

April 13, 1943

Dear Mr. Eisenhower:

Thank you for your letter of April 8 and the suggestion that the War Department dispatch letters of commendation to the parents of Japanese American volunteers.

I agree that such a letter probably would produce a favorable reaction in the recipient parents and it might even increase volunteering, but I question the desirability of singling out this racial group for special consideration. Such action, I believe, would lay the War Department open to criticism that it is playing favoritism to the Japanese. The Japanese themselves repeatedly have asked to be treated as other Americans, and the War Department policy is being oriented in that direction.

I shall insist that the Japanese Americans be accorded the privileges of other American soldiers and that meritorious service by them be rewarded appropriately, but it occurs to me their act of volunteering, although recognized as an act of loyalty and patriotism, also carried with it the opportunity to establish more favorably their position among the American people generally.

While I am not in accord with the suggestion that the War Department initiate such a letter, I do feel a letter of the type suggested should be dispatched by the commander of the unit to which the volunteer is assigned. I am told that some unit commanders make a practice of sending letters of similar nature to next-of-kin when their recruits arrive. It is my feeling that the organization commanders' letter, being an official communication, would

be held by the recipients in somewhat the same high regard as would a War Department letter. With this thought in mind I am having an inquiry made as to what action along this line is contemplated by the commanding officer of the Japanese American Combat Team.

I appreciate your interest on this matter.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

John J. McCloy

Mr. M. S. Eisenhower, Associate Director
Office of War Information
Room 3362
Social Security Building
Washington, D. C.

OASW:WPS:MDH

April 13, 1943

Dear Colonel Pence:

The Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. McCloy, has asked me to write you and ask if you have any plans for writing parents, wives, or other next-of-kin when your fillers arrive. It has been suggested that the War Department write a congratulatory letter to the next-of-kin of each volunteer. While this has merit the Assistant Secretary feels that such special attention is the responsibility of the organization commander rather than the War Department. In this connection it is felt that the War Department should not give special consideration to any one racial group or unit.

The Assistant Secretary does feel that volunteering by the nezei is a distinctive expression of loyalty, especially at a time when Selective Service is in full force, and this aspect of the Japanese American Combat Team should be exploited to indicate to the public generally the loyalty of our Japanese American citizens.

Since, for the most part, the parents of your Mainland American Japanese volunteers are residents of the various relocation centers, it is felt that some form of commendatory letter from you, dispatched at the time of their arrival, will do much to improve the general morale among all loyal Japanese.

Will you please inform the Assistant Secretary of your plan.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

WILLIAM P. SCOBAY
Colonel, General Staff
Executive

Colonel Charles W. Pence
Commanding Officer
442nd Infantry
Camp Shelby, Mississippi

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