

How We Met, a WW2 Love Story

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*This story
via
Oct 06
Newark, NJ*

The fall of 1943, I was an Air Force nurse stationed at Lake Charles, La. And assigned to ^{the} Officer's ward. An A-20 medium bomber with a crew of 3 went down in the swamps near Lake Charles ~~near Lake Charles~~. There was one fatality and two severely burned airmen. When I went on duty, I made rounds and met the two survivors---one was grumpy and in pain and the other was apprehensive and very shy. As time went on, I spent more and more time visiting the shy one. However, he asked me to send flowers to his girl friend back in Batavia, NY for her birthday. I sent a dozen red carnations and paid with my money. Since 2nd Lts. Only made \$150 a month, I did not feel generous and kept hinting about the cost.

We finally settled the finances and since he was now ambulatory asked me for a date. We hailed a cab and went downtown for dinner and a movie. Since he had sustained a laceration on the right side of his head, we sat at a table so the bald side was next to the wall. His hands were swathed in bandages so I cut his steak. Neither of us remember what the movie was about but we still laugh about the cartoon which was about a dog with fleas. The flea kept singing, "There's food around the corner for me!"

My application for Flight Nurse's training at Bowman Field, Ky. was accepted and I was thrilled to be going and to get out of Lake Charles but also hated to leave my new fellow. When I boarded the train for Louisville, I never expected to see Bob again. However on weekends he flew up to see me. We spent many hours in the yard near our barracks listening to the music coming from the Enlisted men's club. We chose I'll Be Seeing You as our song. To this day, when I hear that song it brings back wonderful memories.

On one trip up, Bob asked me to marry him and I said yes. I knew I was getting a diamond as letters to his mother and to me were mixed up ---I got hers and she got mine. On July 22, 1944, we were married by Chaplain Ernest Smith in the base chapel which was all decorated with glads and candlebras for Sunday services. My dress uniform was in the cleaners so I borrowed one. Bob had no friends there so we borrowed Dot Reimer's boy friend, Bob Elliot to stand up with him. Jane Poor Perlowin was my matron of honor. Nurses and technicians attended and it was a touching ceremony. Compared to weddings today, it was cheap. Only cost was \$2 for the licence.

My friends had arranged a reception at the French Village, which had the best fried chicken in Ky., complete with a bottle of champagne. For the life of me, I do not know how that bottle stretched around the table. Oddly enough, as soon as the reception was over, everyone seemed to disappear. There we stood on the sidewalk alone and looking at each other with a "what now" expression. We had the bridal suite at the Brown Hotel and treated ourselves to breakfast in our room. Bob says we did not go out for three days but we toured the area, talked a lot and planned our future. Our honeymoon lasted three days. Bob had orders to go overseas to the ETO. Before parting, we took all our money out, put it on the table and divided it evenly and that has been the way it has been for 62 years. He went to Europe and in time I went to the China

Burma India theatre. It was 15 months before we saw each other again. Just a few days ago, we celebrated our 62nd anniversary. Those years have slipped by so rapidly however in the meantime we reared a wonderful family---two sons, Bob, Jr. and John and one daughter, Janet. We have spent the years melding two cultures---he from NY and me from Tenn. There have been a few civil wars in there but all ended peacefully and as the fairy tale goes have lived happily ever after. And who says war time marriages do not last !