

NO PHOTO Elliott, Edward Gregory

Eagle, ID

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Edward Gregory Elliott, Eagle, died at home Wednesday, March 5, 2008, just hours before his 94th birthday. His children were by his side.

Ed was born in Boise on March 6, 1914, to Jesse Robb and Edward G. (Pete) Elliott. He grew up outside of town along a small dirt road called Fairview Avenue and attended Cole School, which was a short walk from his home.

The Great Depression hit while Ed was attending Boise High School. During the summers he bucked hay for 10 cents an hour plus a couple of meals a day. At school he was a stand-out athlete, earning nine athletic letters. Twice he was named all-state football end. He was a star punter as well, averaging 48 yards a kick. He was named all-state basketball center and set the state high jump record of 5 feet 11 inches in 1932, jumping Western role style. After high school, the University of Idaho recruited him, high hopes that he would do great things for their football team.

Instead of becoming a hero on the football team, however, in the fall of 1933, just before the start of his sophomore year at the U of I, he became a hero in his hometown of Boise when he leapt from his bedroom window and put himself between his father and an armed man who was siphoning gas from the family car. Ed was shot and critically wounded while saving his father.

He was lauded for his heroism on the front page of the Boise Statesman. During the months he recovered at St. Luke's hospital, he watched former Boise High classmates attending school at the brand-new Boise Junior College next door. It was two years before he was strong enough to return to the U of I. His football career never recovered.

He was active in the ROTC Calvary program at the university, enlisted in the Idaho National Guard in 1936, and served in the Army Reserve as a second lieutenant in 1938. At the same time he was a CCC company commander in the Riddle/Givens Hot Springs and Sun Valley areas.

It was during this time he had a blind date with Mary Price of Boise and fell in love. Then World War II turned everyone's lives upside down. Ed entered active duty in 1942, with the U.S. Army's 96th Infantry Division. While training in California, Ed proposed to Mary and they were married on April 24, 1942, in San Louis Obispo, California.

They lived in a dozen communities along the West Coast from Washington through California for the next two years while Ed was moved from one training facility to another. In the summer of 1944, he was shipped out, leaving Mary and a baby daughter, Linda, behind. By the end of the year Ed's infantry division was invading Leyte Island in the Philippines. On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, they joined the assault landings at Okinawa.

Ed shouldered the responsibilities of battalion executive officer and 2nd Battalion commander during the battles. He earned numerous medals for his service during the war but amazingly was never wounded. When Ed returned from the war, he moved with his family to Twin Falls, where he worked for the

Veterans Administration.

When the opportunity to buy a John Deere farm implement dealership in Burley arose in 1952, he didn't hesitate. He moved his growing family to Burley. Soon Elliott's Inc., was growing, too, moving from a rented Quonset hut to a large building on Main Street and then in 1960, to a large site on Overland Avenue along the Snake River. By the time he retired, Ed had expanded the agricultural business and added industrial equipment stores in Idaho Falls and Jerome.

All this time he remained very active in the Idaho National Guard, eventually serving a total of 31 years in the Army and the National Guard. He was named regimental commander of the 116th Armored Cavalry unit of the Idaho National Guard in 1959, and was promoted to brigadier general when he retired in 1967. Ed's civic and business activities went far beyond his store and the Guard. He served as president of the Burley Chamber of Commerce, was a member and chairman of the Small Business Advisory Council of Idaho, president of the Intermountain Association of Hardware and Implement Dealers, and was a founder and first president of the South Idaho Chamber of Commerce, whose main goal was to promote a regional airport for Southern Idaho.

He was very active in the Democratic Party. He served in many capacities in the state party and was a delegate to the 1968 and 1972 National Democratic Conventions.

Another important contribution Ed made to his home state was his involvement in the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Stanley Basin. Ed and Mary had both traveled the basin and camped there with their families when they were young. They both had great stories about two-day trips over rough roads in Model T Fords. In the mid-'60s, Ed and Mary built a small vacation home there on the flatlands across from the community of Obsidian. When, with Ed's involvement, the recreation area was formed, they had to give up that home, moving their dream to a hill above Fisher Creek, where they built a special place that was loved by the entire family for many decades.

Ed served on many advisory boards for the U.S. Forest Service, including the Sawtooth National Forest Multiple Use Advisory Committee and the Sawtooth National Forest Advisory Board. In 1985, with his National Guard and business years behind him, Ed built a home outside of Declo, Idaho, and began raising and showing Tennessee walking horses. His horses won awards at many walking horse events, and he and Mary traveled around the country participating in shows. Ed served as national director of the Tennessee Walking Horse Association for many years.

In 1996, they built a new home in Eagle, overlooking the Boise River, and returned to the community where they had grown up so many years before. As his health deteriorated, Ed delighted in sitting in his special chair overlooking the sixth tee of the Banbury Golf Course, watching the golfers and waving his encouragement. When he lost his beloved wife, Mary, on Jan. 16, 2004, he lost some of his spirit as well. He is survived by his five children, Linda (Peter) Groom, Pocatello, Ed (Sally) Elliott, McCall, Marilyn (Bob) Meyer, Loreto, Mexico, Laura (Jay DeLong) Elliott, Boise, and Chuck (Kathleen) Elliott, Eagle. He is also survived by nine grandchildren, Samantha and Corwin Groom, Chris and Elliott Meyer, Mary (Cole) Odom and Matt Brown, and Abigail, Megan and Ryan Elliott; by two great-grandchildren, Nicholas and Lacey Brown; and by his brother, George (Kelly) Elliott, Burley. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Mary, his sister, Dorothy Elliott, and one grandchild, Jody Kristen Meyer.