



William J. O'Halloran

July 3, 2020

Lieutenant Commander (ret.) William Joseph O'Halloran, USN, died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Fort Collins, Colorado, on July 3, 2020, twelve days shy of his 95th birthday. He was born on July 15, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, to Patrick Eugene O'Halloran and Gladys Hammond O'Halloran. Bill is survived by his beloved wife of 75 years, Leona (Lee) Mae Hertzke O'Halloran, four children (William David O'Halloran, Kathleen O'Halloran Peel, Ann E. O'Halloran Schlax, and Bethany O'Halloran), 11 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and scores of others who considered him their second dad.

Bill moved to Boulder, Colorado, with his mother, older brother, Patrick, and his cousin Mary, who was more a big sister than cousin, in 1935. He thought of himself as a Coloradoan ever since. After graduating from Boulder High School, Bill began classes at University of Colorado but left to enlist in the United States Navy in 1944, during WWII. After basic training, Bill briefly returned to Boulder to marry the love of his life, Leona (Lee) Hertzke on Jan. 3, 1945. Two days later he was on a train to Chicago for electronic school. Lee got to see Bill for 45 minutes at the train station in Denver as he passed through on his way from Chicago to San Francisco. He was assigned to the USS Paddle, (SS-263), and served in the Pacific theater, where he saw action. After eight months on the Paddle, WWII ended, and Bill began his long trip home from Guam. Lee met him in New York City where they lived until Bill

was released from the service.

Bill returned to his studies at CU Boulder but stayed in the reserves. Two years later a billet on the USS Dentuda, (SS-335), came up and Bill returned to active duty, moving his wife and their two babies to San Francisco, starting what proved to be a storied naval career. He also served on the USS Cusk (SS-348), the first submarine to experiment with launching rockets, and the USS Sunfish (SSN-281).

In 1952, Bill was chosen for the USS Nautilus (SSN-571) program, the beginning of the nuclear navy. Bill moved his wife and now four children from the west coast to Pittsburg where he attended nuclear power school and graduated top of his class. Then they moved on to Idaho, where Bill trained on the prototype reactor that would eventually power the Nautilus. Bill was the fifth qualified reactor operator in the US Navy, and he developed the operation manuals for the reactor in the submarine. The world's first nuclear-powered submarine was launched on Jan. 21, 1954, from the shipyard in Groton, Connecticut. At 1100 on Jan. 17, 1955, Commander Wilkinson, captain of the Nautilus, signaled for the first time in history, "Underway on Nuclear Power." Bill was the senior enlisted man in charge of the reactor. As the first submarine that was not dependent on air from the surface, Nautilus made a record-breaking, under-water trip, travelling from the submarine base in Connecticut to Puerto Rico, proving that the Nautilus had the capability of making a journey under the North Pole.

Bill stayed in the nuclear program for the remainder of his naval career, as an instructor in the program at the Naval Base in Groton, Connecticut, as assistant-repair officer on the USS Fulton (AS-11) out of Groton and the USS Bushnell (AS-15), where he was third in command of the ship, out of Key West, Florida. He finished his 26-year career at Main Navy in Washington, D.C., where he worked on the submarine safety desk as a safety analyst.

After retiring from the navy in 1969, he and Lee returned to their home state of Colorado. They finally settled into a house that Lee did not have to pack up to follow Bill to his next assignment. Bill started a second career at Woodward Governor in Fort Collins, where he applied the knowledge gained from the navy and his degree in electronic engineering, which he received from the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California, in 1965, to designing and building governors, which are used to provide reliable and precise control of speed and output in power generation, marine, pump, compression, and vehicle applications. His name is on several of Woodward's patents for governors. In his job at Woodward, he continued to travel the world as a trouble shooter, often taking Lee with him. He retired from Woodward Governor in 1992.

Bill and Lee took full advantage of their retirement. They traveled to Ireland, Poland, and other locations around the world. They enjoyed many road trips, towing their RV behind them. They met up with WWII veterans and visited children, grandchildren, family, and friends in other parts of the country. They would park their RV, or rig as they called it, at their property in Glacier View Meadows, near Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. Tents popped up in the meadow as the O'Halloran clan gathered for summer fun. Bill and Lee's home was always filled with family and friends who quickly became like family.

Bill had an Irish twinkle in his eyes to the very end. He was a grand storyteller. People who knew him felt his warmth and said he was one of the best men they had ever met. His love story with Lee lasted over 75 years. One of his favorite stories was the one about meeting her at a dance. He remembered exactly what Lee was wearing and how he felt when he saw her for the first time. His legacy will live on in the clan he and Lee created, and those lives he touched with his huge, loving heart.

Memorial Contributions can be made to Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Denver or the charity of your choice.

Services will take place Tuesday, July 7, 2020 beginning at 1:30 pm with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, followed by Mass at 2:00 pm all at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Fort Collins. The services will also be streamed live online for those unable to attend in person: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfTYqQ96sVNI3ED-UZFF0eA>

Here is a poem written for Bill by his granddaughter, Jenna Lee Oliver

For Popeye

The whistling of Reveille at sunrise,
The twinkle of his bright, blue eyes,
His lilacs and roses blooming,
His soft voice, surprisingly commanding and booming,
His shiny bald head and straw cowboy hat,
The place at the end of the table where he always sat,
Saying grace and keeping pace,
With all the moments of joy with us he collected,
We never, ever felt neglected.

To be in his presence was bliss,
Something we never wanted to miss.
His silly jokes, his funny songs,
Such wisdom and wit.
There was no other man,
with whom we would rather sit.

We walked with him in his garden,

And through his Aspen grove,
Eagerly watched him making Sunday waffles,
While whistling by the stove,
We took advice like jewels from his lips,
On all those joyful summer trips –
Eating pie, drinking root beer floats,
Blowing out candles on birthday cakes –
Every memory with him was a delight to make.

His big, gentle bear hugs,
Dancing with him and cutting a rug,
Riding his bike,
Taking a mountain hike,
Fishing for Brookies,
All his World War II stories,
Told without ever claiming personal glory.

He would never miss the chance,
To attend St. Patrick's Day parades and Irish dance,
Concerts, plays, convocations, weddings, birthdays, lacrosse,
art shows, swimming, track and baseball...
He was there for it all.

For 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren too,
He made being a wonderful Dad and Grandpa seem so easy to do.
He taught us to so much...
To sing, to listen, to pray, to dance, to swim, to fish, to do math, to drive...
He showed us what it is to be truly alive.

We know he loved us all dearly,
But it all began when he gave his whole heart to Lee,

One look at her and he threw away the key,
To our beloved Mother and Grammie.

He loved her so deep and true.
Every time he saw her, he was alight,
His eyes would sparkle bright and blue,
Especially when he recounted the night
She walked into that high school dance
And they began their 75-year romance.

She was the love of his life!
He never stopped adoring his bride,
His devoted and beloved wife,
His marriage to her was his greatest pride.

She was the reason he chose to strive,
To fight with courage to stay alive.
A lifetime of devotion that is the real deal –
His love for her, and the family they created,
Was unconditional, steadfast and strong as steel.

Moments are not enough
To count the memories
And measure the depth of the love
We all have for this dearest man,
The head of our O'Halloran clan!
Simply, he was the best,
The gentlest, sweetest, wisest man
Any of us has, or ever will know.
It is so very hard, now to let him go.

So, today we raise our eyes toward the sky,
And yes, -- we cry --
Because we do not want to ever say goodbye,
Popeye!

But we will always tell your story,
And hold tight to your memory.
We will never forget
The deep abiding, unconditional love you gave,
And the life of joy, you lived fully, without regret.

Now, each blooming flower in the spring,
Each birdsong,
Each babbling brook and rustling tree,
Beautiful, joyful memories will bring.

Each sunrise and each evening breeze,
will sing to us about the greatest man we ever knew,
The wonderful memories we made,
will comfort us and get us through.

And we will wake each day and know we are blessed,
Because of the family you built and the love you gave –
Even now, as we lay you to rest.
You will live on in each of us, never truly in a grave.

We know you are off to sail different seas above,
But you – our anchor, our hero –

Will live on forever in our love!

By Jenna Lee Oliver

July 4, 2020

Cemetery Details

Fort Logan National Cemetery

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

JUL 7. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
300 W Mountain Ave
Fort Collins, CO 80521
<https://www.stjosephfc.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *William J. O'Halloran*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *USS Nautilus SSN-571 shipmates, their families and alumni call to attention for LCDR William Joseph O'Halloran Ret. and his service to country and to Nautilus. Bills passing to Eternal Patrol will be shared with his shipmates and recorded in the log book kept by the Nautilus Alumni Association.*

Bill, your duty is complete sir.

Let us take up the oar.

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 8:38-39

*Fraternally,
NAAI Chaplain
John Anderson*

John Anderson - July 13, 2020 at 01:05 AM

SY

“ *The Buckley AFB military Retiree Activities Office (RAO) would like to offer our condolences and our gratitude for LCDR O'Halloran's service to our country in the Navy. If you would like help with matters related to casualty assistance, Defense Finance Accounting Service, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), etc you can contact our office on Buckley AFB at 720-847-6693. The RAO is staffed by volunteers, all military retirees themselves, and our sole purpose is to provide assistance to any military retirees and surviving spouses with anything related to their military service and/or benefits, in particular during difficult times such as this. We are deeply sorry for your loss.*

*Steve Young
Lt Col, USAF, Ret
Director, Buckley AFB RAO*

Steve Young - July 08, 2020 at 01:29 PM

ME

“ *To the O'Halloran family...you have so beautifully captured the essence of your beloved father, grandfather, husband and dear friend Bill. What a remarkable career! Clearly a brilliant individual, I can tell by the photos and stories that Bill also loved deeply and brought joy to so many. I can also see that he was loved by all those who knew him. To our friends Bill and Karen O'Halloran, and the entire O'Halloran family, please accept our sincere condolences on the loss of Bill's beautiful presence in your lives. (Bill...I can see where you get your smile and much of your love for adventure!)
With care, Mark and Melinda*

Melinda - July 08, 2020 at 10:10 AM

DB

“ *Bill was the best boss I ever had. He always gave people great respect. I can still hear him saying "Whatever is fair." We always tried to live up to his expectations of us. He was a great boss, friend and great example. It was real pleasure, honor and blessing to have known Bill.*

*God bless Lee and his family,
Dale Beckman*

Dale Beckman - July 07, 2020 at 05:19 PM

PF

My Woodward friend Bill. One who changed the way schematics had been, to ones that properly displayed; left to right! Taught me many things that I used all my life. Thank you Bill, for your leadership during those times and the lasting influence you had on my career. Paul Feltz

Paul Feltz - September 12, 2020 at 01:57 PM

YF

“ *Your Tampa Bay WWME Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of William J. O'Halloran.*



Your Tampa Bay WWME Family - July 07, 2020 at 10:36 AM

BR

“ 31 files added to the album Memories Album



Brent - July 06, 2020 at 08:19 PM

BB

I met Bill at the Home Depot in Fort Collins one day. He saw my hat with the submarine dolphins and we talked for a spell. He mentioned he was on the commissioning crew of the Nautilus. He gave me his card with his personal information on it as well. We bonded right there in the parking lot talking about the Navy and submarines. He was my kind of guy. RIP fellow submariner.

Boyd Bartlett-USS James K Polk SSBN645 Gold '67-'70

Boyd Bartlett - December 01, 2021 at 06:28 PM