



KAREL ALLISON KNUTSON

April 29, 1922 – September 21, 2016

361st Field Artillery

Karel Allison Knutson, 94, of Bemidji, MN formerly of Puposky, MN passed away on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at Neilson Place, Bemidji.

Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Monday, September 26, at Calvary Lutheran Church, Bemidji with Pastors Mike Naylor and Genelle Netland officiating. Visitation will be 4-6 p.m. Sunday, September 25th, at the Olson-Schwartz Funeral Home and one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment will be in Calvary Cemetery, Bemidji. Arrangements were entrusted to the Olson-Schwartz Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Bemidji.

He was born in Blair, WI on April 29, 1922 in the same house where his mother was born in 1899. His family moved to Bemidji in 1924. His parents owned the Daylight Store #2 in Nymore. In 1927 the family moved to a farm in Pleasant Valley. In 1931 they moved to the current Knutson farm.

During his school years he attended Pleasant Valley from grades 1-4; Austin School for grades 5-8; and Bemidji High School.

From October 1940-April 1941 Karel was a member of CCC near Cass Lake. He later worked for Dickinson Lumber. In 1942 he received his invitation from Uncle Sam to serve in the Army. He shipped out of San Francisco on July 26, 1944, and arrived in Pearl Harbor on July 31st, 1944 as part of the 96th Infantry Division Deadeyes and served in Leyte, Okinawa, and Mindoro. He left Mindoro on December 7, 1945 and arrived in San Francisco on January 7, 1946 and was discharged from Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, on January 12, 1946, arriving in Bemidji, MN on January 13, 1946 to -37 degrees.

Karel married Dolores Howe on July 31, 1946. Together they raised seven children on their farm. They moved to their current farm in July 1948.

Karel farmed for the first few years, and then began working for Kahlstorf Construction in Lake George in 1952 ending in 1970. He then joined the Beltrami County Highway Department as a maintenance superintendent in 1970 and continued until an accident on April 11, 1978, that forced him to retire.

Karel and Dolores continued to attend nearly 50 reunions of the 96th Division in many states throughout the U.S. On one of their 96th reunion tours Karel and Dolores were in a devastating fire in a Leyte hotel on the 40th anniversary of the Leyte invasion. They survived by climbing out a window and coming down a rope and sheets for seven floors.

His highlight of retirement was traveling to visit family members and other 96th Division Deadeyes. He would seek out and visit as many of his buddies as he could find.

Another lifelong love for Karel was his logging adventures throughout his lifetime. He was happiest when he could be out in the woods working on his skidder.

Karel is survived by three daughters: Bonnie Jevning (Lowell Vagle), Bemidji; Diane (Dennis) O'Brien, Trempealeau, WI; and Debbie (Bruce) Walker, Shevlin; two sons, Gary (Sue) Knutson, Fertile, MN and Larry (Amy) Knutson, Puposky; two brothers Wendell (Bev) Knutson, Puposky and Garwood Knutson, Albuquerque, NM and numerous grandchildren and other family members.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years Dolores; parents Carl and Adeline Knutson; daughters Janice Davis and Gail LaFontaine; brothers Gile Knutson and Wayne Knutson, grandsons, Cory Knutson, Tim Efteland, and Mickey Lee Winans and great grandson, Lane Egeland-Boyum.

Karel was a proud 96th veteran, husband, father, grandfather and friend to many. The discipline and patriotism he learned in the Army never left him, as friends and family will attest.