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World War II

A native of Tyler, Texas, I was drafted into the U.S. Army in September 1944. After my induction at the Dallas Center, I was sent to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. There I was assigned to a unit and sent to Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas, for basic training. My training was cut short by two weeks because of the need for personnel overseas. Following a three-week wait at Fort Ord in California, I boarded a troop ship bound for the Pacific Theater.

We arrived on the south side of New Guinea and remained on the ship. Then we moved to the north side of the island, where we went into port and waited onboard until we received a convoy. Our convoy sailed from New Guinea to the Philippine Islands. The first night out, a Japanese submarine came within the area of the convoy. It was quite exciting, and I was very frightened. But the destroyers soon eliminated the submarine, and we continued to Leyte — an island in the Philippines.

I remained in Leyte for four weeks before getting assigned to a unit in the 77th Infantry. We were to fly to Manila, but the base had been bombed out and planes could not land. So we sailed to the island of Luzon. We entered the bay at Manila and had to park the ship without benefit of port assistance. I spent the first night in a pup tent in a ballpark. Then we went to a building across from Wall City. The Japanese were still there, and we entertained them with mortar fire until they surrendered. Afterward, I was placed in a bombed out building near the Jones River and remained there until I was assigned to a military police command for clerical personnel. They noted my MOS and assigned me to a second lieutenant who reported to General Douglas MacArthur. I worked with him for a time and also was assigned to several different generals as their secretary.

After the war ended, I was assigned to a PX (Post Exchange) unit. We were involved in obtaining supplies for and catering to civil service personnel, mostly the Australians and the

WAC unit. A year later, soldiers were returning to the States according to the number of points they had accumulated. They earned two points per month and so many for being in a battle zone. Finally I was ordered out to a station where I was to wait for a ship to return home. At 5:00 a.m., they called the names of personnel who were to depart. My name was not called, along with 20 others. Three hours later, they came back and called for the 21 soldiers left, and we boarded the ship in the Manila harbor. As luck would have it, a cyclone came up, forcing us to remain on the ship for two days before being able to leave the port.

We came back to the States through the Aleutian Islands and docked in San Francisco. We then were stationed in Oakland, California, awaiting a troop train to San Antonio. I was discharged at Fort Sam Houston in November 1946. Though I don't attend military reunions, I do have some photographs and a list of personnel from my unit overseas showing their home states.

Before I left for the service, I had worked for the Cotton Belt Railroad. They granted me a leave of absence, so I returned to work for them in their offices at the Cotton Belt Building in Tyler. I used the GI Bill to take some night courses at Tyler Junior College but did not become a full time student at that time.

I had become a Christian and accepted the Lord during services at the Noonday Baptist Church just prior to entering the service. In the Army, however, I departed from the Christian life and was everything but a Christian. I was single then and certainly did not live a testimony as a Christian. After I returned home, my mother introduced me to a woman who worked with her at a factory in Tyler. We married in February 1948. I rededicated my life to the Lord in June 1948 and have lived a consistent Christian life since that time.

Of course, God protected me throughout my military service. I can recall many times that if I had not known God, I probably would not be here today.

I lived in a rural area when I was drafted. Patriotism was not the first thing on my mind, but I revered our country, our flag, and the freedom we enjoy. After serving overseas and coming home safe and sound, I have even greater respect for our freedom, our country, its leadership and all it stands for. However, I think there is lots of greed in our government today.

I appreciate the involvement Green Acres Baptist Church has had in recognizing the patriots and veterans who have served our country, especially through the Fourth of July service conducted every year.