

Chapter XLII

Babysitting

August 19, 1966 – September 24, 1966

After seeing Monty Harldson off, Sheffield and Ramona returned to the mission home. It was difficult to focus on the work at hand, but there was unfinished business that needed attention. Before this crisis came up, they just about had the transfers worked out. Now with the loss of the Elders in Naalehu, some things needed to be redone at the last minute. It was a scramble to get it all done and have the notices in the mail before the post office closed at five o'clock.

In addition to Naalehu, another area had to be closed due to more missionaries going home than were coming out. The quotas were really beginning to have an impact on the Hawaii Mission. While Brother Harldson was there, Sheffield talked to him about it to see if anything could be done.

On the following Tuesday, once more Mililani was brimming with missionaries in transit. That evening after dinner, the four Elders and one Sister who were going home reported their missions. On transfer day, they saw them off and welcomed two Elders and one Sister to the mission.

The lady missionary who went home was Sister Wheeler. She had been such a good influence on Sister Rogerson, that Sheffield wasn't sure what he was going to do with her. She had come a long, long ways in the last several months, due mainly to Sister Wheeler, but also to the fact that she lived at the mission home.

He felt that he needed to keep her where she was so they could keep an eye on her. She had been out long enough to be a senior companion, but could he trust her? The answer to their prayers arrived in the form of Sister Cynthia Handy from Paul, Idaho. Sister Handy was not the typical lady missionary. She was a fifty six year old widow and grandmother. With all of her children now grown, she wanted to serve a mission. She had been sent to Hawaii just for Sister Rogerson. It was truly a match made in heaven.

When Sheffield interviewed her, he told her of her assignment to be Sister Rogerson's junior companion and of the difficulties that she had. Sheffield had made her the senior companion, knowing that she would rely on Sister Handy with all of her wisdom and experience.

In addition to Sister Handy, new to Mililani were Elder Todd Lewis who replaced Elder Bowers as an assistant and Elder James Ashby as the new mission recorder. This was an average transfer, affecting a quarter of the missionaries.

The rest of the week was taken up with missionary conferences in the Honolulu, Pearl Harbor, and Oahu zones. At each of the three conferences, there was a lot of talk about Elder Idler and Elder Bancroft.

Sheffield always looked forward to his personal interviews with the missionaries. That was the best way he could get a feel for how things were going. More than once, things came up that needed further attention. Some of them were serious matters, others could be solved with just a little counsel and direction.

Sometimes it amounted to nothing more than a little babysitting.

On Friday, they were in the Pearl Harbor Zone. The last elder he interviewed prior to the meeting was Elder Alexander Rose from Kemmerer, Wyoming assigned to Moanalua. Elder Rose had only arrived in the mission on Tuesday and Sheffield had a good visit with him then. Elder Rose had grown up on a cattle ranch and they bonded over talking about raising cattle. Sheffield told him about the Two Star Ranch, which was nothing compared to the Rosebud Ranch, whose brand naturally was a rosebud.

Sheffield didn't notice it then, but during this interview, it was very apparent. Elder Rose didn't smell very good. It was as if he hadn't had a bath since he left home a week ago. His hair was a mess and his clothes were wrinkled. He had probably worn them all week. The body odor with a hint of manure was overpowering.

Sheffield didn't quite know what to say at the moment to this humble elder. He was one of the most humble missionaries he had ever met, with a sweet, but powerful testimony. All through the meeting he couldn't help but think about him and how to help him. He couldn't be very affective like that. That evening back at Mililani, he mentioned to Ramona.

"I really didn't have a chance to get very close to him," she relied.

"I felt sorry for the poor kid." Sheffield continued. "Did I ever tell you about the time I spent three days hiding out from a platoon of Marines on Barbados?"

"Lots of times. I can just see you down on your hand and knees hiding in a heard of pigs." Ramona chuckled.

"When it was over, I smelled so bad that the only reason they let me ride in the back of the truck on the way back to the ship was because I outranked everyone else. This kid is almost that bad. I just don't know what to do without offending him. But if I don't do something, he's going to offend a lot of people."

"I have an idea that might help." Ramona suggested. "Back when I was teaching health at Hollins, I taught a section on personal hygiene. Perhaps I could help him."

"How would you go about it? Would you single him out or do it in a group setting?"

"I think I could do it one on one, without offending him."

"Good. I'm going to leave this one up to you."

"We don't have to travel next week, Let me call him and his companion and make an appointment. Give me about a half a day and let me see what I can do."

Ramona didn't hesitate. She picked up the telephone and called the Elders in Moanalua. Without explaining herself, she asked if she could meet them at their apartment at one o'clock on Monday afternoon. She wasn't sure exactly how she was going to handle it, but she had the weekend to figure it out.

The next day, they were in the Oahu Zone. As always they looked forward to spending the day in

Laie. During his interviews, Elder Michael Gears came in with a black eye. Sheffield asked him about it. At first Elder Gears downplayed it, saying it was nothing.

Sheffield didn't buy his story. Elder Gears, from Lethbridge, Alberta, had been out nine months and was a hard working missionary, but had a reputation for being difficult to get along with. He had just been transferred to Waialua to be the senior companion. When Sheffield pressed the issue, Elder Gears admitted what had really happened. He and his companion, Elder Sterling Lindsay from Kaysville, Utah, had a disagreement over their morning routine. Elder Sterling, who had been out for seven months, was a bit temperamental as well and two didn't hit it off very well.

Both of them were the athletic type, although Elder Gears was bigger. Elder Gears and his brothers had always settled their disagreements with a wrestling match. He threw down the challenge and Elder Lindsay accepted. They cleared an area on the floor and went at it. In the process, Elder Gears caught an elbow in the eye. While he was smarting over the blow, Elder Lindsay pinned him, winning the match and the argument.

"You know that I was a wrestler and a wrestling coach, but I don't condone it as a way to solve a disagreement. Especially between companions."

"Oh, its alright President." he said. "Ever since we aired our differences, we get along just fine. I can now say that I love him like a brother."

Sheffield responded, "If thats how you get along with your brother, I'd hate to see how you get along with people that you don't like. Next time the two of you need to solve a disagreement, find a better way."

Next Sheffield had Elder Sterling in. He pretty much told that same story with the same conclusion. He insisted that everything was fine between them now and also expressed his love for his companion.

Sheffield and Ramona stayed after the missionary meeting to attend the Oahu Stake conference, which happened to be that weekend and came home on Monday morning.

That day was Labor Day, and they couldn't help but think of the gathering of the family at the Two Star Ranch that day. It occurred to them that they would be there next year.

Ramona had put a lot of thought and prayer into what she was going to do with Elder Rose. When she showed up for her appointment, she still wasn't quite exactly sure what she was going to do.

They invited her in, and after greeting her they invited her to sit down. It was obvious that there was problem and she got right to the point. "Elder Rose," She began, "I haven't really had much a chance to get to know you yet. President Brason tells me that you have the makings of a great missionary. Tell me a little about yourself."

He told her the basic things that she already knew.

"She felt prompted to ask. "Tell me about your mother."

He explained that she had died when he was very little and that he didn't know her all that well. His father had raised him and his older brothers. That explained a lot. Then she came right out and asked as kindly and gently as possible, "Elder, when was the last time you had a bath or a shower?"

"I don't know. Three or four days ago. Why?"

"You don't do it at least every day or two?"

"My Dad said that it was a waste of water and the power to heat it."

"I see." Ramona said, not sure how to respond. Then she was prompted to say, "Open your scriptures to 1 Corinthians 6:19 and read it to me."

Obediently he opened his Bible and quickly found the passage. He read, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" When he was finished he looked up at her, as if he was expecting to be taught.

"Tell me, Elder Rose, what impressed you about the temple when you went for the first time?"

"The feeling of peace that was there."

"Why was that?"

"Because it is the house of the Lord."

"That's right. Now turn to D and C one thirty two and read verse eight."

Again he turned right to it and read, "Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion."

"What does it take to be a house of order?"

"Orderly and clean."

"That's exactly right. Now since your body is a temple, don't you suppose that the same thing applies? Especially orderly and clean?"

His companion, Elder Wood, picked up on the purpose of her visit and sat back and let her let continue.

"But I do." Elder Rose answered innocently.

"I know that you're clean on the inside, but its the outside that I'm talking about. Do you know what happens when you don't keep your body clean? Let me give you an example, what happens back on the ranch when a calf dies and is just left there for a few days?"

"It begins to smell bad."

"You see, on our bodies, our skin is dying all the time and new skin takes its place. If we don't wash off the dead skin, it begins to smell bad. Elder, you probably can't smell it, but those around you can. I can, and its not very pleasant. I used to be a college health teacher, one of the sections was how to care for your body. I'm going to give you the same lesson. Elder Wood, a reminder won't hurt you either." She included

him so as to not single out Elder Rose.

She went on to explain how the combination of soap, hot water, and a washcloth work together. She talked about the real problem areas when it came to body odor, the under arms, private parts, and feet. "And don't forget to shampoo your hair." She added.

She got up and went into the bathroom and found a bar of soap, a washcloth, a bottle of shampoo, and returned to the living room. She handed them to Elder Wood and said, "Now Elder Wood, stand up and pretend that you're in the shower and demonstrate for us what to do."

A little embarrassed, he stood up and went through the motions of taking a shower using the props and explained what he was doing as he went. When he was done he picked up the towel and acted as if he was drying himself off.

"Drying off is very important." Ramona pointed out. "If you get dressed when you're wet, it acts like perspiration. Then when you get dressed, be sure to put clean underwear."

She went on to talk about using deodorant and brushing their teeth.

Next she asked them to take her into their bedroom and show them their clothes and explained how how soiled and stained clothes give off odors as well. Since it was p-day, Elder Wood had a laundry bag full of dirty laundry. Since Elder Rose didn't change his clothes very often, he didn't have much. In fact most of the new clothes that he had brought with him hadn't even been worn yet.

Again, not to single out Elder Rose, she had Elder Wood pull some of his laundry out of the bag and demonstrate how it smelled. "I'll cover how to take care of your clothes later. But now it's time for a test. Elder Wood, have you had a shower today?"

"Yes ma'am."

"There's not much reason to take two in one day, unless you need too. After all, Elder Rose's father is right. No sense in wasting water and the power to heat it."

She turned to Elder Rose, "I guess this means that you get to show me. Take these and go into the bathroom and do just what Elder Wood demonstrated."

Hesitantly, he got up, picked up the bar of soap, a washcloth, a bottle of shampoo and headed to the bathroom. A moment later they could hear the shower running.

With his companion out of earshot, Elder Wood said, "Thanks Sister Brason. I don't know how much longer I could stand it, but I didn't want to hurt his feelings."

While Elder Rose was in the shower, Elder Wood talked about home. He was from Greensboro, North Carolina, which is one hundred miles south of Roanoke, so they had a lot in common. Since both cities were in the Central Atlantic States Mission, they knew a some of the same people.

When she heard the shower stop, Ramona went to the door and said, "When you're dried off, wrap

the towel around you and let me inspect you.”

She could practically feel the stare emanating from his red face, so she added, “Remember, I used to be a Navy nurse. It was my job to inspect men's bodies.”

A moment later, the door slowly opened and Elder Rose timidly stepped out of the bathroom.

“Now come and stand in front of me.”

The Elder obeyed.

Ramona looked over his exposed upper body. Growing up on ranch, he was quite muscular and brawny. He didn't quite know what to do when she leaned forward and sniffed him. “Oh don't worry. That's just what mothers do.”

To ease his embarrassment, Elder Wood added, “Yeah, my mom was always sniffing me.”

“You missed a spot.” Ramona observed. “It's my fault, I didn't mention what to do about behind your ears.”

She quickly explained and sent him back in to wash behind his ears and get dressed.

When he came out, she asked, “How do you feel?”

“I feel clean. It's great.”

“Good. If you do that every day, you'll always feel that good and smell like a rose. Sorry, no pun intended. Now the Spirit can really work through you, just like the temple that you are.”

“She turned to Elder Wood and asked, now where do you do your laundry?” It was time for the second part of her lesson.

She went with them to the laundry mat and explained the basic principles of doing laundry. Although Elder Wood's mother had explained it to him, there wasn't much that he didn't get. It was obvious that Elder Rose was completely clueless. She explained detergent, what settings and water temperatures to use, and how important it was to read the labels on their clothes for washing instructions. When their laundry was done, she showed Elder Rose how to fold it. Elder Wood didn't do too bad, but it was going to take a while for Elder Rose to figure it out.

When she took them back to their apartment and dropped them off, she announced, “Next week, we'll tackle housekeeping.”

Back at the mission home, Sheffield wanted to know how it went. She told him all about it and that Elder Rose was actually quite receptive to her instructions.

During that week, Sheffield worked on what he wanted to present in the zone conferences that month. After her experience with Elder Rose, he decided that perhaps everyone could use a refresher course on personal hygiene, so he asked Ramona to give a little presentation.

Sheffield also used the time that week to work on the Serviceman's Conference that was scheduled

for the 18th. Major Crane had been transferred and was no longer in Hawaii. Now the ranking LDS chaplain was Lieutenant Commander Christopher Lords assigned to the base at Pearl Harbor. When he met with Sheffield at the mission home, Commander Lords was excited about the conference and had some fresh ideas. Using the chapel at Halawa had worked so well last year, that Sheffield again arranged to use the building between the ward's meetings. Ramona used the time to adapt her personal hygiene presentation to missionaries for her presentation in the conferences.

On Monday Ramona kept her appointment with Elder Wood and Elder Rose and instructed Elder Rose in the basics of housekeeping, such as making a bed, doing dishes, and keeping a tidy house. In working with him, she became quite attached to Elder Rose and came to appreciate the genuine sweetness of his spirit. In return, he came to look to her as the mother that he never knew. Because of that bond, he was quite receptive and was willing to put into practice the principles that she tried to teach him over the two sessions. She told him that she was going to check in on him from time to time just to see how he was doing.

On Wednesday morning, Roy took Sheffield, Ramona, Elder Cunningham, and Elder Todd to the airport and they flew over to Lihue on Kauai for the first of the September zone conferences. It was followed by the Maui, Kona, and Hilo zone conferences and the Hilo district conference. They returned to Honolulu on Sunday evening.

The schedule was free from travel all of the next week. On Monday morning, Sheffield watched the news to see the launch of Gemini XI which was preceded by the launch of the Agena Target Vehicle. By the time he saw the report, the two spacecraft had successfully docked and had achieved a record altitude by going into an orbit of eight hundred fifty by one hundred seventy nine miles. Over the next three days he followed the mission by watching the news. After two space walks, three more dockings, and other experiments, the spacecraft splashed down on Thursday morning. Again Sheffield got the report on the morning news.

During that time, Sheffield was busy with the preparations for serviceman's conference on Sunday and began working on the next transfer. He was informed by the missionary department that because the mission was undermanned in comparison to the number of wards and branches, an extra allotment of missionaries had been called to the Hawaii Mission and would arrive over the next three months. That would be enough to let him reopen the areas that had to be closed. Brother Harlison obviously had come through for him.

Things seemed to be going smooth throughout the mission as no one had brought any more problems to him. Sheffield checked on Elder Gears and Elder Lindsay and found that they were getting along extremely well after their wrestling match. Ramona followed through with Elder Rose and found that

he was faithfully following her instructions. On Friday night, Sheffield and Ramona breathed a sigh of relief that they had made it through the week without anything major to deal with.

Then at one o'clock in the morning they were awakened by the telephone. A phone call at that time of the night could only mean trouble. It was Sister Clark in Honolulu West, the same Sister Clark who had worked wonders with Sister Rogerson.

"President Brason," she began, "I hate to bother you this late at night, but Sister Summers is missing."

"She's missing?"

"Yes. I woke up a few minutes ago and went to get a drink of water and she wasn't in her bed. I turned on the lights and looked all over the apartment for her. It looks like she got dressed and simply walked out the door."

"Alright, Sister Clark. Just remain calm and I'll be there in a few minutes."

After he hung up, Ramona said, "That doesn't sound good."

"Evidently Sister Summers has gone AWOL. We'd better go see if we can figure out what's going on."

Sister Betty Summers was from Phoenix, Arizona and had been out since March. She was one of those who decided to serve a mission after her boyfriend returned from his mission, only to be drafted into the Army. She had been a good missionary with no apparent problems. The fact that she up and walked out in the middle of the night was quite puzzling.

They quickly got dressed and drove downtown to their apartment. On the sidewalk outside, Sheffield found an opened envelope addressed to Sister Summers. He stooped down and picked it up and removed the letter inside. He looked at Ramona and said, "This might give us a clue."

The letter was from her boyfriend and had been mailed from the Army base at Schofield Barracks a couple days earlier. His unit had been sent to Hawaii for a week of training before shipping out to Vietnam. He had a weekend pass and wanted to see her. He told her that he would be staying at the Moana SurfRider Hotel which was walking distance from there.

"I'll bet you anything that's where the little stinker ran off to." Ramona said after he read the letter.

They went up to the door and knocked. Sister Clark, who was dressed and waiting for them, answered the door and invited them in.

"We think we know where she is." Sheffield announced, holding up the letter.

"Where?" Sister Clark asked in desperation.

"Were you aware that her boyfriend was here on Oahu?"

"No. All she said was that he was being sent to Vietnam."

"Well evidently, he's here for some training. He told her that he had a weekend pass and would be at staying the SurfRider. I bet she snuck out to meet him, hoping that you wouldn't notice that she was gone."

"That's not like her." Sister Clark said in her companion's defense.

"Wherever she is, we've got to find her. That's a good place to start."

Even though it was just a few blocks away, the three of them got in the car and drove there. Together they approached the front desk and Sheffield asked, "Do you have a Private Carl Sherman registered here?" He got the name from the return address on the envelope.

The desk clerk glanced at the register and said, "Yes, he is in three forty nine."

"Thank you." Sheffield responded as he turned away. Ramona and Sister Clark followed him to the elevator, which took them up to the third floor. They found the room and approached the door. As he reached up to knock, they could hear giggling coming from inside, one voice obviously male and the other female.

Sheffield knocked loudly. The giggling stopped, but there was no response. Sheffield knocked again more resiliently.

A man's voice called out, "Go away!"

Sheffield knocked again with the same persistence. This time the door opened a crack and he could see part of a face peering through. Sheffield quickly put his cane through the crack so the door couldn't be closed and pushed his way through. The young man was obviously wearing only the towel that he held closed at one hip. An army uniform was strewn over a chair.

There in the bed was Sister Summers. Obviously from her clothes which were scattered around, the sheet that she held up to her was all that hid her nakedness. She shrieked, "President Brason!"

Sheffield focused on the young man and bellowed, "Attention, Private!" with all of the authority of a three star admiral."

He just stuttered and stammered.

"What is it that you don't understand, soldier? I said, Attention."

He had no choice but to snap to attention, with one hand holding the towel closed.

Sheffield tuned his steel gaze on the compromised lady missionary and sternly asked, "What are you doing here?"

Hiding behind the sheet, she didn't answer, but asked, "How did you know where to find me?"

Sheffield held up the letter and said, "In your hurry to sneak away, you dropped this. Now what is going on?"

"Nothing. We haven't done anything."

"It sure doesn't look that way to me."

Sheffield looked behind him and directed Sister Clark, to up her clothes and take her into the bathroom so she could get dressed. As she began gathering up her clothes, Ramona followed and began gathering up the young man's clothes.

With all of her clothes in on arm, Sister Clark reached out to her companion with the other. She gathered the sheet around her and got up from off the bed and went into the bathroom with Sister Clark and the door shut behind them.

When Ramona handed the soldier his clothes, Sheffield ordered, "Put on your clothes."

He hesitated.

"I said, put on your clothes mister."

Ramona shielded her eyes while Sheffield just stood there looking on as he dropped the towel and hurriedly got dressed. As he finished buttoning up his shirt, the two lady missionaries stepped out of the bathroom.

Ramona walked toward them and gestured for them to sit with her on the couch while Sheffield directed her boyfriend to the chair that his uniform had been draped over. Sheffield remained standing.

"Now Sister Summers, you still haven't answered my question." Sheffield said calmly. "Whats going on here?"

"I'm so, so sorry President. I didn't mean for it happen like this. When I found out that Carl was here for some training, before going to Vietnam, I just had to see him."

"Why didn't you just ask me?"

In tears, Sister Summers said, "Because I knew it was against the rules."

"I can go around the rules if I see a need. I would have let you see him. No one knows the uncertainty of going off to war any more than I do. You can't be sure that Carl is coming back, and neither is he. I understand. I wasn't sure that I would come back either. I almost didn't."

For the first time, Carl spoke. "I take it you were in the military, sir."

"That's right. Career Navy, twenty eight years, three wars, two purple hearts, and three stars."

"That explains a lot." Carl said under his breath.

"If you were going to be sneaky about it, why come to a hotel of all places?"

"Because it was close and no one would see us together." Sister Summers sobbed. "We didn't mean for it to go this far, but the temptation was just too great. If you hadn't of come when you did, we would have made a big mistake."

"I hate to tell you, but you already made a big mistake. You were about to make it worse."

"But we didn't, you know, go all the way."

"You went far enough. As a full time missionary, thats way too far. We'll talk about this more tomorrow. Take the morning and get your things together."

"Sister Clark, I want you to have her at the mission home at ten o'clock. Oh, and pack your bags and bring them with you, just in case you won't be coming back."

Sister Summers was devastated and simply buried her face in her hands.

Sheffield turned to her boyfriend. "So Carl, I understand that you're a returned missionary. Where did you serve?"

"In the Central States Mission."

"What were you thinking? You should have known better."

"I'm scared, sir. I don't know if I'll be coming home alive. I guess I let fear stand in the way of reason."

"I don't blame you for being afraid, but this is pretty serious for you too. There isn't anything that I can do about it, but I highly suggest that you talk to someone so you can repent. If it were me, I wouldn't want to face the prospect of meeting the Lord with this kind of guilt hanging over me."

"Yes sir. I'll do that, sir. I'll write home to my bishop and make a confession."

"That's a good place to start." Sheffield agreed. "When do you ship out?"

"On Monday."

"Are you aware of the serviceman's conference on Sunday?"

"Yes, sir. One of my buddies and I were planning on going."

"Good, I hope to see you there."

Looking at Ramona Sheffield said. "Alright then. Its late. We need to get the sisters back to their apartment."

With Sheffield leading the way, Ramona took Sister Summers by one arm while Sister Clark took her by the other and followed him down the hall to the elevator. Still sobbing, Sister Summers didn't say a word all the way back to their apartment. Sheffield and Ramona waited in the car until they were safe inside before driving off.

"You sure can still switch into military mode when you need to, Babe. You about scared that poor kid to death."

"Its not me he needs to be afraid of right now."

"So, what's going to happen to Sister Summers?"

Sheffield just looked at her.

"Thats what I thought. That was a close one. If she hadn't dropped that letter, we never would of found her, let alone just in the nick of time."

They changed the subject and talked about other things on the way home. A few minutes later they were back at Mililani and went upstairs to their apartment and went back to bed.

The next morning, Sister Clark and Sister Summers arrived at the mission home a few minutes before ten. Sheffield was waiting for her in his office. Elder Jarvis showed her to the door and closed it behind her. She took a seat across from Sheffield and bravely waited to hear what he had to say.

He looked kindly at her and said, "Before I tell you what I have to say, why don't you go first."

"I'm so sorry for what happened. I spent most of the rest of the night on my knees telling Heavenly Father how sorry I am and begged for His forgiveness."

"The good news, Sister Clark, is that you can be forgiven, completely and it will never be remembered. The bad news is that I'm afraid that you can't do it here."

Sister Summers simply nodded her head.

"I've had Elder Bauer arrange a flight home for you and I have already called and talked to your bishop. He will want to meet with you and help you begin the repentance process. I have recommended that you be dis-fellowshipped, but the final decision is up to him."

Again she nodded and quietly said, "I understand."

"You were such a good missionary. I was going to make you senior companion and put you with a new sister to train when Sister Clark goes home at the end the month."

"I really loved being a missionary. I really blew it, didn't I. My family is sure going to be disappointed, but not as much as I am in myself."

"If you'd like, you can use my telephone and call you family and tell them that you'll be home this evening so they can meet you at the airport. Its up to you whether or not you tell them why you're coming home."

"Thank, you President Brason. Thank you for everything. This has been the best experience of my life. I only wish I could have finished it. But most of all thank you for following the Spirit and be there to stop us from making an even bigger mistake. I don't know if I could live with myself if we had."

"Good luck to you. And good luck to Carl. If the two of you ever do get married, be sure to send us an announcement. Now if you'll excuse me I need to go talk to Sister Clark."

Sheffield left the room while Sister Summers made the difficult telephone call to her family. Sheffield pulled Sister Clark aside to talk to her.

"I hate for you to have to end your mission on this note. Since you're going to be going home in ten days, I'd like to put you with Sister Rogerson and Sister Handy here in the mission home. The three of you can wrap things up in your area between now and then. Why don't you accompany us while we take Sister Summers to the airport, then on the way back, you can stop by your apartment and get your things."

Sister Summers didn't talk very long, for she came out of the office a few of minutes later.

"Now before you go, there is someone her who wants to say goodbye."

Directing his voice toward the dinning room, he called out, "Private Sherman."

A moment later, the solider came out into the office. Sister Summers gasped and put her hand to her mouth, and rushed into his arms. Sobbing she held onto him tightly.

When they finally spoke, he said, "President Brason called me at the hotel this morning and invited me to come and say goodbye and I came up on the bus."

Looking at Sheffield with tears in her eyes, she said,"Thank you, President."

"It's the least I could do." He said. "Like I said last night, I know all to well what its like to go off to war. I'll give you a moment alone in the library, then after lunch it will be time to go to the airport. You can come with us if you like Private."

While the solider and the lady missionary where in the library, Sheffield had one of the office Elders move Sister Summers things from their car to mission van. After lunch Roy drove them to the airport.

It was a tearful send off for Sister Summers as she said goodbye to Sister Clark, President and Sister Brason, and especially Private Sherman. Then it was time for her to leave. From there he boarded a bus to return to Schofield Barracks. On the way back to the Mililani, they took Sister Clark to her apartment to gather her things and brought her back to the mission home.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona attended the third annual Serviceman's conference. As with the year before, there was a box lunch picnic at the park followed by the meeting at one o'clock in the Halawa Chapel. There were even more servicemen in attendance than the year before as more and more young men were going into the military rather than serving missions.

Commander Lords had also put a lot of work into the conference. One of the biggest challenges was getting the word out. He conducted the meeting while Sheffield presided. After the sacrament had been administered, he had a few remarks before introducing Sheffield and Ramona.

"No one," he continued, "is more qualified to speak to you today than is President and Sister Brason. President Sheffield Brason was born and raised in Roanoke Virginia. After graduating form high school in nineteen seventeen, he entered the United States Naval Academy. During his freshman year, his first midshipmen cruise was a war patrol along the East Coast aboard the USS Arizona, which now lies on the bottom of Pearl Harbor a short distance from here.

"Upon graduation he was commissioned an Ensign and was assigned to a destroyer. On December seventh, nineteen twenty one, he married the love of his life, Miss Geannie Austin. Shorty after their marriage, he sailed around the world with his ship.

“President Brason's passion was and still is flying. After two years of active duty, he was accepted into flight training and received his wings on November first, nineteen twenty four. In the years that followed, he was pioneer in Naval aviation. He worked his way through the ranks, eventually becoming a squadron commander and later an air group commander.

“His active flying career came to an end when he became the executive officer of the famed USS Enterprise and later served on the staff of the equally famous Admiral William F. Halsey. It was while in that post that found him flying into Pearl Harbor on the morning of December seventh, nineteen forty one. On that harrowing day, the plane he was in was shot down, but not before he shot down two enemy aircraft. In the process, he was wounded for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.

“The real tragedy of that day was the deaths of his wife and two children, who were caught up in the attack while on their way to church. I should note that they had a third child who died shortly after birth.

“During the first few months of the war, President Brason was involved in the first counter offensive moves of the war and in June of nine forty two, he was promoted to Captain and took command of the USS Reprisal. For the next fifteen months he took part in several operations in the Atlantic and Mediterranean where he was wounded once more while engaging the enemy off Salerno. Upon his return to the United States, he was nursed back to health by none other than Sister Brason.

“Sister Ramona Brason was born on the Choctaw Reservation in Oklahoma where she spent her early childhood before moving with her family to Arizona. As a teenager, she and her mother made their way to Tacoma, Washington after the death of her father.

“She married Oliver North in nineteen twenty three, but a short time later, he died in the line of duty as a fireman. Following his death, she enrolled in nursing school and upon graduation was recruited into the Navy Nurses Corps and was assigned to the Naval Hospital in San Diego. It was in San Diego where she became acquainted with President Brason's first wife, Geannie, and the two of them became dear friends.

“It was Geannie who introduced her to President Brason's wingman, Thomas Katmuth. Sometime later they were married in August of nine twenty eight. A few months later, she was again left a widow when her husband and President Brason were involved in a midair collision. Not long after that she was transferred here to the Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital. Over the years she stayed in touch with the Brasons and was reunited with them when President Brason was transferred here in late nineteen thirty nine.

“She was on duty at the hospital the morning of the attack. Among the first casualties that she treated were President Brason's wife and children. He credits her for helping him work through his loss. Eventually she was transferred to the Bethesda Naval Hospital, and was reunited with President Brason. When he returned to the States to recover from his injuries, he was sent to Bethesda. It was there that their relationship developed and they were later married on January twenty second, nineteen forty four.

“After his recovery, President Brason was assigned to duty in Washington D.C. where he continued his pioneering efforts. In October of that year he was promoted to Rear Admiral and once again went off to war in the Pacific and was present for the signing of the surrender in Tokyo Bay. He returned to the United States shortly after the war and on June first, nineteen forty six both President and Sister Brason retired from the Navy and settled in Roanoke, Virginia where he began his second career as a high school wrestling coach and government teacher. In February nineteen forty seven, they adopted their three children, Craig, Norma, and Janet who were siblings who suddenly found themselves without parents.

“In November nineteen forty seven, the Brasons were baptized into the Church after a remarkable chain of events that had been years in the making. Sister Brason will share some of it with you in her remarks.

“President Brason was recalled to active duty in nineteen fifty one and did a tour of duty off Korea and one in the Mediterranean. At the conclusion of the Korean War he retired prematurely from the Navy and at the same time was promoted to Vice Admiral.

“He returned to their small ranch in Roanoke and resumed coaching and teaching until he retired at the end of the nineteen sixty three – sixty four school year. During that time, he served as branch president and later as the first counselor in the Central Atlantic States Mission Presidency. Sister Brason likewise served in various callings including a counselor in the Relief Society presidency and later as president. President Brason was serving in that capacity and Sister Brason as the branch music chairman at the time of their call to preside over the Hawaii Mission, which they have done since July first, nineteen sixty four.

“It will now be our pleasure to next hear from Sister Brason. She will be followed by a multi service choir, and then President Sheffield Brason will address us.”

Following Commander Lord's introduction, Ramona came to the pulpit. “Wow!” she began. “That was a great introduction Commander. Now you all know about as much about us as we do. It's so good to be here with all of you today. My husband and I were proud to have served this great nation for so many years. I hope you wear the various uniforms that I see before me with pride and honor.

“The Commander referred briefly to our conversion story I would like to take a few minutes of the time that has been allotted to me and tell you just a little bit about it.” She spent the next ten minutes telling their story and then another ten minutes or so giving the talk that she had delivered at the previous serviceman's conferences about the missionary opportunities that there are in the military. Virtually no one in attendance had been to the previous meetings.

Following her remarks, the multi service choir consisting of sailors, marines, soldiers, and airmen sang “We Are All Enlisted.”

Then Sheffield came to the pulpit. He gave a modified version of his “In the Military But Not of the

Military” talk. The changes he added were in light of what had happened with Sister Summers and Private Sherman.

Among other things, he said, “Our nation is involved in yet another war to defend the weak and oppressed against tyranny. Some at home may question our involvement in this war, but it is the duty of the strong to defend the weak. It is the duty of freedom loving people to oppose domination by anyone who seeks to put out the light and hope of freedom. It is the duty of those who put on the uniform of the United States of America, whatever it may be, to answer the call to duty wherever it may be.

“I know that many of you had hoped to have served missions for the Church. We would love to have had you come to labor with us. But as Sister Brason, has explained, there are missionary opportunities all about you.

“You here to today are as the Two Thousand Sons of Helaman. I’m sure most of you have been taught by your mothers to be men of great faith just like the young Ammonite warriors. They were blessed and protected in combat and everyone of them survived.

“Many of you will most likely find yourselves in harms way in the near future. I pray that all of you will return home to your loved ones and go on to live productive lives and serve in the Church. But if not, I pray that if you are called on to make the ultimate sacrifice that you do so worthy and prepared to enter the eternal world.

“War is merciless. Death is indiscriminate in who it takes, It cares not whether you are ready or not. I know first hand from having seen death board my ship and take who it would. It even tried to take me. So don't worry about whether or not death will tap you on the shoulder, be more concerned with your worthiness.

“It is a wicked world that you have been thrust into. Some of the most unsavory characters wear the same uniform as you and they would love nothing more than to bring you down to their level. Beware of the snares and temptations, they are all around you. Do not be a casualty in that war.”

He went on to say more, and closed with his testimony.

After Sheffield's talk, Commander Lords opened the meeting for the bearing of testimonies. So many men came forward, that at a certain point he had to cut them off in order to be finished in time for the Halawa Ward's sacrament meeting.

Among those who came up to the pulpit was Private Sherman. Without going into the specifics, he said, “I know for myself of the temptations that President Brason talked about. I'm a returned missionary and know better, but I found myself in what began as what I thought was something innocent but was over powered by temptation and got out of hand. I should have been more careful, but I let myself get caught up in the passion of the moment. Fortunately, the Lord sent some guardian angels to intervene before it went

from bad to worse.

“As it is, I have some repenting to do and intend to do so. I have already taken the first step. If death taps me on the shoulder, I want to go clean and free from guilt. If that were to be the case, I hope that it waits until I have done all that I need to do. I'm grateful for the Savior and his grace and atonement that make it possible.” He then went on to bear his testimony.

After the meeting, Sheffield and Ramona had an opportunity to talk to him. He again thanked them for being there to save them from themselves. They wished him well as he shipped out the next day. He hoped that Betty would forgive him and that the incident would not impede the love that they had fore each other. They had great hope for both he and Sister Summers despite being overcome by temptation in a moment of weakness.

In visiting with Commander Lords after the meeting, they thanked him for all that he had done to make the conference the success that it was. This was their last opportunity to participate in it. Sheffield said to him, “If you're still in Hawaii next year at this time, I hope you will do it again.”

With the serviceman's conference over, they had Tuesday and Wednesday to finish working out the transfers. Sister Summers unexpected departure forced the closure of yet another area when Sister Clark went home.

The rest of the week was spent in zone conferences in the Honolulu, Pearl Harbor, and Oahu zones. Sheffield had some good interviews with the missionaries who had recently required some extra attention. On Thursday while with the Honolulu Zone, he found Sister Rogerson to be thriving with her new responsibility as senior companion. She and Sister Handy had developed a terrific relationship. Sister Rogerson had grown a lot herself by teaching the older woman the ins outs of being a missionary. Sister Hardy had taken the younger woman under her wing as a daughter and provided her with stability. On Friday in the Pearl Harbor Zone, they found that Elder Rose had taken to heart the instructions that Ramona had given him regarding personal hygiene. He looked well groomed and confident. As far as how he smelled, he had gone a little too far to the other extreme by using too much cologne. On Saturday they left early to go up to Laie and attended the temple. During his interviews he found Elder Gears and Elder Lindsay to be getting along great. Then when they got home that evening, there was an encouraging letter from Sister Summers. She had already met with her Bishop and was willing to do whatever it took.

After reading her letter, Sheffield made the comment, “Sometimes, all it takes is a little a babysitting and they get the idea.”

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