
W2DU - July 3, 2012



M. W. 'Walt' Maxwell
De Land, FL

QCWA # 5938
Chapter 45
Born 1919
QCWA Presidential Award in 1989
QCWA Hall of Fame Award in 2001
2nd Presidential Award in 2007
75 Year Certificate in 2008

M. Walter Maxwell, 93, died July 3, 2012 at his home in DeLand, Florida of natural causes. Born in Daytona Beach in 1919, his parents were William W. Maxwell and Mabel E. Maxwell of Mount Pleasant, Michigan. Married to Harriette Coral Koster on November 6, 1943, until her death on April 20, 1985.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946 in Corpus Christi, TX. Walt graduated from Central Michigan University in 1954, with a BS degree in mathematics and physics. He was employed by Radio Corporation of America in Princeton, NJ from 1949 until retirement to DeLand in 1980. Walt was responsible for the RCA Astro Electronics Division Antenna Test Range from 1960 through 1980. More than 30 earth-orbiting spacecraft utilized antenna systems designed solely by Maxwell, including the Apollo Lunar Rover system that televised astronauts as they worked on the moon.

Walt was very active in Amateur Radio, licensed in 1933 at age 14. He authored and published three editions of "Reflections, Antennas and Transmission Lines" since retirement.

He is survived by spouse, Jean Binkley Mayhew; three sons, William W. Maxwell of DeLand, FL, Richard A. Maxwell of Marietta, GA, and John R. Maxwell of Gainesville, FL; and one daughter, Susan M. Glasnapp of Delray Beach, FL; three grandchildren, Sheri A. McDonald of Lakeland, FL, Douglas M. Glasnapp of Fort Worth, TX, and Christopher M. Glasnapp of Reston, VA; and two great-grandchildren, Nicholas McDonald and Conor Glasnapp

In case anyone has not heard, Walt Maxwell, W2DU, became a silent key Tuesday night. He was 93 years old. Walt was a strong supporter of QCWA. He had been in poor health.

Thanks.
73,
Ken, W8EK

M. Walter Maxwell, W2DU, is an ARRL Technical Adviser (TA) in the specialty field of antennas and transmission lines. Walt was born in Daytona Beach, Florida in 1919, and grew up in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. A life member of both the ARRL and QCWA, and a Fellow of the Radio Club of America, he was licensed at age 14 as W8KHK in 1933, and has been licensed continuously ever since. He was graduated from high school and entered Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant in 1935, earning a BS degree in mathematics and physics. He played in professional dance bands, and specialized in auditorium and outdoors sound systems until early 1940. Then Walt joined the announcing and technical staff of WMFJ, Daytona Beach, and was assigned the call W4GWZ. Walt also copied Press Wireless News Service from WCX/WJS, 38 WPM CW, while at WMFJ.

With the FCC from late 1940 to 1944, among many other tasks (see Table of Contents, 'Tasks While with the FCC'), his professional antenna experience included participation in building antenna farms at FCC monitoring stations in Hawaii and Allegan, Michigan. Then until 1946 he was in the U.S. Navy as instructor of Aviation Electronic Technicians at Corpus Christi, Texas. While in the Navy he played trumpet in the big band of Alvino Rey, W6UK. From 1946 to 1949 in his own electronic and mobile-communications business, Walt did broadcast-engineering consulting, and was chief engineer of WCEN, Mount Pleasant, having engineered and built that AM station in 1948 (see Table of Contents, 'Broadcast Engineering Consulting').

In 1949 Walt joined the RCA Laboratories (the David Sarnoff Research Center) in Princeton, New Jersey as an engineer, later becoming a charter member of its new Astro-Electronics Division in Princeton. From 1960 until retirement in 1980 he was in charge of Astro's Space Center Antenna Laboratory and Test Range. More than 30 earth-orbiting spacecraft utilize antennas that were designed solely by Walt, which include ECHO 1 (see Antennas in Space from a Historical Perspective, 'The ECHO 1 Antenna Design') and all early TIROS-ESSA-NOAA weather satellites. He assisted in the design of many other spacecraft antenna systems, including the data-link antennas on NOAA's TIROS-M and TIROS-N, and on RCA's SATCOM communications satellites. He also performed design work on the Search and Rescue (SAR) system quadrifilar helix antennas flying on TIROS-N, which are used worldwide for relaying signals from emergency locator transmitters (ELT) aboard aircraft in distress. He assisted in designing the moon-to-earth TV dish antenna used on the moon on Apollo's lunar rover--the moon buggy. (See 'The Lunar Rover (the Moon Buggy)') He set up its test-range facilities and performed all of its final pattern, gain and impedance-matching measurements prior to acceptance by NASA. He engineered ground-based antenna systems at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, for pre-launch communication with the TIROS and RELAY spacecraft while on the launch pad. (See section on 'Antennas in Space') In addition he had total engineering responsibility for the receivers, transmitters and antennas of the

five ground stations set up across the US, used in Project SCORE, the orbiting Atlas rocket that broadcast President Eisenhower's "Christmas Message From Space" in December 1958, the first communications satellite in space. (see 'The SCORE Chronicles')

Having been originally licensed as W8KHK, Walt has also held call signs W4GWZ, W8VJR and W2FCY, the Extra Class license since 1967, and the call sign W2DU since 1968. Every full-time position in his career resulted from association with Amateur Radio. He has served as antenna consultant for AMSAT, as a member of FCC's advisory committee for WARC-79, and as trustee for K2BSA at National Headquarters, Boy Scouts of America, before they moved from North Brunswick, NJ to Texas. By petition to the FCC, Walt obtained the K2BSA call sign for the Headquarters' station to replace the original call sign K2BFW. After retiring from RCA in 1980 he moved to DeLand, Florida, where he writes and edits using state of the art computers, and still enjoys music, playing string bass in small jazz combos and in a professional 14-piece 1940's Glenn Miller style big band. His favorite big bands are Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington and Count Basie. He also enjoys Florida boating in his 17' outboard sportster. From 1992 to 1997, he was President, Frequency Coordinator, and Data Base Manager of the Florida Repeater Council, administering to the more than 1000 Florida repeaters. A three-generation family of hams, Walt's father was W8YNG, his three sons are Bill, W2WM (ex- WA2ETP, 5A4TY, AG2B), Rick, W8KHK, his Dad's original call, (ex- WB2HKX and WB4GNR), and John, K4JRM (ex- KI4CVQ). His daughter Sue was KC4UBZ (license expired) and son-in-law Keith is WD9JCA.

Walt also was the winner of two QST Cover Plaque Awards, one for the first article he published in April 1973, entitled, "Too Low and SWR Can Kill You," and the second published in January 2007, entitled, "How the FCC Helped to End WW2," Cover plaques are awarded to the author voted by readers as the best QST article of the month. The first article was the beginning of a series of articles entitled, "Another Look at Reflections," aimed at dispelling myths concerning SWR, reflected power, and other transmission line and antenna misconceptions that arose when coaxial transmission lines replaced open-wire lines to feed antennas after WW2. The Reflections series of articles later became the first seven chapters of the popular book Walt authored, "Reflections-Transmission Lines and Antennas."

