

**William Bruce Rutherford**  
**EMCS Gold 1967-1973**  
**DOB: December 20, 1935**  
**Eternal Patrol July 21, 2025**



### **William Bruce Rutherford**

William Bruce “Pop” Rutherford, a man who lived a life filled with curiosity, grit, and a deep devotion to family, country, and land, passed away peacefully at the age of 89.

Born and raised in Cape May, New Jersey, Bruce was the son of Harry Rutherford, a gifted sign painter and artist, and Margaret Tyler Rutherford, a hardworking waitress who sold fresh vegetables and Gladiolas by the roadside. Their creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness shaped the man Bruce became.

At just 17, Bruce joined the United States Marine Corps—determined to forge his path and create a secure future. He was assigned to care for the Marine Corps' bulldog

mascot at the stables in Quantico, VA while teaching officers how to pack mortars and ammunition on mules and in an unexpected twist, this introduced him to competitive horseback riding. When a group of officers challenged him to a race, Bruce not only won but kept on winning. He was transferred the next day to Cherry Point, NC, where he worked in the PX.

Bruce met Doris his sweetheart, in just 3rd grade. At 18, he married his sweetheart Doris who was 17, beginning a love story that would span decades and anchor their family through every twist and turn. Their first son, Rob, was born in 1956.

After three years in the Marines, Bruce transitioned to the U.S. Navy, where he would serve for 17 more years, completing a 20-year military career that was nothing short of legendary. He graduated top of his class at Naval school near Waukegan, Illinois, and trained in nuclear power in Schenectady, NY. His first assignment was in Key West, FL. Over the years he served on total of 5 submarines including: USS Bergall (SS 320), USS Spikefish (SS 404), USS Seawolf (SSN 575), USS John Marshall (SSBN 611) & USS Henry L Stimson (SSBN 655). He often spoke about the USS Seawolf, one of the Navy's first nuclear submarines, and remained tight-lipped about its speed, joking that it was "classified." He famously hatched a chicken named "Three Dots" aboard the submarine, and was the first person ever to do so.

During those years of service, Pop and Doris raised their growing family across the country—welcoming Lorna in Cape May Courthouse, NJ, Tim in Ledyard, CT, and Troy in Newport News, VA into the world along the way.

In 1962, the family acquired land in Nelson County, Virginia, naming it "The Wonder If Farm" after the children's endless imagination during long truck rides: "I wonder if we could..." The farm became a family epicenter, where pigs, rabbits, goats, tomatoes, chickens, and grandkids all thrived under Pop's care. By 1978, it was a full-fledged pig farm. According to Doris, Pop raised and delivered thousands of pigs in his lifetime.

In true Rutherford fashion, retirement didn't mean slowing down. After selling the pig farm to his youngest son Troy, Pop built homes, smoked some of the best BBQ on the East Coast, ran a family BBQ stand, grew the biggest Lima beans and the juiciest tomatoes you've ever seen, and gifted more tomato plants than most folks could count. His chicken coop was prolific, his tomato sandwiches legendary.

Pop and Doris loved spending time at their winter home on Lake Okeechobee in Florida, where Bruce embarked on countless fishing adventures with Doris's cousin Ronnie. He'd bring home so much fish that the family would host fish fries all summer long just to make a dent in his epic catch—feeding not just family, but friends and neighbors too. He loved card nights with their dear friends and neighbors, Millie and Dean, and his loyalty and friendships ran deep.

He was a proud and active member of Calvary Baptist Church and the American Legion, where his dedication to service and community continued long after his formal retirement.

Pop was sharp, mischievous, and full of stories—including the time he tried to turn a shed around from underneath it and had it fall on his head (don't worry, he walked it off). He loved telling tales of "slick things and crazy stuff," and made every moment feel like a story worth remembering.

He leaves behind a large family and a legacy of laughter, hard work, wild ideas, and a life built with his own hands. Pop didn't just raise kids—he raised a generation that knows how to grow food, build shelter, and chase dreams with grit and heart.

He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Karen—Pop's devoted VA caregiver—and to the compassionate doctors, nurses, and hospice team at Guggenheimer for their extraordinary care, support, and kindness.

Pop is preceded in death by his parents, Harry & Margaret, his daughter-in-law Donna Rutherford, his sister Pauline, his sister Joan, his sister Gail, and sister Jane.

He is survived by his loving wife Dorothy "Doris", his son Rob Rutherford, his daughter Lorna Ballowe (Carlton), his son Tim Rutherford (Donna), and his son Troy Rutherford (Pam), his grandchildren Alan Adams, Angie Campbell, Chris Rutherford, Daniel Rutherford, Jenny Rutherford, Stephanie Rutherford, David Rutherford, Clayton Ballowe & Jesse Rutherford, his 22 Great Grandchildren and 1 Great Great Grandchild, his sister Joy, his brother Harry, his brother Fredrick, his sister Nora, his brother Luke and his brother Jesse.

Family and friends are invited to gather for a memorial service on Saturday, July 26th, 2025, at 2PM at Calvary Baptist Church in Lovington, Virginia with Pastor Tyler Lucas Officiating. A private family graveside memorial service will be held at the family cemetery in Shipman following the funeral.

Arrangements by the Wells/Sheffield Funeral Chapel of Lovington (434-263-4097).

To order [memorial trees](#) or send flowers to the family in memory of William Bruce Rutherford, please visit our [flower store](#).

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