

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.

Lt. Cdr. K.D. Ringle

Naval Intelligence Gathered & Disregarded

V. Internment

Lt. Cdr. Ringle's report reached the White House just as General Dewitt petitioned the War Department for a presidential order authorizing him to exclude American citizens as well as aliens from the West Coast. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, granting General Dewitt's petition to remove all Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast and intern them in the interior states. Ringle's report was obviously not consulted.

Both Lt. Cdr. Ringle and Curtis Munson continued to protest the removal and internment. Munson declared, "We are drifting into a treatment of the Japanese corresponding to Hitler's treatment of the Jews," another problem ignored by the administration. After viewing the rising tide of anti-Japanese sentiment in California, Ringle

began to believe that internment might be the only way that Japanese Americans could be safeguarded from mob violence, lynchings and shootings.

Drained, depressed and feeling as if he had somehow been an inadvertent accomplice to the betrayal of America's Japanese, Ringle applied for sea duty. Unfortunately, his years in Japan, his intelligence work, and his attempt to set the record straight on Japanese Americans all militated against his receiving fleet assignments that would have assured rapid promotion.

Ironically, Milton Eisenhower, the director of the War Relocation Authority that administered the internment camps, read Ringle's report and requested that he assist in planning the educational and self government program for the Japanese American internees. Between May and June of 1942, Lt. Cdr. Ringle turned his original report into the 57 page report entitled "The Japanese Question in the United States." In it he suggested separating the kibe and clearly suspicious aliens from the main body of pro-US aliens and nisei. He also suggested provisions that would allow US citizens of proven loyalty to leave the camps altogether. Many of the provisions in the report were enacted in the camps, ameliorating, to a degree, the injustice of the camps. While a division chief of staff aboard the cruiser *Honolulu*, off Guadalcanal, Ringle received word that *Harpers* was interested in publishing his report, which it did, anonymously, in October 1942.

Although Kenneth D. Ringle saw action throughout the Pacific, won the Legion of Merit for service in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, commanded his own ship, and after the War, commanded a division of transports in China, his career never fully recovered from time lost due to his intelligence duties. Much of his work on the Japanese Americans

had been deemed too secret for his personnel folder. He was told that his commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for the Tachibana affair was lost. He retired as a Rear Admiral in 1953, but did not make flag rank with his class and never returned to sea. Ten years later, he was dead.

[To Be Continued, V of VI]

*Adapted from Ken Ringle,
"What Did You Do
Before The War, Dad,"*

Washington Post, December 6, 1981

The Sheeks Brothers

Robert B. Sheeks was in the so-called "February Class", which graduated at CU Boulder in Feb 1943, after having begun at Berkeley about one year earlier.

George H. Sheeks and I were both in the so-called "Summer Group", which began at Boulder during June 1942 and graduated in July 1943. George and I were in neighboring single rooms at the Men's Dorm, Fleming Hall, during at least the last half of our Japanese Language training. The rooms were basement level rooms, and were immediately to the right, for anyone entering the building on the west end, or Flagstaff end of the building.

George Sheeks is in the San Diego area. I was best man at his second wedding, some years ago, and we were in frequent contact for many of the post-Boulder years. Bob Sheeks lives only about 50 miles N of here, and we are in frequent contact by visits and phone...

Bob has been in Asia for over half of the time since he left Boulder, was at the June '02 JLS Reunion (as was I), has made many professional trips to the Orient during 2002 and 2003, and may be one of the world's top Asian experts.

*Dan Williams
JLS 1943*

[Ed. Note: George Sheeks appears in one of the photographs submitted to the American Bar Association publication *Experience*, Robert

Sheeks appeared in another story on the JLS discussed earlier. We remember Robert Sheeks at the Reunion, finding all the images of his brother on the paper "placemats" (photocopies of photographs).]

Stillwater OLS

I knew Roger Pineau in Washington, DC where I was first stationed with ONI, then later employed by the CIG ('Group'), which became part of CIA; he was with the Navy Department, working on the naval history project.

My group started at the Boulder school and was sent away to another school that was started at the Oklahoma A&M campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma, midway in our course; I wonder if your project will also follow up their (i.e., our) history? Of course, we hated to leave the beauties of Boulder for the backwoods of Stillwater, but there was nothing to do about it. Some years ago (after I retired and moved to Hawaii, in 1989), I had some correspondence with people at Stillwater, who were trying to document the history of the Oriental Language School there; I sent them what little I could find in my papers about it, but then never heard any more from them.

*Roy Andrew Miller
OLS 1946*

[Ed. Note: Another old letter. He knows by now that we are interested in, and include, Stillwater instructors and graduates.]

The 1942 Winter Group

For the time being, I am holding onto an original photograph that was taken in January or February 1944, toward the end of the course for classes W-1 to W-4 of the Winter Group which began the first week of December, 1942. The students were all, I am reasonably certain, in W-1, W-2, W-3, and W-4, and from the viewers left to right they are: Richard Gilruth Davis(W-1),

Philip Redmond Monahan (W-1?), Harris Inwood Martin (W-2), Sanford Lawrence Schulteis (W-4?), Harold Balkan (W-3), Harold Samuel Dudoff (W-1?), Kenneth Church Lamott (W-4?), Kermit Irvin Lansner (W-1), Richard Mead Woodard (W-2), Sensei, Howard Hoekje (W-4?).

As you already know, many of the JLOs during the War were sons and daughters of American missionary, business, and diplomatic families who lived and worked in Japan, China and Korea. In this small group:

Ritchie Davis was born of missionary parents in China and grew up there; and Ken Lamott, Dick Woodard, Howard Hoekje and I were all born of missionary parents in Japan and raised there.

Of the ten JLS students in the picture, Schulteis and I are the only ones whose names appear on your contact list [*This letter is two years old, we send newsletters to Ms. Faye Lansner and Mrs. Howard Hoekje*]. Davis, Monahan, Lamott, Lansner, Woodard and Hoekje are all dead. I have heard an

uncertain report that Balkan died. And because Dudoff is not on the contact list, I fear he too may be dead [*Not on the necrology list, but not in Peoplefinder either*]. But I see that Travers E. (Ted) Durkee, who was in a later class in the Winter Group, is not on the contact list either; I am quite sure he is still living here in Aptos at 110 Las Lomas Drive, Aptos, CA 95003, so it may be that Balkan and Dudoff are still with us [*Last summer, I sent Mr. Durkee a packet of JLS/OLS*

materials. He is getting the newsletter]

Harris I. "Jish" Martin
JLS 1944

[*Ed. Note: As you might guess, this is another discovery from the files. Not only was it old when I found it last summer, it is a year older now.*]

Some Memories of a JLS Wife, Part I

When I arrived in Boulder in June 1942, I was mad at the US Navy, the US Army, and the

world in general. I was 7 months pregnant and had already moved twice in the 7 months since December 6, when our joy in the confirmation of my pregnancy was blown away by the awful news of December 7.

My husband, Sherwood, was born in Japan, of missionary parents, and grew up there until he left for college. So he quickly volunteered in January for the Navy, which told him to report to the newly established language school in Berkeley, California. No transportation

provided, no pay either. We sold our wedding presents to pay our taxes, obstetrician, train fare to California, and my move back to my parents in Ohio. My husband quit his job and we braced for an uncertain future.

He soon found a place to live near the Berkeley campus, and in March 1942, my father took me on a tough train trip west. I was nauseated much of the way. But we loved the view from the house, of the Oakland bridge; and the mild weather was great. My husband studied at home at

every hour he was not in classes, because although he spoke Japanese fluently, and with a perfect accent, he could neither read nor write it.

At Berkeley, he ran into several old friends, also born in Japan (BIJ's), whose parents were also missionaries from various Christian denominations. He also made new friends – scholars in Asian studies from Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Michigan, etc. Many of them could read but not speak Japanese well, if at all. It was

challenging for the school director, Florence Walne, and the excellent Nisei faculty to design a program which would turn out reliable and fluent interpreters and translators in the 13-month deadline the Navy set!
(*To be continued*)

Mrs. Frances H. Moran

[*Ed. Note: Another great letter from the files. Getting a wife's perspective is always enlightening. This letter is intriguing for its detail on Berkeley, as well. The letter was long, so there will be three more parts*]