



Doug Lynch
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Korean War

When I was 17 and living in Kansas City, Missouri, my friend Don McKenyon and I decided to join the Navy. I served in the Navy Reserve from 1946 until I moved to Tyler in 1950. Then I attended Tyler Junior College during the fall semester and got my call to active duty in December.

I reported for duty on January 9, 1951, and was sent to San Diego, where I served a short time with the Fleet Marines. Then, as a corpsman, I went to school for 14 to 16 weeks straight for medical training. We had the same schooling a nurse had, but it was crammed into that one course eight hours a day continuously.

Later I was transferred to a Navy hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas, for just over a year. So many of the Korean War veterans came there, and they were pretty well torn up. Most of the time, I was in charge of a ward with 30-40 men and had to take care of their medications and so forth. Of course, doctors were available, but we had to call them. We served the public, too. Sometimes on Saturday nights, they would bring in people who had been shot or wounded in downtown Corpus, veterans or not, and we'd have to take care of them.

My first baby — a girl, was born in that Navy hospital. She had a cleft pallet and lip, but the Navy took care of every bit of that.

Though I made many friends in the Navy, I haven't kept up with them the way I should. Some of the boys I met in Corpus, who had served in Korea, were working for the Psychological Evaluation Hospital in Fort Worth the last I heard. But I don't know where they are now, or whether they're still alive.

My military experience was definitely a positive one. I guess I wouldn't be here if I hadn't had that, especially my medical training. That was proven one night in 1974 when an intoxicated driver ran into my car. We were driving back to Tyler on Highway 64 East when the man veered across the road. My arm was broken in three places and was just hanging there. The ends of my fingers were cut off, and every finger was broken. Right after the accident, I put a tourniquet on my arm and told my wife, "Now if I pass out, you take the tourniquet off, count to 10 and then tighten it up again." I had learned to do that while I was in the service. As a result of my injuries, I also lost six inches at my elbow. I guess my military experiences have helped me a lot all through my life.

When I was discharged from the Navy, they told me that I needed some dental work. They prepared a complete dental record and my benefits covered the work done by a dentist in Dallas. As I've gone along, other things also have been covered. When I lost my elbow, the doctor in Tyler didn't think prosthesis would work for me because I was so active that I probably would be pulling it loose and have to replace it every six months. He suggested that I just leave it alone. Well, I went to the VA Hospital in Dallas for another opinion. I stayed there six weeks while they built a sling to keep my arm stretched out.

I really enjoyed my time in the service. After getting out, I decided to become a doctor. Married with four children, I had to support my family while trying to carry a full course load at school. Though I had help through the GI Bill, I just couldn't do it. Finally, I had to drop out and ended up working as a tool and dye maker for 18 years. We lived in Fort Worth.

I had joined the Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth in 1939, so I was a Christian when I went into the service. Most of the men I served with didn't talk about their religion. But I always tried to be around other soldiers who were Christians and who enjoyed my fellowship. If I brought it up in a conversation, I had to know whether to carry on with it or let it drop. I ran into men from all walks of life. Some of them had never faced God or the fact that God's working for us, and some had not accepted God as their Savior.

Years later, after leaving Fort Worth, I attended the First Baptist Church in Chandler, Texas, until my grandson started attending classes at Tyler Junior College in about 1989. He was going to live with us while going to school. I thought he could serve and get so much out of the music and other activities that Green Acres Baptist Church had to offer, so we left Chandler and transferred our membership. Though my grandson later dropped out of school, I couldn't leave Green Acres after listening to Brother David. I said, "Well, I'm home!"

God looks over me. I don't know what he has in mind for me, but I shouldn't even be here. Sometimes I think about Job and his problems, and I believe I've had some of the same problems... ha, maybe not quite as bad. Following my last back surgery, I came down with a staph infection in my backbone that went to my brain. I had to go back to the hospital and was in ICU for about six weeks. They put me on life support for four days. Though I was very close to death and don't remember much of it, I do recall Brother David being there and saying, "Do you know me, Doug? Do you remember?" I always did, but he was the only one I knew or remembered. I'll never forget that. In my life, I certainly have had plenty of opportunities to depend on God.