

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.

An Army MIS "Schooled in Japan" View of the War, the Bomb, Surrender, and Peace

Dear Tim [Shorrock]:

When the war broke out for us on Dec. 7, I was shocked. I thought the Japanese would attack Siberia in spite of their nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union when the Germans attacked Russia in the West. It would be a hard fight, however. Russia could not stand up to attacks from both sides. Then Germany would negotiate with Britain for peace. Japan would take its time in subduing China and the axis powers would dominate the world.

The U.S. at that time had an attitude of "A plague on both your houses." Isolationism was very high at that time. I was sure that Europe and Asia would be dominated by the Axis and the U.S. would be somewhat neutral, dealing with both the Japanese and the Germans. I was not pleased with it, I was resigned to it.

The reaction to Pearl Harbor was instantaneous, we now were on a war footing. There was complete agreement that we would fight, and fight hard.

I was drafted, served as an interrogator and interpreter. In the early part of the war we were getting the [er, stuffing] kicked out of us. At that time I had no Japanese prisoners to interrogate. When we landed in Luzon, the tables were turned and we were kicking the [stuffing] out of the Japanese. In May of 1945 I was an Aide to a Maj. Gen. and we were planning the attack on Kyushu. Gen. Krueger asked me what I thought of the planned invasion. I said where we are landing is where Saigo Takamori (The Robert E. Lee of Japan) had his forces. I said we would have to kill every man woman and child over six, because they would all fight. It would be a massacre. The General looked away and said, "I guess you're right."

When the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, we had a meeting and our demolition experts gave an elaborate review expressing the strengths and weaknesses of such a device. Gen. Krueger then said, "Eckel what do you think?" I stood up and said, "General, the war is over." My Gen. looked at me with an expression of, "how could you say such a thing." I then explained that the Japanese authorities knew the war was lost and this device would give them the opportunity to surrender without shame. (*haji ga nai.*)

Three days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, this time the General didn't ask me any questions. How could I be so wrong? I had to find out.

General Anami and his group wanted the war to go on, the Emperor and his group wanted the war to stop. That conflict took time to resolve, resulting in the Emperor giving his speech to the nation on August 15, ending the war.

I asked many government, military and civilian leaders why

they surrendered. All in their way said because of the bomb they could surrender. At that time it was called *genshi bakudan*.

My General asked what I thought we should do when we landed in Kyoto. I said we should set up perimeter defenses and expect suicide attacks. He agreed. My biggest shock was that there were NO attacks. I had to find out why? I had many conversations with all levels of people. Almost to a man, and women too, they said they were lied to. All expected to die in conflict, however, Japan was *kami no kuni*, and could not be defeated. First there was denial, then the American soldiers, over a half million of them, confirmed their defeat. There was unequivocal proof that Japan as a country was defeated. They were lied to, therefore they had no reason to continue the fight. It was a religious faith they had.

The best explanation I can give is that if there were absolute proof that Jesus Christ was born to Mary a harlot, who also enjoyed her profession, most Christians would feel lied to and cheated. They certainly would not fight for the cause. The shock to the Japanese was equally strong.

Over time changes have occurred, now Japan is a victim of the bomb. The historical events do change over time.

The two groups that were not affected by the war were the Christians and the Communists. Neither subscribed to the notion of *kami no kuni*. The communists and socialists flourished. I remember going to an elementary school where the teacher was telling his students that the Americans were treating them as swine, feeding them powdered milk as we did our pigs. I said, "I drink powdered milk. We as a nation are so wealthy that we can also afford to feed our hogs powdered milk too. All you children must continue to eat the good food we are giving you and grow up

strong as are the American soldiers."

I was declared essential, so I could not leave before May 1946. During that time I saw many changes. The Japanese men my age suffered the most. The Japanese press wrote that our soldiers were going to rape their women. Few rapes occurred. Instead, the girls willingly entered into sexual relations, and seemed to enjoy it. Many Japanese men my age and older committed suicide.

The new religion was communism. Gen. MacArthur took a firm stand regarding the Russians. Wouldn't let them divide the country as was done in Korea. In many ways the General took the place of the Emperor. The Japanese seemed to follow. Nothing really happened until the Korean war, then Japan got its footing.

At 80, I have no contact with the Japanese, though I do listen to their news every morning.

Baldwin T. Eckel
US Army MIS

[Ed. Note: A fascinating account and interpretation. This is also a Reprise of "Red Flags & Christian Soldiers". Mr. Eckel graciously allowed us to reprint his letters to Mr. Shorrock.]

Magee's Navy (3)

I completed the work through Book Two successfully, but no second class rating came through. Shortly after, Cdr. Hindmarsh made a visit to the school and gave the students an opportunity for an interview. I complained about my lack of rating; he said he would look into the matter. Sometime after, I received an order in the school commandant's office (a captain, I recall). He said, "I do not know why but I have orders to commission you an ensign in the U.S. Navy. Raise your right hand." (I had developed a bit of a reputation for the bad habit of confusing '1400' with '4:00PM'. I was still way shy of the magic nineteenth birthday.)

In early December, 1945, before we had quite finished the formal program, we were declared to have graduated and the class dissolved. I do not recall what happened to the others, but Gruner, Maguire and I were transferred to ONI in Washington. One remarkable feature of our orders was the provision of a six month temporary living allowance. A few months after we arrived in Washington, we had opportunities to go to the Pacific, but we could not afford to give up our remaining handsome living allowance. When the six months were up and we had the temerity to request the allowance be extended, the officer in charge of us was outraged, said he had never heard of such an arrangement and threatened to have the original allowance rescinded (which was never done). By then, however, Gen. McArthur had Japan in a tight grip and opportunities for assignment in Japan were closed to young Naval officers who spoke halting Japanese. (to be cont'd)

*John F. Magee
OLS 1945*

So What ! (VII)

Back to Boston it became, my skin and eyes still yellowish. First off was finding an apartment. Meeting the high competition, Grace and I hit it lucky when a renter took pity on us after a long day of searching. The place we got was behind Symphony Hall in a district which my father unhappily informed us was "the red light section of the Hub." No matter, my head was filled with thoughts of a next day's visit to Harvard where I would have to reclaim required courses, a Teaching Assistantship, and a desk in the stacks at Widener. All had to have a place in my life for the upcoming Fall Semester, 1945.

I just made it through the first week of this term. In a class on Alexander Pope taught by the English Departmental Chairman, one of my fellow students had been called upon to answer the professor's question. Looking perplexed, the young man fumbled an answer,

whereupon the professor struck out, "Where have you people been for the past three years!" I had a moment of feeling sorry for this teacher as chagrin crossed his thoughtless face, then it began to happen throughout me.

I felt myself breaking loose and lost no time in making it to the Harvard Health Service. Once carefully having examined me, the doctor said quietly, "You are bordering upon a complete nervous breakdown. Get back to wherever you live, draw the curtains, go to bed, and let it come on. You will know cause to doubt, even to fear, but of this you may be absolutely sure, you will come out of it having regained your self, even though you will become equally certain that it will take every bit as long to work it through as it has taken for it to envelop you."

Hours and days and weeks of the blackest gloom then ensued. While my body shook, sweat, and twitched, my restless mind ran uncontrollably. I had no appetite, I seemed never to know relief through sleep. In darkness all the time, I had a small radio turned on low, day and night, to the classical music channel, but it was a long time before I could take any help from this old standby. I cannot recall that any doctor gave me any prescription during this my very worst period, that of the Fall.

Those days Grace arose early to prepare breakfast and set out something for my lunch before kissing me and running off for another long day of hairdressing at the Elizabeth Arden Salon over on Newbury Street. There she had built up her own clientele of wealthy women who would ask for her only. Her tips paid for our food; her salary and our savings met the costs of everything else.

Not long into the new year of 1946 my Harvard doctor proved himself right, for I began to improve. At the start, mere suggestions thereof. For example, I found that during the night I still might not be able to sleep, but I could become quiet and try to concentrate on naming the states and their capitals. Later I attempted other exercises like counting the fire engine blasts or the police alarms on the streets

below. My first pleasure came on that evening when Grace returned bushed from Arden's, kicked off her shoes, and began to rub her feet. I arose, knelt down before her, and reached out to the weary feet. "Can I help you?" I asked.

"Oh, if you would only rub my feet," she answered.

Some beginning that!
(to be cont'd)

*Robert D. Thornton
JLS 1944*

Foreign Service Officer Manning Williams Dies

Manning Holland Williams, 89, a former journalist who worked as a Foreign Service officer at U.S. embassies in Moscow and Berlin during the height of the Cold War, died at Hampshire Memorial Hospital in his home town of Romney, W.Va., on June 26, 2004. The cause of death was cardiac arrest.

Mr. Williams was a fifth-generation West Virginian with a keen interest in local history. His great-great-grandfather had settled near Romney in the late 1700s.

He was a 1931 graduate of Romney High School, where he played on the school's first basketball team. At Washington and Lee University, he was editor of the newspaper, *the Ring Tum Fi*, and received *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa honors when he graduated in 1934.

He worked his way across the Atlantic Ocean on a cattle boat in 1935 and studied for a year at Heidelberg University, where he witnessed the rise of Hitler's brownshirts.

Coming back to the United States in 1936, Mr. Williams began a career in journalism, working as a reporter for the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Cumberland (Md.) Evening Times. With his dream of becoming a small-town newspaper editor thwarted by World War II, he enlisted in the Navy and saw combat in the South Pacific as beach master for an LST. He reached the rank of lieutenant and was awarded the Bronze Star.

As the war was ending, Mr. Williams and his wife studied Russian at the Navy Language School in Boulder, CO. Mr. Williams entered the Foreign Service and was posted to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. In 1949, he was transferred to the Allied High Command in Berlin and was in Berlin during the Soviet blockade.

His son, Eugene Williams, recalled a story his parents told of driving into East Berlin with two friends -- one British, one French -- and smuggling out an East German resident by bamboozling a young Soviet border guard. They presented the guard with every official document they had, from three countries, and sat stone-faced for some minutes while the young man tried to make sense of the stack of papers. He finally gave up and waved the group through, refugee in tow.

Mr. Williams also worked in Munich for Radio Liberty, which began broadcasting anti-Communist programs into the Soviet Union a few days before Stalin's death in March 1953. Ostensibly a privately funded organization, Radio Liberty was, in fact, covertly financed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Williams, who founded the journal *Problems of Communism* while working for Radio Liberty, was aware the organization was financed by the CIA. "He said he was somewhat disappointed that he was never invited to join the CIA," Eugene Williams recalled.

Mr. Williams returned with his family to Washington in 1957, where he worked for the National Security Council during the Eisenhower administration. In 1963, he transferred to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, where he was chief speechwriter for NASA Administrator James Webb and later for his successors.

Mr. Williams retired from NASA in 1979 and moved back to Romney, where he was active with the Nature Conservancy and local historic preservation efforts. He restored the oldest house in Romney.

*Joe Holley
Washington Post
July 3, 2004; Page B07*