



# JAN AND CHUCK HOLLINGSWORTH'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY TO "EAGLE'S REST"

By Kimberly Suta :: Photography by David Teran; personal photos courtesy of the Hollingsworth family

*Some love stories seem written in the stars.*

*For Jan and Chuck Hollingsworth, it began on a Navy base in the Memphis, Tennessee area, when they were just 5 years old. Both children of Navy fathers, they grew up as "military brats," weaving in and out of each other's lives as their families moved from post to post.*



By Jacque Oxford from Jacque of all Trades



Chuck still remembers the first time he met Jan. "I remember it. There was a lot going on for a little guy who was just adopted, as you can imagine ... learning a new family and meeting a lot of people. Jan made a real impression on me. She was a good little friend even back then," he recalled.

Jan recalls those early days as well. "He had a John Deer ride-on toy so we'd ride that John Deer, which we joke about because we still have one to mow grass," laughed Jan. "But, yes, I remember meet-

ing him ... and I thought, 'I'm just going to love him forever.'"

That early friendship turned into something more profound after a twist of fate. At age 16, Jan was struck by lightning while standing on a Florida beach. A direct strike left her in a coma and fighting for her life. "I don't have any memory of it at all," explained Jan. "I recite what I was told, but I don't even remember being at the beach. I know it hurt really badly when I regained consciousness."



One of the guys at the beach knew CPR, saving her life, and then an ambulance got her on life support, but it was a long year of recovery after that. Still, it was a miracle no one could deny, especially Chuck. "It's a small club of those who get a direct lightning strike and live," he confirmed. "Based on our faith, all of these things that happened are just proof of God's providence in our lives."

When Chuck first heard about Jan's harrowing incident, he was mistakenly told she was killed, and felt a devastation that revealed the depth of his feelings. "It crushed my soul," he admitted. "I knew then I must feel something for her that was far greater than friendship." For Chuck, it was the moment of clarity that may have changed the trajectory of their relationship.

Three years later, when Jan was interning in Washington, D.C., and Chuck was a midshipman at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, the two reconnected. Long dinners, dancing by the beach and shared laughter drew them close. The day after Chuck's graduation, they married — beginning a 30-year journey in the Navy together.

"Jan's brother was a classmate of mine, so that was kind of neat. Our families were there for the graduation and the marriage, so it brought a lot of people to Annapolis for a great celebration," Chuck said.

At the time, Jan was a systems engineer developing software. "I did that until I was blessed with our first child and then blessed to be a stay-at-home mom



raising four kids, wherever we were," said Jan. The couple shares four children (two boys, two girls), all now adults and married with wonderful spouses. They live in Texas, Tennessee, Ohio and Australia. The family has grown even further, including four grandchildren and another one on the way in December.

Chuck's naval career as an aviator spanned 81 countries, with family tours in Japan and Portugal and countless deployments that often kept him away from home. "Of my 30 years, at least 10 were spent deployed apart from the family. The timing and trajectory of my career had me involved in significant events that impacted the security of our nation — but I don't think most people realize the cost and sacrifice of that service," he noted. "That means a lot of missed birthdays, sports events and holidays. I'm proud of the opportunity I had to serve, but I also believe my entire family served alongside me. Each of them shared in the sacrifices to support the job their husband and father dedicated his life to."

Chuck is proud of Jan and his children's resilience through the constant rhythm of moves, new schools and fresh beginnings. "Jan's the poster child of an outstanding military spouse," he said. "She could set up a household overnight, turning it into a home no matter where we were."

Her role wasn't only logistical — it was cultural. Jan supported military family organizations, built community and carried the unspoken weight of service.



"Moves were hard," she admitted, "but I never believed our assignments were an accident. You just jump in quickly and see what you can serve."

The unique experience offered the family a worldview that has given them the capacity to adapt and pivot, even during extraordinary circumstances, such as one of their children's recent encounters with a tornado. "While extremely scary, our youngest daughter demonstrated her resiliency as she just rolled with it," Jan shared.

"They had to adapt to different academic programs, different cultures and new networks of friends," confirmed Chuck. "But they also learned to be curious and open to the world. They certainly think more globally than most."

One daughter even became fluent in Japanese as a child and, due to her diligent effort to maintain her extensive networks, the family now jokes she can't go anywhere in the world without running into someone she knows.



"As one of our daughter's puts it, distance is just geography," smiled Jan.

Their memories abroad are painted in vivid strokes. In Portugal, they fell in love with coastal views, candlelit cafés and sardines "the size of your hand." In Japan, their children eagerly traded forks for chopsticks and embraced the culture wholeheartedly. "When you travel, the culture you're visiting appreciates that curiosity," said Chuck. "It makes you resilient — and unflappable."

Considering the way they were raised, it's not surprising that Chuck and Jan's kids are world travelers, and now that trait has passed to their grandchildren. One daughter with two of their grandkids just completed a two-year State Department tour in Saudi Arabia and recently moved to Australia. During their visit to the U.S. this summer, the grandkids (2 and 4 years old) were absolutely fascinated by the clouds they saw in the sky. "After spending most of their young lives in the arid, cloudless environment of the Middle East, they pointed at the clouds and called them 'shampoo bubbles,'" explained Jan. "And now they have kangaroos in their front yard!" added Chuck.

His career culminated in Corpus Christi, where he served as Chief of Staff of Naval Aviation Training. His retirement ceremony took place aboard the USS Lexington, now a museum ship but once an active carrier where Jan's own father had served decades earlier. "It was doubly special," agreed Chuck. "That ship carried both our past and our future."

After three decades of service, they returned to Texas. "One of the things I love about this part of Texas is that our local culture truly does honor the service and sacrifice of Veterans. So, when you thank a Veteran for their service, please know that it is appreciated," Chuck acknowledged.

The couple explored the Hill Country until fate drew them through the gates of Cordillera Ranch. "As soon as we came in the main entrance, we were in love," remembered Jan, and the couple moved to Cordillera in 2024. By chance, the home they purchased turned out to be House #1 — the very first built in the development. They named it Eagle's Rest, a fitting symbol after a life of constant mobility.

"After such a mobile career, we're excited to settle down," said Chuck.

Life here has been nothing short of restorative. Chuck, now working at Lockheed Martin, continues mentoring the next generation of warfighters, while Jan, after five years of wrist reconstruction surgeries, has discovered the joy of pickleball. After a big dog/leash incident left Jan with a severely broken wrist, she's had numerous operations and years of physical therapy to restore some normalcy of function. "Because the surgical procedure included sawing her wrist bone in two and reattaching it with donor material, Jan hasn't been able to play the piano or participate in many of the physical activities that she loves for more than five years," Chuck explained. "It's been an absolute blast and blessing to be able to get involved in a sport that's a fun, challenging activity yet easy enough on my wrist to play," said Jan.

Together, the couple enjoys kayaking, hiking, Bible studies and exploring Texas'

parks and history. "It's like living in a state park," said Jan of Cordillera Ranch. "Relaxing and quiet."

Through it all, their bond has been strengthened by humor, faith and, always, resilience. "One thing we have in common — we laugh a lot and like to go play," said Chuck.

Whether it's exploring new trails or simply enjoying the quiet of their Hill Country home, their love for each other and for life is unmistakable.

Looking back, their journey feels like a tapestry of providence: a childhood friendship ignited by fate, a love tested by lightning and long separations, a family inspired by global adventure, and now, a home chosen for peace and community.

"We've always believed none of it was an accident," reflected Jan. "Everywhere we've been, we've asked, 'What can we do here?' Now, at Eagle's Rest, we finally get to do that in a place that feels like our forever home." 🍷

