

Box 47
Folder 7
Item 40
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Medical Corps442nd JA INFANTRY
442nd

23 October 1943

Dear General Kirk:

I have just returned from Camp Shelby where I made an inspection of the 442nd Combat Team, the Japanese American unit. In the course of my inspection I learned that the unit is much overstrength in medical and dental officers, so much so that the organization commander intimated he had more doctors than he could usefully take care of.

From time to time I have transmitted to your office the names of doctors and dentists of Japanese ancestry who have requested commission in the medical service and have been informed by your office that no plan exists for using them except in the Japanese American unit; the theory being that because of their race they could not be utilized where white soldiers were under medical and dental treatment. However, I learned at Camp Shelby that the dental officers of the 442nd Combat Team are being used in the camp dental infirmary where their services were considered particularly efficient. It was further reported, that in no instances was objection made to them because of race. In other words, the thing is being worked out on the ground and no prejudice is developing. If the man can do his job he is accepted.

Colonel Pendleton, commanding the Third Army troops at Camp Shelby, gave me the story that one of his Army units which was without an assigned surgeon had had one of the Japanese American doctors of the 442nd Infantry attached to it for a period of time. This doctor's services were so satisfactory that a request was made by the unit commander for his transfer, but under the existing policy, approval for the transfer was refused.

While I would not advocate indiscriminate assignment of Japanese American commissioned medical personnel, it does seem that where the surplus of this personnel could be usefully employed in base hospitals or other units, and especially where the Japanese American doctors were actually wanted, our policy of assignment might be reconsidered to permit such assignment.

We have received good reports on the 100th Battalion's initial combat experience in Italy and the statement has been made by General Clark that these Japanese American citizens were received by all ranks and associates. Under all these circumstances, I feel that the time has come for a re-examination of our policy in the employment and assignment of this medical talent. It is not being usefully employed now.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

John J. McCloy

Major General Norman T. Kirk
The Surgeon General, U.S. Army
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D. C.

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