

12.18 J.A. Volunteers

Kawanoto, Y.A. (Op1.)

1 April 1945.

Major General Henry C. Pratt, U.S. Army,
Headquarters Western Defense Command,
Presidio of San Francisco,
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear General Pratt:

In accordance with my telephone conversation of March 31st with General Wilbur, I am inclosing, for your comments or recommendation, a copy of a letter from Mr. Myer, Director of the War Relocation Authority, relating to an incident on March 26th in which rifle shots are said to have been fired into a house being visited by an American corporal in uniform. Your views on Mr. Myers suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

Mr. McCloy has left the city for a short trip and, in the last minute rush, was unable to study your letter of March 21, 1945 relating to the agreement with the Department of Justice sent to you with Mr. McCloy's letter of February 20th. In his absence, I should like to acknowledge receipt of your letter and assure you that it will be brought to his attention promptly upon his return.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

DAVIDSON BONDERS
Major, Air Corps
Assistant Executive

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As noted.

Dispatched air mail - 2 April 45 - DSK

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343.18 J.A. Volunteers

Kawano to, Y.A. (Cpl.)

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1 April 1945.

Mr. Dillon S. Myer,
Director,
War Relocation Authority,
Barr Building,
910 - 17th N.W.,
Washington, D.C..

Dear Mr. Myer:

Thank you for your letter of March 23th, relating to a shooting incident near Madera, Calif., involving an apparent attack on a discharged veteran and an American corporal.

As General Pratt has previously known of this incident, and has been giving it consideration, I am referring it to him for his recommendations.

We appreciate your bringing this matter to our attention.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

DAVIDSON SOGGERS
Major, Air Corps
Assistant Executive.

Dispatched regular mail 2 April 45. DSK

1 Apr. 45

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Colonel Harrison A. Gerhardt
War Department
The Pentagon
Washington, 25, D. C.

Dear Colonel Gerhardt:

The Western office of the War Relocation Authority at San Francisco informed me in reports by telephone last night and today that on the night of March 26, at a place near Madera, California, rifle shots were fired into a house being visited by an American corporal in uniform. He was staying at the home of his brother-in-law who is an honorably discharged Army veteran.

There have been a few scattered West Coast attempts at shooting civilians of Japanese ancestry, which of course are not matters for War Department action. However, the Madera case represents the first time in this war that an American soldier of Japanese ancestry, wearing the uniform of the Army of the United States, has been a target in his own country. I feel sure that the War Department will want to do all it can to see that it is the last time, and that the Army uniform is respected no matter what the race, creed or color of the man or woman who wears it.

What action the Army authorities will want to take is, of course, a matter for the War Department, but they may want to offer aid to the Madera county sheriff to track down the miscreants, or the Secretary of War and Major General Pratt of the Western Defense Command may decide to issue statements which would have a good public effect generally, or the War Department might take some other action it deems proper.

In the belief that when the War Department verifies the facts in this incident to its own satisfaction, it will take effective action, I am submitting the following details for your information:

On Monday night, March 26, Cpl. Y. A. Kawamoto, on furlough and in uniform, was visiting eight miles south of Madera at the home of his brother-in-law, Minoru Ohashi, recently honorably discharged from the Army.



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In the house at the time also were Mr. Ohashi's parents, his sister, and a friend whose last name is given as Dobashi.

At about 9:30 p.m. five bullets smashed into the house, fortunately failing to hit anyone. Sheriff Justice of Madera county later identified them as .32 calibre bullets from a high powered rifle. I was informed today that he is doing ballistics tests on the bullets, and that no suspects have been located yet.

In addition to information directly from WRA sources, an account in the Fresno Bee of March 27 says that the discharged soldier, Minoru Ohashi, "narrowly escaped death last night in his home." This story states that two of the bullets went into the living room in which he sat, one of them hitting the wall only six inches from his head. The other three bullets, the newspaper says, were imbedded in the outside wall near the window. The Bee adds that Ohashi served several months in Italy and has a brother on the Western front.

Mr. Robert B. Cozzens, West Coast Director for the Authority, has brought the matter to the attention of Attorney General Robert Kenny of California and is seeking to get in touch with Gov. Warren, in relation to those aspects of the incident involving state and local authorities.

As you will recall, on December 14 when the Secretary of War was asked to comment on the Hood River Legion incident and the Parker, Arizona, barbershop incident, both involving Japanese American servicemen, he praised the Nisei fighting men and told the press:

"To me it seems incongruous and wholly inconsistent with American ideals of democracy that these men, who just like millions of other Americans have demonstrated their loyalty to their country, should be subjected to unworthy discrimination."

In the occurrence at Madera, insofar as Cpl. Kawamoto is involved, I believe the interests of the War Department are directly concerned. In my opinion some official action should be taken by the Army to enforce the meaning and spirit of the Secretary's statement, and a public announcement of such action should be made.

As for the attempt upon the life of Mr. Ohashi, the discharged veteran, I imagine that is of some concern to the Army too, because of its effect upon the morale of American servicemen who read it. I am confident that the men in training and on the fighting fronts will condemn it as they condemned the Hood River Legion and the Arizona barber, and as they will attack bigotry wherever it appears,

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particularly when it takes the form of bullets fired at a former comrade and his family.

They will say as you will, that a soldier home from the war should not have to live in a foxhole in his own land.

Sincerely,

D. S. Myers
Director