

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.

Valedictory Address Chinese Department KY1-2 September 1, 1945

Captain Hill, Captain Cheadle, Commander Dietz, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Grubb, teachers, fellow students, and friends. Since this is the first time Chinese language students have been graduated, I wish to use this opportunity to review the history of KY1 and 2. We arrived at this school on April 3, 1944. When we first arrived, the Chinese department had not yet been organized. There were no Chinese teachers, and naturally, there was no director for the Chinese department. Before we started classes, the lady who was the director of the school [Florence Walne, see Issue #60] at the time talked to us one day. Holding the textbook we were to use in her hand, she very generously said to us, "This textbook is called *Hua Wen Ch'u Chieh*. In two weeks' time you can finish studying this book."

Actually, later, that book used five months. She was probably especially polite, thinking that

we were linguistic geniuses, and so spoke this way.

I also remember in this same book, we first encountered Chinese philosophy. That was in the story of the great Chinese philosopher of two thousand years ago, Chuang-Tzu. One night Chuang-Tzu had a dream and didn't know if he were Chuang-Tzu changed into a butterfly or if he were a butterfly changed into Chuang-Tzu. After studying this lesson, we students were not clear whether the butterfly was in the story or was flying back and forth in our brains.

When we came to this place we were still plain civilians and had not yet received our commissions. The salary paid to us by the Navy was only one hundred and fifty dollars a month. After we had given the University \$53 for board and room, given the American government \$15 more or less for income tax, and if we didn't smoke, didn't go to the movies, and didn't eat candy, we could still send \$80 a month, more or less, to our wives and children (to use). After paying rent and buying clothes for the children, they could still have \$5 left to buy food for a month. After going on this way for three or four months, when we were almost starved to death, one day we went to see the Director of the school and asked him why our commissions had not come yet. After we had explained our problems to him, he seemed to understand our hardships, he seemed to want to help us.

He said to us philosophically, "If you don't have the money, that doesn't matter. To come to this school to study Chinese truly is an opportunity which is difficult to obtain. The Navy must spend \$10-20,000 to give each student this kind of education."

Although this kind of talk helped us greatly spiritually, yet economically we could not even buy an apple to stop our children from crying, could not buy half a

loaf of bread for our wives to have enough to eat.

The foregoing are all affairs of the past. I now wish to tell you of our hopes for the future. Because most of us are married, probably we will not have the good fortune to go to Chungking and find beautiful jeep-girls to pair off with and speak words of love. But perhaps we will have the opportunity to go to Shanghai and eat Battle of the Dragon and the Tiger, bird's nest soup, roast shark's fin, Peking roast duck. Several cups of wine, play guess-fingers, to enjoy a little the real flavor of China [Maybe in Chinatown in San Francisco]. Or perhaps at that time we may begin to understand whether that butterfly is in the story or is still flying around in our brains.

Besides enjoying the flavor of real China, we are going to do our utmost to improve the friendship between China and America. The philosophy and arts of the last several thousand years in China have many points worthy of being introduced to America. America's modern scientific inventions and industrial development certainly, likewise, can help China's economic development after the war. Although our abilities are small, still we hope that from now on China and America will be hand in hand to strive for the peace of the whole world.

Naturally, in this school, there are still a great many Chinese teachers with whom we are not very well acquainted, because we had no opportunity to receive instruction from them. However, there are several teachers whom we will never forget in our hearts. Without their help we could never have reached our present achievement. As a representative of KY1 and 2, I now extend to these teachers our most sincere gratitude. This is a very short graduation speech of appreciation. We earnestly wish for your happiness and health, and also we hope from now on

you will from time to time give us guidance. Farewell.

Copy submitted by
G. William Skinner
OLS 1946

[speech not from his class]
Chinese (Mandarin)

[Ed. Note: The bit about 'nice words, but we can't eat them' was rather unusual for a valedictorian speech, I would have thought. Perhaps the postwar graduation date lent an attitude of "...if they can't take a joke" to the class.]

JLS WAVE in the CIA

Born in Baltimore, Maryland on December 13, 1914, Blanche Y. Belitz attended Goucher College in Baltimore. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with an MA in 1935 and taught high school in Baltimore County.

Her membership in Phi Beta Kappa, her language major, her patriotism, and the appeal of the location, she said, all combined to lead her to apply to the US Navy Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado. She was accepted and entered with Group 2 and quartered at 1029 Broadway [The Phi Gamma Delta House, next door to the "Bastille", as it was even listed in the 1943 Boulder City Directory!].

She remembered the smocks to protect the uniforms from chalk dust, mascot Nami attending class, Japanese movies with WAVES segregated into the balcony, and afternoon drill around town. Following her graduation and commissioning, she was assigned to Washington, DC, where she worked in the Stuart Building on 5th and K, N.W. Her assignment was in Naval Intelligence, the analysis and translation of Japanese navigational manuals and coastal sea charts.

Following her discharge, she found employment as a Department of the Army civilian in the American Occupation of Japan from 1946 to 1950. She was stationed first in Nagoya and

then Tokyo, in the Civil Intelligence Section. Numerous former Boulder WAVES arrived in Japan, working in other areas: Avis Pick, Betty Knecht, Irene Slaninka, Margaret Dilley, Jean Barnes, Jean Mayer, Orrel Riffe, Nancy Pearce, Helen Craig, Pat Shannon, and Abbie Jane White. It was a continuation of that great fellowship begun in Boulder.

After the Occupation, Ms. Belitz began a career in the CIA, Foreign Documents Division and later in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. She

alternated duty in Washington, DC with two to four year tours in Bangkok, Thailand, and periods of temporary duty in Bangkok and Vientiane, Laos. While she was stationed in Southeast Asia, she had an opportunity to visit Cambodia, Burma, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka.

After her retirement in 1977, she returned to Arlington, Virginia and performed contract work for the next 8 years. She traveled to Russia, Europe, Great Britain, Japan and the Near East.

In 1993, she wrote that her

kaleidoscopic impressions of Boulder were of hikes on Bear Mountain, Green Mountain, Flagstaff, the Flatirons, and Boulder Canyon. She remembered leaves in Rocky Mountain National Park for hiking, climbs up Long's Peak. There were also recollections of the lounge at 1029 Broadway (with mementos of Byron White's University of Colorado football career) where she and her fellow WAVES had private gatherings before the open fireplace to toast marshmallows. They watched the moon rise

from a perch on the Flatirons, hiked in the snow up Flagstaff, slid down the Boulder Glacier, took survival training in the pool, skated at night on the frozen, flooded tennis courts, and rode bikes out of town to watch cattle with newborn calves in the fields. She also remembered sea chests for books and snow on Thanksgiving Day.

In 1993, she attended the Walking Club of Arlington, the Women's Overseas Service League, fitness programs, aqua exercise, and senior aerobics. (see below)

*Drawn from an entry by
Blanche Y. Belitz,
JLS 1944
In Boulder WAVES
50-Year Reunion, July 16-19, 1993*

[Ed. Note: This bio is well known to those at the WAVE Reunion, but I think the rest of the readership will appreciate it, as well. I will continue to draw bios from the WAVE Reunion book. Her photo was in one of the displays used at the 60th Anniversary JLS/OLS Reunion, which still shows outside the Archives.]

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OLS and Its Life Influence, 3

After VJ Day, word got around that we who were still in Japanese language training had a choice: we could apply for discharge from the service and resume our civilian lives, or we could remain in uniform and very likely be ordered to occupation duty in Japan. I chose the former, wishing to complete my college education. I did not, therefore, graduate from the JLS/OLS. But that did not mark the end of my involvement with

Japan and the Japanese.

In 1946 I entered the University of Chicago under the GI Bill of Rights. I emerged in 1950 with an MA in international relations. In between I met, courted, and in 1948 married Mitsuko Osaki, who was working as a secretary in a university office. Her family, including her parents and two younger sisters, had been living in Hollywood. Shortly after December 7, 1941, they –along with all the other persons of Japanese origin or descent in the West Coast states – had been rounded up into assembly

centers, as you know (theirs was the Santa Anita racetrack) and then shipped out to barbed-wire-enclosed camps that had been hastily erected in isolated areas in the western US (in their case, Heart Mountain, Wyoming). After the Pacific war ended, they were gradually released. Her family settled in Chicago. Mitsuko and I celebrated our 55th anniversary last year; we have three grown children and six grandchildren, one currently serving in the Army in Iraq. (to be cont'd)

*David H. Green
OLS 4-9/45*