

240 Miles on a Lawnmower

On Nov. 12, 1996, Alvin Boone Straight – a veteran of World War II and the Korean War – died of a heart ailment, but his legacy of love will be remembered for generations to come.

During the summer of 1994, Straight was 74 years old and unable to drive because of poor eyesight. His brother, Henry, had suffered a stroke, and Alvin desperately wanted to see him.

As Alvin sized up his options, he decided his only mode of transportation was his riding lawnmower. So, he set off in early July from his home in Laurens, Iowa, to visit his ailing brother in Blue River, Wisconsin.

He attached a trailer to his lawnmower to carry gasoline, clothes, food and camping gear. Traveling along highway shoulders, the lawnmower broke down in West Bend, Iowa, four days and 21 miles into the trip. Straight spent \$250 on replacement points, a condenser, plugs, a generator and a starter. After traveling another 90 miles, he ran out of money in Charles City, Iowa, and camped there until his next Social Security checks arrived in August.



On Aug. 15, Straight's lawnmower broke down again when he was two miles from his brother's house near Blue River. A farmer stopped and helped him push it the rest of the way. At a top speed of 5 miles per hour, the trip took six weeks in all.

After the visit, Straight's nephew drove him back to Iowa in his pickup truck. When Paul Condit, president and general manager of Texas Equipment Company in Seminole, Texas, heard about the trip, he gave Straight a 17-horsepower John Deere riding lawnmower worth \$5,000.



What an amazing story! This 74-year-old man had traveled 240 miles on a lawnmower to affirm the love and concern he had for his brother. Henry Straight recovered from his stroke and moved back to Iowa to be closer to his family.

(more)

Such love will not be forgotten. Maybe that's why his funeral procession included family members pulling a trailer with a lawnmower on top.

In Life Care and Century Park, we have opportunities, more than most people do, to establish legacies of love. And our associates prove it every day.

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter