

**The Japanese Language School Archival Project**

*In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, correspondence, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS graduates to the War effort in the Pacific, the successful occupation of Japan, the creation of Japanese language programs across the country, and the development of cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.*

**Holtom Reprise**

"Gerald (or Gerry, as we called him), was one of twelve who had some background in Japanese that were recruited by Captain John Shively in 1941, commissioned, and sent to the University of Hawaii to study there in anticipation of the upcoming war.

Besides Gerald, there were Donald Nugent, "Mac" Maclaughlin, John Merrill, John Pelzel, Eugene Bordman, John Erskins, Paul Dull, Richard Gard, Bill Shaw, Gene Gregg, and myself. The Naval Language School started in Berkeley, California about the same time during the summer of 1941. After the first exam, Gregg, Shaw, and I didn't make the cut, to use sports language and were sent to the mainland. (They got into Berkeley early in 1942 and I got in with the class in June of that year.)

I got to know Gerry pretty well for the short time we were associated, he tried to help me improve my Nihongo, and we talked a lot about Japan and had

a few drinks together, as well. Gerry struck me as the kind who would volunteer for the Raiders and I mourned his passing.

In 1943, I joined the Second Raider Battalion, (formerly Carlson's) during the Bougainville Campaign and many of the original members were still with the Battalion at that time. They told me that Gerry was fearless and that they respected him very much. They said the command was in a dilemma on what to do with intelligence material they had captured, but they did bring it back with them.

I am glad to see the final episode of Gerald P. Holtom's life [end] with the recovery of his remains and [their return] home from there. My best wishes go to his family, as well."

John H. "Jack" Pierce  
Aka "Watanabe"  
JLS 1943

[Ed. Note: Jack Pierce also sent along a page from the Raider Patch from which the item below was taken.]

**From the Raider Patch**

**RP Editor's Note:** In a letter to Dr. Holtom, Gerald's father, Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson wrote, "On the morning we landed at Makin, Gerry was with me. We captured the post office and Gerry came to me and said that he intended to examine some Japanese notices posted on the bulletin board. I told him that I would be along the road leading to the right flank of our position. The battle was in progress.

He was looking for me along this road when a sniper shot him, the bullet passing through his left chest and emerging behind his left shoulder. He lived only ten seconds. He was buried where he fell. His face indicated that he died without pain. He was wholly at peace." (In closing, there were other sentiments about Capt. Holtom and regrets). It was signed: Sincerely, Evans

F. Carlson, Lt.Col., USMCR, Commanding.

**322 Active Contacts:  
69% from Earliest Classes**

Over the past months we have been culling *Who's Who*, referrals made during original calls, and several different address lists from the *Hudson Collection* for further addresses of JLS attendees. In addition, contacts provided by those receiving *The Interpreter* have aided us considerably. Since October, we have gained 26 new contacts. However, most of the addresses reflect the only the earliest Boulder classes. These were the former JLOs upon whom Captain Pineau depended for historical data, information and stories regarding the JLS and its WWII contribution.

**7/42 - 7/43 Transfers**

19/60 Contacted  
10/60 *Who's Who*  
17/60 Uncontacted  
21/60 Passed Away

**7/42 - 7/43 Entrants**

204/660 Contacted  
63/660 *Who's Who*  
313/660 Uncontacted  
140/660 Passed Away

The Archives has contacted 31% of the JLS entrants or kin from the first two year-groups, a fairly good showing. We located 10% in *Who's Who* and 46% were either not located or did not respond to phone calls and letters. 22% of the first two year groups are listed as passed away. Regrettably, this may be a low count, as it does not include those we have been unable to reach.

Our remaining 98 contacts are from the two remaining classes of 965 entrants, or roughly 10% of the total. 99, or a little over 10% were found in *Who's Who*. I use the word "entrant" because our official list is of those who entered not those who graduated.

**7/43-7/44 Entrants**  
250

**7/44-7/46 Entrants**  
715

Unfortunately, those admitted after July 1943 outnumbered those who went before. A significant amount of these graduated after the war ended. In addition, many were assigned to take Russian, Chinese, or other Asian languages after the school branched out and had its name changed to the Oriental Language School. The last classes had to be shifted to Oklahoma A&M at Stillwater for completion of their courses. Most of these graduates did not serve in the War, or if they did, served in stations unrelated to the effort against the Japanese. These OLS graduates have proven difficult to reach, except through *Who's Who*. Furthermore, these later classes had no reunion organizer, no historian, and no unifying single language expertise. The wash-out rate for these later years may have been high.

So while the first two, year-groups account for 43% of the total entrants, 720 out of the total 1685, our contacts in the first two year groups account for 69% of our total contacts or 223/321.

David M. Hays  
Instructor/Archivist

[Ed. Note: You can tell I was trained as a social historian, all numbers and percentages. I did not count all of the data for the last two year-groups because with only 10% of the data, what we have may be misleading.]

**Verner F. Chaffin  
Papers being Processed**

Verner Chaffin, JLS 1944, donated a substantial body of his World War II and Korean War naval records to the Archives in November. Ms. Cynthia Ploucher was given the task of organizing the collection and producing a guide. The collection largely consists of US Navy orders, personnel actions, official correspondence, and other forms. We expect the remainder of his collection will follow in the near future.

*[Ed. Note: I hope you enjoyed the partial maps of Boulder from the Boulder Bus Schedule, 1946]*

### **The Facility and Hours**

Archives is located in the basement of Norlin Library at the east end of the historic quadrangle on the Boulder campus of the University of Colorado.

The Archives is open MWF, 1100-1700, but is staffed from 0800-1700, M-F. Out of town researchers may arrange for early and every day entry. Photocopying and both photographic and audiovisual reproduction services are available.

### **To Donate**

If you wish to donate your materials, please contact the Archives to insure the proper mailing address. For large shipments, the archives will reimburse expenses. Upon receipt of materials we will send the donator a deed of gift with instructions. The donator must return to the Archives signed deeds of gift. The Archives will then provide copies of preliminary inventories and guides to donors and donor families when available. Feel free to contact us at any time.

### **Contact**

Bruce Montgomery, Curator,  
or David Hays, Archivist,  
University of Colorado at Boulder  
Campus Box 184  
Boulder, Colorado, 80309-0184

Phone (303) 492-7242

Fax (303) 492-3960

Email:  
montgomb@spot.colorado.edu  
[arv@colorado.edu](mailto:arv@colorado.edu)

Website:  
[www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/arv/  
frontpage.htm](http://www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/arv/frontpage.htm)

### **Donations Accepted**

There are those of you who may not have papers to donate to the Archives, but who may wish to support the Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project in other ways. We are setting up a cash account to fund Archives activities regarding the JLS/OLS Project. To date, the Archives has spent in excess of \$10,000 of its own funds on the project. If you wish to donate, make your check out to The University of Colorado and mail it to our contact address.