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28 February 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE A. C. OF S., G-1:

Subject: Questions Submitted by the War Relocation Authority on the Subject of Policy toward Soldiers and Others of Japanese Descent.

1. In connection with the reinstatement of general Selective Service procedures for American citizens of Japanese descent a number of questions have been raised by evanescence in relocation centers, which the War Relocation Authority has submitted for preparation of answers.

2. It is requested that G-1 draft appropriate answers to these questions after consultation with interested War Department agencies. The answers appearing after the questions on the attached list are inserted merely by way of suggestion.

(SIGNED) JOHN H. HALL

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Enc.
List of questions.

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28 Feb 44

LEGALITY OF SELECTIVE SERVICE FOR NISEI

1. Is the induction of American citizens of Japanese descent in War Relocation Centers for Military Service, in violation of the Constitution of the United States by virtue of the fact that citizens of Japanese descent have been incarcerated and guarded by military authorities?

A: No. All American citizens in continental United States are subject to the provisions of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

2. Under any International Law, can the Nisei in Relocation Centers, which can be termed Internment Camps, be inducted?

A: (See answer to Question 1)

BASES FOR REINSTITUTION FOR SELECTIVE SERVICE

3. On what basis and why was Selective Service reinstated?

A: General Selective Service procedures were reinstated for loyal American citizens of Japanese descent because it was felt desirable that they should have the same responsibilities with regard to military service as all other citizens of the United States.

POST WAR STATUS OF VETERANS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

4. Will the Japanese American veterans have the same rights and privileges as other American veterans after the war?

A: Yes.

5. Will disabled Nisei soldiers have full rights in hospitals, training projects, etc?

A: Yes.

6. Can an honorably discharged Nisei, during the war period, travel in the evacuated area?

A: An American citizen of Japanese descent who has been honorably discharged from the Army is eligible to apply for a permit to travel enroute in the evacuated areas.

WHY ARE NOT ALL BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES OPEN TO NISEI

7. Will volunteer 17 year old boys be given an opportunity to attend training schools sponsored by the Army and Navy?

A: ?

8. As American citizens, drafted on the same basis as other citizens, why aren't the other branches of the Armed Forces open to the Nisei, such as the Marines, Air Corps, Navy, Coast Guard and Armored Forces?

A: American citizens of Japanese descent are eligible for all branches of the Army. This does not mean, however, that American citizens of Japanese descent will be assigned to each branch of the Army. As with all soldiers in the Army, it is War Department policy to assign each soldier where he can be most effectively utilized from a military point of view. American citizens of Japanese descent are not presently being accepted by the Navy or the Marine Corps.

9. Do soldiers have a choice of units in which they can serve?

A: No. Assignment will depend upon where each soldier can be most effectively utilized.

10. Is publicity the reason for segregating the Nisei into a combat team?

A: All soldiers of Japanese descent are not being placed in separate units. It is felt, however, that it is desirable to continue the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Combat Team as units composed of American citizens of Japanese descent. If adequate replacements were not supplied, these units would have to be discontinued. It is thought that they symbolize the loyalty and patriotism to his country of the American citizen of Japanese descent. Another factor in generally assigning American citizens of Japanese descent to separate units is that it is considered that an American citizen of Japanese descent might be subjected to discriminatory treatment if he were assigned to a Caucasian unit. Furthermore, it is intended that soldiers of Japanese descent will generally not be employed in the Pacific Theatre; if they were not separated out to begin with, it would be necessary to screen them from divisions whose training was complete just before embarking for the Pacific Theatre.

11. Why are the Nisei segregated again into one unit instead of being inducted, trained and assigned to service with their fellow Americans?

A: (See answer to Question 10)

CITIZENSHIP POSSIBILITIES FOR NISEI

12. Since their children are being inducted, why can not the privilege of citizenship be given to the Nisei in the same way as that privilege has been given to the Chinese?

A: The War Department would support appropriate legislation whereby the alien parents of American soldiers of Japanese descent might apply for American citizenship.

PROPERTIES OF THE EVACUATED AREAS TO ACCEPTABLE NISEI CIVILIANS

13. If Nisei are assumed loyal enough to fight for this country, why are not they permitted to go to the Pacific Coast as civilians?

A: The restrictions against the return of persons of Japanese descent to the evacuated areas on the Pacific Coast continue in effect but will be modified as soon as the military situation permits.

14. Will Nisei who had been determined "acceptable" by the War Department, be allowed to return to the evacuated area; will they be allowed to return during their three weeks' furlough immediately subsequent to induction?

A: No, except for urgent personal or business reasons and upon application for permit. Under the new procedure, there is no three weeks' furlough subsequent to induction.

15. Will Nisei on the "acceptable" list who are rejected on physical grounds, be allowed to visit the Pacific Coast?

A: No, except for urgent personal or business reasons and upon application for permit.

16. Can parents of Nisei soldiers return to the Pacific Coast during the war period?

A: Not for the present except for urgent personal or business reasons and upon application for permit.

DEPENDENCY ALLOTMENT

17. a. Are the inductee's wife and children eligible for a complete dependency allotment from the Army?

A. Yes.

b. Are parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, or other dependents eligible for the complete dependency allotment provided by the Army?

A. Eligibility for dependency allotments for parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, or other dependents, will be determined in the light of the circumstances in each particular case.

18. Will the fact that a Nisei's dependents are in a W.R.A. Center affect the allotments that they are eligible to receive from the Government under the provision of the Service Men Dependency Allotment?

A. (See answers to Question 17a and 17b)

BASIS OF ACCEPTABILITY

19. What are the specific criteria of "acceptability" or "unacceptability" used by the Army Review Board in determining status of the Nisei?

A. All loyal American citizens of Japanese descent, who are of military age, are considered acceptable for military service.

20. Will those individuals investigated by the F.B.I. and sent into Detention Camps in Hawaii, be considered "acceptable" for Selective Service?

A. Probably not.

21. Will Nisei who answered both questions 27 and 28 in the negative or with qualifications or those who answered negatively to #27, and affirmatively to #28, be considered "acceptable" by the Army Review Board?

A. No categorical answer is possible to this question. Determination is made in the light of the circumstances in each particular case.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE MEN'S INSURANCE

22. Are Aliens eligible beneficiaries for payment of Service Men's Insurance?

A. Yes.

REJECTED NISEI

23. Will "acceptable" but medically rejected Nisei be granted immediately war plant clearance or any other clearance necessary for defense work?

A. American citizens of Japanese descent considered acceptable for military service but rejected because not physically qualified may apply for employment in plants and facilities important to the war effort. Eligibility will depend upon the circumstances in each particular case.

DISCRIMINATION

24. Will the government aid in abolishing or discouraging discrimination against the Japanese?

A. The United States Government is opposed to any discrimination against loyal American citizens of Japanese descent.