



# OBON SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

December 2024

### Pearl Harbor Stories

#### J.C. England: Part Five

Ray Emory explained his story to Bethany.

He survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and then continued to serve in the military throughout the war. Afterward, he worked in architecture until he retired in 1985. That was when his real work began.

Ray had been thinking about the 2,341 servicemen who died during the attack on Pearl Harbor. He felt the Dept. of Defense was disorganized so he assigned himself the task of finding these missing men. This work went on for decades.



Ray Emory

He started with lists of their names and then investigated where they were from. He wrote to their families and obtained military records. He documented what they were doing on the morning of December 7th. His files grew larger and larger as he tracked down every known detail of every man who died. He even visited every grave to photograph their gravestone. He was a very thorough man.

In his research, he came across the files of an anthropologist named Mildred Trotter. In 1948, the U.S. Army asked the renowned anthropologist to spend one year at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii identifying the skeletal remains of war dead from the Pacific war zone.

Ray studied her reports and noticed she mentioned handling the remains of *J.C. England*.

The Army wanted to toss together random bones from other sailors to make a complete skeleton to give to the family, but Mildred objected. She would not allow sloppy, deceitful anthropological work to be done under her oversight.



Mildred Trotter

The U.S. Army did not want to start a fight with a famous anthropologist. They waited until her contract ended and she departed Hawaii. Then they gathered the skeletal remains of eleven unidentified people and buried them together. They labeled this mass grave "P1001."

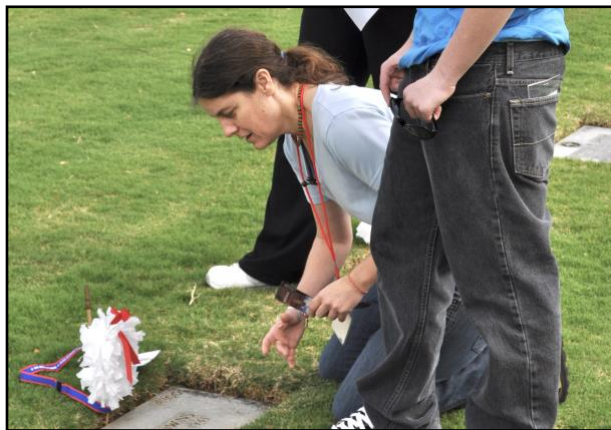
Bethany was speechless.

Ray Emory was telling her that the grandfather, who had been listed as "missing" for more than seventy years, was *NOT* missing. His remains were commingled with the remains of ten other sailors from the USS Oklahoma, and they were buried together in the Punch Bowl cemetery in Hawaii.

Bethany and her son Casey immediately booked a flight.



Casey, J.C.'s niece Katy, and Bethany searching for gravestone P1001



Bethany finds her grandfather



"Eleven Unknowns" Bethany's grandfather and ten others

Bethany found her grandfather's grave. But, now what?

Ray Emory told Bethany it was not impossible to exhume a military grave, but it was very difficult.

The process began with letters.

Bethany wrote to her Senators, to the Pentagon, to the Navy, and to the Department of Defense.

She began writing letters in 2008 and years later the Pentagon began to move. The grave was exhumed, the remains identified, and finally, in 2016, Bethany received the call stating that her grandfather had been positively identified and was ready to come home.

The question they asked; did she want to receive the remains in Hawaii or have them delivered.

J.C.'s parents had moved from California and lived out their lives in Colorado. Bethany tracked down where they had been buried and contacted the cemetery. She asked if any plots were available for purchase.

To her complete surprise, the cemetery administrator replied that J.C. England already had a grave.

His parents purchased side-by-side plots for themselves, and they purchased one additional plot alongside for J.C.

It is typical for mothers of missing servicemen all over the world to believe that one day their missing son will come home.

In the summer of 2016, Bethany remembered back 12 years to that phone call she received inquiring whether she wanted boxes of old photos and letters. A lot had happened.



Bethany receiving Grandfather J.C. England's flag during his burial with full military honors

Her ordeal was over.

Twelve years had passed since she first became acquainted with her missing grandfather. She persevered and was able to finally bring him home.

At the end of such a lengthy ordeal, most people would probably say to themselves...."I need to take a break."

But not Bethany.

She had more things to accomplish.

Next; J.C. England, the Final Chapter