

Waialae
Country Club
Alumni
Association

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Volume 28

Issue 3

Meetings Still on Hold

PAN AM ASSOCIATION



ALOHA CHAPTER

TIER 3 HAS NO EFFECTS FOR US

As of yesterday, February 25th, Hawaii has moved to Tier 3 which allows for a little more freedom to residents from the previous Tier 2. However, it has no effect on our meetings. Waialae Country Club can now host groups of up to 10 instead of the previous 5. Needless to say, we are still on hold as to our WCC meetings.

Below: continuation of Rush Clark's story which began in the February issue.

INTERNMENT IN LOS BANOS—THE REST OF THE STORY

The first indication that the prisoners in Los Banos had that help may be on the way was in July and August of 1944 when they recognized U.S. Navy carrier-based planes bombing Manila 30 miles away. In January of that year they had each received their second and last care package from the Red Cross. Rush Clark and Miravalle made a pact to save theirs (mostly small cans of food) and share them later as needed. Rush writes, "I had a rather intensive garden of camote leaves which grew very fast. I was using leaves and rice to make gruel, which had many vitamins. This assisted us greatly in getting through the period of almost no food."

Months later, in the first week of January, 1945, the most extraordinary thing happened. At 3 a.m., the Japanese guards woke up the committee members, gave them the keys to the rice stores and a radio and said all the guards were leaving for Manila. Later when the entire camp awoke, "there was jubilation, excitement and thrill. There was also the worry that we had no guards," Rush wrote. "We were free but what should we do? There was no security, no knowledge where troops of either side were. We all decided to stay where we were." A few of the Pan Am group who still had money made short trips to locate nearby villages where they bought food. "We ate well, gained a few pounds and saved our [last tins of food]. It was a very exciting, uncertain and unreal period." The camp committee was doling out three meals of rice per day instead of the former one meal and the mood of the prisoners had brightened.

"One week to the day, the Japanese guards came back at night, worried, bitter, upset, mean, tough, and things immediately changed. They took over the camp, requested the keys and radio back," reported Rush. Once again food was cut back and by the end of the month they were only getting a handful of rice with the husks on. The kitchen was closed and they were told to fend for themselves.

During the week in January when the guards were away, aircraft mechanic Ben Edwards had explored a bit outside the camp, making contact with the guerrillas. "Early in February, he went over the fence and did not come back. He sent word that he was in contact with the guerrillas and that something would be occurring. We had seen a low flying American observation aircraft circling our camp and thought he was taking photographs of the camp."

Rush said early on he made the decision to stay away from the guards because it only meant trouble. "One day when I was out with the wood squad, [under guard] an American aircraft flew over strafing the nearby railway line. We were huddled by the guards under a tree and stayed immobile. I found I was sitting next to a guard. We could hear the bombing in Manila. The guard said in English, 'tomorrow' and he made a crashing sound as though bombs were dropping on his head and he'd be killed. Then he said again 'tomorrow' and made a motion of slitting his throat and pointed to us. He was resigning himself to be killed by the Americans, but said he would take us with him!"

"The next morning at 7 a.m. we heard aircraft and rushed out of our hut to look. We saw 7 DC-3s and paratroopers were dropping from them. It was an exciting moment but we realized there were only a couple hundred men 30 miles from Manila and no visible support! The paratroopers dropped to the ground and no one shot at them! There was an eerie silence and we stood in shock. I was disappointed to think that only 200 men had been sent. About 4 minutes later shooting began from everywhere. The Philippine guerillas, lead by some Americans and Ben Edwards, were outside of each of the guard houses, firing into them. American paratroopers came inside the camp and fired on each guard house from the inside. Each one had an assignment and knew the entire layout of the camp. After about 15 minutes, each of the guard houses was silenced and the main guard house, which was adjacent to where the paratroopers had dropped, was finished off. . . The Americans looked big, tough, and hardy as they came running to the middle of the camp. They operated with great precision. They told us to assemble at a nearby playing field and to hurry. This was mystifying because how would we [leave] and what could these few paratroopers do? At that moment I noted overhead P-38s providing umbrella coverage. . . Nearing the field, we heard a great roar and there were 50 Amtraks just pulling up. We stepped aboard . . . I was on the 2nd Amtrak named "Hoosier Hotshots" of the 11th Airborne. We stopped at the water's edge to respond to fire from a Japanese machine gun position. Our men were tremendous. Cool, relaxed, battle-hardened, they did a careful job and it was eliminated. In the first Amtrack there were 10 wounded internees but nobody was killed. We went into the water and 10 miles across the bay in a slow flotilla of Amtraks. The water was calm and we had a fine air cover of various types of planes. . . We landed on the shore and the Amtraks went back for one more load."

The internees were taken to another prison where they were interviewed and processed. "We stayed two weeks before being taken by bus to Manila, then plane to Leyte. . . I was put on a ship and it stayed at anchor for two weeks in Leyte Harbor. The food was good and we were given military GI clothes to wear. The ship departed and went via the South Pacific to Hawaii, where we paused but did not make port, and went on to San Francisco. It was tremendous to be in good shape and we were all full of excitement [when we arrived.]"

Editorial note: In the first paragraph of his report Rush had written that his recollections were of his internment from January 2, 1942 to April 17, 1945, but the last few pages of his report were confusing as to time. I researched the liberation of the camp and found that it took place not in April but on February 23rd. After their evacuation, it took time to process them and get them aboard ship. Though he does not say so, his arrival date in San Francisco was probably on April 17th.

U.S. forces combined with Filipino guerillas to liberate the camp. The raid on Los Banos is considered to be one of the most successful rescue operations in modern military history, with 2147 civilian and military internees evacuated. Rush also mentioned there were 70 guards but, according to military history there were 250 Japanese in the camp. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that internees could only guess about such figures as the number of internees and guards in such a large camp. Books have been written about the raid and interested readers will have no problem doing their own research. Rush's account is unique in that it is his personal account from inside the prison camp. Rush ended his report with the names of the Pan Amers he could remember, recalling 22 of them. Ken Huebsch, with whom Rush and Miravalle were arrested by the Japanese 3 years earlier, went over the wall, was caught and killed. Another Pan Amer never came into the camp and they later heard he had been killed. The rest of the Pan Am group survived.

Rush continued to work for Pan American after the war. He retired in 1980 and passed away on May 29th, 2003. The lengthy report which I used for this story appeared in "Voices of My Peers" by Gene Dunning. Dunning started his career with Pan Am as a purser in 1942. After he retired in 1985, he collected stories from Pan Am employees. His intention was to put together a book of the experiences of Pan Am employees. For those who have a copy of the book, you will find Rush's 15-page report beginning on page 77.

POSTSCRIPT: DAUGHTER STEALS THE HEARTS OF THE JAPANESE

By the mid-1950s, Rush Clark was based in Australia for many years where he was in charge of South Pacific Operations. Rush's marriage had failed and it was in Australia about 10 years later that he met Shirleigh Ryan whom our members know as Shirleigh Clark. She had worked for the ad agency J. Walter Thompson at one time. When Pan Am advertised for someone to head the Advertising Department for the South Pacific region, she applied and was selected. She was the first female to head such a department for Pan Am. There were four other regional department heads and they all referred to her as "Lady Ryan". She covered Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tahiti, Samoa, and New Caledonia.

She reports that she had always referred to Rush as Mr. Clark. After about 3 years, Mr. Clark seemed interested in changing her name to Mrs. Clark and they got married in early 1970. She quit Pan Am at that time and eventually gave birth to their daughter, Barony. Two years later, Rush was transferred to Japan so the Clarks took up residence in Tokyo. All three loved Japan and the Japanese people. Shirleigh says that Rush had tremendous energy. Beside his work for Pan Am, he had always gotten involved with local philanthropic and service organizations wherever he was stationed and Tokyo was no exception. They hired a Japanese housekeeper and Barony loved her. Two-year-old Barony began to pick up Japanese and was fluent by the time she was four years old, though her parents never got past rudimentary Japanese.



Rush and Shirleigh Clark

According to a clipping from a Japanese newspaper, that was repeated in *The New York Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, when Barony was four, her parents arranged an audition for her with the Nippon Television network. She was an instant hit and was featured in a weekly half hour comedy show. She was known as "Bany-chan," Bany being a Japanese rendering of her first name and chan an affectionate suffix for children. She was cheerful, spontaneous and had a lot of energy.

By the time she was 6 she had her own weekly TV show in prime time with a Japanese master of ceremonies who was a comedian. The viewing audience was estimated to be about ten million.

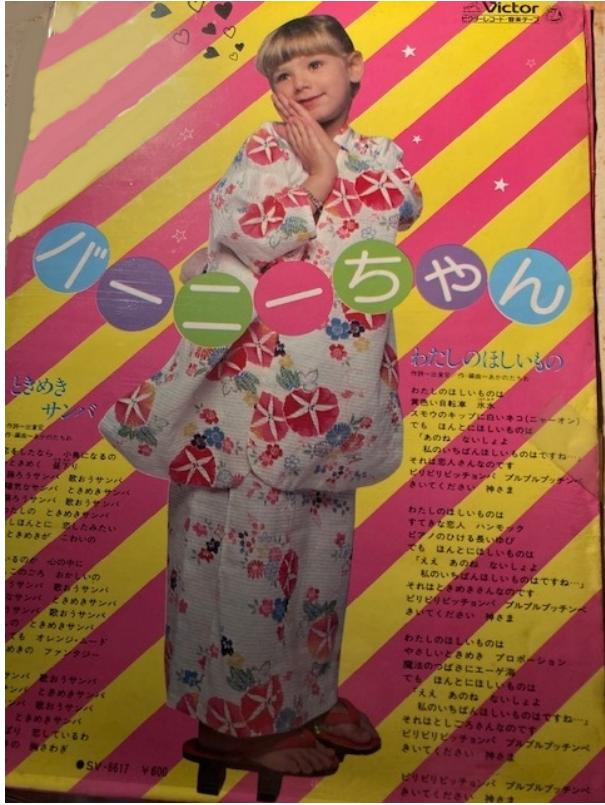


A few of the many clippings Shirleigh has from the 70s. See following page for more.



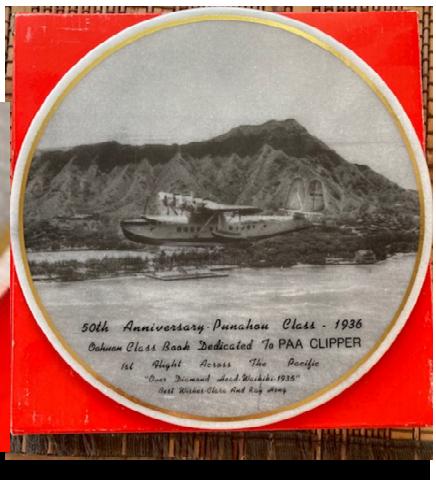
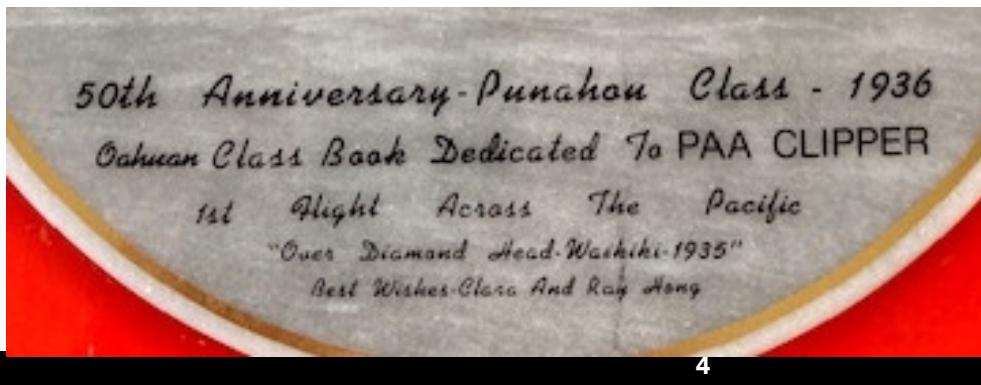
According to the news articles, a reporter wrote "her outgoing demeanor in the show is in striking contrast to the diffidence expected of Japanese children once they have left their carefree early years behind and have entered the tautly disciplined world of Japanese classrooms." When asked by a reporter once if she wanted to be in show business when she grew up, Bany-chan said, "I'm not quite sure. My mommy would be better to answer that." She thought a moment and added, "When I'm 20 years of age, I think I will be working hard on something else, like dancing and using my brain." Shirleigh said she and Rush were not allowed on the set or at interviews because the TV executives felt they would influence her. "As if I could speak Japanese!"

In 1978, Rush was transferred to Honolulu. The Japanese would not release them from their daughter's contract so, for the better part of a year, Shirleigh and Barony would go back to Japan once a month for 4 days. Below are two more clippings from Shirleigh's extensive collection.



PAN AM PEOPLE

Judy Silcox has a new address and apparently no longer has email. Friends can send her a note at 6140 Lombardo Center S. Seven Hills, OH 44131-5560. . . Welcome to new member **Chris Blaydon**, retired captain. Chris and his wife, Mary, reside in Langhorne, PA. His email address is CBlayd@aol.com. . . Marilyn Boock sent the photo at bottom right of a plate featuring a Clipper Ship. (I have enlarged the dedication on the plate so it is legible to our readers.) Marilyn purchased the plate



in the Punahou Thrift Shop in 1990 when her daughter was a student there. She recently found it among "her things". She writes, "I think it was given by the couple [Clare and Roy Hong] to their classmates. A Pan Am theme was utilized throughout the 1936 Year book. The 1936 McKinley High School yearbook was also dedicated to the Pan Am arrival." . . Marilyn added a note that **Shuko Fujita**, one of our stewardesses, plays lawn bowling at Ala Moana Park. "She says there are several sets of balls with PAA logos on them. They are very old and she has no idea of their origins. PAA certainly left its mystique throughout our culture." . . I need a reminder. Someone sent me a couple of photos but I seem to have lost the information that went with the photos. If anyone recognizes photos with the titles of "1975 Mary's Plane" and "Heading Home", taken at the PA ticket counter, please remind me about them: alohadvz@gmail.com. Thank you.

BLUE ANGEL # 4 NOW AT PEARL HARBOR AVIATION MUSEUM

A U.S. Navy plane, previously flown by members of the famous Blue Angels, is the newest addition to the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum. The aircraft, also known as an F/A-18C Hornet, was delivered in early February and was assembled and readied for display. It is now on view in Hangar 79. On the right is a photo of Blue Angel #4 being off-loaded at the museum.



The photo above was taken by UA Captain Michael Donnelly. He took the photo from his cockpit seat over the Bering Sea. (The aircraft above was an MD-11.) It is one of many he sent to me some months after his last flight before retirement in April 2003. His wife, Mary Lynne, a lovely lady, was traveling with him. I had the privilege of being the purser on that trip from San Francisco to Hong Kong and back. Along with many photos, he sent a letter thanking me, on behalf of the cabin crew, for making their trip a memorable one. It has always been a tradition that the crew helps the retiree and spouse to end their career with a good memory.



Cartoon above Courtesy of Mark Lynch via Cartoon Stock



COVID WORKOUT



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(Note: area code for all phone numbers is 808 unless otherwise specified.)

Newsletter Items:

If you have any news item that would be of interest, please call Diane VanderZanden at 200-4322 or send mail to 500 Lunalilo Home Road, #26-D, Honolulu, HI 96825-1734 or by e-mail: alohadvz@gmail.com.

Members, we encourage you to print this page and give the application below to your Pan Am friends who are not members. If you are a former employee and not a member of the Aloha Chapter of the Pan Am Association, we encourage you to complete and submit the application below and help keep our association healthy. Thank you.

PAN AM ASSOCIATION—ALOHA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please check all applicable boxes and complete all applicable lines.

- Renewal New Member
 Retiree—Pan Am retiree who received lump sum pension or is receiving PBGC checks.
 Associate—All other former Pan Am employees
 Ohana—Surviving spouse, child or relative of above; sponsored person with close connection to Pan Am (subject to BOD approval).

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Would you like to receive the newsletter by e-mail, which is in color? Yes _____ No _____

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- Annual Membership: \$ 30 US Residents \$ 35 Overseas residents
Lifetime Membership: \$150 US Residents \$175 Overseas residents

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