

## Independence, MO

Eugene “Gene” Francis Henry, 96, of Independence, Missouri, died on May 9, 2019.

Gene was born on November 5, 1922 to Anthony and Rose Vondenkamp Henry on a farm southeast of Seneca, Kansas where he was raised with his six siblings. After graduating from Sts. Peter and Paul High School in 1940 he worked on a farm until joining the Navy, proudly serving his country from 1941 to 1947.

Gene initially volunteered for submarine duty but was ultimately assigned to Pearl Harbor Battle Cruiser, the USS Phoenix. He was on board the Phoenix during the Pearl Harbor attacks. Even in recent years he vividly recalled and recounted many details of that attack, including the sights, sounds, smells, and emotions of that experience. Gene was honorably discharged on Feb 12, 1947 with the following Service Ribbon authorizations: American Defense with star, American Area, Asiatic-Pacific with 8 stars, Phil. Liberation with 2 stars. Gene remained extremely proud of his service to his country and was fiercely patriotic throughout his lifetime. A member of both the VFW and the American Legion. He volunteered for the latter organization in Independence for many years. He was also a devout member of St Marks Catholic Church in Independence.

Gene was married to Vera Velma Viers in 1948. They had one child, Clyde. The couple celebrated 20 years of marriage prior to Vera’s death in 1968. Gene married Lila M. Malloy Kreiser of Seneca in 1973 in Miami, Oklahoma. They maintained homes in both Seneca and Independence but eventually settled on Independence as their permanent and sole residence. The couple traveled all over the U.S. on camping and fishing trips and frequently participated in those activities at local lakes and ponds with extended family members. Gene enjoyed bowling and yard work with Lila, plus, he was passionate about his involvement with the Kansas City Toys for Tots program. Gene designed and constructed dozens of wooden toys each year with Lila painting each toy. The toys (along with Lila’s hand knitted mittens and hats) were donated each Christmas for that organization. Gene and Lila celebrated 42 years of marriage before Lila passed away in September of 2015.

Gene was employed for Carter Waters Construction in Kansas City. He retired in 1984 at the age of 62 after 35 years of service with that company.

Gene was preceded in death by his parents; and sisters, Leta Tangman and Dorothy Olberding.

He is survived by a son, Clyde Henry of Hawthorne, CA.; a stepson, Louis(Pamela)Kreiser of Eagle River, AK.; a step-grandson , Chad(Christina)Kreiser of Henderson, NV.; two step-great-grandsons, Alex Kreiser of Henderson, NV., and Mason Kreiser of St George, New Brunswick, Canada; three brothers, Linus Henry of Weatherford, TX.; Bill Henry of Wyle, TX.; Paul Henry of Seneca, KS.; and one sister, Joan Klier of Ocala, Florida.

Rosaries will be prayed on Tuesday, July 9th at 2:00PM at the Lauer Funeral Home. Mass of

Christian Burial will be on July 10th at 10AM at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Inurnment will be in the Catholic Cemetery, with full military honors. Memorials may be left to the American Legion and/or VFW. Lauer Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. To express your sympathy and for more information visit [www.lauerfuneralhome.com](http://www.lauerfuneralhome.com) .