



Zerl E. Clay

August 25, 1915 - November 28, 2015

Zerl E. Clay, 100 year old resident of Burtrum, MN, passed away on Saturday, November 28, 2015 at Pine Villa Care Center in Melrose, MN. A private family service is being arranged at this time.

Zerl Eleazor Clay was born on August 25, 1915 in Osakis, Minnesota to the late Eleazor and Bessie Clay. As a young man, he attended District #40 country school near Long Prairie. He worked on neighboring farms until he joined the military. In 1938, he began his 30 year career in the U.S. Navy. In 1939, Zerl married Velma Johnson in Las Vegas, Nevada. The couple lived in Long Beach, California until 1941. Zerl was then stationed at Pearl Harbor during the start of World War II on December 7, 1941. He continued to serve in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Theatre as a Chief Boatswain. During this time, he served on many different ships. Zerl fully retired from the U.S. Navy in 1968. The couple farmed near Burtrum, Minnesota for five years. In 1964, the couple moved into Burtrum and built the Budget Shop, later converting it into apartments in 1973. In 1979, Zerl and Velma moved to Arizona to enjoy their retirement. They returned to Burtrum in 2000 to be near family. Zerl lived out the rest of this life doing the things he loved, like woodworking and carpentry.

Zerl is survived by wife of 76 years, Velma Clay of Melrose, MN; son, Jerry (Bev) Clay of St. Cloud, MN; daughters, Joan (Ken) Rahn of Burtrum, MN; and Jodi (Yancy) Yungdahl of Tenino, WA; sisters, Eleanor Schmidt of AK; and

Ellendale Bartz of Glenwood, MN; and 7 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren and 9 great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Eleazor and Bessie; brother, Forest Clay; sisters, Virginia, Margie and Nita.

Tribute Wall



“ *Zerl E. Clay*

January 21, 2023 at 11:59 AM



“ *As a staff member of CentraCare Health Melrose I had the great opportunity to spend time with Zerl. We talked Navy all the time as my son-in-law is in the Navy. He truly enjoyed the photos I shared of places my son-in-law had been to and he liked to see the changes to the places he was in. His humor will be missed.*

Julie Baum

Julie Baum - December 01, 2015 at 10:32 AM



“ *To live to be 100 is wonderful. Who could ask for more. Just wanted you to know that I am thinking of you. I didn't know Zerl personally, but I remember Vern spoke of him many times. May he rest in the Lord's care now. Friend Donna Ostendorf*

Donna Ostendorf - November 30, 2015 at 06:26 PM