

3) Military Intelligence Service

More than 6,000 Japanese Americans – also called “Nisei” – served in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in the war against Japan, although wartime secrecy meant they received very little credit for their work. Even before the war, a handful was recruited by the Corps of Intelligence Police, and 45 were in the first class of the Fourth Army Language School at the Presidio of San Francisco. After Pearl Harbor, thousands of AJA soldiers attended the Military Intelligence Service Language School in Minnesota, then went to work quietly against their parents' homeland.

MIS AJAs served as interpreters, interrogators, translators, cave flushers, electronic eavesdroppers and combat infantrymen. They served not as a unit, but in ones, twos or small detachments assigned to every major U.S. and Allied unit and service, in every major campaign in the Pacific and Asia. In addition to usual hazards of combat, they risked being mistaken for the enemy and shot by our own side. They are credited with saving hundreds of thousands of lives and shortening the war significantly. Afterwards, they played a key role in rebuilding Japan into a modern democracy and U.S. ally. The MIS received a Presidential Unit Citation for its World War II service.

4) 1399 Engineer Construction Battalion

The 1399 Engineer Construction Battalion (ECB) was activated in Hawaii on April 26, 1944. At its peak, the 1399 had 993 troops. The unit completed more than 54 major defense projects on Oahu during the war, including construction of a large water tank in Wahiawa, training villages, artillery emplacements, ammunition storage pits, warehouses, airfields, auxiliary roads in the mountains, bridge repairs, rock quarry operations and military defense facilities.

Despite requests from Gen. Douglas MacArthur to deploy the unit in the Pacific, the 1399 ECB was kept in Hawaii. The unit earned a Meritorious Service Award.