

In Loving Memory Of
Erwin "Erv" F. Hartmann

Born
July 1, 1934
Hebron, North Dakota

Died
June 12, 2025
Ft. Meade, South Dakota

Memorial Service
Sunday, June 22, 2025 at 2:00 pm
Kinkade Funeral Chapel
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant
Chaplain Justin Warfel

Musical Selections
Special music performed by Chad Madsen

Honorary Pallbearers
Leonard Burtzlaff
Curtis Hartmann
Tom Hartmann
Dave Schneider
Harold Vastag

Final Resting Place
Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota
-at a later date-



U.S. AIR FORCE



U.S. AIR FORCE

*Please join the family at the Sturgis VFW
club following the service.*

In Loving Memory



Erwin "Erv" Hartmann

July 1, 1934 ~ June 12, 2025

Erwin "Erv" Frederick Hartmann was born to Mary and Henry Hartmann on July 1st, 1934 in Hebron, ND. He died June 12th, 2025 at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center in Sturgis, SD at age 90. He was one of 13 siblings. Erwin was the youngest brother with one younger sister. His parents and all siblings preceded him in death. Erwin is survived by his wife, Josephine, his son and daughter-in-law, David and Dara, three grandchildren, Parker, Makenna, Ethan, and countless extended family and dear friends.

He grew up, lived, and worked with the whole family on their dairy farm in Hebron. At age seven, he lost a few fingers from his right hand in some farm equipment. In 1954 he left farm and fingers behind to join the Air Force. He served in post-WWII England in the 1950's as a medic and ambulance crewman. England in the 1950's was not all Downtown Abbey, it was pretty rough. It was more Oliver Twist plus electricity and running water...most of the time. The UK was in a reconstruction phase after the war's devastation and tremendous cost. Erwin had many stories from ambulance runs that would curl your hair, including delivering several babies himself! He often mentioned one R&R trip to Vatican City where he and a couple buddies actually met the Pope.

Erwin's other significant meeting during that time was a lovely young red-haired Brit named Josephine. They married in 1956. There's a funny story from their second date. They were to meet at a dance hall and Erwin made a few laps around inside looking for her. He had walked right past her a couple times and Jo finally stuck her foot out and tripped him on lap three. Apparently, it all worked out after that.

Leaving the UK didn't happen together for Jo and Erwin. Mrs. Hartmann came back a few weeks before Erwin. She arrived at Bismarck airport with only pictures of the Hartmann family, and they only had pictures of her. Even though it was a small airport, it was still quite an event with each of them looking at the pictures, then looking around for each other. Newly-civilian Erwin finally made it back to ND a few weeks later.

After some time on the farm, Erwin and Jo moved to Wahpeton, ND so he could attend trade school. Today that school is the ND College of Science. Erwin learned sheet metal working and then they moved south to the Black Hills.

They lived in Deadwood where Erwin worked for a sheet metal fabricator and Jo started classes at Black Hills State. When the sheet metal shop closed, Erwin started working at Ft. Meade about when Jo started teaching in Deadwood.

At Ft. Meade, Erwin was variously an orderly, photographer, ran the greenhouse, was the hospital EEG and EKG technician. Jo taught English and music and continued taking classes at BH.

Later, they moved to Sturgis and lived in a basement apartment in the northwest part of town near the creek. It's close to what is now McDonalds. In Sturgis, they grew

their family by having one son, David, in 1971.

They all got evicted by the flood of 1972 in harrowing fashion. The night of the infamous Rapid City flood, it was also flooding over much of the Black Hills including their Sturgis neighborhood. They were home as floodwater rushed down the exterior stairwell. The water-swollen door was blocked by chest-deep floodwater and debris. To escape, Erwin chopped out the top of the door with an axe, fireman-style, Jo grabbed baby David, and they all wiggled out to safety.

Later in 1972, they bought their first and last house making Erwin a landlord. That apartment house was old even then, having been built in the 1890's. There was always something to be fixed.

They also started the Sweetheart Flower Shop on Main Street about that same time. Erwin continued working at Ft. Meade but Jo paused teaching for a couple years to run the shop.

Erwin stayed in the Air Force Reserve during all this, retiring in the 1990's about the same time as he retired from Ft. Meade, having served both for over 35 years. He usually drilled at Ellsworth AFB but attended various training schools and duties around the U.S. as he progressed in rank to Chief Master Sergeant, or E-9. That's just about as high as you can get as an enlisted airman. At one point, Erwin was one of only a handful of E-9's in the entire Air Force Reserve. When David was commissioned as an Army officer in 1994, Erwin gave him his first salute.

This means that Erwin ran a six-unit apartment house, worked full-time at Ft. Meade, started a small business/flower shop with Jo, and continued serving as a senior NCO at least one weekend a month at Ellsworth. Hard work was kind of a theme around the house.

There are always setbacks in life and grand plans. In the 1970's, Jo was seriously injured in a car wreck, breaking her neck, and they closed up the flower shop not long afterward. She went back to teaching and Erwin scaled back to just three jobs.

When the First Gulf War started in 1990, Erwin was activated by the Air Force. Both he and Jo were relieved when they learned he would serve at the USAF hospital in Lackland AFB in San Antonio and backfill personnel who had deployed overseas.

All along the way, Erwin's hobbies, besides the constant gardening, would ebb and flow. He served in the Lions Club, VFW, Masons, and the Episcopal Church vestry. He liked bowling, fishing, hunting, photography, collecting coins and pocket watches, playing poker, and of course those Deadwood slot machines. He always credited his statistically improbable slot machine success to getting that hands-on blessing from the Pontiff in the 50's. I'm not sure how Pope Pius the 12th felt about that, I guess maybe they can have that conversation directly now.