

## Chapter LXVII

### Rejoining Geannie

November 15, 1981 – December 7, 1981

Wearing a pressure suit and holding his helmet cradled in one arm, Sheffield rode the elevator up the launch tower, accompanied by a technician. As they went up, he could plainly see that his Staggerwing was securely attached to the external fuel tank that towered above the two outer solid fuel boosters. The elevator came to a stop at the platform that lead to the cabin. Sheffield donned the helmet and the technician helped him secure it to the pressure suit. Together they traversed the platform and entered the cabin, and the technician got him settled into his seat behind the controls.

Satisfied that everything was in order, Sheffield gave a thumbs up to the technician. After exiting the cabin, he closed the hatch behind him. All alone, Sheffield went through his preflight checklist. With everything in order, he said, "Launch control, this is Staggerwing One. All systems are go."

"Roger Staggerwing One. This is launch control. You are go for launch."

The count down commenced and at the ten second mark, the Launch Director called out the seconds, "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, zero. Liftoff."

The engine roared to life and the cabin vibrated as he lifted off the pad. Slowly at first, but as the momentum increased, gravity pulled Sheffield back into his seat. Looking out the window, Sheffield watched as the landscape below him grew smaller and smaller. Within less than a minute he was out over Atlantic Ocean, with the Florida coast looking like a map in an atlas.

Three minutes after liftoff, the Staggerwing separated from the external fuel tank and was in space. "Ground Control, this is Staggerwing One. I have achieved earth orbit."

"Roger Staggerwing One. Godspeed on your mission."

Sheffield unbuckled his seat belt and got up to remove the bulky space suit and stashed it in the storage compartment at the rear of the cabin. As he floated about the cabin, he watched the earth pass below. In the distance he could see the coast of West Africa. He passed over Africa and out over the Indian Ocean and over the southern tip of India. The trajectory carried him out over the Bay of Bengal and across Southeast Asia and over the Pacific Ocean.

As Sheffield looked down on the vast bodies of water, he remembered the days that he sailed those very oceans. As he passed south of Hawaii, he looked forward with anticipation the trip that he and Ramona would be taking as soon as this mission was over. He continued on over the southern United States. As he neared the east coast, he tried to make out the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western Virginia, but it was too far north. Ninety minutes after lift off, he crossed the Florida coast, completing his first orbit of the earth.

Now into the second orbit, Sheffield turned his attention to the purpose of his mission, to prepare

himself for the patriarchal blessing that he was scheduled to give. He began as he always had, by contemplating the individual that would be receiving the blessing. As he prayed for guidance and direction, he felt closer to heaven than he ever had simply soaring a few thousand feet over the Roanoke Valley.

Halfway through the second orbit, Sheffield was jolted from his meditation by the sound of an alarm that had gone off in the cabin. He quickly checked over his instruments and found the problem. He picked up the microphone and radioed, "Ground Control, this is Staggerwing One. The internal guidance system has failed."

"Roger, Staggerwing One. Take manual control and initiate re-entry immediately."

Sheffield took the controls and began a shallow dive through the upper atmosphere. As he went, he could see the glow that engulfed his plane as the friction of the atmosphere heated to temperatures that would have normally incinerated both he and his plane, if not for the heat tiles that had been attached prior to liftoff.

During re-entry, he saw his radio antenna rip away, leaving him with no communications with Ground Control. Once in the upper atmosphere, Sheffield started the engine and the propeller spun to life. The initial flight plan had called for three orbits before landing back at the Two Star Ranch. Now high above the Pacific Ocean, he hoped to make Hawaii and land there.

As he descended, it became obvious that he didn't have enough fuel to reach Hawaii, he began scanning the expanse of ocean for a place to land, hoping to avoid a water landing. Flying several thousand feet above the ocean, there was nothing insight. As he flew on, a dark object appeared on the horizon dead ahead. As he got closer, he recognized the shape of an aircraft carrier. Not just any aircraft carrier, because on closer inspection, he saw that it was the Reprisal.

"That's odd," he thought. "I wonder why they retrofitted her to her original configuration." He was further puzzled that there was no wake behind her. "She's abandoned and adrift." There was no time to wonder at her condition. Nealy out of fuel, he had to land. As he made his landing pass, he circled around and lowered his landing gear. "This is going to be tricky without a tail hook," he said to himself as he lined up with the flight deck on his final approach. Without a landing signal officer to guide him in, he had to guess. Even though it had been more than forty years since he had brought a plane aboard a carrier, it was as if it was only yesterday.

He touched the deck further forward than he had anticipated. That's when he realized that he was too steep and the plane bounced. "I guess Doctor Hawins and Ramona were right," he thought. "Maybe I'm too old to be flying anymore."

There as little he could do at that point as the plane crashed into the superstructure and came down

hard on the flight deck. Sheffield sat there for a moment, dazed from the crash. In all of his years of flying he had never had a landing mishap like this one. As he regained his bearings, he sensed that someone was in the cabin with him.

“That was quite a landing, Flyboy.”

Sheffield immediately recognized the voice. Startled, he looked up to see Geannie.

“Lets get you out of here.” She said.

“Did I die in the crash?”

“No. you're very much alive and well.”

“What are you doing here?”

“Watching over you like I've done for the last forty years.” She said as she helped him from the plane.

The fact that Geannie was there with him confused the situation even more.

“Its too bad about your plane, Curly.” She said sympathetically. “It looks like she's a goner.” Then she added, “That's the least of your problems right now.”

“Why's that.”

“Think about it. Why do you think the ship is out here abandoned and adrift?”

“I don't know.” He replied. Then it dawned on him. “She's a target. I've got to get off of this thing.”

“I'd say, Commander. I'm not here to take you back with me, at least not yet.”

Instinctively he returned to the cabin and retrieved his flare gun.

“Good thinking Curly. That ought to get their attention.”

Sheffield pointed it into the air a fired off a flare. It went high into the sky, leaving a bright arch to mark his location.

“Gosh its good to see you again, Geannie. Its been a while since you've come around.”

“Oh I've been around. You just haven't seen me. It won't be long now before I'll be coming to get you.”

“Really? When might that be?”

“You know that I can't tell you. That would take all of the fun out living, now wouldn't it.”

“I supposed you're right.”

As they talked, Sheffield could hear the sound of a helicopter approaching. A moment later it was right overhead and descending to the deck.

“Well Curly, I'll be leaving now. You're in good hands for now, but I'll be coming for you soon.”

At that, she vanished as the helicopter set down. The side door opened and a sailor hopped out and rushed to his side and brought him aboard the helicopter. The door slid closed and it lifted off again.

“It's a good thing we saw your flare when we did, Admiral Brason. A few seconds more and it would

have been too late.” the copilot said. “Look.”

Sheffield gazed out the window to see a half a dozen or more missiles streak through the sky. When they hit the old carrier, she erupted into a ball of flame and smoke, the explosions buffeting the helicopter. As it flew away, Sheffield could see his old ship begin settle beneath the waves. A moment later she was gone.

It was only a short hop over the horizon and the helicopter landed on the the landing pad at the stern of the Brason. Commander Rubens was there to greet him. “Welcome aboard Admiral Brason. You're safe now. We'll get you as far as Pearl Harbor and you can get home from there.”

“Come one Babe. You better be getting up, we have a busy day ahead of us.” Sheffield recognized Ramona's voice but was unable to determine where it was coming from. With a gentle shaking, he woke up to find himself in his bed at home. “Its about time you got out of bed.” she said. “You'd better get going.”

“I just had the wildest dream that you wouldn't believe. What time is it anyway?”

“Its ten after six. You can tell me all about your dream while you get dressed.”

Sheffield flung the covers off and sat up in bed as if he was getting his bearings before standing up.

“Craig will be here to pick us up at seven thirty. Get in the shower while I make the bed.”

Ramona went ahead and made the bed while Sheffield was in the shower. he was done with his shower when she was ready to get in. He was dressed and shaved by the time she was finished with her shower. They finished getting ready for the day and had a quick breakfast.

“So tell me about your dream.”

“It was pretty wild. I dreamed that I went into space in my Staggerwing.”

“I'd say that's pretty wild.”

“Then something went wrong and I had to come down, but I was out over the ocean with no place to land. Then I saw the Reprisal just drifting with no one aboard. So I tried to land on it and ended up crashing. The next thing I knew, Geannie was there. It's been a long time since she has come to me in my dreams.”

“What did she have to say?”

“I really don't remember. Anyway it occurred to me that the ship was there for target practice. I fired off my flare gun and the next thing I knew, a helicopter came for me and Geannie vanished. You'll never guess where the helicopter took me.”

“I have no idea. Where?”

“It took me to the Brason. Commander Reubens met me and said that he'd take me to Hawaii and I could get home from there.”

“I'd say that was a wild dream. Lets see here, you're still pining over the fact that you've been grounded,

you just watched the space shuttle a couple of weeks ago, and today we're leaving and will be in Hawaii by the end of the week. I can see why you'd dream that."

By the time they put their last minute things in their suitcase, it was almost seven thirty. A few minutes later, Craig pulled in to pick them up on his way to work. It was Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November and that day they flew to Salt Lake on the first leg of their four week trip. They would be gone until just before Christmas. The weather was good for flying and Sheffield secretly wished that they were going in the Staggerwing. When they landed in Salt Lake early in the afternoon, Janet was there to greet them and take them home with her for a couple of days.

Then on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> they rode with Janet Jerry, and the girls up to Rexburg to have Thanksgiving at Norma's house. Teresa and Samantha and their families were already there when they arrived. Naturally Ramona had to fuss over the great grand babies. Soon there were three more to fuss over when Gean and Nathan arrived from Burley.

"How would you like another one of them, Grandma?" Gean asked as she played with the little children.

Ramona looked up with astonishment. When she finally picked her jaw up off the floor, Ramona asked, "Are you pregnant?"

"Uh huh." Gean said as Ramona threw herself into her arms, excited to learn that their thirteenth great grandchild was on the way.

"Oh Gean, that's wonderful. When are you due?"

"Sometime around the first of May."

"Does your mother know?"

"Uh huh, but I told her not to say anything because I wanted to tell you myself."

Just then Sheffield came into the room. "Whats all of the excitement about?" he asked.

"Gean's pregnant!" she blurted.

"Hey that's wonderful, Gean." he said congratulating her.

The last to arrive were Tina and Mark. With everyone there they sat down to dinner while Craig, Edith, and Geoff and Todd and their families had just finished their Thanksgiving dinner clear across the country. Later that afternoon, after dinner, Gean and her family went back to Burley and Tina and Mark went back to Preston.

Sheffield and Ramona stayed with Norma and Wade for couple of days and on Saturday, they took them down to Takara's in Bountiful. Their son Christopher had just returned from his mission in Japan and was reporting the next day. Manti and Iolani had come from Hawaii for the occasion and were there as well.

On Monday the 30<sup>th</sup>, both the Brasons and the Morleys flew to Hawaii together. It was the first time in

five years that Sheffield and Ramona had been back. They were both happy to be in the islands that they loved so much, especially Ramona. That first day they went to Laie and spent the night in the Morley's guest house on the beach. The next day they attended the temple and visited the Polynesian Cultural Center. That evening, Manti and Iolani had over many of the people from Laie who Sheffield and Ramona knew from their mission. They stayed again that night and on Tuesday they drove down to Honolulu in their rental car and checked into the Waikiki Sheraton where the reunion was being held again that year.

With two days before the Pearl Harbors Survivors Convention and Reunion, Sheffield and Ramona had the rest of Tuesday and all day Wednesday to themselves. The first thing they did after getting settled in their room was to change into the bathing suits and spend the afternoon soaking in the sun at Waikiki Beach. After staking out a spot, they waded out into the surf do a little swimming.

Feeling invigorated, they returned to their piece of sand to take in the view of Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach, the same scene that was on the wall of Ramona's bathhouse. The scene included a host of people of all ages, shapes, and sizes. It was almost as enjoyable to watch the people as anything.

"I remember how much Geannie loved coming to the beach." Ramona reflected. "Many times while you were away and when I was off duty, we came here."

"Yes, she did love it here." Sheffield agreed. "We came with the kids as often as we could when I was home. She used to love watching people too. She always liked to speculate as to who they were. For example, she would say that the beautiful young woman over there was an aspiring movie star, or that that fellow over there was an international spy."

"Okay then." Ramona said. "What about that older gentleman over there with the busty younger woman in the skimpy bikini? Is she his wife, his daughter, or something else?"

"In this day and age its hard to say." Sheffield replied. "She could be a con artist after his money. Whoever she is, she certainly appears to have him wrapped around her little finger."

"Well Babe." Ramona concluded, "I don't think its her little finger that he's paying attention too."

After a few hours they went back up to their room and changed their clothes and went out to dinner. They had plans to go to one of their favorite places, only to find that it was no longer a restaurant, but was now a discothèque, so they settled on another of their favorite spots.

That evening after dinner, they drove around Honolulu to have a look around. A lot had changed in the five years since they had last been there. "You know," Ramona observed, "this sure isn't the place that I remember anymore."

"No, it isn't." Sheffield agreed. "One thing's for sure, things don't stay the same."

"You're right about that, Babe. I'm glad that we don't live here anymore. Its become too commercialized.

I like Salem and Roanoke just fine. I just wish the girls and all of the grandkids were closer.”

“At least we still have Craig and his two boys close by.” Sheffield concluded.

They decided to spend Wednesday revisiting their mission in the the Honolulu area. They began with a visit to Mililani. They were greeted by the mission secretary when they entered the mission home. Overhearing them introduce themselves, Harold Tanner, the mission president, came out to greet them and introduce himself.

He asked them to follow him to his office and invited them to have a seat. They learned that President Tanner had only been there since July. Although it had been nearly fifteen years and there had been five other mission presidents between them, he assured them that saints still spoke often of President Brason. Over the years things had changed a lot. For one, the size of the mission. Then they had about a hundred missionaries, now with the growth of the church in the islands and the increased population in general, there were over one hundred and eighty missionaries. There were no more districts as there were now fourteen stakes in the islands, including two student stakes associated with the Brigham Young University – Hawaii campus, which had just been divided a week and half earlier. Even though the name of the university had been changed to BYU-Hawaii more than seven years earlier, to Sheffield and Ramona it was still the Church College of Hawaii.

President Tanner asked, “Say, why don't you come and have Sunday dinner with my wife and I.”

“Why thank you.” Sheffield accepted. “We'd love to have some of Sister `Auli`i's cooking again.”

“I have to tell you that Sister `Auli`i' retired when the previous mission president went home. I've heard a lot about her, but I assure you that our new cook is almost as good.”

“We'll look forward to it.” Ramona said for both of them.

Among other changes, President Tanner told them that the Church had built a new four story office building next to the Honolulu Tabernacle and that eventually the mission offices would be moving into the fourth floor.

“What a shame.” Ramona said. “This is such a lovely place, with so much charm.”

“I agree.” President Tanner said. “But the Church is consolidating all of their offices into the new building.”

After visiting with President Tanner, they went to see Sister `Auli`i and found her at home in the same apartment where she had always lived. She was thrilled that they stopped in to see her. She told them that soon after Roy Hanami died that Suki had to move into a nursing home. “It so sad.” She said of Sister Hanami. “She can't remember nothin no more.”

After visiting Sister `Auli`i they drove around to some of the church buildings in Honolulu where they had

had so many special experiences. They even happened on to a couple of the many chapels that had been built since then. They ended up at the Honolulu Tabernacle down town. And sure enough, right next door was a four story office building. It was nice and everything, “But, “as Ramona said, “its nothing like Mililani.”

“Like I said last night,” Sheffield concluded, “things don't stay the same.”

On their other visits to the Islands in the past years, they had always made it a point to go see Dwight and Cindy Galloway, who had been Sheffield's Second Counselor in the Mission Presidency, but since the last time they were there, the Galloways had moved back to Utah. After the reunion, they were going to take a couple of weeks to revisit their mission and go to the other islands to see old friends such as Richard and Connie Kaaola in Kona, Max and Aloha Mahaulu in Hilo, Frank and Olina Alapai in Lihue on Kauai, and others. But for the next few days, they looked forward to the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association reunion and convention.

Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> the reunion began with the customary luncheon to kick things off. Wearing their blue and white Pearl Harbor Survivor garrison caps and matching Hawaiian shirts Sheffield and Ramona attended the luncheon. Then they rode the bus from the hotel to Pearl Harbor. As the bus turned the corner to go into the base, he looked at the spot where Geannie's car had been strafed that morning forty years earlier. Then he saw her. Geannie was standing there on the corner. Her eyes caught his and she reached out her hand, beaconing for him to come and join her. A sudden chill ran up his spine, causing him to shiver. And then she was gone.

“Whats wrong, Babe?” Ramona asked.

“Oh nothing. I was just remembering Geannie and what happened on that corner.”

“I know. Its kind of haunting isn't it. I know its been forty years, but it seems like yesterday.”

When the bus unloaded at the ferry dock, Sheffield and Ramona waited for their turn to board the ferry to go out to the Arizona Memorial. There was always a solemn feeling on the memorial that straddled the sunken battleship. Even after forty years, oil was still bubbling to the surface from her fuel tanks. Every survivor at the memorial had their own reflections of the Day of Infamy.

Sheffield's first encounter with the Arizona was during his first midshipman cruise while at the Academy when she patrolled the eastern seaboard during the First World War. The last time he saw her intact was on the morning that Admiral Halsey's Task Force Two departed Pearl Harbor on the morning November 28, 1941. The same morning he last saw Geannie still on one piece. It was supposed to be a week long training cruise. Once well at sea, the Enterprise and her escorts were detached for the secret mission to Wake. When he did get back, what was left of the Arizona was one the bottom of Pearl Harbor, right where she had been for the last forty years, and Geannie had been mortally wounded and was dying and Sandy and Austin



were dead.

When they returned from the memorial, Sheffield and Ramona paid their fair for a tour of the harbor. They boarded the launch and took their seats for the cruise through the harbor. All the while, the tour guide gave his presentation, Sheffield was lost in his own thoughts as so many memories flooded his mind. Ramona, on the other hand, enjoyed the tour.

As they neared the piers where the cruisers, destroyers, and frigates were tied up, she interrupted his thoughts, "Babe," she said, "There's our ship." as she pointed to the Brason nestled among the others.

"Yeah, I see her." he said. "I'm excited about our visit aboard on Saturday."

After concluding their visit to the Arizona Memorial and the tour of the harbor, they returned to their hotel and had the rest of the day and evening to do with what they pleased.

On Friday, Sheffield's focus was split between the present and the past. That morning, they met with the Enterprise Air Group for their get together. They were probably the most obscure and overlooked group of Pearl Harbor Survivors. The part they played that morning was often omitted from stories told of that fateful day.

As the Enterprise's morning search was readied for launch on the morning of December 7, 1941 while still two hundred and fifty miles due west of Pearl Harbor, Admiral Halsey directed that Lieutenant Commander Broomfield Nichol, his tactical officer, to along with them to report personally to Admiral Kimmell on the secret mission to Wake. As an after thought at the last minute, Admiral Halsey, who was quite fond of Geannie and knowing that it was their twentieth anniversary, told Sheffield to go along as well so he could start his scheduled leave and take his family back to the States where they would be safe.

The eighteen Dauntless dive bombers took off and fanned out ahead in pairs with orders to land at Pearl Harbor at the conclusion of their searches. With their mission completed, the planes stumbled unaware into the Japanese attack that was in progress. Five of the eighteen planes, including the one that Sheffield was a passenger in, were shot down by either enemy or friendly fire. Three pilots and five rear seat gunners were killed and one pilot and two rear seat gunners, were wounded. Sheffield himself was wounded, albeit slightly.

Of the twenty eight survivors of the the attack, some were killed later in the war, others had died since. There were a dozen from the air group who were gathered that afternoon, plus a handful of Enterprise crewmen who were ashore for whatever reason at the time. Later in the evening, Sheffield and Ramona attended a reunion of the hospital staff, another group who were largely overlooked.

That night when Sheffield went to sleep, Geannie was on his subconscious mind. He was haunted by seeing her standing on the corner, beaconing to him. Once he fell asleep, she came to him again in his

dreams, a recurring dream that he had on several occasions over the years of the morning when he said goodbye to her before sailing for Wake on that secret mission; the last time he saw her well and whole. As with each time he had the dream, he lingered and yielded to her seduction. The only thing different in this dream was that when he said to her as he left, "See in the funny papers." She replied, "That will be sooner than you may think, Flyboy."

Saturday and Sunday were set aside for the attendees to go on tours or whatever they wanted to do. As for Sheffield and Ramona it was the day set aside to visit his namesake. They got up early and got ready for the day. After breakfast, they drove back to the base in their rental car. As with two days earlier, as they turned the corner to go the main gate, Sheffield again saw Geannie standing there, beaconing to him.

"Do you see her?" he asked.

"See who?" Ramona replied.

"Oh no one."

"It was her, wasn't it." Ramona deduced. "You saw Geannie didn't you?"

"Yeah. I did. Or at least I thought I did." Sheffield replied.

"Well its only natural that she would be on your mind. She has crossed mine a time or two since we've been here."

He didn't tell her about seeing her two days earlier or about his dream the night before.

They drove up to the gate and presented their credentials and the invitation from Commander Reubens and were permitted to enter the base. They drove to the docks and parked the car and walked down the pier alongside the Brason to the gangway and went aboard. The officer of the deck that morning was Lieutenant jg Oscar C. Rosenblaugh the Administration Officer.

"Good morning Admiral Brason, Commander Brason." he greeted them. "Welcome aboard."

"Thank you Lieutenant." Sheffield replied.

"Commander Reubens is expecting you. If you will follow me, I will take you to the bridge." On the way Lieutenant Rosenblaugh engaged them in small talk, asking them about their vacation so far.

Once on the bridge, the Captain greeted them and again welcomed them aboard and said. "We're ready to get underway."

He picked up the microphone and said, "Attention all hands. Prepare to get underway. Cast off the mooring lines."

From the bridge they could see men on the dock untie the ropes that had her secured to the dock and men on the bow reel them in.

"Alright, Commander Brason, Lieutenant Vintonelli is waiting for the order to get underway. Would you

like the give the order.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Ramona responded. She cleared her throat, more to give her time to think of what to say than from necessity. Unable to think of anything, she simply said, “Okay, Lieutenant. Lets go.”

Lieutenant jg Robert C. Vintonelli, the Navigation Officer took over from there. The frigate began backing away from the dock and out into the harbor. A few minutes later, she was making her way through the channel between Ford Island and 1010 Dock.

“Before, I forget.” Ramona said, “I have something for you. When we were at the commissioning, I presented you with the books that Sheffield wrote.”

“Yes, and I have read them both. All of the officers have by now. They gave me a much better appreciation of who you are, Sir.”

“Thank you, Commander.” Sheffield acknowledged.

“I have something else for the ship's library.” Ramona said as he pulled two magazines from her hand bag. “What I have here are the June fifteenth, nineteen forty two and the October twenty ninth, nineteen forty five editions of Life Magazine that featured articles about my husband.”

“Well, thank you very much Missus Brason. I look forward to reading them as well.”

“These are some extra copies that we had. They originally belonged to Sheffield's parents.”

“Their in pristine condition.” Commander Rubens observed. “They even have plastic covers on them. Thank you. We'll see to it that they are taken good care of.”

By then, they were passing Hospital Point. “So that's were you spent a good share of your nursing career.” Commander Reubens said.

“Yes, I did. I have a lot of memories of that place, mostly good ones, but some nightmares as well.”

“I'm sure you do.”

“Now I have something for the two of you.” Commander Reubens said. He proceeded to present them each with a navy blue baseball cap which were embossed with gold lettering that read, USS BRASON arched over FFG-17. Each had scrambled eggs on the bill, which were actually gold oak leaf shaped embellishments. Ramona's had a pair of single strand oak leaves that identify senior officers with the rank of commander or captain, while Sheffield's had a double strand, which identified flag officers. They promptly removed their Pearl Harbor Survivor garrison caps and donned their baseball caps, after adjusting the size band to fit.

“Thank you so much.” Ramona said. As she folded their garrison caps and tucked them into her handbag.

“And these are for your children and grandchildren.” Commander Reubens said as he presented them

with a case of twenty four hats, without scrambled eggs.

Once clear of the channel and out in open sea, Commander Reubens ordered the course and speed and then turned to their guests said, "Now that she's fully operational, I'd like to take you on a tour."

"That would be nice. We'd like that." Sheffield said.

As they stepped off the bridge, the Captain said, "You have the bridge, Mister Vintonelli."

He took them through the entire ship, showing them things that they hadn't seen on their initial tour when the ship was commissioned. In each area, he introduced them to the officers and crew who manned the area. They explained in detail the systems, their purpose, and how they worked. Most of the men they had met before, a few were new to the crew since the Brason was commissioned. By the time they had seen the frigate inside and out, top to bottom, Commander Reubens invited them to join him for lunch in his ward room. In the process of the tour and lunch, Sheffield and Ramona got to know Commander Reubens even better.

When they returned to the bridge after lunch, the Captain said, "Now that we've told you what she can do, we'd like to show you."

Already well off shore, he put the ship through a number of maneuvers, some of them at high speed.

"She really handles well." Sheffield said as they made a sharp turn to port at full speed. "I'm impressed."

Short of actually firing off a missile, they got a demonstration of the weapons as well.

"Being an aviator, you'll appreciate this Admiral." Commander Reubens said. "Next we'd like to show you some flight operations with our helicopter."

He took them back to the flight control center located above the hangar. The Seasprite helicopter was setting of the landing pad waiting to take off. They had seen it up close earlier on their tour and Sheffield got to sit in the pilot's seat while the pilot explained the controls and instruments. After the order was given, its rotor spun to life. Soon it lifted of the deck and headed off ahead of the ship to port. They went up on deck above the hangar to watch the one helicopter air show as is it demonstrated its dipping sonar and other tactical maneuvers. Then hovering several feet above the surface, a man bailed out into the ocean. The helicopter moved off and circled around and returned to demonstrate rescuing someone from the water. They returned to the flight control center to observe the helicopter make its landing approach and touch down on the deck.

On the way back to Pearl Harbor, Sheffield and Ramona were invited to dine with all twelve of the ship's officers. At that time they had the opportunity to visit with them informally and got to know them better as well. When dinner was over, they remained behind in the mess hall and got to visit with the fifteen chief petty officers while they were served their evening meal.

By the time the Brason tied up to the pier, it was eight o'clock in the evening; the tour having taken twelve hours. For Sheffield, being at sea again, if only for a half a day, was one of the highlights of the trip. Commander Reubens escorted them to the gangway and bid them farewell, promising to stay in touch.

Sheffield and Ramona left the ship and returned to their car and drove back to the hotel. After a long day, Sheffield was particularly tired, so they changed their clothes and went to bed.

The next day was Sunday and another free day. At eleven o'clock, they attended church in the ward that they attended when they lived at Miliani. It too had changed a lot since then, but there were still a good number of ward members who remembered them. They were made to feel welcome and at home as they participated in the block of meetings. Afterwards, they went to Mililani and had dinner with President and Sister Tanner, the mission staff, and the sister missionaries who still lived in the third floor apartment. Dinner was very good, but not quite how they remember Sister `Auli`i's cooking. After dinner, they were invited to stay and visit into the evening and got to know their hosts better. The Tanner's particularly wanted to hear of their experiences in the mission when they were there. It was refreshing to reflect upon those days as they told story after story, in contrast to the reflections and remembrances of Pearl Harbor. There would be more of that the next day. Again, it was late when they returned to the hotel and went to bed.

Monday was the final day of the reunion with a full schedule. But first, Ramona didn't let the fact that it was Sheffield's eighty third birthday go unrecognized. After breakfast they joined the other survivors at the Punchbowl National Cemetery for the National Remembrance Ceremony. It followed the same format as it had every five years since 1966 with the placing of the wreath, a prayer, a moment of silence followed, by the playing of Taps. Then came the speeches by the organization officials and other dignitaries.

After the memorial, Sheffield and Ramona went to another restaurant that they used to go to and had lunch and to celebrate his birthday. It was then that she chose to give him his gift and a card. After opening it, she presented him with the cards that the kids and grandkids and sent with her to give to him on his birthday.

When they returned to their hotel room, Sheffield said, "I've got a bad headache all of a sudden. Do you mind if I lay down and take a nap?"

"Whats the matter?" she asked.

"I don't know were it came from."

"I've got some Tylenol." She paused and retrieved it, opened the bottle and handed him two tablets. "Here take these. Go ahead and lay down. I've got an appointment to get my hair fixed for tonight right now anyway."

"Thanks Sweetheart." Sheffield gave her a kiss and said. "I'm sure I'll be okay by the time you get back."

“All right then.” Ramona said. “I’ll see you then.”

“See you in the funny papers.” Sheffield said.

“I haven’t heard you say that in a long time.” Ramona said as she stepped through the door.

Sheffield poured himself a glass of water and took the Tylenol. He sat down on the bed slipped off his shoes and laid down. Once he closed his eyes, he soon fell asleep.

The next thing he knew, he was standing beside and slightly above the bed, looking at himself sleep. “This is a bit of an odd dream.” he thought.

Then out of nowhere, Geannie was at his side. She was stunningly beautiful beyond description. Her auburn hair, which shone like embers, was longer than he had ever seen her wear it before, with flaming locks that came down well past her shoulders, spilling over them. Her green eyes shone like emeralds and her crimson lips and broad smile radiated from her youthful countenance with warmth. In fact, she was surrounded by a glow that emanated from her personage.

Around her neck, she wore a long silver chain with a small diamond pendant that rested on her chest, a pair of matching diamonds adorned her earlobes and on the ring finger of her left hand was diamond ring, however it was not the wedding ring that she wore in mortality.

The crimson cotton dress that she wore was woven as one piece, without a seam. From her left shoulder, the neckline angled across her upper chest and then went straight up to her right shoulder. The flared sleeves went to her elbows, the bodice was fitted to her perfect form and the flared skirt went to mid-calf on her left leg and angled down to just above her right ankle. Around her waist was a white sash that hung down the skirt of her dress. Her bare feet were about eighteen inches above the floor.

“High Flyboy.” she said.

“Geannie.” Sheffield said. “You startled me. You’ve sure been coming around a lot lately.”

“Curly, this isn’t a dream, this is for real. You just had a brain aneurysm.”

“Do you mean I’m...” Sheffield paused, unable to fathom what he saying.

“I’m afraid so. I’ve come to get you.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The four story Church Office Building at 1500 South Beretania opened in July 1981 and the Honolulu Hawaii Mission moved into the fourth floor in December of 1982.

The Church College of Hawaii became Brigham Young University – Hawaii in April 1974.

Harold Tanner, the mission president is fictional.