

An MIS Story from Pentagon/PACMIRS/Europe by Kazuo E. Yamane, M/Sgt



Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1944, Kazuo Yamane

I was one of the 100th Battalion personnel recruited in Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, for Camp Savage MISLS as noted in the "Senpai Gumi," made famous by Dick Oguro's book of the same title which relates my MIS story (pages 106-113). I will only summarize it here with other pertinent information and experiences.

From 1935 to 1940 I studied in Japan, from middle school through Waseda University, including a stint in compulsory military training at Waseda. After returning to Hawaii in 1940, I was drafted on November 14, 1941, the first of four Yamane brothers to serve in the U.S. military during World War II. Three of us served in military intelligence. I became part of the 298th Infantry which guarded Oahu for five months after the Pearl Harbor attack. All Nisei in the 298th and 299th Infantry then mustered into a Hawaii Provisional Battalion and sailed from Hawaii on June 5, 1942, to become what is now the famous 100th Infantry Battalion.

We trained for six months at Camp McCoy when, in November 1942, Major Dickey, who spoke fluent Japanese, arrived to recruit linguists. With my extensive educational background in Japan, I decided to volunteer. Sixty men from the 100th reported to Camp Savage in December 1942 and, being the first group of Hawaii Nisei selected for MIS, we called ourselves the "senpai gumi?"

In June 1943, after six months of intensive training in "heigo," four of us proceeded on secret orders to the Pentagon to be assigned to Pacific Order of Battle, Military Intelligence, War Department -- the first Nisei servicemen permitted inside the

Pentagon after Pearl Harbor.

While at the Pentagon, I accompanied an intelligence officer to the Camp McCoy POW compound to serve as interpreter in the interrogation of Japanese Navy Lt. Kazuo Sakamaki, the midget submarine commander captured at Waimanalo in December 1941 - Another elderly Japanese Navy commander was questioned at the same time but Sakamaki, being very fluent in English, answered for both in English; so, there was no need for me as interpreter. An interesting footnote: As a member of a group study tour in Japan in 1963, I visited several large companies and encountered Sakamaki, at that time a section head at Toyota Motors. He did not recognize me and I did not want to embarrass him by broaching his wartime experience as an American POW.

Later, our team moved to Camp Ritchie (now Camp David), Maryland, as the nucleus of the Pacific Military Intelligence Research Section (PAGMIRS), under command of Col. G. F. Gronich. In a memorable assignment at Ritchie, I reviewed boxes of Japanese documents captured on Saipan by the Navy and passed on as "having no military value." I came across a thick book which turned out to be the Imperial Army Ordinance Inventory containing highly classified reports of the entire National Inventory of the Japanese Arsenal, listing specific weapons, their condition and number in stock, storage locations, and place of manufacture. I apprised Col. Gronich of this document, who immediately cancelled all leaves until we translated the entire Inventory. I learned later that the information revealed new bombing targets for our B-29s over Japan and that after the surrender our occupation forces quickly located and seized the armament cache.

In late October 1944, I departed on a three-man secret mission to Far Eastern Intelligence Section, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), General Eisenhower's headquarters in Versailles, France, and Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. Our secret orders, which we opened after our C-54 plane left New York, directed us to link up with a British commando unit to infiltrate the Japanese Embassy and other Japanese government offices in Berlin, confiscate documents, then withdraw. The Russians had already occupied most of Berlin; so, our team waited in Paris while the U.S. Army negotiated for our safe entry into Berlin. But permission never came because the Russians did not want any Allied entry into Berlin.

We then split into groups and left for various European cities to search for Japanese documents (my special mission: keep an eye out for Russian military intelligence) and Japanese nationals employed by Japanese trading companies and stationed in Germany. My mission covered France, Belgium, southern Germany and the Italian cities of Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples.

During a short visit to Lake Como, I was happy to see my brother, Akiharu, of Company K, 442nd Infantry, and visited with my former comrades in Co. B, 100th Battalion. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team had been enjoying a rest period in the Italian Lake resort area.





[Akiharu Yamane, Co K. 442nd RCT, Lake Como, Italy, 1944](#)

Upon my return to SHAEF, our team was ordered back to the Pentagon for reassignment to the Pacific. Having enough service credits, however, I requested a discharge on learning from the American Red Cross that my aged father was very ill. I was discharged at Fort Lewis, Washington, and returned to Honolulu in November 1945.

(Courtesy of "[Secret Valor](#)" by Military Intelligence Service Veterans Club of Hawaii.)