

Randal Hicks

Vietnam era veteran stays in shape running 5k

Randal Hicks of Broken Bow, Oklahoma served in the United States Air Force 21 years, 11 months. “I served in the Vietnam era, and was blessed that I did not serve in that country during the war.” He does have multiple medals, including the National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Service Award with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Air Force Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, NCO Professional Military Education Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal and Air Force Commendation.

He enlisted in Los Angeles, California and did Basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. When asked where his favorite places he served over the nearly 22 years, there was no hesitation – “Colorado Springs!” said Randal. “I was inside Cheyenne Mountain. I was a Computer Tech. Just an Electronic Technician, really. I started out as a radio communications equipment maintenance, then retrained to be computer maintenance. In between those, I trained to be radar maintenance. As long as you knew electronics, it wasn’t much of a problem to retrain and catch up to everyone else.”

Randal said, “My other favorite place to live was Germany because I was stationed on an Army post. We only had seven Air Force personnel there with the 10th Special Forces. They called them the Army Green Berets.” Randal retired as E8, SR Master Sgt.

He keeps in shape as though he is still on active duty. He runs 5ks and exercises. In fact, a recent trip to Durant gave him an opportunity to visit to the Choctaw Wellness Center while waiting on the rest of his group to finish their business before returning to Broken Bow. He was excited to use his time exercising. Randal did not want to waste time just sitting around when he could be taking advantage of the great equipment at the large workout center in Durant.

“There are things here in Durant (at the Wellness Center) we don’t have available in Broken Bow,” he said.

When asked about his 5k runs, he is able to show a collection of awards and ribbons he has brought home from his participation in a number of community and state races. Some were fundraisers or awareness events and others were competitive.

Randal was chosen to represent his Choctaw Nation and Broken Bow as the District 2 Veteran of the Month in 2019, honored with a certificate and flag presented by the Tribal Council.