

Erwin A. Thompson

Alton | Saturday, March 28 2015

Erwin A. Thompson (November 9, 1915 to March 28, 2015) was born to James Arthur and Anna (Riehl) Thompson near Rushville, Illinois and raised in Jersey County by his Grandfather E. A. Riehl, his aunts—Julia, Emma and Amelia—and George Gibbens, Emma's husband. On June 6, 1942, Private Erwin Thompson (later Sergeant) married Ruth Evelyn Johnston in the Thirteenth Regimental Chapel, Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Little Rock, Arkansas. Three children were born to this union: Julia Ann, Gary Arthur, and Janet Grace. Serving in the military (January 30, 1942 - November 15, 1945) shaped Thompson's values. He often spoke of the close bonds formed training recruits for combat at Camp Robinson, Arkansas and Camp Fannin, Texas and later in full-fledged combat under heroic and horrific conditions. Thompson entered the European Theatre of Operations in July, 1944 assigned to I Company, 36th Armored Infantry. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in combat and a Silver Star for "Gallantry over and above the call of duty." Upon his return, he worked at Reliance Quarry as a powder monkey. In May 1947, Thompson moved to the Gas Department of Union Electric where stayed 33 ½ years. He served as Union Steward during part of his tenure there. He retired at age 65 on December 1, 1980. Erwin Thompson will be remembered for his devotion to carrying out the ideal of service. He offered a model of graceful aging—clearing brush, writing novels, and appearing at public music and author events well into his nineties. Erwin A. Thompson was preceded in death by two brothers, two sisters, his oldest daughter Julia Ann, and his wife Ruth. Surviving family includes children Gary Thompson (wife Patty) of Bloomington Illinois and Janet Riehl of St. Louis, Missouri; David Kraus, husband of Julia Ann Thompson. Grandchildren are Diane Thompson (husband Kevin McCarthy), Vince Szewczyk (wife Susan), Janean Baird, David Thompson (wife Lori), Sarah Wilson (husband Jeremy). Great-grandchildren are Amelia, Margaret, Travis, Andrew, Bradley, Emma, Kyle, Cody, Nathan, and Bode. Donations in memory of Erwin A. Thompson can be sent to support Disabled American Veterans. Checks should be made payable to DAV. On the memo line indicate "memorial fund." Please send to: 2122 West Taylor Street, Suite 104, Chicago, Illinois, 60612. Online register book and condolences may be found at www.staten-fine.com.