

Wesley E. Bakken and Chrystal A. (Swiggum) Bakken

This is the third in a series of articles that we hope to publish for years to come. With this series we want to honor Service Members that served our great Nation. As I mentioned in the last article we need your help to honor these fine Americans. If you have someone you would like us to include, please help us research and develop articles. Our email address is mhamlegionpost113@gmail.com

This article is about two people that eventually married after serving our Great Country in time of war. Wesley E. Bakken and Chrystal A. (Swiggum) Bakken both served our Country during World War II, Wesley in the Army and Chrystal in the Navy.

Wesley grew up on the Bakken Farm in Springdale Township. He entered the Army in February 1942, shortly after The United States entered World War II. He trained at Camp Tyson, Tennessee and Camp Claiborne, Louisiana before deploying to the European Theater in April of 1944. In his nearly 4 years in the Army he was involved in fighting across Europe from Normandy, through Northern France and on to Germany. Wesley drove a bulldozer onto the shores on D-Day. He was motivated to drive and maintain that bulldozer through the fighting across Europe because he knew that if it broke down he would become an infantryman fighting on the front lines. Wesley was awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the Bronze Star during his time in service. When the war ended he was discharged from Camp Grant, Illinois and returned to farm on the Bakken farm.

Chrystal A Swiggum graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, then in March 1944 entered the Navy, while there was heavy fighting being reported in the newspapers daily. She trained at North Hampton, Massachusetts for Basic Training, and went on to train in meteorology in Norfolk, VA and Lakehurst NJ. As a meteorologist, she attained the rank of LT JG before discharged from the Navy out of Great Lakes, Illinois in June 1946. Chrystal returned to Mount Horeb after the war and married Wesley Bakken.

Wesley and Chrystal married and had two children, Eilleen (Bakken)Mahn and Keith Bakken. They farmed on the Bakken Farm with Wesley's father, Halvor until he died in 1958. They rented the farm initially then purchased it from the estate in 1968. They continued farming while raising their two children.

Chrystal died of cancer in 1971 and Wesley died of a heart attack in 1974. Both put their lives on hold to ensure all of us in our Great Country could maintain the freedoms we all enjoy today.

Let us Never Forget that Freedom is NOT Free

Compiled by Jerry Hook

Wesley E. Bakken and Chrystal A. (Swiggum) Bakken

