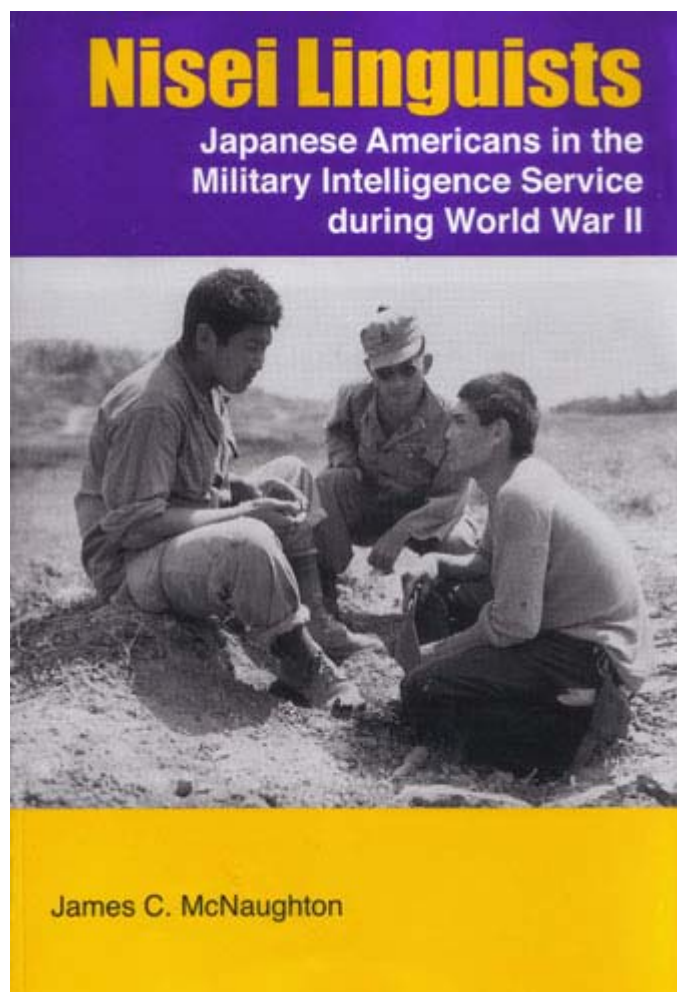


NISEI LINGUISTS

The official government publication of the history of the Nisei Military Intelligence Service soldiers is now in print!

Months before Pearl Harbor, the Western Defense Command selected sixty Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) soldiers for Japanese language training at Crissy Field on the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1942, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Language School moved to Minnesota, where it grew rapidly, first at Camp Savage, then Fort Snelling. When the Western Defense Command forcibly removed 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast to "relocation" camps, the MIS continued to recruit Nisei from the camps and later from Hawaii. Over the next four years, the school graduated nearly six thousand military linguists, including dozens of Nisei women and hundreds of Caucasian language officers.

Nisei linguists served with Army and Marine units from regiment to corps and above from Guadalcanal to the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. They staffed theater-level intelligence centers such as the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section in the Southwest Pacific Area under General Douglas MacArthur. In China, Burma, and India, they served with the Office of Strategic Services, Merrill's Marauders, and Commonwealth forces. Others served with the Army Air Force or within the continental United States. Commanders came to rely on the timely and accurate intelligence they provided. Dozens were decorated for valor, while several were killed or wounded in action. At war's end the Nisei helped arrange local surrenders of Japanese forces, and then fanned out across Japan to begin the occupation. Working in military government, war crimes trials, censorship, and counter-intelligence, the MIS Nisei contributed to the Occupation's ultimate success. They served as a bridge between America and Japan and helped cement the alliance that has lasted until today. The school later moved and evolved into today's Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.



Author James C. McNaughton is command historian for the US European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. He previously served as command historian for US Army Pacific and the Defense Language Institute.

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