

Starke County 28 -- Tidbits of Starke County

Teachers

Do you remember your high school teachers? There were a lot of teachers whom I remember when I went to school in Knox. Of course I remember my aunt, Effie Shilling Johnston, who was the English teacher and Principal of the Junior High. In 6th grade, she made a point of having the boys comb their hair and taught them a few manners.

There was John McSherry, Principal of the High School, who also taught physics. (Principals don't actually teach anymore!) Mr. McSherry would always let you argue with him, but in the end, you knew he was right. He was always a gentleman.

I remember Eleanor and Jim Hamblin (commercial and industrial arts). Wonderful teachers. A close friend of theirs and also a teacher in Knox High School was Paul Harrington. Paul taught Agriculture, Biology and Physics. He taught from 1949 to 1962 at Knox. I lost track of Mr. Harrington, because I went to college, then the Army, and Mr. Harrington moved in 1962 to teach in Illinois. He was later Dean of students at the College of DuPage. After his retirement, he and his wife, Ethel (Kegebein), also a teacher in Knox, moved to Texas.

I mention Paul Harrington's name because someone sent a newspaper article about Paul to me. It seems that during WWII, he served with the 62nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion and flew an L4 reconnaissance airplane. These were civilian planes pressed into service at a very critical time. The article, by Mike Conley of The McDowell News in Marion, North Carolina, says, "They survived by flying low and slow. Harrington's job as a pilot with the 62nd was to fly a forward observer who would gather information and spot targets for the Army. "That was my duty," he said. "I tried to avoid being shot down and being shot by our own fire." Harrington flew missions over the Netherlands, Germany and Czechoslovakia. He managed to fly a mission on Dec. 17, 1944 during the horrendous Battle of the Bulge."

Now, the story ----

The newspaper article goes on, "Even after all these years, Paul Harrington can still show them how to straighten up and fly right. Monday morning, Harrington, who turns 86 next month, took the controls of a beautifully restored U.S. Army L3B (similar to the L4) airplane at Marion's Shiflet Field. He expertly took off from the grassy runway, did a beautiful flyover at the small airport and carefully brought the single-engine plane in for a nice landing.

"He makes it look easy," said Bill Forstchen, professor of history at Montreat College. A resident of Hideaway, Texas, Harrington, his son Jon and his granddaughter Morgen were the guests of Forstchen and Don Barber, who jointly own and operate the restored L3B airplane."

"Harrington flew an L4 aircraft, which is similar to this one, under much more stressful conditions during World War II. But it was the first time he had seen an L3B since he had been in flight school back in 1943. And he quickly showed everyone that he had not forgotten what he had learned more than 60 years ago. Harrington and Barber both got into the small plane. As they taxied and took off from Shiflet Field, **an admiring Forstchen could tell immediately who was actually in control.**"

Attached are photos of Paul Harrington in 1943 and in 2009.

