

HOW WE MET

In April 1967, after completion of Basic Officer Courses (Quartermaster) and as Assistant to the Logistics Officer for a training brigade at Fort Bragg, NC, I was home on leave in Oklahoma City on my way to Vietnam. One hundred miles away, Barbara was at Fort Sill, OK, receiving training to be the Assistant Director of a USO (United Services Organization) club somewhere in Vietnam. She had taken the USO position to leave her teaching position at a school for abused/delinquent children in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

After a brief stay at Ben Hoa near Saigon, I was assigned to the Depot in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. Barbara also received an assignment to the USO Club in Cam Ranh Bay. So in early May, Barbara's new boss brought her along to visit me in one of my warehouses that had much-wanted kitchen equipment of interest to her in running the USO Club.

Unfortunately for Barbara's boss, I would not give government equipment to a non-governmental entity and they went away empty handed. However, I was impressed with what I saw and pursued a relationship with Barbara. I don't want to say that I was appealing because I had a jeep, but it did allow me to take her "out" to the Air Force Officers' Club at Cam Ranh Air Base and to watch outdoor movies while sitting in the jeep at our company headquarters.

We both returned to the States in late April/early May of 1968 and were married. One could argue that we were fated to meet because we could have remained as far apart in Vietnam as we were earlier in Oklahoma.

A further irony is the fact that one of the units I served in at Cam Ranh Bay was the 588th Transportation Corps Company. Some years later, our son, Michael, commanded the 588th TC Company at Fort Hood, TX, and deployed with it to serve in Bosnia.

– Ron Smith –