



## Verne Petersen

February 25, 1917 - July 10, 2018

NORFOLK -- Celebration of life service for Verne Petersen, 101, of Norfolk will be held at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, September 29, 2018 at Stonacek Funeral Chapel in Norfolk with Rev. Terry Buol officiating the service. Burial will take place at Prospect Hill Cemetery in Norfolk following the service. Visitation with the family present will be held from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., Friday, also at Stonacek Funeral Chapel in Norfolk. Verne died Tuesday, July 10, 2018 at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Military rites will be provided by the American Legion Post #16, V.F.W. Post #1644, both of Norfolk, the Nebraska American Legion Riders, and the United States Army Honors Guard. Stonacek Funeral Chapel in Norfolk is in charge of the arrangements.

Verne Petersen decided enough was enough on July 10, 2018 just 8 days before his wife's birthday and 41 days before their 70th wedding anniversary. When you are reduced to drinking tepid thickened coffee and chocolate no longer tastes good, it is time to go. Plus it gave him the best excuse for not acknowledging his wife's birthday or their anniversary. (She was the proud recipient of a new dust pan one year.) He was 101 years and four months and it was his opinion that no one should live that long.

Verne was born in Huron South Dakota February 25, 1917 to a Danish father and a Norwegian mother. He never understood why they gave him a name neither could pronounce and most people misspelled. In later life he grew to

appreciate using this to screen out unwanted solicitations.

Verne took a job with the Chicago & Northwestern Railway in September 1938. He was transferred to Norfolk Nebraska in July of 1940 and drafted and inducted into the Army (August 1941) where he served until October 23, 1945. When offered the opportunity to make the Army his career he emphatically declined and returned to his job with the railroad. He continued to work for the railroad until his retirement in July 1977.

Verne married Anna Lorenzen on August 22, 1948. He was amazed and thankful until the day he died that she said yes. (His Army buddies were also shocked.) Some of his final words were his vow to love her “forever and always.” They raised five children together. He made countless trips to Lincoln helping children move into and out of dorm rooms and apartments with a minimum of complaints.

Verne enjoyed making himself laugh and it didn't matter if anyone else got the joke. Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields, Fred Allen, Rube Goldberg, and James Thurber were some of his favorite humorists. He liked playing with words and could turn anything into a curse. He would talk in song lyrics just to amuse himself and then quiz people on the rest of the lyrics to the songs.

Verne was a collector of stamps (before the infamous chicken stamp honoring the poultry association), arrowheads, coins, fossils, guns, interesting rocks, bits of metal, gears, doorknobs, etc. He liked to share his collections and if visitors were not careful they would often find their vehicles a little heavier when they left.

Survivors include his patient, long suffering spouse Anna Petersen of Norfolk; a daughter Karen (James) Imler of St. Louis, MO; a daughter Helen Petersen of Portland, OR; a son Alan (Melinda) Petersen of Overland Park, KS;

grandchildren: Fred (Nichole) Petersen; David (Rhiannon Kaye) Imler; Sandy (Trish) Petersen; Douglas Imler; Sarah (Karlene Carron) Petersen; great-grandchildren: Hannah, Olive, Owen, Ellie, Albert, Marah, Toby, and Carter; and sisters-in-law Catherine Hansen, Alice Bradley, Betty Lorenzen.

Verne was preceded in death by his parents; his mother-in-law Catherine (Hoos) Lorenzen; his dog Sport; his sister Bernice Petersen; his cat Cat Ballou; his replacement cat Stupid Cat; his sons Loren and Steven Petersen; his daughter-in-law Edith Petersen; most of his classmates; his army buddies; his eye sight, hearing, and most of his teeth; 6 brothers-in-law John Lorenzen, Chris Roth, Brad Bradley, Elmer Hansen, Herman Hansen, and Carsten Lorenzen; his filter; most of his coworkers on the Cheap and Nothing Wasted Railway; his sisters-in law Ruth Hansen and Mildred Lorenzen; all his cars; and most of his cousins. When you live to be over 101, the list gets pretty long.

Condolences may be expressed to the family on-line at [www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com](http://www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Prospect Hill Cemetery - Norfolk

1500 Maple Avenue  
Norfolk, NE 68701

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **28**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Stonacek Funeral Chapel - Norfolk  
1200 N.13th St.  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 371-7676  
[info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com](mailto:info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com)  
<https://stonacekfuneralchapel.com/>

## Service

SEP **29**. 10:30 AM (CT)

Stonacek Funeral Chapel - Norfolk  
1200 N.13th St.  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 371-7676  
[info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com](mailto:info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com)  
<https://stonacekfuneralchapel.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Stonacek Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Verne Petersen*



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**Stonacek Funeral Chapel** - September 26, 2018 at 04:31 PM

AA

*Thanks Verne.*

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**An admirer.** - September 28, 2018 at 08:20 AM



*My condolences to the family. The obit for Verne just showed up on Arizona Channel 15 website. The obit was brilliant. I've never met Verne, but the obit made me feel like I did. This is the link to the website <https://www.abc15.com/news/national/101-year-old-veteran-s-obit-death-is-an-excuse-not-to-get-wife-a-birthday-gift>*

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**Dianne Douglas** - September 28, 2018 at 03:37 PM

SM

*I am so sorry for your loss. Verne really sounded like a remarkable and loved man.  
I feel like I missed out on something amazing because I hadn't ever met him.  
RIP*

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**Sherry Miller** - October 01, 2018 at 03:35 AM

LA

*Saw this obit on Facebook. Brilliant. He'd love it! Take care, Laura*

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**Laura** - October 02, 2018 at 12:20 AM

NE

*It's unfortunate that most of the time we only get to truly know a person once they've passed. Verne's obituary was brilliantly written. Although i'd never met him personally, it gave me quite respect for him. Most people try to cover up what we consider their flaws; he didn't. That's a beautiful thing. The ability to make others laugh and bring joy in the time of sorrow is a heavenly gift that will never die.*

**Nemyf** - October 02, 2018 at 03:44 PM

DO

*First I would like to offer my condolences to Verne's family. We are greatfull for Verne service & sacrifices. He certainly seemed to know how to live & certainly knew when he was ready to go. May his love for his family & his humor ease the pain and comfort those who miss him. Thank you for sharing a bit of him with us all. 🙏*

**Doreen** - January 02, 2019 at 02:59 AM



“ Verne Petersen

October 05, 2023 at 03:46 AM

GS

“ *I wasn't lucky enough to have known Verne, but what a great guy he must have been to share his wonderful humor with the world. I wish you the very best in this hard time and sure wish I'd had the privilege of knowing Verne.*

**Greg Schmidt** - January 03, 2019 at 10:55 PM



“ *I can only say I am so very sorry, sorry the world will now be without this amazing man. I wish I could have known him but thank you for sharing a bit of him with us.*

**Pamela Baker** - January 03, 2019 at 07:11 PM

Jl

“ I didn't know Verne, but after reading his obituary I was left better off for having done so. He sounds like a wonderful man. My father was also an Army veteran, and he died just 3 days after Verne. Coincidentally, I worked for the the Chicago & Northwestern Railway for a time and my dad was employed there for 44 years. I don't know if they ever met, but after reading about Verne I hope they did, as I think Dad would have liked him. This last year I've worked on obituaries for three close family members. After Dad died I followed his up by writing an obituary for myself that is hopefully uplifting and entertaining much like Verne's, and will presumably save my survivors some trouble. I feel we should celebrate a life well lived, as opposed to only mourning our losses, and I applaud the respect given to Verne. I like to think my dad lived a long and satisfying life, and hope that Verne did too. With these many small things in common, I felt like commiserating. I hope you don't mind. I am sorry for your loss and feel for what you may have gone through. I am sure Verne will be missed. Thank you for sharing.

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**Jim** - January 02, 2019 at 09:54 PM

SH

“ So sorry for your loss. I've never met Verne. But I can tell from his obituary that he was a good man with a great sense of humor. I am sure he will be greatly missed.



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**Sherry** - January 02, 2019 at 11:11 AM

KY

“ I didn't know Vern. I did catch that wonderful epitaph written by his daughter. That is probably one of the more insightful ones I have ever read. God bless you all. May he enjoy many card games in the presence of God and I thank you Vern for your service to our country. PS...I hope you meet my dad. He served in the Korean War and worked for the Nickle Plate and the Norfolk and Southern for 63 years.

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**Ken Yagodinski** - October 15, 2018 at 11:01 AM

GO

“ Thank you for sharing Verne's life story in such a wonderful and endearing way. We publish a small town newspaper in Colorado- and wish Verne had been a member of our community!

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**Gretchen Orr** - October 03, 2018 at 12:38 PM

CY

“ Like a lot of people on this tribute wall, I've never met Verne, but can tell he's someone I would like. In fact, I'm guessing he's already in heaven and found my parents who are sharing a laugh with him. I think I'll look him up when I get there. I've got a couple of song lyrics I'd like to share. I'm sorry for your loss.

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**Cheryl Yoder** - October 02, 2018 at 09:43 AM

RH

“ My condolences to the family. I never met Verne....he was always working. But I knew his son Loren. We attended Jenny Walker's advanced algebra class together....at the old Norfolk Senior High School. I got better grades than Loren but he ended up with the Ph.D. in Math. Go figure. Instead, I joined the Navy, circumnavigated the globe, retired, and now work as an immigration fraud officer. I can only imagine what Verne might think of our world today and the current political discourse. I wish you all my best.

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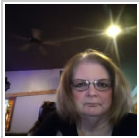
**Ross HECKMAN** - October 01, 2018 at 07:13 AM

MK

“ Condolences from San Francisco, to the family & friends of a man who lived life with humor, love of his country, and devotion to his family.

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**Mary Koenck** - September 29, 2018 at 04:57 PM



“ Verne sounded like a great guy, how wonderful to have 101 years with him but so sorry for your loss. God bless you.

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**Frances Boyd** - September 29, 2018 at 09:07 AM

SA

“ Thank you so much for your service Verne. May all the blessings of good memories surround your family as they celebrate your life. You must have been such an amazing man! RIP dear stranger!

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**Sam** - September 28, 2018 at 11:38 PM



“ We found a copy of his picture from the 1935 Huron High School Yearbook.



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**Michael Waack** - September 28, 2018 at 11:37 PM



“ Ashley Moore sent a virtual gift in memory of Verne Petersen



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**Ashley Moore** - September 28, 2018 at 11:06 PM

BS

“ *My condolences to the family. I have never met or even heard of Mr. Petersen prior to being sent a link to his obituary. On reading, I realised why it had been shared with me.*

*When loved ones pass on, we retain their presence whenever their memory raises a smile or they are thought of or talked of with fondness.*

*Sitting here in Japan, months after his passing - being introduced to Mr Petersen through his obituary that has circled the globe. His 101 years may well be a small part of his legacy, those family members who bade farewell can be assured that his presence and humor and take on life have ensured he will be fondly spoken of by many for many more years - he will always be with you.*

*With deepest respect and - apologies if you feel this tribute to Mr Petersen whom I have never met is in any way intrusive, my intention is to wish the family well, to thank him retrospectively for making me smile and to pay my respects.*

*Regards - BS. Tokyo.*

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**brendan sarsfield** - September 28, 2018 at 10:54 PM

LB

*I don't know any of you, but I loved Verne's obituary and wish I had known him. I'm sorry I can't be there for his services. I have a feeling there will be more laughter than tears ... as it should be. My mother lived to be 109 years and 8 months, so I can relate! May your memories of this remarkable man keep you warm.*

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**Lorraine Boyd** - September 30, 2018 at 12:40 AM

DO

*Verne & family, what a joy life must have been! May his memory and that sense of humor run through the family always. Love the obit & video. The obit was on a Facebook site. Thank you for your service and thank you to your wife for putting up with you! Love, great memories & laughs to all of you!*

Doreen - January 02, 2019 at 02:17 PM

PA

“ *Mr. Petersen's obituary made me smile. Rest in peace sir.*

Patrick - September 28, 2018 at 09:38 PM

WL

“ *I live in Mi. I saw obit of Verne. My kind of guy. RIP*

WL - September 28, 2018 at 04:21 PM

DM

“ *Didn't know this obviously lovely Gentleman but Thanks for your Service. Happy Trails YOUNG MAN!*

Day McGee - September 28, 2018 at 03:28 PM

ST

“ *Prayers for Verne's family. Thank you for your service Sir. I'm sure there's a lot of laughter in Heaven since you arrived!*



Starla - September 28, 2018 at 03:12 PM



Meghan  
Blankensh

“ *Meghan Blankenship lit a candle in memory of Verne Petersen*



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**Meghan Blankenship** - September 28, 2018 at 04:40 AM



SM

“ *I have never met Verne, but I wish I had had the pleasure of his company. His obituary was sent to me by my grandson, who knew I could relate to his sense of humor. I'm sure his wife was blessed by God for having him in her life. My sympathies to all who knew him and loved him.*

*Sandy Mittelstaedt  
Lexington, NE*

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**Sandy J Mittelstaedt** - September 28, 2018 at 12:07 AM



KA

“ *What a true blessing he must have been!! God Speed Soldier!!*

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**Karen** - September 27, 2018 at 09:27 PM



KW

“ *I did not know Verne, but I can tell by his Obit that he was a man of amazing humor surrounded by people with amazing humor. Reading it made me smile after a long day. What a full and amazing life it sounds like you had, and my prayer is that the good memories are the ones that stay strongest for your family to treasure.*

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**Katie W** - September 27, 2018 at 06:17 PM



“ 62 files added to the album Life Tributes



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Stonacek Funeral Chapel - September 26, 2018 at 03:11 PM