

ALPINE 0550



PACIFIC COAST  
EVACUEE PLACEMENT BUREAU

JAMES M. OMURA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Box 47  
Folder 11  
Item 9  
Page 1

WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICE  
1943 FEB 8 AM 8:33

2008 LARIMER STREET  
DENVER, COLORADO

February 5, 1943

Hon. Henry L. Stimson  
Secretary of War  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

The War Department's recent proposal to create a special combat unit of American Japanese volunteers contradicts the spirit of a democratic government and would unnecessarily segregate soldiers of Japanese ancestry in the armed forces of the United States.

I would like to call your attention to the fact that no person of Japanese ancestry, except for intelligence division, is now being accepted by the Selective Service.

I do not believe that any person or group should be discriminated against in the draft or that special privileges be conferred to any race or individual. If there is a place in the United States army for the Nisei, the Nisei should be accorded the same treatment as persons of other racial or national origin. That process is the universal draft.

I, therefore, strongly protest the formation of a special combat unit of American Japanese volunteers and respectfully request your attention to a further consideration of the matter.

I am enclosing with this letter a copy of an article which appeared in the Feb. 3rd issue of The Rocky Nippon, a Japanese vernacular newspaper published in Denver, Colorado. I believe that it will further amplify the above protest and is deserving of your attention.

Yours very respectfully,

*James M. Omura*  
James M. Omura  
Executive Director

Enclosure: 1 excerpt



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Page 2

RECEIVED  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
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# PACIFIC COAST EVACUEE PLACEMENT BUREAU

JAMES M. OMURA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2008 LARIMER STREET  
DENVER, COLORADO

February 15, 1943

Hon. Henry L. Stimson  
Secretary of War  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Stimson:

I have given your letter of Feb. 9th the most careful attention and though much as I would like to agree with you on the basic merit of establishing a separate combat unit of American Japanese volunteers, I cannot quite agree with you in the various features of the program involved.

In his letter to you on Feb. 1st, in which he placed his stamp of approval on the formation of an American Japanese combat unit, the President of the United States revealed that "nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry are already serving in the armed forces of our country."

I am inclined to feel that the War Department, if it were earnest in carrying out the basic issue involved, would have utilized the idle Nisei already pressed into service first before calling for volunteers. I am also conscious of the fact that the 100th infantry battalion, composed of Hawaiian Japanese and commanded by Lieut. Col. Farrant L. Turner, is still stationed at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin and has seen no active service despite the fact that it is the oldest of the so-called "foreign legions" authorized by the War Department.

Neither can I quite comprehend why the procedure for induction of these volunteers could not have been processed through the regular channels of the universal draft, thereby mitigating the resulting feeling of discrimination and segregation to some extent. If a Nisei Legion were an absolute necessity, I still cannot understand why the Selective Service System could not have been opened to them and from there each volunteer assigned to this special unit.

Despite your assurance that "the War Department is not committed to a policy of segregation for Japanese Americans,"

Founded on April 1, 1942, at 1023 - 19th St., in Denver, Colorado, the Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau is dedicated to the relocation of U. S. Japanese — particularly the American Nisei — who have been forced to leave their lifelong homes on the Pacific Coast, under military order. This service is free of charge and is offered in the interest of all Japanese residing in the Western Hemisphere.

*James M. Omura*

2-15-43

Box 47  
Folder 11  
Item 9  
Page 3

2. Hon. Henry L. Stimson, Feb. 15, 1943.

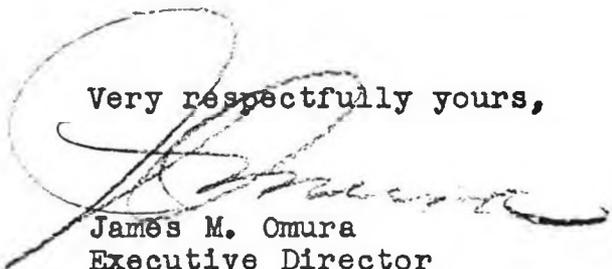
I do not feel secure that segregation will not occur and that the process of assimilation will not be retarded. The inherent and potential danger of segregation still exists and the previous policies of Federal departments and officials are not conducive to impel credence and trust.

In respect to the undesirability of employing Nisei soldiers in the Pacific theatre, I fully recognize the attendant confusion and disaster that might conceivably result. However, it is my understanding that Nisei soldiers are serving under General MacArthur in Australia and on the New Guinea front. The case of soldier Nishizu, who was recently commended on the Jergens' radio program, is an example. It is an unfortunate destiny that we must carry into battle this "double peril", but I do not believe that a single loyal soldier of Japanese descent would shirk his duty and would request assignment elsewhere.

It is for these basic reasons that I challenge the intent and procedure of the War Department and consequently protest the creation of a special combat unit of Nisei volunteers. I fully realize that this protest will carry small weight with the War Department and its decision will not be altered a single iota.

I do not doubt for one moment that the Americans of Japanese lineage will volunteer and that a Nisei battalion will be created, but I do regret that the spirit of democratic government cannot be preserved even in times of war and that we cannot maintain at home the principles for which we are fighting along the various global fronts.

Very respectfully yours,



James M. Omura  
Executive Director

Reports from the various relocation centers, established in the United States for the 112,000 evacuated West Coast people of Japanese ancestry by the Federal government, tend to indicate that a fair proportion of able-bodied Nisei are volunteering to serve in the special combat unit now being formed at Camp Shelby in Mississippi.

Nisei soldiers, who are already pressed into service and have been relegated to menial assignments since the outbreak of hostilities are being transferred to the Nisei Legion training base in Mississippi to greet the incoming volunteers and to act as instructors.

The War Department's announcement, authorizing the creation of a special combat unit of American Japanese volunteers, has apparently gained wide-spread relocation center approval, but among persons of Japanese extraction outside of such centers the reaction has been far more conservative and questioning.

The outstanding example of this disagreement as to the essential merit of the issue is the protest filed on Feb. 5, 1943, with the War Department by James M. Omura, Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau.

In his letter of protest, Mr. Omura held that the creation of a special Japanese combat unit

"would unnecessarily segregate soldiers of Japanese ancestry in the armed forces of the United States."

He further declared: "I do not believe that any person or group should be discriminated against in the draft or that special privileges be conferred to any race or individual. If there is a place in the United States army for the Nisei, the Nisei should be accorded the same treatment as persons of other racial or national origin. That process is the universal draft."

Replying to Omura's protest on Feb. 9, 1943, Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, denied any intent to segregate Americans of Japanese ancestry and reaffirmed his promise that it would be the forerunner of an equal participation of the Nisei Americans in all phases of America's war efforts.

Despite this assurance, Omura further questioned the advisability of forming a special combat unit and took sharp issue with the intent and procedures of the War Department.

Omura conferred with several Nisei leaders over the week-end, among whom was Rev. James Sugioka, past national secretary of the J. A. C. L., on various features of the problems affecting the U. S. Japanese. Opinions were rather overwhelmingly opposed to the creation of a special combat unit of American Japanese volunteers.

## STIMSON'S LETTER

Editor's Note: The following letter by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to James M. Omura, leading figure in the fight for democratic acceptance and treatment of the U. S. Nisei, is released by special permission of the War Department.

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Washington D. C.

February 9, 1943.

Dear Mr. Omura:

I have your letter of February 5, 1943, in which you protest against the establishment of a regimental combat team composed of volunteer American citizens of Japanese ancestry as an integral part of the United States Army, on the theory that the constitution of the combat team as a separate unit will tend to postpone the eventual assimilation of Japanese Americans into the rest of our population. I can see some basis for your argument, but I do not believe that you have the benefit of all the facts in the matter.

I do not have to remind you of the wave of hatred and distrust of all things Japanese which swept this country after Pearl Harbor. For many months thereafter, no attempt was made to distinguish the loyal from the disloyal; all were lumped together and called "Japs." This feeling continues today, but in diminished force, I am glad to say. The War Department felt that by giving loyal Japanese Americans an opportunity to form a unit of their own, of considerable tactical importance and for service in an active theatre, Japanese Americans could, by an appropriate display of their loyalty and bravery, for all time set at rest the suspicions harbored by the uninformed elements of our population. By the same token the unit would constitute a symbol to which every loyal American of Japanese ancestry could point with pride. It is easy to see that if loyal Japanese Americans were scattered throughout the ranks, their individual contributions would pass relatively unnoticed, whereas by formation of a separate unit their collective strength will be evidenced to the world.

The War Department is not committed to a policy of segregation

for Japanese Americans. As you no doubt know, there are well over two thousand Japanese Americans already in the Army serving in ordinary units both in this country and abroad.

There are other reasons, primarily of a military nature, which favor the establishment of a separate unit. The ordinary regiment or division is trained for service in any theatre, whereas a number of factors make it desirable that Japanese American troops be not employed in the Pacific theatre. For instance, there would be the likelihood of inhuman treatment in the event of capture. There would be the possibility, not now existent, of disastrous confusion if the enemy was successful in infiltrating into our midst a few of his troops clad in American uniforms. Again, while it would be expected that Japanese Americans would fight just as zealously in the Pacific theatre as elsewhere, the very fact that they and the enemy sprang from the same racial stock would constitute a psychological barrier affecting the morale of other troops. If Japanese Americans were not established in a separate unit, it would mean that Japanese Americans would have to be separated from the unit with which they had trained if that unit became designated for the Pacific theatre. This would be unfortunate for the man as well as for the organization, to say nothing of the time and energy wasted.

I have written you at length as I wanted to make it clear to you that the advisability of creating a special unit for Japanese Americans had been very carefully considered by the War Department prior to its adoption. The conclusion has been reached that this is the best way to proceed. It was not a question of segregation, but what in the long run would work out best, not alone for the Army, but for our Japanese American population as a whole. It may well be the precursor to "equal participation" by loyal Japanese Americans "in all phases of America's war efforts."

Sincerely,

(Signed) HENRY L. STIMSON,  
Secretary of War.

# OMURA'S REPLY

February 15, 1943.

Hon. Henry L. Stimson,  
The Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Stimson:

I have given your letter of Feb. 9th the most careful attention, and though much as I would like to agree with you on the basic merit of establishing a separate combat unit of American Japanese volunteers, I cannot quite agree with you in the various features of the program involved.

In his letter to you on Feb. 1st, in which he placed his stamp of approval on the formation of an American Japanese combat unit, the President of the United States revealed that "nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry are already serving in the armed forces of our country."

I am inclined to feel that the War Department, if it were earnest in carrying out the basic issue involved, would have utilized the idle Nisei already pressed into service. I am also conscious of the fact that the potential danger of segregation exists and the policies of Federal departments and officials are not conducive to impel credence and trust.

In respect to the undesirability of employing Nisei soldiers in the Pacific theatre, I fully recognize the attendant confusion and disaster that might conceivably result. However, it is my understanding that Nisei soldiers are serving under General MacArthur in Australia and on the New Guinea front. The case of Soldier Nishizu, who was recently commended on the Jergens' radio program, is an example. It is an unfortunate destiny that we must carry into battle this "double peril." but I do not believe that a single loyal soldier of Japanese descent would shirk his duty and would request assignment elsewhere.

It is for these basic reasons that I challenge the intent and procedure

the 100th infantry battalion, composed of Hawaiian Japanese and commanded by Lieut. Col. Farrant L. Turner, is still stationed at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin and has seen no active service despite the fact that it is the oldest of the so-called "foreign legions" authorized by the War Department.

Neither can I quite comprehend why the procedure for induction of these volunteers could not have been processed through the regular channels of the universal draft thereby mitigating the resulting feeling of discrimination and segregation to some extent. If a Nisei Legion were an absolute necessity I still cannot understand why the Selective Service System could not have been opened to them and from there each volunteer assigned to this special unit.

Despite your assurance that "the War Department is not committed to a policy of segregation for Japanese Americans." I do not feel sure that segregation will not be retarded and that the process of assimilation will not be retarded.

I do not doubt for one moment that the Americans of Japanese lineage will volunteer and that a Nisei battalion will be created, but I do regret that the spirit of democratic government cannot be preserved even in times of war and that we cannot maintain at home the principles for which we are fighting along the various global fronts.

Very respectfully yours,  
JAMES M. OMURA,  
Executive Director,  
Pacific Coast Evacuee  
Placement Bureau.

would have utilized the idle Nisei already pressed into service Nisei already first before I am also conscious herent and potential regation still ens policies

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Box 47  
Folder 11  
Item 9  
Page 7

OSCO. 342.18 for American Comments  
on news, papers

### Nisei Life

James O'Keefe

We Oppose... A Nisei Legion... combat unit of Japanese-Americans would be organized... deserves a deeper study... many of the Nisei may... give the matter... Secretary of War Stimson... method of recruiting... voluntary basis.

It is quite conceivable... number of Nisei Americans will volunteer... that a Nisei Legion will be organized... The second generation Americans of Japanese extraction are too easily susceptible to the ingenuities of public officials and the trumped-up slogans of American patriotism.

The creation of a Nisei Legion would be a disaster. It would further segregate the Nisei in America and focus attention to the oft-repeated charge of unassimilability. It would forestall their integration in American society and would set them apart as the Negro Division in the first World War.

Of course, there are certain advantages in the movement to create a Nisei Legion. The accomplishments of this group would have a tendency to stymie and spike "Deport all the Japs after the war" programs. The participation of the U. S. Nisei in the armed forces would reflect on the public mind. It would further give the Nisei at home a talking point against at-

...at its highest peak and to the extent... not... the... for the... army... filled... common... all races and all... vigorously oppose... movement to create a Japanese combat unit here in the United States. We question the consistency and good intent of the War Department on this matter. We earnestly ask that if the Nisei are to be accepted into the armed forces of the United States, that the procedure of their induction should be upon basic democratic principles and not upon face-angling, public-spotlighting process.



Hon. Henry L. Stimson  
Secretary of War  
Washington, D.C.

~~Special Delivery~~ AIR MAIL

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February 19, 1943

Dear Mr. Omura:

The Secretary of War, who was impressed with the sincerity of your letter of February 15, 1943, has directed that I reply thereto.

There are several points in your letter which require clarification. In the first place, your statement with regard to the 100th infantry battalion, which you state is still stationed at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, is inaccurate. The 100th battalion is now at a southern Army post and will shortly depart for an overseas theater of operations.

Other Nisei soldiers now in service have been utilized to make up the cadre for the combat team now being organized. You may be assured that every Japanese-American soldier will be given the opportunity to fight for his country the same as any other American soldier.

The question which you raise regarding a separate combat team composed entirely of Japanese-American soldiers was carefully considered by the War Department. The reasons for the formation of a separate unit and for the voluntary aspect of the program are contained in two telegrams which have been sent to each relocation center, copies of which I am enclosing for your information.

You also say, "If a Nisei Legion were an absolute necessity, \*". The formation of the combat team is not an absolute necessity from a military viewpoint. The number of men involved is but an infinitesimal part of the American Army. It was only because of the War Department's faith in the loyal Japanese-Americans, and a desire to give them the opportunity to demonstrate to the American people that they too have faith in America, that the decision was reached to form the combat team.

*Omura, James M.**X - Omura, James M.  
X - S/W*

- 2 -

President Roosevelt has pointed out, "No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of ancestry." That is the policy of the War Department and it exemplifies the spirit with which the present program has been initiated by those who have faith in the loyal Japanese-Americans.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE  
Colonel, G. S.  
Executive

Mr. James M. Omura, Executive Director  
Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau  
2008 Larimer Street  
Denver, Colorado

Encl.

Two telegrams

OASW:JDH:AMO



550

PACIFIC COAST  
EVACUEE PLACEMENT BUREAU

RECEIVED OFFICE  
FEB 21 1943  
AM 8:40

2008 LARIMER STREET  
DENVER, COLORADO

M. OMURA  
DIRECTOR

February 21, 1943

Hon. Henry L. Stimson  
The Secretary of War  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

The major topic of interest among Americans of Japanese extractions is the recent plan of the War Department to create a special combat unit of American Japanese volunteers.

I have discussed this plan with numerous individual Nisei and various leaders among them, and I have found that the overwhelming majority are opposed to it. I have also been in touch with the various relocation centers and there again reports tend to indicate a reluctance on the part of the American Nisei to accept the idea.

Personally, I feel strongly against the formation of this special combat unit as my letter to you of the 15th implies. I cannot agree with you that this is the American way. Is it too much to ask for a democratic treatment of our racial group in the nation's hour of peril? Surely, there and there alone lies the real test of democracy. National emergency or public hysteria is not an adequate excuse to suspend the basic rights conferred upon the individual under a free government.

This belief is not entirely my own; I simply champion the cause. For that reason, this office has gained increasing support at the expense of other Nisei organizations which purport to speak for the people of Japanese descent in America.

I am enclosing with this letter a published account of your letter of the 9th, together with my response of the 15th and an introductory article on the subject at issue.

Encl.: 1 article

Respectfully yours,

James M. Omura

ALPINE 0550


 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF WAR  
 SECRETARY'S OFFICE

 PACIFIC COAST  
 EVACUEE PLACEMENT BUREAU

 1943 FEB 25  
 JAMES M. OMURA  
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

 2008 LARIMER STREET  
 DENVER, COLORADO

February 23, 1943

 Hon. Henry L. Stimson  
 The Secretary of War  
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

The unconfirmed report that "seventy-five percent" of the resident of Tulelake Relocation Center are repatriating in protest against compulsory War Department registration is, if true, the severest blow to our sincere and conscientious struggle to secure the maintenance of our constitutional and democratic rights.

I deeply regret the action taken and feel that the majority of the Nisei in America are not in sympathy with the Tulelake movement.

However, I wish to point out that possibly the fault was in the nature of the questionnaire and the method pursued. Though I have not had the opportunity to see this questionnaire, I have been informed through various channels that center Japanese resented certain features of this registration.

Furthermore, the War Department obviously failed to carry out its published policy of voluntary enlistment, either for the armed forces or the industry. Threats were implied by the recruiting teams...such as the "or else" alternative reported to this office from Tulelake and "volunteer or be drafted" verdict of the War Department.

I do not condone the action at Tulelake, but I feel that there were contributing factors which compelled and induced these people in taking the drastic and unfortunate course which they did. This action is not a true measure of an individual's disloyalty under attendant circumstances and I believe that the majority do not subscribe to it.

Very respectfully yours,

 James M. Omura  
 Executive Director

Encl.: one letter

Copy No. 1

February 23, 1943

The Editor  
The Daily Tulean Dispatch  
Tulelake Relocation Center  
Newell, California

Dear Sir:

I have just been read a private letter in which the statement is made that "seventy-five percent" of the residents of Tulelake Relocation Center are signing for repatriation in protest against compulsory registration in connection with the latest War Department directive to create a Nisei Battalion.

It is a matter of public record that I have strongly protested the formation of a special combat unit of Nisei volunteers to the Secretary of War. I have in my possession several replies from the War Department concerning this action.

However, I refuse to agree with Tulelake residents that repatriation is the answer to the Army's request and firmly denounce the movement as being inimical to the future status of all persons of Japanese racial extraction in the United States. I condemn the action as unwise, ill-advised, entirely uncalled-for, and dangerous to our future security.

The repatriation movement plays right into the hands of political race-baiters, who are the cause of our current misfortunes. It again confirms their insidious claims of our disloyalty and gives teeth to the present movement, beginning in California and echoing throughout the nation, to repatriate every individual of Japanese descent when truce is declared.

I have given my time, energy and personal finances in the fight for democratic acceptance and treatment of the American Nisei, and I believe that others have done nearly as much. It is regrettable that all this work must be completely nullified by such irrational actions as the repatriation movement in your center.

I cannot impress the Nisei Public too much with the gravity of our present position and the innumerable difficulties besetting our path. I cannot emphasize too greatly that the actions of a few tend to reflect upon our racial group as a whole. Wisdom would have dictated a less abortive approach.

Yours very truly,

James M. Omura  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
~~Pacific Coast Evacuee~~  
Placement Bureau

February 27, 1943

Dear Mr. Omura:

Your letter of February 21 has been transmitted to the office of the Assistant Secretary for reply.

It is to be regretted that you do not accept the explanation of the reason for the formation of the Japanese American combat team as is given in the Secretary's letter of February 9, and in the letter from the Assistant Secretary's Office of February 19.

The Secretary and the War Department have been sincere in their efforts to assist loyal Japanese Americans. Since the views of the Secretary already have been given it appears further explanation or elaboration would serve no useful purpose.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE  
Colonel, G. S.  
Executive

Mr. James M. Omura, Executive Director  
Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau  
2008 Larimer Street  
Denver, Colorado

oasw/wps/maw

*sw 3/19/18  
Dep. Sec. Comstock  
Omura, James W.*

*2-*

*2-27-43*

Box 47  
Folder 11  
Item 9  
Page 14

February 28, 1943

Dear Mr. Onuma:

Your letter of February 23 addressed to the Secretary of War has been transmitted to me for reply. He asked that you be thanked for your expression of your loyalty and for the information you have furnished to him.

The information received in this office with reference to the Tule Lake registration coincides with that which you gave. This high percentage of "expressed" disloyalty to the United States is indeed regrettable and can certainly be of no benefit for the Japanese-Americans as a whole. It is unfortunate that all of the Japanese-American citizens could not have accepted the War Department's plan with the sincerity that it was given. I believe that it was explained in a previous letter to you that one important purpose of the War Department's plan in forming the Japanese-American combat team was to lead the way in a general recognition of the loyalty of our Japanese-American citizens. It was realized, of course, that there were many features in the War Department plan which were not fully satisfactory to the Japanese-American citizens, but since it would open the way to reconstitute the citizens' rights, it was hoped that all the Japanese-American citizens would accept it in the spirit it was given and demonstrate their unity for collaboration. If, as you suggest, the Nisei asked for expatriation because they objected to the nature of the questionnaire and the method pursued, their affection for this land must have been absent or at best very slight.

I regret to say that the War Department teams conducting the registration have met with great difficulties in some centers. All too often it appears they were subjected to obvious harassment. This is particularly true at Tule Lake and it occurs to me that by some means the loyal Japanese will have to get together to combat the aggressive disloyal clique who exercise more influence than should be condoned.

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 (Onuma, James M.)  
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 Tule Lake

2-28-42

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I do not know whether I have made myself clear on this, but I trust that some way eventually will be found whereby the Japanese who have demonstrated their loyalty and patriotism to this country will have a total reconstitution of their rights.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM P. SCOBET  
Colonel, U. S.  
Executive

Mr. James M. Ourn, Executive Director  
Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau  
2008 Larimer Street  
Denver, Colorado

OASW:WPS:AMC

2 March 1944

Mr. James M. Omura, Editor  
The Rocky Shippo  
1941 Larimer Street  
Denver 2, Colorado

Dear Mr. Omura:

Your letter to the Secretary of War of February 14, 1944, reporting on certain petitions filed in protest against the reinstatement of general Selective Service procedures for American citizens of Japanese descent considered acceptable for military service, is acknowledged with thanks.

While there have been here and there some misunderstandings of the War Department's good intentions, there has been an excellent response which has manifested itself in the form of many additional applications for voluntary induction. The manner in which loyal American citizens of Japanese descent have shouldered burdens placed on them by the circumstances of war will receive appropriate recognition.

ASW 342.18 J. A. COMMENTS---OMURA, JAMES M.

ASW 342.18 J.A. Selective Service  
Comments, Omura, James M.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. HALL  
Captain, F.A.  
Assistant Executive

2-10-44

CASW:JMH:MGB

2-28-44

4 March 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, G-1:

Subject: Induction of Japanese Americans.

Your memorandum of February 26th regarding the induction of Japanese Americans into the armed forces and the flow of replacements for the two Japanese American combat units raises the disturbing thought in my mind that the policies which we are, in fact, practicing are not consistent with the policy which has been expressed by the Secretary of War regarding segregation. (See attached copy of the Secretary of War's reply to Mr. James Omura dated 9 February 1943).

*(The WD has me doing it)*

It is realized that the amended Selective Training and Service Act has caused a delay in the flow of induction, which delay probably could not have been foreseen, and that emergency measures had to be taken to secure adequate replacement personnel. The stop-gap measure of withdrawing the Japanese Americans now on duty with the service commands and assigning them to AFO's at Blanding and McClellan, although it was not motivated by a desire to segregate Japanese American units, still in effect results in segregation. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the War Department to maintain that a segregation policy is not in force when the concrete acts result in such segregation.

The creation of the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team was not designed to establish a policy of segregation for Japanese American citizens who were voluntarily entering the military service or who were inducted. It was my understanding that these units were organized to permit the training of combat units which could be rapidly employed overseas in a theater of operations other than the Pacific Area. I believe that the record of the 100th Battalion has justified the creation of this unit. At the time the 100th Battalion was reorganized from the Hawaiian National Guard unit there were already on general assignment throughout the Armed Services a considerable number of Japanese Americans who had been inducted prior to December 7, 1941. Except for those on special assignment

ASW 742.18 J. A. COMMENTS--Omura, James

ASW 742.18 J.A. Selective Service--Gen.

4 March 44

4 Mar 44

Box 47  
Folder 11  
Item 9  
Page 18

- 2 -

as interpreters in the Pacific Area, these Japanese Americans were scattered throughout the service commands in some tactical units. Their presence in units other than the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team was an indication that segregation as such was not the War Department policy. With the withdrawal of Japanese Americans from the service commands, I believe that the War Department is placed in the position of saying one thing and doing another.

In a recent memorandum I asked that you consider a general assignment policy for specially qualified personnel so that their special qualifications could be utilized. I think that this proposal should be given further consideration. It seems perfectly feasible in my mind that these individuals can be assigned to units in the zone of the interior and to certain service units in the Pacific Theater which do not come in contact with the enemy, and which, therefore, would not have to be screened before being sent overseas.

I would like to have your comments on this matter.

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY

JOHN J. McCLOY  
Assistant Secretary of War

Enc.

CC ltr. (Feb. 9 '44) to CMRFA fr. S/WAR

Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1  
Room 33 929  
Pentagon Building