

# You Would Have Liked Charley Tillman!

By JACK KOLB

Charles "Charley" Tillman was to be the subject of one of our "Where Are They Today" columns. I had interviewed Charley late last summer and because there is always a question or two on whether the information was correct or accurate, I tried again in late August and September to contact him by phone. The phone always rang but no one answered. When I tried again around November first, the phone was disconnected. Unbeknownst to me Charley had died.

I never did get to ask his age, although I would suppose it was in the early 70s. Charley was one of those WWII military veterans who was mangled in the process of training for the "big fight." Many were small-town boys, such as Charley, who were thrown into situations of unfamiliar, heavy and lethal equipment, run by inexperienced operators. After months of hospitalization he was discharged and went back to civilian life. Charley was a strong supporter of the Montevideo VFW and a befriender of the National Guard "Battalion Commander" (our son) who was dutifully trying to protect Montevideo and surrounding areas during the spring flood of 1997.

He bought a "Meat and Grocery" store in Montevideo, and specialized as a "sausage maker." By 1970 the "mega-market chain stores" with absentee ownership began moving in. Charley's legs began to give him trouble after many years of standing on the hard floor behind the meat counter. In retrospect Charley decided to look for a new career. He was a volunteer fireman with the Montevideo Fire Department. He also volunteered a lot of his time in the summer helping the superintendent at Montevideo Country Club who was not in the best of health. When the superintendent died, Charley finished the season as the top man.

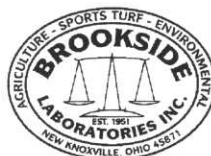
Charley did not feel qualified or confident to fill the position at Montevideo Country Club so that the following year he signed on as an assistant to Karl Johnson at Alexandria Golf Club. After two seasons with Karl he moved on to take the position as superintendent at Montevideo Country Club. This is where I met Charley. He was a gregarious man. He was a high energy person, always asking questions and seeking answers to problems. We worked well together and solved many of his dilemmas. He was always requesting "Plant Pathology Books" and information on different diseases. He was fascinated by the freakishness of nature.

To appreciate the following story you would have to understand this gentleman's excitable nature. Charley had

aerifier holes in his greens that were not healing. We determined that he had an infestation of cutworms. Upjohn Chemical Company had just developed a material for soil insects called "Proxol." This product acted as an irritant as well as toxicant which made "little buggers" (cut worms) come to the surface before they died. I had delivered this product at about three o'clock in the afternoon and apparently Charley applied it immediately. As I was having dinner at home that evening, the phone rang. It was Charley. He was excited and astounded! The cutworms had all crawled to the surface and were as thick as 6-10 critters per square foot. Golfers were complaining that they could not putt through the mat of "cutworm-bodies."

Charley moved on down to Hudson Country Club in Hudson, Wis., where he and his wife managed not only the golf course but the clubhouse as well. Both were bothered by health problems and after a few years retired to Brownsville, Tex. After the death of his wife he returned to Montevideo and lived in their original home until the time of his death. All of you would have liked this venerable man!

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