Aft after landing on Okinawa, Japan, during World War II, U.S. Marine Joe Glavan of Warren, Ohio, did not want to give up the foxhole he had just dug. But his commanding officer ordered him and a fellow Marine to turn it over to two U.S. Naval officers. The pair spent the night in a cave as Japanese shells fell and learned the next day that their foxhole had taken a direct hit. Both Naval officers died. “I still get goosebumps when I think of that,” Joe says. “We had other close calls, but that one stuck with me. They were young men just like myself.”

He survived 44 months in the Marine Corps, witnessing a Japanese surrender ceremony in China and glimpsing the Great Wall of China from a small village—quite a new view for a Midwesterner who had volunteered at 17. “My world opened up when I joined the Marines,” he says.

Now 91, he enjoys life at Independence Hill Retirement and Resort Community in Stone Oak. “I feel like I’m on a cruise ship,” he says. He comes and goes from his cozy apartment, enjoying the community’s activities. A portrait of his wife Anne, who died eight years ago, hangs in his bedroom. The couple met at Hiram College in Ohio after WWII, settled in Pueblo, Colorado, and started a family. Joe had a 30-year career as an educator, school psychologist, and, ultimately, assistant superintendent of schools. The Glavans tried retirement in Florida, where Joe took up cycling in his 70s—a hobby he continued after the couple headed to San Antonio to live closer to family. “I finally gave it up,” he says. “I was in my 80s.”

He’s still active: At 90, he took up swimming and won a silver medal representing Independence Hill in the Texas Senior Olympics in the 25-meter freestyle. He also continues his community service as an honorary member of the Stone Oak Rotary Club. Past volunteerism included organizing transportation for handicapped spectators to watch shuttle launches at Cape Canaveral, serving as his local Rotary Club president and on various boards of directors, and teaching Sunday school.

He and Anne had two daughters and two sons, though one of the boys died at age 18 in a car accident. After nine decades of living, he’s happy to share his secret to life: “Moderation,” he says. “Eat with moderation. Exercise with moderation. Do your job with moderation. When it’s 5 o’clock, go home and enjoy your family.”