

Interviewed by Judy Allen June 8, 2023

David Sim Large, a veteran of the U.S. Army 4th Field Artillery, served his country from July 2, 1962 to June 2, 1964. He was promoted to the Rank of SP4/E4 just before he was discharged. After joining, Large was flown to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he attended basic training. Completing basic training, he was sent to Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma where he had eight more weeks of Advanced Training in artillery. "I then went to work at the Headquarters Training Battery Supply. I worked for the Warrant Officer. The property book was on a rolodex at that time – I guess it would all be on computer now. We supplied everything from Howitzers and trucks down to blankets," said Large. "The Headquarters and Headquarters Supply Battery was the go-to organization over the training batteries. We visited with supply sergeants in all the batteries."

Large had married in 1960, long before entering the military. His wife, Karen Erikson Large, was in Enid, and birthed their first daughter, Shari, in 1963. "My wife stayed with her mother while I was in the service," said Large. Being away from my wife was the most difficult part of military life," he said. He was allowed to come home on leave for two weeks when his daughter was born.

Large said, "I wasn't sent overseas. I remember being at Fort Carson and going to the rifle range. The first day on the range, it was 20 degrees below zero, and training was called off. I wasn't used to that kind of cold. I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, so I think it is in my DNA to like warm weather! We had to train the following day, and it was still about 18 degrees below zero."

He said he remembered it was also cold when they would form up outside early mornings. "There were about 200 of us and we counted off by numbers. It seems like the Texans would always group up, North and South Dakotans would be in another group, and the southerners, like people from Louisiana would be in a group. We were always wanting to get out of the cold and go eat, and the soldiers from the deep south counted off very slowly, sounding like Fooorrrrtyyy Fiiiiivvvve, Fooorrrrtyyy Siiiixxxx; and the Dakotans would be clipped and fast – sixtyone, sixtytwo, etc. Since were hungry and cold, we wanted everyone to count off fast!" Large said the chow was ok, but he couldn't eat the chicken because it wasn't cooked like his mother's. "I always found someone to eat my chicken, though!"

When I was 14, my father decided he had a better business future in Enid, so we moved up there (from the Oklahoma City area). I used to spend summers in Boswell with my cousins, and I had always considered this area (Bryan County) home. My wife passed in 2000 and I retired from being Highway Superintendent in Garfield County in 2004. He moved to Durant in 2005.

"My daughters can't believe my cousins and I went to town at Boswell on Saturday mornings in a wagon and got a 20-pound block of ice. We didn't chip off any of the block to eat, but the guy at the icehouse would always give us a chip to suck on. On Saturday nights, we would ride horses to town and watch the late movie. One of the cousins would tell a scary story on the way home.

The structure of being in the military would benefit a lot of young people I feel that we lost some Americanizing of our youth when the draft was taken away. My opinion is the draft should be reinstated." He said, "I think being away from my parents and family helped me be a better person, better man. The structure of military helps you take orders, and always be on

time. Military service would help a lot of young people. For one thing, they wouldn't be able to walk around with all the devices they have now!"

Large said he was always close to his mother, Ola Pebworth Large. "Growing up, there were life lessons every day! My mother taught me an important life lesson – I had a job and got paid on Saturdays. One time, mid-week, I asked my mother if I could borrow twenty dollars for cigarettes and pay her back Saturday. She agreed, and I paid her back. A few months later, I asked again to borrow money and pay her back on Saturday. This time, she told me she had the money but would not loan it to me. She said I needed to learn to manage my money better! I did!"

"I am proud of the Choctaw heritage that is from my mother." He has two brothers, Roscoe and Collin Wayne, two sisters, Margaret and Charlotte and a half-sister, Billie Jean. Rosco and Charlotte are still living. He has two daughters, Shari and Carri, and four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. His advice for future generations is, "Love your life, love your family. Don't get hung up on the bad parts," he said.

"My daughter and grandson attended Choctaw class with me. I didn't absorb the information, but the grandson can still remember what the teacher told us," said Large. He is thankful for the programs offered by Choctaw Nation – he has benefited from things like health care and the Economic Impact Aid.

When asked to describe himself, Large said, "Very ordinary. We had a milk cow and chickens growing up. My dad was in the Navy and we grew up pretty poor. I think kids today should earn their money by doing chores."

Large has a 1934 Ford he spent years refinishing, inside and out. He is a long-time fan of renovating older vehicles and enjoys driving and showing the car.