



John Varner

May 29, 2009

Mr. John Nelson Varner, age 91, of shell Knob, Missouri, passed away Friday, May 29, 2009 in Table Rock Healthcare, Kimberling city with two daughters, Loretta and Patty by his side.

He was born August 8, 1917 in Casa, Arkansas the son of Sylvester Ellsworth and Alma Henrietta Barnett Varner. In February 1941, he was united in marriage to Mary Ann Elizabeth Mangold who preceded him in death on May 29, 1975. He was also preceded in death by his parents, two sons, one brother, one sister, and one great-grandson.

He is survived by nine of his eleven children; Loretta (Gordon) Slater of Shell Knob, MO; Jessie (Darrell) Birch of O'Fallon, MO; Marvin (Cathy) Varner of Valley Center, KS; Pearlene Bunch of Decatur, IL; Nellie (Richard) Peck of O'Fallon, IL; Edward Varner of Haslet, TX; Patrick Varner of Springfield, MO; Patricia Savard of Joplin, MO' and Joseph Varner of Ft. Worth, TX; 20 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; 1 step great-grandchild; sister, Verniece Smith of Forrest City; brothers, Orval Varner of Colt, AR and Robert (Gladys) Varner of Piggott, AR, and many nieces & nephews.

John served his country during WWII 1942-1945, a Sergeant in the 3017th AAF Base Unit, earning a Bronze Star for Air Offensive Europe GO 33 WD45, a Distinguished Unit Badge GO50, Good Conduct Medal, and a European-

African-Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon. As a young teen, he worked his parent's farm and other odd jobs to help provide for his mother and siblings while his father worked in Oklahoma as a brick mason. He never lost his love for the land and farming, but his excellent mechanical skills and WWII training were put to use at McDonald Aircraft (now Boeing) in St. Louis, and provided the income that supported his wife and growing family. He later moved his family to Chester, IL to accept a position as a guard at Menard State Penitentiary, eventually becoming the manager of the hog farm there. After he retired he moved back home to Arkansas where he raised chickens, guinea hens, rabbits and a huge garden, which gave him much joy. He found humor in life and always conducted himself with the utmost integrity. Shortly after his 90th birthday he was moved to Shell Knob, MO, where his Daughter, Loretta cared for him for 17 months. He was a good dad, husband, uncle, son, brother, and mentor various members of his extended family. He will be missed by all.

A celebration of his life will be held at Stevens Funeral Home in Forrest City, AR on June 16, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. According to his wishes, his cremains will be buried at Bell Cemetery in Palestine, AR. Visit online registry at stevensfuneralhome.net.

Tribute Wall



“ *We will miss uncle Nelson. I am sorry I couldn't be there.* ”

June 18, 2009 at 12:00 AM