
Language at War: U.S. Marine Corps Japanese Language Officers in the Pacific War



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Abstract

This essay analyzes the origins, training, experiences, and recollections of Caucasian American Japanese language officers in the Pacific War of 1941–45. It focuses on the problems that they and the Marine Corps as an institution faced in trying to achieve effective cross-cultural communication in battle. It shows how their function shifted from simply translating so as to facilitate life-taking, to life-saving activities that helped bring the fighting to an earlier and less costly end. The essay challenges earlier portrayals of Marine behavior in the Pacific War as simply inhumane and emphasizes the necessity of the armed services' maintaining effective foreign language training programs in peace and war.

THE tenth of July 1943 was a day to be savored. Nearly 140 young men and their teachers, wives, and girlfriends crowded into Mackey Auditorium on the campus of the University of Colorado at Boulder to graduate. But this was no ordinary commencement ceremony. When the valedictorian rose and began to speak, his words were in Japanese. One of the distinguished guest speakers, Captain Ellis M. Zacharias from the Office of Naval Intelligence, addressed the group in Japanese so fluent and polished as to amaze students and teachers alike. The graduates lustily bellowed out a school song—in Japanese. The president of the

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university presented them not with college degrees but with certificates of completion from the Navy Japanese Language School.¹

This was no ordinary ceremony because the nation was at war. The young men who grasped those certificates were all commissioned officers. They were about to go off to fight a war that, in the words of one of the speakers they heard that day, would be so fierce and so long that their grandchildren would wear the heavy Navy bridge coats they had been issued.² That grim prediction did not daunt the pride, happiness, and sense of purpose that all of those present at the ceremony felt. America was arming itself with a new and potent weapon—language—to fight the enemy that had bombed Pearl Harbor and to restore world peace.³

This graduation ceremony was not the first of its kind, but it was the biggest. It differed from every other at the Navy Japanese Language School—before and after—because so many of the graduates—nearly one in three—wore marine khaki rather than navy blue.⁴ Those forty-three young men shared a lofty sense of purpose: to master one of the most difficult tongues on earth so as to assure the speedy and total defeat of Japan. They faced a daunting array of tasks: turning textbook knowledge of that language into practical frontline communication skills, finding and translating documents their foes left in the field, and capturing and interrogating prisoners of war.

Their story needs to be told for at least three reasons. It encapsulates the experience of the 144 Marine officers who would graduate from the Boulder Japanese language program between 1942 and 1946 and of the Marine Corps in utilizing them. In so doing, it provides insight into the wider, virtually untold story of combat interpreters who were not of

1. Naval Training School (Japanese Language) University of Colorado graduation exercises program, 10 July 1943, Rayer Toki Papers, in possession of Mrs. Ellengale Toki Oakley, Alamo, California. Charles T. Cross, *Born a Foreigner: A Memoir of the American Presence in Asia* (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 43–44.

A note on names: I have used “the University of Colorado at Boulder” to indicate geographic location rather than one of several campuses of the university. In 1942 it had but one campus—at Boulder. Similarly, although the school officially became the Navy School of Oriental Languages when Chinese, Russian, and Malay were added to the curriculum late in 1944, I have retained the then-common name, “Navy Japanese Language School.”

The research and text for this article were completed in October 2002 before the commencement of the war in Iraq.

2. Lieutenant Robert S. Kinsman, USMCR, interview, 8 October 2001, Los Angeles, California. Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews cited in this essay were conducted by Roger Dingman and Pedro Loureiro. The author thanks Dr. Loureiro for his assistance in doing them.

3. Rayer Toki to Akiko Nishikata [later Akiko Nishikata Toki], 10 July 1943, Toki Papers.

4. Boulder graduates class lists, 1942–1945, Folder 4, Box 4, Roger Pineau Papers, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.

Japanese ancestry, including those in the Army and the Navy, in the Pacific War.⁵ The tale also challenges standard accounts of Marines' behavior in that conflict; it reveals another side of the war that suggests that something other than "utmost savagery" shaped what they did.⁶ And, most importantly, the Marine Corps Japanese language officer story serves to remind us of the difficulty of creating and using, and the continuing importance of maintaining, foreign language competence within our armed forces.

Pioneers

The forty-three young Marine officers who graduated in July 1943 embodied an important change in the nation's effort to create a cadre of competent Japanese language officers. Although the Army and Navy had established three-year-long language officer training programs in prewar

5. Marine combat interpreters and translators are virtually absent from the official *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, 5 vols. (Washington: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1963–71); from the twenty-five fiftieth anniversary commemorative pamphlets published by the Marine Corps Historical Center between 1991 and 1995; and from the many recent monographs on major battles ranging from Guadalcanal through Okinawa. The official history, for example, simply notes the number of Marines trained in Japanese and mentions only one Marine Japanese language program. See Benis M. Frank and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 5, *Victory and Occupation* (Washington: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1968), 687. An exception to this generalization can be found in the brief treatment of Sherwood F. Moran's work on Guadalcanal in Craig Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941–1951* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102, 110–12. The recent *Uncommon Courage: Patriotism and Civil Liberties*, broadcast on public television stations, focuses, as do most published works, on the Army's Military Intelligence Service, on the work of Japanese American interpreters to the virtual exclusion of their relatively few colleagues who were not of Japanese ancestry. Stanley L. Falk and Warren M. Tsuneishi, *American Patriots: MIS in the War Against Japan: Experiences Related at the 1993 Capital Reunion* (Vienna, Va.: Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C., 1995), departs from the norm by including reminiscences of four non-Nisei graduates of the Army's Japanese Language School. Pedro Loureiro, "'Boulder Boys': Naval Japanese Language School Graduates," in Randy Carol Balano and Craig Symonds, eds., *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Fourteenth Naval History Symposium* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 366–88, is a valuable overview of the Navy Japanese Language Program.

6. Among the many works that emphasize the savagery and ferocity of Marines in Pacific War combat are Cameron, *American Samurai*; E. W. Sledge, *With the Old Breed* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1981); Eric Bergerud, *Touched by Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific* (New York: Viking, 1996), especially 411–25; and Colonel Joseph H. Alexander, *Utmost Savagery: The Three Days of Tarawa* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995), source of the phrase quoted.

Japan, the Marine Corps was the first service to create, and perhaps even the first to recognize the need for, an intensive wartime program to train Japanese linguists.⁷ The initiative for doing so grew out of the Marines' long presence in China. In 1940, both the commandant, General Thomas Holcomb, and his assistant, Alexander A. Vandegrift, had served with the 4th Marines in China.⁸ General Holcomb had been a Chinese language student before the First World War; alert to the possibility of war with Japan, he in 1939 encouraged his cousin, who had already studied Chinese, to go to Japan for Japanese language training.⁹ In the fall of 1940, Vandegrift, recognizing that the cadre of Marine officers competent in Japanese was pitifully small, urged the commandant to establish an intensive language training program within the Corps.¹⁰

That initiative launched a nation wide recruiting program headed by Lieutenant John R. Shively. Born in Kyoto to missionary parents, Shively left graduate study at Columbia University in January 1941, joined the Marine Corps, and spent the next five months traveling to universities and colleges throughout the country in search of recruits. By May 1941 he had found twelve men who, by virtue of birth or long residence in Japan or by significant study of its language and culture at the university level, seemed to be promising students. Shively decided that the University of Hawaii, where he himself had studied, and where Japanese

7. Wyman H. Packard, *A Century of U.S. Naval Intelligence* (Washington: Department of the Navy, 1996), 365–71; John Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1995), 7–10; and Thomas C. Mahnken, *Uncovering Ways of War: U.S. Intelligence and Foreign Military Innovation, 1918–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), 25, 30, outline the prewar service language programs in Japan.

8. Harry A. Gailey, *Historical Dictionary of the United States Marine Corps* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 101, 207.

9. Brigadier General Bankson T. Holcomb oral history, 14 September 1970 (Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), 40–41.

10. Lieutenant Colonel John R. Shively, USMCR, interview, 9 May 2000, Berkeley, California. The precise source of the initiative within the Corps remains unclear. Shively says it was Vandegrift. Eugene Boardman, in Professor Edward M. Coffman interview with Professor Eugene Boardman, Madison, Wisconsin, 2 February 1982 (U.S. Marine Corps Oral History Program), 1, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., attributed the initiative to a Colonel Bayles [*sic*, William L. Bales], a Chinese language officer who had been stationed in Peking. Prewar China was an important site for Marines' study of both Chinese and Japanese. See Phyllis A. Zimmerman, "Military Missionary: The Riddle Wrapped in a Mystery Inside an Enigma that Was Evans F. Carlson," in Balano and Symonds, *New Interpretations in Naval History*, 253; and Pedro Anthony Loureiro, "Intelligence Success: the Evolution of Navy and Marine Intelligence Operations in China, 1931–1941" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1995), especially 177, 202–20.

speakers were plentiful, was the best place to set up a “refresher course” for these first Marine Japanese language school students.¹¹

In July 1941, just when Washington ratcheted up the pressure on Tokyo to halt its war in China by embargoing oil and gasoline sales to Japan, eleven of the twelve sailed on the SS *Matsonia* from San Francisco for Honolulu.¹² They were an unlikely bunch of Marines. Anxious to obtain their linguistic skills, the Corps had waived physical requirements, dropped the requirement that language students be bachelors, and minimized their military training.¹³ Once in Honolulu, they settled into an intense but not unpleasant routine. Monday through Friday they attended classes taught by two University of Hawaii professors and a Buddhist priest. Two of their instructors were *kibei*, that is men born in America but educated in Japan. In the classroom they concentrated on learning as much military Japanese as possible and used Japanese Army field manuals as texts. Outside it, they improved their conversational skills by attending Japanese language movies. One of them went so far as to move into a Japanese run hotel later shown to have been a nest of spies.¹⁴

The attack on Pearl Harbor cut short the training of the eight men who remained in this program in December 1941, and they scattered to various emergency military duties in Honolulu.¹⁵ The attack also set in motion the forces that would create a second, very different Marine Corps Japanese language training school. It was established within newly formed 2nd Marine Regiment, which in January 1942 was rushed from San Diego to defend American Samoa against possible Japanese attack.¹⁶ Headed by Major Ferdinand W. Bishop, a Marine veteran of two years’ language study in Japan, it was a field school, par excellence.¹⁷ The students, enlisted and officer alike, were a mixed lot with only some prior foreign language study or occasional contact with Japanese Americans. They studied day and night, huddled in palm-thatched huts while the sun shone or gathered around campfires under the moon. Bishop, forty-

11. Boardman oral history, 1; Lieutenant Dan S. Williams, USMCR, interview, 8 May 2000, San Rafael, California; John Shively to Florence Walne, 24 February 1941, 1941:487, Box CU-5, Series 2, Archives of the University of California, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California; Shively interview.

12. Roger Pineau notes, U.S. Marine Corps School, Box 2, Roger Pineau Papers.

13. Boardman oral history, 1; Lieutenant Colonel John E. Merrill, USMCR, oral history, by Richard E. DesLauriers, February-March 1979, San Diego, California, 15, Box 103, Marine Corps Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., 14–15; Holcomb oral history, 13.

14. Merrill oral history, 20–21; Boardman oral history, 2–3; Shively interview.

15. Shively interview; Merrill oral history, 23–24; Boardman oral history, 3.

16. James S. Santelli, *A Brief History of the 8th Marines* (Washington: History and Museum Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1976), 11, 99.

17. Packard, *Century of U.S. Naval Intelligence*, 371.

ish and scholarly, was their only teacher. When he pressed the Japanese owner of a small store to speak to the class, it turned out that the old man, who had left Japan thirty years earlier, had forgotten most of his native language.

Separated from their regular units, this eclectic group of students received intensive language training. They studied both the texts developed by Naganuma Naoe for budding diplomats and attachés in prewar Japan that Bishop had brought home and military dictionaries so as to learn the language of war. They had vocabulary tests every day. Only half of the students completed this rough and ready six months' introduction to the Japanese language before the demands of war took them off to combat duties.¹⁸

Two graduates of the Hawaii Marine program, Paul Dull and John Merrill, became founding fathers of the Corps' third Japanese language school, which was established at Camp Elliott, near San Diego, California, in July 1942.¹⁹ Dull taught reading, and Merrill conversation, in a "rush" course originally intended to last for six months that was subsequently compressed into three. Its purpose was to give primarily enlisted personnel, men chosen on the basis of high IQ scores, a basic knowledge of five hundred Chinese ideographs, or *kanji*, together with the other two scripts used to write Japanese; and to provide basic instruction in the use of a Japanese dictionary. The students would build a basic vocabulary of fifteen hundred spoken words. This foundation was supposed to enable them to read Japanese field orders and maps and to make them competent prisoner of war field interrogators.²⁰

But this program suffered from a plague of difficulties. Combat duty called Merrill and its senior officer away. Dull's recurrent illnesses hindered his effectiveness.²¹ The texts used were improvised. Dull scrambled to get copies of a handbook of Japanese field orders and supplementary materials developed at the Army's Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota. Frictions developed within the small staff when untrained regular Marines took on

18. Major Elmer Stone, USMCR, interview, 19 September 2001, Palm Desert, California; Colonel Harry D. Pratt, USMC (ret.) presentation, Bridge to the Rising Sun Conference, Pacific Basin Institute, Pomona College, Claremont, California, 7 April 2000. Information from speakers at this occasion will hereinafter be cited by name, date, and "conference presentation."

19. Merrill oral history, 26.

20. Course syllabi, Division Japanese Language School, July 1942, Paul S. Dull Papers, Research Archives, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia. I am indebted to Patricia Mullen for making these materials available to me.

21. Merrill oral history, 26–28. The officer in charge was Harold J. Noble, who had learned Japanese in Korea.

instructional duties. The instructors had to plead for freedom from regular Marine duties for their students to get study time.²²

The program did survive, in modified form and at another location (Camp Lejeune, North Carolina) until the end of the war.²³ But it taught only the rudiments of the language to enlisted personnel who were expected to need only limited linguistic competence. They were to be the first point of contact with enemy prisoners who would be passed on to more thoroughly trained officers for “real” interrogation.²⁴ In retrospect, it is clear that this program, despite its staff and students’ hard work, could not produce the more comprehensive kind of Japanese language competence that the Corps needed.

That point did not become clear, however, until after the long struggle for Guadalcanal came to its end in February 1943. That fight, and the simultaneous raids on the Gilbert Islands, made three points very clear. First, there simply were not enough Marine Japanese language officers to go around, even at the projected level of one or two per regiment. Japanese troops ambushed one on Guadalcanal less than a week after Marines landed on the island, and snipers killed a second when the 1st Raider Battalion landed on Makin in mid-August 1942.²⁵ Another was pirated away for a time when the Army’s 25th Division relieved the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal. Second, despite their background and training, these first Marine Japanese language officers lacked both the tactical knowledge and conversational fluency needed to help capture and question the relatively few prisoners taken on Guadalcanal. The Marines had to rely on a fifty-seven-year-old former YMCA missionary, Captain Sherwood F. “Pappy” Moran, for extended interrogation of prisoners there.²⁶

Third, and perhaps most important, senior officers in the field had neither the understanding nor the organization to make appropriate use

22. Dull to Edwards Brothers photolithography company, 10 October 1942; Dull to McGraw Hill Book Company, 13 April 1943; Dull to Colonel Clark, 14 and 18 January 1944; J. C. Pelzel and E. P. Boardman, Proposals Regarding the Employment of Japanese Personnel within the Marine Division, 28 March 1943, Dull Papers.

23. Kinsman interview; Stone interview.

24. Pelzel and Boardman memorandum, 28 March 1943, Dull Papers.

25. Merrill oral history, 28; Boardman oral history, 4; John C. Erskine, “Language Officers Recall Combat Roles in the Pacific,” *Fortitudine* 15 (Spring 1986): 24. The first two Marine Japanese language officers killed were Gerald P. Holtom, son of a Japan missionary; and Merle Ralph Cory, a forty-two-year-old World War I Army veteran, diplomat, and code-breaker who had served in prewar Japan. See Japanese Language School University of Hawaii 1941 list of students, File 4, Box 4, Pineau Papers; *Register of the Department of State* (Washington: Department of State, 1938), 75; and Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, 367.

26. Boardman oral history, 6–8; Cameron, *American Samurai*, 110, 119, details Sherwood “Pappy” Moran’s actions and maturing attitudes toward the Japanese soldier; Pelzel and Boardman memorandum.

of these language specialists. General Vandegrift, the commander of Marine forces on Guadalcanal, had only the most general grasp of what they were about, and they were asked to perform a multitude of tasks that left little time to maintain and polish their language skills. Some rushed off to interrogate prisoners without knowing either the questions to ask or the specialized vocabulary needed to do so.²⁷ Although Japanese language officers had work to do at the front lines, and at regimental and division headquarters levels, no one realized—until the fighting on Guadalcanal ended—that the level of skill needed was lowest in the field and highest and most comprehensive at the division headquarters level. Thus combat units were not making the best use of what little Japanese language talent they had.²⁸

Students

Awareness of these problems and anticipation of a much greater need for linguists in future operations prompted Marine Headquarters in Washington to seek a new source of Japanese language officers—the Navy Japanese Language School at Boulder. In mid-February 1943, barely a week after the last Japanese left Guadalcanal, a colonel arrived in Boulder hoping to persuade more than four of every ten men in the class scheduled to graduate in July to volunteer for the Marines.²⁹ The school to which he came had changed tremendously during the past nine months. Its origins could be traced back to September 1941, when Office of Naval Intelligence representatives joined the handful of teachers of Japanese in America at Cornell University to consider how best to increase the number of intelligence officers competent in Japanese. As a consequence of that meeting, the Navy contracted with Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley to begin training the few students that could be quickly located.³⁰

27. For examples of the brevity and general, rather than tactically useful, character of these early prisoner of war interrogations, see John C. Erskine collection of interrogations, 14 August, and Captain Eugene P. Boardman to D-2, First Marine Division, 1 October 1942, report on questioning of prisoners taken 24 September 1942, Folder C15-4 Prisoners reports from Second Marine Division, Box 46, U.S. Marine Corps Geographic File (hereafter USMC Geographic File), Record Group 127, U.S. National Archives.

28. Boardman oral history, 7–8; Pelzel and Boardman memorandum.

29. Hart H. Spiegel to family, 13 February 1943, in Hart H. Spiegel unpublished memoir “The War Years 1942–1946 and Better Days,” 130, in possession of Hart H. Spiegel, San Francisco, California.

30. U.S. Naval Administration in World War II, Office of Naval Operations, School of Oriental Languages, Captain Albert E. Hindmarsh draft, pp. 12–13, World War II Command file, Classified Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Wash-

Early in 1942, however, this plan was disrupted by two unexpected developments. First, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the removal of Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast.³¹ That decision put the instructors at Berkeley in peril of internment, and no amount of pleading by university officials produced exemptions for them. In June, students and faculty in this quite successful program had to move to a safer inland location where they could continue their work.³² Second, the Harvard program foundered. Distinguished Orientalists in Cambridge, Massachusetts, refused to change their teaching methods, and their students' progress was so slow and uncertain that the Navy decided to terminate its contract with Harvard.³³ Thus by the early summer of 1942, the relocated and enlarged Berkeley program at the University of Colorado at Boulder—the Navy Japanese Language School—became the sole source for any significant number of Marine Corps Japanese language officers.

Who were the forty-three young men there who volunteered to join the Corps? What had brought them to Boulder? How well trained in the Japanese language were they? And how did their experience there set them apart from their civilian peers and from the Marines alongside whom they would later fight?

All of these Marines-to-be were white males because the Navy refused to recruit Japanese Americans, as the Army had done. The first WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) did not enter the program until July 1943, just after the first Boulder Marines graduated.³⁴ These young men were not chosen for their physical prowess. As one of them later colorfully put it, the best features of the whole lot would not have sufficed to produce a single good pilot. Eyes were usually the problem. One student passed his physical exam by telling a Navy corpsman who thought he was blind that he had *one* good eye. That prompted the medic to retort: "I'm going to give you a waiver

ington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. This work will hereinafter be cited as Hindmarsh report.

31. Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 73–176, details the making and implementation of the internment decision.

32. Robert Gordon Sproul to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, 28 March 1942, File 1942:487, Archives of the University of California, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

33. Hindmarsh report, 14–15; Edwin O. Reischauer to Roger Pineau, 5 September 1980, File 2, Box 11, Pineau Papers.

34. Falk and Tsuneishi, *American Patriots*, 3–8; Boulder WAVE class list, provided by Mrs. Irene Slaninka Thiel, Bellingham, Washington.

and you can join the Marine Corps. But if a sea gull shits in your good eye, don't you come back and blame me."³⁵

What mattered more in their selection was one or a combination of two other factors. The first was familiarity with, or even glancing exposure to, the Japanese language. Nearly half had some prior contact with it. About one in five of these future Marines were sons of missionary or merchant parents who had been born and/or raised in Japan or China.³⁶ They were thought more likely to succeed because they spoke Japanese or had some familiarity with the *kanji* with which the language was written. One young man, perhaps the most fluent of them all, boasted that he had learned his Japanese at "Yoshiwara U.," Tokyo's red-light district.³⁷ Others had distinguished themselves by studying Japanese for at least some time at the universities of Washington or California. And still others from the West Coast had heard the language spoken by Japanese American teachers, friends, and school acquaintances.³⁸

The others got into the program because they were "bright as hell." Brains made up for lack of brawn. Most of the future Marines, like their Navy peers at Boulder, were former students or graduates of the nation's top universities and liberal arts colleges. Phi Beta Kappa keys, the symbols of academic success in the liberal arts, were seen so commonly that students joked that the less socially adept in the group pinned them on their jock straps.³⁹ Some had studied "dead" or unusually difficult languages—Greek and Latin, Old English, Arabic, or Russian.⁴⁰ A few had brainpower enough to finish courses at their home colleges and universities while simultaneously trying to learn Japanese.⁴¹

What these officer candidates experienced at Boulder, however, was unlike any other schooling they had ever had. In one year they were supposed to master what prewar Navy and Marine Corps students in Japan had taken three to learn. The basic elements of a language that used

35. Spiegel memoir, 9, 11.

36. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 35; Lieutenant Roger F. Hackett, USMCR, interview with Roger Dingman, 10 April 2000, Los Angeles, California; Ray V. Luthy to Pineau, File 3, Box 7, H. B. Van Brunt to Roger Pineau, 22 June 1980, File 28, Box 11, Pineau Papers; Captain Laurence G. Thompson, USMCR, interview, 21 April 2000, Los Angeles, California; Williams interview.

37. Spiegel memoir, 9.

38. Eugene to Betty Gregg, 20 September 1943, Box 1, Eugene Gregg Papers, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder; Thompson interview; Captain Richard S. White, USMCR, interview with Roger Dingman, 23 January 2002, Seattle, Washington.

39. Spiegel memoir, 10.

40. Ltjg. Lionel Casson, USNR, interview with Pedro Loureiro, 23 May 2000, New York City; Kinsman interview.

41. Lieutenant Frank Gibney, USNR, interview, 2 December 2000, Santa Barbara, California; Spiegel memoir, 15.

three different syllabaries, had three different styles of script, and multiple, socially determined patterns of address, were drilled into them. Monday through Friday mornings, they attended small classes devoted to reading, translating, and conversation. Then they were supposed to master through memorization hundreds of *kanji*. On Saturday mornings, everyone took a difficult exam, and if one failed to pass it, the pain had to be repeated the following Wednesday.⁴²

The course began slowly but accelerated to a dizzying, if not excruciating, pace. Those who came to it thinking they could easily succeed were quickly disabused of that notion. One born-in-Japan student who presumed familiarity with the language came out of his first class “sort of catatonic” because he recognized so few of the *kanji* used.⁴³ A group of Yalies believed cramming the night before the exam would bring success, as it had in New Haven, Connecticut. They liked to drink and sing “The Range of the Buffalo,” a ditty that demeaned the language school’s teaching methods and celebrated the university’s mascot. It went:

With *kanji* cards and tokuhon [reader] our troubles they began
 With muttered curse and swear word,
 Our fevers highly ran.
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, it doesn’t pay to know
 It’s what you learn on Friday
 On the range of the buffalo.

Their study method seemed to work for a while, but then their test scores plummeted. When the school’s director, a spinster missionary daughter, warned them that failure to work harder might deny them a commission and certification as Japanese language officers, they shaped up.⁴⁴

Such a tough regimen might have been unbearable for these young men had it not been for the relaxation of Navy discipline, the character of their teachers, and the rich social life that Boulder allowed. “The oddest naval organization anywhere,” as one student put it, had “almost nothing Navy about it.”⁴⁵ For most of their year, the students had no uniforms to wear. No drill instructor ruled their daily lives or enforced a two a.m. curfew. Military drill was a rarity, and the few naval officers (and only Marine) on the campus were more concerned with ROTC and radio training students than with the Boulder Marines-to-be.⁴⁶

42. Williams interview; Thompson interview; Spiegel memoir, 12–15.

43. Hackett interview.

44. Spiegel memoir, 13–14, 17; Spiegel to family, 30 May 1943, in *ibid.*, 133–34.

45. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 42.

46. Spiegel to family, 18 July, 25 November 1942, in Spiegel memoir, 121,125; White interview.

The teachers were devoted to their duty—and the students. With the exception of a handful of Caucasian former missionaries, all were Japanese or Japanese Americans. Only a few were professional educators. Most came from internment camps where their families and friends remained, yet none exhibited any bitterness about the injustice that the very government that now employed them had done.⁴⁷ While some appeared ancient in their students' eyes, many were not much older than their charges. They had to scramble to keep ahead of the students in the classroom and devoted long weekend hours and nights to grading their work.⁴⁸ Some tutored students having difficulties, and many invited students into their homes or joined them in recreational activities. *Their* willingness to work hard to see that their students succeeded was self-evident and inspiring.⁴⁹

Not least, Boulder was a place to play as well as to learn. When late in the day one got “studied out,” he could play football or baseball on the spacious campus fields. The mountains close at hand, with trails for hiking and creeks full of fish, beckoned. University of Colorado coeds, unfamiliar to those from all-male Ivy League or Northeastern liberal arts schools, fascinated and readily dated the language school students. Not a few of them, thanks to a waiver of the requirement that student language officers be bachelors, found their spouses there.⁵⁰ Little wonder, then, that so very many saw their year at Boulder as “the Golden Age of . . . [their] war careers,” a time that was both fun and challenging.⁵¹

That time was also, however, transforming. What these young men experienced at the Navy Japanese Language School set them apart from civilian society and their comrades-to-be in the Marine Corps. Americans at war knew little of Japan and its people. They ignored or simply

47. Professor Nobutaka Ike interview, 28 March 2000, Palo Alto, California; Ariake (Larry) and Ida Inouye interview, 16 October 2000, Roseville, California. Generalizations about the pre-Boulder experiences of teachers are based upon faculty lists from the University of Colorado Archives, provided by Edwin Nakamura, son of the senior Japanese American faculty member, Berkeley, California, and data derived from the WRA (War Relocation Authority)-26 computerized database at the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, California. Only one teacher is known to have expressed sympathy for Japan's pre-Pearl Harbor actions and policies that led to war with the United States. See Paul F. Boller, Jr., to parents, 18 January 1943, Folder 3, Box 1, Paul F. Boller, Jr., Papers, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder.

48. Rayer Toki to Akiko Nishikata, 18 and 26 March, 9 May, n.d. and 30 June, 9 July 1943, Toki Papers.

49. Spiegel memoir, 17–18; Williams interview; Theodore W. DeBary conference presentation, 8 April 2000.

50. Thompson interview; Kinsman interview; Lieutenant Glen Slaughter, USMCR telephone interview, 4 February 2000; Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 43.

51. Paul F. Boller, Jr., to parents, 3 May 1943, Box 1, Boller Papers.

accepted the injustice of interning their Japanese American neighbors. They were surrounded by racially stereotypical propaganda about the Japanese that goaded them to save or produce so as to hasten the enemy's defeat.⁵² Ordinary Marine recruits were socialized through boot camp and contact with veterans of the earliest fighting in the Pacific into a hatred of the Japanese that was so strong and visceral as to prompt many to kill any and all on sight.⁵³

Marine students brought such attitudes with them to Boulder. They joked about the diminutive stature of their teachers and paid little or no attention to the injustice that had been done to most of them. They initially took the complexities of written Japanese as sure proof that the enemy had to devote all of his brainpower to learning it rather than producing sophisticated weapons of war.⁵⁴ But what they learned in their textbooks about Japanese society and culture, and what they saw in the persons of their instructors, disabused them of the validity of racial and national stereotypes. In their daily interaction with Japanese and Japanese Americans as individuals, they glimpsed the human behind the façade of a people depicted as implacable and inscrutable foes. That meant that these young men did not carry an unthinking hatred of the Japanese into combat. In that respect, they differed greatly from those with whom they would serve.

If that was so, why, then, did nearly one out of three of those in the class of July 1943 choose to become members of the armed service most likely to put them in close, kill-or-be-killed combat with the Japanese? While no single answer to that question is valid for all of them, three elements run through their responses to it. Those who had lived in China had childhood memories of the glamorous "horse marines" protecting foreigners and their properties there.⁵⁵ Those who had grown up in America had seen Marines as heroes worthy of emulation on recruiting posters and in the movies.

The Boulder Marines also shared individual character traits. These young men were, by their own accounts, "macho" types. They more than others liked the rough and tumble of intramural sports and delighted in "playing the field" of plentiful coeds.⁵⁶ They may also have

52. John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), remains the best overview of the impact of racial stereotypes on Americans' thinking in this period.

53. Cameron, *American Samurai*, 89; Bergerud, *Touched by Fire*, 409–12.

54. Williams interview; Spiegel to family, 18 July, 22 August 1942, in Spiegel memoir, 120, 122–23.

55. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 40–42; Thompson interview; Williams interview; Charles T. Cross interview with Roger Dingman, 8 June 2002, Boulder, Colorado.

56. Spiegel to family, 24 August 1942, in Spiegel memoir, 122; Hackett interview; Gibney interview.

been more risk prone than their Navy peers. Rather than commanding an LMD (large mahogany desk) as translators or code-breakers in Washington or Pearl Harbor, they wanted to experience the war firsthand.⁵⁷

Bonding through experiences born of shared residence, however, was what pulled most strongly toward the Corps. All thirty who took over a vacated fraternity house chose to become Marines. In their hours together outside the classroom, they took stock of each other's character, saw one another's foibles, and pinned nicknames on everyone. They took charge, collectively, of their own lives by firmly, if not politely, relegating the fraternity house mother to her own room and the kitchen. They tested one another's reactions to risk—in preparing (or not) for exams, in countless practical jokes, in sports, and in late night escapades that pushed the limits of the acceptable. As a result, they came to know one another so well as to be willing to entrust their lives to each other. Indeed, they were so confident in their capacity to judge character that they went out and recruited eight nonresident students to join the Corps.⁵⁸

But were these young men who had studied and played so hard at Boulder ready to become combat linguists? Had their year in Boulder classrooms truly prepared them for what lay ahead?

Hunters, Not Killers

By the time of their graduation, these forty-three newly minted Marine officers had few illusions about their readiness for what might lay ahead. None had any combat training. Most understood that they knew only the basics of the Japanese language and precious little military vocabulary. All had memorized the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors and slogged through the one chapter in their eight-volume reader that dealt with things military. But it was about the battleship—hardly good preparation for interpreters in the field.⁵⁹ The graduate who was shocked by his incomprehension of much of the valedictory address delivered in Japanese probably was not alone.⁶⁰ Indeed, the large trunk

57. Spiegel memoir, 10, 20; Hackett interview. The "LMD" designation was originated by Albert S. Karr, a later Boulder Navy Japanese Language School student who spent his Navy career at Pearl Harbor. Ltjg. Albert S. Karr, USNR interview, 6 July 2000, Huntington Beach, California.

58. Spiegel memoir, 13, 23; Spiegel to parents, 13 February, n.d. May 1943, in *ibid.*, 130, 132; Glen Slaughter, Ray Luthy, and Richard H. Moss interview with Roger Dingman, 7 June 2002, Boulder, Colorado; Cross interview.

59. Kinsman interview; Thompson interview; Hackett interview; Spiegel to family, 30 May 1943, in Spiegel memoir, 133–34.

60. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 43.

packed with texts and dictionaries that each of these graduates took away with them served to remind them that they had taken only the first steps on the road to becoming combat interpreters.

The road that they traveled to that goal proved much longer, less straightforward, and more demanding than these Marines or their superiors imagined. Their “real” training was to come, on the job, with the Corps in combat. Nearly another full year would pass before they, those who followed them in the Boulder program, and those for whom they worked were ready to face the challenges of cross-cultural communication in battle. The Boulder Marines of ’43 met those challenges in two distinct phases of the war. The first, down to the summer of 1944, consisted of intermittent brief and intense fighting in the South and Central Pacific in which Marine Japanese language officers discovered that their job was less to translate written or spoken Japanese and more to prove themselves as Marines and persuade their comrades in arms to let at least some of the enemy live. The second phase, beginning with operations in the Marianas in the summer of 1944 and proceeding through the bitter fighting at Peleliu and Iwo Jima toward the climactic battle for Okinawa in the spring of 1945, forced the Marine Japanese language officers to take on more varied and dangerous combat roles than anything they could have imagined in Boulder.

Immediately after graduation and short leaves, the Boulder Marines were sent off for remedial training of two sorts. They had to learn to be Marine officers, and Green’s Farm, an isolated portion of Camp Elliott (located within what is now Camp Pendleton, near San Diego) is where they were hastily introduced to that craft. Their training in the field was tough, physically demanding, and at times boring. But after the grind of the Boulder classrooms, it seemed like a release to many of them. By its end, their self-confidence had definitely grown. As one new second lieutenant crowed to his parents: “I’m too valuable for the Marine Corps to risk—and I feel very lucky.”⁶¹

These new Marines also needed to learn some military Japanese. A few went—briefly—to the Japanese language school that their senior, Lieutenant Paul Dull, headed.⁶² Most got no further training in military Japanese. As one of them put it, “I shipped out . . . with nothing conceivably describable as [an] adequate military vocabulary.”⁶³ About a quarter of the class, those destined for the still forming 4th Division, were sent to the Army’s Military Intelligence Service Language School at

61. Thompson interview; Kinsman interview; Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 44; Spiegel letters to family, 6 and 13 August, 24 September 1943, in Spiegel memoir, 140–49.

62. Kinsman interview.

63. Glenn Slaughter conference remarks, 7 April 2000.

Camp Savage, Minnesota, to study Japanese military documents and practice commanding rag-tag Army Nisei interpreters.⁶⁴ That put a fine icing on their cake of Japanese language training.

By the hundredth day after their departure from Boulder, all of the Marine class of July 1943 were at sea, headed for units and places as yet unknown to them.⁶⁵ As they approached Guadalcanal, the language officers drew straws to see whether they would go to the 1st or the 3rd Division.⁶⁶ The normal table of organization for a division had allotted two language officers to divisional headquarters and to each of three regimental staffs. More senior officers who had seen action on Guadalcanal concluded that officer linguists were best assigned to the higher echelons of the division.⁶⁷ But at least six of the Boulder Marines ignored such advice by volunteering to serve in raider battalions—the units most likely to come soonest into direct contact with the enemy.⁶⁸

Once they joined their units, the new Japanese language officers discovered that their essential task was not so much a matter of translation and interpretation as of becoming “real” Marines. That meant overcoming fears of possible linguistic or military inadequacy. It also demanded that they adjust to the “hunter-killer” mentality of those in the field, by becoming, in essence, hunters only.⁶⁹ These young officers had to convince their superiors of their worth, to persuade their comrades in arms not to kill every Japanese, and to lure those of the enemy who survived their assaults to surrender. Only the six Boulder Marines who went to 1st Division headquarters staff had anyone who had served as a combat interpreter to help them learn their craft, and Major Sherwood Moran was old enough to be their father.⁷⁰ Those who went to new units or raider battalions simply had to learn from their own experiences. In both situations these newest language officers simply had to learn what to do—on the job.

64. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 45.

65. Hackett interview; Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 45; Spiegel to family, 7 October 1943, in Spiegel memoir, 149–50.

66. Kinsman interview; Spiegel memoir, 33, recalled that assignment to divisions took place immediately after they reached Guadalcanal.

67. Pelzel and Boardman memorandum, 28 March 1943, Dull Papers.

68. Spiegel memoir, 33.

69. Cameron, *American Samurai*, 115, details the “hunter-killer” mentality of Marines on Guadalcanal.

70. Marine graduates of the Hawaii or Samoa schools who had served briefly on Guadalcanal stayed with the 2nd Division. Major Moran turned new Boulder Marines over to a slightly senior fellow graduate, Lieutenant Gene Gregg (who also lacked combat experience), just before the 1st Division embarked for new headquarters on Goodenough Island in September 1943. See Gregg to Betty Gregg, 18 September 1943, Gregg Papers.

Just how Boulder Marines became combat interpreters can be seen by considering the experiences of those who joined the 3rd Division in its assault against Bougainville, a large, jungle-covered mountainous island that lay three hundred miles northwest of Guadalcanal. The purpose of the operation was to flank the major Japanese air base at Rabaul by establishing a defensible perimeter and building an airfield on the northwest shore of Empress Augusta Bay. D-day for Operation Dipper came on 1 November 1943, when Marines stormed ashore on a wide beach and seized two small offshore islands. Following a fierce naval battle the next day, more Marines came ashore, and all began the task of expanding the perimeter.⁷¹

Although the Marines repulsed an initial Japanese counterattack, they had to push up a narrow ravine along a “trail” in jungle-covered hills that hid the retreating enemy. After blocking points were set up, probing intelligence patrols were sent out along points of the compass to try to determine just where the foe was. It took six weeks for a fighter aircraft field to be built, and nearly two months to establish a secure perimeter of the desired size.⁷²

The Marine Japanese language officers had to demonstrate their utility and establish their credibility with superiors, peers, and subordinates in this dark, rainy, and dangerous kind of fighting. Their principal task was to capture enemy documents and prisoners. But the terrain and style of fighting, which allowed relatively few enemy to bombard the Marines’ defense perimeter on the beach and much of the foe to escape ever further and higher into the jungled mountains, changed their intended mode of operation. There was no single, safe place in which to set up shop for translation and interrogation. And so, much to the disgust of the regimental commanders and enlisted Marines, the language officers’ trunks full of dictionaries and texts had to be hauled from place to place. They turned out to be not much help.⁷³

The language officers had to obtain documents in a particularly dangerous and grisly way. When the shooting stopped and the enemy retreated, they went out on eight-to-ten-man patrols to scavenge the dead. The language officers reached down into the pockets and packs of the foe to get blood-stained but tactically useful maps. They watched,

71. Gordon L. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide: A Geo-Military Study* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 135–40; Jon T. Hoffman, *Chesty: The Story of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, USMC* (New York: Random House, 2001), 36–37.

72. Spiegel memoir, 41; Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 140–41.

73. Kinsman interview; Thompson interview; Lieutenant Hart H. Spiegel, USMCR, interview, 22 September 2000, San Francisco, California. Spiegel to family, 26 February 1944, in Spiegel memoir, 152, revealed how the rain, mud, and humidity simply destroyed the small field box of dictionaries he had carried.

but did not stop, their men from looting the corpses—taking knives, weapons, charms, and even the gold in the dead men’s teeth. This was, as Lieutenant Hart H. Spiegel experienced it, “dismal, dirty, dark, frightening work.”⁷⁴

The very few prisoners who were taken did not surrender but collapsed, wounded, into American hands. They were so rare that their jubilant captors hauled them down from the mountains, threw them into a cage, and then paraded them around in a truck on the beach to the jeers of the Marines there. This was hardly a procedure likely to elicit much of value out of them when they were interrogated at regimental headquarters.⁷⁵

What happened there did not automatically demonstrate the Japanese language officer’s worth. Lieutenant Laurence G. Thompson of the 21st Regiment recalled all that was wrong about his first—and only—prisoner of war interview on Bougainville. Marines with rifles pointed at the terrified Japanese pushed him into the tent of the regiment’s colonel. The superannuated commanding officer ordered two chairs to be brought in, one for himself and one for the prisoner. Thompson, the interpreter, had to squat in a demeaning position between the two. Then the colonel began asking “appropriate” questions: What did the prisoner think of the emperor? What did his highness do every day? What was life like in Tokyo? The baffled and terrified captive mumbled some answers—any answers—which Thompson struggled to translate. The interview terminated in about five minutes, with nothing really useful gained, because some higher-up at division headquarters who had heard that a prisoner had been captured demanded that the man be sent there immediately.⁷⁶

Early encounters of this sort were both terribly frustrating and exhilarating for Marine Japanese language officers. One Boulder Marine complained that “Bougainville was two months of mud, dead Japanese, and no live Japanese to talk to.”⁷⁷ But another realized that his experiences there had transformed him from a classroom into a “real” Marine. “I am now a campaign veteran. The Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, action,” he boasted in a letter home.⁷⁸

That transformation was essential if the interpreters were to be effective in future actions. Because the fighting was so intense and virtually none of the enemy surrendered, the ordinary Marine had to be persuaded that it was in his interest to wound and capture, rather than

74. Spiegel interview.

75. Spiegel memoir, 39.

76. Thompson interview.

77. Glen Slaughter conference presentation, 7 April 2000.

78. Spiegel to family, 29 December 1943, in Spiegel memoir.

kill, Japanese.⁷⁹ The Boulder Marines on Bougainville began preaching that counterintuitive proposition on their way back to Guadalcanal.⁸⁰ But it was a tough line to sell, one that began to “take” only when they, as combat veterans, argued that getting and interrogating more prisoners would help save U.S. Marines’ lives in future battles.

Unfortunately, however, fighting over the next nine months produced few prisoners. In three days of fighting on Tarawa in November 1943, 2nd Division Marines captured only 17 Japanese and 139 Korean laborers. They contemptuously dubbed these captives “termites.”⁸¹ A month of 1st Division operations in New Britain in January 1944 netted only 20 prisoners.⁸² When the 4th Division sailed directly from San Diego to assault Kwajalein on 31 January and 1 February 1944, only 91 prisoners, again mainly Korean laborers, survived.⁸³ The 3rd Raider Regiment seized Emirau a month later, without meeting any Japanese resistance.⁸⁴ And in September 1944, the planned four-day assault against Peleliu turned into a two-and-one-half-month struggle that virtually annihilated that island’s defenders. Fewer than 20 Japanese military men and an additional 200 Korean and Okinawan laborers, a total representing fewer than 2 out of every 1,000 men in the original defense force, were captured there.⁸⁵

79. Major Sherwood F. Moran, Report on Interrogation of Prisoners of War, supplement to Intelligence Annex, General Report on the Cape Gloucester Operation, 26 December 1943 to 18 February 1944, Sherwood F. Moran Papers, Marine Corps University Research Center, Quantico, Virginia.

80. Thompson interview.

81. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 338; Cameron, *American Samurai*, 107. What little interrogation of prisoners occurred was “of necessity hasty, and did not provide a great deal of valuable information.” Very few documents of immediate combat significance were recovered and translated. See 2nd Marine Division Special Action Report Intelligence Annex, 4 January 1944, Box 29, USMC Geographic File.

82. Major Sherwood Moran, Report on the activities and organization of the Japanese interpreters sub-section (1 January 1943–1 February 1944), Moran Papers. But in the wake of the operation, Marine interpreters conducted at least 287 interviews with captured enemy personnel. See Folder c1-2 Interrogation Reports, New Britain, Box 239, USMC Geographic File.

83. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 333–38; Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 45. The very few prisoner of war interrogations from Kwajalein that have survived can be found in D-2 section, 4th Marine Division: Summary of POW interrogation information gathered during Flintlock Operation, Box 213, USMC Geographic File.

84. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 184; Spiegel memoir, 49–50.

85. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 361–64, 406–7. Gordon D. Gayle, *Bloody Beaches: The Marines at Peleliu* (Washington: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1996), 48. General Gayle states that only 202 prisoners, rather than the 219 claimed by Rottman, were taken on Peleliu.

The paltry number of prisoners taken reflected conditions and circumstances beyond the Marine language officers' control. On these isolated islands, there was no place for the enemy to hide. Moreover, the foe, inculcated with the belief that surrender was worse than death, fought with "incomprehensible tenacity."⁸⁶ And the fighting was so intense and traumatizing to those on both sides that the combatants' first instinct was to fire, not to speak or persuade. Seasoned field commanders, like then-Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, who nursed a particular animus against the Japanese who had killed his brother, did nothing to change that.⁸⁷ Thus the pace and tone of battle, together with the attitudes of American attackers and Japanese defenders, combined to limit the chances for Marine Japanese language officers to hone and demonstrate the worth of their skills by interrogating prisoners in combat circumstances.

Persuaders

Beginning with the landings in the Marianas in June 1944, however, the situation confronting Marine Japanese language officers, the roles they took on, and the results of their activity changed dramatically. The three principal islands assaulted—Saipan, Tinian, and Guam—were larger than the coral atolls further east in the Central Pacific, and their battle terrain, encompassing beaches, cultivated plateaus, jungle-covered mountains, and small urban areas, was more complex. Moreover, they possessed sizable native and Japanese colonial populations. Twenty thousand Japanese lived on Saipan; another eighteen thousand had colonized tiny Tinian, only three miles away; and Guam, a hundred miles to the south, had a population of nearly twenty-two thousand natives plus nearly two thousand more Japanese.⁸⁸ These civilians, in the eyes of one of the more senior Marine Japanese language officers, became "the big problem" on Saipan and Tinian.⁸⁹

The Boulder Marines who came to these islands were part of a much larger assault force. Although the two divisions in which they served were one-eighth smaller than those previously committed to battle, one or more army divisions accompanied them. The latter, rather than relieving frontline Marine forces, formed a second arm of American forces as they advanced from particular beachheads over the whole of these three islands. The Boulder Marine graduates of July 1943 also had

86. Robert "Pepper" Martin, n.d., *Time* article, quoted in Gayle, *Bloody Beaches*, 15.

87. Hoffman, *Chesty*, 263, 271–98; Merrill oral history, 56.

88. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 376–78, 380–82, 385–89.

89. Boardman oral history, 18.

more assistance, not only from Army Nisei who were, with the exception of those Caucasians born in Japan, “better than we were,” but also from later products of the Boulder school.⁹⁰ In the year since their graduation, another three dozen Marine Japanese language officers had joined the Corps.⁹¹ That meant that each of the divisions committed to fighting in the Marianas, quite unlike those that had fought in the Solomons, had its full complement of language officers.

Some of these men, principally those working at the battalion level, spent most of their time fighting—fiercely. One Bougainville veteran recalled seeing “more dead and dying Japanese and Marines in two days [on the Orote Peninsula on Guam] than I had seen in the entire war up to then.” He had no more luck trying to persuade ordinary Marines on patrol not to kill potential captives than he had had in the Solomons.⁹²

Others, thanks to the work of their more experienced seniors, became much more adept at acquiring prisoners. They had pocket-sized cards printed up for those on patrol to use. Marines at the front lines were admonished: “Every prisoner turned in means the saving of American lives, time, [and] materiel.” These “patrol cards” also instructed those on patrol on how to ask questions—in English, Japanese, and Korean—likely to yield valuable tactical information: who an enemy unit was, where it was, and how big it might be. The cards went on to provide tactical guidance on how, with the help of a captive, one should approach, and presumably take alive, members of the unit from which he came—without oneself getting killed.⁹³

These far-from-perfect tools helped increase the number of documents acquired and prisoners taken. Within forty-eight hours of the landings on Saipan and Tinian, 2nd Division headquarters had the basic Japanese order of battle. Marines in the field scooped up numerous official diaries that the Imperial Army had provided its soldiers, in which they had scrawled valuable tactical information. Furthermore, prisoners became “just easy marks” in interrogation because their superiors had not instructed them on what to do or say if captured. One Imperial Army officer even went up in a plane with his captors and provided accurate targeting information for bombing Japanese positions.⁹⁴

Heartwarming though such success may have been to the Marine Japanese language officers, they recognized its limitations. Even though about 6 percent of the defending force on Saipan and Tinian, and more

90. Glenn Slaughter conference presentation, 7 April 2000.

91. November 1943, March, April, and May 1944 graduating class lists, Folder 4, Box 4, Pineau Papers.

92. Spiegel memoir, 58, 60–61.

93. Major Robert B. Sheeks, USMCR, interview, 8 May 2000, Santa Rosa, California; patrol card and propaganda materials in possession of Robert B. Sheeks.

94. Boardman oral history, 18.

than one out of every ten defenders on Guam, surrendered, a huge problem remained.⁹⁵ What was to be done to get those who did not, combatants and civilians alike, out of the caves and other hiding places to which they retreated? In the Marianas, the so-called “mop-up” phase of operations presented the greatest challenges to the Japanese language officers.

There Boulder Marines revived, refined, and expanded greatly a tactic rarely used on Guadalcanal. Lieutenants Robert B. Sheeks, David Anderson, and Charles T. Cross carried primitive loud speaker systems to the front lines and called Japanese to come out of their hiding places.⁹⁶ Sometimes they tried to convince the civilians mixed in with soldiers that they were not targets. On other occasions, especially on Saipan during a period of drought, promises of water and food proved effective.⁹⁷ Another Boulder Marine, Lieutenant Laurence G. Thompson, got into an LCI⁹⁸ and broadcast appeals to surrender to Japanese who had jumped from cliffs at the northern end of that island into the surf and had swum out to a reef. Unfortunately, most of those there chose to drown rather than board American boats.⁹⁹

But tens of thousands of civilians were saved and became subjects of great concern to Marine Japanese language officers.¹⁰⁰ Trained to fight and to interrogate, they suddenly became de facto civil affairs officers. Combat units were simply not ready to handle large numbers of men, women, and children herded into makeshift internment camps. On one occasion six thousand prisoners nearly rioted because there was so little water for them.¹⁰¹ Language officers had to adapt—fast; and in doing so, their ability to see Japanese as individual human beings, a skill acquired along with their language training at Boulder, became vital. Lieutenant Sheeks, perhaps the most energetic and adaptable among them, realized that once these new civilian charges had received basic medical care, been separated from Japanese troops, and been placed in primitive shel-

95. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 378–79, 382–84, 391.

96. 23rd Marine Regiment unit reports, R-2 unit reports, 13–15 July, 3 August 1944, Box 335, USMC Geographic File; Charles Cross to parents, 21 August 1944, in Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 52–53; Dan S. Williams, “Recollections of the Navy’s WWII Japanese Language School and Duty as Translator with Marines,” *SASA [Shanghai American School Alumni] News*, Spring 2001, 8; Sheeks interview. Sheeks, who was slightly older than the July 1943 Marine graduates, was a member of the “hybrid” class that began at Berkeley and finished at Boulder.

97. Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 49–52.

98. An LCI is a landing craft, infantry.

99. Thompson interview; Robert B. Sheeks, “Civilians on Saipan,” *Far Eastern Survey*, 9 June 1945, 112.

100. Annex I Report of 24th Marine Regiment—Final Report on Saipan, August 28, 1944, Box 329, Annex H, 4th Marine Division Operations Report, 24 July–1 August 1944, Box 330, USMC Geographic File.

101. Boardman oral history, 18.

ters, they needed to have something to do. He persuaded his superiors to allow the internees to work as stevedores and to help feed themselves by fishing for tuna and starting cooperative farms.¹⁰² Humanitarian activities of this sort, so different from what Boulder Marines had initially been trained to do, were, as one of them put it, “one of the most important things we did.”¹⁰³ They greatly aided the establishment of American control over Saipan, Tinian, and Guam.

Life Savers

What Boulder Marines experienced there differed from annihilative fighting on Pelelieu and Iwo Jima that yielded very few prisoners for them to interrogate.¹⁰⁴ But the Marianas battles prefigured what they and many more Marines encountered, on a much wider scale, on Okinawa. The climactic battle of the war against Japan became, for them, a triple test—of their language skills, their combat savvy, and their character. But it was also important for a different reason. On Okinawa, the very qualities and attitudes of Marine Japanese language officers that set them apart from those alongside whom they fought, became vitally important to the conduct of operations. Their empathy for the Japanese—the ability to see them as human persons as well as foes—helped them to deal with the big question that the presence of more than four hundred thousand civilians presented:¹⁰⁵ Would these people be an aid, an obstacle, or simply something that could be ignored in the conduct of military operations on the island?

Prior to the 1 April 1945 landings on Okinawa, American planners had framed a civil affairs plan and formed joint teams of civil affairs officers. These men had only minimal Japanese language training and yet were expected to manage post-combat activities.¹⁰⁶ But the Marine

102. Sheeks, “Civilians on Saipan,” 109–13; Sheeks interview. Sheeks was later awarded the Bronze Star medal for his work in developing combat propaganda and his risky efforts to get large numbers of Japanese, civilians and soldiers alike, to surrender.

103. Captain Reed J. Irvine, USMCR, conference presentation, 7 April 2000.

104. Pelelieu bore a stronger resemblance to earlier struggles, in that so few prisoners—only two per thousand of the original defenders, were taken. Gayle, *Bloody Beaches*, 48. Iwo Jima yielded a smaller percentage of prisoners than Saipan, Tinian, or Guam; but prisoners had to be rooted out, much as those in the Marianas had been, from caves and tunnels after the fighting stopped. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 423–26.

105. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 431.

106. Robert K. Root, *The Princeton Campus in World War II, 1950* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1978), manuscript copy in Seeley G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 124–27, describes the Navy Civil Affairs Training program

Japanese language officers became those who dealt with the enemy on Okinawa—soldiers and civilians alike—in the first instance. At one level they could be said to be better prepared for this challenge than they had been in earlier operations. Schooled by experience, especially that on Saipan, they expected to have to deal with large numbers of civilians on Okinawa.¹⁰⁷ Many had been able to use respite periods between earlier operations to practice their language skills on prisoners held in a stockade near Pearl Harbor.¹⁰⁸ Division-level general orders had recognized their exclusive authority over what might be taken from enemy dead and established a standard operating procedure for questioning and disposing of both civilian and combatant foes.¹⁰⁹

At another level, however, the Marines were not ready for the problems that masses of Okinawan civilians in combat zones would present. The natives and their picturesque villages were psychologically disconcerting to veterans accustomed to fighting on miserable, virtually unpopulated islands.¹¹⁰ Local people were also a potential shield for Japanese soldiers who might hide among them. And, in contrast to the civilians who had followed Japanese commanders' orders on Saipan, their movements were not controlled. These genuine residents were not colonists. Ordered out of their homes by the local Japanese Army commander—or impressed into service in a local defense corps that provided logistic and medical assistance to Japanese troops—they had been terrorized and disoriented by the “typhoon of steel” bombing that preceded the Marines' landing.¹¹¹ What to do with or about them presented the

there. The James T. Watkins IV Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, California, constitute the richest archival source on the Navy's civil affairs program during its governance of Okinawa, 1945–46.

107. Lewis Meyers, “Japanese Civilians in Combat Zones,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 29 (February 1945): 11–16, cited in Cameron, *American Samurai*, 188.

108. Spiegel memoir, 71; Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, 59; Major James W. Brayshay, USMC (Ret.), interview, El Cajon, California, 28 April 2000; Lieutenant Glenn W. Nelson, USMCR, interview, 19 June 2000, Vienna, Virginia; Colonel James M. Jefferson Jr., USMC (Ret.), interview, 14 March 2001, Fruita, Colorado.

109. First Division General Order 182, 5 February 1945, and Instructions for Handling Prisoners of War, John E. Merrill Papers, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.; POW division stockade interrogation card, Folder 1, Box 1, Joseph Owen Zurhellen, Jr., Papers, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder.

110. Cameron, *American Samurai*, 189–90.

111. G-2 periodic report, U.S. Army XXIV Corps, 1 May 1945, copy provided by Allen Meyer, Chicago, Illinois. William Belote, *Typhoon of Steel: The Battle for Okinawa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), popularized the “typhoon of steel” phrase in the United States. A young Okinawan member of the Home Defense Corps who later became governor of the province, Ota Masahide, did the same in Japan with his *The Typhoon of Steel and Bombs* (Naha, Okinawa: Kume Publishing Company, 1984).

Marines with a great problem, a problem that Boulder Marines helped transform into a great opportunity.

How that happened can be seen in three phases of the fighting on Okinawa. In the first, Marine patrols reconnoitered the central and northern reaches of the island, where they ran into small groups of civilians and only occasional Japanese troops. Boulder Marines' first reactions on those occasions were fear of two sorts. The first was fear of death. Lieutenant James W. Brayshay, whose patrol first crossed the island from west to east, approached a seawall convinced that "a slug of Japs" lay behind it. When, after he called upon those behind it to give up, and only two old women appeared, he heaved a sigh of relief.¹¹² The second fear was of incompetence—inability to understand the locals' seemingly impenetrable dialect. When Lieutenant Hart Spiegel spoke to the first group of rag-tag men that approached him, he could not understand a word they said. His fear vanished when he learned they had wandered out of a home for the mentally incompetent. Within ninety days of arriving on Okinawa he had spoken with so many locals that he feared he would be "talking Japanese all night tonight—in my sleep."¹¹³

These first encounters reawakened Boulder Marines' empathy for Japanese as human beings. When 2nd Lieutenant James M. "Jim" Jefferson was sent on patrol to find and remove Okinawan civilians from harm's way, he ran into a fully armed Japanese soldier. The two men looked at each other. Then the Japanese darted back into the brush and the American decided to "high tail it" for division headquarters. He had seen the enemy, but both of them had been constrained by a sense of common humanity not to pull the triggers on their rifles.¹¹⁴ Another Boulder Marine found himself comforting a mother who thought he had come to kill her twelve-year-old son; the next day he washed and wrapped in rags an abandoned baby. He could not help pitying civilians "covered with lice and fleas" and many layers of clothing who lived, half starving, with swarms of children around them.¹¹⁵

Other "overburdened" Marine Japanese language officers found themselves, in these first days ashore, functioning more like Red Cross officials than soldiers in dealing with the "jillions" of displaced civilians who flooded toward their encampments. "Old men, old women, and hundreds of babies . . . [some with] no clothing, no food, no water," all

Japanese names are given herein in the normal Japanese order, that is, surname followed by personal name.

112. Brayshay interview.

113. Spiegel memoir, 79–80; and *Topeka Capital*, 10 July 1945, in Spiegel memoir, appendix; Spiegel interview.

114. James M. Jefferson 1986 memoir, in possession of Brad Jefferson, Fruita, Colorado.

115. Spiegel memoir, 84; and Spiegel to family, May 5, 1945, in *ibid.*, 160.

of whom spoke “this damn dialect,” had to be triaged.¹¹⁶ That meant talking with them to make sure no enemy soldiers were concealed in their midst, and then deciding what should be done with them.

There was no prearranged system for doing that, but Boulder Marines took to the task with gusto. Two of them, Roger Hackett and James Brayshay, competed to see who could interview the most and then report back to division headquarters—without the benefit of written notes.¹¹⁷ Another devised, in defiance of his suspicious immediate superior, a system of chits that indicated whether or not the person was harmless enough to be sent to temporary internment camps.¹¹⁸ Yet another unusually outgoing and linguistically talented Marine lieutenant became so popular with the inmates of the camp to which he was assigned that they petitioned his commanding officer not to transfer him elsewhere.¹¹⁹ Clearly, human bonds that transcended the horrors of war were developing between the Boulder Marine Japanese-language officers and the Okinawans in their care.

During the second phase of the Okinawa fighting, which stabilized along a line slightly north of the island’s capital city, Naha, Boulder Marines developed an even deeper relationship with local civilians. Recognizing the locals’ potential intelligence value, their superiors put out a call for volunteers to guide Americans as they probed along the front lines. Language officers who were sent into internment camps recruited a fair number of bored men to join them, only to see four out of five of them return to the camps after their first experience of combat. Lieutenant Glen Slaughter, however, bonded with his guide, Komesu “Tony” Seiichi. During a lull in the fighting he helped the Okinawan search for his sometime home in the rubble of Naha. When Komesu walked stoically away from what Yankee bombs had done and determined to con-

116. Ltjg. Daniel D. Karasik to parents, 4 and 12 April 1945, Daniel D. Karasik Papers, Bethesda, Maryland. Karasik was part of a detachment of Japanese-language officers sent from JICPOA (Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area) to enhance the Marines’ intelligence capabilities on Okinawa; Sixth Marine Division Special Action Report, Annex B: 22nd Regiment Phases I and II Okinawa Operation Report, 15 May 1945, File 132-3, Box 255, USMC Geographic File.

117. Merrill oral history, 76–77. Merrill, at division headquarters, and by now a seasoned military bureaucrat, eventually came to insist that the two men take notes of interviews, as the division’s standard operating procedure required.

118. Jefferson interview. Fortunately, his superiors at the division level were delighted by his initiative and saved him from any punishment at the regimental level.

119. N.d. newspaper clipping concerning Lieutenant Tad Van Brunt, in James W. Brayshay scrapbook, in possession of James W. Brayshay, El Cajon, California.

tinue to help the Marines, Slaughter could scarcely keep a dry eye. The two men became inseparable companions for the rest of the fighting.¹²⁰

What that meant in practical terms became clear not long after, when the Marines were trying to clear open but still contested ground along the Kokuba River estuary behind the port of Naha. There the 22nd and 29th Marine Regiments converged to encircle a flat tidal area behind the seawall facing the estuary. In the wee hours of 12 June, naval guns fired star shells that drifted down on little white parachutes, illuminating the battle ground. Lieutenant Spiegel, using a big bullhorn, called on the Japanese to surrender by putting up their hands holding one of those parachutes. The unarmed among the Japanese followed his orders, while skirmishers covered by machine gun fire advanced across the field. Those Japanese soldiers who continued to resist slithered along the ground to the seawall, where most were killed.¹²¹

But some other Imperial Army troops and Okinawan conscripts remained trapped between the Marines and the seawall. Just as the Americans expected, these men began blowing themselves up with grenades or demolition packs. As they did so, flying shrapnel threatened to hit the advancing Marines. Glen Slaughter and “Tony” Komesu resorted to a bullhorn type loudspeaker system to try to get the remaining Japanese defenders to give up. But the area was too wide for them to be heard. So Slaughter and his guide, with the help of three other Marines, pushed an Okinawan conscript and a Japanese prisoner holding a white flag forward on the seawall. They hoped that would persuade those still resisting to give up. The ploy worked—but not without one last risk. Slaughter had to pluck a live grenade from one of the new prisoners who had apparently decided to kill himself and then changed his mind at the last moment. Throughout this danger, the Boulder Marine’s Okinawan guide remained at his side.¹²²

The assistance of local men became even more vital in the final phase of the fighting at Okinawa’s southern end. By that time thousands of Okinawan civilians and their Japanese defenders huddled in caves, positions from which they could readily kill advancing American troops.¹²³ Not surprisingly, Marines did whatever they could to kill or neutralize them. The attackers used hydrogen phosphorous or napalm to

120. Glen Slaughter to Uehara Masatoshi, 12 May 1989, Slaughter translation of Uehara *Okinawa taimuzu* article, 1 July 1989, Slaughter Papers, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Slaughter conference remarks, 7 April 2000.

121. Slaughter to Uehara, 12 March 1989, Slaughter Papers; Spiegel memoir, 98.

122. Slaughter to Uehara, 12 March 1989; Slaughter translation of Uehara *Okinawa taimuzu* article, 4 July 1989, Slaughter Papers.

123. Frank and Shaw, *Victory and Occupation*, 121–22, notes that such activity began in the very first days after Americans landed on Okinawa.

smother or fry the defenders—and potential prisoners of value.¹²⁴ Thus Marine Japanese language officers and their Okinawa assistants had to crawl into these caves in what turned out to be very dangerous combined intelligence and humanitarian operations. On one occasion Hart Spiegel and his men found a Japanese soldier they presumed was dead. But when the man reached for a hand grenade, Spiegel shot him. On another occasion, he and his Marines crawled into a U-shaped cave in an effort to roust out civilians. The local people gestured that it had another entrance, and Spiegel's men hurried toward it, only to be hit by a big explosion set off by Japanese troops.¹²⁵ But despite such dangerous ruses, Marines accompanied by Japanese language officers kept on with this life-saving work.

In the final days before the fighting stopped on 23 June 1945, their efforts became almost purely humanitarian. By that time the 29th Marine Regiment had trapped Japanese army troops on a high grassy area on a bluff overlooking a shard-strewn beach. Its commander agreed to halt his advance for two days so as to “soften up the area by persuasion in order to save lives on both sides.” Glen Slaughter and “Tony” Komesu then began trying to get people who had hidden in caves and on ledges on the bluff to give up. The two men boarded an LCI, came as close to shore as the rocks permitted, and then slipped into a dory to go ashore. When they reached it, they heard what sounded like a firefight on the bluff above. But it was people killing themselves with grenades. Eventually about forty Korean labor troops and Japanese soldiers came down to the beach to surrender, and a Marine platoon leader escorted them to a point from which they could get to safety behind the Marines' lines.

The next day Slaughter and his guide returned to the same spot. From the deck of the LCI, Komesu broadcast an appeal for surrender once more. One man, a medical officer attached to the Japanese 24th Division, responded. Raked by Japanese gunfire, he swam out to the LCI and clambered aboard. Then he grabbed the bullhorn and began calling on the others to give up. Only a few heeded his words. So when Slaughter and Komesu made a third trip back to the beach the next day, they told those remaining ashore that they were trapped between the sea and the Marines above them. This time the call to surrender—and life—worked—before the fighting started. In the ensuing operation, the Marines took several hundred prisoners of war and civilians, with only nominal casualties to themselves. It took three tries, but the Boulder

124. Cameron, *American Samurai*, 178.

125. Spiegel memoir, 90–92; Spiegel interview.

Marine had accomplished both his military mission and a humanitarian one.¹²⁶

The Marine Japanese language officers' accomplishments on Okinawa were truly remarkable and greatly valued by their fellow Marines. As one battalion commander who had only one interpreter in his unit put it, "I could have used at least three Japanese language men."¹²⁷ The Marine combat interpreters blended hunter-killer instincts with humanitarian impulses in ways that definitely served the needs of the immediate combat situation.¹²⁸ They saved Okinawan civilian lives, turned locals into valuable guides and fellow combatants, and took risks to get more prisoners before, rather than after, the fighting. Their efforts help explain why after it stopped, more Japanese soldiers than ever before surrendered.¹²⁹

But what Marine Japanese language officers did on Okinawa also had significance beyond the battle itself. They met its challenges and were changed by it. Fearful of their linguistic competence at its outset, they emerged more confident than ever from it. Forced by circumstance to deal with thousands of Okinawan civilians, they had to expand their vocabularies and take on new humanitarian tasks. What they did on Okinawa also demonstrated that they could be effective leaders of men whose outlook on the enemy was very different from their own. What they experienced and achieved on Okinawa prepared the Boulder Marine Japanese language officers to become point men for peace in August 1945 when they accompanied the first American forces to land in Japan proper.

126. Slaughter to Uehara, 12 March 1989; Uehara *Okinawa taimusu* articles, 6–7 July 1989, Slaughter Papers.

127. Third Battalion, 22nd Regiment, 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, 4 May 1945, Box 225, USMC Geographic File.

128. Lieutenant Hart H. Spiegel's citation for the Bronze Star medal captured the essence of their actions, noting that he had led "patrols into enemy-held caves in an effort to convince the Japanese troops to surrender . . . obtained information to the division and the higher echelons . . . and led numerous patrols to search for helpless civilians and, despite enemy fire, . . . led them to safety." Spiegel Bronze Star citation, Spiegel memoir, appendix.

129. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide*, 443; Belote, *Typhoon of Steel*, 315–17; Roy E. Appleman et al., *The War in the Pacific: Okinawa: The Last Battle*, in *The United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Center of Military History of the United States Army, 1948), 465–68; Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 71.

Conclusion

What they did in Japan is a story for another day.¹³⁰ Suffice it to say that they functioned, in the earliest days of occupation, so as to smooth the way for what became the American naval and Marine presence in Japan that continues to this day. Later some Boulder Marines would become attachés in Japan, while others, as businessmen, journalists, or academics, devoted their professional lives to strengthening ties of friendship and cooperation with their onetime enemy.

The story of Marine Japanese language officers in the Pacific War reveals a great deal, however, about the uses of language in war more generally. The Corps's early efforts to create its own Japanese programs demonstrated that language expertise cannot be improvised. Nor does it emerge, as the Boulder Marines' experience revealed, solely from what is taught in the classroom. What is implanted there can only grow and blossom into a combat-useful skill with time and experience.

Learning the language of an enemy sensitizes and in some ways sets those who claim to speak it apart from their civilian and military peers. World War II-era Marine Japanese language officers became more empathetic to their foes as human beings, and that attitude sometimes set them at odds with their military seniors and juniors alike. That meant that they had to function not just as translators but also as cross-cultural communicators—to Americans as well as to Japanese. Taking on that function demanded then, and requires now, character, courage, and a penchant for improvisation and innovation, not just technical command of a foreign tongue.

That is true because military organizations and their leaders, by virtue of their singular focus on preparing for, and succeeding in, combat, can be slow to recognize the value of linguistic skills. Marines planned for and rehearsed amphibious assaults in the Pacific during the decade before Pearl Harbor but had precious few Japanese speakers among them. General Alexander Vandegrift was prescient in advocating the development of Japanese language skills within the Corps, but when he first confronted the foe on Guadalcanal he had no clear idea of how best to use Sherwood Moran, the one truly competent interpreter at his disposal. Fledgling Boulder Marine combat interpreters and translators had to struggle, early in the war, to get time off from other duties or time away, during lulls between combat, to hone their linguistic skills through prisoner of war interrogations. Not until the Marianas campaign of 1944 did after action reports begin to acknowledge the importance and contributions of the Boulder-trained combat interpreters.

130. Charles R. Smith, *Securing the Surrender: Marines in the Occupation of Japan* (Washington: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1997), details the operations in which Boulder Marines took part.

As their experience so well demonstrated, the actual uses of language and functions of the interpreter-translator in combat do not necessarily conform to preconceptions of what will occur in war. The young men who decided to become Marines at Boulder thought their skills were most likely to be demanded to interrogate enemy combatants and read what they wrote. But over time they functioned less as intelligence gatherers than as battlefield sweepers who located enemy soldiers and civilians, removed them from the scene of combat, and transformed some into aides in the pursuit of victory. Becoming life savers, and not simply aids to life takers, required a breadth of command of the enemy's tongue that stretched far beyond familiarity with military and naval Japanese.

That process, which this essay has described, points to a last lesson about the uses of language in war. What does not exist beforehand cannot be suddenly developed and deployed once war begins. The classroom and language lab are vital precursors to combat. What happens within them must be supplemented by knowledge and understanding that can only be gained through war itself. But on-the-job training can only succeed, as the Boulder Marine Japanese language officers' story demonstrates, if the combat interpreter comes to the field with a solid grounding in the language of the enemy.

For that reason, the armed forces must provide and support language training both in their own specialized schools and in colleges and universities as the Department of Defense now does through the Foreign Language Area Studies program. Such support must continue in peace and war, in times of budgetary penury as well as those of plenty. Tongues, no less than brains and muscles or ships, planes, and tanks, are essential weapons of war.

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