

Delbert Kohles, 81

Aug. 24, 1920 - July 16, 2002

PANAMA – Delbert Joseph Kohles was born to Kathryn (Schulte) and Fred Kohles Aug. 24, 1920, in Earling. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Earling and was a member of the St. Joseph's Catholic High School Graduating Class of 1938. Following graduation, he moved to Forest Park, IL, where he worked on a tree farm for the Society of the Divine Word. It was in Forest Park that he met Sally.

June 18, 1941, he married Celestine (Sally) Arkfeld at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Panama. To this union eight children were born. Following their wedding, the couple returned to Illinois until Oct. 25, 1944 when he was drafted into the United States Army. He served his country until his honorable discharge Jan. 2, 1946. Accepting a job with Pauley Furniture, the couple relocated to Harlan for a short period of time before purchasing a cafe and tavern in Panama. The establishment was known as Del and Sally's Cafe. Delbert and Sally operated the cafe until selling it in 1963 and moving to San Bruno, CA, where he was employed by the U.S. Postal Service. He retired from the Postal Service June 16, 1977, and the couple returned to Iowa making their home in Panama. He was a member of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Panama, the American Legion Post No. 601 of Panama and the Panama Volunteer Fire Department where he served as fire chief and was instrumental in purchasing the first fire truck. He also assisted the Panama Post Office as a substitute mail carrier. In January of 2002, he became a resident of Little Flower Haven Nursing and Rehab Center. July 16, 2002, Delbert died at Myrtle Memorial Hospital at age eighty-one years, ten months and twenty-two days.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one brother, Leo Kohles; sisters, Virginia Gross, Phyllis Swanson, Bernice Little, Agnes Rees and Edna Feblowitz. He is survived by his wife, Sally Kohles of Panama; children, Gary Kohles (Beverly) of Portsmouth, Karen (Alf) Wingert of Panama, Carol (Phil) Wegner of Panama, Jerome "Speed" Kohles (Connie) of Harlan, Michael Kohles (Janet) of Rancho Cordova, CA, Joe Kohles (Janet) of Ralston, NE, Ron (Meg) of Panama and JoAnn (Jay) Townsend of Wawa, PA; thirty-one grandchildren; thirty-seven great-grandchildren; one brother, Fred Kohles (Joan) of Omaha, NE; sisters, Mary Ann (Ed) Frese of Omaha, NE, Jean (Bill) Curran of Huntington Beach, CA, Celine (Bill) Copeland of Council Bluffs, Kathryn (Kenny) McMullen of Council Bluffs; one brother-in-law, Don Feblowitz of Citrus Heights, CA; nieces and nephews and other relatives.

A Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated July 19, 2002 at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Panama, with the Rev. Michael G. Peters celebrant and the Revs. Eugene Koch, Vince Ohlinger, Paul Bianchi and Jack McClure C.P.P.S. concelebrants. Military Rites were conducted in the St. Mary's Cemetery by American Legion Post. No. 601 of Panama. Casket bearers were Steve Wegner, Jeff Kohles, Dave Kohles, Patrick Kohles, John Kohles, Denny Kohles, Joe Townsend, Dan Wingert, Marvin Kohles, John Townsend, Robert Wegner and Glenn Wingert. Pauley Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.