



VILLAGER BACKSTORY

You may know Alice Smith from the Village of LaBelle or the Quilting Guild of The Villages, but what you may not know is that she and her family lived all over the world.



Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

GETTING TO KNOW ALICE SMITH

Age: 72
Village: LaBelle
Spouse: Chuck
Family: Two sons, a daughter-in-law and two granddaughters
Moved Here In: 2016
Moved Here From: Centerville, Georgia
Favorite Villages Activities: Quilting Guild of The Villages, Samba, mah-jongg, walking in the pool



Kristen Fiore

THE VILLAGES DAILY SUN

Do you know someone with an interesting backstory to tell? Email kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com, or call 352-753-1119, ext. 5270

Alice Smith grew up in Haddon Heights, New Jersey, where she said she enjoyed a great childhood. She went to the University of New Hampshire and started out working as a hospital dietician.

Her most interesting assignment in that field of work was a trip to The Pentagon.

"They were having trouble with their puddings and gelatin desserts," said Smith, of the Village of LaBelle. "The Pentagon kitchens were so huge."

Getting to see The Pentagon kitchens was interesting, but being a hospital dietician just wasn't doing it for Smith.

"I was kind of at loose ends," Smith said. "My sister was too, so we said, 'Why don't we join the Army?'"

So that's what they did. Smith and her sister joined the same day and ended up in

basic training together.

This decision ultimately led Smith to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, where she learned Czech. She then went to Rimbach, a site at the Czech border, where she worked on top of a mountain monitoring troop movements during the Cold War.

"NATO was very concerned about the communist bloc," Smith said.

The next part of Smith's tour took her to Augsburg, Germany, which is where she met her husband, Chuck. While they were in the Army, Alice said they were friends, but it later developed into something more.

They got married after they got out of the Army, but Alice said she and Chuck both still felt a little lost. Finally, Chuck decided to join the Air Force,

and Alice was ready to have kids.

Chuck's work with the Air Force took the family all over the world to places like Berlin, Stuttgart, Wyoming, Maryland, Utah, Hawaii and even Korea.

While she was raising her sons, Alice did different jobs in different places. At one point she worked for the IRS, and at another she had her own jazzercise franchise. She started quilting in 1989.

"Once I started quilting, the first thing I did was find a guild, and then I'd meet people that way," she said.

Alice said she liked all of the places they lived.

"They're all favorites for different reasons," she said, adding that Berlin was a wonderful city. "One interesting thing about our time there was that according to

the division of the city after the war, the four allies were able to go into any sector."

Alice said that going between the British, American and French sectors was easy, but getting to the Russian sector required a special permit and a check point.

"The differences between the Russian sector and the others was like night and day," Alice said.

Going to Wyoming was like turning 180 degrees for Alice.

"It took me a while to get used to it, but once I did, I liked it," she said.

Alice said that she was nervous about moving to Korea at first, but once she got there, she thought it was the best place for the family at the time.

"My boys were in high school and one graduated there," she

said. "I really enjoyed it."

Chuck retired in Tampa, and then he and Alice moved to Georgia, but it wasn't a place they felt like they wanted to settle in.

After learning about and seeing The Villages, Alice said she knew that's where they would end up.

"(We needed a place with) activities and people to meet," she said. "When you move to a place like (The Villages) you make friends and have things to do."

After seeing the world with her family, Alice doesn't feel so lost anymore.

"It was a great life," she said. "I loved it."

In The Villages, Alice spreads her time between meeting with friends, a lot of quilting and playing samba, two types of mah-jongg and trivia.

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