

Information from Biskinik August 2022 issue

Harrison is July Veteran of the Month

Choctaw Nation's July Veteran of the Month is Willard Harrison.

Harrison was born and raised in Atoka, Oklahoma, and graduated from Atoka High School in 1967. On January 16, 1968, he left Oklahoma and went to MCRD San Diego. He volunteered to join during the draft period. Harrison served one year of active duty as an 0311 rifleman and did one deployment from June 1968 to July 1969. In May 1969, he was injured by shrapnel and awarded the Purple Heart and Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V for actions while deployed in Vietnam as Lance Corporal Squad leader. He returned from the hospital with the rank of Corporal.

He was with 27th Marines until October 1968, then transferred to Second Battalion 5th Marines to complete deployment. After returning, he joined the reserves with VMJ-4, a jet squadron unit, for three years. He reenlisted with HMH-777 Heavy Maintenance Helicopter Squadron for another three years.

After moving to Oklahoma in 1980, he joined the National Guard with a transportation unit. After a year and a half, he joined the Army reserve with the 95th unit as a Drill Sergeant. Harrison served in Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Jackson, Fort Sill, and Fort Polk. The first time he trained female soldiers in 1988 at Fort Jackson, he had the highest number of soldiers qualify on the range in the first round. Between 1995 and 1996, the Army shut down the Durant station and Harrison was transferred to the 75th in Dallas, Texas. He retired in December 2000 as an E-7 Sergeant First Class (SFC).

Sgt. Harrison also worked for the Army ammunition plant from 1981 to 2013 and became a minister in 1986.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma 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.