

Participated in the battle for Okinawa . . .

said to be the decisive campaign of the Pacific in WWII

"I was 18 when I left for World War II, and almost 21 when I was discharged," said William F. Logan. He was born and raised in Albion, Oklahoma, and had went to Portland, Oregon to work in the shipyards. A draft letter had been sent to Albion and his dad wrote him so he went to the local draft board in Portland.

Bill said when he arrived at the board office, "A bird Colonel asked me what branch of the military I wanted to be in. I said I didn't know, maybe the Navy. The Colonel told me, 'Son, you're in the Marine Corps!'" Bill's enlistment papers were signed October 11, 1943.

"I was asked if I needed a week to take care of business before I shipped out. At age 18, I didn't have any business, so I told them 'I guess I can go ahead and go now.' Travel from Portland to San Diego was by train. Then I was sent to Pearl Harbor where I was part of the 22nd Marine Unit that served in the Pacific."

The first invasion Mr. Logan participated in began at Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 19, 1944 through February 26, 1944.

The next major battle against the enemy for Mr. Logan was the Guam Marianas Islands July 21, 1944 through August 22, 1944. After Guam, the 29th Marine Regiment was brought in to form the 6th Marine Division. Mr. Logan's 22nd Marine Division and the 4th Marine Division had already combined when getting ready to invade Guam, so now all three made up the 6th Division, training at Guadalcanal as a full division with all the necessary artillery including Howitzers.

Mr. Logan said as they trained, the Marines tried to guess where they would be sent next. The well trained 6th Marines were sent to Okinawa, which may have been the decisive campaign of the Pacific. The beach landing was by Amtrak boats. After hitting the beach, the soldiers ran fast as they could into the hills. They went on up through the mountains until they reached the Moto Peninsula. Halfway up, an enemy Japanese soldier on a ridge shot at them with a light machine gun called a 'Nambu'.

"One of the Lieutenants was shot on the right side of his lip and it tore open his mouth all the way back to the gums. You could see his teeth and gums on one side. The Lieutenant in charge of the machine gun unit asked where the shots had come from and I pointed up and the Lieutenant opened up on the Japanese."

Bill said, "I asked Fay if he wanted to go get some more ammunition. We grabbed some ammunition bags and started back and got about halfway and the Nambu cut loose. Fay got shot in the stomach and I got shot in the leg. We were about 200 yards to cover at the little ridge. Fay said, 'Let's just lay still'. Finally, I jumped up and ran and I hit the ground just before I got around the ridge. I could see a Corpsman helping a guy who had been shot in the rear, and then the Corpsman got shot in the rear," said Mr. Logan. "When I got my mind clear, I got up and ran around the ridge where the rest of the company was."

He continued, "There was a Sergeant looking from a foxhole with field glasses and a sniper shot him in the Adam's apple and he was instantly dead. I dived over into the foxhole. They put Sulphur powder where I was shot and I took Sulphur tablets. We didn't have anything else back then. They just kept Vaseline bandages on the wound the whole time to let it heal."

After about three weeks, Mr. Logan was out of the hospital, put on an old C-47 plane and headed back to combat. These were old cargo planes. He and a couple of other guys being sent back to the war used boxes of hand grenades as seats when they flew back to Guam. They were outfitted with new helmets, rifles and a new pack, then shipped back to Okinawa just in time to help take Sugar Loaf Hill.

"It rained for two weeks straight," said Mr. Logan. "We even slept in water, just being sure to keep our head out of the water." He continued to tell the stories of the miseries of Sugar Loaf Hill. Staying wet caused sores on his legs, then when it finally stopped raining, the humidity and heat were unbearable. The Japanese were holed up in caves and the Marines began to take the enemy prisoner. Some of the Japanese would rather be killed or commit suicide than be taken prisoner.

After Okinawa had been secured, an official ceremony was held in Tsingtsao to receive the surrender of the Japanese forces in the area. Mr. Logan was present at the ceremony. General Shepherd and a Japanese general and all the military officers came to a racetrack fixed up as a 'parade ground'. Mr. Logan saw them pull out their sabers and put them on a long table. Then official papers were signed.

While serving in the military, Mr. Logan was cited for Excellent Character of Service, awarded a Purple Heart, a Good Conduct Medal and Honorary Service Button. He was specially qualified as a machine gun crewman. He was discharged in January 1946 as a Private First Class with weapons qualification in Rifle Sharpshooter and Bayonet.

Once Mr. Logan was home in Albion, he said a local young lady, Estella Miller, who had been supporting the war effort by working at Tinker Air Field, agreed to marry him. They were married 72 years before she passed in 2018.

When he was discharged, his salary was \$54 a month while in the service, and he was given a monthly stipend of \$20 for 52 weeks while he was looking for a permanent job. After he and Estella were married, he went to Portland to work in the lumber business and as soon as he had enough money saved, he sent for her. "We spent years in the log woods in that big timber," said Mr. Logan. The couple had three children, two girls and a boy.

Mr. Logan advises young people to plan ahead. "If you go to work and get a good job, and want to get ahead - if you invest ten percent of your money, you will have quite a bit to retire on!"

When asked what the biggest change he had seen in the world during his lifetime, he immediately responded, "Cell phones! Younger kids and take a cell phone and find out anything! You can even talk to a cell phone and find out anything!"

Mr. Logan is surrounded by photos and books in his home that are reminders of the history of his life. One photo is of him and three friends. "We left for war together, sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge and returned about two years later together, coming back home under that same bridge," said Mr. Logan. "We all made it through the war. That picture is of us celebrating the night we got back. I am the only one left now."

Four WWII war heroes. One of them Choctaw. Thankfully our Choctaw WWII hero survived to share his story and photos. Yakoke.

Interviewed on several occasions 2019-2022 by Judy Allen