



THE MISLS Album

Osaka Kato



Where the M.I.
Boys Were Sent

ALBUM
•1946•



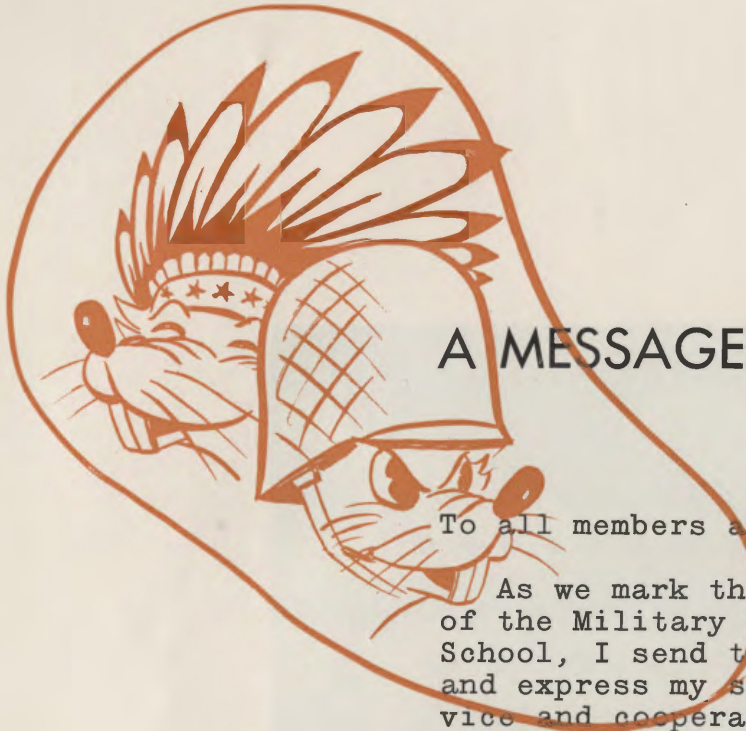
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

To the Graduates of the MISLS who gave their lives
in the performance of their duties ● ● ● ● ● ●

THEY, WHO HAD ALL TOO GOOD CAUSE TO
KNOW THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THE LAND OF
THEIR BIRTH ● THEY, WHO NEVERTHELESS
CHOSE TO OFFER THEIR SPECIAL SKILLS FOR ITS
SERVICE ● THEY, WHO WORKED ARDUOUSLY
DESPITE ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES, TO GIVE
THEIR SKILLS DIRECTION AND PURPOSE ● THEY,
WHO WHEN CAME THE TIME TO MAKE THE
SUPREME CHOICE ELECTED TO PERFORM, AT
THE COST OF THEIR LIVES, THEIR TASKS SO VI-
TAL IN THE SCHEME OF THEIR COUNTRY'S EF-
FORTS.

*"From these honored dead we take increased
devotion to that cause for which they gave the
last full measure of devotion."*

—LINCOLN, GETTYSBURG ADDRESS



A MESSAGE

To all members and former members of the MISLS:

As we mark the 55th month since the activation of the Military Intelligence Service Language School, I send to each of you my personal greeting and express my sincere appreciation of your service and cooperation with the School.

From the time of its establishment at the Presidio of San Francisco, California on 1 November 1941 through successive transfers to Camp Savage, Minnesota on 25 May 1942 and Fort Snelling, Minnesota on 15 August 1944, this school has served our country well in war and in peace. This has required painstaking and conscientious work on the part of the Staff, the Faculty, Civilian Employees, Soldiers and the Graduates themselves, numbering more than five thousand, who went into the field. To each of you who have had a part in this School, I say that I feel we have thus far discharged these obligations in the best traditions of the Army.

But while we may find satisfaction in our performance to date, we cannot pause in our work, for it is not done. And it will not be done until final and everlasting peace is won. Until that time we must stay on the job giving to it the best we have. Our record thus far must spur us to greater service in the days ahead.

Very sincerely yours,

KAI E. RASMUSSEN
Colonel, CAC
Commandant

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PART ONE

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HISTORY OF MISLS

The Military Intelligence Service Language School was conceived during the days prior to 7 December 1941. Considering the strained relations between Japan and the United States, and the immediate threat of war, a small group of officers with a previous tour of duty in Japan recognized the need for an intelligence unit to combat the difficulties which would occur in the process of going to war with Japan. This group of officers was headed by Brigadier General John Weckerling and Colonel Kai E. Rasmussen, then Lieutenant Colonel and Captain respectively. Japan's war strategy and orders would be in a foreign tongue. In the actual prosecution of war, intelligence work would not be successful without the knowledge of the Japanese language. Someone must do the work.

A nucleus for a school was established under the strictest military secrecy. Brigadier General Weckerling and Colonel Rasmussen, at that time on duty with the Fourth Army Intelligence staff, foresaw that qualified Japanese language personnel would be essential. Caucasian personnel qualified in the language were dishearteningly few, and with the crisis rapidly approaching, there was little time to train additional Caucasian personnel. It was then that the decision was made to use Nisei (Americans of Japanese ancestry) to solve the linguistic problems presented by contact with Japan. It was admittedly a gamble for the United States, for many believed then that the Nisei could not be trusted to stand the acid test of battle employment against their own race and blood.

It was hoped at first that there would be enough Japanese-speaking Nisei so that only a few weeks' review in general Japanese vocabulary and a little instruction in military Japanese terminology and combat intelligence would be sufficient to fit them for field duty. These hopes did not materialize. After a survey of the first 3,700 Nisei, it was found that only three per cent were accomplished linguists, only about another four per cent were proficient and a further three per cent could be useful only after a prolonged period of training. The Americanization of the Nisei on the Pacific Coast had advanced more rapidly than the United States public was aware. It quickly became evident that a special training school would be required to make the Nisei reasonably useful to the armed forces as Japanese linguists. Even Nisei well qualified in general Japanese had to be trained in military vocabulary and forms of writing.