

My brother, Dennis Krisfalusy, was raised in a small town in western Pennsylvania. We were blessed with wonderful parents, Charles and Mary, and siblings Chuck, Cindy, and Lisa. We also had a large extended family. After graduating from California Area High School, Class of 1961, Denny entered the Air Force. We were very proud of his decision, as our father was an Army veteran who served in World War II.

Denny's smile lit up the room. His kindness is memorable, from bringing home stray animals (and people), helping neighbors and friends, and creating the famous ball game "rubber hose." There was a constant revolving door of friends! Denny was physically fit; he lifted weights, jogged, and ate healthily; he had a slight build but was muscular. Recently, a friend remarked, "Your brother was kind, but you knew better than to mess with him." Being around my brother was joyous, filled with warmth, love, and pranks.

The day he left for basic training was filled with tears and sadness. When he came home on leave, it felt like a "holiday." My mom made his favorite ethnic foods and invited family and friends to celebrate his homecoming. Denny was stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona. After attending a dance, he called home to let us know he had met a girl named Lois. He spoke of her beauty and kindness. When he met her parents and sisters, he felt an immediate bond. Lois and Denny were married on June 19, 1965. They enjoyed traveling, family, and their dog, Winston. While stationed in Germany, they toured Europe. During Denny's tour of duty in Vietnam, it was a tough time. We were always concerned about his safety, and Lois remained his loyal wife and best friend. This time seemed to make their bond even closer.

They built a house in Arizona, completed over 20 years of military service in the Air Force, and decided to move to Los Angeles. Denny became a mail carrier. In September 1985, they traveled to Mexico, searching for a retirement home. A year before their trip to Mexico, our mother died suddenly. At that time, Denny stated that he could never live if something happened to Lois. When they traveled, they always sent postcards to our family. My grandmother realized upon receiving their postcard that they were in Mexico during the 8.1 magnitude earthquake that killed 10,000 people on September 19, 1985, at 7:19 AM. This occurred before the internet, computers, or cell phones. Communication was impossible due to the devastation.

Contact was made with Denny and Lois's coworkers and friends in Los Angeles. No one had heard from them since they left for Mexico. We realized they did not survive the earthquake. We contacted a family friend, Congressman Austin J. Murphy, and Senator John Heinz for help. The Red Cross and the Veterans Administration also assisted us at that time. I remember contacting the American embassy in Mexico. I was informed that the concern was with the living, and the dead had to be buried. I was assured that if my brother and his wife were alive, we would be notified. When I asked if I could come to Mexico, I was advised that the devastation was beyond belief and it was something I would have to live with, with no guarantee of being able to get into the city. This led to years of heartache for our father, our family, and Lois's family. Lois's sister

Sheila recently said Lois's mother waited for her to come home until the day she died. My dad died on September 19, 1985, but we buried him in 2006. Lois's death certificate is dated November 15, 1985, as a female body was recovered near their room in the St. Regis Hotel. Denny's death certificate is dated July 24, 1989. Due to changes in Mexican law caused by the earthquake, his death certificate is dated later. At 7:19 AM, I always believed he was jogging when the earthquake occurred. This was an emotional time for our family and costly legally. Denny and Lois are buried in a common grave in Mexico City.

In 2023, plans were made to honor Dennis and Lois for their service. Working closely with the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, a service was arranged, and a military headstone was ordered that would feature Denny's name on the front and Lois's on the back. However, we learned that due to the timing of her death, Lois was not eligible to have her name on the stone. I began working diligently with the Veterans Administration, Congressman Reschenthaler's office staff and Senator Fetterman's office members to change this policy. Despite rejection and delays, I was treated fairly, with respect and empathy. I was impressed by the consistent communication and feedback I received from everyone involved. I hope we can continue to collaborate on changing the current law, which prevents spouses of veterans, like our Lois, who died before 1998, from being honored by passing the "Dennis and Lois Krisfalusy Act" to ensure that no veteran spouse is forgotten.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Maxon