

ASW 542.18 Selection Service

1 November 1943

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

Conference Held in Office of Assistant Secretary of War at 10:00 on the subject of replacements for the 100th Battalion and induction procedure for Japanese Americans under selective service.

Present: Lieutenant Colonel Pasolli, G-1  
Colonel Stevenson, G-3  
Lieutenant Colonel Gerhardt, OASW

Colonel Gerhardt outlined the purpose of the conference as:

1. An informal review of a plan for induction, training and assignment of Japanese Americans should selective service be reinstated.

2. Investigation of possibility of assignment of specialists of Japanese American ancestry to any unit of the armed forces where the services of such specialists would be required.

The background of the problem was summarized as follows: Should selective service be reinstated, the manpower potential would accrue to the armed forces, which would be insufficient to formulate another combat team similar to the 442nd. These inductees might then be used to complete the 442nd, which would take a very small number; to provide replacements for the 100th Battalion and later the 442nd; and to provide qualified specialists for the armed forces. Colonel Stevenson suggested that if an entire combat team could not be formed, possibly the remaining Japanese Americans could be formed into Japanese American service units or possibly independent combat units, such as a special division or field artillery battalion. Colonel Pasolli stated that the present system of utilizing Japanese Americans called for placing them in the Enlisted Reserve Corps until groups of possibly 150 had been secured, at which time they would be ordered to active service at Camp Blanding, Florida, and trained as replacements.

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Colonel Gerhardt indicated that this was a segregation policy and provided an argument that the War Department indorsed such a policy. If some method could be devised whereby the Japanese Americans inducted under selective service could be handled in the same manner as any other inductee ~~then~~ this argument would no longer have any foundation. Reference was made also to the case of the Alaskan Japanese who have indicated on their voluntary enlistment application that they do not desire to serve with the combat team.

Colonel Stevenson mentioned that the Japanese Americans now are used in station complements and service troops in the United States and suggested that these individuals be trained as regular replacements and then if they still did not desire service with the combat team, they could be sent to Alaska or the Northwest for service with the Alaska Defense Command.

Colonel Stevenson asked whether there was any intention of assigning Negro inductees to white units, and if there was not, then the War Department has automatically indorsed the segregation policy. Colonel Gerhardt suggested that the Japanese American protests of segregation were based on the argument that they were being discriminated against because of nationality and not race. Chinese soldiers have been and are accepted in the armed forces. The same applies to inductees of German and Italian descent. Colonel Stevenson then retaliated <sup>that</sup> the policy of G-1 to the universal assignment of Japanese Americans to training camps would result in disorder and a violent display of racial prejudice. Colonel Gerhardt suggested that a program of publicity stressing the effectiveness of the 100th Battalion in combat could be utilized to cut down any such disturbances and offered to undertake the necessary liaison with the Bureau of Public Relations to institute a publicity campaign if G-1 would agree to the assignment of Japanese Americans to any training camp. Colonel Stevenson said he did not believe that this would be effective.

Colonel Gerhardt indicated that it might be desirable to use specialists of Japanese American ancestry, such as doctors and dentists, in other units than the 442nd. Colonel Stevenson stated that if such specialists were assigned to units designated for service in Pacific areas, under the present policy they would be removed from such units and re-assigned elsewhere prior to departure for overseas. Reference

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was made to the statements of commanding officers at Camp Shelby that the Japanese American doctors and dentists had been used successfully with white troops and that during the period that this policy had been tested it had worked out satisfactorily on the ground. Colonel Pasolli said this conference would be taken up with Colonel Lynch of G-1 but ~~retaliated~~ <sup>retaliated</sup> that he and Colonel Stevenson were both opposed to a change in policy at this time.

  
H. A. G.