

May 31, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, G-3:

I have had a number of reports on the situation existing at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where the soldiers of the Japanese American combat team have encountered difficulties adversely affecting their morale. According to reports made by officers who have looked into the matter and by letters from the men themselves, it appears that these difficulties are occasioned by the white soldiers of the garrison referring to the Japanese Americans in opprobrious language, in many instances calling them "damned Japs" and other similar names which they intensely resent.

Under these conditions would it not be well to dispatch a War Department letter to the Commanding Officer at Camp Shelby directing the personnel of all units at that station to refrain from making uncomplimentary remarks against these Japanese American soldiers? It seems entirely reasonable to believe that such action might accomplish some good and eliminate much of the abusive language reportedly used toward these soldiers.

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

JOHN J. McCLOY
Assistant Secretary of War

OASW:WPS:MAW

ACofS, G-3
Room 3A 882
Pentagon Building

May 30, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL E. M. WATSON:

You have referred a letter to the President from Private David Miura, a Japanese American belonging to the 442nd Infantry, to me for appropriate handling by the War Department. The War Department will keep the matter under observation with a view of correcting the situation described in this soldier's letter.

Private Miura is an Hawaiian of Japanese extraction who volunteered for the Japanese American Combat Team now stationed at Hattiesburg, Mississippi. A careful reading of his letter indicates that the difficulty he mentions and the one upon which he predicates the request for a change of station for the unit, is occasioned not by any racial prejudice or discrimination experienced in the city of Hattiesburg or the local community, but arises with the other soldiers stationed in the same camp. He specifically points out that the incidents occur when the Japanese American soldiers visit the exchanges where white soldiers call them names. A change of station would not correct this trouble; it would simply introduce a new opportunity for opprobrious expressions by another group of soldiers.

We have watched the situation confronting this organization very carefully and have had a number of inspections made by capable Army officers. These officers report although there is a certain amount of reserve on the part of the white citizens of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on the whole the relationship between the Japanese Americans and these citizens has been good. They do report that some of the white soldiers are not very generous in their contacts with the Japanese Americans; The Hawaiian Japanese Americans seem to be highly sensitive, probably because at home they did not constitute a minority group and they were not confronted with the general feeling they have met with in the Mainland.

It is my feeling that as the men of this unit become better known there will be fewer incidents between the white soldiers and the Japanese American soldiers. The War Department will keep the matter under constant observation and if corrective measures necessitate a transfer of the unit, it will be done.

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

JOHN J. McCLOY
Assistant Secretary of War

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Major General E. M. Watson
The White House

*Cyto operations Branch ASD
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