

Harley Edwin Ploen, 93

Feb. 11, 1924 - Feb. 1, 2018

WALNUT – Harley Edwin Ploen, son of William and Minnie (Kay) Ploen, was born February 11, 1924 on the family farm. He was the youngest of four children. Growing up as a child during the great depression years, Harley was truly blessed with the sibling interaction of Lester, Lois, and Dale. The great appreciation to conquer anything with teamwork and determination given the state of the nation's economy set him up for success throughout the rest of his life. Harley had a unique gift and most important to note the ability to improvise accomplishing virtually any task in front of him.



After attending and graduating from Shelby Consolidated School, Harley went to help harvest on his fathers farm just east of Minden, before being drafted for the WWII effort. On January 21, 1943, Harley Edwin Ploen was inducted into the Army Air Corps. He completed his training in the States, and in August of 1944 Harley was assigned to the Pacific Marana group on the island of Saipan to assist with the war effort. While on the island of Saipan, Harley participated as a member with the B-29 Navy Heavy Super Fortress 882nd Bomb Squadron. Harley was awarded three bronze stars while serving with great distinction. Shortly after the very memorable December 7, 1945 end of the war signing, Harley returned to Minden.

He worked for Minden Oil company delivering fuel to farmers in the area, which he enjoyed. While delivering fuel to the Albert Danker farm, Harley came to know Margie Mae Danker and they were united in marriage on March 21, 1948. The couple moved to Walnut on March 1 of 1950, to a farm owned by Albert Danker, where they started their lives together. Harley and Margie were blessed with four children: Jack, Charles, Peggy, and Vince.

Outside of row crop farming and tending livestock, Harley's interests included being a member of the Walnut American Legion, Walnut AM-VET Post No. 45, Iowa Farm Bureau and former member of the Walnut Presbyterian Church. In the late 1980's Harley was inspired to pay further respects to the armed forces and especially the WWII efforts of 'the greatest generation'. This fueled his passion to make many smaller scale model aircraft that he designed and fabricated in a lengthy time span to be viewed near three roadside locations throughout the Walnut area.

After 49 years the marriage of Harley and Margie dissolved. Harley enjoyed his retirement years remaining on his 49272 Western Avenue farmstead listening to polka band records, volunteering to help many nonprofit groups, separate individuals on various projects and especially traveling to all 50 states with Deloris Davis, his longtime friend of 22 years. After retiring from farming, Harley remained busy working at Agriland Farm Service in Avoca for approximately eight years, and periodically at RL Craft Commercial Roofing Company.

After surviving a stroke, Harley remained on the farm for several years. He then moved to Elm Crest Independent Living in Harlan for an approximate six-month stay. His final destination stay was at Little Flower Haven in Earling, where Harley passed away on Thursday, February 1, 2018, attaining the age of 93 years, 11 months and 21 days.

In addition to his parents, Harley was preceded in death by his brothers, Lester and Dale Ploen; and his granddaughter Melissa Manhart.

Left to cherish Harley's memory are children Jack Ploen and his wife Judy of Avoca; Chuck Ploen and his wife Linda of Walnut; Peggy Manhart and her husband Dan of Neola; Vince Ploen and his wife Tamera of Harlan; eight grandchildren; six great grandchildren; sister Lois Kahler of Avoca; nieces and nephews; other family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life Open House was held Saturday, February 10, 2018 from 1 to 3 p.m. at Little Flower Haven Chapel in Earling. Military Rites were conducted by Shelby American Legion Post No. 240 on Sunday, February 11, 2018 at 3 p.m. at the Shelby Cemetery in Shelby.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Pauley Jones
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