



## Lester (Les) Eugene Waldron

October 24, 1926 - June 1, 2023

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Lester (Les) Eugene Waldron age 96.5, on June 1, 2023, from causes related to Dementia. He was a resident of Roseville, California for his last 13 years. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Betty Waldron; Son, John Waldron (Kathy Gonzales); Daughters Pam Feis and Christine Waldron; Grandchildren Bethany Feis, Rebecca Feis Bakenhus (Drew), Ellie Feis (Jamdan) and Frederick (or Rick) Feis; and his great grandson Russell Bakenus. He also leaves behind his loving sisters, Lorraine Vilt, Leila Rhodes, and Louella Howell of Illinois.

Les was born in Wilmington, Illinois on October 24th, 1926, he was the second of eight siblings. In 1943, at 17 years of age, he left Illinois to join the Navy. He went to bootcamp in Farragut, ID, and was then transferred to San Diego where he trained as a Corpsman. After completing training, in 1944, he was assigned to the USS Jerald and was shipped out to the Pacific Theater. He landed in Okinawa and served as a Medic in one of the most major battles of WWII.

After the war, he joined the Navy Reserve. His love of medicine and his desire to help people took him to Chicago where he worked in research at Michael Reese Hospital. There he worked on research that led to the first hemodialysis machine. It was there where he began his pursuit of a career in medicine with the dream of becoming a doctor.

In 1950 the Korean War began and Les was recalled to active duty. He was assigned to the Marines as a Hospital Corpsman and served two tours of duty.

It was during the Korean war that he met David Ulstrom at Camp Pendleton who ultimately introduced Les to his loving wife Betty May Ulstrom. They were married June 13, 1959.

Six months after their marriage Les was deployed to the USS Brinkley Bass, a destroyer, and was shipped out to Japan. While in a typhoon off the coast of Japan his son, John, was born. He came home for a short period of time, then was shipped out again on the John W. Thomason. Finally able to be home with his family in 1962, he became an instructor in the Great Lakes Corps school. During his time at home Pamela and Christine were born. In the early spring of 1966 he was called to serve in Vietnam. In Vietnam he began construction of a hospital in Tam Ky, which was in the DMZ, near the border of North and South Vietnam. The hospital stands to this day. There he taught English, established safe drinking water and taught basic hygiene practices to people living in the surrounding area. He offered medical care to the community as well as aid to soldiers wounded in battle. The locals called him "Bac'si Wangdon", Doctor Waldron. He never shared much about his time in Vietnam. What he shared were smiling photos of the work he did. Only after his passing did we learn some of the true stories of what he experienced. After 22 years of service, he retired from the US Navy in 1968. During his time serving our country he was given many awards, the last of which was the Navy Commendation medal, the highest award then offered by the Navy to non-combatants.

After the military he searched for his purpose, first thinking he would study to become an Episcopal priest and later pursuing his dream of becoming a doctor. He began work as a laboratory technician in San Antonio and as a unit manager in a hospital in the Dallas area. It was during this time, he became aware of a new program that sought Hospital Corpsmen, or medics, to become what are now known as physician assistants. He was in the second graduating class from the Medex Program at the University of Washington in Seattle. Upon graduation he worked in a rural setting in Ritzville, Washington.

The next several years he continued to work in many different clinics, always searching for a better job. This led to multiple moves throughout the country, ultimately ending up at the VA Hospital in Sepulveda, California.

While working at Sepulveda he and his family lived in Camarillo, later moving to Moorpark, California. His heart was always drawn to the ocean. He loved Southern California for its beaches and he frequently enjoyed walking or jogging on the beach after work and on weekends. After retiring from

Sepulveda, he worked at a clinic in Tehachapi, California until the age of 80.

Though he loved his family, his true vocation in life was medicine. Many of us think that, if he had not been forced to retire at 80, due to a brain surgery, he would probably have worked until he died. After retiring, he moved to Roseville, California to be closer to his daughter, Pamela, and her children.

Les was a lifelong learner, along with pursuing a career in medicine he had a goal of graduating from a University. It was in 1978, at the age of 52, that he was awarded a Bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science from the University of La Verne. Even after he received his degree he continued to pursue learning taking night classes in Spanish, and theology at a seminary in Pasadena. His Catholic faith was very important to him. He became an Extraordinary Minister, taught Catechism, said daily prayers, and read from the Daily Missal. The past three years were particularly difficult for him because he was aware that he had dementia and was losing his ability to think clearly. He spent his final days in a care home where he passed away peacefully with his daughter, Pamela by his side.

A Catholic Funeral Mass will be held on July 28, 2023 at 11:00am, at St's Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in Rocklin, CA. A Military interment will take place at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, Illinois at a later date to be determined.

We ask that in lieu of flowers donations be sent to The Valhalla Veterans Services, <https://valhallaveterans.com>; 2752 Jackson Street, Scranton, PA 18504.



# Previous Events

## Mass of Christian Burial

JUL **28**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Saints Peter & Paul Catholic  
4450 Granite Drive  
Rocklin, CA 95677

# Tribute Wall



“ 6 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Murray Family Funeral Chapel** - June 21, 2023 at 04:52 PM