

Marion 'Joe' Walker

East Alton | Monday, December 28 2015

Marion 'Joe' Walker, 94, left this earthly life at 12:28 p.m. Monday, December 28, 2015 at his residence.

He was born on February 13, 1921 in Bloomfield, MO, the son of Harmon "Doc" and Hazel (Bennett) Walker.

Survivors include his son, Joe (Angie) Ernst of Pontoon Beach; daughters, Sherril (Bob) O'Brien of Wood River, Mary Jo Swengrosh of Godfrey; grandchildren, Kent (Elizabeth) Ernst, Brian Ernst, Kevin (Denise) O'Brien, Kathy (George) Strawbridge, Kelly (Tom) Pollihan, Kristi (Tim) Hatcher, Keri (Matt) McBride, David Hicks; great grandchildren, Autumn and Leif Brockman, Kellen and Camden Pollihan, Tarin and Alayna Hatcher, Kelsea and Angleigh McBride, Olivia, Jackson, Elissa, Heather and Emma Ernst.

A talented youth in many areas, he formed a band in 1936 known as the "Rhythm Rascals", which broke up when he joined the army.

A disabled veteran, he lied to join the army at age 17, became a motorcycle escort and dispatch carrier. He was injured while performing his duties, which led to his honorable discharge.

He married the former Freda C. Smith on August 23, 1945 in Alton.

In the mid 1940's, he and his wife purchased a service station in Meadowbrook called "Joe's Service". They built a house next door and later opened a cafe', "The Wayside Grill". They pumped gas, repaired cars and fed the locals together until the early 1950's.

In later years, he became an Iron Worker and then a chain link fence installer for the C. Ray Roberts Company. He bought that business and continued to install both commercial and residential fencing under the company name, "International Fence Co." until his retirement.

Even though small in stature, his personality and sense of humor made him a giant to his family, friends and acquaintances.

He was an avid fisherman and hunter. He shared the love for the sport with many friends and family. He honed his hunting skills to become a very gifted "skeet shooter" at the Olin Skeet and Trap Grounds in East Alton, where he was recognized with many patches and trophies.

He earned his pilot's license in 1945, flying private planes from what was then Civic Memorial Airport in Bethalto.

When the Alton Belle Casino opened in Alton, he and his wife, spent many enjoyable times there. Joe continued to go following his wife's death in 2000, being greeted by employees and countless friends with great affection.

His parents; wife of 55 years, Freda; sister, Sylvia 'Sue' Harris; brother in infancy, Joe Louie

Walker; and a grandson, Roger Hicks preceded in death.

In honor of a life well lived, visitation will be from 4-8 p.m. Monday at Marks Mortuary in Wood River where services will be conducted at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

The IL Patriot Guard will escort the procession to Upper Alton Cemetery and Alton V.F.W. Post 1308 will perform military rites.

Memorials may be made in his honor to the 'Wounded Warriors Project'. Joe was a proud veteran and had a special place in his heart for those who were injured or disabled during their service.