



Billy "Sam" Hamilton

Second Class Storekeeper, United States Navy
World War II
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I was 20 years old and working at Story Wright Printing Company when I signed up. I had a wonderful time in the Navy. For three and a half years, I was in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. It was a wonderful place to be. It was like a vacation. As a storekeeper, provisions division, I kept warehouses and worked in the food division, in the galley, and took care of freezer and drygood food that the cooks cooked for the sailors. I was stationed at the receiving station. When all the ships came into Pearl Harbor and discharged men for reassignment, they came to the receiving station which was operated like a hotel. There were barracks where they stayed, and we fed them until the Navy reassigned them to another ship or island.

I went in before the Korean War, but it started and I had to stay in an extra year. Things changed when the Korean War started. The base went from 100 to 600 men, and we had to start acting like sailors instead of guys on vacation because there were so many people coming through going to Korea and Philippines. Many more ships came in.

I made four special friends in service, but they have all died. I was not in a unit so there were no reunions. People on ship are together for months or years, but people came and went almost daily where I was, so we did not have that close a group of people. The military definitely brings discipline into your life. Without discipline, we cannot have the military. I have tried to be disciplined in my life.

When I got out of Navy, I used the G, I, Bill and got an associate degree in business administration at Tyler Junior College . Mary and I met and married. My military experience was very rewarding, and I had used it for my employment. I went to work for a wholesale plumbing supply company keeping a warehouse, selling, buying, so forth. The training in the Navy and at TJC helped. I have been in wholesale plumbing supply business 50 years. I am going to retire one of these days.

I worked for Cronk Company 24 years, then John, my son, and I started Hamilton Supply Company from scratch and God has been with us every step of the way. So many times the negative becomes a positive. I got fired for a trivial thing, I was 55 and never had been fired from anything. We don't need to see too far ahead, because God takes care of us daily and He will take care of things down the road. He is faithful and taken care of John and I (me) and our business.

I was converted when I was 12 years old. I was not as good as I should have been, but God was always there looking out for me and still does. When Mary and I married, she was going to First Baptist, so Dr. Bailes married us and we were in that church for 48 years, until about 8 weeks ago, when we joined GABC. We are thrilled to be here.

I think that as Christians, we don't ask enough and we don't get enough from God. He does for us if we ask. All that time in the Navy and since, while raising a family of four children, I was always asking God for something. God wants to help us with both the little and big things. I taught my children to ask God for help in school. I depend on God. Everyone should.

The 9-11 tragedy brought back patriotism that had not been since WWII. There was patriotism in Korean War, but the minute war was over, people tended to forget it. They get busy about daily lives and even government tends to forget it. We are patriotic when we need to be. I am fearful of our generation now that does not seem to be patriotic enough.

I enjoyed my 4 years in the Navy, and I definitely saw God looking out for me, even at time may not have been aware of it. Since then in raising a family, I more aware of God's presence that when I was young. We have 2 boys and 2 girls and 6 grandchildren (27-6 years).