

# 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.*

## Robert W. Christy Reports

I have just read the March 1, 2004, issue of *The Interpreter* (#73). Willard Ellsbree, a JLS graduate, gave me his copy when he visited yesterday. It was of special interest because my name is mentioned in the communication from Robert Crispin about William Beasley. I have some photos (one of which I enclose) of Bill Beasley, Jim Wells, and me at the house on the Yokosuka Naval Base that Crispin describes. Reminiscing with Willard brought back so many memories of Yokosuka and Boulder.

I was at Boulder from June 1943 to August 1944; then at CNO (Stuart Building) in Washington, JICPOA, and Yokosuka (from 29 August 1945 to June 1946). Then I returned to the University of Chicago for my Ph.D. in physics. After a career at Dartmouth College, I retired in 1987. Since then I have been able to indulge my abiding interest in Japanese art and culture, and travel in Japan every few years.

I would be very grateful if you would add my name to the mailing list for *The Interpreter*. Also, I would be happy to share more of my recollections of JLS and Japan.

Robert W. Christy  
JLS 1944

*[Ed. Note: This note came in September 2004 (sorry, backlog). We added Professor Christy as soon as we got his letter and send him a thick packet of Interpreters, an address list, and an entrants' list. He has been on our mailing list ever since.]*

## Earl Swisher CU History Professor JLS 1943, LTC USMCR

*I recently came across this letter From Earl Swisher and thought you might be interested in it, especially as he had been a professor at the University of Colorado. He was in the same class as I – along with Gene Sosin, Frank Ryder, and David Stocking (S2). We entered the Japanese Language School in 1942, and we were together through the whole time we were there. The "Jean and Sandy" he refers to in the last line are Gene [as he came to spell his name] Sosin and Sanford Rogers. Sandy shared an apartment with me in Washington, DC, until his death by a burst aorta (which happened in our apartment while I was away on leave). Earl enclosed a couple of pictures with his letter.*

Edward L. Hart  
JLS 1943

Dear Ed: 10 Sept. 1943  
I was surely delighted to hear from you and the activities of metropolitan Washington. As you have probably gathered from my notes to Jean, our existence has been completely if not blissfully rustic. This month, however, we can go into Elliott any time we are not in class or other duty, and the famed Officers' Club Bar is now open to us—and I might say that it has become a very popular place. However it begins to look like our little band of Marines will

not be together for long. It began last week when the Mastadon [sic] and I were notified of our attachment to the staff of a new and mysterious amphibious corps—blaze on the left shoulder of a red shield with three white stars above and an awful fierce looking yellow alligator below [Ed. Note: *Fifth Marine Amphibious Corps*, 1943]—which is being formed for immediate service at some remote part of the world. We were told to stand by for orders which would probably give us 24 hours to leave when they arrived. We've been busily getting our affairs secured and are still waiting --. Then day before yesterday ten of the boys were notified of detachment for special liaison training with the Army at Savage, Minnesota. They got their things together yesterday and pulled out today. Then just this afternoon, eight more were notified of attachment to radio communications platoons, with 14 weeks special training in Los Angeles. They are to leave here a week from today. That leaves 23 unassigned and as you can imagine from Boulder experience, the speculation, excitement, and anxiety are running high among the eucalyptus trees at Green Farm. In all probability, I shall be out of the States by the end of the coming week—at least that's what everybody seems to think. It looks like a swell assignment, and prospect of exactly the kind of work I like best in the part of the world I like best, and *iu made mo naku*—in the best branch of the service.

We have been having military terminology this month for Nihongo, and brace yourself for the shock—I have been conducting the class. It's been pretty interesting and not much of a job as the material is very stereotyped. It's been limited to reading actual field orders, situation maps, etc. All the materials were provided by Nihongo Heisotsu Gakko at Elliott.

We have also had some interesting training in interrogation by a Captain Wolf who has recently returned from Guadalcanal. He's been very successful at the business and speaks Nihongo with great fluency, although he cannot read or write at all [Not among the USMCR, Navy, or Army MIS or JLS/OLS graduation lists]. He's one of the most colorful and entertaining characters I have ever met, and must have been a riot out in the field. His ideas of military procedure are far from orthodox, and apparently he did exactly as he pleased out there as he does here at Elliott. It's surprising to see that it can be done at least in the Marine Corps. He has told us some wonderful stories.

Last night was Big Night in Camp Elliott—preview of *Lady in the Dark* with Ginger Rogers in person. I went down with an officer's reserved ticket and she came in and sat down just in front of me—very, very glamorous. She is married to a PFC here at Elliott, although I understand he has just been promoted to Second Lieutenant and transferred to Hollywood. Anyway, she was there and made a very charming appearance on the stage and the picture was really delightful. I don't know how much it was changed from the stage production, but it was a good job on the screen.

I don't know where to tell you to write but I'll let you know—of course I may be sitting around here waiting indefinitely. I am enclosing a couple pictures taken on one of our field maneuvers. You can see how far removed from the Gentlemen of the Navy we are already.

Best regards to Jean and Sandy,

Capt. Earl Swisher  
H+S Co., Sch. Bn. TC  
Green Farm, Camp Elliott  
San Diego (44) California

*[Ed. Note: The Fifth Amphibious Corps (VAC) Established 4 Sept. 1943 from the redesignated Headquarters, Amphibious Corps*

*Pacific Fleet, as a augment to the 5th Fleet and Central Pacific Force Naval commands. This unit was tasked the mission of combining and directing Marine Corps and Army amphibious assaults. VAC units went ashore on Tarawa and the Army assault of Makin Island. (Not the Raider mission of earlier in the war.) Additional action was seen at Kwajalein, Eniwetok, the Marianas, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and the occupation of Japan. See website: <http://www.1stmarinedivisionassociation.org/amphib.htm>*

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### Part III

The Air Wing assigned us an R4D and flew us to Tsinan, which was about 200 miles inland from Tsingtao. We were met by an SSU officer and several 43<sup>rd</sup> Army staff officers. We were escorted to a conference room in Army HQ and reviewed our mission. The Japanese had received the Tanaka name through the SSU detachment, and acknowledged that they did indeed have a

the right man, since they were not aware that he had ever served in Hong Kong. They offered no objection to our taking the Major with us, however, and he was prepared to leave with us the next day. That evening, some Japanese staff officers fed us well and poured a lot of sake – an ironic scene in the middle of an erstwhile enemy army, not yet disarmed.

We took the Major with us back to Tsingtao. He was an

had expected. He said he was a finance officer, and looked the part.

From Tsingtao, the Major was shipped to Hong Kong. Some time later, we heard that the British had determined that “our” Major Tanaka was not the right one after all. They repatriated him directly to Japan. I’m sure this suited the Major far better than rejoining his beleaguered 43<sup>rd</sup> Army buddies still in Tsinan.

*The above piece deals with one of my more interesting experiences in North China after the War. It was first published in Scuttlebutt, the house organ of the China Marines Ass’n, next in CIRA, the CIA retirees’ Ass’n newsletter.*

Glenn W. Nelson  
JLS 1944

## Und\_ Reprise

I always enjoy *The Interpreter* newsletter, but especially the piece on “Und\_ for the Audience” in #81. Let me add a postscript.

### ‘Tanaka’ Secured

Chief Petty Officer Hedge often prescribed jumping jacks as part of our daily Und\_ regimen [*Funny, I never knew my DI or sergeants to ever ‘prescribe.’ Must be a Navy order*]. He would count, “Up, down, up, down...” At least once a day he would stop after “up”..., and half the group, at least, well into the rhythm, would continue the down move. Then Chief Hedge would bellow with great indignation, “I didn’t say down!!!”

But we got one good laugh out of it. Someone found a Major Ichiro Tanaka. But, they said, they did not believe he was

cartoon showing a naked Indian fakir levitated horizontally in midair about a foot above a bed of nails. He posted it on the Language School bulletin board, with the added caption:

“Chief Hedge: I DIDN’T SAY DOWN!”

*With best regards  
Robert S. Schwantes  
JLS 1944*

## Reprise on Rancors Aweigh

I received a message left on the Christmas weekend from Larry Vincent, thanking us for placing affable guy, not at all the fire-eating combat officer type we

the Kuwahata story in the December and January issues. Reminded by the story on the skit performed for OP20-G, he praised Gene Sosin for his work on the Revue and lamented that he had never been able to get together with him. Here are their addresses in hopes they will rendezvous successfully. DMH

Mr. Larry Vincent  
Actors’ Fund Home  
155-175 West Hudson, Room #3  
Englewood, NJ 07631  
201-227-8573

Dr. Gene Sosin  
19 Cushman Road  
White Plains, NY 10606  
914-761-4625