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# THE FORUM

MARCH/JUNE 1982



DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER  
Presidio of Monterey  
California



*Yutaka Munakata*

# A lifetime of breathing, living DLI

by Shigeya Kihara

Yutaka Munakata passed away on August 20. He retired from DLI earlier this year after a lifetime career of single-minded, devoted service to the foreign language training program of the United States.

For 38 years, he lived and breathed language teaching, language administration and language programs, day and night.

Recognized early on for his competence and extraordinary devotion with which he accomplished any assigned task, he progressed from the position of Japanese language instructor to his last assignment—organizing the Office of Academic Dean at DLI.

There probably is not one individual who could come close to holding a candle to Yutaka Munakata in total devotion and invaluable service to the foreign language training program at DLI. He was a rare individual, truly one of a kind.

When World War II broke out, Munakata was living in Seattle, Wash., working as an electrical engineer. In the spring of 1942, acting under authority granted to him by President Roosevelt's Executive order 9066, General DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command began the relocation of all Japanese-Americans to the interior. Munakata was sent to the Puyallup Assembly Center from where he volunteered to proceed to Tule Lake to help construct barracks for the internment of Japanese. This was characteristic of him.

For America, his country, he would even construct his own prison.

In the dead of winter 1942, Munakata left Tule Lake to join the faculty of the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage, Minn. Though well-qualified in the Japanese language, the subjects being taught included some never, ever taught anywhere outside of Imperial Japan. Therefore, each day after a full eight to 10 hours of teaching, he returned home to burn the midnight oil until one or two in the morning, preparing for the next day of class. He was a natural teacher and organizer.

With the growth of the language school, Munakata was appointed to

higher and higher positions, which he filled admirably, one after another with his extraordinary ability to learn, assimilate, synthesize and perform.

It seemed that with each greater responsibility, his productivity and enthusiasm for contributing to the greater excellence of the language program increased.

After full days of administration, meetings, conferences and interruptions at his office, he would return home for dinner and in the evening and over weekends, his kitchen table served as a second office. Here, references, files and papers were piled up in appropriate groups for research, organization and compilation of studies, reports and recommendations.

There is no way that an estimate can be made of the tens of thousands of hours of competent work that he put in for DLI over and above his 40-hour weeks. This was all done, of course, without even a thought of compensation or even a hint to his successive commandants that he was doing this. It was a labor of love.

Service to DLI and the government of the United States was his bread and butter, his rice and tea, the air that he breathed and the magnificent obsession of his life. There never has been and probably never will be another Yutaka Munakata at DLI.

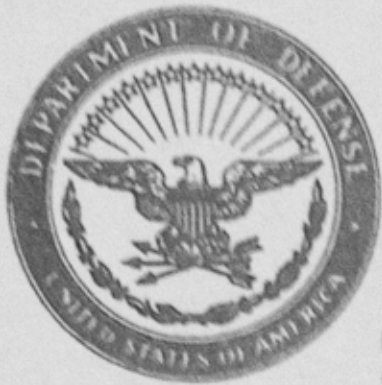
(Editor's note: Shigeya Kihara is a retired DLI instructor and for many years a friend and co-worker of Yutaka Munakata. With the passing of Mr. Munakata, Mr. Kihara was kind enough to offer these reflections, to the GLOBE, of the man he knew).



Photo by SSgt. Ann W. Montoya

*Yutaka Munakata*





REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER  
PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93940

ATFL-DT-AM-TA

12 Feb 82

SUBJECT: Dedication of Yutaka Munakata Memorial

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Mr. Yutaka Munakata served the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, and its forerunner organizations for more than 39 years. He worked at every level from instructor to the Dean's Office. Those of you who knew him are distinctly aware of the extent to which he applied himself to his work.
2. The unique nature of his personality and dedication are perfectly exemplified by this very ceremony. Mr. Munakata is, so far, the only person to be afforded such a magnanimous accolade.
3. The bronze plaque in this monument chronicles his long tenure which began in the Winter of 1942. The main central boulder on which the plaque is mounted represents the upright and solid character with which he approached every task.
4. Mr. Munakata was a true American. He epitomized the skills and devotion which have built this country. He embraced those ideals with near evangelical zeal. But Mr. Munakata was also Japanese. That noble heritage perhaps explains his unmatched pride and bearing. Therefore, this monument has been placed in the setting of a typical Japanese rock garden. This spartan style is intended to allow the observer to focus on the profound relationship between man and nature.
5. In 1971 the three-building complex which now contains the Asian language departments was constructed according to his elaborate plans. Before he passed away last August, he had designed yet another class and office building incorporating the most modern instructional technology. Construction on that building will begin in the next fiscal year.
6. This memorial which we dedicate today is a personal one, paid for and erected by Mr. Munakata's many friends, staff and faculty. It gives me great pleasure to announce publically my full intention to request the Department of the Army to officially dedicate the new instructional building to the memory of Yutaka Munakata. Until we see that building rising to the north of Munzer Hall, it is my fervent hope that this private monument will fill the vacuum we have felt with his passing,

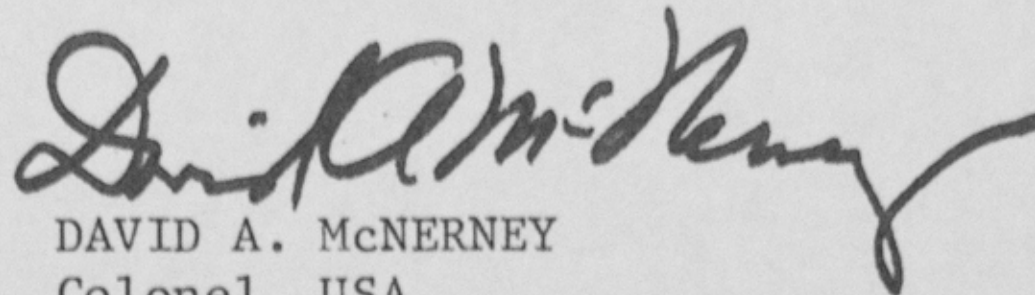


ATFL-DT-AM-TA

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remind us all of a great man, and inspire us to emulate his extensive achievements.

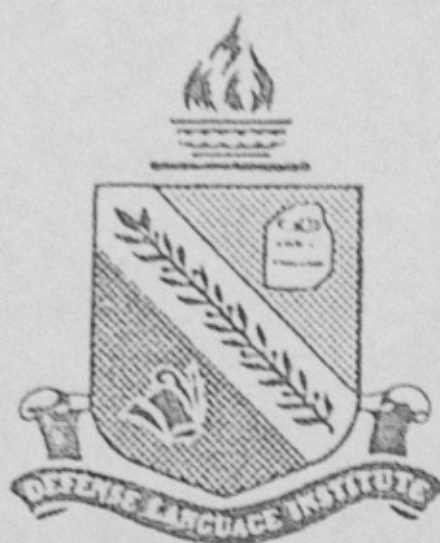
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David A. McNerney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

DAVID A. MCNERNEY  
Colonel, USA  
Commandant

DISTRIBUTION:

Special





DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER



MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

MR. YUTAKA MUNAKATA

at the

PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY CHAPEL

1600 Hours

17 September 1981



## Deaths

# Yutaka Munakata

Yutaka Munakata, retired instructor and administrator at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Presidio of Monterey, died Thursday at his Monterey residence after a long illness. He was 70.

Mr. Munakata was born Feb. 12, 1911, in Thomas, Wash. At age 3 he went with his parents to live in Japan. At 17 he returned to the U.S. to live in Seattle, Wash., and graduated from the University of Washington in electrical engineering.

He began as an instructor in December, 1942, at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage, Minn., which later became the Army Language School and then Defense Language Institute, both located at the Presidio of Monterey. While at Camp Savage he became chairman of the translation department, responsible for translating captured Japanese documents.

In 1948, he was promoted to professor and charged with organizing the language school's Japanese course, later becoming chairman of the Japanese department in 1950.

In 1963, he became director of the school's West and South Europe Division, studying French, German and Spanish as part of his duties. He became director of the East Europe/Middle East division in 1970, and a year later was chief of the Asian group. He was appointed academic policy and curriculum coordinator at DLI last year.

On his retirement in January, Mr. Munakata was awarded the decoration for meritorious civilian service from the school for his contributions to the planning and construction of the three Asian group academic buildings, the accreditation of the language center, a revised grading policy and an innovative approach to team teaching.

He is survived by his wife, Martha; sons, Greg of Vienna, Va., and Donald of San Mateo; daughter, Grace of Davis, and one grandchild.

Private family services are planned Sunday at the Farlinger Funeral Home in Monterey. Inurnment will be in the Monterey City Cemetery.

The family suggests memorial contributions to the Community Hospital or the Hospice of the Monterey Peninsula.



Feb.15, 1982

Defense Language Institute  
Foreign Language Center

Dear Friends:

We want to express our gratitude and thanks for the tribute given in memory of our father. The memorial is truly beautiful and does convey for us a wonderful expression of the esteem and respect for him from the past and present staff and faculty of the Institute.

Our special thanks to Commandant McNerney for for inviting us to share this special moment with you and to Colonel Cabot and Mr. Yamamoto for devoting much of their time to the planning, development and actual installation of this commemorative.

We have lost a father who we loved and respected. We are beginning to fully understand now how many others felt and shared this loss with us.

A memorial has been defined as "a monument intended to preserve the memory of a person or event". To us this memorial symbolizes not only the achievements and contributions made by our father but also the true spirit and ideals of the Defense Language Institute and its people as well.

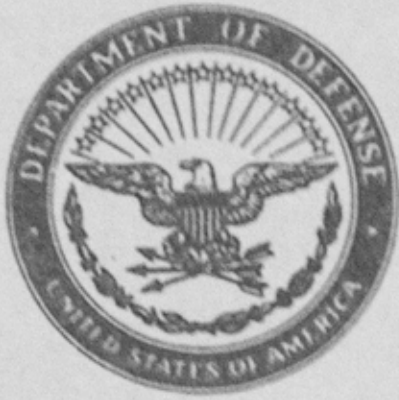
We are humbled by the affection and support conveyed by so many of you after the passing of our Dad and Mom. We will never forget this moment or the people who made it possible.

Our best wishes and thanks to all of you.

With best regards,

*Donald Munakata*  
(for) The Munakata Family





REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER  
PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93940

ATFL-DT-AM-TA

22 February 1982

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal

TO: Mr. Gregory Munakata  
720 N. Irena Avenue  
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

We dedicated this Memorial to your father last Friday, 12 February, 1982. We are sorry you could not be here, but your brother and sister represented the family well.

As part of the ceremony certificates were presented to both Donald and Grace. The certificates, facsimilies of the actual plaque, were intended as only a small gesture, but they specifically asked that we send you a similar package.

Just as you are no doubt proud of your father, the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center is proud of his work and legacy. Please note that the next new building here will probably be dedicated in his name. We hope that you will view this memorial monument as a fitting gesture in the interim.

Pictures are being reproduced and will be forwarded at a later date.

With humble sincerity,

1 Incl  
as

O.H. PERRY CABOT  
LTC, USA  
Foreign Language Training Advisor  
Asian/Middle East Group