



Railsplitter Obituary



David Richard Gramins

14 May 1942 – 1 July 2025

David R. Gramins, son of Richard and Elsie Gramins, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family and friends on July 1st, 2025 after a long battle with Renal and Chronic Lymphatic Cancer.

He was active in everything he did, and that says a lot. Early on, he sometimes held down four jobs to support his new family. Primarily, he worked for the United States Post Office and retired as a Postmaster. His second occupation was the United States Army Reserve, where he was a drill instructor and he retired after reaching his goal of earning the rank of Command Sergeant Major. Even after retiring he kept working. He was a bus driver who was loved by his riders and later worked at Silver Spring and New Berlin Hills golf courses (primarily to get cheap golf!).



Railsplitter Obituary

Despite having a full ticket, he was always there for his family. Whether it was going to band or swimming functions, or being the ultimate do-it-yourselfer and keeping the home and vehicles running, he made time for everything.

He always made friends easily and will be truly missed by all of them, including almost every one of his neighbors in Westchester, where he lived for 51 years.

He is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Nora Lee, his children Jeff (Beth) Gramins and Meg (Tom) Stahl.

Please join us for a celebration of his truly remarkable life on Saturday July 19, 2025 at the Becker-Ritter Funeral Home with visitation from 11 AM until the time of David's Funeral Service at 1 PM. In lieu of flowers, we respectfully request a donation to the ***Tunnels to Towers Foundation*** to support members of the military and first responders.

Dave served as Treasurer of the 84th Railsplitters Association from 2010 to 2025, the longest tenure of any Association officer.



David and Nora Gramins



Railsplitter Obituary

A Tribute to Command Sergeant Major David Gramins United States Army (Retired)

I first met David Gramins when I was a young Lieutenant Colonel and was assigned as the battalion commander of a tank training unit. Dave was the Command Sergeant Major (CSM). Right away I noticed his outstanding command presence. He had spit-shined boots and a pressed BDU uniform that looked like he had been dipped in starch. And he was handsome, as if he was drawn from central casting. Even more impressive was his complete understanding of the unit, its senior NCO's, and the problems we faced. Clearly, he had studied the unit and our soldiers. I knew I would enjoy working with this man.

That was 1985. I have now known Dave for forty years, and he only disappointed me once. After only a few months with me, he was offered an assignment that was too good to pass up: the CSM of a railroad unit. Dave was not a trained tanker, and he had a hard time accepting that his soldiers were better prepared for the unit's mission than he was. Also, this unit often trained in Hawaii. We offered FT. McCoy, Wisconsin. See how wise he was?

Years later our paths crossed again, but this time as retired soldiers serving on the Board of Directors of the 84th Division Alumni Association. Dave accepted the challenging duties of Treasurer. Along with his wife Nora, they kept our books for over fifteen years. In light of so many stories we read about board officers cooking the books or outright stealing, "Team Gramins" kept us solvent, out of the papers and out of jail! Dave's reward came just a few weeks ago at our 25th Anniversary Dinner (and the Army's 250th Birthday) when Major General Kelly Dickerson, the Commanding General of the 84th Training Command, presented Dave a 2-star coin for his service. Nora was also recognized and presented with a bouquet of flowers by our Association President Goldie Schuh.

As Board members, I learned that Dave was a golfer. So, with Colonels Bill McKeown and Gary Davis, and a retired Master Sergeant named Jim Butler, we joined a golf league. A few years later we lost Bill McKeown to cancer and Dave joined our team. I have played with Dave every week for nearly five years, and I



Railsplitter Obituary

grew to admire and respect him more every week. Never more so than when his health began to fail, and he bravely struggled on.

I mention the importance of golf in Dave's life because you tell a lot about a person on the golf course. Golf has been known as "gentleman's" sport (and ladies, as well) meaning the rules of the game are often self-enforced. Without integrity, the game would be a farce. Dave followed the rules of course, and he cleared his throat when he saw a violation that was about to be ignored. He made sure no one in his group would taint the game he loved so much.

In his life Dave Gramins was a volunteer fire fighter, a mail man, a postmaster for a Wisconsin community, a golf course ranger, Commandant of a Drill Sergeant School, and a Command Sergeant Major in several different assignments. You can search long and hard and not find a comparable resume. Above all, everywhere he worked he made it a better place. He accomplished everything with grace, dignity, and honor.

Dave Gramins died on July 1, 2025. Now, two of the finest gentlemen I have ever met, Bill McKeown and Dave Gramins, are reunited once again. I bet they will do "18" every morning and afternoon, in a place where there are no winters, or rainouts, or slow players ahead of them. The game of golf, the U.S. Army, and our country are better, just because he was here. And I am a better man.

Colonel Peter (Skip) Pochowski