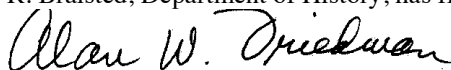


DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
WILLIAM R. BRAISTED**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Professor Emeritus William R. Braisted, Department of History, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**IN MEMORIAM
WILLIAM R. BRAISTED**

William “Bill” Braisted—the son of a US Navy Admiral—was a distinguished historian of Asia and of the United States Navy. Born March 14, 1918, he spent much of his boyhood in Shanghai, where his father commanded the fast combat ship *USS Sacramento*. He received his B.A. from Stanford University in 1939, his M.A. from the University of Chicago in 1940, and his Ph.D., also from the University of Chicago, in 1950. Beginning his career at the University of Texas as an Instructor in 1942, he served for forty-six years, retiring in 1988 after having achieved one of the longest teaching records in the Department of History.

During World War II, he attended the Naval Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado, and subsequently served in the Military Intelligence Service in the War Department. He was promoted to Assistant Professor at the University of Texas in 1950, to Associate Professor in 1958, and to Professor in 1966. In 1976-77, he was Visiting Professor in Naval History at the US Naval Academy, and in 1988-89, he was the Secretary of the Navy’s Distinguished Professor of History at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, DC. He gave the impression of being shy, even diffident, but he held sharp views on national and world affairs as well as on the University of Texas and his colleagues. His students responded to him with affectionate admiration.

Having spent the early part of his career with a teaching load of twelve hours, and having had to prepare four different classes divided between Asian and European history, he was later amused that younger colleagues sometimes complained at having far lighter schedules than he had endured. In his later years, he was the only person in the Department of History who could recall the colorful personalities of the 1940s, when Garrison Hall was occupied by Government, Sociology, and Economics as well as History. Foremost in his memory were Oliver Radkey, a Texan with a Ph.D. from Harvard teaching Russian history, and Joe Franz, who interviewed hundreds of people for the LBJ Oral History Project and whose contract to write a history of UT Austin was cancelled because, in Braisted’s opinion, it was too “candid.” He admired the most prominent historian of the time, Walter Prescott Webb, the first historian west of the Mississippi to become President of the American Historical Association. Beginning in 1975, Braisted attended the British Studies seminar meetings every Friday afternoon, “very much,” as he put it, “as others attend church services every Sunday.”

At the University of Texas, Braisted was the first to organize and offer undergraduate courses in Chinese and Japanese history as well as graduate seminars in East Asian history. He was delighted when Gail Minault arrived in 1972 to strengthen Asian history by teaching courses on India. His principal works are *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909* (1958), and the sequel, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (1971). Both volumes are regarded as definitive and both remain indispensable reference sources for their balanced interpretation and fair-minded judgment. His research on naval history was based mainly on US naval records, then still located at the National Archives on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, where he spent summer vacations immersed in documents and pounding away on a vintage typewriter. He described his research career as “a tug-of-war” between his competing ambitions “to become an East Asian scholar and to publish in naval history.” In his research on Japanese history, he described himself as “an inveterate reader of microfilms.” In

1976, he published *Meiroku Zasshi: Journal of the Japanese Enlightenment* (his own translation from the Japanese with introduction and notes). In 1988, the Emperor Hirohito of Japan appointed him to the Order of the Sacred Treasure—created in 1888 by Emperor Meiji as an elite award symbolized by his personal sword—for distinguished historical scholarship.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Wm. Roger Louis (Chair), Gail Minault, and Robert Hardgrave, Jr.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts on September 4, 2018, and posted under “Memorial Resolutions” at <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/facultycouncil/Wiki+Home>.