Richard W. (Dick) Petree
OLS 2/1/45-1924-2015

The founding president of the U.S.-Japan Foundation and a former U.S. diplomat in Japan, Richard W. (Dick) Petree died Feb. 8 at a hospital in Stamford, Connecticut. He was 90 years old.

After service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Petree earned a master’s degree in East Asian studies at Harvard University and entered the U.S. Foreign Service.

A skilled Japanese linguist, his diplomatic career included postings as political counselor in the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, consul general in Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, and consul in Fukuoka.

After serving as political counselor in the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Petree was nominated by President Jimmy Carter to serve as deputy U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations for Security and Political Affairs, with the rank of ambassador. He held that post from 1976 to 1981.

After retiring from the diplomatic corps, he was the founding president of the U.S.-Japan Foundation from 1981 to 1988.

Petree was also a longtime member of the Council On Foreign Relations.

Born in Jamestown, New York, in 1924, he was the son of Noel H. and Merle (Wilson) Petree.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia, son Richard Jr., daughter Susan and son Daniel. Following interment in Boulder, Colorado, a memorial service in Stamford is planned for early April.

Elizabeth McKinnon Carr
Sensei, 1918-2013

In 1941, as war loomed between Japan and the U.S., Elizabeth and her sister, American citizens, left Japan at their parents' insistence to live with their aunt in Massachusetts.

Elizabeth taught Japanese at the Navy language schools at Harvard and in the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, returning in 1943 to Harvard's Yenching Institute to continue teaching Japanese with her mentor, Serge Eliseeff. The picture here was her favorite photo, which she had taken in celebration when the war between her two beloved home countries came to an end.

In 1947, Elizabeth moved to Berkeley to be in charge of Japanese materials at the East Asian Library (now C. V. Starr East Asian Library) at the University of California. As the first person hired by its founding director, Elizabeth Huff, she was part of the pioneering team that developed the library into one of the most important collections of Asian books and documents in the U.S. Her largest project was the acquisition of the Mitsui Collection of Japanese and Korean materials.

In 1951, she married Professor Denzel Carr of the Oriental Languages Department at U.C. Berkeley. They had one daughter, born in 1954. Elizabeth left the library to devote herself to her family, though she later returned to teaching Japanese occasionally at the U.C. Extension School.

Her interests included art, music, Japanese history, museum visits, and travel. In later years, after the death of her husband, she found solace and a new joy in the garden, a hobby shared with her daughter. Her two greatest loves were family and teaching.

She leaves behind her daughter, Helen Sorayya Carr of El Cerrito, California; her sister and brother-in-law, Lincolna and Joseph Guillfoile, their sons Richard, David, Bruce, and Paul, and their extended families, mostly in Tokyo; and the children of her deceased brother Richard McKinnon, Patricia, Rick, Jonathan, and Christine and their families in Seattle.

Donald L. Bowers
OLS (Russo) 1945

Donald L. Bowers, former chief of the Fallon Eagle. Bowers, a native of Fallon, had served in the Navy during World War II and following the war edited an English-language magazine in Russia. While maintaining much of the look established by Gruelich, Bowers made subtle changes. He introduced shorter articles, modern page designs, a new masthead, and features about events and historical Nevada characters like Mark Twain and Hank Monk.

“Don knew a lot about magazines,” recalled veteran Nevada journalist Guy Shipler, who contributed to the magazine during Bower’s tenure. “My recollection is that he was a good editor.

I think he was more responsible than anyone else for turning the magazine from a highway brochure to an honest-to-god magazine.”

Shipler and others describe Bowers as a free-thinking intellectual who was well read, well travelled, and well connected.

“He seemed to know everyone in the state,” recalled David Moore, Nevada Magazine’s current editor, who was hired by Bowers in the early 1970s as a circulation gofer. “He really liked traveling around the state, particularly to places like Austin and Eureka.”

In 1964, Bowers introduced his most sweeping changes. He persuaded the legislature to allow him to convert the free publication into one with a paid circulation, advertising and national distribution. The first issue of the new Nevada
Prescott H. Currier
Captain USN
OLS (Russian) 1946
1912-1994

Prescott H. Currier was born in Holbrook, MA in 1912 and enlisted in the Navy in 1929. He attended On-The-Roof-Gang training in Washington, DC, graduating with class number 8 in 1932.

He served in the Far East and in Washington as an enlisted man and after four years of service received a discharge. He then received an A.B. in Romance Languages at George Washington University, and was commissioned in the Naval Reserve as an ensign in 1936. Promoted to LTJG in 1940, he was called to active duty the same year.

In January 1941, LTJG Currier, USNR, together with LT Robert B. Weeks, USN, and Army representatives Abraham Sinkov and Leo Rosen, delivered American built cryptographic devices to England. This included two copies of the PURPLE machine. In reciprocity they were supplied by the British with some information about the German ENIGMA system, and were provided modern direction finding equipment.

Although not mentioned in this biography, Currier attended the USN OLS (Russian) Program at the University of Colorado, entering in November 30, 1945, presumably completing the course in June 1946. By November 1945, there seemed to have been different fish to fry.

Currier was the second Officer in Charge at Kamiselya, Japan, with duty from 1952-1954. He had also been stationed in the Philippines, at the Naval Security Group Headquarters, at ONI, at Arlington Hall Station with the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), as Assistant Naval Attaché in London, and at the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland.

The "On the Roof Gang" was a school for radio-men and cryptologists who would go on to deploy on ships and at overseas bases and monitor foreign communications to monitor the movements, operations and intercept the message traffic of foreign navies.

In 1928 the Chief of Naval Operations understood that a group of formally trained operators was needed in the Pacific Fleet to monitor Japanese naval communications. There existed a small cadre of self-taught operators in the Pacific theater, and two of them were selected to become instructors in the "On-the-Roof-Gang". Chief Radioman Harry Kidder and Chief Radioman Dorman Chuancey instructed the early classes.

Initial graduates were sent to ground stations in the Pacific to monitor the Japanese. Later the cryptologists eventually began to serve on board ships.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_roof_gang

LT Aloysius Soden
To
Sister Rita Martin

CINCPAC Adv. Hq., Box 18
FPC. San Fran.
4 Sept.[1945]

Dear Sister Rita Martin:
(In script J)
Yes, I have some news for you — and rather interesting too! On Friday at 1000 Aug 31, I was informed that I was to serve as the personal interpreter to Admiral Murray, the Commander of the Marianas, in his official function as representative of the United States Navy and of the United States Government, at the signing of the surrender terms of the Japanese garrison of Truk atoll. Truk was the headquarters of the 31st Japanese Army which numbered about 90,000 men spread out through the Caroline Islands in the Marshals, and also the headquarters of the 4th fleet, a Japanese Naval command with bases at Truk and at some of the other Carolines, and also the seat of the South Seas government, Eastern Division, the Japanese civil government for the South Sea Islands. If you look at a map, you will get an idea of the vast area covered and of the number of islands in the jurisdiction of Truk. Please do look at a map — otherwise you will have no clear idea of the importance of the surrender ceremony. In short such a surrender meant the transfer of all the Japanese mandated islands to the sovereignty of the United States.

Well, I was chosen for such a signal honor because I happened to be attached temporarily to Commander Marianas. And I was given short notice too. I was informed at 1000 Friday and at 1500 I along with the Staff of the Admiral boarded the small boat which was to take us out to the heavy cruiser Portland anchored off the Orote Harbor here on Guam. The Portland was to be the Admiral's flagship for the occasion, and it was escorted by three destroyers. The Portland is a fine ship launched in 1932 — a beautiful ship, I should say, and speedy — capable of almost 30 knots. I must not stop on details or I would spend too much time. Suffice it to say that the trip from Guam to Truk was most enjoyable. The sea was smooth and the ship rode well. The food was excellent — warships have better food than shore bases, they set priorities, and justly so. At last long — but really very soon — we heaved into sight of our goal, Truk, the mythical Pearl Harbor of Japan a huge atoll with a surrounding reef and interspersed coral islands enclosing a vast lagoon some 40 miles long and twice as wide in which are some ten fair-sized islands most important of which are Dublon, Moon [Moen], Eton [Eten], Faram [Param or Fefan], etc. On these interior islands the Japanese had their garrisons and their batteries both shore and anti-aircraft. It was 0600 when we anchored about one mile outside the reef on the south side of the atoll on Sunday, 2 September. The Japanese envos were expected on board at 1000; and the crew of the ship had been instructed just as how to behave. As many as possible were to wear whites. Strict silence was to be maintained during the signing ceremony; and all were to have serious, passive faces — no smiles or hilarity — we wanted to impress the Japanese with the idea that we Americans realize the seriousness of the war, that we remembered our own dead, that we still were mindful of the
treachery that started the war at Pearl Harbor. And glad to say, these injunctions were well observed — I was proud of the US Navy, very proud.

Personally I was rigged out in borrowed whites, borrowed shoes and other borrowed items — I had left all my whites at Pearl Harbor. I happened to borrow these from someone — fortunately who was about my size — and so I feel I cut not too bad a figure [see #75a for story about whites]. I had stayed up the previous night translating two speeches that the Admiral was to give. My job was to translate his words into Japanese and to render the words of the Japanese envoys into English.

At 1000 the gig with the Japanese envoys pulled up alongside out cruiser, and up the gangway came the delegation. First on board was the commanding office of the 31st Army, Lt. Gen. Mugikura, a short wisp of a man, about five feet; after him came Admiral Hara, Commander of 4th Fleet, a middle-size stoutish man; then came Mr. Abara, head of the Eastern French, South Seas Govt.; after him came the Chief of Staff for the 31st Army and the 4th Fleet and last came two aides-de-camp.

It was my duty to be at the top of the gangway to receive the delegation along with the Flag Lieutenant of the Admiral Murray and to escort them to the Captain's cabin where preliminary negotiations were to be carried on. In the meanwhile the members of the crew of the Portland were looking on from various points of vantage — but with serious faces and in silence. After the envoys had entered the cabin and were still standing, Admiral Murray entered. He took a seat with a very serious mien and proceeded in a very business-like fashion to speak to the three envoys who were to sign. They had in the meanwhile been seated opposite him. It was then my duty to translate what the Admiral had to say sentence for sentence.

The envoys were then identified and had their pictures taken. They were then given the terms of the surrender which they would be required to sign. In the meanwhile I was called upon to translate back and forth — and I was nervous. I tell you; but I tried my best to be calm and cool and believe succeeded to an extent. I had some difficulty now and then to catch what they (were) saying, but managed on the whole to get most.

The whole thing was most impressive, I assure you. The Admiral Murray I took the one chair on the aft side of the table,
Aibara was also of the dejected type — not as bad as the General — And may be a possible prospect for hara-kiri. Both of the Chiefs-of-Staff looked healthy and normal, as did the Aides-d’-camp — they may live. When was in Japan, I saw their military in the height of their power and their pride; now I may say that I have seen how they handle defeat — and I presume to say that I have seen a man on the verge of hara-kiri. At the moment that I write this letter, I have no news as to the hara-kiri of the General, but I have a premonition. Well, so I have written another page in my reminiscences.

I am sorry that I can as yet give you no details as to the ultimate disposition of myself — because I do not know. Some of you have written that you would not like me to return to Japan — I am of your idea also — but as you know, the Navy does not regard likes and dislikes, desires and the opposite. If I am told to go, I’ll go without too much complaining — but I shall not ask for it. I realize what the condition of the country is at this moment — and I should like to stay away from it. If it were probable that I could be in a position to help our Brothers over there — and they most probably need help at present — I should glad go because I know that I should have to remain for only a relatively short time. However brushing up against real facts in the armed services has assured me that such a thing would not be easily done and that I probably would be in a position where I could render no help. Therefore I should much prefer to return to the States and to get back to teaching as soon as possible.

I hope that you are well and happy. Thank God that the war is over at last and that we shall soon be reunited — at least sooner than we expected some months ago when all looked dark and unsettled. I am very ready for a long stay at home and with my loved ones, I assure you. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder". Take care of yourself — and please pray for me — the armed services hardly makes a man more spiritual.

Your loving brother in (J.M.J.)

Allegories (in script I)

Letter provided by
Kevin Mattessich
Great Nephew of
Aloysius Soden
JLS/1943
LT USNR
Brother, Society of Mary

[Ed. Note: Mr. Mattessich allowed me to post this remarkable firsthand account of the surrender of Imperial Japanese military forces on Truk on the USS Portland in 1945. I found photos depicting the very scenes described by LT Soden on a US Navy Historical Center website on the Truk Surrender.]

G. LAIMONT RICHARDS
USN JLS/OLS STAFF
(1918-2012)

George LaMont Richards, Sr. January 17, 1918 - July 31, 2012
George LaMont Richards, 94, peacefully passed away Tuesday, July 31, 2012 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the last surviving child of LeGrand and Ina Jane Ashton Richards. As a family, they are once again fully united in a grand reunion.

LaMont graduated from the University of Utah and continued his education at the University of Colorado in Boulder and Northwestern University in Chicago. During World War II, he served his country as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy. He was assigned to a Naval Intelligence Unit in San Francisco and then to the staff of the U.S. Navy Japanese School in Boulder, Colorado. Following his graduation from Midshipman School in Chicago, he was assigned to Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

LaMont had a distinguished Business and civic career. For 36 years, he was president and founder of Western Supply Company. As a respected member of the business community, he served as Chairman of the Board of Merchants Inc., President of Intermountain Electrical Association, and President of the Utah Council of Retailers and Wholesalers. In 1986, he was a Congressional Appointee and Delegate to a White House conference on small business.

Always concerned for the welfare of his community, he served with distinction for 14 continuous years in the Utah State Legislature. During that period, he was Chair of the House Higher Education Appropriation Committee and Chair of the Judicial, Legislative, and Executive Appropriation Committee. He also served as a member of the Constitutional Revision Committee, Business and Labor Standing Committee, and Rules Committee. Following his service in the legislature, he was appointed to the Institutional Council at Dixie College.

His service to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reflected his commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. First and foremost he was a missionary at heart. His missionary service began early, serving first at the age of 16 as his father presided over the Southern States Mission. At 19, he served in the British Mission and in the southern United States. This laid the foundation for numerous Church callings, including branch president in Boulder, Colorado and counselor in the bishopric of the University Ward in Salt Lake City. He also served as a member of the General Board of the MIA for 13 years, as a member of the Priesthood Missionary Committee and as Chairman of the Explorer Committee, BSA. Also, as a Regional Representative of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he fulfilled assignments in Oregon, Washington, Ogden, and BYU Provo stakes. He enjoyed many years as an ordinance worker in the Salt Lake Temple. He also compiled a set of his father’s talks which were published under the title: LeGrand Richards Speaks.

LaMont and his wife Edna Fae Firmage were married on September 9, 1941 in the Salt Lake Temple by his grandfather, George F. Richards. They spent almost 71 years together.

LaMont loved to travel and has visited numerous countries around the globe. His travel

SDonations Accepted

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Recent Losses:

Deseret News
August 3, 2012

[Ed. Note: We have very few USN JLS/OLS Staff obituaries. Yeoman George L. Richards was listed in the CU Student Directory as enlisted staff at the Naval Training School (Radio) from 1942-1944. His office was in the Field House and he lived at 840 12th Street. It would not have been unusual for junior staff to have filled in as needed at other Navy schools on the University of Colorado Campus.]