

Timeline

1900 Japanese immigrants are engaged in converting California's barren interior lands into rich vineyards and truck farming.

Japanese government discontinues issuing passports to laborers for mainland USA. This was called the "Gentlemen's Agreement."

Wakamatsu Matsumoto, Roy's Grandfather comes to mainland U.S. from Hawai'i.

1903 The Oriental Exclusion League, claiming 78,000 members, launches an anti-Japanese campaign in California and other western states. The use of the term "Yellow Peril" becomes commonly used.

1904 Immigration Act of 1907 passed by U.S. Congress, preventing Japanese laborers from entering the United States via Hawaii, Mexico, or Canada.

1906 Wakaji Matsumoto (Roy's father) joins Wakamatsu in Los Angeles, CA from Japan.

1908 The "Gentlemen's Agreement" goes into effect. The Japanese government agrees to cease issuing passports to all emigrating laborers except for former residents, parents, wives, or children of residents.

1909 Arrival of the first Japanese "picture brides" in the United States. It was common for men in the frontier west to obtain wives by proxy.

Tee Kimura comes to America from Japan and marries Wakaji Matsumoto in 1912.

1913 Japanese immigrants form Northwest Japanese Association of America in Seattle.

Roy Matsumoto is born in Laguna, California.

1920 Takao Ozawa v. U.S. declares Japanese immigrants were not eligible for naturalized citizenship. Cable Act declares that any American female citizen who marries "an alien ineligible to citizenship" would lose her citizenship.

1921 Washington Alien Land Law. "Aliens ineligible for citizenship" are prohibited from owning land. The leasing of land is limited to 3 years.

Roy Matsumoto and his brother Takeshi board the steamship "Burajiru Maru" bound for Japan.

1923 Webb v. O'Brien rules that sharecropping is illegal because it is a ruse that allows Japanese to possess and use land. Frick v. Webb forbids aliens "ineligible to citizenship" from owning stocks in corporations formed for farming.

1924 Immigration Act denies entry to virtually all Asians.

1927 Wakaji Matsumoto and his family return to Hiroshima from southern California.

1930 Roy Matsumoto returns to California from Hiroshima.

1931 Gero Iwai, often referred to as the "father of the Military Intelligence Service" is recruited as an undercover agent in Honolulu.

1933 Roy graduates from Long Beach Polytechnic High School.

1940 The Navy Intelligence Language School is started by the U.S. Navy at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley. The instructors are mostly first generation Japanese (Issei) or Japanese Americans born in the United States and educated in Japan (Kibei).

1941 Two Nisei from Hawai'i, Richard Sakakida and Arthur Komori, are recruited by the U.S. Army in Hawai'i and sent to the Philippines for undercover work.

The Fourth Army Intelligence School is started at the Presidio of San Francisco. Sixty students led by four Nisei instructors begin training in the Japanese language. The school is later named the Military Intelligence Service Language School, or MISLS.

Japan attacks Pearl Harbor on December 7th, and the United States declares war on Japan, entering World War II. Japanese troops land in the Philippines, French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), and British Singapore. By April 1942, the Philippines, Indochina, and Singapore are under Japanese occupation.

After U.S. declared war on Japan, 2000 Japanese American community leaders along Pacific Coast states and Hawaii are rounded up and imprisoned in Department of Justice camps.

The U.S. Army takes command of the Hawai'i Territorial Guard, made up of ROTC cadets and volunteers from Honolulu high schools, the majority of them Nisei.

Many male Japanese community leaders in Hawai'i and the mainland are arrested by the FBI and sent to "justice camps" around the country.

1942 The 317 Nisei members of the Hawaiian Territorial Guard are discharged without explanation and classified as 4-C, "enemy aliens."

Japanese Americans in the military on the mainland are segregated out of their units.

In February, Executive Order 9066 is signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, authorizing the War Department to evacuate and incarcerate over 120,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans. Two-thirds of those interned are U.S. citizens; three-fourths are elderly, women, and children.

Roy Matsumoto is incarcerated in Santa Anita Racetrack temporary concentration camp. He is later sent to the concentration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. Roy enlists in the U.S. Army from the Jerome Camp.

The War Department declares that all Nisei are "enemy aliens not desired for the armed service" and classifies them 4-C. Many of the over 5,000 Nisei in the armed forces are discharged. The War Department announces that it will not "accept for service with the armed forces, Japanese or persons of Japanese extraction, regardless of citizenship status or other factors."

Elmer Davis, Office of War Information Director, recommends to President Roosevelt that Japanese Americans be allowed to enlist for military service. This provided the initiative for the concept of an all-Japanese American military unit.

The first graduating class of the Fourth Army Intelligence School graduates forty-five students.

The Fourth Army Language School is moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota, and becomes known as the MISLS. The first class has over 200 students. Over 6,000 students eventually graduate from the MISLS, a total of 21 graduating classes.

MISLS recruits several hundred Japanese American volunteers from concentration camps and from Hawai'i, including Roy Matsumoto.

An all-Nisei battalion is formed in Hawai'i, later called the 100th Infantry Battalion.

1944 MISLS moves to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Roy Matsumoto undergoes language training at Fort Snelling.

Roy volunteers for a hazardous mission with Merrill's Marauders as a Nisei linguist with MIS.

Merrill's Marauders captures Myitkyina, the vital junction for opening the Burma Road into China.

100th/442nd RCT rescues the "Lost Battalion," 200 Texans who were cut off and surrounded by the enemy.

1945 More than 50 MIS Nisei soldiers land with the U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima, one of the last battles in the Pacific. Nisei are also present in the Tinian Island operation.

The battle of Okinawa is shortened by the work of Nisei MIS linguists who translate Japanese documents revealing defense plans, troop positions, and maps of artillery positions.

The 442nd Field Artillery Battalion help liberate Jewish prisoners of the Landsberg-Kaufering Dachau Death March and Dachau sub-camps.

May 7th, Germany surrenders.

August 6th, the United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima

August 9th, the United States drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

August 14th, Japan agrees in principle to unconditional surrender.

Japan formally surrenders on September 2, 1945, ending World War II.

1946 Tule Lake concentration camp closes, the final stage of "an incredible mass evacuation in reverse." In the month prior to the closing some 5,000 internees had to be moved, many of whom were elderly, impoverished, or mentally ill and most of whom had no place to go.

Members of the MIS provide translation services for war crimes tribunals and trials, including Roy Matsumoto, who is stationed in Shanghai.

During a reception held in Washington, D.C. President Truman pins the Presidential Unit Citation on the 100/442nd RCT colors. "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice-and you have won." - President Truman

MIS Nisei serve during the Occupation of Japan in military government, civil affairs, education, and intelligence through 1952. Roy Matsumoto is stationed in Okinawa, Japan from 1947 to 1952.

1952 The McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act is passed by Congress. This Act allowed Japanese immigrants to become naturalized citizens of the United States for the first time.

Roy Matsumoto returns to California with his wife Kimiko, and daughter Fumi.

1956 California alien land laws are repealed by the voters of California.

1988 President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which

recognized that the incarceration of Japanese Americans was "motivated largely by prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

1993 Roy Matsumoto is inducted into the US Army "Ranger Hall of Fame" in Fort Benning, GA.

1997 Roy Matsumoto is inducted into the "Military Intelligence Hall of Fame" in Fort Huachuca, AZ.

2011 All WWII veterans in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Battalion, and Military Intelligence Service receive the Congressional Gold Medal, including Roy Matsumoto.

2013 Roy Matsumoto celebrates his 100th birthday.