

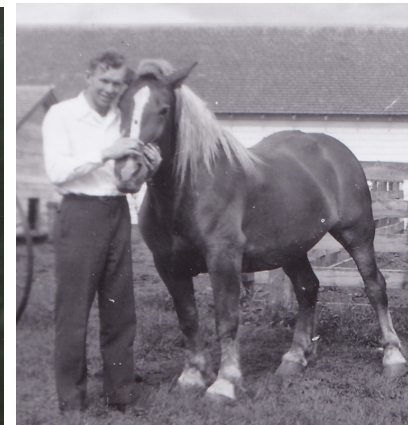
Life of Arnold H. Duevel



Arnold Henry Duevel passed away peacefully, surrounded by family and under the loving support of the Little Falls Care Center staff and CHI Hospice Care, on October 21, 2020. Born August 1, 1918, second of nine children to Henry and Agnes (Osterhues) Duevel in Melrose, Minnesota, Arnold Duevel grew up in Culdrum Township and lived a long and fulfilled life. He is survived by seven children Christine Baron (James), Williamsburg, Virginia; Edward (Janet), Little Falls, Minnesota; John, Royalton, Minnesota; Leonard (Linda), Tananger, Norway; Michael (Sherry), Royalton, Minnesota; Mary Duevel-Banoub (Albert), Porum, Oklahoma; and Elaine Kramer (David), Corcoran, Minnesota; 23 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren, sister Marie Schneider and his sisters-in-law Doris (Cliff) Sawyer and Donna Duevel. Arnold was preceded in death by seven siblings and Margaret (Lindborg), his loving wife of 72 years who passed away on October 28, 2018.



Arnold attended Grades 1-4 at St. Boniface Catholic School in Melrose and completed Grades 5-8 in three years at the District 31 Culdrum Township two-room schoolhouse. He learned English when he started school to add to two dialects of German used at home. While clever with people, tools and animals, Arnold also learned to express himself so well in written form he later would be an author in his own right.



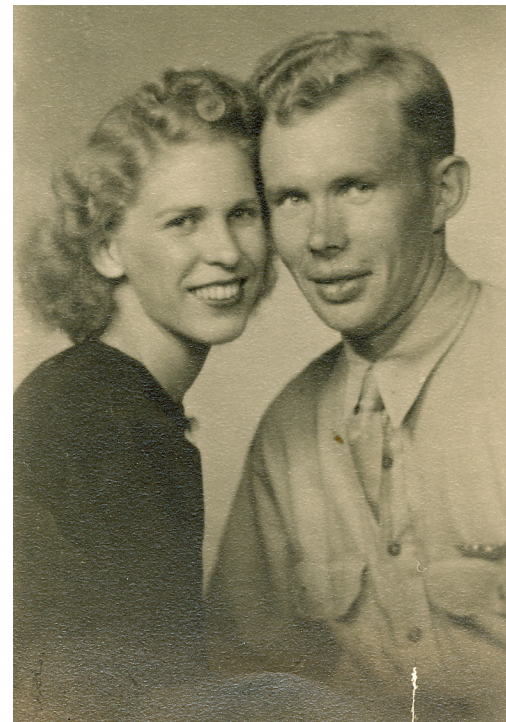
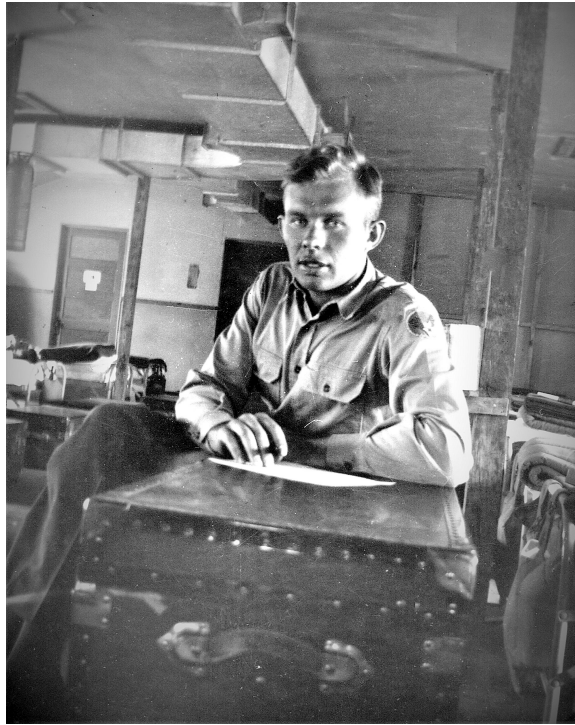
Arnold was a strong and able craftsman and farmer who experienced a change from horses to automobiles to jet plane travel. Work horses were his first thoughts in the



morning and last thoughts before falling asleep as a teenager. He switched from horses to tractors and learned new skills to match a world changed over a century.

After leaving school at the age of 14 to supplement income for his parents during the Great Depression, he was employed on neighboring farms and even worked one full year without salary on a farm near Melrose to pay off family debt. With icicles dangling from Arnold's eyelashes, his skill with horses helped his siblings survive the 1940

Armistice Day Blizzard.



Arnold found work in the steel mill in Duluth before being drafted into military service at the start of World War II. Recognized by the US Army Air Corps for mechanical skill and leadership, Arnold rose to the rank of Technical Sergeant and served as a crew chief on B-26 Marauder bombers. Arnold was stationed stateside in Texas, California, Florida and Georgia. En route to Europe, his plane stopped in Belize, Brazil, Ascension Island, Senegal and Morocco. He was then stationed in England, France and the Netherlands, not returning to the USA until November 1945 aboard a Liberty ship. With 142 missions to his credit, the highest of any crew chief in his squadron, Arnold was decorated as a leader

and war hero with the Bronze Star for meritorious service during combat, six Battle Stars and his 397th Bomb Group received the Presidential Citation. Over seventy years later, he was made an honorary citizen of the village of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont (at Utah Beach), France, and wore that medal proudly.



During his years in the military, Arnold showed a gift for writing letters to his sweetheart, Margaret. For their common 100th birthdays and 72nd wedding anniversary in 2018, over 700 of Arnold's wartime letters were captured in a two-volume book for family and friends. With keen observation and reflective description, Prairie, Planes, Peril and Plans: A Love Story in Letters captured the essence



of one soldier's life from 1942 to 1945 in a world at war. As the battles ended in Europe in 1945, Arnold wrote, "Now that it's over, there's only one thing left. The privilege to go home and be what we were fighting for."

On May 6, 1946, Arnold married Margaret Lindborg, also from Culdrum Township. Together they founded a family, first in Duluth where Arnold worked in the steel mill. When their third child was born, Arnold said boys needed the countryside. He had predicted this move in a letter from France on September 10, 1944, "When this war is over and I get out of this uniform, I've got to get a little farm."

In 1951, Arnold and Margaret purchased a dairy farm one mile south of Royalton. They moved from comforts of the city to a farm with no electricity or telephone service. Weather ruined the first year's crop just as their fourth child was born. Undeterred, they made a life out of the sandy loam, growing much of their food for the family.

By 1958, Arnold and Margaret had put aside enough savings to build a two-car garage where the family lived for the winter while Arnold built a new 30' by 40' house with four bedrooms. Arnold applied the carpentry skills he had learned from his father. By this time, seven children filled their home. Lauded as a model for local construction at the time, Arnold received requests to build a multitude of homes and other structures



nearby. He would sit at the dining room table, listen to the wishes of his neighbors and draw plans for their custom homes. When the floorboards were in place, Arnold showed families where walls would rise so they could make adjustments for a perfect home. Arnold H. Duevel Construction was formed and once again Arnold, as an entrepreneur, was leading his crew.

Even after retirement, Arnold always kept busy and learned something new every day. An artist with his hands, he spent much of his time making wooden works of art in his shop. Today the homes of his children and grandchildren are adorned with hand-customed heirlooms: furniture including benches, cabinets and shelves, as well as canes and toys. He loved creating pieces from the full cycle: trees Arnold had cut, boards he had planed, dowels he rounded on his lathe and treasures finished with sanding and sealer.

Arnold took a leadership role in the community, serving on the Royalton Creamery Board and Langola Township Board. Arnold was an active veteran in Royalton American Legion Post 137 and took a lead in building the Legion hall.



As an accomplished accordion player, Arnold taught fellow soldiers how to play. He said his father had an accordion, and while his parents were away the children tried playing, and he learned just from trying. With music as a binding thread for relatives, Arnold enjoyed playing with his brothers at many family reunions and visits.

A highly religious man, Arnold was an active Roman Catholic his entire life and a parishioner of the Holy Trinity Church in Royalton for almost 70 years. Faith hugged his heart whether in the fields, battlefields, city, farm, town or Little Falls Care Center.

He was an athlete and Minnesota State Horseshoe Pitching Champion. Arnold and Margaret loved dancing and were often the first on the floor for a waltz. While tied to the farm, Arnold and Margaret still managed to travel widely, visiting friends and relatives in almost all states, Mexico, Canada and on four trips to Europe after the 1970s. Arnold enjoyed playing cards and competition dominos—even his smart grandchildren were no match for his skills. With an ever-present twinkle in his eye, one had to stay alert and could never know what to expect when conversing with Arnold, from a quip or joke to a new perspective on any situation.



While an active community member, Arnold focused his attention and kindness on his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He loved family and friends, and he was loved. Just before flying to the European war theater in 1944, Arnold wrote a tender farewell to Margaret:

“Almost all the married men that are flying over sent their wives home today. I’ll bet there were a lot of swollen eyes at the stations. It might be a long time now till we see the States again once we leave.

I’ll try and drop you a line tomorrow if I have time, otherwise Margaret, you might have to wait a while to hear from me. Let’s hope for the best of everything and may God bless and keep you.

Lovingly, Arnold”

The Duevel family was known for their love of a good party and across the decades countless reunions and gatherings took place, often at the farm, their



home in town or the Royalton Legion. Surrounded by family and friends, the joint 100th birthday party in 2018 for Arnold and Margaret will long be remembered fondly. Even with the limitations created by Covid-19, Arnold's 102nd birthday on August 1, 2020, was celebrated in style with a parade including a veterans' honor guard, police car and fire truck. Vehicles full of family and friends rolled past as Arnold smiled, waved and greeted them from the front entrance of the Little Falls Care Center.

Six weeks before they were married in 1946, Margaret wrote to Arnold, "A couple of months from now I hope the moon comes out like now because at 10:30 I'm going to walk with you to the gate and that hike might just as well have moonshine & starlight added to make it perfect for a lover's parting."

Although parted by Margaret's passing in October 2018, destiny has once again aligned the "moonshine & starlight" for this couple to be reunited. We wish Arnold and Margaret a fond reunion in heaven.

