

# Active Adventurers

By Amy Morgan

Betty and Doug Phillips have spent 64 years together marveling at the beauty of the world they've explored far beyond America's borders.

The enthusiastic couple enjoyed the benefits afforded by Doug's career as a pilot to venture across the globe. Whether a trip with their three daughters to Hong Kong in the late 1960s, excursions across Europe, or cruises as their family expanded, the Phillips' delight in it all. A common thread in their travel – sampling the local cuisine to soak up a culture.

"Doug remembers all of the geographical things," Betty said, with a characteristic twinkle in her eye. "I remember the food."

Doug's favorite trip was to New Zealand, where they spent two weeks driving all the way down the east coast and up the west coast without reservations – stopping wherever they desired. "That was probably the best vacation I've ever had!" he said. They reminisce about the tea service each morning with little pots of milk so fresh the cream had risen to the top.

Betty enjoyed Ireland, where their guide joked, "If you can see the Dublin mountains – it is going to rain. If you can't see them – it is raining."

Doug began his career as a pilot while still in high school. He joined the Civil Air Patrol where he learned to fly and earned a pilot's license. He joined the Air Force in 1951 and became an Air Force pilot in 1953. He met Betty in a drugstore in Bryan, the day he got his pilot wings. He was meant to serve in Korea as a fighter pilot but the "War" ended so instead was assigned to Mississippi as a flight instructor. This sped up their courtship, and they were married just three months later, in December 1953.

Doug's 27 years in the Air Force – 16 in active duty, 11 in reserves, eventually did take him to Korea for a year, but the active hostilities had finished.

"We used to fly up and down the DMZ in the F-86 and you could see the MiGs over on the north side doing the same thing," Doug said. "I swear one time I saw a guy stand up and wave at me." In Korea, he took advantage of the proximity to visit Japan and Hong Kong, a location so inspiring that he returned with his family in 1969.

The couple spent several years at Kinchelov Air Force Base in Michigan, where their two younger daughters were born. Being stationed on the Canadian border was quite a shock to Betty, who was raised in West Texas close to Mexico. They remember needing to make an urgent trip to buy shoes and warm clothes when they arrived in August wearing shorts and sandals.

Doug was flying the F-106 plane at the time – which he found the most intriguing of all the planes he piloted.

"It was fast and maneuverable," he said. "We could fly over Mach 2 – twice the speed of sound." Doug joined United Airlines in 1967, for which he flew for 24 years. He still kept his ties with the military, where he flew C-130s and was squadron commander of his reserve unit for five years. He retired as an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel in 1979 and completely retired as an Airline Captain in 1991 before moving to San Antonio.

One daughter remains in Wisconsin, one is in California, and another is close by in San Antonio. The Phillips have lived in Independence Village since 2010. Their home faces the beautiful clubhouse, to which they stroll to join activities or for Doug to play bridge with one of his two weekly groups.

They are very pleased with the activities planned by the staff at Independence Village, "A great group of gals!" Doug bowls regularly, Betty enjoys excursions for shopping, peach picking, Saturday trips to the Pearl Brewery Farmer's Market and to Real Ale in Blanco. They both attend plays and enjoy going with the group to different restaurants in the area.

Their home in Independence Village offers them the proximity they desire to their church, St. Thomas Episcopal, their physicians, shopping, and Stone Oak's many restaurants.

Doug summed up his secret to a happy 64-year-marriage to three little words: "Let's eat out!"



*Doug and Betty Phillips enjoy traveling, eating at their favorite Stone Oak restaurants, sharing a good bottle of wine and of course, living at Independence Village.*

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