



Charles Edward Cunningham

June 24, 1923 - May 5, 2020

You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer. (Job 14:5) You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. Psalm 139:16 (NLT)

In the early hours of the morning on May 5, 2020, God sent his angels to bring home his child, Charles Edward Cunningham, as he peacefully slept.

Mr. Cunningham, a longtime resident of Kingston, was born on June 4, 1923 in Meigs County to John and Beulah Simpson Cunningham. In the 1930s the family moved to the Paint Rock area and there it would grow to include his parents and eight brothers and sisters. He attended school in Midway until he went to high school in Kingston where he graduated from Roane County High School in 1942. That same year he would answer the call of service when he was drafted into the United States Army as a Private First Class and assigned to the 96th Infantry Division as a communications operator to serve during World War II.

After completing his basic service training, he shipped out to the Pacific island of Okinawa where he would fight without ceasing after landing for over 90 days in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He fought valiantly and bravely for God and his country, and in turn received many medals in recognition for his service. In addition to the many medals he received, Mr. Cunningham was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroic actions on April 10, 1945 on Okinawa Island. While his battalion was practically cut off from their combat team, and the only

forward route being one covered by enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, he volunteered at the risk to his own life, to lay communication lines to the forward elements in order to maintain constant contact with them. He worked steadily, even after darkness, to complete his mission. His performance of duty under such hazardous conditions enabled his battalion to take and hold its position. His heroic action reflects great credit upon himself and his military service.

After being given a honorable discharge, Mr. Cunningham returned home to Paint Rock and at one point left the area to train to be an air traffic controller; however, he never sought a career in aviation but after receiving the training he came back to Paint Rock again and then later moved to Maryville, TN where he worked at Aloca . It was there that he met the love of his life, Helen Louise Fine Cunningham. After working at Aloca for approximately ten years, he and his wife moved their family to Kingston. While living in Kingston, he became active in the community joining the American Legion Post 110 in Kingston where he was a continuous active member at the time of his death for more 60 years. During his association with American Legion Post 110, he served in various positions including Post Commander and oversaw American Legion Boys and Girls State for the Post. While living in Roane County he also served as chairman for the March of Dimes of Roane County and was active in various community organizations.

Mr. Cunningham was a longtime employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority and began his career at the Watts Bar power plant and retired as a unit operator 1985 while working at the Kingston Steam. While working at the Kingston Steam Plant he joined IBEW 760 in Knoxville and was actively involved with the local union branch and served as the local union representative on-site at the Kingston Plant for a number of years. After his retirement, he acquired his real estate license and joined East Tennessee Realty in Kingston, Tn. He sold many pieces of property over the years in Roane County and his final project was the development of Allison Woods and Lake Forrest Estate subdivisions for a private owner. He was active

throughout his life up until he fell in his yard on April 17th and suffered a broken hip, and then passed away a short-time after from complications at the age of 96 years. For those that knew him, they know that he was guided by his morals and values that he had held onto firmly throughout all of his life, and he loved God and his family. He never stopped looking forward to tomorrow.

Those who have gone before him are his wife, Helen Louise Fine Cunningham, to whom he was married for 53 years at the time of her passing, his parents John Cunningham and Beulah Simpson Cunningham, sisters Bernice Martello, ElFreda Carter, Hersel Bradford, and brothers Kenneth Cunningham, Joe Cunningham and Willard Cunningham. He is also predeceased by a number of nephews.

He has left behind his daughter Diane Cunningham - Nashville, son Joe Cunningham – Oak Ridge, and daughter Gina (Ken) Mabry – Kingston. Grandchildren Johnny (Larua) Vanderpool, Sherry (George) Hooten, Julie Vanderpool, all of Nashville, Jason (Kelly) Cunningham - Knoxville, Lauren Cunningham – Phoenix, AZ, Zachary Mabry, and Sam Mabry of Kingston. Great-grandchildren Alexandra Hull and Isabella Woodward of Nashville, Elijah Mabry and baby Ezekiel Mabry of Kingston arriving in June 2020 and Jensen Barnes. Sister Doris Cunningham Montooth of Sweetwater, TN, and brother Paul Cunningham of Gainesville, GA, and a host of nieces and nephews.

His family extends a to special thank you to Carolyn Nelson for the care, kindness, and friendship she gave to him over the years, while helping with him each day, and much thanks is given to Leon Laymance for his willingness to assist him in many ways. It goes without saying that Mr. Cunningham had many friends throughout his life. In his later years, one friendship stood out among the others, the one he had with Logan East with whom he spent many hours talking and visiting; thank you for your kindness and caring. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends and fondly remembered and loved

forever in the hearts of those who knew him.

A graveside service will be held at Kingston Memorial Gardens on May 7, 2020 at 11 am and officiated by Charles Millican. The family asks that those who wish to remember him in a special way make donations in his memory to The Journey Home Project for veterans in Tennessee at www.journeyhomeproject.org.

Cemetery Details

Kingston Memorial Gardens

123 Oak Drive
Kingston, TN 37763

Tribute Wall

MD

“ *My sincere condolences to Charles' children: Diane, Joe, and Gina, and to everyone else who loved him and called him Grandpa or a friend. ~ Michele DeFelice*

Michele DeFelice - May 08, 2020 at 01:43 PM

PK

“ *Thinking of the family at this time.*

OES



Pam Kirthlink - May 07, 2020 at 09:10 AM

MD

“ *Our thoughts are with you. Mr. Cunningham was the first neighbor to greet us when we moved to Cunningham Blvd in 2014. We always loved seeing him, and hearing his life stories. He will be missed.*



Mary Belle and Marc Duvivier - May 06, 2020 at 04:48 PM