

*The Interpreter*

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 3A

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

January 1, 2003

**The Japanese Language School Archival Project**

*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, correspondence, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS graduates to the War effort in the Pacific, the successful occupation of Japan, the creation of Japanese language programs across the country, and the development of cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.*

## SPECIAL REUNION ISSUE # 3

### After Action Report

**I. Introduction:** Having dwelled upon the reunion for a few weeks I finally decided to create a report for those who were absent due to prior engagement, health, or family obligations. In short, as you could tell by the reviews, the reunion was wildly successful by all standards. I have never been involved in any operation that has been quite so successful. The success can partially be attributed to planning, outstanding assistance, great follow-through, and timely good luck. On the good luck side, the weather, though hot, contributed consecutive beautiful blue skies to set off the green Springtime and the stunning Boulder Campus. Without such luck, the reunion would have bombed. For

once, the current drought paid off.

**II. Planning:** I had been thinking of this reunion and how I thought it would be best organized for several years, so very little in the reunion was a last minute thought or surprise. As stated before, I had a 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Reunion and a 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Memorial Highway Dedication to model the reunion after. Since we were honoring former Naval and Marine Officers and Navy School instructors, I saw little use for standard university reunion styles. This was going to be a military gig, down to Color Guards, speakers, and transport.

**A.** Initially I coordinated with East Asian Languages & Civilizations and they brought in Luann and Cynthia from the CU Foundation (they coordinate events for the College of Arts & Sciences). It was at this meeting I asked everyone to wait before involving Admin, to organize our own show since we were paying. I later coordinated with Navy ROTC, and began developing a plan. Luann began laying on facilities and developing an initial schedule. I designed the plaque, acquired permission from the Navy, Marines and the CU Regents to use their emblems and seal. Phi Beta Kappa refused at the last minute. I ordered the plaque.

**B.** Our next meeting took place after the invites had gone out. This time the Navy and Marines, and Bill Croyle were on hand to pick up their Navy and Marine commitments and to join in the exchange of ideas. Between that April meeting and the events, Luann scheduled facilities, catering, made up the registrations materials and took registrations. My crew made up four separate exhibits for the east and west entrance to the Library, wrote the bio books, made the placemats from Pineau Collection photos (one of my inspired ideas). Jessica Arntson worked hard to involve the Sensei and kin in the reunion,

her press release to Japanese American newspapers was an inspired move. She also made the Sensei Exhibit. My conversations with her resulted in the idea for Sensei testimonials, to bring the Sensei to center stage at each event. East Asian Languages & Civilizations coordinated the Panel Discussion, Jessica handled the films The Heritage Center volunteered a continental breakfast and a gathering place. Professor Marcia Yonemoto from the History Department managed to get a Freeman Grant to conduct oral histories during the reunion, the interviewers were posted at the University Club, the Archives, the College Inn, and at function sites.

**III. Events:** I attempted to allow for considerable private time for rest, recuperation and informal gatherings, something I noted was absent in other reunions. The scheduled events were fewer as thus not crammed together, the unintended result of which was that our events did not intrude on each other and occurred on time. So we focused on six major events around which we planned supporting or secondary activities:

**A. Welcome Luncheon:** The luncheon featured the posted Colors, a Marine Guard, The Dean of Arts and Sciences, and a Sensei Tribute by Dan Williams. It was a beautiful morning under the table shades. The ceremony was set off by the genteel atmosphere of the old President's House (now alumni center).

**B. Plaque Dedication:** This event was the cornerstone of the reunion and was vital to the success of the reunion. The CSU Air Force ROTC were held up slightly by Friday traffic but otherwise the event moved along seamlessly. We held the event in the new large hall-loggia, a three story arched hallway. I gave an introductory comment then nodded for the Colors to be presented, the Color Guard marched in, halted, I hit the National Anthem on my boom

box, the Colors dipped, were posted, then the guard marched off. CDR Ulrich, USN, spoke, then I introduced Don Willis, JLS graduate and long chair of the Oriental Language Program at CU, until 1981, who had cleared the plaque inscription. He read the inscription to the assembled crowd while I removed the cover from the plaque. Then Verner Chaffin rose to give a Sensei Tribute, successfully closing the event.

#### **C. University Club Gathering Place (Thursday & Friday) and Reception Friday Evening:**

Thursday and Friday afternoon, the University Club set up a bar and snacks and allowed an informal place for those attending to chat and rest. Right after the Plaque Ceremony, we put on a reception there with a cake and food. Big Band music was piped through the sound system.

**D. Panel Discussion:** The Panel Discussion, organized by the Center for Asian Studies and East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and chaired by Steve Snyder, CU, featured: Bill Hosakawa, prominent Denver newsman and former internee; Roger Dingman, USC; Irwin Slesnick, WWSU; Jessica Antson, CU; and Sydney D. Brown, OU. Each excellent talk would have been enhanced by higher volume and planned break periods. The natives were exceedingly restless by the time the question & answer period took place. It turned out to be more of a "now it's my turn talk", which was unfortunate. Those wanting a forum for their comments ought to have been given an audience that had not been in their chairs for two hours already. Those in their chairs had to wait another half an hour to leave. Luckily, the next events were tours, and they could be put off.

**E. Dinner:** I knew it would be successful when I saw how impressed folks were by the placemats – they were 150 photocopies of photos from the

*Pineau* and other collections being traded about like baseball cards. The Dinner featured my remarks, an AFROTC Color Guard, the National Anthem, a speech by the Dean of Libraries, Jim Williams, a series of toasts - a la Dining-In (I did the USA, Wendel Furnas did the Navy, Chuck Cross did the Marine Corps, Dan Williams did the JLS, and the toasts went on, Mike Moss did the Army, and in a note of levity Harry Muheim collapsed the audience by toasting himself), a free bar (I contributed a number of half or less filled bottles of Single Malt), a sensei tribute by Art Dornheim. The last speaker was Ari Inouye, who thanked those assembled and the USN JLS for the privilege of teaching such fine students. Everyone left in high spirits.

**F. Sunday Brunch:** A sumptuously catered Brunch brought everyone together one last time, too pooped to talk much, so we dispensed with the planned remarks. The Colors were retired by Marine NCOs resplendent in their dress uniforms. Short ceilings forced the event outside. The drill was performed with snap and precision. I had long discussions with the Judds, Harris Martin, and several sensei kin.

**IV. Secondary Activities:** We couched these major events among free and voluntary supporting activities: the library JLS displays, the open Archives with cards to those not attending and collections on view, the film festival, the campus tours, and of course personal unscheduled activities. These events and activities could flex and allow for the more fixed events to occur on time.

**A. The Library Displays:** Showed the two and three weeks of preparation: One on the development of the school Tokyo-Boulder and the grads in the Pacific, one on the Sensei, one on JLOs in China, and the Asian/American legacy of the JLS. The displays gave attendees an air-conditioned place to collect, especially on Saturday, when the University Club was engaged by another event.

**B. Archives:** Attendees came to the Archives and were able to view select collections on

display, fill out and sign specially made cards for those who did not come, and have oral history interviews conducted. The Archives was visited on Thursday and Friday, but especially so on Saturday afternoon.

**C. Tours:** We planned for several walking tours of the old Quad, the virtual tours to Gamov Tower (a top floor observation floor) and the Hop Tours, conducted by myself on the informal but friendly circulator which took 8-12 at a time from the campus by the sites of the Timber Town Tavern, the Dairy, the old UP rail yards, to the Pearl Street Mall, up Broadway to the Hill, past the Sink and the sites of Quine's, Greenmans, and other shops, the old Hill neighborhoods, and back to Campus. Sit down tours on air-conditioned small large-windowed buses seemed popular.

**D. Film Festival:** The Friday films in Eaton Humanities went very well. Jessica arranged film shorts which were JLS, Sensei, and Japanese American in focus. The central film of which was *Uncommon Courage* on the Nisei of the Military Intelligence Service. The Saturday film was to be a DVD version of *Tora, Tora, Tora*. But the volume setting was too low and the film crewman who set us up left us with the door locked and no way to turn up the volume. "One out of two aint bad."

**E. Transport:** Karen Gifford of the Archives, with a University van, and Marine NCO volunteers with a Navy ROTC van provided most of the transport for those who did not have cars. Karen became the favorite of Larry Vincent and Bill Himel. Larry ended up regaling her about the foibles of the CU Shakespeare rehearsal to which she took him. "The director was from hunger!" The Weissbergs were especially tickled when the Marine SGT, upon finding the campus gate down, walked up and detached the arm of the gate and drove through anyway. Sounds like the NCOs I had in the Army - field expediency works every time. Faced with a transport shortage at the end of the dinner, without the Marine van, I sat there sipping some single malt scotch

and pondering my way out of this particular "loaves and fishes" dilemma, when an young student security worker walked in and said she heard that we were having transportation problems and told me she called "Night Ride" and said they were taking our people back to their accommodations. I peered up at her and asked, "Aren't you supposed to have wings or a halo?" She didn't understand. I have NEVER had someone step in and solve one of my problems spontaneously like that before.

**F. Oral History Project:** Professor Yonemoto's grant project was extremely successful, as it netted 42 oral histories, which will be transcribed and placed in the Archives.

**V. Weak Areas & Stumbles:** As in any organized plan, there are always weak areas. I knew transportation would be somewhat iffy, but it turned out better than expected, given our resources. I should have made more use of "night ride". The real weak areas turned out to be:

**A. Filming:** With an inexperienced guy working for someone who has never run a camera or a videocam, using a rental camera, I was worried the film would turn out like a "Little Rascals" project. While we got good film at the University Club on Thursday and the luncheon at Koenig on Friday, someone bumped the camera stand during my opening remarks and another camera was close enough to send interference to the rest of the film of the Plaque Dedication. Saturday's events found the camera locked in the Library until 12, and any effort to free it would have made the filmer late anyway. Since our filmer has a newborn at home, he wasn't available for the Dinner. In all, while we made some good film, it wasn't enough for a good recap. Fortunately, the Japanese TV crew will make a copy of their raw footage and final report, so if I can get copies of film taken by the readers, we still may be able to put together a film for sale.

**B. Tours:** It never occurred to me that high temperatures would negate the demand for walking tours, and I should have arranged for another Hop Tour going the

other way. As it turned out, none of my walking tour guides felt comfortable giving a Hop Tour, so I am afraid there were more folks wanting the Hop Tours than received them.

**C. Heritage Center Breakfast:** There are times when you make the right calls but are foiled by those who do not believe you. Both Luann and I predicted that at least 40-60 people would show for the breakfast. Since the standard reunions are so much smaller as a rule, I think we were not believed. Hence, they ran out of everything very early. But at least the museum was fun to look around in, and the waiting room was well appointed.

**VI. Strong Points:** I have already mentioned that the development of a clear picture of the reunion, long in advance, with concomitant prior planning was the strongest point.

**A. The Plan:** The plan, which joined the fellowship of the JLS with a medal ceremony for all assembled, struck exactly the right tone. The incorporation of University, Navy ROTC, and the Archives allowed the graduates and the sensei to feel they were thruly valued by the University and the Navy and that CU was not merely the place chosen for a reunion. The blend of fewer events with reinforcing voluntary events and free time for informal get togethers helped to allow for the punctuality of the main events. While most reunions eschew children, the inclusion of kin to the reunion was vital to placing the sensei in their proper position.

**B. Staffing:** The cheerful and friendly support of so many: Luann and Cynthia of the CU Foundation; my student workers; volunteers like SSG Tracy and his Marines, Jessica Arntson and Bill Croyle; and the general helpfulness of student staff at the UMC, the College Inn, the University Club gave the whole weekend an atmosphere it would not otherwise have had.

**C. The Attendees:** The entire staff, students, the Marine NCOs, the AFROTC Color Guard and volunteers all praised the attendees as being gracious, polite and fun. They, as I, felt privileged to have been part of your 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion.

*David M. Hays, Archivist*