

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 70A

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

December 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.

**Members of the
OLS Class of '45
Part 2**

The following people entered the OLS May 16, 1944:

9. **Tom Kerr** entered with us in May 1944 and graduated with us in August 1945. He had a natural facility with languages, and was, according to some of the sensei, virtually native in Japanese by the time we graduated. When he gave the valedictory for our group at graduation, Mr. Shaw stated unequivocally that Kerr had the highest grade average in the history of JLS/OLS. After graduation he and I roomed together at the Advanced Intelligence School at the Henry Hudson Hotel in New York and were then posted to duty with JICPOA and then with the Naval Technical Mission to Japan. We spent about six months in Japan. NavTechJap, in its infinite wisdom, named him its Mess Officer, to his great disgust, and thus wasted the linguistic talents of quite possibly the best student the JLS/OLS ever turned out. After discharge, Kerr, who had a

wife and two children, went into business in California. As far as I know, Kerr never used Japanese after discharge. He became interested in Revisionist History in his last years and wrote numerous articles for journals. He and I corresponded a couple of times a year until his death a couple of years ago. His widow spread his ashes over the Pacific Ocean from a US naval vessel. She lives in La Mesa, California.

10. **John Catt**, one of the Britishers, entered with us in May 1944 and graduated with us in August 1945. He was bearded for most of his time in Boulder, and this caused great consternation among the Navy command. I have heard that our Commander's protest was passed on to Washington, back and forth several times; but the final ruling was that Catt was British, wore Royal Navy uniforms, was on detached duty to OLS, the Royal Navy permitted beards, and Catt could retain his. And he did for many months. If I remember correctly, though, he shaved it off the last few weeks in Boulder, or perhaps, in Japan afterward. I saw him in Japan a time or two. After discharge, he returned to England and taught in English private schools. I lost touch with him for many years but had a letter from him about four years ago, responded, and we wrote back and forth a time or two. He died about a year ago, and his widow lives in South England.

*H. Morris Cox, Jr.
OLS 1945*

**The Army JLS
Revue**

Readers of "The Interpreter" will remember that in one of last year's issues (Number 43) I described the musical revue which the JLS staged in early 1943 and which I co-authored.

Many of you may not be aware that at about the same time our Army counterparts, who were studying Japanese at the University of

Michigan in Ann Arbor, put on their own satirical revue. They called it "Nips in the Bud."

I knew about the coincidence because Norman Stoner, one of the students in our class that graduated in July 1943, had a brother Private Gerald H. Stoner of Company A, 3651st Service Unit (the Army's Japanese language unit), who wrote the music for the show. That was the extent of my knowledge for the past sixty years, until my wife Gloria, who was then a senior at U. of M. and attended one of the three performances, recently came across the program which she had preserved along with her other college memorabilia.

The show consisted of two acts and fifteen scenes, and included such songs as "Strummin' on the Old Benjo" and a grand finale with the title number and a patriotic march called "Off Toward the Rising Sun," with its stirring (?) opening lyrics: "Hey, hearken to the Doughboys,/Off toward the Rising Sun;/Say, sad about the foe boys,/They're full of scare,/We'll soon be here,/They'll swear in old Nihon-go..."

I came across more coincidences in looking over the cast of performers: Privates Gordon Cotler and Alvin Yudkoff, who collaborated on the book (Yudkoff was also the director), had been my contemporaries at Columbia College and like me -- were active in the Varsity Shows, made famous by predecessors such Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II. Cotler continued his writing career after the war and is today well known for his novels, short stories and TV scripts.

But perhaps the greatest coincidence of all for Gloria and me was that one of the star actors of the revue was Private Bernard J. Choseed, whom she did not know then, but whom we both met after the war when we all studied Russian in Columbia's graduate school. Bernie became

a dear friend and was best man at our wedding in 1950. He taught Russian on U.S. campuses and later in Japan and Eastern Siberia before his death a few years ago.

It would be interesting to learn whether some of our JLS alumni came across these or other Nihongo Doughboys at some point in their travels. I'd be happy to send them the names of the two dozen listed in the playbill.

*Gene Sosin
JLS 1943*

E-mail: Glogene1@cs.com

**Lt. Cdr. K.D. Ringle
Naval Intelligence
Gathered & Disregarded**
Part I: A Dual Assignment

Kenneth Duval Ringle graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1923 with dreams of commanding warships. However, four years later, intrigued by the idea of extended duty abroad, he parlayed his gift for languages into a three-year tour at the Tokyo-based US Navy Japanese Language School. Unfortunately, the US Navy did not include intelligence among their high priorities and those who chose such career paths found themselves side-tracked, their advice often uncalled for and unheeded. In between gunnery assignments at sea, Ringle served in intelligence capacities in Hawaii and California. When war broke out in 1941, Lt. Cdr. Ringle was one of 12 in the Navy who could speak Japanese.

In 1940, Lt. Cdr. Ringle was assigned to make an assessment of Japanese American loyalties on the West Coast, as part of a process to organize Navy counterespionage efforts in Southern California. It was a dual effort in which he was largely given a free hand: to catch spies and assess the danger of "fifth column" activity in California's Japanese American community. He started this effort virtually on his own, moving

among the truck farmers, tuna fishermen and small businessmen of Southern California, asking questions and making observations. By the outbreak of war, he personally commanded five branch offices and 75 men in a district encompassing the region from Sacramento to Mexico and from the Pacific Coast to Nevada.

He soon came to two conclusions regarding Japanese Americans. First, he found West Coast Japanese and Japanese Americans to be entirely different from the Japanese he

had known in Japan more than a decade earlier. While they had retained a considerable portion of their culture, they had acculturated by adapting to American institutions and had increasingly assimilated by learning English and adopting certain American behaviors. Like most immigrant groups, they believed intensely in the United States and in its vision of a better life. Second, despite the Japanese American eagerness to be identified as American and regardless of their record of industry and social

responsibility, Japanese on the West Coast were subject to a wide range of discrimination, often brutal in its manifestations.

While welcomed by agricultural landholders as a “docile” work force in the 1890s, Japanese immigrants soon saved their money, bought land and became competitors to the very California agricultural interests that had initially employed them. Soon their former employers joined the state’s nativist populace in their opposition to Japanese immigration. Alarmed by their increasing numbers,

disdainful and leery of their alien culture, and intensely jealous of their success, white Californians were able to have the Japanese included in the 1924 federal legislation to curtail or end immigration of “unwanted” nationalities and ethnicities. In addition, the fearful majority had struck out at the Japanese in their midst by barring them from white schools and housing, discriminating against them in employment and land ownership, and subjecting them to physical abuse. It was this heritage of discrimination and scapegoating

that Ringle discovered in his prewar investigation into the Japanese American community in Southern California.

[To Be Continued, I of VI Parts]

*Adapted from Ken Ringle,
“What Did You Do
Before The War, Dad,”
Washington Post,
December 6, 1981*

[Ed Note: Kenneth Ringle, son of the Lt. Commander, and a writer for the Washington Post, graciously allowed me to rewrite and condense this fascinating story. We thank him.]

Response to Gift of Photocopied Photo

[Ed. Note: While cataloging the images from the Pineau Collection, we often come upon particularly interesting shots which we copy for a contact in the picture.]

Well, you guys did give me a pleasant review of those old days when things seemed to say, “Yes”.

Wolaver was a brilliant pianist but had, I understand, a tragic ending. Dick Clark was a sweet man. After the War, in Ann Arbor, he gave me a

a friendly treatment on my doctoral French exam. About 5 years ago, I got a handwritten note from one of his friends who said they were sending notices of his death to all those on the list he drew up for that purpose...a beautiful idea. I haven’t been able to find out about Guy Hewitt *[Me neither]* or John Decker *[We sent him an obituary for John L. Decker, who died immediately prior to our reinitiating the JLS/OLS Project (whose picture it was).]*

*Edgar Whan
JLS 1943*

\$Donations Accepted

There are those of you who may not have papers to donate to the Archives, but who may wish to support the Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project in other ways. We have set up a cash account that funds Archives activities regarding the JLS/OLS Project. You will be happy to know that we hire work-study students on this fund, tripling its value. If you wish to donate, make your check out to The University of Colorado and mail it to our contact address.