



Merrill Ray Menlove

JUN 20, 1933 - NOV 9, 2025



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Merrill Ray Menlove

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Merrill Ray Menlove was born in Mountain View, California on June 20, 1933, the oldest of six children of Walden S Menlove and Alice Petrea Isaksen. His early years were spent in the small farming community of Lewisville, Idaho, where as a boy he learned the value of hard work as he dug potatoes and thinned beets, and for fun enjoyed hunting and fishing and the companionship of his best friend, his dog Jip.

When Merrill was 9, he and his family moved to Ogden, Utah, and then during his junior high school years moved to Salt Lake City, where his dad went into a partnership on a construction project to build 240 homes just below Parleys Canyon. Merrill worked side-by-side with his dad through his teen years and learned all the construction trades -experience that served him well all his life.

Merrill attended East High School, where he was on the track, tennis, drill, and rifle teams. At the age of 16, he wanted to go to ROTC Summer Camp, so he lied about his age and forged his parents' signatures, and made it to that Summer Camp. That led to a commitment of 8 years in the Army Reserve. He always knew he wanted to become a pilot, and the Army headed him in that direction - just took a few years to get there.

At the age of 19 he married Barbara Talbot and shortly afterwards spent 18 months of active duty in San Francisco, then came back to Salt Lake City for Army Reserves. He achieved the rank of Master Sergeant at the young age of 23. He and Barbara had five children during his early military years and moves to various Army bases throughout the United States.

When the chance presented itself, he grabbed the opportunity to sign up for Officers' Candidate School so he could go to Flight School and finally achieve his goal of being an aircraft pilot. Since then, aviation has been his life, as he's flown a wide variety of both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. He served as a pilot in both the U.S. Army and the Coast Guard, and was on active



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duty during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He served two full tours of duty in Vietnam. During his time in Vietnam, he met and married Lindsey Raiford, an Army nurse who was also serving there. They shared several years together during their Vietnam time, and after both left active duty, lived in Colorado and Bountiful, Utah.

Besides flying, he also loved shooting and won the National Rifle Matches, shooting against over 5000 competitors from all branches of the military. For a time he served as the Coast Guard Marksmanship Director. When he wasn't shooting, he flew Coast Guard search and rescue missions off the coast of New England. He assisted in the rescue of over 100 individuals, for which he received Coast Guard medals, awards, and commendations.

He retired from the military after 22 years of active duty with the rank of Major, then served more Reserve years. Following his military retirement, he flew as a forest fire lead plane pilot for the U.S. Forest Service, executive pilot for several major corporations, and was an accident investigator for the Federal Aviation Administration. In his lifetime, he logged over 18,000 hours of flight time with approximately 7000 hours of hazardous flying time.

In his off-time, he built 16 homes and 2 experimental aircraft. He also worked for 3 years for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Temple Square and later for several years supervised church building construction for the Church in the southeastern U.S.

He met his wife Margy when they both worked for the U. S. Forest Service in Atlanta, he as a forest fire pilot and she as an engineering technician. They married in 1978 and have now spent 46 years together, living in Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arizona, Oregon, South Carolina, and moving back to Utah in 2007 for their retirement years.

A devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Merrill lived his faith with strength and purpose. He served as counselor in 5 Bishoprics, served on the High Council several times in different parts of the country, and taught the Gospel wherever and whenever he could, whether by assignment or simply in conversation with those he met. He and his wife Margy served a mission in the Micronesia Guam mission on the island of Majuro, an experience he spoke of as one of the best experiences of his entire life.

Merrill described his own life as "a wonderful series of incredible experiences, some life-and death, with countless miracles throughout."



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Merrill was preceded in death by his father Walden Menlove, mother Alice, and daughter Julie Greene. Merrill is survived by his wife Margy; sisters Marlene Cole, Nelda (Dennis) Gehring, and Bonnie Yeates; brothers Dean (Coleen) Menlove and Jay (Judy) Menlove; sons Kevin (Lisa) Menlove and Todd Menlove; daughters Pam (Dave) Thomas, Dana (Paul) Anderson, and Jodie Menlove; 28 grandchildren, 72 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild on the way.

The family wants to thank the caring staff at the Salt Lake Veterans' Nursing Home and Canyons Hospice for the wonderful care Merrill received and the friendships he made during that time.

There will be a viewing held on Friday, November 14th, 2025 from 6-8 pm at the Bountiful East Stake Center, located at 650 East 2150 South, Bountiful, Utah. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at the same location with a viewing prior to the funeral service at 10:00 to 10:45 am. Interment at the Bountiful City Cemetery following the funeral.

For those who cannot attend funeral services, a link to view them by Zoom is provided here: <https://zoom.us/j/97822564530>.

We encourage you to share any memories you have about Merrill on the Obituary page by clicking the "Share a Memory" button below his photo.



Events

Merrill Ray Menlove

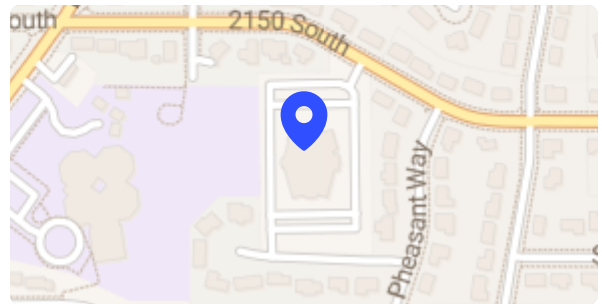
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Viewing

 **Friday**, November 14, 2025

 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM MT

 **Bountiful East Stake Center**
650 East 2150 South , Bountiful UT

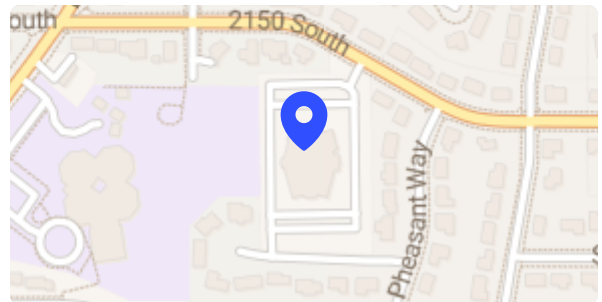


Viewing

 **Saturday**, November 15, 2025

 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM MT

 **Bountiful East Stake Center**
650 East 2150 South , Bountiful UT

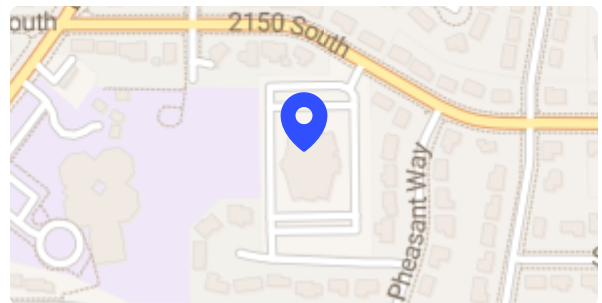


Funeral services

 **Saturday**, November 15, 2025

 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM MT

 **Bountiful East Stake Center**
650 East 2150 South , Bountiful UT





Tribute Wall

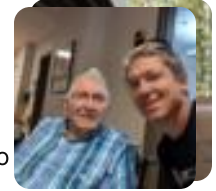
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Eric Olsen shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I met Merrill when I moved into my house in Bountiful back in 2010. I had just left helicopter school, and he one of the first neighbors I met. We clicked immediately because we had so much in common; home projects, helicopters, and anything to do with experimental fixed-wing airplanes. He once told me a story about flying a Huey in Vietnam and having to autorotate into a field with no hydraulics. Apparently the Army adopted an SOP to train autorotations without hydraulics because of Merrill. A switch was even added so pilots could disable the hydraulics during training because of him. He and I worked on each other's airplanes, traded tools, and helped each other with projects around the house. He spent hours working on things with me, and he'd just show up so we could hang out and get stuff done. I never got the chance to take him up in my plane, but I did get to fly in his. He was a steady friend to me, and he was wonderful with my kids. I learned something about "Mel" last night from his amazing siblings. His second wife was from the South and pronounced Merrill as "Mel" and the name stuck as his nickname. Mel's siblings reminded me so much of him last night, and I'm grateful I was able to visit with them. Margie, you've been so wonderful to me. So much love to you and the rest of the family.



November 15 at 6:02 AM



Emily Greene lit a candle in honor of Merrill.

Emily Greene lit a candle in memory of Merrill Menlove

November 12 at 9:23 PM



KB **Kathy Becker** November 13 at 4:42 PM

Mel was a remarkable man and friend. So very sorry for your loss



Media

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Eric Olsen shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

November 15 at 6:02 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Merrill by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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