

In Action in the Southwest Pacific Area Introduction

While MIS personnel served in almost all areas of the Pacific and East Asia, the great majority of them were to be found in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), the Allied theater of war commanded by General Douglas MacArthur. There were several reasons for this, but basically it was because this was the first area of the Pacific to which large numbers of American ground troops were committed and because it remained primarily an Army theater, drawing more than any other on MIS resources. In SWPA, moreover; MISers served not only with American units, but also with elements of the Australian Army. Geographically, SWPA included the great continent of Australia and the area north of it to the Philippines, and MIS personnel were present almost everywhere and at almost every level from MacArthur's headquarters down to the lowest unit in the field.

The personal testimonies that follow bear witness to the great geographical and functional varieties of service experience their authors represent. Richard Sakakida played an unusual intelligence role in the Philippines, initially during the abortive defense of those islands at the start of the war and then during the long, hard years of Japanese occupation. Sunao Ishio was with ground combat forces from bloody Buna in New Guinea through MacArthur's triumphant return to the Philippines two years later. James Tanabe was wounded while serving with Australian troops in New Guinea and then found himself assigned to American Marine units in the central Pacific. George Totten was a member of an infantry division on Morotal and Mindanao, while Yoshita Iwamoto ended up babysitting Japanese prisoners of war on Luzon. Harvey Watanabe served in Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS), the language heart of SWPA, and then was part of the welcoming committee for the Japanese liaison team that flew to Manila in August 1945 to coordinate the details of Japan's surrender.

Undercover Agent in Manila - Richard M. Sakakida

One day I received telephonic instructions from my ROTC instructor to report to Central Intermediate High School, Honolulu. No details or reasons were given. There were approximately 30 other Nisei, and I was the youngest. Those giving the tests and inter-views were all Caucasian Army and Navy officers who were fluent in the Japanese language. The test lasted for two days. Two weeks later again I received a telephone call from the instructor, congratulating me for being selected as the primary as a result of the tests. I was still unaware as to what I was getting myself into except that the job would be away from the islands. I took it for granted that I would be leaving for the mainland, most likely in the Los Angeles area.

On 13 March 1941, I was taken to Headquarters, Hawaiian Department, U.S. Army, to be sworn into the Regular Army as a Sergeant with assignment to the Corps of Intelligence Police (CIP), forerunner of current Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC). Temporarily, I was assigned to the Army Contact Office in the Federal Building in Honolulu doing translation work. Finally I was informed that

my duty station would be Manila with G-2, Philippine Department, U.S. Army. My departure date was set for 7 April 1941 on board U.S. Army Transport "Republic."

I was not to have anything identifying me as member of the U.S. Army. Travel would be in civilian clothes. Furthermore, no members of the family or friends would be allowed to see me off. Other than the immediate family members, no one would be told of my destination. For this reason, as far as my close associates and class-mates were concerned, I had suddenly disappeared from the islands.

Upon arriving in the Philippines, I was met by the Commanding Officer of the CIP unit I was handed an envelope outlining my duties and the name of the Japanese hotel where I was to register. My cover story as I checked in at the Nishikawa Hotel was that I had arrived as a crew member of a freighter, had fallen in love at first sight with Manila, and had jumped ship in order to avoid the U.S. military draft. An arrangement was made with Marsman Trading, sole representative for Sears Roebuck in the Philippines, that I would be a trouble shooter for them. Although this was merely a cover story, I made this known at the hotel. The Nishikawa Hotel was one of two leading Japanese hotels in Manila. Elite Japanese businessmen stayed there. Fortunately, my young age proved to be an asset for they all treated me like their kid brother and looked after me. This enabled me to closely monitor their activities. I also voluntarily helped at the front desk and this gave me access to various information about the guests. After the Japanese invaded the Philippines in December 1941, I moved to Bataan Peninsula with the rest of the G-2 office. On Bataan I was deeply involved in the translation of Japanese battle orders, diaries, and other Japanese documents that fell into the hands of the U.S. forces. I was also involved in making out handwritten propaganda and in the interrogation of Japanese prisoners of war. In March, I was ordered to Corregidor to help intercept Japanese voice radio transmissions. On 6 May 1942, I broadcast the surrender announcement in Japanese and that afternoon proceeded to Bataan from Corregidor with General Wainwright's Chief of Staff for the surrender negotiation. Upon arrival we were lined up on the pier and individually questioned. I was asked if I was a Filipino. I answered "No, I'm an American." Whamo! I was slapped on my face. My glasses flew and cut my face but my Japanese interrogator continued to slap me around. He was well aware that I was a Nisei. I was not allowed to accompany the negotiation team but kept at the pier under guard.

Just prior to the surrender the G-2 had called me and said, "We depend on you to get in on their side and try to get intelligence for the benefit of the U.S. Forces. I doubt whether you can do it because they will really work on you." This was the only directive and caution I received. Being of Japanese ancestry and serving the American forces, I was charged by the Japanese with "treason." Furthermore, those Japanese soldiers who were POWs on Bataan all identified

me as an American sergeant who had interrogated them. For this reason, I was separated from other American POWs and incarcerated with Japanese prisoners.

The Kem pei Tai (Military Police) were known for torturing prisoners to get the kind of answer they wanted to hear. I was strung up with my hands tied behind my back and the rope tossed over the ceiling beam. The rope was pulled until I was dangling on my toes when the questioning began and the beatings started. The questions they kept asking were, "What were your duties in the military" and "What was your military rank." Since the beatings were unproductive, they began applying cigarette burns on my body. I also underwent their infamous water treatment. This time instead of being strung-up, I was tied down under a water faucet to have the water drip, drip, drip on my forehead for hours. This continuous dripping would drive anyone nuts. The next step was to stick a water hose into my mouth and turn on the water full force. I could feel my stomach being bloated. It felt as if it was ready to explode. Then they would press my stomach to let the water out.

I was determined that they would not get a damn thing from me. I had a mission to carry out and also I remembered my aged mother's parting words. She had said, "You are in the service. This is your country. Don't bring any disgrace to yourself and especially to the family. Do your best, that is all I ask." The Kempei Tai must have felt that I was telling the truth since they were unable to make me change my original story.

The Japanese decided to utilize my bi-lingual ability as an interpreter and handyman at the Office of the Judge Advocate, Headquarters, Fourteenth Army. At the office I did all the odd jobs and also performed "boy-san" type duties at the Chief Judge Advocate's quarters. So he could keep an eye on me, I was billeted at his quarters and commuted with him back and forth daily. I learned after the war that during the three years I was a POW, the Intelligence Section of the U.S. Army made several attempts to determine whether or not I was still alive. One time, a Filipino working with the allies attempted to make contact with me but, suspecting it could be a trick of the Japanese military, I did not respond.

As I started to earn some confidence around the office, I began to have access to classified combat intelligence reports. However, I had no outside contact to whom to pass the information. Then, one day, a Filipino lady came to the office and identified herself as the wife of Ernesto Tupas, then serving time in prison for his guerrilla activities. She wanted a pass to visit him. The name Tupas struck me for we did have an Ernesto Tupas assigned to our G-2 office. When I learned it was the same person, I immediately obtained a pass for Mrs. Tupas and thereafter made several passes without the knowledge of the JAG. I needed someone like Ernesto Tupas on the outside to transmit whatever intelligence I gathered to our forces. I decided to work out a prison break plan with the help of Ernesto Tupas and we managed to enable nearly 500 former guerrillas to escape

one evening in August 1944. I myself remained to continue my intelligence work. After the American landing at Lingayen Gulf in January 1945 the Japanese started their retreat toward Northern Luzon. I decided my continued presence with the Japanese would be of no benefit to the U.S. forces, so I took advantage of the beriberi and malaria I had developed. I gave them the impression that I was too weak to be of any further service to them. Thus, I was left behind with instructions to catch up to them as soon I felt better. I was now alone.

I met up with a friendly tribe of Igorots and spent some time with them, but due to language problems I finally left their hospitality and proceeded alone. I had no idea where I was or where I was heading. One day at dusk I was caught in a barrage of Japanese mortar shelling. I distinctly remembered three shells falling rather close by when I suddenly blanked out. When I came to I was unable to get up and my stomach area felt wet. I soon learned that instead of perspiration it was blood. Remembering that there was a river close by I rolled and crawled until I finally made it to the river. I felt at least I would have water to drink and nurse myself. About three hours later the stench was so bad, I finally decided to check my stomach wound. Yes, it was infected and pussy. I carefully washed off the area and found a piece of shrapnel imbedded. Since I had no access to 911, I got my razor blade and became Doctor Sakakida. Still unable to travel, I sat by the river. To my surprise I saw little crabs about an inch to inch and one half in the river. Every day I was able to catch 3 to 4 of them and enjoy them for dinner. Finally I was able to walk, so started on my way. I decided to follow the river down stream hoping that it would take me out to civilization. It was very slow travel. I could only take a few steps and rest.

One day I suddenly heard voices in the distance. I immediately hid but as they got closer I recognized American slang. With hands raised, I identified myself and came out of hiding. I identified myself as a member of CIC taken prisoner on Corregidor and gave them my serial number and rank. They gave me directions to their field headquarters. The taste of chewing gum and cigarettes they gave me was unforgettable. It took me two days, but I finally got back to our forces and rejoined the CIC Field Detachment. This was in late September 1945. All during my captivity, especially during the period of confinement in Bilibid Prison undergoing interrogations, I was determined that one day I would get full revenge with interest. Having access to all the POW camps, I had no problem tracking down those that had tortured me. With vengeance in mind I had the Kempei Tai members brought to Manila for confrontation. In uniform and with dark glasses I had a Nisei acting as an interpreter. He told them, "We are trying to determine the whereabouts of a Nisei by the name of Sakakida. Have any of you known or heard of him." Their answer was the expected denial. I then took my sun glasses off and stared at them.

The Japanese turned white, and began apologizing. They began to bow in a sense of surrender and began crying. The pride and arrogance maintained by them were no longer present. Seeing them in "POW" uniforms and depressed

demeanor killed my spirit of revenge. I was unable to come up with appropriate words but just told them, "The war is over;" and left the room. Thereafter, until their repatriation to Japan I always provided cigarettes and sweets whenever I went to their camp. One day they approached me and told me that the humane treatment was killing them psychologically and wanted me to take appropriate action for what they had done to me. I told them that the war was over and I was certain that whatever they had done was because of the war. I did my duty and no longer begrudged any of them. This is the way I was brought up.

Maybe I was unfair to my wife, Cherry, but I did not tell her the torturous experiences I underwent as a prisoner of the Japanese. Naturally I never uttered a word to my mother or the family members. During my sleep I would dream about the torture and groan and moan. Cherry would awaken me and ask but I would just laugh it off and never talked about it.

Finally, Colonel Tom Sakamoto asked me to be the keynote speaker at the 50th Anniversary of the Northern California MIS in 1991. It was then that Cherry learned of the various experiences I underwent during my captivity. Even today, a certain kind of music, or the sound of a certain musical instrument, bring feelings of loneliness and remind me of the dark nights spent alone in the mountains of Northern Luzon. Although I am dependent on heart medications and painkillers three times a day and must undergo surgery to correct the numbness of my entire right arm, shoulder and neck, I am glad I had the opportunity to serve my country I only hope no one will be placed in the position I had endured during my captivity. But having endured these difficulties, today I feel I am better prepared as a human to face my future.

[TOP]

The New Guinea and Philippine Campaigns - Sunao Ishio

When Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941, I was already in the U.S. Army, just beginning field artillery basic training at Camp Roberts, California. There were quite a few other Nisei trainees there. We mixed in freely with other draftees in camp and joined in with all of the activities. After December 7, there was an abrupt change in the attitude of the non-Japanese servicemen toward the Nisei. The free and easy attitude in the barracks towards the Nisei became strained and in some cases cool and hostile. Almost immediately, we found ourselves on KP duty except for those of us with such non-Japanese sounding names as Ohara, Goda and Mano, who were armed and put on perimeter guard duty. However, it wasn't long before they, too, were on KP.

There was no further training for the Nisei, and in a few weeks we were all scattered to different locations. I was in a group of about ten who were sent to a cavalry camp near the Mexican border and then to Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. It wasn't until June 1942 that we were assigned to Camp Savage, Minnesota, the location of the MIS Language School. I was placed in the

Special Class because of my experience in college in Tokyo for a few years. (I had returned to the States in April of 1941 after being advised by the American Embassy that matters had taken a turn for the worse between the U.S. and Japan.) By September, we had completed our Special Class work. Half of the class remained as instructors at Camp Savage. About ten of us were shipped out to Australia.

En route, we were told that we were now assigned to the I Corps and were promoted to T/3 on board ship. In Australia, the Corps G-2 promptly reduced us one grade, explaining that General MacArthur's policy was to have each man work up to his grade. He also asked each of us individually whether we could read, speak, and write the Japanese language. It was all we could do to keep from laughing out loud. After all, we were the Special Class, the elite at Camp Savage. This was indicative of the early lack of understanding of the potential the Nisei MISLS graduates represented as a source of invaluable military information that could be obtained through our knowledge of the Japanese language, people, customs, etc. As the MIS Nisei began to prove themselves, however, field commanders began to demand that their units have language detachments assigned to them. The demand became so great that a large-scale recruitment program had to be launched to obtain volunteers from the relocation camps and from Hawaii.

The situation at the time of my arrival in Australia in late 1942 was that the Japanese push towards Port Moresby in New Guinea across the Owens Stanley range was beginning to falter because of Australian and U.S. counter-attacks. Our first attempt to fly over the Owens Stanley mountains to reach Corps headquarters had to be aborted because of enemy aircraft but on the second try, we were able to make it. Actually this was 32nd Division headquarters because I Corps consisted of the 32nd on line and the 41st Division in reserve. Not many prisoners or documents were brought in from front line units in the early days. The few prisoners taken were mostly Korean laborers who spoke little Japanese and knew almost nothing of military value. In the early days, documents picked up by the GIs were kept by them as souvenirs. Eventually a few began to trickle in.

Practically every Japanese soldier kept a personal diary in which useful military information was entered, such as training, morale, unit identifications and movements, equipment, etc. When I went through my first batch of documents, I listed all of the military units mentioned in them along with pertinent intelligence information on each and turned my findings over to the G-2. The order of battle officer was very excited by what I had compiled, saying that mine was the first report on any order of battle data that he had seen. Thereafter, I compiled periodic reports depending on the receipt of captured documents. Whenever an operational order or a map was received, I translated it on priority and turned them over to G-2.

Our interdiction of the Japanese supply lines from their base at Rabaul was so effective that captured POWs were starving and in poor physical condition from lack of medical supplies. But life in the New Guinea jungle was not that good for GIs, either. Our daily rations consisted of Australian bully beef and hard tack with an occasional chocolate bar. Once in a great while, some worm-infested steamed rice would be added. Whenever it rained, our foxholes and the latrines would fill up with water. Our desks and chairs were made from whatever material we could find. Pools of stagnant water were all we had in which to bathe. Many of us developed skin rashes, which in my case lasted for many years. Life was especially hard at regimental headquarters where I went to visit one of our men. When I called out his name, he crawled out of a vine-covered hut, unshaven and in dirty fatigues. If I had not known that he was one of us, I would have taken him for a Japanese soldier.

Once in a great while, we would get word about a captured Japanese soldier in a forward field hospital. These men would usually be in extremely poor physical shape and sometimes barely conscious. Many of them thought that they would be killed after being interrogated, and they were resigned to their fate. However; after kind treatment, food, and a cigarette, they would usually open up and talk. After the Buna Campaign, I was sent to ATIS in Brisbane for a few months and then to Finschhafen with a team of several translators. By this time the volume of both documents and POWs was such that separate translation and interrogation teams were set up. I was in charge of the translation team, which had to work late every night to process the large number of documents being received. Any information on the Japanese supply situation for the pockets of troops left along the New Guinea coast and their plans for consolidating their isolated remnants were immediately translated. This information proved very useful in countering Japanese efforts to consolidate isolated units. Facilities were available for typing and mimeo-graphing multiple copies for immediate distribution. All processed documents were sent on to ATIS through channels.

I was again returned to ATIS where I was promoted to warrant officer and then to 2nd lieutenant. It was at this time, in the spring of 1944, that one of the most important documents of the war came into our hands. It was the current Imperial Japanese Army Officer List. Everyone was assigned to the priority translation of the entire list.

Perhaps the most important single document translated at ATIS was the so-called "Z" Plan of the Japanese Combined Fleet dated 5 March 1944. It was translated and distributed on 23 May 1944. The Plan was signed by Admiral Koga, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet at Palau and was prepared to cover a series of defensive operations based on the possibility of Allied attacks in one or more areas of the Pacific. The advantage gained by U.S. forces in having the "Z" Plan was incalculable. With nearly a month before the U.S. invasion of the Marianas to analyze Japan's defenses, U.S. strategists were in a position to decimate the Japanese carrier force.

I had another short assignment to a regimental combat team in training for a possible landing on New Britain. This operation was scrubbed and I was returned to ATIS. Shortly thereafter, I found myself with Sixth Army headquarters in Hollandia in preparation for the landing on Leyte Island in the Philippines in October 1944. Our convoy to the Philippines was under Japanese kamikaze attack for several days. It was extremely unnerving to watch these aircraft circling at very high altitudes and then suddenly swerving off and diving towards one of our ships. Just as we landed on the beach at Leyte, our LST was hit by a bomber; wounding two of our men, Spady Koyama and Cappy Harada. As the Leyte campaign progressed, the Japanese frantically attempted to send in reinforcements by convoys. Many of the ships were sunk, and it was not clear how many of the replacements had been able to make it to shore and to their units. A concerted effort was made to review whatever documents came into our hands to try to piece together a reliable tally of how many effectives had made it to their units. Through a day and night scanning and translating enemy documents, it was confirmed that very few of the replacements had survived.

The desperation of the enemy was evident in his rash tactic of dropping paratroopers on some of the Leyte airfields at night. At one airfield, some of the Japanese parachutes apparently failed to open. I was awakened in the middle of the night and driven to the airfield to face the grim task of removing whatever documents could be found on the mangled and bloody bodies. A special light-proof tent had been put up for me to use. I spent the rest of the night translating the documents, which I had picked up. It was extremely hot and close within the tent, and every sound outside seemed to be magnified ten-fold by my imagining that there would be a follow-up parachute drop. Actually, the orders, which I translated, called for another drop the next day, but this did not materialize. My work on Luzon was much more of the same. In March 1945, I was allowed to return to the States for R&R. I may have been the first Japanese American to walk down the streets of San Francisco since the evacuation. I was in the uniform of a 1st lieutenant. Those I talked with invariably thought that I was something other than a Nisei. This irked me no end, but the fact that we were in the Pacific area was still a military secret.

While on R&R, I was assigned to PACMIRS (Pacific Military Intelligence Research Section) of the Military Intelligence Division, War Department. PACMIRS was at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. There documents of long-range strategic intelligence interest were processed. One of them was a detailed Japanese engineering study for the construction of a proposed dam at San-men Gorge on the Yellow River. The White House was interested enough in the document to put in a request for MIS graduates to explain the contents and answer any questions. I was selected along with another specialist for this assignment. We spent several days in Washington. Another example of the type of document processed at PACM IRS was the complete inventory of Japanese Army ordnance, which provided useful strategic bombing targets and post-surrender strategic bombing survey guidance.

[TOP]

Radio Intercept Intelligence - James Yukio Tanabe

I was born in Marysville, California, and raised on a farm. I attended local schools until July 1942, at which time our family was interned in the Tule Lake War Relocation Center. Within a few months we were faced with a loyalty questionnaire to establish our loyalty to the United States.

Soon afterwards, we moved to a second war relocation center: Topaz, Utah, which was no better than the first. Within a short time, my brother Harry was drafted into military service. Another, older brother, Tom, had been in the Army since 1941. I myself was drafted in April 1943. I completed my basic training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Although we were scheduled to replace our fallen comrades in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe, I was one of the few that did not join the ranks of the 442nd. Instead, one day during basic training, some officers came recruiting for Japanese language candidates for intelligence duties in the Pacific. A colonel said something that sounded like Japanese, so I answered him in Japanese. But before I was able to complete my sentence in Japanese, he turned to me and said, "Fall out -- I want you." Maybe it was for the better that I did not complete the sentence. After basic, I received orders to report to the counter-intelligence school in Havre de Grace, Maryland. I subsequently attended the Army Electronic Communication School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and on completion, was given a Top Secret clearance and commissioned a Warrant Officer (WO-1). From here I shipped out for the Pacific in late September 1943.

The troopship zig-zagged across the Pacific Ocean for 23 days to Brisbane, Australia. We arrived in our heavy O.D. uniforms -- it was autumn back home -- and a complete change into summer uniforms was in order. Two weeks later, I was flown to the Allied listening station on Norfolk Island, "The Ears of the Pacific," as it was known.

Norfolk Island is a small South Pacific island some 800 miles east of Brisbane and due north of New Zealand, inhabited by descendants of Fletcher Christian and other Bounty mutineers. There I spent fourteen to sixteen hours daily monitoring Japanese radio communications, vital extracts of which were flown to the communications center at Brisbane. One of the highlights of my stay on Norfolk Island was spending Christmas Day 1943 on the beach, with 90 degree sunny weather. In January however I was flown to New Guinea and attached to an Australian unit in order to repair and help train the Australians in the use of American communications equipment. Unfortunately, no arrangements to return me to Norfolk Island had been made, and I remained with the Australians for more than two months. After completing my original assignment a Japanese

attack gave me my first combat experience -- and also my combat wound Purple Heart. I was then evacuated to Darwin, Australia, to recover.

After I had recuperated, I was sent on a variety of assignments with Marine units throughout the Pacific. These took me to the Solomons, Guam, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. My primary jobs were intercepting Japanese radio messages and interrogating prisoners of war. While with the prisoners, I spent much of my time keeping them from committing suicide. It was a 24-hour task.

Many of the islands defended by the Japanese had civilians -- men, women, and children -- as well as soldiers on them. I would get on the loudspeaker and try talking the soldiers into surrendering and persuading the civilians to leave the fighting area. This was difficult, since combat was usually at close quarters. Often my attempts at persuasion didn't work. I watched Japanese mothers with infants in their arms climb to the edge of cliffs and leap into the Pacific Ocean.

At war's end I moved up into Japan as part of the Occupation of Japan.
[TOP]

From Morotai to Mindanao and then to Japan - George Oakley Totten III

After training in Japanese language and army basics at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and in military Japanese (heigo), translation and interrogation at Camp Savage, Minnesota, I was sent overseas in July 1944 first to Australia and eventually to Morotai, a Dutch East Indies island in the Halmaheras just south of the Philippines. There I was attached to the 31st Infantry Division, which originated from the National Guard of Alabama. The Division was all white and almost entirely from Alabama. But a few officers had to be introduced from elsewhere, because of lack of trained personnel. That included translators and interrogators. Thus, a group of five Nikkei non-commissioned officers and myself as a 2nd LT., soon followed by another 2nd LT., Amos Belden, with the same training as myself except that he was a BIJ (born in Japan), which gave him greater fluency in spoken Japanese, whereas my forte was in reading fluency, in part because I had studied Chinese before starting Japanese.

At first the soldiers of the 31st had a hard time understanding why the Nikkei team was attached to the G-2 intelligence section, but they gradually came to accept them, and, when battle got underway in the Philippines, and Nisei would be dispatched to work in a battalion, their attitudes changed to warm respect. But I am getting ahead of my story. On Morotai, there had hardly been any fighting. The Division and other Army, Navy, and air units had staked out a small section of the island. On official maps the rest of the island was in enemy hands. In actuality only scattered Japanese roamed the island. They could not muster much more action than to keep our guards alert. Our Division was bivouacked in groves of coconut trees reminding one of picture postcards when the moon was

full by the beach at night. We had a perimeter that was almost always quiet. Sometimes one or two of the half-starved, discouraged Japanese soldiers who wandered about in the thick jungle would creep up to the perimeter to quietly watch from afar the big silver screen we had set up to show movies to the audience of GIs and officers who sat on logs smoking cigars to keep the mosquitoes away. Occasionally we would have to dive into our foxholes when the alarms would sound because "Washing-Machine Charlie" was flying over from a neighboring island to drop some bombs. Now and then Aussie fighters on Morotai would scramble into the air and down the Japanese plane, providing a small but riveting display of a trail of flames curling down the night horizon.

One of my duties in preparation for our impending attack on the Philippines was to give lectures to our troops on the importance of not shooting the Japanese soldiers when they would emerge from the jungle with their hands up. My message was that they were responding to leaflets we had dropped on them and the information they could divulge to us would enable our side to kill many more of them than the few who would surrender. A Nisei member of our team, such as Tadashi Hamane or Jerry Shibata, who had no Japanese accent, rather than a Kibei, such as Shigeo Miyashiro, who was a lifesaver for us all in reading sosho, would come with me and would also speak so that the GIs would get a look at a Japanese American and realize that we had people of Japanese ancestry on our side who made a contribution way beyond their numbers in winning the war. The campaign for Mindanao by the Eighth Army began in April 1945. The task of destroying the Japanese forces east of the Zamboanga Peninsula fell to X Corps led by Maj. Gen. Frank C. Silbert and composed of the reinforced 24th and 31st Infantry Divisions. Fortunately, the Japanese 30th and 100th Divisions facing us were in very poor shape, and their commanders, Lt. Generals Morozumi and Harada respectively, did not expect any American landing, much less one at the point where we came shore.

The 31st Division advanced inland with little difficulty to the town of Malaybalay, precisely in the middle of Mindanao. That is where I found myself when everyone started yelling, jumping with joy, and firing some shots into the night sky on August 15.

There had, of course, been some resistance and our G-2 Unit was busy. We had even received a shower of sniper fire while coming around a curve in a pass a few days after landing. We were saved by the enemy's not being such sharp shooters. Every day some prisoners were taken and we got much information from interrogations and documents that piled up quickly. One member of our team, Sergeant Shibata, was commissioned in the field for his splendid work, thanks to Maj. Peacock, a very capable Alabamian who headed up G-2. One day in a skirmish on the way, our troops overran stockpiles of food which the enemy had left. The GIs did not pay any attention to them, but Kibei "Shig" Miyashiro immediately spotted the cans with saba (mackerel) with delight. So we started fixing our own food by ourselves; the good Japanese rice, the Shizuoka green

tea, and cans of mackerel, tuna, etc. were delicious and a real relief from the GI rations. The day after the war ended, we had to compose a leaflet telling the Japanese to surrender and explaining the "atomic bomb." I remember translating it as genshiteki bakudan. Later it came to be called genshi bakudan "atomic bomb." I felt we were creating a new word in Japanese on the spot. When the leaflets were ready, I was sent up in a two-seater cub and scattered the leaflets, while the pilot was telling me small planes were safer than big ones. I was thinking big planes would be higher up and not as vulnerable to someone with even a rifle just below, but we were not fired upon.

After establishing communications with the enemy in the hills nearby, we arranged a small ceremony when a Japanese general came down with some disciplined but unarmed troops to surrender his sword with as much pomp and circumstance as both sides could muster in the heat and dust of a sunny day. My worst moment came a few hours later in a tent nearby where I had been ordered to translate between the commander of the U.S. 31st Division and the commander of the Japanese 30th. The two generals seemed to enjoy talking to each other telling what they had done to outsmart the other. I was sweating away.

Towards the end of August most of our team were ordered to Davao, where the Japanese troops and civilians were being concentrated for repatriation to Japan. There the bulk of the 43,000 Japanese forces and the some 12,000 noncombat civilians were building their own stockades under American GI direction. This was ironically the same location in which the Japanese had had their own much smaller POW stockade. In these huge, hastily constructed camps, tents and blankets soon ran out, and more and more were flown in, and rations of rice and other food were distributed, but these supplies were usually insufficient. Long lines of people waited in the hot sun for a chance to squat and move their bowels in the oil drums converted to toilets and in full view of everyone else. Many had diarrhea. Others were too sick to go.

Ships came to evacuate them back to Japan. The soldiers went first, marching onto LCM "ducks" that drove into the water and out to the Japanese ships. Since we were overworked, a few Filipino youths who had learned Japanese during the Japanese occupation were sent down from Manila to help us do the paperwork, such as registering and counting all civilians, and here the paperwork was much more complex, since we had no records from the Japanese army, as we had on the soldiers.

A major tragedy was taking place before my eyes. General MacArthur's order to repatriate the "Japanese" was being interpreted to "send back" practically everyone who looked Japanese and their Filipino wives with their half-Japanese small children. Other families were split up. The Philippine government was trying to send down from Manila some Filipino lawyers to screen the so-called "Japanese" civilians being sent to Japan. Day after day the Filipino lawyers were

being "bumped" off the planes in favor of American army officers. Eventually towards the end of the repatriation two of them got down to Davao. They were able to "save" a number of Nikkei (Issei, Nisei, and some who were born in the Philippines but had gone to Japan for an education and returned to the Philippines). Many of these naturally wanted to stay in the country to which they had migrated, where they had their homes and property, where some had been born and where most had good relations with their neighbors.

When the 31st Division was ordered home, Amos Belden and I and one Nisei from our team, named Mike Miyagishima, cut our own orders to proceed to Japan, since we were not yet eligible for discharge. We decided, instead of the usual hassle of army travel, to take a Japanese ship, the last Japanese repatriation ship to leave Davao. This was a byoin sen or hospital ship which came to take the last of the sick and wounded. Amos, Mike, and I took loads of C-rations on board. We ate with the merchant marine captain and the complement of doctors who were all still officers in the Japanese Navy, sharing our rations with them.

At dusk on December 15, we landed at Kure, a naval base on southern Honshu. I remember how tough Japanese nurses in the glaring lights from the docks carried sick and wounded on their backs up steep planks from the ship, choosing the worst cases first, and thinking to myself that this job would be done by men in the U.S. One of our colleagues from Ann Arbor and Savage, Lt. Merritt B. Saldinger, came to meet the boat. He was the only language officer there and very surprised to see the three of us Americans walk off this ship. We had landed in Japan, Amos to the land of his birth, Mike Miyagishima and I for the first time in our lives. (Incidentally Mike stayed in the Army and retired as a colonel.) Arriving in Japan for the first time with a high degree of control of the language was an unbelievable experience. I could read more or less everything and almost every Japanese practically fainted of surprise when I spoke their language with fairly good pronunciation and almost flawless grammar. It was easy to understand why the Japanese army was so cavalier about leaving documents around. They unconsciously believed no one who did not look Japanese could ever read them. And they thought no Japanese could ever choose another nationality and be part of the US military forces. This gave the Allies such a formidable military weapon.

I made my way to Tokyo and joined ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Section) where I worked until near the end of my four-year tour of duty. Then I returned by ship to the U.S. in July 1946 after which I went back to college, became a professor, and devoted my life to promoting better understanding between the U.S. and East Asia.

It is amazing to contemplate that, starting from almost the day after the end of the Second World War; both the Nisei and non-Nisei linguists together have been in the forefront of promoting friendship with Japan. They explained American

democratic values to the Japanese and they taught about Japanese culture to Americans. While Japan and the U.S. have developed trade frictions, they are today both committed to democratic politics (no matter how far both of our countries are from an absolute ideal type) and both have increased our pleasure from our cultural exchanges from baseball and judo, on one extreme, to classical music and noh drama on the other. And within the United States mainstream Americans have come to universally realize that the relocation of "Japanese" from the West Coast was an unnecessary tragedy. It has come to be one of the lessons in the textbook of American history which has now come to help us all be better Americans.

[TOP]

The LUPOW Team in the Philippines - Yoshito Iwamoto

The Luzon Prisoner of War (LUPOW) Team, established in the Philippines after the Japanese surrender, consisted of 24 Nisei from California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii. Seventeen of us (including myself) had come from Fort Snelling, the rest directly from a crash-course in Hawaii. Our team leader was Staff Sergeant Ardaven Kozono, operating under the direction of Lt. John Tappe. Our job was to screen and register Japanese prisoners at POW Camp #1, recording their names, birthplace, units, and place of capture or surrender, and to help run the camp.

Camp #1 was in Laguna Province, about 80 miles south of Manila, near the town of Canlubang. Managing a camp of approximately 80,000 people was a tremendous task, with problems far exceeding any we had experienced in our relocation camps at home. Arriving prisoners had to be sprayed with DDT hundreds at a time, and the dust rose 30 feet into the air over a quarter of a square mile. Many of the prisoners had been in the army since the beginning of the war in China, and were exhausted after their long years of hard service. All of the POWs were suffering from malnutrition; many were sick and wounded. The trucks bringing them to Camp #1 always seemed to include one or two dead, and deaths continued even after their arrival. We had several acres of graveyard, tended respectfully, with each grave marked with a number on a narrow 15-inch white board and recorded on a coded list. I would estimate that over 500 died from wounds, malnutrition, and disease.

Many of the prisoners were so weak they could not even digest normal food and had to be fed soft okayu (rice gruel) during the first few days. The Japanese army doctors and nurses also had their hands full taking care of the wounded, especially victims of flame throwers. There were also a number of POWs suffering from psychological disorders, who had to be kept separately in special enclosures. The prisoners also included Korean labor units, nurses, dependents, children, and comfort girls. They were kept in a separate confinement facility. Despite all the problems, I must admit that the Japanese soldiers were the most

disciplined I had ever seen. Their squad or platoon leaders had complete control of them and, to the last minute, they were perfectly well-behaved. Sometimes members of the LUPOW Team were sent out to various areas to bring in Japanese stragglers or those captured by Philippine guerrilla units. On another occasion, T/5 Seuchi Deguchi and I went to a rock quarry some fifteen miles away to inspect some of our prisoners who were well enough to be put to work there. On the way, we passed through the village of Calumba where the Japanese Kempei (Military Police) had committed atrocities. We soon found ourselves surrounded by villagers shouting "Hapon! Hapon!" They apparently thought we were escapees from the camp. Fortunately we were able to flag down a passing army truck and we left the scene. At the rock quarry, we were told that Generals Tomoyuki Yamashita and Masaharu Homma, who had been executed for war crimes in the Philippines, were buried in Camp #1.

During this period I was also detailed briefly to Manila and assigned to Brig. Gen. Lester, who commanded the Manila Port facilities. I had to interpret for him in inspecting ships coming from Japan to repatriate the Japanese prisoners and other nationals. On one occasion while preparing to board a Japanese ship with the general, seeing our own naval vessels training their guns on us gave me a very eerie feeling.

After about six months, the LUPOW team was transferred to the Manila Records Center to assist in cataloguing the POW files. While there I spent most of my spare time looking for Nisei who had been drafted into the Japanese army, including my own two older brothers who had been stranded in Japan and drafted. I had no luck, but learned later that one was in Malaya and the other in Manchuria.

I had suffered both a bad fungus infection and a brief case of malaria while at POW Camp #1. But in Manila, I had an even greater medical problem. I suddenly became paralyzed from head to toe and had to be rushed to the Manila General Hospital. I came to in the ambulance and saw that the casualty tag hanging from my neck read "Poliomyelitis." At the hospital I was placed in an iron lung and soon was able to breathe on my own. A specialist had to be flown in from Honolulu to tap my spine and, after several weeks in isolation, I was feeling much better. But I had no visitors and even the hospital staff avoided me since I was in isolation. When I was released I rejoined the LUPOW Team and went by ship to Tokyo. Once there, the team was broken up and I had a number of brief assignments: To the Australian Honor Guard at the Imperial Palace; to a British documentary film crew; to Tokyo University to teach English; to an engineer survey crew; and to serve as Maj. General Willoughby's interpreter at the 90th Extraordinary Session of the Diet where Emperor Hirohito presented the Imperial Rescript with the new draft Constitution. Later I requested a more permanent assignment and was transferred to the Eighth Army Judge Advocate Section in Yokohama. There I became a court interpreter for the trial of Japanese "Class B" war criminals. After receiving my honorable discharge from the Army, I remained as a civilian

court interpreter for another year. I then returned home and enrolled as a student at the University of Washington.

[TOP]

Negotiating with the Japanese Uaison Team in Manila - Harvey Watanabe

June, 1943-Graduation. My wife and I wonder when and where I'll be shipped. August: 40 of us, including 1st Sgt. Kanegai, are sent to Camp Stoneman, California, a port of embarkation. We sail -- no convoy -- no escort -- 18 days. We arrive 70 miles up the Brisbane River, Australia, and truck to a suburb called Indooroopili to a tent camp where earlier Nisei MISers await us.

I am now a part of Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS), a part of General MacArthur's Headquarters. It consisted of the U.S. Army, Australians, British, Greeks, Chinese, and others, I'm sure, and of course, the U.S. Navy. As such, ATIS was very multinational but a very special frontline tactical need was filled by the Nisei interpreters/translators. I was assigned to the General Translation Pool and was anticipating my turn for frontline duty.

Within a couple of months I was asked to join the Technical and Tactical Air Translation Team which was headed by George Goda. Several months later George was promoted and I was given the Team. Among the more interesting translations was the Japanese Zero pilot's report on an encounter with a high-flying B29 and the unusual action it took when he tried to intercept it. Obviously, the pilot did not know the B29 had the ability to synchronize all its guns onto one target. In a sense, the B29 started to do what Admiral Togo did to the Russian fleet in the Battle of Tsushima Strait in 1905. The pilot broke off the engagement and made his report.

Another duty was to screen all documents that were sent to ATIS from the various fronts. I presented various documents and portions of them to a review board for recommended actions. Some of general value to the Pacific Ocean Area went to Hawaii and those of long range strategic value were sent to Maryland. I took to the incinerator many excess duplicates, diaries, and other documents with no military value. My faith in the U.S.A. became more staunch. Everybody seemed to trust us more. Encounters with CIC operatives seemed to lessen. Earlier, they had been everywhere we went. Whenever we left camp, they had been there.

In the late Spring of 1945 we moved from Brisbane to Manila. We did our share in moving. I drove a fork lift in Brisbane and ran errands with a staff car in Manila. I nearly got myself done in by a tall Filipino who grabbed me as I was getting into my staff car. He was sure he had captured an escaping Japanese. Thank the Lord, he spoke fluent English. His bob knife looked like a katana (Japanese sword).

It was not long after we were settled in and more and more MISLS graduates were arriving and land warfare was threatening the Japanese mainland, when

the Bomb (Fikadon) was dropped. Some of us had heard grapevine rumblings of it a few days earlier. It was still a shock -- about like the bombing of Pearl Harbor -- except that this one heralded the end of the war! Several days after the "Pikadon," I was asked to head up a small group to accommodate a Japanese Liaison Team coming to Manila to coordinate the initial Occupation of Japan. The Japanese would fly to Clark Field and would be driven to the Rosano Apartments. I recall waiting at the front entrance with Colonel Mashbir. General Kawabe and 13 others, including a couple of civilians, got out of staff cars and approached. The military personnel all wore sidearms and swords! Colonel Mashbir and I looked at each other in dismay.

First things first. My team got them situated. Then Colonel Mashbir and I went to confront the General about their weapons, but we decided to ask first. The General demurred for a while but soon suggested that I take custody of the sidearms. Then the matter of swords: the General stated they were ceremonial. We stonewalled him. He then asked permission to wear the swords to the conference site but to leave them outside the room. We did sweat more than a few drops in the tropical heat of Manila, but we were very, very happy that the matter was settled without ruffling feathers, ours or theirs, before the start of important meetings.

My team had made an impromptu roster of the Japanese Liaison Team and I had it with me when General Willoughby and Colonel Landers asked General Kawabe to name those who would attend the first conference. General Kawabe started naming names so I gave him the roster and my Parker pen to identify attendees. My pen made the first marks by the Japanese Government after the cessation of hostilities. What a treasure I had. Today some burglar has it. To me, it was a much greater memento than the occasion I had during the Korean War to shake the hand of the heir apparent who is now the Emperor of Japan. While the first conference was taking place, I was rushed to headquarters for promotion. The medical officer had me lie still for an hour before my blood pressure came down low enough to satisfy the records needed for commissioning. I went back to talk to General Kawabe's aide who spoke fluent English. I found out he was a Nisei who was caught in Japan by the war, was drafted, and thus served in the Japanese Army. I later had the good fortune of running into him in Tokyo and had a long and pleasant conversation with him. We were now preparing to move into Japan. For us, it was Tokyo. I was assigned to Colonel Edwards whose job was to accommodate all headquarter staff of all levels, war correspondents, and visiting staff. Colonel Edwards twice called me to his stateroom during the sea voyage to stress the need for me to have bodyguards. I declined for the reason that people everywhere are people "like you and me" and the war was over. He acceded but asked me to help in ways other than interpreting because he was shorthanded. I was happy to oblige. Little did I know that a guy raised on the farm would be managing the 735 room Dai Ichi Hotel for 400 field grade officers, 50 WAC officers, 250 war correspondents, 14 Russians who were locked out of their embassy by the pre-

war embassy staff still ensconced there, and two generals who preferred not to go to the Imperial Hotel.

During the war the seven-story Dai Ichi Hotel had been stripped of all metal especially in the kitchen. All elevator cars, except one, were gone, the hot water system had been shut down four years, the heating and air-conditioning systems were also shut down. The dining room and lobby were storage spaces. If I had headaches and heartaches during the war for myself, my wife, and our families still in camp, this was yet another one!

I must give credit to my GI staff and the Japanese staff of the Dai Ichi Hotel for their unstinting response for our needs: getting elevator cars to eliminate the six-floor climb; redecorating all the rooms before Christmas; coping with about 400 leaks when the hot water was turned on; scrounging for sewing machines so our uniforms could be altered or mended; and working out a system of cool water washing of woolen uniforms so they would not shrink (no dry cleaning available -- they managed to shrink about 50 uniforms once because of a temperature mistake). I should also mention the engineering staff that sincerely tried to resign because the heating and cooling system worked so poorly early on, and the French-trained chef who during the first 30 days prepared Spam 90 different ways using GI field stoves which were still in use when I left for home on Christmas Eve, 1945. The most difficult task the staff had was to hire a man attendant for the men's restroom. It was nearly a month finding a man to take that job from a very nice middle-aged woman who was very unobtrusive and efficient. And thanks to Asahi Beer Company for about 80,000 bottles of free beer we received. (I sent 150 bottles daily to the Imperial Hotel.) The beer stopped coming when the U.S. Government informed the Japanese Government that beer was not a U.S. military ration item: therefore, the beer could not be considered a part of reparation payments.

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