

Donald Madsen Norgaard, 95

Oct. 12, 1922 - Jan. 29, 2018

HARLAN – Donald Madsen Norgaard, son of Jens and Anna (Peterson) Norgaard, was born October 12, 1922, on a farm near Harlan. He attended grade school and high school in Harlan before leaving school after the ninth grade to work full-time at a local farm. He was inducted into the United States Army and entered active service in 1942.

Don went on to serve his country overseas during World War II. While in Holland, Don led a scout patrol of ten men deep into enemy territory, gathering invaluable intelligence with his unit that earned him the Bronze Star Medal. Later, Don's unit came under attack in Belgium: he was shot in the foot, and he and his entire unit were captured before being liberated some days later by members of the French Underground. After a brief hospitalization, Don and his unit were sent back to the front lines in Germany. Again his unit came under attack, and this time he suffered injuries to his side, back, and legs. Don was taken as prisoner to a German hospital, where he survived for over seven months before being liberated by American soldiers when the war ended. He was honorably discharged in 1946, at which time he returned to Harlan.

Don was proud of having served his country and the recognition he earned doing so (he especially liked being interviewed about his service by students learning about WWII). In addition to earning the Bronze Star Medal, Don was awarded the Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster, EAME Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal.

Back in Harlan, Don met his future bride Pearle Behrendt, and on June 1, 1949, they wed at Bethel Baptist Parsonage; they were married for 63 years, until Pearle's death in 2013. Three sons were born to this union: Dennis, Donald, and James. Over his lifetime, Don used his talents and strong work ethic in several careers: as a mechanic at Petersen Battery, Norgaard's DX gas station, and Lawn and Leisure; and as a school bus driver. For several years, he ran his own small engine shop, where he spent much of his time fixing lawn mowers. Don had a very strong faith in the Lord and enjoyed reading his Bible, attending church services, and singing hymns with his loud, baritone voice; he was a member of both Bethel Baptist and Grace Baptist churches. He also loved spending time with his family (especially his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and the Beach children), going out to breakfast and socializing, and occasionally indulging in a piece of pie or two—he liked to brag that Pearle's was the best in the country.

Don died on Monday, January 29, 2018, at Salem Lutheran Home in Elk Horn, attaining the age of 95 years, three months and 17 days. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife Pearle Norgaard; son James Jay; and sisters Dorothea Lotz, Fern Morrison, and Marjorie Holloway.

Don is survived by his sons Dennis (Kathleen) Norgaard of Council Bluffs and Donald (Barb) Norgaard of Harlan; grandchildren Nancy Norgaard, Susan Norgaard, Aaron Dailey, and Donnie Norgaard; four great-grandchildren; siblings Alice Stowe of Kearney, MO, Lilas Brockman of Harlan, Richard (Linda) Norgaard of Ankeny; and other loving family members and friends.

Pastor Chad Hol officiated a 10:30 a.m. funeral service on Friday, February 2, 2018 at Grace Baptist Church in Harlan. Larry McDermott, Elliot Svendsen, Don Petersen, and Stanley Christensen served as honorary casket bearers. Wil Beach, Jack Beach, Jeff Swensen, Robert Wullschleger, Michael Sciranko, Lucas Brace and Todd Brace served as casket bearers. Military Rites were conducted by Harlan American Legion Helmer Reyelt Post No. 150 and Shelby County VFW Post No. 941 at the Harlan Cemetery in Harlan.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.



Pauley Jones
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

& Pfannebecker Funeral Home

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