



Richard B. Cronin

July 12, 1937 - May 3, 2026

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Richard Barry Cronin, 88, of Wenatchee, Washington, passed away peacefully on May 3, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of service, strength, kindness, and devotion to family.

Born July 12, 1937, in Bronxville, New York, to John and Elizabeth Cronin, Rich grew up in Scarsdale during the hardships of World War II. Wartime rationing, blackouts, and visits to West Point with his father, helped inspire his lifelong admiration for military service and commitment to country. After graduating from Stepinac High School in White Plains, New York, Rich attended Georgetown University before discovering his true calling elsewhere. In 1957, at age 20, he enlisted in the United States Navy, beginning a distinguished 20-year military career.

Rich trained as an aircraft hydraulic technician and served around the world during pivotal moments in American history, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. During the 1962 Cuban blockade, he served aboard the U.S.S. McKinley, as the nation entered DEFCON 2; the closest the United States has come to nuclear war. He also served aboard the U.S.S. Long Beach, the Navy's first nuclear-powered cruiser. In Vietnam, he helped keep Navy aircraft mission-ready and later, faced health complications linked to Agent Orange exposure with characteristic resilience and determination.

Respected for his leadership and work ethic, Rich rose quickly through the ranks, becoming a Chief Petty Officer in less than a decade before retiring in 1977 as a lieutenant and proud “Mustang” officer.

While stationed at Lakehurst, New Jersey, Rich met the love of his life, Eileen Fitzpatrick, on a blind date at Rac’s Hut, seeing Ernest Tubb perform. After only six weeks of courtship, the two married and built a partnership rooted in love, humor, loyalty, and unwavering support for nearly 43 years. Rich was a deeply devoted and beloved husband who remained faithfully by Eileen’s side throughout her battle with pulmonary fibrosis, until her passing in 2007.

Following his Navy retirement, Rich worked for several major companies, including an assignment in Tehran, Iran, shortly before the Iranian Revolution. Recognizing the growing instability, he safely evacuated his family before the country descended into chaos.

Rich later joined Boeing, where he worked in flight test operations, served as liaison to the Pentagon for the E-6A Mercury program, and later, supervised industrial engineering operations for the 747 Delivery Group before retiring after 15 years.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Rich was a respected and valued member of the Wenatchee community. He served as an American Legion post commander, was the first HOA president of Maple Terrace in Wenatchee, supported Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and led the vestry at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.

To his family, Rich was much more than a veteran and leader — he was a wonderful father, mentor, and steady source of wisdom. He was known for offering thoughtful guidance, sage advice, encouragement, and practical life lessons to his children, grandchildren, friends, and anyone fortunate enough to seek his counsel.

Rich embraced life fully through his many hobbies and passions. He loved off-roading with Northwest Overland, creating stained-glass art, following weather systems and rocket launches, and mentoring fellow HAM radio enthusiasts through the Apple City Radio Club. Family and friends also knew him as an enthusiastic fan of the television series “Gold Rush.”

He is survived by daughters: Sharon (Ben) Bates of Rocklin, California, and Caroline (Craig) Longanecker of Gaithersburg, Maryland; sons: Christopher Cronin of Tennessee, and Dan Cronin of Washington; six grandchildren; eleven great-grandchildren; and sister-in-law, Lois Cronin. Rich was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Eileen; his parents; and brother, John G. Cronin.

Celebrations of life will be held on both the East and West Coasts, with details to be announced. Rich will be laid to rest beside Eileen at Arlington National Cemetery.

Tribute Wall

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“ *RIP brother I will forever miss you. Your friendship, advice, leadership and devotion to our Post will always be cherished. Till we meet again, Ralph*

Ralph - May 10 at 12:23 PM