

# Carousels II



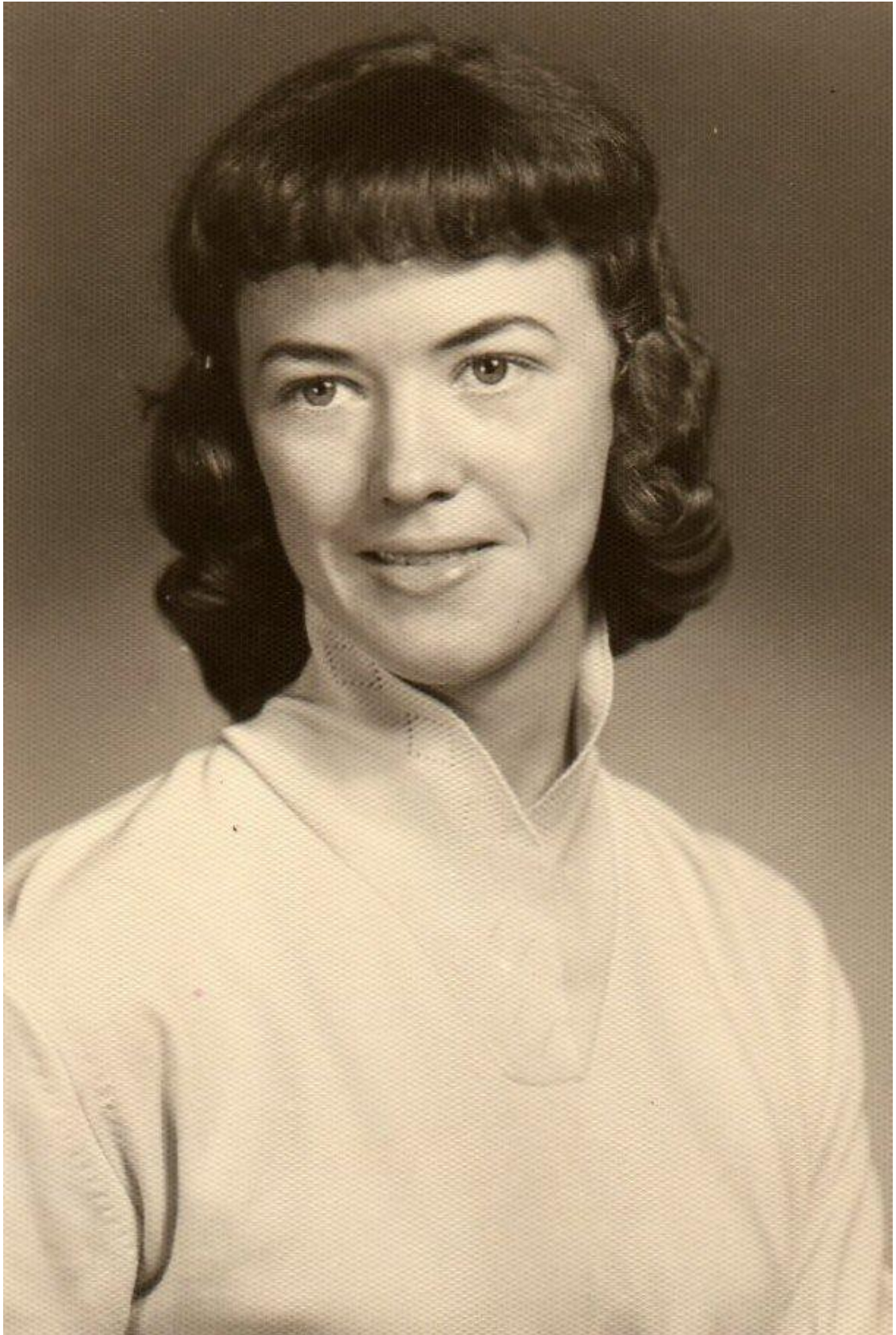
## **My Tribute To a Loving Wife and Mother - Peggy Jean Nelson -**

**September 23, 1939 - November 28, 2005**

**By Clark N. Nelson, Sr.**







# **This Document is Dedicated To our Terminally- ill Daughter**



**1962**



**1964**



**1975**



**1984**



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# Overture

On June 9, 1958 I was fulfilling a role as a member of the US Air Force on the beautiful island of Miyakojima, Pearl of the East China Sea. Only ten days later, I would depart the Far East following these two fantastic assignments:

1. 5 months at the Air Defense Control Center (ADCC); 313th Air Division, Detachment 1; BAQ barracks 1201, Naha Air Base, Okinawa; and 25 days TDY at the 623rd AC&W Squadron detachment at Yoza Dake, Okinawa.

2. a 10 month voluntary reassignment to the 623rd AC&W Squadron detachment on Miyakojima.

Considering sweet innocence and tragedies of war, I'll always feel compassion for the citizens of Okinawa and Miyakojima; the sweet innocence of a culture and citizenry that were never at war with anyone, yet were caught in-between, abused, mistreated, and violated.

Once arriving at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa in April of 1957, I climbed aboard an Air Force 6 X 6, and along with several others was transported to my new assignment at Naha Air Base. Considering the events from 12 years earlier, I wasn't sure what to expect from the people of Okinawa; would I be accepted or despised?

Within three or four days, the answer to my concerns rang clear. We were treated so well by the wonderful people of Okinawa; we were welcomed with smiles rather than frowns, especially at shops in Naha along Heiwa-Dori and Kokusai-Dori.

Notwithstanding our country's noble intentions toward ridding the world of bondage and brutality, the bomb tonnage dropped on Miyakojima alone, by American and British aircraft, exceeded the tonnage dropped on Iwo Jima and Saipan combined; therefore, considering the casualties and destruction endured by the Miyakojima civilians, they had every reason for despising our presence on their island.



Yet only a few weeks after arriving on Miyakojima, a small group of elderly gentlemen invited three of us indoors for a glass of Sake. The room was very nice and we sat and enjoyed the invitation by these gentlemen; we were taken by their friendliness and courtesy.

The local citizens of Miyakojima who worked in the dining hall, those who handled our laundry needs, and those who worked as guards, in motor pool, and in the small PX, were wonderful people; I will never forget them.

Furthermore, I would eventually come to acknowledge the fact that my fifteen months on Okinawa and Miyakojima were the most meaningful experiences of my life.

## **Carousels**

According to Headquarters, 6431st Air Base Group (PACAF) ; Arthur J. Alley Captain USAF, Assistant Administrative Officer; Special Orders A-233, effective 1 May 58; my assignment with the 3625th Combat Crew Training Group (ATC) (WPNSCON) was waiting at Tyndall Air Force Base in the Florida panhandle. I departed Kadena Air Base, Okinawa June 19, 1958 aboard a Flying Tiger Line Super Constellation.

Tyndall was located 12 miles east of Panama City, on Cape San Blas. I was afforded 42 days leave which included 12 days for travel. These were 42 days I was looking forward to. I was anxious to be home again. Once back home I spent time with acquaintances I'd known through the years, then two weeks flew by and I'd run out of things to do.

I'd enlisted in the Air Force only eighteen months earlier but there had definitely been some changes. Former classmates were either busy making a living or were pursuing their dream(s) at a college or university. I felt stuck in neutral with everyone else in high gear.

I packed up and headed for Tyndall even though I'd be checking in several days early. I'd grown accustomed to my role in the Air Force and I was pleased with

the job I was doing. I always jumped at new challenges, so the Air Force had definitely filled a void in my life.

I arrived in Panama City on a hot day in July of 1958. As I stepped off the bus a blast of hot air confirmed the fact I had arrived. I was amazed by the crowds of suntanned teenagers. They were jammed together on the streets like sardines. I had arrived several days early so I wasn't in any hurry. I was interested in what a beach town like Panama City might be like.

Many of the girls were wearing bathing suits that are normally worn at the beach. This was something I'd never seen before. There seemed to be something very special going on in town and I was determined to find out what it was. I'd never seen this many teenagers having so much fun, so I checked in at a hotel downtown and stayed overnight.

I was up bright and early the next morning, and following a few hours of pounding the pavement, mingling with the crowd, I decided to pack up and leave the downtown area. The beach town utopia I'd anticipated had apparently vanished or was never there in the first place. I boarded a local transit bus and headed down US 98 toward Tyndall AFB.

I arrived at Tyndall and signed in at my new assignment, the 3625th Combat Crew Training Group, with my particular squadron, the 3626th Technical Training Squadron, with Barracks 409 my new home.

I had no idea what my new assignment might entail, even though having been assigned to the Weapons Controller School (WPNSCON), but I was eager to find out. Florida was certainly everything I'd expected.

It was hot and humid as advertised, while the most beautiful spots on earth seem synonymous with heat and humidity, yet in most respects, nothing I'd ever experienced might ever match the magnificence common to the island of Miyakojima, Pearl of the East China Sea, one of the most beautiful islands on earth.

Even though particular locations can, at times, prove uncomfortable when it comes to tropical climates, the island of Guam, in the Marianas, was the most



uncomfortable tropical climate I've ever experienced. So I felt I could handle anything Florida had to offer.

I wasn't the only one signing in that afternoon, July 18, 1958; there were other airmen arriving from various spots around the globe. One airman in particular was A/2C Danny Young from Lafayette, Indiana. Danny had already served at WPNSCON up until one year earlier, when he was reassigned to a radar site at Keflavik, Iceland. Following that assignment, the Air Force sent Danny right back to Tyndall. He knew his way around Panama City and especially the resort areas.

Danny would also be one of my roommates in Barracks 409. There were actually six of us in our room including Danny and myself. One of these roommates had been reassigned much like Danny, he was reassigned to a radar site in Morocco for 12 months, then sent right back to Tyndall and WPNSCON.

One of the resorts along the Florida panhandle was Long Beach, located a few miles west of Panama City. Danny's car was a 1956 black and white Ford Crown Victoria and he kept it looking like new. It may have been two years old but it was as sharp as anything around.

Danny explained how Long Beach had become the most popular spot in the area, and the evening of July 22nd, Danny asked if I'd like to see it. I had nothing else to do so I was more than willing. The only place I'd seen to this point was downtown Panama City, in particular, up and down Harrison Avenue.

I knew resorts were scattered about but had no idea what they had to offer, other than cotton candy, popcorn, balloons, soft drinks, sunshine and sand. So I was anxious to take a look. We jumped in Danny's car and headed down the highway. As we left the base then entered the old iron bridge, Danny switched the radio on. The music from the radio epitomized the evening: "Just a Dream" by Jimmy Clanton.

Thirty minutes later we crossed Hathaway Bridge and entered the resort area. I spotted a water tower with 'Long Beach' painted across the tank in bold black lettering, then on our left was the building known as the 'Casino'. We parked in front of the Casino and walked inside. There were arcade attractions galore, and

souvenir counters; everything a souvenir hunter might look for. An aroma of buttered popcorn filled the room.

As we exited the rear entrance, a Ferris wheel was in motion; riders of all ages were twisting and turning to it's cadence of musical standards. A sidewalk ran along the east side of the Ferris wheel and continued toward the beach; as we continued down the sidewalk, Danny gave me a nudge, and explained we were nearing the most popular spot on Long Beach. A jukebox was jumping and so were the crowds; young people of all ages were everywhere. We were standing at the east entrance to the 'Hangout'.

The Hangout was an open dance pavilion. I remember the dance floor as concrete with a smooth surface; it's been my understanding that the floor was originally a durable hardwood, but I personally don't recall if it ever was.

The Hangout was the place for dancing and a great place for meeting people. Most vacationers were from the southeastern states, a majority from all areas of Alabama and Georgia. There were groups of attractive girls inside the Hangout and as far as the eye could see.

A jukebox sat to one side of the pavilion near the sidewalk spanning the beach. A number of white wooden benches were scattered about. The music could be heard from one end of Long Beach to the other. The Hangout was the place to be and exactly as Danny had described. The music was loud and the pavilion known as the 'Hangout' was really alive.

Dancers were dancing to Buddy Holly's music and I must have heard "Think It Over" at least twenty or thirty times that evening; Buddy Holly and Long Beach seemed synonymous. The crowds of young people danced for hours on end. I was amazed by the Hangout and the role it played at Long Beach. It was a fabulous place for meeting someone; I felt fortunate having drawn an assignment like Tyndall, especially considering it's proximity to Long Beach.

I'd never seen so many attractive girls. They were all in one place and all at the same time. If there were ever a 'Heaven on Earth' then this had to be it. The next evening we were back at Long Beach, the evening would evolve to a once-in-a-lifetime experience, an evening that most might only dream about.



As we eased along the highway Danny spotted three airmen from our squadron, each with a girl by their side, and standing near the highway. Danny pulled over so we find out what was going on. Two of the airmen were A/3C Thoma and A/2C Morrow, but I don't recall the name of the third (airman).

All three girls were attractive but one in particular, the one with A/2C Morrow, caught my eye. I was captivated by her grin; as we were talking, she leaned inside a window and began asking where we were from. I'd never seen anyone so full of life. She abounded with an aura of enchantment; I was overwhelmed by her good looks, and her energy. She was everything anyone could ever hope for, I was hooked the moment I saw her.

The first thing that came to mind, "would I ever see her again"? There were hundreds of young men at Long Beach, so I realized I'd have plenty of competition. I wondered if I'd be able to get her attention, wondered if I had what that required. I wanted to see her again and knew I'd never forgive myself if I didn't at least try. Besides, girls this attractive could certainly pick and choose.

The following evening proved more of the same and we headed right back to Long Beach. I wanted to see if I could find the girl from the evening before; the beautiful girl who'd caught my eye. We parked at the Casino and walked inside. I was ready to start looking so I told Danny I'd be waiting outside near the rear entrance.

Then I began my walk down toward the Ferris wheel; within a matter of seconds I spotted her. She was perched atop one of the white benches near the Ferris wheel, she was engaged in conversation with some guy in the Navy; a Navy Mine Defense Laboratory was located in the bay near Hathaway Bridge, so I assumed anyone in the Navy was probably stationed there.

At any rate, my heart sank as I prepared to continue down the sidewalk. Then she suddenly looked up and in my direction, our eyes definitely clicked. This was what I was hoping for, yet she continued her conversation with the guy she'd been talking to; didn't make any sense.

I had little choice but to stand there like an idiot waiting for a miracle, or to accept the situation and continue down the sidewalk. Yet notwithstanding the frustrating disappointment, I hoped what I'd seen in her eyes was genuine. Our eyes had definitely clicked and there was no doubt about that.

I continued walking but never looked back. I didn't want to appear overly anxious, even though I was feeling very anxious. I'd suffered disappointments in earlier relationships, and I'd never forget the feeling. I didn't want to go through anything like that again.

I couldn't understand why she continued talking with the Navy guy, and I was anxious for it to come to an end. But I'd never know for sure, because I was walking in the opposite direction. I realized they could walk off into the night and I'd never be the wiser.

Yet if what I saw truly meant anything, she might've waved or tried to catch up with me later. However if neither were to occur, then I knew I'd be very disappointed. So all I could do was hope for the best.

As I reached the sidewalk spanning the beach, I began second-guessing myself, I wondered if I made a mistake by not walking up and butting in, at least while I had the opportunity. I would at least know where I stood. Then as I walked along with my back to the Hangout, I heard sounds of someone running.

The footsteps gradually became louder so I stopped and turned around. This was the moment she ran up to me. She was completely out of breath. I immediately asked for her name. "It's Peggy" she replied, with that same captivating grin.

Was it too good to be true? I finally had her all to myself; I simply couldn't believe it. I was flattered by her sprint down the sidewalk. Not one girl had ever run to catch up with me. This is a moment in my life I shall never forget; it confirmed a love that will survive eternity.

We spent the rest of the evening together. We walked along the beach and talked about everything under the sun; how I'd been raised in the west and the

places I'd been since joining the Air Force. This was the small talk that comes when meeting someone new, while sensing it's anything but casual.

Peggy explained that she made the trip to Long Beach after being invited by a close friend, whose parents had made the drive and said there would be room for two of her friends, should they be interested in making the trip; another close friend had also accepted the invitation. Peggy and her two friends were high school graduates from the state of Georgia, Class of 1957.

Peggy had been a member of the women's varsity basketball team, so not only was Peggy very beautiful, she was also a fierce competitor. She was selected for the "All County - First Team - All Stars" her senior year. There was an article to this effect in the local newspaper; furthermore, Peggy's competitive nature, to never accept defeat, would play an important role in years to come.

Vacation acquaintances often vary; most appear common to meeting someone, followed by casual strolls along the beach, then once vacation's over, it's back to the usual routine(s). However our meeting at Long Beach was entirely different, it was certainly more than that. From the outset we knew there was something unique between us. Whatever that magic, it would endure the test of time.

The very next evening Danny and I were right back at Long Beach, as if an intangible magnet was pulling us along. As I arrived at the Hangout, my eyes began the usual search. I was searching for Peggy and I was also growing impatient. Then within minutes I finally spotted her. It became obvious I wasn't the only one searching.

We were surprised we'd found each other so soon. We walked and talked and spent another wonderful evening. We weren't entirely alone, for two of my friends and two of Peggy's friends joined us. We were now a party of six, but we managed to spend time alone whenever we felt like it.

Peggy's final evening at Long Beach was the usual scenario. We walked the beach like before and sat on benches and pondered our future, as if every moment was pre-planned; as if it were meant to be. I'd never felt like this before. Whatever we felt for each other was anything but casual; it was a



particular bond, an everlasting bond. I feel sure that we both realized the significance and at the very same moment.

As we said our goodbyes that final evening, Peggy invited me to visit her at her home in Georgia. She explained how we could spend an enjoyable weekend together. I told her I'd do everything I could to make it happen. We walked around for awhile then went our separate ways.

A few days later we set a date for our reunion in Georgia. The date selected was only a few days away and I was already very anxious. By Peggy's response over the telephone, it was obvious she was just as anxious. The only thing left to do was figure out how I'd get there. I didn't have a car so my options were either to hitch-hike or buy a bus ticket.

In the meantime, Danny wanted to take a trip to Biloxi. This would take place over the upcoming weekend. He asked if anyone in our room wanted to go along. I wanted to go but struggled with my decision. The technical school we had attended was located in Biloxi, so I pondered the possibility of visiting that area again.

But there was a problem and it was truly a huge problem. My date with Peggy and the trip to Biloxi were for the very same weekend, I couldn't be in two places at the same time. This meant I'd have a decision to make. I'd have to make a choice and a tough one at that.

Only a few weeks earlier I'd met the most wonderful young lady on earth. If I chose the trip to Biloxi, then a wonderful romance might have a disastrous conclusion. And I wasn't sure I wanted to take that risk.

My mind raced back to a similar situation, a time when I'd fallen for someone, and considered things mutual. It was my understanding my girl friend truly cared, yet in the long run, was little more than generic sweet talk. At any rate, I'd become more cautious than ever before.

I was determined that I'd never make that mistake again. So from that day forward I'd be taking her sweet talk with a grain of salt. Then again, my

relationship with Peggy had been totally different. There was something very special there and it had definitely made an impression.

The choice I made that day was Biloxi, yet I'll never understand why. It bothers me as much today as it ever has. Peggy always insisted I forget that day; to let bygones be bygones. I've tried to do as she suggested but I think I'll always feel bad about it.

It had everything to do with caring for someone, then losing that someone. Besides, I considered myself an authority on the subject. I know this played a role in my decision and even though feeling uneasy about things. I chose to take that risk; I took that gamble and hoped Peggy would allow me to explain.

As we rode along toward Biloxi, I knew I'd made the wrong decision; the farther we drove, then the more agonizing. Peggy meant more to me than anything in the world, yet it was too late to make any changes during that weekend. I felt even worse, by the fact that I hadn't called and explained to Peggy beforehand. I wondered if she'd ever speak to me again. Buddy Holly's "Think It Over" certainly came to mind, it certainly seemed to fit my miserable mistake.

As it turned out, the trip to Biloxi hadn't been anything special anyway. By the time we returned, I assumed Peggy had forgotten everything she ever knew about me. I wanted to call her and explain but assumed she'd probably hang up once recognizing my voice.

August had come and gone and it was now mid-September. Danny was ready to take another trip. We were facing a boring weekend, and barracks can be very boring at times, especially on weekends and holidays. As I sat on my bunk listening to Danny, an opportunity to see Peggy came to mind.

I suggested a trip to Atlanta; I explained how the trip might afford a weekend with Peggy. Besides, I owed Peggy an sincere and meaningful apology. I hoped I could find her, hoped she might let me explain, and hoped she might forgive my stupid mistake.

Peggy hometown was only a few miles northwest of Atlanta, but a drive to Atlanta would be more than 300 miles. I wasn't sure if Danny wanted to drive

that far. I realized the odds for finding Peggy were shaky at best, but I wanted to go anyway. The final decision rested with Danny; it was Danny's car and he handled the driving.

When Danny agreed on the drive to Atlanta, I was overjoyed. It was like Christmas morning albeit three months early. He told me the distance wasn't a problem, but the cost of gas was. He said if everyone helped pay for gas, then the destination wasn't a factor.

One of the airmen from a different room, and a great friend, was A/2c Ed Kohl from West Palm Beach, who decided to tag along. So there were three of us in all. When Friday evening rolled around we loaded up Danny's car and headed for Georgia.

I knew it was proper to call Peggy beforehand, but I chose not to; I preferred speaking with her in person. This was like rolling dice and hoping for the best, but it's simply too easy to hang up a telephone. I was concerned that she might hang up without allowing me to explain.

It was a chilly September morn when we drove through Atlanta. We followed our road map and continued along the route toward Peggy's hometown. We approached a junction and followed the signs, made a right turn, crossed two railroad tracks, then another sign with an arrow pointing the way, indicated we were only five miles from our destination.

We were ready for a break, so Danny pulled off the road and parked at a small restaurant near the railroad crossing. As we sipped coffee and Danny discussed the drive, the only thing on my mind was Peggy. If we were lucky enough to find her, I'd be the happiest guy on the planet. I had no idea how things might turn out, much like flipping a coin, then hoping for good luck.

As we entered the city limits five miles up the road, we approached an intersection and were faced with two possibilities; either take the road to the left or the road to the right. Since the main part of town sat to our left, we made a left turn. Since we'd finally found Peggy's hometown, the only thing left to do was to somehow come up with a family matching her last name, so we hoped to

find someone familiar with Peggy's family, someone who might be able to point us in the right direction.

There was very little traffic that morning and barely anyone around, but we continued through town, as we popped out at the other end, we were facing another railroad crossing. However a man dressed in overalls was standing near the tracks, and appeared to be waiting for a ride; he was clutching a small paper bag in one hand.

I leaned out the window, then asked if he knew the family we were looking for. He said the only family he knew matching my description, lived back through town and along a highway leading to Marietta, Georgia; that we needed to turn around and drive back through town, make a left where the road forks, cross a bridge, and that the family lived on the left side of the highway, not too far below the bridge. That this was the only family he knew that seemed to match my description.

We took the road to the left and crossed the bridge, then farther down the highway; on the left sat a large white house, so we figured this had to be the place. As we slowed down, a man dressed in overalls was standing on the opposite side of the highway. He wore a hat and was holding a lunch pail in one hand; I rolled down a window and asked if he knew the family we were looking for. He grinned from ear to ear when he replied, "That's me"!

I explained who I was and how I met his daughter Peggy at Long Beach. He said she had mentioned my name a few times and had explained everything. He told us to pull in the driveway and continue around to the rear; that I should knock on the door and ask for Peggy. We followed his instructions, but Danny wanted to park at the right side of the driveway, rather than continue to the rear of the home.. The house and property were larger than what I was accustomed to.

As I stepped from the car I took a deep breath. I wasn't sure how Peggy would react; I wasn't sure she'd even acknowledge my presence. I wouldn't have blamed her if she'd ignored me and remained indoors. I realized the way I handled things a few weeks earlier was completely unheard of. All I had hoped for was a chance to explain; all I needed was five minutes.

Then I happened to look up just as Peggy and one of her friends I'd met at Long Beach came walking down the driveway. Their arms were folded and they certainly weren't smiling; besides, folded arms don't generally go with warm welcomes; however considering their demeanor, I wondered if they somehow knew we would show up that morning.

They were dressed in warm sweaters and slacks, it seemed a very chilly morning for the month of September; this explained their folded arms. Peggy looked great and she certainly knew how to dress, she always looked great in red or black clothing and this was one of those times. Peggy was especially beautiful that morning and I'll never forget it, and what I'd initially feared never took place. It would be a fantastic weekend after all.

Peggy explained how disappointed she was when I hadn't showed up as planned. She explained how her week of anticipation had ended in total frustration. She'd cleaned house for days; she wanted everything to look just right. So I was the one who ruined everything, yet she shrugged it off as if nothing had happened.

Danny, Ed, and I were taken by the courteous nature of Peggy and her parents. We were already prepared to spend Saturday night in a nearby motel, but Peggy insisted there was plenty of room in their home. There were two double-beds in the basement for Danny and Ed, and Peggy insisted that I use her double-bed, that she would be fine sleeping on the sofa in the living room. So this is how things worked out that Saturday night.

Peggy was fun to be around. She was happy as they come, always smiling, and full of energy. She learned how to drive on her father's small tractor. She sharpened her driving skills behind the wheel of her brother's '40 Ford. She always seemed to have a heavy foot, the foot on the accelerator pedal.

However she was anything but careless and never took chances, even though I'm positive she could've won every lap at the Indy 500. She adhered to speed limit regulations, yet always searching for faster or shorter route; always in control, and in a hurry to get things done. A two-lane blacktop runs through this community. I drive this highway at least once everyday.



Throughout those weekends in 1958, Peggy her father's two-tone black and white '53 Chevy; she drove the aforementioned two lane blacktop, and usually when headed for a shopping center. The name of this highway remains as it was in 1958, Mars Hill Road.

At a point along Mars Hill Road sits a narrow bridge; the bridge spans the same area as in 1958, but it's wider than the original bridge. In 1958, there were very few landmarks along this highway, except for occasional farmhouses and what seemed miles and miles of Kudzu, a clinging vine with large leaves indigenous to areas of the Far East and the southeastern states, clinging to telephone poles, power lines, buildings, and anything that isn't aflame.

Whenever crossing that bridge nowadays I'm swept back to 1958; the sound of shock absorbers taking a beating as we bumped, then flew across that bridge. Peggy loved to go shopping. There were two large shopping malls in the county in 1958. The trips to these shopping malls could be fun, while other times a little scary. It had nothing to do with Peggy's driving skills, it was based upon what I was accustomed to.

I'd been raised where rolling hills and curves can look safe while in reality they're not. A deer, a cow, or another animal could be waiting just over the hill. But Peggy knew these roads like the back of her hand, such as Jones Shaw Road, a two-lane blacktop rollercoaster.

Our first weekend together in Georgia was a busy one. We made stops at drive-ins for burgers, drive-ins for movies, and those trips to the shopping malls. The shopping mall Peggy preferred claimed to be the largest shopping mall in the South; they claimed to provide parking for thousands of cars. And of course the shortest route to this mall was naturally Jones Shaw Road, the two-lane blacktop rollercoaster.

Peggy's friend, who had walked down the driveway with Peggy Saturday morning, was celebrating her birthday that weekend, so Ed Kohl paired off with her at the shopping mall in Marietta, Georgia, with Peggy and I shopping at the same mall. Danny seemed content just kicking around solo-style, anticipating our return to Panama City and Tyndall Air Force Base.

These shopping malls were nicer than anything I'd ever seen. This made it obvious why Peggy enjoyed shopping as much as she did. I've never enjoyed shopping that much, but I always enjoyed tagging along. Being with Peggy was all I cared about. Peggy had excellent taste in the clothes she wore; each item of clothing had to be what was proper for her in particular, and not only based on it's being in-style.

Peggy shopped for popular items and reveled when spotting styles that had just come out. Her selections were always based upon age and propriety. She was a meticulous shopper, as if shopping was considered one of the fine arts.

Everything Peggy wore had to look exactly right, and anything she wore always did. She was very particular and took shopping very serious. She always chose pleasing colognes, affirming the fact she was squeaky clean; nothing considered loud, but definitely subtle. She seemed to have a knack for that special touch; a touch that for me was always elusive. I was never able to put a finger on it.

There was something unique about the way she chose particular items as well as to why she chose them. Whatever that elusive touch, she always appeared fresh, clean, and adorable; she was absolutely amazing.

Over the waning hours of our weekend we sat in her father's Chevy. We talked about what lie ahead; we pondered our future. At a point during our conversation, Peggy threw me a curve. She looked me in the eye and asked if I would mind if she was also dating someone else.

My heart sunk to rock bottom; this caught me totally by surprise. I wanted to say something but I couldn't get started. I actually wanted to take a deep breath and scream, "What? Yes!! I do mind". But I didn't say a word. Besides, this was question that sounded all too familiar. A daunting phrase came to mind: "I think this is where I came in".

Yet I had no choice but to accept the implication. I figured I'd lost once again. I could only assume that she'd found someone else. I sat there anticipating the bad news. I finally accepted the obvious and replied, "No, I don't care if you date someone else", as I pretended to shrug it off. Peggy just sat there and didn't say a word.

Several seconds later she began to explain. She told me she didn't really care about dating anyone else, that she needed to know how I felt about her, that she was only testing me. I told her how important she was and how much I cared for her. I told her that I'd never be happy with anyone else. I could've proposed on the spot without any problem. That's how much she meant to me.

A few weeks later we were together again at Long Beach. Peggy talked her sister and husband into taking a trip to Long Beach. She wanted to be together again as bad as I did. Following her return to Georgia, I made one trip after another and at every opportunity. The distance involved wasn't that important, not as long as we could be together. Once Sunday rolled around, I was on my way back to Tyndall again.

I traveled either by bus or by hitch-hiking; hitchhiking in uniform seemed the cheapest way to travel in 1958. And even though hitchhiking to Atlanta could prove tiring at times, they were always worth the effort involved. On one of those weekends, we selected a song and called it our own: "One Night (with you)" by Elvis Presley, proving the epitome of our weekends together.

Every October personnel at Tyndall Air Force Base were restricted to the base for the entire month. The top fighter squadrons in the Air Force gathered at Tyndall every October and were engaged in competition. The exercises took place over a specified air space above the Gulf of Mexico. This meant I couldn't see Peggy for a solid month. It was tough for both of us, but we knew we'd make up for the time we missed as soon as November rolled around.

On Christmas Eve of 1958 we decided on a movie at the Georgia Drive-In Theater in Marietta. As the movie began we settled in with the usual popcorn and Cokes. A few minutes later I reached inside a pocket and opened a small box revealing an engagement ring; I held the ring in front of Peggy and asked if she would marry me. Peggy's reply was "Yes".

We didn't have a car at first, but A/1C Kali from our barracks wanted to sell his green '51 Mercury for \$200, so we decided to buy it, even we knew there were a few problems with the Mercury, yet there more problems than anticipated:

**1. The front seat was a bench seat and it was impossible to move it forward; the seat adjustments were frozen in-place. I had a difficult time reaching the pedals;**

**2. The fuel pump would vapor-lock at times so this created an awkward situation. Whenever the fuel pump over-heated it would usually vapor-lock. This stopped the supply of gas to the carburetor, the motor simply stopped running. We kept a quart bottle of water in the car and I poured it over the pump whenever it vapor-locked; once the pump cooled off we were on our way again;**

**3. On the day of our wedding, the Mercury broke down in Columbus, Georgia. We were a little more than halfway between the base and Peggy's home. As a consequence, I arrived three hours late. Yes, I was three hours late for my own wedding. Peggy probably thought I'd changed my mind, but we exchanged our wedding vows at 11:45 p.m.; and**

**4. Several months later while enroute for a visit with Peggy's parents, along Ga. Hwy 85, I dimmed the headlights for an oncoming vehicle. Not only did the headlights dim, they went out and stayed out. I was concerned that I might not be able to get them back on. But after stomping the dimmer switch a few times they were back on. This headlight problem occurred twice during the same trip.**

**We were married in Dallas, Georgia January 31, 1959 and officially became husband and wife at 11:45 p. m. One of Peggy's friend's uncle was a Baptist minister; we were married in his home. The weather had been calm and peaceful prior to and throughout the wedding.**

**However only an hour after taking our vows, the area was hit by violent thunderstorms. So we quickly prepared for the drive to Marietta, Georgia and a place to spend our first night together as man and wife.**

**As I drove down Ga. Hwy 120, otherwise known as 'Dallas Highway', the storm intensified and I was struggling to see the highway, despite the hi-speed flip-flop of the windshield wipers. When I finally reached the Marietta Four Lane, which today has become 'Cobb Parkway', I made a right turn and began shopping for a suitable motor lodge.**

Then Peggy spotted a nice motel she was familiar with, that also featured a nice restaurant. I made a quick sharp right turn, pulled in and parked.

Our family soon grew to three; this was the day our daughter was born at the Tyndall Base Hospital on Thanksgiving Day of 1959. Then six years later our family became four; this was the day our son was born in Atlanta in the Spring of 1965.

We've always felt proud of their achievements; and should parental credit or guidance be acknowledged, they belong to Peggy. After all, Peggy set the examples when it comes to excellence in their field of endeavor, and our children followed.

Our daughter has served in a variety of functions within the insurance industry; in particular, computer operations and solutions therein, relevant to her employer and subsequent branches. Our daughter and her family traveled to Long Beach on many occasions albeit when their children were much younger.

Our son earned a degree in Finance at Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and graduated with high honors. He is currently a senior vice-president with a bank.

I was discharged from the Air Force in December of 1960. We moved to Georgia and began raising our family. We had traded the '51 Mercury several months earlier in Panama City for a 1954 Ford. I still consider this Ford the best car we've ever owned, yet I've never felt sure that Peggy agreed.

Peggy loved and respected her parents and grandparents, especially her father who was the hardest worker I've ever come to know. Her father hoped for a home of their own someday and he began working on that dream during the late-1940s.

The construction of their home was accomplished piecemeal and always took place after work or on weekends and holidays, and he always took a break on Sundays.



During her early-teens Peggy followed her father around and helped in every way possible; I know how important this was for Peggy because she reminisced about those times and on many occasions.

Her father accepted whatever the challenge, and in hopes of providing the things his family needed. If he hadn't the skill or the knowledge for a particular project, he wasted little time in learning those skills. In my heart I know this is what made Peggy who she was; what made her so determined and resilient.

Peggy was the ultimate in confidence building. She knew that accomplishments come to those determined enough to make dreams come true. And this set the agenda that would ultimately evolve once we purchased our first home.

The purchase of our first home took place August 31, 1965. This was a time when I had no idea if I was actually capable of maintaining a home. The underneath sections of the eaves were plywood as they should have been, but for some strange reason the builders had installed interior grade rather than exterior. It wasn't long before these plywood eaves began to buckle and separate due to the high humidity common to the southeast.

As we discussed what needed to be done, Peggy insisted time and again how I would be able to remove the damaged plywood, then replace them with the correct grade. We discussed this several times and I argued how I hardly possessed the skills; besides, the exterior of the home was a white brick veneer, the bricks were laid under and against the plywood at a depth of two or three inches, so removing the sections under and behind the bricks and replacing a new sheet of plywood could prove a monumental task.

But as I've mentioned, Peggy was the ultimate when it came to building confidence. Within a few days I at the top of a ladder and hard at work ripping out the damaged eaves. This job was such a challenge, especially the placement of the brick work snug against the plywood, that blood from my skinned knuckles left a horizontal trail across the white brick.

This was merely the beginning, for over the years I began learning a variety of new skills; these were skills I'd never dreamed of achieving. A relevant, meaningful theme from this time in history comes to mind: *There Is a way*; our

only responsibility then, should we care enough, is to find it; furthermore, caution, sound common sense, and logic are equally essential.

Considering the aforementioned immortal theme, *There is a way*; things seemed to really take off the day I visited a public library book sale. A few minutes after walking inside I noticed a book on one of the tables with the following title: *Basic Electrical Wiring*.

This book had once been a textbook but had become outdated, and electricians of today will occasionally refer to it's content as *old school*. However the basics of electrical wiring haven't changed all that much, but the hardware of the day certainly has.

The price tag on this book was fifty cents. I would've felt like a fool had I passed it up. I bought the book on the spot. I still have that book and it serves that immortal theme: *There is a way*.

Since Peggy's approach was confidence personified, then *There is indeed a way; moreover*, I considered Peggy an authority on the subject, it is she for whom I praise here, not myself. Furthermore, this is an aspect of personal character that remains so important today.

Were it not for Peggy's insistence that I could achieve what I'd never dreamed possible, we'd have spent thousands of dollars for projects that we ultimately handled ourselves. This proved a lot cheaper in the long run and was a lot more fun; besides, it enhances personal pride in oneself, and can prove vital in life's unforeseen confrontations.

Peggy was employed by a prominent insurance company, with a home office in San Francisco; our daughter was employed by the same company. Peggy's years with the company were the epitome of long hours and long days. Peggy retired September 6, 2001; she was a loyal and dedicated employee. She approached work in the manner she approached life; she gave everything she had. The tougher things were, then the stronger Peggy was; an inherent aspect of her personal character.

If there was a job to be done, Peggy could do it; and if she didn't know how, she would learn how. Had she faced the odds of Amelia Earhart, she would've found Howland Island, you can bet on it; she would've been standing there with that wonderful grin; that's when she'd ask, "What's everybody worried about"?

Peggy and Amelia Earhart actually had several things in common; for one, challenges proving the catalyst that fueled their drive, their enthusiasm for the task at hand, yet fear was never a factor; Amelia and Peggy could become fierce competitors, they were both excellent basketball players, thriving upon celebrated victory(s), and never accept defeat. They were winners.

Whenever we purchased equipment for the outdoors, we'd handle the unpacking in the driveway. The first thing I'd be searching for was the owner's manual. Once I found it I'd walk back inside and flip through it from cover to cover. In a matter of minutes, I'd hear a motor start up. I'd walk back outside and see Peggy hard at work. If the item we bought ran on gasoline, Peggy didn't need a manual.

Peggy's goals in life were to be successful, in everything she participated in, and she always was successful; the catalyst for such was always her courage and a will to win, to never give in, to succeed. This carried her through life. She was never careless, yet forever fearless. Our daughter describes it this way: *Mon was as tough as an iron skillet*. And she was.

Peggy's credo in life: "You can do it". And Peggy always could; she always did; she always has. Peggy and courage are synonymous. Peggy never found time to doubt; she preferred moving mountains. She never gave up on anything; she never gave up on anyone. Men are generally stronger physically, yes, but there's an intangible strength that is often overlooked, especially by husbands. Peggy was indeed the strength in our family; she was indeed *the cornerstone*.

And since I was the man in the family, the husband, this is often difficult to admit, however the older I became, then the easier it was. I told her how I felt about her strength and about how important she was to our family. And I mentioned this a number of times throughout those final months.

Peggy accepted compliments with a grain of salt; this was her nature, she always shrugged them off. She never considered herself anyone special, even our family agreed just how special she really was. Moreover, any confidence I might enjoy, was seldom inherent, it came directly from Peggy, by example. A popular lyric asks, 'Did you ever know you are my hero'? Peggy will always be my hero.

I was diagnosed with Large 'B' Cell Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in June of 2003. Throughout the eight days following diagnosis, I remained in the hospital undergoing a variety of tests and 'pre-chemo' procedures. Peggy was constantly by my side. The first two nights she pulled two chairs together and slept in my room.

My chemotherapy treatments began in July of 2003. Peggy walked with me every step of the way. She was always seated next to me throughout the six months of chemotherapy. She watched over me with absolute care. I currently remain cancer-free. Peggy played a major role in my complete recovery.

Every marriage has it's good times and hard times, and for a variety of reasons. Our family was our first priority; we handled everything else as best we knew how. Peggy enjoyed birthdays and especially holidays.

Peggy thrived on opportunities for family gatherings. Thanksgiving was Peggy's favorite; she loved the planning and preparations. It was one of those times when our entire family got together. Our final Thanksgiving together was in 2004.

When Thanksgiving of 2005 drew near Peggy prepared the usual Thanksgiving grocery lists, always quite lengthy. I should know, I was the one who bought groceries.

The Thanksgiving that Peggy had anticipated would never take place. She spent Thanksgiving Day of 2005 in the hospital; she would never come home again. I lost my wonderful wife to stomach cancer November 28, 2005, with respiratory failure the ultimate loss.

**This was two days following Thanksgiving, two days following our daughter's birthday; Thanks giving is the holiday Peggy loved best. Our marriage spanned a period of forty-six years; wonderful years with a beloved wife and mother. She suffered like most, yet never complained.**

**Peggy's final words to me, number three. She was lying helplessly on her back in the hospital bed; she had lost the ability to speak. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, and I asked if she needed something.**

**This was when she forced gusts of air from her lungs and told me those three magic words; I wasn't sure what she said the first time, so I leaned down with my left ear near her mouth. Peggy repeated those three magic words even louder with short bursts of air. I immediately reached down and hugged her, as I expressed my love for her as well.**

**On the day of her services I came to realize this was Peggy's first loss; her first confrontation with defeat. Yet in hindsight, considering her competitive nature this was Peggy as she'd always been; that inherent courage with a will to overcome.**

**Her final two months were crushed ice by mouth and everything else by tube; a feeding tube for canned liquid nourishment, and another for chemotherapy; both nothing more than exercises in futility. It was too little too late. She recognized the odds and accepted them.**

**Our marriage will endure eternity. There will never be anyone like Peggy. The words from our son Chip go like this: "She knew how bad it was and she faced it all with courage and not an ounce of hesitation".**

**There will never be another Long Beach, at least not the Long Beach Peggy and I knew. It was one in a million. It was the spot where we found each other; these are times gone forever. If only we could do it over again, wouldn't that be great?**

**On that evening in July a beautiful young lady ran up to me and an Angel looked down and smiled. Peggy loved life, she loved her family, and especially the newest member; a five-month-old granddaughter she called "Sweet Pea".**



Our final visit to Long Beach was in February of 2003. The beaches haven't moved but the magic is missing. What once was the Hangout is now covered in condos; their shadows defy the sun we once chased. Panama City's downtown area resembled a ghost town.

On Peggy's last birthday I handed her a card, the verse inside capturing everything I'd ever felt about Peggy. I couldn't wait for her to read it: "You're all I ever wanted; you're all I'll ever need"; neither of us knowing what lie ahead. In July of 1958 I reported at Tyndall a number of days early. Had I used all of those allotted days, I wouldn't have been in Florida when Peggy arrived; I wouldn't have met her at all.

Years later, while walking inside the garage her father built, Peggy commented on something she's always been proud of. It was something she'd written in concrete at the age of twelve, the day her father poured the concrete for the garage, before the concrete had cured.

Peggy picked up a stick and wrote the date: May 22, 1952; just below the date, she wrote her father's name; just below his name, she wrote her first name.

When I sold our home and property I had that section of concrete with the date from 1952 removed. It currently rests at our son's home. Yes, it's true. Khufu has his pyramid, but we have a date written in concrete.

A few years ago I began calling Peggy "my Panama City girl". I'm not sure why but it gave me a good feeling inside, and I know for a fact that Peggy enjoyed hearing it. She turned and smiled whenever I mentioned it. And I'll always be reminding her of the same, with each visit to her gravesite.

I took a few days off during the summer of 1972 and we loaded up the kids and headed for Long Beach. On our final day at Long Beach we took a few minutes to look over the area where we'd met in 1958. That stretch of the beach where the sidewalk had been, resembled a wasteland; nothing more than a pile of rubble.

The pieces of broken concrete were scattered everywhere. We were near the spot where Peggy ran after and finally caught up with me. I decided to take one

of the smaller pieces of concrete back home. I always wondered if I had the piece where we stood that evening. Besides, the events of that evening remain my fondest memory of Long Beach.

As we returned home that evening I sat the broken piece of concrete on our carport. I sat it back in one corner so it wouldn't be in the way. We sold that home in 1980, and I forgot to grab that piece of concrete the day we moved; sitting it back in a corner may have been the reason I missed it. I'd be willing to pay a reasonable price to have it back. But I have no idea if it's still around; that was thirty-six years ago.

And the credit for our meeting belongs to my good friend at Tyndall AFB. Of Course this was Danny Young from Lafayette, Indiana. Were it not for Danny, meeting Peggy would never have taken place. I shall never forget Danny's kindness, his friendship, nor the role he played in our lives.

I had tried to locate Danny many times over the years, and were it not for the Grace of God, I doubt I'd have ever found him. That long search finally drew to a close. I've spoken with Danny Young many times since locating his address and phone number.

I close with two lines from the lyrics of a popular recording. They best explain Peggy's impact on my life. She was always there when it counted most:  
*"And when you smile the world is brighter; you touch my hand and I'm a king".*

## **In Memoriam: Danny Young**



**Dan Lee Young**  
**April 17, 1937 - February 28, 2016**

**Danny Young was one of my roommates at Tyndall AFB from July 18, 1958 through January 30, 1959. Danny was one of the most generous individuals I've ever known; I'll always remember him as one of my best friends.**

**Were it not for Danny, be it happenstance or prophecy, I would've never met Peggy at Long Beach Resort; furthermore, it was Danny who made the overnight 300 mile drive two months later, affording an opportunity for Peggy and I to enjoy our first weekend together. This was indeed then, the Danny Young I know; always giving, yet receiving little more than a 'Thank you' now and then.**

**Danny and his wife were passing through Atlanta a few years ago and I was able to meet them at a local restaurant. This was the first time I'd seen Danny in person since December 8, 1960, but he was the same Danny I'd always known; they don't come any better than Danny Young.**

**Danny made the Air Force a career, served his country well, with 23 years of service. Danny was awarded a most prestigious military decoration, the Bronze Star, for heroism at Pleiku, South Vietnam in 1972.**

## Photo Gallery



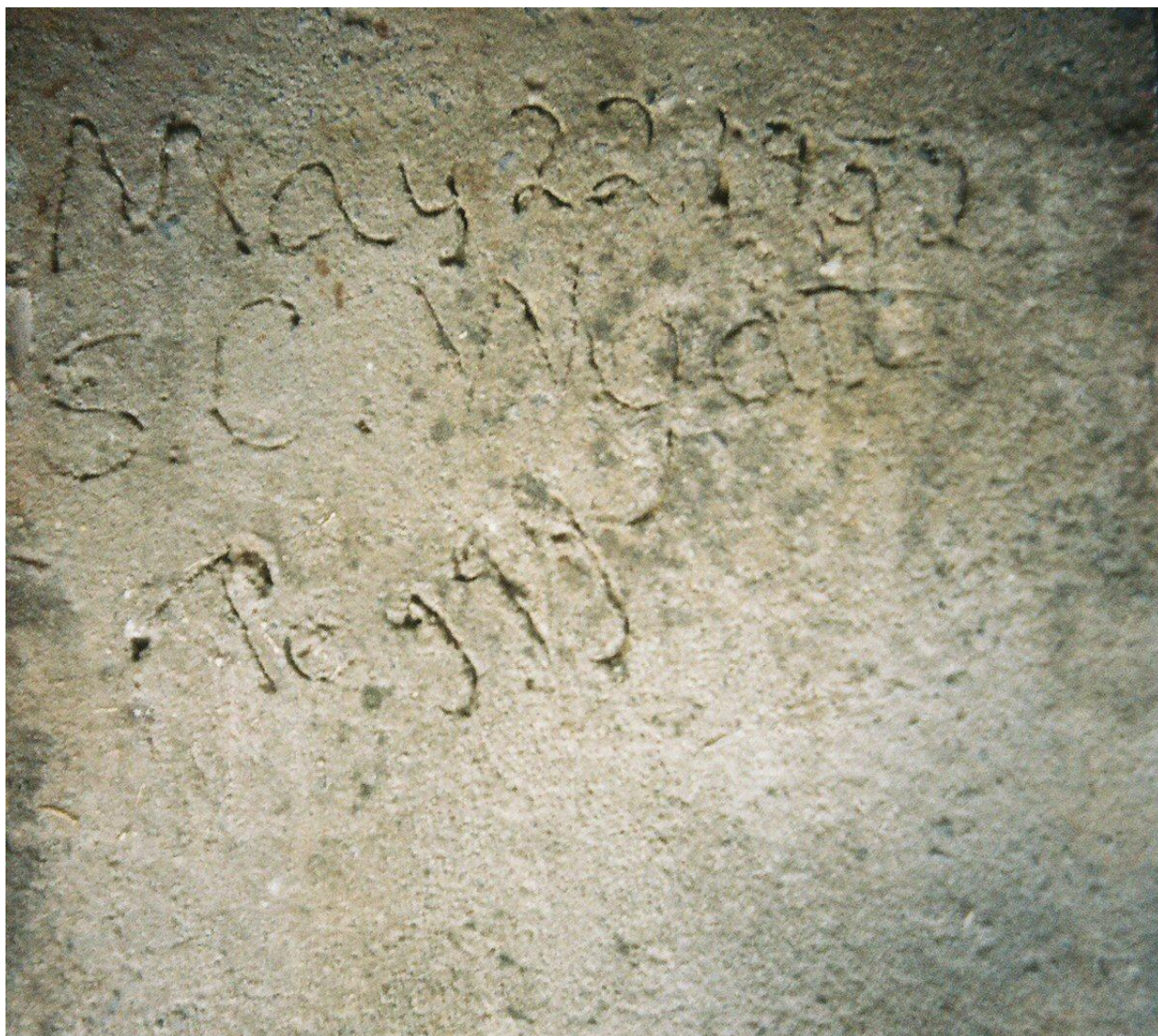
### Rural North Georgia – 1941

The five children standing, from left to right are:  
a cousin – Peggy's sister – Peggy's brother – a cousin - Peggy



**Rural north Georgia - 1945 - Peggy with her dog 'Whitey'**





**Inscription:**

***May 22, 1952***

***S. C. Wyatt***

***Peggy***

**Peggy's inscription in concrete at the age of 12**







**Class of '57**

**Peggy receives her high school diploma  
from Principal W. O. Smith**





**Aerial view of Panama City, Florida**



**2003 - a zoom-in-blur shot - section of the old iron bridge we used to reach Tyndall AFB across the bay from the community of Parker, Florida.**



**WPNSCON Tyndall AFB – my assignment**

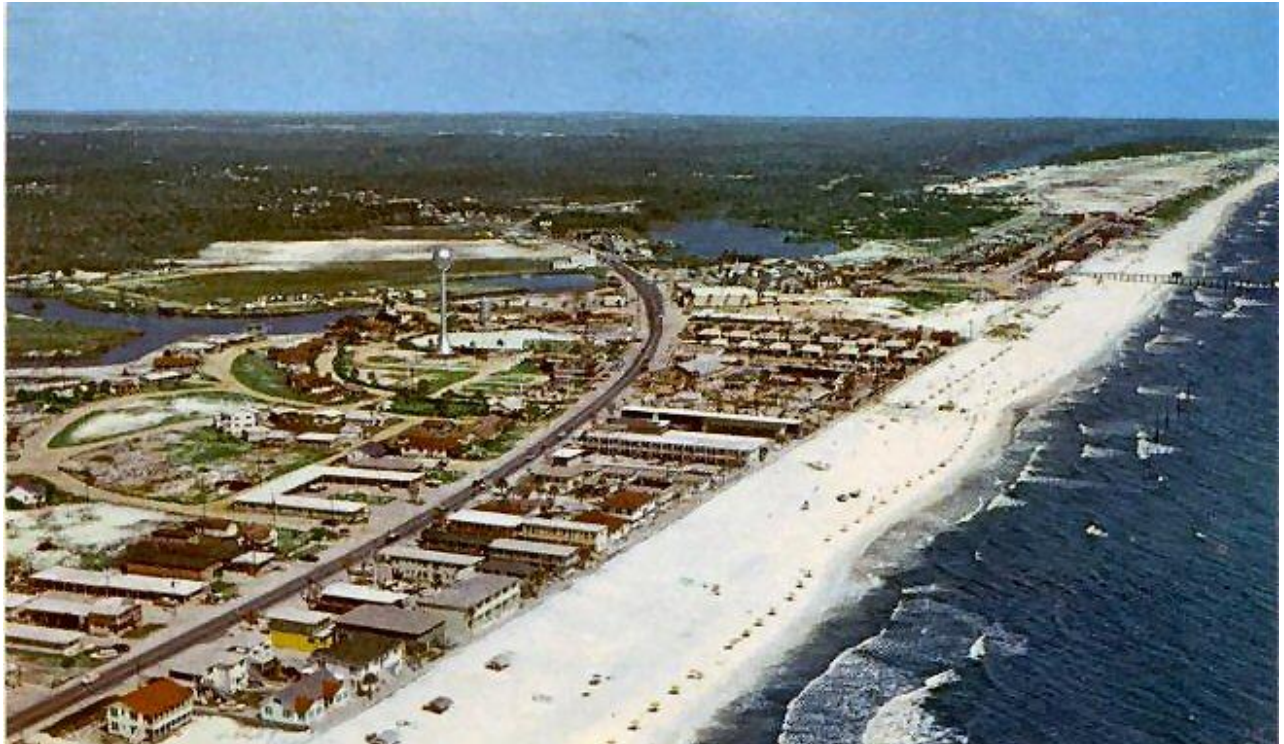
**State-of-the-Art Air Weapons Controller School (ATC)**





**The WPNSCON Building - Tyndall AFB**

**State-of-the-Art Air Weapons Controller School (ATC)**







**Long Beach – July 20, 1958 – Peggy standing at far left**

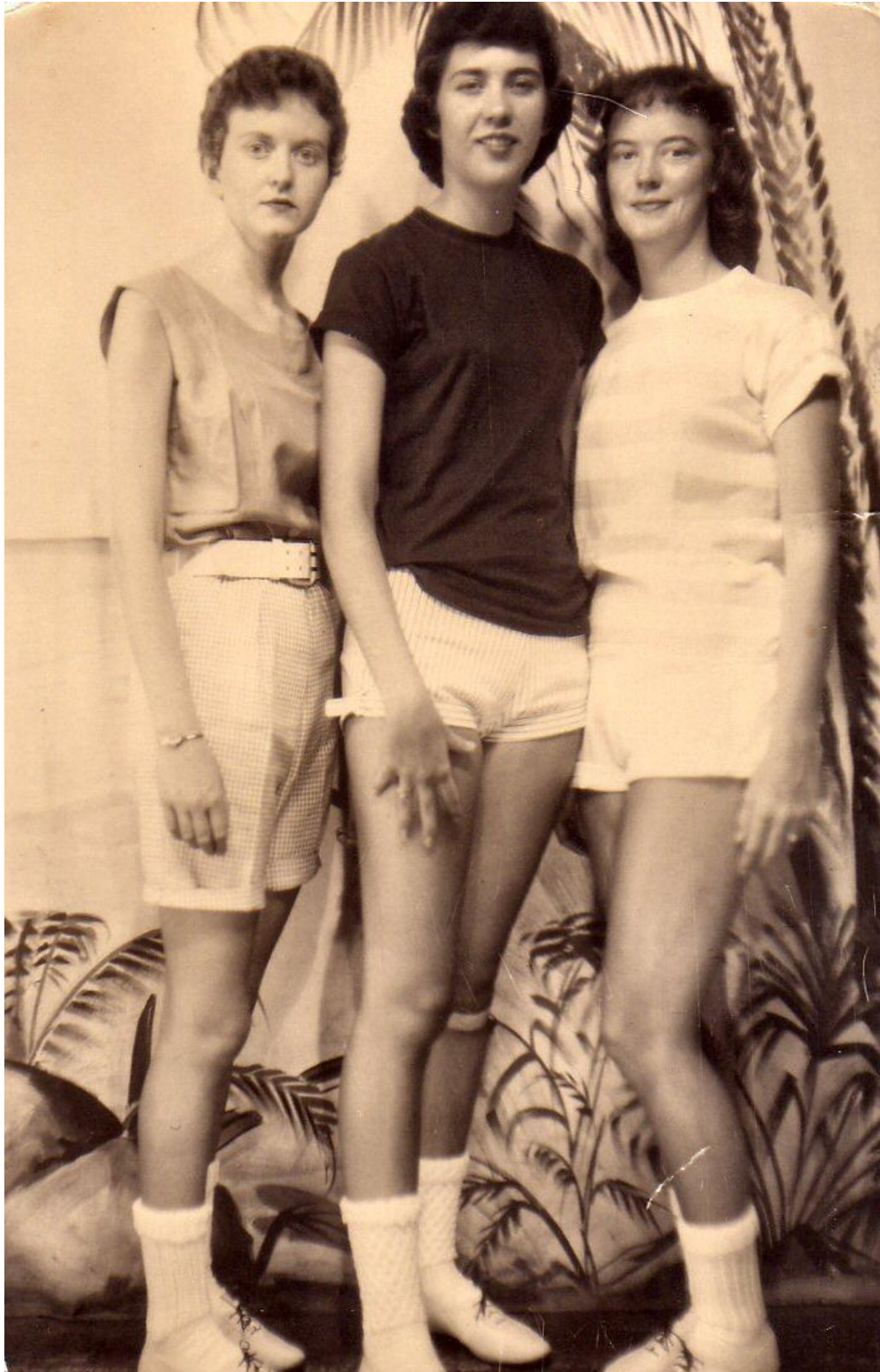




**Parked near 'The Hangout' at Long Beach**

**My good friend J. D. Weeks from Gardendale, Alabama**

**\*\* J. D. Weeks is a renowned Long Beach Resort historian  
and author of several publications**



**Long Beach - July 20, 1958 – Peggy at the far right**





**Long Beach with the 'Hangout' in the background**

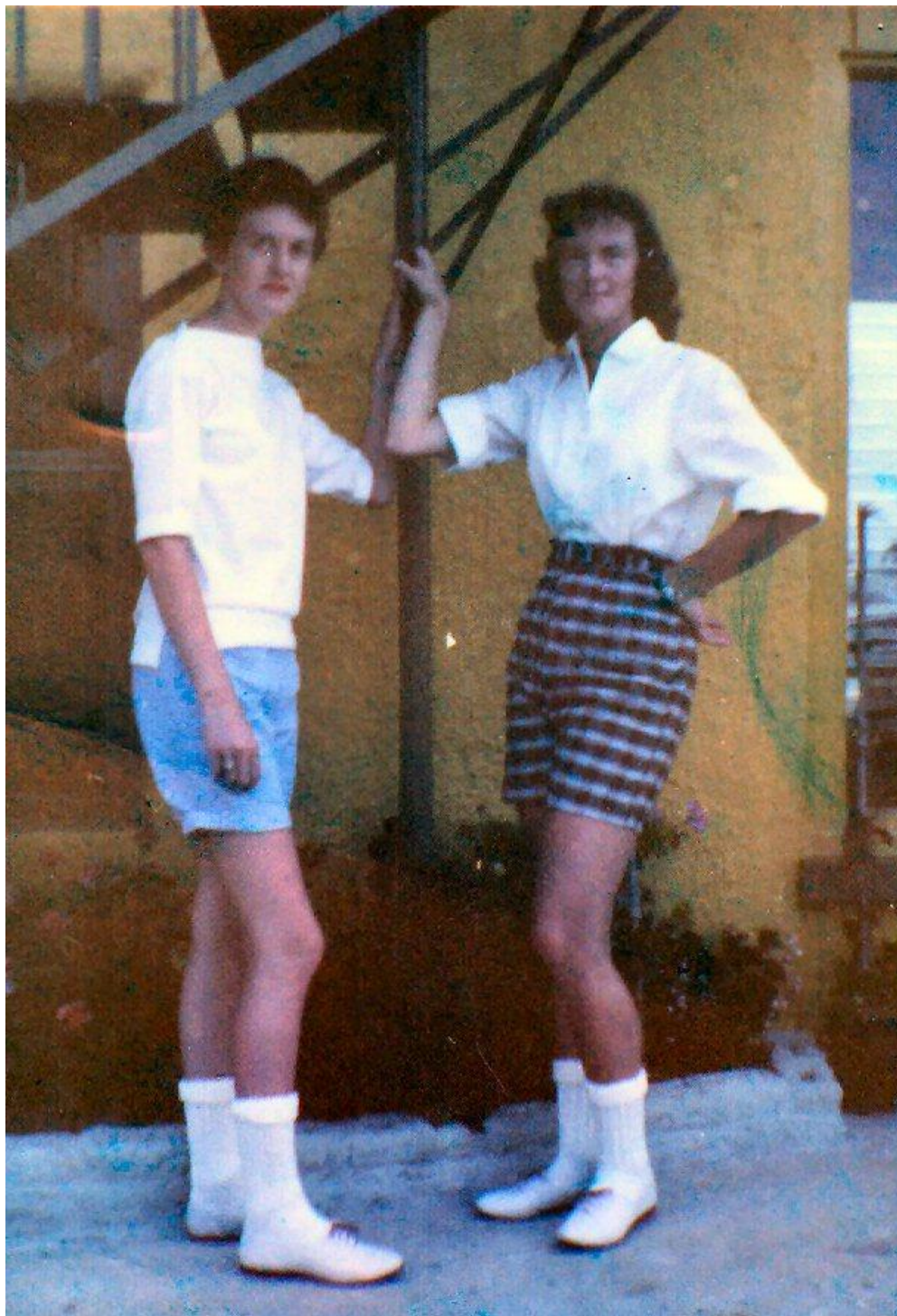


**Long Beach – July 20, 1958 – Peggy sitting at the right in white**



**Long Beach with the 'Hangout' in the background**



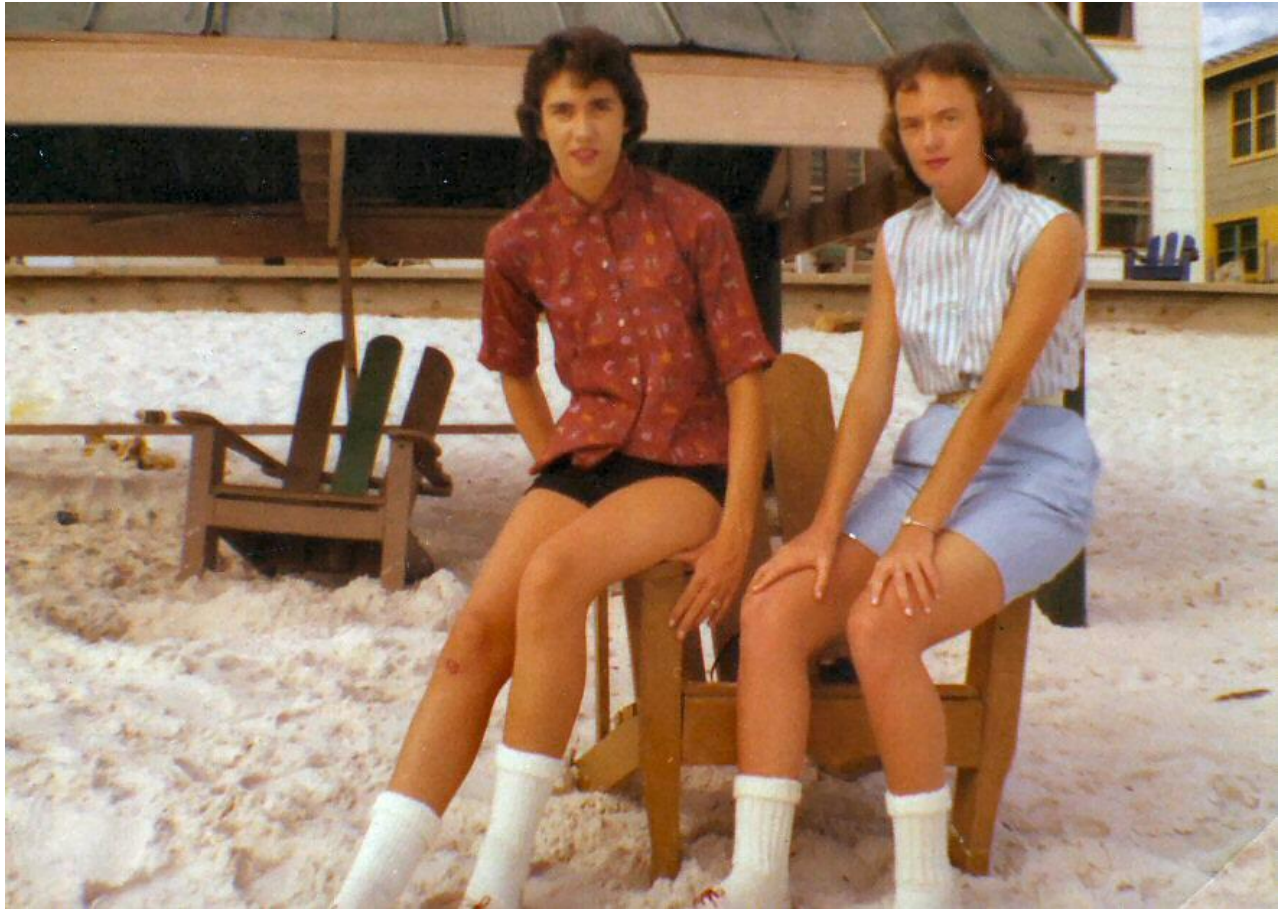


**Long Beach – July 22, 1958 – Peggy standing on the right  
The evening we first walked the beach together**



**The Long Beach Resort 'Casino'**





**Long Beach - July 20, 1958 – Peggy on the right**





**Long Beach - July 21, 1958 – Peggy at the far left in white**



## Beat the Heat at Long Beach







**July 22, 1958 – Peggy in her room at Long Beach**



**Long Beach – July 22, 1958 – Peggy standing at the left**





**L-R:     Peggy     Clark     friend     friend**



**L-R:**

**Clark**

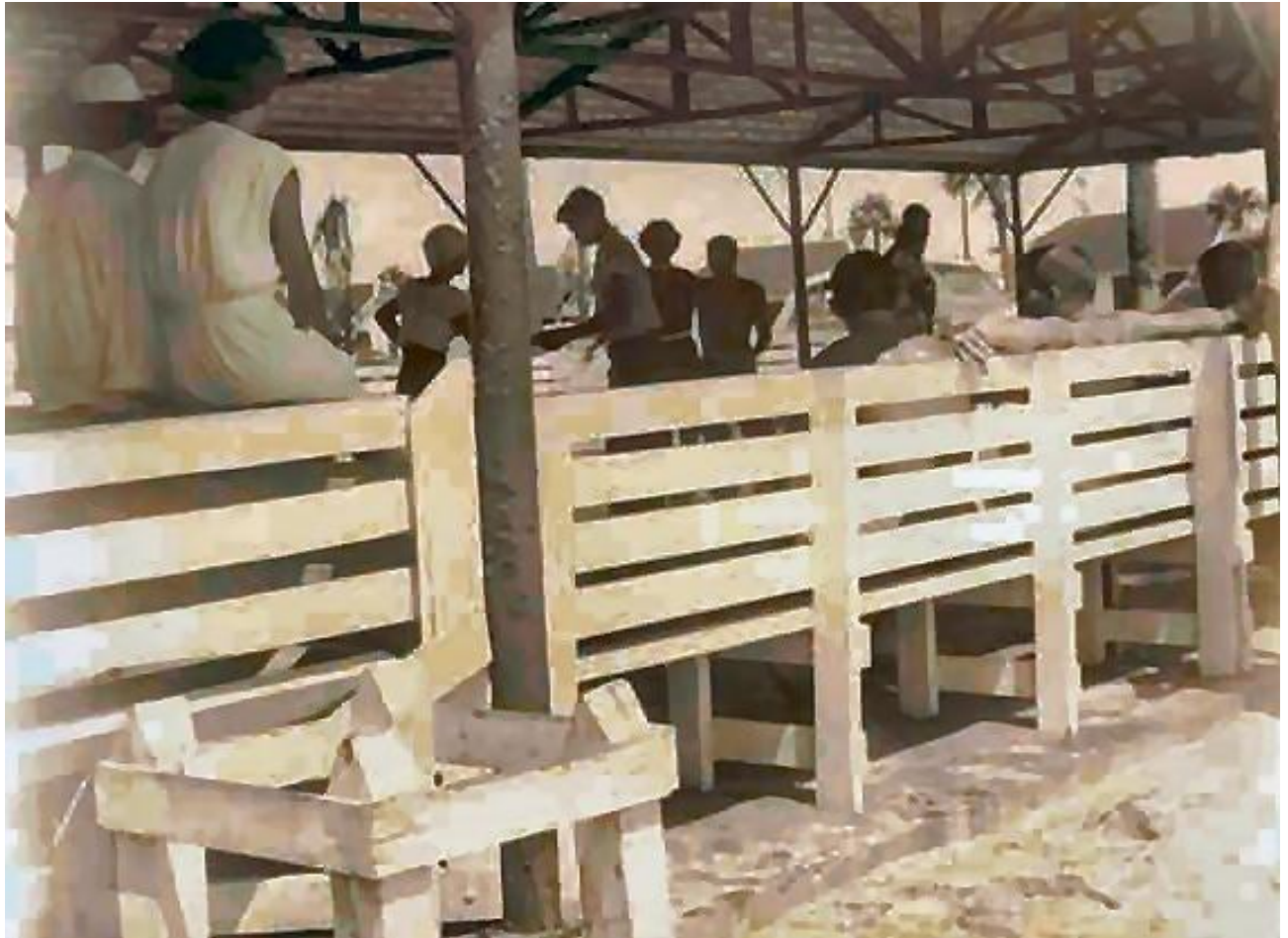
**Peggy**

**friend**

**friend**



**Long Beach - Peggy and Clark the evening of July 23, 1958**



**Dancing inside the 'Hangout'**





**There was nothing like meeting at the 'Hangout'**



**Fun at the 'Hangout' - Jukebox to the left**



**Long Beach with the 'Hangout' in the background**



**The east entrance to the 'Hangout' >>>>  
Where Danny Young always parked**



**Rear entrance to the 'Casino' in the background**





**The 'Hangout' and Ferris wheel in 1958**

3626TH TECHNICAL TRAINING SQUADRON  
(WEAPONS CONTROLLER)  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

TTWC

6 January 1959

SUBJECT: Request for Permission to Marry

TO: Commander  
3626th Technical Training Squadron (Weapons Controller)  
Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida

1. It is my intention to marry in the near future. Under the provisions of AFR 34-24, request I be granted an interview with the Commander with the view of obtaining permission for said marriage.

2. In compliance with the above cited regulation, the following information is submitted regarding my financial status:

- a. Rank: Airman Second Class.
- b. Date of enlistment: 28 December 1956.
- c. Term of enlistment: Four (4) years.
- d. Prior service: None.
- e. Outstanding obligation: Airman pays \$15.00 per month to Arthur Jeweler's, Saint George, Utah for a set of Wedding Rings.
- f. Total income including BAQ and Separate Rations will be \$215.80 per month. It is my belief that I can support my wife on this income.

*Clark N. Nelson*  
CLARK N. NELSON, AF 19 570 938  
A/2C, 3626th TECHTRARON (WPNSCON)

Permission to marry - Page 1 of 2



TTWC-1, Ltr, 3626th TECHTRARON (WPNSCON), Tyndall AFB, Fla, 6 Jan 59,  
Subj: Request for Permission to Marry (A/2C Nelson, C. N.)

TTWC

1st Ind

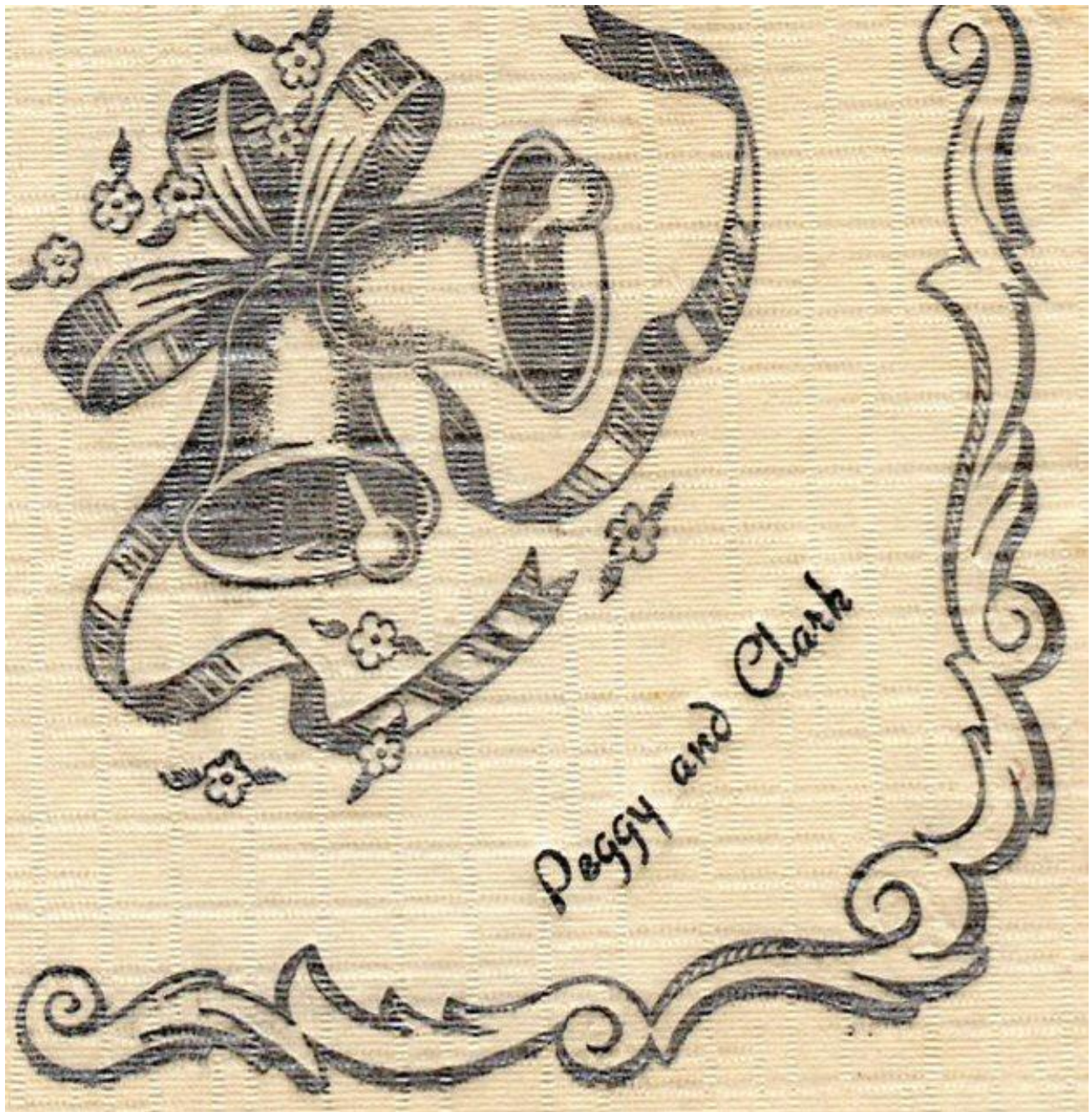
3626th Technical Training Squadron (Weapons Controller), Tyndall Air  
Force Base, Florida, 6 Jan 59.

1. Approved.
2. In compliance with AFR 34-24, subject airman has been interviewed by me regarding his marriage.

*John S. Litchfield*

JOHN S. LITCHFIELD  
Major, USAF  
Commander

**Permission to marry - Page 2 of 2**



Napkin from Wedding Shower - January 1959





**The Ceremony -- Exchanging Vows**

**Our Wedding Day - January 31, 1959**



**Our Wedding Day - January 31, 1959**

**L-R:   my best man   friend   Peggy   Clark**





**Our Wedding Day - January 31, 1959**

**L-R:    friend    bridesmaid    Peggy       Clark**



**Our Wedding Day - January 31, 1959**

**Peggy**

**Clark**





**Mid-Summer 1959 - Peggy and I in front of our off-base apartment in Panama City, Florida – Peggy carrying our daughter who was born at the Tyndall Base Hospital on Thanksgiving Day 1959 - delivery by 1st Lt. Sherk**



**My parents and my sister made the drive in February 1960 to see our two-month old daughter – We drove them out to Long Beach and the ‘Hangout’ to show them where Peggy and I met in July of 1958.**

**Standing, from left to right are: Peggy holding our new daughter; my sister; Clark; and my mother. My dad was behind the camera.**





**I'm feeding our daughter in our off-base apartment  
located on West 8th Street in Panama City**



**The 'Tally Ho' was located on the west side of Harrison Ave at it's most northern point, near the junction that took us farther west across Hathaway Bridge and on to Long Beach Resort.**

**Our off-base apartment was only a few blocks south, to West 8th Street, so Peggy, our young daughter, and I frequented the 'Tally Ho' on numerous occasions.**

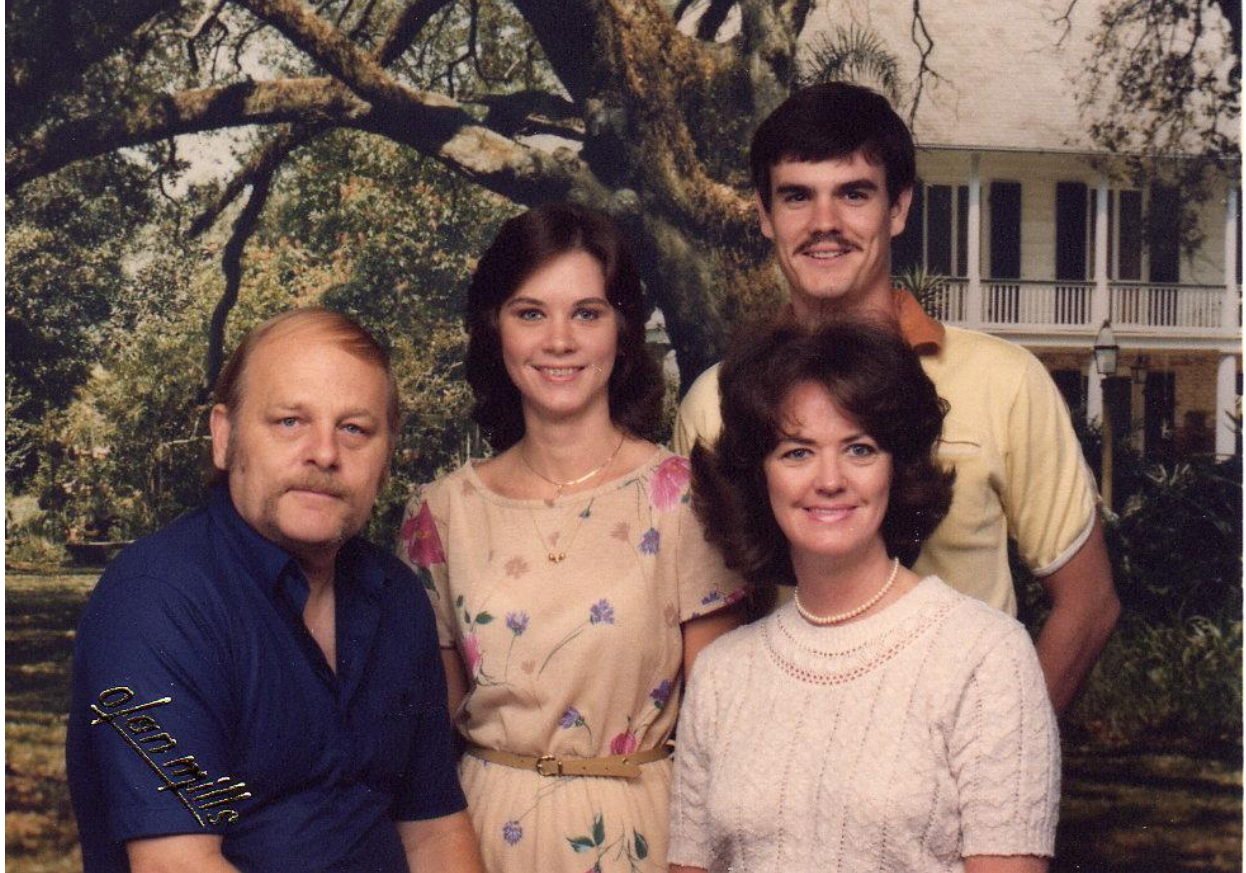


**1967 – Peggy and the kids in front of our first home.  
I picked up the red and white '57 Ford in the  
background for \$200.00 (as a hobby)**



**Peggy and the kids – our trip back to Long Beach in 1972**





**A portrait from 1980 – Peggy and I seated in front – our daughter and her husband standing – \* this selection was a ‘proof’ from the photo studio, so please excuse their logo on the print.**



## The Butterfly Waltz

Prior to, and following Peggy's services, I naturally wanted to install a memorial, a monument, the size of the Washington Monument in Washington D. C. Of course that would never be possible, but I'm pleased with the polished granite bench, with meaningful inscriptions engraved.

Once scrolling down and viewing several pictures of Peggy's gravesite, I hope the reader will consider reading the account of that which I consider an extraordinary experience; an experience I often refer to as 'The Butterfly Waltz'. Of course there are those who are likely to consider this experience silly, absurd, preposterous, and ridiculous. Nonetheless, I have described the experience exactly as it occurred.

















Following Peggy's services, and once the polished granite bench and name plate had been installed, I adopted a daily routine of having breakfast at a restaurant with other veterans, followed by a drive to the cemetery. I spent at least 45 minutes with each visit; I sat on that bench consumed by reflections and the eternal question as to 'Why'?

This cemetery is 'perpetual care', with most trees at the periphery, and no flower gardens within the cemetery grounds. On a sunny afternoon in 2006, I was sitting on the bench, consumed by the aforementioned; in particular, that eternal question as to why.

Then a large orange butterfly fluttered down on Peggy's grave and began it's 'waltz' from one blade of grass to another, from full length to full width. This seemed strange and very unusual since butterflies are rarely seen anywhere near that particular cemetery.

Once the butterfly had completed it's 'waltz' atop the entire grave, it fluttered it's way over to Peggy's name plate, landed, paused for a few seconds, and slowly fluttered the wings. Then it fluttered it's way over to the top of the flowers in the urn, then sat there with the slow wing flutter.

So I'm thinking there must be a reason for what I'd just witnessed. This was the moment when the butterfly suddenly fluttered it's way toward me, then landed on my left knee. I sat there in awe, as it continued the slow flap of the wings, for at least thirty seconds. Then within the blink of an eye, it flew away and never returned.

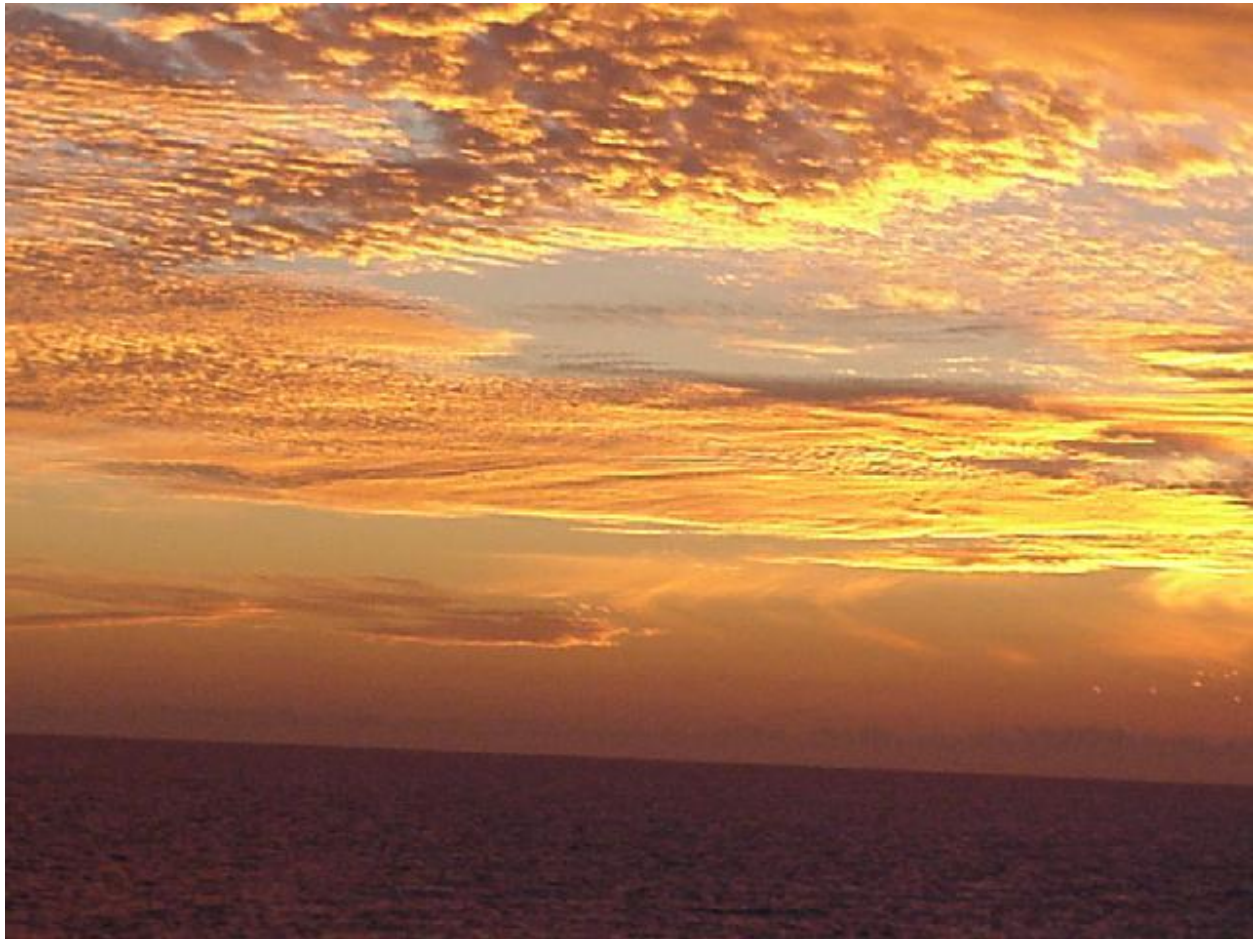
This Butterfly Waltz experience occurred ten years ago, based upon the creation date of this document; I have since tried to evaluate, or interpret, a meaning within that experience. First of all, butterflies don't flutter their way to a person, then land on them.

Another intriguing aspect kindles my search for an answer: To cover the length and width of a grave, on to the name plate, to the roses in the urn, followed by a landing on my knee, was, without question, encompassing every significant object: her grave, her name, the roses, and those present in mourning.



**A modern-day Tyndall AFB F-15 Eagle over the beach**





- - End - -