



## Russell Lee Clement

September 8, 1937 - February 21, 2025

Russell Lee Clement, age 87, husband, father, brother, grandfather, aviator, sailor, and adventurer slipped the surly bonds of Earth on February 21, 2025, passing away in Olney, Maryland.

A graveside service with full military honors, in recognition of his career as a Navy pilot, will be held at Fort McPherson National Cemetery, 12004 S Spur 56a, Maxwell, NE, on Monday, March 10, 2025, at 11:00am DST. Please join in greeting the family after the graveside service (around 1:30pm) with lunch at the Farnam United Methodist Church, 301 Caribou Street, Farnam, NE. All Faiths Funeral Home of Grand Island is entrusted with local arrangements.

Born on September 8, 1937, in Farnam, Nebraska, to Ralph Wesley Clement and Helen Mae Russell Clement, Russell had an upbringing typical of his time, roaming on bicycles and on foot with his brother and friends, all kept in line by the 300+ residents of their small town, who kept them mostly out of trouble.

At age six, Russ was put to work at his dad's store, Clement Mercantile, sweeping and doing the myriad tasks associated with running a family business. He was a Boy Scout and played baseball, basketball, football, and ran track. High school summers were spent driving tractors and harvesting for local farmers, along with two memorable summers working as a Gandy

Dancer (repairing sections of track) for the CB&Q Railroad, living in a boxcar. Russell was the quarterback for the Farnam High School football team, which was ranked number one in Nebraska in their class. Duck and pheasant hunting with his dad, brother Roderick, uncles, cousins and friends was another favorite pastime growing up.

As a child, Russell watched, mesmerized, as a WW II pilot and Farnam native landed his airplane on a farmer's field just north of the family home. Russell said to anyone who would listen, that when he grew up he was going to be a pilot. Russ attended Kearney State College (now UNK), and was admitted from there to the Naval Cadet Program in Pensacola, Florida. He graduated from NAVCAD in 1959, earned his pilot's wings, and married Arvie Charlene Penton. They had two children, a son, Russell Lee Clement II, and a daughter, Carrie Anne Clement.

Russell's naval assignments included flying the S2 aircraft on the USS Valley Forge and the USS Randolph. His crew was responsible for picking up Mercury and Gemini astronauts after splashdown from space, including John Glenn. Russell received recognition for his many nighttime landings on aircraft carriers.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Russell was commander of the squadron that surfaced three Russian submarines, and after that, he became a flight instructor at Pensacola, FL. His next assignment took him to the Gulf of Tonkin in Vietnam.

After Vietnam, Russell earned two Master's Degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and was reassigned to Maryland to serve as project engineer to design and test a new aircraft, the S3, which went on to have a 30-year run in the Navy.

During Russell's Naval career, he was recognized with the following: Air Medal in Vietnam, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and National Defense Medal.

It was in Maryland, that he met and married the love of his life, Frances "Cookie" Cook Guy. This was a second marriage for both, and Cookie brought her children into Russell's life: Daniel, David, Veronica, and Dorothy.

Russ and Cookie both loved sailing, and upon his retirement as a Commander in the Navy, they purchased a sailboat, which they sailed from San Diego to Jacksonville, FL, through the Panama Canal.

In Jacksonville, Russell founded World Wide Yachting, a sailing and marine navigation school, with two partners. Eventually, Russ and Cookie bought out the partners and became sole owners. They also purchased a sailboat hull and began construction on the boat itself.

They purchased a waterfront lot in Apollo Beach, Florida, and lived on their partially-constructed boat while building their house. They began their 'traveling years' by boat, and eventually sold the boat and purchased a fifth wheel RV for travel. Their six children, ten grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren scattered throughout the country, provided lots of places to visit.

During this time, they visited 49 States (Russ would say they couldn't figure out how to drive to Hawaii) and spent two months in Europe traveling by rental car. A world traveler, Russell's heart remained in Nebraska, where Russ and Cookie would visit regularly to reconnect with friends and relatives in Farnam and other parts of Nebraska, finally purchasing a house in Minden, NE to serve as home base. Eventually, they moved to Maryland to be closer to family.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to organizations that support veterans or the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, which Russell supported regularly.

Russell is preceded in death by his parents, aunts, uncles and cousins; and is survived by his wife of 47 years, Cookie; children: Carrie Clement (Michael Denny) of North Wales, Pennsylvania; Russell Lee Clement II of Dade City, Florida; his former wife, Arvie Charlene Clement of Lewisburg, PA, children Daniel (Jennifer) Guy, of Clarksville, MD; David Guy of Leonardtown, MD; Veronica (Jamie) Billig of Leonardtown, MD; Dorothy (Tom) Patterson of Laurel, MD; grandchildren: Adam, Amber, Brady, Daniel, Jordan, Julie, Kevin, Matt, Ryan, Shelby and Tanner, and great-grandchildren: AJ, Amelia, Arya, Audrey, Camden, Charlie, Dakota, Hattie, and Harper.

Russ also leaves to mourn one brother, Roderick (Anita Sue) Clement of Grand Island, Nebraska; cherished nieces and nephews, Andrew, Carolyn and Jules Clement; cousins and friends. He will be missed.

In memory of Russ, the family asks that you look to the skies, embrace adventure, and love those around you.

# Cemetery Details

## **Ft. McPherson**

Maxwell, NE

# Previous Events

## **Graveside Service with Military Honors**

MAR 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

Fort McPherson National Cemetery  
12004 S Spur 56a  
Maxwell, NE 69151-1031  
(308) 582-4433

# Tribute Wall

JE

“ Russ was a kind, humble and gentle man who was filled with immense talents and abilities. I first met Russ in 1988 when he was working on the development of a mobile computer based celestial navigation system. Russ and I spent many hours at my office in conversation and I relished hearing of involvement as a pilot = especially his part in helping bring a peaceful conclusion to the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960's.

*I had the privilege and pleasure of sailing one time on the waters of Tampa Bay with Russ and his lovely wife and partner, Cookie. I was in awe of how the two of them managed to build both their beautiful home and their dream sailboat together that they sailed much of the Americas in their exploits.*

*I send my condolences to Cookie and all of Russ's family.*

*Jeff Etter  
Seminole, FL*

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**Jeffrey L. Etter** - March 16, 2025 at 01:38 PM

JR

“ John Rowland purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of Russell Lee Clement.



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**John Rowland** - March 05, 2025 at 11:41 PM

JH

“ Words cannot express the love and gratitude I feel for being a part of Russ’ life. My husband Kevin and I became fast friends with Russ and Cookie as neighbors in Apollo Beach. We enjoyed time together exchanging stories of adventures, challenges, triumphs and hopes for the future. We learned so much from an honest, loving and humble man. I will be forever grateful that good people find good people and our families grew because of the friendship. The sky will always be brighter knowing you are looking over me.

*My deepest love and embrace to all of his family and to everyone who had him in their life.*

*I love you Russ.*

*Jennifer Hughes*



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**Jennifer Hughes** - March 03, 2025 at 08:23 PM

DH

“ I am extending my sympathy to Cookie and all of Russ's family. I am one of his Farnam classmates. Russ was so good to keep our class in touch with one another. He established a memorial fund so each classmate or their spouse would be remember at their funeral. Keep his memory alive in your heart. May the love of God comfort you.  
*Detta Sheffield Holscher*

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**Detta Holscher** - February 27, 2025 at 10:24 AM

SF

*My sympathy to Cookie and and Russ family they were one of the most beautiful people I worked with. Their love for each other was like no other I pray for their strength and peace.*

*Minister Shirley Francis*

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**Shirley Francis** - February 27, 2025 at 12:27 PM