

Chapter XLIV

Remember Pearl Harbor

November 26, 1966 – January 2, 1967

When they pulled into the driveway at Mililani, Roy had it all decorated for Christmas. Both the office Christmas tree and the one for their apartment had been decorated. The first thing Sheffield did was to meet with Elder Baldwin and Elder Wild to see if anything happened while he was gone. They said that it had been pretty uneventful. They asked him about his adventure, and he was more than happy to tell them about it. With that out of his system, Sheffield returned to the business of running the mission, such as preparing for the mission conference later in December. But first they had all week to get ready for the next distraction.

During the week, there was a lot of talk in the newspaper and on TV about the upcoming reunion of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. It would be the first time that they would return to Hawaii as a group such as this. Thousands were expected to be there and all of Honolulu was rolling out the red carpet for them as they arrived in the islands later in the week.

On Saturday evening, the 3rd of December, Sheffield and Ramona attended the opening reception at one of the hotels downtown. The first item of business was the introduction of the officers of the national Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, the organizing committee, and the agenda of the activities for the week were presented.

There was a lot of optional events and free time built into the schedule to give the attendees plenty of opportunities to go on tours of Honolulu, Oahu, and even the other islands. For Sheffield and Ramona, it allowed them to attend to the mission.

From there, the evening became more of a social function, including plenty of liquor. It was the time and place for the members to seek out their old comrades. Each ship or military unit had tables set up in which they could register their contact information.

Ramona found the table for the hospital and signed in. She found that there was brunch at ten o'clock on Monday morning at the Surf Rider. She hadn't stayed in contact with anyone that she had known, but decided that it would be interesting to attend.

Sheffield, on the other hand, had a more difficult time in finding any information about the Enterprise Air Group. The two squadrons that were involved was such a small contingent that they were obscured by all of the larger groups. Then he noticed a sheet of paper pinned to a bulletin board. It had evidently been posted by someone who was also looking for anyone from the air group, his was the only name on the list. Sheffield added his to it.

There were also tables set up with similar registries for the various chapters of the organization. When Sheffield and Ramona joined, they joined the Virginia Chapter. They found it and put down their

contact information. There were several names already on the list, but no one that they knew. Most of them were from Northern Virginia, around Washington, or the Chesapeake Bay area. After mingling and visiting for a while, they eventually left and returned to the mission home for the night.

On Sunday, they went to the Tabernacle ahead of time for the nondenominational memorial service. He had arranged to use the large chapel from ten to eleven thirty, even though other parts of the building were being used for the regular Sunday meetings. Not long after they arrived, a man and a woman in their mid to late forties entered the chapel and Sheffield and Ramona went to greet them. It turned out that they were Charles and Audry Hempper from Compton, California. Charlie was the Chaplain that he had worked with in putting the service together. He had been an Army private in the motor pool at Schofield Barracks on the day of the attack. Now he had his own car dealership and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

Their communications had pretty much been involved with putting the service together and hadn't really got to know each other. Sheffield and Ramona invited them to Mililani that evening. They accepted the invitation, but first there was the memorial service to conduct.

Before long, people began showing up. Some were dressed as tourists, others were dressed up, but it really didn't matter. As the people came in, Audry softly played the organ to set the tone. They really didn't know how many people to expect, but by the time it was ready to start, there were about two hundred and fifty people scattered throughout the large chapel.

Charlie began the meeting by welcoming every one and extend appreciation to President and Sister Brason of the Hawaii Mission of the Mormon Church and to the Church for making the chapel available to them. That was followed by the hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers", something everyone would be familiar with. If not it was in the hymnal. Again Aubry was the organist and Ramona was the chorister. Just because she could no longer sing didn't mean that she couldn't still be involved in music. Charlie had obviously had some experience behind the pulpit. He then offered the invocation and gave a sermonette paying tribute to those who lost their lives that day.

Then it was Sheffield's turn. He took a different approach by addressing those who survived to fight another day. He borrowed from the Book of Mormon, saying, "We were not fighting for power or domination, we were fighting for lives and our freedom. We were fighting to defeat the tyranny and oppression that sought to overpower the world. We were up against overwhelming odds, but God was on our side. Yes we took a beating and were driven back at first, but it was the faith that this nation had in God that delivered us time after time with miracle after miracle. Nearly everyone agrees that Midway was miracle. It doesn't matter were we served, the important thing was that we stepped up to answer the call."

Sheffield went on to talk about some of the miracles and examples of faith and courage that took place that day. He spoke of the gallant efforts and selfless sacrifice that saved so many lives. He particularly

mentioned all or the pharmacist mates, nurses, and doctors at the hospital, who while overwhelmed and under staffed, managed to save so many, who would have died otherwise. "Unfortunately, they couldn't save everyone, as hard as they tried." He then talked about his own personal loss that day.

Since it was religious memorial service, he borrowed from his remarks at the serviceman's conference about being prepared to be called home to the next world and what it holds in store. Then he brought it back around the relevance of the occasion that they had traveled all that way to mark. He concluded by saying, "Now twenty five years later, it is important that the battle call "Remember Pearl Harbor" still rings in the collective ears of this nation. We must remember and never forget what what happened here. We must never forget that it was God who delivered us. If we as a nation ever forget, it's bound to happen again."

That evening, Charlie and Audry did come to Mililani and Sheffield and Ramona had chance to get better acquainted with them. Naturally, their conversation turned to religion. The Hemppers were impressed by the service the Brasons were giving to the Church.

"I don't know a whole lot about the Mormon Church." Charlie mentioned. "What do you believe that sets you apart from other churches?"

To answer his question, Sheffield went through the Articles of Faith one by one, briefly explaining them as they built one upon another. Charlie was particularly fascinated by the Priesthood and the lay ministry within the Church. He explained that the Presbyterian Church had a lay ministry to some extent in which elders and deacons assist in ministering to the congregation. They politely explained that they were completely satisfied with their church but now had a much better understanding of Mormons.

On Monday morning, Sheffield received a call from Nathan Cole, who had posted the sign up sheet for anyone associated with the Enterprise. Enough had signed up that he had found a place and time for them to get together for dinner on Tuesday evening and asked Sheffield if he could make it. He said that they would be there. To make it work, Sheffield called his counselors and pushed their presidency meeting back.

Later that morning, Sheffield accompanied Ramona to her hospital reunion. She was amazed at how many people she knew. The one comment that seemed to be made by person after person was that she hadn't changed a bit or that the years had been good to her.

As people were moved around and she had been transferred to Bethesda she had lost track of all of them. Those who were closest to her knew of her friend that had died that day, but they were surprised to learn that she eventually married her husband. Many of them were also surprised at what she was doing back in Hawaii.

The rest of the day, Sheffield and Ramona used to take care of their personal business as they did

every Monday.

On Tuesday morning from nine thirty to eleven thirty they attended what amounted to a business meeting of the national association. The rest of the afternoon was spent taking care of mission business. Then that evening they gathered with others who had been associated with the Enterprise. Nathan Cole had been a rear seat gunner in one of the other Scouting Six dive bombers that got caught in the the attack. Most of those there had been pilots of either Scouting Six or Fighting Six. Some of them had been part of the Air Group when Sheffield was the commander and knew them.

Sheffield and Ramona found themselves seated with Nathan and his wife Carol and another couple, Gordon and Celia Buttars from Idaho.

After being introduced, Ramona commented, "Our daughter's mother in law was a Buttars. They live in Clarkston, Utah."

That got Gordon's attention. "Oh really. What's her name?"

"Gail Gover."

"She's my aunt." Gordon said. "She's my dad's sister. Not only that but I'm also related to her husband Wayne through the Govers. In fact, my dad and Wayne are cousins. His name is Gover and so's my middle name. So which one of Aunt Gail's boys did she marry?"

"Jerry."

Jerry's a quite a bit younger than me and I don't know him all that well. But his older brother Morris is about a year younger than me and I know him pretty good. We used to run around together as kids, until we moved to Burley."

"What a small world." Sheffield said. "Morris was my personal assistant when I was the Captain of the Reprisal, and later when I became an admiral."

"I knew that Morris was on the Reprisal. I always accused him of being on pleasure cruise rather than being out there helping us fight the Japs."

"I assure you, that's where I thought we should have been too, but the powers that be kept us in the Atlantic. I think we did a good job of what we were asked to do. We got beat up a time or two in the process as well."

"So what is your connection to the Enterprise?" Gordon asked.

"Well, when she was commissioned, I was the air group commander, and later the executive officer. Then I was Admiral Halsey's air officer until after the Doolittle Raid. So, Gordon what about you? Were you part of the Air Group?"

"No. I was one twenty boots fresh from San Diego assigned to the ship. We got there on the fourth and got caught in the attack. We all went aboard when she came into Pearl the next night."

"I see. How long were you aboard?"

"I got off in July of forty four."

"Wow. You really saw some action didn't you?"

"Yeah I suppose. So What are you doing now, Admiral?"

"Well, my wife and I are hear as presiding over the Hawaii Mission for the Church."

"You're a Mormon?"

"Yes. Your cousin, Morris, had a lot to do with it."

"Well, I'll be gone to hell. So I take it you've been to Clarkston?"

"Several times. Its a nice little place. I've been through Burley before too. What do you do there?"

"I farm about four hundred acres and have a couple hundred head of sheep that I lamb out in the winter."

About that time, their meals were served. Sheffield, Nathan, and Gordon talked about the Enterprise and Pearl Harbor over their meal, while Ramona chatted with Carol and Celia. They mostly talked about their kids and Ramona's grandkids. When dinner was over, Sheffield mingled briefly with some of the others who where there, before he had to leave to get back to the mission home for his presidency meeting.

Wednesday, December 7th was the day that everyone had come for. It was also Sheffield's sixty eighth birthday, a fact that didn't go unnoticed that morning as they got ready for the events of the day. Sheffield and Ramona drove over to the Punchbowl National Cemetery for the national memorial service which began at seven thirty.

They arrived early and got a good spot close to the front while charter buses unloaded those coming from the hotels in Honolulu. Just before the service was to begin, the dignitaries took their places on the stand. They included, the national officers of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, representatives from all of the branches of the military and various government officials from the State of Hawaii and Washington DC.

The ceremony began with a welcome from the President of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, followed by the invocation offered by Nathan Cole. The first item of business was the placing of a floral wreath. Then came the speeches from various officials.

At precisely seven fifty five there was a flyover of four F-102 Delta Daggers from the Hawaii Air National Guard in the missing man formation in honor of their fallen comrades. As they approached, one of the interceptors pulled up, leaving the formation. The rest of the formation passed overhead with a empty place, symbolizing the those who had been lost. After the roar of the jets subsided, there was a moment of silence, followed by a single bugler off in the distance playing taps. That was probably the most touching part of the entire ceremony. After another speech, the whole thing wrapped up at eight thirty.

Throughout the entire week, there were a continuous string of people going out to the Arizona Memorial. Sheffield and Ramona chose to go after the ceremony, as did many others. They returned to the mission home for the afternoon, and in the evening attended the Memorial Banquet in the Monarch Room of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, where a lovely meal was served. Of course there were more speeches and the evening was capped off by Polynesian dancers.

That concluded the reunion and all of the memorial events. On Thursday the attendees dispersed, some flying home, others continued their vacation. For Sheffield and Ramona, it was back to work. Being December, there were no zone conferences to attend. In their place, they had the annual mission conference to prepare for and only one scheduled trip off the island. On Saturday, they flew to Hilo for a district conference.

During the next week, they turned their attention to the mission conference and transfers. As usual, a crate full of Christmas gifts arrived from home. It was stored in the garage until the kids came. While Sheffield was working in his office one week after the Pearl Harbor reunion, Elder Jarvis interrupted him to tell him that he had a telephone call.

Sheffield picked it up to find the President of the Springville Stake on the other end of the line. He was calling with bad news for Elder Seymour Allred. Now it was up to Sheffield to deliver the message. It was still late afternoon, so if he was adhering to the mission schedule, he would be out working. Sheffield called at dinner time, but got no response. He called again after nine o'clock in the evening

Elder Allred was a district leader in Kahuku, just north of Laie. He was from Mapleton, Utah and had been out on his mission for eighteen months. He was dedicated, hard working, successful missionary. When Sheffield talked to him, he simply instructed him and his companion to drive down from Laie the next morning and be at the mission home at nine o'clock.

Sheffield wrestled with how to deliver such a sensitive message. He had to do it once before, but that didn't make it any easier. Ramona counseled him to just follow the Spirit.

The dutiful Elder and his companion arrived right on time. Not knowing what to expect, he willingly followed President Brason into his office. Sheffield said as he closed the door, "Have a seat, Elder." As the missionary sat down, Sheffield pulled a chair around and sat down facing him. Eagerness shined his eyes as he anticipated whatever the President had for him.

Sheffield looked into those eager eyes and had to glance down as he began, "Elder, I called you in this morning to deliver some bad news." He glanced back up and to see the eagerness gone and he waited for whatever it might be. He continued, "Yesterday afternoon I received a telephone call from your Stake President back home that earlier this week, your brother Bruce was killed in action in Vietnam."

The color went from Elder Allred's face as he just sat there for a moment before responding. Finally

he spoke, "No. It can't be."

"I'm afraid so."

Elder Allred began sobbing, "No, no, no." he cried. "I believed that if I worked hard and did everything that was asked of me, that he would be protected."

"It doesn't always work that way. Sometimes the Lord works in ways that we don't understand." Sheffield said. "The important thing is that we all do what we can, come what may, and leave things in His hands."

"But why did he have to take Bruce? He was always a good kid who never did anything wrong. He wanted to serve a mission too, but he was drafted right out of high school. His plan was to go when he got out of the army. He'd only been in for six months and just got there about six weeks ago."

Sheffield stood up and walked around behind the heartbroken missionary. "I'm so sorry, Elder. I know that this is hard news to take. Why don't you use my telephone and call your folks. I'll leave you so you can have some privacy." Sheffield reached out to shake his hand. Elder Allred took it and stood up and threw his arms around him, crying into his shoulder. "Take as much time as you need. I'll be out in the front office."

Sheffield left him alone in his office. As he stepped through the door alone, everyone wondered what it was all about, but knew better than to ask. Sheffield volunteered the explanation, "Elder Allred's brother was killed in action in Vietnam." That news brought a feeling of gloom over everyone who heard it, especially his companion, Elder Aniston.

After more than forty minutes, the door to the office opened. That was Sheffield's invitation to go back in. Sheffield went back into his office and closed the door behind him. "Did you have a good visit with your folks?"

"Yes. Thank you."

"How are they doing?"

"Well my mother is taking it pretty hard. I mostly talked to my dad. He said that the Army told them that Bruce died a hero. His platoon had been ambushed and he risked his life saving three other soldiers, but when he went back for more, he got hit."

"I'm sorry to hear that. You should be proud that he had enough love for others that he was willing to lay down his life for his friends."

"That helps a little, but it still hurts so much." Elder Allred sobbed.

"I know. Believe me, I know. I had to write more letters than I care to remember to the families of men on my ship who were killed in battle. Many of those letters contained acts of heroism like your brother."

Elder Allred just nodded his head and didn't say anything.

"When will his funeral be?" Sheffield asked.

"His body is supposed to get home on Saturday and they are tentatively planning on Monday."

"What do you want to do?"

"My dad says that I should stay here, so I guess that's what I'll do."

"Alright. Would you like to take some time for yourself? You can go to the library or something."

"Yes, I'd like that. We do have an appointment this evening at seven that we need to be back for."

"Why don't you go to the library, where you can be alone. Perhaps there's something in there that will help. Don't worry about Elder Aniston, I'm sure the office staff can find something to keep him busy. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes there is. I'd like you to give me a blessing."

"I can do that. Let me get Elder Aniston."

Sheffield went to the door and invited Elder Aniston into the office and the two of them gave him a blessing. Then Elder Allred sequestered himself in the library. In the meantime his companion was put to work sorting referrals by area.

Sheffield went back into his office and placed a telephone call to the Hickam Air Force Base and after a bit of a run around, he was put through to Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Poindexter, who was responsible for receiving the casualties and rerouting the bodies to their families. His request was simple, "I have a young man in charge who has a brother who's body is being sent home. I was wondering if I could arrange for him to pay his final respects while the body was here."

Colonel Poindexter was sympathetic to the request and told Sheffield to have him there on Friday afternoon at two o'clock.

By then it was lunch time and Sheffield went to the library to check on Elder Allred. "How are you doing Elder?"

"A little better. What you said in the blessing brought a lot comfort."

"Good, I'm glad. I took the liberty to do something for you. I hope you don't mind."

Elder Allred looked up in anticipation.

"The casualties from Southeast Asia come here on their way to the mainland. I contacted the officer in charge of casualty processing at the air base and arranged for you to pay your respects to your brother."

Elder Allred's countenance brightened as he said. "Thank you, I'd like that."

"Good. I thought you might. We need to be there Friday afternoon at two."

"Thanks again. I'll be here."

"Sister `Auli`i has lunch ready, would you like something to eat."

"No thank you President. I'm not hungry."

"I understand. I'll leave you to yourself."

Sheffield and everyone else in the mission home stopped what they were doing to have lunch. Later in the afternoon, Elder Allred came out of the library. Everyone was occupied, but he found a listening ear in Sister Brason, who took the time to listen as Elder Allred unloaded a host of memories of his brother and the kind of person he was. Talking about him seemed to be just what he needed at the moment. By dinnertime, he had an appetite and joined everyone for dinner. He and Elder Aniston left right after dinner and drove back up to Kahuku for their appointment.

Two days later they drove back down to Honolulu and arrived at Mililani in time for lunch. After lunch, Sheffield and Ramona drove Elder Allred and his companion over to Hickam Air Force Base, which was adjacent to the navy base. Sheffield identified himself at the gate where Colonel Poindexter had a pass waiting for them. They were directed to the hangar where the Casualty Processing Center was located. When they pulled up and parked the car, they couldn't help but see the huge C-141 Starlifter setting on the tarmac nearby. Undoubtedly it was plane that had brought the bodies from Saigon.

Together the four of them went through the entry door into the building and found themselves in a small office, where they were greeted by a young first lieutenant who identified himself as Lieutenant Oliverson. "Colonel Poindexter told me to expect you." he said. "He got called away, but directed me to take you to see the casket of Private Allred. If you'll follow me please."

As they turned to follow him, Ramona put her arm around Elder Allred's shoulder and asked, "Are you alright, Elder?"

The missionary took a deep breath and nodded his head.

Lieutenant Oliverson lead them into the hangar where about one hundred flag draped caskets were lined up in neat even rows. As they followed him down the aisle between two rows of caskets, a sacred feeling came over them. Each of them recognized the significance of where they were, for they were among those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the call of duty. Near the end of the aisle, Lieutenant Oliverson stopped and looked at the dog tag attached to the casket and said, "This is him."

Elder Allred placed his hand on the blue field of the flag and didn't say a word. Elder Aniston and Lieutenant Oliverson stepped back, but Sheffield and Ramona stepped forward and on either side of him, put an arm around him.

Lieutenant Oliverson explained, "We can't open it to let you view the body because it is sealed for shipping. It can only be opened at the final destination."

"That's alright. That's not how I want to remember him."

"I'll leave you alone now." the young Air Force officer said as he turned around and returned to the office.

Elder Allred said to his brother, hoping he was listening, and he was, "I'm going to miss you Bruce. We had a good time growing up together didn't we. It used to annoy me when you wanted to tag along with me and my friends. They tell me that you're a hero. I never told you this, but you were always my hero. By the way you were always looking out others, I'm not surprised by what you did. I don't know if I would have the courage to have done that. I'll never forget the last time I saw you. I know we'll be together again someday and when we see each other again, I hope you can be as proud of me as I am of you."

After he had said what was in his heart, he stood there in silence, Sheffield and Ramona still at his side. Ramona removed her arm from around him and reached up and removed the gardenia from her hair. "Here, take this." she said as she handed it to him.

Elder Allred took the flower and gently laid it on the top of the flag that covered the casket, which was not much more than a glorified shipping crate. He wiped the tears from his eyes and announced, "I'm ready to go."

They made their way back down the isle to the office. Sheffield wondered what the stories were of each man who was laid out in that hangar. Surely they each had their own story of bravery and courage. Sheffield couldn't help but remember all of the flag draped body bags laid out on the hangar deck of the Reprisal after some of the battles they were in. At least these men were going home to a proper burial rather than being ceremoniously dumped overboard.

Before leaving, they thanked Lieutenant Oliverson and stepped back outside. While they were inside, it clouded up and was threatening to rain. Sheffield and Ramona drove the Elders back to Mililani and saw them off as they went back to their area.

During the first couple of days of the next week, Sheffield, Ramona and the Assistants finished up the transfers. It ended up that nearly half of the mission was affected this time around. That number was inflated somewhat because it was time to rotate all of the senior couples.

On Wednesday afternoon, missionaries from the other islands began arriving at Mililani, which filled up fast. As always there wasn't room for everyone who needed a place to stay. Some bunked with other missionaries and church members in Honolulu.

Sheffield was in his office early on Thursday morning to begin his interviews. Throughout the morning missionaries came and went according to their appointments.

During his interview with Elder Allred, he said that he was doing better and that he had received a letter from his family telling him about the funeral. He said, "They were puzzled at the white gardenia pinned to the flag. After we left, someone must have seen there it there pinned it on."

By noon, Sheffield had interviewed half of the missionaries. He only took a short break to have a quick bite to eat, before going to the Tabernacle. The conference itself began at one o'clock and after two

hours of instruction, there was a break before reconvening for the testimony portion of the meeting. Because of time, only about half of them had the opportunity. When the meeting was over, they had a box lunch. For a lot of the missionaries, it was an opportunity to hook up with old companions and friends. For those affected by the transfer, it gave them an opportunity to find their new companions.

When it was all over, everyone went their respective ways. For those who were staying at the mission home, another testimony meeting was held for those who had not had the opportunity earlier. Through out the evening, Sheffield continued his interviews and met with several more. Nothing unexpected or out of the ordinary came up in any of them. Oh sure, there was a little homesickness going around. But that was to be expected at that time of the year.

Again Friday morning, the 23rd, Sheffield finished his interviews and he and Ramona went to the Tabernacle for the second session of the conference. This was the part that everyone looked forward to. As with the previous two years, the entertainment came from the missionaries themselves and consisted of various musical numbers and other talent acts, followed at the end by a sing along of Christmas carols, lead by Ramona . Once it was over, came the best part of the entire conference, a traditional home cooked Christmas feast provided by the Honolulu and Pearl Harbor Stake Relief Societies.

“I just realized something.” Sheffield said to Ramona during dinner.

“Whats that Babe?”

“This is our last Christmas Christmas conference.”

After dinner, the conference came to an end and everyone returned to their areas. Those who had been staying at the mission home returned long enough to get their things. With the conference over, Sheffield and Ramona turned their attention to the arrival of the kids and grandkids.

Sheffield and Ramona has scarcely returned to the mission home when it was time for them to go to the airport to meet Janet and her family. They eagerly watched as the passengers deplaned. After about half of the passengers had left the plane, they saw five and a half year old Wesley. My how he had grown since they had seen him last. A year can make a lot of difference. Next the saw Jerry with three and a half year old Andrea. She too had grown. Janet brought up the rear.

“What on earth is that in her arms?” Ramona asked.

They both strained to get a look.

As Wesley reached the bottom of the ladder, he saw Grandpa and Grandma and bolted for them. He was about half way when Jerry set Andrea down and she too dashed toward them. Sheffield and Ramona stooped down to greet them and took them into their arms for hugs and kisses.

Ramona only gave about half of her attention as she was watching Janet and Jerry approaching, hand in hand. As she got closer, she could tell that she was holding a baby. She stood up as they came

near. She just looked at them in amazement, unable to speak.

“Hi Mom, hi Dad.” She said.

Ramona reached out with both arms. Finally able to speak, she asked, “Who do we have here?”

“This is Pearl.”

“Oh how sweet.” Ramona said as she took the little bundle in her arms. “She so tiny.”

“She's only two weeks old.” Jerry said as he greeted his in laws.

“Two weeks and two days.” Janet corrected.

“When did you get her?” Ramona asked for both she and Sheffield.

“Two days ago. Just like with the other two, we got a call out of the blue asking if we wanted a baby. We had put in another application several months ago, but since we already had Wesley and Andrea, we really didn't think we had much of a chance. And now, here she is.”

“Why didn't you tell us?”

“Well for one, we didn't have time. Everything happened so fast. Secondly, we wanted to surprise you.”

“We're surprised alright.” Sheffield said as he reached to take his turn.

“I'm not through yet.” Ramona said as turned away so he couldn't reach. “So, tell us all about her.”

“We really don't know much other than she was born in Tremonton on December seventh and that both of her birth parents are Caucasian.”

“You say she was born on the seventh?” Sheffield asked.

“Yeah Dad, on your birthday.”

“Here you can take her now.” Ramona said as she handed Pearl to Sheffield.

“I wonder if that has anything to do with why they named her Pearl? You know, for Pearl Harbor Day.”

“We hadn't thought of that.” Jerry admitted.

After fussing over their newest grandchild for a moment, Sheffield handed her back to Janet as they walked to the baggage claim area to collect their luggage. With it all placed on a cart, Jerry went over to the rental car kiosk to check out a car. Once he returned with the keys, they all walked together out to where it was parked and Sheffield helped Jerry put it all into the trunk. With everything and everyone in the car, Janet said through her open window, “We'll see you up there.”

Sheffield and Ramona walked hand in hand back to where they had parked. “I just can't believe it.” Ramona said. “I thought we were through having any more grandchildren.” Then the thought occurred to her, “We don't have any place to put her.”

On the way home, they stopped off and Ramona bought a bassinet for little Pearl. When they got

back, Janet and Jerry had already taken their things up to their room and were getting settled. They placed the bassinet at the foot of their bed.

When dinner was served, they joined the office staff and the sister missionaries from upstairs. Sister Handy's grandmotherly instincts were apparent as she fussed over Pearl. It made her miss her own grandchildren. Sister Rogerson didn't seem to know what to do with a baby. The rest of the evening was spent visiting and catching up, although Janet never left very much out of her letters.

The next day was Christmas Eve. Anthony and Andrea were excited for Santa Clause to come that night. But first they anticipated the arrival of Craig and Norma and their families. Janet and Jerry remained at Mililani while Sheffield and Ramona went to meet them. Janet made them promise to keep Pearl a surprise for when they got there.

Again, they watched as the passengers deplaned. Then they saw Gean. At thirteen, she had begun to blossom into a young woman since they saw her last. She was followed by eleven year old Geoff, eight year old Todd, and six year old Tina. Behind them were Craig and Edith. Some more people came through the door, then about the time Craig's family were at the bottom of the ladder, Wade appeared. He was followed by eleven year old Teresa, eight year old Samantha, and five year old Mary, and last of all, Norma. Once on the ground, there was another reunion. It was much like the day before, hugs and kisses, visiting briefly, collecting the luggage, checking out rental cars, and driving back to Mililani.

Janet waited until they had all come inside before going downstairs with Pearl in her arms. Everyone else was caught off guard and were as surprised as Sheffield and Ramona had been. She was passed around, while Janet told them all about her, what little there was. "The adoption won't be official until sometime after the holidays." she added.

Gean, Teresa, and Samatha particularly fussed over their new little baby cousin. Gean especially was old enough to be some help with a new born.

They hadn't had lunch yet and Sister `Auli`i had it ready. Always on top of things, she had planned for all of the extra people. As soon as Wade, Craig, and the older boys had taken everything upstairs to their rooms, they sat down to lunch. The office staff and the lady missionaries gathered at one end of the table so the family could all sit together. It was a good thing that it was such a big table.

Over lunch, Norma said, "We're so happy for Janet and Jerry, but we have news of our own too."

"I know that you can't be pregnant." Ramona said.

"No. I'm afraid that is no longer a possibility. Wade, why don't you tell them."

"With all of the growth in the valley, there are fewer and fewer ranches so there isn't as much work for my practice. With all of the housing that has gone in, there are a lot more pets. Since my specialty is livestock, I was concerned about what I was going to do. Back in August when we went out to Rexburg for

the Ricks family reunion, I ran into one of my old instructors from Ricks College. He said that he was retiring when school lets out in April and encouraged me to apply for his position. It would be teaching animal health and per-veterinarian medicine. So I applied. When we go back after Christmas, we're making a detour and going to Rexburg for an interview."

"That's great news, Wade." Sheffield said. "I hope it works out for you."

"I'm excited about it."

"Well I'm not." Ramona blurted out. "That means that you'll be moving away before we get home."

"I know Mom. But you can come and see us when you come out to see Janet, and we can come home once a year or so. It will be a good move for Wade."

"Besides, we'd be close to my sister, Jolene and Sedrick there Moreland." Wade added.

"I'm sorry." Ramona apologized. "I was being selfish. It sounds like it would be a good thing for you. It's a good thing Sheffield has his Staggerwing. We can be there in a day."

"Speaking of that." Craig interrupted. "I have it all torn apart right now. I'm going completely through it and giving it a good overhaul. I've found some original parts still in it and I've replaced them with new ones. I'm upgrading the avionics while I'm at it. When I'm through, it'll have another ten or twenty years of service life. I should have it done by the time you get home."

"Well thanks Craig. I didn't know you were doing all of that."

"I wanted it to be a surprise, but it's not the surprise that Janet had for everyone."

"I can't wait to take it up. We've been talking about finally taking that cross county trip we were going to take when we retired when we get home."

During lunch the telephone rang in the office and Elder Jarvis excused himself to go answer it. He returned a moment later and announced, Brother Gover, it's for you. It's your mother."

Jerry got up to go take the call. Janet got up to follow him out into the office.

"I do hope everything is alright." Ramona said.

When they returned to the dining room, Jerry said "She called to tell me that my Uncle Gover died this morning."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Ramona said. "Had he been ill."

"He had emphysema and hadn't been well. Since they live up in Idaho, I hadn't seen him for a while."

"You know, Jerry." Sheffield said. "I met one of your cousins here a couple of weeks ago."

"Oh really which one."

"Gordon. He and his wife were here for the Pearl Harbor reunion. He had been on the same ship that I was on at the time. I ran into him at a gathering of men from the ship. He told me that his father's name was Gover."

"Yeah that's him. He's a lot older than me so I don't know him very well. He's more like Morris' age."

"That's what he said."

"Any way," Jerry continued, "Uncle Gover's funeral is next Wednesday with a service in Burley in the morning and one in Clarkston that afternoon."

"Jerry and I talked about it," Janet added, "Since he was going to go home alone like the last two years while I stayed here, he's going to leave early so he can go to the funeral. The kids and I will stay as planned."

The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent visiting and being together as family. "Regardless of where everybody is next Christmas," Ramona announced, "we're celebrating it in our own home and you're all invited."

That evening the children put on their Christmas pageant and Sheffield read both "The Nativity" from Luke and "Twas the night before Christmas". After a long day of travel, it wasn't hard to convince them to go to bed. After setting out the rest of the Christmas presents, everyone else went to bed as well.

The next morning however, the kids were eager to get up and go see what treasures awaited for them under the tree. Although the magic of Christmas had left Gean, Geoff, and Teresa, the younger kids made up for it as they discovered what Santa had brought. The fact that he knew where to find them was enough to lay to rest any doubts that Todd and Samantha may have been having.

Even though it was Sunday, there was lots of time to unwrap and enjoy all of the gifts, since the morning church meetings had been canceled. The ever faithful Sister `Auli`i came in on her day off since she had nowhere to go, to prepare dinner. Ramona, Edith, Norma, Janet, and even Gean and Teresa all pitched in to prepare dinner.

The men retired to the balcony to visit and get out the way. Sheffield told them about some of their recent mission experiences, and especially about his adventure at sea on the Enterprise, his Phantom ride, and the Pearl Harbor reunion. Craig talked more about what he was doing to the Staggerwing. Wade talked about what this new job might hold in store. Jerry told Sheffield what Morris and his dad had been up to and a little more about his Uncle Gover and his family.

When dinner was ready, Teresa came to get them. All of the family and the office missionaries all gathered around the table, the lady missionaries had been invited to have dinner with a family in the ward. Sheffield said the blessing and the feasting began. When it was over, the men were enlisted to help clean up, since they were off the hook during the preparation. When they were about done, Sheffield pulled Sister `Auli`i aside and handed her an envelope with some cash in it as token of their appreciation for all that she did. He had done the same with the Hanamis the day before. With everything cleaned up and put away, the entire Brason family attended Sacrament meeting together. On their way home from church, the caravan of

cars meandered through the surrounding neighborhoods to look at all of the Christmas lights.

Since it ended up that Jerry was going home early, some of their plans were rearranged and Monday became the day at the beach. For Janet and Jerry, it was real treat since they had eight inches of snow on the ground at home. That day they all enjoyed the sun, surf, and sand. The older kids had serious sand castle under construction. It was obvious that Gean was beginning to notice the boys. The way she was beginning to fill out her bathing suit, they were noticing her too.

That evening Sheffield and Ramona took the five older kids to see a movie at the Hawaii Theater, leaving the rest home with their parents. They saw "Follow Me Boys" a Disney film starring Fred McMurry as Lem Siddons who was part of a traveling band but had a dream of becoming a lawyer. He decided to settle down and found a job as a stockboy in the general store of a small town. Trying to fit in, he volunteered to become the scoutmaster of a newly formed troop. As he became more and more involved with the scout troop, his plans to become a lawyer were put on the back burner. In the end he realized that his life had been fulfilled by helping the boys who had been in his troop over the years.

On Tuesday morning, they saw Jerry off as he flew home. Romona told him to give their best to Wayne and Gail and Morris and Sheila. Sheffield told him to say hello to his cousin at the funeral.

For the most part, everyone stayed close to home that day. By evening Mililani was bursting at the seams. In addition to all of the kids and grandkids, that afternoon, it began filling up with missionaries where affected by the transfer. Little Andrea commented, "Just look at all those elders.".

"We don't see many missionaries in Utah." Janet explained. "Just when they go out and come home. In her mind, she somehow combines Elders and missionaries."

"Well, I think its adorable." Ramona agreed.

Since there were so many, the barracks and Sisters dorm room were filled to capacity. Some of the Elders stayed with the Assistants and office staff in the house out behind the mission home. One lady missionary was shoehorned in with the Sisters upstairs, while two more stayed with the Sisters in Honolulu West. Typically the senior couples would have stayed in the extra bedrooms in Sheffield and Ramona's apartment, but since the kids were there, they went directly to their new area. With so many missionaries coming and going, Sheffield and Ramona were preoccupied, so each family went and did their own thing that afternoon.

One thing that made this transfer so extensive was the fact that there were five Elders and one Sister going home. That evening after dinner, the kids and grandkids got to hear them report their missions. The meeting went over, but fortunately Sheffield had canceled his presidency meeting that night due to the holidays.

On Wednesday, Sheffield particularly was busy with the transfer. He had to interview the eight

missionaries, five Elders, one Sister, and one senior couple who were going home before Roy took them all to the airport. When he returned he had eight new missionaries fresh from Salt Lake, three Elders, three Sisters, and another senior couple. It took time to interview all eight of them before sending them off to their areas with their companions. With a net loss of two Elders and a net gain of two Sisters, the Elders in Kapaa on Kauai were pulled out and replaced with lady missionaries.

New to the mission home were Elder Willard Dale as an assistant, replacing Elder Baldwin who had gone home and Elder Sean Bennett who replaced Elder Jarvis as the the mission secretary. The whole process gave the kids and grandkids a good idea of what it is they had been doing for the last two and half years.

Once the last of the missionaries left Mililani, Sheffield and Ramona were once again able to shift their full attention to their family. On Thursday, they all caravanned up to Laie to attend the temple together. As with the last two years, Iolnai and Takara watched the kids for them. Takara was also caught by surprise by Janet's new little baby. Janet left her with some bottles of formula and diapers. After the temple, they came and got the kids and took them to the Polynesian Cultural Center, which was one of their favorite places.

Friday and Saturday had been reserved for sight seeing and a little shopping. Over the years the kids and grandkids had seen most everything there was to see. Since this would be their last Christmas in Hawaii, they revisited some of their favorite places. On Thursday evening, Sheffield and Ramona took on all of the grandkids, including Pearl, so the kids could spend an evening out. Gean was a big help in keeping them entertained. Back home, she had become a popular babysitter.

Then on Saturday night, which was New Years Eve, they had homemade pizza and root beer, played games and finished off the goodies that Ramona had made before they came. The smaller children fell asleep one by one, the rest stayed up the welcome in 1967. New Years day was on Sunday, and naturally the entire family attended their church meetings, with a baked ham and baked potatoes for Sunday dinner before going back to Sacrament Meeting.

On Monday, they saw Craig and Edith and Norma and Wade and their families off at the airport. Norma and Wade, weren't going straight home, but were going to Rexburg for his job interview at Ricks College. To do so, the kids would miss a couple of days of school. Sheffield and Ramona wished him well when they said goodbye.

Now that the holidays had passed and all of the kids, except for Janet and her children, had left and all of the distractions were over, Sheffield and Ramona could give their full attention to the last six months of their mission.

* * * * *

The Pearl Harbor Survivors Association held their first ever reunion in Hawaii, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the attack. The events and schedule that is in this chapter are conjecture, but close to what it probably was, based on some information from my father and mother who were in attendance. Their chance meeting with Sheffield and Ramona was used to establish my connection to the fictional Govers in the story.

The part about my Grandfather Gover Buttars passing away occurred at the time depicted. In one of my areas, a little girl in one of the families referred to us at the eldernaries.