

MASTER SERGEANT ROY H. MATSUMOTO

US Army, Retired (Deceased)



Roy Matsumoto entered the Army in November 1942, attending the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota. He went through basic training with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Camp Shelby, Mississippi, graduating in August 1943. Later that year, he was assigned to a language team of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as Merrill's Marauders. Matsumoto was assigned to the Blue Combat Team of the 2nd Battalion.

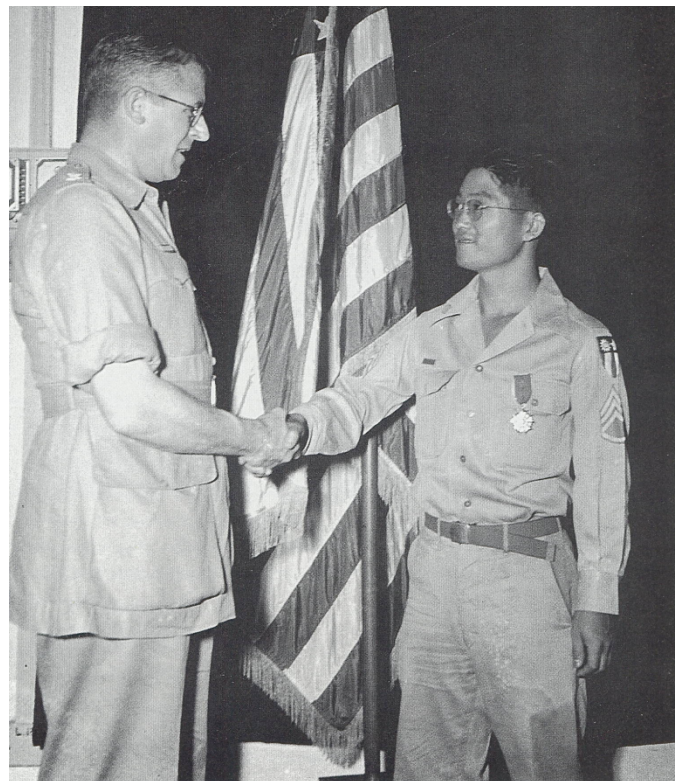
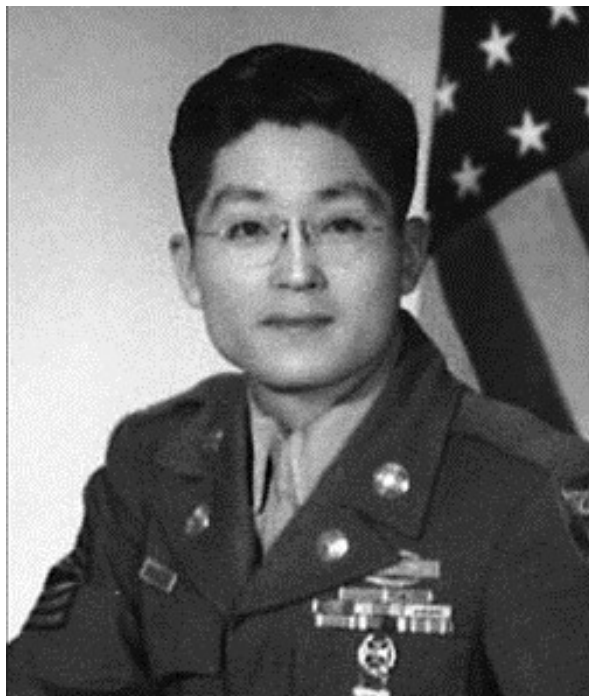
In early March 1944, this team was surrounded by Japanese forces while establishing a road block in the vicinity of Walawbum, Northern Burma. SGT Matsumoto located a Japanese telephone line nearby, tapped the line and, in the course of listening, learned the coordinates of an enemy ammunition dump. The information was relayed to headquarters and the ammunition dump was destroyed. In another intercept the same day, SGT Matsumoto located a large Japanese force moving in the direction of the road block. Forewarned, the 2nd Battalion was able to evacuate in time to avoid confrontation with a nominally superior enemy force. For these two intelligence accomplishments, then SSG Matsumoto was awarded the Legion of Merit.

On 6-7 April 1944, while assigned to the Green Combat Team, SSG Matsumoto volunteered for another intelligence mission that saved his unit from possible annihilation. The 2nd Battalion had been surrounded on a hilltop near the village of Nhpum Ga by a superior Japanese force for 10 days. With casualties at 40 percent, their supplies cut off, and no prospect of rescue, the Marauders were in dire straits. SSG Matsumoto volunteered to infiltrate enemy lines to obtain information. Under cover of darkness, armed only with grenades, SSG Matsumoto infiltrated an enemy encampment and learned of the enemy's plan to attack the US position early the next morning. When the Japanese attacked the following morning, they were met by the waiting Green Combat Team with heavy fire. During the heat of the battle, SSG Matsumoto, stood up in his foxhole and, imitating a Japanese officer, called out the order to charge. Many did and were met by the Marauders' fire. Later, on the morning of 7 April, a body count revealed 54 enemy killed, including two officers. There were no friendly casualties.

MSG Roy Matsumoto retired from active duty in 1963. His awards and decorations included the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), the Combat

Infantry Badge, the Good Conduct Medal with 5 Bronze Star Loops, the Presidential Unit Citation (Northern Burma), the Army Commendation Medal, the Asia-Pacific Campaign Medal (India-Burma, Northern Burma, China Theater), the National Defense Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Occupation Medal (Japan). In addition, he received the Certificate of Honor for Liberation Star Award from the country of Burma and the War Memorial Medal from China. On July 19, 1993, MSG Matsumoto was recognized for his outstanding contribution during the siege at Nhpum Ga by his induction into the Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, Georgia.

MSG Matsumoto was recognized by the MI Corps for his career of contributions to Army Intelligence by inducting him into the MI Hall of Fame in 1997. MSG Matsumoto passed away on 21 April 2014, two weeks short of his 101st birthday.





Roy Matsumoto, right, with other members of Merrill's Marauders

