

The Interpreter

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Our Mission

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, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.

**Clarene Suter
WAVE, JLS 1944**

[This is a sketch of Clarene Suter Saarni, class of 1941, Oberlin College.]

I was born in Warren, Pennsylvania, on November 1, 1919. My dad was a violinist and taught me to play the violin—I didn't keep it up, unfortunately, but shall always be grateful to him for giving me the love of music.

I went to Oberlin with no thought of a language major at first, but was drawn to German and French and took a double major. Japanese? I think my interest in Oriental languages came from my brother, Dr. Rufus Suter, who was a sinologist and worked for the Library of Congress. I always loved the calligraphy of Oriental languages—no doubt an inspiration from Rufus.

I also was inspired to learn Japanese by the fact that I started out in Washington, D.C., in the Army Signal Corps. I learned the rudiments of Japanese, but was constantly frustrated because I wanted to learn more.

Everything came together at the U.S. Naval Language School in Boulder, Colorado, which I attended for fifteen months. Everything about Boulder makes me nostalgic. What a beautiful campus—what friendly, helpful faculty and support staff! I especially remember the excellent, inspirational teaching of Susumu Nakamura, Grace Nakasone, Mr. Ashikaga—and there were so many more, but names escape me. Oh yes, Florence Walne and a Lieutenant Conover also stand out.

In Washington, D.C., I met my future husband, Roy Waino Peitso Saarni. Roy was in the Navy at the time; his assignment was as a Photographic Interpreter. Roy was of Finnish descent. Both fathers, (Mr. Peitso was his birth father; Mr. Saarni, the second husband of Evi Saarni, Roy's mother) were Finns.

Roy and I had a marvelous, adventuresome, exciting 46-year marriage. He was a Forest Ranger with the U.S. Forest Service. We moved from forest to forest. We started out in the Cleveland National Forest near San Diego; later we moved to the Inyo Forest, the Tahoe forest, and at least eight more forests in the course of his career. We often lived in quite primitive conditions such as log cabins with wood stoves, outdoor toilets (I think Roy called them "Chic Sales"), and had to take baths in old fashioned washtubs.

In the midst of all this I managed to get an M.A. in German at the University of Wisconsin, and later another M.A. (well, actually an M.Ed.) at the University of San Diego. My career then became Special Education. I was a supervisor of student teachers at U.S.D. for twenty years before I hung up my hat and retired.

Also, in the midst of all this, Roy and I had a family of four children. John Suter, our oldest, is the son of my deceased brother, Joe Suter. Patty Saarni Rife is our oldest daughter. She

is the mother of eight-week-old Thomas Roy Rife. Lisa is my youngest daughter and has a delightful four-year-old son, Andrew. Richard is the youngest of the four, a graduate of the University of California at Santa Cruz and the father of Moses and Nelson Saarni.

My husband died in 1989. He is sorely missed by us all. I am filling in the empty spaces by taking classes in creative writing and by volunteering in classes for youngsters who are physically challenged.

Life is good.

Mary Clarene Suter Saarni
JLS 1944

WAVE 50th Reunion Entry, 1993

[Ed. Note: Our attempts to find Ms. Saarni have been unsuccessful.]

**The 4th Regiment, USMC
& the "China Marines"
(5)**

World War II's beginning, in 1937 for the Chinese with Japan's invasion, and in 1939 for Europe with Germany's blitzkrieg, quickly changed the missions of the Marines and their military and naval allies in Shanghai. In 1937, the Japanese quickly conquered the Shanghai area, completely surrounding the International Settlement and the French Concession, before moving inland to the "Rape of Nanking" and farther into interior China. More than ever, the two foreign areas were havens for not only foreigners but for their Chinese residents and as many more Chinese as could achieve entry, with or without permission. That condition was portrayed accurately in the movie, *Empire of the Sun*. The Japanese promptly commenced a continuous and increasing harassment of the neutral enclaves and their military protectors. This required the utmost in level-headed, diplomatic military conduct to prevent the "emergency incidents" desired by the

Japanese to justify their seizure and occupation of the two areas. The onset of hostilities in Europe in 1939 caused the departure of British forces from Shanghai's International Settlement to reinforce Singapore. After the Fall of France in 1940, the Vichy French Government ordered Shanghai's French Concession to obey the orders of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis governments. Suddenly, the US Marines were foreign Shanghai's only protectors.

Their lightly armed defense of the status quo, surrounded by actually, if not officially, hostile land, naval, and air forces, was an untenable position for the 4th Marines, who could be overrun and captured by the Japanese at any moment of the latter's choosing. Increased harassment by, and continuous threats of doom from, the Japanese Army units confronting the Marines, plus the reality of Japan's demonstrated and unchecked growth in land, sea, and air military power during the four years of confrontation, produced, finally, orders for USMC withdrawal from Shanghai. Accordingly, half of the Regiment sailed for Manila on the liner *President Madison*. On Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1941. The second half embarked on the *President Harrison* the following day, marching with full Regimental Band to the dock, along streets filled with thousands of onlookers expressing best wishes for the popular Leathernecks. That an era had ended for the Marine Corps, and that the party was over for Shanghai, was the realistic sentiment expressed by many there.

Dan S. Williams
JLS 1943

[Ed. Note: I find it hard to imagine the anxiety and uncertainty that must have accompanied the feelings of good wishes on the faces of those waving to the departing 4th Marines.]

Foster Parmelee, Jr.
Princeton, 1946, OLS (1945-)

Foster Parmelee died at his home in Featherston, New Zealand, July 18, 1997. Foster grew up in Buffalo and attended Exeter. He took part in the ROTC until the Marines tempted him away through the V-12 program and Japanese language training, which he later used in Korea. Returning to Princeton, Foster wrote his thesis on the St. Lawrence Seaway and headed toward a career as an economist. He worked in the State Dept.'s

intelligence and research section and with the Agency for International Development. His travels and assignments took him to London, Paris, Geneva, Korea, Japan, the two African Congos, Saigon, Manila, Bangkok, and eventually to Wellington, New Zealand. Foster's peripatetic life was such that he married four times, having five children and three grandchildren. For the last 20 years, Foster lived in New Zealand with his fourth wife, Helene, teaching high school, playing tennis, raising retrievers, and engaging in horticulture. A

number of Foster's friends and family assembled July 26 at the Bethesda Unitarian Church, near Washington, D.C. His daughter brought his 50th reunion jacket to the service; Alan Lukens represented the class. Foster leaves his four wives, Jean, Terry, Mary Lou, and Helene, children Suzanne, Judith Barnhard, Steven, James, and John, as well as his brother, Alfred. The class will miss this fascinating and loyal classmate, whose devotion to Princeton was indeed remarkable; we send our deep sympathy to Foster's family

and friends.

*The Class of 1946
Princeton Alumni Weekly -
10/08/97*

Gerald Green, USMCEL

In the article "Doyle 'Gocho' Harris, Samoa EJLS/OLS", in *The Interpreter*, Cal Dunbar mentions "CPT Jewett USMC, the conversational Japanese teacher at Camp Elliott." As a member of the inaugural class at that school I remember Captain Jewett as a bluff, elderly (as he seemed to my 18-year-old eyes)

gentleman who had been commissioned a USMC officer solely by virtue of his having been a long-time businessman in Tokyo, well-versed in conversational Japanese. Certainly there was nothing remotely military about him. Willing to disregard the severe injunction that we be allowed to speak no words of English shortly after our arrival at Camp Elliot, and it being known to my classmates that I had played a sousaphone in my high school band, he would always say, when a band marched past our classroom, "Green, how much

does that big horn weigh?" Somehow, we managed to win the war.

We were a very small group of enlisted men, quickly assembled from among new boots at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego (I enlisted December 8, 1942), because of the recent sudden death of the First Marine Division D-2, Lieutenant Colonel Frank B. Goettge on patrol in Guadalcanal the night of 12 September 1942, together with Lieutenant Ralph Cory, virtually the only language officer in the USMC of that time who knew

the language of the enemy. Soon thereafter word was passed to all platoons then in "boot" training to recruit men capable of quickly learning the Japanese language. The criteria for such selection were, apparently, not clear to those charged with the recruiting. No one then in training knew Japanese. Like most of those recruited, I had studied some languages in high school (Greek, Latin, and Spanish). Indeed, Marine Corps enlistment in 1942 apparently discriminated against anyone who was not Caucasian. However, our faculty at Camp

Elliott consisted of Captain Paul Dull, who had been retired from active duty for medical reasons, Captain Jewett, and a robust, young Marine Corps sergeant whose name was Lew Yet Ming, a person of Chinese ancestry who somehow knew Japanese. (to be cont'd)

*Gerald Green
USMCEL*

[Ed. Note: Paul Dull graduated from the USMC Japanese Language School in Hawaii from July to December 1941, along with E. Boardman, J. Erskine, R. Gard, G. Holtom, J. Merrill, D. Nugent and J. Pelzel.]