

Princeton, IL

Donald Evans Ham, 95, of Princeton, IL, died Thursday, May 11, 2017 in Rice Lake, WI.

He was born April 20, 1922 in Barada, NE to Clifton and Edith (Dean) Ham. After high school, he joined the CCC, and served 18 months before enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1943. Don served as a Seabee in the Philippines and New Guinea. After his service, Don married Margaret Hall in Hiawatha, KS on March 29, 1946. They began their family while he farmed and attended Diesel Engine School in St. Louis, MO. Don worked for several years for the Auburn Municipal Power Plant, then for Worthington Corporation where he installed and repaired huge diesel engines for power plants throughout the U.S. In 1973, he became power plant manager for the city of Princeton, IL until his retirement.

Don was an avid St. Louis Cardinal fan, and took his family to ball games and the St. Louis Zoo. He was a talented woodworker who combined that with his love of nature to create beautiful duck decoys and bird sculptures. Don was involved in the Princeton, IL VFW and the Northern Bluegrass Association for a long part of his life. Don developed an obsessive passion for Bluegrass music, and taught himself to play fiddle, banjo, guitar and mandolin. He and his bands played all throughout Illinois.

He is survived by his children: Barb (Mike) Sorenson of Rice Lake and Neal (Margaret) Ham of Omaha, NE; 4 grandchildren: Ted (Michele) Schuler, Tim (Elizabeth) Schuler, Jaymie (Tom) Van Valkenburg, Jessica (Dan) Stalnaker; 14 great grandchildren; a great great grandson; many nieces and nephews. Don was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret on March 9, 2015. He was also preceded in death by siblings: Chester Ham, Ruth Eckley, Mabel Ryder, Leslie Ham, Robert Ham, Herbert Ham, Samuel Ham, Ethel Brown, Vivian Laughlin, Vera Dunn, and Alta Faye Stubbs.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM Saturday, May 20, 2017 at Hemmingsen Funeral Home - Auburn, NE with Rev. Bob Chitwood officiating. Burial will be in Prairie Union Cemetery - Richardson County, NE. Pallbearers are Delbert Eickhoff, Dan Stalnaker, Tom Van Valkenburg, Stephan Schuler, Geoff Schuler, and Thomas Schuler. Honorary Pallbearers are Tim Schuler II, Trevor Schuler, and Thomas Van Valkenburg Jr. Visitation will be held for 1 hour prior to the service.