WARTIME TRANSLATIONS OF SEIZED JAPANESE DOCUMENTS: Allied Translator and Interpreter Section Reports, 1942-1946

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Title:
WARTIME TRANSLATIONS OF SEIZED JAPANESE DOCUMENTS: Allied Translator and Interpreter Section Reports, 1942-1946

Date(s):
1942-1946, 1988

Level of description:
collection level

Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size):
2212 fiche

Context

Name of creator(s):
Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS)

Administrative / Biographical history:
The Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) was a US intelligence agency employed by Gen Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief, US Forces, Far East Command, and Maj Gen Charles A Willoughby, commander US G-2 Intelligence Section, during the American campaign against the Japanese in World War Two. Although established specifically to translate seized Japanese materials and provide interpreters for interrogations of prisoners, ATIS’ mission also included analysis of Japanese military objectives and capabilities and political and psychological interpretations of Japanese military and civilian activities. ATIS was created by Allied General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ SWPA), on 19 Sep 1942 and was inter-service in character and function. Established as a centralised intelligence section in SWPA in response to the urgent need for timely, accurate intelligence on Japanese objectives and tactics, ATIS’ was to translate and analyse seized Japanese military documents and interrogate Japanese prisoners of war. During the course of the war, ATIS moved its base each time GHQ SWPA moved, from Melbourne, Australia, to Hollandia, New Guinea, and then to Leyte Island and Manila, Philippines. ATIS advance units followed the earliest combat forces in each action throughout the drive towards Japan and as the scope of its intelligence operations expanded so did its staff. At its inception, ATIS consisted of a small contingent of officers and enlisted men, but by the end of the war, ATIS personnel numbered 250 officers and 1,700 enlisted staff members, which included dozens of Japanese-Americans. ATIS’ transition from a wartime Allied, inter-service Section in SWPA to an Occupation Service within Supreme Command, Allied Powers (SCAP) began on 28 Aug 1945, when the various combined Allied Land, Naval, and Air Commands were dissolved by US General Order No 41. The need to assess the Japanese military as part of a larger effort to understand Japanese society, however, resulted in a reprieve for ATIS. It continued to perform its former function until it was officially disbanded on 30 April 1946.

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer:
Congressional Information Service, Inc, Bethesda, MD, USA.
Content & structure

Scope and content:
Wartime Translations of Seized Japanese Documents: Allied Translator and Interpreter Section Reports, 1942-1946 is a themed microfiche collection of 7,200 translated Japanese documents. The collection includes translated seized Japanese diaries, Allied interrogation reports of Japanese soldiers and civilians, Japanese reconnaissance reports, US summaries of enemy activities, and Allied tactical and strategic reports on Japanese military movements issued by Allied General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ SWPA), and Advanced Echelons of the Australian New Guinea Force; US 6 Army; US 1 Corps; US 11 Corps; US 10 Corps; US 8 Army; US 14 Army; 1 Australian Corps; and US 24 Corps. Included are all documents bearing the notation ‘Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, Southwest Pacific Area’ and issued during the period 1942-1946. As noted above, the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) was re-organised after the terms of Japanese surrender were signed on 2 Sep 1945, and its mission was altered to reflect the needs of the Supreme Command, Allied Powers (SCAP), occupation force. During its transition to a service within SCAP, ATIS continued to issue documents under the aegis of General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ SWPA) and these documents are included in the collection. Major subjects covered in ATIS documents are Japanese military strategy and tactics; specific intelligence on Japanese troop movements, equipment, and order of battle; indigenous political movements and political geography of the Southwest Pacific; technical data on Japanese military equipment; and, information obtained from Japanese prisoners of war. ATIS translations of seized Japanese materials also made available English language versions of documents, maps, charts, and other official Japanese visual records. Principal among the types of materials collected and translated by ATIS were: personal diaries obtained from Japanese prisoners of war or removed from the bodies of Japanese killed in action, detailing Japanese military operations and objectives as well as personal accounts of the war; letters and personal correspondence, paybooks, and Military Postal Savings Books carried by Japanese soldiers; official Japanese unit field diaries; official Japanese military orders and orders of battle; maps and charts relating to Japanese shipping routes, military positions, airfields, and order of battle plans; Japanese propaganda and psychological warfare documents; Allied interrogations reports of Japanese prisoners of war, detailing Japanese military positions and troop morale; and, Japanese technical manuals, detailing weaponry and supplies.

System of arrangement:
The collection is arranged in chronological order.

Conditions of access & use

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Open, subject to signature of Reader's undertaking form, and appropriate provision of two forms of identification, to include one photographic ID.

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Copies, subject to the condition of the original, may be provided for research use only. Enquiries concerning the copyright of the original material should be addressed to Congressional Information Service, Inc, 4520 East-West Highway, Bethesda, MD, 20814, USA.

Language/scripts of material:
English

Finding aids:

Allied materials

Existence and location of originals:
East Asia Collection of the University of Maryland, College Park, MD; the National Archives and Record Administration's Military Field Branch, Suitland, MD; General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, Norfolk, VA; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; University of Michigan, Asia Library; Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and
Peace.
Compiled Jul 1999

Description control

Rules or conventions: