THE FOUNDATIONS OF VICTORY: THE PACIFIC WAR 1943-1944

THE ALLIED TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER SECTION: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF ALLIED LINGUISTS IN THE PROCESS OF PROPAGANDA CREATION, 1943-1944

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In his memoirs, Colonel Sidney F Mashbir, the head of the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS), a little-known intelligence agency that operated in the Southwest Pacific during the Pacific War, remarked 'it is often humorously stated that no sane white man can learn the Japanese language, and if by any chance he should he cannot stay sane'.[1] Yet after nearly a quarter century of studying Japanese, Mashbir was not only sane, but sufficiently proficient in the language to lead a small army of linguists against Japan. In so doing, he contributed a great deal to Allied victory. The intelligence amassed by the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section was a critical factor in conventional military operations in the Southwest Pacific. This chapter, however, focuses on how the skills of its linguists contributed to an aspect of the war against Japan that historians have largely overlooked—the propaganda war, with special emphasis on developments in 1943-44, when ATIS and psychological warfare (psywar) operatives established the kind of working relationship and exchange of information and resources that ensured their mutual success.

At the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, *Life* magazine asserted that fewer than 100 persons in the United States had a real mastery of Japanese, and quoted Archibald MacLeish of the US Office of War Information as stating that there were only 'three Americans with full command of the language'.[2] While this is perhaps a slight exaggeration, there is no question that in 1941 exceedingly few Americans knew much about Japan or its language. Many years later, Faubion Bowers, one of the few Caucasians who was truly fluent in Japanese during the war, stated that in 1941 there were 'only twenty-five American *Hakujin* (Caucasians) who could read, speak and write—more or less—the Japanese language'. And, as he pointed out, 'twenty-five is not much of a number when you are planning on an Army and Navy of five million or so'.[3] Likewise, commenting on the efforts by the Australian Military Forces to establish a Japanese language intelligence section in early 1941, the ATIS official history notes that 'the shortage of linguists was so acute that the Royal Australian Navy was able to obtain only one qualified civil servant'.[4] The dearth of Japanese linguists hampered Allied efforts to gather intelligence on Imperial Japan's military capabilities and intentions and constrained psychological warfare operations throughout the Pacific War. Yet, thanks to ATIS's mobilisation of the talents of a relatively small number of Japanese linguists, the language barrier was substantially overcome.

The years 1943 and 1944 were crucial as the formative period of Allied efforts to construct an effective apparatus for acquiring intelligence from captured enemy documents and prisoners of war, and using it as the basis for a responsive psychological warfare capability. The organisations charged with the collection, analysis, and application to psychological operations of the intelligence gathered from prisoners and documents were ATIS, the Far Eastern Liaison Office (FELO), and the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB), each of which was built on foundations laid in part by Australians. The unheralded though impressive performance of these units over the course of the war resulted from an effective alliance of primarily Australian and American personnel in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) of operations.

By the end of 1944, Allied linguists and propagandists had not only accumulated a mountain of intelligence on the Japanese enemy, but developed mechanisms for sifting through that intelligence, disseminating it quickly to the appropriate units, organising and presenting it in formats compatible with both combat and psychological operations, and using it in ever more influential ways to bring Imperial Japan to its knees. By 1944, the Allies, all too familiar with the strengths of the enemy's fighting spirit, had also identified vulnerabilities in Japanese

military morale. Based on that information, they crafted realistic propaganda principles and objectives, and devised a multitude of propaganda messages (chiefly in the form of leaflets) to hasten the demoralisation of Japan's fighting forces. By 1944, ATIS had become a dynamic, truly allied organisation, and an integral part of the intelligence apparatus constructed to defeat the Japanese war machine in the Southwest Pacific. It was clear in 1944 that Japanese linguists were vital to the Allied war effort and would become more essential as the months passed and war planners turned to postwar considerations. But it was equally clear that as the number of captured documents and prisoners grew, thus increasing the demand for competent linguists, the Allies' ability to locate and train linguists in sufficient numbers and quality was diminishing.

ATIS was established by order of General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ, SWPA) in September 1942 and is described in the official history as a 'centralized intelligence organization composed primarily of language personnel ... designed to systematize the exploitation of captured documents and the interrogation of prisoners of war', and oversee the collation and distribution of this information to Allied military forces in the theatre. ATIS was an inter-allied, interservice organisation that resulted from a union of US personnel from General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters (originally designated Translator and Interpreter Unit, G-2, GHQ, SWPA, and consisting of nine men) with Australia's Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (CSDIC), which began operating from Brisbane with 17 personnel in early September 1942. The latter Australian organisation was itself the result of a merger of two independent Australian units established shortly after Japan's December 7-8 attack, one a POW section, the other a document translation section.[5] When MacArthur's headquarters established ATIS on 19 September 1942, the official history notes that the 'personnel and activities' of Australian linguists 'were gradually absorbed' by ATIS. Thus, ATIS's 'earliest beginnings stemmed from the formation, at Advanced Land Headquarters in Brisbane, of a small group of Australian officer linguists. From this nucleus was developed ATIS, one of the most important intelligence agencies to serve the United Nations in the area of General MacArthur's operations.'[6]

From the outset, ATIS adhered to three operating principles: first, all linguist resources in the theatre would be pooled; second, all service and national distinctions would be eliminated: and third, all intelligence accumulated would be released simultaneously to all services.[7] ATIS originally consisted of 25 officers and 10 enlisted men, but as the scope of its operations grew, so did its personnel. By September 1944, ATIS employed 767 people and by the end of the war had grown to nearly 4,000 men and women. During the Pacific War, ATIS linguists interrogated over 14,000 prisoners; scanned, summarised or translated two million documents; and distributed over 20 million pages of intelligence on the Japanese. In its efforts to acquire documents and examine prisoners within moments of their capture, ATIS linguists participated in every Allied assault from Papua to the Philippine Islands, and at least 17 Japanese linguists died as a consequence.[8] ATIS's chief limitation was the shortage of qualified language personnel—a problem which was never fully resolved.

In the United States, efforts to find and train Japanese linguists for military intelligence work had scarcely begun when the attack on Pearl Harbor came, and only then, thanks to the foresight of two young army officers. As tensions between the US and Japan rose in 1941, Lieutenant-Colonel John W Weckerling and Captain Kai E Rasmussen, both US Army intelligence officers who had learned Japanese while serving in Japan, began to argue that the absence of linguists might well be debilitating to the army in the event of war. They believed, given the complexities of the Japanese language, it would take months or even years to train enough language specialists to fulfill the army's wartime needs. Consequently, Weckerling and Rasmussen began to search for Americans with some knowledge of Japanese. They rapidly came to the conclusion that Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) were the most likely candidates for language training. It soon became clear, however, that even among Japanese Americans, there were few who knew more than a little Japanese, and only a handful who were familiar with Japanese military terminology. Of the 3,700 Nisei initially interviewed by Rasmussen and Weckerling, only 10% were admitted to the US Army's language training program. One Nisei, Bill Hosokawa, who later became a prominent American journalist and author, recalled his interview with Colonel Rasmussen as a humiliating experience. Hosokawa was confident that he possessed a 'fair speaking

knowledge' of Japanese, but his language skills were soon proven to be 'completely inadequate'. Able to identify only two or three characters out of every one hundred used in a typical Japanese high school textbook, Rasmussen summarily rejected him. 'Hosokawa', he snarled, 'you'd make a helluva Jap'. The US Army had clearly overestimated the language skills of Nisei, who by 1941 were considerably more American than Japanese. Yet some familiarity with the language was better than none and, in the end, 85% of the students recruited for the US Army's language school were of Japanese ancestry.[9]

Most of the US Army's translators in the Pacific underwent intensive language training at the Fourth Army Intelligence School, later renamed the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS). Initially established at the Presidio in San Francisco, its first class of 60 students (only two of whom were Caucasians) began intensive language training in November 1941, just five weeks prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. In the spring of 1942 the school was moved to Minnesota (Camp Savage in 1942 and then Fort Snelling in 1944) and placed under the direct supervision of the War Department. By war's end MISLS had graduated nearly 4,200 linguists for service in combat areas throughout Asia and the Pacific. In all, approximately 6,000 Nisei and 600 non-Nisei completed MISLS training.[10]

The British, Australians, and Canadians likewise established language training programs in hopes of spanning the linguistic gaps in the Allies' intelligence apparatus. The British created a 14-16 month intensive Japanese language course to train army personnel as Japanese speakers and translators, while the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force opted to train only translators. In 1944, the British government projected that its programs would produce 100 army, 30 navy, and 120 air force linguists during 1945, and similar numbers for 1946. These linguists would contribute little to the war in SWPA, however, as they were all earmarked for assignments in Southeast Asia. Australia, which created a combined language course for army, navy and air force personnel, projected that it would train 50 graduates in the first six months of 1945 and thereafter 50 Japanese linguists annually. By 1945, Canada's Japanese language school was training 70 students and had plans to increase its output of trained linguists to 100 per year in 1946 and thereafter. These numbers reveal both the scarcity of the human resources available to serve as Japanese translators and interpreters, and the Allied awareness of the ongoing need for linguists.[11]

Even as the Allies searched for likely prospects for its language schools in 1944, a great many Japanese Americans were already in the field. Nisei contributions to the intelligence war in the Pacific demanded great personal risk, for if captured by the Japanese they undoubtedly would be tortured as traitors. Because of their Japanese ancestry, Nisei also risked being mistaken for the enemy. Allied commanders took a variety of precautions to protect Nisei serving in combat zones and discovered that Nisei had to do more than merely wear American or Australian uniforms and carry identification cards to ensure their safety. In forward areas, Nisei prominently displayed special passes that included their photograph and proof of American citizenship and by late 1943, ATIS policy dictated that Nisei working in the front lines be accompanied by Caucasian officers whose job it was to protect Nisei from friendly forces.[12]

Not only did the Nisei presence on battlefields require special precautions, Allied forces made the very existence of the organisation itself a closely guarded secret. ATIS linguists knew that the Imperial Japanese Army (UA) depended heavily on written orders but nonetheless maintained lax security measures. The Japanese failure to encode much of their communications resulted from an apparent belief that their written language was so utterly alien to westerners as to constitute a cryptographic system in and of itself. An ATIS report noted in 1944 that the Japanese apparently assumed that 'even if the Allied forces did capture Japanese documents, they would be unable to translate them'.[13] Colonel Mashbir (Coordinator of ATIS) believed that if the Japanese learned of ATIS's existence, they would 'take precautionary measures that would nullify' much of the organisation's work and 'thus deprive the United Nations of a major source of information concerning the enemy'. ATIS was thus a well-kept secret, and Japan never became aware of its existence during the war.[14]

Despite the many imposing obstacles in the path of ATIS success, Mashbir and his polyglot company began operations within a year of the Pearl Harbor attack. From October 1942 through June 1945, ATIS headquartered in Brisbane. Referred to as Base ATIS, headquarters included Translation, Examination, Information, Production, and Training Sections. ATIS created an advanced unit in September 1944 as the result of successful Allied counter-offensives in SWPA and the forward movement of MacArthur's headquarters to Hollandia, New Guinea. Known as Advanced ATIS (ADVATIS), this unit was a 'miniature ATIS' designed to extract intelligence of immediate operational value ('spot information') from documents and POWs, classify it as to potential value, then forward it to Base ATIS in Brisbane for processing. As MacArthur's forward headquarters advanced toward the Japanese home islands, ATIS personnel went with it, moving to Manila in May 1945, and then in October 1945 to Tokyo to assist MacArthur with the occupation.[15] Meanwhile, beginning in January 1943, ATIS created a number of Advanced Echelons, each of which provided translation and interrogation services to Allied forces in the field. The first of these was the 1st Advanced Echelon assigned to the New Guinea Force. Linguists on service with this and other advanced language field units as they emerged, accompanied Allied combat forces on landing operations throughout the theatre over the remainder of the war where they scanned captured documents and conducted preliminary interrogations of prisoners in the search for information of immediate use.[16]

ATIS's primary function was to provide Allied commanders with intelligence about the whereabouts, capabilities, and intentions of Japan's armed forces. Yet ATIS translations of captured documents and interrogations played a prominent role in the Allied propaganda war as well, for they revealed much about enemy morale and the factors that affected it. Together, ATIS publications and personnel contributed to a better understanding of Japanese military psychology, pinpointed the enemy's vulnerabilities, and provided propagandists with current intelligence that proved critical to the Allied assault against enemy morale. ATIS linguists also critiqued Allied propaganda, wrote Japanese language leaflets, served as interpreters at POW encampments, and through prisoner interrogations provided much-needed feedback on the impact of Allied propaganda.

In SWPA, two military organisations engaged in psywar operations designed to demoralise enemy forces and reduce Japan's military effectiveness. The Far Eastern Liaison Office (FELO), established in June 1942, was an Australian organisation headed by Lieutenant-Commander JCR Proud (RANVR). Initially consisting of five people, FELO grew to 474 personnel by the end of the war, including 105 New Guinea natives and five Japanese prisoners. Originally identified as Section 'D' of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, FELO was soon separated from that agency and became a 'semi-independent' organisation under the command of the Australian Chiefs of Staff and directly responsible to the commander, Allied Land Forces, General Thomas Blamey.[17] Two years later in September 1944, in anticipation of his return to the Philippines, General MacArthur approved the creation of the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB), which consisted primarily of American military personnel and was commanded by Brigadier-General Bonner F Fellers. Propaganda operations in the theatre were then coordinated at GHQ, SWPA. For both FELO and PWB, leaflets were the primary weapons of persuasion—weapons designed to convince Japanese that the war was unwinnable and continued resistance would lead to Japan's destruction rather than victory. For both organisations, ATIS provided the raw materials from which the finished product came and often evaluated the quality of the propagandists' output by assessing the credibility of the message as well as the accuracy of its presentation in Japanese.

American psywar personnel received their first introduction to propaganda operations from Australians when, in 1944, the PWB handed 17 officers and 20 enlisted men over to FELO for 'basic training'.[18] FELO's indoctrination course, coordinated by Commander Proud, stressed both psywar methods and the need to understand the target audience. It outlined the rules of propaganda creation, described the variety of preliminary intelligence needed for optimal psywar planning, and provided an outline of the stages of development that comprised an effective propaganda campaign. Above all else, FELO indoctrination emphasised the importance of timing. 'The crux of the whole program', concluded Proud, was 'the right leaflet at the right place at the right moment.'[19] The second requirement was intimately related to timing: psywar must be perceived as 'one of the fighting forces', a weapon to be used

operationally in light of local situations. Proud drilled into his students that successful psywar began with the collection of intelligence relevant to a particular operational area. It then proceeded through a planning stage six to eight weeks prior to the start of a military campaign, which focused on determining the enemy's susceptibilities based on current intelligence. Propagandists then devised specific propaganda themes to exploit identified weaknesses in enemy morale. Upon completion of its psywar training course, FELO assigned nine Australians to PWB to serve as the nucleus of the new American unit.[20]

As head of the PWB, General Fellers combined the insights gained from Australia's field experience through two years of war with Japan, with his own study of Japanese military psychology at the US Army Command and General Staff School in the 1930s, and outlined four stages in conducting an effective psychological warfare campaign.[21] A closer examination of these four stages highlights the crucial role played by ATIS in Allied propaganda operations. First, Fellers wrote, effective psywar required a 'detailed knowledge of enemy psychology'. Second, propagandists must recognise the enemy's psychological vulnerabilities. In the third stage, propagandists must select 'decisive psychological objectives', and finally, time their propaganda properly and be sure the facts are clearly and logically presented. Beyond that, he emphasised that propagandists must continually reevaluate and revise their output as dictated by current intelligence estimates. In each of Fellers' four stages, as well as the process of evaluation and revision, ATIS was an integral part of the process of propaganda creation.[22]

What Mashbir once said of intelligence agents applied equally well to propagandists—they must be able to put themselves inside the enemy's brain. In order to anticipate the enemy, Mashbir said, 'your knowledge of his character and psychology must be so profound as to permit you to deduce his probable intentions'.[23] ATIS's many reports and publications enhanced propagandists' understanding of the Japanese enemy. ATIS wrote, for instance, a five-part report intended by its authors 'to give a rounded and documented exposition of Japanese military psychology'. Totalling nearly 200 pages, it contained a wealth of information on the history and traditions of the IJA as well as the training and indoctrination of its soldiers. It revealed both the historical roots of the custom of self-immolation and the reasons behind its continued practice during the Pacific War, assessed the role of the 'emperor cult' in Japanese indoctrination, and discussed the ramifications of the 'death before dishonour' philosophy of Japan's fighting forces.[24] Taken as a whole, ATIS's report on Japanese military psychology provided a wealth of information for combat propagandists seeking to understand the ostensibly 'inscrutable' Japanese enemy.

The second step in planning, according to Fellers, involved pinpointing the enemy's psychological vulnerabilities. Here again, ATIS gave propagandists the means to search for weaknesses in the Japanese psyche. Propagandists scrutinised ATIS's 'Current Translations' (excerpts of captured documents) for information on the status of enemy morale as revealed in diaries and official Japanese army and navy communications. ATIS's 'Enemy Publications' (verbatim translations of Japanese military manuals, intelligence reports, or operational orders) supplied propagandists with evidence of the debilitating effects of interservice rivalries, discipline and morale problems, strained officer-enlisted men relations, and supply shortages on Japan's war effort. Enemy documents also called attention to the Japanese army's reliance on corporal punishment, which by its own admission had a decidedly negative impact on the morale of enlisted men. ATIS 'Research Reports' documented Japan's use of 'false rumours' to raise morale, the medical corps' practice of killing sick and wounded troops, and assessed the psychological impact of bombing, disease, and food shortages. ATIS reports thus helped psychological warfare personnel develop a realistic appraisal of the mental wellbeing of Japan's field forces.[25]

Step three in Fellers' prescription for effective psywar called on propagandists to establish specific objectives based on their understanding of the enemy's frailties. The PWB outlined over 20 such objectives, which included efforts to increase Japanese doubts about their leaders, convince the enemy that their spiritual strength was not adequate to overcome Allied material superiority, heighten interservice rivalries, and show that the emperor had been exploited and betrayed by the 'militarists' (Imperial Japanese officers who controlled the government and were responsible for initiating the war in Asia and the Pacific).[26] In pursuing

these goals, the PWB sought to exploit the psychological weaknesses exhibited by Japan's fighting forces—weaknesses caused by the military defeats and physical hardships inflicted upon them by conventional Allied forces and then exposed by intelligence organisations such as ATIS.

The final step in Fellers' formula for effective psywar stipulated that propagandists time their operations carefully and present the facts logically and clearly to the enemy. Again, ATIS sources frequently revealed the whereabouts and state of morale of enemy troops, thus dictating which leaflets were most appropriate for distribution to a given enemy unit. As for the presentation, whenever possible ATIS linguists screened Allied leaflets to ensure that the language was properly employed, the calligraphy was written correctly, and the message was appropriate for a Japanese audience. In every respect, ATIS enhanced Allied efforts to uphold Commander Proud's dictum that the key to effective propaganda operations was 'the right leaflet at the right place at the right moment'.

The New Guinea campaign provided the first opportunity for FELO to engage in extensive propaganda operations in the field. FELO began its field work in Papua, New Guinea soon after its establishment in June 1942, making its first propaganda leaflet drop on Japanese troops retreating along the Kokoda Track and establishing its first forward office at Port Moresby in November I942.[27] All told, FELO dropped millions of leaflets and captured 3,367 Japanese POWs in New Guinea, 798 of whom attributed their willingness to surrender to Allied propaganda.[28] Subsequent analyses of ATIS interrogations of prisoners taken in New Guinea revealed a substantial number of interesting preliminary findings on the volatility of Japanese morale, discernible trends in enemy morale in connection with specific morale factors, and the presence of a continuum of 'personality profiles' among Japanese combatants. In each case, ATIS reports proved that at least some Japanese were susceptible to psywar operations and were remarkably useful in Allied efforts to devise more convincing propaganda messages.

Studies of ATIS interrogations of prisoners captured in New Guinea between February and November 1943 showed that Imperial Japan's armed forces were comprised of men with varying dispositions and tendencies and that each individual soldier possessed a unique level of morale that fell along a continuum, which included 'examples of unshaken patriotism and morale at one extreme and defeatism and anti-war sentiment at the other'. The Foreign Morale Analysis Division (FMAD, a section of the US Office of War Information) classified the prisoners taken in New Guinea in 1943 into four 'personality profiles' based on their responses under ATIS interrogation. The first group consisted of men who exhibited 'positive morale'. Prisoners in this category generally enjoyed military life; saw themselves as effective soldiers; were not despondent about Japan's losses in New Guinea; had faith in Japan's mission in Asia; expressed confidence in their immediate military superiors, the high command, and Japan's political leadership; and remained convinced that Japan would win the war. Men with positive morale were also unimpressed with Allied propaganda leaflets and did not discuss their contents with other soldiers.

The second category of Japanese POWs was comprised of men who exhibited 'changing morale' levels. These individuals tended to believe that their military reversals in New Guinea were simply the consequence of Japan extending itself on too many fronts and had no broader significance in terms of strategic implications. Some of these prisoners also confessed to some war weariness, however, acknowledging that their initial enthusiasm for the war and Japan's leaders had deteriorated over time and that they had become more cynical and concerned about Japan's military prowess and its likelihood of ultimate success. Men in this group also asserted that they found Allied propaganda amusing and poorly worded and said they were unaffected by it.

FMAD's third category of Japanese included those who were characterised as having 'passive morale'. Prisoners in this group stated that they fought only because they were conscripted, had never been enthusiastic about the war, did not like soldiering or the military, believed one's duty did not extend to killing oneself to avoid capture, and were not markedly influenced by Allied propaganda.

Finally, FMAD identified those with 'poor morale'; men who were bitter about being conscripted, did not see themselves as effective soldiers, perceived the war as 'utterly futile' or even the result of Japanese greed and aggression, were appalled by the privations they suffered in New Guinea, felt their superior officers had no regard for the troops' wellbeing, believed Japan could not win the war, and eagerly read Allied propaganda leaflets and discussed them with others. Some of these men had become so demoralised that they confessed to having deliberately exposed themselves to capture or death just to 'get it over with'. In short, one FMAD study concluded, 'as long as he does not possess an army of automatons or robots, as long as he must depend on human beings, with all the range of temperament, suggestibility, courage and hardihood that this implies, there are weak spots in his armour, chinks which psychological warfare strives to locate and exploit'.[29]

The small numbers of Japanese combatants who were taken captive in New Guinea between September 1942 and April 1943 were badly wounded, unconscious, unarmed, or otherwise unable to resist. As the campaign progressed, however, larger numbers of Japanese prisoners were taken and found to be in much better physical condition at the time of their capture, thus exhibiting less willingness to resist. Even so, nearly all Japanese prisoners captured in New Guinea (or elsewhere, for that matter) believed that being taken prisoner was 'the greatest single evil that could have befallen them' and expressed no desire to return to Japan or have their families in funned of their fate.[30] That never changed. Other facets of Japanese thinking, however, proved to be more malleable.

As operations in New Guinea wound down, careful analysis of ATIS reports on the campaigns there revealed that between July 1942 and May 1944 'the Japanese in New Guinea moved through a complete cycle, materially and in terms of morale'. As Japan's initial advances and combat successes were followed by a long period of physical hardships, greater isolation, increased air attack, and finally outright defeat, the psychological and emotional wellbeing of Japanese combatants underwent a parallel collapse. 'The extremes of success and failure during this period', said one report, 'made possible a study of Japanese morale under diverse conditions.'[31] Some analysts in 1944 hypothesised that this pattern of emotions might repeat itself in future campaigns and even suggested that Japanese civilians might exhibit a similar pattern of responses over time. Just as combatants in New Guinea became progressively less confident in victory as military reversals and supply shortages mounted, intelligence analysts surmised that Japanese civilians might fight bitterly at first, but as the Allies cut Japan off from its empire, the intensity of the air war increased, and realistic hope of victory faded, Japanese civilians might become more willing to give up the fight, as seemed to be the case in New Guinea.[32]

Beyond the evidence of Japanese demoralisation, ATIS intelligence pinpointed specific conditions that eroded morale as well as those that sustained Japanese fighting spirit over time. Multiple studies of prisoners and documents captured in New Guinea showed a rising level of demoralisation due to immediate battlefield circumstances such as combat reversals, supply shortages, and the absence of air support, though most remained confident in more remote or ideological issues such as the righteousness of the war, the inviolability of the Japanese Emperor, the competence of the nation's political leaders, and the commitment of the Japanese home front to the war effort. In short, captured documents and prisoner interrogations confirmed that the 'tenor of criticism grows more intense as the person or group under discussion becomes less exalted and remote'. While 'the Emperor had no critics', concluded one wartime study, the immediate military superiors of Japanese prisoners were widely condemned for their failure to provide effective leadership and adequate supplies to the men in the field. Among the vast majority of Japan's frontline troops in New Guinea there also developed early on a 'lively skepticism concerning the reliability of the news' they received.[33] And as Japanese troops became more suspicious of official reports disseminated within their own camp, the more hungry they became for any source of news and the more willing to put credence in Allied propaganda, particularly FELO news leaflets, which dominated propaganda operations throughout 1943.

Japanese combatants in New Guinea also lost confidence in their weaponry and war material, and there was a total collapse of morale with regard to issues of health and wellbeing as disease, malnutrition, and abysmal medical services took their toll on Japan's fighting forces.

Even more significant was the growing number of prisoners who began to exhibit a loss of faith in ultimate Japanese victory during the final months of fighting.[34] Nonetheless, Japanese troops, even those who were dispirited and seemingly devoid of hope, retained faith in the righteousness of Japan's cause and justified the war as one of Asian liberation from western domination. The documentation also shows that most Japanese soldiers remained intensely loyal to the Emperor, exhibited considerable confidence in the nation's political leadership, and clung tenaciously to the belief that surrender was dishonourable to oneself, one's family, and the nation.[35]

Propagandists concluded therefore that since battlefield defeat and physical hardships did not generally lead the Japanese to abandon their most deeply held principles, those principles were resistant to external manipulation and thus not a likely prospect for propaganda operations. Conversely, ATIS intelligence confirmed that as battlefield conditions deteriorated, Japanese troops exhibited a dramatic loss of confidence in the organisational efficiency of the IJA, which had failed to maintain an adequate supply system, provide desperately needed reinforcements, or even communicate reliably with its field forces. As a result, psywar personnel concluded that they were more likely to increase Japanese despair and sense of hopelessness by focusing attention on concrete matters related to the abysmal battlefield conditions confronting the target population, while propaganda themes of a more philosophical or ideological bent were unlikely to produce favourable results.

In addition to contributing to Allied understanding of propaganda themes most likely to demoralise Japanese combatants, ATIS linguists also offered valuable critical analyses of Allied propaganda. Harold Nishimura, a Nisei serving with the US 7th Division Language Team, for example, wrote a lengthy memo in January 1945 assessing the merits of the propaganda disseminated during the Leyte campaign. Noting that ATIS made every effort to elicit POW reactions to Allied propaganda, he stated that the results were 'gratifying'. Nishimura reported that in the late stages of the operation 'nearly all prisoners either surrendered using a leaflet or stated they had read and been influenced by them'. He also noted, however, that of the 127 prisoners taken by the 7th Division, nearly all of them objected to the fact that Allied leaflets contained the word 'surrender'. Indeed, ATIS interrogations revealed that virtually all Japanese objected to surrender leaflets that had the words 'I Surrender' emblazoned on them. Even though the words were in English, ATIS reports showed that Japanese troops understood their meaning and found them offensive. As a result, the standard surrender leaflet was changed to read 'I Cease Resistance'. Nishimura's report also insisted that whenever possible, skilled Japanese Americans should collaborate in the creation of propaganda leaflets since 'very few Caucasians have the necessary insight ... to produce effective propaganda. Without a thorough knowledge of the Japanese language', Nishimura wrote, 'the actual composition of the propaganda leaflet is juvenile or contrary to Japanese psychology and language.'[36]

Allied propagandists never completely overcame their difficulties with the Japanese language, although the assistance of ATIS linguists and a growing reliance on POWs helped considerably. Mashbir recalled that some of the early propaganda leaflets exhibited malapropisms that rendered the message meaninglessness, and referred to one author who twisted 'his Japanese aphorisms as completely as though he had used a Mixmaster'. The resulting leaflet, said Mashbir, would have made as much sense to Japanese as saying to Americans: 'Here are some beautiful Vermont maple leaves. Therefore you must surrender because a rolling stone is worth two in the bush.' Mashbir went on to say, however, that ATIS suggestions were 'well received' and the quality of propaganda improved dramatically as the war continued.[37]

The hundreds of interrogation reports issued by ATIS proved immensely valuable for evaluating the results of the propaganda war. ATIS publications included evidence of declining morale in entire units as well as individual prisoners and revealed the extent of Japanese contact with Allied propaganda. During interrogation prisoners often commented on the degree to which they and their comrades had been influenced by the 'war of words' and frequently identified propaganda themes they found persuasive as well as those which did not resonate with the troops. Although POW interrogations confirmed that the quality and effectiveness of Allied propaganda leaflets increased over time, prisoners often suggested ways to improve specific leaflets and in some instances even volunteered to write their own propaganda texts or make frontline broadcasts.[38]

Effective psychological warfare depended upon a complex network of Allied personnel who laid the groundwork and provided the wherewithal for assaults against the enemy's mind. The work of propagandists began only after successful military operations had created a susceptible target audience. Once the enemy became physically and mentally vulnerable as a result of successive military defeats, ATIS intelligence highlighted psychological targets of opportunity. Propagandists then organised the data as it pertained to several clearly stated objectives. FELO made use of a collation section to bring together information gathered from various intelligence sources bearing on a particular psywar objective. In this, as in so many other ways, the PWB followed FELO's lead. The PWB's Collation Section, for example, analysed the intelligence amassed by agencies such as ATIS (and parallel units in Asia and the Pacific, eg the Southeast Asia Translation and Interrogation Center and the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Area) and made recommendations as to how it should be used to achieve PWB's goals. It fulfilled these tasks by creating worksheets known as Daily Collation Summaries that collected and organised intelligence data pertinent to a specific psywar objective.

Just two or three brief examples will illustrate the process at work. ATIS intelligence revealed that Japanese enlisted men frequently accused field officers of abandoning them in the face of enemy attack, deliberately lying to them in an effort to raise morale, and ordering medical personnel to kill sick and wounded troops who impeded military operations. In response, the PWB Collation Section urged leaflet writers to capitalise on the 'willingness of high-ranking officers to desert their men' while expecting or demanding that the enlisted men fight to the death. It also recommended the use of propaganda that exposed the lies of Japanese officers, as well as their orders to murder wounded men. PWB responded with a leaflet quoting directly from an ATIS translation of a Japanese officer's orders to 'dispose of all sick and wounded soldiers' in the event of a successful enemy attack. The leaflet labelled this order a 'death sentence' and urged Japanese troops to cease resistance or face certain death, perhaps at the hands of their fellow soldiers and 'by order of your direct superiors'.[39]

Other PWB leaflets attempted to increase soldiers' distrust of their superiors by exploiting false Japanese claims of victory. Leaflets asked how the US Navy was capable of retaking the Solomons, New Guinea, and Saipan if it had been destroyed in 1942 and 1943 as had been widely claimed by Japanese officers? Or how Americans could land in force in the Philippines if their fleet had been destroyed in naval operations off the Philippine coast? Considering these developments, read one such leaflet, do the reports of your military leaders 'seem entirely reasonable to you?'[40]

A final example of the role of ATIS in propaganda creation is revealed through a chain of events that began with an ATIS interrogation report in which a Japanese prisoner stated contemptuously that,

> The Government is trying to create the impression among the men that because they are Japanese and therefore possess the Yamato spirit they cannot lose battles and cannot be destroyed. They shipped us to distant lands—to New Guinea and Guadalcanal—and expected us to win the war with Type 38 Rifles and the Yamato spirit, but without food or airplane protection. Are they expecting five feet of Yamato spirit to overwhelm 500 kg bombs from Consolidated B-24s? This is absurd.

Inspired by this condemnation, the Collation Section recommended a series of leaflets to portray the 'one-sided character of the present struggle' and demonstrate the futility of the war. In this case, the process of propaganda creation culminated with a leaflet describing the history of the Type 38 rifle, which was first used in the Russo-Japanese War, and the advances made in military technology since then. 'Why then', the leaflet asked,

> do you have to fight against automatic rifles with rifles of the bolt-action type? If you had fought with new weapons like the Americans, perhaps tragedies like Leyte might have been avoided. However much spiritual strength you may have, how can you expect to tackle a 500kg bomb from a Consolidated bomber with a Type 38 rifle?.[41]

Allied propagandists thus seized an opportunity, as revealed in the enemy's own words, to heighten Japanese despair. In this instance, and many others like it, ATIS laid the groundwork for psywar operations.

By the end of 1944, ATIS had become an indispensable source of intelligence. But the statistical trends did not portend well for the future of this language intelligence unit or others akin to it functioning in Asia and the Pacific. There was growing concern among Allied organisations dependent on ATIS intelligence that the numbers of available Japanese linguists were inadequate, the language skills among linguists recently arriving in theatre were declining, and the sources of future linguists and the instructors to teach them were nearly exhausted, at precisely the same time as the numbers of captured documents and POWs were multiplying. Already by the summer of 1944 ATIS reported that it had accumulated 'a backlog of approximately 200,000 captured documents'.[42]

In December 1944, representatives of the Allies met in Washington DC at the Japanese Document Conference to address the brewing crisis associated with the collection. translation, and exploitation of captured Japanese documents. The Language Personnel Committee, one of several committees created to grapple with various aspects of the Japanese documents problem, concerned itself exclusively with the procurement, training, and employment of Allied language personnel. It concluded that the various language training schools simply could not keep up with the demand for linguists. 'Practically all activities to which language personnel from these schools have been assigned desire personnel increases', the final committee report stated, but the number of people receiving training was not keeping pace with the growing demands. 'As the war against Japan progresses', the committee summarised,

> Allied military operations will be over larger land masses where Japanese will be encountered in increasing proportions. Increasing demand will, therefore, be felt for language personnel who can cope with the linguistic problems of every sort occasioned by this contact. Language personnel will be required not only for military and naval intelligence, but for civil administration, censorship and other purposes. As the presently and prospectively available language personnel are definitely limited in both number and quality, the necessity for considering the procurement, training, utilization and conservation of language personnel, especially for the purposes of military and naval intelligence, at this time is obvious.[43]

At the time of the Japanese Document Conference (December 1944-January 1945), the total numbers of trained Japanese linguists of 'varying degrees of proficiency' from all sources was determined to be roughly 3,000. Projections were that by January 1946, that number would grow to nearly 5,500, and by January of the following year, perhaps as many as 7,500 Japanese linguists would be available for military duty. Even so, those willing to venture a guess predicted a considerable shortfall in language personnel. The Language Personnel Committee noted that in the coming months of the war, Allied combat units would only exhibit a greater need for linguists as 'the amount of Japanese language intelligence material which will fall into Allied hands will be "tremendous"'. The committee stated that it was impossible to project the overall number of linguists needed by the Allies in coming years, but reported that censorship duty alone was likely to require the skills of at least 2,000 Japanese linguists, and that civil administration was likely to have a 'similarly large requirement'.[44] The committee was also concerned that the 'critical shortage of qualified personnel' in the field meant that mentally and physically exhausted linguists were not being rotated out of active combat theatres and were being denied leave or furlough. What is more, the language skills exhibited by recent graduates of the language schools seemed to be diminishing and the search for students and teachers alike to maintain the flow of linguists from the various national language schools was turning up fewer and fewer legitimate prospects. (For example, in 1944 the average MISLS recruit was familiar with only 300 kanjis whereas their 1943 counterparts began language training knowing 7O0.[45]) In short, ATIS had fulfilled a critical intelligence need during the slightly more than two years of its existence, but the struggle to acquire skilled linguists would continue for the remainder of the war and on into the occupation of Japan.

It is a well accepted maxim of war that one must 'know the enemy' in order to defeat him. But in the case of Imperial Japan, the process of getting to know the enemy was extraordinarily difficult. Westerners had great difficulty understanding 'exotic' Asian cultures and the 'inscrutable' Japanese people, or so they said. The real problem, of course, was not so much the complexities of Asian cultures and peoples, as basic ignorance. Too few Americans and Australians knew much of anything about Japan in 1941, and considerably fewer could claim even a rudimentary knowledge of the Japanese language. Nonetheless, the language barrier that threatened to keep Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific ignorant of the intentions and capabilities of Imperial Japan was diminished because of the invaluable contributions of AXIS linguists. The union of two distinct national organisations, one Australian and one American, enabled ATIS to grow to maturity as a truly Allied intelligence unit and its successes exemplify the critical importance of shared knowledge, expertise, and objectives in coalition warfare.

It is unfortunate that despite the significance of their work as translators, interpreters, propagandists, and intelligence analysts, Japanese linguists, most of whom were Nisei, along with the intelligence organisations to which they belonged, remain an historical footnote. Perhaps it is because they were not war heroes in the traditional sense—because, as one historian has observed, 'their weapons were language, skill, and intelligence, not bayonets and machine guns'—that they have failed to receive much recognition.[46] Yet the historical record speaks for itself. ATIS was highly acclaimed by those who relied on the intelligence gathered by its linguists during the war, and who continued to depend on ATIS during the occupation that followed. MacArthur himself reportedly told a Mashbir confidant, 'I am Mashbir's most avid reader. In fact, I imagine I have read every word that he published'.[47] While it is safe to assume that MacArthur did not in fact read the millions of pages of intelligence ATIS produced, the remark is nonetheless indicative of the value he placed on the organisation and the role it played in conventional military operations. But ATIS was also an integral and indispensable part of the process of propaganda creation and evaluation, for its linguists provided the bulk of the intelligence that enabled propagandists to know the enemy, pinpoint his vulnerabilities, devise convincing propaganda, and assess the results of psychological warfare operations.

Endnotes

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3. *American Patriots: MIS in the War against Japan* (Washington, DC: Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, DC, 1995), 11.
4. General Headquarters, Far East Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, *Operations of the Allied Translator and interpreter Section*, GHQ, SWPA, Vol 5, Intelligence Series (1948), 3 (hereafter cited as Intelligence Series, ATIS)
5. ATIS, SWPA, Progress Report, From Organization—19 September 1942 to Reorganisation—8 September 1944, A, MacArthur Memorial Bureau of Archives (hereafter MMMBA), RG 3: Records of Headquarters, South West Pacific Area, 1942-1945, Box 72, Norfolk, Virginia (hereafter cited at ATIS Progress Report).
6. Intelligence Series, ATIS, i, 4.
7. Intelligence Series, ATIS, 2-3.
8. Intelligence Series, ATIS, i, 5; ATIS Progress Report, A. For the figure of 17 Nisei linguists killed in the Pacific War and Asia see Tad Ichinokuchi (ed), *John Aiso and the MIS: Japanese-American Soldiers in the Military Intelligence Service, World War II* (Los Angeles, CA: MIS Club of Southern California, 1988), 201.
9. Bill Hosokawa, 'Our Own Japanese in the Pacific War', *American Legion Magazine* (July 1964): 15-17, 44-7. For more information on Nisei contributions to the Pacific War see Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1969); Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1988); Masaharu Ano, 'Loyal Linguists: Nisei of World War II Learned Japanese in Minnesota', *Minnesota History* 45 (1977), 273-87; Joseph D Harrington, *Yankee Samurai: The Secret Role of Nisei in Americas Pacific Victory* (Detroit: Pettigrew Enterprises, 1979); and Lynn Crost, Honor by Fire: Japanese-Americans at War in Europe and the Pacific (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1994).
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11. Report of Japanese Document Conference, 28 December 1944-15 January 1945, 28, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), RG 165: Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, entry 79, box 1992.
12. Hosokawa, 'Our Own Japanese', 46, ATIS, SWPA, Information Request Report no 96, 25 November 1943, 5-7, MMBA, RG 3, box 123; Mashbir, *I Was An American Spy*, 242, 247, and Report of Japanese Document Conference, 28 December 1944-15 January 1945, 69-72, NARA, RG 165, entry 79, box 1992.
13. ATIS, SWPA, Publication no 6, 'The Exploitation of Japanese Documents', December 14, 1944, 1, NARA, RG 407; Records of the Adjutant General, entry 427, box 1316. See also Mashbir, *I Was An American Spy*, 237, and Harrington, *Yankee Samurai*, 5-7.
14. Ibid and Intelligence Series, ATIS, 12.
15. Intelligence Series, ATIS, 31, 33-5.
16. Exploitation of Japanese Documents, 1-2, 57; ATIS Progress Report, A , Intelligence Series, ATIS, 16ff.
17. 'Report on Activities of Far Eastern Liaison Office for Period June 1942 to September 1945', 1, Bonner F Fellers Papers, box 2, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Palo Alto, California. For a more detailed discussion of the organisational relationship between FELO and AIB see Alan Powell, *War by Stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau, 1942-1945* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996).
18. Report on Activities of FELO, 38.
19. 'Notes Recorded on Indoctrination Course in Psychological Warfare Given by Officers of the Far Eastern Liaison Office', 3, 15-17, NARA, RG 331: Records of Allied Operational and Occupational Headquarters, World War II, General Headquarters, South West Pacific Area, entry 283 L, box 31.
20. Report on Activities of FELO, 38.
21. Written in 1935, Fellers' study, entitled 'The Psychology of the Japanese Soldier', outlined his thinking about the Imperial Japanese Army in the 1930s and contained ideas that continued to hold sway throughout his tenure as head of PWB. Fellers' study is included as annex 23 of his 'Report on Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1944-1945' (Washington, DC; US Army Center of Military History, Historical Records Branch, 1946). This report is located in the US Army Center of Military History, Historical Records Branch, Washington DC; the MMBA; and in the Bonner F Fellers Papers.
22. Fellers, 'Report on Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1944-1945', Annex 22: Basic Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1-4.
23. Mashbir, *I Was An American Spy*, 33.

24. ATIS, SWPA, Research Report no 76 (5 parts), April 4, 1944-February 24, 1945, MMBA, RG 3, box 119.
25. See, as examples, ATIS, SWPA, Research Reports no 94: Psychological Effect of Allied Bombing on the Japanese; no 117: Infringement of the Laws of War and Ethics by the Japanese Medical Corps; no 122: Antagonism Between Officers and Men in the Japanese Armed Forces; also ATIS, SWPA, Enemy Publications, no 237 Personal Punishment and Military Discipline-Court-Martial Judgments, 2 Army; nos 285 and 300: Lessons from New Guinea Operations; and no 336 Extralegal Punishment. All located in MMBA, RG3.
26. PWB, SWPA, Daily Collation Summaries, NARA, RG 331, entry 283 L, boxes 7-14.
27. Notes on FELO Indoctrination Course, 35; and Report on Activities of FELO. 28. Report on Activities of FELO, 12.
29. US, Office of War Information, Foreign Morale Analysis Division (FMAD), Report No 19, 'Group and Individual Morale of the Japanese During the Lae-Salamaua Campaign', 12 May 1945, 24-37, NARA, RG 331, entry 283 K, box 9.
30. US, Office of War Information, Foreign Morale Analysis Division (FMAD), Report No 18, Aspects of Japanese Fighting Morale during the Papuan Phase of the New Guinea Campaign, April 23, 1945, 26, NARA, RG 331, entry 283 K, box 9.
31. US, Office of War Information, Foreign Morale Analysis Division (FMAD), Report No 20, Factors Affecting Japanese Morale during the Aitape-Hollandia Campaign, June 10, 1945, 3, NARA, RG 331, entry 283 K, box 9. See also FMAD Report No 19, 18-19 for a summary of Japanese POW attitudes toward capture.
32. Ibid, 3, 23.
33. FMAD Report No 18, 12-13.
34. FMAD Report No, 19, 23.
35. Ibid, 23. See FMAD Repon No 18, 3-14 and Report No 19, 20-23 for more detailed analyses of the ways in which specific circumstances affected the morale of Japanese combatants in New Guinea.
36. Memo, HQ, 7th Division re: Psychological Warfare, January 10, 1945; and report by Harold S Nishimura,both in NARA, RG 331, entry 283 K, box 14.
37. Mashbir, 339.
38. See Allison B Gilmore, '"We Have Been Reborn": Japanese Prisoners and the Allied Propaganda War in the Southwest Pacific', *Pacific Historical Review* LXIV:2 (May 1995), 195-215.
39. PWB, SWAPA, leaflet 7-J-11, Sandberg-Hallgren Collection, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Love Library Special Collections.
40. PWB, leaflet 9-J-1: 'Truth of Leaders', Sandberg-Hallgren Collection.
41. PWB, Daily Collation Summary, NARA, RG 331, entry 283 L, box 14; and PWB, leaflet 33-J-l: 'Type 38 Rifle', MMBA, RG 4: Records of General Headquarters, United States Army Forces Pacific, 1942-1947, box 56.
42. ATIS, Progress Report, A. The growing deluge of documents led to a September 1944 reorganisation of ATIS and the creation of a more elaborate system of scanning and screening each captured document to ascertain its significance, thus permitting linguists to translate in full only those considered of immediate value.
43. Report of Japanese Document Conference, 26.
44. Ibid, 25-7. The breakdown in numbers for these projections is as follows: of the 5,487 linguists predicted for January 1946, the US Army would provide 3,865; the US Navy 910; the British 287, Australia 140, Canada 135, and 150 would come from other Allied sources. By January 1947, officials hoped to have an estimated 7,502 Japanese linguists: 4,580 trained by the US Army and 1,710 by the US Navy; 537 British linguists; 190 Australians, 235 Canadians; and 250 from other sources. 45. Ibid, 27-30. For an extended discussion of the difficulties in recruiting and training Japanese linguists, see 'MISLS: The Training History', Annex 10.
46. Ano, 'Loyal Linguists', 287.
47. Mashbir, *I Was An American Spy*, 240.