



Edwin Bitz

February 16, 2009

GLENDIVE, MONTANA: Edwin Bitz, 77, died on February 11, 2009 at the Eastern Montana Veterans Home in Glendive. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Monday, February 16, 2009 at the Eastern Montana Veterans Home in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Interment with military honors will be held at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Mandan, North Dakota. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive is entrusted with the arrangements. Edwin Bitz Life Tribute Service February 16, 2009 Eastern Montana Veterans Home Glendive, Montana Master of Ceremonies: Welcome Song: "Silent Night" Celebrant: Eulogy Good Afternoon. Edwin Bitz was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps; a resident of this facility, the Eastern Montana Veterans Home for almost 12 years, and yet we know very little about the person Edwin was. The sadness here today comes not from Edwin's death, but rather is present because we sense that Edwin did not seem to have gotten much joy from his 77 years on this earth. The pleasures in his life seemed few; his burdens seemed to overwhelm him. Edwin's circle of trusted people was small. Those inside the circle saw a caring person, but Edwin seemed intent on trying to keep a distance from those with whom he had contact, and for the most part, people learned to keep their distance. Edwin was born in a rural area of North Dakota, a middle child surrounded by 12 siblings. Raised on a farm that grew its own food, Edwin learned to work early, helping with the farm chores, and milking cows daily. Edwin's education was complete through the 8th grade.

Just shy of his 21st birthday, Edwin went into the military, and served in the United States Marine Corps for two years, until his honorable discharge. He then served another six years in the Marine Reserve. Edwin's active duty was served in Korea during the Korean War. Was Edwin a casualty of war? Perhaps. He returned home to North Dakota after his discharge, but his brother, Henry, says Edwin was a changed man. Henry recalls that when Edwin was asked about his tour of duty, he would clam up and walk away. He never spoke of it. Edwin didn't stay long in North Dakota, choosing to go west to Havre, Montana, where his brothers Willy and Louie, had set up a barbering business. Edwin did odd jobs in Havre for a time, and then because Willy had moved on to barber in Browning, Montana, Edwin followed him to Browning. Edwin eventually settled in Great Falls, Montana, where he continued to make his living doing odd jobs. But the torments of his mind and soul did not diminish. In 1997, Edwin became a resident of the Eastern Montana Veteran's Home. He adjusted to the facility, and enjoyed some of the activities provided. He played bingo and attended church, and was baptized by one of the visiting ministers. Edwin especially liked going on the van rides and outings. One of the caregivers he was close to and that he allowed in his trusted circle, would take him out for breakfast and gambling once a month. They would spend about three hours away from the Home. Edwin didn't particularly like to gamble; he just really enjoyed that outing and that caregiver. Edwin's favorite food was hamburger and he would eat hamburgers for supper every night and sometimes even for breakfast. Edwin also enjoyed his cigarettes and would go out on the patio to smoke at every cigarette break. A gentleman and veteran, who lived here in Glendive but has since died, would come to the Veteran's Home here and spend time visiting the resident veterans. Edwin became one of the regulars he visited and eventually he was appointed guardian for Edwin. He helped Edwin with his affairs, and one of his comments about Edwin was that he could have better managed Edwin's finances if Edwin hadn't insisted on having to have money for pop and cigarettes. Due to some of Edwin's disorders, he had some character traits

unique to him. Edwin always tried to pass people on their right. And he liked to walk circles around people. He sometimes would tell his special caregiver about times when he was able to circle someone more than once. Edwin had been diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome, and would yell frequently, especially when agitated. One of his nurses asked his special caregiver to ask Edwin why he yelled at her. The caregiver said she would. She asked Edwin, "You like her don't you?" Edwin replied that he did. "Why do you yell at her then?" Edwin's reply was simple, "Because she jumps." Although Edwin seemed to prefer his own company, he knew the first and last names of every resident and every staff person at the Home. He didn't always let them know, but he knew. Something else important to Edwin was that he would hang around the two hospice rooms whenever anyone was in them. His special caregiver told him he didn't have to do that and he could go back to his room, but Edwin told her he would stay because he was "the keeper of souls." This past Christmas holiday, one of Edwin's nieces called him. At first he wasn't going to take the call, but with encouragement from his special caregiver, he did take the call. Edwin spent a good deal of time on the phone, talking and laughing, something his special caregiver did not see Edwin do much of. All the years Edwin spent at the Eastern Montana Veteran's Home, he was well cared for, and he had a few people he trusted, liked and could depend on to be there for him. Edwin fought every day on his own personal battlefield. His adversaries were very real to him. They were powerful adversaries and they took their toll of Edwin's energy, his endurance, his strength and his courage. Perhaps sometime in the next days, we can all pay tribute to Edwin by providing a small kindness to someone we feel is struggling with life's challenges. "There but for the grace of God, go you and I." Let us now listen to the second song selected by Edwin for today's service, "Amazing Grace" sung by local musician, Randy Lovaas. Song: "Amazing Grace" by Randy Lovaas
Celebrant: On Wednesday, February 18, 2009, Edwin Bitz will be interred with military honors at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Mandan, North

Dakota. The flag presented in Edwin's honor at that ceremony will be sent to Edwin's brother, Henry Bitz. Today, we will close Edwin Bitz's life tribute service with the playing of Taps. Our Master of Ceremonies, Lance Silha, will introduce this special tribute for Corporal Edwin Bitz, United States Marine Corps. Master of Ceremonies: The History of Taps Of all the military bugle calls, none is so easily recognized or more apt to render emotion than Taps. Until the civil war, the traditional call at day's end was a tune, borrowed from the French, called "Lights Out". In July of 1862, in the aftermath of the bloody Seven Days battles, hard on the loss of 600 men and wounded himself, Union General Daniel Adams Butterfield call the brigade bugler to his tent and together they wrote the music for Taps. The music was beautiful on that still summer night and was heard far beyond the limits of the Brigade. The next day several buglers from neighboring Brigades, asked for copies of the music. The call was gradually taken up through the Army of the Potomac. This powerful Taps was soon adopted throughout the military. In 1874, it was officially recognized by the United States Army. It became standard at military funeral ceremonies in 1891. There is something singularly beautiful and appropriate in the music of this wonderful call. Its strains are melancholy, yet full of rest and peace. Its echoes linger in the heart long after its tones have ceased to vibrate in the air. TAPS Edwin was born on March 5, 1931 in Jud, North Dakota the son of William and Dorothy (Gahner) Bitz. He attended Woodberry Township School near Jamestown, North Dakota, completing the 8th grade. Edwin entered military service on February 21, 1952, serving with the United States Marine Corps in Korea until his honorable discharge as a Corporal on February 11, 1954. Edwin had been a resident of Great Falls, Montana until moving to Glendive where he had been a resident of the Eastern Montana Veterans Home since April of 1997. Mr. Bitz was preceded in death by his parents, four brothers, Gotthielf, Edward, Ludwig and John and two sisters, Martha and Edna. Survivors include four brothers, Henry Bitz and his wife Donna Mae and LeRoy Bitz all of Port Orchard, Washington, William Lee Bitz of Browning, Montana and George Bitz and his wife Sally of

Aberdeen, South Dakota, two sisters, Frieda Olsen of Fargo, North Dakota and Rosemary Tilden of Springfield, Missouri. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Edwin Bitz*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM