



OBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

December 2024

Pearl Harbor Stories

J.C. England: Part Four

In 1960, Pan Am was looking for gorgeous women to fly the skies and provide comfort to their passengers. Of course, they had to pass their rigid weight inspection and their mandatory shapely leg review.



Vicky checked every box. She was beautiful, well-bred, and had received a proper education at the best private school available.

This is exactly what Pan Am was looking for. She could turn any man's head, was charming and witty, but best of all, she could mix a perfect

How many flirtations, invitations, and solicitations Vicky received is unknown. It was all part of what those "stewardesses" had to tolerate every day of the week to do their job.

But they also had the golden opportunity to meet successful, dynamic people. In the 1960's the passengers using commercial aircraft were a well-heeled group of mostly educated businessmen.



Vicky on the tarmac

Vicky did eventually settle on one man who was a handsome Navy officer. They married and started a family. Of course, they moved every two years, so daughter Lisa was born in Vancouver, and two years later, Bethany was born in Spain.

The two sisters were like night and day. Lisa liked fashion, and Bethany liked tie-dyed; Lisa loved visits to the beauty parlor, and Bethany wore a ponytail; Lisa shopped for name-brand shoes, and Bethany wore flip-flops; Lisa moved to Florida, and Bethany moved to Washington State.



Lisa, Vicky, Bob and Bethany

In 2004, the sisters were surprised when a second cousin, who they hadn't heard from in 20 years, reached out. She explained her deceased mother (J.C.'s sister) had been holding onto her brother's belongings. In the attic were several boxes of old yearbooks, photographs, newspaper clippings, and letters from J. C. England.

She asked if Bethany wanted them and, being intrigued, she replied...."sure, send it all to me."

Bethany opened the first box and could not believe what she saw.

Her grandpa, the man who her mother had never met, had been an extraordinary young man. He had been a top high school student, Yell King, actor, comedian, and life of every party.



J.C. England (center) was a cheerleader at his high school



J.C. riding on the weekend



J.C. was the lead in a class play

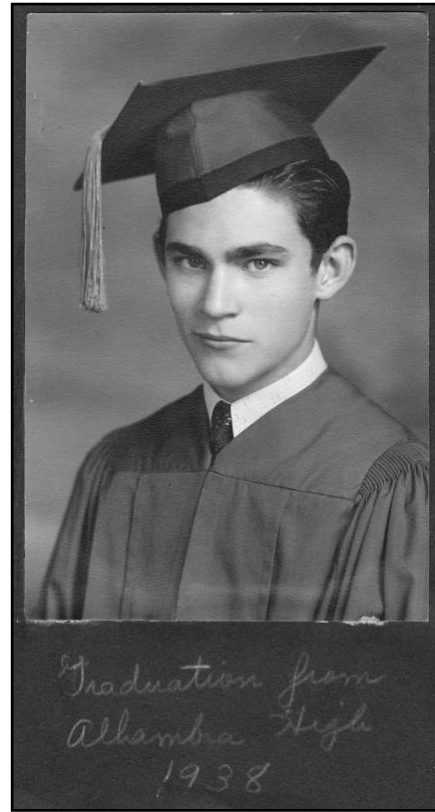


Clowning at the beach

This *good-ol-boy* with an Oklahoma drawl surpassed the California boys in everything he did. J.C. could sing and dance and was even elected student body president his senior year.



J.C. having fun on the beach with a buddy



Graduation day

J.C. England was a man with a plan.

America was still in the grips of the Depression, so J.C. decided to pursue a career in the military. He researched the requirements and discovered that after only two years of college, he would be conscripted immediately as an officer in the Navy.

There was no other profession in America where anyone could advance that quickly. J.C. made the calculations. If he worked hard, he could set himself up as a respected officer with a great salary and benefits, all before his 22nd birthday.

Bethany was astonished at the discoveries she made. This young man who became her grandfather was a fascinating person. She could not believe how every time she dug down through another layer of papers in those boxes, she found something new. Bethany was discovering things even her mother didn't know. Tragically, Vicky passed away in 2002, just two years before her father's boxes arrived in the mail.

The saddest part of the whole story was his tragic death in the attack on Pearl Harbor. J.C. had plenty of chances to abandon ship and save himself. Instead, he unselfishly went down below deck, again and again, rescuing others. As a result, he died and was lost forever.

This sad story makes what happens next even more surprising. In 2008, a man named Ray Emory contacted Bethany and informed her that he knew where her missing grandfather was buried.