



## Donald Charles Soderholm

October 10, 1921 - July 31, 2015

Donald Soderholm, age 93, of Glenwood, formerly of Alexandria, died Friday, July 31, 2015. A funeral service will be held 11 AM, Saturday, August 8, 2015 at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Alexandria. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 PM Friday at the Anderson Funeral Home in Alexandria and also one hour prior to the service at church.

### OBITUARY

Donald Charles Soderholm was born on October 10, 1921 in Alexandria, Minnesota to Francis and Frankie (Nelson) Soderholm, both parents of Swedish descent. He was the eldest of five children, grew up in Alexandria, attended Washington Elementary and graduated from Alexandria High School in 1939. After high school he attended Dunwoody Institute. He was baptized and confirmed in the Svea Evangelical Swedish Lutheran Church of Alexandria which was located where Calvary Lutheran Church now stands. He often shared many fond memories of his childhood spending lots of time with his siblings, Kenneth, Dolores, the twins Darlene and Dwayne, and many cousins; a closely knit family.

Donald met Norma E. Koch, the love of his life, in Alexandria while she was working at the Shell Log Cabin Café. She couldn't refuse his charm and persistence. They were united in marriage on April 26, 1942. Their union of sixty-five years blessed them with three daughters, Kathy, Joan and Leone, seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

The young couple first made their home in St. Paul, but things changed

quickly when this young patriotic twenty year old enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, August of 1942 to fight in World War II. He left on a train for San Diego to begin his basic training, went on to Texas A & M College for training as a radio operator and Cherry Point, NC for patrol training before his combat service. His Marine units were Air Warning Squadron 5 and Landing Force Air Support Unit 1. He has been recognized as one of forty-eight Marines who fought in all three of the toughest amphibious operations of WWII on the Pacific Islands of Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Don witnessed the raising of the American flag atop Mount Suribachi, February 23, 1945. He and his unit of forty-eight Marines provided technical assistance through air warning and close air support for each of the six Marine divisions involved in these battles. Donald began as a private and advanced to technical sergeant. After 38 ½ months of service, he received his honorable discharge in October 1945. Donald then returned to Minnesota to join his wife, Norma, and daughter Kathy. Proudly he became a lifetime member of the VFW.

After the war, they made their home in Detroit Lakes, MN where Don worked for Peter's Meat Products before coming back to his hometown of Alexandria. He was hired by the Great Lakes Pipeline Company, now Magellan, where he worked for 38 ½ years retiring in 1985.

Don enjoyed life and lived it to the fullest. He made friends easily everywhere he went and kept those friends close at heart. He was always available to help others, giving the shirt off his back if need be and generously giving of his time and talents to "fix" things. He and his wife Norma loved to travel and visited places like Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica and spending many winters in New Mexico after retirement. The couple loved to dance to the Big Band Songs – music of the 40's and, whenever possible, watched a favorite musical show – Lawrence Welk. The music always brought that wonderful smile and kept his toe a tapping! His favorite places were his home that he built on Lake Louise and his woodsy get-away at Crooked Lake. He and Norma were very family oriented making time for their kids and grandkids. Don loved children

and they him, to the extent that he'd be asked to come play outside by the neighbor kids!

Love of horses filtered into Don's existence from his father. He often would tell stories of his experiences with these powerful animals leaving one with thoughts of how he ever survived some of these escapades. Stories! Don was a great storyteller! He'd create bedtime stories for his children about "Wildfire the Horse" and "Reddie the Fox". At family gatherings he'd keep things lively with stories centering around his childhood and caddying at the Alex Golf Club, horses, hunting and fishing, travels and WWII – always entertaining and full of information. Those stories will be greatly missed!

Don passed away peacefully with family by his side at the Glacial Ridge Hospital in Glenwood on July 31, 2015. He leaves behind many people who loved him: his 3 daughters, Kathy (Jay) Morrell of Monticello, Joan Osterberg of Alexandria and Leone (Michael) Howe of Glenwood; six grandchildren, Kelly (Amy) Morrell, Michael (Paola) Morrell, Julie (Michael) Frandsen, Lori Howe (Philip Kuehn), Stephanie Howe (Randal Hagen) and Jon Osterberg; nine great grandchildren, Isaac and Abigail Frandsen, Lydia and Alyssa Morrell, Zachary and Brianna Morrell, Sydney and Elsey Hagen and Michael Kuehn; many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Norma; his brothers, Kenneth and Dwayne Soderholm; his sisters, Dolores Hakenson and Darlene Larson; one son-in-law, William Osterberg; and one grandson, Judd Osterberg.

A funeral service will be held 11 AM, Saturday, August 8, 2015 at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Alexandria. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 PM Friday at the Anderson Funeral Home in Alexandria and also one hour prior to the service at church. Donald's grandchildren and great grandchildren will serve as honorary pallbearers. Military honors will be accorded by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 936, American Legion Post 87, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 235 and the Minnesota National Guard.

# Tribute Wall

BT

“ *What a beautiful tribute to a dear old friend, so many good memories of years gone by of which I shared with some that go back to 1943....Donnie and I did WWII together, meeting him first at Cherry Point, NC until we traveled home together some 2 years later on furlough shortly after the war ended, we have kept in touch these many years with my own good memories of time's through life....Having family get together with our young children (6 girls) several time's in their youth, fishing, hunting ducks, those were great times I will always remember....I will miss you Donnie but will always remember you until we meet again....Semper Fi*

*Bob Thompson - Minnetonka, MN*

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**Bob Thompson** - August 05, 2015 at 09:21 PM

LH

*Thank you, Bob, for sharing your memories and sharing a life-long friendship with Dad. God Bless --- Leone*

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**Leone Howe** - August 06, 2015 at 09:05 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald Charles Soderholm.*



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August 05, 2015 at 01:56 PM

VK

“ Donald (we called him Donnie) was my uncle, and I have fond memories of visiting him and Norma and my cousins at Lake Louise. Donnie worked long hours but was never too tired to entertain his guests. There was much laughter. And the sky was the limit when it came to indulging his 3 daughters. There was a lake home and water skiing and horses! And one of the horses had a sense of humor. I believe he enjoyed knocking me off his back with a low-hanging branch. He always stopped when it happened, looked back at me like I was an idiot, and waited for me to get back on so we could repeat the exercise next time around. Donnie was a strong, loving, generous man, and I was blessed to have him as an uncle.  
Vicki Koch

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**Vicki Koch** - August 03, 2015 at 08:54 PM

LH

*Thanks so much for the beautiful tribute to Dad. Vicki Jo! I remember those times all too well. Thank goodness for great memories! Love,  
Your Cousin - Leone*

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**Leone Howe** - August 06, 2015 at 08:41 PM