

The Vintage Voice

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Sally and Roger Meet and Are Married

The Rev. Roger Noyes

We met in Valley Wales in the early spring of 1945. We were stationed there as enlisted personnel with the U.S. Army Air Transport Command, sharing the base with the RAF. As a civilian I had been a saxophone player and played in an army band before being shipped to Wales. Sally had attended finishing school and worked as a photographer before enlisting. Our romance grew to the point of making plans for marriage. However, the rigors and strange demands of a world war kept messing up our marriage plans. Army regulations required a six-month wait! They called it the “cooling off” regulation. Worse yet, the news of our proposed marriage was not well received by Sally’s mother. Can you imagine a mother hearing that her beautiful and well-cared-for daughter was going to be married to a young man whose character was unknown and who played the saxophone? While we were waiting, the war ended in Europe, and we were transferred from Valley Wales to separate bases in Germany. Finally the six-month wait was over, and we were free to be married.

We met early on the morning of October 3rd in Paris and enjoyed breakfast together at the Patio Club where Sally was staying. Our plans were finally underway. We metroed to the headquarters of The Air Transport Command where we naively requested information on how to be married. We were told we would have to wait three days just for the required blood tests. We had only six-day passes, and a three-day delay was not good.

Boldly we took off on our own, thinking that we might be able to beat the time by going to the local ATC Airbase hospital at Orly Field just outside of Paris. We boarded an unbelievably antique bus standing in Place Vendôme with a sign saying “Orly Air Field shuttle.”

On our way, the bus stopped at a large U.S. army hospital. Sensing an opportunity, we decided to try our luck there. Luck was with us — a young U.S. army sergeant took our blood samples and said to come back after lunch, and he would have the documents ready.

We decided to wait out this time by hitchhiking down the highway to nearby Orly Field, not only for lunch but also to see some old buddies. So we stopped a U.S. army truck and asked for a ride. They said, “Sure, climb aboard!” After climbing into the back of the truck and sitting under the canvas cover, we discovered that they happened to be hauling a few garbage cans to the Orly Field dump that day. Even though there were only one or two garbage cans, Sally has gotten lots of mileage out of this incident throughout the years by saying, “Yes, I was driven to lunch on my wedding day in a garbage truck.”

After obtaining our blood test documents, we rode back in that old puffing shuttle bus to the ATC headquarters in central Paris, where we were introduced to a nice-looking lady French lieutenant who took over the drill of getting us married.

It was late in the day, and urgency spurred us across town with the French lieutenant driving us in her prewar Citroën to a large office building which served as the official place of business for this particular section of Paris. We were escorted into a high-ceilinged chamber, where we were asked to sign a very officious-looking book and to wait with another army couple who were also there to get married. Minutes later, a tall and very official-looking gentleman, complete with epaulets and a ribbon crossing his chest, walked in and asked us a whole bunch of questions in French, none of which we understood. Every once in a while we replied, “*Oui!*” and then it was all over. We had been witnesses for the other army couple, and they had been ours. We never learned their names. But we were happy, and we were married, and it took only the one day. The date was October 3, 1945.

On our way back to our hotels, we stopped at the nightclub in the Eiffel Tower and drank champagne toasts to each other. Even with the terrible privations of wartime, the French always seemed able to produce quantities of champagne. Maybe they brewed it every morning.

French law requires that all marriages be done by civil authorities, but Sally — a cradle Episcopalian — wanted a church wedding to be added. Even though I was unchurched, I agreed, and so four days later we were married at the Episcopal Pro-Cathedral. The Dean of the cathedral registered Sally as “Episcopalian,” and for me (a bit embarrassing), he wrote down “no affiliation.” He then officiated at our exchange of vows, with the gardener and his wife serving as witnesses.

Sally and I returned to the U.S. to live the civilian life in Los Angeles, where I worked as an instrumentalist in big bands, later as a draftsman/designer. I finally was able to meet Sally’s mother. I am very grateful that she and I became like mother and son. We grew to love and respect each other very much.

I often sit in silent wonder as I ponder the difference in being “non-affiliated” and later serving for over thirty-seven years as an Episcopal Priest.



For more than twenty years, Sally and Roger Noyes lived in Guadalajara, Mexico, where Roger was ordained to the priesthood in 1971 under the authority of Bishop Melchor Saucedo. They spent three years ministering in the Diocese of Botswana in Africa, then returned to Mexico and later to the U.S.A. All four of their children were born in Southern California.

Sally and Roger presently live in Cottonwood, Arizona, where he is Rector Emeritus of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in nearby Sedona. They will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary in 2010.