



Fair winds and following seas, Gene!



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
EUGENE ROEGIERS
OCTOBER 26, 1934 - NOVEMBER 25, 2024



USS LONG BEACH

In Loving Memory

Eugene Louis Roegiers, 90, of Eagle, ID, passed away Monday, November 25, 2024, at the Edgewood Spring Creek Eagle Island Memory Care Facility. He was born in Jasper, MN, on October 26, 1934, to Cyriel and Louise (DeMunck) Roegiers, the 6th child in a large Belgian farming family. He had many nicknames throughout his life, but the first would be while playing football for Jasper High School: “Bull” Roegiers. One day, he helped a young lady pick up her books on the way to class. Later that year, he picked her up and took her to the high school dance, and the rest, as they say, is history. After graduating high school, Gene received a BS in Business Education from Mankato State College and promptly married his high school sweetheart, Lila (Krapf), on June 10, 1956. The couple settled in Mankato, MN, where Gene taught typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping at Garden City Community High School.

Gene enlisted in the military and attended Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI, where he was commissioned on November 1, 1957. Navy life took the young couple to Corpus Christi, TX, Reykjavik, Iceland (where Son #1 was born), Norfolk, VA, Cape Canaveral, FL, Bremerton, WA (where Son #2 was born), and Long Beach, CA. As a Gunnery and Missile Launch Officer, he was at sea on the USS Independence, the USS Observation Island, and the USS Long Beach. His tours of duty took him to ports in the Mediterranean, Okinawa, Australia, Hong Kong, Hawaii, the Panama Canal, and Saigon, Viet Nam. Tour highlights included the Mercury and Gemini space shots and hosting President Kennedy on his ship. Gene left active duty in 1968 and moved the family to Chicago. He entered federal service there, managing defense contracts, and joined the Navy Reserves. In 1971, Gene took a new position at the Naval Weapons Support Center in Crane, IN, and settled the family in nearby Bloomington, IN.

For Gene, life in Bloomington was centered around his family and his church, Faith Lutheran, where he was a choir member, an elder, a host (with Lila) of many bible study groups, and a volunteer groundskeeper. You can take the boy out of the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy. He was the consummate gardener and was always planting or cultivating something. This earned him his next nickname, “The Garden Weasel.” Lila could barely keep up canning all the produce from their prodigious vegetable garden. What couldn't be eaten was distributed to friends and neighbors. But gardening wasn't his only talent. Gene was skilled in carpentry and always building or tinkering with something in his garage workshop. He would assist his decorator wife in making wherever they lived a showplace. Other talents included his ability to make up words and lyrics on the fly, his mastery of grilling, blending frozen drinks, and his train whistle and cricket noises.

Never one to sit still, Gene was always on the go. Whether it was Bridge Night, dance lessons with Lila, church choir practice, a Band Booster meeting at his sons' schools, a Navy Reserve weekend, or going for a jog to pick up cans on the roadside to recycle, there was never any moss growing on him. He was the guy that people called when they needed help, and he was always happy to give it. Gene occasionally slowed down enough to watch an Indiana University basketball game where he loudly chastised the players for their less-than-stellar performance (“DUMMIES!”).

Gene retired from the Navy Reserves in 1980 and from Crane in 1998 after completing 41 years of federal service (Navy, Navy Reserves, and Civil Service). After Lila's retirement, they took advantage of their timeshare around the country and beyond, visited relatives in Minnesota, and spent time with their sons, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. Unable to fully retire, he worked part-time as an associate for a merchandising service company and later in the Lowe's Home Improvement Center where he ran circles around co-workers more than half his age.

In 2004, his beloved Lila was diagnosed with Parkinson's and dementia. Gene became her steadfast caretaker until Lila moved into the nursing home. He visited every day (sometimes twice), ensuring she had the best care. After her passing in 2014, Gene moved to a senior community in Eagle, ID, to be near his son, Greg. Yet again, he couldn't stop moving and would assist from time to time on his son's hot air balloon crew, as well as volunteering at the Idaho Food Bank. As his own dementia (Alzheimer's) progressed, he transitioned from Independent Living to Assisted Living and finally to Memory Care. Much like his father, his son, Greg, became a fixture at the facility and visited daily to make sure Gene was well taken care of.

Surviving family members include his son Gregory Roegiers (Anne) of Eagle, ID, son David Roegiers of Chicago, IL, grandchildren Alexander Roegiers (Jessica) of Pittsburgh, PA, Rachel Robertson (Michael) of Pasco, WA, great-grandson Graham Robertson of Pasco, WA, and sister-in-law Edna Roegiers of New Ulm, MN. He was preceded in death by his parents, sister Devonna Feit (Raymond) of Worthington, MN, sister Lucille Thu (Andrew) of Renner, SD, brother Daniel Roegiers (Delora) of New Ulm, MN, brother Vincent Roegiers (Ora) of Columbus, GA, and sister Leona Johnson (Albert) of Sioux Falls, SD.

Gene's kind, caring, generous, and goofy spirit will be greatly missed!

Memorial contributions may be made to the Friends of North Eden Cemetery by contacting Nancy Stoltenberg at nancystol@frontier.com.