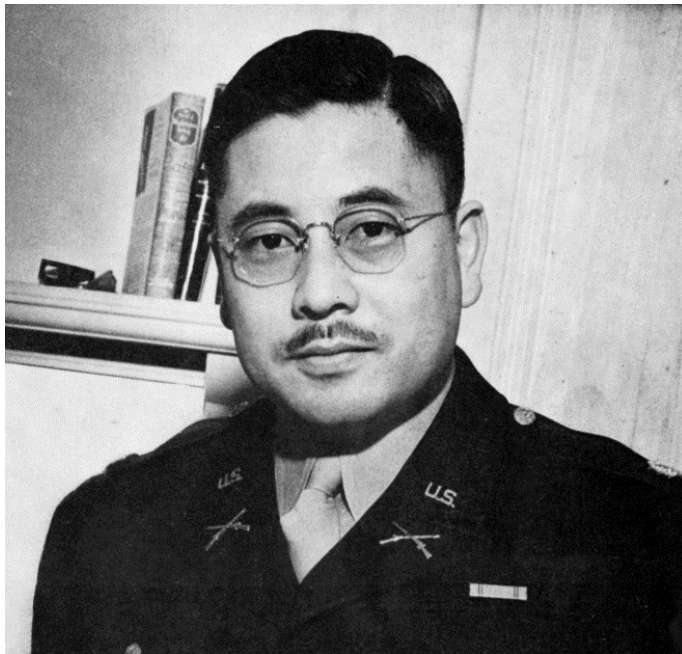


COLONEL JOHN F. AISO **US Army, Retired (Deceased)**



COL John F. Aiso was born in Burbank, California, in 1909. A second generation Japanese-American (Nisei), Aiso graduated from Brown University and Harvard Law School. Prior to World War II, he worked for a British-American firm in Manchuria, China, and then established a successful law practice in Los Angeles.

Shortly before the US entry into the war, Aiso enlisted in the Army, where he was met by a Sergeant with the comment, "Just what we need, another lawyer." However, then PVT Aiso's talents were soon spotted by officials hastily trying to organize a

school in Japanese language and military intelligence to meet the demands of the war. Aiso was chosen to be Chief Instructor of the fledgling school (1941-1942) called the Fourth Army Intelligence School at Crissy Field, Presidio of San Francisco. Between 1942 and 1945, he served as Director of Academic Training of the school, then renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) and moved to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Aiso and three other instructors provided the teaching base at the school.

Aiso faced the task of developing texts and organizing a curriculum in just a few weeks' time. Additionally, at a time when the patriotism and loyalty of Japanese-Americans were in doubt by many Americans, Aiso was the first Nisei in the US Army to have responsibility for such a major project and was under tremendous pressure to perform. With the deployment of Aiso's first graduates in May 1942, however, all doubt was dispelled. The school was quickly flooded with requests from the field for more operatives. Under Aiso's direction, the school trained approximately 6,000 Army Japanese-language interrogators and translators, thereby making an invaluable contribution to the war effort. The school Aiso helped create eventually became the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

In 1945, Aiso was given a direct commission as a Major in Military Intelligence and was assigned to GEN Douglas MacArthur's G2 staff in Japan to prepare for the Tokyo war crimes trials. He was in charge of enforcing the political purge mandated by the Potsdam Declaration. His efforts during this challenging time fostered understanding and good will between the Japanese government and the people of Japan and the US.

In 1948, Aiso was discharged to the Officer Reserve Corps with an automatic promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. He went on to serve as a reserve officer with the Judge Advocate Generals Corps until his retirement at the rank of Colonel in 1965. At that time, Aiso was decorated with the Legion of Merit for his World War II service with the MISLS and his post-war work with MacArthur's G2 staff

In his civilian life, Aiso served as a Municipal, Superior, and Appellate Court Judge in Los Angeles. He retired from the bench in 1973. In 1985 the Emperor of Japan conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Third Class, on COL Aiso, based on his long service to US-Japanese relations since 1945. He remained active in MI associations until his death in 1987. COL Aiso's achievements contributed significantly to the American victory in the Pacific, to the development of modern MI language training, and to the vindication of Japanese-Americans.

COL Aiso was posthumously inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1991. The Aiso Library at DLIFLC, Presidio of Monterey, California, was named in his honor on 19 April 1988.

More information on COL Aiso is available in the book: *John Aiso and the M.I.S.: Japanese-American Soldiers in the Military Intelligence Service, World War II*, compiled by Tad Ichinokuchi (1988).