

COLONEL HARRY K. FUKUHARA **US Army, Retired (Deceased)**



Harry K. Fukuhara, a second-generation Japanese American from Seattle, Washington, moved with his mother back to her hometown of Hiroshima, Japan, when he was 13. He spent the next five years in Japanese schools, learning the culture and language of his ancestors. Repatriated at age 18, he moved to California and obtained an Associate's Degree in June 1941. Six months later, he and approximately 120,000 other Japanese Americans were relocated away from America's west coast and placed in internment camps. Furious, but wanting to prove his loyalty to America, Fukuhara enlisted in the US Army in 1942.

SGT Fukuhara went first to Camp Savage, Minnesota, to learn the duties of a military linguist: interpreter, interrogator, and translator. In May 1943, the 22-year-old was assigned to

Australia and then New Guinea as part of the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS). He became the leader of a ten-man interrogator/interpreter team. Understanding the Japanese cultural naiveté under interrogation, SGT Fukuhara was determined to convince American commanders of the value of capturing Japanese soldiers for intelligence purposes. He and his team had great success in eliciting critical information from Japanese prisoners of war and captured documents. In addition, they prepared surrender leaflets, participated in missions to persuade Japanese soldiers to surrender, reconnaissance missions with native scouts, and as members of US Navy PT boat patrols. For his accomplishments in the field, Fukuhara was promoted through the ranks to Master Sergeant and awarded numerous Bronze Star medals. On 10 August 1945, he received a battlefield commission to Second Lieutenant.

During the occupation of Japan, Fukuhara initially served as an Interpreter/Translator and then became the Operations Officer and Commander of the Counterintelligence Field Office, Osaka, Japan, until 1952. After an intelligence assignment in San Francisco, he returned to Japan as the Chief, Counterintelligence Investigative and Liaison Detachment, Tokyo, from 1959 to 1964. From 1964 to 1966, he was the Deputy Commander of the 109th Intelligence Corps Group, Fort Meade, Maryland. He returned again to Japan to command the CI and Collection Detachment in Tokyo from 1966 to 1970. When he retired from the Army in 1971, he was serving as the Military Governor of the Yaeyama Islands Group. After his retirement, he remained active in intelligence within the Military Intelligence Excepted Career Program. He served in this capacity until

1991, fostering American/Japanese cooperation through his extensive personal contacts.

COL Fukuhara's military awards include the Bronze Star (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. He also received the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, presented by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1987, and the Department of the Army Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service, presented by the Secretary of the Army in 1987.

COL Fukuhara was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 1988 and selected as a Distinguished Member of the MI Corps in 1993. COL Fukuhara passed away on 8 April 2015.



T-3 Harry Fukuhara, interrogating a Japanese prisoner-of-war on Aitape, New Guinea, in April 1944 (National Archives)



Above, COL (Ret) Harry Fukuhara was selected as a Distinguished Member of the MI Corps in 1993.

Below, Retired COL Fukuhara

