John Eugene

-by Cliff Bennett

All words stand for certain meanings, so does every person. The word Johnnie applied to this person stands for a unique combination of attributes; there is only one Johnnie that acts on the stage of life and has established a consistent character. This has been established as Johnnie not John for it was form related in his younger years. Even today he is still called Johnnie by most people.

Johnnie never attended the University nor did he receive a certificate or diploma in higher education, but to say he was not educated would be a gross prevarication. Some people have 50 years experience but others have one year experience 50 times. So it is with Johnnie. Whatever experience he has had became part of himself, and he has had a broad experience, and he is not satisfied until he understands his experience. Specialists in many fields can get a few pointers from Johnnie for he understands what he talks or thinks about, how some others may have memorized a few words without understanding. One tribute to Johnnie would be these words “Johnnies no dumb bell” Many of his acquaintances will know what it means. On many occasions others have sought his advice and help on a problem they could not master in spite of their education. This may have been some satisfaction to Johnnie but has not caused him to exalt himself. In his own eyes he is the same Johnnie.

As Johnnie is his own man, his activity has been in a manner so as not to seek the limelight. Most of his service has been in activity which escaped the notice of most people other than those directly in contact with it, but the effect is there and is for reaching. In his earlier experiences he was active in athletics. Acrobatic tumbling was a specialty. He also excelled in boxing and was a good swimmer, all of which created a development which has carried forth to this day. What he can do will surprise many.

In spite of what has been said before, Johnnie could not hide all of his talents from the majority. He has not sought leadership among the affairs of men, but has been sought out by those who have their eyes opened, and he has served in several capacities that were not too public. Indeed in

many fields he has assisted leaders who apparently received most of the credit. In church affairs Johnnie has given service in some ways after the same pattern as before mentioned. He has served on church building committees, sometimes as chairman but in every case a prime advisor. He also used his many talents on welfare projects. Also there was service on the church farm committee. In a more public way he served on the Seventy Priesthood presidency set up. He was a mutual teacher at one time. He was on the Lethbridge stake high priest committee for some years. He has travelled throughout the stake with the high Council for sometime also.

An outstanding quality of Johnnie is that whatever he does he does well or he won't do it. This quality probably received its first initial development several years ago. At this time a project of building a model stagecoach (body by fisher), required a great deal of time, patience and skill. After the completion the result was worthy of a place in national competition. In Johnnie's younger years he had many ambitions and desires, many of which, because of circumstances he had to forgo. Later as circumstances changed, the opportunity to live according to some of these desires was again presented. One of these was the desire to fly. Taking advantage of the conditions that presented themselves he pursued and obtained a pilots license and an airplane. In his pursuit of both of these, he went the extra mile mastering both theory and practice for the requirements of pilot and navigator. He also made it possible for his two oldest sons to each obtain a pilot license. Also he has supported both of these sons on a mission to France and a third son Tommy is presently on a mission to Australia.

As a man Johnnie meets the requirements and is a good neighbour, sometimes ascertaining needs before they become apparent. One of his latest hobbies is a study of astronomy. He probably has a better understanding of this subject than anyone in the vicinity.

Johnnie was born 8:30 AM Saturday 18th of July 1914 at Taber and received his early education in the Taber school. Being much mechanically minded and practically inclined, he received development from several projects and informative literature available at the time. This practice has continued to the present time, resulting in several were the creations and new ideas on present day information. One of these is a new concept of a

solar clock, the development of which is now adent. Johnnie married Ray Mendenhall sixth of July 1939 in the Cardston temple. They have had eight children, David John who passed away as an infant, Dale Eugene, Carolyn, Jerold Evan, Barbara, Thomas Edwin, Lorna and Leif Eric. From the current marriages of these children Dale and his wife have four children and Carolyn and husband have three. This makes nine grandchildren for Johnnie and Rae, and Barbara has one son.