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I had moved to Houston from San Augustine, Texas, and was working when I received a letter from Uncle Sam in 1950 inviting me to join him. They put me on a train to San Antonio. After we arrived, the first thing we had to do was strip off our clothes and get a GI haircut. There was not a hair on my head more than an eighth of an inch long. After it grew out, I decided that I liked having a flattop. So I've had one for 50 years now.

For 16 weeks, I attended medical basic training and learned how to patch wounds, give shots, etc. We practiced giving shots to oranges. I was trained to become a company aid man who would accompany the troops and patch up wounded soldiers until the medics arrived. One of the highlights of that time period was when I was given the honor of carrying the Texas flag during our graduation parade. I had been in competition with a friend to see who could be the sharpest. He won first place, so he carried the American flag.

Then I was assigned to the military police. I thought, *Well, if I have to shoot somebody, I'll know how to patch them up.* I was stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio for the entire duration of my service. My duties included patrolling the hospital and picking up soldiers who had left their barracks to go downtown and get drunk. We also had to pick up soldiers who were AWOL. One time, we had to drive all over the 10,000-acre King Ranch in search of a prisoner.

The worst experience I had as an MP happened in downtown San Antonio one night. We had gone to pick up a soldier who was so drunk that he couldn't walk. After I grabbed him by the hands, and my partner picked him up by his feet, he started throwing up. The vomit went all over his face and down my arm, and it smelled terrible.

Another incident involved a young lady who was off her rocker. She had escaped from a holding tank, and we had to try to find her. We drove through the barracks and all over San Antonio. Finally we found her wandering off into the woods near Salado Creek. One night, I was chosen along with another MP to guard a million dollars in cash. The military paid everyone in cash back then. So we sat there guarding the trunk in a holding cell. Of course, some of our prisoners tried to bribe us to let them go.

On special holidays, we flew a huge American flag (50 by 100 feet) on the flagpole at the

hospital. It took about 10 MP's to fold the flag correctly. It was a thrill to raise that flag and hear the bugles play.

While I was in the service, I got married and had a son. I didn't want to stay in the service because I didn't think I could support my family on \$80.00 a month, though they did furnish us with groceries and a place to live.

I became a Christian when I was 14 years old. In the little country town where I lived, church services were only held once a month. I well remember being baptized. We went to a big lake that was too deep along the bank for us to wade in and be baptized. I told them about a little creek, and we set off to find it. In one area of the creek, the water was about waist-deep. So I was able to get baptized there. Back then, people didn't witness to others about their faith. It was a more personal thing.

Having been born and raised in the country as one of 14 kids in my family, I had to learn how to take care of myself. I didn't really witness to anyone in the military, but I tried to live a life that I thought would be pleasing to God. When we could get a weekend pass in the service, my buddy and I would go to Houston to see our girlfriends. He owned a brand new Mercury that he would drive 100 miles per hour on Interstate 10 from San Antonio. I did a lot of praying during those rides back and forth.

After I left the service, my wife and I attended a church in Houston. They asked me to serve as a deacon, and I agreed. It turned out that I was the youngest ordained deacon that church ever had.

During my days in the service, there were no hippies or flag-burners like there are today. We were proud to be Americans, and we stood for the morals upon which this country was founded. Now kids and even adults put up banners protesting things rather than going out to do something good for their country. A statement by President John Kennedy always stayed with me. He said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

War changes people, of course. It seems to be a necessary evil. The Bible speaks of wars and rumors of wars. Someone will always protest anything that is morally right or even anything that is not morally right. Basically, however, I think the majority of people are moral. They just say things they don't really mean at times. I hear people say that America is going to the dogs. But the only person you can be responsible for is yourself. All we can do is set a good example for others.