

# The Army, The Recruit, The Wedding!

The United States entered the Korean War as a part of the UN force following the invasion of South Korea by the Communists of North Korea on June 25, 1950. It became one of the bloodiest wars in modern times. More than three million troops and civilians died during the conflict.

I had just completed my first year of college work and had an educational classification to remain in school. Early in August I was notified that my classification had been changed to 1-A and that I was eligible to be drafted. In visiting with the clerk of the local draft board, I was informed that they would be drafting 22 men at the next meeting of the board. "You are number 12 on our list." It was at that point that I decided to check out the local U.S. Army Reserve unit in my home town.

The commanding officer encouraged me to enlist with them. He indicated that it was very imminent that the unit would be called up and that I could then be with the people from my home town. That is what I did and joined the 289th AA Battalion of the 89th Division of the 5th Army of the United States. We met on Monday nights twice a month for three hours of training. Before long I was made company clerk and attained the rank of PFC. After watching all those reruns of M\*A\*S\*H, I now realize I should have been a Corporal!

During the next school year I attended Panhandle A&M College nearby and worked in a local hardware store. In the course of events attending the Guymon, Oklahoma Church of the Nazarene, I met and started dating Evelene Hopkins. She had recently graduated from what is now Southern Nazarene University and was teaching school in Texhoma, Oklahoma. We became engaged early in June and set our wedding for August 24. My job at the hardware ended and I went to Colorado to work on a wheat and cattle ranch.

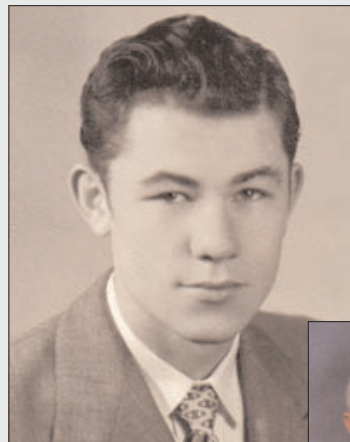
News came to thrill the heart of a stay-at-home student. The Reserve Unit has been called to two weeks of active duty in Wisconsin and may be called to permanent active duty from there. We were scheduled to leave by train from Liberal, KS on Saturday, July 21 and to return on Sunday, August 5. The great flood of 1951 had inundated the railroad area of Kansas City, so we could not take the scheduled route to Chicago on the Rock Island Line.

We were taken by bus to Colby, Kansas and boarded a train there. We were fortunate that the only cars available were Pullman. This was real luxury to prepare us for what we would encounter in Wisconsin. We quickly learned that if each of us put a quarter in the tip plate, we would receive very good and fast service in the dining car. Upon arriving at Camp Sheboygan, we were issued five woolen blankets and a cot. It was so cold that I slept in my fatigues with two blankets under me, two over me and the fifth for a pillow.

I was still cold!

The next morning we were taken by bus to Camp McCoy which was all the way across the state and near the Mississippi River. It was so hot there that no blankets were ever needed. Training consisted of many hours of marching, watching films, learning about the M-1 Garand carbine and other necessary skills for the Army.

One day we were taken to the firing range to live fire the M-1



by Leland A. King



rifle. I was fortunate to have an instructor to help me and I qualified as a sharpshooter. The man next to me on the line was not at all comfortable with the process. He was on position #1 and when he pulled the trigger, he also jerked the rifle to his left and hit target #36.

The instructor said, "That's good, soldier. Let me have your rifle." He was not ever allowed to carry one after that.

The two weeks were finally over and no orders for call up were received, so by bus, train and private car I returned to Guymon on August 5, 1951.

The next two weeks were spent in preparation for the wedding event. I met Evelene's father earlier in the summer. Her sister who was to be her maid of honor arrived on the 20th. Her mother, father and other two sisters arrived on the 23rd. The best man arrived at 1:55 p.m. for the 2:00 p.m. wedding and the usher did not ever arrive. He later told me he woke up in Oregon that morning and realized that it was our wedding day.

August 24, 1951 was probably the hottest day of the

summer. The church had no air conditioning nor did our car have any way to cool us. We were off to Amarillo, Texas for a very short honeymoon. Evelene was to report for the beginning of school on Monday, August 27.

*The Rest of the Story* would include the facts that the unit was never called to permanent active duty, my discharge papers are dated 1953, the best man and I are still best of friends, the usher has not kept in contact with us, Evelene and I are still quite happily married and we now have two children and three grandsons. My life as a company clerk started me on the road to being the record keeper for many, many organizations.

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