

Leland Marion Searls



Leland Marion Searls died Dec. 8, 2011, with his family at his side.

Lee was born on Jan. 7, 1918, in Brush, Colo., and married his high school sweetheart Virginia Carter in 1937, shortly after graduating from Grinnell High School.

In his lifetime, he went from plowing fields with a mule to helping send the first Atlas and Thor missiles into space. He retired in 1972 from his Air Force career. For the next 12 years, Lee and Virginia toured the United States, enjoying long visits with family and friends in Iowa, Missouri, California, Washington, and Texas. They then settled in Renton near their daughter Beverly.

He enjoyed woodworking and was particularly proud of the home he built, single-handedly, on Chatterton St. in Grinnell; over the years he helped his family with home projects including furniture, room additions and decks. Among his other passions were food and camping, and especially family.

He is survived by his wife of 74 years Virginia; three daughters,

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Beverly Baccus of Renton, Wash., Sharon McVicar of Lompoc, Calif., and Janet Lorenzo of Los Osos, Calif.; 10 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews in the Des Moines area.

He was preceded in death by one grandchild and one great grandchild.