

9500 333.1 Relocation Centers

March 15, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCLOY:

Subject: Visits to Japanese Relocation Centers.

During your absence I made three trips to the Japanese relocation centers. A summary of my activities in connection therewith follows:

FIRST TRIP

Left Washington February 11, returning to Washington February 14.

Relocation centers visited:

- Gila River
- Manzanar
- Colorado River

I. Purposes of Trip:

1. Observe operations of the registration teams.
2. To assist the War Department registration teams in any way it appeared necessary.
3. To observe in general the operations of the relocation centers and administration thereof.

II. Activity at Gila River Relocation Center

I arrived at Gila River Relocation Center about 11 A.M. February 12, reporting at the Military Police Company for transportation. I talked to the Military Police Commander and discovered the general conditions of the Military Police Company were not good. There was an excessive number of unauthorized absences running as high as 30 at one time, thus reducing the number of personnel available for duty. Since I was not directed or authorized to make a report on the Military Police Company conditions, I made no effort to make a formal report on the situation but did informally report the situation to General B. M. Bryan, PMG Office, and suggested that an inspector be sent to make a detailed inspection of the unit.

342.18
342.18
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3-15-43

On the War Department registration, I discovered a definite coordinated anti-registration and anti-cooperation activity. This consisted of Kibei standing outside of the registration building, advising the Nisei and threatening them should they answer the loyalty question in the affirmative. As a result there was a fear on the part of the Nisei to register and when they did they were inclined to answer in the negative on loyalty.

Following a conference with Captain Thompson, officer in charge of registration, Mr. Bennett, the Project Director, Mr. Terry, Project Attorney, and other officials of the project, I suggested that definite action be taken against the interfering individuals. This action should take the form of arrest and indictment for interfering with recruitment.

Later in the day I had a conference with some 12 Japanese leaders in the center, consisting of Issei, Nisei, and Kibei. In this conference, I explained the purpose of the War Department program and suggested that no interference would be tolerated. I answered a number of questions with reference to the registration. The result of this conference is not known, but it is my belief that the arrest of 28 Japanese for interfering with the registration some three days later was occasioned by my activities. Following this arrest there was a marked improvement in registering, but still little increase in volunteering.

III. Activity at Manzanar Relocation Center

Left Gila River Relocation Center at 3:00 P.M. February 12, and arrived at Manzanar about 8:00 P.M. That evening I conferred with Mr. Gussens, the District Supervisor, Mr. Brown, acting Project Director, the Project Attorney, and several other members of the Project staff. I explained the purpose of the registration and the War Department plan. Lieutenant Bogard, the officer in charge of the registration, reported that no difficulty in registration had been encountered but there had been a large percentage of expressed disloyalty and few volunteers. The project itself appeared quiet and the information given me was that the evacuees were under full control since the December 6 affair. Later in the evening I discussed the general situation with two leading Japanese in the center; one a Nisei, the other an Issei. They expressed a desire to cooperate with the War Department plan and said that they did not believe any trouble would be encountered in carrying out the plan. The following morning I made an inspection of the project and found conditions generally good. I was informed by the officials that farming operations were under progress but the evacuees would not work in the camouflage net factory.

IV. Activity at Colorado River Relocation Center

Leaving Manzanar at 9:00 A.M., I arrived at Colorado River about 11:30 and went directly to the relocation center. I inspected registration and found general excellent cooperation on the part of the Japanese in registering. Due to the limited time there I had no opportunity to inspect the installations, but the general atmosphere encountered was one of cooperation. The project director, Mr. Wade Head, informed me that since he had removed some five Kibei, who had beaten up Mr. Kido, president of the J.A.G.L., there had been a material improvement in the morale of the evacuees and no longer were they afraid to express their loyalty. After lunch I had a conference with two of the leading council members and explained the War Department plan.

Summary of My Observations of the Relocation Centers Visited

The Japanese are appreciative of the War Department plan to give them an opportunity to serve in the military service and to get out of the relocation centers.

There is some resentment on the part of the loyal Japanese-Americans against their evacuation from their homes in California. They constantly raised the point that they were citizens and loyal citizens. As such they have felt mistreatment.

Almost without exception, the Japanese opposed the voluntary feature of the induction. They claim they prefer to be placed on the same status as all other citizens and desire Selective Service induction.

Most of the Japanese are opposed to the separate Japanese combat team on the grounds that such an organization constitutes segregation; however, most of the opposition against this has been dissipated as a result of careful explanation on the part of the officers in charge of registration.

From my own observations and information that I obtained from other people, it is my definite opinion that a great many of the Japanese are indeed and in fact very loyal in their attitude toward the United States. Failure on the part of the War Relocation Authority and other agencies to give adequate protection to Japanese has caused them to be inarticulate in their expression of loyalty.

SECOND TRIP

Left Washington March 2; returned March 3.

Relocation centers visited:

Rohwer, Arkansas, Relocation Center
Jerome, Arkansas, Relocation Center

I went on this trip following a conversation with Lieutenant Siler and Captain Holbrook, the officers in charge of registration at these centers. Both of these officers informed me over the telephone that they had run into a very difficult situation which appeared not capable of solution by them. This situation was a failure at Rohwer of evacuees to register and the failure of the volunteer program at both centers. I came to the conclusion that if I, as the War Department representative, should go there and talk the matter over with the representative members of the Japanese controlling body, it might be that some good could be accomplished.

I. Activities at Rohwer Relocation Center.

At the Rohwer Relocation Center I talked to Captain Holbrook, War Department officer in charge of the team, and learned that the situation had developed to a point where no registration was going on. Captain Holbrook felt that there was organized opposition but it had not been possible for either him or the project officials to uncover the conspiracy. That evening at 8:00 I talked to the council, consisting of one member from each block. I explained the War Department program and the purpose of the registration. I also answered questions in regard thereto. One of the members present expressed the belief that my visit had clarified the situation but at the same time he said there was definite opposition to volunteering and to the separate unit. The purpose of this phase of the plan was fully explained. It was not possible for me to tell what the reaction was to my talk. Captain Holbrook expressed his feeling that it would accomplish good.

II. Activities at Jerome Relocation Center

The conditions at Jerome were very similar to those at Rohwer and it is my belief that there is a close liaison between the evacuees of the two centers. I talked to some 50 or 60 leaders in the morning and in the presence of the War Relocation Authority officials; and felt that the reaction was good. The registration was proceeding with little difficulty but few volunteers were presenting themselves for induction.

Summary of My Second Trip:

I received the distinct impression that the project officials were not enthusiastic about any program which would cause a liquidation of the projects. This was expressed at both projects by the directors stating to the evacuees, following my talk, that no individual would be required to leave the center unless he desired to do so. Mr. Whitaker, the District Supervisor, who was present with me at both places, told me confidentially that it was his feeling that at both centers there had been too much laxity and the Japanese had been given too much authority, to the extent that now they refused to do anything unless they felt that they wanted to. He stated that my talk to them had been just the thing they needed.

THIRD TRIP

At the Direction of General McNarney, I left Washington on March 8 and returned March 9, going to Phoenix, Arizona and visiting Gila River and Colorado River Relocation Centers. This visit was made at the suggestion of Brigadier General Persons who wanted me to go and meet Senator Chandler who was conducting hearings and investigations of the Arizona projects.

Senator Chandler had previously visited Manzanar, at which place he encountered considerable difficulty in getting information, both from the War Relocation Authority project director and the War Department representative, Lieutenant Bogard. Arriving at Manzanar on March 2, he had required Lieutenant Bogard to submit the questionnaires which were being executed by the Japanese male citizens. Lieutenant Bogard refused him these papers and the summary of the answers thereon, on the grounds he had been instructed at the War Department that they were confidential. Senator Chandler then wired the Secretary of War, asking that Lieutenant Bogard be given instructions to release the information to him. In the meantime Lieutenant Bogard had called me by telephone explaining the situation. My instruction over the telephone to Lieutenant Bogard was to give Senator Chandler any information or document he had with him. Therefore, in answering Senator Chandler's telegram, it was possible for me to say that instructions had already gone out.

General Persons felt that since Senator Chandler had been accompanied to Manzanar by two Army officers from the Western Defense Command, he would be subject to influences which were in opposition to the War Department program and that it was necessary for either myself or some officer cognizant with the War Department policy and having knowledge of the general situation to meet Senator Chandler in Arizona.

Senator Chandler's schedule, as was known here, was to conduct hearings in Phoenix. I arrived at Phoenix about noon on Saturday, March 7. Hearings did not start until about 2:30. I first met Senator Chandler at the hearings. It was evident by Senator Chandler's questions, that he had a very poor impression of the loyalty of the Japanese and of the administrative conduct and control of the centers. At Manzanar he had discovered that 60% of the Nisei had answered in the negative on the question of loyalty, and he constantly stressed that point during the hearing, so that the newspapers wrote up the story to the effect that the Japanese in the United States were disloyal. This story was sent out over Associated Press wires and apparently re-published in most of the United States newspapers.

Following the hearing, about 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon, I had only a limited opportunity to talk to the Senator. Since Mrs. Chandler was with him and he was going to lunch, I agreed to go with the party to Gila River Relocation Center, where he conducted a hearing during the evening from 9:00 P.M. until midnight. The hearing at Gila River Relocation Center consisted of interrogating the project director and other officials. They made, I feel, a good impression and it appeared that Senator Chandler changed his views to some extent on the question of the loyalty of some of the Japanese. After the completion of his investigation, I did have about a 20 minutes' conversation with him, during which time he expressed appreciation for the War Department's consideration in sending an officer to assist him.

I told Senator Chandler it was my hope that he would not dwell upon the 60% disloyalty at Manzanar because that did not represent the real condition throughout other center. I informed him that we would give him a complete tabulation on the question of loyalty as soon as it was received so that it might be incorporated in the Senate Investigation report. After Senator Chandler completed his hearings at the Gila River Relocation Center he went to Tucson. He evidenced no further desire to conduct further investigations in Arizona. Mr. Malone, his Special Consultant, and I went back to Phoenix where I had a long talk with him on the general situation. On Sunday morning Mr. Malone accompanied me to Colorado River where we spent the day inspecting the project facilities, and interrogating project officials and several of the Japanese evacuees.

The general situation at Poston was, I felt, exceptionally good. It made a good impression upon Mr. Malone and by his interrogations it was clear that he felt the War Department program constituted a proper step in the direction of solving the entire Japanese question. He appeared obviously pleased by the progress being made by the War Relocation Authority officials.

Returning to Phoenix where we spent Sunday night, we left for Gila on Monday, March 8 and spent the entire day inspecting all facilities of the project and interrogating Japanese and the relocation project officials. Three groups of Japanese were called in and interrogated. One

group of three consisted of fathers of Japanese Nisei who had expressed disloyalty; a second group of five Japanese Issei had sons volunteering for service; the third group were Japanese Nisei.

In the first group the fathers of the disloyal Japanese Nisei said that they had not influenced their children and that their sons' action was entirely on their own accord and it was affirmed by them, that their children desired to return to Japan. In two instances the fathers admitted that their sons had associated with Kibei and it was their assumption that the expression of disloyalty by their sons might have been caused by this association. Mr. Malone apparently felt that these young Japanese who had expressed disloyalty may have done so through lack of appreciation of the consequences.

The interrogation of the five fathers having sons who volunteered made an exceptionally good impression upon Mr. Malone. The fathers in all instances were Issei. They said they heartily favored the volunteering by their sons; that they themselves had nothing to gain by Japan's successes; that they were American in thought even if not citizens; that they had cast their lot with this country and expected their sons to fight for it.

I am certain that following his observations in the two relocation centers, Mr. Malone had a much better impression than he received at Manzanar. He repeatedly emphasized the point that segregation must take place without delay; that loyal Japanese should be given the opportunity to leave the relocation centers as rapidly as possible. He expressed to me his ideas of the policy which he felt the Senate should advocate. This, in general, is as follows:

1. Loyal Japanese males of military age should be subject to the same Selective Service processes as all other American citizens.
2. Loyal Japanese citizens not eligible for military service should be immediately released from relocation centers under a minimum of supervision. This would include the Issei of known loyalty, and in particular, fathers of sons in the Army.
3. Known disloyal Japanese, both aliens and citizens, should be immediately placed either in internment camps or under much closer supervision and control than is exercised in the relocation center.

General Summary

As a result of these visits and my contacts with both WRA officials and the Japanese, I have formed the following concrete opinions:

1. Lack of WRA policy in segregation has caused a considerable deterioration of the loyalty on the part of the Japanese and has caused

RG 107-183
Box 44
Folder 2
Item 4
Page 8

the citizens to be subjected to pressure from the Kibei and aliens which many could not resist.

3. Most Japanese citizens feel mistreated in their evacuation and confinement in the relocation centers.

W. P. S.

Conversation Between Colonel Scobey and Colonel Bendetsen.

B: Letter of October 7, 1942, AG 220.71 (9-28-42) OB-S-E. That was a secret letter reduced in classification to restricted. I can give you the authority for reduction if that will help.

S: No, that is all right. Thank you very much. How are you getting along.

B: Verywell, thank you. How are you?

S: I'm pretty good. I'm probably taking off tomorrow morning to go to Poston.

B: That will be interesting. Will you get up here?

S: No I won't have time. I would like to, but I will not have time. Two or three things Mr. McCloy wanted me to look into down there. One, how is recruiting getting along, how it is being presented. And you know about those people being arrested do you not? We have taken that up with Ennis with the hope that we can go to bat in Federal Court on that and get those people convicted.

B: That will be very good, I saw that written up.

S: I'm going to look in on that and see what measures are being taken to get a true bill on the people.

B: Have a good trip. Hope you can get up this way.

S: I doubt if I can. I would like to go to Manzanar. If the weather is fine and I make good time, I may get to Manzanar, but I doubt if I get there.

B: You are flying out?

S: That is right. Some day I hope to get out to WDC and see you people.

Penned note by Colonel Scobey:

Western Defense Command (Bendetsen) informed of Scobey's proposed trip to Relocation Centers in Western Defense Command (page 2)

(First page of Conversation re detail of some officer to go to Washington and work with WRA, filed ASW 210.69 WRA)

333.1 Relocation Centers

2-9-43

FROM WAR DEPARTMENT

BUREAU ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR

MARCH 1, 1943

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TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

NIGHT LETTER

1943 MAR 1 22 19 4

CAPTAIN JOHN A HOLBROOK
HONNER RELOCATION CENTER
McNEHR, ARKANSAS

COLONEL SCOBRY, EXECUTIVE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR, ^{AND} HILLON
MYER ~~RELOCATION CENTER~~ ARRIVING GREENVILLE ARMY BASE AIRPORT
ONE PM TUESDAY STOP ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION FOR THEM TO VISIT
BOTH HONNER AND JEROME STOP NOTIFY PROJECT DIRECTORS AND MP
COMPANY COMMANDERS BOTH CENTERS AND LIEUTENANT SILER STOP COLONEL
SCOBRY PROBABLY WILL DESIRE TO SEE INFLUENTIAL JAPANESE LEADERS
IN EACH CENTER.

HUGHES

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*(Reinert)
Center*

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X- Sealey

*E. Hughes
J. Holbrook
J. D. Logg
(Reinert)*

3-1-43

RG 107-183
Box 44
Folder 2
Item 4
Page 11

February 24, 1943

Dear Captain Ochs:

Thank you for your note of February 18, and the enclosed photographs taken at the time of my visit to your station. I enjoyed my brief visit there and greatly appreciated the courtesies extended to me and my party by your Commanding Officer, Major Beal.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE
Colonel, G. S.
Executive

Captain Henry J. Ochs, Jr., A.C.
Assistant Executive Officer,
Army Air Base
Biggs Field, Texas

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333.1
Relocation
Centers

7-2

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RG 107-183
Box 44
Folder 2
Item 4
Page 12

February 9, 1943

933.1

Relocation Centers

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GULLION:

I expect to leave Thursday, February 11, 1943, for Poston, Arizona; Mansanar, California; and perhaps other places to visit the war relocation centers located there in connection with the Japanese-American program.

I would like for Lieutenant Hughes to accompany me if it meets with your approval.

Will you have orders issued for him? We will travel by military aircraft and other transportation.

(SIGNED)

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE
Colonel, General Staff
Executive

Major General A. W. Gullion
1058, Munitions Bldg.

2 - Scobey
2 - P.M.G.
2 - Hughes, Lt.

29-43

Headquarters Army Air Base
Biggs Field, Texas

February 18, 1943

Colonel W. P. Scobey,
Office of the Assistant Secretary of War,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel:

Inclosed please find one set of pictures of your party,
taken at Army Air Base, Biggs Field, Texas, on your recent
trip.

I hope you had an enjoyable trip. Please stop and see
us when you are in our vicinity again.

Incl.: pictures.

HENRY J. OCHS, Jr.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Asst. Executive Officer.