



Ernest Allen Bridwell

August 15, 1915 - October 23, 2010

Lifelong Gazelle resident Ernest Allen Bridwell, 95, passed away at Madrone Hospice in Yreka on October 23, 2010. Ernest was born August 15, 1915 at the homestead house on Scarface Road in Gazelle. He was the youngest of six children born to Noah Dolphus and Margaret Lelia (Snodgrass) Bridwell. Ernest attended local schools. He was employed by Long-Bell Lumber Mill in Weed for 38 years (later known as International Paper Company.) He was a member of the Gazelle Grange #380, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was a member of the first group of volunteer fireman for Gazelle Fire Department. He also helped organize the Gazelle Horseman Club along with starting the rodeo grounds in Scarface.

Ernest served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He served 18 months in Bari, Italy as part of the 15th Air Force, 49th Wing, 451 Bomber Squadron from January 6, 1943 to September 19, 1945. During that time he was awarded the Soldier's Medal for "heroism at great risk of life" in a non-combat situation. According to the letter sent by the U.S. Army to Ernest's mother, after observing an aircraft that crashed and burst into flames, he and other soldiers "Heedless of the intense heat from burning fuel, together with the imminent danger of explosion, with complete disregard for their personal safety, made their way through the blazing debris to successfully remove several seriously injured crew members." He was also authorized to wear a second Bronze Cluster with his Distinguished Unit Badge.

While on leave Ernest married Mary Crechriou on July 8, 1945 at St. Joseph's

Catholic Church in Yreka. He had to return to duty on July 25th. The couple set up home in Gazelle and raised three children, Gertrude Ann "Trudi," Martin and Roger. Ernest enjoyed ranching, horseback riding and cattle drives throughout Siskiyou County.

One time while doing his chores around his barnyard he told his son, with a big smile, "I'm a very rich man, look at what I have" while pointing to an old hen with a half dozen chicks. Then pointing to the hillside behind the barn where two new baby calves were running around in circles amongst the spring wildflowers. "This is my way of believing in God." After Ernest's retirement from International Paper Company he could easily be spotted driving down the streets of Gazelle in his pickup full of dogs on his way to care for his livestock at the "barn" or "meadow."

Ernest is survived by his wife of 65 years, Mary; his daughter and son-in-law Trudi and George "Mike" Haggerty of Newark, CA; his son Martin Bridwell of Grenada, and his son and daughter-in-law Roger and Kim Bridwell of Gazelle. He was the beloved grandfather of nine grandchildren: James Haggerty of Newark, Shelley Lumm and husband John of Brentwood, Martin "Andy" Bridwell and wife Debra of Grenada, Gabe and Shelly Bridwell of Big Springs, Tim Bridwell of Red Bluff, Cole Bridwell of Shasta Lake City, Quentin Bridwell of Montague, Carolyn Bridwell of Alturas and Janice Bridwell of Chico. He will also be greatly missed by his fourteen great grandchildren: Savannah and Johnathan Lumm; Jessie, Martin "Drew" and Randall Bridwell; Danielle, Conner, Jake, Jacqueline, Ava, Isabelle and Molly Bridwell; Tate and Tyler Bridwell. He also leaves behind extended family members Merry Wood of Pondersa, Marsha Pitkin of Grenada, Nick and Heather Wood of Yreka, Candace and Jeff Deaton and family of Alturas. Family and close friends who knew and loved him best will also miss him dearly.

A visitation will be held Friday, October 29, 2010 from 7:00 to 8:00 PM at Girdner Funeral Chapel. A funeral service will be held Saturday, October 30, 2010 at 11:00 AM at Girdner Funeral Chapel. Private burial will be at the Gazelle Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Madrone Hospice,

255 Collier Circle, Yreka, CA 96097 or to a charity of one's choice.