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Korean Conflict

Along with my brother and several other young men, I joined the National Guard in 1954. I had just turned 17 and was still in high school. There were 125 men in my unit when we were first sent to Wichita Falls. After that, we had to serve one weekend a month plus two weeks at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, each summer. I started out working in communications as a radio operator. Of course, cell phones today are much better than our radios were then. I became sargeant of our unit.

Our summer camps at Fort Hood, the largest active military base in the United States, involved either lots of flooding or lots of dust. After moving to Fort Worth because of my job, I was assigned to a tank company at Lake Worth that had to go out and open tank trails. That was always very rough and nasty work. We slept in the field, eating mosquitoes, bugs and dust. As reserves in readiness for active combat, we were trained to fill in if the situation called for it. The Korean Conflict was going on when we first went in, so we were subject to being called up for duty there. Since other men were being drafted, we thought we would be activated. But I never was involved in active combat.

In 1962, my unit was called out because of flooding in Fort Worth. We were on duty for about seven days evacuating people and guarding their property while they were out of their homes.

My time with the National Guard was a positive experience. I learned how to cooperate with others to get a job done. Though it was a difficult situation that involved self-discipline and following orders, it served a good purpose. Three of the men who joined the Guard with me got out at same time, but one stayed longer.

I moved to Tyler 32 years ago in 1970 and joined Green Acres Baptist Church shortly thereafter. My wife and I, and our three sons, lived just up the street from the church.