 2015. Burial was in the Sixteen Cemetery. The family request no flowers, rather memorial contributions be made to the James Murphy American Legion in Keswick. Friends may sign the online guestbook at www.hollandeoblefuneralhome.com.

Ronnie was born on the family farm near What Cheer on August 11, 1937, the son of Harold Woodrow Ferns and Verna Marie Johannes. By society’s standards, his childhood was anything but easy. Yet he never let it get him down or define who he was. Ronnie was pretty much self-educated and eventually obtained his GED. After finishing his education he began working for Harley Wilson as a handyman. Shortly after that he accepted a position with O.W. Hellman working as a plumber, furnace repair and electrical work. Through these hard times he gained a tremendous amount of respect for his grandmother, Alice (Garrett) Ferns who was always there for him and his siblings. In 1954 he enlisted in the U.S. Army where he spent the next four years building Air Force facilities in England and Germany. After his discharge in 1958, he began working at Amana Refrigeration until he decided to attend barber school on the GI Bill. After receiving his licensure, Ronnie cut hair in Oskaloosa and What Cheer with Andy Armstrong. On December 26, 1958 he was united in marriage to Donna McClure Ferns at the McClure farm near Barnes City. In 1970, Ronnie began carrying mail in Marengo and eventually became Postmaster at Marengo, Thornburg, Haysville, Wapello, Keokuk and Fort Madison. After his retired from the Post Office, Ron became active in the real estate business. Eventually becoming a Real Estate broker, Auctioneer and Certified Appraiser. He was a member of the VFW and the Masonic Lodge. Ronnie was an avid hunter and loved to fish. He enjoyed everything about the outdoors and looked forward to each changing season. Ronnie’s real passion in life was his family and close friends.

He is survived by his wife Donna Ferns of What Cheer; his son, Jeff (Lorna) Ferns of What Cheer; three sisters, Shirley (Kenneth) Allison of Oskaloosa, JoAnn (Gerald) Asher of Beacon and Glady of Oskaloosa; two brothers, Gary Ferns of What Cheer and Loren (Linda) Ferns of Illinois; and a cousin Irene “Elwood” Larson of Grimes. Ronnie also leaves behind several nieces and nephews, cousins and close friends.