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Interviewed by Judy Allen at the Choctaw Community Center in Spiro 4-22-24 at 11:30

Billy Butler served in the U.S. Army from 1966-1968. He was overseas in Korea for 14 of those months.

Basic training and advanced training were in Fort Polk, preparing him for his stint in the Infantry. When he joined the service, a bus took him from Poteau to Oklahoma City, then on to Fort Polk. The highest rank Butler achieved was Spec 4.

He was discharged from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He had a car, so he was able to provide his own transportation back home.

Butler didn't consider making a career of military service. "I didn't like being told what to do and when to do it," he said. The difficulties of the military lifestyle set his mind to go back home for job and family. I picked up where I left off. I worked for General Dynamics in Fort Worth. I lived and worked there for three years, then moved back to Oklahoma." One of his jobs was as draftsman at Riverside Furniture Company in Fort Smith. He retired from Baldour Electric. "I was in maintenance, repairing machines. I worked in a die casting plant," said Butler.

The Army also had some good points. "It helped me grow up a little bit, and take responsibilities," said Butler.

"They fed us pretty good. We had to eat in the field occasionally." He said the military life helped him appreciate home more. He feels like service improved his discipline.

He qualified for the M-14 N M-16. He served in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea with Company C, 7th Battalion.

Married before being joining the military, Butler stayed in touch with his wife, Donna, through mail to their Spiro home. They had one child, Amy Cox, while he was in Korea. Later that had two more girls, Cathy Miller and Emily Brewer. He has nine grandchildren. His wife is no longer living.

Butler's parents were Jewell Darneal and Ulmer Austin Butler. "Mom was a home maker and Dad worked for the Midwest Lumber Company, driving a truck." Butler has two sisters, Virginia Cook and Frieda Parker. Both are still living.

He remembers the tradition of gathering at the grandparent's home on a regular basis. "We would meet at Grandpa Darneal's as a family. All my cousins would be there. It is a tradition we have all lost."

Growing up, the family went to church at Arkoma First Baptist Church. He now attends First Baptist in Spiro.

A lifelong fisherman, Butler enjoys going to the City Lake in Spiro for crappie. "I catfish in the Arkansas River. I eat what I catch!" he said. Fishing is a peaceful past time for a man who describes himself as "quiet".

The Choctaw Nation appreciates Veterans, and thanks Mr. Butler for his service to our country.