

Engaged

Patsy seemed ready to say yes. My daughter remembers her telling that I popped the question casually one night out in the parking lot of the Airborne Club. She remembered it - to her daughter Rebecca, as the time I put my leg up on a log divider in the parking lot and asked 'Whaddya think about getting married?' I'm not sure I was THAT casual!

But I clearly remember when I presented her with an engagement West Point pearl "A-Pin." She much later revealed to her daughter Rebecca, (not me) she was worried I might not ask her at all to marry me. There were plenty of bachelor officers who either married late, or not at all, being content to date women from around the world. John Flynn, West Point Class of 1944 did not marry Nancy until late 1951.

But when she said yes, she wanted to take her time to get ready for a traditional wedding. So we - she - set the date for June 21st, 1953. She would be 24, I would be 25.

I joined her Trinity Episcopal Church, and was baptized according to Episcopal rules on the 31st of May, 1953.

We had several sessions - marriage counseling - to insure we knew what we were - getting into - with Rev Charles Widney of the Columbus Episcopal Church. He

would perform the Wedding Ceremony, which would be held in the Fort Benning Chapel across from her home.

She had all kinds of help getting ready from her mother and her local friends. Her sister Arleigh Coates was chosen as Matron of Honor. Four of her single Army Brat friends were bridesmaids, and her niece Pamela was one of the flower girls. One other girl, Ronnie Green was the "Ring Bearer"

Which was involved in the only hitch in the entire Wedding. I had ordered from the same company - L. G. Balfour- that was a long time jeweler who won the contract and supplied all 670 Class rings to our Class of 50, and the 'A' engagement pins and the 'Miniature' Class ring for wives - all engraved properly, including Patsy and my wedding bands, with its mirror image of West Point's Crest 'Helmet of Pallas' on the sides. But the two wedding rings didn't arrive in time for the Ceremony! They screwed up the shipping! I had to scramble to a dime store to get two el-cheapo brass wedding bands for the Ceremony. What a laugh. The order arrived two days later, after we had left for the month long honeymoon - with brass wedding rings!

As for the ceremony, both her brothers, Pfc Bailey Simpson - who was an Airborne trooper stationed at Fort Bragg and about to go to Korea, and Vernon Simpson were able to attend the Wedding.

Married Life (3) Marriage

Category: Married Life (1)

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She picked out a beautiful white wedding gown and had her formal portait done before the wedding.

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The Belle of Fort Benning, 1952

Her father was happy to pay for her wedding, including a reception which would be held at the Fort Benning Golf Course Club.

The Wedding

The Chapel Service was packed

"O Perfect Love" was the music she selected. Perhaps I can find a digital version to play here. I still have the Sheet music she got from Rev Widney and saved it all these years.)

Meanwhile here is an online U-tube rendition of that most beloved Hymn played at many a wedding.

<http://youtu.be/CNtnhL4bHcs>

Just Cntl-Click on that URL above

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My fellow Tactical Department Officers did the Honors, with Sabers

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Yeah the Cake Cutting at the Golf Club Reception

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***And Bachelor Capt Dance, who owned a hot Jaguar
and was my Best Man at the Wedding located and
drove us to the reception in this Model T Ford***

Honeymoon

I arranged for the Honeymoon 30 day leave trip through Virginia where we would visit Fort Monroe where she grew up in her teen years, and meet with a few of her Newport News high school days friends. Then through West Point where I would meet with Colonel Alspach, Professor of English - who had shown an interest supporting my getting a Masters of Arts Degree in English, and teach for a three year tour at the Academy.

Then we would stop in New York City, stay two nights and see the Broadway Play "Sound of Music."

Then we would drive through New Hampshire to stay overnight with Lt John Ross and his wife. Where he, a West Point Classmate of mine had been assigned to my Company K, 7th Cavalry in the summer of 1951, and was under my command. But in a combat action in August 19th, 1951, he was badly wounded in the right arm by machine gun fire on a difficult mission to try and take fortified Hill 487. He was patched up and for a time was an Assistant Adjutant at the 7th Cavalry Regimental level, where he actually swore me in while I executed a number of sworn statements accompanying my recommendations for awards for men of my company. But he never really recovered from his brief combat service in Korea, and

after we saw he and his wife, he disappeared from the West Point classmates scene.

Finally we would have at least a 10 day stay at the Honeymoon goal I picked out - "Jasper in Quebec," on St Donat lake, Montcalm County, Quebec. In the St Laurinetan Mountains north of Montreal, Canada.

On our way back we would stop in Atlanta, where - pretty much draining my bank account - we would order a really nice, lifelong bedroom suite of furniture from Georgia Furniture makers who were among the best.

When we got back to Atlanta we bought a beautiful, life long Bedroom suite- a four poster bed, two large dressers, and two end tables, all finished in beautiful mahogany veneer. It was shipped to our already existing two bedroom housing project in modern Fort Benning housing.

At last I would be out of my hot bachelor hovel.

Next item Married Life (4) where I will describe Jasper in Quebec where we played on the lake and went up ski lifts.