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I went into service because my brother had been in and I admired him so much for what he did. He was in the Korean Conflict.

I learned to love the military and made a career of it, stayed for twenty years. With my graduation from basic training, I was sent to Hamilton Air Force Base, California, to become a draftsman. I was taught how to design runways and put in emergency landing strips in areas where there were no airfields. We learned how to create and design hangers that could be constructed in a matter of days.

After about eight months at Hamilton, I was shipped to Alaska. That was very strange because I had been raised in Dallas where there's no snow. I was at Elmendorf Air Force Base from May of '52 until April of '54. During that time we made bomb targets. That was a unique experience because we still had the old propeller-driven bombers at that time. We had to take a little square on the map, about a half - inch square, and blow it up so that it fit into a ten-by-ten inch-area. We would draw all the details and put all the

information pertaining to where a bomb target was located. We received several commendations for good accuracy because we could get a bomb within one hundred yards of any given target. We were very proud of the work we did.

From Alaska I went to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and was there until July of 1955. I was in communications security, and the work I did there was classified. From there I was transferred to Salt Lake City and was there for three years in the Ground Observer Corps. There we trained civilians to spot aircraft and call the information in on a hot line so that we could plot it on a large plastic board. We had to identify and keep track of all aircraft to make sure no enemy aircraft came into the area. We were able to keep our skies safe.

In August 1958, I was transferred to England for sixteen months. I had gotten married in July of 1955, and while I was in England, my oldest son was born. My job in England was general drafting work, making all kinds of progress charts and trend charts for the base commander. Then I was transferred to Wiesbaden, Germany, where I got more into the communications security again. Most of what I did there was classified. I was there until August of 1961. From there I went to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, just outside of Phoenix, and I stayed there for eight years. My work there was general drafting, just like at most of the places. We did various things for other organizations, such as nearby Litchfield Park Naval Air Station. They did not have a drafting section so we did the design work for them.

In January of '69, I went to Da Nang Air Base in Viet Nam and was there for just under a year. During that time I was in communication security. A lot of my work had to do with briefings and general drafting, but it was still classified because we were in a war zone. We had several incidences in which we were under fire from the North Vietnamese, the Viet Cong. Right outside the air base was a little town that we called Dog Patch. It seemed to be just a regular Vietnamese village during the day, but at night the Viet Cong who lived there would put on what looked like black pajamas, and they set up all kinds of rockets that they fired at the base.

In early December, Bob Hope and his troop came and we enjoyed that. One of the highlights of my experiences at Da Nang was belonging to the chapel choir and going into town every Sunday evening to put on a sing-a-long for a Vietnamese Church. Once they learned to speak English and learned what we were saying, several people were converted just because of the messages they received through song.

One of the things I want to share with you is that I was saved at the age of eleven, but I went forward because all of the other kids did and I thought it was expected of me. I was brought up in the church. It took me until I was in the military to renew my walk with Christ. To really meet Christ for the first time. That was while I was in Alaska and I was doing some very heavy drinking at that time. And it was a Christian Youth Group in downtown Anchorage that helped me sober up and stay sober for the remaining time there, and from then on I've had a good walk with Christ. Like everybody, I've strayed occasionally, but He's pulled me back.

If it wasn't for the Lord, I wouldn't be here today. He saved my life on several occasions when I was in Viet Nam. Once was when we were under a mortar attack, one of the men woke up dazed and confused, not aware of what was going on. Just as a buddy and I got ready to lead him from the barracks to the bunker, a mortar hit outside across the road. As soon as that settled down, we made a dash for the bunker. Just as we reached it, another mortar hit in the same place. So He looked out for us. He watched over us the whole time. I did lose a very good friend over there, but I also gained many good friends and saw several military men saved as a result of the experience.

I retired in 1971. After spending two or three years trying to figure out what I wanted to do, I tried to get back in, but I wasn't critical so they didn't want me. I trained with a steel company and started driving a truck. I quit in '79 and went to nursing school. Been a nurse ever since. Right now I work with adolescents that are in a drug rehab center. I retired in '99 for a little while, but in March 2002, I went back to work full time. I had to retire permanently in December 2002.

Patriotism back then was a major thing. Everyone was patriotic and you couldn't say anything bad about our country because somebody would be on top of you. Now it seems like it's gone so much the other way. Patriotism now is disappearing and it's very sad because we need to be honoring our country and honoring God for giving us such a wonderful country and giving us the freedom we have.

In 1962, my second son was born. The oldest one now lives in Grand Prairie and is in telecommunications. The second one lives in Winona, just north of Tyler, and he's a computer programmer with a company in Longview. He's also a volunteer fireman and E.M.T. Specialist. In 1964, my daughter was born. She now is married and lives in Minnesota.

My wife, Betty, and I are part of the Care and Share Class with Janelle Doyle. We do all kinds of projects in the class. We look after two or three couples from time to time because they have health problems.