

VETERAN

Interview questions

Nate Cox, Veteran interviewed November 10, 2022, at CN Headquarters

NAME -Nate Cox - age – 51 at time of interview, 11-10-22

PHONE [REDACTED]

ADDRESS [REDACTED] Durant OK 74701

BRANCH OF SERVICE _US Army Reserve

RANK Lieutenant Colonel

Years served – from 1990 January - to - Army reserve June 2018 (28 years)

Where attended basic training

Ft Sill Ok / Advanced individual training Ft Jackson, South Carolina

WHERE DID YOU SERVE

I was mobilized multiple times - Honduras,
El Salvador, Korea, Germany (twice), and Bosnia

What was your job while in service?

I have been:

A company commander for a personnel Services Company

I was a Battalion trainer for the 95th training Division,

The bulk of my career has been in Personnel Services which later changed its name to Army Human Resources Corps. I retired as the G-1 which is the Chief HR officer for the 95th training Division.

Special friends you made in service- I made quite a few friends overseas and all over the country. I keep in touch some through social media mainly.
no reunions in the four years I have been retired.

Any commanding officers that you especially remember?

I remember Captain Tayman who was my commander in Germany and Bosnia the first time – in 96 ad 97. Because I had been in the reserves and was coming on active status in country and he did a good job of mentoring managing my expectations and guiding me in life and coming overseas and things like that.

Were there any animals (work or pet) around the areas you served?

no

If serving overseas, were there any civilians you met or made contact with who you would like to mention making an impact on you our your life?

I met several, couldn't tell you their names. Most were retired military who chose to remain employed as a civilian worker. Impacted life because they had experience with the area and country, lifestyle, customs, places to eat - and not eat - in the area! Because they lived there full time.

Was there a point during your service, that you decided the military was, or was not, the right career choice? _____-

Yes, I guess it was when I was mobilized in 1996 to go to Germany as a part of Joint Endeavor and you realized how you are a part of such a much bigger picture. You realize you are part of making whatever needs in the mission to happen, happen. You see the results. In Central America it was a joint task force mission with Navy and Marines and Air Force, and we built clinics and schools outside of San Salvador. I saw the results. I came in the very beginning when there was nothing but jungle and it was humbling to see the final results and know you helped at least somewhat with that.

Is there a battle or point during your service that you would like to describe so that future generations can better understand what military life can be – for better or worse?

We were in a battle zone but did not see battle.

When you are young and trying to start out your career or education, or whatever you choose to do as an adult, it kind of brings home confidence that you can overcome certain things, but also humility in the sense you don't know everything. There is a lot out in the world that can educate you.

MEDALS AND CITATIONS RECEIVED

Two Meritorious service medals/five army commendations medals.

FAVORITE PLACES YOU WERE STATIONED Germany

Stories of Service:

1.

Can you tell us about when you went into the military? Were you drafted, or did you enlist? Enlisted.

Came back and went through ROTC program at NE State in Tahlequah.

1. (If enlisted) Why did you join?

Had doubt on what I wanted to do in the future and rather than take a complete break from college, which I had begun, thought maybe it would instill some direction, and give me a direction.

2. What or who did you leave behind (family, child, pet) when you left to serve?

3. Not married at the time. Just left parents.

4. In which branch did you enter?

Army reserves

(If enlisted) Why did you choose that branch? Follow up question to Nate:

5. How did you get to your initial point of entry? Dad dropped me off to enlist at a Recruiting processing station.

6. What type of training or schooling did you have?

When graduated out of NSU. . . .went to officer basic course in Indianapolis.

Advanced training was a lot of leadership classes. Management training.

Surprised when I got there and over half of my class were from West Point.

7. Did you qualify with equipment (vehicles, aircraft, radios, weapons, etc.)?
(If Yes) What was training with that equipment like?

Yes. With M16, A1; and 9 mm

8. What was the hardest part of training?

Just self- discipline. Fatigue, external pressures (people screaming in your face, keeping a level head, thinking under pressure, staying calm and making a decision) it prepared me for a lot of things, good or bad.

Would you recommend the military life?

I would recommend military for youth if it is their choice. Young people know they need direction, and they go to different places to get it. Sometimes they take a bad turn and go to places they shouldn't. Some go an academic or spiritual route. If you are confused and really don't know what to do, I am not saying this (military life) will solve it but may help get you focused and decide what you want in your life. It must be an individual choice, though.

9. What was the hardest part of the military life-style for you to adapt to? Why do you think it was?

Self-discipline. A lot of people think they are self-disciplined. That and the fact you are being away from family.

10. What was the easiest part of the military life-style for you to adapt to? Why do you think it was?

Making friends. We were always right there shoulder to shoulder, same room, same tent. They develop into your second family.

End of Service

1. did service change you?

I believe so. Being in the service caused me to appreciate more of the little things in life and provided a sense of what I wanted out of life.

2. Did you join a veteran organization?

I am a member of a retired officers association out of the Army. I have also done work with a wounded warrior's group.

Conclusion of Military Questions

When I was 19 years old, and thinking about going this route, what influenced me also, was not just that I wanted to take a step back and refocus, maybe force myself to be a little more disciplined about what I wanted to do and then do it, but I am thinking about all my family that had gone through in the military. Those I respected most had served in the military.

My mom's dad was in second invasion at Normandy on beach with the 2nd infantry division. 80 percent of his platoon was killed within the first three weeks he got there. and he didn't speak a lot of English, but he ended up being platoon Sgt. IF you asked him, he said he was only promoted because he was one of last ones left.

And he came back to reservation in Mississippi with his purple heart – he was injured twice in Germany. Segregation was still happening when he came back so he went through quite a bit when he came back,

My dad was in the Marine Corps, and I had several uncles in the Navy, Marines and Army.

Uncles were in the South Pacific. – in battle most of time he was in WWII. Wanted to live up to their history.

Orbria, older brother of dad, was in WWII

My grandfather. His memory was great. He could remember all names of his kids, their family - spouses and kids, of the soldiers he served with in combat.

I kind of idolized him. I wanted to be like that some day.

1. Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

2. Is there anything you've always wanted to share about your service or veteran experience that you never have?

3. What would you like people to know or remember from your story?

4. Is there anything else we should talk about that we haven't covered?

5. What do you wish more people knew about veterans?

I can't speak for all, but I can say most veterans appreciate the thank you's but don't expect it. Most Veterans would rather you honor those who came before them and did not make it home. What I hear from the people I met and served with - You ask a lot why you did it and they say, "what else was I supposed to do"?

Youth and life information:

Where were you born and who were your parents? Delton and Deloris Cox.

Born in Haskell, Kansas – Delton was assistant dean at Haskell, Brother was born at the old Talihina hospital, then moved to Mississippi a while then moved back to Oklahoma.

Do you speak any Choctaw?

Yes, and can tell the difference in Ok and MS dialect

Nate has One Daughter - Isabelle.

Have you traveled much?

Locally in state. When working with CMSE (Choctaw Management Services Enterprise) I travelled a lot because I got to interact with military. In 2002, I started with CMSE in San Antonio as project manager for the WIC Overseas program to transfer equipment and people – I worked as a transportation manager with programs they were setting up overseas. Eventually, I became the managing officer. I took a lot of pride in helping the military families I had been in those (type of) meetings in uniform on the other side of the table, so I knew how challenging it was for the contracting officer to get the information together to get those supplies for families.

It was rewarding to help military families.

CMSE had programs in Italy, Germany, Japan and at one time in Turkey and UK. (in addition to providing WIC, CMSE provides personnel services to the military.)

How has COVID 19 affected your life?

Professionally, here at Choctaw Nation Human Resources, we have learned to communicate more virtually with computers, phones, etc. Personally – my daughter graduated High School in Durant and did not get to have a graduation.

Any other comments?

I think we (general population) do a much better job of honoring those who served than we have in the past 40 or 50 years. We need to continue recognizing the selfless service to this country.

Current age at time of interview - 51 years.

** comment taken from November 2022 Choctaw Nation Associate News Digest - employee Veteran interview (not conducted by Judy Allen)

Nate explains that metrics show that less than 1% of the general population have chosen to serve in the military, but Native Americans as a demographic group have the highest percentage of its population (19%) volunteer for service in the military.

“Native Americans have always held certain values and principles sacred and have been willing to give their life in defending those tenets,” Nate says. “Personally, I have several members of my family who have served and their willingness and commitment to defend what we hold most valuable was always inspirational. I have never considered taking much pride in my personal military career, but I was always proud of those that I was so fortunate to meet, manage, and serve in my career. I have always been more grateful for the experiences and acquaintances than prideful.”