



Kai E. Rasmussen

1902-1988



Courtesy Photo
Col. Kai E. Rasmussen
1902 - 1988

Col. Kai E. Rasmussen, USA, helped establish the language school that later became the Defense Language Institute.

Born in 1902 in Helsingør, Denmark, Rasmussen emigrated to the United States when he was 20. He enlisted in the U.S. Army soon after. His commanding officer later challenged him to try for an appointment at West Point.

He was graduated from the U.S.

Military Academy in 1929 and served as a coast artillery officer until 1936 when he was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo as a military attache and language student.

In early 1941 hostilities with Japan seemed eminent. Rasmussen was acutely aware of the dearth of Japanese language capability in this country for conducting military intelligence. Though Japanese-Americans were regarded with suspicion, he proposed establishing an intelligence school with Nisei as students.

The War Department reluctantly ordered the establishment of the Japanese Language School at the Presidio of San Francisco.

The War Department allotted Maj. John Weckerling and Capt. Kai Rasmussen \$2,000 to set up and organize the school. It opened Nov. 1 -- just six weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

When the school relocated to Minnesota, it was placed under the direct jurisdiction of the War Department. Rasmussen became its commandant from 1942 to 1946.

When the language school moved to the Presidio of Monterey,

Rasmussen saw it through the first three months in new quarters. Then he was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Oslo, Norway, as military attache.

From 1950 until his retirement in 1955 Rasmussen was assigned to intelligence duties in Tokyo and Washington, D.C.

He died March 11, 1988.

Dedication Ceremony

- *Aiso Library* •
- *Rasmussen Hall* •

Official party arrives

Troops march into position

Attention sounded

Colors presented

National Anthem played

Invocation

Guest Speaker Introduction
by Col. Ronald I. Cowger

Guest Speaker
Hon. Norman Y. Mineta

Memorial Proclamations

Ribbon Cutting

Unveiling of Names

Firing of Volleys

Playing of Taps

Conclusion of Ceremony



Photo by PH2 Kenneth Trent

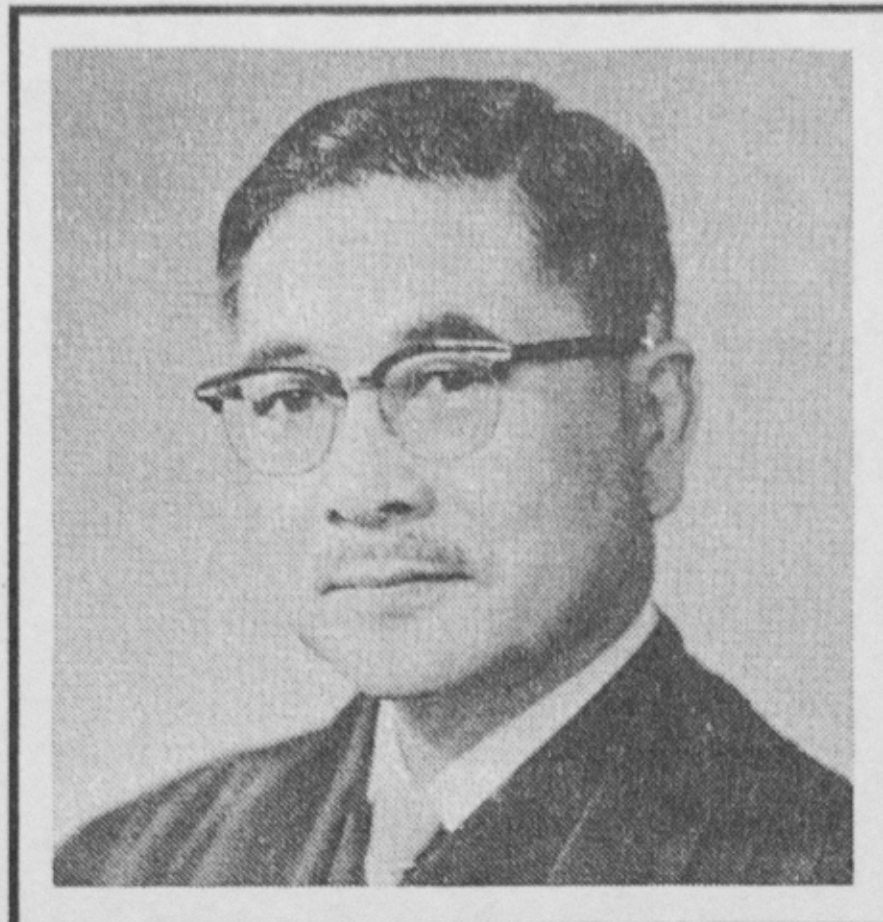
Rasmussen Hall

Headquarters and Library memorializations scheduled on DLI's 47th Anniversary

John F. Aiso and Kai E. Rasmussen to be honored at building dedication ceremonies

John F. Aiso, Harvard Law School graduate, got drafted while he was a practicing lawyer. He was originally assigned to repair trucks.

Soon after, Military Intelligence began testing all Nisei soldiers for their Japanese language ability. Aiso was assigned to the not-yet-open Military Intelligence School at the Presidio of San Francisco as a student in Japan-



Courtesy photo

John F. Aiso
1909 - 1987

ese. When he got there, Aiso was informed he'd be an assistant instructor. Then he was told he'd revert to civilian status and be the head instructor. All this happened before the school opened.

Aiso and his instructors, with

no teaching experience, had two weeks to prepare teaching materials, language programs, student-teacher guidelines and schedules. The school opened Nov. 1. Pearl Harbor was attacked six weeks later.

Aiso, his instructors and students were relocated to Minnesota. The school came under severe pressure to turn out more and more linguists for the war effort. He became director of training and struggled to meet war department demands.

Aiso and his instructors turned out 6,000 graduates. Gen. Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's G2, credited these MIS men with shortening the war in the Pacific by two years and cutting casualty figures by a million.

In the mid-40's, Gen. Clayton Bissell visited the school. He saw Aiso giving commands to the entire student body, including officers. Bissell had Aiso commissioned a major -- at a time when few Japanese-Americans were being commissioned.

In 1946, Aiso was assigned to G2 in Tokyo and was responsible for purging militarism from the Japanese government.

He retired from the Army in 1947 and reentered law practice. Aiso eventually served as Justice pro tem of the California Supreme Court.

Aiso was guest of honor at DLI's 46th anniversary celebration -- his last public appearance before his death Dec. 29, 1987.

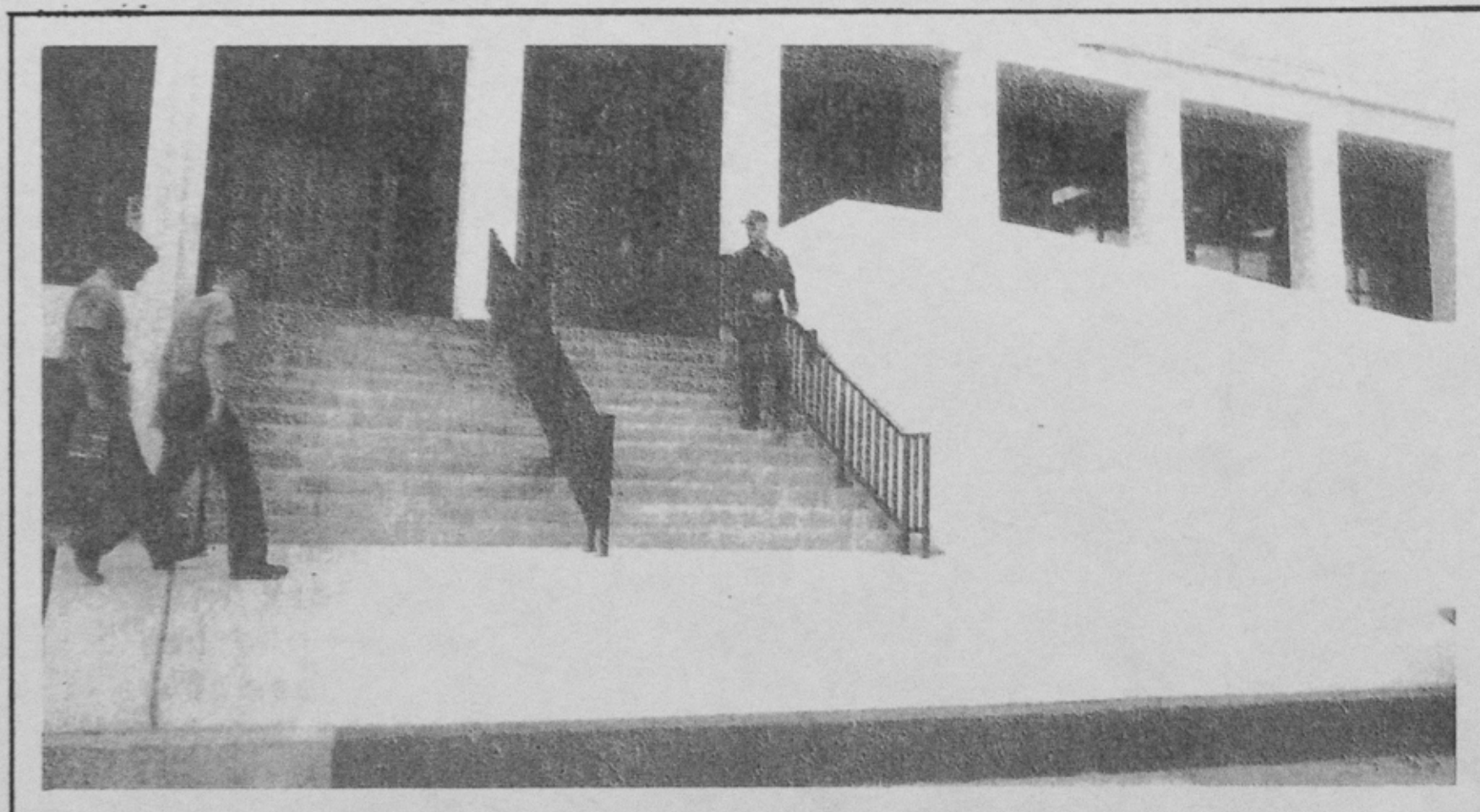


Photo by PH2 Kenneth Trent

Aiso Library