

Warren Watson

Warren Watson was born January 12, 1923, to parents Keen and Rilda Slone Watson. He was born at Pippa Passes, Kentucky, the same year Ms. Alice Lloyd founded her college on the “creek”. Growing up he had one sister Marie, and two brothers: Neil and Charles Arthur. Charles died when he was only three months old. Warren recalls another important aspect of his early life was the recording of the first country record – “The Little Log Cabin in the Lane”, by Fiddling John Carson. To Warren as a child all the sounds of nature were music to him.

Warren started school at the age of five and by age eleven he was ready for high school. In 1942 he graduated from Caney Junior College at the age of 19 and immediately went to teaching school. His first job was at a two-room school at Bolyn, Kentucky (the head of Rock Fork). Warren’s sister, Marie taught the lower grades and he taught the upper ones.

In 1943, with World War II waging, Warren was drafted into the U.S. Army. He was assigned as a member of the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion out of Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. This Battalion was unique in two ways: it was the only separate armored infantry battalion (AIB), as the others were attached to armored divisions. Also, it was the only AIB to train with the top secret canal defense lights in the Arizona desert and Wales. His group was attached to an intelligence organization called “T Force”, which collected intelligence information from captured towns.

Warren served in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. It was here that he was shot in the throat by sniper fire, with the bullet barely missing his carotid artery. It should be noted however, the

wound did paralyze the left nerve in his tongue and shot off part of his epiglottis. At the time of his injury he was left for dead on the battlefield but a medic disobeyed orders and dragged him to safety.

As a result of his knocking out a machine gun nest as well as the above injury, he received the following medals: The Silver Star, The Bronze Star, The Purple Heart, Croix de Guerre with bronze star (a French medal), Combat Badge, ETO Medal with four bronze stars, World War II Victory Medal, American Theater Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and Validi Milites from Belgium for the defense of the Ardennes. This last medal translates “valiant warriors”. Warren jokingly states that his best medal of all was the “Ruptured Duck”. This one was his discharge button that he and his fellow combatants wore on the lapels of their coats.

After the war Warren states the veterans “rocked”, as they were drawing unemployment checks until they were able to find work. This didn’t take long for him as he soon went back to teaching; first at Lower Rock Fork for a year and next another year at Wayland High School.

Next for Warren was back to school himself, as he was off to the University of Kentucky for almost four years. Here he earned his Bachelor’s of Arts Degree and Masters of Arts in education. After UK, Warren taught math at Hazard High School (1952-55), and in 1952, he married Alberta Adams from Lexington. Alberta was a medical technician as well as a chemistry teacher. To this union would be born one daughter, Pam. He is very proud of the fact Pam has her Masters Degree in Counseling and is employed by Comp Care. He is equally proud of the fact she is married to Barry Stenulson and that they blessed him with a grandson, David, a junior art major at Asbury College.

From 1955 to 1962, Warren taught school at Harrison High School in Cynthiana. From here he moved his family to Lexington and then on to Hollywood, Florida. Here he taught one year in the Dade County School System. Afterwards, he moved his family back to Lexington where he continued to teach; this time at Bryan Station Junior High. His last two years before retirement were spent teaching at Evarts High School in Harlan, Kentucky.

Faced with retirement, Warren settled on his wife's family farm and it was here he played rhythm guitar and fiddle in the C & W Band (The Sleep Hollow Boys) for the next ten years. Since he always had a love for carving he took advantage of retirement and carving and has made 13 fiddles.

Warren keeps in touch with the remaining members of his World War II company by way of the Pekan, their publication. When asked about the name "pekan", he replied it meant, "weasels"; a fitting name considering the nature of their mission during the war.

After breaking his ankle in three places in 2007, he and his wife moved in with their daughter in Nicholasville. He is a member of the Church of the Savior in Jessamine County and still plays fiddle at local nursing homes with musician friends. Yes, as he states, "at 85 years young, I can still fiddle around".