REMEMBERING

John Bowles

August 5, 1917 - June 30, 2019

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John William Bowles of Balfour, BC passed away of natural causes at 101 years of age on June 30, 2019 in his own home, surrounded by his loving family.

John was born at Vegreville, Alberta on August 5th, 1917, to John Thomas Bowles and Irene Boorse Bowles (nee Connolly).

John spent his early years in Alberta, and was raised mainly on the family farm at Reed Lake, near Clyde. In 1935 John and his siblings Russell and Kenneth left the prairies and drove to Balfour, where John immediately felt at home, and where he chose to spend most of his life.

John found work on the Arthur Noakes farm, where he fell in love with Grace Noakes and married her in 1939. They moved to Zeballos, B.C. where John worked as a gold miner until he enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1943, leaving his wife Grace and children Bette and John Jr. at home.

John became a member of the Irish Regiment of Canada, trained to be a wireless operator, and went overseas in 1944. His Unit was assigned to the Italian Campaign. John's son Britt was born while he was deployed in Europe.

On September 27, 1944 while John was on field patrol with his platoon he suffered a shrapnel wound and was captured by enemy forces. He spent more than 7 months as a Prisoner of War in Italy and Austria before World War II ended in May 1945, at which time he was repatriated to England. He finally arrived home in September 1945.

Upon his return from overseas, John held several jobs, including delivering heating coal and working in the McDonald Jam Factory before purchasing the Balfour Store

from Charles Holt. John and Grace operated the Balfour General Store from 1946 until they retired in 1973. The store included the Balfour Post Office, Esso gas pumps, and a telephone exchange until automatic telephone dialing became common. John was the Postmaster at Balfour for more than 25 years. The store remains vibrant today, and is known currently as the Balfour Superette.

Between 1951 and 1956, children Sidney, Kevin and Kathleen arrived. All the children began their working lives as employees of the store.

John was a pillar of the community, very much a credit also to his wife Grace. He was involved in many community initiatives, including the creation of the Balfour Irrigation System and the Balfour Golf Course. Due to its remote location, the Balfour General Store had an oxygen resuscitator kit for reviving drowning victims, and a fire suppression kit for immediate forest fire response. John was known to suddenly dash away with one of these kits to provide aid when needed.

John always enjoyed a game of golf. This was evidenced by his work with the Balfour Recreation Commission, developing the local public golf course. His retirement property, which he purchased under the Veteran's Land Act following WWII, shared a property line with the Balfour Golf Course, and John had membership #1. His round of golf was usually concluded with a glass of scotch on the 19th hole.

John was also very proud of the fact that in 1987, along with fellow curlers George Beaudry, Red Koehle and Bill Holland, they won the first-ever Canadian Masters Curling Championship in Regina.

John was predeceased by his parents Thomas and Irene, brothers Russell, Kenneth, and Alec, sister Irene, daughter Bette Irene (1958), wife Grace Nellie (2001), and grandson Ian Conor (2007).

He is survived by his siblings, Joan and Wayne; children John Jr., Britt (Beverly), Sidney (Marion), Kevin (Miriam), and Kathleen; ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, and long-time friend Herbert Brown, with whom he shared the same age for half of each year.

John's family wishes to extend a special thank you to the staff of Nelson Cares and La Viva Seniors Living, and particularly to Beth Bearchell and Lynn Webster, who provided wonderful care during his last weeks. Many thanks also to nurses Emma Lesnik and Lia MacRaild from Interior Health for their attentive care. A special thanks also goes out to Dr. Kevin McKechnie for providing exceptional care to John. Dr. McKechnie told John years ago that he would become his first patient to reach 100.

Interment for John W. Bowles was held for close family and friends on July 4, 2019 at the Balfour Cemetery. The family thanks Thompson Funeral Service for their care and assistance.

For those wishing and able to attend, a Celebration of Life for John will take place on August 17th at 2:00 PM at the Balfour Evangelical Covenant Church, 7741 Upper Balfour Road in Balfour.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate that any donations be sent to the

Kootenay Lake Hospital Foundation, 3 View Street, Nelson, B.C., V1L 2V1.