

WDOAS:HAG:ml

Box 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 1

Volunteers
Masacka, Mike (Sgt)

8 October 1945

Sergeant Mike Masacka, 39915586
Sv Co., 442nd Infantry Division
APO 758, c/o Postmaster, New York

Dear Sergeant Masacka:

I was deeply gratified to see in the September issue of the "JACL Reporter" that you had been awarded the Legion of Merit for the outstanding work you performed in front line reporting of the combat record of the 442nd Combat Team.

We have followed with great interest the work of that unit here in the office, and the accounts we have received of its action, largely originating from your pen and the interesting personal accounts which you have so thoughtfully provided us, have kept us in close touch with the unit.

Mr. McCloy is temporarily out of the country but I am saving a copy of the article for him. In the event that you have not already received a copy of the article which appeared in the "JACL Reporter", I am sending you one enclosed in this letter.

Our best wishes and heartiest congratulations.

Sincerely yours,

15/5

HARRISON A. GENHARDT
Colonel, General Staff Corps
Executive to the Ass't Secretary of War

10/8/45
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8 Oct 45

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September 1945
JACL ReporterBox 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 2

REPORTER

**Mike Masaoka Decorated
With Legion of Merit**

Our national secretary on leave, Mike Masaoka, was serving as a T/S throughout the campaigns of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. We were pulling for his promotion because we knew he was doing a very good job as the public relations officer of the unit. The good news arrived about a month or two ago that Mike had been promoted to sergeant.

Then, out of a clear sky, the announcement came about his being deco-



Sgt. Mike Masaoka

rated. This was a wonderful news which should make all JACLers proud of their secretary. Congratulations to him for receiving the honor from the army.

Lieutenant Colonel Anson D. Clark, Fifth Army Public Relations Officer, wrote in commendation: "Masaoka not only wrote many stories describing the gallant fighting of the Japanese American Combat Team, but, as a technician fifth grade, organized an efficient staff to increase the volume of releases sent out on the unit. Without transportation, Masaoka made his way from position to position the best he could and did an outstanding job of front-line reporting. As a result of his efforts and devotion to duty, the heroic deeds of the 442nd Combat Team soon gained outstanding position in the American press."

In another commendation, Brigadier General Tristram Tupper, Public Relations Officer for the Sixth Army Group, said: "By publicizing members of his unit, he has contributed greatly for a better understanding between the American public and the citizens of Japanese ancestry."

It was estimated that Masaoka and his staff processed more than 2,700 news stories on their unit.

"His devotion to duty and his exceptional performance in an assignment usually held by an officer are exemplary and reflect the finest traditions of the Army of the United States," the citation read.


 Box 49
 Folder 7
 Item 4
 Page 3

 T/5 Mike Masaoka 39915586
 Sv Co, 442nd Inf, APO 758
 c/o P. O., New York City
 November 5, 1944

ASW 342.18 J. A.

Masaoka, Mike

Mr. John J. McCloy
 Assistant Secretary of War
 The Pentagon
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. McCloy:

It has been quite some time since I last wrote you, and, because our Combat Team is doing so well over here in France, I thought you might like to know the latest on our boys.

The men of our Combat Team are outdoing their magnificent Italian performance. Our replacements have entered into the "Go For Broke" spirit of the original volunteers and have fought like veterans. You and your associates who were responsible for the formation of this special Japanese American Combat Team can be prouder than ever of your efforts in our behalf.

Though the record of our boys in sparking the great Allied drive from Rome to Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence is an enviable one for a unit engaged in its baptism of fire, our achievements since landing in France have been even more spectacular.

Though you are probably aware of it, may I summarize it briefly for you.

About two weeks after landing in Marseilles, we were sent into the lines to spark an Allied offense, which, after sweeping through Southern and Eastern France, had bogged down near the German frontier. In less than a week, against some of the toughest enemy resistance in this sector, our Combat Team took four pivotal hills and a ridgeline dominating an important valley leading into Germany itself, a group of strategic elevations which several other outfits had tried to take without success, and aided in the liberation of a key town straddling both German escape and communications routes. During this push, a single rifle company is credited with charging up a wooded knoll and routing several entrenched German companies, killing 125, capturing 27, wounding at least the ten they brought back for treatment to their own aid station, and seizing an entire company CP, including the captain, the first sergeant, and the complete records.

Driving beyond this town, the Combat Team aided in the liberation of two more key towns as well as several other important heights. Then two of our battalions were meeting unexpected opposition from Germans emplaced on a commanding ridge, a special task force of two rifle companies flanked the enemy in

5 Nov. 44

2--

a surprise movement, routing an estimated three Wehrmacht battalions, killing 80 with small arms fire, and capturing 56, not to mention large quantities of enemy materiel destroyed. Our artillery, according to some Frenchmen, killed an additional 200 to 350 Germans.

The next chapter reads even more like a story-book.

A battalion from another regiment in our division became isolated when it was cut off from behind by the Germans out on a long, strategic ridge. When their own battalions were unable to effect a rescue, our tired boys, who had just been placed in division reserve for a short but well-deserved rest, were called back into action. Their mission: to rescue what the newspapers and radio have described as the "lost" battalion of this war. After seven days of isolation in a circular area some 300 yards in diameter, the "lost" battalion was contacted by our Third and First Battalions, in that order.

To effect the relief of the encircled unit, our men had to slash through elements of at least nine different German organizations as well as scattered sections of separate companies. They charged one enemy controlled hill with fixed bayonets, driving the enemy out of their well-entrenched defensive positions. One of the companies reports that a German tank approached within 50 yards of them, demanding their surrender. A bazooka man knocked that tank out. Another group tells of German soldiers dressed in American uniforms who caused some confusion by firing on them. This is unconfirmed as yet.

While the First and Third Battalions were battering their way through to the "lost" battalion, the Second Battalion protected the exposed flank of their brother battalions, and, at the same time made a masterful sweep which resulted in driving the Germans out of three defensive lines, killing some 125 and capturing 95. Throughout this entire drive, our Field Artillery Battalion was in direct support of our boys and performed their assignments efficaciously. Our Company of combat engineers also did yeoman work, clearing minefields and neutralizing booby-traps, as well as making and keeping roads open.

All in all, it was a great demonstration of teamwork and every element in our Combat Team did his part effectively and on time.

What the rescued men of the "lost" battalion have to say about our boys would shame those who question or doubt our innate Americanism. I, for one, shall never forget the men who with tears in their eyes and a half in their voices poured out their thanks to our boys. To them, we were American troops. And to our boys, they were fellow American soldiers who had to be rescued at all costs.

Speaking from a strictly P.R.O. viewpoint, it was regret-

3--

able, however, that the members of the rescued battalion were from the Midwest, the Southwest, and the New England states instead of from California. What a story that would have made!

Many of our officers and men, many from the relocation centers, either lost their lives or were wounded in this action.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing a clipping or two from The Beachhead News, official newspaper of our Corps. This story features the rescued; I understand from the editors that we are soon to be featured in a special four-page edition in a week or two. When this issue is distributed, I shall send you a copy.

This mountain-forest fighting has been hard on our boys. And this rain and cold have only added to their miseries. Even the boys in the 100th who were at Cassino and Anzio say that the present campaign is their most difficult. But, true to the motives which prompted their volunteering, our boys are carrying on in spite of the weather, the terrain, and the enemy. I can only repeat what I wrote in a previous letter: I am proud to be one of them. Without doubt, we have one of the "fightingest" outfits in the Army. And our Second and Third Battalions are proving equal to their illustrious brothers of the 100th; some, in fact, would claim that they are superior.

We have heard that the Army and Corps commanders have told our Colonel that we were responsible for breaking the stalemate which existed at the time we came into the line. Persistent rumors, or perhaps wishful thinking, would have a Presidential Citation awarded us for our action here. And, as far as I'm concerned, the Combat Team has more than earned it. Be that as it may, there can be no question that our boys have won the respect and confidence of the Division, the Corps, and the Army.

Incidentally, my older brother is missing in action, although his buddies claim he was killed while on a patrol. We have been unable to find his body, though, so I am hopeful that he was injured and taken prisoner by the Germans. I feel quite at a loss now, what with brothers Ike and Tad wounded in Italy and my third brother missing.

So much for that.

There are several other matters, too, in which you might be interested.

One of these is the showing of such motion pictures as "Behind the Rising Sun" and "Air Force", especially to our men and their fellow soldiers in this sector. Among our men, it leaves a very bad taste, to say the least, while among our fellow troops it may raise certain questions and doubts which might affect the smooth teamwork needed between units while fighting the enemy. This particular subject was called to my attention by our Division P.R.O. officer who thought that more tact should be employed in the showing of such films in this sector, and

possibly else here among Army troops. For understandable reasons our boys are very touchy about such pictures and feel that their good work may be wasted should they continue to be shown.

Another is that several of the men in our Combat Team are interested in having their relatives return to California, and other "evacuated" areas. Two of them have asked that I write you concerning their cases, and I am doing so with the knowledge that your Department will give overseas servicemen's relatives every consideration possible.

Two of the applicants are Mrs. Tsuny Takahashi and Miss Kay Teru Takahashi, wife and four year old daughter of Captain George S. Takanashi, a dental officer with the Combat Team. They desire to return to their home in San Mateo, California, where Captain Takahashi practiced before the evacuation. The Captain's 57 year old mother, Mrs. Nui Takahashi, now residing in the Central Utah Relocation Center, Topaz, Utah, would also like to return, but, if her application would jeopardize the others, she is willing to remain in the Center. Mrs. Takahashi and her daughter are residing at 4539 Vermont Street, Detroit, Michigan. Her first application for a permit to return was filed in May of this year. Mrs. Takanashi's brother Saburo Kinoshita is studying at Camp Snelling for G-2.

Two others are Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Manaka, now of 144 West First South, Salt Lake City, Utah. They are the older brother and sister-in-law of First Sergeant Royal Manaka of Service Company, 442nd Infantry. The older Manaka was rejected for the Army on physical grounds. He and his wife, the former Mitsuyo Matsushita, would like to return to their home in Monterey, California. They filed their application last month.

All of the above-named applicants are American citizens, except the Captain's mother.

If your office desires additional information on any of the above, I shall be pleased to do what I can in obtaining it for you.

Stories in the Pacific Citizen and other publications continue to stress the improving position of the Japanese American in the American scene, including the West Coast. This fact is a great morale booster for the men in our Combat Team. They know now that their efforts are not in vain. They are grateful to you and your associates for the wide publicity given our work over here.

Colonel Scobey, when last I saw him in Italy, asked that he be remembered to you when next I wrote. He looked very well and was enthusiastic about his program, especially for the after-the-war period.

I must apologize for this lengthy letter; it just grew as

5--

haven't
writing

I pounded away on my captured Italian typewriter. I ha
realized how long it was until my buddy asked me if I were
a novel or something else along those lines.

Box 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 7

So I shall close now with a repeated assurance that "your"
Combat Team is doing an exceptional job over here and with my
personal greetings to you and yours for a pleasant Holiday sea-
son. I am hopeful that before another Christmas follows this
coming one, we shall have won the war and shall have returned to
our respective homes in the good old United States of America.

Cordially,

Mike Mantha

Trapped Battalion Freed

Box 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 8

Lost Battalion of World War II Rescued by Japanese Americans

By PVT JOSEPH E. PALMER
Staff Writer

"We had to guard our water hole with machine guns because the Germans tried to pick us off when we came down for a drink . . . a whole combat patrol went out to try and make contact but only a few of us returned . . . they'd hit us from one flank and then the other, then from the front and the rear, but they never broke through . . . we never were so glad to see anyone as those fighting Japanese-Americans . . ."

Those drama-packed quotes came from the men of this war's "lost battalion" which was cut off from all friendly units for nearly seven days.

Some men of the 141st Infantry's first battalion broke into sobs early Monday evening when elements of

a Japanese-American outfit cracked through the encircling krauts to affect the long-awaited relief.

The Japanese-American unit, fighting with fierce tenacity and dogged determination, started its move to rescue the battalion on the third day of the entrapment.

Steadily they drove the enemy before them, using everything in the infantry book against the krauts. Bayonet charges and close-in work with hand grenades took a high toll of German dead. One Japanese-American, for instance, killed six squareheads by sniping with a captured enemy rifle.

At another junction, on the rescue trip, the krauts yelled down from a hillside position: "C'mon and get us!" And the Japanese-American did exactly that, charging up with fixed bayonets and

(Continued on Page Three)

Thrilling Story of 1st Bn, 141st, Told

Fighting Japanese-Americans Release Doomed Unit

The story of the dramatic rescue of the heroic 1st Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment, surrounded for a week, and of how American ingenuity fed it and supplied it and thereby helped it to resist surrender and prevent its annihilation can now be told.

Racing ahead shortly after the start of the present offensive, the battalion soon outdistanced supporting troops to its rear.

On the main trail through the dense woods northeast of Biffontaine, it was finally brought to a halt by a heavily defended roadblock. Unable to break through the stiff opposition, the doughboys decided to withdraw to replenish their supplies and reorganize only to find that the krauts had set up a roadblock behind them. Escape through the woods on either side of the path, it quickly developed, was equally impossible because of the superior enemy forces.

Its plight made known by radio, other units were directed to break through to the rescue, only to find the defenders firmly entrenched. It looked like a lost battalion.

Then the 12th Tactical Air Force dropped supplies. Food, water and ammunition were parachuted down. (See TRAPPED on Page Four)

"THE LOST BATTALION"



Into woods like this fought Japanese-American troops Monday, pushing their way against fantastic resistance to the rescue of their GI comrades, of the 1st Bn, 141st Infantry, surrounded by the German enemy who was determined to destroy them. (PWB Photo)

'Just Plain Ordinary Hell', Says Member of Lost Battalion

(Continued From Page One)

shooting from the hip. Few of the Nazis there will ever see the fatherland again.

Every officer in the trapped outfit was loud in his praise for the work of the Japanese-Americans, one phrasing it this way: "As fighting men, as real American soldiers, they are tops—absolutely tops."

When the American battalion started the operation leading to its seven-day ordeal on Monday noon, October 23rd, the objective was the top of a hill on a long ridge-line overlooking a strategic valley.

That same evening, after intermittent fire fights, the battalion reached the crest of the ridge and during the daylight hours Tuesday pushed to the hilltop objective, by passing some enemy resistance.

Then it was on the evening of October 24th, that the Germans snipped the last slim physical string tying the Americans with outside help.

In an encircling move, the krauts cut communication and supply lines filling up the entire area around the battalion for a depth of two and a half miles.

The battalion thus was held in

a rough circle, the entire area being covered with some of the tallest timber and heaviest undergrowth in northeastern France.

"It was just plain ordinary hell," said Lt Joseph B. Kimble, who commanded one of the companies in the pocket. "They would hit us from one flank and then another. Then they'd try the front and the rear."

"But wherever they hit they found a machine gun waiting on them."

When the men started out they had a day's supply of "K" rations. Those didn't last long. An attempt was made to fire a supply of "D" bars into the troops with artillery shells, the same method employed to get propaganda leaflets into German hands.

But the effort wasn't too successful. Most of the candy was destroyed when the shells hit trees or buried themselves deep in the muddy ground.

For the first five days, the men had practically no food and then the air corps came to the rescue, dropping "K" rations, some water,

proved a life saver for us," declared Lt Martin J. Higgins.

"There was never a moment when we could relax, when we could let down or feel half way at ease," continued the lieutenant. "The krauts always were on the prowl, trying to find a weak spot to rout us out. You don't sleep much under those circumstances."

Several times the Germans made strong efforts to break in. Once for instance, they set up a machine gun in an open space. Sgt Harbld F. Buchheim, himself on a machine gun, watched them carefully. When they had finished the job he killed all five.

The only water hole was filled with a dirty scum but it tasted like stuff from the best mountain spring to the thirsty men.

A machine gun was mounted at the hole as a protection against kraut snipers. To get a drink, this procedure was followed: one man took the canteen, another went along with a rifle as an added protection against mauling Germans.

"But we managed to keep our morale pretty high, mainly by talking about the best restaurants we ever had eaten in," said Lt Harry Huberth. "It may seem funny, but it helped a lot."

The only word the outside world had of the battalion came through the radio operated by Lt Erwin Blonder, forward observer for a field artillery unit. Occasionally, he called for concentrations of the encircling krauts.

Supervision of care for the wounded fell to Pvt Lee Johnson, a company aid man, who salvaged enough bouillon to keep the injured supplied with hot drinks. All the water dropped from the air was saved for the sick.

Incidentally, an extra bit of heroism was shown by Sgt James Comstock and Pvt Peter Bondar who climbed 200-foot trees to pull down two yellow parachutes which became lodged in the pine giants. The chutes were giving away the American position.

Major Claude D. Roscoe, acting CO, said that the battalion came out with negligible losses.

Let it be said that the Germans lost more than the Yanks in the operation.

"We accounted for more than 100 krauts dead and wounded in the whole operation," said Maj Roscoe.

Box 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 9

Box 47
 Folder 7
 Item 4
 Page 10

 T/5 Mike Masaoke 39915586
 Sv Co, 442nd Inf, APO 464
 c/o Postmaster, New York
 July 31, 1944

 Mr. John J. McCloy
 Assistant Secretary of War
 The Pentagon
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. McCloy:

The day after writing you some three weeks ago regarding possible publicity for our 442nd Japanese American Combat Team, we were visited by two special feature writers from the Fifth Army Public Relations Office. They told us that they had special instructions from the Chief of Staff's Office in Washington to get out some features on our unit in its initial engagement with the enemy. We furnished them with background material and whatever other items they desired, also suggesting several follow up angles.

The following day, a special motion picture crew from the Army Pictorial Service visited us. They also had orders from the Chief of Staff's Office to take pictures of our men in combat. We spent the next two weeks with them, as they took several thousand feet of excellent film. Some of the shots showed our engineers removing mines and explosives, our artillery blasting away at the enemy, an infantry patrol after snipers, an advance company of riflemen entering a captured city, our wounded being cared for, etc. Given the proper commentary, we believe that this film can do more good than anything yet conceived, for here is visual, irrefutable proof of Japanese Americans engaging the enemy of America.

In addition, several hundred "still" photographs and about fifty color photographs of our men were also taken by the Army Pictorial Service.

Last week, our Colonel-Pence appointed me to supervise our Public Relations Office, as it is called. We are to have field correspondents send in the news, which will be then sent to the Division and Fifth Army Public Relations Offices for clearance and forwarding to the Bureau of Public Relations in Washington. I was fortunate enough to spend several days with Colonel K.W. Clark, chief, Fifth Army Public Relations Office, working out ideas and projects for further publicizing the work of our Combat Team. I was also able to make contacts with several American and British war correspondents, although the King of England and Arch Bishop Spellman monopolized their time and attention. The news-reel cameraman for all of the major companies in this area was also interested in our unit.

Thus, at this time I am happy to report that a method of publicizing our unit has been worked out. I am hopeful that all our expectations in this respect will be fulfilled.

24218 J. L. Masaoke, Mike

31 Jul 44

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If you or your office have any ideas as to how certain stories ought to be written up, or any suggested features which might be developed, we shall certainly appreciate hearing from you.

Last week, when our 100th Infantry Battalion received a War Department citation, we were able to have complete newsreel and newspaper coverage. When the King of England visited the Fifth Army and one of our battalions was selected to act as a part of the guard of honor, we were again fortunate enough to have complete coverage. Incidentally, the King congratulated several of our men for their conduct in their initial engagement.

At the present time, we are conducting a contest among our officers and men to see if we can't find a short, descriptive, and appropriate word to use as a synonym for Japanese American in our releases. With a \$25.00 war bond as the prize, we are hopeful that we shall be able to find a "catchy" word.

Just now, we are resting, licking our wounds as it were, as we prepare to return to the fray. Although we have suffered casualties and all of us know the real meaning of fear, we have not had a single case of desertion or A.W.O.L. since we left the states. Further, at the moment, we do not have a single man in confinement.

Yesterday, we held impressive memorial services for the dead. At the ceremony, when our battalions marched in, it was revealing to see how thinned-out our ranks are now after our first tour of duty. I know that we have an imposing number of purple hearts already and that our list of those killed in action shows many from the mainland as well as Hawaii. Almost every member of the Combat Team, with the exception of those in the rear echelons, have already qualified for the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

You might be interested to know that two of my brothers are now in the hospitals; one may never walk again. My other brother is in the rear CP as a guard. One other brother, not in our unit, is in Camp Adair, Oregon.

Private First Class Tooru Hanazawa, of cannon company, asks that he be remembered to you.

Many in the Combat Team have asked that they also be remembered to you, for most of them realize that you are the "godfather" --that's the term they use--of our organization. For them, I can say that they are doing the kind of job we knew them to be capable of. You can be proud of the 442nd.

With my personal best wishes to you, I remain

Cordially,

Mike Marabaz

CASW:RAG:NAV

Box 44
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 12

21 July 1944

T/S Mike Masacka, ASN 39915536
442nd Infantry, Service Company
APO 464, c/o Postmaster
New York, N. Y.

Dear Corporal Masacka:

Mr. McClay has asked me to reply to your very interesting letter of July 10th. I am glad to hear of your assignment as field correspondent of the Japanese American units, and I know you will do a good job in this interesting and exacting position.

Your comments on the Combat Team and the 100th Battalion confirm the reports we have heard from other sources of the excellent showing you men are making on your combat missions. I saw the recent announcement by General Clark that the 100th Battalion had been cited. I feel it will not be long before the Combat Team will take its place beside the 100th among our outstanding units.

I note you refer to the inadequate publicity and coverage which the Combat Team has been getting. I feel that this observation must have been made prior to the recent steps which have been taken to secure adequate coverage and that at the time of this letter you probably already know what is being done. I feel sure that these steps will amply cover the point which you raise. We here in Washington will do all within our power to see that this information is disseminated in the right way and in the right places.

Let me assure you that the conduct of the members of the Combat Team justifies the faith which led to its formation and that its behavior is having and will have a vital effect upon governmental policy regarding the treatment of Japanese Americans and other minority groups during the years to come.

If you see Colonel Scooby again I would appreciate it if you would give him my kindest regards.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

HARRISON A. GERHARDT
Colonel, General Staff Corps
Executive to Ass't Secretary of War

Penned: Give my best to Chaplain Yamada. I owe him 2 (2) letters. H.A.G.

J.A. Volunteers

Masacka, Mike

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342.18 J.A. Combat Team, 442nd
342.18 J.A. 100th Bn.

21 Jul 44



39915586 Box 49
 T/5 Mike Masaoka 399 Folder 7
 Sv. Co., 442d Inf., APO Item 4
 1/0 Postmaster, New York Page 13
 July 10, 1944

APD 464

Reply sent

Hon. John J. McCloy
 Assistant Secretary of War
 The Pentagon
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. McCloy:

Knowing of your personal interest in the Japanese American Combat Team, I am writing this after returning from spending several days with the men up at the front. As you may know, the Division has appointed me to serve as the Field Correspondent for the Japanese American units in this sector. This work permits me to come and go among the men almost as I please.

I am happy and proud to be able to tell you, unequivocally, that the men of the Combat Team are performing magnificently. Although green and assigned to a difficult mission in their initial engagement, they conducted themselves as veterans. This was the opinion of a visiting colonel from another division who was observing our men in action.

Other observations made by him, as well as by other visiting officers and our own commanders, bear out this fact. The calmness and business-like attitude of our men, even under the most intense fire, was a revelation to all. Their failure to complain about matters which they knew to be unavoidable was also mentioned favorably.

Acts of heroism and bravery were numerous and the courage and fighting ability of the Japanese American soldier was much in evidence. I had the good fortune to speak with many of them after engagement and all were eager to return to the fray and carry on. Not one of them shirked or bolted under fire; in fact, some officers declared them to be enthusiastic for their own good.

There can be no question that all of the volunteers, and especially those from relocation centers, are keenly aware of their grave responsibilities. They are determined to make such a showing that no one--even the most rabid race-baiter in California--can doubt their loyalty and allegiance. They are eager to assure the heritage of all Americans for their "people". And, they are insuring that future now, in the battle for Italy, that they and their children may never again have to suffer the indignities and experiences which have been their lot. All of the volunteers, the young and the old, the mainlander and the islander, are imbued with this spirit. They will make that kind of history which will not only justify your faith when you championed their rights but also cause you and other Americans to be proud of them.

There is no need for me to tell you that we are suffering casualties. They are the inevitable by-product of war. But, in

the best tradition of the American soldier, they carry on though their buddies are killed or wounded, even more determined than ever before. Truly, I have never been so proud of my fellow Americans with Japanese faces. At times, during the evacuation, I wondered about their ability "to take it and dish it out". I longer fear on that score. And the German enemy will testify to their gallant qualities.

Chatting here and there with the fellows, many have suggested that there is need for better and more inspired. While they understand that this lack of capable through all may be corrected at the first opportunity, and that their organization is not alone in this respect, nevertheless they are naturally deeply concerned about it. This is not intended as an indictment of all for some of them have proven most capable under the most trying of circumstances.

In summary of our Combat Team, I can assure you they will not let America down, nor the faith of those who believe in them.

A few weeks ago, Colonel William P. Scobey dropped in on us. He is now the morale section officer for this whole theatre. He seemed quite pleased with what he saw. He asked that he be remembered to you.

In reading issues of the Pacific Citizen, which are airmailed from Salt Lake City, Utah, to me, I note that conditions generally are improving for Japanese Americans and that there are now several groups on the West Coast actively campaigning in our behalf.

In this connection, I believe that an intelligently supervised publicity drive may be most helpful, especially with reference to stories concerning our Combat Team. While I am Field Correspondent for this unit and presumably able to write up any and all stories as I please, I find that neither the Division nor the Army public relations officers in this sector fully appreciate the need for certain "types" of stories which I feel are most valuable in our efforts to combat the un-American proposals of many persons and organizations.

Furthermore, it is my personal view that every possible means of distributing these stories, which I feel are so important to our future, and encouraging their publication in Pacific Coast newspapers and their recital over radio channels ought to be utilized. Perhaps the facilities of the Office of War Information might be pressed into service.

I believe that these suggestions are in line with your policy expressed when the Combat Team was formed.

In the beginning, as you may recall, a Major Russell, a former newspaperman, was assigned as our Public Relations Officer. Since last October, Major Russell has been in Washington and we have been "muddling through" without an officer in charge, or any active program of public relations whatsoever. While the Table of Organiza-

tion for a Combat Team does not provide for a public relations officer, because of the precedent already established and the unique need for one by our outfit in terms of our future welfare, I believe that some qualified commissioned or warrant officer who is intimately acquainted with our aspirations and desires ought to be specially assigned to our unit. A Japanese American officer, I believe, should be appointed to manage this vital department. I would be pleased to continue my work under such an officer. Page 15

This matter of properly impressing all Americans with the fact that we, though called upon to suffer and sacrifice much, are fighting alongside their husbands, brothers, and sons in this great struggle for human rights should be of paramount interest to the administration in general and to the War Relocation Authority in particular.

There is no need to repeat how we Japanese Americans feel on this subject. This is our greatest opportunity to answer, once and for all, those who insist that certain American citizens cannot be loyal to the country of their birth simply because of their racial ancestry. We will take advantage of this opportunity to the utmost. We hope that those at home will be acquainted with our actions.

Now that we are on the fighting fronts, perhaps you have some suggestions as to what we may do to help further liberal War Department, War Relocation Authority, and general government policies regarding the treatment of Japanese Americans and other minorities during the years to come. Since we are now actively engaged in the "fight", whatever we may do should carry more weight than otherwise. Accordingly, we shall be privileged to do ~~at~~ what we can, especially should such suggestions come from you.

This is written not as a letter from a member of the armed forces but as a personal note to you, expressing as always some of my personal sentiments.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Marabe

Box 49
Folder 7
Item 4
Page 16

ASW 342.18 J. A. Volunteers

Masaoka, Mike

342.18 J. A. Selective Service

x- Gerhardt
x- Masaoka

12 Nov 43

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Dear Corporal Masaoka:

Mr. McCloy has asked me to reply to your very interesting letter of November 10. The matter of selective service and its universal application to Japanese Americans is now under study in the War Department. You must realize that our big job is to use manpower where it is needed most and this will be the governing consideration in a decision effecting the reinstatement of the draft.

Mr. McCloy seemed very pleased at the progress that the Combat Team had made in its training and appreciates the eagerness with which you and your fellow members of the Combat Team await overseas service.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

HARRISON A. GERHARDT
Lieutenant Colonel, G.S.C.
Executive to Ass't Secretary of War

Corporal Mike Masaoka
Service Company, 442nd Infantry
Camp Shelby, Mississippi

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Box 49
 Folder 7
 Item 4
 Page 17



SERVICE COMPANY, 442ND INFANTRY
 Camp Shelby, Mississippi
 November 10, 1943



Mr. John J. McCloy
 Assistant Secretary of War
 Pentagon Building
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCloy:

I trust that you were pleased with what you saw during your recent visit to our Combat Team in Camp Shelby, Mississippi. I believe that our outfit will not only equal but perhaps better the splendid record now being made by our fellow Japanese American unit in the Italian campaign; and, thereby, justify the faith and confidence which you have in us.

We are training more diligently than ever before. We are eager to go overseas. Strange as it may seem, many of our men are worried that the European war will be over before we shall have been able to participate in dealing the death blow to Hitler's Fortress Europe.

Inspired as we are by the achievements of our brother outfit and the confidence which men like you have in our destiny, we shall not, and cannot, fail.

In connection with the matter of drafting Japanese Americans--a question you asked me some time ago--may I say that it is my considered opinion that should selective service be reinstated for loyal Nisei it should be on the same basis as for all other Americans.

Those who wished to volunteer for the special unit have, in the main, done so. I know of many more who would have volunteered had they not felt, rightly or wrongly, that our special unit was a form of segregation. It is my opinion that for the future good of the Japanese Americans, as well as all Americans, our boys must fight shoulder to shoulder and in the same ranks with other Americans. In this way, they will prove to their comrades in arms their ability and worth as soldiers and as Americans. If the present government policy of scattering evacuated Japanese Americans throughout the country is a sound one, so a policy of scattering Japanese American soldiers would likewise promote assimilation and the winning of public confidence. Furthermore, the idea that all Japanese Americans to be drafted in the future must report to our special unit might serve as an excuse or an opening for those who desire to segregate our people for all purposes.

They might point to the War Department policy not as one of confidence in Japanese Americans but rather as one of suspicion and mistrust, that we are herded together so that greater surveillance might be kept over us.

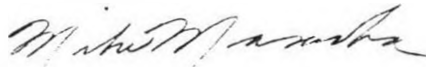
I believe that the present makeup of our 442nd Combat Team fulfills the objectives of the War Department program. To arbitrarily assign future draftees to our outfit would remove the voluntary status from our organization and thereby eliminate the most effective public relations argument concerning us: namely, that we are a 100 per cent volunteer unit composed of Japanese Americans who had so much faith in their America that they volunteered for service in spite of being subjected to more persecutions and discriminations than any group of Americans have ever been called upon to accept.

Finally, my belief is that those remaining Japanese Americans who have not volunteered would prefer to be treated as all other Americans and not as a special class. I realize that this may cause considerable difficulty in training plans but I feel that this is the only consistent American way to deal with future Japanese American draftees.

Although there are a number of other problems which I would like to present, I feel that all of them can be cleared up when the draft status of the Japanese Americans is finally settled, and, therefore, I shall not mention them in this letter.

May I say, in closing, that I express these thoughts as an individual, and not as a member of the armed forces; and that I do so only because you asked me my opinion while you were visiting Camp Shelby.

Cordially,



Cpl. Mike Masaoka

MM:fbh