

Process Paper

When talking about the involvement of Japanese-Americans in World War II, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion are what first come to mind. We wanted to share and learn about the lesser-known Japanese-American involvement of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Knowing the general story of the MIS, we decided to dig deeper and choose this topic for our project.

First, we learned what the MIS was and what their role was in the war. We learned the events of the program from its first classroom in Presidio to their Presidential Unit Citation. Once we were familiar with the story of the MIS, we began to analyze the challenges they had faced and how they overcame them. We realized that they had similarities to the struggles of those in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, but experienced them differently because they were stationed in the Pacific Theater. To conduct our research, we mainly used the internet and a book called “The Nisei Linguists.”

While conducting research, we had difficulty finding primary sources. This led us to the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center. We were able to find books that contained pictures and interviews with MIS members.

At first, we considered doing an exhibit, but knew that the supplies could create unwanted expenses. This led us to choose a website as our project medium. Using a website allowed us to work on the project at different locations. We would work separately and would meet together once a week to collaborate and give feedback to each other. As the project deadline approached, we met more often to finalize our content and aesthetics.

Our topic relates to the theme, Breaking Barriers, because the members of the MIS not only overcame their personal challenges, but helped America to cross the language and cultural barrier with Japan. Despite the racism and hatred Japanese-Americans faced, they were determined to show their loyalty to America. Their determination overshadowed anybody's doubts about their commitment to America. Even when they met friends and family in battle, they remained loyal. The confrontation created an identity conflict within themselves, but they were able to overcome this by creating peace rather than violence. Finally, as Japanese-Americans, they were not only able to understand both languages, but also the cultures. During the rebuilding of Japan, the MIS members were able to help the countries understand each other. Their legacy has left a lasting peace between the countries as they are essential allies to each other.