

# The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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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.*

## Our Japanese "Ally" Part IV

At another time a prisoner's story had led us to a reputedly intricate cave system, containing a large amount of well-equipped troops. On this occasion we had two encounters. The first was with the Seabees in that area, who were all for eliminating our emissary. They were almost as hard to convince as the Japanese, but they finally saw it our way.

Shortly after, they were given concrete evidence [*The only kind of evidence a Seabee would accept, I suppose*] of the loyalty of our helper. We had taken up our positions near the mouth of the cave and had sent Kuwahata ahead to negotiate. Only a few words had passed between him and the Japanese guard when our boy suddenly signaled furiously for us to retreat, and he followed rapidly. We barely had time to get behind a rock when the grenade exploded.

Kuwahata prescribed dynamite for this job, and the Seabees said that they would take over. All hands in our party were then invited to partake of

the well known generosity of the Seabees. Kuwahata alternated mouthfuls of his first hot "C" rations with translations of the writing on Seabee souvenirs. These wonder men of the construction world would have built us a chateau in return for him. Since he was too valuable a "souvenir" to be traded, we declined.

We never thought we'd be sorry to say goodbye to anyone on Iwo. We hadn't reckoned with the presence of Kuwahata. Despite our longing for hot showers and clean clothes on the ship that would take us back to our base, we knew we'd miss our daily mole hunt with this enemy who now seemed one of our gang. But the lieutenant in charge of the stockade was glad to see us go, for then he could have exclusive rights to the abilities of our find in handling the other Japanese. The day we said so long in English we left the little corporal established as the number one man in the stockade.

(End of Part IV, to be continued)

*Lieutenants John J. Craig  
& Lawrence C. Vincent  
USMCR, JLS 1944 and 1943  
Guam, August 1945,  
Lawrence Vincent Collection*

## The Chinese Program, Part I

Since I had been a foreign language major at college before the outbreak of WWII, after graduating from the Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School in Chicago, I was assigned to the Navy Language School in Boulder, majoring in Mandarin Chinese. The breadth of the language courses there was quite extensive, and particularly in Chinese, for in addition to Mandarin, there were other courses in Cantonese and the dialects of Foochow and Amoy. Of course there was a great emphasis on Japanese, and, because of its Asian involvement, on Russian. Proof of the lack of American

preparation linguistically for our sudden leadership in a war in the Orient was the scarcity of printed lesson texts. Our text-books were reproduced from handwritten lesson sheets. I still have my old lesson books stored away. My Navy-issued Chinese/English dictionaries, though worn with age, are still in use. Incidentally, a further indication that, as Americans, and in spite of our war against the Japanese Empire, we were still not very farsighted with regard to our Asian future, was the lack of any courses in the Korean language. Nor, given the emergency pressure of time, were there any courses in the history and culture of the various cultures of the various countries involved in our language training. Also, one peculiarity of language program assignment that was brought to light by a fellow student in my Chinese class, related to the historical animosity of the Poles and the Russians. He, being of Polish descent and fluent in that language, could easily have breezed through a course in Russian, which is closely akin to Polish. However, the administration of the school purposely assigned him to a Mandarin class, much to his chagrin (to be continued).

*Joseph Burgess  
OLS 1946  
Mandarin Chinese*

[*Ed. Note: Sounds like Standard Operating Procedure. It would have even been more likely to have happened if he had been fluent in Russian already. Sounds like the assignment of the most fluent graduate in Japanese to Mess Officer, never using his language skills at all, or the Japanese speaker who was sent to an Army school to learn German!*]

*Perhaps the other language programs were not as infused with culture and literature as I have been told was the Naganuma training program in Japanese. Mr. Gibney recently lamented the lack of cultural training for military Iraqi language officers. Mr. Burgess's letter will be completed in the next issues.]*

**USMCEJL II**

Dear Mr. Hays, please accept my thanks for your letter of May 7, 2003 [*Sorry for the delay*] and for the accompanying copy of the William Manchester article, "The Man Who Could Speak Japanese." Terrific!

Thanks to *The Interpreter* and your fine and helpful staff [*I agree, they are a great student staff*] I have recontacted Calvin Dunbar (LA High ROTC, 1941, and Guam, 1945) and Aubrey M. Farb, OLS 1944 (LT Farb, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, Japanese Language Section, Guam, 1945).

I entered the Marine Enlisted (6 months) Japanese Language School in September 1944 when the school was in the FEW Permanent Barracks at the San Diego Base. I was a 17 year old volunteer. In December 1944 the school was moved to Camp Lejeune. This took almost three months! So I missed Iwo and Okinawa.

On graduation, I was sent to JICPOA (now JICPAC) at Pearl Harbor to which the language sections of the Marine Divisions had been recalled to translate documents and interview prisoners.

After Hiroshima we joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division on Guam. After some weeks the Division broke up, and we were sent to Sasebo to the Fifth Amphibious Corps H.Q. and the Second Division. Spent almost a year on Kyushu, almost always on Temporary Duty (TDY) out in the boonies or, once, with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Army Division in Fukuoka. Returned to US in August '46.

Do you know whatever happened to Staff Sergeant "Gocho" Harris, an instructor at the Enlisted School who was scheduled to go to Boulder about the time (May 1945) I graduated?

PS: My 28 year old son (AB, BS Stanford, 1996, MA, NPGS 2003) serves as a Naval Intelligence Officer at JICPAC, Pearl Harbor... *Plus que ça change, plus que là même chose.*

Thomas A. Carey  
USMCEJL 1945

[Ed. Note: I am fairly certain one could not enroll in a Navy School with a nickname, so I did not look for "Gocho". However, I did find a Doyle William Harris of Muncie, Indiana, enrolled as of April 30, 1945. I found a Doyle W. Harris of the appropriate age (84) at 10 Heritage Way, Allen, TX 75002 (972) 727 3655. Of the 28 Doyle W. Harris's that I found, three were between 74-76, but I thought that to be too young for a Staff Sergeant in 1945. I have no idea whether the above Harris and address is the right one. Now "Gocho" may not be our Doyle W. Harris, anyway.]

## Horace G. Underwood LL.D., JLS 1944 1917 – 2004

Dear Friends:

Horace Underwood was one of the Boulder language graduates 1942-43.

The details of his life are in the notice below. He knew both Japanese and Korean very well and served as translator for the Panmunjong meetings between North and South Korea. Any further information can be gotten at Yonsei University.

We were in Boulder at the same time and knew Horace well.

Julie L. Murfin  
(Mrs. Thomas Murfin)

Horace Grant Underwood peacefully completed his earthly service at 11:20PM on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in the presence of his beloved wife, Dorothy, and his eldest son and wife, Horace and Nancy. It was Dorothy's 71<sup>st</sup> birthday, and the year Horace and Dorothy were to retire to Australia.

A man with a sharp mind and clear vision, Horace was a wise counselor, strong friend, and generous host who gave his time unstintingly to charities, service organizations, and Christian foundations.

The grandson, son, and father of Christian missionaries, he was born in and served Korea all his life with a steadfast love of the country, its history and people. He maintained contact with dozens of relatives and hundreds of friends through mail and email.

Horace taught English at Yonsei University, served in the US Navy in both World War II and the Korean War. He was a

graduate of the US Navy Japanese Language School in 1944. He was founding Dean of Seoul National University and became Professor of Education at Yonsei. During the turbulent 1960s he was Acting President of Yonsei and steadfastly remained at his post despite enormous political pressure, including threats and violence to his home. During this time he introduced reforms and calmed agitators until the troubles subsided.

One of Horace's great joys was introducing visitors to his beloved Korea, his deep knowledge of its history bringing its past alive. In particular, he loved "The Beach" at Taecheon, helping found the Beach Association in 1948 and building one of the first cabins. It was a barren spot, in contrast with the forested beauty spot it has become. He drove there as often as he could, never happier than when out in the boat.

He was an encourager. His family, students, researchers, writers – anyone with a vision was urged to set their goals high, especially anyone whose vision included full-time service in Korea.

Many hundreds gathered to wish Horace farewell at the flower bedecked services at Saemunan Presbyterian Church and the Luce Chapel of Yonsei University before the graveside service in the Foreigner's Cemetery in the grounds of Seoul Union Church. There his body rests with those of his parents, grandparents, and his first wife Joan.

Family and friends give grateful thanks to God, for Horace enriched their lives.

[Ed. Note: Issues #48 and #57 carried stories, submitted by Robert Schwantes and Cal Dunbar, about Horace Underwood, who had himself achieved a legendary reputation among the faculty and students at Yonsei University in Korea. His son wrote, "My father spoke often of his days in Colorado 'Champion cribbage player of the Colorado Navy' was one of the titles he claimed".]

[Ed Note: The following is my version of Telfer Mook's tale of his establishment of a school on Tinian.]

## Tinian's School for Japanese Children 1944-1945

In July 1944, when Lt., j.g. Telfer Mook, JLO (JLS 1944), went ashore on Tinian, he was confronted with several thousand surviving captured children. Since the saying went, "Golden Gate in '48", Lt. Mook wondered what would become of the children. Then he remembered a semi-burned Japanese math book he had stepped on as he had come ashore. He discussed the matter with his commander and received a perfunctory go-ahead.

So he asked through the POW camp if there were any Japanese teachers. A handful came forward, fearful and curious. They wondered how they could be of use since they knew very little English and they assumed the classes would be held in English (as the Japanese conquest had imposed Japanese on schools in the "Greater Prosperity Sphere"). Mook replied with the comments, "Do you speak English? Do the children speak English? No? So why would we try to teach in English? No, the classes will be taught in Japanese," much to the surprise of the teachers.

Lt. j.g. Mook then asked if they knew where any texts would be. The teachers knew that many texts may have been preserved in the basement of the school that had been destroyed by the naval shelling and aerial bombardment. Indeed a later search revealed the texts, but Mook found them rife with Imperial Japanese propaganda, even the math and science books. The Lt. j.g. asked the teachers to write texts stripped of such propaganda. When the first came back with a new text, Mook found that the teacher had kept most of the propaganda, not expecting Mook to be able to read Japanese. Mook fired him. The others got the message and brought back proper texts.

He was able to convince the senior teacher, Nobuji Ikeda, to help lead the effort for the sake of the children. The next step was to request material for school buildings. His commander directed the Seabees

to build a number of quonset huts. He was also able to scrounge plywood and lumber on the beaches left from offloading military equipment. The plywood was painted black to serve as giant blackboards, so that the handful of texts could be transcribed, as time went by, on the "blackboards".

One of his biggest challenges resulted from his insistence (over the Japanese teachers' resistance) that the genders be taught together. The teachers believed the girls, after 4th grade, could not compete with the boys. Mook, making it up as he went, insisted that such a contention flew in the face of the findings of American education. The teachers held out on strike and Mook had to occupy the children until the teachers relented. He received scouting uniforms from the US and a variety of sports equipment from the Army Air Force units on Tinian. So Mook had the children marching around in Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops or playing baseball and other sports. The Army fliers and air crews brought footballs, bats and gloves, and coached the children. Mook was touched by the irony that the bombing crews, fresh from raids on cities on the Japanese home islands would adopt Japanese children and play games with them. The teachers knew when they were whipped and soon gave in.

Later Lt.j.g. Mook and his teachers concocted a college prep course, but with not enough teachers or texts, they had to hold anonymous qualifying exams. Girls and boys qualified in roughly equal numbers. The Japanese teachers, who had graded the exams were forced to admit that Mook had been right.

Lt.j.g. Mook's school caught the attention of the Navy and Washington. So impressed were they that they offered to let him set up an educational system for the Occupation. But, as Reverend Mook later said, "They made a mistake, they offered me a choice. They made the offer, or they said, I could go home. I went home, instead." He left his school to his assistant, Lt. j.g. Warren Johnston (JLS 1944), two months his junior. (cont'd)