

Harold Williard Johnson

Harold W Johnson, son of Holger and Mable (Coulthart) Johnson was born on 25 April 1919 in Walsh county of North Dakota. Harold was baptized on 27 July 1919 and died on 12 October 1948 in Newfolden, MN. Harold married Avis Gladys Bakke on 7 or 8 April 1947, personal records show 7 April while the church registry shows 8 April. The couple had two children, Helen Marie Johnson and David Leroy Johnson. David later enlisted in the US Navy and served in Vietnam.



Research on his military service was much more difficult to find. According to records of headstone applications for military Veterans, Harold enlisted in the US Army on 9 June 1942 and was discharged on 13 November 1945. His service number was 27-281-142. The application also shows that he received the Good Conduct Medal and the Purple Heart. We knew that he had been wounded during the war and received a pension after discharge. Harold was assigned to Company B of the 702 Tank Destroyer Battalion and there is significant research available on-line regarding this battalion. The Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated on 15 December 1941 at Fort Benning, Georgia and shipped to England on 25 February 1944. The Battalion landed on Omaha Beach on 11 June 1944, shortly after D Day. The Battalion fought at Mortain where they joined with Canadian troops. The Battalion entered Belgium on 5

September and crossed the German border near Gangelst and fought against the Siegfried Line in October and November 1944. The Battalion reached the Elbe River near Magdeburg where they took on occupation duties following Germany's surrender. Company B, of which Harold was a member, received the Distinguished Unit Citation and the Croix De Guerre (Cross of War) for action on 27-30 July 1944. Harold served in a distinguished Company B during the war, was wounded and died as a result of those wounds. Harold Johnson is buried at Bethesda Cemetery in Marsh Grove township, near Newfolden, MN.



Les Bakke's recollections of Harold Johnson.

Since Harold died in 1948 when I was only four years old, I do not remember him other than what my sister Avis Bakke told me. Harold's family lived about a half mile from our farm in Marsh Grove township, Marshall county, Minnesota. Helen and David were close to my age. We grew up together, played together went to Newfolden School.