

Memories of Military Service

Serving in the Tennessee Army National Guard for nine years was both a privilege and an honor for me.

Looking back on that experience leaves no doubt in my mind that it made me a better person. The benefits were many, including ...

- Money to help with my college education.
- A sense of repayment to my country for what it does for me.
- Coming to really understand how valuable discipline can be in life in general or in any particular endeavor.
- Total respect for a chain of command.
- Learning the absolute necessity of team dynamics to successfully accomplish a mission.
- The camaraderie that develops, leading to lifelong friendships.

That was years ago, but service to my country left an indelible mark on me – memories I will cherish throughout the rest of my life.

It is my belief that it would be good for any young person – perhaps between high school and college, or the start of a career – to spend at least two years in some branch of the Armed Forces or the Peace Corps. Such service brings a higher level of maturity for choices about the future.

Few things bond people together like a shared memory, such as with fellow soldiers I run into around Cleveland or the state. Or memories with teammates in sports who win a championship, or work teams who hit their goals. In each case, all share a special connection. That's why the Facility of the Year honors given at our annual management meeting are so highly regarded, next only to the Chairman's Award as the top honor of the night. And it's because it took every member of the facility team to achieve it.



Some memories come as the result of circumstances, but many can be proactively created. Author Lewis Carroll wrote, "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backward." What does that mean to you and me? The richest memories are often those we plan and intentionally create.

(more)

Isn't it true that most memories you have are with the people you spend the most time with? If you want to make memories with your family, spend more time with them. If you want to create memories with your associates and the patients and residents you serve, don't do it behind the door of your office.

You simply can't make memories with people if you don't take time to be with them. But when you do, those memories are golden.

The Apostle Paul recognizes this principle in his letter to the church he founded in Philippi: *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now* (Philippians 1:3-5 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter