

Everett Willemsen Jr., 90

Everett Willemsen Jr., 90, of Grinnell and formerly of Lynnville died April 15, 2009, at St. Francis Manor in Grinnell.

Funeral services were held at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, April 23, at the Grinnell United Methodist Church with the Rev. Len Eberhart of Grinnell, and the Rev. Marvin Miller of New Sharon, officiating. Organist was Darwin Van Wyk and vocalist was Cindy Willemsen. Pallbearers were Ron, Bob, Larry, Brenda, and Dan Willemsen, and Michelle and Leigh Ann Zoto. Burial was in Woodland Cemetery in Lynnville.

Memorial contributions may be directed to the Grinnell United Methodist Church or St. Francis Manor. Memories and condolences may be submitted to the Willemsen family at www.smithfh.com.

Everett was born on June 9, 1918, in Lynnville, the son of Everett and Alice Dykens Willemsen Sr. He was raised in Lynnville and attended Black Oak rural school near his home. For several years he was employed at the Maytag Company in Newton.

Everett entered the U.S. Army in August of 1941. He graduated from pilot training and B-26 transition and operational training from the Army Air Corps and then was assigned to the 397th Bomb Group, 599th Bombardment Squadron. He flew 64 combat missions in the European Theater including D-Day, which was his 15th mission. He was awarded the Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters, ETO Medal with 5 Battle Stars, Presidential Unit Citation, World War II Victory Medal, American Defense Medal and American Campaign Medal. After release from active duty in 1947, he remained in the Air Force Reserves for 21 years and retired as a lieutenant colonel.

On Aug. 12, 1945, he was married to Dorothy B. Smith, in Newton. The couple lived in Lynnville where he operated the Lynnville Sundries, and for many years he was also a rural letter carrier for the United States Postal Service. He retired in 1982, and the couple moved to Seeland Park in Grinnell in May of 1994.

He was a member of the Grinnell United Methodist Church, Rural Letter Carriers Association, Grinnell American Legion, The Retired Officers Association, B-26 Marauder Historical Society, and the 9th Air Force 397th Bomb Group 599th Bombardment Squadron Historical Society.

Everett enjoyed traveling in his Air Stream travel trailer and attending Air Stream rallies around the country. He loved fishing, and held a keen interest in current affairs.

Survivors include two children, Sandra (George) Zoto of West Barnstable, Mass., and Brian (Teri) Willemsen of Streamwood, Ill.; two sisters, Cornelia Johnson of Grinnell, and Ella Mae Van Helten of Mitchellville; four grandchildren, Dan and Brenda Willemsen and Michelle and Leigh Ann Zoto; and his great-grandson, Goran Perley.

Everett was preceded in death by his parents; his wife in 2007; two brothers, John and Fred Willemsen; and one sister, Margaret DenHartog.



Apr 29, 2009 PCCR