

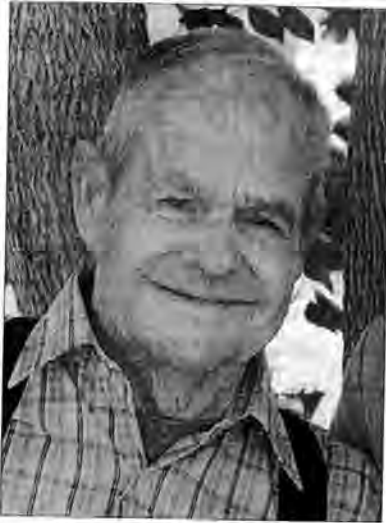
## Hale Gearhart, 90

July 14, 1919 - Oct. 10, 2009

**GREAT FALLS, MT** — Hale F. Gearhart, 90, of Great Falls, died Saturday, Oct. 10, 2009 at Park Place Healthcare Center of natural causes.

Funeral services were held Thursday, October 15, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, with burial to follow at Sun River Cemetery.

Hale was born on July 14, 1919 at home at the Paulk Place in Shelby County near Harlan, to Ellis R. and Blanche (Kemp) Gearhart. Hale grew up in a loving home surrounded by family. He was raised on fresh milk, homemade bread, and love. Hale never lost interest in farming or the plight of the American farmer. Hale joined the United States Army in April of 1941. He completed his training at Camp Claiborne, LA. Further training was in Scotland and North Ireland. He volunteered with the British Six Commandos, Troop 9, and made the Invasion of North Africa where he was held for five days as a POW by the Germans until liberated by the United States. Following this campaign Hale served with the 34th Infantry Division, 168th Infantry Company L; also 109th Engineers. He fought in the Algeria-French Moroccan, Tunisian, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno battles and campaigns. Hale's love of nature and the outdoors brought him to Montana in 1948. He worked as a cowboy for different ranches in the Augusta, MT area. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service in both Arizona and Montana. Hale was respectful of the Native American culture and knew the history and customs of most of the western tribes. Hale was a patriot, a proud American, and a flag always flew at his home. Hale was a lifetime member of VFW Post 1087 and a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Great Falls, MT.



Hale married Emella Jundt in Aberdeen, S.D. in December 1947, and a son, Bill, was born in 1948. They later divorced.

Hale married Shirley Birkenbuel in Florence, AZ on November 12, 1968 and became an instant Dad to three daughters.

Hale is preceded in death by his parents, sister Leota Hansen, brothers Lynn and Hoyt Gearhart. He is survived by his wife Shirley, daughters Susan (Dan Petersen) Bridgeford, Tari (Chuck) Strop, all of Great Falls, MT, Janice (Pat Marnin) Gearhart of Wolf Creek, MT and a son William G. (Leila) Jenks Gearhart of Fort Worth, TX. He is also survived by his grandchildren; Erica Bridgeford, Zachary Jarvis, Courtney and Chuck Saksa, Chuck and Micaela Strop, all of Great Falls, MT, Ashlea Roberts and Josh Proffitt, and Jacque Harding of Bozeman, MT, Candace and Cody Hatch of Colorado Springs, CO, Andrew Jenks, Jamie Anderson, and Matthew Hill of Fort Worth, TX. Also surviving are great-grandchildren: Reese Strop, Stocktin, Bridger and Braxtin Saksa of Great Falls, MT, Brooke Hatch of Colorado Springs, CO and Amaya Proffitt of Bozeman, MT. He is also survived by brother Charles (Esther) Gearhart and sister Myrna Poldberg of Harlan, a sister Shirley McDermott of Atlantic, and brother Stuart Gearhart of Reno, NV, and many nieces, nephews and cous-

**Croxford Funeral**

ins.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to keep the flag flying at Overlook Park. Condolences to the family can be left at [www.croxfordfuneralhome.com](http://www.croxfordfuneralhome.com)

## Home & Crematory

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