



## Arnold Raymond Nelson

December 19, 1937 - February 19, 2025

Arnold Raymond "Arnie" Nelson, 87, passed away on February 19, 2025, in Glendive, Montana.

Born on December 19, 1937, in Williston, North Dakota, Arnie led a life of adventure, service, and purpose with an unmistakable sense of humor. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Minot State Teachers College before serving his country with distinction in the United States Marine Corps from 1960 to 1969. Rising to the rank of Major, he was awarded four Purple Heart Medals, a National Defense Service Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, a Navy Commendation Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation, a Combat Action Ribbon, and several Rifle Marksmanship and Pistol Expert badges.

Following his military service, Arnie embarked on a successful career as a Certified Public Accountant. He worked for Continental Can Company, which took him and his young family across the country—from California to Washington State, Nebraska, and Ohio—before settling in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1979. In 1984, he joined Chef Boyardee, a division of American Home Foods, where he remained until his retirement in 1998. During those years, his family's pantry was always stocked with Spaghetti & Meatballs, Ravioli, Crunch 'n Munch, and self-bake pizzas.

Despite joking that he was "too busy doing nothing," Arnie remained active

throughout his retirement. He built a bar at the American Legion in Manhattan, Montana—where his Marine Corps sword still hangs—and remodeled his house in Williston with his close friend Eddie. Even later, he could be found fixing his truck, cleaning gutters, or tinkering in his garage.

Arnie was known for his cheerful demeanor and quick wit. His mother-in-law affectionately called him "Arnable." He was rarely seen without a smile, joke, or story at the ready. He loved to dance and deeply appreciated old-style country music and 1950s rock-n-roll. He was a devoted Penn State Nittany Lions football fan, and he enjoyed late-night cribbage marathons with his brother and sister at family gatherings.

His signature style included pressed jeans, a bomber leather jacket, and cowboy boots—always prepared to meet people with dignity and warmth. His daily routine often included Cheerios for breakfast and ham and cheese sandwiches for lunch before unwinding with a cocktail and "stimulating conversation" at one of his favorite haunts: the Bull Run Inn in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; the American Legion in Manhattan, Montana; or Busters Bar in Williston, North Dakota. Pendleton whiskey and Miller Genuine Draft were among his favorite adult beverages.

A lifelong traveler at heart, Arnie loved "bumping around" the United States in his truck—always stocked with sunflower seeds and Wrigley's Doublemint gum. His road trips spanned from visits to family in North Dakota and South Carolina during his working years to retirement adventures across British Columbia, Napa Valley, Fort Myers Beach, Georgia, Arizona, and beyond. He frequently drove to see his daughter in Boulder, Colorado, and his son in northern Virginia; he made regular stops in Lewisburg to reconnect with friends "for just a few days."

Arnie is survived by his daughter Kari Nelson (Tom Wilson), son Todd Nelson

(Tammi), granddaughters Kirsten Marie LaDestro and Lindsay Alexis Nelson, sister Elaine Sommers, and niece Tammy Nelson Antoniadis. He was predeceased by his father, Arne Nelson; his mother, Ruth Nelson; his brother, Larry Nelson; his sister-in-law, Jan Nelson; his brother-in-law, Al Sommers; and his daughter, Christie Michelle LaDestro.

Arnie lived life on his own terms—full of laughter, resilience, and an unwavering love for family and friends. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him.

As a decorated Marine, Arnold Nelson will be laid to rest with dignity and honor at Arlington National Cemetery in northern Virginia this summer.

Remembrances and condolences can be shared with the family at: [www.silhafuneralhomes.com](http://www.silhafuneralhomes.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ I met Mr. Arnie when I started at m&h gas station in williston,he was always laughing with us girls and making jokes. We're gonna miss seeing him here

Victoria - March 17, 2025 at 01:01 PM



“ Up at Rocky Mountain National Park.



Kari Nelson - March 06, 2025 at 09:05 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Kari Nelson - March 05, 2025 at 05:42 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Photos



Kari Nelson - March 04, 2025 at 07:42 PM

KN

“ 3 files added to the album Photos



Kari Nelson - March 04, 2025 at 07:40 PM

TN

“ 2 files added to the album Photos



TODD NELSON - March 04, 2025 at 05:17 PM

VV

“ VVA#234 lit a candle in memory of Arnold Nelson



VVA#234 - March 03, 2025 at 06:37 PM

TN

“ 5 files added to the album Photos



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**TODD NELSON** - March 03, 2025 at 04:11 PM