



## Raphael "Ray" George Eckman

November 26, 1927 - March 31, 2021

Raphael "Ray" Eckman, 93 year old resident of Little Falls, MN passed away Wednesday, March 31, 2021 at the Little Falls Care Center in Little Falls, MN. A memorial gathering will be held from 1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. on August 19, 2021 at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN. Military honors will be held at 3:00 P.M. on August 19, 2021 at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls, MN. Caring for Ray and his family is the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN.

Raphael "Ray" Eckman was born on November 26, 1927 in Little Falls, MN to the late Vincent and Frances (Olek) Eckman. The youngest of eight children, Ray lived his entire life in Little Falls MN. He enlisted in the Army in 1946 and served as an amphibious boat mechanic before joining the MN Army National Guard in 1951. For 31 years, Ray worked at Camp Ripley, starting as a truck mechanic in the Combined Support Maintenance Shop and later becoming a commissioned officer in 1955. He ended his career as the Shop Superintendent at the rank of Colonel (06) in 1983. Ray also served as the Deputy Director for the State Area Command of the MNANG for several years. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct and outstanding leadership from 1973 to 1983.

In 1951, while stationed at Camp Rucker, AL for training, Ray and Jeanette Zimmerman were married and they honeymooned in Key West, FL. They

soon built a home for his growing family on Riverwood Drive, where he then resided for over 60 years. Ray enjoyed living on the river and owned many boats over the years and was particularly fond of pontoon boats. He enjoyed tinkering on anything that needed fixing; often he commented that he could “fix anything but broken hearts and bicycles”. Ray also enjoyed cutting his own firewood well into his 80’s. He loved to travel and drove through all of the lower 48 States and Alaska, often accompanied by his brother Walter. Ray also extensively toured Europe by either train or tour bus. His other interests included reading, watching WWII documentaries, and any and all activities associated with Post 46 of the American Legion, including serving as Post Commander. In retirement, Ray volunteered for the Food Shelf and drove patients to medical appointments.

Ray was preceded in death by all of his birth family, his eldest son, Patrick (Renee Boicourt) in 2003, his wife of over 60 years, Jeanette in 2013, his step-grandson Jesse (Lisa) Rund in 2007 and his great-granddaughter Hailey Joe Albachten in 2016.

Ray is survived by his children, daughter, Beverly (Stan) Rund of Elbow Lake, MN, son, James Eckman of St. Cloud, MN and daughter, Aimee Eckman (Joanna Stevens) of Eastham, MA; grandchildren, Lucas, Anna and Katrina Eckman, Johanna Vosen, Jordan (Ellie) Eckman, Alehna Albachten, Collin Eckman, Emma Eckman Stevens; step-granddaughter, Allison (Chad) Bagby; great-granddaughter, Avah Albachten; step-great-grandchildren, Alayna Rund, DJ Lenz, Nicole Bagby; and one step-great-great-grandchild, Asher Bagby.

# Cemetery Details

## Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery

15550 Highway 115  
Little Falls, MN

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

AUG 19. 3:00 PM (CT)

Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery  
15550 Highway 115  
Little Falls, MN

# Tribute Wall



“ *Lemieur Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Raphael "Ray" George Eckman*



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**Lemieur Funeral Homes** - August 19, 2021 at 09:41 AM



“ *Raphael "Ray" George Eckman*

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January 21, 2023 at 11:59 AM



“ *20 files added to the album Life Tributes*



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**Lemieur Funeral Homes** - August 19, 2021 at 09:39 AM

AW

“ Anne M. Wolke lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" George Eckman



Anne M. Wolke - May 19, 2021 at 02:57 PM

PG

“ Uncle Ray was my favorite uncle. I will miss him! I know this is late but I never read my Facebook page. Uncle Ray would come to Mi. And we would go to many garage sales. He really like that my mother Rose was a pro at sales. Ray was so much fun.

Pat Goulait - May 06, 2021 at 04:38 PM

DJ

“ Dear Eckman family (Bev)Ray was such a nice person. He was a very close friend to my father. They exchanged magazines now and then. May he rest in peace. May God Bless You All.



Debbie Jelinski-Harakel - April 21, 2021 at 09:53 AM

CM

“ Claudette Moran lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" George Eckman



Claudette Moran - April 18, 2021 at 01:51 PM

LH

“ *Bev and family, I only met your Dad a couple of times but he was very nice to me. He had a very long and impressive life. I'm so sorry for your loss. Love and prayers from Tom and me.*



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**Linda Hauge** - April 15, 2021 at 02:17 PM

KY

“ *Ray was the very best neighbor to my elderly grandmother. As precocious five year old twins, my sister and I thought it would be really funny to hide from my grandma Myrtle one day when she volunteered to babysit. We chose a really good place: the tiny linen closet. Ray was the first person she called to assist with finding us. Grandma Myrtle and Ray searched for what seemed like an hour ( more like 15 min) and it was Ray who finally found us. The look on his face was of tremendous relief then, a very faint smirk. A sideways stern look then followed as we were reunited with our care giver. Excitement!*

*Ray also was very fond of gardening with my grandmother and together they grew many different varieties of veggies. I loved it when Ray would come over just to chat and check upon his plants. He would engage my sister and I in the process, and for that we were so thankful. I also remember a hike to the "back 40" with Ray to inspect the land and trees. He knew the area so well and I loved he too loved nature hikes.*

*He will be missed. My deepest sympathy to the family. Truly a good man.*

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**Kirsten L Yocum** - April 14, 2021 at 07:30 PM

GT

*Just saw Ray's obit. Have many fond memories of Ray's dedication to the Morrison County Food Shelf from the early days at St Francis convent to our new building on the west side. He was always available when we needed help with his sidekick Lenny Gamradt! A very generous hard working man! Rest in peace Ray!*

**Gloria Thomes** - August 17, 2021 at 05:53 AM

JS


*“ Aimee: I am so sorry to hear of your Dad's death. What a wonderful life, and at age 93! So much to remember and so grateful you had him as long as you did. Both Becky and Jeep can relate how tough it is to lose their father. Both are still in a state of grief, and it will take a while until they can be thankful for the time they had with him. 88 was a long time too. Prayers are with you and Joanna, and your whole family. Hugs and love, Jean Snow*

**Jean E. Snow** - April 13, 2021 at 11:20 PM

BA

*“ I am so glad I took the time over the last many years to visit with your Dad every summer. It was a great time to share a meal and just visit  
I am looking forward to seeing the family at the memorial service later this summer  
Barbara Ahlstrom*

**barbara ahlstrom** - April 06, 2021 at 11:32 AM

 Susan  
Ogaard

*“ Susan Ogaard lit a candle in memory of  
Raphael "Ray" George Eckman*



**Susan Ogaard** - April 05, 2021 at 08:18 PM

LC

“ It saddened my day when I heard of Col Eckman's death. I knew Ray as both a family friend and my superior in the military. I first met Ray as a ten year old, at Cp Rucker, AL in 1951, where he was a Sergeant in my fathers section. During the 1950s I would see him when he socialized with my parents and when I made the Annual Father/Son Day at Cp Ripley. He was one of the soldiers who showed us kids military equipment and how it was used along with the History of the Minnesota Guard. On leaving my parent's home in 1960 I didn't see Ray again 1979 when he was visiting Ft Leavenworth, KS on a training conference. From that point on during my military career I could always count on him for military advice and council. He was a Soldier of the Old School in looking out for his men and accomplishing assigned tasks. Ray, with your passing, the flag of our heart will be at half staffed. My family wishes to convey our deepest sympathy and prayers to Ray's family for their loss.

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**Les & Shirlene Chisholm** - April 05, 2021 at 04:39 PM

KB

“ To the family of Ray Eckman  
We are sorry to hear of the passing of your father Ray. He hired me for my first job at Camp Ripley. He was a great man and a great legionnaire even though there is a 20 year age difference between us we became great friends I will miss him very much.  
Ken and Pat Burggraff

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**kenneth Burggraff** - April 05, 2021 at 03:02 PM

SS

“ Ray was a nice man, and enjoyed getting to talk to him and serving his meals at the care center



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**shelia schyma** - April 04, 2021 at 12:08 AM

CL

“ Charlie And Dianne Ledbetter lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" George Eckman



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**Charlie and Dianne Ledbetter** - April 02, 2021 at 06:14 PM

KD

“ Our deepest sympathy. Our thoughts and prayers for all of you.  
  
Buck and Kate(Zak) Davis

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**Kathleen Davis** - April 02, 2021 at 01:16 PM

SH

“ Sue Holtz lit a candle in memory of Raphael "Ray" George Eckman



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**Sue Holtz** - April 01, 2021 at 08:03 PM

JW

“ My sympathy goes out to Col. Ray's family. He was quite a guy. I worked with or for him for many years at Camp Ripley. Years ago when he had his huge garden he used to share things with me from time to time and drop them off at our house. My little girl used to holler out to me when he came "Momma, the vegetable man is here." That always cracked him up. Many fond memories of Ray. I'm sure he will be missed by many people. God Bless.

Joyce Wedel - April 01, 2021 at 04:31 PM

NK

“ Bev, Jamie, Aimee and family-  
We are so sorry to hear that Uncle Ray passed away. We send our thoughts to all of you. Peace to all

Nancy (Zimmerman) and Gene Kalthoff

Nancy Kalthoff - April 01, 2021 at 03:03 PM



JT

“ Dear Jim & Family,  
We are sorry to hear of the passing of your father and grandfather.

Jeff & Deb Tschida - April 01, 2021 at 02:53 PM

WW

“ Very nice gentleman, remember him coming in to Coborns to buy his groceries! My Sympathy to Rays Family.

Wendy Waltman - April 01, 2021 at 12:08 PM



JC

“Our Deepest Condolences” Mrs. Paul C.  
(Joyce) Crowder and Family



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**Joyce I. Crowder** - March 31, 2021 at 07:14 PM