

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.

Institute of Asiatic Affairs

At CU, 1943-1950

From November 1943 to 1950, and perhaps later, the University of Colorado supported an Institute of Asiatic Affairs. C.C. Eckhardt, Chair of the History Department was the first director of the institute. As part of a broad promotion of mutual understanding and reciprocity. Eckhardt believed that every university should work toward constructive post-war ideals.

The Institute's goal of postwar understanding was addressed through the increased purchase of books on Asian topics, close cooperation with the JLS, the sponsorship of conferences and speakers such as Professor John Decker, JLS Director Glenn W. Shaw, and Lt Jg. Earl Swisher, all JLS graduates.

Professor Earl Swisher, the director after the departure of the JLS in 1946, kept up the effort.

The Passing of FDR

It is raining tonight, this night of an unbelievably tragic day. And all about the lounge are the green covered copies of the Advertiser with its black banner line reading "2nd Extra" and the sorrowful three words on the first line of the head, "Death Takes President."

Surely there has only been one other night like this in our country's history, that April night almost exactly eighty years ago when another great man lay in death and the nation mourned. It would be hard to say which was more tragic, but there is no need to make comparisons. The awful hand of fate could never have struck more bitterly than it did today.

I had just left BOQ 1 after grabbing a bite of lunch and was waiting for the bus when I met a couple of the fellows from the office, talking about a "cerebral hemorrhage". Out of casual curiosity, I asked in a completely offhand way, "What cerebral hemorrhage?" The answer was like a big fist landing without warning and with full force. It was so incredible that I instinctively said, "You're kidding!"

The news had just been announced briefly over the loud speaker systems in the BOQ's, and it passed swiftly by word of mouth through our bus as we rode up toward the office. When we passed the headquarters building, I looked down toward the flagpole, and it looked like a large white sliver, bare and neglected, as the colors clung limply to it at the halfway point. There was not so much as a flutter of life in that flag—it just clung there, sagged against the pole.

Work during the afternoon seemed to be tackled more or less half-heartedly throughout the room, and every little while a group of the fellows would start to exchange scraps of information, trying to piece together the picture. After work, I came down to the BOQ and

have been sitting here next to the lounge radio on the second deck almost the whole time since then, except for the dinner hour when I went over to the mess hall with Rog. When President Lincoln died, the funeral cortege passed slowly through the miles of mourning city and countryside for a full week, but tonight this great expression of international grief has been coming through our loudspeaker hour after hour from every part of the country, from Europe, and from here in the Pacific. Somehow, there just doesn't seem anything worth doing tonight except to sit and listen and try to understand a loss that seems so amazingly personal.

Albert to Muriel Weissberg,

April 12, 1945

Weissberg Papers

US Navy & Marine Japanese Language Schools For World War II

Part III: USMC Schools

Apprehension over the loss of a source of Japanese language officers with the termination of the Tokyo School led the US Marine Corps to open a crash course for university students who were already moderately fluent in non-military Japanese. Twelve students were admitted in July 1941. Eight completed the course "suddenly" on December 7, 1941. The four who were dropped were subsequently admitted to Navy and Army JLO Programs. Japanese language faculty from the University of Hawaii and School Director, John Shively, handled the instructional duties. Nicholas Ballard, a recent graduate of the Tokyo School, commanded the school. The graduates served mostly in combat units throughout the War. The Marine Corps was not happy with its officers' course and decided to discontinue it by becoming a partner in the Navy Oriental Language School in Boulder.

In June of 1942, however, the USMC opened an enlisted program, an entirely distinct program not offered by the Navy. Each month, between 25 and 50 graduates of marine boot camp were selected from platoons on the basis of their IQ scores, personal interests, evidence of foreign language facility, and Drill Instructor recommendations. Each class started at full speed. During the first several weeks of the course, most students were dismissed on the basis of poor weekly test performance. A 10-15% graduation rate was not unusual.

The purpose of the school was to prepare marines to be combat interpreters with marine infantry battalions. Graduates were expected to interrogate prisoners, persuade enemy soldiers to surrender, look out for the safety of civilians, and screen captured documents. To achieve those goals, the marines studied the Naganuma curriculum on an abbreviated scale for six months. After graduation, many worked for several months practicing the language by interrogating POWs at prison camps. These enlisted marines worked as interpreters in campaigns across the Pacific, and during repatriation, research, and construction projects throughout the Far East after the War.

I estimate from remaining records that 160 enlisted marines graduated from 25 graduating classes.

Professor Irwin L. Slesnick

Alumnus Comment

I have just received the *Colorado Alumnus* with the article about the "Boulder Boys". I am getting increasingly steamed about the brush-off given the women, as if they were just an appendix. What ever the attitude toward women may have been in 1943, it is unconscionable to ignore their contribution today. Among the internationally known scholars and translators is the late Helen Craig McCullough. Her stature

is surely well known to the likes of DeBary and Seidensticker.

"Boulder Boys", indeed. It is a cute sobriquet, but manifestly unfair. Your author might have mentioned the CU alums who went through the school, namely, yours truly, Ed Seidensticker, Odette Jensen and Jane Bein Henson. As for occupation: personnel, educators and business entrepreneurs, [one need only] look up the bios in our reunion booklet, called *Kore wa Hon des'*, now that's nostalgia. Let us have today's liberated women give us our due!

*Sincerely, Marylou (Siegfried)
& Norton Williams, JLS 1944*

[Editor's Note: Despite my attempt to include such statements as men (and women), I failed to include noted female graduates in Ms. Watenabe's article. In any case, that would not have affected the title, "Boulder Boys", at all. Mr. Seidensticker made a similar comment about being uncomfortable with that term. Can anyone remember where and when the term first appeared? I know it was used at the Pomona Conference. It could be that Capt. Pineau or Bill Hudson used the term, as well. Perhaps one of you can shed some light.]

\$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.

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