

## In Loving Memory of Ralph Jacob Fries, Retired Navy CW03



**Ralph Jacob Fries**, Retired Navy Chief Warrant Officer 3, passed away peacefully on January 21, 2025, at 87. Surrounded by the love of his family in his own home, Ralph's passing marks the end of a life defined by devotion—to his family, his country, and the values he held dear. A loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, and friend, Ralph faced his battle with prostate cancer with the quiet courage and resilience that those who knew him had come to admire.

Born in Brewster, Washington, Ralph was the second son of Jacob and Lola (Peckenpaugh) Fries. He grew up on his family's Green Valley farm in the North Star District, where he learned the value of hard work and the beauty of simple living. After completing his education in Seattle, Ralph answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the U.S. Navy. This decision would shape the course of his life.

During his Navy service, Ralph met Harlean, the love of his life and his first wife of 50 years. Together, they embarked on a journey that took them around the world. Ralph dedicated over two decades of service to his nation, rising to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3. While traveling for his military career, they raised two sons, Gary and Glen, who became Ralph's greatest pride and joy.

After retiring from military service, Ralph transitioned to a second career as an Owner-Operator truck driver. For 20 years, he continued to embody his signature work ethic and determination, often sharing his wisdom and sense of humor with those around him. In retirement, Ralph found his true calling: honoring and remembering the sacrifices of his fellow veterans. Tirelessly dedicated to his "heroes," Ralph worked alongside other Vietnam veterans to ensure that the names of countless fallen soldiers were added to the Vietnam Wall Memorial in Washington, D.C. His efforts were a labor of love and a testament to his unshakable loyalty to those who served.

Ralph was also a passionate historian and storyteller. Deeply connected to the land and community where he was raised, he devoted countless hours to researching and preserving the history of the North Star District and Eastern Washington. He shared this rich heritage with others by hosting Pie Socials on the Fries Family Farm, inviting residents of the Okanogan Valley to celebrate the area's pioneer roots. Over the years, he also published ten books documenting the history of Eastern Washington, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Ralph will be remembered as a man of quiet strength, steadfast character, and a heart full of love for his family and community. He is survived by his cherished wife, **Inez Strange-Fries**; his sons, **Gary Fries** and **Glen (Kathy) Fries**; his grandchildren, **Ella (John Wesley III) Davis**, **Eva Fries**, **Ben Fries**, **Marissa Fries**, and **Brady Fries**; and his great-grandchild, **John Wesley Davis IV**. He is also survived by his brother, **Lloyd Fries**; his nieces, **Cathy (Randy) Ford**, **Mary Colenello**, **Susan (James) Sinford**; and his nephew, **Jeff Myers**. Ralph was preceded in death by his parents, **Lola and Jacob Fries**, his sisters, **Mary Fries** and **Edna Gilson**, and his first wife, **Harlean Fries**.

Ralph's life was a testament to the values of service, love, and perseverance. His legacy will live on through the family he adored, the veterans he honored, and the history he worked so tirelessly to preserve.

A graveside service with full military honors will take place at the **National Cemetery Riverside** - 22495 Van Buren Blvd. Riverside, CA 92518, on **Friday, February 21, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. A memorial service will follow at the **Salvation Army in Escondido** - 1301 Las Villas Way Escondido, CA 92026 on **Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 1:00 PM**.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Ralph's memory to the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund**: <https://www.vvmf.org/Support-VVMF/Memorial-Donations>.

Though Ralph's absence leaves a void in the hearts of all who knew him, his family and friends take comfort in knowing that his was a life lived with purpose, kindness, and courage. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.