

JAPANESE AMERICANS PLAY VITAL ROLE  
IN UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE SERVICE  
IN WORLD WAR TWO



By **JOHN WECKERLING**  
*Retired Brigadier General*

*Written in 1946*



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**Born:** November 21, 1896.

**Military Service:** Entered military service in 1917 as a member of officers training camp, CMTC, Fort Roots, Arkansas; Received direct commission as 2nd Lt. of Infantry on October 15, 1918; Commissioned in the Regular Army as 2nd Lt. on July 1, 1920, and promoted to 1st Lt. on same day. Retired as Brigadier General, United States Army in August 1952.

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Japanese Americans Play Vital Role  
In U.S. Intelligence Service in WWII

## Nisei Language Experts

Here for the first time an article written by a retired general who served throughout World War II as an intelligence officer reveals the "behind the scenes" story of how, why and who started the Army Language School back in November of 1941. General Weckerling wrote this article back in 1946 when he was serving as deputy assistant chief of staff, G-2, War Department, Washington, D.C. The article also reveals the story about a group of American intelligence officers who were instrumental in convincing the War Department on use of the 100th Battalion from Hawaii as combat troops and the organization of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. All made possible through successful use of Japanese American language personnel serving with combat units in Guadalcanal and Attu in the Aleutians.

General Weckerling (then a colonel) was slated in spring 1943 to command the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, but his orders were changed since his commanding general felt that his services in the intelligence field was invaluable.

This article, declassified February 3, 1948, takes on a fresh significance in view of the forthcoming Norcal MIS Association's reunion gathering in San Francisco, Nov. 12-13. It is being printed in the Hokubei Mainichi in several installments.



BRIG. GEN. WECKERLING  
Wrote This Piece in 1946

By JOHN WECKERLING  
Retired Brigadier General

### I — NISEI PROBLEM IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT

The story of the Nisei during World War II is closely interwoven with the vindication of a sizeable segment of our immigrant population (300,000 Japanese-Americans in the United States and Hawaii in 1942). Looked upon with great suspicion before and immediately after the outbreak of war, the Nisei justified the confidence of those who knew them and supplied the answer to one of our most vital war problems — the need for efficient interpreters

and translators of the Japanese language.

It is not the purpose of the present article to examine into the reasons for our failure to gauge correctly the patriotism of the Japanese population in the United States or for their removal from the West Coast. Neither will the fighting exploits of the 442nd Combat Team and the 100th Battalion, both composed entirely of Nisei enlisted personnel be reviewed. The outstanding records of these Nisei combat units have won the admiration of the people of the United States and have been in large measure responsible for destroying the last vestiges of prejudice against the Nisei. As a matter of fact, the impetus behind the organization of the two Nisei combat units stemmed from the interpreter and translator problem, as will be seen later in this article. The war record of another group of Nisei, those assigned to intelligence tasks, is not so widely known.

War Department intelligence during the war involved not only intelligence policies, directives and operations, but concerned itself in the procurement and training of personnel for many of its information gathering agencies. In certain cases highly competent personnel had to be supplied to field agencies in order to enable those agencies to perform assigned missions for their local commanders. The procurement, selection and training of competent interpreters and translators of the Japanese language, including order of battle experts, radio monitors and similar intelligence specialists,

was a typical example of this character. It could have been highly inadvisable, if not actually detrimental to the conduct of operations, to require the theater commander to train such personnel in the zone of operations. The only known sources of procurement of Japanese linguist before the war were: (a) the small group of officers who had studied the Japanese language in Japan, many of whom had either been retired, incapacitated or were beyond the age and rank of interpreters, and (b) a negligible number of US citizens, missionaries, businessmen and others, qualified in Japanese.

During the summer of 1941 the probability of war with Japan was rapidly mounting and those few who realized the language difficulties involved in prosecuting a war against the Japanese were alarmed by the lack of our preparations in this respect.

The complexities of the Japanese language are almost beyond occidental comprehension. In the first place, the Japanese in-

corporated practically the entire Chinese language, written and spoken into their own about AD 500. In addition to the "Japanese" reading, there is a "Chinese" reading for practically all ideographs. A rough equivalent understandable to occidentals would be the incorporation of the entire French language into English plus a highly complicated and revolutionary system of picture writing.

In the written style, there are two syllabaries ("katakana" and "hiragana") each of 50 ideographs, in addition to the Chinese ideographs (8,000 used by the metropolitan Tokyo daily newspapers). A highly educated person reads and writes five to eight thousand Chinese ideographs, while the average unskilled laborer or farmer barely understands 500. The syllabaries or alphabets are used for writing connectives, tenses, conjunctions and denoting subjects and objects of sentences. In addition, there is another syllabary known only to the educated and called "hentaigana," each char-

acter of which can be written in two or three different forms. To top off what must now seem to be the ultimate in confusion to the reader, there are four distinct steps in writing each Chinese ideograph depending on the degree of abbreviation and the character of the letter, document, notice, bulletin, etc., involved.

The differences between the spoken and written Japanese are accentuated by the courtesy gradations imposed on the spoken language, depending on the rank or class of the individual addressed. The written language divides itself generally into the informal and formal, the structures being quite different. Japanese officers before the war had openly boasted that the Japanese language was so difficult that it constituted a code itself not susceptible of solution by foreigners. There was considerable ground for this optimism.

methods employed at the British Interrogators' School and recommended that Prisoner of War interrogation be eliminated from the Japanese language school curriculum and that an interrogation school embracing both German and Japanese interrogation under War Department of Army Ground Forces supervision be established at some central locality or near Washington. The adoption of this plan would have meant a costly delay and a reconsideration of the entire Japanese interpreter program.

Officers who favored the British methods were of the opinion that the same attitudes and psychology used in interrogating the German POWs would apply equally well to the Japanese. The British interrogators adopted a harsh, dominant attitude towards captured Germans, apparently with good results, in order to deflate their strong Nazi conceit and arrogance. However, those who knew Japanese psychology insisted that a sympathetic approach would be more effective with Japanese prisoners. They were aware that the Japanese were taught to commit suicide rather than surrender. Many of those who were later captured regarded themselves as traitors and often requested permission to destroy themselves. A stern attitude toward them would have resulted in sullenness and even encouraged self-destruction. As we now know, Japanese prisoners of war were very cooperative as the result of the kind treatment accorded them. It was fortunate therefore, that the War Department approved a separate school for interrogation of Japanese prisoners under the control of officers familiar with Japanese psychology who had actually served short attachments with the Japanese Army.

The school opened 1 November 1941, with a course as in-



**FIRST GROUP** of civilian instructors at Presidio Language School in San Francisco in November, 1941, is shown above. They are: left to right (standing) Mr. Tanimoto, Mr. Oshida, W/O Naqase W/O Yamada, Mr. Kihara and Mr. Imagawa. Seated, Paul Te-kawa, later director of academic training. (Missing from picture: Major Aiso first director of academic training).

tensive as could be devised. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was general approval of the school. However, commanders of units under orders to the Southwest Pacific in early 1942 were not entirely convinced that the value of Nisei were worth the risk of possible disloyalty.

The treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor naturally engendered the great hatred of the Japanese and as a corollary the public and the Army as a whole regarded the loyalty of all Japanese-Americans at that time as doubtful. This wholly human reaction was also reflected in the War Department and orders were soon issued that no Nisei would be allowed to serve overseas. The implementation of this policy would have vitiated the only feasible plan to provide qualified interpreters and translators for the Pacific theatre

and would have thoroughly frustrated the efforts of the field intelligence agencies. The leading antagonist of this policy within the War Department was Colonel M. W. Pettigrew, then Chief of the Far Eastern Branch, Military Intelligence Division, who, with the support of other officers who knew the Japanese and Nisei, succeeded in having the order rescinded. Later, when Japanese-Americans were being removed from the West Coastal areas, the transfer of the school to the Middle West was urged upon the War Department. It was also realized that the school was too small to supply sufficient interrogation teams to coincide with our operations plans for 50 divisions by January 1944.

## Japanese Americans Play Vital Role In U.S. Intelligence Service (2)

# Confusing Early Days

In June 1941, Colonel Carlisle C. Dusenbury (then Major), a former Japanese language student on duty in the Intelligence Division, proposed the utilization of Japanese of American birth (Nisei) and with Lieutenant Colonel Wallace Moore, of missionary parentage in Japan, planned the organization of a language school. Colonel Rufus S. Bratton, also a former language student and Military Attache

in Tokyo, then Chief of the Far Eastern Branch, Intelligence Division, approved the plan and took steps to obtain the support of the Training and Operations Division (G-3), which had general supervision over the Army's school system. (A former Deputy Commander in Europe, Lt. General Clarence R. Huebner, then a colonel, was the officer who collaborated with Colonel Bratton in the final plans for the school). Because the mass of the Nisei was on the West Coast, the Presidio of San Francisco

was selected as the logical location for the school. By the fall of 1941 a directive had gone to the Fourth Army to implement the plan. The author, a former language student and Assistant Military Attache in Japan, was recalled from duty in Panama to organize and direct the school and to procure both faculty and student personnel.

Delay in the establishment of the school was barely averted. American officers who visited England during the early summer were enthusiastic over

Japanese Americans Play Vital Role  
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# Aiso Found In Motor Pool

In May 1942, the school moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota (adjacent to Ft. Snelling), and the student body and faculty greatly increased. From that time on, the success of the Nisei program was never in doubt. Reports were beginning to reach Washington of the valuable assistance rendered by two Nisei in interrogations done in the Philippines campaign, and on Bataan. A little later, the Army units on Guadalcanal sent in similar reports praising the efficiency and loyalty of the Nisei interrogators used there. As a matter of fact, there was no single instance of disloyalty of a Nisei during the war.

The Military Intelligence Division had great confidence in the Nisei and was convinced that they could also be usefully employed in battle. The organization of a Nisei division was first proposed which would not only utilize a (then) very latent source of U.S. manpower, but would also bring about complete postwar acceptance of the Nisei as a citizen.

In the spring of 1942 Colonel Pettigrew formally proposed the organization of a Nisei combat unit. The Commanding General in Hawaii endorsed the plan from the beginning and declared his belief that the Nisei would prove to be an excellent combat soldier. The ex-Japanese language officers on duty in the War Department unanimously approved the formation of such a

unit. However, opinion was divided within and without the War Department concerning the use of the Nisei as a front line soldier. Restriction to non-combat duties was recommended by several higher echelon commanders. It was even seriously suggested that the Nisei should not be used at all or limited to non-critical installations in the Zone of Interior.

Colonel Pettigrew pursued his plans determinedly, and they were finally approved by the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. John J. McCloy. The organization of the Nisei unit was then assured, but the project was reduced in scope to a combat team on the basis of a careful population study.

## (II) PROCUREMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AT THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

When the Japanese peace envoys lined up at Nicholas Field in the Philippines as the prelude to armistice negotiations in August 1945, General MacArthur's official party included two officers of Japanese-American ancestry — Lieutenant George K. Kayano of San Francisco and Lieutenant Thomas T. Imada of Hawaii — both graduates of the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Ft. Snelling. This was deserved recognition to the outstanding work which has been performed by Japanese-Americans in the intelligence work of the armed forces in the Pacific theatres of operations.

The process by which Nisei language personnel were given systematic training to prepare them for their duties as interrogators, interpreters, translators, order of battle specialists, speakers on radio programs beamed to Japan, propaganda writers, "cave flushers," and many other assignments, is an interesting one.

It was at first thought that there would be sufficient Japanese speaking Nisei so that only a few weeks' review in general Japanese vocabulary and minimum instruction in military Japanese terminology and combat intelligence would be required to fit them for field duty. Neither the number of those available nor their anticipated linguistic abilities met expectations. After a survey of the first 3,700 Nisei, it was found that only 3 percent were accomplished linguists, about 4 percent were proficient and another 3 percent were fair, and could be useful only after a considerable period of training. These figures took into consideration ability in both Japanese and English. The Americanization of the Nisei on the Pacific Coast had advanced more rapidly than the United States public was aware. Japanese language schools created and encouraged by the Japanese government before the war to maintain ties with the homeland had not achieved the results with which they were generally credited. It quickly became evident that a special language and intelligence training school would be essential to qualify the Nisei reasonably well to the armed

forces as intelligence specialists. Even Nisei well qualified in general Japanese had to be trained in Japanese military vocabulary and special forms of writing.

The selection of Nisei of unquestioned loyalty reasonably qualified in the Japanese language became the primary task. The screening of all of the Nisei personnel processed through the Selective Service stationed at the various army units on the Pacific Coast was accomplished. The author and Colonel (then Captain) Kai E. Rasmussen, who

commanded the Military Intelligence Service Language School from May 1942 until 1946 and who was largely responsible for its efficient management, personally interviewed each Nisei soldier in service. It was on one of these screening tours that the future Director of Academic Training at Fort Snelling, Major John F. Aiso, a Nisei, was found in a motor maintenance battalion as a PFC. On the same screening trip PFC Arthur Kaneko, a then rare "Sansei" (third generation Japanese-American) who had had extensive Japanese

language training in Japan, was discovered. Both were earmarked as potential instructors, Kaneko eventually becoming a lieutenant.

Two Nisei civilian instructors, Mr. Akira Oshida of Berkeley and Mr. Shigeya Kihara of Oakland, were soon added to the staff and with these four Nisei the work of preparing the text books and classroom exercises for the Japanese language courses was begun.

Japanese Americans Play Vital Role  
In U.S. Intelligence Service (4)

# Recruitment



MAY 26, 1942, issue of Minneapolis Morning Tribune publicizing opening of Camp Savage Language School.

On November 1, 1941, about six weeks before Pearl Harbor the school started operations as the Fourth Army Intelligence School in an abandoned airplane hangar on old Crissey Field adjoining San Francisco Bay at the Presidio of San Francisco. The first course at the school was opened with eight instructors and 60 pupils.

The greatest problem which faced the Military Intelligence Service Language School after its removal to Camp Savage was the recruitment of personnel for the expanded program. Most of the army personnel of Japanese ancestry, not members of the school, were discharged or furloughed to enlisted reserve and relieved from active duty. The evacuation of all Japanese residents, aliens and citizens alike, from the Pacific Coast, had already begun. The War Department then wisely adopted recruiting of volunteer Nisei language personnel. But the school's quota were met with difficulty at first. Pro-Japanese elements apparently dominated

the Japanese Relocation Centers. The loyal Nisei were reluctant at first to volunteer for army service because they felt that their rights as American citizens had been ignored in placing them and their families in these camps guarded by armed soldiers.

In some cases Nisei volunteers suffered beatings from the pro-Japanese elements in Relocation Centers. Some were disowned by their pro-Japanese "Issei" (first generation) parents. However, volunteers soon exceeded the school's requirements. Many of the first groups of students were well over thirty, generally qualified in the Japanese language and anxious to prove themselves loyal to the United States. So eager were they to finish training as early as possible that it became necessary for the duty officers at Camp Savage to patrol the school area to prevent extra study after lights were extinguished at 11

p.m. Many succeeded in extra hours study in spite of a long school day of seven hours instruction plus two hours study in the evening in the classroom.

In August 1944 when it became apparent that Camp Savage was entirely too small for greatly expanded field requirements, the school was removed to nearby Fort Snelling. As of June 8, 1946, approximately 6,000 men had graduated from the Presidio, Savage and Snelling schools.

For most army organizations, V-J Day meant the beginning of curtailment of activities and a slackening to a peace-time tempo. For the Military Intelligence Service Language School, it spelled just the opposite — heavier loads and a faster gait in order to supply the requirements of the occupation forces in Japan.

During the Japanese war, the graduates of the MISLS were vital cogs in the combat intel-

ligence and psychological warfare work. After the war they were equally important links between General MacArthur's occupation army and the Japanese people. The US Strategic Bombing Survey, the Atomic Bombing Survey and the War Crimes Trials could not have effectively carried on without Nisei interpreters and translators.

The occupation of Japan from the linguistic standpoint presented many problems. The most difficult was one of replacements, many of the Nisei having had 2 to 3 years continuous combat duties in the Pacific. For this reason the MISLS trained nearly 3,000 students after the Japanese surrender to meet the accelerated occupation demands and to replace veterans who had to be returned to the U.S. according to the point system.

## Japanese Americans Play Vital Role In U.S. Intelligence Service (5)

# Nisei Linguists In Pacific Area

### NOTICE

The 5th in the series of articles about the Japanese American linguists in World War II by Brig. Gen. John Weckerling was omitted in Monday's paper due to space limitation.

### (III) NISEI LINGUISTS — EYES AND EARS OF ALLIED PACIFIC FORCES

In the crucial battles of the Pacific, the Japanese Army was confronted by an enemy who al-

ready had much detailed information of the Japanese plans for attack and defense. In the analogy of football, the Japanese were playing with their signals entirely known by their heavier and harder-hitting opponents. Our forces were aided by an extraordinary and surprising lack of "security consciousness" on the part of the Japanese. They were apparently secure in their belief that the difficult Japanese language in which their orders and plans were written and communicated could not be deciphered effectively by Occidentals.

The American-born Japanese language specialists — translators, interrogators, radio monitors, and trained order of battle experts — were one of the chief means of obtaining intelligence of the enemy and his plans. The Presidio, Camp Savage and Fort Snelling became the eyes and ears of not only the American

combat forces, but also that of the other allied armies fighting Japan. For many Nisei were "loaned" to the British, Canadians and Australians. The U.S. Navy trained Caucasians for intelligence work although later in the war several hundred Nisei were attached to JICPOA, the Navy's Pacific intelligence center. The Marine Division also used them in combat.

Nisei language specialists were with every major unit in every engagement from Guadalcanal and Attu to the march into Tokyo. To mention all units with which they served would be to list every major unit that has engaged in combat in the Pacific.

The language specialists, working selflessly and in complete anonymity, translated enemy orders, documents, etc., which often contained his tactical decisions and dispositions. This information greatly assisted our commanders in the field in making decisions, conducting effective operations and avoiding surprise.

It became almost routine practice for our Japanese-American language teams (one officer and ten men per Division — proportionately larger teams to superior units and headquarters) to work so rapidly and accurately that our artillery was sometimes enabled to drop shells on enemy command posts and gun emplacements within a few minutes after translations were completed by the language detachment. On many occasions this intelligence helped clear the way for our infantry slowly moving forward through the jungles or held up by enemy fire.

As one example, the official reports of the American Division disclose that it was the work of the Japanese language specialists that was largely responsible for the Division Commander knowing well in advance where and approximately at what time and in what strength the Japanese would attack the division



MIS men checking documents at First Cavalry Division Intelligence Center. Front to rear: Unidentified Nisei GI. S/Sgt. (later major) Hirai and Sgt. (later major) Noby Yoshimura. Unidentified intelligence officer.



Unidentified MIS interpreter with pill box flushing detail somewhere in Leyte, Philippines.

along the Torokina River near Bougainville.

Graduates of the Military Intelligence Service Language School translated Japanese battle plans for the naval battle of the Philippines. These plans were captured with Admiral Koga, then 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. Japanese plans for the land defense of the Philippines also were disclosed through the work of the language specialists from the Military Intelligence

Service Language School before our forces had landed on Leyte.

Concerning the work of Nisei language specialists, Joe Rosenthal, AP newscameraman who won the Pulitzer Award for the photo of the raising of the Stars and Stripes at the crater rim of Mt. Suribachi, wrote:

"Usually they work with headquarters in serving as interpreters. Armed with hand grenades at the entrances to Japanese pillboxes or caves, they often convince the enemy to surrender where other officers, lacking the proper diction of the Japanese language, would fail. They work so close to the enemy on these missions that with the danger of being killed by Japanese, they run the risk of being shot, unintentionally, by our own marines. Their dungarees soon become ragged in rough country and the similarity of their physical appearance to that of the Japanese enemy makes their job much tougher.

"Many have paid with their lives, and many more have been wounded. They have done an outstanding job, and their heroism should be recognized. It has been recognized by the Marine commanders where I saw them in action at Guam, Peleliu, and Iwo."

Two of these Nisei, Technical Sergeant Kazuo Komoto with

the 11th Airborne Division, and a Japanese-American Staff Sergeant with the 1st Radio Squadron Mobile, were among the first troops that landed in Japan at Atsugi Airfield near Tokyo Komoto, incidentally, was the first graduate of the Military Intelligence Service Language School to win a Purple Heart when he was hit by a Japanese sniper on New Georgia Island early during the Pacific campaign.

Another graduate, Technical Sergeant Robert Oda, acted as interpreter when our naval forces took over the Japanese naval base at Yokosuka.

These language specialists came to the Military Intelligence Service Language School from all walks of life and from various parts of the United States and Hawaii. Among them were dentists, lawyers, Ph.Ds., cooks, farm-hands, gardeners, laundrymen, houseboys, and even a professional gambler. One was a former member of the Territorial Legislature in Hawaii. Some were veterans of World War I. Technician 3rd grade James Yoshinobu, who served with the 4th Marine Division on Iwo Jima, and Technical Sergeant John Tanikawa, who was awarded a Bronze Star for his work with the 41st Division on Leyte, were

veterans of World War I.

From Guadalcanal, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Burden, then Captain in the G-2 Section of the XIV Corps and one of the two American Caucasian graduates of the first class at the Presidio wrote:

"The use of Nisei in the combat area is essential to efficient work. There has been a great deal of prejudice and opposition to the use of Nisei in combat areas. The two arguments advanced are: (1) Americans of Japanese ancestry are not to be trusted, and (2) the lives of the Nisei would be endangered due to the strong sentiment against Japanese prevailing in the area. Both of these arguments have been thoroughly disproved by experiences on Guadalcanal, and I am glad to say that those who opposed the use of Nisei the most are now their most enthusiastic advocates. It has been proved that only the Nisei are capable of rapid translation of written orders and diaries, and their use is essential in obtaining the information contained in them."

Major General Ralph C. Smith who commanded the 27th Infantry Division added: "The language section attached to the 27th Division was invaluable in the Makin operation."

who has had contact with the Nisei is concerned, They are tops — much of it under conditions they never expected. Sergeants Matsuna and Mazawa were dropped by parachute deep in Kachin territory to an OSS unit. They have been working in areas behind enemy lines, doing both language and radio intercept work. These two volunteered without any hesitation and took their jumps in fine form although having no previous training in parachute jumping whatsoever."

Service Language School, wrote: "I cannot overstate the value that Colonel Stilwell (son of General Stilwell) and his headquarters place on Nisei language men. As far as everyone

Recognition has been given to the work of these Nisei Americans in the field. Although complete reports are not available, at least 50 Nisei received direct commissions from the ranks as Second Lieutenants, and another 25 or 30 were commissioned through the various Officer Candidate Schools in Australia and in the United States. One of these, Masaji Marumoto of Honolulu, received a commission as a First Lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General's Department and was the civil affairs legal officer attached to Military Government in Okinawa.

A number of Nisei have been awarded decorations for intelligence work in combat, but complete information in this respect also is lacking. As of early 1946 it was definitely known that 1 Distinguished Service Cross, 2 Legion of Merits, 5 Silver Stars, 1 Soldier's Medal, over 50 Bronze Stars, and 15 Purple Hearts have been awarded, and this is in a field of activity where continued presence in the front lines is not normally expected. It is certain that many more decorations have been received by Nisei intelligence personnel.

Some Japanese-American language specialists were assigned to the larger headquarters and in various stations in the continental limits of the United States and therefore denied the opportunity of serving in combat. Most of the honor graduates of each graduating class were retained as instructors at the Military Intelligence Service Language School to train other students or on other vital intelligence work. It took considerable persuasion to convince these men that they could render more important service in non-combat assignments.



Sgt. Noji and unidentified MIS man interrogating Japanese POW up front. Unidentified intelligence officers.

Fourteen Nisei volunteered for service with Merrill's Marauders in Burma. An officer writing of their exploits says: "Throughout, whenever and wherever there was need for any of the boys, they never hesitated. They were not only interpreters, but soldiers at the front. They faced danger willingly, whenever called upon. They faced the enemy, fought against him. Roy Matsumoto, Ben Sugata, Robert Honda and Henry Gosho are credited with about 30 Nips. You can see by that that the boys have been right upon the line."

"During battles they crawled up close enough to be able to hear Japanese officers' commands and to make verbal translations to our soldiers. They tapped lines, listened in on radios, translated documents and pa-

pers, made spot translations of messages and field orders, and in numerous other ways made themselves invaluable."

It was in the engagement at Myitkyina that the Marauder Nisei lost their commanding officer, Captain William Laffin (his mother was a Japanese) when he was strafed by enemy planes. Of the 14 Nisei who started out with General Merrill, six were commissioned as officers for meritorious service in the field, one was decorated with Legion of Merit, and three received the Bronze Star. All received the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

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# Field Promotions

From the China-Burma-India Captain Barton Lloyd, a graduate of the Military Intelligence

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# Kibei Bravery Wins Acclaim

It is interesting to note that many of the outstandingly daring feats were performed by graduates who were "Kibei" (those born in the United States but sent at an early age to Japan and educated there). These "Kibei" were mistakenly judged in some quarters as being pro-Japanese elements in the Japanese-American community.

Technical Sergeant Kaz Kozaki, a former non-commissioned officer instructor at the Military Intelligence Service Language School, was a "Kibei" and so was Technician 3rd Grade Eiichi Sakauye. Kozaki won a Silver Star and a Purple Heart for rescuing an American army officer under fire when they were attacked by the Japanese as they were stepping ashore on New Guinea from their landing craft. Eiichi Sakauye rescued a wounded British officer under fire in the China-Burma-India Theater and received the Silver Star for this feat.

Technician 5th Grade Terry Takeshi Doi was an out-and-out "Kibei." His command of Japanese was stronger than that of English. He had been caught at a dual-national in Japan and had been forced to serve in the Japanese Army, thereby losing

his American citizenship. He had been kept at the Military Intelligence Service Language School after graduation before he was cleared for service in the combat zone. When Doi appeared before Judge Robert Bell of the U.S. District Court in the St. Paul - Minneapolis area for restoration of his American citizenship, a Canadian dancer who also was scheduled to be sworn in as an American citizen requested Judge Bell to swear her in separately. She refused to be "sworn in with a Japanese." Judge Bell denied her request and she walked out of court.

Terry Doi was one of the first Nisei to land on Iwo Jima among several others who had landed among the first waves. He distinguished himself from the beginning, going into cave after cave with only a flashlight and knife persuading many enemy soldiers to come out and surrender. Wrote Lt. Wesley H. Fishel, Doi's commanding officer to Judge Bell, "I know you will be happy to know that Terry did one of the finest pieces of work possible. Doi was one of the first GIs to land on Iwo Jima. The limits of censorship prohibit details, but I can say Terry is one of the bravest and most capable men I have seen out here."

Another Caucasian officer graduate of the Military Intelligence Service Language School, Lieutenant Squaire, wrote: "There was nothing but praise for the Nisei, particularly a boy by the name of Doi . . . There is a story about him people tell which goes something like this. He was continually going into caves with a knife and flashlight and hollering to the enemy to 'get the hell out or else.' Mr. Doi's middle name is now 'Guts'."

Technician Grade 3 Kenji Yasui was a "Kibei" who won for himself the local title of the "Nisei Sergeant York." Yasui, because of his schooling in Tokyo (high school and college graduate) and his command of the Japanese language, was sent to the OWI in India to work on propaganda leaflets to be dropped over the enemy lines. Masquerading as Colonel Yamamoto, a local Japanese Commander, he brought in single-handed a large group of Japanese prisoners of war. Mr. John Emerson, State Department Political Adviser to the Theater Commander and himself a former State Department language officer in Tokyo, wrote Colonel Rasmussen as follows:

"I don't know whether you have heard yet that one of them, Kenji Yasui, has been recommended for a citation (Yasui received the Silver Star) for his courageous performance in bringing in 13 Japanese prisoners during the mopping-up operations in Myitkyina. Kenji and two others volunteered to go out to an island in the river to round up a bunch of Japanese. He swam out, got a cramp half-way across and almost drowned, shouted to the Japanese to come out, and finally got 13 together. Two had to be killed and one tried to blow Yasui and himself up with a grenade. Kenji luckily escaped that. He announced that he was a Colonel

and made them line up and execute close order drill. Then he made them get in the river and swim across pushing a raft on which he stood with carbine aimed at them. Afterwards he learned the Japanese had 20 rounds each and had a bead on him when he came ashore. Only

because he started shouting military commands in Japanese did they hold fire."

Technician 3rd Grade Shigeto Mazawa served with the KACHIN RANGERS (native Burmese levies) and took part in daring raids against the enemy

in Burma. Much to his surprise, he found himself a temporary Captain in the British Army commanding a company of Kachin Rangers.

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# Cite Nisei Heroes



Private First Class (later lieutenant) Kaz Kozaki (extreme left) was the first Nisei to receive Silver Star and Purple Heart during landing operation where he saved the life of an officer and others under fire. First Nisei to receive direct commission at ATIS. Others are unidentified enlisted PFC students.

Several reported none too amusing incidents — that of being captured by Chinese troops and being mistaken for Japanese soldiers. They finally convinced their captors by sign language and by writing that they really were "Minkuo" (American) soldiers.

Sergeant Vic Nishijima was on Ie Jima (west of Okinawa) on the morning that Ernie Pyle was killed by a Japanese machine gun ambush. Writing to his friends at Fort Snelling, Nishijima wrote: "I had to give war scribe Ernie Pyle hell for trying to cross a mine field. Also wound up in a newsreel with him but didn't know who the 'elderly private' was until next morning.

Technician 4th Grade Seiyu Higashi was born in Los Angeles, but was taken back to Naha, the capital of Okinawa, in his early years. He was reared in Naha, completed middle school and then returned to Los Angeles. He graduated from high school in Los Angeles and shortly after Pearl Harbor he enlisted in the United States Army. Higashi was sent to Okinawa because of his knowledge of the Okinawa dialect and at Naha met his father for the first time in eight years.

Technician 3rd grade Frank T. Hachiya was born in Hood River, Oregon, where the name

of 16 Americans of Japanese ancestry were once erased from the county memorial honor roll. After basic training at Camp Roberts in California, Frank was assigned to the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage. At the time of his death, he was a veteran of the Kwajalein and Eniwetok campaigns. He had been sent out as a special replacement to the language team working with the Sixth Army Headquarters at Leyte. He was scheduled to fly back to Honolulu the following day. His father was in a Relocation Camp, and his mother in Japan.

Hachiya volunteered to cross an enemy infested valley to question a prisoner of war who had been captured by friendly units on an adjacent ridge. Lieutenant Howard M. Moss, his commanding officer, said: "It was essential to get the information from the prisoner of war immediately as some of our units were in a bad spot . . . When they reached the bottom of the valley a Japanese sniper let them have it at close range when he (Hachiya) tried to talk to the Japanese in the valley in Japanese. Frank emptied his gun into the sniper. Then he walked back up the hill where he was given plasma . . . at the hospital he was given every possible care, but the bullet had gone through his liver."

Others like Sergeant Omura

in New Guinea, Staff Sergeant Shoichi Nakahara, Technician 3rd Grade Ellie Fukui, Technician 4th Grade Mitsuru Shibata, Technician 4th Grade Ben Sata-shi Kurokawa, and Technician 4th Grade Snichi Bill Imoto on Okinawa also have lost their lives in service of their country. However, the circumstances surrounding the death of Sergeant George I. Nakamura, who was killed in action in the Philippines deserve special mention.

George was the son of a Japanese alien who was seized shortly after Pearl Harbor in Watsonville, California, for possessing "rockets and other signal equipment." His father was taken into custody, but was exonerated and is living in Rockford, Illinois today. Lieutenant James Hoyt, his commanding officer, describing the circumstances of his death wrote: "Nakamura was on temporary duty with the 63rd Infantry Regiment of the 6th Infantry Division and participated in an engagement near Payawan. With heroic intrepidity, he exposed himself to enemy fire in order to issue an oral ultimatum of surrender to several isolated enemy units."

There also was Technical Sergeant Yukita Mizutari who was killed in New Guinea and who received the Silver Star posthumously. This non-commissioned officer language team leader went to the rescue of his subordinates who had been fired upon by enemy infiltrating into

their positions. Colonel Mashbir, Chief of the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section of General MacArthur's Headquarters, wrote: "The loss of Technical Sergeant Mizutari is learned with the deepest regret since this soldier was a soldier in every sense of the word, and while serving with various language units in the field as well as at the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, his contribution in fidelity and devotion to duty was outstanding. His record serves to exemplify the great work of the Nisei for their country to which cause he has given his life."

\* \* \*

The present article is not the last, certainly not the most complete telling of the magnificent work of the Nisei in intelligence activities. There are many other Nisei who distinguished themselves in the field and in the zone of the Interior. The writer regrets that only the material presented above is available to him. If the present article aids in a small way in stimulating the presentation of a complete history of the Nisei participation in World War II, it will have achieved its purpose.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article was written by Brig. Gen. Weck-erling (retired) in 1946.

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