

## ***Ted Leflore***

### **Korean War Veteran Served in the US Navy for 8 years**

As a Seabee in the Navy, Ted Leflore served in San Diego, California, the Public Works Center, Guam and in the Philippines. While serving the Philippines, Ted and his fellow Seabees built an airstrip. "We had to knock a whole mountain down to do it, and it was right by the sea!" he said. "I was a Construction Apprentice."

Ted is a Korean War veteran, serving in the US Navy for eight years. He entered into service January 13, 1954 and was honorably discharged February 20, 1962 with the rank of CP.

He shared a memory of an exciting air flight when a fire forced an unplanned landing on an island. "I was glad to land and get that plane repaired!"

As a Construction Apprentice, Ted said, "I just worked. I did not see combat. We were issued a rifle but we did not go to war." He said he did not apply for any medals or citations.

Ted had a lot of friends in the service. "I had one friend from Kiowa that got out the same time I did! We rode the bus together but it didn't stop at Kiowa. When we got to Atoka, I had a relative drive him home. I'm not sure where he is now. He used to call, but I haven't heard from him in a couple of years. His name is George Shields."

Ted lives in Atoka County across the road from where he was born. After his Navy service, he spent 30 years working for Sherwin Williams in Garland, Texas, then he and his wife moved to Oklahoma, purchasing land and building a house.

His daughter, Elaine, still lives in Texas. He has one granddaughter and one grandson, both graduates of OU.

"I wish I had graduated from somewhere," said Ted. "I went to Jones Academy and Haskell." He said he enjoyed Jones. "I went there as a small boy. It was my home." After the service, he used the GI bill to help buy a house and get his GED.

Ted had two sisters and six brothers. Four of his brothers are also veterans – three of them are buried in the cemetery by Caney Hill United Methodist Church down the road where they attended as youth.

"I mow and clean the cemetery and keep an eye on it. My wife, Mary Ann, is buried there. I put flags on graves of the 22 veterans who are buried there. Three of the veterans are my brothers – Andrew, Preston and Thompson (Jr).

Another brother, Don, also a veteran, is buried in Calera, and Ted has a brother who is not a veteran, Charles Gipson. Ted also had two half-sisters, Christine Dillard and JoAnn Jackson, both deceased.

Ted was selected as Choctaw Nation Veteran of the Month July 2021. He is active in the District 10 Community Center lunches and activities.

Cut line:

Ted Leflore voluntarily mows the cemetery near his home and keeps flags on the graves of the 22 veterans who are buried there. He is standing beside his wife's tombstone.

Photo by Deidre Elrod.