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A farm boy from Nacogdoches, Texas, I enlisted in the Army Air Corps shortly after graduating from high school in June 1946. They sent me to SAC (Strategic Air Command) Field in San Antonio for basic training. Two weeks later, the Air Force was created as its own division.

Six months later, I was transferred to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois for advanced studies. I learned how to repair radios, transmitters and other things, but that winter was pretty miserable for us old farm boys. After another six months and a two-week furlough at home, I rode the train to an Air Force base in San Francisco. A week later, I boarded a DC-4 military transport and flew to Hawaii. I caught another plane three or four days later to one of the Marshall Islands, Guam, Iwo Jima and Tokyo (just over 8,000 miles).

I was stationed at an old Japanese transmitter base called Chitohis at Okaido in northern Japan, where I serviced transmitters and radios until 1949. Transportation from Tokyo to Jatosi was via a fairly narrow-gauged railroad. It was quite interesting to see the smoking volcanoes along the way. In the springtime, I enjoyed the huge peach orchards.

During my 21 months there, I took one or two short vacations. One was to a small, smoking volcano in the east with a large lake at the base of it. The lake (about two miles wide, six miles long and 1,100 feet deep) was actually a crater that had collapsed and filled with water. I spent a week at a Japanese hotel there twice and enjoyed it very much.

About 10 Japanese handled maintenance at the base, and we found them to be very fine people. One of them, a prior Japanese Air Force commander, liked me well enough to give me his military medal. I considered that quite an honor. I hadn't been in Japan long before the base commander received orders to send someone to Tokyo for a radio repair school. Though I had

just finished that type training, they still sent me. I was the most likely candidate. It took about a week and a half in Tokyo before I convinced them that I knew as much as some of the teachers. My quarters were just down the street from General MacArthur's headquarters. Each day as I stood on a corner waiting for my ride to the school, MacArthur invariably would drive by in his big fancy car on his way to his office. I had to salute him two or three times a day. A well-respected man, there was no doubt that he was the commander. He would look directly at me as he passed, so I knew I had to salute him. The emperor's home also was in that area, so I saw that everyday, too.

When driving from the transmitter base to the main Air Force base, we would pass through a small town. The Japanese ate lots of fish, and some of the cooking odors in that town were pretty smelly. Many of the residents were very poor. They used straw shawls for raincoats. Sometimes we would throw a half-smoked cigarette on the ground, and the Japanese would almost knock us down in their anxiety to pick up the butt.

Our base, no more than 60 miles from Russia and about 200 miles from South Korea, had P-51 fighter aircraft. Sometimes the Russians would fly a bomber over the base to take pictures, and we'd scramble about half our crew to chase him off. It was an interesting place. Occasionally a small cloud would pass over and be followed by a 30-minute snowstorm. Shining through the storm, the sun would glow orange-red. That was something to see.

After I returned home, a pink or blue envelope arrived one day that normally indicated a recall to military duty. Luckily, it was just a change to my military specialty. I promptly enrolled at Stephen F. Austin College in Nacogdoches on the GI Bill and had a lot of fun, though I didn't have enough money to date during the 27 months it took to earn my chemistry degree.

Next I worked in oilfields in East and West Texas for about six months as a mud logger analyzing cuttings. We had to determine whether the sand contained oil or gas to see if they were in a profitable area. I got tired of moving around so much and went to work in Kilgore as a chemist for Petrolite, a wax manufacturing plant, for six years. Then I worked in research for the Dixie Wax Paper Company in Dallas.

I was not a Christian when I joined the service, but my parents had taught me to go to church. My dad was a farmer, and my uncle was an Assembly of God preacher. We attended his church and the Baptist churches near our home, though we never joined one. At the age of 28, I joined a Baptist Church in Kilgore and became a Christian. Jeanette and I were married there on April 21, 1958. For 32 years, we belonged to the Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Oak Cliff near Dallas. When I retired in 1992, we moved to Tyler and joined Green Acres Baptist Church.

My military experience was a very positive one. I met people from all over the United States and Japan. The GI Bill provided a means to pay for my education. It was pretty tough back then for a kid to go directly to college from high school. My pay during basic training was \$21.00 per month. Later I earned \$105.00 per month. When I became a corporal and a buck sergeant, I was paid a little more. I drew \$125.00 per month while attending college and lived with my mother and younger brother in a two-bedroom cottage. We survived on that income and the produce from our backyard garden. There were three boys in my family. Each of us went to college, but one had to pay his own way. My middle brother joined the Navy and drew benefits on the GI Bill, too. My younger brother went to college directly from high school and earned his master's degree from Ohio State University.