



HISTORY

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OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

After four years of fighting in Europe and the Pacific, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war on August 15, 1945. Japan formally surrendered on September 2, 1945 aboard the USS Missouri. Although World War II ended, the work of the [MIS](#) was far from over. More than 5,000 MIS [linguists](#) participated in the occupation of Japan, which lasted until 1952.

In preparation for the occupation, the [Military Intelligence Service Language School \(MISLS\)](#) located at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, shifted its focus from military to civilian Japanese language along with government terminology and policies. The need to learn military tactics was no longer significant, and students were taught general knowledge of Japanese language and culture. New replacements graduating from MISLS were immediately shipped to Japan for assignment. Additional MIS and Women's Army Corps (WAC) linguists also served at the Pentagon providing additional assistance to the occupation effort.

The MIS linguists immersed themselves in every aspect of the occupation from major assignments in military government, disarmament, intelligence, civil affairs, land reform, education, and finance. Finding themselves faced with the immense task of providing for the needs of a post-war population crippled by food shortages and the destruction of transportation networks, MIS linguists proved essential in working with local authorities in the implementation of Occupation Force directives. Military government offices were established throughout all of Japan's prefectures and these bilingual MIS personnel helped oversee their implementation.

In addition, many MIS linguists were also translators and interrogators for the trials of Japanese war criminals. Of the 70 linguists assigned by the United States Army to work as defense attorneys and monitors, many came from the MIS. Those MIS personnel assigned to this duty provided processing and translation services for the war crimes tribunals that took place in the Philippines, China, French Indochina, East Indies and Japan.

Intelligence was an important aspect of the Occupation that MIS members also provided. Nisei soldiers were involved in intelligence organizations such as the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) and the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD). These organizations played key roles in the gathering of information for General

Headquarters (GHQ). The CIC's mission was to detect and prevent subversive activities directed against the Occupation Forces in Japan, and operated throughout Japan. The CCD's mission was to extract civil intelligence from a variety of mass communication media in Japan. The purpose was to keep a pulse on the nation so Occupation policies could be implemented in an orderly manner. Over a third of the United States personnel in the CCD were MIS graduates. Some Nisei females also served in the CCD.

The Nisei linguists also helped create new laws and even aided in the development of the Japanese constitution. Additionally, the setting up of the Japanese Self Defense Forces came about in no small part because of the aid provided by the MIS linguists and aides that helped in the operation.

Because of the *Nisei*'s language abilities and familiar faces, the MIS truly became the bridge of understanding and friendship between Army headquarters and the Japanese civilians. MIS linguists were commended as they served honorably in every assignment. Both Americans and Japanese civilians believed that "the occupation of Japan could not have succeeded so smoothly without the language expertise and presence of the *Nisei*."

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