

Donald Johannsen, 86

July 27, 1928 - Sept. 11, 2014



AVOCA — Donald Grant Johannsen, son of Grant and Hattie Irene (Dittmer) Johannsen, was born on July 27, 1928 in Avoca. He attended country grade school south of Avoca and later graduated from the Avoca High School with the class of 1946.

May 14, 1950, Don was united in marriage to Margaret Jacobsen, daughter of Harry and Ruby Jacobsen at the Hancock Methodist Church. To this union two children were born: Christie and Clay. On February 25, 1952 Don enlisted in the United States Army at Omaha, NE. He served during the Korean conflict until his honorable discharge on February 20, 1954 at Camp Carson in Colorado where he remained with the Army reserves. During his service time, Don built helicopter hangers and the Freedom Village where they signed the peace treaty ending the Korean Conflict on his birthday, July 27, 1953. He was awarded the Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. After his discharge, Don returned to Iowa where he farmed for a short period of time outside of Avoca before starting his career as a self-employed truck driver. He began driving for Henry G. Nelsen in January of 1956 and continued as a cross country driver for forty-one years. During this time, Don drove 4 million miles accident free and was awarded a safe driving award in 1975 by the Interstate Trucking Commission. He drove for several trucking companies during this time. Don retired in 1998 and was kept busy with his passion for woodworking in which he produced many beautiful pieces. The lumber he used was oak from the farm, cut, dried and planed for all of his projects. He was also a strong family man who cherished the time spent with his kids and grandkids. Don died on September 11, 2014 at the Select Specialty Hospital in Omaha, NE having attained the age of eighty-six years, one month and fifteen days.

Don was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife of sixty-four years, Margaret Johannsen of Avoca; his children: Christie and her husband Ron Kawaler of Winnipeg, Canada and Clay and his wife Trudy Johannsen of Avoca; his grandchildren; Chase Johannsen and his wife Christie of Fargo, ND; Cole Johannsen and his wife Rachel of Glenwood; Daniel Kawaler and his wife Kelly and Stephanie and her husband Nick Wall all of Winnipeg; two great granddaughters: Olivia Wall and Adalynn Johannsen; his sister, Esther and her husband Phil Updike of Eufaula, OK; his sister-in-law, Judy and her husband Gary Petersen of Osceola; nieces and nephews, other relatives and many friends.

Funeral services were conducted by Rev. Eric Meissner at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Avoca on Monday, September 15, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. Interment was held at the Graceland Cemetery in Avoca with Gary Petersen, Phillip Updike, Eugene Somsen, Dean Krohn, Lon Nelsen and Jerry Greenfield serving as honorary casket bearers; Clay Johannsen, Chase Johannsen, Cole Johannsen, Ron Kawaler, Daniel Kawaler and Nick Wall served as casket bearers.

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