



## John L Taylor

March 11, 1920 - April 14, 2012

John Leland Taylor was the first child born to George Edwin & Gladys May (Dyer) Taylor on March 11, 1920. John was born on the Taylor family farm northeast of Geneva and passed away on April 14th at the Exeter Care Center at the age of 92 years 1 month and 3 days. John attended District #3 County School just two miles south of the family farm. He also attended two years of high school. He received his GED through the veterans many years later. He spent his youth helping with the farming & raising livestock. While in high school, John and friends Earl Strothkamp and Kenneth Miller enjoyed attending dancing and car racing. His family struggled like most family through the “dirty” thirties and in fall of 1937, John traveled to Iowa to help with the harvest. This is where he met the love of his life, Wilma Leigh Horton. John returned to Iowa for the 1938, 1939 and 1941 corn harvests. Before leaving in the fall of 1941, he asked Wilma to marry him. He told her that he would return for her in January for her hand in marriage and true to his word he did. John and Wilma traveled back to Nebraska on January 28, 1942, stopping in at the United Methodist Church in York, Nebraska to get married. The pastor’s wife was one of the witnesses and he called the next door neighbor to be the second witness. John explained to the minister that he didn’t have much money, but he did have \$5.00 to pay for the ceremony. The newlyweds lived with John’s parents on the Taylor family farm. John was drafted into the United States Army in March of 1942 and was transferred to Camp Berkly in Abilene, Texas. In April of 1942, Wilma

purchased a bus ticket and traveled to Texas to be with John. John was transferred to Camp Granite, a small town near Needles, California from September to December in 1943 and then to Fort Dix in Trenton, New Jersey for three months before receiving his orders for active duty in Europe. In March of 1944, John boarded a ship to England and left behind his wife that was expecting their first child. John entered the war in the European Theater by landing at Utah Beach on D-day 2. John received word from the American Red Cross that he became a father on August 15, 1944 of his and Wilma's first daughter, Sharon Kay. He traveled through France, Luxemburg, Elgin, Holland, Germany and Czechoslovakia. John was rewarded for his commitment to the 90th Division of the 3571 Infantry Company H Mortar Platoon by receiving several promotions. By the summer of 1945, he was promoted to Staff Sergeant of the platoon. In October of 1945, John received his honorable discharge from the United States Army and began his trip back to the United States. On October 23, 1945, John was reunited with an anxious family waiting for him in Omaha at the train station.

John, Wilma and Sharon returned to the family farm to start their life together and take over the farming from John's parents. John and Wilma were blessed with the arrival of two more daughters, Shirley Ann on August 9, 1946 and Sandra Leigh on December 27, 1947. Although the young family enjoyed many great adventures and happiness together, they were not complete until the arrival of a son, John Leland JR on November 25, 1953.

John was a father who insured that his children learned the art of hard work on the family farm with raising cattle, hogs, sheep & chickens, also having a large milking cow herd. The girls were all given the opportunity to learn how to drive a tractor and farming machinery. He loved to attend livestock sales in Clay, Fillmore, Saline, Thayer & York County. Always wheeling and dealing for the best prices and cost for delivering other buyers livestock. John enjoyed the chase of a good sale or buy.

John and Wilma were blessed to live in an area with "true" neighbors. One's that they could always count on during good times and bad. It was the

Hafer's, Fishers and Tatro's that you could find John and Wilma out for supper with on a Saturday night.

John and Wilma attended many 90th Infantry Reunions across the United States and enjoyed visiting with family and friends during their travels to Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Arizona, Arkansas and many other states. They also travel to Iowa to visit Wilma's family and California to visit John's brothers Kenneth & Donald and their families.

John continued to be actively engaged in farm and cattle with his son John Jr. He and Wilma decided to move to Geneva in August of 1983. He was always an active member and supporter of the local VFW and Legion Club in Geneva, serving on the firing squad and color guards for years. He and Wilma could be found helping out in the VFW food stand at the Fillmore County Fairground every year. You could always count on John looking you up around fair time to purchase raffle tickets for the hog and beef that VFW raffled off at the Fillmore County Fair. He still holds several records of selling the most tickets. John enjoyed attending the livestock sales of the 4-H. John and Wilma were able to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary with a reception at the United Methodist Church in Geneva on January 26, 1992 with all their family and friends attending. They celebrated their 57th Wedding Anniversary at their home in Geneva with their 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren in January of 1999.

John lost the love of his life, Wilma on October 4, 1999. He continued to enjoy family Christmas', birthdays and having his family around him. His commitment to supporting the local VFW (aka "The Office") continued with daily visits from 4:30 – 5:30. It was at the VFW that he and Dick Wagner became good friends and decide to have a weekly luncheon outing. Every Thursday morning around 11:00 you would find John and Dick heading out of town for lunch to York, Wilbur, Friend, Mc Cool, Tobias, Fairmont or Strang. After the passing of his friend Dick, John invited Chuck Picard and Verlyn Naimon to attend with him and keep up the tradition. They enjoyed many,

many trips together for lunch and great conversation, always denying Chuck the opportunity to drive.

John welcomed the arrival of 15 more great grandchildren and was able to see 5 of those great grandchildren graduate from high school and one from college.

In April of 2009, John accompanied by his daughter Shirley and grandchildren Mike & Roger Sluka and Tammy Garza attended the World War II memorial in Washington, DC compliments of the Honor Flights. Although the day was long and exhausting, he was proud and honored to have been able to go to Washington DC and see the Memorial with several other World War II Veterans.

On March 14, 2010, John was honored by his family for his 90th birthday with a reception at the Heritage Crossings. He was blessed to have over 120 family and friends come to wish him a Happy Birthday.

John was preceded in death by his parent, George and Gladys Taylor, his wife of 57 years Wilma, his son John JR, two son-in-laws, Larry Elznic and Edward Sluka and brother & sister-in-law Kenneth & Gladys Taylor.

John leaves behind this daughter's Sharon Elznic and Sandra & Norm Girmus of Geneva and Shirley Sluka of Roca. Brother & wife Donald & Mary Ann Taylor of Covina, California. Grandchildren David & Karen Elznic, Donna (Elznic) & Rodney Norrie and Kristi (Petersen) and Randy Kennel of Geneva, DeAnn (Elznic) & David Carpenter and Lindsey (Taylor) & Shane Stone of Hastings, Dale & Becky Elznic of Ohio, Seth Petersen & April Knapp of Grafton, Leigh (Petersen) & David Varner of Malmo, Mike & Angie Sluka, and Roger & Natalie Sluka of Lincoln and Tammy (Sluka) & Steve Garza of Panama. Great grandchildren Anthony Gerberding of Grand Island, Daniel & Andrew Elznic and Emileigh Kennel of Geneva, Gavin, Ben & Carley Elznic of Ohio, Sadie & Christopher Carpenter of Hastings, Nathen, Seth & Josh Varner of Malmo, Ashleigh Varner and Ashley, Briar, Brody, Sam & Makayla Sluka and Colby & Taylor Sluka of Lincoln, Cody Sluka, Brandon & Hannah Garza of Panama and Katie Petersen and Cori Knapp of Grafton. John had

been anxiously awaiting the arrival of his 25th great grandchild, a son Alex Anthony that was born to Lindsey (Taylor) and Shane Stone in March. Services for John will be Wednesday, April 18, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. at the United Methodist Church in Geneva, Nebraska. Interment with Military Honor's will be in the Geneva Public Cemetery. Visitation will begin Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Farmer & Son Funeral Home in Geneva, Nebraska. Memorials are directed to the family in lieu of flowers.

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ *Sharon, Sandy and Shirley*

*Very sorry to read about your dad. Hope he didn't have to suffer. sounds like he had a great life and really enjoyed his family and friends. Please accept our sympathy. You are all in our prayers and thoughts.*

*God Bless*

*Jim and Pam (Clark) Schroeder*

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**Pam Schroeder** - April 16, 2012 at 05:01 PM