

## Chapter V

### New Beginnings

April 8, 1946 – July 15, 1946

Now that Sheffield had his answer, he turned the plane around to return to the airport. He pondered the experience that he just had. It was so powerful that he was determined to follow through with the impression that he received, although it was not the way he was leaning. In fact, it wasn't even something that he was considering.

He was inclined to accept the call to duty as he was accustomed to doing. In fact he had all but decided to stay in the Navy for another five years. But now he felt that he must answer a higher call. He had no idea why he received the answer that he did. He trusted that it would lead to opportunities that he couldn't even imagine. He almost felt ashamed that he treated the idea so lightly and immediately dismissed it without a second thought.

Staying in the Navy would have been the easy thing to do. Even working for the airline would have been something he could have easily walked right into without much of a stretch. But coaching wrestling and teaching government was way out of his league. Geannie had been a teacher and a good one at that. "She must be looking down on me and laughing out loud." he thought.

These, and a myriad of other thoughts raced through his mind. Before he knew it he was back at the airport, making his final approach. Once back on the ground, he checked the aircraft back in and paid for its use. It had been good to get back into the air once again; in more ways than one.

Sheffield drove into Washington. When he entered his office, his staff was hard at work. Without saying much more than, "Hello." he went into his office and shut the door behind him. He picked up the telephone and took a deep breath before dialing the number. Never before had he said no to the call to duty. At least this was a request and not an order.

A moment later he had been patched through. "Jonas Ingram speaking." the voice on the other end of the line announced.

"Admiral Ingram, this is Sheffield Brason."

"Yes Sheffield. I've been expecting your call. Before you give me your decision, I have to tell you that an alternative has surfaced. I tell you this so you won't feel obligated to say yes. If you want it, its still yours."

"I'm glad to hear that, Admiral, because I was calling to decline the offer. I have thought long and hard about this and the decision was difficult, but it is clear to me that I have made the right decision for myself."

"Thank you for considering it. I know that it was a lot to ask of you."

"So who did you find to do it?"

"Someone who has been long over looked for promotion for some reason. In fact, he's an old friend

of yours.”

“Really. Who is it”

“Captain Fred McGowan. Of course we'll need to pin a couple of stars on him. He's got the experience from being chief of staff for McCain and now Towers. He knows carrier operations.”

“Excellent choice, Admiral. I highly endorse him.”

“Thanks again, Sheffield. I'm going to push through his promotion and get him here as soon as possible. And Sheffield, good luck to you in whatever you do.”

“Thank you Admiral. Goodbye, sir.”

Sheffield put the receiver down in its cradle, relieved that that went well. He was happy for Freddy. He always felt bad that he had somehow leaped ahead of him. If anyone deserved it, Freddy did. Sheffield was able to go about his day with his mind free from wrestling with his decision. Now he had to wrestle with the consequence. Suddenly all of his memories of wrestling, in both high school and at the Academy, came rushing back to him. It got him excited about the future.

That evening, Ramona listened intently to Sheffield as he related his experience. When he was through, she said, “Well then, there you have it. That's what you'd better do. I think its funny that you dismissed Bill so quickly without giving it any thought and that turns out to be the thing you're supposed to do.”

“What do you think? Should I tell American Airlines thanks but no no thanks or should I keep that door open just in case things don't work out?”

“I suppose it wouldn't hurt to keep your options open. But I do think you ought to call Bill and tell him that you're interested.”

“That sounds reasonable. I think I'll call him right now. He's probably home.”

Sheffield found his number and had the operator put him through. A moment later, he was connected. “Hello Bill. This is Sheffield. How are you this evening?”

“Well hello Sheffield. I'm just fine, thank you. And you?”

“I'm just great Bill. Listen the reason I'm calling is first to apologize to you if I was curt with you at the wedding. I kind of brushed you off about that coaching job, but my mind was elsewhere. Now that I have had time to think about it, I'm very much interested. That is if it's not to late.”

“Not at all, Sheffield. I'm glad you're willing to consider it.”

“What do I need to do?”

“Just sit and wait. Like I said, the position won't be posted for another six weeks. Why don't you send me your resume and I'll submit it to the rest of the board along with my recommendation. When it gets closer to the time, the superintendent will have you in for an interview. So just sit tight for now.”

“How good a shot do you think I have at getting it?”

“Oh, I'd say about ninety nine percent.”

“Alright, then. Thanks Bill. I'll get it off to you in the next day or two.

“I'll be looking for it. Thanks for calling Sheffield. I'll be in touch.”

“I'll talk to you later. Bye.”

After hanging up, Sheffield turned to Ramona, “Just maybe we'll be moving to Roanoke after all.”

During the rest of the month of April, Sheffield and his staff wrapped up their report. Both Sheffield and Ramona received the final approval for their retirement, including details about their pensions. In the meanwhile, the Reprisal sailed for the Mediterranean, without Sheffield.

Ramona pressed forward with plans for a trip to Hawaii in conjunction with their retirement. They decided to spend two weeks at her beach house. The plan was to leave just after Memorial Day.

But first they began in earnest to make plans for moving to Roanoke. They decided to rent an apartment until they got settled and would look for something more permanent later. On the first weekend in May, they took a trip home to look at apartments that Sarah had lined up for them to look at.

They both left work at noon on Friday and drove home. Rather than staying with his parents, this time they stayed with Walt and Sarah in the home that they had just moved into. It was along the Roanoke River in the seven hundred block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side of town, near the Austin sawmill and lumberyard and close to where the Austin brothers all lived.

Sarah had lined up several places for them to look at on Saturday, beginning early in the morning with appointments throughout the day. Some of them were downtown, close to Emmett and Ellen. Others were on the west side of town closer to Walt and Sarah. They settled on renting a two bedroom apartment in a building on the corner of Windsor Ave Brunswick Street, only few blocks away from Walt and Sarah.

The Windsor Avenue Apartment Building located in the Raleigh Court neighborhood of Roanoke was built in 1928. It was a two-story, "U"-shaped Tudor Revival style building constructed of stone, brick, half timbering, and stucco with an enclosed courtyard plaza with stone paved sidewalks and stone walls. Their second floor apartment looked out over Brunswick Street.

On Sunday, they attended services, had lunch with Walt and Sarah, and drove back to Washington.

The last three weeks of their Naval careers seemed to zip by. Sheffield and his staff had wrapped up their project and closed up shop. Ramona spent the last week working with her replacement at the hospital. Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup> was their last day on duty. That evening a joint retirement party was held for them. Lieutenant Gover and Ramona's secretary had worked together in planning the event, which was held in the banquet room at a hotel on Connecticut Avenue about half way between the hospital in Bethesda and the

Navy Building in Washington.

The invited guests included their immediate staff and extended out from their; including Sheffield's boss, Admiral Sallada from the Bureau of Aeronautics and Ramona's boss, Rear Admiral William Chambers, the Commander of the National Naval Medical Center. Also invited were Brigadier General Harvey Morrison and Marcella. The evening featured a wonderful meal, speeches and toasts. Then those assembled heard from Ramona and Sheffield.

Ramona told the story of how she had observed her mother's gift of healing and how it instilled in her the desire to become a nurse. She told of how it was only made possible by the death of her first husband and the settlement that she had received. Her story included her first post at the Naval Hospital in San Diego, followed by all of those years in Hawaii, which included the attack on Pearl Harbor, and finally the last three years at Bethesda.

Sheffield told of how his desire to fly as a young boy had lead him to a career in the Navy. He talked of being accepted for flight school and the succeeding years of flying. He expressed his gratitude for Geannie and how she had followed him from coast to coast and back again and finally to Hawaii, where his formal flying career ended when he became the executive officer of the Enterprise. He related how he rose through the ranks and how each post prepared him for the next. The best part of the last few years had been his association with the Reprisal and the men he served with aboard her. He talked of that day off Salerno and the injuries he received and how it was Ramona who nursed him back to health. He barely mentioned their future plans, other than going home to Roanoke. In conclusion he paid tribute to Lieutenant Gover and all of the faithful, continual service that he had rendered to him over the last three and a half years.

This was also the conclusion of Morris Gover's four years in the Navy. The next morning, he would board a train and begin making his way west to his family in Utah. Sheffield wished him well and asked him to stay in touch with him. He would be interested to know where life would take him. Then in a rare moment of affection between the two men that had been separated by rank and command, Sheffield gave him a fatherly embrace.

When Sheffield and Ramona got ready for bed that night, they took off their uniforms and hung them up for the last time. Sheffield laid in bed with the last twenty five years swimming around in his head as he reflected back over his career. He found that the things that stood out were not so much the things that he had done and the places that he had been. But rather it was that Geannie had been with him every step of the way, except for the last four and half years. Oh how he missed her and Sandy and Austin. He remembered the dark days that followed.

He thought of how it was Ramona and her love for him that had seen him through. As much as he

loved Geannie and missed her, it was matched by the love that he had for Ramona. He rolled over in bed and put his arm around her and pulled her petite body in close to his. He wondered at what laid ahead as he finally drifted off to sleep.

Ramona decided to sell the townhouse rather than hanging onto it and renting it out. She already had the property in Hawaii that she had held onto all those years. Earlier in the week, she listed it with a realtor. Over the weekend, they packed up everything for the move to Roanoke. On Monday morning, they left in a caravan, Sheffield driving his car loaded with things, Ramona in her car which didn't hold very much, and Shenan and Emily in his pickup. They had come up to help them move and to see Ruth Ann.

They arrived in Roanoke around midday and unloaded everything in their apartment. Their telephone was hooked up Tuesday and they spent the next two days getting settled. By Wednesday evening, they had everything in place. Thursday was the Brason Memorial Day picnic. The day followed the usual pattern, with a trip to the cemetery, followed by the picnic.

It was a good opportunity to catch up on the nieces and nephews. As for Shenan's family: Danny's civil engineering business was taking off. He had won a bid on an expansion project at the airport and was ready to being moving dirt around once Shenan and Joe finished the survey work. He had made bids on other projects as well and said that if things kept going the way they were, he'd have to hire someone to run the equipment so he could focus on drawing up plans and bidding jobs. His wife Melissa was busy with their kids. Christina was just about to turn four and Melvin was sixteen months old.

Joe and Adelle's daughter, JoDelle was now eighteen months old. Ruth Ann had come down on the train and all she could talk about was Joseph Morrison and how she was looking forward to him coming home for good in two weeks. Wendalynn was graduating from Hollins next week and had brought a boyfriend with her. He was Allan Coles, an army veteran. Delbert had just graduated from Jefferson High School, but wasn't sure what he was going to do next. He was going to work for Danny during the summer. Everyone was encouraging him to go to college, but he wasn't sure what he wanted to do.

Now for Walt's family. Emmaline and Willie were still glossy eyed honeymooners, and little Carrie had just celebrated her third birthday. Tim had just completed his first semester at Virginia Tech and would be taking summer classes. Sylvia also had just graduated from Hollins and she to had brought a boyfriend. He was an ex-marine by the name of Scott Rowan from the southwest part of the county known as South County. The two of them looked pretty serious. Walt said that he was a good young man from a solid family. And last but not least, Delbert would also graduate from Jefferson next week. He had been accepted at Radford would be studying economics.

It occurred to Sheffield that Sandy too would be graduating from Hollins and Austin from high school along with their cousins, had they made it home to Roanoke. Perhaps Sandy would have brought a young

man too. He wondered whatever happened to Chip, the boy that she was fond of in Hawaii.

Friday, Sheffield called Joe Weinstein in New York to see what he had come up with only to find that he was out of the office until Monday. Sheffield left a message for him that he would be unavailable for the next two weeks. He also called Bill Casper and reassured him that he was still very much interested in the coaching position. Ramona hadn't done anything about looking into a job. She wanted to wait until she got back from vacation.

That evening evening, Sam and Mike Taylor had them over for dinner. As Mike invited them in, Ramona was shocked at Sam's appearance. Ramona hadn't seen her since Christmas. She didn't look good then but now was a shadow of her former self. Sam waited until after dinner to give her friend the terrible news.

"Ramona," She began, "you've been a good friend and I want you to know that I cherish you're friendship."

"Why thank you Sam. I assure you that the feeling is mutual."

"The last time I saw you, you encouraged me to go see the doctor and I put you off. I told you that I was just feeling run down from too much running around. Well, after that, I just didn't bounce back. As winter turned into spring, I was feeling worse. That's why I didn't see you when you came down for Emmaline's wedding in April. I was so sick then that I couldn't get out of bed. That's when I decided to go to the doctor, like you encouraged me too."

"And what did you find out?" Ramona asked with trepidation.

"I have cancer."

Ramona gasped, putting her hand to her mouth. "Oh Sam, I'm so sorry. Is there anything they can do for you?"

"Well as I'm sure you know, there are now a lot of experimental treatments, but I let it go too long for them to do much for me. They do have me on some medication that is supposed to slow it down."

"What's the prognosis?"

"According to the doctor, I'll get progressively worse. They say that I have six to nine months."

"Oh, Sam." Ramona sobbed. As she gave her a hug, she could feel how frail her body had become. Sam had once weighed about one hundred and eighty pounds, now she was less than one hundred and twenty pounds. In less than a year she had gone from being thirty pounds over weight to being thirty pound underweight.

"It's okay, Ramona. I've made peace with it. I just want to make the best of the time I have and spend it with the ones I love. That's why I wanted to invite you over tonight. I'm so glad that you're living here now."

“How are Mike and the kids taking it?”

“They try to put on a brave face around me, but I know that its hard on them.”

“I don't know which would be more difficult, to loose someone out of the blue like both Sheffield and I did, or to watch them slowly waste away. I never got to say goodbye to either of my first two husbands. Sheffield did get to say goodbye just before Geannie died, but it was all so unexpected for both of us.”

“That's why I want to take advantage of the time I have. Hopefully it will give those I love closure so they can go on with life after I'm gone.”

“If there is anything at all I can do for you Sam, please let me know.”

“Enough about me. Now tell me what are your plans?” Sam changed the subject and Ramona told her about their trip. Sam listened with excitement as Romona told her about their vacation and how she hoped to get a teaching position at Hollins in their nursing program. When Sheffield and Ramona left to go home, Ramona promised to come see her when they got back, because Sam wanted to here all about their vacation.

The next day was June 1<sup>st</sup>, the first official day of their retirement. The day was spent day packing and getting ready for their trip. On Sunday, they attended services where Walt preached his last sermon at Green Memorial Methodist Church. He talked about the twenty years that he had been their pastor, not including the the four years before that that he had been the assistant pastor, under his father. In those twenty years there had been the joyous occasions of births and weddings and times of grief dealing with death and personal tragedy. During it all, he had learned more than he had taught and had grown as he helped others through tough times. But know he had been called on to something else and it was the time to let someone else have the experiences that he had had. He talked of how large the congregation had grown over the years. To make a clean break and a fresh start, he announced that his family would begin attending the West End United Methodist Church which was only a couple of blocks from their new home.

After the service, everyone thronged around Walt, wishing him well. What they didn't realize was that the Austins would be leaving with him. Because Walt was the pastor, they all drove past the the other church to come to the church that they had belonged to while growing up. Sheffield and Ramona would also be going with them. Emmett and Ellen and Shenan and Emily and their family would be the only ones from the Brason and Austin families remaining in the congregation.

That afternoon, the Brasons gathered at Emmett and Ellen's for dinner. There was much to celebrate with the new beginnings for Sheffield and Ramona as well as Walt. In addition to all of that, Romona's birthday, which was the next day was not overlooked.

After dinner, Walt drove them to the airport where they boarded an American Airlines DC-3 bound for Washington. That night, the stayed with Harvey and Marcella. Ramona's forty third birthday began early as

they had to catch an eight o'clock flight to San Francisco.

During the war, commercial air travel had been severely limited. Airports and airfields across the country had been taken over by the military. Virtually all aircraft production was military, even passenger aircraft were strictly for military transports. Such was the case the when Sheffield had flown cross country during the early months of the war.

With no further military purposes, the airports and aircraft were returned to commercial civilian use. Sheffield could see that the day would come and that is why he had considered a second career with the airlines. That day as they flew cross country on an American Airlines Douglas DC-4, he wondered if he was making a mistake. In the months since the end of the war, air travel was on the rise. No longer would it take four or five days to cross the country by rail. This flight took a mere thirteen hours, nonstop. Accounting for the time zones they passed through, it as six o'clock when they arrived in Oakland. Despite the early hour on the west coast, it had been a long, tiring day. Tomorrow promised to be of the same. Just the fact that they were going was enough of a birthday celebration for Ramona.

That night they stayed with Pat Owen who still lived in Oakland while Mace was stationed in Japan. After dinner and visiting for a while, Sheffield and Ramona were exhausted. Needless to say they went to bed early. Their internal body clocks told them that is was ten o'clock when was only seven. They managed to wait until eight before going to bed. The next day the flight was just as long, only this time it was on Transocean Airlines. Again, with the time difference it was only late afternoon when they landed at John Rogers Airport in Honolulu.

After disembarking the plane, they retrieved their luggage, checked out a car and drove to Ramona's beach house. Everything was just as it was when they left it the year before. Even though they were tired from two days of travel, the excitement of being there gave them enough of an energy boost to take everything out of storage and set up housekeeping. That evening, they sat out on the patio and enjoyed the sound of the surf. It was music to their ears. For Ramona It was like coming home.

This visit was truly a vacation without ulterior motives as had been the case on the last two visits. In 1944 it was a working honeymoon, in 1945 it was a rendezvous while Sheffield was passing through. There were no restrictions, no business to attend to, and no agenda. They spent a good deal of time simply relaxing and unwinding from their careers without giving much thought to what might lie ahead.

They revisited some of their favorite places and sought out new places where they hadn't been before. With flight restrictions throughout the islands lifted, Sheffield checked out a surplus Navy Beechcraft Model 17 Staggerwing at John Rogers Field. They took off and flew southeast out over the ocean passing south of Molokai, Maui, Lanai, and Kahoolawe to Kona on western shore of the big island of Hawaii, one hundred seventy three miles from Honolulu. With a cruising speed of two hundred miles an hour, the flight



took just under an hour.

Neither one of them had ever been to the Big Island before and it was one of the places they wanted to explore. At Kona, Kailua was the main population center which was nothing more than a large fishing village of historical significance. They landed at the landing strip north of Kailua, which had been cleared during the war. They caught a ride into town and checked into the Kona Inn for a two night stay. Nestled among palm trees along the shore, the two story inn with twenty rooms was built in 1928 by the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company.

Thirty five miles southeast of Kailua is Mauna Loa, the largest volcano in the world, towering 13,678 feet above sea level. Other points of interest in the area included the place where Captain James Cook was killed in 1777 when the natives discovered that he was only human and not a god. The area was also the place where Kamehameha had begun his conquest that united the islands. Kona had been the highlight of their trip. After three days and two nights, Sheffield and Ramona took off to return to Honolulu, but not before circling around Mauna Loa.

In all, they spent two weeks in Hawaii. Before leaving to come home, they put everything back in storage with plans to return again next year. On the 19<sup>th</sup> they made the first leg of the two day flight home. Again they stayed with Pat. The days seemed longer than they were by the time change. It was late in the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> when they arrived in Washington and stayed with Harvey. The next morning they returned to Roanoke. It took the rest of Friday and all of Saturday to recuperate from their travels.

On Sunday they attended services for the first time at the West End United Methodist Church on the corner of Campbell Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> Street where they joined Walt and Sarah and their family along with the Austins. They found their new congregation to be warm and receptive of the newcomers. That first Sunday, Ramona was recruited to join the choir. The chapel had been built in 1910 and the rest of the building was built in 1922. It was a two story, yellow brick building with the two columns supporting the recessed entrance with three large wooden double doors.

That afternoon, Sheffield and Ramona went to see Mike and Sam, as promised. Sam was feeling pretty good and had been relatively free from the pain for a few days. She listened with excitement as Ramona told her about their trip.

"I'd love to go there before I die." Sam wished. "The cost of flying is bad enough, but on top of that, there's the hotel. With all of my doctor bills, just don't know how we could afford it."

"If you can come up with the air fare, you can stay at my beach house."

"Oh, I couldn't take advantage of you like that, Ramona."

"You wouldn't be. Its just setting empty any way."

"If you don't mind me asking, how much does it cost to fly over there?" Mike asked.

When Ramona told him, Mike nodded his head and smiled.

With their retirement for Navy official and their vacation behind them, Sheffield and Ramona turned to beginning the rest of their lives. Sheffield contacted Bill Casper and was assured that he definitely had a good chance at the job. Bill told him to expect a call from the superintendent in the next few days for an interview.

Just to hedge his bets, he called Joe Weinstein to see what he had. Joe was happy that Sheffield had called back, as he had been trying to contact him while he was on vacation. Joe offered him his choice of three positions, two of them at the corporate office in New York and one at the operations center at the airport in Richmond. He had tried to free up a place for him in Roanoke, but things didn't work out. Sheffield asked if he could have a few days to think about it. Joe gave him ten days, but couldn't hold them any longer than that. He said that there would always be other positions opening up and that he would really like to have Sheffield work for them.

A few days later, he received a call from the school district and was invited to come in for an interview. As it turned out, the superintendent happened to have been principal at the school where Geannie taught when she graduated from Hollins. Mr. Yancey had worked in the school district in various capacities for many years and had been the superintendent for the last fifteen years and would be retiring in the next couple of years.

He had reviewed Sheffield's credentials and references, particularly his high school and college wrestling record. He found it to be suited to what was expected of a coach. His leadership roles throughout his military career were certainly indicative of a coach. But the thing that concerned him the most was Sheffield's lack of a teaching certificate. He said that he may consider his three years as flight instructor in lieu of a certificate. At the end of the interview, Sheffield wasn't sure how good of a chance he had, but Bill assured him that compared to the other candidates being considered, he was a shoe in. The final decision would be made after the 4th of July.

A few days after their visit with the Taylors, Mike called Ramona from work. "Hi Ramona, this is Mike. How are you?"

"I'm fine Mike. How are things with you and Samantha?"

"Right now they're pretty good. Sam has been doing better the last little while. But the doctor told us not to expect it to last more than maybe few weeks or maybe a month."

"That's good news. I ought to come see her."

"If things workout, we'll be gone for several days. I have managed to scrape together some money for plane tickets to Hawaii plus some spending money. Were you serious about letting us use your beach

house?”

“Certainly. That would be just fine, In fact, I insist.”

“Then, I'm going to do it. I can take off here and leave things in the hands of my office staff. I haven't told Sam what I'm up to yet, so if you happen to talk to her, mum's the word.”

“I've got you. What are you going to do with the kids?”

“Let Craig look after them I guess.”

“Look, you leave the kids up to me. Since you'll be staying at my house, I'll come stay at yours.”

“You'd do that?”

“I'd do anything for Sam to have the trip of a lifetime while there's still time. Just let me know when your leaving.”

“Thanks so much, Ramona. You're a real sweetheart.”

“I know. Thats what Sheffield keeps telling me.”

Later that evening, Ramona received a telephone call from an excited Sam with the news that they were going to go to Hawaii. She thanked her profusely for making it possible.

“That's what friends do for each other.” Ramona said. “When will you be going?”

“The week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.” Sam replied.

In the meantime, Ramona met with frustration everywhere she turned. She applied for a teaching position at Hollins only to be told that she was over qualified. She took that to mean that the Director of Nursing Education felt threatened by her, that Ramona would eventually end up with her job. She was met by the same obstacle at the Jefferson Hospital School of Nursing and the Lewis-Gale school of nursing. Ramona didn't want their jobs. She'd already done that, all she wanted to do was to train and inspire a new generation of nurses.

Sheffield and Ramona stayed at the Taylor's while Sam and Mike were in Hawaii. Craig was fourteen soon to turn fifteen, Norma had just turned thirteen, and Janet was was ten. For Ramona, it was a glimpse of the desire that she had been denied. For nine days, she got to pretend that she was a mother. For Sheffield, it was a reminder of what it was once like to have a family.

On both Sundays they took them to Services at Green Memorial where the Taylor's attended. One evening they played Monopoly. The last time Sheffield played Monopoly was with Geannie, Sandy and Austin. Ramona got off to a good start by buying Park Place, two hours later she had bought up the majority of the property and cleaned everyone out. Another afternoon, Ramona and the girls baked cookies while Sheffield took Craig up in a Stearman that he checked out at the airport.

Sheffield and Ramona celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July by taking their borrowed children and gathered with Walt and Sarah and their family and the Austins at the cabin. It soon became obvious that Craig and

Stirling's daughter Edith were sweet on each other. Evidently this had been going on for a few months. After a day of hotdogs, watermelon, games, and swimming, they came down off the mountain and watched the fireworks display at the 25,000 seat Victory Stadium along the Roanoke River.

It had been ten days since Sheffield had talked to Joe Weinstein, but still didn't know for sure about the coaching job. On Friday he called Joe and explained that he had something in the works in Roanoke and asked for a few more days. Joe told him that he couldn't hold the Richmond job any longer but he could give him some more time on the two in New York. He indicated that there might be some more possibilities come up in the next few days.

On Saturday afternoon they attended the four o'clock matinee of Anna and the King of Siam. After the movie they went to a new type of restaurant they had just opened that specialized in pizza. It was the first time that any of them had tried pizza and they were hooked. While exploring this wonderful new cuisine topped with pepperoni, Italian sausage, mozzarella cheese, and marinara sauce made with tomatoes, garlic, onions, and herbs, accompanied by a pitcher of Coca-Cola, the owner approached their table. "How do you like it?"

"This is incredible." Sheffield mumbled with his mouth full." Ramona and the kids nodded in agreement.

"Where on earth did you come up with such a thing?" Ramona asked.

"Italy." the owner explained. "While based near Naples during the war, I discovered pizza. My buddies and I couldn't get enough of the stuff. When I came home, there wasn't any place around here that made it. Italian immigrants had brought pizza with them, but it was mostly confined to Italian communities. So, I made a trip to New York to see an army buddy and his family was gracious enough to teach me how to make it. With help from my GI Bill, I opened this place. A lot of people laughed at me saying, 'Nobody's going to eat that stuff.' Well, I'm getting the last laugh. People all over the country are flocking to pizza joints. I'm getting ready to open another place in Blacksburg in a couple of weeks."

Before taking another bite, Sheffield said, "I really think your on to something here. We'll certainly be back."

"Good. I'm glad you enjoy it. Be sure to tell you friends."

Sheffield nodded and gave a thumb up in response.

As promised, Mr. Yancey got back with him at the beginning of the week. The news was not good. They had decided to offer the job to someone with a teaching certificate. It really came as blow to Sheffield. He questioned what the experience in the airplane was all about. It had felt so right. Had he made a mistake in putting off American Airlines? Bill Casper didn't understand why they didn't select him either. Sheffield did

the only thing that was open to him and called Joe Weinstein back to see what else he might have to offer, besides something in New York. Joe told him that he'd see what he could do.

Mike and Sam returned from their trip excited and tired. The trip had been wonderful and they got to do and see a lot of things. Best of all was getting away from all of the worries. Relaxing on the patio with the sound of the ocean was not only medicine to her soul, but to her body as well, even if it would be short lived.

Craig, Norma, and Janet had enjoyed their time with the Brasons as much as Sheffield and Ramona had enjoyed them. If only for a few days, that had experienced what it would like to have a family. Something they both missed for opposite reasons.

In the meantime Ramona had turned her attention from teaching nursing to being a nurse and applied at both Lewis-Gale and Jefferson Hospitals only to be told again that she was overqualified. She didn't want to be the director of nursing, she just wanted to be a nurse. Next she began applying for positions at doctors offices. Again, she was told that she was overqualified. They were looking for someone with less experience that they wouldn't have to pay what she had been making.

It wasn't about money. She had all of the money she needed with her pension and what she had accumulated over the years, including the insurance settlement from Tom's death. Sheffield had his pension as well, along all of the money he had earned and never spent during the war, not to mention the insurance settlements from Geannie and kids. No it wasn't about money. They just wanted to be busy and active and contributing what their talents and abilities.

They had a long talk one afternoon later in the week. They wondered if they had made a mistake in moving to Roanoke. Their townhouse in Washington hadn't sold yet, maybe they should move back there and see what they could find. On Friday 12<sup>th</sup>, Joe Weinstein called with an operations position in Honolulu. American Airlines was opening service to Honolulu and wanted Sheffield go and set up shop so they could begin operations. Now that really appealed to both Sheffield and Ramona. It was a very tempting offer. They both loved it there and they would have a place to live. They wrestled with it all weekend but just didn't feel right about it in some regards.

On Monday afternoon, Sheffield was about to call Joe back and take the job. He was reaching for the receiver when the telephone rang. He answered it to find Mr. Yancey on the other end. "Sheffield," he said, "the man we offered the job to has declined it in favor of another position. The job is yours, if you still want it."

At that instant, Sheffield experienced a repeat of the feeling that had overcome that day above the countryside of Northern Virginia.

"Are you still there Sheffield?" Mr. Yancey asked while Sheffield paused.

"Yes. I'm still here. And yes, I'll accept the job."

“Very good. Someone will be contacting you about orientation. It will be good to have you with us, I'm sure we can expect good things from you.”

“Thank you Mr. Yancey. I'm confident I can deliver. Goodbye, sir.”

Sheffield hung up the telephone and turned to Ramona with a broad smile on his face. “I have the coaching job!” he exclaimed. “I can't explain it, but it just feels right.”

“I know what you mean. I was caught up in the emotion of moving back to the islands, but something deep down told me that it wasn't right.”

“That's how I felt. I don't know why, but this is what is meant for us. Something good is bound to come of it.”

“I know. But what am I supposed to do. Every place go, I run into brick walls.”

“Maybe you're going in the wrong direction. Look at me, I'm going down a completely different path. Maybe you should look for something else too.”

“I guess was so focused on nursing that I hadn't thought of anything else. The only problem is I don't know what that might be.”

“You'll know it when you stumble across it. Just like I did.”

“I Suppose you're right, Babe.”

“Don't worry about it. It will come.”

“I'd better call Joe back and tell him thanks but no thanks.”

Sheffield went ahead and placed the call, but instead of accepting the job, he declined and explained that things had fallen into place for him in Roanoke. Joe was disappointed because he felt Sheffield had so much to offer, but he understood.

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The apartment building on the corner of Windsor Ave Brunswick Street (2049 Windsor Ave.) was built in 1928 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

Rear Admiral William Chambers was the commander of the National Naval Medical Center from 1944 to 1946.

Transocean Air Lines was an Oakland, California based airline that operated from 1946 until 1960.