



Henry H. "Hank" Gerecke

February 26, 1921 - September 18, 2016

Henry H. "Hank" Gerecke, 95, of Cape Girardeau passed away Sept. 18, 2016 at Chateau Girardeau in Cape Girardeau, Mo. He was born February 26, 1921 in St. Louis, MO. He was the oldest son of Alma (Bender) Gerecke and Pastor Henry H. Gerecke of Chester, IL; he also had two brothers, Carlton M. Gerecke of Mt. Olive, IL and Roy D. Gerecke of St. Louis, MO. who predeceased him. He was married to his beloved wife Millie (Curtis) Gerecke for 64 years who died on Dec. 20th 2010; they met in Nancy, France while Millie was serving in the US Army Nurse Corps at the end of WW II. He is predeceased by his son David H. Gerecke, Horsham and his Daughter-in-law Dot, also from Horsham., Victoria, Australia.

Survived by his children and grandchildren; Stephen L. (wife Karen) of Lansing, KS, and Jan M. Moore (husband Bob) of McClure IL. He had 4 grandchildren; Samantha (Gerecke) Vojak (husband T.J.) of O'Fallon, IL; Stephen Moore of McClure, IL; Jessica Gerecke of Lansing, KS; and Jason Gerecke of Australia. He had 3 great-grandchildren; Gabriel, Nolan and Ava Vojak of O'Fallon, IL.

He enlisted in the United States Army in 1939, received a commission as a 2nd Lt. in 1943 and retired in 1975 as a Colonel. During his 35 years in the Army he served in many different places as well as in the European Theater of Operations, WW II; S. Korea and S. Vietnam. During his time in the Army he

was awarded the Legion of Merit (5); Aviation Medal (2); The Bronze Star and from the Vietnamese Government a Medal for Gallantry.

He served in Japan and Korea and then he went on to serve as Confinement Officer at Ft Belvoir VA. From there he went to serve as Provost Marshal of the Pacific Area Panama Canal Zone where he supervised all Military Police activity for eight military installations as well as assisting in the training and modernization of the National Guard Republic of Panama or the Guardia Nacional. He also served as Director of the Military Police Department US Army School Europe in Oberammergau Germany. He then went on to South Vietnam, where he served as Battalion Commander of the 504th Military Police Battalion in 1965 to 1966. After leaving Vietnam he served at Headquarters, Combat Development Command Staff Officer, General Staff at Ft. Belvoir VA. And from there he served as Provost Marshal III Corp and Commander 7th Military Police Group Ft. Hood, TX. From there he went back to Panama, serving as Provost Marshall US Army Forces Southern Command. He served his second tour in Vietnam 1972 to 1973 as Provost Marshall and Commander 18th MP Brigade. Returning to the US he was assigned as Provost Marshall 5th US Army at Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX. He retired from the Army in December 1974.

He received numerous commendations during his military career including the Legion of Merit with 4 Oak leaf clusters; the Air medal with an Oak leaf cluster; Army Commendation with 2 oak leaf clusters and the Vietnamese Cross of Valor as well as a Bronze Star.

During his military career he attended numerous education venues starting in 1944 with the Police Officer Criminal Investigation course in Ft. Custer, MI.; US Army Military Police Officers Career Course Ft. Gordon, GA in 1954; US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS. 1961; Graduate Traffic and Police Administration course Traffic Institute

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 1947 to 1948; Michigan State University where he received a BS degree in Police Administration; and Sam Houston State University, Huntsville TX in 1975 where he received an MA degree in Criminal Justice.

In December of 1974 he & Millie came to Cape Girardeau, MO. where he became Chief of Police until 1981.

After retiring as Chief of Police he went on to teach Criminal Justice at Southeast Missouri State University Cape Girardeau, MO as well as at Washington University of St. Louis, MO.

In lieu of flowers the family request donations be made to the Mildred J. Gerecke Scholarship fund at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, MO.

Friends may call 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau.

Funeral service will be at 10:00 AM Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau with the Rev. John Dehne officiating.

Burial will be at Cape County Memorial Park in Cape Girardeau. Full military rites will be conducted by Missouri Honors Team.

Cemetery Details

Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery

2315 Highway 61 North
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
(573) 334-1909
<https://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com/>

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **20**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Service

SEP **21**. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Andrew Lutheran Church
804 N. Cape Rock Dr.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Tribute Wall

DO

“ *i Had the pleasure of serving under (at that time 1955-1957) Capt. H. Gerecke at the 534th MP Company in Ft Clayton Panama. He attended my wedding and I always looked up to him. (I felt he was my Father) while I was in the military . God will be waiting to accept him with open arms REST IN PEACE Colonel*

DON OCONNELL - February 25, 2017 at 09:10 PM

JM

Don, if you are still with us, I want to thank you for your kind words. I have never come to this site before, today I just came because I was looking for a date. My Dad still talked about to the end, he was always alert and no dementia at all.

Jan Moore - July 19, 2024 at 08:25 PM

NT

“ *My heart felt condolences to the Gerecke Family for your loss. May God be with you and help heal you hurt. We were visiting my Dad at the Veterans Home and picked up the paper at the hotel. Steve and I attended EOBC in 1973. Mike Gunther, Dixon, MO*

nther - September 22, 2016 at 06:17 AM

KB

“ I was 21 years old when I became a Police Officer at Cape Girardeau Police Dept. Chief Gerecke was demanding and expected the very best out his officers. He took a chance on hiring a female with no military or law enforcement experience and I hope I made him proud. I hold Henry Gerecke and Millie in special regards. He pushed education and I went back to school because I knew the only way I would advance was if I had education and experience. He was tough as nails but I have a deep respect and appreciation for him.

On Friday nights, Chief Gerecke and Butch Boyd would come out on the evening to early midnight shifts and monitor the patrol. They ride together and sometimes respond to our calls. One night around 2200 hours I was dispatched to fight in progress. Chief Gerecke came over the radio and ordered the dispatch to send someone else. I was fighting mad. I went to the call and waited until I heard the Chief go to the station.

I was young with more temper than good sense but I marched up to the Gerecke and told him what I thought and he laughed at me. He put his arm on my shoulder and told me I was right and he had been wrong and he was sorry, it would not happen again. I was in shock because Hank Gerecke was never wrong.

He was good man and a good cop! You have my deepest sympathy. I was blessed to have known him.

Karen Buchheit - September 20, 2016 at 10:58 PM

KT

“ Oh Colonel , I have so many wonderful memories of you coming into Ryans ...the stories you would tell me.....and the shared memories of Hickory Street in St Louis..... I can still remember all those years ago when I first met you , Millie and Helen...we just kind of clicked....I am so blessed and honored to have known you My heart breaks today as I learn of your passing but one thing I know, you are now reunited with your beautiful Millieyou will forever be in my heart....RIP Colonel...

Kim Turnbough - September 19, 2016 at 12:38 PM