

Doyle Baker is Veteran of the Month

Doyle Baker, Stigler, Okla. (District 5), is the Choctaw Nation Veteran of the Month.

Baker attended Stigler Public Schools through 10th grade and graduated from McCurtain High School in 1965. He married his wife, Sue, that same year and entered the workforce as a welder's helper in Tulsa. During his employment with the National Tank Company, he received draft papers. On Dec. 6, 1966, Baker was sworn in for service in Oklahoma City with orders for Fort Bliss, Texas where he completed basic training. He was sent to Fort Polk, LA and was to complete Advanced Infantry Training and Non-Commissioned Officer school. Because the Vietnam War grew more intense, his NCO was cancelled, and he was ordered to the state of Washington in preparation for the Vietnam War.

In June 1967, Baker was sent to serve in Vietnam. He was assigned to Delta Company, Second Battalion, 16th Infantry, First Infantry Division, the first unit to enter Vietnam. While serving as an infantry soldier, Specialist Baker's assignments were to search and rescue, secure landing zones, and regularly conduct ambushes on the Vietcong. In Nov. 1967, SPC Baker and Lima platoon were headed out on patrol with a lead vehicle, a tank, that held nine men from the platoon. The lead vehicle hit a land mine, and SPC Baker and another soldier, who were on the second vehicle, were the only survivors.

Sergeant Baker and his company were caught in the middle of the Tet offensive in February 1968.

Sgt. Baker completed his deployment June 30, 1968, and landed in Oakland, Calif. on July 1. On July 3, 1968, Sgt. Baker was awarded the Bronze Star for service in Vietnam. He received 30 days leave and then given orders to report to Fort Leonard Wood, Miss. where his assignment was to train troops in Individual Tactical Training (ITT). Due to his knowledge of conflict in Vietnam and conflicting outdated strategies from WWII, Sgt. Baker rewrote the training objectives. He completed his duty to the Army on Dec. 5, 1968.

He was then called into ministry. Pastor and Mrs. Baker began their ministry in 1970 and have served for 53 years. Forty-two of those years have been with the Garden Heights Freewill Baptist Church.

The Bakers have one daughter, Dana, three granddaughters, one great-granddaughter, one great-grandson, and a great-granddaughter to be born in February.

The Choctaw Nation holds our Veterans in the highest esteem and appreciates the sacrifices and contributions they have made to preserve our freedoms and the way of life we hold dear.