

# The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

September 15, 2003

## 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.*

## Old Pineau File Found in Archives

Looking over Jessica Arntson's shoulder while she was showing me some papers from the *CPT Roger Pineau Papers* last Spring, I noticed a page dated 11 March 1981, attributed to C.M. Volpe, a predecessor of mine in the Archives. Since we save past researcher correspondence, I found stapled letters between CU personnel and CPT Pineau from 1976 to 1981.

These letters show that the Archives had been searching for JLS and OLS documents as early as 1976. As I read through the letters, I saw many of the same requests made by Professors Slesnick, Dingman, and Dr. Louriero. The rosters CPT Pineau used were duplicated from our original lists. So the JLS project, by other names, is actually more than 25 years old. The correspondence was placed in the Pineau Information File (all collections have files containing donor letters).

## Memories of Times Past

I was always one of the bright kids in school. When I got to Boulder I soon learned that being bright was not quite the same as being brilliant. The competition at Boulder was beyond anything I had experienced and I eventually felt pretty good about surviving and graduating and having done well.

I don't know why, but I was sent to the translation section at the Naval Intelligence Headquarters at Pearl Harbor. By translating some technical documents in the pile of stuff we were first assigned I convinced the head of the Translation section, Jack Ashmead, that that I hoped he would send the technical aircraft documents to me. This was fortunate for me since as a young boy I tuned up our family car, read the mechanical engineers handbook and was fairly knowledgeable about aircraft and aircraft engines.

I got Harry Muheim and Sol Levine out of the bunch of new arrivals to work for me. There were others who helped, but picking Harry, whom we called "Mu", and Sol was really a smart thing to do. "Mu" already knew a lot about aircraft and although Sol didn't, he learned so fast that we soon were managing a new small translation subsection specializing in Japanese aircraft.

We worked hard and began to earn the respect of others and our superiors. I was eventually given citation from Admiral Chester Nimitz. I earned it and I am proud of it, but I think I would not have received it without the help of "Mu" and Sol. I never got around to thanking them, as I should have. Should they happen to read these words I wish to express my very great thanks. *[At the time Karr was not aware of Harry Muheim's passing. Please read the P.S. he added before sending this letter]* Others were helpful but Muheim and Levine were the very best.

Boulder and Pearl Harbor were great experiences for me. I learned much about language, other people, the U.S. Navy and much more. I learned to do my best, whatever my assignment. This learning was a great help in finishing my MA and PhD.

So Boulder has always, during the war, and since the war been a very important part of my life. I feel very fortunate to have been part of it at Boulder.

Albert Karr  
JLS 1943

P.S. Bill Hudson told me recently of Harry Muheim's passing. He was a genius.

## Catching Up: Letter to a Sensei

*[The following is a letter from Robert Rickert to a sensei, Eiichi Tsukiji.]*

Dear Eiichi,

I would not expect you to remember me, but I remember you because you were my favorite sensei. I was only five months through the 14-month long Japanese language program when the war ended, so I quit. I remember saying good-bye to you. I can imagine you may have felt at the time that I wasn't far enough along to do much with the Japanese language.

Having just discovered the JLS project at Boulder, and getting your address from David Hays, I am writing to thank you for your conscientious instruction, and to tell you what happened thereafter. Those five months were not a waste of time after all.

The Navy transferred me to the military government on Okinawa. I spent a year and a half there, the last year being a civilian working for the Army, which had taken over the military government from the Navy. I traveled all up and down the Ryukyus as part of my job, which was to do what I could to help the local population revive their industrial activity, such as it was. A lot of the time my Japanese was better than the English of the people I was

dealing with. My vocabulary was very limited, but it grew, and you had given me good pronunciation so that the people could understand me up to a point once they caught on I was trying to speak Japanese. I could leave notes that people could read, talk to my opposite number in the civilian government over the telephone, give speeches in Japanese that others wrote for me. One was at a boat launching. "Honjitsu no shinsuishiki ni atarimashite..." *[For those of you whose Japanese is a little rusty this means:]* a little fancier than I could have come up with on my own. On several occasions I had interesting conversations with people who spoke no English and had never spoken to a foreigner before.

I saved most every penny I made on Okinawa and with the GI bill I went to Harvard Law School. Then I practiced law in Manhattan for ten years before moving to Winston-Salem in 1960 where I've been a lawyer for R.J. Reynolds, retiring in 1987. From time to time, I had business contacts with Japanese, usually involving an interpreter. But over drinks and dinner, I would try out a few simple topics of conversation in Japanese even though I had by then forgotten much of it. One time I was in a negotiation that lasted a week, and I found that it was starting to come back to me. However, my vocabulary remained at a casual social level. Really interesting topics were, and are, beyond me.

My first trip to mainland Japan was on a business trip to the Philippines. I went to Japan a few day before in order to recover from jet-lag *[jisaboke, well we did it the other way we might as well give you the Japanese]* and visited some businessmen I had dealt with in the States. They spoke little English and there was no interpreter, but we communicated pretty well until they tried to explain Japanese wedding customs to me. They ran me down to Kiyoto on the

shinkansen and showed me all the wonderful sights. We stayed at an ancient ryokan and were entertained by a geisha they had known for years who filled them in on the latest political jokes and gossip. It was all over my head, of course. After I retired, my wife and I stopped in Japan for a few days on our way to China, and I found I could ask directions, buy tickets, recover lost luggage etc. I found I could even play golf there. In Taipei I had been warned not to take a taxi with a young driver because the young ones played "chicken" with each other on the streets and

the old ones. So I said to them "Dare ka, Nihongo go dekiru hito ga koto ni imasuka?" One was dangerous to ride with. But when I saw a crowd of taxi drivers in the hotel lobby, I couldn't tell the young ones from the old ones, so I knew I'd found one of the old boys.

I notice that the Japanese language had evolved since 1945, just as English has. "Katsudou shashin" sounds pretty dated now.

I could go on, but you get the idea. Even the small amount of Japanese I learned at school has enriched my life and led to

friendships and experiences I would never otherwise have had.

My life has been full of good fortune. I hope that you can say the same. If you are in touch with other students or sensei who would have known me, please say "yoroshiku" for me. I'm curious to know how you got from Chicago to Lakewood.

*Sincerely,  
Robert D. Rickert  
Entered OLS 1945*

## **Alan Campbell Dies; Revamped Civil Service (1998)**

Although his name never became a household word, Dr. Campbell was a pivotal figure in the way modern-day government works. As chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the predecessor agency to the Office of Personnel Management, he was the top personnel officer of the entire federal government and best known as the architect of the innovative Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. That act

applied private-sector personnel management and compensation practices to the roughly 2 million federal workers.

Dr. Campbell, an academic and Democratic Party activist, was a native of Elgin, Neb. He served as an ensign in the Navy during World War II, attending the Oriental Language School at the University of Colorado in Boulder and Oklahoma A&M in Stillwater, OK. After graduating from Whitman College in Washington state, he received a master's degree in public administration from Wayne State

University in Michigan and a doctorate in public administration from Harvard University. Before joining the faculty at the University of Texas, Dr. Campbell was dean of the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University.

Dr. Campbell was dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Administration at the University of Texas for only 20 days when he received a call in late February 1977 to meet with Carter. After the meeting, Dr. Campbell submitted to the White

House a three-page memo outlining his ideas about civil service reform. Two weeks later, he was offered the job of chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

*Washington Post  
(Feb 6, 1998): D, 6:1*

## **Good & Bad News**

Among the names given by Dr. Rush: Frederick A. Olafson, Burton Wechsler and Charles David Cook have been located and are on our list; Alan K.

"Scotty" Campbell and Stephen Pounds Taylor have passed away; and Helmut Joachim Schmidt is missing.

The Columbia and Cornell alumni associations were very helpful, as were the Political Science Office at Syracuse and the Philosophy Department at UCSD. Finding members of the OLS classes of 1945 and 1946 has not been a simple task and interesting them in the project has not always been easy. Thanks go to Dr. Rush for bringing several to our attention.