

Richard "Rich" Sondag, 82

Jan. 14, 1928 - Nov. 6, 2010

PORTSMOUTH — Richard Michael Sondag, son of Joseph and Mary (Hammes) Sondag, was born January 14, 1928 on the family farm east of Portsmouth. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Portsmouth and attended St. Mary's School graduating with the class of 1945. After finishing school, Rich helped his dad on the family farm. Always looking for entertainment, Rich liked to go to the movies in Earling. One evening he met this lovely young lady by the name of Leona Heese. It was love at first sight. They dated for a few years, during which Rich also was in the United States Army. Before leaving for Korea, Rich proposed to Leona.

May 20, 1952, just two weeks after Rich returned from Korea, they were united in marriage by his brother, Msgr. Joseph Sondag at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Earling. While in Korea, Rich served on the front line with the 27th regiment, 25th division Wolfhound, receiving the Combat Infantry Badge and a Korean Medal with Bronze Battle Star and the United Nations Medal while achieving the rank of Corporal. Since Rich was still in the Army, the newlyweds had to live in Indiana where he was stationed until receiving his honorable discharge on October 22, 1952. Rich was a member and past Commander of the John Ohlinger American Legion Post No. 547 and Msgr. Joseph Sondag Council No. 12193 Knights of Columbus, both of Portsmouth. Rich and Leona returned to Shelby County where they farmed and later purchased the Sondag family farm where he was born. Farming with John Deere equipment was a must for Rich. He was proud of his very clean bean and corn fields, hogs, cattle, garden of melons, sweet corn and potatoes. He placed a small white flag in one of his bean fields. When asked what the flag was for he would reply, "just to make you ask questions." He loved to tease and play little practical jokes on his family and friends. Free time, especially in the winter, found Rich reading the daily newspaper, farm magazines (especially *The Green Machine*) and anything about history or politics. As a member of St. Mary's Church, Rich was always active in most of its functions, picnics, fund-raising events and held various offices in the church and the community. Rich died on November 6, 2010 at Creighton Medical Center in Omaha, NE, having attained the age of eighty-two years, nine months and twenty-three days.



In addition to his parents, Rich was preceded in death by his siblings: Marie, Francis, Ted, Msgr. Joseph and Suzette. Survivors include his wife, Leona (Heese) Sondag; his children: Ken Sondag and his wife Kathy of Cary, NC; Dave Sondag and his wife Val of West Des Moines; Carol and her husband Brian Kelley of Eagle Grove; Ed Sondag and his wife Linda of Omaha, NE; and Patty and her husband Bob Corey of Omaha; grandchildren: Paul Kelley, Rachel Sondag, Laura Sondag, Patrick Kelley, Amy Corey, Michael Sondag, Ryan Corey, Daniel Sondag, Melissa Sondag and Tyler Sondag; his sister Barbara and her husband Richard Heller of Portsmouth and his sister-in-law Joan Sondag of Harlan; nieces and nephews; other relatives and many friends.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. John Dorton at St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima in Portsmouth Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. Military Rites were conducted by the John Ohlinger American Legion Post No. 547 at St. Mary's Cemetery in Portsmouth. Honorary casket bearers were Paul Kelley, Tyler Sondag, Melissa Sondag, and Rachel Sondag. Serving as casket bearers were Amy Corey, Michael Sondag, Ryan Corey, Daniel Sondag, Patrick Kelley and Laura Sondag.

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