

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 97A

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

March 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

.... About 30 of us are now ensigns. Julie, Mary and I were commissioned this week. It was a strange ceremony: no band, no flags, no parade. After we had filled out the necessary papers, the officer came down to the basement of the men's dormitory, stood at the head of the table that was littered with papers, pens, stamping pads, etc. He gave us a short informal talk about being proud of the uniform, then asked us to rise and face him. He administered the oath and that was that, except that the janitor kept walking in and out of the room. When it was over, we rushed to classes and studying.

.... There have been about two or three more commissions arriving since I last wrote, which makes less than half of us ensigns. The other half are getting worried, and envy us the extra pay we are receiving. With leave coming up it's pretty hard for them to manage on the Naval

Agent's pay of \$130, out of which they pay \$53 for room and board.

*Betty Knecht to her Mother,
July-August, 1943
JLS 1944*

WAVE 50th Reunion Entry, 1993

A Malay Graduate

I am one of those who did not immediately respond to your request for historical information regarding my husband, Paul Mussen, since I had relatively little to contribute. However, since I have been reading the bulletins you have sent, I can add a little, if only for an historical perspective on the period.

For one thing, I should not be on the Russian list, since Paul was in the Malay program, not Japanese or Russian [*our mistake, from the transcripts*]. I do not know how large this group was, but you have the records, I am sure. Since he graduated from Stanford with an M.A. in Psychology in 1942 and was in the ASTP program, I am assuming he was assigned to Boulder in 1943 [*April 5, 1944*]. At that time the fear was that invasion of Asia might have to be through the Malay Archipelago and so he was assigned to learn Malay. He described it as a manufactured Lingua Franca, not a native language of any of the island peoples, but with an extremely simple grammatical structure written with Sanskrit characters and suitable for the Hindu populations of the islands and much of the Asian mainland.

I know little of the actual dates and details of his military career, since he usually related only incidental occurrences and postings. After Boulder he was assigned as an Ensign to Naval Intelligence on Oahu, then to Washington, D.C. and finally back to San Francisco for the debriefing of Pacific theater veterans. This was the site of his discharge. Since the war played out as it did, he never used the Malay for military purposes. His

stories of his Hawaiian days were wry and stamped him with little faith in military "intelligence." His favorite tale was of being asked to send out inquiries about sighting of enemy naval activity, in the course of which the inquiry became a reporting of ship movements which were nonexistent—the question became the report by the time it went the rounds of sources—much like the party game.

(to be cont'd)

Ethel F. Mussen, Ph.D.

Hart Spiegel Recalled

It was a pleasure to talk with you on 8/18/04 and to receive the packet of names and *Interpreters* thereafter. The issues of 3/15/01 and 3/15/04 had news of Hart Spiegel, and my sad footnote is that he died the next day – 3/16/04 [*Yes, Glen Slaughter and Ray Luthy had informed us*]. Though I've known Hart since 1936, when we entered Yale in the Class of 1940, and graduated with him from Yale Law, I hadn't realized that he was in OLS at Boulder. He was a thoroughly nice guy and an excellent student, and had an outstanding career in the law.

*Robert J. Fitzwilliam
OLS 1946*

[*Ed. Note: Mr. Fitzwilliam also sent a Yale obituary along with comments by M. Spiegel in the Yale Fiftieth Reunion Classbook, where he told the story we printed in the newsletter in 2001. We will place these items in Mr. Spiegel's information file. I include the following poem the "Ode to the Survivors of the Class of '40" from Hart Spiegel's last Yale class notes column. I dedicate it to all his fellow JLS/OLS graduates.*

*There is nothing whatever the matter
with me,
I'm just as healthy as I can be.
I have arthritis in both my knees,
And when I talk I talk with a wheeze.
My pulse is weak, my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape
I'm in.*

I think my liver is out of whack,

*And a terrible pain is in my back.
My heart is poor, my sight is dim,
Most everything seems out of trim.
But I'm awfully well for the shape
I'm in.*

*I have arch supports for both my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to go out in the
street,
Sleeplessness I have night after
night,
And in the morning I'm just a sight.
My memory is failing, my head's in a
spin,
I'm peacefully living on aspirin.
But I'm awfully well for the shape
I'm in.*

*The moral is, as this tale we unfold,
That for you and me who are
growing old,
It's better to say, I'm fine," with a
grin,
Than to let them know the shape
you're in.]*

So You Want to Study Japanese...? (2)

I have tried to recall the names of others in the section. Of particular note was Alan K. "Scotty" Campbell because he had studied the language at Whitman College before joining the program. He studied in New York after the War and had a distinguished career that included heading the Maxwell School of Communications at Syracuse University and later the Lyndon Johnson Institute in Austin, before being tapped by President Carter to head the US Civil Service Commission.

Other names that come to mind include Bert (Burt) Wexler, Len Rush, Jim Gunn, Bob Bosch, Ray Giulianelli, Paul DeLisle (sp.?), and Helmut Schmidt from Milwaukee, who became a very senior executive in a company which owns that very tall building in San Francisco. The last member of our section was someone whose name was Forrest, but nicknamed Woody [Pitts].

Our group was one of those chosen to help stock the all-Japanese school at Oklahoma A&M in Stillwater, Oklahoma. It must have been late June or July ('45) because I remember it as

being so hot that the minute you stepped out of a shower, you started to perspire all over again. We were there in August when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and then V-J Day was declared.

On that day of celebration, virtually every student in Stillwater went into Tulsa, the nearest large city. We marched or strode in our uniforms on the streets of Tulsa and we met many a college girl, some of whom we were to meet again later in San Francisco at Mills College.

Stillwater in those days was a "dry" town, so that the only way

top to bottom). In Florida, Pennsylvania and now North to get an alcoholic drink was to find a taxicab driver who sold liquor undercover, hidden in brown bags. I suppose it was blended whiskey, probably of poor quality. It was certainly obvious that this local law was maintained by those who benefited from the illicit trade. We celebrants returned from Tulsa to find that "the authorities" had gone into all our rooms, located the illegal booze and poured it all down the drain.

With the fighting over, the Navy had to decide what to do with us. Our course of Japanese

residencies ranging from a couple of hours twice a week to was to have been 14 months, I believe; shorter by several months than the Chinese, and much longer than the Russian (6 months) and the Malay course of four months.

After some deliberation it was decided to offer those of us who were only part way through the curriculum a choice of three options: (a) finish the course and be reassigned to useful duties in the Navy, (b) take an exam to enter the US Foreign Service, or, (c) leave the program and be assigned to "the fleet". All of us were transferred to Camp

\$Donations Accepted

Those of you who do not have Stoneman near San Francisco. Despite being overrun by naval personnel, San Francisco seemed a beautiful, fascinating and ideal place to live. We spent several delightful weeks there, waiting, as it turned out, for new orders.

(To be continued)

*Charles D. Cook
OLS 1945*

[Ed. Note: Rush, Gunn, and Pitts are on or mailing list. Wechsler passed away in January 2004. Bosch, DeLisle, Schmidt and Giulianelli were sought out but not found. Schmidt seems to have passed away. Campbell's obit was printed.]

Tatsumi Reprise

I had Tatsumi in class daily for 14 months. As a life-long professional musician myself, you'd think he and I would have crossed paths on that subject but never did. No singing in our classes, just the mantra top to bottom, left to right. Little has changed for me except the life change brought about by Tatsumi's teaching of the Kanji.

Thousands of students from preschool to post-grad have suffered my reiteration of that mantra (sometimes left to right,

Carolina this odd skill has followed me, buoyed along (oops) by money from the National Endowment for the Arts and its agents whom I early on persuaded Kanji writing is ART, not [just] language and therefore eligible for art grants \$\$\$). On such a grant I wrote a book (50 Japanese Picture Words - a Manual for Preschool Teachers) and now work for the Asheville Area Arts Council which frags (old soldiers talk) me out to schools around the area - next month Asheville Catholic School and Owen Middle School - for

full time five days a week. I continue my solo keyboard/vocal career brushing aside hate mail from Billy Joel and Elton John who are unnerved by an 80-year old rocker creeping up on them. I see my wife occasionally who is President of the Asheville Gallery of Art and does legitimate Art herself. One of our cats has taught himself to sit on the toilet and do his thing with dignity. Cuts down on litter expense.

*Brian M. Battey
OLS 1946*

papers to donate, but who wish to support the JLS/OLS Project, can send checks to a JLS/OLS cash account that funds Archives activities regarding the JLS/OLS Project. Those wishing to donate should make their checks out to The University of Colorado Foundation and mail them to our contact address.

Contact

David Hays, Archivist
Archives,
University of Colorado at Boulder

184 UCB
Boulder, Colorado, 80309-0184
Phone (303) 492-7242