

Chapter XXVIII

On the Homefront

June 26, 1950 – December 31, 1950

The Sunday newspaper the next day shed a little more light on the developments in Korea. With each day, the news was more unsettling. On Tuesday President Truman announced, "I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support." His decision to offer military aid to South Korea was without seeking an official declaration of war from Congress. Sheffield had never liked Truman, especially for his decision to use the atomic bombs. Now he had bypassed congress to intervene in the conflict.

Sheffield wasn't necessarily opposed to intervening, but in the way it was done. Being a government teacher, he had come to a much deeper understanding of the constitution and the powers given to the president and those held by congress. He felt that this was a breach of power on Truman's part.

Then, the United Nations Security Council—minus the Soviet Union—passed an American drafted resolution condemning North Korea and called on all members states to "furnish assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."

Sheffield's prediction of war looked more and more likely. He was glad that he no longer wore a uniform, he was weary of war. Yet in the back of his mind, he knew that it was entirely possible that he could be recalled to active duty. By Wednesday, the news was even more grim as Seoul fell to the Communists.

These news reports caused mixed emotions about where he was in his life at that time. He really enjoyed civilian life, something that he had never really experienced. He followed the news closely from the perspective of being on the homefront. But there was a part of him that longed to make a difference as he had done for the twenty five years he was in the military, especially during the war.

He reminded himself that he was making a difference. He was making a difference in the lives of his wife and children. He was making a difference in the lives of his students, both in his government classes and his Sunday School class. He was making a difference in the lives of the young men that he coached on the wrestling team. He had no idea how far reaching the difference he was making would be in their lives and the lives they would touch and the things that they would do.

Amid the sporadic news reports, Sheffield spent the week revising his manuscript. On Friday night, Sheffield, Ramona, and Janet took in a movie at the drive-in. Craig was otherwise occupied with Edith and Norma had been asked out on a date. The feature film that night was a science fiction picture titled "Destination Moon." Ever since reading a novel many years ago about a starship on a voyage of exploration through space, Sheffield had been fascinated by the concept of space travel. He often wondered if he would live to see it become a reality. He still had "The Constellation Chronicles" in the bookcase in their library.

The 4th of July was the following Tuesday. While visiting with Shenan and Emily at the Austin/Brason Fourth of July festivities at the cabin, they learned that Sheffield's assessment of Ruth Ann's behavior at the Memorial Day picnic was correct. She had left Joseph and their two children and ran off with a deputy sheriff. Evidently she never did outgrow her fascination with men in uniform. Joseph hadn't heard from her in more than week. He had reason to believe that they had gone to California. The Sheriff's office considered the incident to be runaway and not a kidnapping.

After not hearing from her for three days, Joseph called Shenan and Emily to give them the bad news. He told them that he had suspected that she had been having an affair for sometime. They promised to stay in touch and let him know if they heard from her.

"We're worried sick about her." Emily confided in Sheffield and Ramona. "My heart really goes out to Anna and Paul. Joseph and the kids have moved into the ranch house with Harvey and Marcella. At least she can look after the kids."

"I'm so sorry." Ramona comforted. "I haven't been down to see Harvey for a while. We are planning on going to see him in a couple of weeks. We could leave the kids home and take you with us instead, couldn't we Sheffield?"

"Oh absolutely." he agreed. "I don't think they want to go that bad anyway. Sure, why don't you come with us?"

On the way down the mountain, a news report on the car radio told of the navy carrying out air strikes on communist positions while a hastily deployed infantry regiment was retreating ahead of a rapidly advancing armored column.

Over the next several days, the news was pretty much the same. In mid July, the Selective Service began issuing draft calls with orders to report for basic training in September. Shenan and Emily's youngest son, Delbert who was twenty two, was included in that first round. Unlike the days after Pearl Harbor eight and a half years earlier, young men were not flooding the local recruiting stations. Reserve and National guard units were being activated to build up the available forces. These circumstances put Craig's future plans in question.

Towards the end of July, Sheffield and Ramona flew down to Denison to see Harvey. As promised they took Shenan and Emily with them. The kids were all to happy to stay home. There was still no word from Ruth Ann but the man she ran off with had been in contact with his brother. All that was known was that they were somewhere in California. After spending a three day weekend, they returned to Roanoke, bringing three and half year old Anna and eighteen month old Paul with them to spend a month with Shenan and Emily. The plan was for Joseph to come and get them over Labor Day.

By the 4th of August, Craig's 19th birthday, the situation in Korea had become desperate. U.S. and

South Korean forces had retreated to the very southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. Those were the circumstances when Craig reported to the Selective Service office to register for the draft as required of all young men when they turn nineteen. When he returned home, he reported what he had learned. "Since I'm registered in a two year program at school, I got a deferment until I graduate. Once I graduate, I'm a candidate for the draft. Now I don't know if I'll be able to go on a mission when I turn twenty or not."

Trying to be optimistic Ramona encouraged, "Who knows, this whole thing could be over with by then."

"I don't want to cast a shadow on your optimism," Sheffield countered. "But in my experience something like this could take a while. Particularly if the Russians or the Chinese get involved."

In the time that he had left before going back to school, Craig replaced the engine exhaust manifold on the Staggerwing. When returning from Denison, Sheffield had noticed that the manifold pressure level had dropped enough to cause concern.

Although Craig's plans looked uncertain, Norma landed what she considered to be her dream job. She was hired to work a couple of hours a day, three days a week at DeYoung's Music Source in Roanoke, the music store owned by her piano teacher's husband. They sold and repaired musical instruments of all kinds as well as sheet music and records. Her duties included keeping the sheet music and records stocked and cashiering.

Sheffield completed the revisions to his manuscript and turned it over to Carmen Erikson to prepare it for submission to Random House. She was happy to take the job. The money would again be used for Christmas. Now he could turn his attention to coming up with a plan for the ship's reunion.

His first thought was to call Mason Owen. As the executive officer, Mace had more contact with the officers and crew than Sheffield had. Mace thought it was a good idea and offered to come up with a mailing list of former crewmen. Since he was right there in Washington, he had access to the Navy's Bureau of Personnel and the Veterans Administration. Between the two, he hoped he could come up with something. When asked if he still planned on retiring at the end of the year, he said the the war made it unlikely. He'd probably stay in another five years, making it thirty year career. He was a little befuddled by the fact that he couldn't seem to make flag rank. Perhaps the war would open the opportunity.

Sheffield continued to get letters and even a telephone call from time to time about his book, mostly from men who had served aboard the ship. One evening in mid August Sheffield answered the telephone. "Is this Captain Sheffield Brason?" a man asked with a slight European accent."

"Yes, This is Sheffield Brason."

"Captain Brason, this is John Godfrey. You knew me as Johan Gottfried. I was the Captain of the

Edelweiss. I am calling from Washington D.C. where I've been on vacation with my wife. I saw your book and had to buy a copy. It said that you were living in Roanoke, Virginia and I had to look up your number and give you a call."

"I'm glad that you did. I have often wondered about whatever became of you."

"Well, we'll be passing through there tomorrow afternoon on our way back home to Florida. If you don't mind, I'd like to stop by and visit you. That is if it's alright."

"By all means. I'd like that very much. In fact I insist that you spend the night with us."

"We don't want to impose."

"Nonsense. You were once a guest aboard my ship. You can be a guest in my home."

"That is so kind of you. Can you tell me how to find your home."

"You'll be coming though on Highway Eleven. It goes right past our house. After you cross the Roanoke River for the second time, we're the first place you'll come to on the south side of the road. Please plan on having dinner with us too."

"Thank you Captain. We look forward to seeing you."

The next after noon around one o'clock a car with Florida license plates pulled into the driveway. Sheffield heard it pull in and went out to the driveway to greet their guests. Captain Gottfried looked very much as he remembered him, only a little older. He was introduced to his wife, Catarina and he introduced Ramona to them and invited them in.

After some casual visiting, the former German Raider Captain told his story. "After my crew and I were transferred from your ship to a temporary detention camp in Rio de Janeiro, we went aboard a transport returning to the United States. We were as well treated as we had been aboard your ship and my men rested their fears of being captured by the Americans. The Nazi propaganda machine had made it sound like a fate worse than death.

"Five days later we arrived in Jacksonville, Florida and were put on a train and taken to Camp Blanding few miles away. We were not tourists by any means, but compared to the harshness of war our lives in Florida were like a vacation in a tropical paradise. My men were put to work as citrus pickers and packers, or in the sugarcane fields, and even as custodial workers at the Army base where we were held.

"According to the the Geneva Convention, we were provided living quarters and rations comparable to those of your military. My officers and I could not be compelled to work but we chose to just to keep busy. We were paid for our labor, part of which helped cover the cost of our keep. What was left could be saved or used as pocket money at the camp canteen.

"We were provided with writing materials, art supplies, woodworking utensils, and musical instruments, and were allowed regular correspondence with our families in Germany. Our letters were

censored, naturally, and were routed by the Red Cross through Switzerland.

“Because I was an officer and spoke English, I was given a great deal of latitude as the senior internee. The German officers and NCO's supervised and disciplined our own men. Even during the war, I didn't have a very high opinion of the Nazis but as an officer in the Kriegsmarine, I was sworn to serve my homeland. Had I refused, I would have put my family's lives in jeopardy. My officers and men were of the same opinion, except for the political officer. You remember what happened with him.”

“How can I forget. I have never been more infuriated in my life than I was over that episode.”

Captain Gottfried continued. “Out of my contempt for the Nazis, I was willing to cooperate and told the American authorities everything I knew. They were more interested in U-boat operations, but I told them all that I knew, particularly when it came to the surface fleet. I told them what I knew about tactics, weapons, and electronic equipment. Because of my cooperation, I was given even more leniency. My men never knew about my cooperation, but I do know that some of them also cooperated.

“After two and half years, the war was over. However, it wasn't until February 1946 that I was released. It was a bit disconcerting but understandable. After all it took time to process everyone and Germany was in shambles. I was put on a train to New York City and from there on a ship bound for Germany. To this day, I consider it a miracle that Catarina was waiting on the dock for me when I got off the ship in Bremerhaven.”

All the while, Sheffield and Ramona had listened intently to his story. Ramona asked, “How was it a miracle?”

Catarina explained in her heavy German accent, “Our home was in Stettin. Now it is called Szczecin and is in Poland. Stettin had been one of the main German navy bases on the Baltic Sea. Being a navy man, that is where Johan's home base was. I last saw him in late May of 1942. He had been given the command of the Edelweiss in March while she was being converted to a raider. He got to come home for two weeks before he sailed.

“Our three children were eighteen, fourteen and eleven at the time. Our oldest son had been indoctrinated by the Nazi propaganda and had enlisted in the Kriegsmarine to be a sailor like his father. After his basic training he came home for a short visit before being assigned to a U-boat stationed in France. His boat sailed shortly after that and was never heard from again.

“I worried for Johan, wherever he was. The last I heard from him was a letter mailed from Yokohama, Japan. It wasn't until more than a year later when I got a letter from him saying that he was a prisoner of war somewhere in the United States. At least I knew that he was alive and in good hands. I wrote back, but my letters must have been intercepted by the Nazis for they never reached him. I got one or two more letters from him after that.

“When our second son was only sixteen, he was conscripted into the army. After only three weeks of basic training, he was sent off to the Russian Front. He had only been there a month before he was killed.”

“I’m so sorry for your lose.” Ramona sympathized.

“Two lives wasted and all for a madman. One went willingly, the other against his will. That left only our daughter, Lizal. About the sametime our son left for the Russian Front, Stettin was badly damaged by Allied bombers. Our home was damaged and Lizal and I were left living in what was left of it with no electricity. We lived like that for the next several months until we recieved word in April 1945 that the Russians were advancing toward the city.

“We were encouraged to evacuate. Many left by ship, others by train. In my estimation, both would be targets of allied bombers. Lizal, who was fourteen at the time, and I left on foot, taking with us what little we could carry. We headed west towards Hamburg, three hundred forty five kilometers away, thinking it would be safer there becuase the allied advance hadn't got that far. And when they did, it would be either the Americans or the British.

“As we traveled, we stayed away from the main roads and large towns as best we could. We foraged for what food we could find or steal and sought shelter wherever. Sometimes sleeping in sheds or abanoned homes. Sometimes we where taken in or given rides by people heading west. After about ten days we had arrived on the eastern outskirts of Hamburg. That’s when the British arrived and captured the city without a fight.

“The very next day the war was over but the suffering continued. Hamburg had been pretty much destroyed. We were at the mercy of the British, who began bringing in food and restoring access to water and eventually electicity.

“We felt safe remaining there, that is until sometime later the Russians demaned that all former citizens of the area now under their control be returned. The Britsh complied, but the word was that Americans disregarded their demand. The American Zone was well to the south, except for Bremerhaven, on the North Sea. It was an American enclave within the British zone because of the American's request to have a port in Northern Germany.

“For fear of being turned over to the Russians, we again fled and continued west the one hundred thirty kilometers to Bremerhaven where we arrived about a week later. We found a place to live and what work either of us to find to subsist on. We were completey cut off from any family and didn't know anybody.

“I knew that Johan would be returned to Germany sometime but I had no idea when or where, or how we'd ever find each other. Being a seaport under American control, I hoped it would be there. Sometime later, I got word that a ship bringing former prisoners of war from America would be docking at the port. We went down to the dock to watch the ship unload, but he wasn't on that one, or the next, or the one

after that. I lost track of how many ships we watched come in.

“Then one day in February 1946, Lizal and I were at the dock to watch yet another batch of men return. I studied the face of each man, searching for my husband. And there he was. Lizal and I began yelling to get his attention. He heard us and ran toward us. Like he said, it was a miracle.”

“That is an amazing story.” Ramona agreed. “But how did you end up here?”

Johan picked up the story again. “I was able to save a fair amount of the money that I had earned at the camp coordinating the work schedules of the men under me. Being in an American occupied area, it was worth something and we were able to get by.

“While at the camp, I learned a little about how things work here. I fell in love with Florida. When I was returned to Germany, I was one of the few who wanted to go back. I contacted the owner of the citrus packing plant with whom I had worked. He and I had become very good friends. I asked him if he would sponsor us in our bid for immigration. He wrote back and said that he would be willing to do that. Over the next several months there was a lot of paperwork to fill out and a lot of waiting.

“Eventually our request was granted in 1948 and the three of us boarded a ship for New York. We showed our documents to the immigration officials and were permitted into the country. We boarded a train headed for Jacksonville where my friend had arranged for us to rent a home and had a job waiting for me at the warehouse.

“Within the allotted amount of time, we applied for citizenship and became naturalized citizens. At the same time we changed our names to their English translations. We are now John, Kathryn, and Lisa Godfrey.”

“Where is your daughter?” Ramona asked.

“She's on her own now. She is now nineteen and will be a sophomore in college.”

“So do you still work for the warehouses?” Sheffield asked.

“I did for a while, but I learned of a position for a cruise ship captain with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Ship Company based in Jacksonville. Given my experience, and my cooperation with the authorities while I was at the camp, I got the job. My ship, the S.S. Florida, sails back and forth between Miami and Havana three times a week. We sail every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at six o'clock in the afternoon and return every Wednesday, Friday, and Monday at eight thirty in the morning, so that gives me three days a week at home. Now that Lisa is gone, Kathryn comes with me most of the time so it works out quite well. You should come and sail with me sometime.”

“We'd love that.” Ramona said.

They spent the rest of the afternoon, had dinner and stayed the night. During that time the former enemies and their wives got better acquainted with each other and revisited their first encounter. Sheffield

and Ramona told their story to their new friends, including finding the Church.

Kathryn said, "Many years ago before the war, two Mormon missionaries from America knocked on our door in Stettin. We invited them into hear what they had to say, but that is all the farther it went. If they were to knock on our again, we would certainly invite them in and listen to them because of you."

The next morning, the Godfreys left to go home to Miami, but before leaving, John gave Sheffield their contact information and agreed to stay in touch.

At the end of the third week in August, it was time to take Craig back to school. Norma, who didn't like to fly all that much opted to stay home on this trip. In her place, Sheffield offered to take Edith so Stirling and Emily wouldn't have to make the cross country trip. They left Roanoke on the morning of the 19th and after stopovers at St. Louis and McCook they landed in Rexburg that afternoon.

The Rowan's who were already there on their annual visit to Chantelle's family met them at the airport with Craig's car. After getting both Craig and Edith situated in their respective accommodations, which were the same as the year before, Sheffield, Ramona, and Janet checked into the Idamont Hotel.

On Sunday, they attended church with the Ricks family and rested from their trip. Monday and Tuesday was the vacation portion of their trip. Packed for an overnigher, they left Rexburg early on Monday morning and headed for Teton National Park. Since Norma wasn't with them, Edith tagged along

They took the longer route which took them by way of Palisades Reservoir and through the Snake River Canyon to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. They took their time and stopped off here and there along the way. It was still early afternoon when they arrived in Jackson Hole and checked into the Jackson Hole Lodge. That gave them plenty of time to look around the quaint little western town without much to offer.

Early the next morning they set out to explore the Tetons. The majestic mountain range dominated the western landscape. As they meandered up the road, there were several scenic turnouts from which to view the mountains. The area around Jenny Lake had the most to offer and the most spectacular view of the Grand Teton which towered above the lake. After spending a while there they continued on to String Lake and past Mount Moran and along Jackson Lake as far as Colter Bay where they had their picnic.

On the way back, rather than back tracking they drove out to Oxbow Bend on the Snake River and stopped for the best view of Mount Moran. From there they took the main highway back to Jackson. The drive provided a panoramic view of the entire Teton Range.

They drove through Jackson and turned off to go up and went over the Teton Pass with its winding narrow road. But oh what a view. Coming down the other side, they dropped down into Idaho. The drive north to Driggs and beyond provided an entirely different perspective of the mountains. Late in the afternoon, they arrived back in Rexburg.

Craig started school on Wednesday morning, so after saying goodbye, Sheffield, Ramona, and Janet took off in the Staggerwing and flew down to Clarkston and stopped off to spend the rest of the day and that night and the next day with their friends, the Govers. Since it had been a year since they had attended the temple, they left Janet with the Govers and borrowed their car to drive into Logan. On Friday, they flew on back to Roanoke.

When they returned from their trip, Sheffield had received a letter in the mail from MGM with an offer to purchase the movie rights to his book. The letter that was accompanied by an agreement form. They were particularly interested in the Edelweiss episode. After giving it some thought, he had his attorney look over the agreement, before he signed it and mailed it back.

In the agreement, MGM would have movie writes to the book with a period of one year to start a project. Sheffield would receive an amount up front to be followed by an additional amount once work began on the production. After the project was completed, he would receive royalties on the profit. If nothing became of the project, he would be free to resale the rights when the agreement expired.

On Labor Day, the Braosns got together at the Two Star Ranch for their picnic. Joseph flew up from Texas to pick up the children. There was still no word from Ruth Ann and he told Shenan and Emily that he intended to file for divorce on the grounds of desertion and abandonment. They certainly couldn't blame him. The picnic was also a farewell for Delbert who would be leaving for basic training the following Monday.

Sheffield had his usual half a day at school the next day and school started on Wednesday the 6th. Norma was a senior and was in one of Sheffield's government classes. Janet was in the ninth grade in junior high. Norma already had decided what she wanted to do after high school. She wanted to attend Hollins and major in music education and stood a good chance of obtaining a scholarship. Once school started, her hours at the music store were adjusted to make sure she had enough time to concentrate on her school work.

Janet was still taking piano lessons too, but she didn't have the same talent for it that Norma had. She was in it more for her own enjoyment. In the months since she lost her toe, her foot had healed. The tenderness that had accompanied it in the months that followed had subsided considerably. She began running again and had gradually increased her endurance and made the ninth grade track team.

When Sheffield and Coach Karrington met with the wrestling team hopefuls, they were encouraged by the prospects of a promising team. There were some outstanding sophomores who had done very well as freshmen. There was also a senior who had transferred from Richmond who was a potential state champion. They began working with the boys and at the end of the tryout period had selected the team. All but two from the previous year's team were cut, leaving them with a lot of young talent to form the backbone

of the team for the next two years.

As September proceeded, the news on the war front had improved considerably. On the 15th General MacArthur staged a successful amphibious landing at Inchon which essentially cut off the enemy in the south from their supply and communications lines. Ten days later, Seoul had been liberated and President Truman gave the order to pursue the retreating enemy across the 38th parallel, into North Korea.

At the end of September, Mrs. Erickson had finished retyping his manuscript and he submitted it to Random House for publication. Again it would be a waiting game, but since they had published his first book, the wait might not be as long.

Ramona kept busy looking in on Emmett and Ellen and of course was always on the look out for a deal on piece of property, or trying to sell on. Her calling in the Relief Society had kept her busy. At the end of the month they were informed they would be released. The following Sunday, Roger called Ramona and Sheffield into his office at the church and extended a call to her to serve as the new Relief Society President.

It had only been three years since they had been baptized and she wasn't sure that she was ready for something like that just yet. Roger assured her that he had every confidence in her, as did Sheffield. She accepted the calling and set about selecting her counselors.

Over the next few days with a lot of thought and prayer, she chose Renee Brown and Camilla Rogerson, who had just recently moved to the area from Flagstaff, Arizona, as her counselors and Maxine Austin as her secretary. After being presented to the Branch and sustained, they were set apart and went to work.

During October the news from Korea remained encouraging. It looked as if Ramona was correct in her optimistic assessment that it would be over with and done in a short time. Perhaps Craig's plans weren't in jeopardy after all. After retaking Seoul, General MacArthur crossed the 38th parallel, into North Korea on the 7th and by the 19th Pyongyang had been captured. The communists had been pushed almost to the Yalu River and out of Korea altogether.

Just as it was looking like it was all but over, Sheffield's warning became a reality. On the 25th the Chinese crossed the Yalu River, taking American commanders completely off guard. What followed was a string of crushing defeats.

In November Sheffield was notified that his second book had been accepted for publication and received an up front payment along with a royalty check from his first book. He was also informed that a third printing of another twenty thousand copies was in the works.

As for the ship's reunion, Mace was making progress in putting together a mailing list. Sheffield had booked the Tazewell Hotel convention hall for June 6th and 7th, 1952. He estimated a gathering of five thousand, including wives. If he felt that more room was needed, they could handle twice that number. He

had to send them a nonrefundable payment to hold the reservation. Sheffield next turned his attention to putting together an announcement to be mailed out once the mailing list was completed.

The assessment of the wrestling team had been correct. The season looked very hopeful from the onset and got off to a good start with a victory over one of their more formidable opponents and followed up with another solid win before suffering their first loss. By Thanksgiving they had a record of four wins and one loss.

Again, Sheffield and Ramona hosted Thanksgiving. Everyone was there except for Craig and of course Ruth Ann. There was still no word from her. Joseph had filed for divorce, which went through uncontested. In the agreement, Shenan and Emily were granted generous visitation rights, which included several weeks during the summer and at Christmas. Joseph remained on good terms with the family. After all the problem was with Ruth Ann, not them. In addition to the family, the missionaries were their dinner guests.

Delbert had completed his basic training as well as his advanced infantry training. He was home for two weeks and had orders to report to the 4th Infantry Division stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. For the time being he would be fairly close to home, only five hundred thirty five miles away. His unit most likely would end up in Korea at some point.

Thanksgiving was subdued for the nation that year as the casualty count mounted. So many families had reason to mourn rather than give thanks. After defeat after defeat, by the 25th the UN began retreating as they were driven by Chinese forces back across the 38th parallel. Prospects for a victory in Korean deteriorated rapidly and hope for an imminent victory give way to a desperate struggle to avoid defeat.

Once again, Craig's plans appeared to be subject to change. A few days after Thanksgiving, he received a letter from the Selective Service. Since he wasn't there to open it, Sheffield opened it for him. It wasn't a draft notice, but it informed him that he was to report to the local draft board within two weeks of graduation from college to update his change of status.

Sheffield celebrated his fifty second birthday with his family and the following day, his team gave him another win. A few days later he received a call from John Steinmann, a producer from MGM. He said that he was in the early stages up putting together the movie based on the Edelweiss incident.

He sensed that there was more to Sheffield's personal story than he put in the book. Desiring to capitalize on his personal conflict in overcoming the loss of his wife and children, he wanted to send one of the script writers and a photographer out to interview him so they could include it in the script. Sheffield agreed and they decided on following Friday the 15th since Sheffield's team had a bye that week and the next weekend he had to go and bring Craig, Edith, and Read home for the holidays. Before hanging up, Sheffield suggested that he also call Debra Mayfield and John Godfrey to get their perspective and told him

how to contact them.

The following Friday, Ron Warfton, the script writer, showed up right on schedule at five o'clock. He was accompanied by his photographer, Clive Shoupe. Sheffield invited them in and introduced his family. After getting acquainted, Ron took them to dinner at the restaurant at the Hotel Roanoke, on MGM. Over dinner Ron began his interview, asking Sheffield to tell more about his personal struggle at the time. He had done his homework, having dug up the the old issue of Life Magazine.

Sheffield told his story as Ron took notes. Sheffield concluded by telling him that it was all in his personal log. Ron asked if he could look at it after dinner. Sheffield agreed and Ron found that it told the story better than he could. He asked for and received permission for Clive to photograph each page along with other personal affects from the time. The main reason he brought Clive along was to get pictures of Sheffield to be used in casting his part. At the end of the evening, they had everything they needed and returned to the Hotel Roanoke where they were staying and flew back to Los Angeles the next day.

School let out on Wednesday the 20th for the holiday break. On Friday Sheffield flew the Staggerwing to Idaho and returned the next day with Craig, Edith, and Read. Sunday was Christmas Eve and Craig made an appointment to see President Rowan between the meetings to talk to him about his chances of going on a mission. Roger told him that they weren't good. Because of the draft, the church had to cut back on the number of missionaries they called.

At that time there were a record number of five missionaries from the Roanoke Branch already serving. His nephew, Dean, would be home later that month and his own son, Wade would be home the following December. With the cutback, he couldn't even replace the ones returning and that Read couldn't go either. The next missionary to return would be in August when Craig would be ready, but with two still out, he couldn't send him either. As much as he would like to him go, his hands were tied.

That was about what Craig was expecting to hear. If he didn't already have enough on his mind, President Rowan gave him one more thing to think about. "By the way Craig, Since you're all home from school for the holidays, I've already talked to Reid and Edith and asked them to speak in Sacrament Meeting next Sunday and I was going to ask you too. Are you up to it?"

"I suppose." Craig agreed.

He thought long and hard for the rest of that day and the next about the decisions that he had ahead of him. He was preoccupied in his thoughts on Christmas Day as the family opened their gifts and got together later for Christmas dinner. After everyone had left and the festivities had quieted down, Craig asked is Sheffield if he could talk to him.

Knowing that a mission was most likely out of the question, he had already formulated an alternate

plan. He told Sheffield that he wanted to fulfill his military obligation and at the same time finish school. He asked, "What would you say if I went into the Navy Reserve?"

"That's a viable option." his Dad replied. "You do know there is still the chance that you can be called up to active duty. As far as that goes, they could still recall me."

"I realize that, but in the meantime perhaps I could get another year of school behind me."

"I see where you're coming from. You do realize that it's a six year commitment rather than only two years if you're drafted into the army."

"Yeah. I've thought about that. Including boot camp, one weekend a month and a month each summer, it amounts to less than about a year spread out over six years."

"Unless you get called up to active duty, that is."

"I realize that. I could get basic training out of the way this summer and attend weekend drills while going to school."

"They try to keep the reservists attached to units close to their homes. For us that is Norfolk. You could take the Staggerwing and fly over and back to cut down on your travel time."

"Really. You'd let me do that?"

"Sure. You're a good pilot. I trust you."

"Thanks Dad."

"How does Edith feel about this?"

"We've talked about it and she is alright with the idea of me joining the reserve. I'm seriously thinking of asking her to marry me. We could get married in Idaho Falls when school let out in the spring. That way we can get married in the temple. We'll both still only be nineteen. Do you think that is too soon?"

"Not for as long as the two of you have been together, you're practically like an old married couple as it is. She was going to wait for you while you served my mission anyway. This way you won't have to wait."

"I know. That's kind of what I've been thinking. Thanks Dad. I've got a lot to do in the next few days. I'm going to go talk to the Navy recruiter tomorrow and see what he has to say but I'm not going to make any commitment just yet. And then I want to pick out a ring. I think I'd like to propose on New Year's Eve."

"You'd better talk to Stirling first."

"Yeah I guess I'd better do that. Like I said, I've got a lot to do in the next few days."

During that week, Craig got the answers to his questions. On Tuesday, Craig drove into Roanoke and met with the recruiter and got all the information that he needed. It all sounded reasonable to him. He could enlist when he came home after graduating and still enroll at Virginia Tech for classes in the fall. From the Navy Recruiter, he went to see Edith and told her what he had learned. But he didn't tell her everything that was on his mind. Together they drove down to Blacksburg so he could look into enrolling in Virginia

Tech's advanced automotive program. He still needed to line up a couple more ducks.

The next duck was to talk to Stirling Austin. He called him at the lumber yard and arranged to meet him for lunch. Just as he had discussed it with Sheffield, he laid out his plans to enlist in the Navy reserve to Edith's father and sought his advice.

Stirling also felt it was reasonable, given the circumstances of not being able to serve a mission.

Craig was comfortable with Stirling and didn't hesitate as he laid out the rest of his plans. "There's one other thing." Craig continued. "I would like to ask Edith to marry me, but first I wanted to ask you."

Stirling replied, "I can see that you have given a lot of thought to things. How do you plan to support her?"

Craig was ready for that question and had his response ready. He explained that he had enough money from his mother to live on while attending school, plus what little he would get paid for being in the reserve. He reasoned that it wouldn't cost much more for two to live as it would be for one. He could cover rent and other living expenses.

"Well then in that case," Stirling said, "you have my blessing. You're a fine young man, Craig, and I have all of the confidence in the world in you. I know that Edith is deeply in love with you, and I can tell that you love her just as much."

"You're not too concerned that we're too young?"

"You've got me there, Craig. I was barely twenty when I married Lorraine and she was only seventeen."

"How long were you married before she died?"

"From February to December when Clarence was born."

"That must have been tough. I remember how hard it was when my parents died."

"Yeah, I know that was hard for you too, Craig. Fortunately for you, Sheffield and Ramona were there for you. Just a little over a year after Lorraine died, I married Mary Ann." Changing the subject, Stirling asked, "So when are you going to propose to her?"

"I want to do it on New Year's Eve, I just haven't figured out how to go about it."

"Dose she suspect, its coming?"

"I don't think so, at least not so soon."

"Well, good luck Craig. It sounds like you have things pretty much figured out. If there is any thing I can do for you, just let me know."

"Yeah there is just one thing. I want to go pick out a ring tomorrow but I don't what size to get."

"I'll tell you what, just stop by the lumber yard on your way into town tomorrow. By the way I understand that Edith and you are talking in church on Sunday."

“Oh yeah. I almost forgot.”

The next day, Craig stopped by the lumber yard and Stirling had managed to get Edith's high school class ring, which she never wore, and gave it to Craig as a reference. “When your done with it I'll just slip it back and she'll never know it was gone.”

Craig took the ring and went on his way. He had somewhat of an idea of what to look for as once when they went to Idaho Falls, she stopped by the show window at a jewelry store to daydream. He was smart enough to pay attention to what she was wanted. He was also smart enough to make a note of how much something like that cost and had enough money with him to cover it.

He found the jeweler to be very helpful and felt that he got a good deal on the half karat marquise cut diamond engagement ring with a matching wedding band for later.

Now that he had his ducks pretty much lined up, he wanted to spend time with Edith, who he hadn't spent much time with the last two or three days. But first on his way to pick her up, he stopped by lumber yard to return her class ring before she noticed that it was missing.

The rest of the afternoon, he and Edith went ice skating and got something to eat. They talked more about their plans for the future, but the subject of getting married didn't come up. He wanted to save the proposal for something special, except he didn't know how he was going to go about it other than he wanted to do it on New Year's Eve.

During their conversation, Edith asked, “So what are you going to talk about on Sunday.”

“I don't know yet. I haven't had much time to think about it.”

“Well you'd better get on the ball. I plan on talking about how I have grown by attending Ricks College and the things I have learned about myself. If I were you, I'd figure something out.”

During the rest of week, Craig racked his brain as how to propose to Edith and didn't give much thought to his talk, unless someone reminded him. By Sunday afternoon he hadn't come up with either one. Since sacrament meeting was in a couple of hours, he decided that he'd better at least figure out what he was going to say.

As the meeting was ready to start, Craig was seated on the stand between Edith and Reid. In one pocket he had a few notes that he may or not use. In another pocket was the engagement ring as he sought an opportunity to pop the question. Perhaps once his talk was over, he could figure out how and where to do it. During the sacrament he was frantically trying to figure out what he was going to say. Then Edith stood to give her talk. He set aside his own thoughts so he could listen to what she had to say. He'd just have to wing it and hope that it turned out alright. He was about ready to just wing the proposal as well.

Edith talked about the wonderful opportunity that attending Ricks College had been and how her testimony had grown in that environment in ways that she couldn't have imagined. One of the things that

impressed her immensely was when she had the privilege of doing baptisms for the dead in the Idaho Falls Temple with a group of students including Craig and how she looked forward to some future day when they could be married in the temple.

That comment got Craig's attention. "At least its on her mind too." he thought to himself. "Maybe she won't be surprised when I ask her after all. Maybe I've been worrying about it too much."

As he was lost in his own thoughts, he didn't hear her wrap up her talk and bear her testimony. She sat down next to him and sqouze his hand and whispered, "Good luck."

That was it, he had run out of time. He looked at her and smiled as he got up out of his seat. He walked to the pulpit and took a deep breath and began with the only thing concrete that had come up with, a joke that he had heard told in sacrament meeting in Rexburg.

"There a stake high councilman from one of the small communities around Rexburg who had to go to a conference in a big city. When his plane landed he hailed a cab to take him to were the meeting was being held. As soon as he got in the cab, he knew that he was in trouble when the driver downed a shot of whiskey. It soon became obvious that this wasn't the driver's first drink.

"All the way he prayed that they would make it there in one piece. To his horror, the cab swerved into the path of an oncoming truck. The next thing he knew, they were at the Pearly Gates. To his disbelief the drunken taxi driver was allowed right in. When it was the high councilor's turn, he was asked to justify why he should be admitted into heaven. He cited a long list of his the callings that had held in the church and all of the service that he had given, which didn't impress the keeper of the gate. Finally in exasperation he asked, 'Why did that drunk get in so easily?'

"'Well,' the gate keeper answered, 'When people got into his cab, he caused them to pray more fervently that they ever have in their life. On the other hand when you got up to speak in church, you caused them to go to sleep.' Brother's and sisters, I sure hope that I don't put you to sleep."

While waiting for the chuckle among the congregation to die down, Craig offered a quick silent prayer of desperation for inspiration for as what to say next. Then he began, "This is New Years Eve and tomorrow we begin a brand new year. This is the season for making goals and resolutions for what we hope to accomplish in the new year. Goals are more that something that we wish would happen but rather a commitment to do all we can to make them happen.

"For example my life's goal is to be a mechanic. But to do so I have some short term goals in place to get there. They include getting an associates degree from Ricks College, serving a mission, and getting a bachelors degree from Virginia Tech. I suppose my ultimate goal is to some point along the way marry my sweetheart, Edith.

"Sometimes we have to step back and reevaluate our goals. Perhaps we need to make an

adjustment in how we go about accomplishing them or redetermine our priorities. Perhaps the goal is no longer something we want to pursue or things come up that make it no longer attainable.

“The best example I can think of of someone who has a goal and readjusts her approach to accomplishing that goal is my little sister, Janet. Her goal to compete and excel in running track has been an inspiration to us all. She has faced setbacks that appeared to make her goal unattainable, like when she lost her toe and a number of other things that get in her way. Yet she is so focused on her goal that she figures out another way to get there, mostly by working harder.

“Sometimes some of our goals simply become out of reach. I have had a goal to serve a mission ever since we joined the church. I have constantly worked toward that goal and was in reach of realizing it when I graduate from Ricks next spring. But then something like the war in Korea came along and because of the draft and the limitation placed on the number of missionaries permitted to serve. I met with President Rowan last week only to be told that it would be impossible for me to go.

“I had an inclination that this might be the case, so recently I had to reevaluate what I want to do with my life in the years ahead. With being drafted a real possibility, I have come up with some new goals to get me to the same place that I eventually want to be. In order to fill my military obligation and further my education at the same time. I have given it a lot of thought and made it a matter of prayer and I have decided to join the Navy Reserve after I graduate and get my basic training out of the way and attend Virginia Tech in the fall.

“Naturally I have other goals and dreams that I would like to accomplish as well, like becoming a better man and honor my priesthood. Attending Ricks college has done more for me to that end than anything else I could have done. Edith mentioned the time that we did baptisms for the dead in the Idaho Falls temple and how she has a goal for us to one day be married in the temple.”

Craig paused for a moment. Then he had an idea. He wasn't sure it was the best idea, but he went with it anyway. “Since both of our families are here.” he said. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out the ring as she turned around to Edith who was sitting just behind and to his side and got down on one knee. He took her by one hand and looked her in the eyes, which were suddenly filled with surprise. “Edith,” he said loud enough for those around him to hear, “will you marry me.” and slipped the ring on her finger.

Edith leapt to her feet as Craig stood up and threw his arms around his neck and said, “Yes!” Then she sealed their engagement with a kiss right there before the entire congregation.

As the congregation applauded, Ramona nudged Sheffield and asked, “Did you know about this?”

“I knew he was going to ask her today, but I had no idea that it would be like this.”

With Edith clutching his arm, Craig returned to podium and continued. “She said Yes! Now with

some rearranging, all of my goals for the new year and beyond are in place and I am once again on the path to where I want to be.”

With Edith still at his side, he finished his remarks by expressing his love for his family and especially for Edith, and bore his testimony.

When they sat down, Reid came to the pulpit and said, “Wow, I don't know how to follow that. Congratulations Craig and Edith.” before going on to give his talk.

After the meeting, everyone wanted to congratulate the newly engaged couple and Stirling and Mary Ann invited them and Sheffield, Ramona and the girls to come by on their way home to discuss the arrangements before Craig and Edith had to return to Rexburg. Craig had it all figured out, and everyone agreed. They would get married in the Idaho Falls Temple while their families were there for their graduation in May.

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For the story line of “The Constellation Chronicles” see Remembering Geannie Part I, Chapter 17. It sounds a lot like “Star Trek”

The story of the Edelweiss and Captain Gottfried is in the Business of War, Chapters 12 - 15

The information on German POWs is from “The Enemy in Our Midst: German POW Camps in Florida ” and Wikipedia article “German prisoners of war in the United States”

The information about Stettin and Hamburg and the allied occupation of Germany is from various Wikipedia articles.

Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the 1950s didn't have many of the attractions that are now associated with the town. The antler arches in the town square weren't constructed until the 1950s and 60s. The old west shoot out didn't start until 1955. The Pink Garter Theater didn't open until 1959.

The S.S. Florida was an actual cruise ship that sailed from Miami to Havana as described.