

# The Interpreter

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★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

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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.*

## John Asmead Correspondence

### The Japanese Education Of John Ashmead

As for my Japanese education, most of my material is lost, thrown out, or in storage, so I will have to give you mainly my memories [his papers, including this letter, are being donated to Haverford College].

In the academic year 1936-37 (my junior year) I took Japanese at Harvard. As it happens, my then Japanese teacher, now 90 years old, is still alive and well in Tokyo. There were seven students in the class. We used mainly the texts the Japanese government employed in Korea. They were variations for Koreans, derived from the basic Japanese texts for native Japanese speakers, and so were thought to be more useful for any foreign students of Japanese. The first year of Japanese at Harvard then was primarily spoken Japanese, with some Kanji training. Upper level Japanese at Harvard was primarily on the

written language. A volume I still have from this series is Serge Elisseeff and Edwin O. Reischauer, ed., *Selected Japanese Texts, for University Students* (Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Newspapers) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press/Harvard Yenching Institute, 1942, 2 vols.). This material was available, I believe, as handouts, before 1942. In a revised form, similar texts are still in use at Harvard. I got to know Elisseeff very well after the Second World War when he wanted to give me a scholarship to go on in Japanese.

In 1937-38, my senior year at Harvard, and later in graduate school in English, I was not able to take Japanese. When war came in 1941, I entered the Navy Japanese Language School, first at Berkeley, California, then at Boulder Colorado [at the University of Colorado] in late 1941. The Navy used a six volume text, photocopies of the program it gave its language officers in Japan. I might here note that I was told the Navy before Pearl harbor had seven Japanese Language Officers. After Pearl Harbor, one went insane, and then the Navy had six.

The Navy texts were the so-called Nagano [sic Naganuma] texts, after a Japanese teacher Nagano [Naoe Naganuma] who had compiled them, mainly from the Korean readers mentioned above. Each day we had one hour of rapid conversation drills, one hour of reading texts, and one hour of dictation, in which we copied at the blackboard kanji and kana which were dictated to us. On Saturday we had tests of the week's work. The sixth volume in our series of textbooks was not from the Korean text series, but was a series of chapters dealing with the Japanese Navy, and with various naval terms. We also learned many army terms. In addition, we had occasional training in sosho or "grass writing" since we were expected to cope with personal diaries and handwriting. The whole course was 12 months, in which we did nothing else, and did not even have any physical training except for an hour on Saturdays after our exams. About every three months an outside examiner came in and examined us individually. Each section in the Navy school had only five students. I was in a special advanced section, which included Donald Keene, and

which finished the 12 month course in 11 months.

In 1942, I was in the third class, which had about 30 students, chosen by the Navy because they had had Japanese and/or Phi Beta Kappa, a national honor society. I had had a year of Japanese and was Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, so I was selected. The first two classes had had together perhaps 20 students. After our class, the third one, the need was such that the classes got steadily bigger. And later this US Navy School was used by the British Navy.

The Army Japanese Language School was at Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan. This was somewhat different from the Navy school. It had physical exercise and drill every day, and the average Japanese language officer I met in the Army did not know Japanese as well as the average Navy Japanese Language officer. Also, the Army used non-commissioned Nisei, second generation Japanese, as interpreters. (The Nisei usually did not read complicated Japanese very well). I worked with these Nisei when I was attached to the Army for the landing in Leyte, in the Philippines. Often these Nisei had learned their Japanese from their mothers, and spoke a kind of women's Japanese, so much so that Japanese prisoners would sometimes ask us why our propaganda broadcasters, often Nisei, included so many homosexuals. The Nisei were very fine soldiers, however, but after one or two attempts I gave up taking them on patrol, because I had to surround them with white troops to keep our troops from accidentally shooting them.

Although the Navy Japanese Language School gave good training in spoken Japanese, it was not so good as the pre-war Harvard method in teaching written Japanese. So when I was based in Hawaii, I took coursework in modern Japanese



Boulder, Oct-Nov 1942 – identified is Howard Nelson, Donald Allen, James Holderbaum, G. Wattles, George Phalen, Tim Harrington,

Robert Dallahan, John Ashmead, John Davis, Neil Rawlinson, b&w, 4x5, Pineau21\_05\_05\_16, AUCBL

fiction at the University of Hawaii.

During the war, the Navy Japanese group based in Hawaii created an extensive military dictionary, a remarkable work. My specialty was the Japanese air force, and I supplied many of the aviation terms in this dictionary.

Studying Japanese is now on an up-curve. I was told there were 96,000 students of Japanese in the US last year. I would want to check that figure. But whatever the true figure, it is way beyond the original seven naval officers in 1941.

The disaster of Pearl Harbor caused an upsurge in Japanese language study. But at the end of the war, in the 1950s, that interest almost vanished. In the 1960s I was able briefly to get backing for work on Lafcadio Hearn, but in the seventies I had to abandon my interests in comparative Japanese and American culture for lack of support. It is only in the last decade, with the triumph of Japanese manufacturing and banking, that now, in the late 80s and early 90's, we have a second wave of interest in the Japanese language. In part this interest has come about because American businessmen and manufacturers do not wholly trust Japanese interpreters. But in part it has come about because of a new and desirable interest in things Japanese.

*Excerpt written December 15, 1990  
John Ashmead  
JLS 1943*

*Professor of English & Film  
Haverford College, 1947-1988  
Died in 1992 at 74*

## Oakland woman celebrates her 108th birthday

OAKLAND -- At 108 years old, Chiyoko Otagiri is not only the oldest resident at Piedmont Gardens retirement community in Oakland, she's the oldest Nisei (a second-generation Japanese-American) in the state.

Otagiri was born May 27, 1905, in Cupertino, where her parents worked on a ranch, picking plums to be dried into prunes.

She's always being asked the age-old question -- what's the secret to your longevity?

"My mother worked hard all her life and she always ate well - lots of fruit and vegetables," said her 80-year-old son Jim Otagiri. Longevity also runs in the family.

"My parents lived into their 90s and my brother Sam was close to 90," said Otagiri, a diminutive lady who looks much younger than her years and still enjoys excellent health.

Otagiri celebrated her milestone birthday June 1 with lunch at Piedmont Gardens with about 20 family members, including Jim and her two daughters, Eiko, 85, and Kathryn, 83. Otagiri also has eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. The family continued the festivities that evening with dinner at Fuddruckers in Emeryville.

As was customary in those days, according to Otagiri, her parents sent her and her brother back to Japan to be educated. For 12 years, until her high school graduation in 1922, Otagiri lived with her grandparents in the province of Yamanashi, about 60 miles west of Tokyo, while her parents remained in the United States.

Not long after her return to California, Otagiri met and married her husband James and they settled in San Francisco, where their three children were born.

"My dad came to the U.S. when he was 14," said Jim Otagiri, whose father died in 1977. "He went to Berkeley High School and graduated from UC Berkeley. My parents married the same year he graduated, in 1927."

During World War II, the family suffered the same fate as many Japanese-Americans on the West Coast and were forced to move to an internment camp in central Utah called Topaz. In 1943, they were moved to Colorado, where James taught Japanese to military personnel [*Chiyoko was likewise a USN JLS/OLS Sensei*]. Ironically, Otagiri's brother, Sam, was simultaneously fighting for the Japanese army.

In 1947, the family returned to the Bay Area, first to Berkeley and then El Cerrito.

"When my mother had her own home, she had a nice yard and spent most of her time gardening," Jim Otagiri said. "Even after she moved to Piedmont Gardens in 2004, her balcony was filled with plants and flowers."

Four years ago, Otagiri moved into the assisted living section of the retirement home, but her love of flowers is still very visible in the orchids, roses and overflowing vases that surround her.

Over the years, Otagiri traveled the world, including numerous visits back to Japan, where her parents and brother had returned to live in the late 1920s.

"My father owned a wholesale business, importing all kinds of dishware from Japan, so my parents traveled there many times," Jim Otagiri said.

Nowadays, Otagiri has slowed down a bit but enjoys getting out to walk with her son and visiting with some of the "youngsters" in the retirement home.

"I have an old family friend who comes by every week to cook me a Japanese meal," said Otagiri, who also tunes into Japanese TV.

In honor of her 108th birthday, Otagiri received birthday greetings from President Obama and the Japanese Consul in San Francisco.

*Maggie Sharpe  
Oakland Tribune  
06/19/2013*

[Ed. Note: Thanks go to Alice Cary for this article. We have been in touch with Chiyoko Otagiri and her son James since 2000. They have been generous supporters of the USN JLS/OLS Archival Project.]

## JLS Football?

I am writing you to ask if you have any football knowledge of the years 1942 when my dad was going to school there [*in the JLS*]. For Christmas my sister gave me a gold football pendant inscribed Greenwood Navy 1942, it had been in my mom's jewelry box. He played for the UW prior, I asked my

cousin Chris Hanson about it and he knew nothing. But had heard the Colorado coach sneaked him into a few games as a "ringer" down there. I'm curious if he played in the famed Army Navy game of 1942, known as the best football game of all time.

*Stacey Greenwood  
Son of Dick Greenwood  
JLS 1943*

*I think the 1942 Army/Navy football game dubbed the "best game" ever, was between the US Military Academy (West Point) and the US Naval Academy (Annapolis). Enlistment and the draft had virtually put an end to much collegiate football, or down-sized and short-talented the players considerably. Some of the best remaining talent went to the Military and Naval academies where they could still play, go to school, and stay out of immediate gunfire. Army beat up on everyone else by average margin of victory of 35-40 points. Navy followed right behind. Army had two Heisman winners in their backfield: Glenn Davis (Mr. Outside), and Doc Blanchard (Mr. Inside). So those Army/Navy games were titanic struggles, especially in 1944 and 1945. There is nothing like the Draft to improve service academy football, eh?*

**1942** Army 6-3, Navy 5-4,  
Both Unranked on AP Poll

**1943** Army 7-2-1 #11  
Navy 8-1 #4

**1944** Army 9-0 #1  
Navy 6-3 #4

**1945** Army 9-0 #1  
Navy 7-1-1 #2

**1946** Army 9-0-1 #2,  
Navy 1-8 (competitive but,...)

*By contrast, Colorado football was not nationally heralded, although we had a few great players in the late 30s: "Whizzer" White and "Kayo" Lamm. But anyone at the US Navy JLS/OLS at the University of Colorado was decidedly NOT playing football at the USNA, 1800 miles away (probably a longer distance considering the roads then). A few snuck onto the football field at CU during the initial, loose discipline of the summer and fall of 1942. Some used fake names. I will check for you. However, after the first*

*grades came out, and the Navy hierarchy tightened up discipline, all outside activities had to be dropped. I'll see what we can dig up.*

I think the last correspondence my brother Stacey Greenwood had with you was asking if you knew anything about the origin of our Dad's gold football pendant that is stamped "Navy 1942." I found a couple of news articles in my Dad's papers that talk about the Navy Football team comprised of men from JLS and the Navy Radio school that was formed in 1942, so that mystery is solved, see attached.

*Kathy Greenwood*

*Extracurricular activities were frowned upon by the sensei and often had to occur surreptitiously. My response was an attempt to separate any football played by JLS/OLSers at CU from both varsity CU football and the Army/Navy games that took place more than 1500 miles away. Any intra/Navy program sports would have been more intramural in nature and would not even have been dubbed the "best game ever" even at CU.*

I thought maybe the games were played as "exhibition games" to raise money for War Bonds. I have a Program (attached) from one of the games they played on Nov 11, 1942 [Ah, they took place early on].

I'm just glad they had a little bit of fun while they were there, as what they went through later (in the Pacific) was sure a horror story. I think the time my folks spent in Boulder was their best year. In one of his letters from the Pacific, my Dad says the whole year in Boulder was like one long honeymoon. They always planned to go back there for vacation, but never did.

*Kathy Greenwood*

*Armed with your information, I was able to go into the student newspaper (Silver and Gold) and find information on the CU Navy football season of 1942. A Navy Team was formed from the roster of the Navy Radio School at the University of Colorado during October and November of 1942. They played three games. The University of Colorado also*

*fielded a varsity football team in September of 1942, which was 'fortified' as well by Navy ROTC cadets. The separate Navy team, "with former greats" from several colleges around the country, including 'Bama' Holley, 'Red' Barefield, JLSers Dick Greenwood and Spencer Silverman, as well as "Kayo" Lam, former CU star, began playing on October 18, 1942, with a game against Regis College. The Navy team received players from the Navy Radio School and the JLS. The CU Navy Team beat Regis 20-13. \$1,265 in gate receipts was turned over to the Naval Radio School's recreation fund. On Armistice Day, the CU Navy team played the Denver B Team "Bees," to a 12-12 tie. The University of Colorado Navy played Regis College again on November 22, losing 20-6 with a team depleted by Navy Radio program graduation and reassignment. It appears that neither Dick Greenwood nor Spencer Silverthorne may have played in the third game.*

*The student newspaper, the Silver and Gold, covered the games alongside stories of the CU Buffalo varsity team and supported their Navy team.*

*David M. Hays  
Editor & Archivist*

*[Ed. Note: We sent scans of newspaper articles from the Silver and Gold to them.]*

## **Wallace Allan Mills** **JLS 1944, CIA 1948-1975** **Obituary**

Wallace A. Mills, born July 6, 1924 in Cleveland, Ohio, died August 3, 2012 in Bethesda, MD, aged 88 of complications from bladder cancer. He was residing at Maplewood Park Place Retirement Community. He had lived in Washington since 1948

Wallace Mills graduated from: Euclid Central High School in 1942; Harvard, BA, 1946, Phi Beta Kappa; US Naval Language School, Boulder CO where he studied Japanese, 1943-45; Yale, MA, 1948, in International Relations.

He was commissioned in the US Naval Reserve, attaining the rank of Lieutenant., Jr. Grade,

while on active duty during World War II.

Wallace Mills joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1948, posted to: Frankfurt, West Germany from 1951 to 1956; Paris, France, 1958 to 1963; Bogota, Colombia, 1968-71; Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Chief of Station 1971-73; and Langley, Head of Mexico desk, 1973-75. He retired from the CIA in 1975. After retiring, Mills joined KAPPA Consulting Agency from 1975-80. He worked with doctor's associations and hospitals to establish among the first Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO). Mills was also a financial consultant to Harry Belin in a variety of for-profit and not-for-profit business ventures as well as to Mary Cootes Belin in her last years of residency at her home, the Evermay estate, in Georgetown.

Wallace Mills was a board member for Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, Georgetown, DC; Chatsworth Homeowners' Association Board, DC; Middlesex Beach Homeowners' Association Board, Delaware. He was a member of: DACOR, an organization of foreign affairs professionals; the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO); and the Vestry at All Saints Church, Chevy Chase, MD.

Among his honors, he was one of 40 high school seniors from across the nation who received the Harvard College national scholarship in 1942. He was selected to be a Member, Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, 1962. He received the CIA medal in 1975.

Wallace A. Mills was married to Elinor McCormick Mills from 1953 until her death in 1999. Together they had four children: son, David Mills, El Paso, Texas; and daughters Letitia W. Mills, Bethesda, MD, Ann C. Mills, Silver Spring, MD, and Katherine L. Mills, Falls Church, VA. He had: a sister Jeannette M. Neidermeyer, Alexandria, VA; brother Lee Mills (Shirley), Columbia, SC; and brother Don Mills (Joni, deceased) Columbia, SC. He also had many nieces, nephews, grand nieces, and grand nephews.

As a CIA Intelligence Officer, he represented the United States in several world capitals.

At the close of WWII, the Germans were leaders in engineering and science. Wallace Mills was involved in efforts to recruit East German scientists who had been debriefed by Russian scientists in order to determine the extent of nuclear and rocket propulsion science/engineering passed on to the Soviets. It was critical to helping catch up and move ahead of the Soviets in the arms race. The joke was, "When the first Soviet and US satellites passed in orbit they spoke German."

In the late fifties and early sixties France was in danger of aligning with the Soviet Bloc. Communists dominated universities and were influencing a whole generation of French intellectuals as well as the labor unions. Among other things, Mills befriended French intellectuals (incl. Georges Souffert) and convinced them to participate in the State Department's Leader Program, which lead to (Souffert) teaching at several US universities and coming away from that experience with a different view of the US.

In Bogota, Colombia, Wallace Mills served as a Political Officer, working to counter communist influence in the intellectual and political arena. Although drugs had not yet become the problem they would in later decades, he worked with US agencies to interdict drug shipments to the US.

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, he helped to protect US interests and promote stability during the transition from Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier to his son Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, and again keep communist interests at bay.

After his retirement in 1975, he was recruited by the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers (now Assn of Former Intelligence Officers) to help improve the agency's image. In August of that year, he and his family were interviewed by Marlene Cimonis of the *Los Angeles Times*. The profile ran in newspapers across

the country and in the *International Herald Tribune*.

Proud of his work, he strongly believed he was helping his country and the countries where he served.

He was known for his open mindedness, curiosity, and a desire to learn more about the world. Multilingual, he spoke five languages at various points in his life: English, Japanese, German, French, and Spanish.

Wallace Mills was a strong FDR Democrat, who felt that the greatest threat to America was greed. He believed America's greatest strength lay in the diversity of its people – immigration provided new ideas, new energy.

*Ann Mills*

*January 15 & August 31, 2012*

*Reverend D. Mills, August 31, 2012*

*Edited by David M. Hays, Archivist*

## Japanese Language Newspapers used by the JLS?

A journalism history professor in Japan asked an interesting question that I had not fielded before. His interest is in whether or not the USN JLS/OLS subscribed to large numbers of issues of Denver area Japanese Language newspapers, like the *Colorado Times*. Initially, the professor used the phrases: "subsidized" and "supported" the Japanese language newspapers.

While I thought such an intentional subsidy or support was highly unlikely, on its face, I did think that such subscriptions might have been made to provide additional reading material. I suspect that the Sensei and their families would have been avid readers. I recall several photos of them reading such newspapers, and the Pineau/Kublin story that included a sensei reading aloud from a Japanese language newspaper.

Do any of you remember multiple copies of Japanese language newspapers in the library or provided as reading material for your classes? I have heard many of you tell of Japanese language films shown for immersion purposes. But I have not heard or read any references to Japanese language newspapers in the curriculum,

and we do not have the school's office files or correspondence to show whether or not the school used them.

Thank you in advance for any thoughts or memories you can provide.

*Best Wishes,*

*David M. Hays,*

*Archivist & Editor*

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I can't recall any Japanese language newspapers which were used by students in our second class of JLS that graduated in July 1943. However, we were shown some films from Japan in the auditorium. I remember that one of them had to do with contemporary Tokyo, probably dealing with life in the in the 1930s. I didn't understand most of the dialogue and very likely the majority of the audience also found it difficult. But there was the moment when a hotel doorman came out to the street, approached he curb, blew his whistle and shouted "*TA-kushi!*" We all burst out laughing and applauding in delight at having comprehended the word.

I look forward to other reactions to your query. Always a pleasure to hear from you and read about the doings of the various fellow alumni.

*Gene Sosin*

*JLS 1943*

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At both Berkeley and Boulder, our USN JLS had copies of Japanese language newspapers on hand for us to study, and/or told us where they were available at the university library. In that sense, the schools did use Japanese language newspapers published in the US. Copies of the newspapers were not issued to us. They were not an important part of the curriculum, but in retrospect I feel they should have been. At most they were used as a minor supplement to our Naganuma textbooks. Sometimes, but rarely, an instructor would read or quote something from one of the Japanese vernacular newspapers, as an example.

I do not know whether either of the two Navy schools themselves separately subscribed

to the newspapers published in the Denver area. At Berkeley it seems to me that the Japanese language publications we saw were from Los Angeles and/or San Francisco. At Boulder, we might have been provided access to the Japanese language newspapers published in Denver, like the *Kakushi Jiji* and *Rocky Nippon*, but copies were never issued to us as part of the curriculum.

I agree with you that aside from normal subscriptions to the newspapers, it was highly unlikely that any other support was given to such newspapers by the U.S. Navy or its Language Schools. In fact, I believe that subsidy and any other direct support would have been impossible under the wartime circumstances.

*Robert Sheeks*

*JLS 1943*

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A very interesting question. If not, why not? Ms. Walne, Lt. Conover, Chief .....???..... (it was a long time ago).

*Ned Coffin*

*JLS 1943*

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I have no recollection of having read a Denver Japanese Language newspaper while at the School. This does not mean they did not exist. I have forgotten many such matters. The Japanese community in Denver was small. I had one Nisei friend whom I had met at Columbia while an undergraduate who lived in Denver, but I have no recollection of her mentioning such a newspaper. Perhaps the teachers subscribed. I do recall quite clearly the Japanese languages published in Hawaii during the war.

*Donald Keene*

*JLS 1943*

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I have no recollection of any such thing. To the best of my memory, we never saw a paper in class. I would doubt there was at that time a Japanese population in Colorado sufficient in number to support a newspaper [Actually, there were the *Kakushu jiji* = Colorado Times, (1918-1969), the *Rocky Nippon* (1934-1942), and the

*Rocky Mountain Shimpō* (1942-1961)]. Perhaps some publication, maybe even mimeographed, was circulated in one or more of the Relocation Centers—I once visited a Relocation Center in Wyoming, but I'm not sure there even was a Center in Colorado [Yes, *Amache*, in *Grenada, Colorado*].

*Dick Moss*

*JLS 1943*

## Ned Coffin to Moss, Williams, Packman, Flournoy, and Bronston

Most interesting to me in your email is the revelation that Williams, Moss, Packman, Flournoy and Bronston are still with us, as is my cousin Dave. I couldn't connect names with the other email addresses.

What would you all think of the idea of exchanging a few words; perhaps even a note about the Hindmarsh effect on our lives. I took a course in memoir writing some time ago (months? decades?) in which we were told that each chapter should be no more than 3 pages long, double-spaced, and I wrote one on that very subject. I'm attaching it in the hope of evoking reactions.

I'm living in Strafford, one of Vermont's most beautiful villages, widowed but blessed with a travelling companion and sufficient health, energy and wealth to afford quite a bit of it. Where are you? *doko ni sunde iru ka? zen zen nihongo o wasure shimaimasu.*

*Ned Coffin*

*JLS 1943*

## \$Donations Accepted

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