



## Donald James Johnson

February 28, 1923 - August 17, 2019

I arrived into this world on February 28, 1923, at the McPherson County Hospital, McPherson, Kansas. I was the third of six children born to Arthur Theodore and Ida Caroline (Nelson) Johnson. My folks were both of Swedish decent and all four of my grandparents came from different areas of Sweden. My parents lived and farmed north and east of McPherson. In spite of being raised during the depression years, in the 1930's, I had a very happy childhood. I remained at the farm until my graduation from McPherson High School in May 1941. In the fall of 1941, after most of the farm work was completed, I enrolled in a National Defense Training School, Wichita, Kansas. Where I spent about four months preparing myself for employment at an aircraft plant in Wichita. I acquired a job at the Boeing Aircraft Company in Wichita and worked in the wing assembly department. I choice to work the second shift at Boeing, because the shift paid five cents an hour more then day shift which paid sixty cents an hour. This was considered to be a good wage for a person just out of high school.

In October 1943, I received greetings from our President Franklin D. Roosevelt to enter the United States Armed Services. After passing a physical examination, I was introduced into the United States Army at the induction center at Leavenworth, Kansas. A few days later I was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky for basic training at a armored tank training center. For advanced training some of us boarded a train that ended up at Fort Ord, California, a camp near Monterey, California. At Fort Ord, we were introduced to a troop and cargo landing vehicle, the amphibian tractor. We were soon to be a part of the 727 Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and we spent about two months practicing training maneuvers on Monterey Bay.

The training in the states was over, and after a fifteen day furlough, which I spent at home in Kansas. We left Camp Stoneman, California, for what we thought was additional training on the Hawaiian Islands. The orders were changed after we left California, and we were to be sent directly to a combat area in the Netherlands, East Indies. After thirty days on the USAT Willard A. Holbrook, we arrived at Morobe Harbor, New Guinea, which was the wrong location. We disembarked the next day at Finschhafen, New Guinea, we soon left Finschhafen and ended up at Hollandia, New Guinea. Hollandia was the headquarters for General Douglas MacArthur, as he commanded his troops in the Pacific Theater. We

received our Amphibian Tractors at Hollandia and made ready for some other beachhead landing. We soon loaded our tractors on LST's and departed for points unknown to us. After a few days on ship We disembarked with our tractors, loaded with infantry which we soon learned it to be the initial landing on Leyte Island in the Philippines. We made many additional beach landings, mainly on the Islands of Leyte and Luzon in the Philippines. The we became sub-attached to the Australian Army. We soon established our base on Muari Island, in the Netherlands, East Indies. With Muari Island as our base we landed infantry troops on various beaches in Borneo. After a few months working with the Australian Army, we received orders to return to the Island of Luzon in the Philippines, were our tractors were again made ready for a major landing which we learned later was to be on the mainland of Japan.

Our second stay on the Philippine Islands was about complete, and we were expecting to soon move forward making some major landings. A Special radio broadcast was received and announced that the war was over in the European Theater. To our happiness the war was soon over in the Pacific Theater, and after a few months, and when the Army point system permitted, our battalion mainly as a group, headed back to the states, rather than to Japan. I was low on points so I remained back at camp a month or two longer. I received my discharge from the Army in January 1946.

After I was discharged from the Army, I decided to take advantage of the G.I. Bill of Rights. I immediately enrolled as a freshman at Kansas University, Lawrence, Kansas, with plans for a major in business education. Sixty hours were completed toward my planned major, when my landlady, Mrs. Rachel Eson, of Lawrence, realized I was much happier working with tools and youngsters, then when I was adding a column of figures. Through her inspiration, I enrolled at Pittsburg State College, Pittsburg, Kansas. I graduated in January 1950 with a major in industrial arts and with minors in commerce and social science. In June after I graduated from college, I married Pearl Nelson, a grade school teacher at Hutchinson, Kansas. Pearl and I grew up in the same farm and church community. We also attended McPherson High School together. We have blessed with one son Bradley, who was born November 17, 1958.

I accepted a teaching position at Roxbury High School beginning in the fall of 1950. I was hired to teach industrial art science, a farm management course, and a course in bookkeeping. I taught at Roxbury until the end of the 1954-55 school term. A vacancy occurred at Canton High School, Canton, Kansas. I accepted a position to teach industrial arts, bookkeeping and later a drivers education.

Since my second year of teaching, I have lived and operated a farm in the community where I was born and raised.

Don was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2715 and of American Legion Post 24 both of McPherson.

Don enjoyed woodworking, farming, coffee, gooseberry pie, cookies, spending time with

his family and grandson.

Donald James Johnson, 96, of McPherson, KS, passed away at 4:50 a.m., Saturday, August 17th, 2019 while in the company of family members, at McPherson Hospital. Don was preceded in death by his parents; his wife Pearl and his infant daughter Linda Kay Johnson.

Don is survived by his son Brad Johnson and his wife Deanna, of McPherson, Kansas and his grandson Joel Johnson, of Manhattan, Kansas.

A memorial service will be held on Monday, August 26th, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at New Gottland Covenant Church, McPherson, Kansas with Pastor Dan Parry and Richard Skar officiating.

Burial will be held at New Gottland Lutheran Church Cemetery McPherson, Kansas.

Military honors will provided by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2715 and the American Legion Post 24 both of McPherson.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to New Gottland Covenant Church and they can be sent to Glidden-Ediger Funeral Home; 222 W. Euclid, McPherson, Ks. 67460.

# Cemetery

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**New Gottland Lutheran Church  
Cemetery**

Rural McPherson, KS,

# Events

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**AUG 26 Memorial Service 10:00AM**

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New Gottland Covenant Church  
1700 Pawnee Road, MCPHERSON, KS,  
US, 67460

# Comments

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“ My sympathy to the entire family. I always enjoyed visiting with Don and Pearl here in Lindsborg at our store. Don also knew my dad who was an Army veteran also. They were at the same places at the same time in the Pacific New Guineas and Leyte, and I'm sure shared stories with each other. We will miss Don Sincerely, Dean Anderson

**Dean Anderson** - August 19, 2019 at 02:33 PM