

Adventures of our Wives

First of many – San Diego to Astoria and back. Carol Cross and Beth Dittmann travel by car from San Diego CA to Astoria OR to meet the ship on arrival. Carol is my wife of almost 50 years. She returned with me from our honeymoon several days early due to operational requirements of the ship. After returning to San Diego Carol and Beth Dittmann, newly married wife of our MPA, Skip Dittmann decided to drive to Oregon to meet the ship. There were many adventures along the 1200-mile journey, including a stern warning from Navy Security personnel when the two blondes appeared to be headed in the wrong direction in San Francisco. The wives agreed to stop at each time they need 10 gallons of gas to collect their “bonus pair of drink glasses”. After 1200 miles, and the return trip, each new bride had a complete set of matching drink glasses. Ours’ stayed in our cupboard for many years. From Denton Iowa to Yokosuka Japan .

A longer journey was described by LeeAndra and husband Russell Coots, RD-2. After graduating from Radar School Russell Coots returned to Mt Auburn, Iowa to marry his fiancée LeeAndra. Following the wedding Coots left to report aboard the USS Frank Knox just finishing yard work in Vallejo CA. Coots reported aboard 9/1961 and was soon headed to Yokosuka Japan. LeeAndra, who had never traveled far from her home town in Iowa began a 1660-mile journey from Iowa to California by train and was met by relatives in Riverside. After a short time with relatives, LeeAndra then arranged for passage from Long Beach CA by passenger ship to Yokosuka, Japan via Hawaii. LeeAndra was able to see some of Hawaii before steaming on to Yokosuka, adding over 5510 miles to her total journey. There waiting on the dock to meet her was new husband Russell. The couple located a one room “cabin” in the beach community of Hayama, living between a Navy Officer and a Marine officer homes. Cost of the 7100 plus mile journey – train and ship passage – around \$500 recalls LeeAndra. Counting the return trip LeeAndra traveled over 14,200 miles! Once settled in LeeAndra walked everywhere except to go shopping on the Base at Yokosuka. Shopping trips required a train trip in and a taxi ride with goods back. Their “Cabin” quickly became the weekend retreat for radarmen and radiomen from the Knox. Near the end of his enlistment their first son was born at the hospital in Yokosuka. Coots did not reenlist and the family returned to San Francisco and then settled in Iowa where they remain to this day.