

When you lived your life for others
and you loved *without condition*
When you made so many laugh and your
smile won't be forgotten
When you left behind an empty place
that no one else can fill
When the friendships that you shared
long to be renewed
When you built your life on hope
and fulfilled it every day
The *footprints* that you left behind
So, *goodbye* will bring us face to face
is not forever,
You're only steps away.



Strength Hope

every · courage · honor · respect · bravery · courage · honor · respect · b

LaVerne Dean Stephens was born at home on the farm in Beadle County near Hitchcock, SD, on November 14, 1937, to Ellis (Spike) and Edna (Tollefson) Stephens. He passed away September 26, 2017, following a long and complicated journey with Lewy Body Dementia.

After LaVerne's mother, Edna, passed away, he lived with relatives for a short time before returning to live with his father and stepmother Lillian (Christianson) Stephens. He graduated from Hitchcock High School in May of 1955 at the age of 17. With his father's signature of approval, he enlisted in the USAF on May 26, 1955.

He served faithfully in Canada, Texas, Alaska, California, South Dakota, Idaho, Greece, and a tour of duty at DaNang Airfield in Vietnam.

In Newfoundland, Canada, he met and married Johanna (Joan) Fitzgerald and together they had 8 children; three daughters: Cathy, Karen, and Laurie, and five boys: Edward, David, Daryl, Daniel, and Darren.

After completing 20 years of service, LaVerne retired with the rank E 6 from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and returned to South Dakota with his family. The marriage didn't survive the transition from military life to civilian life. Joan returned to Idaho and LaVerne remained in South Dakota and they later divorced.

LaVerne was employed by Erie International as a Machinist Mechanic. He met and married his second wife, Connie Ulmer. To this union was born a daughter, Nicole, but the couple later divorced.

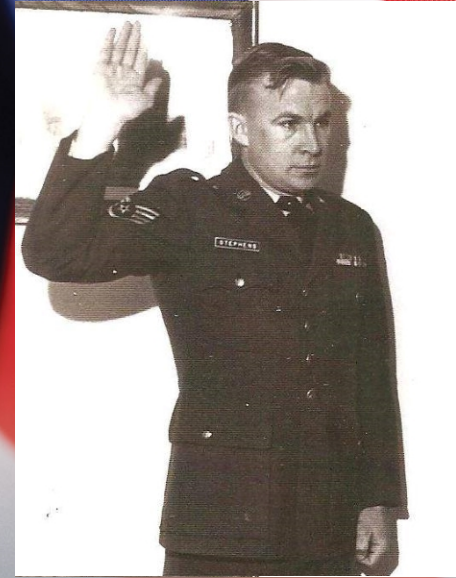
In 1980, LaVerne went to work for the South Dakota Developmental Center-Redfield working in the maintenance department. He worked on the dorms as Direct Care Staff and retired in March of 2000, from the Department of Corrections where he attained the rank of Sergeant. While working at South Dakota Developmental Center-Redfield, LaVerne met and married Barbara (Schiesser) Champion. They were married in January of 1983. Together they lived in Redfield, Tulare, and again in Redfield.

LaVerne loved his children, grandchildren, two pet dogs, and was a huge fan of the Green Bay Packers. He also loved the Minnesota Twins and Notre Dame Football.

Thankful to have been a part of his life are his wife of 34 years, Barb; and his nine children and spouses: Cathy (Ron) Fink, Redfield; Nicole (Ron) Schultz, Redfield; Karen Bevan, Clemmons, NC; Ed (Anja) Stephens, Germany; Laurie (Steve) Rierson, Twin Falls, ID; Darren (Angie) Stephens, Idaho Falls, ID; David (Lisa) Stephens, Layton, UT; Daryl Stephens, Gilbert, AZ; and Dan (Judie) Stephens, Port Orchard, WA. He is also survived by two brothers: Floyd "Ole" Stephens and Dennis "Denny" (Diane) Stephens of Redfield and two sisters: Shary (Jim) Stemper, Hartford, SD, and Brenda (Tom) Svoboda of Schuyler, NE. He is survived by 22 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Lanny, in infancy; his son-in-law, Robert Bevan, and his sister-in-law, Linda Stephens.

every · courage · honor · respect · bravery · courage · honor · respect · braver



In Loving Memory Of

LaVerne Dean Stephens



Born:

November 14, 1937
Beadle County, SD

Died:

September 26, 2017
Redfield, SD

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LaVerne Dean Stephens

Funeral Service

Saturday, September 30, 2017 ~ 2:00 p.m.
Thelen-Hyke Funeral Home ~ Redfield, SD

Officiating

Reverend Marty Toepke-Floyd

Music

Lynette Flint ~ Pianist

Music Selections

On Eagle's Wings Amazing Grace CD Selections

Pallbearers

Darren Stephens	Daryl Stephens	Dan Stephens
David Stephens	Eddie Stephens	Leonard Schiesser

Honorary Pallbearers

Floyd "Ole" Stephens	Dennis Stephens	Terry Schiesser
Ryan Fink	Michael Bevan	Jeremy Stephens
Tanner Stephens	Alec Rierson	Carter Stephens
Joshua Stephens	Austin Stephens	Zachary Stephens
Jake Stephens	Caleb Schultz	Ryder Fink

Military Honors

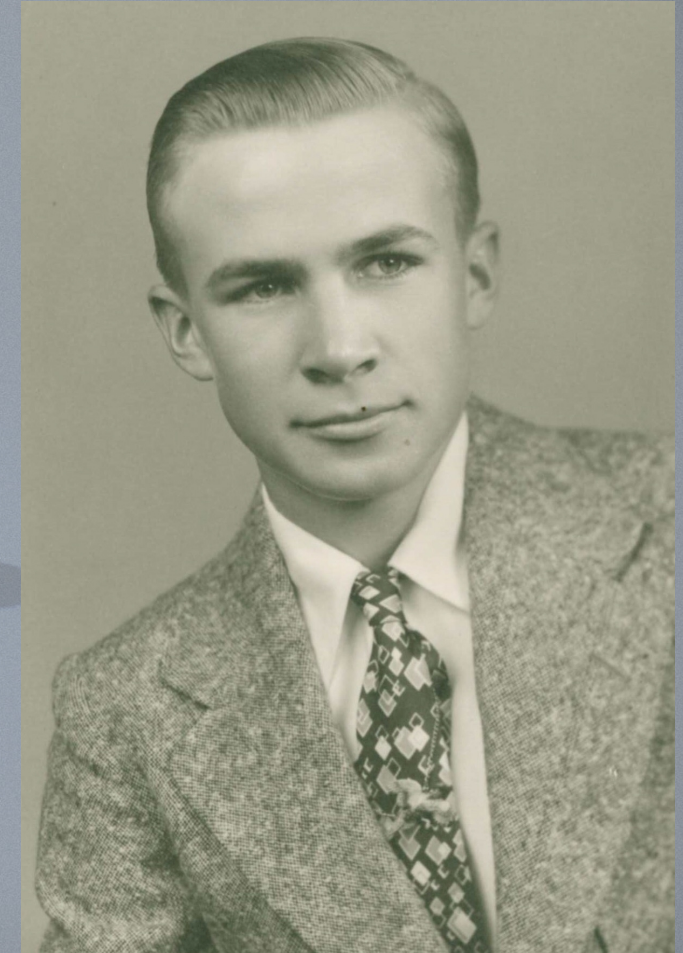
Clay Kiser American Legion Post #92 ~ Redfield, SD
Paul A. Schleher VFW Post #2755 ~ Redfield, SD
Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard ~ Rapid City, SD

Final Resting Place

Greenlawn Cemetery ~ Redfield, SD



Respect Honor



*"Aim High ...
Fly-Fight-Win"*