



## Charles G. "Chuck" Copping

December 4, 1923 - December 17, 2004

Charles G. (Chuck) Copping passed away on Sunday, December 12, 2004 at the Glendive Medical Center after a short battle with lung cancer. Memorial services will be held at 10:30 A.M., Friday, December 17, 2004 in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. Private family interment with military honors was in the Dawson County Cemetery in Glendive on Thursday, December 16, 2004. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive is entrusted with arrangements. Chuck was born to George and Myra (Wiley) Copping on December 4, 1923 in Glendive. He was educated in Glendive and graduated from Dawson County High School in 1941. While in high school, he played football and was a member of the team that won the State Championship in 1940. Chuck loved working with horses and as a young man worked at various ranches in the area. He enlisted in the Army shortly after Pearl Harbor in December of 1941. He saw action with the 82nd Airborne in Salerno, Sicily, Naples, Normandy, Holland and Belgium. Among the several citations he earned were the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He was honorably discharged in November of 1947 after testing equipment in Alaska. Along with various jobs, he liked rodeos and was very proud of a buckle he won in Killdeer, N. D. where he rode against some tough competition! Chuck was called back to active duty in September of 1950 and served as an instructor in the Ranger Training Command in Fort Benning, Georgia until October of 1951. He was married to Delores Helvik on December 31, 1950 in Glendive. They had two sons. Clint and Mike. In 1974 during a visit to Europe,

he was wearing that Killdeer buckle and gave it to a young boy in Belgium who was despondent over the loss of his father. This seemed to make a difference in the boy's life and Chuck saw and talked with him again in 1979 and 1994. This touched Chuck's heart. Chuck retired from Shell Oil in the fall of 1992 after working there for 38 years. After his retirement, he spent a lot of time reading Western History and books about the European Theater of World War II. One of his greatest sources of enjoyment was sharing his collection of music CDs with others of his generation who were living in a retirement home or long term care facilities. He was loved and respected by those who knew him and will be missed by many in addition to his family. He is survived by his wife, Delores; a son, Clint (and Yvonne) of Gillette, Wyoming, a brother, Deane of Glendive, a sister, Kate of Cheney, Washington; three grandchildren, five great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Chuck was preceded in death by his parents, a sister (Almira), and his son, Mike. If desired, memorials may be given to the Glendive Medical Center Hospice Program, 202 Prospect Drive, Glendive, MT 59330 or the charity of your choice. Eulogy by Celebrant Sandy Silha: Chuck Copping. Simple, direct, tough, fair, stern, kind, much loved and always, always, respected. Chuck gave respect, he received respect, but mostly, Chuck lived in a manner that earned respect. Charles G. Copping, "Chuck", was the eldest of four children of George and Myra Copping. Born and raised in Glendive, Chuck was a familiar and well liked face around the neighborhood. He would tell about being a young lad with a talent for getting into trouble with his father. When he figured punishment was on the way, he would run to the neighbors, hoping his father, George, would go easier on him with them around. Chuck's younger brother Deane tells a story about these young years. It was he, Deane, that was outside, unhappy, crying and hollering. His father, George, came out of the house with razor strap in hand to settle things down. Deane took off through the neighborhood, crying and hollering even louder, with his father trying to catch up as he snapped and popped that razor strap. Finally one neighbor came out and suggested to George that maybe he wouldn't have to

hit so hard. George explained that he wasn't hitting, just snapping and popping the strap and besides, it was Deane he was chasing, not Chuck. The neighbor replied, "Oh, I guess that's not so bad then." But even Deane had to respect his older brother, because Chuck would take punishment with Deane, rather than tell his father who the real culprit was when there was mischief going on. Chuck graduated from high school in the spring of 1941, and in December, Pearl Harbor and World War II came along. Chuck enlisted in the army. He served with the 82nd Airborne on the European front. World War II had a great impact on Chuck. Chuck was involved in the Normandy invasion and Omaha Beach. He saw much action and was part of history in the making. He earned recognition and respect, and was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. To hear Chuck tell war stories, he didn't see himself as a hero or as someone who had done anything special, although he was a hero and had done many acts above and beyond. Chuck just wanted people to have some idea of what the war was like and what it had cost us in good people, good soldiers, good men. When he first came home from the war, Chuck didn't speak much of the war, or what he had seen and done. It wasn't until later in his life, when he started going to army reunions, that he began to share his experiences and feelings about what had happened during the war. One cold, rainy night, driving home from Wibaux with Deane, he pointed to a hillside and asked Deane what he would think about lying on that cold, rainy hillside. Of course Deane replied he didn't think much of that idea. Chuck then told his brother about doing just that in the war. He lay there for a month, holding position, unable to move. He couldn't take his boots off and he wasn't even sure if he still had feet in those boots. As Chuck said "War stinks!" After returning home from the war, Chuck never again hunted. He said he knew what it was like to be hunted by someone who wanted to kill you. But he did teach his sons how to use a gun safely and responsibly. But he never took them hunting. Perhaps because of his personal experiences that is why he became a student of the European Theater of World War II. Inside Chuck's

memory folder are some words by General Omar Bradley about soldiering that had great meaning for Chuck. Chuck had fought that fight; he had lived those words. In 1974, Chuck took his first of several trips to Europe, back to the places where he had fought during the war. Chuck told Delores that he wanted to walk where he had crawled, and stand unafraid. Chuck has earned our respect and our thanks. Freedom truly isn't free. As a young man, before and after the war, Chuck loved horses and worked on various ranches in the area and did some rodeoing. It was this cowboy and his stories that attracted Delores to Chuck. Delores had moved to Glendive with her family after her high school graduation. Delores worked some evenings at the Runway Drive-in. She saw the Copping brothers, Chuck and Deane out there. Although she knew their parents, she really didn't know the boys. But she liked what she saw in Chuck. One evening, Delores got in her car to go home. Her car was the kind where you turned a key and then pushed a button to start the car. If you didn't turn the key first, the car sounded like it was trying to start but wouldn't. That night, Delores didn't turn the key but just pushed the button. Her story is that Chuck rescued her. Chuck and Delores began dating and a few months later in September, Chuck got called back to active duty and headed to the west coast. Chuck must have missed Delores, and on his way to the east coast to his new post, he and Delores Helvik were married on December 31, New Years Eve, 1950. Delores joined him on the east coast a short time later. In October of 1951, Chuck was discharged and he and Delores returned to Montana. They lived in Baker for a brief time and then settled back in Glendive, where they remained. Chuck worked for Shell Oil for 38 years. This past week, Delores received a call from one of the oilfield hands that had worked with Chuck during that time. He just wanted Delores and the family to know that any success that he had in the oilfield was due to what Chuck had taught him. The respect the other men had for Chuck at his job, Chuck had earned. He retired in 1992 from Shell Oil. Chuck and Delores raised two sons, Clint and Mike. As a father, Clint speaks of Chuck as being somewhat of a "drill sergeant". Clint felt his friends sympathized with him for

having a tough father. But Clint also noticed, then and now, that his friends had great respect for Chuck and perhaps even some envy of Clint, because as firm as Chuck was, he was also fair, and a great teacher of life and the right way to live it. Clint and Delores smile when they tell of Clint having long hair in his youth. Chuck did not approve of that long hair but told Clint he could keep the long hair if he kept the hair and his nose clean. The long hair stayed. So did the mutual respect. When Chuck was on to a good thing, he loved to share. He once came across a brand of fan that worked well. Mike and Clint each got one, whether they needed one or not. If a pair of boots fit well, three or four pairs would be even better. One Christmas, the kids and grandkids asked Chuck what he wanted for Christmas. All he could come up with was socks. When the gifts were being opened at Christmas, Chuck's first gift was socks. Chuck thanked the gift giver. His next gift – socks. "Thanks," said Chuck "I can really use these." And so it went – socks, socks, socks. Chuck sincerely thanked each one as they tried hard not to laugh at the joke they had played on Chuck. When Chuck had opened all his gifts and had a pile of socks, they brought out the real gifts for him. Chuck and his family had a good Christmas and a good laugh. But perhaps what everyone loved and respected most about Chuck were his acts of heartfelt kindness. On one of his visits to Europe, he gave away his prized rodeo belt buckle to console a boy in Europe that had lost his father. He took care of a family dog that everyone else tried to avoid. He loved music from "his" generation and he would share his huge collection of music, by taking cases of his CD's to the retirement home and extended care facilities for the residents to listen to. He would switch these out monthly, providing new listening for the residents. He even went so far as to replace the CD player at one facility when it quit. When his granddaughter was in daycare, Chuck noticed a girl there that didn't speak. No one knew if she couldn't speak or just chose not to. Chuck went out and bought a micro-recorder, took it to the daycare, and showed the girl how it worked. He spoke into it and then played back his voice. She took the recorder and began to sing into it. What made him notice her anyway? He was that kind of man. At

the front of the chapel you probably have noticed the photo tribute the family has put together of Chuck. If you haven't looked at this tribute yet, please take time after the service to view these memories. You will see Chuck as a young athlete who was part of a title winning football team, as a soldier decorated by a victorious army, and thanked by more than one "grateful nation". You will glimpse Chuck as a cowboy, a son, a brother. You can see the joy and love of a husband, father, and grandfather. You will remember him as a friend. Chuck taught his sons and grandchildren that if you are going to do something, do it well, do your best. He gave and received great love and respect. On December 12, 2004, Chuck passed away after a short battle with lung cancer. He will be missed; he will be remembered. Join us now in listening to Chuck's favorite song, "Just A Closer Walk With Thee" by Patsy Cline. Celebrant I would like at this time to invite Irene Schmitt to share some memories and thoughts of Chuck. Irene Schmitt Song – "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" Celebrant The family would like to take a few minutes now to hear from those who may want to share a thought or memory of Chuck. As mentioned, we ask that you come to the podium and use the microphone, which I will leave on so all may hear. Yvonne, Chuck's daughter-in-law would like to begin. When she finishes, please feel free to come forward. Yvonne and others Celebrant I would like to introduce Donna Kramer who will do a reading that is special to the family. Donna Kramer-Final Salute Celebrant I would like to thank you all for sharing your memories with us. There is no finer tribute to Chuck than the friends that are here today. It is important that we never assume a friend wants to mourn alone. The family will need you in the days, weeks, and months ahead. When something reminds you of Chuck, share it with them. Send a note, call or e-mail Delores, Clint and the rest of the family. Let them know what a significant impact Chuck had on your life and that you will always remember him. In the next week, Delores, Clint and the family will be facing their 1st Christmas without Chuck, and Delores will have an anniversary without Chuck a week later. Remember these firsts, for at these times,

Chuck's absence will be felt with a fresh sense of loss. Your presence and memory sharing will honor this fine man and keep his presence alive.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Charles G. "Chuck" Copping*

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December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM