

In Loving Memory Of
Dana E. Caldwell

Born
September 18, 1936
Sturgis, South Dakota

Passed Away
December 14, 2025
Rapid City, South Dakota

Memorial Service
Friday, December 19, 2025, 1:30 p.m.
Kinkade Funeral Chapel
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant
Reverend Kevin Jensen

Musicians
Pianist: Marlene Kotab
Soloist: Chris Kaitfors

Musical Selections
“How Great Thou Art” “Don’t Fence Me In”
“On Eagle’s Wings”

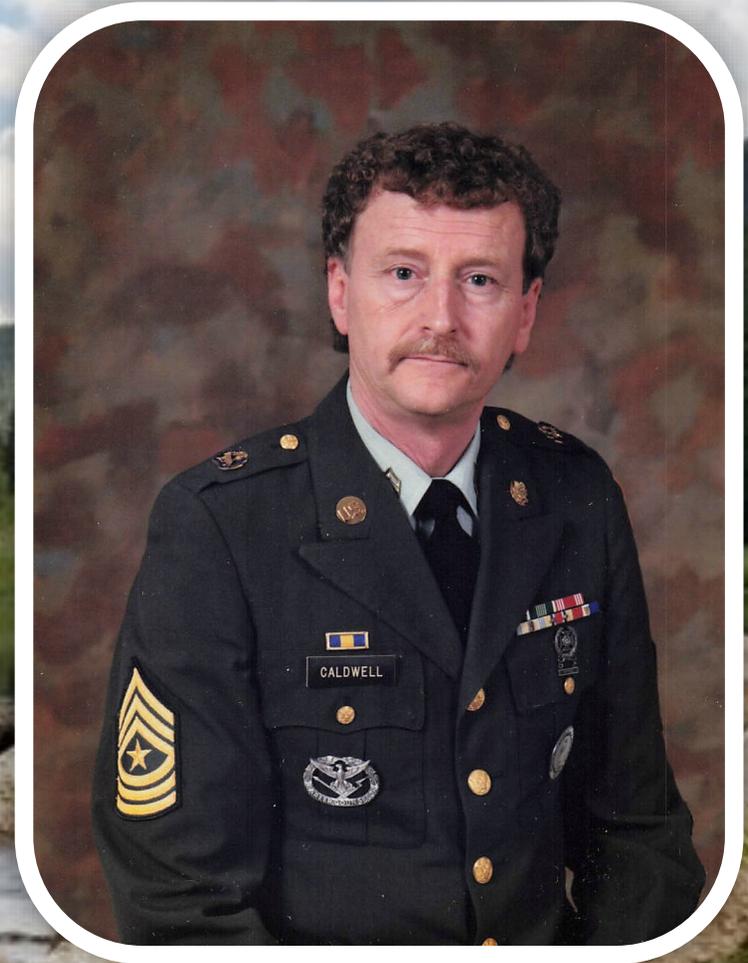
Honorary Pallbearers
Bob Perequine Grant Simons Elaine Jesson
Vien Lehman Paul Mechling Dean Kinney

Military Honors
SD Army National Guard
Sturgis Volunteer Honor Guard

Final Resting Place
Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota

*The family invites you to join them at The 44 Lounge,
2721 Lazelle St (inside Baymont Inn), following the burial.
Thank you for your presence and condolences.*

In Loving Memory



Dana E. Caldwell

September 18, 1936 ~ December 14, 2025

Dana Elliott Caldwell

Dana Elliott Caldwell, 89, died Sunday, December 14, 2025.

Dana was preceded in death by parents, Irene Elliott and Alton Caldwell; older brothers, Albert and LaVerne, and younger sisters, Judy and Ginny. He is survived by the love of his life, Maxine; his daughter, Carmen, and two grandchildren, Elliott and Elsa.

Dana was born on September 18th, 1936, at Anderson Maternity Home on Main St in Sturgis, SD. As a child, he lived in Sturgis until he was seven, when his family moved to their ranch located north of town. At the age of sixteen, Dana had a falling out with his father, left home, and took to the road. Soon after, he was hired to drive the truck for a traveling vaudeville show; this venture lasted most of the summer. Growing up on the ranch, he had always planned to be a cowboy until his teenage years at Sturgis High School, where he graduated in 1955. There he met Maxine Hardy, his high school sweetheart and long-time companion, whom he rekindled a connection with in 1985 that lasted the remainder of his life. After graduation, he and several classmates joined the Army and were sent to Germany; however, none were assigned to the same unit. It took seven days to cross the North Atlantic in a troop ship that was rough from wear. All were happy to see the coastal town of Bremenhoffen. There, Dana underwent artillery training for the 155 Howitzer unit and held several positions during his two years on assignment. This was during the height of the Cold War, which meant numerous alerts and rapid response field exercises. The garrison was in Schwäbisch Gmünd; however, the units had precious little time at this gorgeous location, sometimes spending as long as six weeks in field exercises, both summer and winter. During these exercises, the unit would often spend days firing the powerful 155 Howitzers at a range of 20 miles. For their furlough, Dana and a close friend from Sturgis, stationed nearby, planned an elaborate trip that spanned the better part of southern Europe. However, they enjoyed their first night in Paris so much, they stayed for the entire furlough. Caldwell had many other adventures in Holland, Belgium, and England; he developed a special love for London as they spoke English and loved GIs. When time was up in Germany, he again travelled to Bremenhoffen to return on the same well-traveled troop ship, the USS Butner. After his return to South Dakota from active duty, Dana rejoined the Army National Guard, where he remained an additional twenty-five years, ultimately retiring as a Command Sgt Major.

When he returned to Sturgis, he held many jobs, beginning as a door-to-door life insurance salesman in western South Dakota. Here, Dana found he had an aptitude for sales. Other part-time jobs included gandy-dancer on the railroad, Arthur Murray dance instructor in the evenings, followed by many various construction jobs - his favorite was driving the huge Euclid trucks at the LG Everest quarry in Rapid City. Dana then enrolled in Black Hills State College and received a bachelor's degree in education and a minor in English and social studies. Close to graduation, Dana met a lovely nurse named Peggy Fraser who worked at Ft. Meade. They married in 1960, and their daughter, Carmen Kay, was born the following year. Upon graduation, Dana was hired to teach English at Deadwood High School. After one year of teaching, his good friend, Betty Matkins, told him she had applied for a radio station license in Sturgis. The manager, Les Kleven, was in town and met with Dana for an interview. He was hired on the spot and became the sales manager, making Dana the first employee of KBHB in 1961. The station grew rapidly, going from 1,000 watts at 1280 on the dial to the more desirable, clear channel frequency of 810 at 25,000 watts, making it the most powerful AM radio station in South Dakota. In 1980, Dana became the general manager, a position he held until retirement in 2001. During his career at KBHB, Dana went TDY to St. Cloud, MN, to resurrect a Kleven station in the city. Following that, Dana took some time off from the station and was a consultant for various underperforming radio stations in several Midwest and Southwest states. Later, Caldwell, along with several partners, received a license to build a new station in Dickinson, ND. The first station there, KLTC, was a booming success right away and inspired the group to open two more stations in the Dickinson area. KBHB was sold to CD Broadcasting of Minneapolis; CD hired Dana as general manager and kept on the faithful staff. The station was subsequently sold several more times, and with each sale, the buyer kept Caldwell and the same talented staff that made the station such a desirable property.

Dana was an avid fisherman, bird and deer hunter, and most of all a motorcyclist. He enjoyed both dirt and road bikes. He was hooked after acquiring a 90cc dirt bike from Pappy Hoyle in exchange for radio advertising. Sports cars were also a lifelong pursuit and passion.

His iconic voice is well known throughout the KBHB five-state area, as is his love of the people whom he met along the way.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.