

A VITAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATION THAT
SAVED LIVES AND HELPED WIN THE WAR

Minnesota's
Remarkable

SECRET

SCHOOL for LANGUAGE

*Learn the unique story
of the U.S. Army's
Military Intelligence Service*



During World War II, nearly 6,000 Japanese American servicemen received intensive and accelerated training in the Japanese military language at the MIS Language School at Minnesota's Camp Savage and Fort Snelling. MIS soldiers participated in every major campaign in the Pacific.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
PREFACE.....	5
INTRODUCTION	6
CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES.....	7
BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS.....	8
UNITED STATES ARMY’S MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE TIMELINE	8
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	11
LESSON 1: MIS BACKGROUND AND HISTORY	11
LESSON 2: MIS LANGUAGE SCHOOL TRAINING	11
LESSON 3: JAPANESE LANGUAGE	12
LESSON 4: MIS SOLDIERS AS INTERROGATORS.....	12
LESSON 5: AREAS WHERE THE MIS SERVED (MAP LESSON)	13
ACTIVITY CARD 1.....	14
UNITED STATES ARMY MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY	15
MIS VOCABULARY WORDS	19
MIS WORD SEARCH.....	20
ACTIVITY CARD 2.....	21
HARRY T. UMEDA.....	22
DRAFT, PEARL HARBOR, AND TRAINING.....	22
MIS DUTY.....	22
DISCHARGE AND POST DUTY LIFE	25
TOSHIO WILLIAM ABE	26
EARLY MILITARY TRAINING	26
ARRIVAL AT CAMP SAVAGE	27
CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER	27
GEORGE SUZUKI.....	30
DRAFT AND TRAINING.....	30
FROM INTERNMENT CAMP TO COLLEGE TO U.S. ARMY.....	31
MIS ACTIVE SERVICE	31
EDWIN M. (BUD) NAKASONE.....	32
DUTY IN OCCUPIED JAPAN	32

BILL DOI.....	34
THOUGHTS ON BEING INCARCERATED	34
FROM INTERNMENT CAMP TO U.S. ARMY	34
TRAINING AT CAMP SAVAGE.....	35
CHITO ISONAGA	36
CALL TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WAC	36
TRAINING AT FORT SNELLING.....	37
SERVICE IN JAPAN	37
ROY H. MATSUMOTO	38
LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE JAPANESE	41
JAPANESE LANGUAGE LESSON.....	43
SOUND CHANGES AND KANA COMBINATIONS.....	44
ACTIVITY CARD #3: READING JAPANESE WORDS BORROWED FROM ENGLISH.....	45
ANSWER KEY FOR ACTIVITY CARD #3	48
ACTIVITY CARD #4.....	52
MIS SOLDIERS AS INTERROGATORS	53
ACTIVITY CARD #5.....	55
ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY CARD #5	58
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
BOOKS.....	59
WEBSITES.....	60
VIDEO CASSETTE TAPES/DVDS.....	61
TEACHERS’ GUIDES.....	61
OTHER RESOURCES	62
APPENDIX A: CAMP SAVAGE TODAY.....	63
APPENDIX B: AMERICA’S SECRET WARRIORS	64

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Twin Cities chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is deeply grateful to the family of the late Toshio William Abe and to George Suzuki for their generous donations, which enabled this project to be carried out.

This Curriculum and Resource Guide was developed by the Twin Cities JACL Education Committee: Sally Sudo (chair), Sylvia Farrells, Susan Fink, Lillian Grothe, Cheryl Hirata-Dulas, Lucy Kirihara, Kathy Ohama Koch, Gloria Kumagai, and Rachel Matsumoto, with the assistance of other volunteers, including Edwin (Bud) Nakasone. Others who contributed to the 2013 revision include Janet Maeda Carlson, Carolyn Nakasone, and Matt Walters.

We also acknowledge the following for the use of their materials: Edwin (Bud) Nakasone (president of the Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota and author of *The Nisei Soldier* and *Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota*), Thomas Saylor (interview of Toshio William Abe), James Tanabe (interview of Chito Isonaga), the National Japanese American Historical Society (Brenda Tong and Rosalyn Tonai), MIS Association of Northern California (Ken Iwagaki and Harry Fukuhara), MIS Club of Southern California (Kathy Tanaka and Ken Akune), the Go For Broke Educational Foundation (Teri Kuwahara), the MIS-Northwest Association (Takashi Matsui and Edith Watanabe), the Dan Patch (Savage) Historical Society (Janet Williams), and Tuttle Publishing.

This project is dedicated to the Nisei men and women who, despite the challenges they faced, demonstrated loyalty to their country in serving in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II.

*“The United States of America owes a debt
to these men [Nisei linguists] and to their
families which it can never fully repay.”*

Colonel Sidney Forrester Mashbir
Commandant
Allied Translator & Interpreter Section

PREFACE

In 2012, the Minnesota Legislature approved the Minnesota Department of Education’s Academic Standards in History and Social Studies.¹ These standards were implemented beginning in academic year 2013–2014.

This curriculum and resource guide was developed to help teachers fulfill standard **6.4.4.21.4**. Below is an explanation of this code.

Number	Meaning	Description
6	6 th grade	
4	4 th strand	History
4	4th substrand	United States History
21	21 st history standard	Understand the economic growth, cultural innovation and political apathy of the 1920s ended in the Great Depression which spurred new forms of government intervention and renewed labor activism, followed by World War II and an economic resurgence. (Great Depression and World War II: 1920-1945)
4	4 th benchmark	Identify contributions of Minnesota and its people to World War II; describe the impact of the war on the home front and Minnesota society after the war. (The Great Depression and World War II: 1920- 1945) For example: Fort Snelling, Japanese Language School, SPAM, Iron Range mining and steel production.

The focus of this curriculum and resource guide is the “Fort Snelling Japanese Language School.” The U.S. Army’s Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) was established in 1941 at the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1942, it was moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota, and later to Fort Snelling, both located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

¹ For the complete Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies (February 17, 2012), visit <http://www.education.state.mn.us/mde/>.

INTRODUCTION

The Military Intelligence Service (MIS) has been called “America’s secret weapon in the war against Japan.” Although not well-known due to its highly classified nature, the 6,000 soldiers serving in the MIS, mostly second-generation Americans of Japanese ancestry (Nisei), were given intense and accelerated training in the Japanese language first at the Presidio of San Francisco, then later at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling in Minnesota during World War II.

Shipped overseas in small teams, these soldiers accompanied combat troops in every major landing in the Pacific. They played a key role by translating captured documents, interrogating prisoners of war, and interpreting enemy orders and commands. After the war, MIS soldiers acted as interpreters at war crimes trials and served under General Douglas MacArthur’s occupation force in Japan.

According to General Charles Willoughby, Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence for General MacArthur, “the Nisei shortened the Pacific War by two years and saved possibly a million American lives and saved probably billions of dollars.”

Women were also trained in the Japanese language at Fort Snelling beginning in 1944 as part of the Women’s Army Corps (WAC). Their curriculum was the same as that of the men, but instead of being trained as interpreters and interrogators, they were trained in the written language as translators.

“Never in military history did an army know so much about the enemy prior to actual engagement.”

General Douglas MacArthur
Commander in Chief
Southwest Pacific Area

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

The **objectives** of this curriculum and resource guide are for students to:

1. become aware of the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling in Minnesota;
2. understand the experiences of soldiers who served in the MIS; and
3. understand the unique role of the MIS during World War II.

This Curriculum and Resource Guide is intended for use by teachers of grade 6, but can be adapted for use by others teaching Minnesota History and/or WWII History. Lesson plans and learning activities are included that incorporate important aspects of the MIS's role in World War II.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

UNITED STATES ARMY'S MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE TIMELINE

November 1, 1941—Fourth Army Intelligence School (later renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School, or MISLS) started in an abandoned hangar at Crissy Field, Presidio of San Francisco, California. Japanese language training led by four civilian Japanese American instructors. Initial class had 60 students (58 Nisei, 2 Caucasians).

December 7, 1941—Pearl Harbor attacked; United States entered World War II.

February 19, 1942—President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the War Department to “prescribe military areas from which any or all persons may be excluded.” More than 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry were forcibly removed from the West Coast states and interned; two-thirds were U.S. citizens.

May 1942—First class of 45 students graduated; ten graduates kept as faculty. Other 35 deployed to Southwest Pacific (Guadalcanal) and the Aleutian Islands in small teams attached to American and Allied Forces units needing their services in the Pacific.

May 1942—School moved to Minnesota after Governor Harold Stassen offered Camp Savage, a former Civilian Conservation Camp, and later a home for the indigent. Renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS). There were eventually 21 graduating classes totaling more than 6,000 students.

June 1, 1942—First official MISLS class started at Camp Savage under jurisdiction of the War Department with 18 instructors and 200 enlisted students. Twenty students were placed in a special accelerated class and graduated in Sept. 1942. Excellent combat reports of MISLS graduates coming in from the Aleutian Islands battles and Guadalcanal.

April 1943—Increased need for linguists. Hundreds of Japanese American volunteers recruited from U.S. internment camps and Hawaii.

1943–1945—MISLS graduates served throughout the Pacific, U.S. Zone of the Interior, and Europe, as interpreters, translators, interrogators, psychological warfare specialists, frontline infantrymen, and in the opening phase of the Occupation of Japan. MIS soldiers supported over 135 organizations, serving in the following commands (and battles) in the Pacific War:

- **Alaskan Defense Command:** Adak, Attu, Dutch Harbor, Kiska
- **South Pacific Command:** Bougainville, Espiritu Santo, Fiji, Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, New Georgia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tahiti, Vella Lavella
- **Southwest Pacific Command:** Admiralty, Australia, Borneo, East Indies, Morotai, New Britain, New Guinea, Philippines
- **Central Pacific Command:** Eniwetok, Formosa, Guam, Hawaii, Ie Shima, Iwo Jima, Kwajalein, Makin, Okinawa, Paula, Saipan, Tarawa, Tinian, Truk, Wake
- **Southeast Asia Command:** Burma, China, India, Indo-China, Malay States, Siam, Sumatra
- **European Command:** Versailles, France
- **Continental U.S. Command:** Camp Ritchie, Maryland; Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
- **Canadian Command:** Vancouver, British Columbia, November 1, 1941

August 1944—MISLS moved to Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

November 1944—Fifty-one Women’s Army Corps (WAC) students arrived at Fort Snelling for language training.

May 1945—Surrender of Germany.

August 1945—Surrender of Japan.

January 1946—Thirteen WAC linguists sent to work in the Allied Translator Intelligence Service (ATIS) in Tokyo; others sent to intelligence service at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, and other bases in the U.S.

August 1945–April 1952—More than 5,000 MIS graduates served during the Occupation of Japan, in areas of military government, disarmament, civil affairs, education, and intelligence.

December 1945—1948—MIS linguists provided translation and interpreter services for the war crimes tribunals and trials.

June 1946—Twenty-first and final MISLS class graduated from Fort Snelling.

July 1946—MISLS moved to Presidio of Monterey, California. Renamed the U.S. Army Language School.

April 2000—MIS awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

For more detailed information about the MIS, see the article in the appendix: "American's Secret Warriors".

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LESSON 1: MIS BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Objectives

- To learn about the background and history of the Military Intelligence Service and Language School.
- To learn vocabulary words related to the MIS and Language School.

Materials

- Activity Card #1
- MIS Background and History handout
- MIS Vocabulary Words
- MIS Word Search
- Answer Key for MIS Word Search

Methods

- Students will read the MIS Background and History handout.
- Students will answer questions on Activity Card #1.
- Students will find the vocabulary words from the definitions provided on the MIS Word Search

LESSON 2: MIS LANGUAGE SCHOOL TRAINING

Objectives

- To learn about the experiences of students at the MISLS at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling during World War II.

Materials

- Activity Card #2
- Biographies of MIS veterans and WAC student

Methods

- After reading one or more biographies, students will complete writing assignment(s) on Activity Card #2.

LESSON 3: JAPANESE LANGUAGE

Objectives

- To appreciate the challenges that the MIS soldiers had in translating from Japanese to English, and from English to Japanese.

Materials

- Learning to Read and Write Japanese
- Katakana Chart
- Sound Changes and Kana Combinations
- Activity Card #3 - Reading Words in Japanese
- Answer Key - Reading Words in Japanese

Methods

- Review with the handout on “Learning to Read and Write Japanese,” emphasizing the types of written languages: two different alphabets (hiragana and katakana) and kanji (picture symbols).
- Review the handout “Reading Words in Japanese,” emphasizing the five vowel sounds, use of katakana for writing foreign words in Japanese (students will need to refer to the “Katakana Chart” and the “Sound Changes and Kana Combinations” chart), breaking down sounds and syllables in a word.
- Students will complete Activity Card #3.

LESSON 4: MIS SOLDIERS AS INTERROGATORS

Objectives

- To understand the MIS soldiers’ role in interrogating Japanese POWs.

Materials

- MIS Background and History handout (from Lesson 1)
- Activity Card #4
- MIS interrogation photographs

Methods

- Students will read the MIS veteran biographies and MIS Background and History handout (refer to Question 5), then answer questions on the Activity Card #4.

LESSON 5: AREAS WHERE THE MIS SERVED (MAP LESSON)

Objectives

- To locate significant areas where the MIS soldiers trained and served during World War II.

Materials

- Activity Card #5--“Areas Where the MIS Served,” and blank map.
- Answer keys for Activity Card #5 and map.
- This lesson will require students have access to a world map or atlas.

Methods

- Discuss areas of the Pacific where the MIS soldiers served.
- Students will locate areas on the map as requested on Activity Card #5 and map.

ACTIVITY CARD 1

Activity #1 **MIS Background and History**

Questions:

1. Name three tasks the MIS students were taught at the language school.
2. Besides Japanese language skills, what other qualities or character traits did the MIS soldiers need? What qualities do you have that would have made you an acceptable student?
3. Why were some MIS volunteers scorned or disowned?
4. What made Minnesota a good place to establish the MISLS?
5. Describe some of the duties an MISLS graduate performed during and after World War II.

UNITED STATES ARMY MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

1. What is the origin of the Military Intelligence Service Language School?

The Fourth Army Intelligence School, later renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (abbreviated MISLS), was established in November 1941, a month before the United States entered World War II. The War Department saw war looming in the Pacific, and recognized the difficulty in facing the Japanese military, having a language that was unfamiliar to the average American Army officer. Japanese officials had boasted that their military documents were safe because Westerners could never learn Japanese, especially the shorthand styles of writing.



SITE OF THE ORIGINAL MIS LANGUAGE SCHOOL AT CRISSY FIELD, PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 1, 1941. COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) John Weckerling, the first language school was started in an old airplane hangar at Crissy Field in the Presidio of San Francisco. Its purpose was to train soldiers to read, write,

and speak Japanese fluently. These linguists would serve as translators, decoders of Japanese military documents, and interrogators of Japanese POWs in case the U.S. went to war with Japan.



MIS VOLUNTEERS FROM GRENADA (AMACHE), COLORADO INTERNMENT CAMP TAKING OATH, 1942. COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

2. How were people recruited for the Military Intelligence Service?

The Army first tried to recruit American Caucasians, but found few qualified in the Japanese language. With the crisis approaching, the War Department

decided to recruit Japanese Americans, known as Nisei. This decision was a gamble for the War Department, but the Nisei proved to be loyal and highly effective.



CAMP SAVAGE, MINNESOTA WINTERS WERE FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE WARMER CLIMATES THAT MOST MIS SOLDIERS CAME FROM.

Initially it was thought that there would be enough Japanese-speaking Nisei that only a few weeks of review and instruction in the Japanese military terminology would be required to make them fit for field duty. After a survey of 3,700 enlisted Nisei, only 3 percent were found to be accomplished in

Japanese. Another four percent were considered “skilled,” and 3 percent could be useful if they underwent prolonged and intensive training. It became evident that a special training school would be required to make the Nisei useful to the armed forces as Japanese linguists.

Kibei were also recruited. However, because of their ties to Japan, they were originally thought by U.S. government officials to be security threats.

In 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, including American citizens, were forcibly removed from the West Coast (all of California and parts of Oregon, Washington, Arizona and the territory of Alaska), and confined in internment camps surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by armed guards. Hundreds of internees were recruited as soldiers for the MIS. Often these volunteers faced the scorn of other internees, and in some cases, were disowned by their pro-Japanese Issei parents.



MISLS STUDENTS STUDYING AT CAMP SAVAGE. FROM: THE MISLS ALBUM, 1946.

Women were also studied at the MISLS. In November 1944, fifty-one WAC students (47 Nisei, 3 Caucasians and 1 Chinese American) reported to Fort Snelling, Minnesota for training.



AT ITS PEAK IN EARLY 1946, FORT SNELLING HOUSED 3,000 MISLS STUDENTS AND 160 INSTRUCTORS. FROM: NAKASONE EM. THE NISEI SOLDIER, 1999.

In total, over 6,000 Nisei served in the MIS during World War II and in the immediate postwar period.

3. Why did the MISLS move to Minnesota?

Due to factors such as the exclusion of persons of Japanese ancestry from the West



MIS SOLDIER, RIGHT FOREGROUND, INTERROGATES A JAPANESE POW, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 1943. U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.

Coast and the need for more and larger spaces, the MISLS moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota. Minnesota was selected after investigation of more than a dozen other locations in the U.S. Governor Harold E. Stassen felt that the people of Minnesota would provide a friendly and accepting atmosphere for the Japanese American soldiers. Colonel Kai E. Rasmussen became the commandant. The first class at Camp Savage began on June 1, 1942, with 200 students and 18 instructors, living and learning in cabins that had been used by the state as homes for indigent men.

4. Why did the MIS Language School move from Camp Savage?

In August 1944, the school outgrew its facilities and had to be expanded. The MISLS moved to nearby Fort Snelling, Minnesota, where it remained until July 1946, almost a year after the war ended. Thereafter, the MISLS was moved to the Presidio of Monterey, California, and renamed the U.S. Army Language School.

5. What was the role of MIS Language School graduates?

During World War II, the role of the MIS soldiers was considered secret and highly classified. The MISLS graduates were assigned in small teams to units fighting in the Pacific and to intelligence centers throughout the Pacific. These MIS linguists became the eyes and ears of not only the American fighting forces, but of other Allied forces fighting Japan. They translated captured documents, interrogated

prisoners of war, wrote propaganda, monitored radio messages, and encouraged Japanese soldiers and civilians to surrender.

As interrogators, the MIS soldiers were successful because they established a rapport with the Japanese POWs. The MIS soldiers did not physically coerce the POWs, but instead offered food, cigarettes, and medical care. The Japanese military's philosophy was that its soldiers were expected to die for their country instead of surrendering. Thus, Japanese soldiers were not taught how to act if they were captured. Under the Geneva Convention rules, the only information POWs were required to give were name, rank, and serial number. The Japanese POWs innocently and freely gave away information on battle plans, troop strength, and morale to the MIS interrogators.

Battle sites where MIS soldiers served in combat included: Burma, with Merrill's Marauders; Guadalcanal and the Solomon and Mariana Islands; Corregidore, Mindanao, Leyte, and Luzon in the Philippine Islands; and Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The MIS soldiers are credited with shortening the war in the Pacific by two years, and saving a million American lives and billions of dollars.

After the war, thousands of MIS soldiers served during the Occupation of Japan in military government, disarmament, civil affairs, education and intelligence. They were also translators and interpreters for the war crimes tribunals and trials.



MIS SOLDIER, WEARING EARPHONES, WORKING WITH THE JAPANESE DEFENSE LAWYERS, WAR CRIME TRIAL, 1946. RICHARD HAYASHI COLLECTION, NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES.

MIS VOCABULARY WORDS

Allied: relating to the countries (Great Britain, France, United States, Soviet Union from 1941, and China) fighting against the Axis powers (Germany, Soviet Union until 1941, Japan, and Italy) during World War II.

Camp Savage: location in Minnesota where the MISLS moved to in 1942.

Caucasian: a person of European ancestry.

Fort Snelling: location in Minnesota where the MISLS moved to in 1944.

Interrogators: persons who ask questions.

Internees: persons forced to live in an internment camp.

Issei: (“ee say”) a person born in Japan who immigrated to the United States.

Japanese American: an American citizen of Japanese ancestry.

Kibei: (“key bay”) American-born Japanese persons who were sent back to Japan for their formal education, and then returned to live in America.

Linguists: persons who are skilled in languages.

MISLS: abbreviation for the Military Intelligence Service Language School.

Nisei: (“nee say”) American citizens of Japanese ancestry, born of immigrant parents; second-generation Japanese Americans.

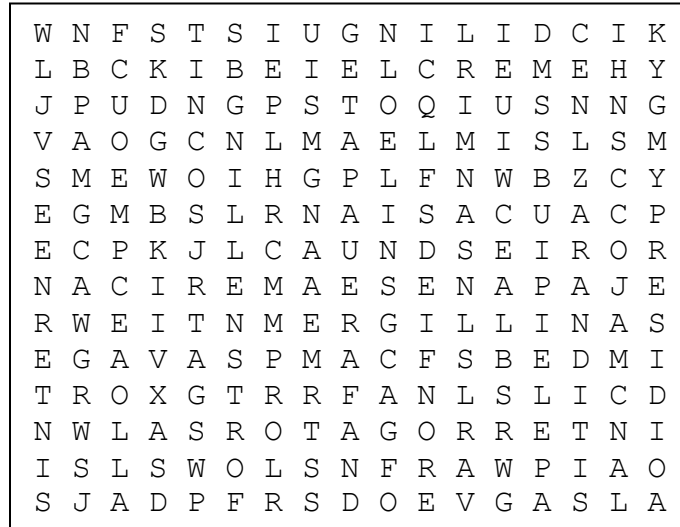
POWs: abbreviation for prisoners of war.

Presidio: location of the first MISLS in San Francisco, California.

WAC: abbreviation for the Women’s Army Corps.

MIS WORD SEARCH

Write in the correct words in the blanks. Find the words in the MIS Word Search. Words may be backwards, forwards, up, down, or diagonal.



1. Abbreviation for Military Intelligence Service Language School. _____
2. Relating to the group of countries (Great Britain, France, U.S., Soviet Union from 1941, and China) that fought against the Axis powers (Germany, Soviet Union until 1941, Japan and Italy). _____
3. A person of European ancestry. _____
4. Location of the first MISLS in San Francisco. _____
5. Location of the MISLS after it moved from San Francisco in 1942. _____
6. Location where the MISLS moved in 1944. _____
7. Persons forced to live in an internment camp. _____
8. A person born in Japan who immigrated to the United States. _____
9. An American citizen of Japanese ancestry. _____
10. American-born Japanese persons who were sent back to Japan for their formal education and then returned to live in the United States. _____
11. American citizens of Japanese ancestry born of immigrant parents. _____
12. Persons who are skilled in languages. _____
13. Persons who ask questions. _____
14. Abbreviation for prisoners of war. _____
15. Abbreviation for Women's Army Corps. _____

ACTIVITY CARD 2

Activity #2

MIS Language School Training

Read about the experiences of one or more MIS Language School soldiers or the Women's Army Corps (WAC) student in the biographies provided.

Imagine that you are the Japanese American soldier or WAC student who has just entered the language school at Camp Savage or Fort Snelling.

1. Write a letter home to a relative or friend who is living in an internment camp. Include your experiences as an MIS student.
2. Describe the living conditions, the language school, and why you feel you want to undergo training as an MIS soldier.
3. Draw a picture of life at the language school.

HARRY T. UMEDA

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

Harry Tsutomu Umeda (pronounced “oo-may-dah”) was born in 1915. His parents and two older brothers emigrated from Japan to the U.S. in 1910. Harry and his next oldest brother were born in Sacramento, California. He only spoke Japanese at home, and did not speak English until first grade.

Because of the California Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920, Harry's father, who was not allowed U.S. citizenship, could not own land. With the help of a Caucasian couple, a farm corporation was formed, with Harry and his older brother (both American-born, and therefore U.S. citizens) as shareholders until they came of age to become the owners.



HARRY WAS A STUDENT IN THE FIRST MISLS CLASS AT CAMP SAVAGE. COURTESY OF HARRY UMEDA

DRAFT, PEARL HARBOR, AND TRAINING

In September 1940, Congress passed the Selective Service Act. All males between the ages of 21 and 35 had to register for the draft. Harry was drafted in February 1941, and he reported for basic training at Watsonville, California.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, Harry and his unit were ordered to move from Monterey Bay, California, to Kiska Island, Alaska. Harry and eight other Nisei could not accompany the unit, but instead ended up in Gilroy, California, housed in an onion warehouse, which served as an assembly center for all Nisei soldiers awaiting reassignment.

During this time, Harry's wife, Ethel, whom he married in July 1941, joined her family at the Amache, Colorado internment camp. Ethel later received permission to move to the Twin Cities. Harry's family was sent to the Rohwer, Arkansas internment camp, but Harry was not interned because he was serving in the Army.

MIS DUTY

Harry was in the first MISLS class at Camp Savage, Minnesota. Quarters were sparse, and the students slept on mattresses and studied on the floor. After graduation,



MIS LINGUIST INTERROGATES
JAPANESE POW, NEW GUINEA, 1944.
U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.

Harry's class formed ten man teams of translators and interpreters. In April 1943, the teams left for Brisbane, Australia, where they had to undergo more training, but mostly waited.

In August 1943, Harry was shipped to the jungles of New Guinea, where there was active combat all around. Harry's language team was assigned to the east central coast of New Guinea at the Central Japanese Prisoner of War (POW) Compound. There, Harry came face to face with the Japanese enemy as they were processed by the teams.

Many POWs were malnourished and in poor physical condition. Those who were injured or wounded had had little or no medical attention. The POWs were brought back to health. The kind acts were greatly appreciated by the POWs and helped to gain their trust. The POWs were interrogated for combat and strategic intelligence. Most POWs were surprised to see a face that looked like theirs doing the interrogating. They had little, if any, knowledge of the American Nisei.

Harry later wrote:

“As our combat troops brought the POWs in, they were in a malnourished, starvation state—all were in extremely poor physical condition. Many were but skin and bones. ... Some were delirious. Those injured or wounded had had little or no medical attention. They were carefully nourished and brought back to good health by our forces. The food and medical attention were deeply appreciated by the emaciated POWs. This aided greatly in our next step—the interrogation. We interrogated the prisoners for combat and strategic intelligence. These are highlights of my interrogation experiences:

“The prisoners were astounded that they were being interrogated by a person who looked like them and had knowledge of their language, customs, and cultural heritage. They had little if any knowledge of American Niseis.

The fact that they had been treated humanely, having been fed, clothed, housed decently, and medically taken care of made them greatly appreciative. The fact that

they never received any training in POW life and nuances made them answer all our questions truthfully...they literally 'spilled their guts out.'

Interrogation, I found, is really experiential. Interrogation is not a method to be learned purely from the textbook. We did not learn interrogation techniques at [Camp] Savage—we were trying, at that time, to master the difficult Japanese language.

Every prisoner was different. One had to develop a variety of techniques, and to me this was the most interesting phase of interrogation.

As the guard brought each prisoner to me he would stand at attention. After carefully examining the prisoner's papers, I would determine his physical condition; eyeballing him, I would then make up my mind concerning the approach to take: soft or hard. It depended also on the psychological state of the prisoner, the type of intelligence needed, and the immediate or later importance of the intelligence.

The soft approach was pleasant: I would offer him a cigarette, gum, hard candy, chocolate, drink of water, etc. and begin plying him with questions of his home, family, school, prefecture, relatives, job, etc. Then gradually lead into the military questions, usually OB (Order of Battle, i.e. unit designation, chain of command, commanders' names and ranks, adjoining unit designations, weaponry, objectives, etc.)

The hard approach was generally unpleasant for me and there were times when I would switch with someone more adept at this approach. No pleasantries, no handouts, you would have the prisoner standing at attention all through the interrogation, you would scowl, use a gruff commanding voice and direct tone in all inquiries. I've seen many a prisoner become so fearful, especially if you threatened to report their POW status to Tokyo headquarters and to their parents, [that they felt for the first time, a sense of shame for being POWs. Many felt so ashamed that they felt that they could not return to their native home.] I understood the fear that war can bring to an individual for I, too, underwent the same experience during my first air raid...

All during the interrogations I kept thinking that these prisoners were my enemy and they were the ones that brought me into this jungle. But as one human being to another, such events brought sadness and tears to my eyes."

Excerpt used with permission from: Nakasone EM (ed). Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota. j-Press Publishing, White Bear Lake, Minnesota, 2002, pp. 65-68.

In October 1944, Harry's MIS team left by troop transport to Leyte Island, Philippines. Three weeks later, Harry went to combat on Mindoro Island,

Philippines, and a few weeks after that he was awarded a furlough. He had served two years of overseas service.

For the next sixty days Harry and Ethel spent time visiting relatives in the internment camps and looking for an apartment, without success. The same story was given, that the apartment had just been rented. With his furlough almost over, Harry requested an extension and could receive another sixty days if he visited classes at Fort Snelling to describe the duties of a linguist in the South Pacific. Finally with his furlough over and still no apartment, Harry returned to his unit at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, where he found out he was eligible for discharge.

DISCHARGE AND POST DUTY LIFE

Harry was honorably discharged in August 1945, as Staff Sergeant, Headquarters, 24th Infantry Division, U.S. Army. He received the Asian Pacific Service ribbon with two bronze stars, the Philippine Liberation ribbon with two bronze stars, the American Defense Service ribbon with medal, the Good Conduct Service ribbon and medal, and three overseas bars.

Harry and Ethel decided to settle in Minneapolis. Harry attended business school for refresher courses under the G.I. Bill of Rights. He became Comptroller and Director of Finance for Fairview Health Systems from 1956 until retiring in 1980.

TOSHIO WILLIAM ABE

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

Toshio William (Bill) Abe (pronounced “toe-shee-oh” and “ah-bay”) was born in 1919 in San Diego, California. His parents were born in Japan. His father immigrated to the U.S. in 1906, and his mother, one or two years later.

EARLY MILITARY TRAINING

Bill was drafted by the U.S. Army on April 2, 1941. The next day, he went for basic training at Fort Ord, California, where he was placed in a segregated unit with 175 other Japanese Americans. In receiving the draft letter, “I felt that I didn’t want to go in the Army...For one thing, the reason I was home was I was trying to take care of my mother (his father passed away in January 1941). As far as patriotism goes, there was no question in our minds as to where we stood. Our parents, my dad, always said, ‘you guys are Americans. That’s where your feelings should be.’ I had heard from other guys that said their parents said the same thing. I think that’s true of the Japanese parents.”



A few months after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, Bill and the other Nisei soldiers were sent “inland” to Camp Wolters, Texas. They were put into labor battalions, assigned to jobs generally performed by Army prisoners. Regarding the impact of Pearl Harbor on him, being of Japanese ancestry, “I didn’t even think about it. The enemy attacked Pearl Harbor. It was the enemy versus us, as Americans.”

In March 1942, Bill’s mother, brother and his wife were sent to a War Relocation Authority Prison camp and interned, given only one week’s notice to pack and take care of their affairs.

ARRIVAL AT CAMP SAVAGE

In May 1942, the 175 Nisei soldiers at Camp Wolters were called into formation, and Bill and 19 others were informed that they would be sent to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. When they arrived, no one knew what they were supposed to do, until someone recalled that the Army was opening up Camp Savage. According to Bill, “the town of Savage looked just like it sounded; a gas station, a general store, a restaurant, and city hall—all ma ‘n pa operations—dirt streets. Nearby was ‘Camp Savage’ consisting of six log cabins (barracks), a mess hall, and a latrine building, which also looked like log cabins. This “complex” was formerly a home for aged men, a place where the state dumped off men to live out their lives.”

“We were in class eight hours a day, five days a week,” recalled Bill. “On top of that, we had two and a half hours of studying at night...They taught us reading, writing, conversational Japanese. We studied the Japanese military system. We studied Japanese religion, Buddhism, and how the Japanese government operated.... The majority of us had never been to Japan.”

After six months of training, Bill was in the first graduating class at Camp Savage in December 1942, but he was the only graduate who was not sent out due to a question of loyalty and a security risk, since his father had been a pioneer in the San Diego fishing industry. He was also considered a possible enemy agent because he had taken a photograph of the Oakland Bridge during its construction in 1937. He was eventually cleared, and received orders for overseas duty in December 1943.

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

Along with 19 other MIS linguists, Bill spent two months on board a merchant marine cargo ship sailing from Los Angeles to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), then Calcutta, India, followed by a five-day train ride to New Delhi, India, arriving at the U.S. Army Headquarters of the China-Burma-India Theater. He spent several months in New Delhi doing office work translating captured documents.

Bill was then flown to the newly captured Myitkyna, the major supply point in Burma for the Chinese fighting the Japanese in China. There he replaced the original MIS soldiers in the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), known as “Merrill's

Marauders". He was later transferred to the "Mars Task Force," the unit relieving the 5307th.

On the battlefields of Burma, Bill was at the front lines fighting as an infantryman, and "getting shot at and all that stuff." As an MIS linguist, "...the situation was, we had teams of ten...guys. Then when division headquarters sent us out to battalion, then to company, then down to the front lines, they would send us out in pairs. One guy is usually more proficient in language than the other guy. He would do most of the translation of documents. The lesser guy would interrogate prisoners. If he needed help, he'd ask his partner. That's the way you worked, in pairs." Bill and the other Nisei MIS linguists also faced double-jeopardy, since they were fair game to the enemy and could easily be mistaken as the enemy by unknowing American soldiers.

When interrogating Japanese POWs, he recalled, "...We didn't have any guidelines or anything....It was more or less natural. You wanted to know why they were there, the strength of their unit, what their objectives were. We call that tactical question. We want to know answers right now so we can let other people know as to how they are going to react. In contrast to that, the strategic questions were something that you sent back to the rear areas. Gives the overall picture...What they're doing there, how many guys, and how they're feeling. Stress and problems they might have. Were they advancing or retreating? How much reinforcements they got? Questions are almost natural when you're at the site."

Asked whether he tried to be the POW's friend or try to come off as aggressive, Bill answered, "...the guys we talked to, a lot of them were wounded. They were in tough shape. We'd try to comfort them. Sure they were our enemies, but the American troops handled prisoners very well. In those days you'd give them a cigarette. We weren't aggressive, and I think they appreciated that, especially in fighting out there in Burma. They were fighting the weather too, and the terrain, jungles and all that stuff. Sometimes I got the impression they were glad to be captured."

About the willingness of the Japanese POWs to answer questions, Bill responded, "when we were at [Camp] Savage they gave us the mental makeup of the Japanese

soldier who is ... totally devoted to the emperor at any cost. They were willing to give up their lives, which was probably true during the early part of the war.”

“The bottom line, in my opinion, of the Japanese and why they lost the war was they underestimated their enemy. As the war progressed in favor of the Allies ... particularly in Burma, the Japanese found out that maybe they underestimated the enemy and consequently they started losing the war. They started losing people. Their replacements were younger people. The younger people weren’t all that devoted to the emperor. They were thinking [that] maybe they wanted to live through this instead of dying for the emperor. In my interrogation, some of these younger guys couldn’t care less about winning the war. They wanted to get home.”

Bill was in continuous combat for eight months. He was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Theater ribbon with two battle stars, the American Theater ribbon, Good Conduct medal, the WWII Victory Medal, and three overseas bars.

Relieved from his Burma combat duty in March 1945, Bill returned to the U.S. in September 1945, having spent 22 months overseas. He was honorably discharged in November 1945. He became a mechanical engineer, retiring in November 1990 from 3M Company. He was married and had three children. In 2004, he passed away at age 84.

Excerpts used with permission from:

Nakasone, E. M. (ed). *Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota*. j-Press Publishing, White Bear Lake, MN, 2002.

Saylor, T. *Minnesota’s Greatest Generation, Oral History Project*. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN, 2002.

GEORGE SUZUKI

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

George Suzuki (pronounced *soo-zoo-key*) was born in Astoria, Oregon, on April 6, 1922. Before World War II, he worked for a lumber company and lived with his parents and younger brother in a hotel they operated in the “Japan Town” section of Portland.

In May 1942, after Executive Order 9066 was signed, the Suzuki family and all others of Japanese ancestry in Portland had to leave their homes and report to the Portland Assembly Center. Their temporary living quarters were stalls where horses had been housed and shown. George and his family were moved to the permanent Minidoka War Relocation Authority camp in Idaho in August 1942.

DRAFT AND TRAINING

In Spring 1943, George was released to attend Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. In the middle of spring semester in 1944, he was drafted into the MIS. He had been classified 4-C (enemy alien) in the internment camp, but became reclassified 1-A (available for unrestricted military service).

After basic training, George went to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, for nine months of intensive study of the Japanese language. Many people wanted to join the MIS, but they had to meet certain requirements. Because George had attended Japanese school in Portland during elementary school and could read and write a little, he was accepted. At the MISLS, students were placed into classes according to their level of proficiency in Japanese. George was assigned to the middle group with 18 others.



GEORGE SUZUKI, IN UNIFORM, WITH GIRLFRIEND (LATER HIS WIFE) ESTHER AT MACALESTER COLLEGE. ESTHER WAS ONE OF THE FIRST JAPANESE AMERICANS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE INTERNMENT CAMPS TO ATTEND COLLEGE IN THE MIDWEST. PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE SUZUKI.

FROM INTERNMENT CAMP TO COLLEGE TO U.S. ARMY

George's teachers were of Japanese ancestry and fluent in Japanese. The MISLS students attended classes every day and half-day on Saturdays. On weekends, they received passes to go to town. George often took the streetcar



MISLS STUDENTS, INCLUDING GEORGE SUZUKI (FIRST ROW, 2ND FROM RIGHT), AT FORT SNELLING, 1944. PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE SUZUKI.

to Macalester College since he had friends there and stayed overnight in their dorm rooms.

MIS ACTIVE SERVICE

In June 1945, after graduating from the MISLS, George was sent to Manila, Philippines. It took the troop ship three weeks to get there since it had to zigzag the Pacific Ocean to avoid enemy ships. There was always a blackout at night. George was stationed at the headquarters of the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) at a racetrack where Japanese prisoners of war were held and interrogated. He remembers terrifying guard duties at night. He also recalls that a group of advanced MIS linguists were killed when their plane crashed into a mountain en route to Okinawa.

After VJ (“Victory over Japan”) Day in August 1945, George was sent to help with the postwar rebuilding effort in Japan from September 1945 until May 1946. He and other MIS linguists lived near the port in Yokohama. George oversaw the native Japanese who worked for the Occupation army.

George felt fortunate the war was over when he went to Japan. He was able to see relatives there.

George returned to Minneapolis, since he lived there before he was drafted. He and Esther were married in August 1946, and raised two children. George attended and graduated from the University of Minnesota business school and worked for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture before retirement.

EDWIN M. (BUD) NAKASONE

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

Edwin Masunobu (Bud) Nakasone (pronounced “nah-kah-soh-nee”) was born in Wahiawa, Oahu (Hawaii) in 1927. When he was 14 years old, he witnessed the Pearl Harbor attack from his kitchen and yard.

In August 1945, as World War II was coming to a close, Bud was drafted. He had heard reports from those from Hawaii who were training in the MIS that they were being treated well in Minnesota. Because he had attended Japanese language classes after school and on Saturday mornings, he was able to pass a second or third grade level reading test of Japanese given by MIS sergeants recruiting in Hawaii.

After basic training, Bud was sent by train to Fort Snelling, arriving on a cold Christmas Day 1945. Bud began language training in March 1946. He was placed in Section 14, there being 22 sections, with the more advanced students in lower numbered sections. Classes were held from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings, all students were marched to the academic buildings for two hours of compulsory studies. The curriculum concentrated on Japanese, with history and cultural elements sprinkled in. Military Japanese (heigo) was no longer taught, and more civil administration and governmental terms appeared in stenciled handouts.

In June 1946, Bud’s class, the last to begin at Fort Snelling, was transferred to the Presidio of Monterey, California. Bud graduated in December 1946, advancing from Section 14 to Section 11.

DUTY IN OCCUPIED JAPAN

In January 1947, Bud arrived in Japan as part of the occupation force. His memories include:

- “Allied occupation personnel were privileged—every train included a coach that had a wide white stripe painted on the outside with the words ALLIED



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDWIN NAKASONE.

- PERSONNEL ONLY on it. Japanese were not allowed on the coach and they crowded themselves in the other coaches while the occupation coach was usually sparsely filled.”
- “The *tamanegi* [onion, pronounced “ta-ma-nay-gee”] existence held forth for Tokyoites—they were malnourished and starved. Often I saw men in old army uniforms and women in raggedy old *mompei* [women’s wartime unattractive baggy slacks, pronounced “mom-pay”] cramped in the coaches, returning from a bargaining foray into the country. They had taken their treasured kimonos and were bartering them for rice and vegetables. As they peeled off their kimonos for food, tears were shed--thus the allegory *tamanegi* life....”
 - “During this difficult period the Japanese, in general, came to observe that America was a nation of expansiveness, sympathetic to the poor and defeated, kindly, nevertheless all powerful. Many remarked to me that their warlords were infinitely stupid to make war against America. I heard this sentiment many times, ‘You Nisei are a shining example of the greatness of America. You are Japanese in body, blood ties, and understand our culture; yet you are American in spirit and thinking and your great country has even allowed you to become a soldier in your honored army. You must help us by serving as the bridge of understanding between America and Japan. We must follow the leadership of America and become a democratic country.’”

After discharge in July 1948, Bud attended the University of Hawaii as a cadet in the Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (ROTC), graduating in June 1950. He remained active in the Army Reserves, and retired as a Military Intelligence Colonel in April 1987, having served continuously for nearly 42 years. He received the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, WWII Victory Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Medal with three hour glasses, and the Army Reserve Achievement Medal.

Bud married and raised two children. He taught history and international relations at Century College, White Bear Lake, Minnesota until his retirement in 2000.

Source: Nakasone E.M. (ed.). Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 2002.

BILL DOI

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

Bill Doi (pronounced “doy”) was born in 1916, in Leland, Washington. His mother died when he was seven years old. His father never remarried and raised four children by himself. Bill’s family moved a number of times, dictated by his father’s jobs. In addition to his logging and lumber mill work, his father had milking cows and ran a successful strawberry farm, which he lost when the land owner refused to renew his contract.

THOUGHTS ON BEING INCARCERATED

Regarding internment, he remarked, “to be absolutely frank, I never really thought evacuation would ever happen. We were citizens, we had done nothing wrong. How could the government take us from our home and farm? But take us it did.”

Bill, who was attending art school in Seattle, and his brother, Jim, his wife and child, returned home so they could be interned together as a family. In May 1942, along with many other Japanese Americans, the Doi family was taken by train to an assembly center near Fresno, California. The following July they were moved to Tule Lake, a California War Relocation Authority camp. Bill recalls “barbed wire fences, towers with soldiers armed with machine guns pointed at us day and night. Get too close to the fence and you were shot dead. More than one innocent life was extinguished thusly.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL DOI

FROM INTERNMENT CAMP TO U.S. ARMY

Late in 1942, Bill was notified that a recruitment team from Camp Savage would be coming to Tule Lake to seek volunteers to join the army as Japanese language specialists to work as interrogators and translators for the war against Japan. He thought, “we can’t be trusted to live in an open society. To many we were spies or undercover fifth columnists working for Japan. Governor Earl Warren of California said the very fact that we haven’t done anything yet is proof that we are just waiting

for the right moment to strike. Nothing has been done--or even begun to be done to releasing the evacuees. And yet, we are to be trusted enough to become part of the U.S. Army."

"At perilous times people do some unusual things. Thousands of Japanese Americans did. Is it possible that if we took the unusual step of coming out of [internment] camp to join the Army that other Americans will believe that we Japanese Americans are also true Americans? It was worth a try. Also I did not especially like being confined. On Nov. 28, 1942, I, along with 34 others from Tule Lake, was inducted."

TRAINING AT CAMP SAVAGE

"As our train arrived into St. Paul, the bitter cold of Minnesota was our introduction. Our California-weight clothes were small comfort as we rode the canvas-covered open back army truck to Camp Savage."

"Depending on our proficiency in the Japanese language, class assignments were given. Top section was No. 1 and the worst No. 22. I drew 21....Never have I studied so hard; from 8 to noon, 1 to 5 p.m., and 7 to 9 p.m., and after that several more hours studying in the latrine. Lights out was 10:00 p.m...."

After two months of this intense study, life took a drastic change. Someone in camp was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and everyone at the MISLS was x-rayed. A scar was found in Bill's left chest, and he was taken to Fort Snelling hospital, where he spent two months flat on his back. Luckily, it was found to be an old scar, and he went back to class.

Unfortunately, to miss two months out of a six month course proved too much. While waiting for the next class to begin, he worked in Special Services developing free time activities for the busy students. His request to start with the new class was later denied, as was his request to go through basic training.

Bill served in the Office of Special Services at Camp Savage, Fort Snelling, and at the Presidio in Monterey. After discharge, he moved back to Minneapolis where, under the G.I. Bill of Rights, he received a Fine Arts degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Bill worked in advertising until retiring in 1983. He married in 1943 and raised five children.

CHITO ISONAGA

World War II Veteran, Women's Army Corps

Chito Isonaga (pronounced "chee-toh ee-soh-nah-gah") served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) from December 27, 1944 to February 26, 1946. She was honorably discharged at the rank of Sergeant.

Chito was born in Kauai (Hawaii). After graduating from high school in 1933, her parents, both born in Japan, wanted her to study further in Japan. From 1933 to 1939, she attended Hiroshima College for Women, where she studied English and Home

Economics. She became very proficient in the Japanese language, reading, writing, and speaking.

After returning to Hawaii, Chito was hired by the FBI to work as an interpreter. She worked with two FBI agents who were checking on Japanese who had strong ties to Japan, including businessmen, Consulate personnel, and Buddhist priests.

Chito was at church in Kauai when Pearl Harbor was attacked. She was listening to her family's shortwave radio the night before the attack, and heard overseas Japanese Nationals announcing that there may be war in the

Pacific. She recalls mentioning this news to FBI agents and laughing with them about it.

When the war broke out, Chito moved to Honolulu and worked in the Police Department in the Office of Censorship. She was provided a list of Japanese people to monitor and to intercept their letters.

CALL TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WAC

In 1944, there was a call for volunteers for the WAC, at which time many Nisei women volunteered. Chito did not tell her parents, as they might have objected. She



NISEI WOMEN SERVING IN THE WACS BEFORE FLYING TO JAPAN, FEBRUARY 1946. CHITO ISONAGA IS PICTURED 6TH FROM THE LEFT. U.S. ARMY PHOTO.

knew the language, and felt she had something to offer. Unlike her parents, she was confident the U.S. would win the war.

Chito was stationed at Fort DeRussy in Waikiki, Hawaii, before being sent for basic training. Women were segregated from the men. Although they learned how to march and to do calisthenics, WACs were not trained to use weapons. After basic training, Chito's group was sent to Des Moines, Iowa for clerical training. The women learned to keep military records, file, and type. Four WACs, including Chito, were sent to Washington, D.C. to work for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services, later the Central Intelligence Agency or CIA), with plans to be sent to the China-Burma area.

TRAINING AT FORT SNELLING

Instead of going overseas, the women received orders to go to Fort Snelling to attend the MISLS in 1945. Chito trained there from May 1945 to November 1945. She remembers having to unpack her winter clothing. She herself had seen snow while she lived in Japan, but for some of the other women from Hawaii, it was all new to them. She remembers the many lakes in Minnesota and the fishing expeditions they took on weekends. She graduated with honors from the MISLS and was assigned to be an instructor at Fort Snelling during November and December.

SERVICE IN JAPAN

In early 1946, Chito was sent to Japan where she worked with the occupation forces under General Douglas MacArthur, stationed in Tokyo. She was assigned to Colonel Rush, and translated the many diaries kept by the Japanese military. Portions of the diaries she translated were used as evidence at the military tribunal of the war criminals.

After her discharge in 1946, Chito decided to take the long route back to Hawaii to see the world, so she left Japan on a British freighter and sailed westward. Before leaving Kobe, Japan, she applied for a job with the CIA. When she got back home, she found out that she had been hired to work in Japan. She returned to Tokyo and worked 15 years for the CIA doing some of the same work she did as a WAC. She also learned Chinese.

After retiring at age 65, Chito moved back to Kauai.

ROY H. MATSUMOTO

World War II Veteran, U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service

By 1941, it was clear that the United States had to prepare for a conflict with Japan and that soldiers who could speak and write Japanese would be critical. While most Nisei had grown up speaking Japanese in their homes, and many learned to read and write Japanese after school and on Saturdays, their English abilities were typically far better. For this reason, a special group of Nisei were purposely recruited. Referred to as *Kibei* (pronounced “key-bay”), they were Nisei who had attended school in Japan for three years or more.



MATSUMOTO RECEIVING LEGION OF MERIT AWARD FROM GENERAL MERRILL. CBI THEATER. SOURCE: THE PACIFIC WAR AND PEACE, AMERICANS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY IN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, 1941-1952.

One Kibei, Master Sgt. Roy H. Matsumoto (pronounced “mah-tsu-moh-toh”) became one of the most highly decorated Nisei soldiers. Roy was born in Laguna, California, in 1913 to Tei Kimura and Wakaji Matsumoto. Roy was the eldest of six children. His father, Wakaji, was a farmer and later professional photographer. Wakaji’s father, Wakamatsu, was an Issei pioneer in the rich agricultural lands of southern California. Roy’s mother was a mail order bride, the daughter of a famous fencing instructor in Japan. Roy is therefore a third generation Japanese American (Sansei) on his father’s side and a second generation (Nisei) on his mother’s.

When Roy reached junior high school age, he and a brother were sent to Japan to live with his maternal grandparents. He spent three years in a Japanese middle school before returning to California for junior and senior high school. While Roy was in Japan, his parents, four brothers, and two sisters returned to Hiroshima. His parents were in Hiroshima during the war.

In the spring of 1942, Roy was first incarcerated at the Santa Anita Race Track Assembly Center before being sent to the Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas. In order to get out of camp, Roy volunteered to serve in the army. Because of his Japanese ability, he was recruited by the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) at Camp Savage in Minnesota.

Roy arrived at Camp Savage with considerable skill in Japanese, and was soon asked to help the other students. Roy recounts how Minnesotans were very friendly. When the students had time off, they often hitchhiked to Minneapolis to attend dances and eat Chinese food (the only Asian food available). Roy said that in California, no one would pick up a Japanese American hitchhiker, but in Minnesota this was not a problem. Because he did not like to dance, Roy would buy fried rice to bring back to camp for everyone. While at Camp Savage, Roy was also introduced to skiing.

After training, Roy became a linguist for the Merrill's Marauders, a special unit in the China-Burma-India Theater, whose mission was to supply and assist Chinese armies in their struggle against Japan. In 1943, Roy was shipped to India. He was one of 14 Japanese Americans who volunteered for the 530th Composite Unit, Provisional, which gained fame in the jungles of Burma as Merrill's Marauders. This was an especially dangerous assignment, because the Marauders operated behind enemy lines. It was especially risky for any Nisei should they be caught by the Japanese. In addition, the rugged mountainous jungle terrain and lack of food and water made conditions brutal. Marauders had to carry all of their provisions, including ammunition. Only 200 out of the original 2700 Marauders survived this dangerous assignment.

Roy's exploits were legendary. Discovering a telephone wire in one of the trees, Roy climbed the tree and tapped the phone line. Through information he gained from the interception, the army was able to destroy a group of Japanese guards. According to James McNaughton's book, *Nisei Linguists*, the Marauder 2nd Battalion (about 600 men) was trapped at Nhpum Ga (Maggot Hill). During the night, Roy crawled out close to the Japanese lines, listened to their conversations, and secured valuable intelligence information. Thankfully, Roy was familiar with the Fukuoka Japanese dialect the soldiers were speaking.

One night, he returned with information that the Japanese were planning to cut off part of the perimeter. After helping set up an ambush trap, Roy waited for the attack with the rest of the Marauders. When the attack came, the Marauders sprang the trap, dispatching the first wave of attackers. When the second wave stalled in confusion, Roy stood up and yelled *susume!* ("Advance!") in the Fukuoka dialect, causing the second wave to meet the same fate as the first.

After his assignment with the Marauders, Roy served in China at the Sino Translation and Interrogation Center (SINTIC), where he discovered his cousin and brother were imprisoned in China. Although sent to interrogate, he spent much of his time trying to find out what had happened to his family. Roy had assumed they had perished because his father's studio was only two blocks from the epicenter of the Hiroshima nuclear blast, but it turned out they had survived because his father had moved everyone to the countryside.



(2013) MASTER SGT. ROY H. MATSUMOTO, 100 YEARS OLD, IN MINNEAPOLIS FOR A MERRILL'S MARAUDER'S REUNION. FLANKED BY MIS VETERANS EDWIN NAKASONE (L) AND AL YAMAMOTO (R).

After the war, Roy remained in the service, entered China, and became an intelligence specialist for the Detachment 202 Office of Strategic Services. He was tasked with interrogating Japanese prisoners and escorting war criminals to Sugano prison in Japan. He retired from the army in 1963 after 20 years of service.

On July 19, 1993, Roy Matsumoto was inducted into the U.S. Rangers Hall Of Fame. In 1997, he was also inducted into the Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame. Roy has been awarded 5 Bronze Stars, an Honorary Green Beret, a Burmese Green Beret, Combat Infantryman's Badge, two Distinguished Unit Citation ribbons, Japanese American Citizens League Legacy Award, and the Legion of Merit. In 2010, Roy received the Congressional Gold Medal, the United States' highest civilian award.

Despite Roy's success, he received little publicity because the MIS Nisei had remained true to their wartime pledge of secrecy. Roy's daughter, Karen Matsumoto, first learned of her father's wartime actions in a graduate school children's literature course. Karen was 30 years old when her professor mentioned that she had read a book entitled *Burma's Rifles*, in which there was a character named Matsumoto. After reading the book, Karen realized that the character was her father. Roy's story is also told in the documentary, *Honor and Sacrifice: The Story of Roy Matsumoto* (2014).

LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE JAPANESE

The Japanese language is very different from English. It has two alphabets, *hiragana* (hee-rah-gah-nah) and *katakana* (kah-tah-kah-nah) and over 3000 picture symbols called *kanji* (kahn-gee). Traditionally, Japanese is written from top to bottom and right to left. Therefore, the front of a Japanese book is the back of an English language book. In this lesson, however, we will write from left to right, just like English.

This is what hiragana looks like:

SINGLE VOWEL	あ A	い I	う U	え E	お O
-----------------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

The same syllables in katakana would look like this:


SINGLE VOWEL	ア A	イ I	ウ U	エ E	オ O
-----------------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

In written Japanese, the root word is often written in kanji and the word endings are written in hiragana. Katakana, meanwhile, is used for foreign words. For instance, the word "spaghetti" is written:

ス パ ゲ チ
su pa ge chi

Children in first grade learn all of the symbols in the two alphabets and 76 of the most basic kanji. By the time they finish 6th grade, they will have learned 1006 kanji. A high school student must know about 3000. All of this is learned by rote. In other words, they have to memorize it.

In the beginning, the Japanese only had hiragana and katakana. When they learned that the Chinese had invented kanji, they decided to borrow this written system from the Chinese. The ancient Chinese drew pictures of the things they knew. To them, the sun looked like ☀. This was squared off and simplified to become 日.

The Chinese first drew a tree as . This was also simplified and squared to become 木. To form the word for “origin,” they added more lines to the bottom part of the tree to make 本.

These two pictures for sun (日) and origin (本) put together form the word for Japan, which means “origin of the sun.”

The sun coming up behind a tree looks like , which became 東, which is the word for “east”.

This is just a small sample of what learning to read and write Japanese would be like. The soldiers in the MIS had to learn 50 new kanji a day in order to keep up with the class. Many of them would stay up late into the night, studying in the bathrooms, after “lights out”.

Japanese writing from Walsh, Len. “What is Japanese Writing?” In: Read Japanese Today. Tuttle Publishing Company, Tokyo, Japan, 1969. Reprinted with express permission of Tuttle Publishing, www.tuttlepublishing.com.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE LESSON

This is the katakana chart:

COLUMN \ LINE	A	I	U	E	O
SINGLE VOWEL	ア A	イ I	ウ U	エ E	オ O
K	カ KA	キ KI	ク KU	ケ KE	コ KO
S	サ SA	シ SHI	ス SU	セ SE	ソ SO
T	タ TA	チ CHI	ツ TSU	テ TE	ト TO
N	ナ NA	ニ NI	ヌ NU	ネ NE	ノ NO
H	ハ HA	ヒ HI	フ FU	ヘ HE	ホ HO
M	マ MA	ミ MI	ム MU	メ ME	モ MO
Y	ヤ YA		ユ YU		ヨ YO
R	ラ RA	リ RI	ル RU	レ RE	ロ RO
W	ワ WA		ン N		ヲ O

Japanese writing from Walsh, Len. "What is Japanese Writing?" In: Read Japanese Today. Tuttle Publishing Company, Tokyo, Japan, 1969. Reprinted with express permission of Tuttle Publishing, www.tuttlepublishing.com.

SOUND CHANGES AND KANA COMBINATIONS

ガ ga	ギ gi	グ gu	ゲ ge	ゴ go
ザ za	ジ ji	ズ zu	ゼ ze	ゾ zo
ダ da	ヂ ji	ヅ zu	デ de	ド do
バ ba	ビ bi	ブ bu	ベ be	ボ bo
パ pa	ピ pi	プ pu	ペ pe	ポ po
キャ kya	キュ kyu	キョ kyo	シャ sha	シュ shu
ショ sho	チャ cha	チュ chu	チョ cho	ニャ nya
ニュ nyu	ニョ nyo	ヒャ hya	ヒュ hyu	ヒョ hyo
ミャ mya	ミュ myu	ミョ myo	リャ rya	リュ ryu
リョ ryo	ギャ gya	ギュ gyu	ギョ gyo	ジャ ja
ジュ ju	ジョ jo	ビャ bya	ビュ byu	ビョ byo
ピャ pya	ピュ pyu	ピョ pyo		

ACTIVITY CARD #3: READING JAPANESE WORDS BORROWED FROM ENGLISH

There is one additional feature of Japanese that appears in this activity. Just as there are upper case (capital) letters and lower case letters in English, there are regular sized characters and small characters. One use of the small characters is for the kana combinations shown above. In addition, the small tsu “っ” signals that you should inhale briefly before making the next sound. So, スリッパ is read su-rip-pa (slipper).

A. Sound out these words related to sports:

1. テニス		9. バレーボール	
2. ホッケー		10. ゴルフ	
3. スキー		11. サッカー	
4. ベースボール		12. クロスカントリーレース	
5. ジョギング		13. ボウリング	
6. フリスビー		14. ジムナスチックス	
7. ハイキング		15. バスケットボール	
8. レスリング		16. ラクロス	

B. These words are about eating:

1. バナナ			9. キャンデー	
2. コーヒー			10. ルバーブ	
3. ケーキ			11. サラダ	
4. レストラン			12. ポークチョップ	
5. ラーメン			13. オレンジジュース	
6. チーズバーガー			14. チョコレート	
7. ブルーベリー			15. チキンスープ	
8. サンドイッチ			16. オムレツ	

C. These are places.

1. ロンドン			9. ミネソタ	
2. ハワイ			10. カナダ	
3. スペイン			11. エジプト	
4. ブラジル			12. インディア	
5. ラオス			13. メキシコ	
6. ミシシッピ			14. フィリピン	
7. オーストラリア			15. サンフランシスコ	
8. モロッコ			16. イエローストーン	

D. Match the Japanese word with its English counterpart:

1. スカート		a. elevator
2. ナイフ		b. spoon
3. ネクタイ		c. giraffe
4. エレベーター		d. hotel
5. カメラ		e. knife
6. ビデオゲーム		f. backpack
7. スプーン		g. television
8. ゼロ		h. shampoo
9. ホテル		i. necktie
10. ジラフ		j. video game
11. シャンプー		k. radio
12. バス		l. computer
13. テレビジョン		m. zero
14. バックパック		n. skirt
15. ラジオ		o. bus
16. コンピューター		p. camera

ANSWER KEY FOR ACTIVITY CARD #3

A. Sound out these words related to sports:

1. テニス	tennis	9. バレーボール	volleyball
2. ホッケー	hockey	10. ゴルフ	golf
3. スキー	ski	11. サッカー	soccer
4. ベースボール	baseball	12. クロスカントリーレース	crosscountry race
5. ジョギング	jogging	13. ボウリング	bowling
6. フリスビー	frisbee	14. ジムナスチックス	gymnastics
7. ハイキング	hiking	15. バスケットボール	basketball
8. レスリング	wrestling	16. ラクロス	lacrosse

B. These words are about eating.

1. バナナ	banana		9. キャンデー	candy
2. コーヒー	coffee		10. ルバーブ	rhubarb
3. ケーキ	cake		11. サラダ	salad
4. レストラン	restaurant		12. ポークチョップ	pork chop
5. ラーメン	ramen		13. オレンジジュース	orange juice
6. チーズバーガー	cheeseburger		14. チョコレート	chocolate
7. ブルーベリー	blueberry		15. チキンスープ	chicken soup
8. サンドイッチ	sandwich		16. オムレツ	omelet

C. These are places.

1. ロンドン	London		9. ミネソタ	Minnesota
2. ハワイ	Hawaii		10. カナダ	Canada
3. スペイン	Spain		11. エジプト	Egypt
4. ブラジル	Brazil		12. インディア	India
5. ラオス	Laos		13. メキシコ	Mexico
6. ミシシッピー	Mississippi		14. フィリピン	Philippines
7. オーストラリア	Australia		15. サンフランシスコ	San Francisco
8. モロッコ	Morocco		16. イエローストーン	Yellowstone

D. Match the Japanese word with its English counterpart:

1. スカート	n	a. elevator
2. ナイフ	e	b. spoon
3. ネクタイ	i	c. giraffe
4. エレベーター	a	d. hotel
5. カメラ	p	e. knife
6. ビデオゲーム	j	f. backpack
7. スプーン	b	g. television
8. ゼロ	m	h. shampoo
9. ホテル	d	i. necktie
10. ジラフ	c	j. video game
11. シャンプー	h	k. radio
12. バス	o	l. computer
13. テレビジョン	g	m. zero
14. バックパック	f	n. skirt
15. ラジオ	k	o. bus
16. コンピューター	l	p. camera

ACTIVITY CARD #4

MIS Soldiers as Interrogators

After looking at the photographs taken of MIS soldiers and Japanese POWs, answer the following questions:

1. How were the Japanese POWs treated? How might it have made a difference that the MIS soldiers and POWs shared a common ancestry?
2. If you were an MIS soldier, what questions would you ask the Japanese POWs?
3. How accurate was the information that the MIS soldiers received from the POWs?

CHALLENGE: Write a story or create a script about what might be happening in one of the photographs. Include your answers to the questions above.

MIS SOLDIERS AS INTERROGATORS



PHIL ISHIO AND ARTHUR USHIRO CASTLE INTERROGATING JAPANESE PRISONER-OF-WAR AT BUNA, NEW GUINEA, JANUARY 2, 1943. U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.



T/SGT CHARLES HAMASAKI AND CAPT. EUGENE WRIGHT INTERROGATING JAPANESE POW ON STRETCHER. MEDICAL OFFICER IS CAPT. ROBERT BOALS. NEW GEORGIA (SOLOMON ISLANDS GROUP), NOVEMBER 20, 1943. U.S. ARMY SIGNAL



JIRO ARAKAKI INTERROGATES A JAPANESE COMMANDING GENERAL OFF YONAKUNAJIMA, OKINAWA. SEATED, AND FACING CAMERA, IS COL. M.F. SMITH. OCTOBER 7, 1945. U.S. SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.



MIS NISEI INTERROGATE JAPANESE POW ON LEYTE, JUNE 17, 1945. LEFT: BUD MUKAI, TEAM LEADER, (LOS ANGELES, CA). CENTER: RALPH SAITO (HAWAII). U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

ACTIVITY CARD #5

Areas Where the MIS Served

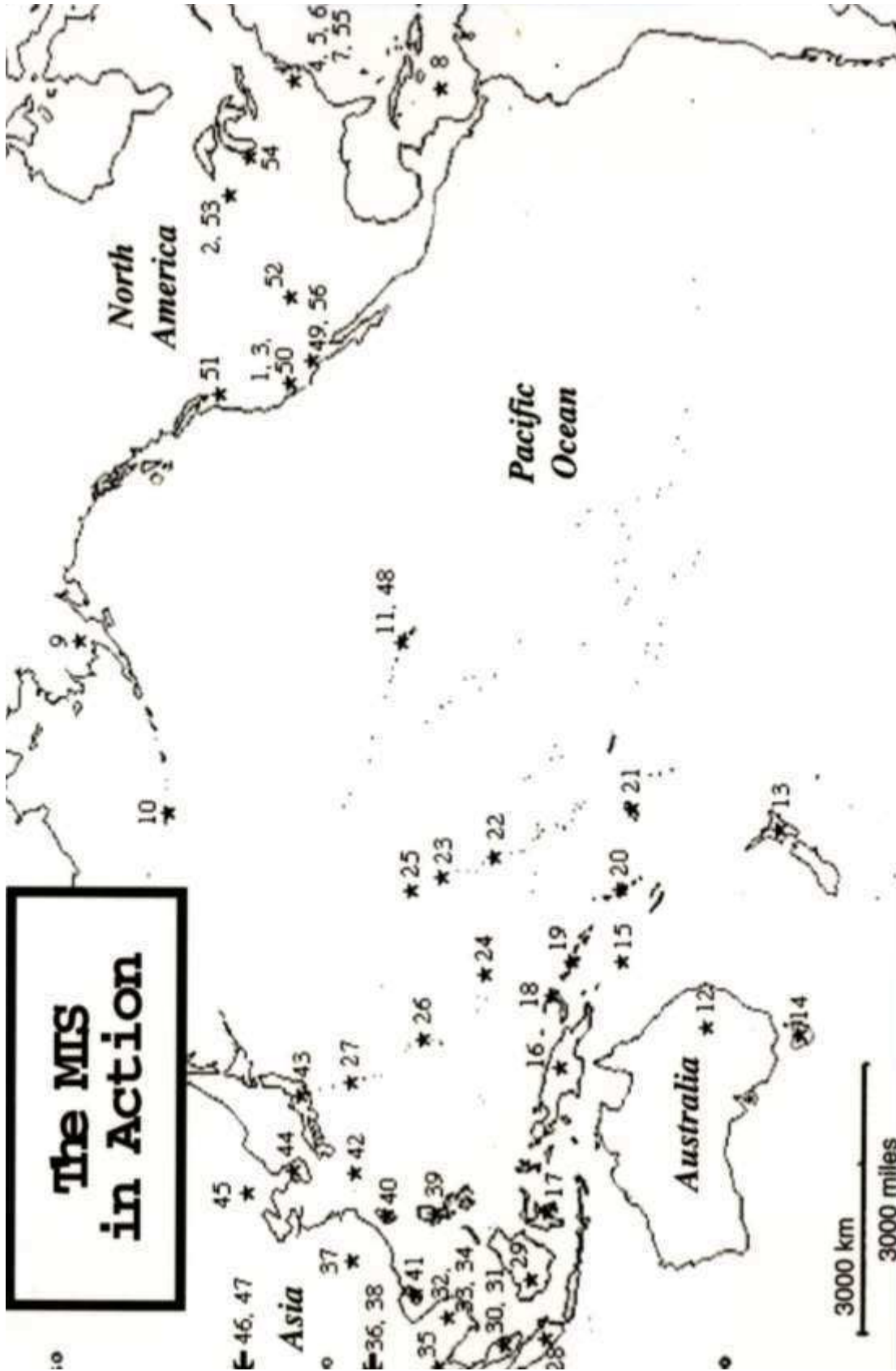
Use the Map Provided to Complete this Activity Card

1. Fill in the directions N,S,E,W on the compass.
2. The map shows a portion of the world. Label the following continents:
Australia Asia North America
3. On the map, label the following oceans:
Indian Ocean Pacific Ocean Atlantic Ocean

For questions 4–8, using the numbers on the map, identify the following places (write only the **first** number listed for each location):

4. The first MISLS was at Crissy Field in the Presidio of San Francisco.

5. The MISLS moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota, then to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. _____
6. Washington, D.C. _____
7. Graduates of the MISLS were assigned to combat areas in the Pacific. Identify the following locations where they served:
 - a. Aleutian Islands off Alaska _____
 - b. Japan _____
 - c. China _____
 - d. Philippine Islands, which includes Corregidor, Mindanao, Leyte and Luzon _____
8. CHALLENGE
 - a. Burma (now Myanmar) _____
 - b. Okinawa _____



Courtesy of Inui et al. *Unsung Heroes*. MIS-Northwest Association, 1996.

MIS Map Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. MISLS at Presidio of San Francisco, California | 15. Coral Sea Islands | Eniwetok | 42. Okinawa — Ryukyu Islands |
| 2. MISLS at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling, Minnesota | 16. New Guinea | Ponape | 43. Japan |
| 3. ALS-DLI at Presidio of Monterey, California | Biak | Bikini | 44. Korea |
| 4. Washington, D.C. | Japan | 24. Caroline Islands | 45. Manchuria |
| Pentagon | Ambon | Truk | 46. France |
| Federal Communications Commission | Buru | Palau | 47. Germany |
| 5. Camp Ritchie, Maryland | 17. Celebes—Halmahera—Molotai | Yap | 48. MIS Veterans Club of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii |
| 6. New York | 18. Bismarck Archipelago | 25. Wake Island | 49. MIS Club of Southern California, Los Angeles, California |
| Fulton Fish Market | Rabaul | 26. Mariana Islands | 50. MIS Association of Northern California |
| Manhattan Project | Bougainville | Guam | California |
| 7. Virginia | Green Islands | Rota | 51. MIS-Northwest Association, Seattle, Washington |
| Fort Holabird | Admiralty Islands | Saipan | 52. Rocky Mountain MIS Veterans Club, Denver, Colorado |
| Vint Hill Farms Station | Buka | Tinian | 53. Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| 8. Caribbean Sea | New Ireland | 27. Iwo Jima | 54. The American Legion Chicago Nisei Post #1183, Chicago, Illinois |
| 9. Alaska | New Britain | 28. Sumatra—Java | 55. Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C. |
| 10. Aleutians | 19. Solomon Islands | 29. Borneo—Sarawak—North Borneo | 56. Nisei Women's Army Corps, Los Angeles, California |
| Kodiak | Guadalcanal | 30. Singapore | |
| Adak | Malaita | 31. Malay | |
| Dutch Harbor | Santa Isabel | 32. Vietnam | |
| Kiska | Vella Lavella | 33. Cambodia | |
| Attu | New Georgia | 34. Thailand | |
| 11. Hawaii | 20. New Hebrides—New Caledonia | 35. Burma | |
| 12. Australia | —Espiritu Santo | 36. India | |
| 13. New Zealand | 21. Fiji Islands—Samoa—Tahiti | 37. China | |
| 14. Tasmania | 22. Gilbert Islands | 38. Nepal | |
| | Tarawa | 39. The Philippines | |
| | Makin | 40. Taiwan | |
| | 23. Marshall Islands | 41. Hong Kong | |
| | Kwajalein | | |

Courtesy of Inui et al. *Unsung Heros*. MIS-Northwest Association, 1996.

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY CARD #5

4. 1

5. 2

6. 4

7.

a. 10

b. 2

c. 8

d. 9

8.

a. 3

b. 13

c. 12

d. 6

e. 7

f. 14

g. 11

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Entries in bold text are available for loan through the Japanese American Citizens League, Twin Cities Chapter. For more information, visit our website at www.twincitiesjacl.org.

BOOKS

- **Crost, Lyn. *Honor by Fire*. Presidio Press, Novato, CA, 1994. (The first book to describe the exploits of the MIS in the Pacific Theater during World War II.)**
- Ichinokuchi, Tad (ed.). *John Aiso and the MIS: Japanese American Soldiers in the Military Intelligence Service, World War II*. Military Intelligence Service Club of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 1988. (Biography of John Aiso, the chief instructor and director of the Military Intelligence Service Language School.)
- Inui, Roy; Koshi, George; Matsui, Mitzi; Matsui, Takahashi; and Sato, Ken. *Unsung Heroes: The Military Intelligence Service, Past, Present, Future: The Eyes and Ears of the Allied Forces During and After World War II*. MIS-Northwest Association, Seattle, WA, 1996.
- **Ishimaru, Stone. *Military Intelligence Service Language School: Fort Snelling*. TecCom Production, Los Angeles, CA, 1991. (A photographic documentary by an Official U.S. Army Photographer for a *Life Magazine* assignment in the summer of 1944.)**
- **McNaughton, James C. *Nisei Linguists. Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II*. U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., 2007.**
- *The MISLS Album, 1946*. Battery Press, Nashville, TN, 1990. (Originally published in 1946 at Fort Snelling, this album is a comprehensive yearbook of the first five years of the MISLS, complete with a history, list of graduates, and photographs of the commanding officers, school directors, and students.)
- **Nakasone, Edwin M. *The Nisei Soldier: Historical Essays on World War II and the Korean War*, 4th ed. J-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 2012. (A compilation of essays that chronicle the experiences of Japanese American citizens (Nisei) who participated in World War II and the Korean War.)**

- Nakasone, Edwin M. *Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota*. j-Press Publishing, White Bear Lake, MN, 2002. (A compilation of personal stories of MIS and 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team veterans who settled in Minnesota.)
- Niiya, Brian. *Japanese American History from A to Z*. Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA, 1993. (Includes a chronology of major events in Japanese American history in historical context, and more than 400 A to Z entries on significant individuals, organizations, and events.)
- Uyeda, Clifford and Saiki, Barry (eds). *The Pacific War and Peace. Americans of Japanese Ancestry in Military Intelligence Service, 1941 to 1952*. Military Intelligence Service Association of Northern California and the National Japanese American Historical Society, San Francisco, CA, 1991. (Commemorative book that was compiled on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the MISLS.)

WEBSITES

- <http://www.njahs.org/misnorcal/index.htm> - The Military Intelligence Service Research Center website is a project of The Military Intelligence Service Association of Northern California. Information includes a timeline of MIS history, MIS participation in Pacific Theater campaigns, MIS honors and awards, photographs of MIS soldiers in training and in service, video clips from the film "Uncommon Courage: Patriotism and Civil Liberties," and list of resources.
- <http://www.njahs.org/misnorcal/essay.htm> - Essay on the history of the MIS titled, "MIS History: Japanese American Military Intelligence Servicemen and the War in the Pacific."
- http://www.goforbroke.org/history/history_historical_campaigns_mis_school.asp - Website of the Go for Broke National Education Center. Descriptions of role of MIS participation in campaigns in the Pacific are detailed: Guadalcanal, Aleutian Islands, New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Philippines, China-Burma-India Theater, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Occupation of Japan. Other topics include school and training camps, translation of the "Z" plan, and awarding of the Presidential Unit Citation.
- http://www.mnhs.org/library/tips/history_topics/120language_school.html - Background information, and a list of primary and secondary resources available at the Minnesota Historical Society Library.

- <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/45/v45i07p273-287.pdf> - Article by Ano, Masuharu. "Loyal Linguists, Nisei of World War II Learned Japanese in Minnesota." *Minnesota History*, St. Paul, MN, Fall 1977, Vol. 45, no. 7, pp. 273-287.
- <http://www.ci.savage.mn.us/> - Website of the City of Savage, Minnesota. Includes information about Camp Savage.
- [http://www.javadc.org/AJA%20women in wwII.htm](http://www.javadc.org/AJA%20women%20in%20wwII.htm) - Essay on the role of Japanese American women in the Women's Army Corps titled, "Japanese American Women in World War II."

VIDEO CASSETTE TAPES/DVDS

- **Beyond Barbed Wire**. 1 hr., 28 min. Mac and Ava Picture Productions, Monterey, CA, 1997 - Recounts the struggle that the Japanese Americans faced when they volunteered or were drafted to fight for the U.S. during World War II while their families were forced to live in internment camps.
- **Uncommon Courage: Patriotism and Civil Liberties**. 1 hr., 26 min. - Bridge Media, Inc., P.O. Box 1285, Davis, CA 95617-1285, 2001. Tells the story of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) during World War II and during the Occupation of Japan.
- **MIS: Human Secret Weapon**. 100 min. - MIS Film Partners, UTB Pictures, and Film Voice, 2012. When the U.S. Army realized its deficiencies in intelligence operations against Japan, Japanese American soldiers were secretly trained for the Military Intelligence Service. They proved their patriotism to the country that had imprisoned their families in War Relocation Authority prison camp by choosing to fight against the country of their parents' birth.

TEACHERS' GUIDES

- Epstein, Shari and Mukai, Gary. *A Teacher's Guide for "Uncommon Courage: Patriotism and Civil Liberties."* Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE) Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, and the National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc., San Francisco, CA, 2003.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Minneapolis Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401, phone 612/630-6350 - The Special Collections Department has several folders of newspaper clippings, photographs, and a small book about the MISLS at Camps Savage and Fort Snelling (Shellum, Duane R. *America's Human Secret Weapon*. Minnisei Printers, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, 1977.)
- Minnesota Historical Society Library, 345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, MN 55102, phone 651/259-3300 - Primary and secondary resources available are listed at:
http://www.mnhs.org/library/tips/history_topics/120language_school.html.
- Savage Community Library, 13093 Alabama Avenue, Savage, MN 55378, phone 952/ 707-1770 - The Heritage Room contains a file on Camp Savage, photographs and reference sources.

APPENDIX A: CAMP SAVAGE TODAY

Today, there is little left of Camp Savage except for one building currently being used by the Minnesota Department of Transportation Highway Department. The land adjacent to the building has been turned back to the City of Savage and is being used as a training facility for the Savage Police Department's K-9 unit. There is a historical marker erected in 1993 that identifies the site. Most of the cabins that were used have been moved, and can be seen around residences and businesses in and around Savage.



Below is the wording on the Historical Marker for the Military Intelligence Service at Camp Savage, Minnesota (located at Highway 13, near Xenwood Avenue in Savage, Minnesota).

Camp Savage

During World War II, some 5,000-6,000 Japanese American soldiers, members of the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service, were given intensive and accelerated classes in the Japanese language at Camp Savage.

Their subsequent work translating captured documents, maps, battle plans, diaries, letters, and printed materials and interrogating Japanese prisoners made them "our human secret weapons," according to President Harry Truman, who commended them following the war.

The Military Intelligence Service (MIS) program began in the fall of 1941, a few weeks before Pearl Harbor, at the Presidio in San Francisco.

For security reasons, it was moved in May 1942, to Camp Savage, a site personally selected by language school commandant Kai E. Rasmussen, who believed Savage was "a community that would accept Japanese Americans for their true worth – American soldiers fighting with their brains for their native America."

The 132-acre site had served as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp to the 1930s and was later used to house elderly indigent men.

Conditions were extremely difficult in the early months of the war, when the first students studied without desks, chairs, or even beds. By August, 1944, the program had outgrown Camp Savage and was moved to larger facilities at Fort Snelling.

Most of the English-speaking Japanese Americans, known as Nisei, were from the West Coast and Hawaii. Some were already in the U.S. military service when they were selected for the language school, while others were volunteers from the camps in which Japanese American citizens had been interned following the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

According to General Charles Willoughby, chief of intelligence for General Douglas MacArthur, "the 6,000 Nisei shortened the Pacific war by two years."

Erected by the Savage Chamber of Commerce, 1993
(Camp Savage historical marker, dedicated May 15, 1993)

APPENDIX B: AMERICA'S SECRET WARRIORS

55

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

CHAPTER THREE

AMERICA'S SECRET WARRIORS

*Never in military history did an army know so much about the enemy prior to actual engagement.*²

General Douglas MacArthur

"Harry S. Truman said, 'They are our human secret weapons.' The role that 6,000 Japanese American soldiers played in the Pacific battlefield has been a well kept secret until now."

Charles Hellinger
Los Angeles Times
20 July, 1982

"The 6000 Niseis shortened the Pacific war by two years."

Major General Charles Willoughby
G2 Intelligence Chief for
General MacArthur

"As for the value of the Nisei I couldn't have gotten along without them."

Major General Frank D. Merrill,
Commander of Merrill's
Marauders in Burma

"By these brave people, the lives of several thousand Americans were saved."

Colonel Sydney F. Mashbir
Commander of ATIS
(Allied Translator and Interpreter Section)

Introduction

Americans, especially World War II buffs, are aware of the wartime contributions and fighting ability of the Japanese Americans, the "Nisei soldiers," who fought heroically in Europe as members of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd

Regimental Combat Team. This essay, therefore, is about another segment of Japanese American soldiers, the almost forgotten Military Intelligence Service (MIS) men.

First, some background. In Hawaii, prior to 7 December, 1941, the day of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, there were approximately 163,000 persons who were ethnic Japanese. On the mainland the number was 120,000. Two thirds were *Nisei*, the offspring of the immigrant parents, who were known as the *Issei*. The *Kibei*, another term to be used in this essay, represented the small number of *Nisei* who were educated and brought up in Japan during their formative years.¹ Even prior to the actual beginning of the war, all ethnic Japanese were suspect by the U.S. military authorities and, in fact, shortly after the tragic attack, Japanese Americans in the Hawaii Territorial Guards² were unceremoniously cashiered out of their Guard service. On the mainland, the infamous incarceration of Japanese Americans began when Executive Order 9066 was issued on 19 February, 1942. Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) were no longer to be drafted and all the services would not enlist any AJA. Those who had already been drafted were not allowed to be in combat units and many were transferred out from line status and placed in supernumerary or general labor category.³ As a result of all of this, the spirit and general morale of the AJAs, as can be well understood, were at rock bottom.

As America prepared for war, however, senior military intelligence officers reached the appalling conclusion that we were bereft of any Japanese linguists, those who could speak, read and write Japanese. American Caucasian personnel who were adept in Japanese could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Those who were even vaguely familiar with the language were few, too, and they were primarily children of missionaries who lived in Japan before the war. Nevertheless, credit goes to the senior army intelligence officers⁴ who foresaw the impossible situation of engaging an enemy without personnel able to decipher Japanese, a difficult language at best. These officers saw a possible solution to this problem in the *Nisei*. After all, weren't they speaking to their immigrant parents in Japanese and weren't they also going to Japanese language schools

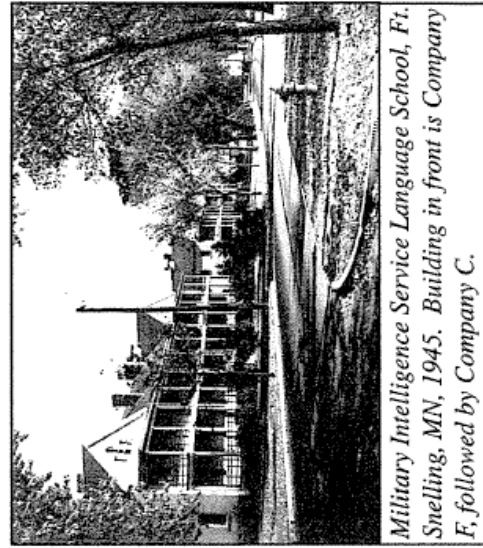
Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

after finishing their daily English public school classes? The draftee army of 1940-41 did include a proportion of AJAs. They were surveyed and the results were appalling—only fifty eight were deemed suitable. In November, 1941, 60 soldiers—58 Niseis and two Caucasians, became the first class of the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS).⁵ The small number available for schooling clearly reflected that the acculturation of the Nisei to American culture had progressed far beyond what most persons might have believed.

The school began in an old, abandoned airplane hangar at Crissey Field, Presidio of San Francisco, on a budget of two thousand dollars. Everything—desks, chairs, chalkboards, chalk, paper, etc.—were scrounged from the main post. Instructors made their own teaching manuals and taught only from past experiences. This was a very difficult situation since *heigo* (Military Japanese), advanced *kanji* (Chinese characters), reading and writing, and *soshio* (continuous cursive Japanese writing, sometimes called grass writing), were constants in Japanese orders, documents, diaries, letters, and coded messages.⁶ The Kibei were especially needed in mastering this difficult form of advanced Japanese. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the issue of Executive Order 9066 on 19 February, 1942, which called for the expulsion of all ethnic Japanese from the west coast, required the army to look elsewhere to conduct the MI school. Under these circumstances, the state of Minnesota was chosen as the next location for the Military Intelligence Service Language School since the state was known for its kindly outlook towards all ethnic and racial categories.

Camp Savage and Fort Snelling

Camp Savage, in the town of Savage, Minnesota, was a one time CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) and, later, a state maintained old-men's camp. This became the sparse new home of the MISLS, and many of the Hawaii and California MIS veterans remember with pain the severity of their first winter in Minnesota.



Military Intelligence Service Language School, Ft. Snelling, MN, 1945. Building in front is Company F, followed by Company C.

The first class at Savage began with 200 students. Meanwhile thirty five of the original sixty members of the San Francisco class were scattered into combat units from the Aleutians to Australia. As the Pacific battles continued from 1942 into 1943 (Guadalcanal, Attu and Tarawa), and as these “guinea pig” linguist specialists began to show their worth, division, corps, and joint forces commanders began requesting, and even commandeering, the Nisei linguists.⁷ By January 1944, over a thousand (1,101) students were enrolled at Savage and soon it became evident that expansion of the school was absolutely necessary to meet combat needs. Fortunately, an old time regular army post was located close by with adequate facilities and so the move was made in August, 1944, to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Fort Snelling's commodious buildings and enviable Twin Cities location was the site of the MISLS until it was moved to the Presidio of Monterey in July of 1946. By this time over 6,000 students had graduated from this service school.

In the initial stages of the school many graduates received only hurried basic training and were immediately shipped overseas. Time and their language expertise overruled special combat or team/unit training. Later, as the war dragged on, special requirements necessitated that some obtain paratrooper training, or special radio intercept classes and technical intelligence training. The MIS school routine and class studies were extremely demanding.

In fact, even the British, Australian and New Zealand armies demanded Nisei language personnel.⁸

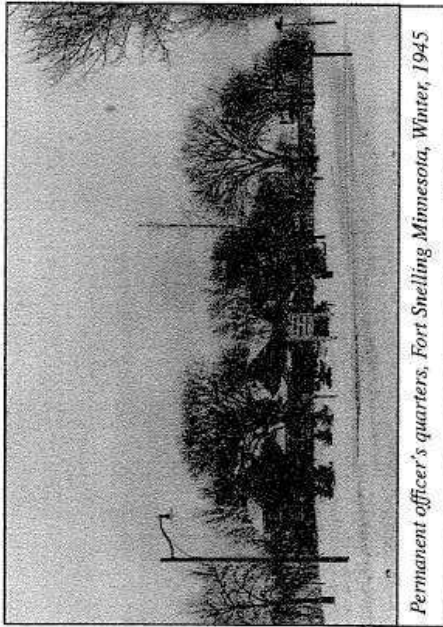
Richard Sakakida

The story of the Niseis in combat in the Pacific is replete with many instances of bravery, gallantry, and heroism, of the remarkable, unflinching loyalty of a minority to their mother country. One such hero was Richard Sakakida. Young Richard Sakakida was recruited by the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Police prior to Pearl Harbor and sent to Manila, Philippines.⁹ Mission: to spy on the Japanese businessmen located in Manila. Ironically, our army intelligence in Hawaii focused on the Philippines as the probable attack point during those threatening days prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, and they felt that the businessmen would have first hand knowledge of their military's intentions.

When the war did begin, Sakakida rejoined his unit and served courageously in the defense of Bataan and Corregidor. As General Douglas MacArthur and some of his higher headquarters staff personnel left the Philippines by air, he, as a valued linguist, was offered the final seat on the last plane to go to Australia. He declined, offering up his seat to a married AJA linguist, and continued serving our cause as the personal interpreter to Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainwright. After the surrender of the Philippines, Sakakida was imprisoned and interrogated daily in brutal fashion. The Japanese accused him of spying against Japan. "How could you be a traitor to your race and heritage and work against your mother country and for the Americans!" Sakakida held true to his faith in and loyalty to America and steadfastly denied being a spy—all this despite daily torture that included being stripped naked with his hands tied behind his back and stretched upwardly by rope around a rafter so that he barely touched his toes on the floor. Then, nefariously, they applied lighted matches or cigarettes to his inner thighs and gradually worked up to his buttocks and private parts.

Through all this Sakakida persevered always claiming to be

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. J-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.



Permanent officer's quarters, Fort Snelling Minnesota, Winter, 1945

Mondays through Fridays were devoted to classroom work and this included required night classes until 9 p.m. The "school of the soldier," to include the ubiquitous inspections, were held on Saturdays. Sundays continued to be the traditional sabbath day. Since heigo (military Japanese) proved to be difficult even for the knowledgeable Kibei, many students continued their study in the lairine after lights were extinguished. Some even continued their study with a flashlight under their blankets. Such dedication was commonplace.

Niseis to the Rescue

In the earlier phases of the war little was known of the contributions of the Nisei linguists by the other services, and the United States Navy and Marines had even barred them from enlisting or being attached to their units. They did not trust the Nisei. But as the Pacific battles continued and their value as intelligence personnel became evident (as interrogators, interpreters, translators, psychological operations broadcasters, cave flushers, decoders, etc.), and as the U.S. Army experienced the tremendous value of having Nisei as their eyes and ears, the other services began to clamor for Nisei linguists.

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

an American soldier and not a spy.¹⁰ This story does not end here. The Japanese had eventually transferred him to one of the Filipino POW camps. With his knowledge of the Japanese military discipline, habits, and culture he cleverly ingratiated himself to the camp commandant and the guards. He stole Japanese uniforms, equipment, and rifles, and had some Filipino POWs pose as the Japanese prison guards. He marched his Filipino guards to the main gate, overcame the Japanese guards and subsequently 500 Filipinos escaped into the jungles.¹¹ Sakakida melted into the jungles and continued to feed Filipino guerrillas information about Japanese units to the end of the war. Sakakida spent more than a year in the jungles of Luzon and was finally rescued despite being wounded, emaciated and disease ridden. Unfortunately, Sakakida was awarded only the bronze star for his wartime heroism and exploits against the enemy.¹²

Nisei Linguists in Combat

The Niseis took every advantage of the Japanese arrogant notion that their language was too complicated for an ordinary Occidental to exploit. The Japanese often sent messages in the clear, or in a simple *kana* code. The shooting down of the redoubtable Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is a case in point. Nisei linguist Harold Fudenna, in Port Moresby, New Guinea, intercepted the radio call concerning Yamamoto's inspection trip of his forces in Bougainville and immediately notified higher headquarters. Other Nisei linguists stationed in Alaska and Hawaii had also heard the call and so it was arranged for a P-38 fighter plane ambush of Yamamoto's twin engine "Betty" bomber and the six zero escort planes. The P-38s, coming from Henderson Field in Guadalcanal, had but fifteen minutes flying time over northern Bougainville but the planning was so precise that Yamamoto's plane was shot down.¹³

Another event that truly showed the inestimable worth of the Nisei was their superb translation of Japan's "Z" plan. Operation "Z" was Japan's intended, all-out counterattack plan against the U.S. Navy in the Central Pacific. This was to be her major, last-gasp

effort and she had mobilized her remaining capital ships and air effort for this battle. On 31 March, 1944, the two Japanese bombers transporting Admiral Mineichi Koga (Yamamoto's successor) and his chief of staff, Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome crashed into the sea off the southern coast of the Philippines during a severe tropical storm. Admiral Koga perished and Admiral Fukudome's waterproof container, which completely outlined Japan's Operation "Z," was picked up by Filipino fishermen and turned in to U.S. headquarters by the guerrillas. The front-line Niseis, realizing the strategic import of the document, had it immediately transported by submarine and aircraft to Allied Translator Interpreter Section headquarters at Brisbane, Australia. There, at ATIS, two of the best Kibei translators, Yoshikazu Yamada and George Sankey, along with three Caucasian officers that included Faubion Bowers (later to become MacArthur's personal interpreter), translated the entire document.¹⁴

ATIS sent a copy to Admiral Nimitz at Pearl Harbor and he had copies sent to every flag officer in the Pacific. Japan was completely unaware that their Operation "Z" plan had been compromised, and as the American forces began their invasions of Saipan, Tinian and Guam in June, 1944, Admiral Spruance's carrier fleet and submarines dealt the Imperial Japanese fleet a devastating defeat. We knew their every move. And so, during the Battle of the Philippines Sea, our forces shot down a record 346 planes on 19 June, 1944, the so-called "Marianas Turkey Shoot."¹⁵

Sergeants Matsumoto and Kubo

The Nisei proved their combat worthiness in many other ways. Sergeant Kenji Yasui came to be known as the "Little Sergeant York" when he volunteered to swim to an enemy held island on the Irrawaddy River in Burma. With his platoon out of sight he strode to the center of the island and commanded in Japanese, "I am Colonel Yamamoto of the Imperial Japanese Army. I have come to take you on a secret mission. Follow me." No one followed, so he repeated his order and soon seventeen Japanese soldiers came forth. He put

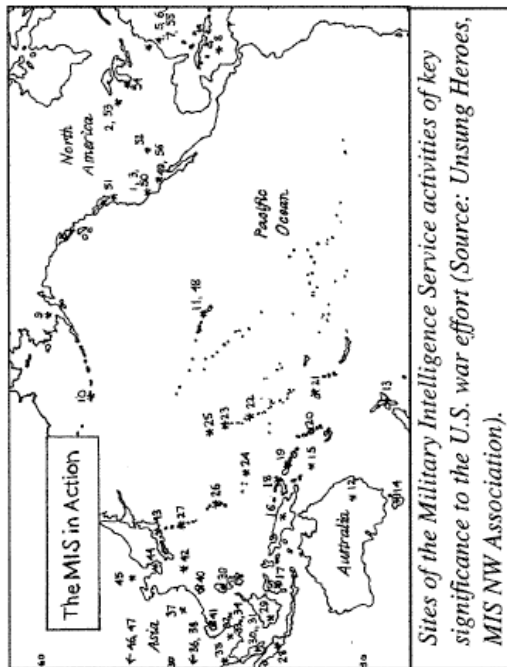
them through close order drill and when some threatened four POWs they were killed and he ordered the other thirteen to swim and push him across the river as he stood atop the raft.¹⁶ Sgt. Yasui was awarded the silver star for his 1944 "show of bravery."

Sergeant Roy Matsumoto's heroic exploits with Merrill's Marauders in Burma is another case in point. On 4 March, 1944, Matsumoto crawled within hearing distance of a Japanese unit about to attack. He hurried back to his defending unit to inform his commander of the impending attack. An ambush was set up and as the Japanese moved to their attack position Matsumoto shouted in Japanese "Susume! Susume!" ("Charge! Charge!"). The premature attack resulted in 54 enemy dead and no American casualties. Matsumoto was awarded the Legion of Merit medal.

One month later Matsumoto and the Marauders were completely surrounded at Nphum Ga, Burma. In the midst of the Japanese assault he stood up and, posing as a Japanese officer, ordered a fatal "Banzai" suicide charge into the strong point of the U.S. defense line. The fact that Matsumoto survived is a miracle and the Marauder survivors all felt that he had saved their lives. When quizzed why Matsumoto was not put in for the Congressional Medal of Honor the commanding officer remarked, "He was only an enlistment man doing his duty."¹⁷

Sergeant Bob Hoichi Kubo received the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery on a cave-flushing mission in Saipan. There were approximately 24,000 civilians in Saipan, eighty six percent of whom were Japanese. Learning from a POW that Japanese soldiers were holding a large number of civilians captive in a cave, Kubo slid down a rope into the cave and laid down his .45 caliber pistol before the Japanese soldiers. Then he shared his K-rations with the hungry soldiers and coolly talked them into surrendering. Kubo then led the soldiers and more than 100 civilians out of the cave. This occurred at the time when hundreds of civilians, especially mothers with their young in hand, were committing suicide by jumping into the raging sea hundreds of feet below because they had been indoctrinated by the Japanese propaganda that Americans were rapacious, abominable monsters.¹⁸

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.



Sites of the Military Intelligence Service activities of key significance to the U.S. war effort (Source: *Unsung Heroes*, MIS NW Association).

The MIS in Action—Map Legend

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| 1. MISLS at Presidio of San Francisco, California | 23. Marshall Islands | 40. Taiwan |
| 2. MISLS at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling, MN | 24. Kwajalein | 41. Hong Kong |
| 3. ALS-DLI at Presidio of Monterey, CA | 25. Eniwetok | 42. New York City |
| 4. Washington, D.C. | 26. Ponape | 43. Japan |
| 5. Camp Ritchie, MD | 27. Bikini | 44. Korea |
| 6. New York | 28. Saipan | 45. Manchuria |
| 7. Virginia | 29. Truk | 46. France |
| 8. Fort Holabird | 30. Palau | 47. Germany |
| 9. Fort Hill Farms Sta., Caribbean Sea | 31. Yap | 48. MIS Veterans' Club, Hawaii |
| 10. Alaska | 32. Wake Island | 49. MIS Club of So. CA, L.A., CA |
| 11. Hawaii | 33. Marianas Islands | 50. MIS Assoc. of N. CA, San Fran., CA |
| 12. Australia | 34. Guam | 51. MIS-Northwest Assoc., Seattle, WA |
| 13. New Zealand | 35. Rota | 52. Rocky Mountain MIS Veterans of MN, MN |
| 14. Tammah | 36. Saipan | 53. Japanese American Veterans of MN, MN |
| 15. Coral Sea Islands | 37. Tinian | 54. The American Legion Chicago, N. East Port #165, Chicago, IL |
| | 38. Iwo Jima | 55. Japan's Assoc. of Veterans of MN, MN |
| | 39. Sumatra-Java | 56. Nisei Women's Army Corp., Los Angeles, CA |
| | 40. Borneo-Sarawak | |
| | 41. Malaya | |
| | 42. Singapore | |
| | 43. Vietnam | |
| | 44. Cambodia | |
| | 45. Thailand | |
| | 46. Burma | |
| | 47. India | |
| | 48. China | |
| | 49. Nepal | |
| | 50. The Philippines | |

at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, continued a fresh supply of linguists overseas as replacements for the many other combat linguists who returned home deservedly. Following MacArthur's 3-D edicts (destruction, demobilization, and democracy), Nisei soldiers accompanied their American officers and civilian leaders all throughout Japan to explain and aid the Japanese in understanding our occupa-



Nisei Soldiers, Sgts. Asahino and Yoshika enjoying friendship of Mrs. Iwabuchi, a Japanese national.

tion program.

Nisei served honorably in undertaking the destruction phase of the once potent Japanese war machine; not only did they uncover hidden ammo caches and dumps, but they tracked down elements of Zaibatsu war production factories which were not fully destroyed. Also, Nisei interpreters and translators helped investigate and apprehend war criminals, both class A and B types. Some participated in the prosecution or defense of these criminals. An interesting episode related by Sergeant James Tanabe recalled how he was at the botched suicide attempt of Premier General Hideki Tojo and saved the general's life by donating his blood as Tojo's life waned in the balance. He subsequently became Tojo's personal prison guard until Tojo was hanged by order of the International War Crimes Tribunal.²¹

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. J-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

Interrogation Techniques of the Nisei

Initially, U.S. interrogation of Japanese POWs emphasized the strict, overbearing, dictatorial "you-do-as-I-command-or-else!" approach. This was the method used against the Germans. Nisei linguists, however, perceptive of Japanese traits, demonstrated kindness and understanding, making timely and appropriate use of food and tobacco to gain valuable information. After all, the Japanese soldier was trained to fight and die for the emperor. Their service schooling did not include prisoner of war conduct; one was to fight to the very last. So Nisei interrogators always made sure that the POW was fed, clothed, cleaned up, and reassured that he would not be abused and destroyed. Once reassured, the prisoner literally "spilled his guts out" in keen appreciation. Enemy positions, weapons emplacements, ammo caches, names of commanders, officers and NCOs, unit tactics, the order of battle—all were readily obtained by the interrogators. Our forces were thereby able to accomplish ambushes successfully and the field commanders continuously praised and repeated the dictum that the Nisei were the eyes and ears of our front line units.¹⁹

MIS Linguists in Occupation of Japan

With the end of the shooting war on 15 August, 1945, the language focus shifted to the Occupation of Japan. *Heigo* (military terminology) was out and civil Japanese, along with military and government terminology and policies, were stressed, both in training and in the field. Here, again, America's occupation of Japan could not have succeeded so smoothly without the language expertise and presence of the Nisei. They were the bridge of understanding between the democracy espousing America and the militaristic Japan. During the occupation, Japanese citizens marveled at the role played by the Nisei, for they came to be MacArthur's spearhead in our thrust to democratize Japan.²⁰

The Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS)

many died fighting for values that they believed in—individual freedom, dignity, loyalty, honor, and duty to country. They wanted to prove that American culture is not a matter of skin color but one of character, faith and loyalty to their nation.

Epilogue

Fifty years after their war experiences, many of America's samurai warriors are in their golden years and thousands more have since departed. What have their pains and sacrifices brought forth? How have they made it better for the AJAs of today? Are the present AJAs and other Asian Americans appreciative of the great sufferings experienced by these WWII veterans? The Freedom of Information Act of 1974 allowed many of the secret documents that the Nisei linguists translated to be viewed by the public.²³ Yet, the Niseis through past customs of reticence (known as *enryo* in Japanese) failed to let the public know of their worthy exploits. Now, gradually, they have come to realize the historical significance of bestowing their legacy to the future AJAs. The reunion panel-discussions and subsequent write-ups, be they autobiographical sketches, unit histories, news and magazine articles, books and videos, have been sincere, edifying, and, often, gripping episodic look-sees into the Nisei Yankee samurai. They were brave soldiers who served and fought hard to win the right to be called Americans.

Notes

1. Approximately two thirds were American citizens, their parents were known as *Issei* (first generation), and they were born in Japan. Their children, American citizens by birth, are called *Nisei* (second generation), the grandchildren are called *Sansei* (third) and the great grandchildren are called *Yonsei* (fourth generation.)
2. The Hawaii Territorial Guard (HTG) had been organized to do home security duty when the Hawaii National Guard was federalized in 1941, prior to Pearl Harbor.
3. Harrington, p.33.

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

In the demobilization phase the Nisei were employed to hasten and smooth the process by which over eight million overseas Japanese soldiers and civilians were brought back to their homeland. Of crucial importance was their service as counterintelligence agents who spotted and ferreted out communist agents who had been recruited while prisoners after the war in Siberia. The major port of entry for these repatriates was Maizuru in southwestern Japan.

The True Value of the Nisei Soldiers

A major purpose of this essay is to impress upon the reader the truly heroic exploits of the AJA soldier in the Pacific war. Their value to the United States during World War II is inestimable. General C. H. Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief, said: "The Nisei saved a million lives and shortened the war by two years." Long time United States Senator Daniel Inouye, who fought valiantly in Europe with the other major AJA unit, the 442nd RCT, said in the 50th Anniversary reunion of the MIS vets:

We (Nisei) all started together when Pearl Harbor exploded, pushed by EO 9066 into camps, not fit to be drafted until the president opened the draft. The turnout was unprecedented, but here is where those of you here took another lonely step forward, serving without public recognition, serving with men who were suspicious of you, or who hated you.... We had an easy field; we knew what our enemy looked like but you didn't, and to that the stories of the 442nd fighting in Europe made the news, but there was very few for the Nisei in the Pacific engaged in military intelligence. We need to correct and acknowledge you, the Nisei in MIS are the real heroes. I have great admiration for you and your contributions. As a matter of honor, why would anyone take the assignment that you took? ²²

Thousands of Nisei, despite incarceration of themselves and their families in hastily set up camps in deserts, swamps and high mountain plateaus, god forsaken, and treated as prisoners, still volunteered or were drafted to serve in combat against their ancestral roots. They were willing to die for America, their birth-land and

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

4. Brigadier General John Weckerling (then Lieutenant Colonel) and Colonel Kai E. Rasmussen (then Captain).
5. Testing was then expanded to include those in Hawaii and those incarcerated in the relocation camps. Of the 3,700 surveyed only 3% were accomplished in Japanese, another 4% were proficient, and a further 3% could be useful only after a prolonged period of schooling.
6. Weckerling, p.187.
7. Nisei linguists proved their immense worth in translating the enemy's Midway and Marianas Battle plans, as well as accompanying the U.S. Marines and Army invasion units into Guadalcanal, Attu, Kiska, Tarawa, Gilbert and Marshall Islands, New Guinea, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, etc. (*The Pacific War And Peace*, pp. 17, 27-29, 38, 43, 51).
8. *The Pacific War And Peace*, pp. 58-59.
9. Harrington, p. 4.
10. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Sakakida (USAF Retired), gave this poignant, courageous report orally at the MIS National Reunion, Monterey, California, 31 October 1992.
11. Harrington, p.115.
12. *The Pacific War And Peace*, p. 14. On 17 February, 1999, Sakakida was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service medal for his heroic WWII work in the Philippines.
13. *The Pacific War And Peace*, p. 38.
14. Yoshikazu, Yamada, "My War Time Experiences," MIS Veterans Club of Hawaii, 50th Anniversary Reunion 8-10 July 1993.
15. Yoshikazu, Yamada, "My War Time Experiences," Sunao Ishio, quoted in "The MIS Story," *Rafu Shimpō*, 12 November 1993, P.5.
16. Ishimaru Military Intelligence Service Language School, U.S. Army, TecCom Production, Los Angeles, CA., 1991., p.18.
17. *The Pacific War And Peace*, p.62.
18. Ishimaru, Military Intelligence Service Language School, U.S. Army, p. 18.
19. John Aiso, p. 80.
20. The author served with the Occupation Forces in 1947-48. Japanese often remarked that America was truly a great country in

- even allowing ethnic Japanese Nisei to serve as officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers in the victorious U.S. armed forces.
21. Sergeant James Tanabe's account of Premier General Tojo's imprisonment at Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, given at the MIS Capital Reunion, Washington D.C., 21-23 October 1993.
 22. U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, guest speaker, MIS Capital Reunion, Washington D.C., 21-23 October 1993.
 23. Over 3 million documents were translated.

Selected Bibliography

Books

- Chuman, Frank F. *The Bamboo People: The Law And Japanese-Americans* (Del Mar, CA: Publishers Incorporated, 1976).
- Daniels, Roger. *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese-Americans And World War II* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972).
- Duus, Masayo U., *Unlikely Liberators, The Men Of The 100th And 442nd* (Honolulu, HA: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).
- Harrington, John D., *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role Of Nisei In America's Pacific Victory* (Detroit, MI: Pettigrew Enterprises, 1979).**,
- Hosokawa, Bill, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York, NY: W. Morrow Inc., 1969).*
- Ichimokuchi, Tad, ed.; with Daniel Aiso, *John Aiso And The MIS: Japanese American Soldiers In The Military Intelligence Service, World War II* (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of So. CA., 1988).**,
- Ishimaru, Stone S., *Military Intelligence Service Language School: U.S. Army* (Los Angeles, CA: TecCom Productions, 1991).*
- Ishimaru, Stone S., *Military Intelligence Service Language School: Camp Savage, Minnesota 1942-1944* (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of So. California, 1992).*
- Moulin, Pierre, *U.S. Samurai In Bruyeres*, (Luxembourg, France, Rapid Press, 1993).
- Ota, Masahide, *The Battle Of Okinawa: The Typhoon Of Steel And Bombs* (Tokyo, Japan: Kume Publishing Co., 1984).

Courtesy of: Nakasone, EM. *The Nisei Soldier*, 2nd ed. j-Press, White Bear Lake, MN, 1999, pp. 54-71.

The Pacific War And Peace: Americans Of Japanese Ancestry In The Military Intelligence Service, 1941-1952, MIS Association of Northern California and The National Japanese American Historical Society, 1991.**

Tsukano, John, *Bridge Of Love* (Honolulu, HA: Hawaii Hosts, Inc., 1985).

Turner, David, *Legacy Of Merrill's Marauders* (Turner Publishing Co., 1987).

Yoshida, Jim, with Bill Hosokawa, *The Two Worlds Of Jim Yoshida* (New York, NY: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1972).

Albums, Newspapers, Other Publications

Americans Of Japanese Ancestry And The United States Constitution (San Francisco, CA: National Japanese-American Historical Society, 1987).

Autobiographies (Rocky Mountain MIS Veterans Club, 1992).

"50 Years of Excellence," (Presidio of Monterey, Defense Language Institute, Public Affairs Office, 50th Anniversary 1941-1991, 1 November, 1991).

"The Kibei," in *Pacific Citizen*, Special Holiday Issue, Vol. 99, No. 25, 21-18 December, 1984 (Monterey Park, CA).

"The Men of the Military Intelligence Service," (Honolulu, HA: *The Hawaii Herald*, Vol. 5, No. 18, 21 September, 1984).

"The Military Intelligence Service," (Honolulu, HA: *The Hawaii Herald*, Vol. 14, No. 13, 2 July 1993).

MIS Capital Reunion, "The Nisei Veteran: An American Patriot," Washington D.C., 21-23 October 1993. (Interviews and Program).

THE MISLS ALBUM, U.S. War Department General Staff, Washington D.C., 1946).

MIS Club of So. California Newsletter, Vol. 8, No. 6, November/December, 1993 (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of So. California).

MIS Club of So. California Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 1, January/February, 1994 (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of So. California).

MIS 50th Anniversary Hawaii Reunion, Honolulu, 7-10 July 1993.

(Interviews and Program).

"MIS, Part I," in *Pacific Citizen*, Vol. II 7, No. 16, 5-11 November, 1993 (Monterey Park, CA).

"MIS, Part II," in *Pacific Citizen*, Vol. II 8, No. 17, 12-18 November, 1993 (Monterey Park, CA)

MIS 50th Anniversary Sentimental Journey Reunion, Minneapolis, MN., 28-30 May 1997. (Interviews and Program).

San Francisco and Monterey, CA: The MIS 50th Anniversary Reunion Program, 29 October-2 November, 1991.

Savage Review, Vol. 8, No. 9, May, 1992 (Savage, MN).

"Secret Soldiers," (Honolulu, HA: *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 4 July 1993, p.1).

Yamashita, Nob, "Fighting My Ancestors: An Autobiography" in *MIS Club of So. California Newsletter*, Vol. 8, No. 7, Christmas Edition, 1993, p. 7-8 (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of So. California).

Audio-visual Media Sources

Ding, Loni, "The Color of Honor," (San Francisco, CA: Vox Productions, 1987).

Kitano, Harry, "Relocation of Japanese Americans: Right or Wrong?," (Culver City, CA., Zenger Productions, Inc.).

Narahara, Sheryl K., "Fifty Years of Silence: The Untold Story of Japanese American Soldiers in the Pacific Theater, 1941-1952," (San Francisco, CA: National Japanese American Historical Society, 1993).