

Hiawatha , KS



Command Sergeant Major, A. Dean Tollefson, passed away Monday, May 15 at the age of 85 due to complications of Covid and his November 19, 2022 Traumatic Brain Injury. He was born January 29, 1938 at the Horton Hospital to Clarence and Clara (Torkelson) Tollefson of Willis, Kansas.

Known as the Noisy Norwegian, he created numerous smiles with his warm greetings and conversations. He filled hearts with hope as he spread his daily words of wisdom and notable quotes: "Every day is a good day, just some are better than others." "The Lord won't give you more than you can handle." Always eager to lend a hand, a shoulder, an ear ... he served others throughout his life.

He served his country from July 7, 1955 to January 29, 1998 through his service in the U.S. Army and the Kansas Army National Guard. He was elected into the Order of Saint Barbara, a military honor society for distinguished Artillerymen on November 20, 1982. His military honors include Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (with 2 oak leaf clusters), the Army Achievement Medal, The Army Good Conduct Medal (4 awards), the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters), the National Defense Service Medal (2 awards), the Armed Forces Reserve Medal (3 hour glass devices), the NCO Professional Development Ribbon with numeral 3 and Army Service Ribbon. At his 1998 retirement, a Staff Sergeant at the time (Robert Herlinger) described the retiring Command Sergeant Major Tollefson as "always putting the soldier before himself and finding the rose in everyone." His soldiers often comment on his guidance and leadership molding great men, as well as great soldiers. Patriotism and the role of the People in our government were important topics for him. He lived to serve and stand with the common man and encourage the common man- active involvement in our government.

He graduated as Salutatorian from Willis High School in 1956 behind his Valedictorian sweetheart, Peggy (Tobiason) Tollefson. He obtained his Associates degree from Highland Community College in May 1974. The childhood sweethearts, Dean and his devoted ex-wife, Peggy (Tobiason) Tollefson raised 5 children (Doug, Denise, Travis, Robin and Ryan) during their 42 year marriage and have treasured the memories and years with his 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, and 1 great great grandchild.

He served his clients at the Noisy Norwegian- Nook through his Insurance Agency, accounting and tax services and enjoyed his years as a Rural US Postal Office Mail Carrier. In fact, he proudly enjoyed using 5 hours on a 3 hour mail route, leaving time to check on elderly families and friends. During his final years he enjoyed his work with Howard Auction Company and then LG Auction Company. He coached Little League Baseball, served more than 60 years in the Lions Club, was Scout Master with Boy Scouts of America and was a lifelong member of the Zion Lutheran Church of Everest. His senior years were blessed with conversations and kinship at Gary Shears Auto Repair Shop and Larry Chestnut- Barber Shop.

He was an avid sports fan and followed the Hiawatha High School Redskins/Redmen through many seasons, tournaments and State Championships. His love of math and numbers led him to his special talent of timing and documenting the approach speed of pole vaulters and jumpers at the Kansas State High School Track Meet. Always a character and a friend to all, he usually would answer the question “how are you?” with “Better than yesterday.”

He is survived by his children Douglas Dean Tollefson, Denise Diane Tollefson, MD and Travis Tate (Jamie Funamura, MD) Tollefson, MD. Dean- Grandchildren: Robin Diane Malloy, Ryan Douglas (Amber) Tollefson and Theo TateTollefson. Great Grandchildren: Jalen and Justice Malloy, Sydney, Ashlyn and Kristopher Tollefson and his Great Great Granddaughter born November 15, 2022 just 4 days before his Traumatic Brain Injury, she is Amora Rae the daughter of his beloved first great granddaughter, Sydney Nicole Tollefson. He had great pride in his Norwegian heritage and has imprinted that pride upon each of his descendants. Uff da!

He is also survived by his Sister Linda (Robert) Fee and nieces Exzondria Rodvelt and Lachelle (Shannon) Hartley. His brother- children: Karen (Douglas) Tollefson-Foye and Troy (Amy) Tollefson.

He was preceded in death by his parents Clarence Arthur Tollefson and Clara Mae (Torkelson) Tollefson, his brother Daryl and Daryl- beloved wife Donna Tollefson. His grandparents were Tonnes and Ella Mae Torkelson & Christopher and Martha Tollefson.

Funeral arrangements are planned for the weekend of July 8, 2023. As he oftentimes closed his voicemail messages, “I love you with all my heart. God Bless. Tollefson Out!” Chapel Oaks Funeral Home is assisting with arrangements.