

## The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

The Face of Fillmore this week has the privilege it has never before enjoyed – and that is to wish Paul Stevens a very happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! Very few people reach this advanced year and our family so excited to share in this experience with him.

To sum up a century long life in just a few paragraphs is impossible but a brief look at Paul's life, gives us an idea of the life he had enjoyed.

Paul was born on July 4, 1925 in Fillmore, Utah to Hazen and Harriet Stevens. One story I was told was that the guns of the old tradition of the 21-gun salute went off and Paul was born. That was quite a welcome!

Paul was raised in Fillmore in the home where he made his entrance to the world. He has two sisters and two brothers, all of whom have passed on. He grew up helping on his father's farm. I was told that as a young boy, he thought that all of the festivities that go with the Fourth were in honor of his birthday.

Paul attended Fillmore schools and graduated with the Millard High School Class of '42. Shortly after graduation, he received an "invitation" from the U.S. Government to join the Armed Forces. Many of his friends were joining as the country was close to entering World War II. Paul also had the desire to serve so he joined the Navy and was assigned to the U.S.S. Steamer Bay, an aircraft carrier headed for the South Pacific.

It is interesting to note that Paul was among the first sailors to be on the Steamer Bay, as it was brand new at that point. When he left the Navy after his service was over, the ship was also decommissioned at the same time.

During his tour of duty, Paul received seven battles stars, which were awarded for battles he had taken part in. Names of places like Okinawa, Palau, the Philippines and others are associated with those awarded stars.

The U.S.S. Steamer Bay saw a considerable amount of action in the Pacific. Many of the similar ships were sunk in battles including some with Millard County residents on board. Paul feels fortunate to be among those who came home safely and says his time in the military was the best experience of his life.

Upon his arrival back in Fillmore, Paul met a young lady Greta Olsen from Beazer, Alberta, Canada who was in town visiting her sister Lois Starley. In a short time, Greta was hired to care for an elderly disabled woman, who lived next door.

Greta was asked to sing with a group that included Paul's sister Carolyn. The two became friends and one evening planned to go to a local dance. When Paul pulled up in front of the house, Greta asked where his sister was and he told her he had already taken her to the dance. This was their first date. A courtship followed and the two were married on September 26, 1947.

For a time, when the Millard High Campus contained only the Old Main Building, the junior high and the auditorium, there was a store located just north of the school. Owned and operated by Paul and Greta, it was a gathering place for the teenagers and a great spot to pick up something to eat.

Farming was a way of life for the Stevens' family. When Paul's dad Hazen decided to retire from farming, he sold his property in two pieces to two different men. Later on, Paul was able to buy back both of these farms and consolidate them as they had begun as well as adding more acreage to the farm.

While the farm is now operated by Paul's grandson Dan Anderson, Paul has never lost interest in it and still loves to see what is happening. In fact, Paul was actually still farming at the age of 90.

Being a busy, successful farmer has taken up a lot of Paul's time, but he has also enjoyed taking time off the hunt and fish. He describes himself as a "sportsman". He also loves telling of the great family get togethers the Stevens family has.

Paul has many titles: Dad, Grandpa, Great Grandpa, Great-Great Grandpa, Uncle, Cousin, Neighbor, Friend and others. One thing I can say that others can't is that he is an important contributor to the Face of Fillmore. With his amazing memory and sharp insight, he has often helped when I needed it. Thank you.

Happy Birthday to a great friend!

