

Chapter XXVIII

Shenan's Dying Wish

November 1, 1964 – November 30, 1964

There was rarely a dull moment around Mililani. It seemed like there was always something unexpected to deal with. Whether it was a taking care of something as critical as having a missionary in the hospital, or the normal minor interruptions that seem to occur everyday.

Elder Stewart rested comfortably in the barracks while everyone else except for Elder Bateman, his new companion, went to church and about there other activities on Sunday. Elder Bateman got in a lot of reading while Elder Stewart rested. He was still sore from the surgery and quite tender, at least he wasn't in the terrible pain that he encountered several days earlier.

The Haggertys stayed Sunday as well and attended church with Sheffield and Ramona. Then on Monday they saw them off at the airport. They promised to stay in touch as they bid farewell.

Sheffield and Ramona had until Wednesday to finish preparing for their next trip. That wasn't all they had to look forward to, Shenan and Emily were coming the following week. They had originally intended to come in February, but moved their trip up to take advantage of the fact that Shenan was feeling reasonably well, well enough to travel and enjoy it. A luxury that he may not have later.

Sheffield had followed the presidential election campaign as best he could by watching the ten o'clock news and reading the newspaper. They had mailed in their absentee ballots a week earlier. As they watched the returns come in on election night, Sheffield was disappointed that President Johnson had beaten Barry Goldwater; Ramona was glad.

On Wednesday morning, Sheffield, Ramona, Elder Wiemer, and Elder Miller flew out in the chartered Cessna for their zone conferences. Wednesday was spent in Hilo, Thursday in Kona, Friday on Maui, and Saturday on Kauai which was in conjunction with the Kauai district conference. Each followed the established format that was now part of the routine. When they arrived back at the mission home on Sunday the 8th, they were glad to be home.

On Monday morning, they had a few hours in which to take care of their personal business and read the mail that had piled up while they were gone. There was a letter from Janet telling of attending Elder Lee's homecoming report in his home ward in Logan. She said that they had a chance to visit with him and all of the good things that he had to say about them while served with them in Hawaii. There were letters from the other kids as well and a thank you note from Harvey and Marcella. The Haggerty's dropped a line to give them their new address and to tell them that they had found a small house to rent until they could find a bigger place.

Ramona was responding to the letters while Sheffield glanced through the newspapers that had also piled up. Then it was time to go to the airport to meet Shenan and Emily. Dressed in casual attire, they

drove to the airport and waited for the flight from the mainland to land. As the passengers began exiting the plane, they scanned the stream of people for Shenan and Emily.

They saw Emily emerge from the hatch, but they hardly recognized Shenan as he came through the door. Shenan had always been a brawny man. Working as a surveyor all those years he had worked hard and had the tanned, muscular physic that went with it. Like Sheffield, his hair had turned gray fairly early, but at least he still had a full head of hair.

As they drew near after descending the stairs, Sheffield and Ramona were taken back by how frail he looked. His face was gaunt, his eyes sunken, and his hair had thinned considerably. The contrast since they last time saw him just over four months ago was stark. As they stepped off the stairs onto the tarmac, they received their traditional Hawaiian greeting.

“Hello there little brother.” Shenan called out while he was still a few steps away.

“Aloha and welcome to Hawaii.” Sheffield said as he took his brother's outstretched hand and pulled him close. As he gave him a brotherly hug, the kind of half hug and half handshake that they were comfortable with, Sheffield could feel what his eyes had seen.

“Gosh, its good to see you, Shenan.” Sheffield said as they released each other.

“You're looking good, Sheffield. I wish that you could say the same about me.”

“I can see that you've been through a lot. How are you feeling?” Sheffield asked.

“Better than I have. That's why I wanted to come now, so I could enjoy the trip.”

Ramona had presented Emily with another lei and a hug and a greeting for Shenan while Emily had a big hug for Sheffield. She was obviously excited to finally be in Hawaii.

All of those years, they had hardly taken a vacation, and when they did it was usually within a few hundred miles of Roanoke. Rarely did they venture much further. The farthest that had ever been was when the entire family flew to Salt Lake to go to the temple. Even after Shenan retired, they hadn't traveled much.

They told Sheffield and Ramona all about their flight as they picked up their luggage and walked to where Sheffield had parked the car. When they left Roanoke that morning it was thirty eight degrees with an expected high of fifty six. The temperature in Honolulu at one thirty in the afternoon was already seventy six degrees heading to eighty three.

“I can see why you love it here so much.” Shenan said as they got in the car.

As they left the airport and drove through downtown and on up the valley to the mission home, Shenan and Emily took in all of the sights with wide eyes during the twenty minute, seven mile ride. Sheffield and Ramona pointed out the various attractions that they passed and told them about them.

As they pulled into the driveway a Mililani, Shenan asked, “This is where you live? Its a mansion.”

“Actually,” Ramona explained, “we have an apartment on the second floor.”

Sheffield came to a stop under the veranda of the porte-cochère and got out to open the trunk. Shenan and Emily got out and looked around in amazement. Ramona had them turn around to look down the valley, over the city, and out to sea.

“Simply breathtaking.” Emily gasped. “How come we never did anything like this sooner Shen?”

Elder Moore and Elder Masters, who had just pulled into up to their apartment in the rear, came to help them take their luggage in. Ramona introduced the two missionaries as part of the office staff.

“You don't look like missionaries.” Shenan observed. “Where are your white shirts and ties?”

“This is their preparation day.” Sheffield explained. “It's the only time they get to dress casually.”

The two elders took all of their luggage upstairs to the guest room while Sheffield and Ramona gave them the tour of Mililani, beginning with the office area downstairs. Sister Manning and Sister George came bounding down the stairs as they were about to go upstairs to the mission president's apartment. Sheffield introduced the sisters who explained that they were going to a district outing. Ramona pointed out that the sister missionaries had a apartment on the third floor. Once upstairs, the tour continued with a tour of their apartment and finally the semi private guest suite. Emily and particularly Shenan were tired from their long trip and wanted to rest before settling in.

That gave Ramona time to finish writing her letters and for Sheffield to go through the rest of the newspapers. Shenan and Emily came out of their room a couple of hours later looking rested. Sheffield and Ramona invited them out on the balcony to visit over some ice cold lemonade. They told them about the things they had planned out for them to do. Shenan was particularly excited about going deep sea fishing.

Naturally the conversation turned to Shenan's health. “At first,” he said, “I was shocked when the doctor told me that I had cancer. I thought it was the just a persistent case of the stomach flu. Then he told me that I had a year to live. I'm only seventy, I thought I'd live longer than this. At first I was quite upset about the whole thing. But then I reasoned that if the good Lord wanted to take me now, I'd go willingly and made peace with it.”

“I can't imagine what that would even be like.” Sheffield said sympathetically. “You seem to have a good attitude about it.”

“Its either try to be cheerful or go around grumpy all the time. Life is literally to short for that. I've been spending a lot of time with the kids and grandkids lately. Say, we sure enjoyed the Labor Day shindig at your ranch. Craig and Wade are taking good care of the place for you.”

They went on to talk about Shenan's health a bit longer but he and Emily quickly changed the subject and wanted to know all about the things that Sheffield and Ramona had experienced on their mission. They listened with eagerness as they talked about the people and places that they had encountered and the special experiences that they had.

They talked about Harvey and Marcella being there a month earlier and about their baptism and how they had changed. Shenan told about the privilege that he had to baptize Anna and Paul. Edith explained that they were staying with Danny and Melissa while they were on their trip, since Anna and Jessica were “best cousins” as she put it.

That evening, Sheffield and Ramona took Shenan and Emily out to dinner. The rest of the evening was spent visiting some more out on the balcony. The darker it got the brighter the lights of the city below became. As the stars came out, they shone almost a brilliantly. The warm breeze made for a perfect evening. Shanen commented on that fact when it was time to go get ready for bed.

Sheffield had arranged to be away from the office on Tuesday. Ramona fixed breakfast for the four of them. While they were eating, Sheffield got a call that required his attention. By nine, they were ready to leave. The thing that Shenan wanted to see the most was Pearl Harbor. So that was the first stop of the day. As they approached the main gate, Sheffield showed them the spot where he found Geannie's bullet riddled car.

They drove up the guard post and Sheffield showed his credentials, which got them on the base. First Sheffield took them to the docks where several cruisers and destroyers were tied up. “I'd had hoped a carrier would be here.” Shenan wished. “All that time you spent riding around on them, I've never seen one up close. I've seen them from a distance when we were in Norfolk, but never up close.”

“Really?” Sheffield said. “Its too bad that you just missed the Hancock. She was here ten days ago on her way to the Western Pacific. I could of gotten you real close, maybe we could have gone aboard.”

“I'd of liked that.” Shenan said.

As he had done with Harvey and Marcella a month earlier Sheffield explained to them how the attack went that morning nearly twenty three years earlier and recounted their whereabouts. Ramona pointed out the hospital where she was and where Geannie and the kids where brought. Sheffield retold the story of being shot down and making his way to the hospital in time to see Geannie just in time. From the docks, they took them to the ferry for the ride over to the Arizona Memorial.

After spending nearly two hours at Pearl Harbor, Sheffield took them by the house where they had lived. It looked as if someone had already moved in after the Haggerty's had moved out. They spent the rest of the day showing them around Honolulu. They were particularly impressed by the Iolani Palace, that still served as the state capitol building until the new capitol which was under construction could be completed.

There was still much more to see when they called it a day and returned to Mililani. In preparing dinner, Sister `Auli`i included Shenan and Emily who dined with the office staff and the the assistants. That evening, Sheffield had to take time out from their company to meet with his presidency. Since the guest room was in use, President Kaaloa stayed in one of the other spare rooms.

On Wednesday, Richard took Shenan and Emily out for a half day of deep sea fishing. It was something that Shenan had really looked forward to. They spent a good half a day out on the water and caught some mahi-mahi and mackerel. Dick told them that he could arrange to have some of it cut, wrapped, and frozen for them and ship it home to them.

Sheffield and Ramona didn't go out with them as they had work to do. They spent the day with the assistants working out the November zone conferences since the first round was next week. When Shenan and Emily returned from their excursion, Shenan was particularly tired so they spent the afternoon resting.

Thursday was another treat that Shenan and Emily had looked for. Sheffield and Ramona took them up to Laie. During the morning, they attended a session at the temple. It was the first time that Shenan and Emily had attended the temple since they went the first time fifteen years earlier. It was the first time since then that they had been near a temple. Then after lunch, they spent the afternoon at the Polynesian Cultural Center and that evening they attended a luau.

On Friday and Saturday, Sheffield and Ramona showed them more of Honolulu and Oahu. One of the places that Emily wanted to go was Waikiki Beach, so they spent an afternoon soaking in the sand and the surf. Emily didn't let that fact that she was nearly sixty eight years old and quite overweight stop her from donning her bathing suit and enjoying herself.

Shenan and Emily were having the time of their lives. They nearly forgot that he was dying, except for the fact that he tired easily and experienced some discomfort, despite the pain medication he was on.

On Saturday evening, Sheffield and Shenan spent a good deal of time out on the balcony just talking. Their wives sensed that they needed some time alone. They talked about things from their childhood and growing up. Shenan expressed regret that he had worked so hard and not taken time off to enjoy life more and all of the things that he would have done differently. He talked about how proud he was of Danny, Joe, Wendalynn, and Delbert.

But all of that was offset by the heartache and grief he endured because of Ruth Ann. She had always been the rebellious one, always chasing after the wrong kind of men. They thought that she had finally settled down and straightened out when she married Joseph Morrison and had Anna and Paul. They hadn't seen her since she and her family came home for Memorial Day in 1950. At the time something seemed wrong. By the 4th of July, she had ran away with another man, leaving her husband and children. That was the last anyone had seen her, except for in scenes in movies. And it has been years since anyone had even seen her there.

The only time anyone actually saw her and talked to her was when Sheffield and Ramona happened upon her at the MGM studio lot in 1951 when there were there to attend a meeting about the movie "Neptune's Realm". At that time she was going by the name of Ann Ruthridge. Shenan talked about

wanting to spend some time in Los Angeles to see if by some miracle they could find her.

Sheffield and Shenan talked late into the evening. They talked about death and what it held in store. Shenan wasn't afraid of dying. He had hope in what was waiting for him and had made peace with his pending death. "I have an advantage," he said. "At least I know when it's coming. We can't stop it, but at least we can be ready. You didn't have that when Geannie and the kids died. We were all caught off guard by that. When I see them, I'll tell them that you're doing well."

On Sunday, Shenan and Emily attended church with Sheffield and Ramona. That was the last day of their vacation in Hawaii. Other than attending church, they rested before their flight back to Los Angeles the next day. When Shenan was first diagnosed with cancer, he had asked Walt to give him a blessing. At this time, he asked the same of Sheffield, which he was happy to do.

He blessed him to find peace in his circumstances and with optimism and courage to face his final end. He blessed him in his search to find Ruth Ann and promised guidance and direction that before he left this life that his family would be reunited, but if not, that time would come in the next life. He admonished him to be faithful and to endure to the very end. He blessed him to enjoy reasonably good health otherwise and that the pain could be managed. There was no mention of being healed. When he was finished, all four of them were in tears. Rather than a half hug, half handshake, the brothers held each other in a full embrace.

On Monday the 16th, their week in Hawaii came to an end. There was a little time that morning, but eventually, it was time to leave for the airport. Sheffield and Ramona got them there with time to spare before their flight was to leave, which gave them a little more time to visit.

Then it was time for them to board their flight and say their goodbyes. Once again, the brothers held each other in a full embrace. "Goodbye, Sheffield," Shenan said. "Thank you for everything, and I mean everything. I shall not see you again in this life, so until we do meet again, take care of yourself."

As they released one another, they each had tears in their eyes. Ramona had a hug for Shenan while Emily had one for Sheffield. Then it was time to board the plane. After passing through the gate, they turned around for one final wave.

Sheffield was quite emotional as he watched his oldest brother disappear into the 707, knowing that it was the last time that he would ever see him. They waited until the plane taxied away from the terminal before they made their way out to the parking lot and drove back to the mission home. Sheffield remained in a somber mood for the rest of the day as they attended to their personal business.

On Tuesday they went back to work. Then that evening, Sheffield met with his presidency. On Wednesday Sheffield and Ramona met with the assistants to work out the transfers so the notices could be

typed up and sent out in the mail. The rest of the week was spent in zone conference in the Honolulu Zone on Thursday, the Pearl Harbor Zone on Friday, and the Oahu Zone on Saturday. As always when in Laie, they went early so they could attend the temple and spend time with the Morelys. Then on Sunday they attended the Honolulu Stake Conference in which Apostle Delbert L. Stapely was in attendance. During the course of the meetings, Elder Stapely had a one on one interview with President Brason.

The following week didn't involve any travel but Wednesday was transfer day, with all of the comings and goings of missionaries in transit. They sent off three faithful Elders, including Elder Wiemer and two others. In their place, they welcomed three brand new Elders fresh from Salt Lake. As usual, there were some new faces around the mission home. Elder Andrew Gibby from Bountiful, Utah replaced Elder Wiemer as an assistant to the president. Each month one of the office staff was rotated back out into the field. This time Elder Victor Morgan from Cardston, Alberta replaced Elder Moore as the financial secretary. In addition, Sister Jaquelyn Knight from Malad, Idaho replaced Sister Manning.

The next day was Thanksgiving. Sheffield and Ramona missed gathering with their family at home. According to the kid's last letters, they were all having Thanksgiving with their in-laws. In place of having their family over, they gathered with their family away from home at Mililani. The faces had changed over the months as missionaries came and went. Gathered around their Thanksgiving feast were the Assistants to the President, Elder Miller and Elder Gibby; the office staff, Elder Bateman, Elder Stewart, Elder Morgan, and Elder Masters; the sister missionaries, Sister Knight and Sister George; the mission home staff, Sister `Auli`i and Brother and Sister Hanami. Sister `Auli`i lived alone and had no family, the missionaries were her family. Brother and Sister Hanami were getting with their family later in the day.

It wasn't the traditional Thanksgiving dinner, but it was a feast none the least. Rather than turkey, they had some of the mahi-mahi that Sheffield and Ramona had caught. It had been garnished with red bell peppers and green onions, steamed in ti leaves. Instead of mashed potatoes and gravy, it was served with rice topped with grilled pineapple and sweet and sour sauce. Other trimming included poi, mixed vegetables, and homemade Hawaiian sweet rolls. And to drink; fruit punch made from guava, orange, papaya, passion fruit, and pineapple with some 7Up for fizz.

Ramona hadn't done any real baking since they left home back in June, so she offered to make a couple of her pineapple coconut cream pies for desert. There was barley enough for the thirteen people at the table. Elder Gibby wouldn't eat anything with coconut, so it was just right for twelve servings.

Sister `Auli`i took one bite and rolled her eyes. With her mouth still full she said, "Oh Sister Brason, I've done a lot with pineapple and coconut in my life, but I have never had anything like this before. I've got to have your recipe."

"Why thank you. It's something I came up with years ago. I'd be happy to share it with you."

"You make really good pies, Sister `Auli`i. In fact there terrific" Sheffield added. "But no offense, nobody can make pies like my Ramona. In fact, the very first time that I met her back in February or March of twenty nine, Geannie, my first wife, invited her over to meet my wingman. She brought a cherry pie that was out of this world. If I hadn't of already been happily married, I'd of married her on the spot."

"He loves to tell that story." Ramona interjected. "To tell you the truth, when I arrived at their home, I had never met him. When I first saw him, I hoped that he was the wingman that I had come to meet."

"So how did the two of you fall in love?" Sister Knight asked.

"Well," Ramona replied, "thats an interesting story. A year and half later, I married his wingman, whose name was Tom. Six moths later, he and President Brason were involved in a mid air collision. My husband was was killed and we thought that we had lost Sheffield too, but he was rescued.

"After that, Sheffield made sure that I was taken care of and he and Geannie went out of their way for me. Thats when I first fell in love with him. But there was nothing I could do about it, he was happily married to my best friend.

"Eventually, I put in for a transfer to distance myself from him and that is when I came here to Hawaii. Over the years I stayed in touch with them and never stopped loving him. Then after a number of years, Sheffield was sent here as well, and his family joined them soon after. I continued to keep my feelings for him secret."

Sheffield continued the story. "Then after I lost my family, it was Sister Brason who was there for me in my grief. When I went off to war, we stayed in touch and she continued to help me. But in all of her letters, she kept mentioning this mystery man who she was in love with, but he was unaware of her feelings. After more than a year, she was sent to Washington, DC and after returning form the North Atlantic, she met me on the dock when my ship came into Norfolk."

"It was good to see her again. As soon as the ship was tied up, I went down to meet her. She had a big hug for me, which wasn't out of the usual because she was always hugging me. Then she gave me a big kiss right on the lips. That, I wasn't expecting."

"I had to hit him over the head with something." Ramona interrupted.

"It was a kiss I'll never forget." Sheffield continued. "My toes are still tingling from it. That was the beginning of my feelings for her. But before they could develop very far, I went back out to war. Then my ship got hit and I was injured and I ended up in the hospital where she was stationed. While she was nursing me back to health, I was falling in love with her. A few months later, we were married."

"How romantic." Sister Knight sighed. "That the kind of love story that movies are made of."

"Actually," Ramona added, "they did make a movie of it. Its called 'Mediterranean Summer'."

"Really? I've never heard of it." Sister Knight said.

"It was a number of years ago, you'd of been too young to remember it." Sheffield said.

"We'll I'd like to see it sometime. I enjoy a good romance story."

"Its more of a war story."

"In that case," Elder Masters said, "I'd like to see it."

Several of the other Elders concurred, they'd like to see it too.

"So there was a movie made about you?" Sister Knight asked."

"Yes." Ramona answered. "Actually there were two of them. They're based off of his book. The first one is called 'Neptune's Realm'. In both of them, Ronald Reagan played Sheffield and Anne Baxter played me. We have a copy of them."

"Can we see them?"

"We don't have them with us, but I suppose we could have them sent over." Sheffield said. "There not missionary approved Disney movies, but I suppose I could make an exception."

After dinner, Ramona and the Sister missionaries pitched in and helped Sister `Auli`i and Sister Hanami clean up. Sheffield offered to help, but soon found that he was just in the way.

On Saturday, Sheffield and Ramona flew to Maui in the chartered Cessna for their district conference in Kahului. They were met at the airport by President Sulas Collins, the district president, who took them to his home at 151 Lower Waiehu Beach Road in Waiehu, which was situated a little northwest of Kahului. President Collins' wife, Minnie, a tiny little Chinese woman, was waiting for them and had lunch ready.

Sheffield and Ramona had stayed with them once before and were given the same upstairs bedroom that they had used on that occasion. From their bedroom window they could see Kahului Bay across an open field with some tall grass and brush. To the west, behind their house, were the mountains. The Collins home was modest, yet larger than some of the other homes in the neighborhood.

As district conferences go, this conference wasn't any different from the many he had attended since he had been in the mission. This was the second time that been to a conference in the Maui District. The thing about this conference that stood out is that during Sheffield's talk during the general session, a severe thunderstorm blew in, knocking out the power. People sitting along the one side of the chapel quickly closed the windows as the rain was coming through. Even though the rain could be heard beating down on the roof, Sheffield's continued his talk, speaking up so he could be heard over the clatter of the rain and the booming of the thunder. Ironically he was he was discussing having a foundation built on the Rock of the Redeemer so that "not if, but when", he stressed, the devil should send forth his mighty windstorm to beat upon them, he would have no power to drag them down.

After the meeting was over, the thunderstorm continued. Not wanting to venture out into the storm, nearly everyone chose to remain in the safety and shelter of the meetinghouse. Sheffield and Ramona

mingled among them as the members of district visited and socialized with one another. It only drove home the point of his message, that safety is found within the gospel. Not until the storm moved on over the mountains to the south did people venture outside. When they did, a full double rainbow arched overhead.

Before flying back to Honolulu, Sheffield and Ramona had lunch with the Collins and his counselors in the district presidency and their wives. The trip back was a little rough as the storm front lingered to the west, over Molokai. To avoid it, Sheffield flew north to go around it. Skirting the backside of the storm, they then flew on to the west toward Oahu.

On Monday, Sheffield received a letter from Shenan which he read out loud to Ramona. The letter read, "Dear Sheffield and Ramona.

"Emily was about to write and thank you for the wonderful time that we had, but I told her that I wanted to do it myself. As you know I'm not much of a letter writer, but I had to write this one. Thank you for the wonderful time that you showed us while we were there. We have never had such a time in all of the forty seven and half years that we've been married.

"I especially want to thank you for the blessing that you gave me. I took great comfort in it at the time, but I didn't expect it to be fulfilled in the manner that it was. You see, we had a miracle and that blessing and our prayers were answered.

"On Monday we flew back to Los Angeles to spend a couple of days before coming on home. I don't know why I thought we'd ever be able to find Ruth Ann in that place. As we were landing, we could see out our window just how sprawling it was. We decided that it would be futile.

"After we landed we rented a car and drove up towards the Los Angeles Temple and found a motel. We spent the rest of the day and evening just driving around to see what was there. Still I couldn't help but look at people closely, in hopes that we might find Ruth Ann.

"The area around our motel wasn't that nice of an area. Emily said it was kind of scary. Some of the areas we drove through was pretty nice, especially Santa Monica. We were tired and hungry so we came back to the motel and had supper at the restaurant next to the motel. It was kind of a greasy spoon, but the food was decent.

"On Tuesday morning, we went to the temple. Since I would never be that close to one again, I wanted to go one last time, even though we had been in Hawaii a few days earlier. I'm glad that I did. I really felt at peace about everything, and knew that all was in the Lord's hands and that there was a place waiting for me on the other side.

"Then we drove up to Beverly Hills and looked at the mansions where all of the movie stars live. I can't imagine having a house that big. I could think of a lot of things I would do if I had that kind of money, but having a mansion house isn't one of them.

“We spent the afternoon in Hollywood and toured some of the movie studios. Again, I was looking over every woman we saw to see if it was Ruth Ann. After all, that was the last place that you saw her. I realized that if a person didn't want to be found, a place that big would be the place to do it. I can see why so many people want to live there, you can't ask for nicer weather in November.

“Eventually I got tired and we went back to our motel and went to the diner for supper. The lady that greeted us, took us to our table, handed us our menus, and said that our waitress would be right with us.

“We were still looking at the menus when the waitress came and stood at our table. She asked if we were ready to order. That's when we looked up at her. Our eyeballs about popped out of their sockets. The waitress lowered her pad as her jaw dropped to the floor.

“She said, 'Dad, Mom? What are you doing here?'

“I said, 'Looking for you.'

“I haven't seen Emily move so fast in long time as he jumped up and took a hold of Ruth Ann, bawling like a baby.

“She asked how on earth did we find her.

“I told her that the good Lord had led us to her.

“When Emily quit bawling, she took her by the hand and told her that I was dying.

“Ruth Ann went as white as sheet and she began bawling. She sat down with us and we had a good long talk, while another gal came and took our order. After we ate our supper we went back to our room and when she got off work, she came over and we talked some more.

“She said that if we knew all of the things that she had done, that we wouldn't want to even see her. We assured her that we still loved her and missed her every day for all of those years. Then she told what she had done and we told her that it didn't matter and asked her to come home.

“She didn't think she could do that and face everyone, but she did give us her address where she lived. She lives alone now but said that she had lived with a number of men over the years. When we told her how Anna and Paul had grown up, she said that even though she ran out on them like that, that she never stopped loving them and thought of them everyday.

“When we asked her why she just up and left like that, all she'd say was that she felt trapped in a life that she didn't want to live. Now she wished she had that life back because she was now trapped in the life that she thought she wanted and could see no way out of. She said that all she had to live for was the next bottle of booze or the next man that would sleep with her. The hard life that she has lived showed in her face. It was heartbreaking to listen to her pour out her heart like that, but at least we had found her and knew where she was. There was hope. There is always hope.

“When she left, she promised to stay in touch. That's a beginning. That was more than we could of

ever hoped for. It was miracle that we found her. Maybe another miracle will bring her home. That will give me something to live for. I told her that I wanted nothing more than to see her once more before I died.

“So now I got to do the two things I told you that I wanted to do. I got to see Hawaii, and we found our long lost daughter. I can go in peace now, whenever that might be. I'm ready and I'm not afraid.

“Love Shenan.”

Ramona had listened intently as Sheffield read the letter to her, chocking up from time to time. They were both in tears and didn't know what to say.

Finally Ramona said, “After all these years, I can't believe they found her. How old would she be now anyway?”

“Oh gosh,” Sheffield reflected, “lets see. She's about a year and half older than Sandy, and she would have just turned forty at the beginning of November.”

“So that would make her forty one now.” Ramona said after doing the math. “It sounds like the 'good life' that she was looking for turned out to be a very hard life.”

“I'd say. Its just like I said in my talk yesterday. She never did have a very sure foundation. She always wanted to do things her way.”

“Well, I'm glad that they found her.” Ramona said. “I hope that she'll want to go see him at least once more before he's gone.”

“I'm sure glad that I got to see him once more.” Sheffield said thoughtfully. “I'm glad it was while he was still in reasonably good shape. I've been thinking about something he said.”

“Whats that?” Ramona asked.

“I don't think I'd want to have a pretty good idea as to when I was going to die. I think I'd rather just be gone.”

“What, and just up and leave me without saying goodbye? ”

“Believe me, I'm in now big hurry. Geannie will just have to wait a while longer for me to rejoin her.”

“Yeah. Quite a while. I'm not done with you yet.”

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The USS Hancock was actually at Pearl Harbor on October 31st and November 1st on her way to the Western Pacific.

According to the Church News, Elder Stapely was at the Honolulu Stake Conference that weekend.

For more about Ramona's pineapple coconut cream pie and the story of Ramona meeting Sheffield on the dock, see The Business of War, Chapter 24.