



Railsplitter Obituary



Lerch, Terry W.

21 August 1949 – 27 November 2023

Colonel (Ret) Terry W. Lerch, age 74, slipped peacefully away into God's arms at Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh, Wisconsin with his family around him on Monday, November 27, 2023. He was born August 21, 1949 in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, the son of Warren and Margret (Hungerford) Lerch. Terry married Dorothy (Wriedt) Lerch on September 4, 1971 in Oshkosh, WI. Terry and Dorothy had three children before she passed on October 14, 2014. Terry remarried Linda (Campbell) Lerch on May 21, 2022, in Oshkosh, WI.

Terry was very active with his community and family. He established the Boy Scouts of America Troop 1396 in Lake Ridge, Virginia in 1989 which has 113 Eagle Scouts. He served as the Boy Scout Master for about four years. He played the trumpet with the church band for multiple churches as the military moved him and the family. Terry always made time to support his kid's sporting events from participating as the assistant coach to filling in required slots during regatta's. Terry played in the Oshkosh High School band and had the opportunity to travel to Europe to play. In 1967 Terry graduated from Oshkosh High School and then while attending the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, enlisted into the local Army



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Reserve unit of the 84th Division (Training) on August 23, 1969. He attended Basic Training at Ft. Ord, CA where he was selected as Squad Leader and received an accelerated promotion to PFC upon graduation. He completed Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, GA and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant with the Infantry on September 1, 1970. Lieutenant Lerch served as a Training Officer, completed the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Ft. Benning, GA in August 1971 and assumed responsibilities as a Company Commander in June 1976.

On November 1, 1977 Captain Lerch entered full-time active duty with the 86th Army Reserve Command as the Area Recruiting & Retention Commander. In August 1978 he was assigned to the Peoria, IL District Recruiting Command as the Army Reserve Operations Officer. In February 1982, Captain Lerch served as the Chief, Recruiting Support at First US Army, Ft. Meade, MD until July 1985. Major Lerch then attended Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS before assuming the position of Chief, USAR REQUEST & FORSTARS, J-1, Forces Command at Ft. McPherson, GA.

In August 1988 Major Lerch began service on the Department of the Army Staff at the Pentagon as a Manpower Program Analyst in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel. In August 1991, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and assigned to the Program Analysis and Evaluation Division, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, serving as the Personnel Analyst, then Deputy Chief of Division. During this period, he graduated from the Army Management Staff College in December 1994 and the Air War College in June 1995. He was promoted to Colonel in May 1996 and became the Chief, Program Analysis and Evaluation Division. In September 1998 he was assigned to a new position as the Director of Staff for the Chief, Army Reserve. Colonel Lerch culminates his Army Staff experience having the privilege to have served under five successive Army Reserve Chiefs: MG William F. Ward, MG Roger S. Sandler, MG Max Baratz, LTG Thomas J. Plewes, and LTG James R. Helmly.

Colonel Lerch's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal (4th Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), National Defense Service Medal (w/2d device), Armed Forces Reserve Medal (w/30 year device), and the Army Staff Identification Badge.



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After serving over thirty-four years of distinguished service, Colonel Lerch retired from active service at Ft. Myer, VA on September 30, 2003. He then was employed with CALIBRE Systems Inc., a leading provider of government information technology and management services located in Alexandria, VA. Retiring after nine years as a Director in December 2012. In 2021 Terry and Linda moved to Omro, Wisconsin.

Survivors include his wife Linda (Campbell) Lerch of Burlington, WI; three sons Jason Lerch of Remington, VA, Jared (Cari) Lerch of Lost River, WV, and Chet (Sandy) Morton of Kewaunee, WI; his daughter Lieutenant Colonel Tera Lerch (Kris Schlichting) of O'Fallon, IL; ten grandchildren Alexis, Hannah, Jaelyn, Lily, Caralyn, Austin, Ella, Logan, Jase, and Isaiah; sister Sandra (Lerch) Esselman of Sun Prairie, WI; and brother Gary (Anne) Lerch of Oshkosh, WI.

Terry was preceded in death by first wife Dorothy, his parents, and brother-in-law James Esselman.

The funeral service will be on Saturday, December 2, 2023, at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 1250 Leonard Point Rd, Oshkosh, WI with Pastor Robert Rosenberg officiating. Visitation will be held at the church from 10:00 – 11:30 am followed by the service. Burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a future date.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to the Aurora Medical Center and Aurora Hospice Care.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations for The Wounded Warrior Project (<https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org>), USO (<https://www.uso.org/donate/donate-in-honor>), or The Epilepsy Foundation (<https://give.epilepsy.com/page/33651/donate/1>). Online condolences may be made at www.konrad-behlman.com.