

George W. Blair

George Warren Blair, a man of integrity, determination, and courage passed away on January 1, 2020, at the age of 98.

George was born August 24, 1921, in Sturgis, SD, to Harry and Elizabeth (Johnson) Blair. He was raised on the Blair family ranch near Sturgis with his older sister, Evelyn, and younger sister, Mary. He attended grade school at the Upper Pleasant Valley School and graduated from Sturgis High School in 1939.

In the spring of 1942, he took flying lessons at Spearfish, SD, and enrolled in classes at Black Hills State Teachers College. He met his future wife, Viola Hays, in Algebra class there.

George enlisted in the Army Air Corps in the fall of 1942, and served as a B-25 bomber pilot in the Pacific Theater. On his 47th mission, his plane received enemy fire, and George ditched the plane in the South China Sea. He and all but one of his crew were rescued by a U.S. submarine.

On November 4, 1945, George married Viola Hays in Kent, WA. They ranched in Harding County and in 1956, the family moved to the family ranch near Sturgis.

George led an adventurous life. He hiked the Grand Canyon in his 70's, hiked Bear Butte in his 80's, and tubed down Spearfish Creek in his 90's. For 57 years, his constant companion was his wife, Viola. He was her caregiver for several years before her death in 2002.

His children marveled at his ability to recite poetry, work jigsaw and crossword puzzles, play Scrabble, discuss sports, talk about the weather and politics, and recall local family histories.

George was active in many local and state organizations. He was a member and elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis. He was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives in 1978 and served 4 terms in Pierre.

George and Viola raised nine children. George is survived by eight children, Jan Pharr, Mary Beth (Brian) Cornelius, Nancy (Galen) Remington, Gayle (Russ) Urban, Jerry (Kim) Blair, Kathleen (Jeff) Skalbeck, Ann (Gary) Uhde, and Jeff (Cindy) Blair. George is also survived by his sister, Mary (Don) Tech; 26 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

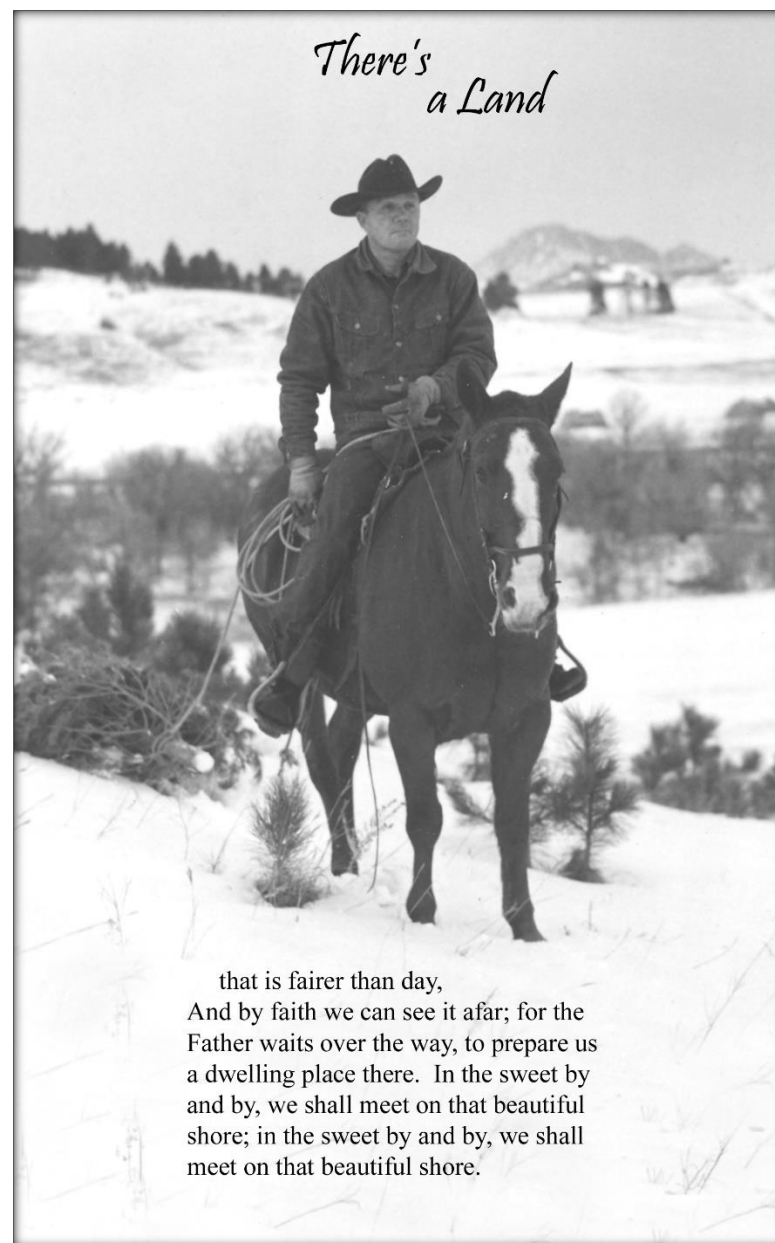
He was preceded in death by his oldest son, John, in 1978; his wife, Viola, in 2002; and his sister, Evelyn, in 2016.

Memorials will be directed to the First Presbyterian Church in Sturgis, and the High Plains Western Heritage Center in Spearfish.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

In celebration of our dad's life and service to his church, his community, and his country, we invite all of you to join us for fellowship and a meal at the church. Thank you for your prayers and words of comfort.

In Loving Memory Of



George W. Blair

August 24, 1921 ~ January 1, 2020

*In Loving Memory Of
George Warren Blair*



Psalm 121 (NKJV)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
My help *comes* from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

John 10:10

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Luke 23:43

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

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George Warren Blair*

Born

August 24, 1921
Sturgis, South Dakota

Died

January 1, 2020
Spearfish, South Dakota

Funeral Service

Monday, January 6, 2020 at 1p.m.
First Presbyterian Church
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiants

Reverend Paul D. Henschen
Reverend Russell T. Urban

Accompanist

Brenda Schaffer

Soloist

Bob Speirs, accompanied by Leslie Speirs
"Peace In the Valley"

Congregational Hymns

"Joy to the World" "In the Sweet By and By"

Pallbearers

Jeff Blair ~ Jerry Blair ~ Brian Cornelius
Galen Remington ~ Jeff Skalbeck ~ Gary Uhde ~ Russ Urban

Interment with military honor guard

Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota
Soloist: Amanda Odden--"Amazing Grace"