

Lester Esbeck, 86

May 12, 1916 - Jan. 23, 2003

ELK HORN – Lester Nelson, son of John Nelson and Frederika Christina Larsen Esbeck, was born May 12, 1916, in Elk Horn. He attended school in Elk Horn and graduated with the class of 1934. In June of 1934, Lester joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CC) for one year at Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center. He then became employed by Raymond Olsen and Carl Lykke in their poultry business in Elk Horn until he enlisted in the United States Army in June of 1941. He served with the 3rd Armored Division in the European Theater during World War II and received many distinguished awards including a Silver Star and two Purple Hearts. Following his honorable discharge in May of 1945, he returned to Elk Horn and joined his father and brothers in the Esbeck Motor Company.

Sept. 24, 1954, Lester married Marcella Molck Brink in Versailles, MO. One daughter was born to this union. Lester and Marcella lived in Atlantic for a short time and then, later, on the Howard Hansen farm east of Kimballton. In 1957, they purchased their present home in Elk Horn. Lester continued to work with his brothers selling Chevrolet cars, Frigidaire appliances and Zenith electronics until his retirement in 1991. He was a member of Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Grove Lodge 492 in Marne, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. After Marcella died Feb. 7, 1998, Lester was able to remain in their home. Jan. 23, 2003, he died at the Cass County Memorial Hospital following a brief illness at age 86 years, eight months and 11 days of age.

Lester was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Marcella; two brothers, Robert L. Esbeck and Howard Esbeck; a sister-in-law, Veta Esbeck; and a granddaughter, Jenna Hensley. He is survived by two daughters, Barbara (Jack) Retz of Anita and Cherie (Mark) Hensley of Elk Horn; a son, Gary Brink (Felicitias) of Las Vegas, NV; 13 grandchildren; 14 great grandchildren; one great great grandchild; nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Jan. 28, 2003, at the Elk Horn Lutheran Church with Pastor Mike Williams officiating. Burial was in the Elk Horn Lutheran Cemetery. Honorary casket bearers were Art Jacobsen, Bob Goeken, Calvin Hoegh, Gerald Petersen, Jim Sander, Emory Petersen, Bernie Pardee and Eldon Ericksen. Casket bearers were Lee Nissen, Marty Ericksen, Dan Nissen, Doug Ericksen, Tom Potts, Rolf Stierle and Darwin Swanson. Ohde Funeral Home, Kimballton, in charge of arrangements.