

Marcia Lynn Souvigney Jones

Shortly after graduating, Marcia Souvigney entered the Order of the Sisters of St. Joseph, attended the Elms College, and began teaching. She had taught in and around Springfield for approximately eight years when she felt the need to move on.

Marcia had continued her education and, while working for Springfield Label and Tape, completed her Master's Degree in Education. She also joined the Massachusetts Air National Guard and, while further continuing her education (culmination in a Masters Degree in Business Administration), she served on the Guard's National Advisory Board.

The Guard sent Marcia to technical school for training as a Weather Observer. Finding the weather field to be to her liking she applied for a position as a Meteorological Technician at the Air Force Reserve Base at Westover. She was accepted on a temporary basis and went to work for TSgt Isaac (Ike) Jones, the non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of the weather unit.



Unfortunately Marcia did not have the necessary 'points' to be accepted into the Civil Service System as a permanent employee, so she returned to her job at Springfield Label and Tape. This was not an altogether unfortunate occurrence because she could now socialize with the people who worked there, Sergeant Jones in particular, and they were married at his home in Iowa in 1978 when he retired.

They spent two years in Colorado where Ike attended school and Marcia tutored nursing students and the baseball and basketball teams; taught math courses; and, when the head of the business

department was shot and killed, took over and taught his business courses. She also worked for a time in the office of a coal mine and, during the season, managed the local H&R Block income tax office while studying for and receiving certification as an Emergency Medical Technician and an Associate's Degree in health, recreation and physical education.

Leaving Colorado, Marcia discovered that the Navy was expanding and, due to a changed age limitation, she could apply for Officer Candidate School. She did so and, after a whirlwind application process and acceptance, she set out for Rhode Island where she attended OCS.

From OCS, Marcia was transferred to Rota, Spain, where she was assigned to the Naval Oceanographic Command as a Meteorologist. Marcia soon became a skilled weather forecaster. While in Spain, the Joneses traveled extensively, visiting London, Paris, Amsterdam, Athens, and Istanbul as well as the Black Forest in Germany and several cities in Spain and North Africa. After three years at Rota, where she worked as a staff duty officer, they were transferred to Okinawa.

In Okinawa, Marcia served as the Officer in Charge of the Navy Meteorology department and supported Navy and Marine operations in the Western Pacific. Travel was less frequent in Okinawa - the OIC is not as able to take time off - but it did include a trip to the northernmost islands of Japan and a week-long shopping trip to Korea as well as 'business trips' to Diego Garcia and Navy and Air Force bases in Japan and the Philippines.



From Okinawa Marcia was transferred to the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California. Business casual civilian clothing is required there - hence the shopping trip to



Korea. While at Monterey Marcia received two master's degrees - one in Meteorology and one in Oceanography. The Navy doesn't allow their students to loaf, so there was not a lot of time to do anything but study. However Marcia and Ike did find time to buy a camper trailer and, between terms, use it to visit several places in and around California. Marcia also used the camper as a study while it was parked in their driveway, and it made an excellent guest room when family visited.

After graduating it was off to southern Virginia. Marcia's assignment was to the forecast center at Norfolk - the biggest Naval Base in the world. It was much like Spain but, where the Area Of Responsibility in Spain was the Mediterranean Sea, at Norfolk the AOR was the Atlantic Ocean.

In Okinawa, as a morale building exercise, Marcia had instituted a series of 'family dinners' where each of the unaccompanied members of her unit would prepare his or her specialty and feed the rest of the single troops (usually no more than 5 or 6 people) once a month. On Thanksgiving and Christmas, the family dinner was expanded to include all the Navy people working that day, and holiday dinners were delivered to them so they could celebrate, too. These 'meals on wheels' became very popular.

In Norfolk, Marcia, as a junior officer, was one of the people working the holidays, so Ike prepared a turkey and, piling it into his little sports car, drove like a mad-man to the base. The rest of the people working brought their family's traditional holiday side dishes and Thanksgiving dinner was served in the conference room. By the time Christmas rolled around, the word had spread and many of the single people who weren't working asked if they could come, too. By the third or fourth 'family dinner,' single parents had joined the group and even the Captain was stopping by to pay a visit.

The tour at Norfolk should have been fun. There was no crippling load of class-work and Marcia was back to being a worker-bee not the boss. Virginia Beach is beautiful and there are more things to do and more places to visit than a normal lifetime can stretch to cover. It should have been fun - but...



Marcia was doing well. She had just been given a new job - head of Optimum Track Ship Routing. OTSR's original purpose was economic - it was intended to be a money saving program. Ships transiting the Atlantic were provided a route that kept them away from unfavorable currents or winds that might slow them down and cost more fuel. OTSR monitored their progress like a shepherd taking a flock of sheep to pasture and made sure their charges were on the most economical course. There might be as many as 8 or 9 ships at any one time and the division was staffed with three or four experienced forecasters - the cream of the crop. They were doing an excellent job and then - Desert Storm.

Suddenly they went from a handful of ships to an ocean full - as many as 90 or 100. The handful of people who had monitored a few ships were suddenly forecasting for 10 times as many and on top of that, the Atlantic weather was foul. Marcia would go to work at 3:00 AM and not return until 9:00 or 10:00 PM.

Marcia's success there was part of the reason her next assignment was to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

The assignment to Newport was fantastic. Not only was it a wonderful career opportunity, but it was a place steeped in military history and tradition. Sitting in the beautiful old buildings there, Marcia could feel herself in the company of the Navy's greatest heroes - Halsey, Nimitz - men who built the modern Navy and who literally changed the course of world history.

Newport had another benefit. It was close enough that Marcia and Ike could visit her parents almost every weekend. One of the disadvantages of military life is that often it is impossible to assist older parents when they need help. This assignment came at a very good time, as Marcia's parents needed some encouragement and assistance to rearrange their lives to accommodate their failing health.

War College is divided into two parts. The first part, in Newport, Rhode Island, is followed by a shorter second part near Newport News, Virginia. The Joneses loaded up their camper and returned to the Hampton Roads area and moved into the Morale Welfare and Recreation-operated campground on historic Fort Monroe while Marcia attended classes at Norfolk.

Upon completion of War college - where she earned another Master's degree - Marcia was assigned to the U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base. For those who don't know, TRANSCOM, as it is called, 'owns' all the transportation facilities of the Department of Defense. Its personnel are made up of members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. Its 'hardware' includes planes, trucks, ships, and trains. They transport everything from mail to Thanksgiving turkeys to the armed forces overseas. They deliver humanitarian aid to disaster victims and ammunition to war zones. They fly the President of the United States, all of his staff - both administrative and security - and his limousine when he travels.



Their camper came in handy again as construction of the house Marcia and Ike were building was delayed by floods in the St Louis area and they ended up living in it for three months while their house was completed. After that less than happy start, the tour at TRANSCOM settled down to be very pleasant. St Louis is a beautiful and historic city and, while the duty was important and interesting, it wasn't overpowering and time for travel was available.

Unfortunately at this time Marcia's health began to fail. The medical people at Scott AFB did their best, but it was some time before Marcia was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia and even longer before it was discovered she had Pulmonary Hypertension as well as other health issues. After four years at TRANSCOM, Marcia and her husband retired to the Orlando, Florida area.

It didn't take Marcia long to make herself at home in Florida. The first thing she did was apply for a job at Walt Disney World. Disney found a spot for her in Security. She worked two days a week and, as part of her pay, was allowed into any of the parks almost any time she wanted and was allowed to bring up to three people in with her once a month. She loved the work, especially after she was moved to a position roughly equivalent to the desk sergeant of the Magic Kingdom police force. She continued working there until her deteriorating health made her choose between Disney and Teaching.



Having gone to school on and off for most of her life, Marcia naturally looked around for a school in Florida. She decided she could use more education in the computer field so she started taking a few courses at the local community college. It wasn't long before the school discovered they had a math teacher enrolled and quickly signed her up as an adjunct to teach their remedial math courses (of course they no longer call them that).

Marcia enjoyed teaching 'pre-algebra' and algebra. The state of Florida requires all students pass an 'exit exam' in this subject before they can be awarded a degree - ANY degree. The subjects were

the same ones she taught to sixth graders in Springfield, but these students were often in their twenties or thirties and were motivated - HIGHLY motivated. They were more than willing to work and work hard.

Before anyone says, "How hard could that be?" reflect on this - one of Marcia's students was having trouble understanding her when she referred to even numbers.

"You know, even numbers - divisible by two with no remainder. You know that," Marcia said.

The student answered, "Well, I do now."

Or another student - mid thirties with children in school - who put her hands over her ears, burst into tears, and ran out of the room when Marcia mentioned that they would be studying fractions. Her teacher in third grade had hit her with the text book and told her she would never learn math - so she never did.

It wasn't long before Marcia was getting the students who had tried the course before and failed. She quickly gained a reputation as the last resort for problem students. She might have continued doing that, but the head of the science department found out that there was an adjunct who was capable of teaching meteorology at the school. He quickly drafted her to set up and teach a course. She enjoyed teaching Meteorology even more than math. It was nice, she often said, teaching students who were actually in danger of graduating.

Living in Florida and teaching part-time gave the Joneses plenty of time to travel. While she worked for Disney, Marcia could get deeply discounted rates on cruises. If the ship wasn't full by three of four days before the sailing date, they offered the spaces to cast members. Marcia and Ike took advantage of this to take some very pleasant boat trips.



They also did a lot of driving.

Marcia's failing lungs and compromised immune system made flying difficult, so they went by car. One of their trips started in Orlando and went to Minneapolis, Minnesota, by way of Indiana. From there they went on to Seattle, stopping briefly at Yellowstone Park, and joining a cruise there to Alaska. After they returned from Alaska, they took a meandering

route south along the coast until they reached San Francisco where they turned east and southward to Arizona. After a week in Sedona, they wandered through Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico until they got tired and then returned to Florida via Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. All in all, it was about 12,000 miles in a little over a month during which they visited 34 national parks and monuments. A couple years later, they took a shorter trip - only about 5,000 miles - through the upper mid-west, touring Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa.

Time was beginning to catch up to Marcia and in 2012, while visiting Branson, Missouri, she contracted pneumonia and spent a month and a half in the hospital, returning to Florida in a specially equipped RV. In 2013, she entered the hospital in March and only left in October when she returned to her home to spend her final days.



She was cremated and her ashes are interred at the Arlington National Cemetery.

It was an exciting journey - not as long as some, but well worth the effort.

