



Bob Paine
Private, U.S. Army Air Corps
World War II

The war started when I was a sophomore in high school in Palestine, Texas. There were eight children in my family, and two of my brothers were in the Army Air Corps. So I decided to try to get into the Air Corps, too. Two or three of the fellows who played football with me went along, and we all took the tests. In February 1945, we were inducted and driven to Houston where we boarded a train. We didn't know where we were going but ended up at the air base in Amarillo.

I was scared to death. There I was in the Air Corps, and I had never even been in an airplane. My oldest brother, Walker Paine, had been on an Army Air Corps plane that had gone down close to St. Louis and killed everyone aboard but him. My family drove to St. Louis to check things out. When we arrived, they let us see him. His face was burned to a crisp and looked terrible. His leather jacket seemed to have saved his life. We didn't think he would live, but he did. After he recovered, he went overseas and flew the hump for 36 months. I was ready to take his place.

In Amarillo, they taught us how to march and how to be a soldier. We went on bivouacs, walked for miles and miles, and slept in tents. After returning from one of those maneuvers, we heard that the war had ended. We couldn't believe it. When we asked what would happen to us, they said they would let us know in a few days.

Soon they called everyone together and said, "The war is over. We're going to offer you one way to get out of this. You can either reenlist in the regular Army or you will be susceptible to further military service if needed." Not many of the men reenlisted. Most were like me. I was engaged at the time and wanted to go home.

I enjoyed what time I did serve with the Army Air Corps. They nearly made a man out of me. I knew how to say "Yes, sir" and "No, sir". But I was glad the war was over. I don't believe in wars because I don't think that's why we were put on this earth. We should live and let live.

During World War II, we knew we would serve our country if it needed us. We didn't look for ways to get out of it. We were ready to give our lives for it. We were lucky there were so many churches around for us to attend in Amarillo. Though I was ready to die, I really didn't want to and so was worried. Going to church helped me.

After I left the service, I married my fiancé. We've now been married 56 years. We love God, read the Bible, go to church every week and brought our boys up as Christians. Our oldest son died at the age of 49 about 30 months ago. Our other son has Lou Gehrig's Disease, so we don't know how long he'll be around. We have six grandchildren who also are Christians, and four great grand children. I'm glad they're on the right path. We've had a great life.