

Biography of Paul A. McKinley

(1919-1996)

Whether you called him Paul, Great Grandpa, Grandpa, Dad, “P.A.,” or just plain “Mac,” the life of Paul McKinley has touched us all and enriched our lives.

Paul was born in English Township, Lucas County, Iowa on January 28, 1919 to Edith and Harry McKinley. For most of his early years the family lived in town in Chariton, Iowa and for one year on a farm northeast of town.



As a young man, Paul experimented with crystal radio sets, amateur radio receivers, Morse Code and telegraph senders and receivers. He built a chemically powered speed boat and refurbished a one cylinder Fairbanks Morse gasoline engine for use with his mother's washing machine! He later was able to overhaul an old Model T touring car which provided him transportation throughout his high school years.

He graduated from Chariton High School in the class of 1937, playing football and acting in school plays. He especially enjoyed winter sports, including skating, hockey, sledding, skiing and bobsledding on a home-built 8-man bobsled.

In the fall of 1937, Paul joined the US Navy at Ottumwa, Iowa. He attended US Naval Training School in Great Lakes, Illinois and the USN Communications School in San Diego, California. He then boarded the USS San Francisco, a heavy cruiser, for duty as a seaman signalman in the fall of 1938.

At the time, the USS San Francisco operated in and around Hawaii, San Francisco and on the east coast including Norfolk, New York and the Caribbean. Paul completed a goodwill cruise around South America in 1939 as a signalman, and was reassigned to the radio room later that year. He started flying with the ship's cruiser scout aircraft as a radioman-gunner in the spring of 1940.

Paul was eating breakfast on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese struck on December 7, 1941. All that the sailors could do at the time was fire small arms at the enemy aircraft and keep under cover. Paul's scout plane was badly damaged, but with spare canvas and "dope" he and his pilot were able to get it into the air by the afternoon.

They found no evidence of an invading force, but were fired upon several times by nervous American servicemen!

The USS San Francisco served in the Pacific for several months after the attack and then returned to the port of San Francisco for major repairs in the spring of 1942.



Paul took this opportunity to have his girlfriend, Betty Jane Woltersdorf, take the train out from Iowa and together they flew to Reno, Nevada, where they were married at Baptist Parsonage on May 4th. They spent a three week honeymoon in San Francisco before Paul was back at sea on the USS San Francisco.

Paul served as a cruiser scout on the San Francisco for most of the next year, including a heroic effort at Guadalcanal which resulted in the sinking of the Japanese Battleship "Hei."

The year 1943 found Paul reassigned to Alameda Naval Air Station in California, where he was to organize and operate an air crewman's school. Meanwhile, Betty gave birth to their first child, Richard Michael, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on February 19, 1943. She joined Paul six weeks later in Oakland, California.



By the spring of 1944, Paul was reassigned to Guam to organize and administer communications for the American invasion there. He repeated the task one year later, when he was flown to Kisarazoo, near Tokyo, to manage the setup and operation of communications and navigation facilities to aid in the American occupation of Japan.

Five years after his tour of duty was supposed to end, Paul was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1946.

Returning to Iowa, He joined Collins Radio Company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, serving as Engineering Group Head responsible for the design of navigation equipment for commercial aviation. He developed several patents and worked extensively to develop the VOR system which remains the backbone of aviation radio navigation to this day. Collins Radio became famous for its navigation and communications systems, and Paul played a large role in the company's success in the field.

On the home front, Paul and Betty enlarged their family with the addition of daughter Linda Kay, born June 4, 1948. They likewise enlarged their home, moving from a spot on "E" Avenue to a home they built together on Ridgemoor Drive in Cedar Rapids.

In the early 1960's, Paul became interested in boat design—building a test boat for Arthur Collins and starting a small boat building company called Hawk, Inc. The Collins boat proved so successful that Paul was asked to move to Newport Beach, California, and oversee the building of a 70-foot yacht for Collins as well. This was in addition to his duties as Director of Factory Service for Collins Radio in Newport Beach.

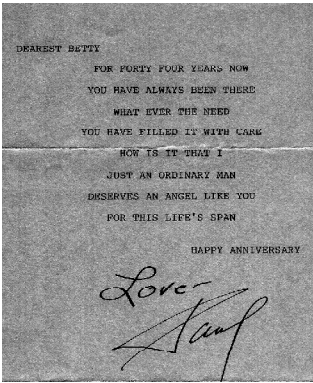


The yacht Peregrine was built of epoxy fiberglass and grossed out at 65,000 pounds.

It was launched in the spring of 1968, powered by two 500 horsepower GM diesels, with cruise performance at 20 knots and a top speed of 23 knots. Her maximum range was 2000 miles. The boat proved highly successful, and was operated by Arthur Collins in the Newport Beach area for nearly 20 years.



Paul served in several Collins Radio positions in Newport Beach, including Manager of Test and



Inspection, Inspection Materials Manager and Program Manager of classified Navy Projects. He spent two years commuting to and from the Collins plant in Richardson, Texas as Program Manager for military high frequency equipment.

When Collins was purchased by Rockwell International in 1972, Paul stayed aboard, working in Anaheim and Newport Beach as Director of Quality

Assurance, Strategic Planner and Manager of Manufacturing Systems. Paul retired from Rockwell in 1983, at age 63, as a result of a stroke.

A man who placed his faith in Jesus Christ at an early age, Paul was baptized at the First Baptist Church of Chariton, Iowa in 1927. After the War, he served the Salem E.U.B. Church of Cedar Rapids on various committees and as President of the Trustee Board. Moving to Newport Beach, he served St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church as Ruling Elder from 1970-1971 and as President of the Trustee Board in 1972.



Paul is the patriarch of a family of Christian believers—wife Betty, children Dick and Linda, daughter-in-law Marilyn, son-in-law Greg, grandchildren Karen and spouse Tim, Kristin and spouse Jesse, Ann and spouse Drew, Heather and spouse Ben, Alex and spouse Laura, Paul T. and five great-grandchildren.

He always enjoyed the love and support of his three sisters, Hazel Coon of Troy, Michigan; Lois Duncan of Davenport, Iowa; and Dorothy Tuttle of Chariton, Iowa. All of us have been blessed to share this life with Paul, and look forward to seeing him again with the Lord in heaven.