



John Schindler

January 11, 1923 - October 11, 2008

GLENDIVE MONTANA; John Schindler, 85, passed away on Thursday, October 9, 2008 at the Glendive Medical Center in Glendive, Montana. Visitation will be held at 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 11, 2008 at the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home. A life tribute service will be held at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive, with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Interment with military honors will follow in the Dawson Memorial Cemetery in Glendive. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive is entrusted with arrangements. John was born January 11, 1923, in Glendive, the son of Joseph and Susan (Sterhan) Schindler. John was raised and educated in Glendive. He attended Dawson County High School for 3 years before joining the United States Navy, serving during World War II. John was serving in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack. Following the end of World War II, John remained in military service, until his retirement with an honorable discharge from the United States Navy in July of 1971. John lived in Portland, Oregon for a short time before returning to Glendive in 1974 where he has resided since. John was preceded in death by his parents, a long time special friend, Loretta Hays in 1994, 2 brothers and 2 sisters. John is survived by one sister; Ruth Theis, of Billings, Montana and one brother Henry Schindler of Seattle, Washington, and numerous nieces and nephews. John Schindler Life Tribute Service Saturday, October 11, 2008
Welcome: Master of Ceremonies Eulogy: Celebrant It is an important day when we stop to bear witness to a person's life and times among us, the

difference his living and dying made among family and community and to take the time to express our grief, our hope, our wonder and our memories. It is here that we show honor to John Schindler, and to the memories of a life that touched us and remains alive in our hearts. Without a doubt, there two things in life John had a great love for, one was the Navy; the other was Loretta Hays. John's story is one of a simple life lived the best he could live it. John was the third of seven children of Romanian immigrants, Joseph and Susan Schindler, and the first of their children to be born in the United States. John was raised and educated in Glendive, Montana, and the house he grew up in on Nowlan Avenue, he returned to in his retirement years and lived out his life. John would recall that when he was a child, his parents had a huge garden that you could look across and see the cemetery hill. Growing up during the depression years in a large family, there were not many extras. Jobs and money were scarce. John and one of his brothers would deliver papers to earn a bit of money. On January 11, 1941, his eighteenth birthday, John enlisted in the United States Navy. In December of 1941, John's assignment was on a flagship in Hawaii. On the morning of December 7, 1941, as John was on deck to raise the flag, he tells of observing the low-flying Japanese planes coming in. The first plane was so low, John could see the face of the Japanese pilot and then things went crazy. Being on a small ship, it was not one of the primary targets and survived the bombs. In the aftermath and during the days immediately following the attack, John's ship and crew were on rescue duty around the harbor. The impressions of the attack that stayed with John were of the tight formations of the Japanese aircraft, the sounds of men screaming, and the smells of all the destruction. When asked if he had a gun, he replied he did. When asked if he used it, he said in the course of his twenty plus years of active duty, he only used his gun during training, never while on duty. During his naval career, Pearl Harbor was the only battle he actually was a part of. Early in his first tour of duty, John was promoted to quartermaster, which meant he would steer the ship in and out of the ports. John served on many different ships, but most of his time during World War II

was spent on the fuel tankers. These ships would not travel with the destroyers and aircraft carriers, but just go in and refuel them on the high seas and then move on. John felt these fuel tanker ships were the most frightening ships he served on, because if attacked they just blew up because of all the fuel they carried. It was during World War II and his first enlistment that John struck up a penpal relationship with the sister of a shipmate. They got to know each other through the letter writing and exchanged pictures. Things were getting a bit serious on paper when John's six-year enlistment was up. John had to make decisions; the Navy suited him, and he wanted to make a career of it. He felt it would be unfair to have someone always waiting for him. John ended the penpal relationship without ever meeting her in person. John loved the ports of call and traveling the world. And even though he suffered bouts of seasickness, he enjoyed the open sea. And he loved his shipmates. John developed a passion for the history he was a part of. He researched that history and had a particular interest in the one and two person reconnaissance submarines used in World War II. These subs may have been of particular interest to John, because on December 6, 1941, one day prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, John observed one of these subs enter the harbor. He did not think anything of it at the time, believing it to belong to the United States. After the attack, he read news articles about these Japanese subs and their missions, and developed a desire to know all about them. John researched these submarines and knew all about them, how many there were, who piloted them, what their missions were, and what eventually happened to them. During his career in the Navy, John saw much of the world, Hong Kong, Japan, Alaska, Korea, and Rome to name a few. John had photos of all the ships he served on except for one. After twenty years of active duty, John retired, but did spend ten more years doing reserve duty. Upon retiring from active naval duty, John landed in Portland, Oregon. Coming out of the Navy, John found the skills he had acquired there were not particularly useful in procuring a job in the civilian world. And not having a high

school diploma made job hunting very frustrating for John. He began doing janitorial work in hotels. Someone suggested the merchant marines, but he found a long line of applicants and union dues of \$600 dollars. That was discouraging, so he tried the coast guard. They would give him a job but only as a deckhand, and he could not see himself doing that. He finally ended up doing janitorial work in a federal building and eventually working for the city's street maintenance crew. But the important life-changing event that occurred to John at this time was that he met Loretta Hays. She was ten years older, divorced with children and she became the love of his life. He and Loretta were together for over 30 years. Loretta and her family made him a part of their family. John had no natural children, but he became a grandfather to Loretta's grandchildren, and was known as Papa John, and he was greatly loved. When John's mother became ill with cancer and later died, John and Loretta came to Glendive and helped John's father through this particularly difficult time. When John's father got sick, John and Loretta decided to relocate to Glendive. They returned to Glendive and lived in the house John had grown up in. John became truly retired upon moving to Glendive. Once a year, after saving up their loose change, they would travel to the West Coast and visit family and make a stop in Reno, Nevada, for fun. He and Loretta lived a simple life in Glendive. They enjoyed living in the small house he grew up in surrounded by pieces of the cedar furniture that his father had built. John enjoyed fishing at Intake and in the Yellowstone River, especially for catfish, as Loretta love to eat catfish. He was an avid reader, but only of non-fiction. He gave a sizable donation to the library because he said if he wanted to know something, he could always go there. John enjoyed a beer and his cigarettes. He loved to have visitors sit, have a beer and discuss politics and other issues or just tell stories about the Navy. He'd greet you with "Hey, kiddo, how's it going?" John loved to talk and once started, it was hard to get him to stop. John was very intelligent, stubborn and independent. But he was also friendly, gentle, kind and generous. During his naval days, he would send part of his paycheck back home to his parents. He loved kids, and kids loved

him. All the neighbor kids knew him and would visit with him and worry about him. He even gave one of his cars to a neighbor boy that he had a special affection for. A couple of the neighbor boys would remember him and Loretta and bring fish to them after they would go fishing and catch catfish. Once when there was a bad wind, it blew a large pine tree in John's yard over. They made their dad go over and check on John during the storm to make sure John was alright. He was their friend too. John would remind his great-grandchildren when visiting with them, how important school was and to do well there; and he was proud when they did. John and Loretta's granddaughter, Diane Gibson has a few memories to share today... "When I started coming out there to be with Grandpa when I got older and he no longer traveled after Grandma passed away, we had such wonderful times together. Always trying to beat each other to the bill when we went out to eat. He was so funny trying to get me to agree to let him pay. Sometimes he beat me to it! I loved their home and the feeling of Glendive so much! His father built the house and Grandpa told me when he came home for a visit when he was in the service he helped add a room on. There is so much history and love in that home. My Grandma was so very proud of it, small as it is and old. You could see how happy they were. It was so much fun trying to one up him whenever we could. Each year we tried to do something new for him. One year Ted fixed the railing on the front porch so that he would have something to hold on to. He had said he quit using the front door because he felt unsteady going down the stairs. So Ted built a steel bar at the right height so he would have something to hold on to. Another year we bought a vhs player and I wrote the instructions one by one so he would be able to watch some old Red Skelton tapes we bought him, he said he was one of his favorites. Then we decided to get him a larger TV, because his eyesight was not so good and the TV old. He was so amazed at the picture. One year we decided to sneak cable into his home and set it up to pay the bill. Once it was done he couldn't take it back, because his most favorite thing was watching football and the history channel, which he didn't have before. He only had two local

working channels prior. As time went by, I think maybe two years he finally convinced us to let him take over the cable bill, of course I made him promise he was going to keep it. He said there was no way he would let it go, now that he new what he could see. He always wanted to know how all the kids where doing and was so very proud to know that Melissa went to college, Jim was a branch manager at a local bank and Katie was going into nursing school. We had taken Katie out there the first few years we started going in the 90's, she is our youngest and he was so happy to see her. Our other children were grown and out of the house, they had been able to be with Grandpa and Grandma every year when they came here to visit. Grandpa was an amazing man. I wish I would have gotten him to record all his history for us to share with his great grandchildren. He loved fishing and told me about hunting when he was young there in Glendive. I will miss hearing his voice. saying 'well!! how are you kiddo!!, its really nice to have you here!! And when we would get ready to leave he always wanted to know if we couldn't stay just a little longer. We sat for hours on end just talking about his past, Grandma, and my Dad (who he dearly missed) So many memories, I really loved him more than I can say!" Diane Gibson After Loretta died in October in of 1994, John's topic of conversation was as much about Loretta as the Navy. He missed her terribly and never really got over her death. In his later years, John's eyes began to fail him, and he became hard of hearing. He continued to drive, but less and less and only to the grocery store and to do necessary things. But John continued to live independently. Members of he and Loretta's family from the West Coast would come to visit a couple times a year. They loved John and his stories. A few weeks ago, a nephew, John's sister's boy, Paul Macomber, showed up at John's door. Paul and John hadn't seen each other since Paul was a boy, and Paul was seeking John out to get to know him and learn about John and the family history. John welcomed Paul with open arms and the comment that "it was about time." Paul and John spent five days talking and getting to know each other. It is a time Paul will always treasure. Even though

John had no family living close, he had neighbors who were close friends and cared deeply for him. When John took ill this past week, they visited him in the hospital, and were in touch with his family. When told by family that things did not look good for John, a couple of these good friends and neighbors honored John by sitting with him at the hospital. It was their wedding day, but they did not want John alone as he made this important journey. They were present with John as he departed this earthly port of call. The family who could not be with John would like to express their appreciation to Ron and Michelle Nodland for this great act of kindness and love. Let us now listen to the song "Peace in the Valley," recorded by local resident, Randy Lovaas. Song: "Peace in the Valley" by Randy Lovaas Closing: Celebrant Because of distance and weather, many of John's family are not able to be here today, but their thoughts and love are with John. John touched many lives during his lifetime of 85 years. During his years in the Navy, he put himself in harms way many times for the freedoms each of us and generations to come can enjoy. He was proud of his Navy experiences and loved to share them with all who would listen. In finding a life partner in Loretta, he also found family to love and be loved by, and Loretta was the joy of his life and the most important person in it. John was a good and decent man, who loved and enjoyed his simple life and the people in it. John is held close in the hearts of many and will be greatly missed. It seems fitting to say good-bye to John, who sailed the seas of the world and whose ship has left us, with the words of Henry Van Dyke: "I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says: 'There, she is gone!' 'Gone where?' Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to their destined port. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at that moment when someone at my side says: 'There, she is gone' there are other

eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: 'Here she comes!'" We can only imagine that those eyes watching John come in and the voice raising that glad shout is Loretta. Let us now close John's life tribute service with a song John wanted played today, "Amazing Grace". Song: "Amazing Grace" by Randy Lovaas

Tribute Wall



“ *John Schindler*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM