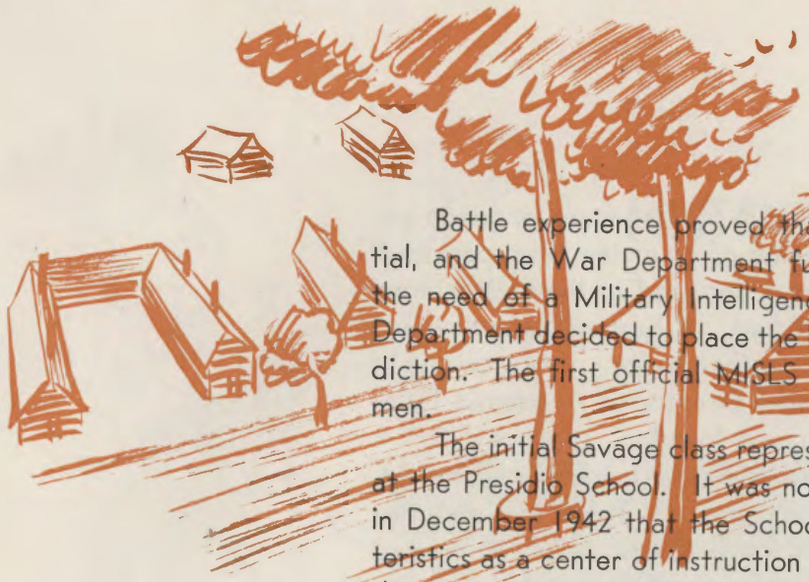
The mustering of loyal Nisei qualified in the Japanese language became the primary difficulty. The screening of all of the Nisei personnel conscripted through Selective Service and stationed at the various army units on the Pacific Coast was accomplished. A personal interview and examination was given each Nisei soldier in the service. It was on one of these screening tours that the former Nisei Director of Academic Training at Fort Snelling, Major John F. Aiso, was found.

On the same trip, Pfc Arthur Kaneko, who later became a lieutenant, was located and found to be a qualified linguist. These two and two civilian instructors, Akira Oshida and Shigeya Kihara, were ear-marked for the teaching staff of the School. The four worked feverishly preparing textbooks and class room exercises for the Japanese language course.

On 1 November 1941 the Fourth Army Intelligence School opened with an additional civilian instructor, Tetsuo Imagawa, and 60 students. The School consisted of a Commandant, an Adjutant, a cadre of three NCOs, eight civilian instructors and 60 enlisted students. At this time John Aiso, then Pfc, was discharged into the Enlisted Reserve Corps to assume duties as Chief Instructor. Of the 60, 58 were Nisei and two were Caucasians who had previous language training. At the outbreak of the war with Japan on 7 December 1941 the School was struggling along in a remote converted hangar at Crissy Field in the Presidio. With the actual prosecution of the war started, studies were intensified. Subsequently, 15 of the students were relieved of their studies because of failure to meet the exacting requirements. Commencement found 45 of the original 60 graduating with 35 of them being sent to the Pacific Theater of Operations, in the Guadalcanal area and Alaskan area. These 35 language specialists, being pioneers in this field, left without any ratings whatsoever since there were no existing T/O's for work of this kind. Not until a year later, when their work was recognized by various Division and Army commanders, did they receive their first stripes. The first campaign in which the men proved themselves was the Battle of Guadalcanal. These "guinea pig" language specialists were also instrumental in translating the Imperial Japanese Navy Battle Plans, which proved to be the deciding factor in the United States Navy's dealing the Japanese Fleet its worst defeat in naval history off the northeast coast of the Philippines.

By the time the first class was graduated, the teaching staff had increased to eight civilian instructors. Owing to the subsequent mass exodus of Japanese Americans from the West Coast for security reasons and because of a need for increased facilities for the School, the Fourth Army Intelligence School was deactivated. The teaching staff, increased by the remaining graduates, became the instructor cadre for Camp Savage, which was undergoing activation by the War Department in Minnesota.



Battle experience proved that Intelligence Corps men were essential, and the War Department fully acknowledged the importance and the need of a Military Intelligence School. It was then that the War Department decided to place the Intelligence School under its direct jurisdiction. The first official MISLS class began on 1 June 1942 with 200 men.

The initial Savage class represented little change from the curriculum at the Presidio School. It was not until the second class got under way in December 1942 that the School began to take on its special characteristics as a center of instruction in military Japanese. It has been found that to expect students to obtain a grasp of both military and general-usage language was to demand too much of them, and with the second Savage class, the stress was laid on the military side.

The third class opened in the summer of 1943, after the entire school system had been re-organized into three divisions: upper, middle and lower, according to the student's abilities. At this time the Military Research and Liaison Section, headed by Akira Oshida, and the Translation Section, under Yutaka Munakata, were set up. In July 1943, the MISLS consisted of 23 academic sections; in October of that year it had jumped to 41. By graduation time for the third class, 46 sections were in session.

This third class was also the first to contain a separate officer candidates class of 35 Caucasians with previous background in Japanese either as the result of training at the Army's Intensive Japanese Language School at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor or residence in Japan. Most of these 35 were commissioned as Second Lieutenants for duty as language officers with the teams of Nisei enlisted men turned out by the School. The class also included several special groups: nine officers and seven enlisted men of the Canadian Army took the course, as did ten Marine Corps officers, who were graduates of the Navy's Japanese language school at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Twenty-four members of the third class were sent to Fort Benning upon graduation for paratroop training and upon their return were assigned to field units as airborne interpreters.

The fourth and last Savage class, begun in January 1944, brought the School to peak size while in Savage: 52 academic sections as of July 1944, with 27 civilian and 65 enlisted instructors. With this class the Upper-Middle-Lower divisions scheme was replaced by the so-called "collegiate" (for their resemblance to the separate college within a university) divisions identified alphabetically, with no distinction among them as to student abilities. At the same time, the academic term was lengthened from six to nine months. Once again an officer candidates

class of 107 students was included in the total of 1,100 in attendance. A class of officers, undergoing special training for work with the Office of Strategic Services, and one of school undergraduates, graduates and men from the Navy and Paratroopers receiving instruction in "crash intelligence," were among the special groups included in the fourth class.

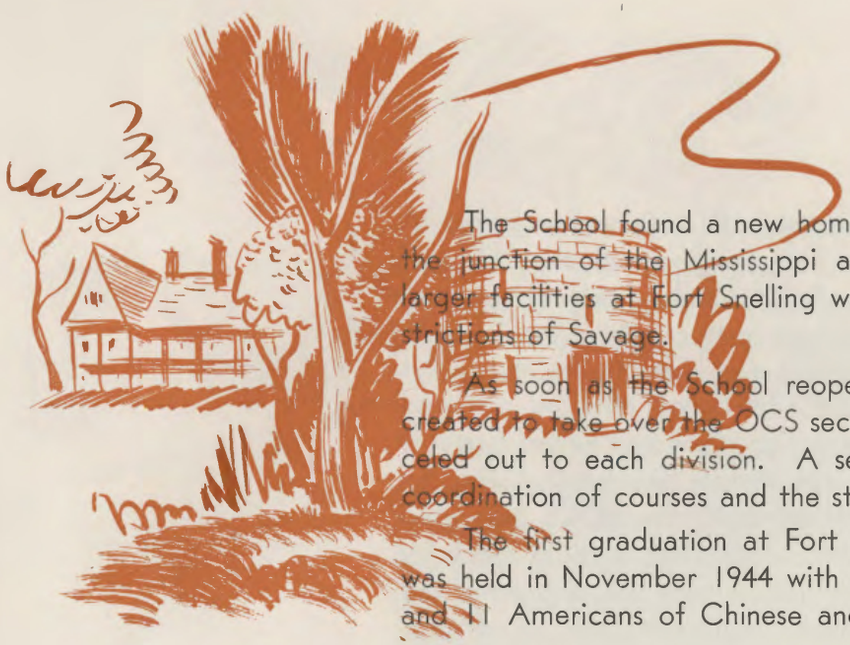
Naturally, this balloon-like expansion of the School required increased facilities. A gradual program of construction which had added barracks and classrooms to the original plant was sharply accelerated with the addition of 36 new classrooms, several barracks, five BOQs (also used to house enlisted instructors and officer candidates), a radio shack for the super-secret radio monitoring activities, a mess hall, a theater and auditorium, a gymnasium with full athletic equipment and an officers' mess.

By the fall of 1944, the MISLS was an established service school which had turned out some 1,600 enlisted graduates, 142 officer candidates, and 53 officers, who had had courses in reading, writing, and speaking Japanese; translation, interpretation, and interrogation; captured document analysis; *heigo* (Japanese military and technical terms); Japanese geography and map reading; radio monitoring; social, political, economic, and cultural background of Japan; *sosho* (cursive writing); and order of Battle of the Japanese army.

In the spring of 1943, two celebrated dignitaries paid a visit to Camp Savage. First came Major General George V. Strong, at that time Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, on the War Department General Staff, followed by Honorable Joseph C. Grew, former United States ambassador to Japan who addressed a special assembly of the School. The importance of such visits as these to the students, who for reasons of wartime security had to do their jobs out of the spotlight of publicity and who nevertheless needed to be impressed with the essentiality of those jobs, cannot be calculated.

Savage "alumni" will probably long remember the dramatic retreat ceremonies at which overseas-bound graduates were given their send-offs. With the entire School Battalion dressed up at a stiff "Present Arms," the outbound teams marched down the center of the improvised parade grounds to receive the good wishes of the Commandant and his staff.

Despite the enlargement and improvement of Camp Savage, facilities were inadequate and overtaxed. A large part of the Camp supply and administrative functions were handled through Fort Snelling. Logic and expediency clearly pointed to a move to this permanent Army installation, at that time standing only partially occupied and offering by virture of its location and facilities many more conveniences than Camp Savage could hope to match.



The School found a new home in historic Fort Snelling, situated at the junction of the Mississippi and the Minnesota Rivers. Now the larger facilities at Fort Snelling would alleviate to some extent the restrictions of Savage.

As soon as the School reopened at Fort Snelling, Division E was created to take over the OCS sections, which heretofore had been parceled out to each division. A separate OCS Division facilitated the coordination of courses and the standardization of instruction.

The first graduation at Fort Snelling and the ninth of the School was held in November 1944 with 382 Americans of Japanese ancestry and 11 Americans of Chinese ancestry receiving their diplomas.

Soon after this, a group of instructors was relieved for an important assignment at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. This was the first of such faculty depletions. It was followed by appointments to the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia, top priority overseas assignments, and, after V-J Day discharges from the service.

The Chinese Division was organized in February of 1945 and placed under the Training School for administrative purposes. This division must be distinguished from the classes of Americans of Chinese ancestry in the regular divisions. The latter were trained in the Japanese language while the Chinese Division received training in Chinese.

In June 1945, the WAC sections were activated. This was to be the first and last group of WACs to be trained at the School. Their curriculum followed that of the regular six-month course given to the men with the exception of the oral subjects which were omitted. Since the WACs could not be used as interpreters and interrogators, they were trained only in the written language to qualify as translators.

After the defeat of the German forces in Europe, all the might of the U. S. Armed Forces was turned on the Japanese enemy in the Pacific. Acceleration of operations in the Pacific meant a need for more and more linguists. At the MISLS, the only source of these linguists, every effort had to be made to prepare the men and get them out as fast as it was humanly possible.

The terms of all sections were shortened considerably, in some cases from six to eight weeks. Not only was every daylight hour given to instruction and evenings to supervised study; but Saturday morning hours ordinarily utilized for examinations were also scheduled for instruction. Instructors were placed on duty every evening, not merely to supervise study, but also to tutor the students. This was actually a return to the former six-month course for the nine-month sections.

To meet new demands, the oral language course was organized. This was a radical departure from the fundamental ideas of the MISLS, where the emphasis was primarily on the training of men to work in written Japanese and only incidentally in the spoken tongue. In spite of the limitations of oral linguists, it was realized that they would be valuable and needed in combat and in the initial phases of occupation in the Pacific. With this in mind, the Oral Language School, designated as Division F, was activated in July 1945.

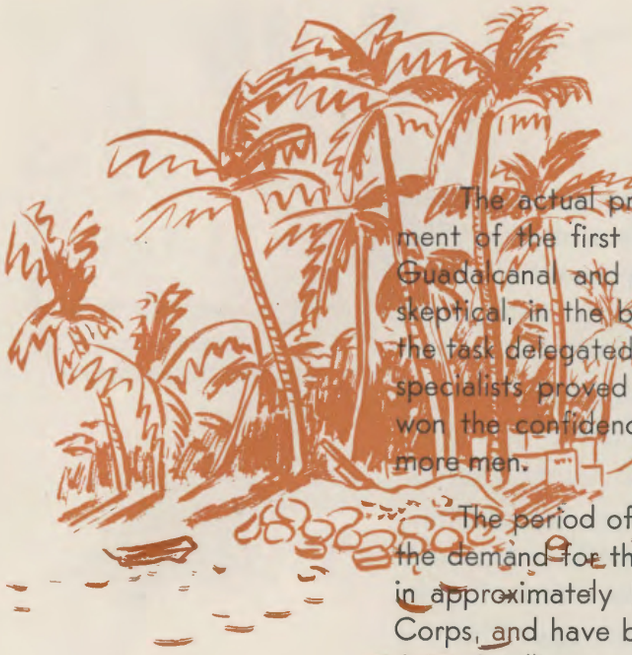
Subsequent to V-J Day, there was a shift in emphasis from Military Japanese to general Japanese, and in particular, to Civil Affairs Japanese. The unconditional surrender of Japan did not in the least lessen the demand for Japanese language personnel. On the contrary, quantitatively and qualitatively, the demand became more insistant. Replacements for earlier graduates who were eligible for discharge became imperative. Civil affairs language work called for language men of higher caliber than that demanded by combat intelligence.

To meet these needs, the curricula were revamped. The School term was set at six months for all sections. Military Japanese courses such as military reading, field service regulations, applied tactics, captured documents, military interpretation and PW interrogation were dropped and courses like *Heigo* were cut to the minimum in time and content. The hours assigned to these subjects were given to the general Japanese courses. Reading and translation of the *Naganuma Readers,* Japanese to English translation, and Chinese characters and dictation were scheduled for every academic period. New courses like Civil Affairs terms and Japanese Government and Administration were added. New teaching materials were prepared to take care of the shift from military to civil Japanese. The job of winning the war had been finished but the job of winning the peace had yet to be accomplished.

In October 1945, a Korean language class was initiated with Lt Calvin Kim in charge. The class started with seven enlisted men and one officer. Their major program was study of the Korean language. During the course of study, additional students were found and graduation on 16 March 1946 found 13 men receiving diplomas.

In October 1945, MISLS had reached its peak enrollment of 1,836 students in 103 sections.

The closing chapter of Fort Snelling was highlighted with the graduation of 307 students at the 21st commencement in the School's history, and the 11th at Fort Snelling on 8 June 1946. The MISLS had by then graduated some 6,000 men.



The actual process of using expert linguists began with the assignment of the first graduates from the Presidio of San Francisco to the Guadalcanal and Alaskan areas. Some of the unit commanders were skeptical, in the beginning, of using these men, but their proficiency in the task delegated to them became evident. Battle-tested, the language specialists proved to be more efficient than originally estimated. They won the confidence of unit commanders, who in turn requisitioned for more men.

The period of academic training was accelerated to keep pace with the demand for these men. Graduates of the School have been placed in approximately 130 different Army and Navy units, with the Marine Corps, and have been loaned to our Allies. They were attached to the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area, with headquarters in Hawaii. Teams of at least 10 linguists were selected for each of the headquarters of more than a score of infantry divisions in the Pacific.

Other language teams were assigned to the Joint Intelligence Collecting Agency which later combined with British Intelligence to form the South East Asia Translator and Interrogator Center with headquarters in New Delhi. Teams were assigned to Merrill's Maurauders, Mar's Task Force, Far Eastern Air Forces and the China-Burma-India theater. During the Attu and Kiska campaigns in Alaska, nearly 50 MIS graduates were working out of the Advance Alaskan Department, which had its headquarters in Adak.

Intelligence men trained at the Presidio (San Francisco), Camp Savage and Fort Snelling became the eyes and ears of not only the American fighting forces, but also that of the other Allied armies fighting Japan. The Army had prepared these men for manifold duties as interrogators, interpreters, translators, radio announcers, propaganda writers and cave flushers.

In the crucial battles of the Pacific, the enemy did not know (nor did thousands of Americans at home) that they were confronted not only by vastly superior American arms and daring Yankee intrepidity, but by an enemy who already had much detailed information of the Japanese plans for attack and defense. They had lulled themselves into a complacent sense of security. They thought that complexities of the Japanese language in which their plans were written and communicated would be unfathomable to the westerners.

For thousands of Americans on the fighting fronts, this was so. They knew, however, that the language specialists, with their knowledge of Japanese, were one of the chief agents for obtaining enemy intelligence

and plans. These language specialists, working selflessly and in complete anonymity, cared for little but to execute their duties to the maximum. They translated from Japanese to English the enemy information concerning tactical decisions and dispositions. This information greatly assisted our commanders in the field in making decisions, conducting effective maneuvers and avoiding surprise. Never before in history did one Army know so much concerning its enemy prior to actual engagement as did the American army during most of the Pacific campaign.

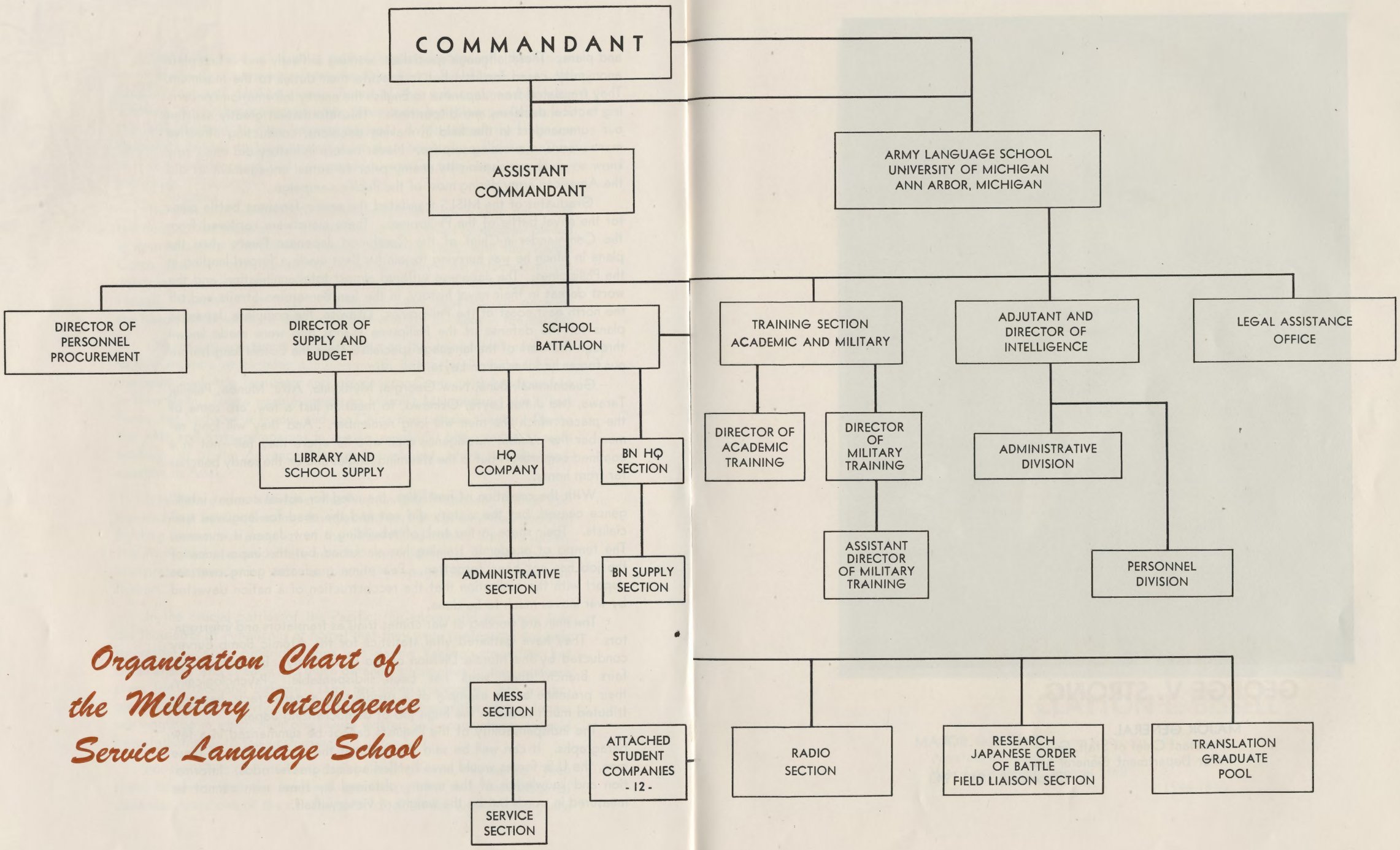
Graduates of the MISLS translated the entire Japanese battle plans for the naval battle of the Philippines. These plans were captured from the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Japanese Fleets when the plane in which he was hurrying to join his fleet made a forced landing in the Philippines. The Japanese suffered almost total annihilation, and the worst defeat in their naval history, in the San Bernardino Straits and off the north east coast of the Philippines. Likewise, the complete Japanese plans for the defense of the Philippine Islands also were made known through the work of the language specialists from the School long before our forces had landed on Leyte.

Guadalcanal, Buna, New Georgia, Myitkyina, Attu, Munda, Peleliu, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, Leyte, Okinawa, to mention just a few, are some of the places which the men will long remember. And they will long remember the combat intelligence men who lie where they fell—not in a confined cemetery—but in the steaming jungles and on the sandy beaches far from home.

With the cessation of hostilities, the need for actual combat intelligence ceased, but the victory did not end the need for language specialists. Their share in the task of rebuilding a new Japan is immense. The tempo of academic training has slackened but the importance of the job has not been forgotten. Peacetime graduates going overseas depart with the realization that the reconstruction of a nation devasted by war leaves much to be done.

The men are working at war crimes trials as translators and interrogators. They have gathered vital statistics for the Atomic Bomb Survey conducted by the Morale Division of the U. S. Army. In the Civil Affairs Branch, their work has been indispensable. Psychologically, their presence as an example of a product of a democracy, has contributed much to aid in the huge job of democratizing Japan.

The indispensability of the linguists cannot be summarized in a few paragraphs. It can well be said that without the participation of these men, the U.S. forces would have battled against greater odds. Information and knowledge of the enemy obtained by these men cannot be measured in words but by the weight of victory itself.



Organization Chart of the Military Intelligence Service Language School

GEORGE V. STRONG

MAJOR GENERAL
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
War Department General Staff
(Deceased) 1942-1943