

Moriyama Compound Today Zenro Suzuki

I visited Camp Moriyama of Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) in November 2003 to see if something remains that shows USAF presence there. The 29-acre Camp Moriyama is about 6 km north-east of the Metropolitan Nagoya, and it used be USAF Nagoya Air Base's Moriyama Compound, which later became Moriyama Air Station. Camp Moriyama is now a home of Headquarters of JGSDF's 10th Division and its subsidiary units of 35th Infantry Regiment, 10th Communications Battalion, 10th Support Regiment and 10th Band. It is also a home of direct subsidiary units of Middle Army, 10th Division's upper organization. They include 306th Camp Communications Company, 408th Accounting Unit, 114th District Military Police Unit and Camp Administration Unit. As shown in Figure 1, a statue of big grampus is placed on the gate of the Camp because grampus is a symbol of the 10th Division as it is of Nagoya Castle.

Historically, Imperial Japanese Army's (IJA's) 33rd Infantry Regiment of 5th Battalion, 3rd Division, was first stationed at Moriyama in 1897 and then 3rd Cavalry Regiment in 1928, and 3rd Field Artillery Regiment finally in 1944 moved there. After WW2 ended, US Army's 25th Infantry Division occupied there in October 1945. After they moved to Osaka in February 1946, 5th Army Air Force took the command there and a signal unit later redesignated 1st Communications Squadron began radio teletype operations in June 1946. In 1954 and 1955, many old buildings in Moriyama were destroyed and receiver antennas were relocated to a newly constructed Obu Site, south of Nagoya, to make room for new buildings to be constructed and used by Headquarters 5th Air Force and other units then in the Metropolitan Nagoya. In January 1956, Headquarters 5th Air Force was relocated there from a Japanese insurance company's Yamato Building in accordance with the evolution of time that made US military move out of urban to rural areas as Japan restored independence and became an ally of the United States. One and a half years later, however, all the USAF units including Headquarters 5th Air Force abruptly moved out of Moriyama to Fuchu near Tokyo as US military strategy changed on a large scale in the Far East. Then JGSDF came in Moriyama in June 1959.

Moriyama Compound is described in the 1st Communications Squadron's Yearbook 1953-1954 as "Beyond the city limits of Nagoya is a fort like compound known to the First Communications men stationed there as "Little Dien Bien Phu." This is the Moriyama Compound, a one time Japanese Cavalry Post and now the site of First Comm's Radio Receivers, RTTY, CW and Voice." However, the 1st Comm was not the only tenant of the Compound. Detachment 6 of the 136th Communications Security Squadron (CSS) with its receiver antennas, Special Weapons Defense School of Japan Air Defense Force and the 6110th Hospital Squadron together with even the US Army's 440th Signal Construction Battalion shared the Compound.

By comparing three maps of Moriyama depicting buildings location during the Korean war era, in 1956 when Headquarters 5th Air Force was just relocated and in March 2003 together with by my *in-situ* observation, I found that only a total of 8 old buildings built by IJA and a total of 8 "new" buildings built to accommodate Headquarters 5th Air Force relocation are still exist. Among the 8 old buildings is the one built in 1897 which used to be IJA's Headquarters of 33rd Infantry Regiment and later became office and billeting of Detachment 6 of the 136th CSS. This old building has been repaired and is now employed as billeting and Museum of the Camp. Figures 2 and 3 shows the building as it was in 1951 and in 2003. Shown in Figure 4 is another old building deserved to mention whose companion building adjacent to this was burned down at midnight of 2 November 1953. Headquarters building of the 5th Air Force is one of the 8 "new" buildings. Figure 5 shows the building which is now used as headquarters and offices of

various JGSDF units in the Camp. The rest of the 8 "new" buildings include BOQ's and women's as well as airmen's quarters which are still used as billeting today. The Airmen's quarters is shown in Figure 6.

I found there are no traces of USAF presence in Camp Moriyama today other than the buildings and only a few lines in the pamphlet of the Camp. Even the Museum exhibits only cover IJA and JGSDF days and nothing about USAF days. Young JGSDF soldiers seem to know nothing about that USAF was once there though some of them still using USAF billeting as their home. While standing in the Camp, an airplane flew overhead on its way to land at Nagoya Airport (formerly Komaki AB). The airplane was neither a USAF F84, F86 nor C119 but was a Japanese airliner. I understand that USAF presence there is only a blink in the long history of Moriyama. All we have now is the memories of old soldiers and some old photos.

References.

1. "Camp Moriyama" published by JGSDF (no date).
2. "1st Communications Squadron's Yearbook 1953-1954" edited by A/1C James L. Seay with photos by A/2C Leslie G. Figular (no date).
3. "Map of Moriyama Compound 1949-1952" prepared in 2003 by Fredrick R. Wagner, a veteran of the 136th CSS and a member of USAFSS Veterans Group.
4. "Headquarters Relocation Program" written by Walter K. Miles and published in 1956 by Headquarters 5th Air Force.
5. "Map of Camp Moriyama as of March 2003" published in 2003 by JGSDF.



Fig. 1 Gate of Camp Moriyama.



Fig. 2 The old building built in 1897 and employed as Office and Billeting of Detachment 6 of the 136th CSS in 1951. (USAFSS Veterans Group Photo)



Fig. 3 The old building now employed as billeting and Museum of the Camp.



Fig. 4 The old building whose companion building adjacent to this was burned down in November 1953.



Fig. 5 The "new" building which used to be Headquarters 5th Air Force.



Fig. 6 The "new" building (right) which used to be Airmen's Quarters.