

A funeral service for the late long Wyoming resident, Charles "Eldon" Randall, 85, will be conducted at 11:00 A.M., Wednesday, July 2, 2008, at the Wheatland United Methodist Church with Pastor Skip Perry officiating. Interment with military rites accorded by Ora Call American Legion Post #10 and Laramie Peak Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3558 will be in the Wheatland Cemetery.

He died Thursday, June 26, 2008, at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Mr. Randall was born August 9, 1922, in Wheatland, the son of Charles and Emma (Akerblade) Randall. He attended schools in Wheatland and graduated from Wheatland High School in 1940. On August 9, 1950, he married Louisa "Grace" Lunde in Minot, North Dakota, and they made their home in Wheatland.

He was a World War II veteran and prisoner of war. Having served in the Army Air Corps, he attained the rank of Staff Sergeant and served in the European Theater. He was a member of the 306th Bomber Group and on April 27, 1943, his B-17 Bomber named "The Untouchable" was shot down over Bremen, Germany. Wounded, he parachuted into a field where members of his crew were scattered and where he was pinned to the ground by farmers with pitchforks who turned him over to the German Army. He was taken for medical care to Hanover by the soldiers and then later to Frankfurt. His wounds included shrapnel which was removed from his legs by placing him under a huge magnet and letting the force pull the shattered metal out of his legs. After he was deemed well enough to travel, he was transferred to Mooseberg (Stalag VII A) and then later to Stalag 17 B which was made famous by the movie of the same name. Stalag 17 was located in Krems, Austria. On May 8, 1945, he was liberated along with 4,000 other prisoners being held in the stalag. Eldon survived 25 months in confinement. He arrived back in Wheatland in July 1945. After a short 90-day leave, he received orders to report to Santa Anna, California for embarkation to the Japanese Theater. The war ended before he had to go. He was honorably discharged with the Air Force medal and the Purple Heart.

Upon his return to Wheatland, he worked as an electrician. It was then he realized that there were no television repair shops and so after some intensive study he prepared himself to open that first shop at 16th and South Street. By 1954 he had extended his business from repairing to also selling new sets. Additionally, he leased and then purchased the New Hall Conoco Service Station and ran the station, renaming it Randall's Conoco and combined it with television repair and sales. He often reminded us that he sold gas for .18 cents a gallon. He later sold the service station and in 1969 moved the store to Maple Street and then to the location on Mariposa Avenue.

Mr. Randall served his community well. He joined the Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department in 1942 and again after the war, serving as Fire Chief for 22 years. One of his proudest accomplishments was the Drill Evolution Team winning five State Championships in

Wyoming Volunteer Fireman's Association and as the Association's Secretary of the Mutual Aid program.

Eldon was a rural mail carrier delivering mail on the Bosler Route for 46 years, a 123 mile round trip. Known as the "Red Baron of Highway 34", his 52 patrons kept him busy. Along the way he saw deer, antelope, coyotes and mountain lion and collected numerous rattlesnake rattles. He said he would not miss the times he was snowed in. He enjoyed the drive and went through at least 10 four-wheel drive vehicles.

He lived a successful and yet precarious life. This was verified by the fact that he carried scars on his legs from the shrapnel wounds, a .22 caliber bullet in his back, and being struck by lightning while installing a TV antenna. He was stranded on a 60 foot TV tower on the roof of the Platte County Courthouse when he was dismantling the tower when it snapped and left him dangling. Unable to dislodge himself, he yelled for help until the Fire Department arrived.

He enjoyed the Wyoming lifestyle of hunting and fishing. He was an avid bowler and won many trophies. Playing cards was something else he enjoyed and often sat in as a fourth with his wife's bridge club when needed. He flew the flag every day in service to his country

and community. He was a member of the Torrington Elks' Club, the Volunteer Fireman's Association, Laramie Peak Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3558, and Ora Call American Legion Post #10 where he was the past Post Adjutant. He and Grace were married for 53 years and they traveled extensively.

Survivors include a sister-in-law, June Randall of Casper, Wyoming; nephews, Charlie (Dale) Coe of Bullhead City, Arizona, Neal E. (Grace) Hawkins and Charles W. Hawkins all of Horseshoe Bend, Idaho, and John Randall of Evanston, Wyoming; nieces, Lola E. Gibbons of Caldwell, Idaho, Darlene Blume and Maxine Peterson both of Las Vegas, Nevada, Clairetta Goertz-Zeller (Dean) of Gillette, Wyoming, and Bonnie (Steve) Wilson of Casper. There is a continuing legacy of nieces and nephews and friends who will miss him always.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife on May 4, 2003; sisters, Hattie Randall, Ina Davis, Eva Curtz, Etta Carter, Margery Goertz, Esther Coe, Bertha Hawkins; and a brother, Hilton Randall.

Serving as pallbearers will be Hugo Lenz, Jerry Orr, Rocky Lawrence, Johnnie Baker, George Branscom, and Dean Whinery. Honorary pallbearers will be his Fellow Firefighters, Drill Team Members, and All Veterans.

Memorials to Ora Call American Legion Post #10, P.O. Box 144, Laramie Peak Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3558, 1401 - 9th Street, Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 666, all Wheatland, Wyoming 82201 or a charity of the donor's choice would be appreciated by the family.

The family would like to thank the staff at the Platte County Memorial Hospital in Wheatland and the Cheyenne VA Medical Center for their care and compassion.



**Charles "Eldon"
Randall**