



Billy Dodson

August 9, 2008

Billy Dodson, 94, of Benton passed away Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008, at Saint Francis Medical Center. Billy Dodson's life began near Vanduser, Mo., on Feb. 4, 1914, six full months before the opening shots of World War I were fired. He was raised on a farm road near Bell City, Mo., and briefly attended a rural school a few miles west of Morley, Mo. Throughout his life, he often recalled those early years when the only means of transportation into town was on muleback or in a buckboard-style wagon. During the worst years of the Depression he rode a west-bound freight train all the way to Idaho with a friend named Hogjaw Meredith on what he euphemistically referred to as a "sightseeing" tour. He subsequently returned to Idaho with five friends jammed into a Model A Ford with a rumble seat to seek work in the potato fields. He reminisced about the six of them, completely exhausted, stopping by the side of the road just north of Jackson, Wyo., to sleep on the ground or leaning against a tree. He was drafted into the Army in early 1941, and immediately appreciated three guaranteed meals a day and an endless supply of buddies. In December 1941, he was on leave and hitchhiking from south Texas to Morley, Mo., when Pearl Harbor was attacked. When he arrived at home he was immediately greeted with the telegram that sent him back to his base. He served in both the Pacific and Europe, fighting through France and Germany and earning several battle stars. He was discharged in the fall of 1945 and returned to his home in Blodgett, Mo. He was hired as an electrical lineman by the REA in the 1950s and married Ruth Adams on Aug. 23, 1955, in

Bloomfield, Mo. He was a devoted husband and father who worked hard for his family. He never failed to respond to the midnight work calls during thunderstorms, ice storms or in the aftermath of an occasional tornado. He retired from the REA in 1976, and moved to Benton in 1992. In his later years, he was widely known for his dry wit, understated and gracious good humor, warm heart and outgoing and friendly personality. He was also a talented musician and gifted storyteller who could always be relied upon to entertain friends and family. His life spanned some of the most important events in human history, and in many of those he was an active participant. He represented the noblest qualities of the American spirit and he was universally loved by those who knew him. He will be missed. He is survived by his children, Vicki LeGrand, Christy LeGrand and Billy Dodson; and his three grandsons, Joseph Dodson, Thomas Dodson and Andrew Mothershead. He was preceded in death by his parents, Lee and Bertha Enscoe Dodson; his wife, Ruth; four brothers, Paul Dodson, Mack Dodson, Joe Dodson and Ward Dodson; three sisters, Ora, Loma and Grace; and one grandson, Daniel Mothershead. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Monday, August 11, 2008 at Ford and Sons Benton Chapel in Benton. The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, August 12, 2008 at the chapel, with Pastor Dennis Lowe officiating. Burial will be in Blodgett Cemetery, with full military rites by the Missouri Honor Team.

Tribute Wall

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“ We only know Mr. Dodson through the tales of his son, Billy, and yet we feel that not having met him is our great loss. As another wise and witty authentic American citizen, father, husband, and warrior passes, our thoughts and prayers are with you all. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful, departed, rest in peace.

Philip and Sandra Brou - December 08, 2008 at 12:00 AM