



Richard J. Derse

April 20, 2026

Passed from this life at the age of 93 to be rejoined in Heaven with his high school sweetheart Dorothy, wife of 58 years. He valiantly battled for several years through illness and health conditions, with an amazing will to live independently.

The dedicated Father of and generous provider for Rick (Sabine), Steve (Rhonda) and Donna, now survive him. He will be missed by his beloved grandson Evan. Sister Rosalie (Thad) and brother Thomas (Kathy) will miss his humor and wit. He is also survived by sister in-law MaryKay (Jerry), Susan and was "Uncle Richie" to Larry, Greg, Darin; Monica, Mark, Paul, Cathy, Mary; Jenny, Lisa; Beth, Sara, and Abby.

Lieutenant Derse retired from the Milwaukee Police Department after nearly 30 years, served in Korea for the United States Army and was a member of the S/E Wisc. Korean War Veteran Association. Member of American Legion Greendale Post 416 and VFW Post 10519, Loyal order of the Moose lodge 49 and the Retired Milwaukee Police Association. He was a graduate of Pulaski High School, UW Milwaukee and Marquette University.

Special thanks to St Charles Borromeo Parish for their prayers and support and to C.J. Zablocki V.A. Medical Center, Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center and Harbour Village Senior Living Community for their care and kindness.

In lieu of flowers Memorials to St Jude Children's Research Hospital or Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology would be appreciated.

Memorial Visitation will be held Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:45 AM at ST. CHARLES BORROMEO CHURCH (3100 W. Parnell Ave, Milwaukee) followed by celebration of Mass of Christian Burial at 12:00 Noon. Private inurnment at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery will take place at a later date.

"A most devoted Husband and an exemplary man of service who loved the Lord our God."

Cemetery Details

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery

21731 Spring St
Union Grove, WI 53182

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

MAY 9. 10:00 AM - 11:45 AM (CT)

St. Charles Borromeo Church
3100 W. Parnell Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53221

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 9. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

St. Charles Borromeo Church
3100 W. Parnell Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53221

Military Honors

MAY 9. 1:00 PM - 1:15 PM (CT)

St. Charles Borromeo Church
3100 W. Parnell Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53221

Tribute Wall

SA

“*Rich was my patient at Harbour Village, but he became so much more than that — he was part of our family. Every morning, I could count on his fist bumps, hearing him call me “kiddo,” and his check-ins to ask how I was doing. Even when he didn’t always remember every conversation we had, he remembered the things that mattered most. He remembered that I was “kiddo,” that I was there to take care of him, and he never forgot to ask, “How’s the weather out there?”*

People often forget that places like this become our second home. We do more than care for people medically — we build relationships that stay with us long after someone is gone. The stories, wisdom, and experiences shared by our veterans and older generation leave a lasting impact on our lives every day, and Rich was no exception.

I’ll always miss the simple moments with him — his morning fist bumps, seeing him around campus, and our daily check ins. I’d like to think I made a small impact in Richard’s life near the end, because I know he and his family made a meaningful impact on mine. He will always be remembered as more than a patient.

— Nurse Sam



Sam - May 07 at 11:28 PM

SR

“ Sgt. Derse was at #6 Early in the days I did my “field training” in 1969. I never saw him again after that ,during my 9 years with MPD, but he left a lasting and positive impression with me and I thought of him often of the years.

Sheriff Gary Carlson Ret. - May 01 at 03:51 PM

JG

“ Dick was my lieutenant at the 4th District when I was a young patrol officer with MPD. I remember him as a good boss and a nice guy. My sympathies to his family.

Jeff Gajewski

Jeff G4 - April 29 at 10:57 AM

DD

“ 1 file added to the album Richard Derse



Donna Derse - April 28 at 06:32 PM

RD

“ *My Father in Law:*

He lived a life defined by service. As a Korean War Veteran he defended our nation with dignity and honor. He understood the true meaning of "Duty".

As a police officer he donned the uniform day after day putting other's needs ahead of his own with courage and bravery protecting the streets of Milwaukee.

He was a selfless hero; but beyond that he was a devoted father and a great source of comfort, wisdom and love to his family.

We salute your service and we honor your memory.

Thank you for all that you have done.

You will be greatly missed.

Rhonda Derse - April 27 at 11:42 AM

SD

“ *1 file added to the album Richard Derse*



Steve Derse - April 25 at 11:28 PM

MM

Then Sgt. Derse was my instructor at the academy in summer 1973. As was Sgt. Route and Sgt. Enos. All good men and cops. Sgt. Derse had a sense of humor that both understated and excellent. I still laugh at some of the things he said at the academy and then later in in-service days. No jokes - just off the cuff comments. Often at the expense of those who had it coming at that particular moment. He was a good copy of the 50's era actor Richard Widmark. Both in looks, demeanor and a rather pronounced way of talking out of one side of his mouth at times.

A very good cop who belonged in that era. I do not think he would fit in well now. I still work for MPD as a PSSI. A good job and organization but not what it was back then. But what is anymore? I did truly admire him and learned a lot from him.

Mike McGuire - June 04 at 10:26 PM