



## **HISTORY**

### **>> Historical Information**

#### **CHINA - BURMA - INDIA THEATER**

The [MIS](#) intelligence work was indispensable and extensively used in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater and several different areas. Not only did they work as interpreters and translators, but some also saw action on the battlefield as riflemen. Others also worked at the Southeast Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC) located in New Delhi, India; [Office of War Information \(OWI\)](#) in Burma; and the [Office of Strategic Services \(OSS\)](#) in Calcutta, India. The MIS worked with the American command units, the Merrill's Marauders and Mars Task Force, and participated in some of the most notable actions in the CBI theater.

#### **Merrill's Marauders**

A group of 3,000 men including 14 MIS soldiers volunteered for a "dangerous and hazardous" mission under the leadership of Brigadier General Frank Merrill. With the Japanese occupying Burma from the beginning of the war, there was no land route for supplies to China. The only way to secure a supply route was to reopen Burma Road and destroy Japanese communications and supply lines in the process. The newly formed 5307 Composite Unit (Provisional) was put to task. From February to August 1944, the Merrill's Marauders, as they were later dubbed, played a part in the operations. Its main goal was to clear the north Burma area of Japanese troops and capture the town of Myitkyina and its airstrip.

Trained in jungle warfare, the Marauders trekked through more than 700 miles of dense Burma jungle for seven months. All together, the soldiers participated in five major and 30 minor engagements. Along the way, the Marauders were met with enemy fire and attacked by monsoons and tropical diseases. By the time the Marauders had captured the town of Myitkyina and defeated the Japanese troops, it had been reduced to 15 percent of its original size. The Merrill's Marauders were awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) in July 1944 and disbanded in August of that year. In 1966, the DUC was redesignated to [Presidential Unit Citation](#).

All 14 MIS soldiers were fortunate to have all survived the ordeal and received [Bronze Stars](#) and Combat Infantryman's Badges. They included:

Howard Furumoto	Edward Mistukado
Henry Gosho	Herbert Miyasaki
Grant Hirabayashi	Roy T. Nakada
Robert T. Honda	Ben S. Sugeta
Calvin Kobata	Thomas K. Tsubota
Russell K. Kono	Jimmy Yamaguchi
Roy Matsumoto	Akiji Yoshimura

These men are the only intelligence servicemen fully recognized for their work. General Merrill commended the MIS when he said, "as for the value of the [Nisei](#) I couldn't have gotten along without them."

Among the Marauders, Master Sergeant Roy Matsumoto had an incomparable experience and is known for his heroism in Burma. On March 4, 1944 Matsumoto crept within distance to eavesdrop on a Japanese unit conversing and obtained vital information on a future attack. Matsumoto immediately informed his commander and prepared an ambush. As the Japanese soldiers prepared for their assault, Matsumoto courageously shouted an order in Japanese. The Japanese soldiers responded and

prematurely attacked. This resulted in 54 Japanese casualties while the Marauders suffered none. For his daring actions, Matsumoto was awarded the Legion of Merit medal.

In another incident with the Marauders, Matsumoto again displayed his courage. In the middle of an assault at Nphum Ga, Burma, Matsumoto posed as a Japanese officer and ordered an all out "banzai" attack into the heart of the Marauders position. With this action, Matsumoto saved the lives of the Marauders. When asked why he wasn't considered for the [Medal of Honor](#), Lieutenant Colonel George McGee replied, "he was only an enlisted man doing his duty."

### **Mars Task Force**

The 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), otherwise known as the Mars Task Force, replaced Merrill's Marauders in August 1944. The Mars Task Force was comprised of two regiments -- the 475th Infantry and the 124th Cavalry -- with 12 MIS [linguists](#) were attached to each regiment. The mission of the Mars Task Force, similar to that of the Merrill's Marauders, was to operate around and behind enemy lines, cut off supplies and reinforcements, and clear the Burma Road.

The MIS soldiers served both as interpreters and riflemen, however one of its most important tasks was to eavesdrop on Japanese soldiers. Linguists were responsible for obtaining information from Japanese soldiers who conversed loudly around the defense perimeter. They gathered intelligence on ammunition dumps, enemy positions and movements. The Mars Task Force served in the CBI theater until February of 1945.

MIS who participated in the Mars Task Force included:

James Araki	James Okita
Herbert Hamaguchi	Benji Shirayama
George Harada	Kan Tagami
Takeshi Angel Hirano	Toma Tasaki
Kazuo Komoto	Frank Tokubo
Paul Miwa	Sadao Toyama
Arthur Morimitsu	Tom Tsunoda
Gilbert Nagata	Tom Tsuruda
Yutaka Nakahata	Tony Umemoto
Hiroshi Nakamura	

### **China**

MIS linguists served in Chungking, China under Chiang Kai-Shek in July 1944. Five MIS Nisei participated in an American mission to Yen-an, which operated as Mao Tse Tung's headquarters. The servicemen nicknamed this mission the "Dixie Mission" because it was in "rebel" territory.

The MIS interrogated Japanese POWs to extract intelligence information on the Japanese units as well as wrote propaganda leaflets distributed among the prisoners and intercepted communications. The MIS worked diligently day and night to gather vital information.

MIS soldiers who served in China included:

Koji Ariyoshi	Shoso Nomura
Jack Ishii	Toshio Uesato
George I. Nakamura	