



**John  
James**  
*Army*

## John James

Jan 15, 1922 - Dec 29, 2020

**BIRTHPLACE:** Clay Center, KS

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### SOLDIER DETAILS

**HIGHEST RANK:** Tech 4

**DIVISION:** Army, 132nd Infantry

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** Pacific

**SERVED:** Oct 2, 1942 - Dec 7, 1945

**BATTLE:** Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea,  
Luzon

**MILITARY HONORS:** Bronze Service Arrowhead  
Pacific Theater Cir 4465 WD44 American Service  
Medal, Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, Philippine  
Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Service Star,  
World War II Victory Medal, Good Conduct

**HONORED BY:** John E. James, Stan & Marilyn  
James Copeland, Linda James Heitman

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### BIOGRAPHY

John "Russell" James, born in the farmhouse in Exeter township near Idana (southwest of Clay Center, KS) on 15 January 1922, grew up the oldest of twelve farm children and became responsible for operating the family farm at age fourteen when his father's gangrenous appendix ruptured, completely sidelining the head of the family for more than a year. "Tough times forge tough people," and the Great Depression did that for all Kansas farm families. His terminal education was the 8th grade in the Hebron one-room school, but he was always brilliant: "had a PhD in his hands." "If you can break it, Russell can fix it," a handy skill for a soldier (Oct 1942 – December 1945), engine-mechanic-Cat-skinner, tire-recapper, electrical handyman all during the Pacific island-hopping. He was trained and toughened for that national military by God's providential provision through Kansas' 1930's depression. Clay County country-boys adapt, so Russell became a master cat operator off-loading U.S. war materials from Navy Cargo ships onto jungle islands occupied by well-prepared Nipponese . . . and lived to tell about it! Neither the rats nor their mites nor the mosquitoes nor the dehydrated eggs-and-spam sidelined him . . . unlike so many less fortunate American soldiers. Discharged on 7 December 1945 (God has a sense of humor) as a Tech 4, 19 days later he married his grade school friend, Betty; it lasted just one day short of 59 years. Ex-Tech four James took a (low-pay) farm laborer

job, but worked double and triple jobs with borrowed equipment and invested in a few cows. By 1980 Russell's health forced his retirement from farming, but not from family, church or Clay County, as he continuously served people by fixing little things that go bad –notably sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, miscellaneous household appliances –at no or low cost to the elderly and widowed. His daughters furnished four children for U.S. military service –three are retired but still working “for God and Country,” like all their forefathers. We are proud that our dad, our hero, was “one of Ike's boys.”