

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 96A

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

February 15, 2006

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.

Knecht Recollects

.... This evening we had a house meeting and were greeted by the officer in charge of the school. He explained about the Navy organization here on campus. There are in all about 2400 Navy students in the various programs --- V-12, Navy Radio, Radar, Marines, Language School, etc. There are about 500 male language students and so far 55 women, although they expect eventually to have 100.

.... Well, the Navy finally came through with our first check, a small one, to be sure, since we have been here only part of July. The check was for \$48, but at the same time they also handed us our bills from the college for room and board, payable in advance for both July and August: \$75!

.... We haven't found anyone to do our laundry, so most of us do our own. The kitchen and basement are a madhouse on Saturdays. The line begins forming right after exams and continues all day. There aren't enough clotheslines, either.

*Betty Knecht to her Mother,
July-August, 1943.*

WAVE 50th Reunion Entry, 1993

**D. Hays Phone (303) 492-7242
Magee's Navy (4)**

My career in Washington was diverse if relatively unproductive. My first assignment was to complete the intelligence files on certain Japanese ports, presumably to aid an invading fleet. I had files of interview notes with pre-war visitors, including ship captains, city maps, reconnaissance photos, and the help of a Marine officer skilled in photo interpretation. My task included examining the condition of key utilities and harbor facilities and the mooring capacities of the harbors (determined by drawing circles with a pencil and compass on the harbor map). My study products were well received by my superior, despite the fact that more accurate results could be—and probably were—obtained by having someone in the occupation force go and look. At least, however, the ONI files were there should anyone have asked.

My next assignment was with something called the Washington Document Center, which was in a warehouse containing countless mail sacks full of books and papers that were swept up after the occupation. Our job was to discover what each item was and write a brief description. I recall one item I dealt with was a seven volume history of religion in the Ryukyu Islands. Later when I came across a table of several hundred pages containing weather statistics for Irkutsk in Siberia that the Japanese had translated from Russian, I was assigned to respond to a request to translate the table into English. I never was told who wanted it. (to be cont'd)

*John F. Magee
OLS 1945*

**British Born
in the US Navy**

(Continued) Certainly, those dead languages changed the course of my life. Additionally, having had a French governess from the age of four, I was already bilingual, which gave me access to the minds of those Russian teachers who had lived in France. The official schedule was four hours of classes and nine hours of homework.

Personally, I found this tedious, and chose privately to avoid homework, but spend three class hours absorbing the next day's lesson and the fourth hour seeking any clarification.

Needless to say, the alphabet was no hindrance, since it can be memorised in minutes, rather than in months, unlike kanji.

Many of the Russian teachers had in their minds a single word of English to translate a particular word in Russian. One had to know what they expected.

If the Russian text suggested "the fish are spawning", then you flunked if you failed to render "the fish are throwing caviar"!

The political undercurrents too were important to recognise. Our teachers, exiled from Russia, were mostly bourgeois Socialist Revolutionaries, but included one communist, two aristocrats and one crypto-monk. Due to my European upbringing they delighted in confiding their sympathies and prejudices. The senior aristocrat assured me that the Menshevik SRs were more guilty of slaughtering the aristocracy than the Bolsheviks. His sympathies lay with the peasants. He recommended that I wear silk shirts on campaign, as he had done, to avoid being bitten by insects. The SRs invited me to meet their hero, Alexander Kerensky (ictus on the 1st syllable), whose Provisional Government was routed by the Bolsheviks!

As class valedictorian I ended up with a speech largely crafted by Prince Mestchersky. I toned down the final version to render it relatively anodyne.

My subsequent USN career, after Advanced Intelligence

training, took me to the Pacific theatre and finally to Japan - where I operated from three offices in Tokyo. But that is another story.

In 1946 I returned to England, where I took an Oxford University MA degree in Russian. I simultaneously gave lessons in the language in evening classes, based on the techniques acquired in Boulder. More recently, I visited Russia for the first time. My old-world Moscow accent led a few strangers to ask if I was perhaps a spy! The reply of course, was that I was not in gospodin Putin's profession.

With best Regards,

*Gerald Stonehill
OLS 1945
(Russian)*

Reprise on Red Flags

Just last night I had the time to read many of the articles, in THE INTERPRETER, especially the series entitled "Red Flags and Christian Soldiers." That was a period of my life when I was very much isolated from public life and the news while in the early years of my life as a Jesuit seminarian, and so I knew little about the early Occupation Days and especially about the early post-War missionary effort, except what I heard later about the post-war efforts of the Catholic Church after I came to Japan in 1952.

Here are a few fragments of information that may help you track some of the Marines who joined the OLS in spring '45. For a few months at Boulder (about May-June '45) my room-mate was Jim Zumberge. After the War, Jim went back to university and became a geologist. He participated in some expeditions to the South Pole, and published books on his experiences and research. Later I happened to know that he became President of the University of Southern California in L.A. about 1981.

Another university president of our group was Jim Hester. He

became Pres. of New York City Univ. (check the university!) about 1960, still in his 30's, and then later about 1977, Pres. for a term of The United Nations University in Tokyo. I had the chance to have lunch with him and a mutual friend at that time. He told me that he had come to Japan in the Occupation right after JLS.

I was the presiding priest at the funeral of Chris Bavelles in Tokyo about four years ago. We met in Tokyo about a year before his death by sheer chance. Neither of us knew that the other was living in Tokyo, nor had we any contact with each

potbellied heavy-set fellow in Bermuda shorts who was called other since summer '45. I seem to recall that Dave Switzer became President of a Protestant-affiliated university in Texas, perhaps it was Southern Methodist.

I myself came to Japan in 1952 as a Jesuit seminarian, and spent the first year in language school where--lo and behold--the main textbook was the Naganuma reader series. I fell right in with the advanced class.

After finishing theology studies in Tokyo I was ordained a priest in 1958. After that I went back to my former studies in

not only apply to the WWII bunch alone, but to us young'uns too.]

electrical engineering, finishing up in the doctoral program of Tokyo University in order to qualify as a professor in the Dept. of Electrical-Electronic Engineering of the Faculty of Science and Technology of Sophia University. This is the Jesuit-sponsored Catholic University (now about 11,000 students) located in central Tokyo. I was also Dean of this Faculty for a term. Since 1970, when I reached the mandatory retirement age, I have been doing mostly administrative work within the Jesuit organization,

[Ed. Note: Seek and ye shall find....]

but I am also active in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter movement in Japan, and also frequently preside at the weddings of graduates of Sophia University.

My being assigned to JLS--something I had never imagined until the day before an interview with a Navy officer--started me on a career and a lifetime that I had never planned or dreamed of.

*Fr. Robert Deiters, SJ
OLS 1945-46*

[Thanks for the update on you and the other OLSers.]

‘The Older We Get..., The Better We Were.’

[Continued from Issue #94] I emailed A.J. Tillery to look at your *Interpreter* and send you a copy of his memoir, if he had an extra. I have one he sent me years ago but I hesitate to part with it. It is good and you will like it if he has one.

One funny incident while in California. Ward took me to a Marine Corps League birthday lunch near Monterey. There were about 40 or so there. One

‘Colonel’ wore a white T-shirt emblazoned with a large Marine Corps emblem. Over and under the emblem in bold letters was: “THE OLDER WE GET THE BETTER WE WERE”. I told George that it broke me up.

Keep *The Interpreter* coming. I hope you had a great Holiday season.

*Cal Dunbar
USMCCEL 1944*

[Ed. Note: This was mailed in November of 2004, so I added the past tense and assure Mr. Dunbar that both my 2004 and 2005 Holiday Seasons were fine. That slogan does

Tatsumi Reprise

I enjoyed reading my classmate Gene Sosin's account (#83) of the song written by Tatsumi Sensei. In what must be the greatest coincidence of the year, a few days after our exchange on this subject, I was going through some old files totally unrelated to Boulder, and there hidden among them I found a complete version of Tatsumi's song. Both words and music -- and three verses! Music by J. B. Kremer, who was a Boulderite, but I don't think I knew him.

*Wally Erwin
Summer group 1942-43*

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