

2.4 KOREAN WAR 1950-1953

American soldiers in Korea were called GIs: short for Government Issue; General Infantry.

The Korean War started counting 3 years on 6/25/1950. In those 3 years 33,652 GIs died and another 103,000 were wounded. The conflict continued and has remained a sore spot on the earth's skin. North Korea remains Communist; the government of South Korea is patterned after the U.S. Constitution.

“North Korea keeps 1,000,000 troops positioned within 60 miles of the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone, the 2.5 mile wide monitored space between the 2 Koreas.). South Korea has 690,000 troops with 37,000 U.S. advisors. The area is still unsettled due to North Korea's interest in developing nuclear capability, in violation of a 1994 agreement.” —“The 2 Koreas”, [national geographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com), 2003.

“In 1950 the infantry was getting slaughtered, and they were sending cooks, clerks and the like to fill in the front lines.”

—“Ed”, Healing Suicidal Veterans, p. 148.

Sign at Valley Evangelical Free Church, Chaska, MN, 6/6/13,
when Korea again became a volatile hotbed:

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers.”

“The Cold War was more frigid in Korea than anywhere else in the world.”

—Bruce Cumings, Korean Historian

During this time, U.S. troops continued to serve in Germany as Military Police to monitor East and West Germany.

Psalm 33:13-22: Korea

The LORD looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race,
From His throne He observes all who live on the earth. He made their hearts,
So He understands everything they do.

The best-equipped army cannot save a king,
Nor is great strength enough to save a warrior.

Don't count on your Jeep to give you victory—
For all its strength, it cannot save you.

The LORD watches over those who fear Him,
Those who rely on His unfailing love.

Your eyes, LORD, are focused on [Richard] right now,
Let Your unfailing love rest upon him.

—In memory of Captain and Pilot Richard “Dick” Carroll, 1933-2011. Psalm 33, NASB, with some adjustments by the author. Read at his funeral 7/30/2011.



Cousin Dick.

Private Pain: Korea

I was trained as a grease monkey
At Wold Chamberlain Naval Base to support the pilots.
Ended up repairing jeeps.
When I came back
Everything was OK.
It had to be. By order of my father.
And it was.
Except for the crying jags at night.



Grease monkey cap.

—In appreciation of Bill G., 1937-2012, who finally told his story Summer 2011.

Conflicted Conscripted: Back Home from Korea

Back in '62
The parents didn't even pick me up at the airport.
I had to find my own way to the VA,¹ then to my town.
Pa warmed a barstool after work at the foundry,

Wondering when I would get off my high horse

—a little head injury, my foot!—

And get back to *real* work.

Ma was on the line at the pickle factory, glad for the late shift,

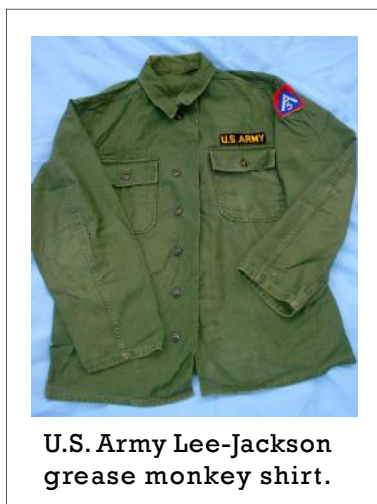
Preferring vinegar to his sourness at the house.

I came back from the 51st parallel

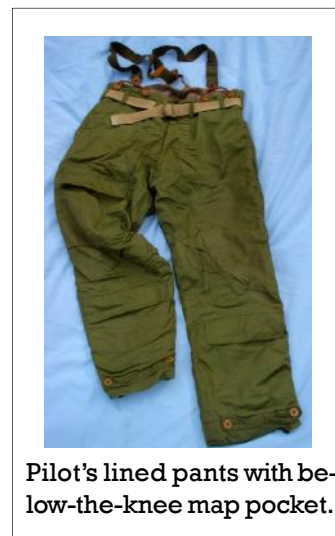
To their DMZ.

—With compassion for Bill, who enlisted at age 16 to get away from home.

¹Veterans Administration Hospital, Mpls-St. Paul, MN.



U.S. Army Lee-Jackson
grease monkey shirt.



Pilot's lined pants with be-
low-the-knee map pocket.

Pushing Up... Pushing Away: Korea

1...2...3...4...

I'm so homesick for my wife and kid...10...11...

Why did *he* get to go home 15...16...and I didn't? 25...26...

I'm grateful...27...he carried my package to them, ...30...31

But he got to smell her perfume 41.....42....43. 44.

He's the one who grinned at my little girl. 54. 55. 56. 57.

Peg wrote congenially that Erin called *him* "Daddy". 68 69

It grinds my gut. 7475767778

I'll never get that time back: 80 81 82 hearing that word, 84.....85....

Seeing her learn to walk. ...94.....

—“Captain B. J. Hunnicutt, M.D.” (Mike Farrell), based on M*A*S*H 4077 (Medical Army Surgical Hospital), episode 178, 10/15/1979, when “Corporal Radar O’Reilly” (Gary Burghoff) was rotated home.

Poem below is in memory of all the generations of children who have been introduced to military life because older brothers came back, but not soon enough. In honor especially of a 10-year-old classmate David, who worried quietly at school about his older brother fresh back from Korea in 1961-62. They shared a room at home and Brother slept with his eyes open, loaded rifle in hand:

Gentle Footsteps: Back Home from Korea

Jesus, walk through my quarters
Mop up my worries, clean that mess I stowed;
Make me ready for inspection.



Korean War Duffel.

Sweep in with Physician's confidence. Brush my brow,
Close my eyes while I sleep, if You would; I'm so tired of hyper-vigilance.
Take my jungle bugs, my unease and re-entry culture shock with You.

And while You are ambling by my office
You could go ahead and pay those bills while You're at it!
My heart is an open checkbook to You, regardless.

Come in to check on me in the night,
Gently lift my hand from my rifle. Put the gun in the closet.
Help me trust You to protect me instead.

Take the bullets out. Count 'em. Then hide 'em.
Quietly wake me; call my name, touch my toe so I don't choke You out.
Relieve the memories that trigger all that adrenaline.

Open Your glue, re-bond me to kid brother. Bring me out of my camouflage.
Help me attend to tone of voice, unmet need, small annoyance;
May I use Your soft slippers to keep from stepping on toes? Amen.

—To honor David and his older brother.

**"In Korea, soldiers didn't sleep. Guys who
ended up going to sleep
woke up dead."**

**—One soldier, quoted by Rev. Dean J. Seal,
Shepherd of the Hill Church, Chaska, MN, 5/29/2016.**

Selected Service: Divided Germany

I moved my appointment date up so I could go in sooner. Fresh off the bus from Minnesota to Basic Training in California: “You, you, you. Go down the hall.”

Without that officer even knowing my name or that my father was a town constable, my purpose in the Army—and probably my life direction—were sealed due to the order in which we got off that bus.

During the heat of the Korean Conflict, I became part of the Military Police followed by an entire tour of duty in Germany to maintain the division of that country due to the decisions from WWII. On leave I visited France, Holland, then Italy twice. It was very nice, but not all that exciting.

I learned when you get a bunch of young GIs together, they do what they think is right among them. If that collective intelligence isn’t guided by character, things can change in a hurry. “It seemed like a good idea at the time” is heard in a lot of MP brigs and police stations.

I met my wife while stationed in Germany. Moving to the U.S. was not easy for her, but my parents were extremely happy—because they were both German immigrants. My cousins are still there; we have returned for visits many times. It was a good experience all the way around.

I had a fine life for 3 years overseas, then became a police officer in Minnesota for 40 years. Unfortunately some young men continued the same carousing lifestyle they decided to pursue in the military. That’s where I came in, again. Admittedly, most of my job would have been unnecessary in either location if there were no alcohol. Some GIs drink because of negative experiences, as a means of survival, to fit in, due to loneliness; some because they abandoned—or embraced—what they learned as youngsters. Others drink because they were never plugged into what they could do well; alcohol use has been attributed to boredom, also so folks can still live with themselves and their memories.

—Retired Military Police Sergeant Firmus Opitz



Ammo Box.



Military Police Armband.

A Fine Line: Divided Germany

Military Police recognize personnel have a choice: (to be or not to be law-abiding, that is the question), but soldiers and civilians can both get confused about what a good choice looks like. Sometimes suicide looks like a good choice to guys who have seen too much. Discipline is one thing, but discipline with the use of guilt only magnifies guilt.

It is crucial to instill the ability to reason in members of the police and military rather than “action by emotion”. When I was out searching for insurgents in my war, thinking it through was the only thing that stopped me from shooting innocents a couple of times. I came so close to making the wrong judgment call. Any of us could. A person trains to react the way one’s judgement states at the moment. Will I survive or will he? Using reason with overarching Christian principle worked for me.

Look for logic in the situation: is it logical for him to be here at this hour? With a bag over the shoulder when women in this culture are the bearers of burdens? Does it look like he will harm me? If I could give any advice it would be to rely on God’s protection. We did something called “door rattling”— checking to make sure a location was secure. For some reason I skipped a door. I never skipped a door, but that night I did. It was discovered later that behind that door was an enemy who would have shot as soon as the doorknob moved. Be led. Be prepared spiritually. If you miss His nudge, and they find you, you will still go to heaven. That sure helped my nerves in “police action”.

Yes, I did shoot someone in the line of duty. Yes, it bothers me plenty. If I take the gospel as my own, I also have to take “*Thou shalt not kill.*” It was justified, I went through protocol, but that didn’t halt the guilt or the second-guessing. No jury would have convicted me for doing it in the line of duty, but by God’s law, I still don’t feel justified, all these years later. Did I offend the Lord by doing it? All we seem to be able to do is to bring the rules of war as close as we can to His rules for society. Regardless of any tribunal or departmental investigation, no matter which human being releases culpability for my action, it is still hard. For all the reasons I could put behind stopping an insurgent who should not have been there, imagine how hard it would be to have made the wrong judgment call, to have discovered a different reason for that person’s presence after the fact.

We are called to love one another, even if we don’t agree with an ideological choice or a cultural penchant. This is extremely difficult under normal circumstances; but in war, a person tells himself all the reasons why the other side should deserve death in order to bolster courage. How can a person reconcile that with “*Love one another*”? The spiritual tug-of-war is almost impossible.

—Firmus Opitz

Over-Extended: Navy

I signed up for 4 years in the Navy in 1946. They must have had a shortage of men because about when my time was up, we all got a directive: “You extend your enlistment to 5 years, or we’ll do it for you.” We’d been assigned to take Naval Reservists back to Guantanamo Bay base anyway, so I didn’t get the paper-work filed, but they were true to their word. Some took the option of taking Naval Reserve instead of the extra year, and they were discharged, then surprisingly found themselves on the way back to Korea the next day.

Instead, I was shipped back to New Orleans Yeomen School for practice shooting drones (not the sophisticated kind they have now), then spent my year in the Atlantic and Mediterranean on the lookout for them. Once that was fulfilled and I was discharged, I took a turn on the Selective Service Board.

—Yeomen 3rd Class Tom Heath, Chaska, MN.

Break Him or Make Him?: Navy

I’m not the same person as when I left North Carolina for the Navy. Now there’s something that can change you! Parents have sent sons into the service to “make a man out of him”. I don’t know how many went into Korean Conflict Service to be made men of, but I can assure you you’re never the same when you come out as when you go in. You see things that you never saw before and, more to the point, hope never to see again. That’s not to say the service is all bad, but you do experience some of the seamier aspects of human nature.

My parents had us kids in church every time the doors were open. I thought it was part of my fabric, but when I got under the sails, I had trouble staying dry. “Water, water everywhere but nary a drop to drink” was not quite accurate: sailing in water was our *modus operandi*, but alcohol was almost as plentiful. It was cheap and drinking it was the expected behavior. It very nearly became my Waterloo.

It was in the Navy I took my first alcoholic drink. It very quickly became my pattern to go out and get snockered every Saturday night, maneuverably tipsy. But, no matter how big the hangover, I was ALWAYS in church the next day. The pattern that had been ingrained into me by my parents stayed with me, even if my lifestyle changed. Sunday was not complete until I went to church, asked forgiveness. I was searching to find out who I really was then and realized beverages were not doing me any favors. I still go to church, though! It works for me. I’m still changing. I’m still growing daily.¹ Still learning

to accept myself for who I am. God doesn't criticize me, so maybe I can let up on being my own worst critic. I'm learning about self-worth. 60 years after my service, I'm less conflicted, more willing to carefully and studiously form an opinion. I'm gratefully even more a man now than then, learning to become "a workman who has no cause to be ashamed."²

—Tom Heath

¹Tom's favorite book to help his journey is Bless My Growing by Gerhard Frost, from a friend in Cursillo.

²2 Timothy 2:15

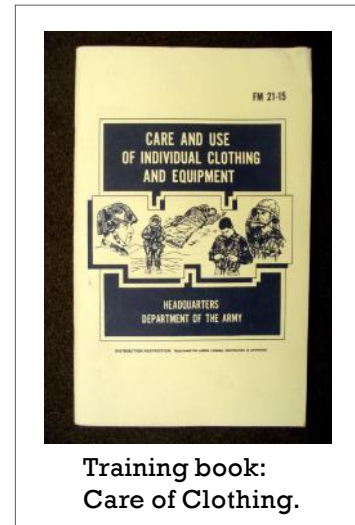
On Thoughts at Sea: Navy

1. Newbie on the Water

The fresh clean feeling on deck early in the morning
The endless expanse of water encircling earth's girth
The sunlight skipping off water
The noonday brilliance scrubbing the tips of waves bleach-white
The feeling of security as the ship climbs again to
The top of each crest after each dip-and-roll in
The ponderous, mountainous swells
The self-defiance against the forces of nature during the fury of a storm
The wind-torn waves wildly sending spray and spume
The sea shuddering the bow, being caught in the grip of its ague¹
The taste of both salty sea water and fresh rain blowing in your face

The silver flying fish gliding, gleaming and glistening, racing crest to crest
The water changing its hues with light's spectrum
The cathedral of the deep pierced by a shaft of light
The shark playing steal tag with ferocious antagonism
The sudden decent of the sun into the sea, and
The flaring sky, a promise of tomorrow. Lying on deck watching
The night sky slide in and out of position with each roll
The phosphorus, plankton and krill dancing in the froth
The comfort of sleeping topside on hot summer nights
The hustle of vital activity every day

The interminable chow lines in all conditions
The false richness of payday and



The inevitable crap game, the crest-fallen loser and beaming winner
The steady sssahhh, sssahhh, sssahhh of
The lava stones cleaning the wooden deck
The sweating in knee-length dungarees
The swearing, pushing forward to a gleaming finish for the cursed inspection
The test when men stand stiff and strained to be appraised or criticized
The minute inspection by gloved liveried² officers for any specks that shouldn't
be there
The time you can call your own, unhampered by dutiful things
The listening to music you have heard innumerable times and never tire of

2. Shore Leave

The routine chores becoming eagerly awaited tasks to complete as time is
hurried forward
The last-minute preparations
The feeling of arriving at a familiar port
The self-same objects recognized that make up the picture of strangeness
The way the sun lights up the Acropolis, sets the Parthenon gleaming
The snow-covered peaks merging with the clouds into nothingness
The golden beaches stretching out of sight
The modern cliff dwellers of Sorrento
The indescribable beauty of Capri, the reflecting canals of Venice
The serene quietness of the Suez Canal, the *blueness* of "The Red Sea"
The dirt and squalor of Old Tangerian Casbah and
The clean-cut lines of the new town
The Rock of Gibraltar jutting defiantly into
The sea, clinging with one finger to the mainland
The way people come to look at the ship, admire and exclaim
The peddlers who meet the ship as though they were foretold of our coming
The anticipation of getting away from
The ship for a few hours to see strange and interesting faces
The continuous babble of voices intoning an older country, a foreign nation
The ancient atmosphere, bleak buildings, pompous ruins, reminiscent of more
glorious times
The haggard look of people, the scarcity of grey heads,
The thinness of the children
The way it always seems to rain when the sun should shine
The wonderful assurance of returning to a warm ship, food, and faithful buddies

3. Back Out to Sea

A sigh of resignation from things hoped for to things realized
A withdrawal from port, faces and bodies on shore merging into one colored
mass,
All signs of life sinking from sight on the retreating horizon
A final month, interminably long
A delay rumored, herds of scuttlebutt dispersed

4. Finally Homeward Bound

When the ship edges into the dock
When casting mooring lines followed by sisal Hauser ropes
When docking is complete
When upturned faces scan the ship, searching
When recognition breaks
When strained faces become smile-wreathed countenances
When ecstatic greetings are exchanged
When discharges are being transferred
When sailors give their temporary home a last once-over
When there are papers and more papers, examinations, insults and victories
When walking out the gate the last time
When triumph of completion intermingles with feelings of desertion, aloneness
When home at last with time to think of anything else, there are thoughts on
things past...

—With Tom Heath

¹Ague: chronic revisit of malaria; reference to the sea having a bout of chills and shakes.

²Liveried: standard issue, colors and uniform, complying to regulation.

Death of a loved one can affect service personnel even more than civilians because there is an unwritten contract: soldiers prepare to die in combat protecting the safety of loved ones back home, and loved ones should be waiting for them when they return. If the “contract” is broken—and there is no longer a “tribe” to protect—the reason for prevailing in combat diminishes.

—Based on Samuel A. Stouffer's and Arthur A. Lumsdaine's “Studies in Social Psychology in World War II”, 1942, and The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II), 1949.

Grieving: Navy

Grief sucks at the bones of your loss:
Death of a buddy, divorce, duty done, job gone,
All in some way provided by the government.

Grieving double-time:
Over what we did
And what we failed to do.

Anger, guilt, anxiety, sadness, despair,
Even ignoring there is something to grieve over,
All part of the hidden marrow.

Some don't grieve loss until several years later
After the fracture has festered. Like being peeved every Tuesday
And realizing it's because hubby's no longer there to put out the garbage.

Letting go of the infection is tough smelly work.
A person can lose sleep, change appetite, get sick. Yet
Taking time to grieve and redirect all that energy is a good thing.

Find ways to say goodbye.
Reconcile to each loss that's felt, whether it seems rational or not.
Let healing take its time—but take it.

We all grieve—in one way or another. I believe even God grieves when He sees
How far His Creation has fallen, even knowing that it would happen.
Because He has grieved so much, He can help with ours.

Maybe disturbing dreams aren't a bad thing;
They are bringing hidden things to the open.
When my mother was dying, I knew I'd not visited enough.

I'd been in the Navy on the high seas for 5 years. Now that I needed to,
I didn't get a flight home quickly enough. I've had to live with that.
I've grieved over the years at not ever having told my mother I loved her.
Of course she knew I loved her, but I never verbalized it.

I've had dreams about seeing her, unable to reach her to tell her.
In one dream I was finally able to hug her and say so...and woke up crying.
That dream, making it right, put it in perspective.



“In the Sweet Bye and Bye”
(we will meet on that beautiful shore), published in 1887,
was a popular song at funerals into the 1950s and 60s.

An adult Sunday School class helped me imagine my own death bed.
“If you had one piece of advice to give your friends, or say one farewell,
What would it be?” I’d say: “Keep in touch.” “Tell them so.”

Some day there will be no more “just a minute”.
What we care about most gets all used up and goes away.
So take care of it, fix it when it’s broken . . . and heal it when it’s sick if you can.

This is true for marriage, for children with bad report cards,
Dogs with bad hips, aging parents and grandparents.
We keep them because they’re worth it . . . because WE are worth it.

—With Tom Heath, U.S. Navy.

Six Practical Steps in Family Redevelopment:

1. Redefine the priorities of your life and be sure you make people more important than things.
2. Put an end to credit buying and begin to pay your way out of debt.
3. Spend time with the people who count in your life. Build memories.
4. Provide healthy love and discipline for each child. Base consequences on their personality.
5. Verbalize your love.
6. Stay in touch with each other and in tune with the Lord.

—Dr. Richard D. Dobbins, from Pamphlet: “Your Family is Your Fortune”,
EMERGE Ministries, Inc, Akron, Ohio, p.11.

The Mettle of a Man: Navy

I signed up off the farm
Graduated as a Yeomen A,
Begged to get out from behind
A typewriter on base;
Found duty on USS Worcester CCL-144
Out of Norfolk, VA
And saw half the globe
Typing on the ship.



Portable government issue
typewriter of the era.

—Norman Monroe, 1st Class Petty Officer, retired, Chaska, MN.

Vets or Family Members: To receive deserved but never yet awarded medals, list the most significant duty assignment (example: U.S.S. Worcester CL-144) with documentation. You will need the person's service number to obtain earned but never received medals. (Go to the county of induction for the discharge number, Form DD-214)/ Postage only will be charged for the medals shipped (correct for their service time period back to the Civil War). Replacement medals and patches will have a cost, but it is not a great amount.

For posthumous service personnel: a blood relative must provide place of birth and pursue the claim. Visit the Registrar of Deeds in that county. If they registered for service, that office should have a copy of their military service DD-214 that would show any medals or ribbons earned. Compare that to what has already been received. 1-800-308-0849 <http://www.medalsofamerica.com> —Dr. Norman Monroe

God Has Tattoos, Too: Navy

I have engraved thee
Upon the palms of My hands.

—Isaiah 49:16



TattooDesigns24.com

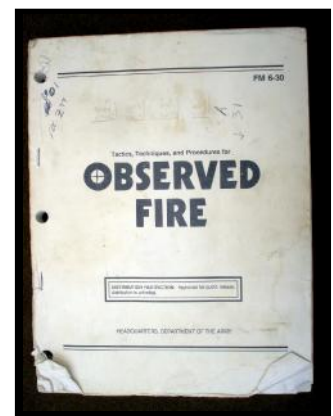
[Tell Me a Tattoo Story](#) by Alison McGhee and Eliza Wheeler, 2016, ISBN 1452119376. A young son learns about his father's service and life.

“A man has a certain gravitas, or personal presence and power. He gets points among other men, for example, for being able to grow a bushy beard. It's why a guy wears greasy clothes into an auto parts store or an army jacket in his home town. It gives him “street cred”. In service culture, tattoos have always added to one's toughness quotient when beards aren't allowed.”

—Jesse Hunt

Medic!: Korea

In specialist training we were told
Not to depend on little red crosses
(better than bullseyes)
Or the Geneva Convention to shield us.



In fact, Navy Intelligence figured
Sniping one medic was more effective for the enemy
Than shooting 5 Marines;

Besides demoralizing our troops,
One down meant we couldn't
Patch 5 up.

It was not lost on us that statistically, any medic
Got the chance to help only 5 guys before
He was taken out. Lousy odds for all that training.

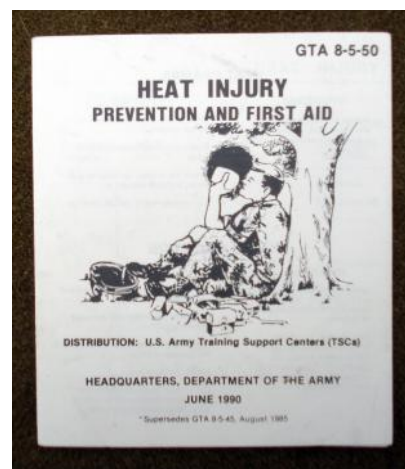
So, I “lost” my patches,
Had the guys call me “Rex”² instead.
Strapped on a holster—full of bandages—

Kept my head down.
For some reason
I beat those odds.

—George H.

¹The Geneva Convention provided agreed upon rules of war etiquette in western culture. Included was the mutual agreement not to fire upon any medical personnel or schools. Korea/Asia was not invited to the table when these rules were made.

²Rx as code for “Help!”, instead of the expected “Medic!”.



Treatment of Heat Injury,
Army training manual.

Rexie: Back Home from Korea

I've been told I was the only pro baseball player drafted¹ from North Dakota. Unfortunately it only lasted one year before I was drafted into the Korean Conflict. After my 4 years as a nurse in the Army for the Marines, I returned, deciding to go to Hamline College for pre-Med on the GI Bill. Due to service, I was older than the rest (they called me “Gramps”). There was a recall in the middle of a semester: an FBI Agent came right to the campus and knocked on the classroom door. My professor said, “George, are you in some kind of trouble?” But the Agent just delivered my orders—then made sure I didn't forget I'd be leaving at the end of the hour. I guess they needed medics pretty bad. Fortunately

I got credit for most of my classes, but some I had to take over.

When I returned from the second tour, I was always trying to make ends meet while none of the “kids” seemed worried about finances. It wasn’t too long before I ran out of money—with a wife and small children to support, I figured I’d have to drop out to get a job. I asked the Dean for advice. He retorted, “Well, every time you come in my office, you seem to sell me something I hadn’t known I needed. Try pharmaceutical sales.” So I did. A drug company realized I knew the terminology, told me I had more real-life education and experience than most young general practitioners stateside; hired me on the spot. I spent the next 50 years visiting family doctors as a pharmaceutical rep and it sure paid the bills. It worked for me.

—George “Rexie” H.

¹Was recruited and played for the New York Yankees farm team in the Northern League.

Sky Pilot: Korea

Mom was pregnant with me
When Dad went to the Korean War.

He was a pilot—my hero—
Killed in battle at age 32,

His life on earth ended
On the day of my birth.

I learned God could be my Father
Because I had no other choice that made sense.

I had no one to watch my back until I realized,
“He guards the hands and lives of His faithful ones.” Psalm 97:10

—Clyde Harvey, “Valentines to God” sermon 2/14/2016.



An F-51D Mustang taxis past another parked F-51. (U.S. Air Force photo) <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/shared/media/photodb/photos/050429-F-1234P-001.jpg>

Vergib Mir?¹: Divided Germany

Dear Erika, Marta, Gabi, Crista,

I'm sorry about American prejudice against German-speakers in the United States post-WWII and during the Cold War. We hardly knew how to think about our own German heritage after the war, let alone someone else's. War does terrible things, and I'm guessing it did a disservice to you as you were trying to become American wives and citizens. *Vergib mir?* I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive us for our insensitivity toward war brides. I officially welcome you now! Thank you for coming to America.

—Angela

¹*Vergib mir?*: German for “Forgive me?”



Cold War West German flag, 1949 - 1990 . Vexillo-
logical Association Focused on Flags: a Shorthand
of History, <http://www.loeser.us/flags/cold.html>

Harry and Joe: Back Home from Korea

“I worked at the Naval Hospital as a Navy Nurse in Washington, D.C. on my second tour of duty. To my surprise, not only flown-in wounded soldiers, but anyone anywhere in the government could use the facility, including a legislator who had the sniffles.

I was on the graveyard shift one night. I'd just done rounds at 5:00 am and it was quiet so I went down to get a cup of coffee. Just as the elevator door was closing, I managed to push the call button to stop it and wrestled the doors open. There were President Harry Truman and 2 guardians! The Secret Service members immediately reached for their pistols (I'd surprised them, too), but Truman said, “He's OK. He's just got a cup of coffee.” I don't even recall if I offered it to him.”

—George Heger