



## Lester F. Stecker

July 14, 1921 - March 12, 2014

Lester F. Stecker, 92 of Grand Island died Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at Life Care Center at Elkhorn.

Services will be 2 p.m. Monday at Messiah Lutheran Church in Grand Island. Reverend Gary Harris will officiate. Burial will be in Westlawn Memorial Park Cemetery with military honors rendered by the United Veterans Honor Guard and Nebraska Army National Guard.

Visitation will be from 4-6 p.m. Sunday at All Faiths Funeral Home.

Lester Francis Stecker was born July 14, 1921 on a farm north of Culbertson, Nebraska. His parents were Tjark (John) and Kate (nee Jelkin) Stecker. As a son of an immigrant, his first language was German, learning English when he started school. In 1933 his family moved to a farm southeast of Trenton, Nebraska. While there he survived tornadoes in 1935, 1937, and 1939 and was a witness to the dustbowl of 1934 and the Republican River flood of 1935. He graduated high school in Trenton in 1939. From 1939 to 1942 he worked as a farm laborer near Scottsbluff, Nebraska. In 1941 he enrolled in the University of Nebraska. After completing one year of school, he was drafted by the United States Army on July 20, 1942. On the same day he was struck by lightning. He did basic training in Camp Callan, California and was subsequently selected for Officers Candidate School. He then trained in Camp Davis, North Carolina and received his commission on February 25, 1943, the first draftee from Trenton, Nebraska to receive a commission. In April 1944, he departed for Swindon Air base in England where his 777 anti-aircraft battalion

had considerable experience shooting down German V1 and V2 bombs. He crossed the English Channel to Omaha Beach in July 1944, attached to the 6th armored division. He was engaged in six major campaigns in WWII, the most memorable for him being Bastogne (Battle of the Bulge) and the liberation of Buchenwald. For his defense of a bridge in France he was awarded the Bronze Star. After VE day he received the assignment of returning displaced persons to the countries of Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. On his return trip to the United States he experienced a severe hurricane at sea, reaching Boston on Thanksgiving Day 1945. In January 1946 he re-enrolled in the University of Nebraska. On March 3, 1948 he married Lola Burr. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1948 with a B. S. degree in Agriculture. From 1949 through 1953 he taught vocational agriculture at Tecumseh Nebraska High School. In 1953 he began employment as a farm manager with Farmers National Company in Geneva, Nebraska. In 1961 while still working for Farmers National, he relocated to Grand Island, Nebraska, which is where he raised his family and remained for the rest of his life. In 1977-78 he became the first farm manager for the Husker Harvest Days farm show. In 1979 he formed Stecker Farm Management, which he ran until retirement. In June 1980 he again survived a tornado at his residence in Grand Island.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a half sister, Hannah Talbert and a half brother, and his wife Lola. He is survived by his sister Nadine Wolters of Lebanon, Kansas, and brother Henry Stecker of McCook, Nebraska; sons: Judge James Stecker and wife Lori of Columbus, Nebraska; John Stecker, Ph.D, of Columbia, Missouri; Mark Stecker and wife Beth of Grand Island, Nebraska; grandchildren: Daniel Stecker of Lincoln, Nebraska; Dr. Gregory Stecker and wife Veronica of Cincinnati, Ohio; Captain (UASF) Tyler Stecker (currently deployed in Qatar) and wife Molly of Wichita, Kansas; and Jenna Stecker (attending Baylor University). Lester is also survived by step-grandchildren and their families: Eric Blessing, Cy and Kimberly Hawke, and

Stephanie Arnold.

Memorials are suggested to the Korean War Hero Flight.

# Cemetery Details

**Westlawn Memorial Park**

Grand Island, NE

# Tribute Wall



“ *Lester F. Stecker*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *Jim, John and Mark:*

*I was sorry to read of your father's passing. It has been many years (almost 50!) since we were neighbors on 22nd Street and you used to play with my younger sister, Betsy. My dad, Chuck Pilmer, always enjoyed talking farming with Les, as he worked as a farm manager and appraiser for Doane when your dad worked for Farmers National. Our sympathy to you from the Pilmer family.*

*Ellen Pilmer Lappin*

**Ellen Pilmer Lappin** - March 17, 2014 at 02:39 AM



“ *Jim, Lori & Family,  
Prayers for peace and comfort for all of you. ~Michael & Beth Jones  
& family*

**Michael Jones family** - March 16, 2014 at 11:17 PM



*John,  
We are sad to know about your father's death. Accept our heartfelt sympathies. We just found that the funeral was over today. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family.  
From your friends at work -Manjula, Steve, Yichang, Bob and student helpers.*

**Manjula Nathan** - March 17, 2014 at 05:45 PM