

Box 44
Folder 2
WDOAS Item 1
HAG:rlb P. 1

ASW 342.18 J.A. Selective Service

Comments

Nakashima, Saburo

254 Heart Mt.

x- Harrison A. Gerhardt
x- Nakashima
014.311 WDC Permits-Inter-Live
Comments
Nakashima

13 Mar 44

13 March 1944
(Dictated 12 March 1944)

Mr. Saburo Nakashima, Chairman,
Heart Mountain Community Council,
Heart Mountain Relocation Project,
Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

Dear Mr. Nakashima:

Your letter of March 7, 1944 addressed to the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, containing a petition signed by the Community Council of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, has been forwarded to this office for action and reply. The War Department has given careful thought to your communication and has arrived at the decisions which have governed our policy only after complete consideration of all factors involved. I should like to discuss those portions of your petition which pertain to the War Department.

1 and 2. Universal Application of the Draft and Induction Into Other Branches. The use of citizens of Japanese American ancestry in certain assigned units has not been based upon any policy of racial discrimination. I am inclosing for your information a copy of a reply prepared in this office to a recent communication on the same subject which I believe will explain the War Department's viewpoint.

3. Evacuation and exclusion from the West Coast is based entirely upon military considerations and will be constantly reviewed in the light of the changing military situation.

6. Accord the Same Treatment to Japanese American Soldiers as to other Americans. War Department has no policy of discrimination against Japanese American soldiers or any other racial group. Where evidence that such discrimination has existed in our armed forces proper action has been taken to eliminate such conditions.

Sincerely,

HARRISON A. GERHARDT

Lt. Col., General Staff Corps
Executive to Ass't Secretary of War

Inc.
copy ltr 4 Mar 44 re racial discrimination

HEART MOUNTAIN RELOCATION PROJECT

Heart Mountain, Wyoming

March 7, 1944

RECEIVED
WAR DEPARTMENT
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

1944 MAR 11 AM 8:49

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Item 1
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65-200-214, 311
Sugden (8-7-44)

TO: Honorable Henry L. Stimpson
Secretary of War
Washington, D.C.

FROM: Community Council of Heart Mountain, Wyoming

SUBJECT: The Petition

Dear Sir:

We, the Community Council of Heart Mountain Relocation Center; Heart Mountain, Wyoming enclose the copies of the petition by the residents of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center which was sent to the President on March 7, 1944.

We earnestly ask your cooperation and valuable assistance in this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

Saburo Nakashima

Saburo Nakashima, Chairman

Heart Mountain Community Council

MAR 11 1944



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COMMUNICATIONS DIV.
OFFICE SECRETARY OF WAR



PETITION

TO: President of the United States of America
White House, Washington, D. C.

FROM: Parents of American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry
at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming

SUBJECT: Supplemental Petition

Dear Mr. President:

We, the parents, of sons who have stated their grievances and contended that they were being grossly discriminated against, being denied equal opportunities in the armed forces and civil life accorded to them as loyal American citizens, know your Excellency will accept their petition and demands embodied in the document. We have raised and educated our children to be upright American citizens and have confidence our boys will never betray the trust placed in them.

We came to this country with the desire to become permanent residents, to lead peaceful, normal American lives. Due only to the irony of fate, not our choice, are we classed as enemy aliens. Some of us are very old, the majority being far past the prime of life, and some of us are giving our only sons to serve. May God be with them wherever they may go to lay down their lives for their country.

Mr. President, as you alone have the power to grant them their greatest wishes and to preserve their faith in American democracy, we, who are loyal Japanese residents of America and at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, as parents of sons now serving in the Armed Forces and of sons to be inducted by the recent reclassification of the Selective Service Act petition you for due consideration for their rights.

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P. 4PETITION

TO: The President of the United States of America
White House, Washington, D.C.

FROM: American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry at
Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming

SUBJECT: Restoration of Rights to American Citizens
of Japanese Ancestry.

Dear Mr. President:

We, the American citizens of Japanese ancestry at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, are in complete accord with the decision of the War Department, that we are to be inducted into the army through the Selective Service, and hail it as significant recognition of our loyalty, and as a big step toward the application of American principles in the treatment of minority groups.

However, since the evacuation, the treatment accorded us, was far short of dignity and consideration as should be given American citizens.

We doubt, whether or not you are aware that we have been, for almost two years, behind a barbed wire fence, with our little sisters and brothers and elderly parents, under the strict guard of Military Police, which gives it the resemblance of a concentration camp. The spiritual shock and physical hardships caused by the evacuation have been the greatest in our lives. We are not charged with any crime or accused of disloyalty, the only crime being, we are people of Japanese ancestry.

We never lost faith in America in the long confinement here, but kept faith in your immortal words, "Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry."

We took the only way that any good American would take in this predicament, that was to co-operate with the war effort in whatever was assigned to citizens. Finally the time came when we were given the same chance as the majority of other Americans, to serve our country.

Many of us may be called any day, many of us may not return until victory is won, and some of us may never return.

With this thought in our minds, we appeal to you to give your careful consideration and cooperation to the following petition, and rightfully demand, which we hereby set forth.

1. UNIVERSAL AFFLICTION OF THE DRAFT.

When the volunteers of the Japanese American combat team were inducted, the reasons given were, it has a distinct and very definite advantage, and the value of bringing the Japanese American question to the American public, and to establish their position as loyal American citizens, the adoption of Selective Service met with this requirement. Any further segregation from other Americans is unnecessary and undesirable, as it is much against our wishes to be segregated at all.

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PS2. INDUCTION INTO OTHER BRANCHES.

That we shall be permitted to be assigned to any service branch, such as the air-force, coast guard, and navy as well as the army.

3. RETURN TO THE WEST COAST.

Although the decision rests with the War Department, we firmly believe, the reasons for evacuation, which existed two years ago, do not exist any more, except the political pressure group, prompted by prejudice and selfishness for promoting agitation. It is our primary conviction, that until we are allowed to return to our original homes and business, our citizenship rights, are not, and will not have been restored as American citizens.

4. GOVERNMENT AID TO ABOLISH ANTI-JAPANESE PROPAGANDA.

We believe that Americanism faces the supreme test, both at war and on the home front. The enemies of Americanism within, are those sinister forces with selfish motives, under the guise of patriotism, who tread upon the rights of minority groups, who work through radio, movies and the unscrupulous press. This condition is rampant on the Pacific Coast. The Government should counteract with firm measures.

5. FULL RESTORATION OF OUR CIVIL AND INALIENABLE RIGHTS.

As in the case of Civil Service and other rights, which they were deprived of by City, State and National Government.

6. ACCORD THE SAME TREATMENT TO JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS AS OTHER AMERICANS.

Discrimination actually exists in all Army camps and Armed Force. We request that no distinction shall be made to them in any service and that they be promoted according to their ability.

7. PROTECTION OF FAMILIES IN WAR RELOCATION CENTERS.

Continued protection after their re-settlement and assurance of this, in the form of an announcement by the War Department through the press and radio.

We are requesting the restoration of our inalienable civil rights, accorded other Americans, which we firmly believe, is our right, guaranteed by our Constitution. When this hope of ours is fulfilled, the heroes of the 100th Battalion Combat Team of Japanese ancestry, who perished on the battlefield in Italy and elsewhere, shall not have died in vain.

With these firm convictions, we hereby present our petition for your esteemed consideration.

Dated this 28th day of February, 1944

Heart Mountain Relocation Center

Heart Mountain, Wyoming