

Salute to Veterans

Green native Pickett served country proudly

By DALE CURRY
SPECIAL TO THE R-H

Doug Pickett volunteered to serve his county by joining the United States Navy almost 69 years ago.

That decision led to military service in Korea, Japan, Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Pickett began his military stint by attending boot camp at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, California.

His stay in California didn't last long and Pickett found himself far from home.

"I was in the Navy 47 months," Pickett said, "and 34 of those months were overseas. I was gone for ten months, then 14 months and then ten more months."

Many of those months were spent in enemy territory.

"I was in Japan the first ten months I was overseas," Pickett said.

He followed that up with a 30 day leave but was soon back in Japan and then Korea.

"While in Korea, I felt the ground shake from bombs and I saw a lot of activity," Pickett said.

ett said.

Pickett was stationed in Korea when the war with Korea ended.

Military action was not the only life-threatening event that Pickett encountered. "I contracted malaria while in Korea," Pickett said, "I lost 36 pounds and turned yellow."

Pickett is not eager to talk about the details of his service. He realizes that as difficult as life was for him and others in his company, there were others who had more difficult lives.

"I had shells fly over my head, but no one ever looked down a barrel at me, as far as I know," Pickett said, "or at least if he did, he missed."

But Pickett and others were far from comfortable.

The barracks that Pickett and others stayed in had no heat and the windows were broken out.

"We had to sleep in sleeping bags with blankets piled on top of us," Pickett said. "It's difficult to talk about and to think about how things could have been different."

Pickett and four

other men from Green County left home together.

"Bill Taylor, Tommy Turner, Dwight Sandridge, Harold Berry and I all went to boot camp together," Pickett said. "I went to Japan with Bill Taylor and then wound up in Korea with Bill."

Pickett's family has strong military ties.

His other brother, Sonny, had already joined the Navy while Doug was still in high school.

"I wanted to go with Sonny," Pickett said, "but Dad said I had to finish high school."

Eventually he and his brother Sonny would both be in the Navy at the same time but were never stationed close to each other.

Sonny spent most of his time in Key West, Florida, according to Pickett.

"Daddy would say, 'I got one boy in the Navy who has never been out of the United States and one boy who can't get back to the United States,'" Pickett said.

Pickett's son, Brad, joined the Navy immediately after graduating high school. One grandson, Bradley, has

been in several combat spots and the other grandson, Chad, was part of the Florida National Guard.

Pickett also has two sisters who married husbands who were military as well.

Despite the difficulties of a military life, Pickett is encouraging to anyone who is thinking about a career in the military.

"I'd tell them to go for it," Pickett said. "You get a lot of experiences in the military."

Pickett is grateful for all the people who have served their country and recognizes their sacrifices.



Doug Pickett and his son Brad pictured in their uniforms.



**THANK YOU TO
ALL THOSE WHO
SERVED**



Robby Beard

Green County Sheriff



**GREATER LOVE HAS NO
ONE THAN THIS: TO
LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE
FOR ONE'S FRIENDS.**

JOHN 15:13

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FOR YOUR SERVICE**

ON BEHALF OF



**Salute
to Veterans**



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