



## Trooper Charles P. "Paul" Corbin

Badge #99  
EOW ... September 15, 1943

Charles Paul Corbin was born August 16, 1916, in Zalma, MO, which is in Bollinger County. He is the third of four children, to Charles Everett and Mildred Gertrude Corbin. Charles Everett Corbin moved to Southeast Missouri in 1899, where he prospered in the lumber business. In 1904, Charles Everett Corbin opened a general store in Zalma and maintained a lumberyard. In 1918, the Corbin family moved to Lutesville, MO, where he continued in the lumber business. Charles Everett Corbin served on the Lutesville town board for several years and was mayor for two terms in the mid 1920s. Charles Everett Corbin was elected associate judge of Bollinger County and served from 1926 to 1929. Mr. Corbin was also a noted Baptist minister who preached through the area for over 40 years.

Charles Paul Corbin was an active boy scout in his youth and lettered in varsity basketball at Cape Central High School. Paul was also an accomplished pianist.

Paul Corbin married Ruby Mae Niswonger of Cape Girardeau, MO, on September 4, 1937, in Oran, MO. Ruby had been married previously and had one child, Betty Jean Hawk. Paul and Ruby Corbin had two children, Seba June and Gale Paul. Seba had a birth defect and died shortly after birth in 1939. Gale Paul Corbin was born May 31, 1942.

Paul Corbin was a full-time member of the Missouri National Guard 140th Infantry when it was called to service in December 1940. He remained on active duty until June 1941 and attained the rank of sergeant major. Upon his release from the National Guard, Paul Corbin joined the Cape Girardeau Police Department until his appointment to the Missouri State Highway Patrol on December 22, 1941.

During his career with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, Paul Corbin was an avid fisherman who was also known for his physical presence. He was six feet two inches



*This photo shows a young C. Paul Corbin standing next to historic Cape Rock in Cape Girardeau, MO, prior to joining the Patrol.*

tall and weighed approximately 220 pounds. He was well known for his strength and weight lifting ability. Trooper Corbin was a motorcycle officer with both the Cape Girardeau Police Department and the Patrol. Tpr. Corbin received a Letter of Commendation from the FBI for capturing five Italian prisoners of war who had escaped from the POW camp in Nevada, MO.

On September 15, 1943, Tpr. Corbin was on patrol accompanied by Public Service Commission Inspector Ed Bilyeu north of Carthage, MO, when a transport truck and trailer struck his patrol car. Tpr. Corbin met the truck on a bridge as the truck struck the bridge and jackknifed into the path of the patrol car. Tpr. Corbin was killed instantly and Inspector Bilyeu was critically injured. The driver of the truck, Alfred Vastings, was held and charged with manslaughter but the charge was dismissed eventually.

Ironically, just days before being killed in the line of duty, Tpr. Corbin had received his draft notice for service in World War II. Tpr. Charles "Paul" Corbin was laid to rest in Memorial Cemetery in Cape Girardeau, MO. His father, Charles Everett Corbin, died June 14, 1955, and was buried next to his son.

Tpr. Corbin's widow, Ruby, was left to raise her children without any financial assistance, and had to take a job in a hospital laundry until she and her young family could move by bus back to Cape Girardeau to live with her mother. Ruby then worked in a shoe factory. She remarried approximately five years after the death of her husband.

Tpr. Corbin's death was used to emphasize the need for worker's compensation for state employees. The *Jefferson City News Tribune* reported in 1943 that State Representative Willard Tucker stated the death of Tpr. Corbin, "... again emphasized the imperative need of protection for state employees subjected to unusual hazards. The



*This photo of Trooper Charles P. Corbin and his son G. Paul Corbin was taken a few days before he was killed in the line of duty on Sept 15, 1943. Paul was one year old. About this photo, Paul said, "I've always felt he has been here in spirit to catch me if I started to*

state of Missouri stands in the paradoxical position of excluding our own employees from the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, which we force on every other employer in the state." As a result of this sequence of events, the Missouri Legislature passed Section 226.160 RSMo. in 1945, which authorized the Highway Commission to bring Highway Department and Missouri State Highway Patrol employees under the worker's compensation act if the commission chose to do so. Worker's compensation was not required for all state employees until 1969.

On January 1, 1966, Tpr. Corbin's son, Gale Paul, who was just over one year old at the time of his father's death, became a member of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Gale also chose to go by his middle name of Paul. Young Paul was assigned his





*C. Paul Corbin wore his Missouri National Guard uniform with pride.*

father's badge number 99. G. Paul Corbin spent a large part of his career in the Patrol's Training Division where he rose to the rank of captain and served as the director of that division. G. Paul Corbin became an icon in the Training Division before moving to the Field Operations Bureau prior to retirement.

Upon his retirement in 1994, G. Paul Corbin became the chief of the Nevada Highway Patrol. In 1998, Chief Corbin returned to Missouri where he became chief of police in St. Charles, MO. He retired from the St. Charles Police Department in 2003.

Throughout his 32-year career, Captain Corbin was without peer

*This photo of Trooper C. Paul Corbin's car was taken at the scene, after the crash that took his life.*

in his dedication to the department and his father's memory. Capt. Corbin honored his father in the most fitting manner by his exemplary demeanor, behavior, and dedication to the Missouri State Highway Patrol. When Capt. Corbin retired, badge 99 was retired.

On September 15, 2003, on the 60th anniversary of Tpr. C. Paul Corbin's death, U.S. Highway 71 through Jasper County, MO, was designated as the Charles P. Corbin Memorial Highway. U.S. 71 is the highway upon which Tpr. Corbin had been killed.

*(Lt. James P. Ripley, Troop A, researched and wrote this profile in 2004. Ripley retired in 2013.)*

*Tpr. Charles P. "Paul" Corbin was the fourth member of the Patrol to make the Ultimate Sacrifice.*

