



Walter H. Bohlman

May 27, 1942 - October 5, 2006

Walter Harry Bohlman, age 64, of Valley City, North Dakota passed away on Friday, September 29, 2006 at the Sheyenne Care Center in Valley City where he had resided for the past two years. A Life Tribute service with military honors will be held at 10:00 A.M., Thursday, October, 2006 at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in New England, North Dakota. Interment will follow at the North Dakota Veteran's Cemetery at Mandan, North Dakota. Visitation will be held from 5:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M. Wednesday, October 4, 2006 at Ladbury Funeral Service in Dickinson, North Dakota and one hour prior to services at the church on Thursday. Silvernale- Silha Funeral Home of Glendive, Montana is entrusted with arrangements. Walter (Walt) was born on May 27, 1942 on the family farm near New England, the son of Frederick and Patsy (Lesniak) Bohlman. He received his education in New England public schools, graduating with the class of 1960. Walt was a farmer who enjoyed working with his father on the homestead farm, located 1 mile north of New England. He served in the United States Army from 1965-1967. Following his honorable discharge, Walt returned home to the family farm. He also worked as a welder for Koffler Manufacturing in New England for a number of years. He enjoyed collecting antiques and firearms and enjoyed bowling. He was a member of the New England Fire Department and the American Legion. Walt was preceded in death by his father Frederick in 1989 and his mother Patsy in 1987. Walt is survived by his brother, Marvin and his wife Hedy Bohlman of New England, North Dakota; his two sisters, Audrey Kuntz of Escondido,

California and Bonnie Bohlman of Dickinson, North Dakota; three nieces, Nancy Feller and her husband Jim of Blunt, South Dakota , Patricia Schumacher of Austin, Texas and Candace Segel and her husband Kenneth of Escondido; one nephew, Casey Bohlman and his wife Dodi of Richardton, North Dakota; five great nieces and six great nephews. Eulogy by Celebrant Sandy Silha: Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine an endless, bright, blue North Dakota sky. Feel the hot summer sun pulling out a bead of sweat on your brow. Hear the birds chirping and the whirring of the grasshoppers. Smell the perfume of a newly mown hayfield. Your muscles are sore from the hard task of putting up bales of hay, you are tired and thirsty, you are content. Walter Bohlman loved that world. And his roots ran deep in the family farm soil. Walter Harry Bohlman was born May 27, 1942, on the family farm near New England, North Dakota. Walt's sister, Audrey, remembers Walt's birth quite clearly. She and her brother, Marvin were sent to an upstairs bedroom when their mother's labor began. Audrey and Marvin both put their ears to the floor trying to hear what was happening in their parent's bedroom down below. After a difficult delivery, Walter, was born, the third of four children of Frederick and Patsy Bohlman. Walt grew up on the farm and learned a good work ethic early. This work ethic probably came easily to Walt, as he loved doing farm chores. But Walt was also a mischievous lad. He carried around a BB gun which he hunted rabbits with and when wanted to get his brother or two sister's attention, he would shoot them in the leg with it. Of course, he would get the reaction he was looking for. The gun has other memories for Bonnie, because Walt, against his father explicit orders, would take Bonnie with him at night to spotlight and hunt rabbits. This was quite exciting to a young girl. Bonnie now has possession of this particular BB gun and the memories that go with it. Walt was not a complainer, just the opposite, as many times no one was aware of anything being wrong. Marvin recalls young Walt being out in the field augering grain with their father. Walt began fiddling with the auger. A bit later, without a word, Walt headed for the house. He went in and found his mother, showed her a bloody finger with the tip missing and asked her for a

band-aid. And that was that. Walt was more interested in other people and what was going on around him than with himself. Walt attended and graduated from the public school system in New England. But reading and writing didn't interest him much. Walt was always trying to find someone to do his book reports or schoolwork for him. On the senior "skip day" he skipped alright, but, he was not out with the class having a fun day. His fun and time was spent on the farm, doing what he loved; helping his father. During high school, Walt had a car and would give rides to anyone who wanted or needed a ride. His car was a favorite place at lunchtime to go and have a cigarette. One thing about school Walt did enjoy was school sports and being a New England Tiger, especially playing on the basketball team. You may have noticed that Walt's letterman's jacket has been placed by his family in the casket with him. After high school graduation, Walt became a farmer, working with his father on the family farm. Included on the picture board the family put together, are several farming pictures, haying, harvesting, hauling bales, using the tractor to clear snow. Walt was a farm boy through and through. This is probably a good time to mention that through out Walt's adult life, up until his accident, Walt had a fondness or you might say, a weakness for liquor. It was a part of his life. It was just the way Walt was. Besides farming, Walt had other jobs over the years, such as welding for Koffler Manufacturing and doing plumbing and electrical work for Bill Hanson. Walt tinkered a lot and there wasn't much he couldn't do. His neighbor and friend Kirk Erickson would tease "Wally" about being a "jack of all trades and master of none." Walt also spent time in the United States Army serving his nation. He was stationed in Fort Bragg and was sent to the Dominican Republic when there some trouble was brewing. His military years were the only time before his accident that he spent away from his home and the farm. Walt's second love had to have been being a volunteer fireman. Walt was a dedicated fireman, rarely, if ever, missing a fire. His fellow fireman even accused him of sleeping in his clothes, as he often was the first to respond, no matter what, and he generally rode on

top of the truck. Walt served as the secretary for the fireman's meetings. The others would look at his scribbly notes of the meeting and shake their heads, wondering how Walt would read those minutes at the next meeting. But Walt would show up at the next meeting with the correct minutes neatly typed. It wasn't until about the last year that Walt was secretary, that the fireman learned Duane Wobig, a teacher, had been typing up those minutes for Walt. Having seen a great deal of bad writing from students, Duane had no problem deciphering Walt's scrawls. And Walt would have Duane make any corrections if Duane had misread Walt's scrawls. Walt was a volunteer fireman for many years and he is wearing his fireman's jacket today. Other memories that Duane has of Walt are of hunting. Walt enjoyed deer hunting, not necessarily filling his tags, but of driving around with friends and enjoying the hunt. Walt was always ready to take friends from the eastern part of the state and out-staters out for their deer. He always insisted on driving his own pick-up and leading. On many hunts, Walt was the only who didn't fill a tag. Walt and his friends enjoyed their socializing and certainly weren't above a good practical joke. Bill Hanson and Walt were tearing down the old hotel here in town. It was twelve stories high and they were doing this on evenings and week-ends. The hotel had generated many rumors and gossip over the years. Walt and Bill began telling around town that as they tore the hotel apart, it was giving up many things substantiating those rumors and gossip. They also claimed that when the job was done, they planned to publish their findings. Walt and Bill had people in a stir wondering what they knew. At the end of the job, they posted a sign on the empty lot saying "Your secrets are safe!" At least two people had a good laugh...Walt and Bill. And Walt could take a bit of teasing. His sister Audrey chuckles when she remembers his hair. Walt would comb it from the back, forward, because he didn't have much in front. But it would stick out at some odd places like the wind had combed it. One day while visiting his friend, Hugo Hanson, Hugo's young daughter asked Walt why his hair stuck out the way it did? Everyone had a good laugh. Later, on that little girl's birthday, Walt showed up with his hair slicked down to his head.

Everyone had another good laugh. In visiting with family and friends about Walt, everyone, everyone, remembered three things about Walt. One was his pit Bar-B-Q. This was an event lasting several days. Walt's birthday was at the end of May, his sister, Bonnie's, was the day before Walt's and a neighbor had a birthday somewhere close. Walt would hold his birthday pit bar-b-q over Memorial Day week-end. The whole town was invited, with many showing up to enjoy it. He would dig a pit in the ground for the meat. His neighbor Kirk Erickson would help him get the wood and coals going. This would go on for a day and a half or two. Tents would be set up, the beer and cards would come out and Walt and friends would keep the pit hot day and night, cooking the meat. The meat would be done on Sunday. People would bring the side dishes, and everyone would enjoy the bar-b-q, the horseshoe, cards and visiting. It was an annual event! The second thing people remember about Walt was his visits. With his friends it was a daily occurrence to have Walt drop in to see how they were. He wouldn't stay long, he always had somewhere to go, but he always came. With others, it might just be a "How ya doing kiddo? But he was really interested, not just being polite. Walt knew most of the history of New England and the area, and when things had happened. Late at night and in the early hours of the morning, Walt would patrol around town, just checking to make sure everything was okay. And if he told you about someone or something, it was not gossip, he knew. Walt was sincerely interested in the people he knew and cared about them. The third memory about Walt, that everyone mentioned, was his helpfulness. He would always fill the need for an extra pair of hands on a job or task. He was always asking what he could do to help. He always said his own work could wait until tomorrow. He always had time for others people. It seems Walt had two lifes. The first being the one we have talked about. The second began when Walt was 48 years old and stepped out of a truck in Washington state. No one knows if he mis-stepped and fell, hitting his head, or if he fell because he had a stroke, or if the fall was due to a genetic disorder, later diagnosed in both Walt and his brother, Marvin. Whatever the reason, Walt went to the ground,

severely hitting his head. Surgery and a coma lasting several weeks followed. When Walt began to recover from the fall and the surgery, he was a changed man. Parts of his memory were gone, he had paralysis on one side, immobilizing him, and his personality changed. The last sixteen years of his life were difficult ones spent in various nursing homes. Many of you corresponded or visited Walt during these years. All of you were saddened by the course Walt's life had taken. For sixteen years, Walt has not been an active member of his family or of this community, which he loved so much. Look around here today. Walt's family has planned this service and gathered here to remember Walt, the fireman he fought fires with are here in their jackets to pay their last respects and to escort Walt as he begins his journey to his final resting place, veterans await to provide military honors, friends have shared stories and memories of Walt, Chaplain Oakland offers all who have gathered spiritual guidance and support. What a wonderful tribute to Walter Harry Bohlman. We have been touched by the significance of Walt's life; we will remember Walt with love and with smiles; we will continue to tell his story. Remember that sunlit hayfield mentioned earlier, remember Walt's love of the family farm, remember his love of this community? The family would like everyone to know that as Walt is laid to rest at the North Dakota State Veteran's Cemetery they have placed with Walt, in the casket, an aerial photo of the family farm. And to line the grave where Walt will be placed, Marvin, Audrey, and Bonnie will place a shovel full of soil from the farm he loved, so that Walt may always rest at home. In closing is a verse with special meaning to Walt's family: God saw him getting tired And a cure was not to be. So He put His arms around him And whispered "Come unto me." With tearful eyes we watched him suffer And saw him fade away. Although we loved him dearly We could not make him stay. A golden heart stopped beating Hard working hands to rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us He only takes the best.

Tribute Wall



“ *Walter H. Bohlman*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM