



Gerald Gersmehl

AUG 29, 1918 - JUN 8, 2013



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Gerald 'Jerry' Gersmehl, 94, of Decatur, IL, passed away on June 8, 2013, after a lengthy illness.

He was born in Abbotsford, Wisconsin on August 29, 1918, the only child of Walter T. H. Gersmehl and Agnes Litzer Gersmehl of Melan, WS. He grew up mainly in and around Wausau, WS and graduated from Mosinee High School in 1937. He took a one year business course in the Wausau Vocational Training School after graduation. Jerry worked at any job he could find during the depression years, including picking raspberries and strawberries on his dad's farm. During WWII, he was drafted into the Army in 1940 at Mosinee. His number was called in 1941 and he went into training at various locations in the US. In 1943, he left for Italy in the first wave to reach Europe, and fought with the 45th Thunderbird Division as a Staff Sergeant in Company A, 4th Platoon, 179th Infantry until 1944, when Rome fell. He received the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the Combat Infantry Badge, of which he was most proud. Jerry is listed in the World War II Honoree Registry in Washington, DC.

Jerry moved to Decatur, IL in 1945 and worked for A.E. Staley Mfg. Co. as a laboratory technician until his retirement in 1980.

He married Gertrude Bradshaw in 1958. They were divorced in 1966.

He married Nina M. Taylor in 1967. She preceded him in death on May 4, 2013.

Jerry was an avid fisherman and enjoyed fishing the Okaw River, Kentucky Lake, Star Lake (WS), Lake Wateree (SC), and took many fishing trips to Canada with friends and family, including Nina and his grandsons, Bryc Spainhour and JC Ross. His last trip to Canada was when he was 92 years old. He also enjoyed shore fishing in the Gulf of Mexico and, with his good friend Gary Near, in the canals around Harlingen, Texas, where he and Nina spent twenty winters.

Jerry was on the Staley A.A.A. bowling team for many years before retirement. He was a die-hard Cubs baseball fan. He also liked gardening, working crossword puzzles



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and reading, especially war and western novels. He kept a daily journal starting in 1970 until recently and spent many hours documenting the family and local happenings. He and Nina enjoyed traveling the world, from Europe to Australia, and saw much of the United States together.

Jerry leaves several cousins in Wisconsin and three step-daughters who love him very much: Sonya Crowe of Columbia, MO; Janet King (Chuck) of Winnsboro, SC; Judith Gash (Jerry) of Hammond, IL. Nine grandchildren: Michelle Hester, Suzanne DeMarco, Mark Crowe. Bret, Bart (Denise) and Bryc Spainhour, Beth Ross (JC). Kevin Gash (Nursel) and Simone DeVore. Fourteen great grand-children and two great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife and son-in-law, Dr. A.B. Crowe.

We will miss Jerry's puns, quick wit, and his great knowledge on many subjects. He was a loving husband and father.

The family wishes to thank the wonderful people at Heartland and DMH Hospice. Thank you to the Veterans Association HBPC unit, especially to nurse Carol for her loving help and concern. Thank you also to Marga at Help At Home.

Services to celebrate Jerry's life will be 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 11, 2013 at

Graceland/Fairlawn Funeral Home. Visitation will be one hour prior to service.

Burial will be at Graceland Cemetery with military rites conducted by the Macon County Honor Guard. Memorials may be made to the American Lung Association (www.lung.org/donate/) or to The Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org)

The family of Gerald "Jerry" Gersmehl is being served by the Graceland/Fairlawn Funeral Home, 2091 N. Oakland Ave. Decatur, IL. Please view the online obituary, send condolences, and share memories at www.gracelandfairlawn.com.



Tribute Wall

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JG

Judy Gash posted:

Thank you, Don. I do have items to send to WI. I will contact you when I pull them all together. Judy Gash

June 11 at 2:17 PM

DL

Don Litzer posted:

Hello, I'm Don Litzer, a historian of the Litzer family since I was in high school. My dad and Gerald were first cousins (my grandpa Ed Litzer had the tavern north of Wausau). Gerald's mom (my great Aunt Agnes) corresponded often, and after her passing in the late '80s, Gerald and Nina sent me a wonderful collection of photos of Agnes' parents and her Litzer aunts and uncles. In about 2005, Gerald and I exchanged several letters, in which I shared with him a DVD of videos shot by his Uncle Tom Litzer, and he shared with me stories of growing up in northern Wisconsin, as well as his brave service to our country in World War II. I'm now the assistant director at T.B. Scott Free Library in Merrill, WI. If I can help the family out in making sense of anything Gerald had regarding his mother's family, or if any of those items need a home, let me know (check the staff listing at tbscottlibrary.org for contact info), and please accept the condolences of my wife Sarah and I, and my parents, Don and Nancy Litzer of Marathon, WI in this difficult time.

June 10 at 5:25 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Gerald by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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