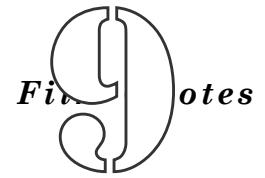


Knowledge of Japanese Culture



ACTIVITY: *As mentioned in the film, diaries of captured Japanese prisoners were often translated by the MIS. After reading and discussing the quotes below, write two diary excerpts: one from the perspective of a Japanese soldier, the other from the perspective of a Japanese American soldier.*

“What the nisei had was a real knowledge of Japanese culture and Japanese psychology, so they could use their own judgment when it came to interrogating a prisoner.”

James McNaughton, Ph.D.
U.S. Army Historian

“He said, ‘You traitor.’ I said, ‘I’m an American soldier.’ He kept on saying I was a traitor. So I said, ‘Yes, if we were to cut our vein, I guess the same blood will flow. But you’re fighting for your country and I’m fighting for mine. We do have our differences in opinion and I want to make sure that you know that I’m the interrogator and you’re the POW.”

Grant Hirabayashi
Military Intelligence Service
U.S. Army, 1942-47

“The best thing is to become friendly with them, you know, and not knock them around or be mad with them or anything like that, you know. You just sit down and talk to them and you get their sympathy.”

Mike Yasutake
Military Intelligence Service
U.S. Army, 1941-47

“Prisoners time and again told me that when they were captured, that was worse than death. Even if they were unconscious and about to drown in the

water or were crash-landed and severely wounded, unconscious, that still it was just a disgrace.”

Maj. (Ret.) Walter Tanaka
Military Intelligence Service
U.S. Army, 1941-1961

“They didn’t have the luxury of treating the Japanese soldiers that they were fighting against as nonhuman creatures. They knew they were human. They knew they had feelings. They read their diaries and letters. Even after the Japanese soldiers had died, they could read the soldier’s letters and diaries. They cried over some of this stuff.”

James McNaughton

“The Japanese soldiers were not given training in security. They wrote down everything that they saw, their feelings—they even talked about where they were going next, who their commanders were. They had no discipline as far as writing diaries.”

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Roy Takai
Military Intelligence Service
U.S. Army, 1942-66

QUOTES CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE.

Film Quotes #9

“MIS helped eliminate the enemy by giving information and that information, properly used, saved many American lives, American soldiers’ lives. And, in my mind, I just feel that I was in the business of saving lives.”

Harry Akune
Military Intelligence
Service
U.S. Army, 1942-46



THOMAS SAKAMOTO WITH PRESS AND GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR IN ATSUGI, JAPAN, SEPTEMBER, 1945.
(PHOTO: PRESS ASSOCIATION, INC., COURTESY OF NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.)

“Being one of the few Japanese Americans on the battleship Missouri, on the deck, 30 feet away, seeing the Japanese delegation humbled, in defeat, I came away with very mixed feelings. As I attended four years in a Japanese military school in Kumamoto, Japan, I knew the proud feeling of the Japanese military, particularly yamato damashi, which is military spirit; bushido which is the way of samurai. When the Japanese delegations were piped aboard, the mood changed from festive occasion to one of hostility, and one could hear a pin drop.”

Col. (Ret.) Thomas Sakamoto
First Language Class
Military Intelligence Service
U.S. Army, 1941-69

“The Japanese people and nation was totally disgraced on the deck of Missouri. After fighting 25 months in the jungles of New Guinea, this was indeed the most emotional period of my life, watching the surrender of the Japanese nation. Of course, V-J Day was a celebration so—what can you say?”

Thomas Sakamoto