

Masthead Logo

---

Archives Alive

---

10-6-2014

# The Serb and the Fox

Girindra Selleck  
*University of Iowa*

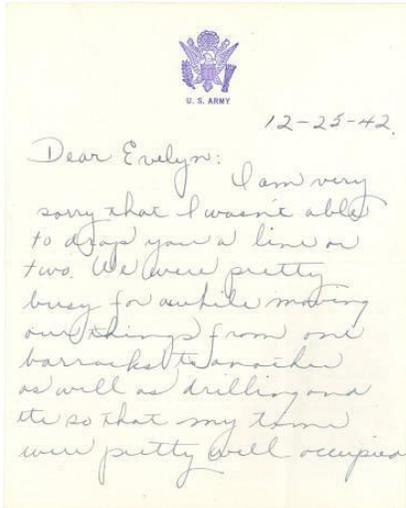
---

Copyright © 2014 Girindra Selleck

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#). For more information please contact: [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

# Richard Hayashi to Evelyn - December 25, 1942

## Rhetorical:

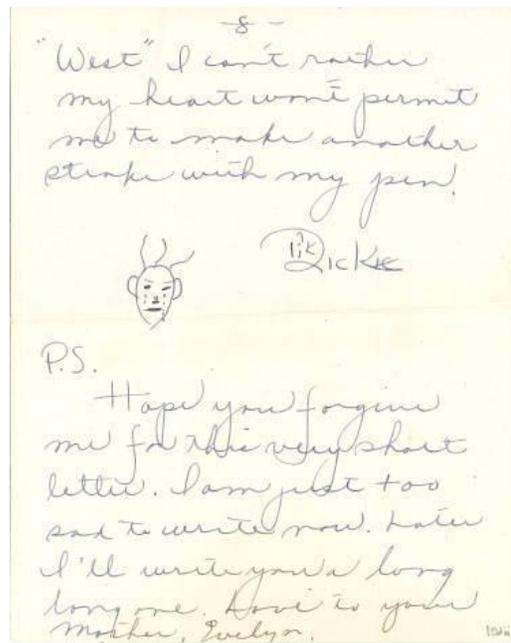


This letter from a Japanese-American language student studying at Camp Savage during World War II to his friend Evelyn conversationally outlines the important things that have happened since he last wrote to Evelyn. His writing contains little transition between his ideas, rapidly moving from his graduation from language school to the state of Evelyn's mother, to his friend in Canada, to his

friend who recently died in the Pacific theater in somewhat of a stream of consciousness style. Throughout the letter Hayashi uses phrases that would have been typical to the time period. He asks after Evelyn's mother, despite having never met her, hoping that she is "in the pink". Later he refers to his classmate going "West" when he died in battle. Toward the end of the letter, his sadness and depth of feeling over his friend's death is clearly evident.

Hayashi mentions many patriotic sentiments as he explains his mixed emotions about his friend's death. While Hayashi is sad that his friend has died, he is also glad that his friend gave his life for his country, one that "gave him everything". This reference to the wealth of opportunities and values that his friend died fighting for is notable. Hayashi even grows slightly profound in his musings that "some day people will understand why there is war", though he does not elaborate on his own opinions of why there is war, or whether he supports it. His high opinion of his friend is even clearer in his statement about how his friend "joined the ranks of many eternal heroes".

However, Hayashi lightheartedly remembers his friend’s cheerful disposition and roly-polyness. He ends the letter saying that he can not write any more after discussing the sad event because “[his] heart won't permit [him] to make another stroke with [his] pen”. The juxtaposition of his cheerful wishes that Evelyn’s mother is “in the pink” and his writing about his classmate dying in the Pacific theater show an interesting range of emotions. Though the first half of the letter is light and conversational, it grows abruptly darker with the news of his friend’s death, arguably the most important news of the letter, despite Hayashi’s statement earlier that his graduation from Camp Savage was the “most important and vital thing”. He signs the letter with a somewhat bittersweet sad face. Though it is there to represent Richard’s sadness, it has a somewhat ridiculously laughable look too. The presence of a face at all after this tragic news is somewhat surprisingly in its lack of somberness, but the face with its crazy hair seems especially uncharacteristic for the content. Perhaps it represents an attempt to lighten the mood for both Evelyn and himself after his sad news, or of Hayashi’s humorous personality and positive outlook despite the sadness and hardships around him.



### Historical:

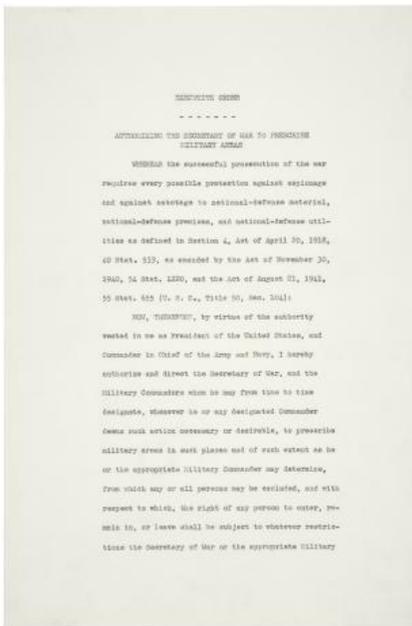
Richard K Hayashi, the writer of this letter mentions his attendance, and graduation, from Camp Savage language school in

Minnesota. Camp Savage was a language school designed to teach second generation

Japanese Americans (Nisei) to help with interpretation and translation during WWII. Though many students were recruited



from Japanese internment camps and welcomed the chance to leave the conditions there, Hayashi was transferred from a training camp in Missouri. The first Japanese language school was in San Francisco, and was called the Fourth Army Intelligence School. Of the 60 students who enrolled at the school on November 1, 1941, only 45 graduated in May of 1942 due to the difficulty of the courses.



After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Roosevelt passed Executive Order 9066, which allowed certain areas to be declared military areas, forcing many Japanese Americans into internment camps. Though the school was associated with the military, sparing its students from internment, the increased racism toward Japanese Americans, especially those on the West Coast, caused the school to be moved to Savage, Minnesota in June of 1942. There it was declared the first official MISLS (Military Intelligence Service Language

School), and subsequent classes were held. The curriculum focused on reading and writing of Japanese, with an emphasis on understanding Japanese military terminology, military codes, and Japanese law and culture. Additionally, students had to learn interrogation and interception techniques, as well as complicated

and especially difficult Japanese letter writing style, as well as complicated cursive writing. Often students studied late into the night even after their long hours of classes. The only buildings that remained lit were the bathrooms, so often there would be many students studying there late into the night. Richard Hayashi was part of the first class of 156 students to be taught at Camp Savage, Minnesota in the first academic term from June 1942 to his graduation on December 1, 1942. Unlike many of the other students, who, though they were of Japanese descent knew little to no Japanese, Richard Hayashi had had 11 years of Japanese language training already before he was transferred from Camp Crowder, Missouri to Camp Savage in 1942.

At the time this letter was written Hayashi was unsure when or where he or any of his other fellow graduates would be sent overseas. He estimated that he would stay in the United States for at least a few months. After graduating from Camp Savage Richard Hayashi spent six months as part of a language team in the South Pacific, before returning to the US. Hayashi stayed in the US for some time, and was trained for officer candidate school, and was later sent to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a mostly Japanese American unit, in Italy in 1944. He was a platoon leader in the 442nd as well as the first Nisei to fight in both the Pacific and Europe.

Written By: Grace Coleman

TABLE 1—SUMMARY OF STUDENT PERSONNEL FOR MISLS ACADEMIC TERMS NOVEMBER 1941—FEBRUARY 1944\*

Academic Term	Students Entered		Students Relieved*		Students Graduated			
	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Date	Enlisted	Date
Provisional (6th Army)	18 <sup>1</sup> (4 AEA) (2 ACA)	40	4	15	2	1 May 42	45	1 May 42
Jan 42	22 <sup>2</sup> (14 AEA) (2 ACA)	146 (10 AEA) (1 ACA)	0	4	22	1 Dec 42	149	1 Dec 42
Dec 42								
					2	19 Apr 43	2	18 Jan 43
					1	24 Apr 43	2	23 Mar 43
					61	18 Jun 43	61	10 Apr 43
					12		1	15 Apr 43
							1	30 May 43
							229	18 Jan 43
							396	
Jul 43	22 <sup>2</sup> (2 AEA) (2 ACA)	733 (53 AEA) (50 ACA)	12	76	8	15 Jan 44	337	15 Jan 44
					2	23 Mar 44	238	23 Mar 44
					10		51	10 Aug 44
							2	28 Sep 44
							2	18 Nov 44
							677	
Feb 44	7 (1 ACA)	683 (14 AEA) (18 ACA)	1	140	1	10 Jan 44	5	25 Mar 44
					4	10 Aug 44	8	19 May 44
							10	10 Aug 44
					1	29 Sep 44	1	22 Aug 44
					6		4	7 Sep 44
							10	29 Sep 44
							1	9 Oct 44
							3	10 Oct 44
							379	18 Nov 44
							45	17 Feb 45
							543	
Feb 44 DCS	3 (2 AEA) (1 ACA)	107	0	0	3	10 Aug 44	107	10 Aug 44

ACA - American of Chinese Ancestry  
AEA - American of European Ancestry  
Source: MISLS, "Training History of the Military Intelligence Service Language School," pp. 16-18, Unpubl Ms, 1946, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH).

## References:

"Hennepin County Library." *Hennepin County Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

<<http://hclib.tumblr.com/post/75074828981/the-many-faces-of-camp-savage-c...>>

McNaughton, James C.. *Nisei linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II*. Washington, DC: Dept. of the Army :, 2006. Print.

"Military Intelligence Service Language School." *Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

<[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Military\\_Intelligence\\_Service\\_Language\\_Sc...](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Military_Intelligence_Service_Language_Sc...)>

"Today's Document from the National Archives." *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

<<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=219>>.

United States. National Park Service. "Military Intelligence School at the Presidio." *National Parks Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, 8 Feb. 2014. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

<<http://www.nps.gov/prsf/historyculture/military-intelligence-school.htm>>.

United States. National Park Service. "Fort Snelling: Breaking the Code." *National Parks Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, 26 Feb. 2014. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

<<http://www.nps.gov/miss/historyculture/langschool.htm>>.

