The US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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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.

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century

5. Entering Columbia at 16
Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

All through elementary school, junior high school and high school I was always the best student in my class. My marks were so good that I skipped several times without any trouble. I was pleased to be singled out for promotion in this way, but the results were not necessarily to my benefit. I would feel this particularly when I entered college at the age of sixteen, two years younger than my classmates, still a boy among these young adults. In high school I was not only younger but smaller than others in my class. In order to compensate for my inadequacy (particularly evident in sports) I tried to demonstrate my ability in other activities. I became the editor of the school magazine in which I published my short stories, and the author of the plays performed at the end of the school year. But even these successes did not make up for my loneliness outside the classroom.

I was lucky, however, that Miss Tannenbaum, a teacher of English literature, decided to take me under her wing. She had the custom of choosing boys of promise and helping them to win a Pulitzer scholarship to Columbia. These scholarships had been established by a newspaper publisher who left a sum of money to provide ten scholarships each year to boys who had attended high schools in New York. The scholarships not only paid tuition for four years but provided modest amounts for living expenses. In order to win one of these scholarships one had to be among the best students in New York State, as determined by the results of statewide examinations given every year.

Admission to Columbia involved still other examinations that covered not only subjects I had studied in high school but others (such as ancient Greek and Roman history) that were not taught in my high school. With Miss Tannenbaum's encouragement I read widely as possible in literature and history.

The crucial subject was mathematics. It was impossible to receive a grade of 100 percent in an English or French examination--an examiner would always be able to find some fault--but in a mathematics examination where there was only one right answer, it was possible. I had no special aptitute for algebra, but my memory was good and I more or less memorized the textbook. I did better on the examinations than students who were considered to be geniuses in math.

I could not count on my father to support me through a university if I failed to win a scholarship. The alternative was one of the city universities where tuition was free. For fear of not being admitted to any university I applied to a city university, but my heart was set on going to Columbia. As the weeks passed without any news I became pessimistic, sure that I would never be able to go to the university I had chosen. But on June 18, 1938, my sixteenth birthday, I received a letter from Columbia stating that I had been admitted and had won a Pulitzer scholarship. Four years of study were assured. In a burst of self-confidence, I decided that I would never again accept money from my parents.

That September I entered Columbia College. Miss Tannenbaum had urged me to study nothing while in college except for four languages--French, German, Greek and Latin--and their literatures. There were unusually few required courses at Columbia, but it was not possible to avoid them, and I had to sacrifice the study of German and Latin. One required course was Humanities, the reading in English translation of the great works of literature from Homer to Goethe. Miss Tannenbaum, who had studied under Mark van Doren, had told me he was the best teacher at Columbia, and I managed to obtain a place in his class in Humanities.

The reading assignments for the course were most demanding and there were innumerable short examinations to verify that the students had read and understood the assignments. The class met four times a week and generally we read each week two or three works of classical literature and philosophy such as the Symposium of Plato or the Ethics of Aristotle. I was shocked by receiving only a B on the first examination. My scholastic triumphs in high school evidently did not guarantee good marks at the university.

Professor van Doren was a marvellous teacher. He was a scholar and a poet, but he was above all someone who understood literature and could make us understand it with him. He never used notes for his lectures but seemed to be considering each work for the first time, thinking aloud. He frequently asked questions of the students, not to test their knowledge but to discover what the work we had read meant to them. He had little use for commentaries or specialized literary criticism. The essential thing, he taught us, was to read the texts, think about them, and discover for ourselves why they were ranked as classics. Insofar as I have been a success as a teacher of Japanese literature it has been because I had a model in Mark van Doren.

At this time there was a movement in American education to return to the original texts of the Western tradition in order to understand the background of the present. The Humanities course was one aspect of this movement. Another university required students to learn four European languages well enough to read the classics in the original languages. Mark van Doren did not go so far, but he believed in the paramount importance of the great books. I still think he was right, though the emphasis on the great books is sometimes scorned these days. Even now, if I give a lecture about, say, the tragedies of Chikamatsu I tend to use Aristotle's Poetics as a guide in describing what is universal and what is unique in the Japanese theatre.

Most of my classmates lived in the dormitories, but at my mother's insistence I had to live at home. This cut me off from the social life at the university. Worse, it obliged me to spend almost three hours on the subway every day. As a child I had found the subway exciting, but having to commute five days a week made me hate it. The subway cost only five cents all the way from Brooklyn to Columbia, but the subway cars were old and dirty. The seats were of wicker, generally frayed, and the lighting was yellow and feeble. But I could not waste the precious hours I spent in the subway, so I read books, most of them with small print. When I could not get a seat, I read standing. My eyesight was better than normal when I entered the university, but after a year of reading on the subway I needed glasses.

Donald L. Keene
JLS 1943
Daily Yomiuri Online
February 11, 2006

Instead of Carrying a Gun

As a Boulder Language School graduate, I have enjoyed the accounts of fellow participants as published in *The Interpreter* and would like to recount some of my experiences during the period February 1943 to 1945.

In January 1943 I was engaged in wartime research at the Geophysical Laboratory in Washington, DC, and my wife was working at the Board of Economic Warfare. Her boss asked her to get information about the Japanese Language Program at Boulder which she did and also got an extra copy for me. The draft was in full swing and I probably would have been deferred because of my work, but I was intrigued with the idea of serving as a translator and interpreter instead of carrying a gun or manning a waist gun in a bomber.

My interview with Commander Hindmarsh was brief: "Where did you go to college? Were you Phi Beta Kappa? Are you sure you want to do this?" Apparently, I gave

satisfactory answers as I soon received orders to report for duty and papers for transportation to Boulder. I was quartered in the men's dormitory and settled into navy life, including *Undō.*

I had French and Latin in school and three years of Greek in college, but was shocked when I began to learn the structure of Japanese. I was impressed by the dedication of the Nisei instructors who worked so hard to help us learn the language. In my spare time, meaning Saturday afternoon and Sunday, my wife and I rattled around in the mountains in a 1929 Ford Model A coupe which I was able to purchase from a graduating language student for $25.00.

In June 1944, I was ordered to the Intelligence School at the Henry Hudson Hotel in New York City. For five weeks we were initiated into the mysteries of radar, sonar, naval operations, etc. At the same time, my wife and I had a taste of life in the big city. (to be continued)

Lawrence Alan Seymour
JLS 1944 [Passed Away April 2007]

Dec. 2006-May 2007 Losses: Sol Levine, Walter B. Williams, William G. Beasley, Zeivel Harris, Wayne Pike and Lawrence A. Seymour, William Bevan.

Robert C. Krapf
OLS 1945 (Russian)
1914 – 2005

Robert C. Krapf, 90, of Pleasant Hill, passed away March 26, 2005. A memorial service was held in the Memorial Garden of the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church on May 30.
Mr. Krapf was born Nov. 14, 1914 in Pittsburgh, the son of Charles G. and Fey E. Krapf.

Since 1994, he resided in the Uplands Retirement Village in Pleasant Hill and prior to that in Oak Ridge, Fairfield Glade and Knoxville. He was a member of the International Association of Round Dance Teachers and the Lloyd Shaw Foundation, and since moving to Pleasant Hill, he taught traditional square and contra dancing in the Uplands Retirement Village. He also taught dancing in Oak Ridge and Fairfield Glade.

He was a charter member of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church in Knoxville, and was a member of the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church for the past 15 years.

He held a B.S. in engineering from Carnegie Mellon University and a master's degree in economics from Brown University, with post-graduate work in economics at the University of Illinois. He was a U.S. Navy officer in World War II and worked for 35 years for TVA before retiring in 1976.

Survivors include his daughter, Fay Krapf of Raleigh, NC; sons and daughter-in-law, Peter Krapf of Oak Ridge and Bruce and Janet Krapf of Murfreesboro; and five grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Lois Krapf.

Crossville Chronicle
Cumberland County, Tennessee
June 29, 2005

Excerpts from the Coffin Songbook

TAIHEIYO

Umi no tami nara otoko nara
Mina ichido wa akogareta
Taiheiyo no kuroshio wo
Tomo ni isande yukeru hi ga
Kita zo Kanki no chi ga moeru

HARU GA KITA

Haru ga kita, haru ga kita, doko ni kita
Yama ni kita, sato ni kita, no ni mo kita
Hana ga saku, hana ga saku, doko ni saku
Yama ni saku, yato ni saku, yama no ni mo saku

Tori ga naku, tori ga naku, doko ni naku
Yama ni naku, sato ni naku, no ni mo naku.

Ned Coffin, Compiler
JLS 1944

Macarthur Aide: US Must Learn From Errors

Toward the end of the occupation of his nation, Japanese Emperor Hirohito announced he would formally apologize to U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur for Japan's actions during World War II - including the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

Lennox Tierney *[JLS 1942]* was there, on the fifth floor of the Dai-Ichi Insurance Building in Tokyo, where MacArthur held court from 1945 to 1949, on the day Hirohito arrived. Now 93 years old, Tierney fears a brutishness he saw in MacArthur that day is being repeated by Americans involved in today's wars.

But these days, he says, the country can ill-afford such behavior.

In the years that followed the war, MacArthur came to be thought of as an expert in Japanese culture, but that's not what Tierney says he saw in the eminent general. "He was culturally stupid," says Tierney, Japan's commissioner for arts and monuments during the occupation, now a semiretired professor and museum curator living in Holladay.

"Apology is a very important thing in Japan," said Tierney. "With us, we don't apologize unless we get caught with our hand in the cookie jar, but for the Japanese, there is a very strong sense of what an apology means."

But when the emperor arrived at his office, MacArthur refused to admit him or acknowledge him, Tierney said.

"MacArthur kicked off his shoes and just sat there, smoking his corn cob pipe with his feet up on his desk and didn't say a word," recalled Tierney. "He didn't even invite the emperor into his office."

"It was the rudest, crudest, most uncalled for thing I have ever witnessed in my life."

Tierney considers it fortunate that the general's imperial affront was never made public, as Japan's citizens likely would have been outraged.

He fears the mistakes of World War II are being repeated in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Americans didn't know much about Japan prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor," he said. "To most people, it was geisha girls and Mt. Fuji and that was about it. And that is where we got caught so terribly short, because here we were, at war with a major power that we didn't know much about. Here we were at war, and we couldn't even speak the language. We didn't know a thing about them."

Tierney himself didn't know much about Japan when, as a student at the University of California at Los Angeles, he was called on to study the nation's language, culture and history for the U.S. Navy.

"It was a funny choice," he said, "because I'd spent most of my life devoted to studying China."

But for the U.S. military that appeared to be close enough.

"That was a shame," he said. "We should have made a greater effort to understand them."

Now, he said, "we're doing similar things with our presence in the Middle East. We've caused such great harm by being culturally inept - and it may be even worse, because I think we know even less of Middle Eastern and Arabic languages and cultures."

In Japan, MacArthur's actions against the emperor were known only to a few people, who kept the insult a historical secret for decades, Tierney said. In today's world, where information travels so much faster than it did in the 1940s, such cultural affronts are not so easily concealed.

Though he doesn't consider himself an expert on the Islamic world, Tierney said he doesn't believe the cultural ideas of accepting defeat - prevalent among the Japanese - are present in the nations that the U.S. occupies today.

"So all of that, together, is a kind of cultural dynamite," he said.

Now, 65 years after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tierney says he is pleased that relations between the United States and Japan healed so well and so quickly. In the first years after the occupation, Tierney received degrees at two Japanese universities and he still travels frequently to the westernized Asian nation.

But he cringes at the suggestion, prevalent among members of the Bush administration, that Iraq will one day be an economic, political and cultural ally to the United States, similar to Japan.

"Today we have so much worse a situation," he said. "We

have occupied a nation that never attacked us. Maybe we didn't like their government, but they never attacked us. And that is a bad problem, because we will never be able to claim the legitimacy we had in Japan."

And when the U.S. stumbles culturally, he said, there will be no one to keep the secret.

Matthew D. LaPlante
The Salt Lake Tribune
12/07/2006
mlaplante@sltrib.com

[Ed. Mail: Thanks to Stan Falk for bringing this article to our attention. Lennox Tierney has been on our mailing list since 2004. His comments line up with those of the late Frank Gibney.]

Daniel Norton Williams JLS 1944, 1917-2006

WALLINGFORD & TWIN LAKES, SALISBURY - Daniel Norton Williams, 88, a businessman and educator who was for many years a leader in local civic organizations, died at home Tuesday, July 11 after a long illness. Son of the late Daniel Wayne and Minette (Norton) Williams of Wallingford, he was a graduate of Choate School, Haverford College (Phi Beta Kappa) and the US Navy Japanese Language School at Boulder, Colorado; where he met his wife, the late Marylou Siegfried Williams. During WWII, he served in the US Navy as a translator, participating in the surrender on Chichijima.

After the war, he returned to work at the Wallingford Steel Company as Manager of Purchasing until retiring in 1976. Shortly thereafter, he joined the faculty of Choate School, where he taught economics for 13 years and initiated a series of internships for students with local businesses. He and his wife also taught a pilot program in Japanese at Choate, where three levels of Japanese are now offered.

He was a lifelong member of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford, where he served as Music Committee chairman, Deacon and Trustee, and was active in its choir. He was a co-founder of the Independent Day School and served on its board for many years, including eight as president. He was President of the Board of the Meriden-Wallingford Hospital during the planning of the MidState Medical Center. He was a member for many years of the Rotary Club of Wallingford, served a term as president, received the Albert H. Ruwet Award. He was named a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International. He was active in a host of community organizations, serving on committees and boards, often as Chairman or president. Among the organizations he was active in were: Wallingford Community Concerts, the Wallingford Symphony, Wallingford Chorus, Visiting Nurse Association of Wallingford, Wallingford YMCA, the Gaylord Hospital Ethics Committee and the American Silver Museum.

He was on the Board of the Connecticut Association of Purchasing Management (President 1956, Fred Harvey Award winner) and served on the Board of the National Association of Purchasing Management. He served on Governor Thomas Meskill's Governor's Commission on Services and Expenditures. In 1997, he was awarded the Haverford College Alumni Award for service to the school.

He is survived by two sons, Bradford (Patricia) Williams of Falling Waters, WV, Jonathan (Mary) Williams of Longmont, CO, two daughters, Nancy (Alex) Ward of New York and Mary Sylvina "Bina" Williams, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Lovingly cared for during the past five years by Nana Agyemang.

B. C. Baily
Funeral Home

RIJ Note

I note from #107 that you have listed Eddie Neville in the BIC group. Eddie was at Boulder, studying Japanese, when I was, and he and I were fellow students at Harvard following the war and became fast friends. Our families were close and spent time together over many years. His Japanese was very advanced, as he had been raised in Japan, where his father was Counselor of the Embassy under Joseph P. Grew.

I can assure you that Eddie is indisputably an RIJ. During our time at Boulder he often mentioned the family summer home in Kurozawa and sometimes, when the evening grew late, he remarked how much he wanted to go home. The rest of us would then say that we, too, should like to go home, whereupon he would say, "But you don't live in Japan like I do!"

In later years, he became a professor of Japanese at a New England college *[Canisius College]*. It may well be that Eddie was born in China during an earlier assignment of this father. In any event, Eddie should be considered a member of the RIJ group.

His daughter, Whitney Ann, <Whitney@maine.rr.com>, presumably can give you additional information.

H.H. Cloutier
OLS 1945 Russian

BICs Considered Yet Again

Making reference to your January 1 and February 1, 2007 issues (#107 & #108) of *The Interpreter* items: "BICs" and BICs Reconsidered", I note that the letter brings up the point that there were those who happened to be born in America on our parents' home leave, or furlough.

My two sisters and brother were born in Nanjing. I was conceived in Nanjing but born in Los Angeles on my parents' furlough, returning to China soon thereafter. A number of those listed in the January 1, 2007 list were childhood friends of mine.

There is no particular significance to this, but I thought I would mention it.

R. Stuart Hummel
JLS 1942, RIC

JLS/OLS Key to longevity?

Have you noticed how many Boulderites are 90 years old or are shortly approaching that age? Like Willis, Kohmann, Furnass, Boller, Karr and many others? Do you not think that the intense mental discipline of learning Japanese in 14 months under wartime conditions, plus physical exercises by Chiefs Hedge and others were a contributory factor to their attaining such old age? If so, how about a short tribute to this aspect in *The Interpreter? [Sent in February 2007, Amen]*.

Bill Hudson
JLS 1944

[Ed. Note: Out of 16 million Americans who served, only 400,000 remain. The odds are very much better for those who were in the JLS/OLS, where more than 20% remain. Looks like those languages, intelligence, academic, diplomacy, and professions agreed with you.]

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century

6. Encountering 'kanji'
Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

Van Doren was not the only teacher I admired. The teachers at Columbia were outstanding and the classes were always small. I enjoyed studying Greek under Moses Hadas, a learned but gentle teacher. Greek is a difficult language, but the texts one reads even in the first year are masterpieces. There is nothing of the childishness of elementary texts in modern languages.

The study of Greek affected me in an important, though negative way. I had believed, on the basis of having studied French and Spanish in high school, that I could learn any foreign language without difficulty, but I discovered that there were others in the class who learned Greek more quickly and retentively than I. It was a humbling experience, but a necessary one.

I discovered also in a class in French composition that although I prided myself on my knowledge of French, it was quite another matter to write French that was not only grammatically correct but stylistically pleasing. The teacher of this class, Pierre Clamens, was a marvellous teacher who gave everything to his students. He was rather like another French professor I admired, the extraordinary scholar of Japanese literature Jean-Jacques Origas who many years later became a friend.

Mark van Doren's class profoundly affected my way of reading and understanding literature. It also affected me in a totally unpredictable manner. The students were seated alphabetically in this class, and that is how it happened my

seat was next to that of a Chinese named Lee. As the result of meeting him four days a week before and after class, we became friendly. I had never known a Chinese before. I had gone a few times with high-school classmates to eat Chinese food, but that was about my only contact with China (or any other part of Asia).

It had never occurred to me to doubt that the great books of the Western tradition we read for the Humanities class constituted the priceless heritage of all mankind. I did not even wonder if other traditions had also produced great books. However, as Lee and I became close, I asked him about Chinese literature. The first book he recommended that I read was the "Analects" of Confucius. Confucius was the one Chinese philosopher whose name I knew, but I had no idea what he taught or why he was famous.

To tell the truth, I found the English translation of the "Analects" extremely tedious. Confucius' responses to his disciples' questions seemed merely a series of platitudes, not at all comparable to the soaring ideas of Plato. Although I did not reveal my disillusion to Lee, I took a kind of pleasure in memorizing what I considered were particularly silly sayings about Confucius. I could not believe that anything so prosaic as "The Master would not sit if his mat was not straight" deserved to be called philosophy.

It took considerable time and extensive reading in translations of Chinese literature and philosophy before I freed myself of such childish attitudes. In the meantime, I had begun to study Chinese with Lee. My first lesson occurred when we went swimming at a beach not far from New York. I enjoyed his company and learned much from him, but we did not have many mutual subjects of conversation. He intended to become an engineer, and literature did not have the importance for him it had for me. One day at the beach I had the sudden inspiration of asking him to teach me some Chinese characters. He first drew in the sand a horizontal line. "This means one," he said. Two and three were similar and easy to remember. With four the writing became more complicated, but that made it all the more interesting to learn the characters. I especially liked characters with many strokes or unusual shapes, just as I had liked stamps that were triangles or had curious surcharges.

We agreed to meet every day for lunch at a Chinese restaurant near Columbia. After eating a meal that almost always consisted of fried rice and eggs foo yong, the cheapest food on the menu, he would take out a novel he had purchased in Chinatown and go over a few lines with me. This book was not intended to teach people Chinese, but each character I learned was a precious postage stamp that I pasted in the album of my memory. Lee also bought a brush and a book of calligraphy and I practiced writing characters. I became fairly accomplished at imitating the characters, but another Chinese pointed out, after examining my calligraphy, that I had not written the characters but painted them, ignoring the correct order and direction of the strokes.

Although we met five times a week for lunch and a Chinese lesson, I did not make much progress. Lessons in Chinese conversation might have been successful, but the kanji were what attracted me. Moreover, Lee, who came from Canton, was not confident of his pronunciation of standard Chinese. As a consequence I learned the meaning of characters but had no idea how they were pronounced nor whether they were in daily use or only found in books. It was not an ideal method of learning a foreign language.

In 1938, the same month I entered college, the Munich Agreement was signed. My friends were outraged at the supine attitude of England and France towards Hitler and the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, but I was secretly happy that war had been averted. Anything was better than war, I thought, and at first it seemed that war had been prevented.

In the summer of 1939 Lee and I went together to the New York World's Fair. We were excited by the exhibits that gave a preview of a brighter world to come. I saw television for the first time and a car that ran on electricity and did not require gasoline. A bright future seemed about to begin, but a month or so later war broke out in Europe.

Ever since I was a child I had dreaded the coming of war. In high school I had a bright idea of how to prevent the European countries from waging wars--by damming the Gulf Stream and in this way making Europe too cold for people to fight wars. But even though I was able to concoct grandiose projects, I could not suppress the fear that if the Nazis were not stopped by military force they might conquer all Europe.

Donald L. Keene
JLS 1943
Daily Yomiuri Online
February 20, 2006

Robert H. B. Wade, US official, envoy

Robert H.B. Wade, a former official for the US defense and state departments, died of a heart ailment Jan. 26 at his home in North Chatham. He was 88.

The only son of a banker and a teacher, Dr. Wade was born in the coal-mining town of Tamaqua, Pa. He received his bachelor's degree from Lafayette College in 1937 and then a diploma from Bordeaux University in Bordeaux, France, in 1938. Having cultivated a passion for the French language and culture, Dr. Wade completed his doctorate in French literature at Yale University in 1942.

According to his son, Greg B. of Sudbury, Dr. Wade had intended to become a teacher or professor until military duty called. His experience in World War II was the beginning of a long career in public service.

Recognized for his linguistic abilities, Dr. Wade was placed in a special Japanese language program at the University of Colorado at Boulder, from which he graduated in 1943. As a lieutenant in the Navy, Dr. Wade was assigned to the Allied Translators and Interpreters Service in Brisbane, Australia. He completed his military service working on Far Eastern affairs at the Pentagon's Office of Naval Intelligence. (to be cont'd)

Boston Globe
February 7, 2005
http://www.boston.com/news/globe/obituaries/articles/2005/02/07/robert_h_b_wade_us_official_envoy/

[Ed. Note: The Wade family visited the Archives in 2006, after one of the grandchildren graduated from CU.]

A "Bastille Bastard"

David Lawrence Osborne 1921-1994

David L. Osborn *[JLS 1943]* was born on January 11, 1921 in Bethlehem, Indiana. He received a B.A. from Southwestern University at Memphis in 1940, and an M.A. from Harvard University in 1947. On June 24, 1942, he entered the US Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He was assigned to quarters in the "Bastille", or the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity, recently vacated by the enlistment or draft of its patriotic members. The fraternity house was even called "the Bastille" by the Boulder City Directory. There he joined fellow inmates: Glen Slaughter, Bob Newell, Dan Holtom, Tom Smith, Richard Moss, Ray Luthy, and others. According to fellow Bastille Bastard, Glen Slaughter, "Dave Osborne was probably the best natural-born linguist to attend the Japanese Language School (Issue #63A)."

From 1942 to 1947 he served as a Japanese Language Officer for the United States Navy. LT Osborne was assigned translation and interrogation duties at the Kwajalein War Crimes Trials in 1945, and obtained confessions from Admiral Koso Abe and Captain Hiyahsi concerning the execution of Americans on Kwajalein (Issue #27).

On July 13, 1949, Osborn married Helena Anna Polichnowski.

Osborn joined the U. S. Foreign Service in 1947 and served in the following capacities: vice consul, Tokyo, 1948; information officer, U.S. Information Service (USIS), Taipei, Taiwan, 1949 to 1950; consul, Sapporo, Japan, 1951 to 1953, and Kobe, Japan, 1953; international relations officer, China Desk, State Department in Washington, 1954 to 1955; member of U.S. delegation to the Geneva Conference with Chinese, 1955 to 1957; political counselor, 1958 to 1961; and first secretary to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, 1961 to 1964.

He was assigned to the National War College from 1964 to 1965; served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, State Department, 1965 to 1966; served as deputy chief of mission in Tokyo, 1967 to 1970; and he was Consul General in Hong Kong, 1970 to 1974. From 1974 to 1977 he was the U.S. Ambassador to Burma, and in 1978 he retired from the Department of State. He died in San Diego, California on September 16, 1994.

The papers of David L. Osborn, 1947-1994, were donated to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

ISAAR(CPF)
Examples – USA (NARA)

& David Hays
Editor & Archivist