

Box 48
Folder 1
Item 33 P. 1
G-1
GBW
4200

WDGAP 291.2 Japanese

6 September 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR (MR. McCLOY):
(Attention: Captain Hall)

When the 442d Combat Team was activated in January 1943 it was specifically provided that the personnel procured therefor be native-born citizens of Japanese ancestry. This unit is fast approaching its authorized strength, which also provides for replacements. It is considered that the remaining vacancies in the 442d Combat Team should be available for Nisei only, as originally authorized.

In view of the above, it is recommended that the attached request of Mr. Frank Tanabe be not favorably considered.

Incls.

Memo for Col. Walker
fr Asst Exec, OASW,
3 Sep 43, with incls.

GEO. A. MILLER,
Colonel, G.S.C.,
Acting Assistant Chief of Staff.

COPY TO ACCOMPANY ORIGINAL

Box 48
Folder 1
Item 33 P. 19WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
WASHINGTON

September 2, 1943

Captain John M. Hall
Executive Secretary, Acting
Japanese-American Joint Board
Pentagon Building
Arlington, Virginia

Dear Captain Hall:

I am attaching original letters from Elmer L. Shirrell, Relocation Supervisor in Chicago, and Frank Tanabe, regarding the latter's interest in securing a waiver of his lack of U. S. citizenship for induction into the Army.

I should appreciate your presenting this case for consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert W. Frase".

Robert W. Frase
Acting Chief
Employment Division

Enclosure 2



Box 48

Folder 1

Item 33 P.2

65 W. Maple
Chicago (10)65 W. 1
Chicago 1207

Elmer L. Shirrell
War Relocation Authority
226 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago

Dear Mr. Shirrell,

Since the attack on Pearl Harbor, I have been trying to enlist in the armed forces of the United States, but being technically an alien, I have been unsuccessful in my many attempts. Nevertheless, it is still my strongest desire to serve in whatever capacity this country,--the only country I have ever pledged allegiance to. If it is in any way possible for you to help me in this effort, I shall always be grateful. Following is the list of things I have already done towards the ultimate enlistment in some branch of the service.

On December 8, 1941, I first consulted my draft board on the possibility of reclassification. They referred me to the Naturalization and Immigration Department. The Department had no suggestions. Therefore I went to the recruiting offices in Seattle where I inquired into possibilities. The answer was negative as far as enlistment was concerned.

Again I appealed to my draft board which took the case to the state headquarters of the selective service board. Enclosed is a letter in reply. Back to the recruiting center I went and on question from the officer in charge I answered that I was a citizen and proceeded to fill out a questionnaire. But on encountering a question on the truth and integrity of the same, I told the officer the truth. He just took the questionnaire and tore it without a word.

Somewhat later at school (university of Washington) I saw a notice asking for volunteers in the American Field Service. I hurried down to the A.F.S. office and told a Mr. Scott my troubles but he had no way of accepting me. I then went to the Red Cross center to offer my services as an ambulance driver. No luck.

I kept trying--appealing to my draft board at frequent intervals.

Then came evacuation. At the Tule Lake Center, I first told you of my desire to enter the armed forces. In November, 1942, when the Savage Camp sent Lieut. Hirano to recruit, I had the Lieut. send a telegram to Colonel Rasmussen on the possibility of enlisting in that school. The wire was in the negative.

The War Department's announcement in February of this year of the eventual forming of an entire American Japanese combat team afforded me with another opportunity to volunteer. I did. I took my physical along with the rest of the boys and waited induction. Almost, it seemed, at the eleventh hour, the War Department announced that aliens were not acceptable. Mr. Carl Sandoz, social welfare department of Hunt, Idaho, then sent a letter with complete history of me to the W.R.A. office in Washington. In April, I met Lieut. Davis then recruiting for Camp Savage in effort to enlist in that school again.

The Lieut. assured me that he would bring the matter to Colonel Rasmussen's attention.

The W.R.A. authority granted me leave to Chicago to wait further action. Again, I made the rounds of the recruiting office, the selective service boards in Chicago.

The first of this month, I quit my job and took a trip to Minneapolis. At Camp Savage, I saw m/sgt. Uno, Capt. Tsukamoto, and eventually Capt. Dowd in effort to wear the khaki. In town I visited the Immigration and Naturalization Department, and a Colonel at the recruiting center. Lieut. Colonel Rossberg of the Minnesota State selective service office was of some help. He promised to write to the board in Seattle for me.

I am back in Chicago again and now that the question of nisei draft has come to the fore again, I wish to submit the above and the following for consideration by the War Department.

Going back to before my birth, my mother was pregnant before she left this country for Japan. That was in May, 1919. I was born in August (1919) in Osaka. My mother says we would have been back in the United States earlier but for my getting sick, but at any rate, we were back in this country, according to our passport, in November, 1920. Since that date none of our family (my parents and two brothers and sister) have ever left the United States. (I am the oldest child). I finished elementary school in Seattle in ignorance of my alien status. In 1937 upon my completion of Broadway high school, we joined our father who had been in Cut Bank, Montana since 1934. In the fall of 1938 after a summer in an Alaskan salmon cannery, I entered the University of Washington. I lived from then until evacuation at the Japanese Students Club of the U. of W. My folks came back to Seattle on November 27, 1941 and were subsequently evacuated to Puyallup and then to Hunt, Idaho.

I have known only this country. My friends are entering the services. Why can't I, whose conscious life began here? An accident of birth technically brands me an alien, but education, mode of living and thinking--I am an American whether I am wanted or not. If it is possible, Mr. Shirrell, can you help me in doing my little in this fight for the four freedoms and everything that goes with it. Americanism is more than a matter of race. It is something felt in the heart--almost a religion. These years of American living and thinking, friends, and substances plead that I be given my share to do in perpetuating Americanism and democracy, the freedoms of equal mankind. It isn't something I can put down in black and white, but I assure you it is something felt in the heart.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Tanabe
Frank Tanabe