

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.

OOOklahoma II

I was glad to see Bob Bruns' letter in *the Interpreter* for June 15 about the last class to be sent to Stillwater from Boulder. I was in it too and my memories are much the same as his. I do remember "OOOOKLAMOMA" being played daily in the dining room as one class after another was tagged to go south. Someone spread the rumor that there were serious water shortages in Oklamoma and the bath conscious *sensei* who were also being sent along with us to the new school were terrified.

Bob Bruns's memory fails him in one regard. There were many Ed's at the school, but no Ed Sherman. That was me – Bill Sherman – who gave the speech at our graduation.

Bill Sherman
JLS 1946

[Ed. Note: I spent my Officer's Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in the winter of 1975. Whenever we watched TV, and much to our consternation, every TV ad would trumpet, "OOOOkklahoma..." or "Oklahoooma, Okay!" I still haven't recovered.]

Letter from a Japanese Warrant Officer to the Governmental Authorities of Japan

Calvin W. Dunbar, USMC (ret.), provided us a copy of the following letter:

Gentlemen:

We are the prisoners of war who fought this futile war on the islands of Guam, Iwo, Okinawa, and others. Living now in comfort in the physical universe under the favorable treatment of U. S. A., we express our heartfelt thanks to the U. S. A. From the view-point of the spiritual universe, however, we are getting along in the depths of despair.

All of us know how most Japanese hate the prisoners of war like us according to their old custom and tradition. Some of them probably think why didn't we kill ourselves as the Japanese militarists had taught us, and the other of them might have decided that Japan lost the war because we, the personnel in the front, did not fight admirably. Regarding those questions and opinions against us, there might be many different answers, according to each one's thought. But, in general, we feel we were deceived by the prewar Japanese government. We believed in their assurance that Japan was the strongest nation in the world, that Japan was the divine land, and Gods would save our fatherland, that the spiritual power can conquer the material one and that we would never be defeated in war, since Japan had occupied the East India Islands. We think no one can really acknowledge American fighting power except the personnel who fought against them on the bloody islands like us. Now we are heartily convinced what the militarists had said before the war was false propaganda.

Before the invasion we and our glorious dead comrades wondered what the Japanese

fleets were doing, while we were suffering from shortage of food and many of us died of malnutrition on account of the activity of American submarines and bombers.

Under this condition, the invasion began. How terrific were "the hair-cutting bombardments," which raked all parts of the island! So hellish were the enemy plane's diving and in such great number that we could do nothing against them. Hard, desperate fighting continued. Commanders shouted, "Hold out! Stand out till reinforcement come." Breathing with difficulty, the many wounded asked just before their death, "Haven't the ...Japanese Fleets...come yet?" Using only rifles and grenades, we fought as well as we could, for most guns and machine guns were destroyed by shells during the first three days. But the long-awaited-for day had never come and we couldn't defeat the overwhelming power which had a lot of materials.

Scattering into jungles or caves, after the last attack in full remaining force was of no avail, we had a little time to consider that.

Although we were not killed unfortunately, we did our best. But why had the "Imperial Headquarters" forsaken us? Didn't Japan have any more power to give us a helping hand? If it be so, why didn't they expect it before the war? Everything of American material was superior beyond comparison. It was the responsibility of the military leaders who started this hopeless war and tricked us into fighting that we lost the campaign. Therefore, it was a foolish thing for us to commit suicide for them. You can guess what was the condition of we who could not get any food and shelter, and yet did not want to kill ourselves.

The cursed war is over. Under the new renewed peace our fatherland must be striving for construction of peaceful

Japan along the line of democracy. Some intelligent people who know the democracy, perhaps understand our position as P.O.W., but many of others might not. We hope, however, the Japanese government understands this, because you have been reforming any militaristic idea in Japan. If we could not know what you think about us and get your stirring remarks to us, how we would be encouraged to live!

Expecting Japanese people's abhorrence of us – however it may be we still wish to return to our native land – without knowing the date of our repatriation no one of us are hopeful. We feel as if we have been cast on a dark, endless and lonely desert.

We know you have been pressed by much work to solve many problems of Japan herself, but if it is at all possible I would like to have you express to us that, at least, the statement of our native country do not ignore us and that we will have a brilliant future again after we come back to Japan.

Please brighten our life! This is our earnest desire.

(I would ask your forgiveness for my writing this letter in poor English to be censored by the military authorities of U. S. A.)

- Yamamoto, Asajiro on behalf of the P.O.W. in the Island Command Stockade, Guam, February 19, 1946.

[Ed. Note: Yamamoto was a warrant officer (Junshikan) in the Japanese Army at Guam.]

**Phi Beta Kappa
Assisting with JLS Project**

With the assistance of Aubrey Farb, we were finally able to gain the help of PBK in locating uncontacted JLS grads. We may be able to assist them in expanding their rosters, as well.

They thought they would publish a story or two in the *PBK KEY*.

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.

\$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.

Contact

Bruce Montgomery, Curator,
or David Hays, Archivist,
Archives,
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

New JLS Website:

<http://www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/arv/col/jlsp.htm>

New Collections

The following are further collections promised or recently received by the Archives:

- Earnest Beath

\$Donations Received

The Archives has recently received generous donations from:

- Eleanor Beath
- Sydney D. Brown
- James V. Martin