

The Life of Richard E. Helmer

December 16, 1926 - March 26, 2020

Husband of Norma Helmer

"In life, we loved you dearly, in death we love you still. In our hearts you hold a place, no one else will ever fill."

Richard E. Helmer of Groton, SD, age 93, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 26, 2020 at Strand Kjorsvig Living Center in Roslyn, SD. Family members have decided that due to COVID-19, no services will be held at this time. His family has gathered to pray and share memories. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Richard Ellwin Helmer was born on December 16, 1926, to Henry and Mable (Wilmsen) Helmer in Andover, SD. He attended Andover High School, graduating in 1944. He was then drafted into the US Army. He was stationed in the Philippines and the 20th Air Force Base in Guam as a Motor Pool Sgt. Richard received the Asiatic Pacific Service Medal and the Victory Medal. With pride, when asked what his favorite service memory was, Richard said, "My captain said, 'Helmer, sew up that Japanese prisoner's head!', and I DID!" For 74 years, he was a member of the American Legion, Post 258. Richard returned to the Andover area and began his farming career.



On September 20, 1953, Richard was united in marriage to LaVonne Jones at Langford, SD. They lived in Andover for a short time, and then purchased their farm in 1955. To this union, four children, Deborah, Rich, Pamela, and Cheryl were born. Richard was a wonderful father to his four children when they were growing up.

On December 23, 1988, he married Norma Lemmon at Webster, SD. He farmed and worked at the Andover Garage (he was so proud to say that he never missed a single day of work) and retired at the age of 62. They made their home in Andover and later moved to Groton, SD in 2016.

Richard's survivors include his devoted wife, Norma Helmer; mother of loving stepchildren Bobbie (Steve) Talcott, Sioux Falls, SD; Deanna (Jeff) Spooner, Marysville, WA; Sandy (Ron) Hurst, Andover, SD; and Michael Lemmon (Laura Henry) Darrington, WA. Grandchildren include Ryan (Nichole) Talcott, Sioux Falls, SD; Jesse (Keri) Talcott, Sioux Falls, SD; Scott (Lyndsay) Talcott, Chaska, MN; Josh Spooner, (Miriam Ayoub) Seattle, WA; Tina (Jeremy) Urdahl, Watertown, SD; Mindy (Jacob) VanderVorst, Claremont, SD; Jeremiah Hurst, Andover, SD; Luke Lemmon, Molly Lemmon, Darrington, WA. He has many great grandchildren and neighborhood grandchildren.

Richard is also survived by his children, Deborah (Robert) Utecht, Naperville, IL; Rich (Dee) Helmer, Geneva, IL; Pamela (Bruce) Merkel, Andover, SD; and Cheryl Wold, Aberdeen, SD; his grandchildren; Eric Utecht, Brad (Claire) Utecht, Lanny (Becki) Merkel, Brett Merkel, Nicolas (Maggie) Helmer, Julia Wold, and Jordan Wold; and his great grandchildren Justin Merkel, Lillian Merkel, Mac Merkel, and Penelope Helmer.

He is survived by his brother Colonel Donald Helmer, San Antonio, TX and sister Joyce Skiles, Chattanooga, TN. He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Leon, Orville, and Norman; sisters Dorothy, Beatrice, and Barbara; and one son-in-law, Daniel Wold.

Condolences may be directed to the family in care of Norma Helmer, 203 E. 2nd St., Groton, SD 57745. An online guestbook and obituary are available at www.pricefuneralchapel.net.