

Chapter VII Double Wedding

August 18, 1954 – December 31, 1954

It was seven thirty in the morning when the Staggerwing climbed into the sky. Sheffield circled around as he gained altitude. Once in the air, he saw the 1949 Beechcraft A35 Bonanza that Craig had rented from the airport where he worked. Sitting next to him in the front seat was Edith with Little Geannie on her lap. As Sheffield approached Craig's aircraft, he raised him on the radio. "Bonanza niner-seven-charlie, its good to have you as my wingman. Take position at four o'clock off my starboard wing. Over."

"Roger that Admiral." Craig said as he took up position about fifty yards behind and to the right of Sheffield. "What's our flight plan? Over."

"We'll be making fuel stops in Springfield, Illinois and McCook, Nebraska. We can have lunch at either one. Over."

"I think we can hold off until McCook. Over."

"Roger. That's a fine looking plane. That v shaped tail is sure interesting. Over."

"Its a little slower than your Staggerwing and doesn't quite have the range, but it will get you where you're going. Over"

"How's the ride? Over."

"You know," Craig said, "this is a pretty smooth ride. I should use the rest of my inheritance money and buy it. Over."

Ramona had been listening in on the conversation reached over and snatched the radio's microphone from Sheffield. " Bonanza niner-seven-charlie, this is your Mom. Now you listen to me. Take that money and invest it for now. Wait until you're established before you start collecting toys. Over."

"Roger that, Mom."

Sheffield took the mic back and added, "She's right son. You can borrow mine for now."

The conversation continued as they stayed in touch with each other over the radio as they headed west in tandem across the Appalachian Mountains and over the Ohio Valley. At mid morning they landed briefly at Springfield to top off their fuel tanks and took off again shortly and continued west. They crossed the Mississippi River over Quincey, Illinois and on over Missouri.

As they crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph, Missouri, the sky grew dark in the distance. Sheffield called for a weather report and was advised to alter course to the north and land in North Platte. Craig followed Sheffield's lead as they banked to the right and headed northeast to Lincoln, Nebraska where they again headed west. The sky was clear ahead of them with a few high scattered clouds, but off to the south they could see the thunderstorms in the area that they would have been flying through.

It was early afternoon when they landed at Lee Bird Field in North Platte, Nebraska. By then

everyone was hungry. While the two planes were refueled, they had lunch at the snack bar and grill in the terminal building. Norma, who still got queasy while flying, was careful as to what she ate so it wouldn't end up all over the back seat.

Once in the air again, they followed the North Fork of the Platte River past the famed Chimney Rock and on into Wyoming. When they passed just south of the Grand Tetons and crossed over into Idaho, they were almost there. Several minutes later, they were circling Rexburg, waiting for a crop duster to take off before they could land.

They arrived at Rexburg about twenty minutes behind schedule to find Wade and Roger waiting for them as arranged. They had arrived earlier in the week for the annual visit to Chantelle's family. After securing their aircraft, Sheffield unloaded the Staggerwing into the loaner car from Chantelle's brother that Wade had brought while Craig and Edith put their things into Rogers car. A few minutes later they drove into town and got checked into the Idamont Hotel; one room for Sheffield and Ramona, one room for Craig and Edith, and one room for the girls.

There wasn't much time to do anything besides rest up from the long flight. On Thursday while Ramona and Norma were taking care of last minute things for the wedding, Sheffield took Craig with him to find a car for Janet and Takara to get around in, just like he had done for Craig six years earlier. Since they would be the ones using it, they came along.



Sheffield's first and only stop was at the same dealership where he had bought Craig's car. They happened to have a turquoise 1949 Chrysler Windsor two door coupe that would fit the bill, at just the right price. Craig looked it over closely and in his mechanical expertise, declared it to be sound. Sheffield paid cash for it on the spot and went to the court house to license it – in his name. After all, it would also serve his transportation needs while in the area over the next two years as he came and went to fly Janet and Takara back and forth. That evening, the Brasons and the Rowans got together at Chantelle's parents' home for a barbecue in the park across the street.

Friday was the big day. The brides and grooms needed to be at the temple at seven o'clock in the morning. For all of them except for Wade, this was their first time through the temple. For those going through with them, they had to be at temple at nine.

As the session started, the room was full of the Brasons, and Rowans from Virginia and the Ricks from Rexburg, along with the Orchards from Moreland and Quinn and Bonnie who had come up from Tremonton. Also in attendance as guests of the Brasons were Morris and Sheila Gover and Wayne and

Gale Gover who had come to bring Jerry to school. Also, Debra and Chet Mayfield had come up from Salt Lake to be there.

The actual wedding took place at eleven in the temple's largest sealing room, which was filled to capacity and then some. Being the oldest, Wade went first. He and Norma knelt across the alter as President Killpack, the temple president, pronounced the blessings on them and sealed them as husband and wife, legally and lawfully wedded for time and all eternity. Incidentally, he had married Craig and Edith three years earlier.

Wade and Norma were too focused on each other to really hear the counsel that he gave or the significance of the promised blessings. They kissed over the alter and then stepped aside to exchange rings. Then it was Sedric and Jolene's turn. They were much the same as Wade and Norma. Both bride's had tears in their eyes, but it was Chantelle who cried the most with two of her children being married within minutes of each other.

President Killpack had both couples stand near the door to greet their guests as they exited the room. Since the Rowans had two weddings, Roger and Chantelle were the first to meet the newlyweds. Sedric's mother and father were next, followed by Sheffield and Ramona.

Sheffield stopped in front of Norma and took her by both hands and looked into her eyes. "You look so beautiful, sweetheart."

"Thank you Dad." she pulled him into her arms and said, "Thank you for everything. You're the best dad a girl could have. I love you."

With a tear in his eye and emotion in his voice, he replied, "And you're the best daughter a father can have. I love you too."

Outside of the temple Janet, Takara, and Jolene and her brothers Read and Michael along with Olivia who had made the trip to Idaho with the Rowans, were waiting as the families began coming out of the temple. Jerry Gover had hooked up them as well. Janet had been watching Little Geannie and when Craig and Edith came out, she wanted her mother and practically squirmed out of Janet's arms.

The crowd grew larger as everyone waited for the two couples to come out. Then the double doors opened and out stepped the brides followed immediately by the grooms. Cameras clicked at every angle to capture the moment. Neither bride was wearing their wedding dress, saving them for their receptions. In fact, Norma hadn't even brought hers. The wedding party lingered and mingled before migrating to a restaurant across the river, overlooking the falls for the luncheon hosted by the fathers of the grooms.

That evening, the Ricks hosted an informal open house for Wade and Norma since they wouldn't be able to travel from Idaho to Virginia for the reception. Sedric and Jolene were there too, but they would have the spotlight the next evening in Moreland. The guests from Utah also came. Sheffield was surprised that

Hank and Teri Terry had come over all the way from Boise. In that informal setting a lot of visiting and catching up took place and continued even after both couples left for separate undisclosed locations to spend their wedding nights.

The Terry's spent the night in Rexburg and on Saturday morning Sheffield and Hank had a chance to catch up before he and Teri started back to Boise around noon. Hank had been Sheffield's executive officer on the Reprisal during the Mediterranean campaigns of the summer of 1943.

That next evening the spotlight was on Sedric and Jolene. They had a formal reception at the meetinghouse in Moreland, seven miles west of Blackfoot where his family attended. The reception line included Norma and Bonnie as bridesmaids, Quinn as the best man, and Roger and Chantelle as the parents of the bride, along with Sedric's parents. After going through the reception line, Sheffield, Ramona, and the girls sat at a table off in one corner. Several people from Moreland stopped by to introduce themselves and visit for a moment.

After the reception, Wade and Norma returned to Rexburg and stayed in a separate room at the Idamont. On Sunday morning they set out for their honeymoon in Sun Valley while Sedric and Jolene began their honeymoon road trip back to Roanoke. Craig and Edith also left on Sunday to fly back to Roanoke so he could be to work on Monday. Sheffield and Ramona and the girls attended church with the Rowans and Ricks in the Rexburg First Ward where Janet and Takara would be members while attending school.

Now that the wedding was over, the attention turned to getting Janet and Takara settled. They and Beverly and Olivia moved into their upstairs apartment in the Ricks home, and checked in at the administration building. Both the campus and the student body had grown since Craig had graduated. After checking around, Ramona found a therapist for Janet to go to for the ongoing therapy that she needed for her hand. The therapist was in Idaho Falls, so the car would come in handy.

On Tuesday morning, the Rowans had to leave to return to Roanoke and said their goodbyes to Jolene and Beverly. Sheffield and Ramona packed a picnic and squeeze Janet, Takara, Beverly, and Olivia into the Chrysler Windsor and took them up to Mesa Falls and Big Springs, a couple of their favorite nearby places that had visited on previous trips to Idaho. Janet and Beverly had been to these places before, but they were new to Takara and Olivia.

On Wednesday morning the girls started school and later in the day Wade and Norma returned from their honeymoon getaway. Early on Thursday morning, they said goodbye to Janet and Takara and made the return flight to Roanoke, with Wade and Norma riding in the back seat. It was almost early evening with plenty of daylight left when they landed at the Two Star Ranch. After unloading the plane, Wade took Norma home with him. Sheffield and Ramona unpacked and unwound with a relaxing soak in the bathhouse before turning in. The house was hauntingly quiet and empty that night when Sheffield and Ramona went to bed.

On Friday, the attention turned to the reception. During the morning, Sheffield, with help from Wade and Seduc, worked on the yard and in the afternoon, he got out the Christmas lights and strung them on the fence along the driveway and around and through the lower branches of the trees. Meanwhile the mothers of the brides and the brides spent the day in the kitchen preparing the refreshments and centerpieces.

On Saturday morning Sheffield took the grooms in the pickup and went to get the tables and chairs from the church and set them up around the yard and set up the backdrops which Chantelle got from somewhere. By mid afternoon, the decorating and preparations were complete.

All of the now unused bedrooms in the house were used as dressing rooms for the brides and grooms. Seduc's parents had flown in that morning and he picked them up at the airport and they too needed a place to freshen up. The house was a mass of orchestrated confusion as everyone milled about getting ready for the evening. The refreshments were set out on the serving table and everything was ready as the first guests began arriving.

The reception line began with Sheffield and Ramona followed by Norma and Wade. Roger and Chantelle were in the very center with Roger next to Wade and Chantelle next to Jolene. Naturally, Seduc was next to Jolene and his father and mother were at the end of the line. There was no provision for bridesmaids or groomsmen since Quinn and Bonnie weren't able to make the trip. Also missing were Janet and Takara.

Nearly everyone from the branch came through line, which included the extended Brason and Rowan families. Others who knew one or the other and in many cases, both families also came. There were a few out of town guests who came as well. Mason and Pat Owen came down from Arlington. Harvey and Marcelle came up from Denison. They were also there to pick up Anna and Paul and take them home.

Norma didn't expect any of her natural relatives to come so she wasn't disappointed when none of them showed up, except for one. Samantha's cousin Paula and her husband Jacob Messner did come from Norfolk. They were also connected through their friendship with Sheffield and Ramona. Ramona was the first to see them and couldn't help but whisper in Sheffield's ear, "Look, here comes your girlfriend."

The weather cooperated and it was a lovely evening. As it began to get dark, the Christmas lights added to the ambiance. At one point about half way through the evening the reception line broke up for the simultaneous cutting of the cake, with one couple on either side. After that, the reception line never did reform as everyone casually visited with whomever they encountered.

When it was time to wrap things up, several of the guests pitched in to clear away and clean up. Someone volunteered to take the tables and chairs back to the meetinghouse and the decorations and gifts were stashed in the garage. By eleven o'clock everything was taken care of.

Everyone went to church on Sunday and that evening both couples and their parents got together to

open the gifts. They both got some really nice things to set up housekeeping with. Naturally there were a lot of duplicates. For example Wade and Norma got two cutlery sets but Sedric and Jolene didn't get one. On the other hand, they got three sets of flatware so they did a little trading until it evened out.

The real challenge was for Jolene and Sedric to take their gifts back to Idaho with them. They ended up boxing them up so Roger could ship them to them. On Monday, the Orchards left and took Jolene with them. Chantelle hated to see her go, but at least she wouldn't be too far from her family in Rexburg.

With the double wedding over and a week and half before school started, things settled down and Norma and Wade began their lives together. The plan was for her to finish her last year at Hollins and then turn their attention to having a family. It was nice to have things get back to normal, although being alone was an adjustment for Sheffield and Ramona.

Like Ramona said, "When we got married we expected to be alone anyway. When we adopted the kids we knew that they'd grow up and go out on their own someday."

During that week, they got a letter from Janet and Takara. They were enjoying the college life, studying hard and taking advantage of the social life. From the letter, Janet's social life seemed to include a lot of time with Jerry Gover.

Labor Day was on the 6th of September. It was a bit on the cool side for early September the Brasons gathered in the trees in the pasture down on the river for the Labor Day picnic. Sheffield's brothers and their wives were all there, but some of their children had elsewhere to go. As their families grew it became more difficult to get everyone together. Criag and Edith came as did Wade and Norma. They still had that newlywed look in their eyes and hardly left each others side.

Ellen, now eighty one, was beginning to have more difficulty getting around and doing things for herself. Ramona had always stopped in to look after her two or three times a week, but at the picnic her difficulties seemed to be more obvious.

The next day Sheffield had his typical half a day at school to get ready for the first day of school on Wednesday. He followed his typical first day of school routine. Now that Janet had graduated, none of his children were in high school any more. Ramona and Norma went back to Hollins the same day. Norma decided to take health just so she could be in her mom's class. Her goal was to stop by at least three times a week after school or work to practice the the piano. Sheffield and Ramona enjoyed hearing the strains of the piano throughout the house. At those times, it was as if she had never left.

During the rest of that first week, Sheffield and Coach Warfman put the wrestling team hopefuls through the tryout process. At the end of the next week, some had dropped out as usual, while the cream was rising to the top.

September was already more than half way over. On the third Saturday in September, Craig, Edith,

and Little Geannie, and Norma and Wade come over for a backyard barbecue. After enjoying some home grown, grass fattened, grilled tender loin, it was time for a soak in Ramona's bathhouse. Sheffield and Ramona went into their bedroom to change into their bathing suits while the kids went upstairs to change in what used to be their respective bedrooms.

Soon all seven of them are enjoying the sensation of the hot, relaxing water. Seventeen month old Little Geannie particularly loved splashing her hands and kicking her feet in the water as she sat on Ramona's lap. They had a good visit about a host of things, including wondering what Janet was up to. After a half an hour or forty five minutes, Little Geannie grew tired of it and began to fuss.

"I think this warm water has made her sleepy." Ramona said. "I think I'll take her in and put her down for a nap."

"I think I'll come too." Sheffield added. "Why don't you kids stay and enjoy it some more."

"Thanks, that will be great." Edith said.

Sheffield and Ramona got out and dried off and took Little Geannie and went into the house. By the time Ramona had Little Geannie in some dry cloths she was practically asleep. She laid her down on their bed and she fell fast asleep. With her taken care of, Sheffield and Ramona changed out of their bathing suits and into some dry cloths and went out into the family room.

About a half an hour later, Craig and Edith and Norma and Wade burst through the door in their dripping wet bathing suits. Laughing and giggling and dashed up the stairs and darted into their respective bedrooms, practically slamming the doors behind them.

"What was that all about?" Sheffield asked.

"I don't know, but they're in a hurry to do whatever it is they have on their minds."

A moment later, the somewhat muffled moans and shrieks of pleasure and ecstasy could be heard coming from upstairs. "What on earth are are they doing?" Sheffield wondered aloud.

"It sounds to me like they're making a couple of grand-babies" Ramona beamed.

"Obviously." Sheffield agreed. "But couldn't they be a little more discreet about it?"

"Awh, what the fun in that?" Ramona winked. "Do you remember that time right after we were married and we came home for a visit? We did it in your parents house, too."

"Yeah, I remember." Sheffield smiled. "There was something about being sneaky that made it all the more enjoyable."

The sound grew more intense, first one and then the other. Which one was which they didn't speculate. Then silence.

After a while there where stirrings of life coming again from upstairs. A moment later, Craig and Edith came downstairs all dressed and freshened up, still radiating in the afterglow. "Is Little Geannie awake yet?"

Edith asked.

"I think I heard her a moment ago." Ramona said. "I was about to go check on her."

"That's okay, Ramona." Edith replied, "I'll get her."

A few minutes later Norma and Wade came downstairs, they too were all dressed and freshened up, and had smiles on their faces. Not long after that, they all left and went home.

That evening Sheffield and Ramona went to a movie that Sheffield had been anxiously waiting to see, "Men of the Fighting Lady", a Korean War drama that took place aboard the Oriskany. The film's high point was the scene where a blinded F9F Panther pilot is talked in for a landing aboard the carrier. After the movie, Sheffield and Ramona went out for a treat and came home and went to bed.

September had ushered in fall and at the end of the tryout period Sheffield and Coach Warfman had selected the wrestling team. The team seemed to lack the potential of teams from previous years. Some of the new juniors showed more promise than the returning veterans.

Ramona had sold a piece land for development and had made such a good return on her investment that she bought another parcel. The area was going through a building boom and growth spurt.

After Marie died, the government bought the Austin Mansion for a convalescent home for wounded soldiers. Now they were in the process of converting it into office space and approached Ellen with an offer to buy her home as well. At first, she was hesitant and resisted the notion. After all, she had lived in that house for nearly sixty years. Sheffield and Ramona told her that she could come and live with them and she could have the guest room for herself.

"I don't want to be a guest." she retorted.

"We'd let you have the upstairs," Sheffield replied, "but I don't think you'd get up and down the stairs very well."

Sheffield and Ramona talked to Walt and Shenan about the idea and they all agreed that she shouldn't be living alone anymore. They each talked to her about it and meet with the same resistance.

It wasn't until at Sunday dinner one week when the subject was brought up again. "You're ganging up on me." Ellen protested. They simply pointed out the difficulties that she had been having and said that if she didn't take their advise, they might have to put her in a retirement home.

"I'm not going to live in an old folks home, they're for old people. What do think I am?" She blurted rather indignantly.

Ramona seized the opportunity and suggested, "I don't blame you. I wouldn't want to live with a bunch of old people either and have some nurse checking up on me when it wasn't convenient. I'd want to go live with one of my kids."

"Oh I don't want to be a burden." she said stubbornly. "Besides, who would have me?"

"Our offer is still good." Sheffield's assured her. "We'd love to have come and live with us."

"Well let me think about it." she finally agreed.

After dinner, Ellen was tired and wanted to rest before going to church. Ramona suggested that she go into the guest room and lie down on the bed while they cleaned up.

A little while later, Ellen came out fresh and rested. "My that's a comfortable bed." she observed.

"It could be your's." Sheffield told her.

"Like I said, I'll think about it."

Over the next few days Ellen did think about it. She became aware of the things that she had difficulty doing and the things that she couldn't do anymore. When Ramona stopped in, she realized how much she depended on her and others when they came over.

She looked around and wondered what to do with the lifetime of memories that were in the house. She began identifying who she thought might like some of them. Others she realized were old and worn out. She didn't say anything about it to anyone for two weeks as she thought it through. She remembered when she was a girl how her own grandmother had come to live with them.

The offer on her property would go a long ways to taking care of her needs should she ever have to go the hospital and it would leave a small inheritance for her three sons. She realized how lonely it was at night particularly. Sometimes she found herself talking to Emmett as if he was there. It would be nice to have someone to talk to. As it began to cool down in October she thought of the cold winter days ahead and how drafty the old stone house could get. She dreaded the idea of putting up with the old coal furnace.

Then one day she fell. She was simply walking across the room and went down. She hadn't tripped or stumbled over anything; her legs just gave out from under her. She pulled herself back up with nothing but he dignity hurt. She finally came to the conclusion that what if that she hadn't been able to get up and no one stopped by for a day or two.

She called her sons and their wives together one evening and consented. She had picked out what she wanted to take with her and what she wanted them to have. The rest, they and the grandchildren could pick through and what was left could either go to Good Will or to the city dump.

The matter was settled and one Saturday in October she brought her things out to stay. Over the next little while or so, her sons and daughters in law went through the things they wanted, then the grandchildren got what they wanted and the rest was sorted through and disposed of. With the house cleaned out, Ramona contacted the government real estate agent who had made the initial contact and arranged for the sale. It didn't take Ellen long to settle in and she didn't look back.

One Sunday in October, President Brown called Ramona into his office. She asked Sheffield what it was all about. All he would tell her was to go and find out. After Sunday School she and Sheffield were seated across the desk from their friend and ecclesiastical leader, Jack Brown. He began by talking about all the good things that the Relief Society had done over the last four years under her direction and the time before that when she had served as a counselor.

“My goodness, has it been that long?” Ramona said in disbelief.

“It has.” Jack told her, “and we think you’re due of a well deserved change. So at this time I extend to you an honorable release and our heart felt thanks.”

“Well thank you, Jack. I appreciate that. Now that Ellen is living with us, I guess I could use a break.”

“I didn’t say anything about giving you a break. You’ve been a member of the Church long enough to know that’s not how things work. No, we have something else for you to do. Sheffield here is over the music and he has something for you.”

“Music, really?”

“Ramona, sweetheart.” Sheffield began, “We would like to extend a call to you serve as the choir director. Will you except the call?”

“You don’t need to be so formal, I am your wife you know.”

“I know. I’m just fulfilling my duty. You deserve the dignity that we try to conduct these matters with.”

“Choir director, huh. Yes, I’d love to do that.”

“Very good.” Jack said.

Then he turned to Sheffield, “Now drop the formality and give our new choir director a hug.”

Later that afternoon in Sacrament meeting she and her presidency were released and she was sustained and set apart for her new calling.

Once the Magician wrestling team actually began their season, Sheffield’s concerns were realized. They lost the first two matches to teams that Jefferson had dominated in the past. They did win their third match, but only because of a technicality that disqualified the other team, after soundly trouncing them.

Having Ellen living with them actually gave Ramona more time to tend to her business now that she didn’t have to go out of her way to stop in on her. Ellen was okay to leave alone for periods of time during the day. It was in the evenings that had been hard on her. Ramona loved her new calling as the choir director. As early as late October, they began working on a piece to perform in Sacrament meeting the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

During November the wrestling team continued to do poorly. In an attempt to improve their performance, Sheffield and Coach Warfman implemented longer practice sessions and even resorted to

Saturday practices. Some of parents complained that the Admiral had turned wrestling practice into boot camp. Some of the wrestlers were on the verge of mutiny, but those who toughed it out got tougher. By the end of the month, those who had put in the extra work began to have more success in their matches.

School let out after a half day the day before Thanksgiving. Janet had written home to say that she enjoyed her classes and was doing well. She said that she had been dating Jerry pretty much exclusively and that she was going to spend Thanksgiving with the Govers in Clarkston. Takara had also included a note saying that she was really enjoying college life.

Over Thanksgiving dinner, both Craig and Norma each had some special news for the family. Unbeknown to each other, it was the same news. Norma went first. "Mom, Dad." she began. "Do you remember when we said that we wanted to wait until after I graduate from college to start a family?"

"Yeah." Ramona said.

"Its a little sooner than we expected, but it appears that it will be about three weeks after graduation."

"What?" Ramona blurted. "You're pregnant!?!"

"Huh huh. We just found out earlier in the week."

"Well that's exciting. Wouldn't you say, Sheffield?"

"Absolutely, I'd say. Congratulations." Sheffield added.

"Thats so exciting. I can't hardly stand it. When are you due?"

"About June twenty first."

"Wow that's just great. I'll be a grandpa again for Father's Day."

"That's exciting news, Norma. Congratulations." Craig said. "I hate to upstage your good news, but Emily and I have some of our own. Do you want to tell them, or should I?"

"Go ahead, Craig."

"Well hold on to seat Mom because Dad's going to have two grandchildren for Father's Day."

"What?" Ramona screamed with delight. "You're pregnant too?"

"We just found out yesterday." Edith said. "My due date is also on June twenty first."

"Wow, I don't believe it. Two at once. How did that happen?" Ramona asked. "Wait a minute. I'll bet it was that Saturday back in September wasn't it. We'll I'll be."

"The only problem," Craig added, "is that I'll be in Norfolk during June with the reserves."

The news set the tone for the rest of the day. There was truly a lot to be thankful for. With five women in the kitchen cleaning up after dinner, Sheffield enlisted the help of Craig and Wade to put up the Christmas lights.

On Friday the whole family, except for Janet and Takara went up to the cabin to spend the night. The next morning they selected their Christmas trees. Sheffield and Ramona got a nice big one, but Craig and

Edith and Norma and Wade each got smaller ones that were more suited to their homes. When they came down of the mountain, the kids went to their own homes. Sheffield, Ramona, and Ellen spent the rest of the day decorating their tree.

Sheffield quietly celebrated his fifty sixth birthday by going out to dinner with Ramona and his mother. He did get a telephone call from both Craig and Norma, and Janet and Takara had sent him a sweet birthday card.

The Magicians gave him a gift later in the week with an honest win, their first of the season. The credit went to the boys who were willing to work hard and put in the extra effort. The win also stymied the criticism that Coach Brason had been receiving. However the next week they were trounced by EC Glass at Lynchburg. Even at their best, the Magician always struggled against the Hilltoppers.

They sent out their Christmas cards and began receiving cards in return. One evening after Sheffield returned home for dinner after wrestling practice, he picked up the stack of mail to look through it. Among the bills, ads, and cards, was a card from the John and Kathryn Godfrey.

“They have some interesting news.” Ramona said.

“Oh really. What did they have to say?”

Ramona took the card out of the envelope and began reading, “Dear Sheffield and Ramona. We got your card the other day and we just had to write back. So much has happened in the last year. For starters, John took an early retirement and left his job with the cruise line.”

“So much for taking that cruise to Havana.” Sheffield interrupted. “There wasn’t time while I was on active duty and then when I got out, school started and with the wedding this summer and everything else going on there just hasn’t been the time. Why did he retire really?”

“Well,” Ramona continued, “they go on to explain.” She resumed reading, “Ever since Batista and his cronies seized power in Cuba back in fifty two, things have really got bad down there. For starters he invited the Mafia to set up shop in the casinos. Gambling, prostitution, and crime in general is running rampant down there, not to mention the political unrest ever since the attempted coupe last year.

“Consequently the type of passengers changed drastically. Instead of couples looking for a nice getaway, it became hoodlums and thugs looking for some action. The atmosphere aboard the ship became unruly and John simply got tired of it. There was an opening for Peninsular and Occidental’s terminal manager her in Miami and John applied for and got the job, which keeps him close to home.”

“Now Get a load of this.” Ramona interjected.

“Now that he wasn’t gone all of the time, we had more time to the things that we didn’t before. One of them included the missionaries. As you know, we have been seeing them off and on ever since we told you

and the Mayfields that we'd agree to meet with them. But we never progressed very far and never had a chance to attend church. That all changed and we're happy to tell you that we were baptized on October thirtieth. We're so grateful for your example and telling us about the gospel. We owe it all to you."

"How about that." Sheffield interrupted. "Isn't that interesting. What else do they have to say?"

Ramona continued reading, "Now that we have more time, we'd like to come and see you again sometime. Better yet, we'd love to have you come down to Miami sometime and stay with us.

"So much for our news. We're happy to hear that all is well with you and your family. Congratulations on the wedding and the grandchildren on the way. We hope you have a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. We hope to see you sometime so lets make some plans. Love John and Kathryn Godfrey."

"Thats something." Sheffield concluded. "I'd like to take them up on their invitation. We could fly down in the Staggerwing. After the first of the year we should get with them and make some plans."

School let out after a half day on Wednesday the 22nd. Sheffield found a substitute for the day so he could fly out to pick up the girls. Ramona had a full day of classes that day or she would have covered for him. He took off by himself at first light and followed the Springfield, McCook flight path, with fairly decent weather all they way, except for some low cloud cover over the Ohio Valley.

Wednesday was also the last day of school at Ricks. When Sheffield landed at the Rexburg airport late in the afternoon, Janet was waiting for him. A cold wind was blowing out of the northwest. They went back to her apartment and he was invited to have dinner and spend the night with the Ricks.

The weather forecast called for a cold front to push through later in the morning. He had Janet, Takara, Beverly, and Olivia hurry to get ready so they could get on their way before the weather got worse and grounded them. Consequently they didn't get to fix their hair just so nor put on their make up. He reminded them, "You know, I've seen all four of you at less than your best before." They got the point and hurried to get ready.

The Staggerwing took off at first light. They needed all the time they could spare with the short winter days and the loss of two hours due to the time zones. Once in the air the sky looked menacing behind them, but fortunately the position of the jet stream gave him a good tail wind clear across Wyoming and Nebraska all the way to St. Joseph, Missouri before making their first stop for fuel and lunch. The weather over Missouri and the Ohio Valley had improved from the day before. After another short stop in Louisville, Kentucky, they made it home just as that sun had set. As Sheffield circled around the ranch to line up for his landing approach, the Christmas lights came on. Once on the ground, the girls unloaded their things from the plane and helped push the plane into the hangar. After bringing their stuff in, Beverly and Olivia called their parents to have them come and get them.

It was nice having a houseful again, with Janet and Takara home for the holidays and Ellen living there. That first night home, Craig and Edith and Little Geannie and Wade and Norma came over to see them. They all came over again on Christmas Eve for a while and again later in the day on Christmas, after having spent time with their spouses' families. Christmas was on Saturday that year and Christmas dinner was postponed until late afternoon after Craig and Norma had been to their in laws.

The weather during the week between Christmas and New Years was warmer than usual, with some days getting as high as sixty degrees. They had the whole week to spend together as a family and had lots of things that they wanted to do.

The only interruption to their time was that Sheffield and Coach Warfman has scheduled three extra wrestling practices on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings for a couple of hours each. The practices weren't mandatory but strongly encouraged. They didn't want the boys to loose the momentum they had been gaining by all of their hard work. It wasn't surprising which ones showed up, the same ones who hadn't been complaining about all of the extra work.

On Wednesday afternoon, the whole family, including Ellen went up to the cabin to spend the night. Then on Thursday evening, Walt and Shenan and their families came out for a family holiday get together. Both Walt and Shenan noticed how much better their mother was doing since she had moved in with Sheffield and Ramona.

Friday night was New Years. Norma and Wade and Craig and Edith each did their own things and Janet and Takara celebrated New Years Eve with their friends at a district M Men and Gleaner activity at the branch meetinghouse. Sheffield and Ramona took Ellen with them and went out to dinner and to see "The Bridges at Toko-Ri" about a naval aviator, a reservist called back to active duty from his civilian job as an attorney played by William Holden, assigned to bomb a group of heavily defended bridges during the Korean War. The part were his wife, played by Grace Kelly, brought their children to see him in Japan reminded Ramona or their rendezvous in Tokyo when she and the girls went to spend Christmas with Sheffield.

And so 1954 had come to a close. It had been a busy and eventful year with graduations and weddings. Now there were two more grandchildren were on the way in 1955.

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President William L. Killpack was the president of the Idaho Falls temple from 1949–1965.

"The Bridges at Toko-Ri" was based on a novel by the same name by James Michener and was released in December 1954