

By Charles Clark

Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Jack Austin Jr., was named the March Texoma Hero on March 26, in recognition of his service in the United States military.

"I am deeply humbled and honored with this recognition," said Assistant Chief Austin. "I don't consider myself a hero at all, but for me, those who paid the ultimate price are the heroes."

In the ceremony, Assistant Chief Austin's named was added to a list of 76 local veterans honored since the recognition began in 2015.

Billy Teague, co-founder of the Texoma Hero, noted that the ceremony was to "sincerely thank the new Hero for selfless service, not only to our nation, but for community contributions after leaving the military."

Chief Gary Batton nominated his Assistant Chief and read his military biography.

While serving in the U.S. Army from 1987 to 1991, Jack Austin Jr. was stationed in Germany as a Field Artilleryman. His distinguished career included being awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon, and Expert Badges for rifle, grenade, machine gun and Air Assault, among other commendations.

"He has served with honor and integrity and still does that today in his role as Assistant Chief," said Chief Batton.

Since becoming Assistant Chief in 2014, he has advocated for veterans by establishing designated parking spaces at all CNO facilities, established the laying of wreaths with Choctaw youth at the Veterans Cemetery, providing paid leave for associates who are soldiers serving on active duty. He helps with the Veterans Advocacy Program getting them all the benefits possible, supports the Veterans' Airlift Command, and much more.

"For me, serving my country was never to gain the awards or accomplishments that were read in my bio earlier, but to simply serve," said Assistant Chief Austin.

“I was blessed to serve with so many great people during my short term in the service and I can still remember that day, before I got out of the Army, praying and asking the Lord to place me in a position to continue service, but this time to serve the Choctaw people So, I am equally blessed today,” he said.

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