

## John W. Labertew

7-22-2003  
Funeral services for John W. Labertew, 86, were held Friday, July 25, 2003, at 10 a.m. at the United Methodist Church in Wheatland, with Reverend Les Ludlam officiating and Reuben Best as Eulogist.

Interment with military rites conducted by the Wyoming National Guard will be in the Wheatland Cemetery at Wheatland.

Mr. Labertew died Tuesday, July 22, 2003, at the Platte County Memorial Hospital in Wheatland.

John was born November 29, 1916, in Mitchell, Neb., the son of Norval V. and Maudie (Newell) Labertew. In 1918, the family acquired a homestead at Moresprings, Wyoming, which was located between Jay Em

and Lusk, Wyo.

After a few years, the family returned to Mitchell where John rode horseback to attend grade school and high school at Mitchell. In high school, John played football and in 1935, he made "All State" and was invited to play football at Boulder for the University of Colorado.

John decided to enroll in Scottsbluff Junior College at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, in 1938, and also began a program initiated by President Roosevelt called Civilian Pilot's Training Program. In 1940, he graduated from Junior College and received a "private" flying certificate from the Everett Hogan Flying School at Scottsbluff. Thus, John's "love of flying" began.

He did some local work as a "ferry pilot" and, after a few hurdles, he entered the Army Air Corps Cadet Program on March 21, 1942, in Texas.

John trained in the PT-19, B-13, AT-6, and the Republican P-43, receiving his wings on

December 13, 1942. In 1943, he began flying the B-24, a four-engine plane, and then the super fortress B-29 Program came along. John made Airplane Commander and had an 11-man crew known as the "Labertew Crew".

On March 1, 1945, his crew received orders to fly to Tinian, one of the Mariano Islands in the South Pacific, about 1,780 miles south of Japan. After flying numerous missions over Japan, John came home in October of 1945. In May of 1943, John married Peggy Hoagland and they later divorced.

After his discharge from the service, John worked in Cheyenne for Cheyenne Light and Fuel and then at his family's ranch at Dubois, Wyo.

In June of 1950, he began working for the Wyoming Highway Department as a highway land surveyor and retired in 1979.

John married Doris Rinker Robbins in Gering, Neb. on November 17, 1956. John collected memorabilia on flying, which was his passion; but, he also enjoyed fishing, football, and visiting

with his family and friends, especially his "flying buddies".

John was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Wheatland United Methodist Church, and past member of the American Legion.

He is survived by his wife, Doris of Wheatland; two daughters, Connie Cunningham of Newcomerstown, Ohio and Judy Allison of San Antonio, Texas; three step-daughters, Suzanne Carey of Wheatland, Diane Siewert of Wausau, Wisc., and Barb Moody of Wheatland; 11 grandchildren; and 21 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; three sisters, Wilma Nelson, Audrey Bayne, and Zoe Johnson; and one great grandchild.

Memorials to the United Methodist Church, 907 - 9th Street, or Platte County Memorial Hospital, 201 - 14th Street, Wheatland, WY 82201 would be appreciated by the family.

Gorman Funeral Homes - Platte Chapel of Wheatland is in charge of the arrangements.