

Leland "Gene" Welker, 84, of Bemidji, MN, died Monday, January 10, 2011, at North Country Regional Hospital in Bemidji, MN.

Leland Eugene Welker was born December 5, 1926, in Monmouth, IN, to Harley "Chip" Welker and Christena (Rumschlag) Welker. His mother died when he was an infant, and he was raised by an Uncle and Aunt, Frank and Rose Loshe. He grew up and attended school in Decatur.

During WWII, he joined the Army Air Corps and served in the Pacific Theater. He is also a veteran of the Koren Conflict and the Viet Nam War. His military career span was a total of 31 ½ years. He served in the Army Air Corps, Air Force, Air Force Reserves, and the Indiana Air National Guard before retiring as a Senior Master Sergeant.

He received an Associate's Degree from Denver University, a Bachelor of Science in education from Bemidji State University, and a Masters in Education from St. Francis University. He taught school in Adams County for 15 years, and he also taught drivers education for several years and was an assistant swim coach at Bellmont.

In 1987, he and his wife Beverly (Douglas) Welker retired to Bemidji, MN, where he enjoyed reading, bird watching, and gardening.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly Welker, of Bemidji, MN. Daughters Denise (Mel) Wiemer of Indiana; Lynette Welker of Minnesota; and Jolene (Terry) Tarvin of Minnesota. Sons Danny (Patti) Franks of California, and Terry Franks of New Mexico. Two Granddaughters, Katie Wiemer of Indiana and Tasha Tarvin of Minnesota. Sisters Irene Hamrick of Decatur, IN, and Joan Custer of Ohio. Brother Herb Welker of Florida. Numerous nieces and nephews.

Leland is preceded in death by: His parents; a son, Craig Welker; brother Gordon Welker; foster sisters Dorothy Loshe, Helen Heimann, and Frances Koors; and foster brother, Ralph Loshe.

Memorial Visitation will be on Tuesday, January 18, 2011 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Haggard and Sefton Funeral Home and from Noon-1:00 on Wednesday, January 19, 2011 followed by a 1:00 p.m. Service. Interment will be in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Berne with Military honors by Wright-Patterson AFB Honor Guards.

**Haggard and Sefton Funeral Home online obit (accessed 1/18/2011)**