



## Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke

December 2, 1949 - November 22, 2021

Sonny (Elmer) Ferdinand Rinke, age 71, passed away on November 22, 2021. Sonny lived a life helping those around him, making and sharing all the best stories, dreaming of ways to make everything work better, and loving his family. He was born on December 2, 1949 to Speed (Elmer) and Lorraine Rinke. Sonny was raised in Utica, MI with a love for fishing, cars, and fixing anything broken. He served proudly in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in the Vietnam war.

After returning home, Sonny met the love of his life, Gail, and married on May 15, 1976. Sonny and Gail welcomed three children into the world, Dana, Alissa, and Jeffrey. The majority of his professional career was with the Experi-Metal sheet metal company in Sterling Heights, MI, helping connect customers with manufacturing solutions. Sonny enjoyed traveling to car shows across the country, meeting new people and sharing life stories, and learning about new technologies. He and his family were able to travel to many destinations throughout the country, but especially loved summer trips to Frankfort, MI to enjoy fishing, quiet sunsets, and family time. In his last years, Sonny enjoyed a retirement abuzz with project cars, aftermarket swap meets, and playing with his three grandchildren.

Sonny is survived by his wife Gail, brother Leo (Nancy) Rinke, children Dana (Kevin) Secord, Alissa (Edward) Kay, Jeffrey (Sahra) Rinke, and grandchildren Anna, Angelina, and Lennon.

A viewing service will take place at Wm. Sullivan and Sons Funeral home in

Utica on Sunday, November 28, 2021 from 1:00 pm-8:00 pm. On Monday, November 29, 2021, he will be laid in state at 10:30 am at Trinity Lutheran Church in Utica, MI with a service following at 11:00 am and a luncheon to follow. Memorial contributions may be made with the Trinity Lutheran Foundation ([www.trinityutica.com](http://www.trinityutica.com)), FaithWorks ([www.faithworksmichigan.org](http://www.faithworksmichigan.org)), an organization dedicated to assisting widows, single moms, veterans, elderly, the disabled and others in need, or Disabled American Veterans (DAV), P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250 [dav.org/tribute](http://dav.org/tribute)  
View Livestream at  
<https://youtu.be/ShzJ6thL9jE>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **28**. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home  
8459 Hall Road  
Utica, MI 48317  
(586) 731-2411  
utica@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Instate

NOV **29**. 10:30 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church  
45160 Van Dyke  
Utica, MI 48317

## Funeral Service

NOV **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church  
45160 Van Dyke  
Utica, MI 48317

## Military Honors

NOV **29**. 11:45 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church  
45160 Van Dyke  
Utica, MI 48317



# Tribute Wall



“ *Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors created a Tribute Video in memory of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke*



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**Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors** - November 29, 2021 at 11:02 AM

BK

“ *30 November 2021*

*Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Elmer Rinke. His fellow troopers of the 11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia, salute our fallen brother and worthy hero. Sonny served courageously with I Troop of the 3rd Squadron in 1970-71, and it was our privilege to have him in the ranks of the Legendary Blackhorse Regiment. Our loss is that of another brother down and we will continue to honor his memory at our gatherings and at our annual reunion. Elmer was an exemplary soldier and had the utmost respect of the Blackhorse Troopers. His name will be listed on the roll of our honored dead and in our newsletter, Thunder Run and honored at our next Annual Reunion. But as our Burial Liturgy clearly states: "life has not ended, merely changed" and Elmer's soul continues on an endless path. As we were together then (in Vietnam), we will be together again in the life hereafter, comfortably enfolded in the loving arms of our Merciful Father.*

*Chaplain Blandin W. Karabinos, 11th ACVVC (Vietnam 71-72)*

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**Blandin Karabinos** - November 30, 2021 at 11:05 AM

AN

“ *Sonny was a great Man whom had the ability to get people to smile and laugh. He cared. Sonny had the passion to want to solve problems. He always had a solution. His humor was one of a kind. He would come up with some of the funniest jokes. He loved doing projects and he did them very meticulous. His Memory will remain this world. Sonny was truly a blessing.*

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**anonymous** - November 29, 2021 at 11:31 PM

MA

“ *I was so sorry to hear of Sonny's passing. My deepest sympathies to his family.*

*Marty Posluszny*

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**Marty** - November 29, 2021 at 06:08 AM

PP

“ *Dear Gail, sending condolences to you and your family. I am so sorry for the loss of your husband Sonny. Prayers are with you. Pat Hagen Plott*

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**Pat Plott** - November 28, 2021 at 07:36 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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November 28, 2021 at 01:11 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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November 28, 2021 at 09:01 AM



“ *Our family began our friendship with The Rinke's when I was 8 years old. I will always remember the times Sonny and Gail would take us on rides in their suburban to see Christmas lights, and fireworks in the summer.*

*Sonny was a great story teller. I will never forget the times he would call Gail when my sisters and I were away on scrapbook trips with Gail. Sonny would be on speaker phone sharing a story or giving his opinion.*

*Sonny will be missed by all who new him, He was a wonderful husband and dad, a great friend, and neighbor, Gail, Dana and Kevin, Alissa, Eddie,Anna, Angie, and Jeff,Sahra, and Lennon please know you are in my prayers. May the Lord bring you His peace each day,  
Love, Laurie Madonna*

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**Laurie Madonna** - November 28, 2021 at 12:51 AM



*Sonny was the best I loved to see him and Gail at a family gathering he always made you smile your going to be missed by all,wish they're were more people on this earth like you it would be so much better!  
Love Bob and Jean*

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**Jean Jackson** - December 01, 2021 at 03:17 PM

CF

“ *Sonny would always light up the room with his exuberant personality. You could tell that he always spoke from the heart, loved his wife Gail, loved his kids and was always interested in others' well being. Sonny's light will perpetually shine on with the Lord. His mission is complete. God Bless his soul. Rest in Peace, Sonny. My sincere sympathies and prayers to Gail and family.*

*Cherice Fortuna*

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**Cherice A Fortuna** - November 27, 2021 at 04:15 PM

GU

“ *Great memories of old town Utica with Sonny., Tach Winders, parties together, first jobs, and so much more. Always a good friend..  
Never to forget,  
Guralczyk, Olden familys*

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**guralczyk** - November 27, 2021 at 12:07 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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November 27, 2021 at 10:50 AM

GM

“ Truth\_ We have had the pleasure of knowing my brother-n-law Sonny for all these years !  
He has always put Our Father in Heaven & family first above all others & his hobbies !  
Sonny , being a Motorhead & Street Rod'r and a passion for the 'Woodward Dream Cruise' as we both shared , he always respected and admired the creative designer & artistic engineer that rebuilt there older vehicles. following in the footsteps of his father "Speed" as they called him !  
There was also the passion of fishing- always catching the biggest #1🐟  
He's to you my brother - see you in Heaven one day ! { Gary & Linda Mathiak }

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**Gary & Linda MATHiak** - November 26, 2021 at 03:48 PM



“ Our family had the pleasure of getting to know Sonny, once his son Jeffrey married our daughter Sahra. Sonny was such a sweet, caring, thoughtful, helpful and smart man. He had the gift of gab for sure, which was found to be very charming. He loved sharing all of his knowledge ❤️ I enjoyed listening to him. He loved his wife and family very much! He will surely be missed, but never forgotten. May God welcome you with open arms and make room for you and all of your stories, Sonny! God Bless his family at this difficult time.  
Michael & Mylene Eldaly

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**Mylene Allen** - November 25, 2021 at 08:58 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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November 25, 2021 at 02:51 PM



“ *My Father and Sonny's Dad had many great talks about cars. He would bring Sonny with him when going threw my Dads salvage yard. I always enjoyed Sonnys visits when i took over. Prayers to the Family. Harry Warholak. (Warhoop)*

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**Harry Warholak** - November 25, 2021 at 12:57 PM



“ *Rick, Kelley,Tony, Beth Zappella purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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**Rick, Kelley,Tony, Beth Zappella** - November 25, 2021 at 08:55 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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November 25, 2021 at 07:44 AM

KB

“ *karen, Tracey, Debbie and Butch purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Elmer F. "Sonny" Rinke.*



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**karen, Tracey, Debbie and Butch** - November 24, 2021 at  
08:38 PM