



Paul Kerchum CMSGT

January 25, 1920 - December 17, 2022

Paul Kerchum was born 25 January 1920 Youngstown, Ohio to Pavel and Anna (Bohut) Kerchum. Raised in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1938 and served with E Co., 27th Infantry, Hawaii. After that enlistment he re-enlisted with B Co., 31st Infantry. At the outbreak of WWII, he fought in the Philippines until the surrender of US Forces at Bataan. He is a survivor of the Bataan Death March and 3 ½ years as a POW. He survived the “Death Ships” as he was transferred to mainland Japan, ending the war at Mitsubishi Mine Number 11, Hosokura, Japan. After the war he was in the Army/Air Corp until the creation of the US Air Force. He served in the Air Force in Supply until his retirement as a CMSGT until 1 Aug 1966. Moving to Tucson, AZ, where he began working in real estate and finally owning PK Realty in Mescal, AZ. A member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic church where he worked in various ministries for over 30 years and was a founding member of their Knights of Columbus council. He was preceded in death by his wife, Gloria (Winters) Kerchum after 73 years of marriage and his son Paul. He is survived by his daughter Paula (Kerchum) Desmarais and her husband Ronald their four children, his grandson Domonic, and 19 grandchildren/great grandchildren. Paul was a member of the many veteran organizations and spoke at the Veterans Memorial for many years. He never turned down an invitation to talk about his POW experiences to organizations, but especially to schools. He will be greatly missed.

His funeral will be at 10:00 at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Benson on 25 January 2023. Interment will follow at 1:00 pm at the Southern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sierra, Vista, Arizona with full military honors. Please be at the staging area no later than 12:30 pm.

Cemetery Details

Southern Arizona Veteran's Memorial Cemetery

1300 Buffalo Soldier Trail
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
(520) 458-7144

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

JAN 25. 10:00 AM (MT)

Our Lady of Lourdes
386 E. 5th Street
Benson, AZ 85602

Staging Area Line Up

JAN 25. 12:30 PM (MT)

Southern Arizona Veteran's Memorial Cemetery
1300 Buffalo Soldier Trail
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
(520) 458-7144

Rite of Committal

JAN 25. 1:00 PM (MT)

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1300 Buffalo Soldier Trail
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
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Tribute Wall



“ *Paul Kerchum CMSGT*

January 30, 2023 at 12:50 AM



“ *To the family of Paul's. We send our deepest sympathy. It was a honor to know Paul and have the most respect for him. May he Rest In Peace. And see and be with our Lord. God bless the family. Larry and Barb Napier*

larry and barb napier - January 25, 2023 at 09:49 PM



“ *I didn't know Paul. Only met him a few times. But he and my late husband used to speak quite a bit. They were both Air Force. Listening to Paul relate his experiences during Bataan always sent chills down my spine. He made an impression on me, my Pat, and so many others. He will be greatly missed. It's good to know, though, that he's together again with his Gloria.* 🙏🏻💙



BetteLee Henry - January 23, 2023 at 09:40 AM

RS

“ Paul and my father, Archie Sanders, were good friends in the Army both before and after the War. Paul visited us several times in Missouri in the early 1960s when I was a teenager. He was always upbeat and happy. I remember a story he told me about the POWs first night in the work camp in Japan. It was winter and cold but each bed had a block of wood on it. The Americans burned the blocks of wood the stoves to stay warm. In the morning the Japanese guards beat them for burning their pillows.

Ross Sanders - December 30, 2022 at 05:12 PM

R6

“ Paul will be known as a brave, kind and inspiring man to all those that knew him. Over the years my conversations with him built a respect and honor for his service to our great nation. He made a difference.



Richard Custer B6/31st Inf 68/69 - December 28, 2022 at 03:23 PM



“ Paul was a true patriot. He loved this country and endured more in his time @ Bataan than most will ever endure in a lifetime. I enjoyed spending time with him @ the 31st Infantry Reunions. RIP Charlie Tapp Commander 31st Inf. Regiment

Charlie Tapp - December 26, 2022 at 06:47 PM

LF

“ *Sending love, hugs and prayers to the family. I have many memories of Paul. Two come to mind; listening to him tell his stories at church, his passion and way of bringing you right in to history with him. Also watching him escort mom in to Mass, holding her hand, helping her sit. I remember thinking, I hope my husband loves me that much as we age. May he now rest in peace. Love Lori Fortner*



Lori Fortner - December 19, 2022 at 09:56 AM

TM

“ *Terri M lit a candle in memory of Paul Kerchum*



Terri M - December 18, 2022 at 09:01 PM