

Kurata
Occupation
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CIC

SUBJECT: Niseis With the US Army Counterintelligence Corp (CIC) in Japan

1. The recruitment of nisei soldiers for duty with the U.S. Army Counter-intelligence Corp (CIC).

a. In the spring of 1945, the first group of Niseis were recruited for training and duty with CIC. The initial recruitment of Niseis for CIC was done at Ft Meade, MD. Over three thousand Niseis were assembled at Ft Meade for shipment to the European Theater as replacement for the 442nd units when Germany surrendered in May 1945. During the recruitment interviews many of the Niseis refused to go into the CIC program; rumors were that Niseis in CIC would be used as spies in the Pacific War against Japan.

b. The CIC recruiters glamorized CIC duty in the war zones, i.e. CIC agents would normally wear civilian insignias such as war correspondents; would be the initial U.S. units to enter captured territories and occupy the best facilities for operational use and living quarters; would be provided with a jeep for every two agents assigned; use of CIC badges and credentials providing you access to any officers regardless of rank and restricted areas.

c. Selected Niseis were sent to Camp Ritchie, MD, a secluded location for the U.S. Army Intelligence Training School. Approximately 100 Niseis were in the first all-Nisei CIC classes, June-July 1945. Upon completion of the training rumors were that we would be sent to the Philippines. The surrender of Japan in mid-August resulted in our group's shipment directly to Yokohama, Japan.

2. Initial experiences and duty assignments in Japan during the Occupation of Japan.

a. Transported aboard a converted Liberty ship directly from San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan, arriving on October 1, 1945. Loaded on four-wheel amphibious landing vehicles, called "Ducks" and transported to Camp Zama; a Japanese army facility used by the U.S. Army as processing center for incoming personnel.

b. Enroute to Camp Zama only very young children and old people seen in villages. Learned later that nearly everyone had evacuated their homes in the urban areas and escaped to the rural areas and mountains. Japanese propoganda had warned the populace of the barbaric conduct of American soldiers.

c. First morning in Japan, was with four other Niseis walking about in a village just outside of Camp Zama and had the first contact with Japanese. Walking by a group of old women, we heard them making comments about us; they thought we were American Indians. We stopped and talked to them in Japanese and convinced them that we were Niseis.

d. With the initial occupation of Japan, a CIC Detachment was assigned to every prefecture in Japan and located in the prefectural capital. Unit usually had 12 to 15 personnel. Our all-Nisei group being the first CIC trained Niseis to arrive in Japan, we were assigned in pairs to each CIC units throughout Japan. Prior to our arrival in Japan, the Japanese linguist requirements of CIC units was provided by MIS Niseis detailed from ATIS.

3. Niseis' role in CIC activities during the Occupation of Japan

a. Mission of CIC was to to detect and prevent sabotage, espionage and subversive activities directed against the U.S. Occupation Forces in Japan. CIC was tasked with being the "eyes and ears" for The Supreme Commander, Allied Powers (SCAP). The Niseis were essential and played a vital role in carrying out the CIC mission in Japan. Initially the principle sources of information for CIC was the Japanese police and local government officials; very few could speak or understand English. The Nisei personnel made daily contacts with the Japanese officials and civilians to gather information and conduct investigations. The Niseis understood the Japanese culture and custom and were able to achieve the maximum cooperation and support from the Japanese in accomplishing the CIC mission. The Niseis expended a great amount of their personal time and money in socializing and entertaining Japanese officials to win their confidence and cooperation. It was the custom among Japanese officials and businessmen to talk business away from the office in the evening at eating /drinking establishments. Entertainment funds of Japanese officials were large, , while CIC funds for entertainment was very small.. This necessitated many of the Nisei CIC agents to use their personal money to reciprocate properly. Many times I was out three or four nights a week with Japanese contacts and getting back to my home after midnight. Majority of the Japanese men seemed to relax and let themselves go at parties and most of the times it was very hard work not to try and keep up with their heavy drinking habits. Regardless of how late we worked at night, we were always ready to go back to work the next morning at the time. The frequent night time activities made us extremely unpopular with our wives; they always suspected us of having "Geisha Party" all the time.

b. One of the major area of CIC operation was to monitor the organization and activities of the Japan Communist Party which became very active following the release of all political prisoners under SCAP orders. The released Communist activists quickly re-organized the Japan Communist Party and had their members infiltrating the labor unions. They were the instigators of frequent labor rallies and demonstrations. The climax of their activities were the annual May Day rallies and demonstrations staged throughout Japan. Many of the May Day rallies turned into anti-U.S. demonstrations and resulted in attacks against U.S. personnel and properties. The huge 1950 May Day Rally in Tokyo ended in the destruction of many U.S. vehicles and damages to properties. The CIC Niseis were usually assigned to observe, monitor and report these activities on the spot. Worked together with Japanese plain clothes police; needed to conceal your identity with the U.S. Occupation Forces to avoid confrontation with the demonstrators.

c. Niseis were very much involved in the highly sensitive operation of recruitment and development of informants within specific target organizations; i.e. Japan Communist Party, labor unions, ultra-nationalist movements, etc.. Was involved in the recruitment, development and handling of an informant who was a JCP prefectural officer. Initial contact made with this potential informant because of his wife's arrest and confinement by the Japanese police for inciting a demonstration. This man, Watanabe (not true name) was harrassing the police daily demanding the release of his wife. When this came to CIC attention, we decided to work with the police to attempt recruitment of the individual. Arrangement made with the police to have police advise Watanabe that SCAP authorization was required to release his wife. SCAP authorization could be obtained through the local CIC unit. Subsequently Watanabe came to CIC to demand SCAP authorization for his wife's release. I was given the assignment of talking

to Watanabe and attempt possible recruitment. On his first two visits to CIC I told him that because of the nature of his wife's direct involvement in anti-U.S. Occupation Forces activity, the release of his wife could not be considered. On Watanabe's third visit I suggested that SCAP may consider release in exchange for information which he could provide CIC. Initially Watanabe refused to consider any such exchange, but finally agreed after several more visits and use of coercion on my part. CIC knew the position Watanabe held in the local prefectural JCP Headquarters organization; the position gave him access to local inner party directives and documents. Initial agreement made for Watanabe to provide specific JCP information for three months, whereupon his wife would be released. Watanabe did cooperate as agreed, and I as the source handler met him in secluded locations at night to receive information and documents. After a number of such meetings, I learned that he liked to drink so I began to provide him with some "drinking money". Before the three months agreement period ended I talked him into continuing for an additional three months with the promise of adequate monetary payment for his cooperation. I was able to gain his confidence and trust so that he continued to work for CIC through me for three years until my reassignment back to the States.

d. Working in sensitive intelligence operations is mostly hard work; not glamorous, exciting and cloak and dagger image as portrayed in movies and novels. However, sometimes it can turn out to be quite nerve wracking and possibly dangerous. This happened back during the Occupation days when I was handling another informant whom I had recruited to penetrate the local JCP organization. This informant was a newspaper editor who wrote pro-leftist articles. He was recruited through the use of monetary and material incentives to join the Communist party and gain access to the JCP prefectural level meetings and officers. He succeeded in gaining access and became a valuable source of information; this information was used to evaluate the reliability of the documents provided by my other JCP informant. This operations was going well for six months. Then late one night I received a frantic telephone call from the newspaper editor informant. He related that he had just escaped from a JCP meeting because he had become suspect. He had innocently queried a JCP official at the meeting about the date for an important JCP event that would be forthcoming. The JCP official demanded to know from whom and where he had heard about the subject event; only top JCP officers had knowledge of the event. My informant could not reveal the true source because it would compromise his personal security. He gave another JCP officials name as the source and left the room on the pretense of going to the restroom. He escaped from the building and called from his office; he was afraid for the safety of himself and his family if the Communist officials discovered the truth. That night immediate arrangements were made and the whole family and personal belongings were put on board a train to a destination several hundred miles away. Coordination was made to have the CIC unit at the new location assist the newspaper editor and family to start life anew.

e. One of the additional duties of nearly all Nisei CIC personnel, particularly during the early part of the Occupation was to supervise the local Japanese employees; i.e. housekeeping; cooks and waitress; motor pool mechanics; etc.. Isolation of CIC units throughout Japan required dependence upon the Japanese for providing material and labor support for the facilities. I have been called upon to supervise or instruct the Japanese employees and contractors working for CIC many, many times. Niseis were indispensable for CIC operations in Japan.