

Honoring those who served: Cotton Lyall, US Army 1953-55

Editor's Note: *The following feature is the first in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.*

Cotton Lyall

J.D. (Cotton) Lyall was born in and has lived most of his life in Tonkawa or on the family acreage southwest of town. Cotton was born as the third child to H.C. Lyall, Sr. and Ila A. Lyall and grew up as a “white” haired ornery lad with many of the same attributes of the comic strip character “Dennis the Menace”. He was always looking at life with a mischievous gleam in his eye and a quick story to tell, which he often tells as the “gospel truth”, “would I lie?” and a hearty chuckle.

Cotton worked at various odd jobs in Tonkawa most all of his life, such as the City Water Department under the tutelage of former water superintendent Wes Barney, at Williams Oil Tool Manufacturing, Gruner's Oil Tool and later with the U.S. Postal service in Tonkawa.

Cotton holds the distinction of working with USPS beginning as a substitute “gofer”, part-time carrier, clerk, assistant post master and then as the first post master in Tonkawa to come up through the ranks. The office of post master was previously a political ap-



Cotton Lyall, 1953

pointment position. After 33 years in the postal service and nine years as post master he retired in 1989 to his 40 acres and cows on the hill where he and Willa Mae, his wife of 59 years, (who else would have him?) have lived for all those years.

Cotton and Willa have two beautiful and talented daughters, Diana Reese, married to the Tonkawa school superintendent Rod Reese, and Dana Edminsten, married to Melton Edminsten, assistant manager of the Oklahoma Drug, Alcohol & Narcotic Bureau for

the state of Oklahoma. These wonderful ladies have produced six grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren. Cotton and Willa Mae are quick to point out these are all “world beaters”.

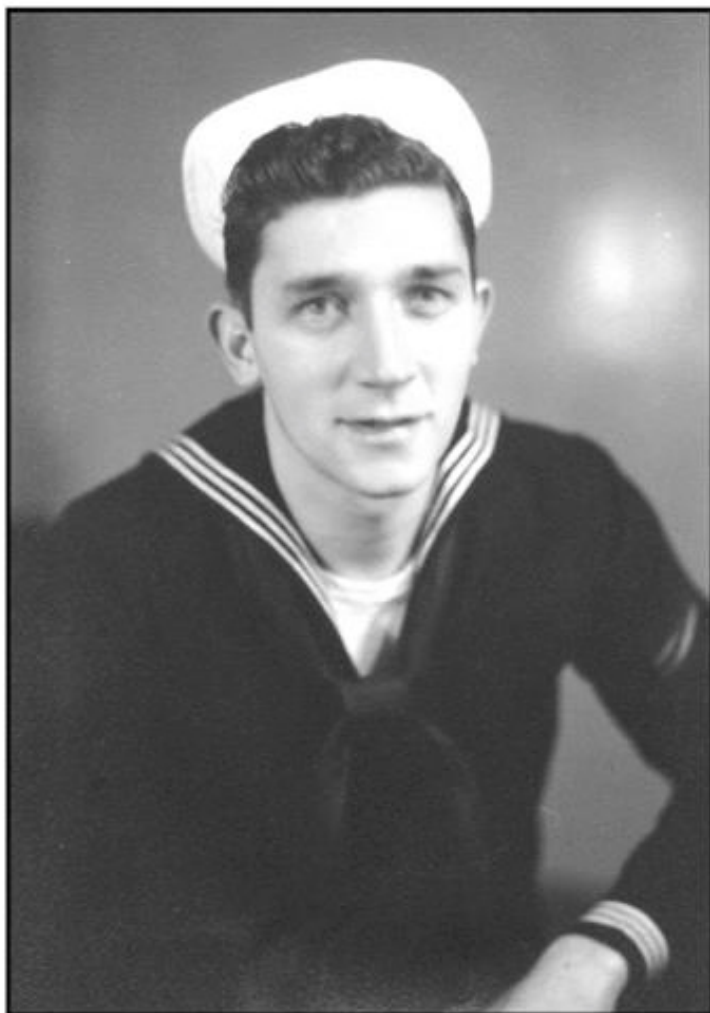
Shortly after Cotton and Willa were married in 1953 Cotton received that infamous “greeting” from Uncle Sam to fulfill his military obligation in the U.S. Army. He served for two years in Korea and was honorably discharged in 1955.

The Lyalls have served together as active members of the First Baptist Church of Tonkawa in many capacities and positions. They have sung together in the church choir and for countless funerals of Tonkawa friends. They are proud supporters of Tonkawa, having attended and graduated from Tonkawa schools and Northern Oklahoma Junior College (NOJC).

Their retirement years have been good to them. Enjoying their “house on the hill” where the wind continues to blow and they watch other people's cows graze in their pasture between trips to the barn (woodshop) where Cotton enjoys making unique wood bowls on his trusty worn out wood lathe.

When he is asked what the bowls are for he replies, “They are Guzenta bowls” and then explains that whatever you want “goes into” them. Jesse Donley Lyall or J.D. Lyall, better known as Cotton, is a Tonkawa original.

Honoring those who served: Robert Thomas, US Navy 1952-54



Robert Thomas

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Robert Thomas

The war with Korea started in June of 1950 and the draft began immediately, so Robert Thomas said he went to Stillwater and joined the Navy Reserve, serving two years active duty and two years non-active.

"I applied for active duty in 1952, went through boot camp at the Great Lakes Navy Training Base and was sent to Norfolk, Virginia where I went aboard the Destroyer U.S.S. Corwell D.D. 547," Thomas said.

In January 1953 Thomas left Norfolk and was attached to the 7th Fleet, escorting the aircraft carriers and patrolling the North Korean coast with a lot of time in the Wonson coast area.

Thomas said he was detached from the 7th Fleet and started home in June, going through the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean Sea, and then to the Atlantic Ocean, arriving in Norfolk August 1953.

"I was released from duty in March 1954," Thomas said. He moved to Ponca City where he owned a print shop until he retired in 1999. "We are blessed with two children and four grandchildren," he said.

Insight about US Navy efforts in Korea:

By the middle of 1951, the front lines in the Korean War had stabilized near where the war started 12 months earlier. Negotiations began amid hopes that an early truce could be arranged. But this took two more frustrating years, during which the contending forces fought on, with the U.S. Navy providing extensive air and gunfire support, a constant amphibious threat, relentless mine sweeping and a large logistics effort.

Honoring those who served: J.D. Irwin

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J.D. Irwin

By LOREN LAVERNE LAWS

Military Background

J.D. Irwin was only 15 years of age when he enlisted in the 45th Infantry Division at Tonkawa, Oklahoma. His dad signed his approval for J.D. to join the 45th. J.D. withdrew from Tonkawa High School in the 11th grade and joined some of his friends who were already in the 45th.

When the local National Guard Unit mobilized they were ordered to Fort Polk, Louisiana for six months basic training. After basic training they were stationed in Japan for about six months for intense training getting them ready for combat in Korea. Three troop ships had transported the soldiers to Japan from the States.

After training in Japan they headed to Korea and were north of the 38th Parallel. J.D. was a member of the service battery and he was a member of a group of soldiers who made sure the troops had plenty of 90 lb. shells

for their 155 mm Howitzers. He was in Korea for 7-8 months and returned by troop ship to the States for discharge. After arrival in San Francisco, California he was stationed at Camp Stoneman at Pittsburg, California. No doubt J.D. passed the camp's famous sign: "Through these Portals Pass the Best Damn Soldiers in the World."

After a short stay at Camp Stoneman he rode a troop train headed for Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There the governor of Oklahoma gave a welcome home speech to the arriving troops. J.D. entered duty in June 1950 and received his honorable discharge from the Army at Fort Sill in June 1952. His parents were there to welcome their son home from the Korea Conflict.

J.D. used the G.I. Bill to attend Northern Oklahoma College.

In 2000, he was one of the veterans who received a letter from President of the Republic of Korea, Kim Dae-jung, in gratitude for protecting his country from the North Koreans. The President also awarded him with the Korea Service Medal. U.S. soldiers were not allowed to receive such medals until 2000, the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War.

J.D. and his wife qualify to be buried in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery, Fort Gibson, Okla. This is one of the great benefits that the U.S. Government provides for service veterans.

For more about J.D., see story written by Laverne Laws for the Tonkawa News, issue dated Thursday, April 24, 2003.

J.D. was named to both major All-State football squads selected by the two largest big city newspapers in Oklahoma.

J.D. was a returned 45th Division veteran and was first choice of the Daily Oklahoman North Squad at the guard position. He also made the Tulsa World's All-State Team.

In 1950 Irwin finished his junior year of high school and the 45th infantry division was being mobilized to go to Fort Polk, La., because of the Korean War. "I joined up and left for the Army," Irwin said. "I served two years and was discharged in June of 1952."

"I returned to high school to finish my senior year and play football," he said. "The Bucs lost only one game that year to Blackwell." Irwin won District conference, and All-State first team. "No one person can do it by himself," Irwin said.

Honoring those who served:

Danny G. Beck, US Navy 1948-52

Editor's Note: *The following feature is the fourth in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.*

Danny Beck

After graduating from Tonkawa High School in May 1948, Danny Beck joined the U.S. Navy and reported to the naval station in Oklahoma City. As soon as he was sworn in he was issued a train pass to San Diego, California. His boot camp lasted 11 weeks.

In January 1949 after boot camp he was assigned to the USS Antietam. This aircraft carrier was one of the largest in the U.S. fleet, the flight deck being 888 feet long. It carried 90 F4U Corsair airplanes - the most capable carrier-based fighter bomber in WWII, manufactured by Chance Vought - and a Navy crew of 1,700 plus a company of 80 Marines. Sailors were assigned different stations on the ship. The airplane Corsair traveled 125 miles per hour; the Japanese considered it the most "formidable" plane in the war.

While aboard the Antietam Dan was trained as a dental technician. In March 1949 he was assigned to the USS Valley Forge.

While in Hong Kong for five days of rest and recuperation, on the second day there, they were called back on the ship to prepare for engagement in the Korean Conflict.

They sailed to Japan and loaded their ship with all kinds of ammunition for the fighter planes and for their large guns on ship. The Korea Conflict was on.

(Danny fondly recalls that while in Japan he purchased a set of china which to date he and wife Betty still have at the family home in Wichita, Kansas.)

Danny's last assignment and additional training as a dental technician was in San Diego at the Marine Recruiting Depot. He was very surprised when he happened to make contact with our 1947 Tonkawa High School football coach, Coach Butcher. What a surprise.

Coach Butcher had been called back in the Marines. Danny also came in contact with two of his friends from Tonkawa, Bill White and Lloyd Wright. They were being processed for their tour with the Marine Corps.

While he was in training in San Diego toward the end of his four-year commitment to the Navy, Dan received two promotions - one to 3rd Cpl. Petty Officer and the other to 2nd Cpl. Petty Officer. The Navy, of course, wanted him to re-enlist.

Danny received his honorable



Danny Beck

discharge in September 1952 in San Diego, California and got ready to go home.

His parents had some friends who lived near San Diego and they traveled there for a vacation and to get their son from the Navy. His family had a wonderful vacation and a fun trip back to Tonkawa.

It was a pleasure helping write this story about Danny. We played football together at Tonkawa High School and graduated together in 1948.

We are grateful for Danny's service to this great country of ours as we are of so many of my friends who also served. We will miss him at the 2013 Tonkawa Alumni Reunion September 27-28. Due to health issues Danny is not expected to attend the reunion.

Honoring those who served: Laverne Laws, US Army 1952-54

Editor's Note: *The following feature is the fifth in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.*

Loren Laverne Laws

THS Class of 1948

US Army: 1952 to 1954

Laverne Laws' first military experience was with the local National Guard during the summer of summer of 1947. Summer camp was at Fort Sill, Okla.

After graduation from Tonkawa High School, Uncle Sam was knocking at Laws' door but he was not to answer that call just yet.

In August 1948, Laws received a call from the basketball coach at Oklahoma City University offering him a four-year basketball scholarship to OCU.

"Needless to say, I was very excited about this offer," Laws said. "The draft law allowed that you were not to be drafted if you were in college."

Graduation from OCU in May of 1952 made Laws eligible for the draft. And so it was that in July '52, he received his notice

and was drafted into the U.S. Army. Fort Sill, Okla., became his first assignment.

Two of his high school buddies also were drafted the same day, Robert Thompson, who also will be honored at THS Homecoming this year, and the late Jimmy Querry.

"All three of us reported to Uncle Sam at Fort Sill for induction," Laws said.

After Fort Sill they had to report to Camp Chaffee, Ark., for five months of combat basic training.

"It was very hot in Arkansas during the summer and the new inductees had a hard time with the heat," Laws said. "Having played four years of college basketball, I was in great shape and I made it through the summer heat without any problem. I did not like basic training, but I knew they were training us well for combat."

After basic training came his new assignment and after a couple of weeks furlough Laws reported to Seattle, Wash.

"I had never flown by commercial airlines and the flight was awfully scary," Laws recalled.

After a week in Seattle, over 3,000 combat soldiers boarded



Loren Laverne Laws

the SS Marine Serpent troop ship and headed toward Japan.

"We were on the ocean for 28 days and I got very sea sick and home sick," Laws said. "When we finally arrived in Japan it was a culture shock."

In Japan the U.S. Army had try-outs for the Army basketball team and having played four years of college basketball, Laws thought he would have a chance to make the team. No luck, however, every All-American there tried out too.

"I made the combat team that headed to Korea," Laws said.

They boarded another troop ship and sailed to the southern tip of Korea to Pusan. There they boarded a troop train and headed for the front lines.

"At Pusan many combat soldiers were boarding another troop ship headed back home to the good ole USA," Laws said.

"The first project we did at the front line was to build a sandbag bunker and dig a fox hole," Laws said. "That was the safest place to be when enemy mortar and artillery rounds came toward us. At night we would fire artillery that exploded in the air, lighting up a large area. The artillery shells had a parachute and it had lights attached to it that helped us see enemy activity at night. We had all kinds of weapons to fight the North Koreans, tanks, air power, machine guns, mine fields, hand grenades, mortar guns, and our rifles."

The 38th Parallel was the boundary line between South and North Korea. Laws was a forward observer attached to the infantry. His group of troops were responsible for guarding the 38th, not allowing North Korea to invade South Korea.

"I was on the front lines from

January 1953 until a so-called peace treaty was signed July 27, 1953," Laws said.

"On August 7, 1953, I received a very special call from the Red Cross informing me I was now the father of a healthy baby boy," Laws said. "I was extremely excited and thrilled at the news."

Laws said he had the good fortune to teach at the Army education center and also served as a supply sergeant. About October 1953, he learned that because the war was over, if soldiers wanted to go to college they could get out of the Army four months early.

"I applied for this special program and was accepted. The conflict did not end until 48 hours after North and South Korea agreed on a peace treaty. On July 27, 1953, it was over," Laws said.

November of 1953 Laws was on a troop ship headed for home - another 28 days on the ocean. This time he did not get sea sick or home sick because he knew he was going to see his wife and new baby boy, Larry, his firstborn.

"I arrived in San Diego, California and boarded a flight to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City," Laws said. "It was December 1953 and it was great to be

home."

After a brief furlough, he was assigned to Camp Carson, Colo. "My wife, son, and I loaded up my old green Chevy and headed to Camp Carson. I was assigned there four months until April '54 and received my honorable discharge" Laws said. "That day is stamped in my mind forever."

"Uncle Sam was good to me," Laws said. "I utilized the benefits of the G.I. Bill to earn and pay for my master's degree from Oklahoma University and for my counseling in education degree at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. The Veterans Administration allowed me to finance my first home. Their benefits also include eligibility for my wife and I to be buried at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery."

A few years ago, Laws received a letter from the president of South Korea, together with a Korea Service Medal, thanking him for his service to their country. "It was not until 2000, the 50th anniversary of the Korea Conflict, that they were able to do this for those who served," Laws said. "We are proud to have served our nation."

Honoring those who served: **Vincent Medina, US Army 1948-53**

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Vincent Medina

Vincent Medina served during the Korean War with the 189th Service Battery hauling ammunition to the 155 front line firing battery. Medina also hauled supplies, food and provided transportation when needed.

He enlisted in August 1948 and was mobilized in September of 1950. He underwent training in Japan and was then sent to Korea and was stationed north of the

38th parallel.

In 1953 was released from the hospital in Japan and sent back to the states to be discharged at Fort Hood, Texas.



Vincent Medina

Honoring those who served:

Lonnie Bray

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Lonnie Bray

Lonnie Bray has dedicated his life to his country, community, and family. He graduated, Tonkawa High School, 1948, attended NOJC before he began his military career by joining Oklahoma National Guard in September of 1946. In September, 1951, Bray was mobilized with the 45th Division and served in both Japan and Korea. He rejoined the National Guard in 1953 when the Oklahoma National Guard was reorganized after Korea. Bray rapidly rose through the ranks becoming a warrant officer junior grade, chief warrant officer, second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and captain. All in the Tonkawa Unit. Bray asserts

that one of his smartest decisions was to attend the Nuclear Weapons Employment School and the Advanced Field Artillery School in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. A year later, he accepted a position with the National Guard Headquarters, 45th Division Artillery, 45th Division. He was promoted to major in September, 1966, and completed Command and General Staff College in 1967. When Oklahoma lost the 45th Division in 1968. Bray was assigned to the 45th Artillery group in Enid where he controlled three artillery Battalions in western Oklahoma. Throughout the seventies, he progressed from lieutenant colonel to group commander and was promoted to Colonel. A year later he was assigned as commander of the 45th Support Center RAOC. This unit was assigned the mission of rewriting the rear area battle plan for southern Europe. He became the Oklahoma National Guard Chief of Staff Logistics in 1979. He

retired after thirty-eight years of service to the United States with many military awards in 1985. Some of the many honors he received were the Legion of Merit, Army Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Oklahoma Guardsman and Commendation Medals, Army Reserve Component Medal, Japan Occupation Medal, Korean Service Medal, and the Oklahoma Long Service Medal. Bray became president of The National Guard Association of Oklahoma in 1985, he served as President of the 45th Division Association in 1986. He also was Executive Director of the Oklahoma National Guard Association for two years. He also worked as the Tonkawa City Manager for two years. Bray's dedication to his family began with his marriage to Sally Blubaugh on March, 1951. During their fifty-seven years together, they celebrated the births of three sons, John Mike Bray, James Mark Bray, and Lonnie



Lonnie Bray

Maurice Bray, Jr., and one daughter, Mary Susan Green. Mike and Mark continued their father's legacy by serving in the military; three of Bray's grandsons also carry on their family's tradition. Bray currently shares his life with his wife, Yolla Steers Bray, and they enjoy spending time with eighteen grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. He now insists that he is "playing golf from now on."

Honoring those who served:

James Mayfield: US Navy, 1949-1974

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James Mayfield

James Mayfield graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1948. He served in the US Navy from 1949 to 1974 and was a Senior Chief Petty Officer, Anti Submarine Warfare Specialist.

James enlisted in the Navy at the Recruiting Station in Oklahoma City and then went to boot camp in San Diego for 11 weeks of training.

Classified as an Airman, James was then sent to Memphis Tennessee for training in the Aviation School and basic Aircraft Maintenance.

From Tennessee, James was transferred to the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst New Jersey Parachute School for 16 weeks.

Later, James was assigned to VX1, at the Naval Air Station, Boca Chica, Key West, Fla.

VX1 was a development Squadron for anti-submarine warfare. Serving in VX1 for two years, James was then sent back to Lakehurst for additional training in the repair and maintenance of high altitude oxygen regulators and systems in jet aircraft.

James received orders to report to the San Diego Naval Station

for assignment to the USS Boxer, CVA 21. James went aboard the Boxer as she was under way, sailing under the golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Getting onboard the Boxer was a task.

"It was 52 feet up to a Jacob's Ladder to the boat boom, from the pilot boat that took me to the ship," Mayfield said. "The Officer of the Deck welcomed me aboard, and I was informed that we were under way to Pearl Harbor for training, then to Japan and on to Korea. The date was January, 1952."

1953-1956

Arriving at Pearl Harbor and getting more personnel from two Fighter Squadron plus F98B Panther Jets and AD1 SKY Raider Attack Planes to provide low level Rocket and Bomb support for combat troops, Boxer sailed to Yokosuka Japan, arriving there in September 1952.

Mayfield said it was a very hectic two weeks at the navy base taking on ammunition, including bombs, rockets and large amounts of food and medical supplies. Boxer got underway for Korea. The ship and her crew were launching jet aircraft and Sky Raiders around the clock.

"There was never a quiet moment that a plane was not landing or taking off," Mayfield said.

With the ship's crew and the squadron personnel plus the marine detachment, there were a



James Mayfield

little over 5,000 men on board. "The mess deck was open 24 hours a day and there was always a line waiting to eat," he said.

Boxer was on station off the Korean coast for almost eight months before returning to Pearl Harbor. Finally there was fresh milk and vegetables waiting on the dock for anyone who wished to eat real state-side food.

"There was liberty for everyone and we were all glad to be going back to San Diego," Mayfield remembers.

Mayfield said that happiness lasted for less than a week when orders arrived for Boxer to return to Korea. The Aircraft Carrier Hancock that relieved Boxer had a massive crash when an F7U jet tried to land, but hit the island structure, caught fire then crashed into all the planes that were parked on the forward section of the ship.

Boxer reloaded all personnel

and aircraft plus more supplies and returned to Japan. After the Korean war was over, Boxer was ordered to leave port for Kobe, Japan.

While underway, aircraft were moved to the flight deck and secured with heavy cables. No one except the ship's officers knew what was going on. Three days later we arrived in Kobe and waited for a troop ship to come along side. A gangway was attached to the troop ship and Boxer. United States Marines moved across the gangway for several hours, until the hangar deck was full. The 1st Marine Division was onboard and Boxer departed homeward to the states.

The first order for the marines was to take a long shower with fresh water. There were over 1,000 Marines sleeping on the hangar deck.

Next, the marines wanted and got all they could eat and they were served any type food they desired. The mess halls were open and operated full strength 24 hours a day.

Boxer's first stop was Naval Station Guam to take on fuel for a high speed run to Pearl Harbor. Most of the Marines got to go ashore for six hours liberty. After not seeing an American woman for nearly a year and not having access to real Jack Daniels Whiskey, the Mayor of Guam ordered

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Mayfield

(Continued from Front)

all Marines to return to the ship three hours after liberty started. He did not want Guam totally destroyed. Every Marine who went ashore came back aboard with at least three bottles of Jack Daniels.

"The only one who complained was the junior officer on the Quarter Deck, who was informed that he was there to watch and not to question what the Marines were bringing back to the ship, Mayfield said.

Refueled, Boxer got underway and steamed at nearly 20 knots for a day until the ship reached Pearl Harbor. After taking on a full load of fuel and crates of pineapples, milk, oranges and other food supplies, Boxer made another high speed run to San Diego. Waiting on the pier at North Island was a troop train to take the Marines back to Camp Pendelton, Calif., for processing and medical treatment as necessary.

Boxer remained in San Diego for 10 days and was then on its way back to Japan again. That tour of duty lasted until early 1957, when Boxer finally docked at North Island Naval Air Station. All together Boxer was away from Home Port for over 21 months.

Mayfield was transferred to Naval Air Station, El Centro, California, Parachute Unit to test experimental parachutes for new types of high altitude aircraft. The new type of parachutes were designed to work with the new types of ejection seats that were being installed in high altitude aircraft.

Mayfield was never scheduled to make an ejection seat jump as there were more experienced jumpers ahead of him. After making over 20 jumps, a hard landing caused by a wind shift and high descent rate resulted in Mayfield fracturing a vertebra in his lower back.

His enlistment was up and James left the US Navy as a Petty Officer 1st Class, and returned to Miami, Fla., his home of record at that time. Working a small construction job on a tug boat towing bridge beams and empty barges was the work Mayfield could do and like. Starting as a deck hand and cook, he advanced to first mate and took the required test to become an Inland Tug Captain. "In 1958 there were a lot of unemployed members of the maritime union out of work, so I had no chance to advance to Captain," Mayfield said.

On December 15, 1958, Mayfield rejoined the US Navy and was sent to VS-39 at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point Rhode Island. Mayfield retained his rate of 1st Class Petty Officer, because of new Navy requirements that said if a 1st Class rejoined the Navy before two years was up, he could retain his rate.

He was assigned to the aircrew division and started flying anti-submarine patrols from the USS ESSEX, CVA9. While flying from the ESSEX, James helped track the first Russian submarine capable of launching a ballistic missile from the tip of Iceland to Bermuda.

The ship then sailed eastward to ports in Spain, Italy and through the Suez Canal to Pakistan, returning back through the Suez Canal and homeward bound for Quonset Point.

Completing his two years of sea duty, Mayfield was sent to VT 22 at the Naval Air Station, Kingsville, Texas. Having extensive training on the repair of high altitude oxygen systems in F98T and F98B jet aircraft, he then became an expert on the maintenance and repair of Martin Baker Ejection Seats. He also became the squadron investigator for the planes that crashed while he was at VT 22.

After one year in VT 22, Marine Captain Bob Hoff, who was

in charge of the Safety Division, asked Mayfield what he would like to do next. Mayfield requested that he be sent to avionics school in Memphis, Tenn. Three days later, he received orders to report to school for Avionics.

Mayfield was frozen in rate for Chief Parachute Rigger since he was number 35 in line to be advanced. After 16 weeks of school and being the senior petty officer in a class of 77 men, most fresh out of high school, Mayfield graduated number three and was given the choice of where he wanted to go next. He chose VP 48 at North Island Naval Air Station. VP48 was a sea plane squadron flying P5M Martin Mariners. He was assigned to flight crew 1 and became very knowledgeable of all maintenance requirements on the P5M.

Also required was a two week course at Survival, Escape, Resistance and Evasion School to prepare him for duty in Viet Nam.

He was advanced to Chief Petty Officer and then was sent to the Phillipine Naval Base at Olongapo for duty with VP 48. Having extensive knowledge of the maintenance of the P5M Aircraft, James was sent to the USS Pine Island Sea Plane Tender Stationed in Camron Bay, Viet Nam, for six months, as maintenance Chief for VP-48 and VP-50 while on the Pine Island.

Returning to San Diego, he was still assigned to VP 48 to phase out the old sea planes and transferred to flying in P3A Lockheed Orion patrols from Moffett Field in San Francisco for six months then to Naval Air Station, Iwakuni Japan for another six months tour flying off the coast of Viet Nam.

Finishing his tour in VP 48, Mayfield was sent to VS 35 flying from the USS Ticonderoga, again off the coast of Viet Nam for two six-month tours in VSS-35.

One special event happened during the last tour. Flying as 1st crewman with the commanding officer of VS-35, the crew of SAF-3E001, logged 127 hours flight time in one month, all occurring at night.

Each flight was 4.5 hours long starting at 12 a.m. and landing at 0430 a.m. All flights were combat patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin, 15 to 30 miles off the coast of North Viet Nam.

The pilots were awarded Air Medals and Mayfield was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal for flying in a combat zone. Mayfield retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer, Anti-Submarine Warfare Specialist.

James Mayfield flew for a total of 2,170 hours from carriers, 600 hours in sea planes and 450 hours in P3A Lockheed Orion's, plus over 500 hours when he was going to transition to SH3A Sea King Sonar Helicopters, but was sent to VS35 instead.

After retiring from the Navy, Mayfield started working for General Dynamics on January 10, 1974 and retired as a senior specialist in charge of the Microfiche Duplicating Systems on his 62nd birthday, January 11, 1962.

He worked in the over seas division and traveled to such places as Paris, France for three months; Frankfurt, Germany; Auckland New Zealand; Melbourne, Australia; Caracas, Venezuela, Taipei, Taiwan and two times to London, England.

His wife kept his suit case ready to go on a moment's notice. Many times he would go to work in San Diego at 8 a.m. and end up on a plane to Germany flying out of Los Angeles at 3 p.m. He still has all his passports as reminders of years long past.

James Mayfield and his wife Edith, formerly Edith Martin, who graduated from Tonkawa High School in the Class of 1948, now live in Johnson City, Texas.

Honoring those who served:

John W. (Bill) McKenzie

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Bill McKenzie

John W. (Bill) McKenzie graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1949. He went one year to Northern Oklahoma Junior College where he met his future wife Verna Kelli.

He enlisted in the National Guard in 1950. He served in Service Battalion 189th FA. Battalion, 45 Infantry Division his entire military career.

The 189th was mobilized in



Bill McKenzie

September 1950 and was stationed at Camp Polk, La., where

they trained and recruited draftees to fill their ranks.

“We shipped out of New Orleans and by way of the Panama Canal and San Francisco arrived in Hokkaido, Japan,” Bill said. He explained that Hokkaido is located on Japan’s northern coast island.

Hokkaido is the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan and served as a key staging area for American troops during the Korean War.

“We trained until December while living in ten-man tents with wooden floors

and one pot belly stove,” he said. “We went to Korea in December 1951 and were stationed just above the 38th Parallel. During the six months I was there, there were no big advances by either side in our sector.”

Bill was married in November 1952 to Verna Kelle and both attended and graduated from Oklahoma A&M.

They have two daughters and two grandchildren. All have college degrees in English.

Bill has been farming and has lived on the same farm north of Blackwell since 1955.

The McKenzie’s are great fans of OSU football and basketball and try to attend most home games.

Honoring those who served:

Robert Leon Thompson, THS Class of 1947

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Robert Leon Thompson

Robert (Bob) Thompson graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1947. He also joined the National Guard that summer.

He attended Northern Oklahoma Junior College for two years, transferred to Oklahoma A & M or Oklahoma State University and graduated in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.

He married his high school sweetheart, Patricia Ann Dittmore, on May 28, 1952. A week later, Uncle Sam came calling.



Robert Leon Thompson

He was drafted into the Army with his two high school buddies, Laverne Laws and Jim Querry. So it was off to Ft. Sill, Okla.

He was with the 6th Armored Division. Later, he was sent to Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., where

he became a small arms weapon instructor. He taught the new recruits about various weapons such as the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), small machine guns, Colt .45 pistols, M1 carbine and several automatic weapons.

His first child was born while stationed in Missouri, Valorie (Thompson) Buss.

After his discharge from the Army in 1954, he joined the Army Ready Reserves until 1960.

Robert moved his family to Enid and went to work for Champlin. He was severely injured in an elevator crash on June 15, 1961. Two men were killed, and he and his friend, Jesse Upp,

were in the hospital for several long months. Robert worked for Champlin for 30 years. He was a draftsman and later was the warehouse foreman. He was their last employee when they closed their doors in Enid for good.

Robert and Pat had three children, Valorie Buss, Steven Thompson, and Eric Thompson. Patricia passed in January 1989 with cancer. He later married RosAnn who passed with cancer in 2010.

Bob has six granddaughters and six great grandkids.

He is looking forward to attending Homecoming this year. He is still living in Enid and loves to come to Tonkawa to visit with his family and friends. If you would like to drop him a card or visit, his address is Golden Oaks #C122, 5801 N. Oakwood Road, Enid, OK 73703.

Honoring those who served:

Dick V. Rogers, Major USAR (Retired)

Editor's Note: *The following feature is the eleventh in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.*

Dick V. Rogers

Korea Veteran

Service Btry., 189th F.A. BN
45th Inf. Division

June 1947 - May 1952 (Initial
Assignment)

By LOREN LAVERNE
LAWS



DICK V. ROGERS

In September of 1947, Dick Rogers withdrew from Tonkawa High School and reported to Fort Sill, Oklahoma with his hometown National Guard unit for training.

During 1948-49, while still active in the National Guard, and realizing how important education was to him and for his future, he attended Northern Oklahoma Junior College in Tonkawa. It wasn't long before his unit mobilized. In 1950 he spent six months at Camp Polk, Louisiana doing basic training.

As a private in 1947, Dick had been assigned to Fort Sam Houston to attend a cook and bakers school. As a result of this training he became a first class mess sergeant responsible

for feeding the troops until he became an officer.

An old WWII "luxury liner" transport ship, the General Simon B. Buckner, transported the soldiers from New Orleans to Hokkiado, Japan, the second largest island in Japan.

They had sailed from New Orleans through the Panama Canal and up to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, where African American troops boarded the ship bound for Korea. There were about 2,500 combat troops on the ship.

Dick's unit was assigned to Hokkiada, Japan from April 1951 to November 1951 as a security force on this northern island of Japan. In November 1951 they sailed to Inchon, Korea and traveled by the destroyed city of Seoul, Korea to north of the 38th parallel.

He recalls it being very cold in Korea at this time of the year. The Army hadn't prepared for this cold weather and it wasn't long before troops were issued insulated boots and warm parkas.

As a private in 1947, Dick had been assigned to Fort Sam Houston to attend a cook and bakers school and as a result of this training he became a first class mess sergeant responsible for feeding the troops.

When his tour in Korea ended, Dick and four other Tonkawa soldiers were eligible to rotate back to the U.S.A. and were transported to Fort Lewis, Washington; Dick and J.W. McMullen then reported back to Oklahoma.

The others were the late Johnny Hill, Charlie Barker and Dwight Burch. J.W. McMullen's article will be published later in these series of articles.

Dick was honorably discharged at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in May 1952; however, in Feb-

ruary 1953 he re-enlisted in the National Guard and was sent to Fort Sill, OK for summer camp. The summer of 1954 his unit did basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, where he was encouraged to take the necessary courses to become a 2nd Lt.

As 2nd Lt. he was assigned to Battery C. 45th Infantry Division in Blackwell. Later, during 1961-62, he was assigned to the 95th Division, Company in Ponca City, Oklahoma.

While in the U.S. Army Reserves Dick earned the rank of Major. It was while in this capacity that he provided leadership to troops headed for active duty in Vietnam.

Dick left high school early yet accomplished so much - PVT 1st Class, Mess Sgt., 2nd Lt, and Major. We are so proud of our Tonkawa classmate.

He spent his working years with Conoco Oil Company in the international logistics division and retired three times, 1985, 1991, and 1994. He and his wife Nikita have traveled to many, many countries and have enjoyed the different cultures they have encountered in their travels. They are enjoying retirement in Willis, Texas and are planning to attend homecoming this September 27-28, 2013.

Honoring those who served:

Bobby Howell, USM 1952-1954

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 12th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Bobby Howell

THS 1948

USM 1952-1954

By **LOREN LAVERNE
LAWS**

As a result of the Korean conflict I was drafted in April 1952 to serve a minimum of two years. I had an option of Marine Corp or Army and selected the Marines. Basic training was at MCRD, San Diego, CA. Upon completion I was assigned to Marine Air Wing and sent to Jacksonville, FL Naval Training Center for eight weeks of classroom exercises. Following this I went to Memphis, TN for a 7-month class. Upon graduation I was assigned to Marine Air Base, El Toro, CA. I spent the remainder of my 2-year service as a radar operator at El Toro.

I returned to Tonkawa and enrolled at NOJC in the fall semester and worked part time at Williams Oil Tool. After two semesters I went to OU and received my Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1957.

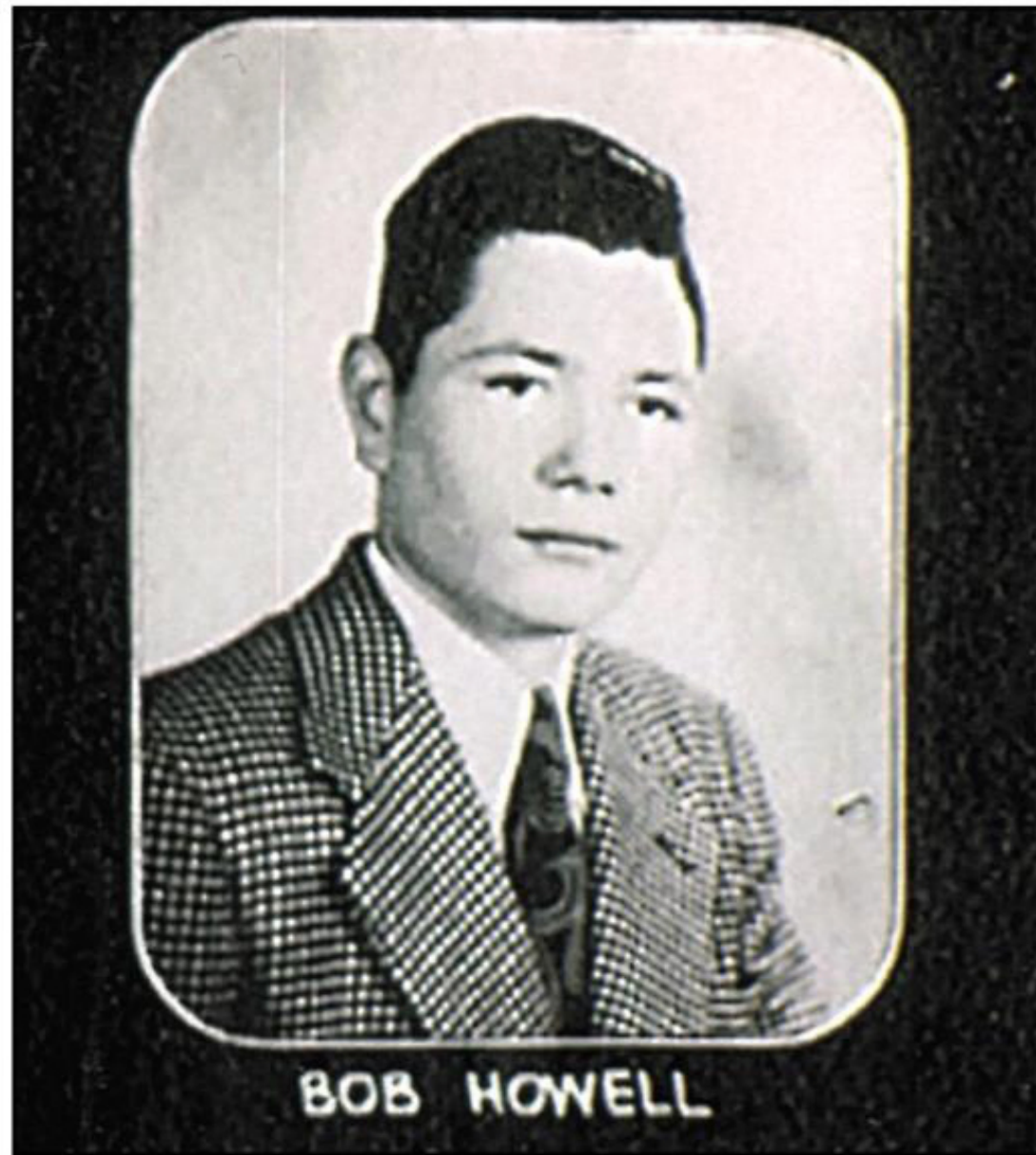
Upon graduation I was hired by IBM in Kingston, NY. I worked in the technical and marketing areas and retired from IBM after 35 years in 1992.

Without question getting drafted had an enormous influence on my life. The training provided me an electronic background and the GI Bill assisted me in obtaining my BSEE and ultimate career at IBM.

This writer's personal copy of 1948-1998 Memories, a 68-page excellent booklet compiled by the late Nelsene Irby Driver for the 50th reunion of THS's Class of '48, describes school activities beginning with the year 1936. It includes a year by year history of school life at Washington Elementary School, and Tonkawa High School, of memorable friendships made, teachers, school events and humorous descriptions of classmates at these schools. It also includes some notes about Bobby that the writer wants to share with readers:

In the 2nd grade Bobby was no longer at Washington, he had transferred to the Marland School District; however, to the delight of his friends he was back in Tonkawa for the 6th grade.

In the summer between 9th and 10th grade Bobby moved again but was happily welcomed back to Tonkawa for 12th grade.



Bobby Howell

Nelsene also wrote: We can't forget about Bobby Howell by all means. He decided that since he started here that he may as well finish here. So we once again saw his shiny gold tooth among us. He has made a name for himself with his red pickup.

Bobby was an outstanding member of our 1947-48 Buc football team; it was the writer's

pleasure to have played with him their senior year.

Bobby will not attend the big celebration at the THS alumni homecoming this year as he and his wife already have plans for a vacation in the New England states.

He and his wife Janice are enjoying retirement in Austin, Texas.

Honoring those who served:

J.W. McMullen

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 13th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

J.W. McMullen

THS 1948

By Loren Laverne Laws

We are indebted to our National Guard buddies Lonnie Bray and Dick Rogers for most of this military history. (All of us were in the Tonkawa High School graduation class of 1948.) Due to health issues, J.W., who resides in an assisted living community in Enid, Oklahoma, was unable to submit his story for publication in *The Tonkawa News*. He will be unable to join us for the 2013 homecoming activities and will be greatly missed.

J.W. joined the local National Guard in Tonkawa, Oklahoma in 1947 and took part in summer camp at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; it was the beginning of his 38 years of service in the Guard.

J.W.'s mechanical work career began when he worked at Jack's Auto Supply while still in high school. A mechanic who worked for Kay County mentored him,

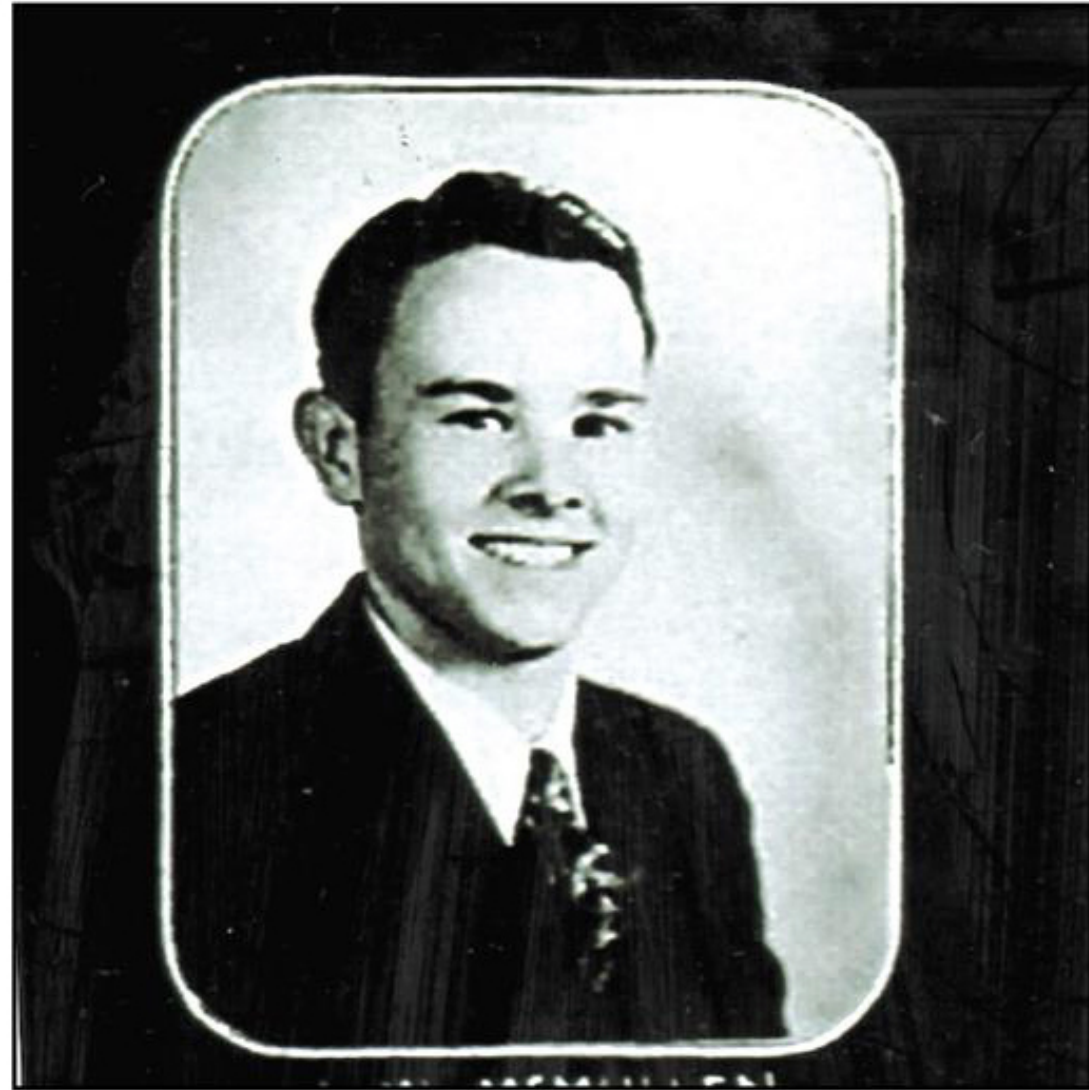
enabling J.W. to take a lot of mechanical experience with him when he joined the Guard. His unit mobilized in 1950 and he next served in summer camp at Camp Polk, Louisiana with his National Guard unit.

After basic training he boarded a troop ship in New Orleans and sailed through the Panama Canal up to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, then on to Japan. In Japan and Korea he served as a Battery Motor Sergeant, making sure, along with his well-trained mechanics, that all vehicles were in working order.

After his tour overseas, J.W. was assigned back to the U.S. From Seattle, Washington he traveled by troop train to Fort Sill, Oklahoma where he was honorably discharged.

After his discharge J.W. secured a job in the oil fields of North Dakota, didn't like the bitter cold weather, and headed back to Tonkawa where he rejoined the National Guard. He was assigned to the State Motor Pool at Enid, Oklahoma, and decided to make the military his career.

As a master sergeant in the 189th Headquarters Battery at Enid, he was in charge of mo-



J.W. McMullen

tor pools in guard units at Alva, Cherokee, Blackwell, Nowata, and Tonkawa. He was responsible for transporting equipment from these units to Norman, Oklahoma, where the equipment was inspected and returned to their home bases. The National Guard gave J.W. a great career... it is said he really liked keeping those Army vehicles running in

top shape.

J.W.'s wife is deceased, and the whereabouts of his son and daughter or other relatives are unknown. We would have enjoyed knowing more about his life and the 38 years of service he gave to this great country of ours. A huge thanks to Lonnie and Dick for helping compile this brief history.

Honoring those who served:

Clovis E. Evans

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 14th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Clovis E. Evans

THS 1948

By Loren Laverne Laws

Recently this writer visited with Clovis by telephone to gather material for this story, including his military service. He related that he and his wife were in the process of moving to Spartanburg, South Carolina where one of their daughters and grandchildren reside. (Another daughter lives in Midland.) For this reason they do not plan to attend Homecoming September 27-28, 2013

I have very fond memories of Clovis - we played football on the same team, and in track he threw the shot-put, I was a high jumper. He reminded me about catching a bus to participate in a track meet in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We paid our own way... we liked competing in different track meets throughout the state and on this particular trip we didn't mind having to pay. On our return trip from Tulsa to Tonkawa, we stopped to see our former coach (Coach Butcher) at Panska, Oklahoma. He had been our coach in 1947 and we were glad to see him again.

Clovis entered THS as a sophomore and both of us graduated in 1948. He motivated and encouraged me, and above all, helped me with my academics. As an athlete, it was highly important that I maintain a good academic record. I will always appreciate his interest in my life.

About the military, Clovis related that after his Guard unit was activated and shipped out to Japan, after a short time in Japan, he learned that he had fulfilled his military obligation and did not have to go on to Korea. He boarded a troop ship and returned to California. This was in the fall of 1951. He then rode a troop train to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and received his honorable discharge there. While in the National Guard he was in charge of the communications department.

For our 50th class reunion in 1998, Clovis wrote a wonderful, personal story for the MEMORIES book, and he has given me permission to use it for this occasion. This is his story:

After graduation, I attended Northern Oklahoma Junior College in Tonkawa. I graduated NOJC in the morning of May 29, 1950 and married Pat Duffy that evening in Tonkawa. I was activated with the Tonkawa Service Btry of the 189th F.A. Bn of the Oklahoma National Guard in late summer of 1950 and went to Camp Polk, LA. The unit shipped out to Japan in early 1951.

I was graduated from Oklahoma A&M College in 1953, majoring in accounting. I went to work for Conoco in routine clerical work, but transferred to Conoco's pipeline division in 1954. This started a saga of moving about the country for about 16 years - Oklahoma, Texas (Wichita Falls, Houston), Kansas, Louisiana (Lake Charles, Grand Isle), Indiana, Washington, Wyoming, Montana. Two beautiful little daughters were born during repeat trips to Ponca City. I left Conoco in 1969 at Lake Charles and joined Navajo Refining Com-



Clovis E. Evans

pany at Artesia, NM. I served as Director of Special Projects and Risk Management for many years. Retired in the summer of 1993. Pat and I have done a good deal of traveling both before and after retirement which we really enjoy. Along the way we have been blessed with five lovely granddaughters, two of which will be Seniors next year. I have been very active in various civic organizations, some political party work and much work for the Lord in His church. I have worked with young people a lot in both civic and church related activities. I had a minor heart attack in 1988 and then had a quadruple by-pass in 1996. I walk

a lot now and exercise, so feel pretty good most of the time. I am presently active in volunteer work with Sr. Citizen groups, the Kiwanis Club, our church and many home projects. We also enjoy a mountain cabin in Cloudcroft, NM, especially in the summertime. We (if the Lord wills) will celebrate our 50th anniversary in May 2000.

In this year of 2013 Clovis and wife Pat are in their 63rd year of marriage, they have had quite a life! We will miss our classmate at this year's homecoming and wish for Clovis and Pat a joyous life in Spartanburg.

Honoring those who served:

E.E. "Gene" Wheeler

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 15th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

"Gene" Wheeler

Age 14,

U.S. Army Air Forces

By Loren Laverne Laws

I was born near Drumright, Oklahoma on August 25, 1931, but I was raised in the small town of Tonkawa, Oklahoma (population 3,000). I had great parents and a good home life. However, when I was in the seventh grade I became bored with school and, since I was larger and I thought, more mature than my classmates, I started to associate with the 17 and 18 year olds. When some of them got married and others enlisted in the military, I felt that I was losing all of my friends, so I decided that I would enlist the next time some of my friends enlisted.

There were five of us wanting to enlist, so we went to a recruiting office. The Navy recruiter wanted to know what we were doing at the present time. It was February and three of us were still in school; two were seniors and I was in the ninth grade. He told us to stay in school and come back in June.

This wasn't what we wanted, so we started to plan our next move. About that time some Army recruiters came to town, so we got together and went to see them. When a recruiter asked what we were doing, we all said that we were out of school and ready to go, so he started the paperwork. Of the five of us, two were 18, two were 17, and I was

14, but I said that I was 17. The recruiter told us that we would take our physicals on the 25th of March and those of us who were 17 would have to get our parents' consent. I knew that my parents wouldn't sign for me, so I did some fast thinking and told the recruiter that I would be 18 on March 21. He told me to go to the draft board and register, then take my draft card to Oklahoma City when we went for our physicals.

On March 21, 1946, I went to the Selective Service office to register. I puffed up my chest and went in. A lady asked if she could help me and I told her I needed to register. She asked, "When is your birthday?" I replied, "Today." She filled out the papers and gave me my draft card.

The five of us went to Oklahoma City and we all passed our physicals. We were sworn in at 5:00 p.m. on March 26, 1946. I was exactly 14 years and 7 months old.

We were put on buses and arrived at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas at midnight. The next day they processed us, giving us uniforms, shots, tests, etc. Then the split-up started. Three of us had signed up for three years and two had signed up for eighteen months. The three year enlistees were assigned to the Army Air Forces and the other two went to the artillery.

On my fourth day in uniform I was assigned to guard a work detail of four German prisoners of war while they picked up trash on a portion of the base. I was given a carbine but no ammunition. The war was over and the prisoners were only waiting to go home. But how was I to know what was going on?

Soon we were off to Sheppard Field, Texas for basic training. During basic, there were six



E.E. "Gene" Wheeler

trainees in my flight who were underage. About three weeks into our training our commander told us that he knew that some of us were underage, but if we didn't cause any problems, it would be all right. I was the youngest of the six and the only one to finish basic.

My parents found out where I was when the Army mailed my civilian clothes home. My mother went to the school superintendent for advice on how to get me out of the Army. He suggested that she consider leaving me where I was. He told her he

couldn't keep me in school and perhaps it was the best that I stay in the Army. She agreed.

After basic I went to Lowry Field, Colorado for typing school and then to Shaw Field, South Carolina for training to become a medic. When the Air Force became a separate branch in September 1947, I had to choose between the Army and the Air Force. I didn't know why, but I decided to remain in the Army. Since I was on an Air Force base, they assigned me to SCARWAF (Special Category, Army with Air

(See VET Page 8)

VET...
(Continued from Page One)

Force). There were several of us in this category. We kept the same job except we were Army attached to the Air Force for pay, duty and rations.

While I was at Shaw Field in early 1947, I got a pass and went to town on a date with a girl that I had met. We went to the movies and I was walking her home when a police car pulled up beside us. They put us in the car, took my friend home, and took me to jail. I was charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The girl was 17 and we were out after curfew.

The next morning my commanding officer, who was also the hospital commander, came to the jail. When he was told what the charge was, I could hear him laughing. He told the police that they had the wrong one locked up. He knew that I was only 15. The charges were dropped, but every time the commander saw me going to town he told me to leave the young ones alone.

I attended surgical technician school at Fort Sam Houston, Texas and extended my enlistment two years so that I could go overseas. I spent a year at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, then returned to Lowry Air Force Base. I was still SCARWAF. When the Korean War started I returned to the regular Army and was sent to Fort Hood, Texas with the 2nd Armored Division. At this time my enlistment was extended one year, the so-called "Truman year." I had nine months left on my enlistment when our division was sent to Germany. After eight months there I returned to the States. I was discharged in March 1952 with six years service and two overseas tours. I was 20 years old.

My parents had relocated to Enid, Oklahoma so when I received my discharge at Fort Sill, I went 100 miles north to Enid. About the only jobs available were as a service station attendant or at the post office. Both of those possibilities sounded very boring so I went to Vance Air Force Base and talked to the base hospital commander with whom I had worked at Lowry Air Force Base. When I told him I was looking for work he called the base recruiting office and told them he was sending me over to them and that he wanted me assigned to him. So, after sixty-five days as a civilian I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.

When my tour of duty was up at Vance AFB, I was transferred to the 529th USAF Infirmary, Paine AFB, Washington. I didn't care for Washington so I put in for overseas duty and in February 1956 I was sent to the 918th AC&W Squadron, Baldy Hughes Air Force Station, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. When I arrived it was 40 below zero and the snow was seven feet deep. The road to the base looked like a toboggan run. That was the best assignment of my career. I was the senior medical technician and with my assistant, we took care of the medical needs of 165 military and 200-plus dependents.

In May 1958, I was transferred to the 325th USAF Hospital at Richard-Gebaur AFB, Missouri where I worked in the emergency room. In December 1960, I was sent TDY to Gunter AFB, Alabama to a medical school for independent duty. It was a very difficult course, one which I should have had before I went to Canada. After completing the course I returned to Richards-Gebaur AFB.

In August 1960, I went to the 731st AC&W Squadron, Sundance AFS, Wyoming. This was another great assignment. Sundance was an experimental base whose sole purpose was to determine the feasibility of powering a radar base with nuclear energy. We had Army, Navy and Air Force personnel on the base. In addition to providing medical service, we collected water, soil and vegetation samples each month to test for radiation leaks. We monitored the film badge program for all nuclear technicians. The experiment was a success; a 20-pound core provided power to the base for over two years.

In December 1962, I went overseas again, this time to a Greek Air Force Base at Tanagra, Greece. We were assigned the duty of safeguarding, maintaining and loading nuclear weapons on Greek aircraft in the event of a NATO emergency. In addition to operating the dispensary, I was the first sergeant, motor pool MCOIC and I also ran the past exchange.

I went to my last duty station, Amarillo AFB, Texas in January 1964. It was here that I finally had my records changed to my correct age. I worked at the 3320th USAF Hospital handling student sick call and the emergency room. I retired on June 30, 1966 with the rank of technical sergeant at the age of 34 years and 10 months.

Gene Wheeler, ten days after retiring from the Air Force, went to work for a large non-profit group that operated hospitals. He worked as a hospital administrator in Worland and Sundance, Wyoming, then went to Soldotna, Alaska where he was in charge of a hospital from the construction phase through its opening. He also worked as a hospital administrator in Crawford, Nebraska and Hugoton, Kansas. He sold insurance in Washington State for a time, went to the beach in Florida, then back to Alaska where he worked in real estate for six years. Gene and Anna, his wife of 42 years, bought a condo in St. Marie, Montana which they use as a home port while touring the country in a motor home. Gene and Anna have maintained their Alaska residency and plan to retire to their cabin on the Kenai Peninsula in a few years.

Honoring those who served:

Jimmy B. Schatz and Harry Vines

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 16th and 17th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Jimmy B. Schatz

THS 1952

Corporal Jimmy B. Schatz graduated from Tonkawa High School Class of 1952. Served in the Army in the 8th 22nd Engineer Aviation Battalion in 1953-1954. He served in Taegu and Nakton, Korea and in Guam, where he operated heavy construction equipment building air strips.

He came back to Tonkawa where he worked at Valley Lumber Co. He moved to Chelsea, OK in 1970 where he owned and operated Chelsea Lumber Company. He has two children and five grandchildren.

Harry Vines

THS 1953

Vines served three tours of duty during two separate wars, Korea and Viet Nam.

He was born in Rural Marland, where he attended school early in his life. He later moved and

attended high school in Vallejo, California. He later returned to Oklahoma and graduated from Tonkawa High School and was a member of the 1952 state championship football team. He took military leave from school and was mobilized with the 45th Division during the Korean War when he was only 17 years old. He returned to Tonkawa after his duty was complete in Korea and graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1953.

Vines attended Northern Oklahoma College for a time, but left college and pursued work in the oil fields of Kansas.

Vines re-enlisted in the Army that spring at Fort McClellan in Alabama and proceeded with his military career as an S-2 Intelligence NCO.

Master Sergeant Vines completed 23 years of service to this country and later entered private business.

During two tours of duty in Viet Nam, Vines served with Colonel Hal Moore as S-2 in the second wave of the battle in the Ia Drang Valley. The battle is familiar to those who have seen the 2002 Mel Gibson film "We Were Soldiers" based on the book "We Were Soldiers Once and Young" by the Lt. General Harold G.



Jimmy B. Schatz

Moore, retired, and war correspondent Joseph L. Galloway.

The significance of the battle in Ia Drang Valley in 1965 changed the way America fought war. Col.

Moore led the first American soldiers known as Air Cav units. Infantry soldiers who fly into battle on helicopters to their destinations.

Honoring those who served:

Billy Ray Noles

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 18th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Billy Ray Noles THS 1944

By daughters Kevin Ditmore
and Erin Burns

Billy "Bill" Ray Noles was born October 17, 1926 in Three Sands, OK, but moved with his family to Tonkawa at an early age attending Tonkawa public schools, from grade school through graduation. On May 15, 1944, just a few days following graduation, he enlisted in the United State Marine Corps.

Although under-age, Dad and his good friend, Bob Blubaugh, talked their way through the recruitment process and five months before his 18th birthday, they were headed for basic training. Dad spent his service with the Marine's in the Pacific Theatre and served in action at Okinawa Ryukyu Islands, and in the occupation of China. He achieved the rank of Sergeant and was honorably discharged on August 21, 1946.

Upon his return to Tonkawa, Dad completed two years at Northern Oklahoma Junior College. During this time he enlisted in the Army National Guard. He

was ordered into active military service during the Korean Conflict on September 1, 1950. From Tonkawa he was sent to Ft. Pike, LA, shipping out of New Orleans, thru the Panama Canal to San Francisco for a 26 day trip aboard ship to the island of Hokkaido, Japan. He was assigned as a First Sergeant, and received distinction as a sharp shooter. He was honorably discharged on September 29, 1951, when he then returned home to Tonkawa.

He married our Mom, Maxine Stone, on July 28, 1950, and together they raised three daughters, Jan, Kevin, Erin. Dad worked with his father, Tom, at Noles Appliance and Furniture Store, and later worked for Brookhart Motors in Tonkawa. Except for this time in the service and a short time working in Locust Grove, OK and El Dorado, KS in accounting capacities, Dad was a life-long Tonkawa resident. In 1965, he and Dick McKenzie formed a partnership known as McKenzie-Noles Insurance Agency. He retired in 1981 but remained active in several operational areas of the business. He was involved in many Tonkawa civic and social organizations, and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He loved Tonkawa and enjoyed investing his time in the community.

Dad had an amazing sense of humor and was always ready to share a story or a joke. He loved spending time with his family



Billy Ray Noles

and friends, especially at their home on Lake Hudson. He spent hours taking us water skiing and tried not to lose his patience in teaching us to load and unload the boat. He took every opportunity to fish or play golf and could be ready at a moments notice.

Dad's nickname was "Nails", as he had a reputation for being tough, but fair. He believed that if you were going to do something, do it right. He stood up for what he believed in and always encouraged others to do the same. He talked often of the many life-long friendships he made during the war and how special they were to him.

Our Dad was extremely proud of being a Marine and a member of the Army National Guard, but, as with most veterans, was reluctant to talk about the atrocities of war with his family. Most of what he saw in combat was buried with him when he passed away in August of 1997. We are grateful to Ret. Col. Lonnie Bray of Tonkawa for his help in researching Dad's service history. We are very proud of our Dad and what he stood for. We are also grateful to all those who serve their country, past and present.

**ATTEND CHURCH
SUNDAY**

Honoring those who served:

Richard S. Cross

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 19th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Richard S. Cross THS 1953

by **RICHARD S. CROSS**

I was born two miles south of Tonkawa and raised in the Tonkawa, Blackwell and Ponca City ar-

reas and graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1953. On my 18th birthday I was called up with the 45th Infantry Division, SV. Btry., 189th F.A. BN. (Tonkawa Unit) and was in Korea.

I attended Junior College in Miami, OK where I met my wife, Anna, of 58 years and finished college in Pittsburg, KS. My job took me to Russell, KS and in 1980 I purchased a retail store and grew it to five stores and a rental housing business. I have served on the Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Pride, Main Street, Gideons and 1st Southern Baptist Church and Rotary.



Richard S. Cross

Honoring those who served:

Gordon A. Miller

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 20th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Gordon A. Miller Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

By Loren Laverne Laws

Like many others from our hometown, Gordon Miller joined the National Guard's Service Battery, 189th Field Artillery Battalion, 45th Infantry Division. His position as a mechanic helped keep the vehicles in good running order - kept the wheels rolling, he said. One of his buddies in the motor pool was J.W. McMullen (J.W.'s article was published in The Tonkawa News August 26, 2013).

Like many young men from Tonkawa, Gordon dropped out of high school to join the National Guard. When his unit mobilized, he, too, did his basic training in Camp Polk, Louisiana.

When he returned to the States from Korea a troop train took him from California to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he received his honorable discharge. Soon after his discharge he married Zelda Willerton on June 14, 1952 in Perry, Oklahoma.

Gordon said it was 40 years before he earned his high school diploma. Not only that, he went

on to receive an associate degree from Amarillo Junior College. This degree was required in order for him to secure a job with a gas company in Pampa, Texas, a job he kept for 25 years.

Our telephone visit of September 14, 2013 revealed some surprises and brought back good memories. As it turns out, this writer went to school at Three Sands and Tonkawa with his wife Zelda and her siblings Calvin, Phyllis, Margaret and Roy Willerton. They were a wonderful family. And Gordon's brother, Francis Miller, was like a brother to my older brother, the late Lester Laws. Lester, Francis and I played many backyard basketball games together.

Gordon's expertise as a mechanic in the National Guard enabled him to get good jobs in civilian life. After his discharge he worked as a mechanic for a Chevrolet company in Tonkawa and later moved to Pampa, Texas. Gordon worked there 15 years for the Culberson Chevrolet Company. His last employment was with the Natural Gas & Pipeline of Amarillo, Texas, a tenure he held for 25 years. During all these years he also farmed and raised cattle.

Gordon shared that in recent years he has experienced some sad times due to the death of his wife Zelda on December 10, 2010. (Six children were born to the marriage, including two sets of twins!)

It is unfortunate that due to



Gordon A. Miller

health issues, including an eyesight problem, Gordon wasn't able to attend this year's Homecoming. He advised he can be contacted at 11897 County Road, Pampa, Texas 79065-1620, Phone No. 806-669-7172.

Gordon reminded me that his brother Charles Miller graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1954 and played on the Tonkawa back-to-back state champ football team. Charles resides in Pampa.

Even though Gordon dropped out of high school, he had a successful career. As mentioned above, he received his high school diploma 40 years later and he didn't stop there, he was determined to get his associate degree and did.

Know that you will be missed at Homecoming, Gordon, and receive our heartfelt gratitude for your service to our great country.

Honoring those who served:

George Jay White

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 21st in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

George Jay White Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

The verification of Military Service George Jay White shows November 12, 1952 to October 22, 1954.

Honorable Release, Last Grade: Corporal (Spec 4.)

Korean War - Army @ Wiesbaden Air Base - Army Airfield (63rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion) Company Headquarters Group, Radar Section

He went to radar school to learn the new transistorized radar (M-33 is the U.S. Army number) in Karlsruhe, Germany. He was a radar technician.

He moved to Tonkawa in 1944 and started playing football in 5th grade. He started playing football for the high school in 8th grade. He was Captain of the football team his junior year. White graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1951 and went in the service in November 1952. White went to Lawton, El Paso ... then White Sands, New Mexico ... and then Germany (2 places in Germany:

Weisbaden and Karlsruhe)

He married Quenetta Sue Williamson in August, 1955 at First Christian Church in Tonkawa

White was a firefighter in Ka-hoan Pass, California,

He worked as farm laborer in the summers, worked at the Valley Lumber Yard (based in Tonkawa). and delivered the Tonkawa newspaper

White delivered the Daily Oklahoman in Tonkawa with Laverne Laws (also a Korean War vet).

He was a lifeguard at the Tonkawa swimming pool. Leland Paul Blackwell (retired Army Major died in 2011) was over the swimming pool and he also reinlisted in the U.S. Army and was cadre over in leadership school in El Paso where White attended. Blackwell recommended White for leadership school in the 8th army. He liked Leland a lot. His daughter Annette remembers her Dad talking about babysitting Leland's son Ed, which caused him to babysit many more children of the officer's group that was attending Texas Western. They called him a "tomato head" which showed he was in charge of the gun range and could fire the 90 mm cannon, small arms and even throw hand grenades

White built the radio station in Okmulgee (after U.S. Army and marriage) and was the broadcast engineer there (this was a second



George Jay White

job concurrent with his teaching career -- to help pay for kids guess having 4 kids was expensive.)

White graduated from North-ern Oklahoma College and Oklahoma State University.

His profession was a professor teaching Electronics and Elec-

tricity.

Upon retirement and getting the last kid out of the house (there were 4), the Whites are now winter Texans, living summers in Edmond.

**ATTEND CHURCH
SUNDAY**

Honoring those who served:

Donald Olmstead

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 22nd in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Donald Olmstead Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

SGM Donald Olmstead was born in Tonkawa, OK and attended local schools before joining the Army in 1950. Prior to joining the US Army he was a member of the local National Guard Unit. He was discharged from the Army in 1950 for being underage. Three months later, still under age, he went on active duty status.

After completing basic training at Camp Carson, Colorado, SGM Olmstead was sent to Korea. His first assignment was a bar with L Company, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Through the efforts of Jerry Weeks and his company commander, SGM Olmstead was able to visit the Guard Unit from Tonkawa when they arrived in Korea.

When SGM Olmstead's unit was pulled out of Korea and sent to Japan for retraining, he volunteered to return to Korea hoping to be assigned to the Tonkawa Unit. However, he was assigned

to the 2nd Infantry Division, G Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment. During the heavy fighting in July 1952, as a squad leader, his unit took Old Baldy. The next day the Chinese retook it. When his unit was overrun, SGM Olmstead and one other man from his platoon were the only persons left from their platoon sector. Both were wounded and were rescued when the French Battalion retook Old Baldy.

After recuperating in military hospitals, SGM Olmstead returned to the states and spent the next 30 years in the US Army. During that time he served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War.

During SGM Olmstead's first tour he served as a five man Ranger Team assigned to the Vietnamese 23rd Ranger Battalion. His second tour he was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division as 1st Sgt of B Co. 2nd of the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion. At present he is the Honorary Command Sergeant Major of the active duty unit now serving in Afghanistan. His duties include any assistance to the rear detachment in Fort Knox, Kentucky, visiting wounded in hospitals, and attending funerals for those who gave all.

Throughout his 30 year Army career, SGM Olmstead has received 31 decorations and awards including: The Combat Infantry Badge 2nd Award; Legion of



Donald Olmstead reads *The Tonkawa News* near the Cambodian border.

Merit; Bronze Star with V Device, awarded 5 times; Purple Heart; and Army Commendation Medal, awarded 3 times. His Foreign Awards include: RVN Gallantry Cross, RVN Honor Medal First Class, and RVN Ranger Badge.

SGM Olmstead moved to Las Vegas, NV in 1985 where he worked for Clark County Social

Services until retirement. He still resides in Las Vegas, NV with his wife, Tammy. He is currently owner of Olmstead Towing in Las Vegas, NV. He does not actively participate in the business, as he has turned it over to one of his sons.

**ATTEND CHURCH
SUNDAY**

Honoring those who served:

Jack Kendall

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 23rd in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Jack Kendall

**U.S. Air Force 1952-1956
Honoring Those Who Served
in the Korean Conflict**

By Loren Laverne Laws

This outstanding ex-airman and the writer graduated from Tonkawa High School in May 1948. Jack was a star track quarter miler in the 440 yard dash and my teammate in football and track.

We also were cheerleaders for each other at the May 1948 state track meet in Norman, Oklahoma. Jack ran a smart race and placed third. He encouraged me to do well in the high jump, and it must have worked - I took home first place. We were the only members of our track team to qualify for participation in the state meet. Sixty-five years later, we are still trying to remember how we traveled to the big meet! We were our own coaches. There was no money in the THS track budget, which meant we had to pay our own expenses. It was worth the experience because we took home two track medals.

Jack attended Northern Okla-

homa College for one and a half years. After this he worked in the oil fields in Montana and Colorado until January 1952. By this time he was about to be drafted by Uncle Sam; he joined the Air Force for four years VS the Army for two years - a smart decision. In 1960, Jack received his college degree from Central State College in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Jack and his wife Felicia, who reside in Spokane, Washington, did not attend the 2013 homecoming because they were traveling in Germany, her native country.

I missed Jack at last month's reunion but have visited with him through the years at homecoming; in fact, he roasted me when I was honored at the 2006 homecoming and he did a fantastic job.

In the 1942-43 school year, the 7th grade students from Washington Elementary and those from Central Elementary were housed in the THS building. Thus in time Jack and I became classmates.

Following is a quote from the 1948-1998 MEMORIES booklet compiled by the late Nelsene Irby Driver for the 50th reunion of THS's Class of '48:

HOMEcoming

We remember Miss Waters for her beautiful blue eyes and also for a paddle she warmed every evening, especially on Jack Kendall and Bobby Howell. Those boys seemed to never get enough of the paddle persuasion.



Jack Kendall

Remember your Class Will, Jack? Jack Kendall wills his big mouth to Lawrence Mills; his ability to get in trouble to Raymond Gravel; and his ability to feed the girls a line to any girl that's silly enough to fall for it; and wills Bonnie Anderson to David Gayer.

Jack Kendall and Bobby Howell's Class Prophecy:

Jack and Bobby are traveling back and forth between Tonka-

wa and Ponca City. They have worn out numerous cars, but that makes no difference because Jack is part owner of Wetmore's and is extremely wealthy. Bob is still talking about the good times.

Jack was an air traffic controller during his Air Force days. After he received his honorable discharge he journeyed into the business world as a financial advisor and stock broker.

Honoring those who served:

Danny Blubaugh

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 24th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Danny Blubaugh Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

By Loren Laverne Laws

Danny Blubaugh - a fighting Buccaneer and a brave Marine

Danny graduated from THS in 1947. He was selected as an all-state guard in football.

He was a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps and was killed in action in Korea 1952.

Danny was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal.

Until 1998, the Blubaugh family never really knew much about Danny's military service. Then a friend and fellow Marine, Ron McKinney, wrote the following on August 31, 1998:

"Danny was a member of Recon Platoon, H&S Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division. His rank was Corporal (E-3) at the time of his death. Being a member of the same squad, Sgt. William Mason's and fellow Oklahoman, it was my sad duty to carry severely wounded Danny from his fighting hole on Bunker Hill down to the aid station, where he expired while saying his act of contrition. Our heroic Corpsman, Michael Roberts, who did all he could for Danny that day, passed away in Cleveland, Ohio on 21 July, 1998 (of cancer). Former Sgt. William Mason, who named one of his sons after Danny, attended the funeral of "Big Mike Roberts."

On Aug. 28, 2000, McKinney, of Seminole, Fla. wrote the following about Danny Blubaugh:

"I was the only one with him, I had one end of the stretcher carrying him off the hill to the CP which was also our aid station. He and John Miller and another person whose name eludes me were all wounded simultaneously during an artillery and mortar barrage on our sector of the Howe Company, 3rd Battalion, First Marine's perimeter on Bunker Hill (Hill 122). We were the remnants of the Recon Platoon and under the command of Staff Sergeant William "Mace" Mason sent up with Howe Company as reinforcements.

"This happened on this date in 1952, yet it has never left my mind. After a night of exceptionally heavy artillery and mortar bombardment by the Chinese, we were in the act of filling sandbags to repair our covered fighting holes. The man on the other end of Danny's stretcher was Joe Caid of the Recon Platoon, H&S Company, 3rd Bn., 1st Marines. In point of fact, John Miller, whose chest was split open from one arm pit to the other, appeared at first to be the most seriously wounded and was evacuated first. He survived somehow, and we later received a note from him written in a Stateside hospital. Danny, who was on top of his bunker, laying sandbags at the time he was hit, insisted that John, his bunker mate, be carried down first. It wasn't until we put Danny on the stretcher that we realized just how gravely he was wounded. Although he must have been in serious pain, Danny toughed it out. He had his "Green Scapular Medal" on a thong around his neck. He took it out of



Danny Blubaugh

his blouse and was reading it and reciting "Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us now and in the hour of our death." I have never been in a church since that day without reliving those few minutes before Danny died.

I have spoken to Danny's younger brother on the phone. When I spoke to Ronnie Blubaugh in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, something which had bothered me for many years came to mind.

"Having enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 16, a beardless lad, I felt that the use of the diminutive of my given name was an insult. Danny, however, persisted in calling me "Ronnie",

even after I had asked him to quit. The fact that we were both from Oklahoma (I'm from Marlow, but was raised in California) and the fact that Danny outranked me, were the reasons I tolerated that situation. Perhaps the knowledge that Danny could whip my ass, as he demonstrated during our training for the Recon Platoon, also influenced me. Danny, less a "friend," and more like an older brother (something I'd never had until I joined the Recon Platoon). He was a cool head, and a damned tough Marine whom I respected and admired."

**ATTEND CHURCH
SUNDAY**

Honoring those who served:

Thomas Henry Heath

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 25th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Thomas Henry Heath

Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

TONKAWA WAR HERO BURIED IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

1st Lt. Thomas Henry Heath Korean War Casualty, September 21, 1951, Heartbreak Ridge

By Loren Laverne Laws written for Veterans Day, November 11, 2013

This is the last of several articles written for The Tonkawa News about our Korea veterans. Lt. Heath was the first of two soldiers from Tonkawa to be killed in action in Korea. The second, Cpl. Daniel Lee Blubaugh, was killed on Bunker Hill on August 29, 1952.

I had the pleasure of sitting at the same table with Richard Cross, Lt. Heath's nephew, and his lovely wife Anna, at the Distinguished Alumni Banquet in Tonkawa on Saturday, September 23, 2013. They put me in contact with Major Ed Cross, another of Lt. Heath's nephews, who provided me with some of the following history.

Lt. Heath was a Tonkawa High School football star on the 1938 BUC football team. His coach was the late Adrian Vincent. (Coach Vincent, a wonderful educator, was also this writer's 7th grade football coach and teacher.) After high school, Heath played

football at Northern Oklahoma Junior College in 1940. His coach was the late Bois d'Arc Beames. (Coach Beames' son Bob Beames was the first football player to make all state in 1941 and played football for Oklahoma A&M.)

After completing junior college, Heath joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to the special force, the Rangers. They were trained to go behind enemy lines to gather enemy information, and to help clear the way for friendly forces to advance. Lt. Heath earned the Silver Star Medal in the Battle of the Bulge when he and another trooper made a two-man patrol behind enemy German lines. In a 24-hour patrol they not only obtained the required enemy information but captured a German soldier and returned to their friendly troops.

Lt. Thomas also served in World War II in the European Theater, first seeing action on the Normandy Beachhead. He earned his commission in the field serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in WWII. This battlefield promotion, an advancement in military rank that occurs while deployed in combat, advanced Heath to First Lieutenant.

For his valor at Normandy Beach, Heath received the Bronze Star Medal. The Bronze Star Medal is the 4th highest individual military award and the ninth-highest by order of precedence in the U.S. military. It may be awarded for acts of heroism, acts of merit, or meritorious service in a combat zone.

Lt. Heath took his WWII experiences into the Korean Conflict February 15, 1951. He was wounded in Korea and received the Purple Heart and was on a rehabilitation program two months. After completing rehab he was given two choices regarding his military assignment. One choice was to serve 23 months



1st Lt. Thomas Henry Heath

in the occupation of Japan, and the second option was to return to the Korean Conflict for three months. Lt. Heath returned to the Korean War Zone on May 3, 1951. Sadly he was killed in action September 21, 1951 while fighting the enemy in the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge.

The Battle of Heartbreak was a month-long battle in the Korean War which took place between September 13 - October 15, 1951. In the book, *Rangers in Korea*, written by Robert W. Black, Pages 74-75 highlight the leadership of Lt. Heath in the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge.

If anyone reading this article wishes to help honor the memory of this local hero, contact Laverne Laws at 2408 W Five Mile Parkway, Dallas, TX 75233, 214-337-4918, Email: lawssmith@sbcglobal.net. Suggestions may

include:

1. A scholarship in Lt. Heath's name via Tonkawa High School

2. Military history of Lt. Heath placed in the Tonkawa Historical Museum

3. This article placed in the Tonkawa High School website

Here is a touching program quote from a Korea Veterans Day parade that the writer attended:

although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance be as lasting as the land they honored.

-- Daniel Webster

SOURCES

Richard and Anna Cross
Major Ed Cross

The Tonkawa News (poignant, undated article, Tom Heath Is Killed In Korea)

Honoring those who served:

Ivan LeRoy Shorter

Editor's Note: The following feature is the 26th in a series of profiles that will honor the Korean War era veterans from Tonkawa. The bulk of the work and research was completed by Mike Schatz and Laverne Laws.

Ivan LeRoy Shorter

Honoring Those Who Served in the Korean Conflict

LeRoy joined the 45 National Guards in the summer of 1950, when he was 18. In September they mobilized. Instead of attending Tonkawa High School he went to basic training at Camp Poke in Leesville, LA. Service Battery 189th Field Artillery Battalion West to Japan and then to Korea. He was a truck driver and cook. He completed his high

school education during his service and received his diploma from Tonkawa High School. He returned to the states in June of 1952 and received honorable discharge from active duty, but remained in National Guards until 1954.

Married Maxine Brown in 1953 and moved to Bartlesville, OK. He farmed and was a Barber until 1964. At that time he was employed by the United States Postal Service as a letter carrier for the next 25 years. They had two children. LeRoy was very patriotic and proud to have served his country. He talked very little about the war, but did say that was the hardest two years of his life, being away from family and home.

He died with cancer in 1989 at 57 years old.

He was a good husband, dad



Ivan LeRoy Shorter

and much loved papa to five grandchildren.