



Donald V. Wilfinger

July 8, 1935 - January 7, 2025

Donald V. Wilfinger, 89, of St. Anne, passed away on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee. He was born on July 8, 1935 in Chicago, the son of Joseph and Hattie (Giesen) Wilfinger. He married Mary O'Neill on May 29, 1976 in Chicago.

Donald was a veteran of the United States Navy, having served during the Korean Conflict. He spent his career as a truck driver.

Donald is survived by his wife, Mary Wilfinger, of St. Anne; two sisters, Joanne Aeschlimann and Rose Marie Wilfinger; sister-in-law, Therese O'Neill; brother-in-law, Terry (Harriet) O'Neill; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Gail Sparkman; brother-in-law, Ed Aeschlimann; and brother-in-law, Michael O'Neill.

A graveside service will be held at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Memorials may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project or River Valley Animal Rescue.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JAN 14. 10:30 AM (CT)

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery
20953 Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421

Tribute Wall

“ Like John Wayne, my uncle was a hero of my brother Ed and myself. With his tattoos on his arm he was bigger than life to each of us. When we went for a visit to Chicago to visit family, we always wanted to see Uncle Val. He always made time to see us even when he was working. He would swing by during his lunch and park his truck in the alley behind grandma’s house. His cat that swallowed the canary grin always brought a smile to my face. He was quite the prankster telling us all kinds of stories, they were so funny. When grandpa was at the table he would tell us about how he skipped out of school and was selling hotdogs on the corner. He would say “Pa had no idea what I was doing “. And grandpa couldn’t hear that we were laughing at the story and always thought we were laughing at him. Those were great memories. Uncle Val smoked Lucky Strikes with that red bullseye on the front of the pack. He would blow smoke rings, put the cigarette on his tongue and close his mouth for a moment, and start smoking it again after he removed it from his mouth. Ed and myself got to spend a couple of nights at his house and saw his cats. He took us to a gun range to shoot some of his guns. I remember he let me shoot a German Luger from the war. I have a big regret that I never had the opportunity to ask about his service in the Navy during his deployment in the Korean War. I love history and it would have been fantastic to hear about that time. I had so many times that I enjoyed with him. I remember he took the whole family out to have a Chicago pan pizza. I never saw such a thing like that and it was super special. When he came for a visit to see us in Maryland, I was curious about how he got his shoes so shiny. So he was more than happy to show me how to spit shine my Sunday shoes, mirroring his own. They were like glass!

The unfortunate thing about our relationship is we lived too far away from family which limited our visits, but not the quality of great times when we did get together. By the way, he taught each of us to be pretty good with that pink ball and paddle. Nobody could hold a candle to him, he could do it with his eyes closed, behind his back and between his legs. He was the best and I will always cherish the

memories I have of him and the happiness he brought to my childhood and young adult life. I think "Happy Days" and the Fonz character Henry Winkler played on tv, was a copy on Uncle Val's life. He was a great looking man and had a heart of gold. He will be deeply missed. See you later.

Love Bobby

Robert Aeschlimann - January 11, 2025 at 11:18 AM