

## Ronald Love story

Interviewed by Judy Allen at Stigler Community Center 5-6-24, 1 pm

Choctaw Army veteran Ronald Love of Stigler, Oklahoma was drafted in 1967, serving from October 12 of '67 to March 8, 1987. Basic training was in Fort Polk, Louisiana for Infantry Training, and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) was in Fort Lee, Virginia. His AIT was for Supply/Material Handler. This was Love's job when he was stationed in Germany. He worked in a warehouse, receiving supplies. Once the army gear was received, items were distributed out to the units.

Love attended Chemical School at Anniston Army Base. He had orders to go to Vietnam, but an older brother was already there as Air Force Police. The brother, Raymond, was subjected to Agent Orange. He passed in 2008.

"My father was in the Navy," said Love, "His name was Gerald Love, and my mom was Olivia May Love." Love graduated high school in spring of 1967, and was drafted that October at the age of 19. He married in June of 1973, and they lived in Korea. He is no longer married, but she still lives in the Lawton area, where they were based periodically at Fort Sill. His tours of service during his 18+ years were: Germany, Alaska, Korea, Fort Sill, Korea (2nd time), Fort Sill (2<sup>nd</sup> time), Korea (3<sup>rd</sup> time), then back to Fort Sill (3<sup>rd</sup> time). After discharge from Fort Sill, Love worked at Marilyn's Restaurant as a dishwasher for eight years, then worked at the Ammunition Depot in Savannah ten years, then back to Marilyn's for another eight years.

Medals and citations received by Ronald Love include the National Defense Ribbon, Korean Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal and Expert Marksman. The highest rank achieved was Staff Sgt. (E6).

He was interested in sports, and played football in Germany as Quarterback one year. "We were undefeated and traveled all over Germany. We played in the championship game in Berlin, where we played the base team." In Korea, Love said he played first base in softball. "I liked it better than football. We won all the games. I grew up playing baseball since I was eight years old." Love said he also played basketball in Germany and was asked to play for the post team.

Love's mother was a homemaker and his father was an appliance repairman. He had three brothers and one sister: Everette Mitchell; William Michael (Marine Corps), deceased; Raymond (Air Force); and Deborah. His grandmother's maiden name was Younger – she was a cousin to Cole Younger. His grandfather on his mother's side was full-blood Choctaw.

He attended grade school at Soldier Creek in Midwest City and high school at Star Spencer in Spencer, Oklahoma. He played football and ran track in junior high and basketball in high school. "I have always liked sports and watch football on television now! My team is the Kansas City Chiefs."

Family traditions used to include an annual reunion, although they stopped after his grandparents and aunts and uncles passed. "The family still gathers for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We play poker and my little sister keeps winning because my dad taught her to play poker!" he laughed.

Love has three children, Sheylyn, Christopher and Jerry. "My younger son went to Jones Academy and received straight A's, then went to college in Oklahoma and in North Carolina. He made the Dean's Honor List at both places."

Love is conscious of his health”I watch my diet. I try not to eat fatty foods, and I eat lots of fruits and vegetables. I don’t raise a garden, so I use the Farmer’s Market. I usually get the raw honey to use instead of sugar.”

His advice to future generations is, “Be smart! And not to let anyone override you.”