



## Mel Pulju

January 26, 1949 - September 3, 2013

A Celebration of Life will be held for Mel Pulju on Friday, September 13, 2013, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Elmer Goche Post 3922, Veterans of Foreign Wars, in Wadena. Mel passed away, unexpectedly, on September 3, 2013 at the age of 64, in Minneapolis, MN.

Mel was born on January 26, 1949 in Park Rapids, MN. He graduated from Wadena High School in 1967, and married Pegi (Hansen) Pulju in Wadena in 1973. Mel served in the U.S. Army, 9th Division, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry, from 1969 to 1971, including a tour in Vietnam. In 1981, Mel moved with his family to West Fargo, ND, before relocating back to Wadena in 1991. For the past thirteen years, Mel worked as a custodian at the Wadena Deer Creek Schools. He lived life to the fullest, especially on the golf course, baseball field, and with his family, including his grandchildren, who love and miss their "Papa". Mel will be remembered by his many, many friends, family members, co-workers and school children for his kindness, infectious smile, and quick wit.

Mel is survived by his wife of 40 years, Pegi Pulju; mother, Darlene (Zentner) Pulju "Toby", both of Wadena; sons, Kelly (Becca) of Wadena; Kasey (Ashley) of Blaine; daughter, Josi (Michael) Schultz of West Fargo, ND; brothers, Larry (Candace), Keith, Joe and Gary, all of Wadena; Terry (Karen) of Winnemucca, NV; sister, Sheila (Grant) Pohto of Ham Lake; father and mother-in-law, Floyd

and Hazel Hansen of Wadena; brother-in-law, Todd (Jody) Hansen of Duluth; sisters-in-law Cindy (Keath) Borchert of Wahpeton, ND, and Laurie Kopischke-Pulju of Wadena; beloved grandchildren, Annika and Sofia Pulju, Allison and Alexis Schultz and Floyd Pulju; and many nieces, nephews and grand nieces & nephews.

Mel is preceded in death by his father, Melvin H. Pulju and brother, Donald Pulju.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

SEP **13.** 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Elmer Goche Post 3922, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
213 1st St. SE  
Wadena, MN 56482

# Tribute Wall



“ *Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Schuller Family Funeral Homes** - September 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BE

“ *My heart goes out to the Pulju family. I was here in 2010 for a class reunion and got to visit with Mel and Larry. It had been a lot of years since I had seen any of them. Mel said Bev do you know why my marriage has lasted so long, my wife always goes with me. He was an exceptional man.*  
*Beverly Sharp Shackelford*

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**Bev** - November 13, 2013 at 11:45 AM

LG

“ *Linda (Brown) Gasparrini lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Linda (Brown) Gasparrini** - September 14, 2013 at 06:26 PM

JD

“ To the Pulju Family: I am so very sadden by the passing of Mel. He's an awesome guy and will always remain in so very many hearts. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Thank you for sharing the video of Mel with his families and friends, and the awesome smile he shared with all of us. Blessings with the Grace of God.  
Julie Denny



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**Jul Denny** - September 13, 2013 at 09:17 PM

ML

“ MJ wanted to come to the celebration for Mel but he got sick! He said "He taught me Rock, Paper, Scissors...he could read your MIND...No REALLY!"

*Thinking of you all.*

*Mark & Nicole Lunde Family*

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**Mark & Nicole Lunde** - September 13, 2013 at 05:27 PM

LM

“ Pegi,  
I was so sad to hear of your loss. Please know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Hold all those precious memories close to your hearts. With Deepest sympathy.  
Cindy and Larry Masching

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**Larry & Cindy Masching** - September 13, 2013 at 01:37 PM

MB

“ *Mel was easy to talk to, always said Hi and joked around and made you feel at ease when talking, a lot like Duck. I will miss him. My prayers go out to the families.*

*Mike Baron*

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**Mike Baron** - September 13, 2013 at 09:45 AM

SH

“ *Steve Heltemes lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Steve Heltemes** - September 12, 2013 at 11:35 PM

KK

“ *Bye My Brother in Arms.. You will be missed. I will always have the memories of our time in Nam and the party you invited me to in MN. And, of coarse, our last meeting and get together in Bemidji. It was an honor to have you as a friend. May God Bless Pegi and your family in this time of sorrow. You left too soon, but perhaps God needed an all star ball player for his team and called you up to the Major League.*

*Enjoy Heaven..*

*Your soldier buddy and friend..*

*Ken Kuehnel*

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**Ken Kuehnel** - September 12, 2013 at 08:45 AM

JS

“ *Jim & Barb Sundby lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Jim & Barb Sundby** - September 11, 2013 at 02:50 PM

CW

“ *Cory Waln lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**cory waln** - September 11, 2013 at 02:09 PM

MS

“ I'll never forget when I was up to bat at a Flies game, runner on first, two outs, and Mel, in his usual spot along the third base line, with his orange t-shirt tucked into his baseball pants, sans belt - which he most likely had to borrow to one of us - because for some reason, it was hard to remember all of one's equipment. Anyway, his hand went to his chest - indicator - then his hand touched his other hand - the steal sign was on. Now, I don't remember who was on first base, and it should be noted that the signs had never changed in, well, at the very least, the 10 or so years I played for Hunts. But I watched a tasty fastball go down the middle of the plate, while out of my peripheral, noticed our runner on first base stay put. Steeeee One! I stepped out of the box and looked at Mel, who was smiling, but shaking his head like he was disappointed. Anyway, he puts the steal sign on again, this time not messing around with any other "bluff" signs, in case there were a team in the Northwoods League that hadn't figured out our signs by now. No matter, he just went straight to his chest, then straight to his hand. He did it again, straight to the chest, straight to the hand. Surely, the runner saw it this time...And the pitch, another soft fastball heading right down the plate...Steeeeehe-he-he two (this time Gary let out his patented chuckle when a pitch so juicy goes down the middle of the plate while the batter sits and watches). Again I step out, again Mel gives the sign, but this time I have to protect, and I swing-bunt a weak curve back to the pitcher for the final out.

As I'm walking back to the dugout Mel greets me by home plate, puts an arm around me and says, in a most serious manner, for Mel anyway, "I don't care if the steal sign is on or not...If you ever get a pitch that meaty again, you better be swinging."

Some of the best advice I've ever received...And I have been reminded several times since then, that when an opportunity presents itself for the greater good of you or those close to you, to swing away, under any circumstances.

I'm very grateful to have known Mel, he will be missed, and much love to the Pulju family, may you find strength and peace in this difficult time...

*~Matty*

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**Matt Schiller** - September 11, 2013 at 11:12 AM

BP

*Thank you for the great memory Matt.*

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**Becca Pulju** - September 11, 2013 at 09:26 PM

PL

“ *We were so shocked to hear of Mels passing...the world lost a good man. He was so fun to be around...and was always smiling. Loved him.*

*Roger & Peggy Liimatta Family*

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**Peggy Liimatta** - September 11, 2013 at 07:14 AM

DL

“ *Pegi, We are so very sorry for your loss. Mel was truly one of the great guys. I always looked forward to seeing him on my summer vacation to Wadena. Quick with that great smile and a handshake. always made me feel so happy to be back home.*

*Dave and Mary Larson*

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**david larson** - September 10, 2013 at 09:57 AM

MD

“ *Michael Dubois lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Michael Dubois** - September 10, 2013 at 09:53 AM

CC

“ I will never forget that one-of-a-kind laugh of his. Mel always made you feel like the most important person in the room. He was admired by all who met him and he will be missed by so many.

*Chris and Taryn Carter*

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**Chris and Taryn Carter** - September 09, 2013 at 03:30 PM

JB

“ We are already missing Mel so much. As 3 year old niece Britta said, "it's just not going to be that much fun without uncle Mel." Couldn't have said it better myself. We are blessed to have so many memories of family time spent with Mel over the years.

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**Jody Hansen (Todd, Kevin, Britta)** - September 09, 2013 at 01:29 PM

EM

“ Eric & Kim Macklanburg lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



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**Eric & Kim Macklanburg** - September 09, 2013 at 10:20 AM

DS

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. So grateful we were able to connect for our "mini-reunion" of some of us from 2/47th charlie company in June. I have been in contact with the guys and they are all saddened by the loss we all feel. Even tho' we have not been in regular contact over the years the "brotherhood" of our time together in VN created within each of us a sense of "chosen family" which we will always cherish. Until we meet again my (our) brother, God Speed and may your family be comforted by our thoughts and prayers.

*Dave Sjostrom and the rest of the brothers and spouses.*

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**Dave Sjostrom** - September 09, 2013 at 09:22 AM

LM

“ Pegi, I'm so sorry for your loss, from reading the tributes, it sounds like he was a wonderful man!

*Loretta (Hill) Meyer*

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**Loretta Meyer** - September 09, 2013 at 09:10 AM

JB

“ Pegi, Kelly, Josi and Kasey,  
Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you at such a difficult time. We have so many memories of Mel, baseball, basketball, chatting about our kids and grandkids. I am sure going to miss him stopping in the concession stand to get a handful of popcorn or just stopping by to say a few words. WDC coworkers and children are going to miss this great guy.

*Dale and Jackie Becker*

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**Jackie Becker** - September 08, 2013 at 05:32 PM

DD

“ *Dan And Stephany Duncombe lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Dan and Stephany Duncombe** - September 08, 2013 at 04:03 PM

DM

“ *Mel,  
You are in such a wonderful place. Say hi to my sister Linda Herzog Brandriet for me. I am sure she is glad to see you and to share some old memories together. Pray for all of us and save a place for us,  
Deb Herzog Meeker*



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**Deb Meeker** - September 08, 2013 at 11:17 AM

SB

“ *Scott & Kristie Barthel lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Scott & Kristie Barthel** - September 08, 2013 at 09:29 AM

GK

“ *Gene & Sandy Kapphahn lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Gene & Sandy Kapphahn** - September 08, 2013 at 09:16 AM

SN

“ *One of the nicest guys ever! God must have needed another baseball player for His team.*

Steve & Jan Nelson - September 07, 2013 at 04:34 PM

AB

“ *Andrew Browne lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Andrew Browne - September 07, 2013 at 02:12 PM

MV

“ *Margaret & Peter VanErp lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Margaret & Peter VanErp - September 07, 2013 at 01:42 PM

DK

“ *Dave And Arlis Kern lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Dave and Arlis Kern - September 07, 2013 at 10:29 AM

DL

“ *Dan & Melissa Lawson lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Dan & Melissa Lawson** - September 07, 2013 at 09:16 AM

DS

“ *On prayer,  
The time may be delayed, the manner may be unexpected but the answer is sure to come. Not a tear of sacred sorrow , not a breathe of holy desired poured out to God will ever be lost, but in God's own time and way will be wafted back again in clouds of mercy, and fall in showers of blessings on you, and on those for whom you pray. May Gods mercy and grace blanket you during these days and those ahead  
Dick Shorma*

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**Dick Shorma** - September 07, 2013 at 08:05 AM

BW

“ *Bob & Cathy Woods lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Bob & Cathy Woods** - September 06, 2013 at 09:55 PM

DA

“ Duane And Jonell Asfeld lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Duane and Jonell Asfeld - September 06, 2013 at 02:35 PM

LR

“ Lucy Rehm lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Lucy Rehm - September 06, 2013 at 01:59 PM

LR

Thoughts & prayers are with you, Pegi & your family at this difficult time. He will truly be missed by many. He always had a smile on his face and had such a good sense of humor..

Lucy Rehm - September 06, 2013 at 02:06 PM

JK

“ Josh & Ashley Koning lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Josh & Ashley Koning - September 06, 2013 at 09:45 AM

HB

“ *Hebron Brick purchased the A Full Life for the family of Mel Pulju.*



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**Hebron Brick** - September 06, 2013 at 09:30 AM

JB

“ *Jim And Lorie Baron lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



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**Jim and Lorie Baron** - September 06, 2013 at 07:44 AM

SV

“ *I remember when my dad worked with Mel many years ago at Smith Furniture and enjoyed every minute of it. He will be greatly missed by many. Prayers to Peggy and family... Sonja Smith VanOrsdel*

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**Sonja VanOrsel** - September 05, 2013 at 09:19 PM

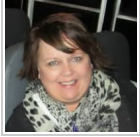


“ *Pegi, thoughts and prayers to you and your famly  
Cindy Anderson*



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**Cindy Anderson** - September 05, 2013 at 08:09 PM



“ *Mel will be missed by many. He had such a great spirit and a wonderful sense of humor! He made me laugh everyday at work, along with many others. We will sure miss his smiling face and positive attitude. Work isn't the same without you, miss you Mel!*  
-Nadine Wegscheid

Nadine Wegscheid - September 05, 2013 at 06:59 PM



“ *Brenda Bushinger Bakken sent a virtual gift in memory of Mel Pulju*



Brenda Bushinger Bakken - September 05, 2013 at 01:33 PM



*I have some great memories of the Huntersville Horseflies days. Mel will be missed by many. Brenda Bushinger Bakken*

Brenda Bushinger - September 05, 2013 at 01:37 PM



“ *Troy & Becky Wangsness lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Troy & Becky Wangsness - September 05, 2013 at 11:33 AM

DK

“ I remember the many times we talked about baseball or other important subjects. But what I remember most was Mel's smile, even when things weren't going well he always had a smile to make the day brighter for everyone.

Dennis Kaatz - September 05, 2013 at 11:21 AM



“ America the Beautiful was purchased for the family of Mel Pulju.



September 05, 2013 at 09:25 AM

RB

“ Randy And Jodi Becker lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Randy and Jodi Becker - September 05, 2013 at 09:14 AM

KG

“ Lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Kayla and Tracy Gustafson - September 05, 2013 at 08:45 AM

SG

“ Sent a gift in memory of Mel Pulju



Scott and Linda Gustafson - September 05, 2013 at 08:26 AM

MT

“ Missy Tabery lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Missy Tabery - September 05, 2013 at 08:05 AM

RY

“ Rick And Linda Youngbauer lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Rick and Linda Youngbauer - September 05, 2013 at 07:33 AM

RY

*Mel was a great guy! He will be missed by many. I will never forget Mel at "The Shack" feeding the fireplace to keep us all warm. Peg and family please know that we are thinking of you.*  
Rick and Linda

Rick and Linda Youngbauer - September 05, 2013 at 07:37 AM

IL

“ *Ivan Lorentz lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Ivan Lorentz - September 04, 2013 at 10:07 PM

PL

“ *Pat Lorentz lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Pat Lorentz - September 04, 2013 at 10:06 PM

DS

“ *Our sympathy and prayers to Pegi, Kelly, Kasey, Josie, to their spouses and those beautiful grandchildren Mel spoke of so often. He was so proud of all of you. We will always remember Mel's ever-present smile, his quick wit, and soft heart. Rest in peace Mel. We miss you.*

*Donna and Dan Sartell*

donna sartell - September 04, 2013 at 09:39 PM

RR

“ *Rachele Reese lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju*



Rachele Reese - September 04, 2013 at 09:19 PM

KL

“ Ken And Nancy Lawson lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



Ken and Nancy Lawson - September 04, 2013 at 08:03 PM

NP

“ I'm going to miss all our little chats, especially when it came to comparing notes on our football picks. Your smile, laughter, and positive attitude will be missed by all. Your presence at WDC made our days brighter!

Nancy Peterson - September 04, 2013 at 07:11 PM

BM

“ Bruce And Penny McManigle sent a virtual gift in memory of Mel Pulju



Bruce and Penny McManigle - September 04, 2013 at 06:12 PM

BM

Mel you always had a smile on your face and a story to tell. Thank you for being a friend .

Bruce and Penny McManigle - September 04, 2013 at 06:16 PM

ME

“ Margaret & Peter Van Erp lit a candle in memory of Mel Pulju



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**Margaret & Peter Van Erp** - September 04, 2013 at 05:46 PM

DA

“ I'm going to miss waving at Mel whenever our paths crossed at the high school. Even more, I will miss the updates we would share about family, especially the grandkids when we actually could take the time to chat. He always had a smile to share. Wrapping his family in a huge hug~ Di

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**Di Schiller Anderson** - September 04, 2013 at 04:27 PM

JB

“ My Dear Friend Mel,  
So, you could have warned us so it wouldn't have been such a shock when we came to work on Tuesday. My heart will hurt for a long time. I can't imagine giving anyone else the grief I have given you since you came to work here. You were the only one willing to pose for all those silly pictures Dana took. Every time I see Mr. Bones I'll think of you. And, who is going to bicker with Dana when she's posting the mail? No one could ever do it like you did. Thanks for all the chats in my office. You were always so kind to the students - they will remember that. Do you know how much you were appreciated around here and how much you will be missed? I hope you know. Also, don't forget all the help I gave you in study hall when we were seniors (Wadena HS Class of '67). Okay? From now on when I think of you I will smile. Be good.

Joyce Boyne

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**Joyce Boyne** - September 04, 2013 at 02:33 PM

PS

“ I have many fond memories of Mel as my baseball manager and family friend. One of my favorite memories of Mel was how he would step into the batter's box at the age of 50 , take two strikes, and then slap a single over the head of the second baseman (usually hobbling to first with a pulled hammy). I consider Mel and the Pulju family to be my family. He will be dearly missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Pulju family.

Love,

*Phil Schiller and family*

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**Phil Schiller** - September 04, 2013 at 11:51 AM

JS

“ Jim Stoneman sent a virtual gift in memory of Mel Pulju



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**jim stoneman** - September 04, 2013 at 11:45 AM

JS

“ See ya on the other side Buddy, save a place for me!

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**jim stoneman** - September 04, 2013 at 11:44 AM