

Remarks by James McNaughton

MIS Exhibit Grand Opening Ceremony
U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii
March 28, 2015

Aloha ... Thank you so much. Some of the stories that she tells are even true (a reference to emcee Barbara Tanabe's introduction of MacNaughton, his credentials and his work). Thank you so much for inviting me. A special thanks to the Nisei veterans. I really, really appreciate the chance. I met with some you yesterday evening and I hope to meet some more of you this morning. It is a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for me, personally, and it's deeply moving. Thank you to [retired] General [David] Bramlett and to Vicki (Olson, Hawaii Army Museum Society executive director), also to the Hawaii Army Museum Society for making it possible for me to come out here. And, thank you, Larry (Enomoto, president of the Military Intelligence Service Veterans Club of Hawaii), for being a wonderful, wonderful host for myself and my wife. *Mahalo nui loa* from both of us. And especially to Judy Bowman (director of the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii) for having the great responsibility of telling the story of the U.S. Army — the Nisei in all aspects of the Army in the Pacific — to thousands and thousands of visitors every year. It's a tremendous responsibility and she handles it very, very well.

One more thank you — I want to reach out to the Junior ROTC color guard, if you're still here. Thank you. Great job, young men, and to the military escorts. Thank you very much for what you've done this weekend. I was watching you out of the corner of my eye, and you guys are really great. It makes a big difference to these veterans, I know, to meet some youngsters who are serving in the same U.S. Army that they served in so many years ago.

A mission to you before you leave here today: Make sure that you have a chance to go up and introduce yourself to one of the veterans. Go ahead, don't be shy and just say "hello" and ask them what they did. Have a little interaction with them. They are amazing and they will be glad to talk to you.

Why is this exhibit so important? And I really think it is important. I invite you to come look at this exhibit this morning and to return many times — as often as it stays open — and to bring your visitors and family. But especially think about it a little bit. Go through and stop and pick out something that's interesting and focus on it and think about it and ask someone about it — a relative, an uncle, a grandfather, perhaps. I also want to say, this is not just about past history; this actually has a link to the present, and the link right now is the Defense Language Institute.

You know, before the Second World War, the armed services had no place to train foreign languages. And that changed, and the Army continued that school. Now it's in Monterey, California — now called the Defense Language Institute — and they train over 30 languages: Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish — you name it, all kinds of languages, and these are to train young men and women, in all of the armed services.

And many of them are out there today, and I mean literally today: They are on the Korean Peninsula, they're in the Middle East, they're in Africa, they're in Europe. They are all over the world who are giving up their weekend and a few years of their lives to help protect us. And you need to keep that in the mind, that the world is still an uncertain place and we still need to have brave young men and women who will go, perhaps, into some harsh and dangerous places and use their skills to help keep us free and safe.

Now, what do we have to do to make sure that the MIS story continues and it continues to be told? You know, history does not tell itself. That's something I have learned as a historian — that's my full-time job. History cannot just be a book on a shelf. If that sits on the shelf and no one reads it, it doesn't matter. You have to be continually telling it, and I will tell you, just a history book doesn't do it. You need to have movies, you need to have websites. You need to have museum exhibits. You need to have *manga*.

You know, you need to have all kinds of things to get that story out, because everyone is different. And someone can walk through this museum exhibit and the light bulb comes on. Other people, it doesn't come on. Some people can see a movie and the light bulb comes on. You know, but other people don't. So you need to reach them in different ways. Those of you who have spent time as teachers in classrooms, you know that some students respond to certain things; other students respond to others. But we need to reach as many as possible.

Another thing I've learned as a historian is that people remember what is important to them. And if you notice, the things that are important are the things that we keep retelling the stories again and again. And I'm talking about, you go back in American history — Valley Forge, you know, celebrating the Fourth of July, talking about Gettysburg and the Emancipation Proclamation, talking about Ellis Island, talking about Angel Island. These are important and we keep telling each other and our children these stories. Pearl Harbor, 9/11, Normandy, Okinawa — the Battle of Okinawa, the Selma March during the civil rights movement. You know, we use these stories because they're important and we pass these along. The MIS stories, you have to keep telling them again and again in new ways.

So what have we done so far about the MIS? I just want to make it clear if you don't remember anything else I say: We're not done telling the MIS story. We are definitely not done, because there are still people who have not heard the story or they haven't heard very much about it.

Now, telling the story of the Military Intelligence Service did not begin with me, certainly. It really, I think, began in the 1970s with the work of people like Joe Harrington, a retired Navy journalist. Shigeya Kihara, who was a *sensei* (teacher) at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling and then later moved to Monterey and retired there — he made sure that, for example, in the 1970s when the Defense Language Institute built new academic buildings, he said, "I'll get you some names." If you go there today, you've got Hachiya Hall, Nakamura Hall and Mizutari Hall, named after three MISers (Frank Hachiya, Yukiitaka "Terry" Mizutari and George Nakamura) who received Silver Stars, posthumously. They gave their lives in the Pacific during World War II. The academic library is named after the (MISLS) academic director, John Aiso. It is the Aiso Library. So the students who are studying Arabic and Russian and Chinese and Korean and Spanish, etcetera, today, when they go into the library to study, they're walking into the Aiso Library. There's a connection there.

I was a latecomer to telling the MIS story. I started in 1987 and began going to reunions of the MIS veterans. I met first, in California, 'cause that's where I was, I met people like Tom Sakamoto; Hoichi Kubo, who was from Maui, retired in San Jose; Harry Fukuhara, who lived for many years in San Jose. When I was given the opportunity to write a book about the MIS, I worked on that, came out here for interviews and met some gentlemen like Ted Tsukiyama, Jim Tanabe, who were wonderful mentors to help me understand this very complex service, the MIS.

So when I began my research in the 1980s, the MIS was, in fact, not a total secret, but it was not very well understood. If you asked anybody about Nisei soldiers, they would usually think about the 100th Battalion or the 442nd. And then if you asked about the MIS, "Well, who knows what they did? They were all over, little groups and everything." It was very hard to pull that

story together. And I thought that, “OK, I’m a historian. I’ll take it like a piece of history and sort of put the story together.” But even for myself, I didn’t understand how important it was for today. Until 9/11.

September 11th, 2001. We were attacked by a very foreign culture, foreign group. Very few Americans understood their language, and there was a lot of prejudice, like, “Well, we just need to lock all these people up.” And you may have heard some of this talk after 9/11. We were very fortunate that former Congressman Norman Mineta, in 2001, was secretary of transportation. He was the U.S. secretary of transportation. He was responsible for air traffic safety. And I heard him say that his first thought was, “You know, America made a mistake one time; we will not make the same mistake again. We will keep America safe, but we’re not going to do it the way they tried to do it in 1941 and 1942.”

We are so fortunate that we had someone like Norman Mineta, who, in fact, as a young boy, was in Heart Mountain with his family. So he understood what was the price of prejudice and he understood how wrong it was to take a whole group of people and to treat them like they were all the enemy. He knew that was a total lie. So we did it better. Not perfect. America’s never perfect. But we are always working on getting better.

So, OK, I tell you it’s important to tell the story of the MIS. How do we do that? And I think it’s very important to understand that the specialty of the MIS was not just speaking the Japanese language, but understanding the Japanese culture, as well. And so however you tell the story to the young people, they need to understand [that] they need to understand. They need to go out in the world, in at least one other culture, you know, be it Korea or China or Germany. I studied German in high school, not Japanese. They really need to open up their minds and their horizons and learn a little bit about another culture. They can study abroad, you know, they can embrace their own heritage, whatever that heritage is.

America is a big country and we have big hearts. And there is nothing wrong with having Japanese eyes and American hearts. Hey, we’ve proven it. The MIS has proven that this is possible. But the best way to tell a story if you’ve ever been a classroom teacher is a personal story.

You know, you can talk about theories and philosophies, but, ultimately, it comes down to individuals. And that’s what this exhibit does so well. You’re in for a real treat if you haven’t seen it yet. The MIS story has lots of individual personal stories in it. If you look at those stories, you will learn a great deal. If you look at these personal stories, and I’ll just mention a handful. But believe me, there are 6,000 individual stories. Not all of them have been told yet.

I will start with a young man from Hawaii who graduated from high school and was recruited. I’ll start with two young men actually recruited before the Pearl Harbor attack for a secret mission and that was Richard Sakakida and Arthur Komori. The Army counterintelligence sent them to Manila because the Japanese already had spies in Manila before they began the war. And so we needed our own spies — loyal young Americans who could infiltrate into the Japanese business community in Manila and find out what was going on and report back to Army intelligence.

So Art Komori and Richard Sakakida did that – very, very brave. They were not wearing uniform at that time. After the war began, they fought on Bataan, and then Richard Sakakida was captured by the Japanese, tortured and forced to work for the Japanese army in the Philippines. What did he do? He used his position of influence to get information about the Japanese military operations and give it to the Philippine guerrillas. Very, very brave. If he was ever discovered, it would have cost him his life. After the war, he was commissioned in the U.S Air Force and

served a long career with the U.S. Air Force. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in 1999.

Another local boy, Hoichi Kubo, was a student at the University of Hawaii before the war, was drafted, and he witnessed the Pearl Harbor attack from Schofield Barracks. He was stationed at Wheeler at the time. They shipped him away with the 100th Battalion. Then the recruiters came from the Military Intelligence Service Language School. He didn't want to go. I remember interviewing him. He said he wanted to fight. He didn't want to just look at books and translate documents. He was a real fighter — I would not like to have been his high school teachers. But he went off and he did fight, actually. He was assigned to one of the Army's great combat divisions, the 27th Infantry Division, New York National Guard. They fought four assault landings, and he was the only MIS Nisei to receive the Distinguished Service Cross for an act of great compassion and heroism on Saipan. After the Battle of Saipan — I won't go into all the details — but it's a wonderful story.

After the Battle of Saipan, some Japanese soldiers were hiding in caves and one group of Japanese soldiers had taken more than a hundred civilians in a cave and was holding them hostage. The only way to get them out was to blast them out, use flamethrowers, use explosives and blow 'em out. He said, "No, no, look, give me a chance. Give me a chance." So he took his helmet off, he went down a rope into the cave, and talked with the soldiers for hours and hours, and talked to them and said, "What are you doing, huh? Why are you trying to do this? You know, these people have no part in the fight." He talked them out of it in Japanese. He talked them out of it and they released all of the civilians, and the soldiers themselves became prisoners of war. That's the kind of courage and compassion you have to show to win the Distinguished Service Cross.

Another one is Kazuo Yamane, and you'll read more about Yamane in here (the exhibit). He didn't go into the Pacific, and as far as I know, he didn't ever have to fight anybody in a battle. He was fighting a different battle. He was fighting a military intelligence battle. He was also drafted before the war, went to the Mainland with the 100th Battalion and then was recruited as a language student. And so where did they send him? They sent him to a brand new building in Washington called the Pentagon. Well, he was Japanese from Hawaii, but he was one of the first Japanese Americans to work in the Pentagon, and he worked on deriving intelligence about the Japanese army during the war.

And that wasn't enough. Then when Eisenhower's headquarters said, "Hey, we have Japanese business personnel, diplomatic personnel in Europe. When the war ends in Europe, we need somebody who can talk to them." So Yamane was one of three Nisei who flew to Paris, France, to stand by. And at the end of the war, he helped interrogate and escort the Japanese personnel in Berlin. Go figure. It's just an amazing story.

And, finally, I want to mention Dick Hamada, who volunteered in 1943 for the 442, but the OSS picked him out. The Office of Strategic Services. And they sent him to Burma after some special training and he did what today we think of as special operations missions, leading small detachments of indigenous troops in very, very difficult terrain in a guerilla war against the Japanese in Southeast Asia. OSS Detachment 101. And then, at the end of the war, how do you think all those Allied prisoners came back safely? He was part of a small team that parachuted into Beijing — Japanese-occupied Beijing — to negotiate for the release of the high-ranking prisoners that were being held in Beijing by the Japanese, including some of the "Doolittle's Raiders," who had been held there for several years, since 1942.

And I was pleased to learn just this week that Dick Hamada has been selected for the Military Intelligence Hall of Fame at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and there will be a ceremony later this spring to honor him in the Hall of Fame.

So how do we tell this story then? I've given you some suggestions about why it's important, and to use personal stories. Well, I've mentioned some of them.

You can use awards. It could be the Distinguished Service Cross. Or it could be the Congressional Gold Medal, which Congress awarded in 2011.

You have museum exhibits, like the one you're going to see here this morning. You have books such as the one that I put together. And I see other authors sitting here. Go find their books. Buy their books and read 'em. They're really interesting. You have films. There's a new film I know I've heard of, is being produced on Kazuo Yamane, so look for it, maybe in a year. They're working on that, as well. Like I say, there are some people that won't read a book, but they'll watch a movie and really learn something. So that's great.

And family histories and oral histories are very, very important. That's where we get the details that we need so that historians like me can sit down at our computers and take all that hard work from the families, the photo albums, the oral histories. And then we've got the easy part. We just sit down and kind of synthesize it. It's all a part of the team effort.

Several things are underway: I've already mentioned the film. You know, in Washington D.C., JAVA — the Japanese American Veterans Association — has been working for years to digitize official records from the National Archives. The National Japanese American Historical Society in San Francisco about a year and a half ago opened the MIS Historic Learning Center at Crissy Field, in the original hangar where the school began with 60 students in November 1941.

The Smithsonian Asian-Pacific-American Center is planning a digital exhibit for the Congressional Gold Medal. When I first heard about this, I thought, you know a museum is a museum. I know what that is. They said, no, no, this is going to be different, because this is just going to be online with material and stories and photos and clips of oral histories. And it dawned on me that there are thousands of people who can see it online if they can't travel to Washington, D.C., especially young people. You know if you have some nieces and nephews, or granddaughters and grandsons — how do they do their research for their papers they're writing in school? They get online, use Google. Well, they'll find great information online now when this exhibit is completed next year as a digital exhibit.

So really, the MIS is not a secret anymore. And, in fact, we need to make it even less of a secret. So how will we know if we're winning the war? What will success look like? Well, let me give you just, as I conclude, a few thoughts. Success will be if a new generation of historians, museum curators, film makers, other researchers, take up the challenge — 'cause I'm giving you a challenge — to dig deeper and to reach out to new audiences, maybe with new technology that I'm certainly no good at. There's got to be people out there that can do this digital stuff better than me.

Success will be when a granddaughter or a grandson of a Nisei soldier, maybe a younger person from a different ethnic group with a different last name, learns about the MIS and then is encouraged to dig deeper. You know you've got to hook 'em, get 'em interested in a personal story, and then let 'em spread out and learn more about it. Success will be if then his or her parents bring them here to see this exhibit and tell them about it. Success will [be] maybe if they go to San Francisco and visit Crissy Field. You know, do the Golden Gate Bridge and go out to Angel Island, then also, "Hey, let's go see the MIS Learning Center." Go to Los Angeles and go

see the Japanese American National Museum. And if you can't do any of that stuff, go online. There's good stuff online.

Success will be, ultimately, if the young person learns that the exact same thing that made some Americans suspicious of the Nisei — and they were after the Pearl Harbor attack; their parents came from another country, they could speak another language — well, that was exactly what the MIS needed. The MIS needed Japanese Americans who could speak Japanese and understand the culture, because we needed those skills to help win back our freedom and security. So to serve their country, the MIS Nisei had to reach back to all of their heritage: their Japanese heritage, their American heritage, their Hawaiian heritage. They had to use all of that in their heart and skill to help win the war.

And if a young person understands that, then that will be success. If they will understand that you can't let other people define who you are — that is your only right; you can't give that away. Don't let other people define who you are. You show them who you are, just like the MIS Nisei showed the rest of America who they are.

So, in conclusion, just let me say, please, after this ceremony, take the chance to go walk through the galleries and look. Look at the objects there, look at the text and the photographs. Read those stories. But that's only the first part. Then you've got to go ask — a parent, a grandparent, an uncle — and ask them to elaborate. “What did you do? Tell me more about this. Hey, do you know this guy?”

And then, speaking to the young people here, think about what would you do? What would you do? What will you do when your time comes and you have to do something to make a difference.

So, you know, we still have a lot of work to do on this MIS story. This exhibit is great, the books that have been published are pretty good — most of them, some of them. But we have to keep telling that story. Because the story cannot end here, just with this. We have to honor the elders, and we have to teach the children. Those are very, very important tasks.

Thank you very much.