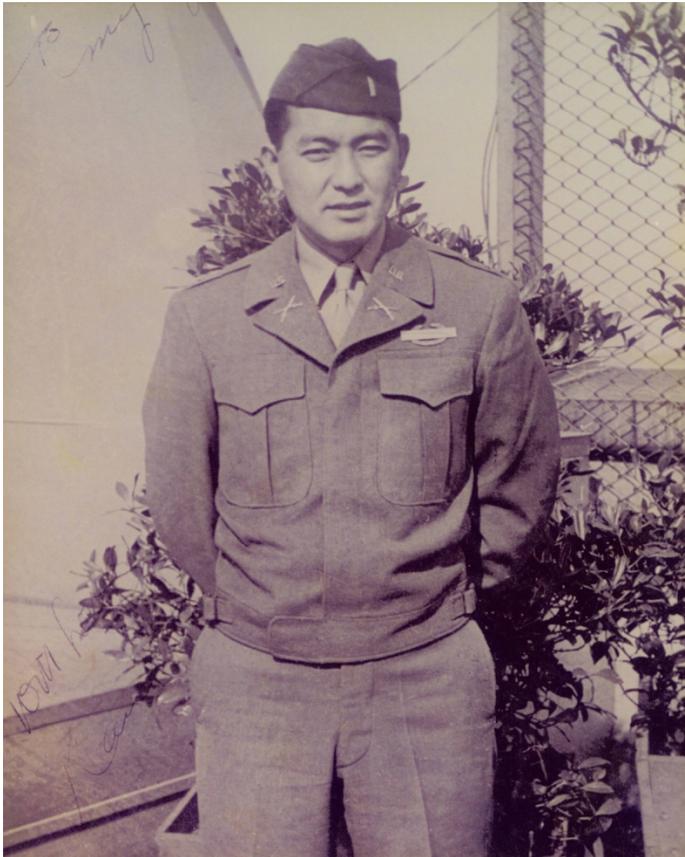


MAJOR KAN TAGAMI

US Army, Retired (Deceased)



On 16 February 1941, MAJ Tagami was drafted into the US Army and attended basic training with the 53rd Infantry Regiment at Fort Ord. Just prior to the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, a survey of qualified Japanese linguists in the Army turned up only 19 fluent Soldiers. With the dire need for linguists, the Army began actively recruiting Japanese-American soldiers to fill the void. MAJ Tagami attended the first class at the Military Intelligence Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota. An excellent student, he was selected as one of the few NCO instructors at the school.

As the war intensified, MAJ Tagami volunteered to lead a 15-man language detachment behind Japanese lines to gather information. MAJ Tagami volunteered for many combat intelligence patrols. He

helped capture and interrogate Japanese prisoners of war, gaining vital intelligence on the strength of Japanese troops. On one such occasion, while interrogating a Japanese prisoner of war (POW) at a field hospital, MAJ Tagami discovered that the responses of the POW were diametrically opposite those of an earlier interrogation. The Nisei interpreter who had first questioned the POW had never been to Japan. He did not realize that the POW had falsified his story. MAJ Tagami quickly provided his commander the correct version of the information, which proved invaluable to the mission and saved many American lives.

After the war, MAJ Tagami was assigned as Aide-de-Camp to GEN Douglas MacArthur. In this position he assumed a very important role in the Army of Occupation of Japan. He provided GEN MacArthur with sound advice regarding Japanese culture, ethics, and law and customs critical to the Army of Occupation of Japan. His personal advice did much to permit a smooth, peaceful and successful transition to a democratic society in Japan.

During this assignment, MAJ Tagami was directed by GEN MacArthur to visit the Emperor of Japan to discuss a personal problem facing the Emperor. This was

unprecedented under Japanese protocol. MAJ Tagami was the only member of the United States Occupation Forces to have a private audience with the Emperor.

There is little doubt that MAJ Tagami's professional acumen, both as a Japanese linguist and as an intelligence operative, left an indelible mark on the course of our Military Intelligence profession.

MAJ Tagami retired from the Army in 1961. His awards and decorations include the American Campaign Medal, the Asia-Pacific Campaign Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal – Japan, the World War II Victory Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal. He also received a Career Intelligence Medal.

MAJ Tagami was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 1996. He passed away on 24 November 2005.

