MIS VETERANS

Military Intelligence Service Veterans Club of Hawaii

Newsletter
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2014 Officers Sworn In

The MIS Veterans Club's incoming officers and board members took their oaths of office at the annual Shinnenkai, held in January at The Willows. **Pictured above, they are, from left: Gale Wilson, treasurer; Karen Kikukawa, secretary; Lawrence Enomoto, president; Harry Kawaoka, auditor; Herbert Yanamura, second vice president; and George Arine, first vice president.** Board members include Glen Arakaki, Gregg Hirata, Tammy Kubo, Mark Matsunaga, James Moy, Yoshinobu Oshiro, David Sakai, Sherman Takao, and Ted Tsukiyama.

President's Message

"...Strategic Plan 2014 –2019 is intended to help our MIS Veterans Club determine where we are going in the next five years..."

I am honored to join a long line of distinguished World War II Nisei veterans and Korean War and Vietnam War veterans, all of whom served in different kinds of military intelligence duties—linguists, analysts, computer and technical specialists, etc. As the *chonan*—eldest son—of a WWII Nisei veteran who completed Japanese language training at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling in 1944, and who served in the Philippine liberation campaign and occupation of Japan, I am proud to have joined the Military Intelligence Service Veterans Club of Hawaii several years ago, first as an associate member based on my dad's MIS service, but also as a veteran member having received intelligence training and served in intelligence assignments during my 22 years of consecutive U.S. Air Force enlisted and commissioned service.

After my election as your new club president last year, I proposed to the executive board at its November 2013 meeting that it establish an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), which I volunteered to chair for the purpose of developing a Strategic Plan for 2014-2019. With the board's approval, the SPC includes George Arine, Edgar Hamasu, Mark Matsunaga, and Gregg Hirata as committee members and Karen Kikukawa and Gale Wilson as resource persons. The SPC has met three times in January and February 2014, and has prepared a draft document for review by the board at its February 2014 meeting. Final approval by the membership will occur, hopefully, at a special general membership meeting in early summer 2014 at a date and place to be announced later.

This Strategic Plan 2014–2019 is intended to help our MIS Veterans Club determine where we are going in the next five years by determining (1) where we stand now, (2) where we want to go, and (3) how we will get there.

Mahalo for supporting me as your 2014 president!

Lawrence Enomoto

Surprise Reunion on Okinawa

Herbert Yanamura was a 21-year-old Japanese American soldier in the U.S. Army during the Battle of Okinawa in mid-1945. He was an MIS linguist serving with the 381st Regiment of the 96th Infantry Division when his unit approached the village of Maehira on June 21.

Army observers had seen many people in the village, so Herbert's commander asked him to make a surrender appeal to the villagers. Herbert was led to a point close to the village, and he used a loudspeaker to ask the villagers to come forward. Over several hours and a number of appeals, more than 1,500 people surrendered to the Army.

One of the villagers was a 10-year-old who lived with her grandparents and relatives. That child grew up to become a 78-year-old grandmother, Hatsuko Tomori.

Last year, when Mrs. Tomori heard that the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum would be honoring the Nisei for their role in the Battle of Okinawa, she recalled her own experience and the Japanese-speaking American soldier's appeal to surrender, which she credited with saving the lives of her family and hundreds of others.

She brought her story to the event organizers, and they eventually reached Herbert, who confirmed it was he who had communicated at Maehira that day.

Herbert Yanamura sees Hatsuko Tomori of Okinawa for the first time in 68 years. Herbert's appeal resulted in 1,500 villagers coming forward to surrender to the U.S. Army.

Last November, Herbert was invited to Okinawa for the observance and to visit Maehira, where he was greeted by Mrs. Tomori, a throng of villagers, and the news media.

Herbert said, "It was a very emotional reunion that included a number of other villagers besides Mrs. Tomori. At the time of the war, it was very gratifying that we were able to convince the villagers to surrender and avoid the terrible loss of life that had happened elsewhere in Okinawa.

"But it's even more gratifying to learn that the people we helped went on to raise families and enjoy their lives, and that they appreciate what we did for them. This was one of the most heartwarming events my family and I have ever experienced."

MIS Members Honor Pacific Fleet Commander

MIS Veterans Club members were among those who honored Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., third from left, at a Japanese American Citizens League welcome dinner for the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii in February.

Harris was born in Yokosuka, Japan. His mother was Japanese, from Kobe, and his father was a U.S. Navy chief petty officer. Harris grew up in rural Tennessee and Florida, attended the U.S. Naval Academy, and is a naval aviator. His mother was naturalized, and he recalled that her proudest moments were not his personal achievements, but voting and jury duty as an American citizen. Harris was promoted to four-star admiral and took command of the Pacific Fleet last October, becoming the highest ranking American of Japanese ancestry in the Navy's history.

Referring to the Japanese American soldiers of World War II who served in the MIS, 100th Infantry Battalion, and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, he said, "I stand on the shoulders of giants.... They were heroes of my childhood and heroes of mine today." He acknowledged that, with the exception of Douglas Wada, the Navy and Marine Corps didn't accept AJAs in their ranks during the war. And he quoted Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, who said, "Before World War II, I entertained some doubt as to the loyalty of American citizens of Japanese ancestry in the event of war with Japan. From my observations during World War II, I no longer have that doubt."

Photo by Karen Kikukawa

From left are club members Kenichi Watanabe, Glen Arakaki, Admiral Harris, Herbert Yanamura, Ted Tsukiyama, Andrew Sato, Yoshinobu Oshiro, and Lawrence Enomoto.

Edward Mitsukado of Hawaii was an MIS linguist with Brigadier General Frank Merrill's Marauders (officially the 5307th Composite Unit [Provisional], code-named Galahad) in Burma during the war. In June 1944, he sent a letter to Colonel Kai Rasmussen, commandant of the MIS Language School at Camp Savage, describing his work and offering suggestions on improving the training that soldiers were receiving. This story comes to us from Terry Shima of the Japanese American Veterans Association. He credits Dr. Greg Bradsher, senior archivist with the National Archives and Records Administration, for preparing the article and Archivist Eric Van Slander for providing Mitsukado's letter.

Edward Mitsukado: "Somewhere in Burma"

Mitsukado began his "Somewhere in Burma" letter to Colonel Rasmussen by indicating "that the 14 boys who left Camp Savage September 13 of last year [1943] with Captain [William A.] Laffin have done their job in magnificent style. They have conducted themselves as soldiers throughout the campaign, and officer[s] and men of this outfit have only the highest praise for them. They volunteered to come over with the volunteer outfit and have proved themselves beyond any doubt and question."

After mentioning the death of Laffin, who was killed in action at Myitkyina, Mitsukado reported that he and most of his colleagues were still operating at the front, while the others had been evacuated and were probably enjoying a well-deserved rest. He wrote, "Fighting out here is heavy and goes on day and night. You can hear the machine guns, rifles, and big guns all through the hours. You go to sleep hearing them and wake up with the din still in your ears. Occasionally the Japanese throw their big shells over this way, and the whistling shells make you start thinking and wishing for a haven like Savage. Thomas K. Tsubota and I have a dugout that gives us good security. At nights the firing, the tracers, flares, and the fires make one think of a big New Year's celebration in Chinatown.

"Adding to our discomfort out here are the flies that stick to you during the day and mosquitoes that like to serenade to you all night. You can't eat a meal without a million flies joining you. Then also the dreaded monsoon has set upon us, and you have all the water and mud you'd ever wish to see and roam around in."

After mentioning a greeting he had received from General Joseph Stilwell, Mitsukado noted, "Marching on the Ledo Road and all through the jungles of a very rough and difficult terrain, we hit the Nips in surprise moves that caught them napping…. The marching, close to a thousand miles, was tough and rugged, what with a full field pack, 3-5 days rations, ammunition, rifles, and other odds and ends on your back. Besides those some of us interpreters carried an extra bag containing necessary books and papers. Jungle life is hard to describe. One goes into it with romantic ideas, but that is soon replaced with realism born of sweat and grime and fatigue that hits you to your very bones."

Mitsukado then proceeded to write about the combat experiences of the interpreters, noting "they never hesitated" and had "faced danger, willingly, whenever called upon." After making suggestions for MISLS training, he concluded the letter by writing, "Again I say the boys you sent out here in Burma are carrying on, never forgetting the faith you had in them and the spirit of our officer [Laffin], who, I know, is watching our work from above."

Mitsukado's letter reflected the tough and very harsh mission of Merrill's Marauders, a long-range special operations unit in Burma. Members began assembling and training in India during the fall of 1943. In February 1944, some 2,750 members of the unit, in an operation designed to disrupt Japanese operations, marched into Burma. During the next five months, in the Burmese jungle behind Japanese lines, the unit fought in five major engagements (including at Walawbum and at the Myitkyina airfield) and engaged in combat with the Japanese on 32 separate occasions. As Mitsukado indicated in his letter, "all through the campaign our unit has swept everything before it. We have met the Nips in their chosen ground and have beaten them at every turn."

The unit came to an end in August 1944, when the remaining Marauders were consolidated into another unit. General Merrill subsequently commissioned Mitsukado a second lieutenant and he continued to see service in the China-Burma-India theater, as did most of the other members of Mitsukado's group. For their service, each Nisei linguist/infantryman received the Combat Infantryman's Badge and Bronze Star. One was awarded the Legion of Merit.

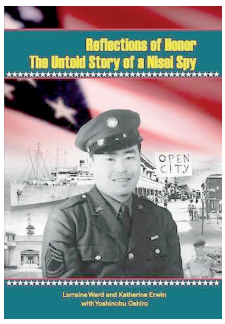
Rasmussen shared Mitsukado's letter with Major General Clayton Bissell, the G-2 assistant chief of staff, and Bissell sent it further up the chain of command. Major General J. E. Hull, then acting assistant chief of staff of the Army's Operations Division, responded to Bissell, indicating that in the organization of a similar unit there would be a Nisei detachment and that this was in accord with General Stilwell's desires, "who recognizes the great value of this personnel in assisting Galahad type operations." This new organization, the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), was activated on July 26, 1944, and would include the 475th Infantry, as well as a team of Nisei.

Mitsukado, a former court recorder in Honolulu, was serving in the 100th Infantry Battalion when he was transferred to the MIS because of his Japanese language abilities. He passed away in 2002.

Above photo: Edward Mitsukado at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, prior to his transfer from the 100th to the MIS.

New Addition to MIS Library

MIS Veterans Club member Yoshinobu Oshiro has added another history to the MIS library with the publication of *Reflections of Honor: The Untold Story of a Nisei Spy*.



It recounts the life of Arthur Komori, who was recruited into the U.S. Army before the outbreak of World War II. Maui-born Komori was assigned to the Counter Intelligence Corps in pre-war Manila to spy on the Japanese. Once the Japanese army invaded the Philippines, he became a translator and undercover agent on the front lines of Bataan. He managed to escape to Australia shortly before the fall of the Philippines and spent his war years with the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service. He returned to the Philippines with the Allied forces and later spent time in Japan during the occupation.

Yoshinobu Oshiro and Lorraine Ward autographed their book following a reception to announce the publication of *Reflections of Honor***. The event was held at Wist Hall on the University of Hawaii at campus.**

Authored by Lorraine Ward and Katherine Erwin, *Reflections of Honor* was a labor of love for Yoshinobu. He said the story and Komori's papers were brought to him by the Komori family about a decade ago and he tried for many years to find an author to develop a biography.

It wasn't until he introduced the idea to Morris Lai of the University of Hawaii's Curriculum Research and Development Group that the project gained momentum. Lai was able to attract Ward and Erwin to the project, and with Yoshinobu's involvement, they were able to complete the project.

The book was published by the University of Hawaii Press and is available for purchase at <uhpress.hawaii.edu> for $20.

Donations Welcome

The club welcomes donations to help support our activities and efforts to preserve the legacy of service of our MIS veterans. Please send your donations to our mailing address.

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