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I was laid off of from a job in Conair Aircraft Land in Ft. Worth and came back home to Tyler. I tried to find a job but couldn't because of my draft status. Nobody wanted to hire anyone who was going to be taken away soon. I was just going from one place to the other on temporary jobs here in Tyler. I was inducted in the Army on May 19, 1953.

I had tried previously to volunteer into the Air Force. For some reason they were not taking people with my qualifications so I came back home and waited.

I got a notice that I was to report to Dallas for induction May 19, 1953. I caught a bus in Tyler, rode to Dallas, and went through the ceremonies of being sworn in with the other inductees. We were bused to San Antonio where we spent about four days getting military clothing and stuff issued to us. Then we went by plane to Camp Roberts, California, halfway between L. A. and San Francisco.

I had sixteen weeks of basic infantry training there, from late May through October. I believe that was the hottest place on earth. The services were not segregated in terms of race. We had Afro-Americans in our company. Basic training was my first introduction to living in an interracial environment. It didn't bother me, but I was raised to believe that segregation was the way things should be. After basic training, I received a two-week leave and came home. I flew back out to Pittsburgh, California, where I waited about a week and then was put on a ship and sent to Korea. I remember they put us on a ferry and took us south under the Golden Gate Bridge to a ship out in the ocean. Our first stop was Kobe, Japan.

We spent about a week there, and it rained every day. Next, they put us on another ship, sent us down around the southern end of a peninsula of Korea and back up the other side to Inchon Harbor. There we disembarked and went by train from Inchon to Seoul, Korea. Ordinarily you could drive that distance in an hour to two, but the train ride took about seven hours. The train would go forward for a little while then backwards, go forward and go backwards, but we finally made it. We went by truck ten miles south of Seoul to a little village called Yong Dong Po. From there we went to where the 20th Transportation Truck Company was located. That's where I was assigned for seventeen months.

I don't remember the names of the ships I was on. I remember them by size. Only one of them was what they called a "double stack," which is a very, very large troop carrier. But the ships were not so large that the sea didn't control them. I remember that between California and Kobe, Japan, we went through a storm. It was terrible. The ship was listing so badly that when we went down to eat, we had to hold our tray with one hand and eat with the other. I, and just about everyone else, was seasick.

I remember arriving in Korea in November in cold weather. I was assigned to a truck and helped move big caliber ammunition for cannons. I called them "big bullets," but they were shells. We moved them back and forth and around. We were assigned to support the 58th Ammo Company, which was

right next to us. They would move that stuff around from one place to the other, re-organize it and all that. I also helped transport 55-gallon drums of diesel oil to the troops up north for heating purposes. I drove a truck for probably eight or nine months and then was assigned as personnel clerk, company clerk, as they called it. I served there until I left Korea and came back to the states in April 1955. About six months before returning to the States, I was promoted to Sergeant.

Morale seemed to be good among the troops. At the time I got over there, the peace treaty had been signed, but you could still tell that a war had taken place. The whole countryside was devastated. Some buildings were blown apart, and others had big holes in them. The people were living in poverty conditions. But morale among our people seemed to be good. Knowing that they weren't going to be shot at made everyone feel better.

I thought it kind of surprising that I spent 16 weeks in basic infantry training and then went to Korea to drive a truck. I didn't complain at all. I was glad to do it. The roads were rough. They were fairly narrow and had been blown out by shelling. The few paved roads that we used weren't smooth either. A lot of the roads that we used in transporting, particularly up in the northern part of South Korea, were very rough dirt roads.

Before I went into service I lived in Ft. Worth. I believe that was the farthest I had been from home. I saw a lot of the world very quickly. Although Japan was well developed by the time I was there, seeing it and Korea made me appreciate the United States of America much more. We had fine roads, we had plenty of food and clothing, and we could go to the store and buy good merchandise. I saw those countries and how the people had been devastated by war. I saw children who were undernourished and had very little food. People lived on the streets in little carport-like huts. In the area where we were, most of the houses were straw huts. One room, probably about 10 X 12, was all the house that they had. Their diets were very simple and had no variety at all. Seeing all of that made me appreciate what we had here at home.

I was in the service for two years, less one month. I had good friends in the military but did not develop any long-term friendships. We did some things together and were quite close at the time. Our company lived in tents, and the 12 to 14 men assigned to my tent became good friends. When a man would finish his term of duty and prepare to return home, we had that sad feeling that a real close friend was leaving, and we probably would never see him again. But

I remember one guy that I served with. He lived in Florida and was a motorcyclist. One time he decided to go riding across the country. He came to Tyler, looked me up, and we spent the day together. He left and that's the last time I've seen him. As far as I know, no one ever tried to organize a reunion of our company. We just lost touch with each other.

After I returned home, I worked briefly for a man who dug water wells. I then worked 13 months for Union Asbestos and Rubber Company. I went to G. E. in 1957 and worked there seven years. I did carpenter work one summer and then sold insurance for three years. In 1966 I went to work for the Tyler Fire Department.

I took advantage of the G. I. Bill but went to college only part-time and at night. In 1958 I enrolled at Tyler Junior College and started out to get a degree in accounting. I graduated in 1961 and went to East Texas State College (now Texas A and M at Commerce) nights and weekends for two or three semesters. I got tired of driving, working, and going to school at the same time. I just quit. When Tyler State College (now the University of Texas at Tyler) opened, I enrolled there and took courses in a hit-and-miss fashion. I tell folks that I have a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial education, and I know that I am real proficient because it took me twenty years to get it.

I was a church member but not a Christian when I went into service. While working in Fort Worth, I visited Mother and Daddy here in Tyler. I attended the First Baptist Church with them one Wednesday night, and Dr. Porter Bailes, the pastor, came back to speak to them. He turned to me and asked, "Are you a Christian?" I told him that I was not, and he said, "Don't you think it's about time you made that decision?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "When I give the invitation, I want you to come down." I did. I was baptized about a week later, but I really wasn't saved. It was in 1959 that I realized that I was just a church member and needed Jesus. Living next door to me was a good friend who had surrendered to the ministry. I wasn't going to Sunday School and church regularly, and he would talk to me about that. I said "Well, I really don't have time now. I've got to do this, and I've got to do that." He said, "Well, you're going to keep putting it off until it'll be too late." One day the Holy Spirit impressed on me that it was time for me to act. A verse of scripture in the Bible says, "Behold now is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time." I said, "I guess it is." I was going to Bailes Baptist Church then, and that's where I made my profession of faith.

I came to Green Acres about two years ago. I started into the ministry in 1978, and I was going to this little country church up in Wood County, where I was raised. The congregation was without a pastor, and they called me right away. I said that the church was desperate for a pastor to call me, someone just newly surrendered to the ministry. I pastored that church for ten years. I was also a fire investigator for the Tyler Fire Department.

I can see that God has guided me through the years. I aspired to be an attorney, but things didn't fit together for me to do that. Looking back, I see clearly God did not want me to be an attorney. At one point I was going to be in the ministry, but God just kind of moved me from place to place, making sure I didn't go straight to that goal. With a few detours, God finally brought me there. In 1971, I had a friend who told me about going to South Texas and working as a missionary to the Mexican people. Over a period of two or three weeks, I got the feeling God might be leading me. I believe now that God was really calling me to do mission work, but I had a family, a job, and a regular paycheck. I tell folks I was a coward, afraid to leave what I had for the uncertainties of missionary work. I didn't go, and God led me to this little church. That was, I guess, one of the greatest challenges I've ever had.

Loreta Sheffield and I married in 1959. We have three children, a daughter and two sons. We have six grandchildren. My family is the greatest asset God has given me. He has also allowed me the opportunity to work and to allow God to work through me. In 1995 I got into these short-term mission programs with International Crusades in Dallas. My first trip was to Latvia. Since then I have been to Honduras, Africa, Russia, and to the Ukraine twice, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and back to Latvia. My wife does not go on these trips because she does not like to travel, especially by air.

Patriotism in America seems lax compared to the time when I was in service. My understanding of the military as it's operated now is that the discipline is not as strict. When I was in the military, you showed respect, the deepest respect, to an officer. You saluted him anywhere that you met him. You knew there were rules. You knew that if you violated those rules, you would suffer the consequences, which could be severe. Today, as I hear people talk about their recent experiences in the military, I am told that there's drug use and large scale alcohol use. There's discipline, but it's not like it was when I was in there.

My time in the military was a very positive experience. It taught me responsibility. It taught me that I couldn't lean on somebody else. I had to create initiative within myself to get things done. I had to assume responsibility. When I was assigned a truck, I was told, "This is your truck, your responsibility. You tear it up, you pay for it." Of course, I was very careful. We had one man who turned over a truck and he had to pay for the damage. On payday, he would get less than half of his regular pay. The rest went to pay for that truck. I didn't want that to happen to me. Yes, being in the service was a good experience.