

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.

**Some Observations
Regarding the
"Summer Group"
(June 1942 to July 1943)**

Members of the first three JLS groups to graduate at Boulder (December 1942, February 1943, and July 1943 respectively) received their USNR or USMCR commissions at about their time of graduation. Prior to being commissioned, students were civilian Naval Agents or Yeoman 2nd Class in the USNR. Those students enlisted or commissioned before arrival at Boulder retained their status until graduation, at which time the enlisted were commissioned, and those already commissioned retained their respective ranks.

Since most local draft boards did not recognize the civilian Naval Agent status as officially being in the Armed Forces, draft calls were sent to some. So, in August 1942, the "Summer Group" Naval Agents became enlisted Yeoman 2nd Class and therefore free from draft considerations. Though enrolled

in the JLS, we were also registered as students of the University of Colorado, wore civilian clothes at all times, attended campus dances, hikes, and other activities when schedules permitted, and were a part of the CU student body. Off campus, travelling on trains and elsewhere, not wearing a uniform often brought a taunting, but probably envious, comment of "draft dodger" or "4-F" (determined by draft board to be physically unfit for military duty). Uniforms seen then on the CU campus were those of the NROTC student cadets, enlisted Navy students attending a Naval Communications School located at CU, and the occasional previously commissioned or enlisted JLS student. After July 1943, all USNJLS students wore uniforms, since they were commissioned immediately upon reporting for duty.

The heavy USNJLS study schedule at CU was punctuated by invited home visits with the sensei on the USNJLS faculty, exploration trips to nearby Front Range lakes and other scenic places, and regular exercise events which included soccer games and water polo. I remember owning the only bicycle on the CU campus a distinction when mentioned to a Pearl Street cycle store manager about 15 years ago, he found to be incredulous. It was a typical single-speed bike on which I ventured, with some walking, to the top of Flagstaff and almost burned out the coaster brakes on the descent. All in all, most USNJLS students were delighted to be located in Boulder. Had it not been for the flawed military decision to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast, while at the same time not bothering those living in much more sensitive Hawaii, The U.S. Navy Japanese Language School would have remained for the duration of WW2 at UC Berkeley.

Dan S. Williams
JLS 1943

**Albert L. Reiner, JLS 1944
Passes Away**

Albert L. Reiner passed away on May 22, 2001 in Santa Cruz, Ca. He graduated from Harvard College in 1936. He served as a Lieutenant in Naval Intelligence and was attached to the Staff of Admiral Kelly Turner for the Invasion of Okinawa. His knowledge in Japanese and the decoding of the enemy's plans resulted in a Navy Commendation. Upon his discharge he served the U. S. government in posts in France, Chile, and Costa Rica using his expertise in the languages of those countries. After leaving government service he returned to his original love, that as Professor of Languages teaching at Briarcliff College in New York and then as Head of the Romance Language Dept. at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. Upon his retirement a Chair was named in his honor.

Celebrities Overseas

Letter to wife, 1945:

If I tell you how I got here you wont believe it – but here it is and it's the truth so help me. I came up from the Marine Airfield on Okinawa to Omura with an "old friend of mine" – Tyrone Power, the movie star! He's a Marine 1st Lieutenant and won his wings at Corpus Christi, Texas. He pilots a Marine Corps Plane from Okinawa to the Japanese city of Omura, located just 30 miles below Sasebo.

It was very funny, the whole thing. When Mattison and I were at the Marine Airfield to inquire about possible transportation, they told us to see Lt. Power who may be going up in his plane. They pointed him out to us and neither of us recognized him – Mattison approached him and asked blithely, "Are you the Mr. Powers who is flying to Omura?" Tyrone looked up quizzically, as if asking himself don't these blokes ever go to the

movies, and who hasn't heard of the great Tyrone Power and would fail to recognize his flashing smile? He resignedly replied that he was Mr. Powers – and at that instant something clicked within me and I realized in a flash who he really was. Mattison however, in spite of my persistent efforts to nudge him, went naively on, and wound up with a flourish, "Thank you, Mr. Powers." He was quite appalled when I told him about it later, although neither of us bothered to explain the mistake to Tyrone. He's quite a nice guy, with a wonderful physique and dark brown eyes, dark complexioned, sparkling white teeth – everything you could expect of a Hollywood star. I think he rather enjoyed not being recognized and catered to by us because later he seized every opportunity to come over and chat. He's not conceited at all, and everyone at the airfield likes him. On top of that, he's a very good pilot and takes his business seriously.

Verner Chaffin
JLS 1944

Contest!

You Find the Error!

The editor, David Hays, has decided to institute a bi-weekly contest, "You Find the Error". The readership is challenged to find errors in fact, spelling, intent, and implication in *the Interpreter*. The contest has been underway informally since the beginning and we already have had many winners. The winners get to bask in the knowledge that they were right and we were wrong, a feeling that can last until the next issue. "In Jest, folks!"

Actually, the readership is reminded that our intention is to honor, not insult. But be forewarned the contest will go on. We will make mistakes. We welcome any and all corrections.

[Ed. Note: I apologize for implying that Ms. Kschinka's memory was inexact. Her spelling, which carried

a ? mark, was in fact correct. A recent compilation of Sensei conducted by Ms. Jessica Arntson revealed two Sensei by the name of Takeo and Kathleen Okamoto. He was a Teaching Assistant who came on board in July of 1942. Ms. Arntson has found more than 150 names from the University of Colorado Board of Regents Minutes, so we have a much better, more accurate roster of the Sensei. We also found 20 more possibles for our contact list by comparing the 150 names and the Axiom Home white pages. Jessica is conducting a survey with Sensei and Sensei kin. She is planning an article in the future. Again, Mrs. Kschinka, I am sorry.]

In Remembrance of the Fallen

We at the Archives wish to offer you our hope that all of your loved ones escaped harm in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The families and friends of our faculty, staff, and students are safe. At the same time we wish to take this time to extend our condolences to all who lost family and friends in that malevolent assault on the United States. We will try to act during these times, in keeping with the example your generation provided.

- David M. Hays

\$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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