

KCK VA center to honor late Mayetta native

(KAIR)--Two United States Senators, from Kansas, have introduced legislation to name the VA outpatient clinic in Kansas City, Kansas, after Captain Elwin "Al" Shopteese, a native of Jackson County, Kansas.

The legislation, introduced Thursday, was done so by U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, who serves as ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Senator Roger Marshall, MD. A release issued jointly by the two Kansas Republicans explains that the legislation formally designates the clinic as the "Captain Elwin Shopteese Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic" or the "Captain Elwin Shopteese VA Clinic."

Moran, in the release, says the legislation "will help honor [Shopteese's] legacy and preserve his story for generations to come," with Marshall adding that Shopteese "exemplified bravery and patriotism to our great nation while fighting during the invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge."

According to the release, Elwin Shopteese was born in Mayetta, Kansas, on July 16, 1921 and was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Upon high school graduation, he immediately enlisted in the Kansas National Guard and became a member of Company E, 137th Infantry Regiment. Shopteese and his company were involved in several battles across Europe during World War II, including the invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. He received a battlefield commission for his leadership while in combat at Omaha Beach. Shopteese earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his service during World War II and returned to Kansas to attend Haskell University in 1946 before his service in the Korean War.

After returning from the war, Shopteese began a life of service for his fellow Native Americans, specifically the Potawatomi. He served as a Tribal Council member and was directly involved in the creation of the Indian Community Alcoholism Resources Expeditors Recovery Home, where he served as executive director until the time of his passing on June 25, 1992.

The Kansas City VA outpatient clinic opened in July 2022 and is located at 9201 Parallel Pkwy, in Kansas City, Kansas.