

# The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 109

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

[arv@colorado.edu](mailto:arv@colorado.edu)

March 1, 2006

## 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.*

## IN MEMORIAM

**Donald Huefner**, OLS 1945, CIA retired, who served a Vice President and Executive Director of Association of Former Intelligence Officers, 1978 - 1979, died April 21st 1999 at Fairfax hospital. He graduated from the Russian Program, US Navy Oriental Language School at the University of Colorado. There will be a Mass at Our Lady of Good Council, 8601 Wolf Trap Road, Vienna, Virginia, on Tuesday April 27th at 10:30 a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the American Heart Association or Our Lady of Good Council Catholic Church.

AFIO Weekly Intelligence Notes  
#16-99, 22 Apr 99

## Stillwater to Truk

Life is full of surprises, but few can be as pleasant as your letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2004, together with the plethora of information about the Japanese Language School! My wife was enthusiastic about your telephone call, and I am likewise

delighted that Google™ facilitated all this!

I'm writing to establish "contact" with you, since I do not quite know how to begin to help with your project. I'm delighted to participate in any way you suggest.

As you see from this letter, I'm still employed (at age 82!) and hopefully making a contribution to society!

After leaving Boulder, I was sent to Stillwater, Oklahoma, to continue study of Japanese. The Navy moved there for some reason I don't remember now [The doubling of the civilian student population in the fall of 1945 required CU to withdraw much of the housing and classroom space used by the OLS. Oklahoma A&M had more space. The Chinese, Russian and Malay programs and some of the Japanese students stayed in Boulder.]

The War ended in August of 1945 and I was sent out to Truk, in the Caroline Islands. As a Japanese interpreter, attached to a US Naval Military Government Unit, which was an integral unit of a Marine Force. Our mission was to evacuate a garrison of about 40,000 Japanese troops on Truk. As you may know, Truk was the major Japanese force in the South Pacific [Something of a Japanese "Gibraltar", I understand] - never invaded (except attacked by air) because of strong fortifications. I was the ONLY person who knew any Japanese, and what an experience I had! I would be happy to share some recollections with you if you think of some way to do this. My experience on Truk has remained vivid in my memory. The Japanese command included a vice admiral and a major general, and a lowly Lt. (j.g.) like myself the only interpreter!

I continued in the Naval Reserve, Intelligence Division, for many years after leaving active duty, and retired as Captain, USNR. My last tour of duty as Commanding Officer,

US Naval Intelligence Division (-), Boston. While in command, our division won the trophy in 1968!

Edward J. Michon  
OLS 1945

## Rumors of My Demise

On December 15, 1944 I was ordered while in San Francisco to Pier 7 at 3:30 PM for embarkation. Nothing was said either about the name of the ship or its ultimate destination. That same afternoon I sailed aboard the *Tjisadane*, a Dutch merchantman, leased by the Army for transporting mostly unassigned Navy personnel and debarking them where needed at South Pacific bases. Since I was named "unloading officer" [ah, those extra duties] by the Army officers aboard, I spent a lot of time ashore at various bases until we reached Hollandia, New Guinea. Whereupon, I left the ship as ordered, prior to my embarkation, to report to 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet HQ. By this time, I felt very ill and checked in first with the base doctor who said I had some kind of virulent tropical fever. He sent me to Brisbane and the Army 42<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital where I would recover faster. Meanwhile I went to bed and two pharmacist mates came to dress me and get me and my gear aboard a plane taking off at dawn. I thus had no opportunity to check in at 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet HQ. Meanwhile, unknown to me, the *Tjisadane* sailed and was soon after torpedoed and sunk with great loss of life. (To be continued)

S. Paul Kramer  
JLS 1944

## Expendible? Maybe Not

When I read James Gunn's piece referring to Franklin Roosevelt's death, I felt moved into gear. So long I have put off my promise to send over my files on Japanese follow-ups. I can never

forget that day, the whole world seemed dark. And the foothills of the Rockies right outside my window are still etched in my head. Nothing came over the radio except the *Bach Air for the G String*. Nobody else elsewhere seems to have heard it like we did. Everywhere we went. Gunn has it right, "Life-changing news everyday. Relationships brief but intense. So much unanimity of purpose." Yes, all that. But we hoped we could stay alive.

We were a threesome, my roommate Pete Speros, Jim Madigan and myself. Speros and I could think each other's thoughts before they were expressed. He was a master interlocutor and our first night there he was master of ceremonies at our first mass audience get-together. He came on stage - I didn't know him then - fumbling index cards, remarking, as he walked on, "As Adam said to Eve...er...as Eve said to Adam...anyway—Johnny on the spot when the leaves began to fall."

It was our class-tension breaker. He hailed from BYU. Madigan was a self-reconstructed Jesuit priest. Good looking as hell [interesting choice of metaphor for a possible priest], a self-acknowledged God's gift to all womankind.

I went from Boulder to Leyte Gulf, stamped "expendable" at the Market Street, San Francisco port of departure. That, as never before, told me just who I was. Expendable! I stayed a year aboard ADCOMPHIBSPAC-PHIL, the old *Thomas Jefferson*, which was hauled off the bottom of an Oregon/Seattle bay to serve as home for full staffs of expendables. Aboard, in the communications shack, just before lunch, the tape came across, "ATOM BOMB HIROSHIMA". That's all. We left for the mess hall wondering what that meant. - I had 45 minutes alone with President and Mrs. Truman years later. I told him, "You saved not only my

life but my father's." "How's that?" He sort of barked.

I was second in command of a ship scheduled for the first wave in the Tokyo invasion. I explained. My father, a Methodist minister assailed by leukemia, was treated with radioactive phosphorous sourced at the Tennessee Valley Authority reactor .... kept him alive and active for 15 more years.

Got back to Pearl Harbor as Public Information Officer (PIO)

Arthur B. Shenefelt  
OLS 1945

## George W. Nace

You're referring to George Nace [JLS 1943], I'm sure. I met him once (1982), heard several of his stories from World War II.

Of being an interpreter on a ship that was used to imprison POW's. Of surgery being needed, with no anesthetic available, of the Japanese commanding officer standing

severe the pain, of the patient obeying, of the operation succeeding. (Both officer and patient were POW's, of course).

Of riding into Nagasaki shortly after the Japanese surrender, with Admiral Byrd. Truman didn't trust MacArthur to give him an accurate picture, asked Admiral Byrd for an independent report on the damage. They felt quite exposed in this jeep, had firearms hidden but ready. Nothing happened.

The police department swiftly

compiled a block by block census of the damage, as it was responsible for keeping records on every dwelling and every occupant. Byrd obtained the report, had it translated, wrote a cover page, and forwarded it to Truman. The report identified the epicenter of the blast by noting which block had been crushed by a shockwave from directly above. Structures on all other blocks fell over at angles.

Admiral Byrd was his son's godfather.

As a scientist at the

University of Michigan, George Nace specialized in frogs. He was one of the first to grow frogs through their entire growth cycle and realized that frogs needed different foods for each stage of growth, as well as a variety of foods during the adult stages. He developed a caged ramp upon which he could put live crickets, mosquitoes, refrigerated flies, and even Japanese quail in order to "deliver" foods to the frogs. During this time, there was some construction in the building and few of these crickets and warmed-up flies escaped into the

to Admiral Blandy, in command of Cruisers/Destroyers Pacific.

rest of the building. After that, whenever insects appeared in other parts of the building, Professor Nace was blamed. This accusation even occurred during an infestation of wolf spiders, which were never raised in his lab. So George Nace became something of a legend on the campus, though, on the matter of insects, not an entirely favorable legend. A version of his caged ramp is still being used at UM, the Detroit Zoo, and by other breeders of frogs.

Steven Johnson, son-in-law  
& Suzanne Nace, wife.

over the patient and ordering him not to flinch no matter how

## Too Many Obits (Cont'd)

Hart H. Spiegel, another fellow Boulder classmate and Marine, and a San Francisco friend subsequently, passed on March 15, 2004. Two Asia related activities of Hart, not included in *The Interpreter's* July 1, 2005 excellent bio and obit for Hart, are worthy of mention. He and wife Genevieve were longtime major supporters and sponsors of the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, responsible for much of its growth and success, and Gen

was a docent, as well, there for many years. Their efforts for that Museum were most noteworthy. Hart friends may not be surprised to learn that he solved a 'Chinese puzzle' and achieved monetary results for his client, when such seemed totally beyond any possibility. Until WWII the American-owned Shanghai Power Company supplied electricity to the International Settlement and the French Concession, the foreign-controlled key areas of that city. (To be Cont'd)

Dan Williams  
JLS 1943