

Preface

The pages that follow contain the personal recollections of nearly two dozen veterans who served in the war against Japan. They were originally presented in somewhat different form during panel discussions at the October 1993 MIS reunion convened by the Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C., in Arlington, Virginia.

To offer this material in its most meaningful and consistent form the order of presentation has been altered from that of the original panel sessions and the material reorganized into geographical and subject areas. While some editing was necessary, we have tried to keep this to a minimum and to let the panel members speak in their own voices and personal styles. Space limitations unfortunately forced us to do some pruning or condensation and we have also made a few corrections of names, dates, and places in the interest of historical accuracy. Our primary aim, however; was to preserve these presentations as the individual stories of representative MIS veterans, told from their point of view and as they remembered them. We thus made no effort to cover all aspects of the war nor to explain or justify those instances where one individual's recollections might differ from another's or from other sources or interpretations.

This volume also includes biographical profiles of all those who participated in the panel discussions-either as speakers or as moderators-along with pictures of them as they appeared in the years under discussion.

The work of editing the individual presentations was shared by both editors, with, additionally, Stanley Falk concentrating on organizing the volume and writing the introductory and historical texts, and Warren Tsuneishi focusing on the profiles, production, and administrative matters. We would like to thank Allan Lefcowitz of The Writer's Center, Bethesda, for assistance in producing this volume; graphic artist Jack Hirose, a member of JAVA, for designing the book; and the U.S. Army Center of Military History for providing the map. And of course we are grateful to all members of the reunion panels for their work in preparing their presentations for publication, for pulling up with our queries and prods for more and more information, and for granting us permission to include their recollections in this volume. Final responsibility for any errors, however; remains with the editors.

Stanley L. Falk
Warren M. Tsuneishi

Foreward

The Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C. (JAVA) convened, on October 21-23, 1993, in Arlington, Virginia, a national reunion of veterans who had served overseas or at home as Japanese language specialists

in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. This was the fourth in a recent series begun in 1991 when the MIS Association of Northern California organized a massive reunion in San Francisco and Monterey in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Fourth Army Japanese Language) Intelligence School in November 1941 at the Presidio of San Francisco. The school was renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School and was moved first to Camp Savage, Minnesota, and then to Fort Snelling, near Minneapolis. (After the war, it returned to California, and after being reorganized, now serves as the Defense Language Institute, Presidio, Monterey.)

The second recent reunion (whose theme was "The Sentimental Journey"), held in Minneapolis in May 1992, produced a call for a similar gathering to take place in the National Capital area. JAVA, newly established only a month before, was quick to respond, and began preparations for a reunion to be held here in late 1993. Cooperation and support soon followed from other MIS organizations in Northern and Southern California, the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and the Rocky Mountain region as well as from individual veterans from Chicago, Minneapolis, New York and elsewhere, and from such groups as the JACL. Meanwhile, the MIS Veterans Club of Hawaii held a successful reunion in July 1993, in Honolulu, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the departure for language training at Camp Savage of the first Nisei contingent from Hawaii.

The theme of the 1993 National Capital Reunion was "The Nisei Veteran-An American Patriot." Events focusing on this theme included the presentation of American Patriot Awards to four MISers with outstanding service records- veterans Richard M. Sakakida, Harry K. Fukuhara, and Roy H. Matsumoto, and civilian instructor Shigeya Kihara; the awarding of Philippine Liberation Medals by the Philippine Embassy to those who had served in that campaign; and ceremonies honoring fallen comrades at the Columbarium and at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

The reunion program was also designed to bring out the war experiences of participants in a personal way through a series of panel discussions and a documentation session extending the better part of a day. These panels consisted of those who had served during the war or in the Occupation of Japan in various capacities as Japanese linguists, including for the first time, a group of "non-Nikkei" veterans. Their contributions added a new dimension to the panel discussions. The documentation session covered the production of two MIS-related video releases, *Fifty Years of Silence* and *Mission in Manila*. In the documentation workshop, conducted by Dr. Glenda Nogami, individual veterans were encouraged to fill out personal history forms for the archives of the Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks.

The JAVA Executive Council approved the publication of these personal experiences in the belief that published volumes, distributed to veterans and the general public and located in suitable libraries and repositories, should be made

available for future research and study on the role of Nisei in the MIS. Without the willing cooperation and support of the participants in the panel and documentation sessions, all of whom submitted written presentations, this volume would not have been possible. They deserve heartfelt thanks.

Sunao (Phil) Ishio
Founding President, JAVA

Overview of the War in Asia and the Pacific -- Stanley L. Falk

The war in the Pacific began on December 7, 1941 with the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor and with simultaneous Japanese attacks on other Western bases throughout the Pacific and East Asia.

By early spring, 1942, the Japanese had invaded and captured the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, portions of northern New Guinea, and other islands in the central and south Pacific. On the Asiatic mainland, they had also overrun Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, and much of Burma. In early May 1942, they met their first defeat in the air-and-naval Battle of the Coral Sea, southeast of New Guinea. And a month later they were crushed in the decisive air-and-naval Battle of Midway, in the central Pacific. Nevertheless, during the summer they pushed further into eastern New Guinea and also landed on Guadalcanal, at the southern end of the Solomon Islands of the south Pacific.

So far, the initiative had been all Japanese, but now the tide began to turn. In August 1942, American troops invaded Guadalcanal; a month later, Australian and U.S. forces attacked the Japanese in eastern New Guinea. And by the end of the year, British and American units had begun limited offensive operations in Burma.

The great Allied counteroffensive was now under way. The year 1943 saw much bitter fighting, but the Japanese were defeated in eastern New Guinea -- at Buna and elsewhere -- as well as on Guadalcanal. Far to the north, U.S. forces recaptured the Aleutian island of Attu. And in the central Pacific, near the end of the year; American troops landed on Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands. From here, in February 1944, they jumped north to the Marshall Islands and then, in mid-summer, captured Saipan and other islands in the Marianas, barely 1,500 miles from Japan itself.

In the south Pacific, meanwhile, other Americans were seizing Bougainville, in the northern Solomons. In western New Guinea, General MacArthur's forces landed at Hollandia, in April 1944 and, in October, invaded Leyte Island in the Philippines. In Burma, meanwhile, a last-gasp Japanese offensive aimed at India was defeated and thrown back.

The year 1945 brought more American landings in the Philippines: On Luzon, Mindanao, and elsewhere; as well as our invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, on the doorsteps of Japan. At the same time, American B-29 bombers from the Marianas were laying waste huge areas of the Japanese home islands. In early August, finally, they delivered two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A week later; Japan surrendered. The defeat of Japan could not have been accomplished as swiftly or effectively without the wholehearted participation of the Japanese American community. Some 6,000 Nisei soldiers served in the Army Military Intelligence Service in all areas of the Pacific and East Asia and in the subsequent Occupation of Japan. They were joined in the MIS by about 600 Hakujin (Caucasian) linguists, most of whom had learned their Japanese from Japanese-American sensei (teachers). The MIS soldiers interrogated enemy prisoners, translated key documents, helped intercept, decode, and interpret Japanese communications, wrote propaganda leaflets, and made broadcasts. On many occasions, they risked capture or death trying to convince enemy soldiers or civilians to surrender. Then, when the war was over; they continued to perform valuable service in helping run the occupation of Japan.