

The Goto Stone

By Mrs. Rebecca Higeons

During the 67th U.S. Army Military Police Corps Regiment Anniversary Week, a granite block (known as the “Goto Stone”) from a firing range at Camp Drake, Japan, was transferred from the honor guard of the 545th Military Police Company to the U.S. Army Military Police Corps Regimental Museum. The transfer took place at a quiet ceremony held in Memorial Grove on 24 September 2008 at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

The Goto Stone is inscribed and dedicated in honor of Private First Class Mitsuru Goto, a Japanese-American who was born in Hawaii. He was an interpreter assigned to the 1st Platoon, 545th Military Police Company, 1st Cavalry Division, Camp Drake. On or about 19 July 1950, his unit received a request from the intelligence staff officer (S2) of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, Camp Drake. The 8th Cavalry Regiment was about to be committed to combat in Korea, and they needed an interpreter to translate interviews held with natives and prisoners of war concerning equipment, strength, enemy location, and so forth. At that time, most Koreans spoke Japanese so Private First Class Goto was the logical candidate.

Private First Class Goto was ordered to accompany the 8th Cavalry S2 on a reconnaissance of the unit’s area of responsibility. They left for their mission before dawn on 23 July 1950. As they began to reconnoiter the area, their jeep hit an enemy land mine and they were killed instantly. They were the first 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers killed in action during the Korean War, and Private First Class Goto was the first private to make the supreme sacrifice in Korea.

The Goto Stone was originally placed near the main gate of Camp Drake, but it soon found its way to the company area of the 545th Military Police Company. It could usually be found near the orderly room, arms room, or supply room. Upon the unit’s deactivation, the stone was taken to the 1st Cavalry Division Museum, Fort Hood, Texas, where it was to be held until the unit was reactivated. The reactivation of the 545th Military Police Company at Fort Richardson, Alaska, triggered plans to move the stone. But due to the extreme changes in temperature there, officials were concerned that the stone might crack or break. After careful deliberation, the U.S. Army Military Police Corps Regimental Museum was selected as the stone’s final resting place.

And so, after a long journey, the Goto Stone has been turned over to a museum by a small honor guard of 545th veterans. Its final resting place is a place of honor.



Private First Class Mitsuru Goto



Brigadier General David Phillips and members of the honor guard prepare to unveil the Goto Stone.

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