

Gordon Adair Ballagh, 91, of Burwell, Nebraska died July 31, 2012 at the Community Memorial Health Center in Burwell, Nebraska surrounded by his family.

Funeral services will be 10:00 a.m. Friday, August 3, 2012 at the United Methodist Church in Burwell, Nebraska. Burial will be in Cottonwood Cemetery in Burwell. Pastor Stan Gurney will officiate. Visitation will be from 5 – 8 p.m. Thursday at Hitchcock Funeral Home in Burwell. Memorials are suggested to the Burwell Fire Department or the Burwell Veteran's Park.

Gordon was born at home near Ballagh, Nebraska in northern Garfield County on January 19, 1921 to Robert A. and Harriet E. (Gumb) Ballagh, Jr.

Gordon grew up on a ranch with his parents and siblings in northern Garfield County.

After graduating from Burwell High School in 1938 he worked at home with his father. In the spring of 1941 he went to Buffalo, New York and began working at the Curtiss Wright airplane factory as a sheet metal Fitter, building O-52 observation planes and P-40 fighter planes.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Aviation Cadet branch of the United States Army in January of 1942 and received cadet training in Alabama, Florida, Texas and Louisiana being commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant and qualified as Bombardier Navigator, then on to Walla Walla, Washington for heavy bomber training. He and his crew on a B-17 bomber then arrived in England in October of 1943 and were soon making bombing raids over Germany and occupied countries. On December 1, 1943, his plane was shot down on a mission over the Ruhr Valley in Germany. After being taken prisoner by the German's, he was taken to Lille, France then to Stalag Luft 1 prison camp at Barth Germany where he remained for eighteen months until the close of the European Theater of World War II in 1945.

Gordon married Marjorie Ellen Rowse on August 22, 1945 at the United Methodist Church in Burwell. They began their married life on the Ballagh Homestead ranch north of Burwell, and he continued ranching there until poor health required him to move to the Community Memorial Health Center in October of 2010.

Gordon enjoyed the challenges and joys that ranching brings, being one of the first in this area to have Angus cattle, buying his first in 1946. Most of all he enjoyed raising his five children on the ranch. As the children married and grandchildren began to come visit, it was Gordon's greatest delight to take them out to feed bucket calves, gather eggs from the chicken house, ride horseback, or ride a 4 wheeler and tractor. He would gather everyone together to make ice cream using the old hand crank maker. His favorite was peanut brittle. Throughout his life he gave evidence of his love for God, family and country. He was very active in his community, where he served in various positions. He was a Sunday School teacher, superintendent, and board member of his church. He was on the advisory council at Nebraska Christian School and served on various school boards. He was one of the original directors of the Rodeo Telephone Company and served in this capacity until it sold. He was a treasurer of the Garfield County Historical Society. He was on the election board for many years. He was a Red Cross Chairman and a member of the Garfield County planning commission and a many time 4-H leader. He enjoyed being a

player on the Ballagh baseball team. Gordon had strong faith in God and set a good example to his family.

Gordon is survived by five children: Rowan and Phyllis Ballagh of Amelia, Nebraska, Janell and Paul Jochim of Chicago, Illinois, Lynn and Amy Ballagh of Burwell, Nebraska, Ronda and Tom Gunther of North Ogden, Utah and Eric and Debbie Ballagh of Burwell, Nebraska. Eleven grandchildren: Kalynn and Chad Scoular of Rapid City, South Dakota, Adair Ballagh of Burwell, Nebraska, Jill Jochim of Chicago, Illinois, Jami & Matt Crow of Peoria, Illinois, Aaron and Cami Ballagh of Amelia, Nebraska, Ryan and Tesha Ballagh of Idaho Falls, Idaho, Devyn Ballagh of Burwell, Nebraska, Kellen Ballagh of Burwell, Nebraska, Brandon Ballagh of Lincoln, Nebraska, Heather and Justin Ratliff of Chandler, Arizona, Charissa Ballagh of Omaha, Nebraska and five great-grandchildren, Aliyah Scoular, Benny and Ella Crow, Nolan and Maclaine Ballagh, a sister Edith Weller of O'Neill, Nebraska and a brother-in-law, Everett Rowse of Burwell, Nebraska.

Gordon was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Marjorie on February 17, 1999 a brother, Glen Ballagh and a sister, Esther Knight.