

Glen Sullivan is the Oldest Veteran in Gaines County

Leo Copeland

As far as we are able to find out, Glen Sullivan is the oldest military veteran in Gaines County.

He was born November 29, 1917. He will turn 95 this month. He had two younger brothers, Paul and O.W. Jr. who was nicknamed, Hezzie. All three of the brothers went to school in Seminole, and all were in the same military base, together. Glen is the only one of the brothers still living. But neither of them died in the war.

In 1940 Glen and Paul went to Lubbock and joined the US Army Air Force which was known as the Army Air Corps after 1941, and then became the US Air Force in 1948. Hezzie wanted to join, too, but his mother wouldn't sign for him to go in until he graduated from high school.

As soon as Hezzie graduated he joined the Army Air Corps. They were all three stationed at Sheppard Field at Sherman. All three made Staff Sergeant. The brothers enjoyed being together at the same base, but on November 13, 1942 a tragedy occurred which changed their situation.

Five brothers, (Whose names happened to be Sullivan but were no relation to Glen and his brothers) were all aboard a light cruiser the USS Juneau (C-52) when it sank, and all five brothers, the only children of their parents died.

As a direct results of the death of the Sullivan brothers, (and the deaths of 4 of the Borgstrom brothers, within a few months of each other, two years later, the US War Department adopted a Sole Survivor Policy. This policy put in play a set of regulations which included the Special Separation Policy for Survivorship. This basically says that all the members of one family cannot serve at the same place at the same time. This is to prevent their all being killed at the same time leaving their family without a survivor. Glen and his brothers had to be separated.

O.W. Jr. (Hezzie), the youngest of the three, was at Wichita Falls. He was Staff Sergeant in 510th Bomb Squadron. He was a gunner.

Paul became Staff Sergeant with the 6th Air Force 3rd Bomb Squadron and served over four years including 18 Months as a radio operator on a B-17 doing enemy submarine patrol duty in The Caribbean area. Paul was involved in a plane crash in the islands, but wasn't seriously injured.

Glen was a member of the 405th School Squadron operating an 8th Air Force Link Trainer. The Link Trainer, also called Blue Box and Pilot Trainer was a flight simulator. More than 500,000 US pilots were trained on Link Simulators as were pilots of nations as diverse as Australia, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Israel, Japan, Pakistan and the USSR.

The Link Flight Trainer has been designated as a Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Glen Sullivan would take raw recruits and train them to be crack pilots without ever letting them get into a real airplane. We understand the Confederate Air Base in Midland has a Link Trainer.

Glen spent most of his time at Perrin Field seven miles northwest of Sherman. He went to school at what later became Texas A & M.

Glen said sometimes being in the Army Air Corps wasn't much fun, but he has a favorite story to tell which occurred while he was stationed a Perrin Field.

Glen's mother told him if he would come home to Seminole she would cook him a chicken fried steak. They were scheduled to have inspection and he knew he wouldn't be able to get any time off, but the inspection was canceled at the last minute leaving him little time to make the trip. He went to the officer in charge and asked if he could take a plane and make a quick trip to Seminole.

He received permission and quickly got the flight underway. He flew low over Abilene and someone took down the cereal

numbers of his plane. He he buzzed low over his family's home in Seminole before landing in Hobbs, New Mexico and borrowing a car to come home in.

He enjoyed his good, home cooked steak and then hurried back to Sherman. When he arrived, he was called into the Squad Commander's office. "Where have you been," he was asked. "I've been to Seminole," he replied. "You were spotted over Abilene." The commander said. "Yes Sir. It is on my way to Seminole," Glen protested.

The commander thought he was going to Seminole, Oklahoma which was just a short distance north, and he had gone west instead. The matter was cleared up when the commander discovered there was a Seminole, Texas, also.

When Glen left boot camp

headed for Sherman on a train they got as far as Monahans when they got word the Army Air Force wasn't ready for them yet. So they sent them, instead, to Fort Bliss at El Paso to learn how to ride horses which involved grooming and cleaning up after them. He was glad when the folks at Sherman sent for them.

Before enlisting, Glen was working at the Post Office. When he went in the service they had to agree to give him his job back when he got out. He said he had a hard time getting his job back but finally did. They wanted him to take a part time job.

He had worked at the Post Office for only a couple of months, but when the Army found out he had worked there they came and got him and wanted him to figure out a way



for the troops at Sheppard Field to get their mail in a more timely manner.

He had them all write their squadron number and their barrack number at the field Post Office. This worked like a box number.

At one time Glen was about to be sent overseas but they found he didn't have enough time left so they sent him back to Sheppard Field.

He said his buddies in the military were his brothers, but added, "I think I was the meanest one."

After his discharge Glen married Nelda (Reynolds) and they lived in Seminole. Nelda worked at the old movie theater and Glen ran the projector at the Spanish speaking theater down town. They had one son, Larry who graduated from Seminole High in 1962.

Nelda passed away in 1959.

Glen married Janelle in 1965. She had four children; Connie Fowler who lives at Palmer; Jana Gillispie who lives

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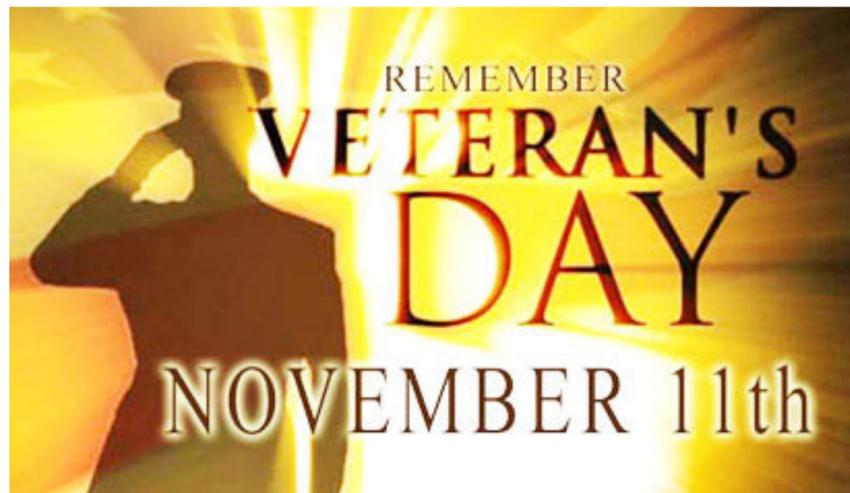
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