

Walter Wade Pannell | 1924-2015

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Walter Wade Pannell, 90, formerly of Wise County, died Thursday, July 30, 2015, in Carrollton, attended by his family and caregivers of Sonoma House.

Pannell was born on a farm near Wolfe City Sept. 3, 1924, to General G. Pannell and Olive Dees Pannell. Pannell was raised in rural Hunt and Fannin Counties and attended Trenton High School. At age nineteen, he volunteered to serve his country in World War II as a soldier in the United States Army. He was trained as a rifleman, assigned to the First Infantry Division and sent to fight in Europe against Nazi Germany. In the fall of 1944, a few miles east of the Belgian/German border, Pannell's Big Red One Division was thrown against the forces of Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model in the longest engagement on German soil during the war – the Battle of Hürtgen Forest. Pannell fought bravely and sustained grievous and extensive combat wounds, the scars of which he bore the rest of his life.

After his honorable discharge from the Army in 1945, Pannell returned to Texas, where he met and married Doris Ann Wessels, his wife of more than 65 years. Out of their marriage three children were born: a daughter, Barbara Pannell Shields; a son, William Wade Pannell; and another daughter, Judith Pannell Kockos. Pannell is survived by his wife and children, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Pannell was known for his boundless energy, rugged independence and enthusiasm for hard work. He understood machinery and spent most of his working life employed by the

DeVilbiss Company, traveling the world as a customer service representative, installing, trouble-shooting and fixing the company's industrial equipment to keep its customers happy.

Pannell was also known for his skills at farming and fruit and vegetable gardening. He was generous with those skills and his time. When his wife's father, who had farmed the land in Runnels County for a half-century, grew old and ill, Pannell spent his vacations working his father-in-law's fields to keep the Wessels family farm going. After retirement from DeVilbiss, Pannell and his wife moved to Ballinger, the community of Pannell's German immigrant family. There he worked tirelessly in the barns and fields of his wife's cousins, solely for the pleasure of their company.

The Pannells ultimately returned to North Texas, settling first in Parker County and then Wise County, their last independent residence before coming to Sonoma House.

Pannell enjoyed listening to music of all kinds, but particularly big band arrangements and military marches. He was a devotee of WRR. He was an excellent baker and cook. Not content with working all day in the sun, he would busy himself with his wife in the kitchen. He could quilt and sew and often worked with his wife in making beautiful traditional quilts for family and friends. A man for all seasons, there wasn't much he couldn't do. When he could spare the time, he liked to fish.

Pannell's wife and children wish to thank the caregivers of the Memory Unit of Sonoma House for their faithful service and many kindnesses shown to him during his last illness.

Pannell's ashes will be interred with military honors in the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, 2000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas 75211, on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2015, at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Pannell's memory to The Wise County Veterans Group.