



Vernon Bigalke

February 18, 1917 - November 22, 2007

Vernon was born February 18, 1917 in Darling Township, Morrison County, MN to the late Fred & Mabel Bigalke. He grew up in Darling Township and attended country school. Completing his schooling, Vernon worked on the family farm and served in the Minnesota National Guard from 1937-39. He entered the US Army in 1941 and served in the European Theatre as a Technical Sergeant. He was captured early in 1945, forced to march with the retreating German Army and liberated at the end of the war. Vernon was honorably discharged on November 3, 1945 and returned to Morrison County. He was employed by Pankrantz Plumbing & Heating in Little Falls as a sheet metal worker for three years. Vernon was united in marriage to Betty J. Copley on September 1, 1948 at Bethel Lutheran Church in Little Falls. The couple farmed in Darling Township for 32 years. They sold the farm in 1978 and moved to a home on the Mississippi River North of Little Falls. Vernon then was employed at Camp Ripley in the Supply Department for 10 years, retiring in 1988. With great passion for veterans, Vernon and LaVerne Hansen initiated the creation of the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery near Little Falls, MN. Beginning in 1985, Vernon and LaVerne worked to see their vision fulfilled. The Minnesota State Veteran's Association was formed in 1990. In 1992, ground breaking occurred and in 1994 the dedication ceremony of the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery fulfilled their vision. In 2000, the couple moved to Little Falls. Vernon enjoyed all sports, especially baseball, playing cards and watching CNN. He was always an advocate for veterans. In

addition to being a member, Vernon served as chaplain of the Randall VFW; Little Falls Disabled American Veterans (served as Commander); Little Falls American Legion; Commander of ex-POW Central Chapter and State Commander of ex-POW. Vernon served on the Darling Township Board as clerk for 22 years, Darling Cemetery Board and was a State Fire Warden for many years. He was a recipient of the WCCO Good Neighbor Award and the local Hometown Hero Award in 2004. Vernon was also a faithful member of Zion Lutheran Church in Little Falls serving as deacon, trustee and many other positions. His love for the Lord sustained him as a POW and throughout his life.

Vernon A. Bigalke is survived by his:

Beloved wife: Betty

Sons: Darrell Bigalke of Stillwater, MN

Daniel Bigalke & wife, Sally of Roseville, MN

Bradley Bigalke of Little Falls, MN

Bruce Bigalke & wife, Carol of Ham Lake, MN

Six grandchildren: Anne, Siiri & Brock Bigalke, Joe & Jake Bigalke and Emily Scott

Brothers: Donald Bigalke & wife, Betty of Little Falls, MN

Kenneth Bigalke & wife, Fern of Little Falls, MN

and nieces and nephews.

Vernon was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Leonard Bigalke.

Honorary casketbearers will be the grandchildren.

Casketbearers will be Scott, Dean & Greg Bigalke, Lance, Scott & (Gary or Terry) Schwanke.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **25**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

LeMieur Funeral Home of Little Falls
214 2nd Street SE
Little Falls, MN

Service

NOV **26**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church - Little Falls
411 3rd Avenue NE
Little Falls, MN

Tribute Wall



“ *Vernon Bigalke*

January 21, 2023 at 11:59 AM



“ *Sorry to hear about Mr. Vernon Bigalke's passing. I had met him and talked with him a few times. I talked to him at the home of Daniel & Sally Bigalke. I heard very interesting stories about him through my friend Joe. I enjoyed talking talking to him a few times when I had the opportunity. I am glad that I had met him. I will read more about him and other POWS through a book that is either out in stores or will be in stores.*

Sincerely,
Christopher Traeger##imported-begin##Christopher Traeger##imported-end##

November 29, 2007 at 08:50 PM



“ *There are no words to describe my love for my grandpa. He was the greatest man I ever knew. I know that in my heart I will see him again when the lord takes me home. I will miss him for ever and ever. God Bless you grandpa and I love you.##imported-begin##Joe Bigalke##imported-end##*

November 28, 2007 at 12:23 PM