

ASW 353.8 M. M. M. - Japan

19 July 1943

Dear Mr. Hay:

Your letter addressed to the Office of War Information quoting an extract from a religious pamphlet which in turn quotes from a letter written by a Japanese American soldier, has been referred to this office for acknowledgment and reply.

The Army does have at the present time approximately 6,000 Nisei (American born Japanese) in its ranks. The majority of these soldiers are at Camp Shelby, Mississippi but more than a thousand are scattered throughout other stations in the Army. Since many officers are unfamiliar with the Japanese Americans it is possible that there has been some misunderstanding on how they should be treated, but the War Department has no knowledge of the incident reported in the publication you quote.

The policy of the War Department is to treat the Japanese American soldiers exactly as other American soldiers are treated, and any discrimination against them because of racial origin is at variance with this policy. If you will furnish this office with the name of the place where the alleged incident occurred or the name of the soldier who wrote the letter the matter will be investigated with a view to correct what appears to have been an improper procedure.

As announced by the Secretary of War last January, the War Department has organized a Japanese American Combat Team, composed of infantry, field artillery and engineers. All of the enlisted men and some of the officers of this combat team are Japanese American citizens. This unit is developing into an excellent fighting organization and the men belonging to it have a high esprit de corps.

A number of Japanese American soldiers already are in the combat areas where they are performing highly valuable service, and recently three of them were decorated for their meritorious service.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

Mr. John W. Hay
795 Main Street
Westbrook, Maine

WILLIAM P. SCOBEE
Colonel, General Staff
Executive to Asst. Secretary of War

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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

JUL 14 1943

Colonel William P. Scobey
U. S. War Department
Room 4E-886 Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Scobey:

The attached communication was referred to the War Relocation Authority but it seems to deal with matters in the province of the War Department.

Sincerely yours,

D. S. Myer
Director

Enclosure



HARRY F. G. HAY JOHN W. HAY
 SEVEN HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE MAIN STREET
 WESTBROOK, MAINE

RG 107-183
 Box 53
 Folder 6
 Item 9
 Page 3

Office of War Information
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:

I am quoting an excerpt from a religious pamphlet that came to my desk this week:

"What happens to the American-Japanese who finds himself treated like an outcast? Here is one answer, which we take from a letter written by a nesei citizen who, in a spirit of high patriotism, enlisted in the United States Army immediately after Pearl Harbor.

" 'Eversince they announced Japanese shooting of American prisoners of the Bombing of Tokyo,' he writes, 'we all nesei soldiers got confined to the barrack. We can't even go to P. X. or to the movie or service club now. Only place we can go is to the mess hall and next barrack..... It is a punishment for what we have no responsible for. I blew up when we got the order. I don't want to feel this way toward this country and I honestly tried very hard to keep faith on her and believe on her, but I can't help it anymore when things like this happen so often. I cried last night and I wasn't the only one either. I know so many good Americans and I tried and tried, but these things happen so often overpowering it. Other nisei are talking very calmly and quieter than usual, but I couldn't hold on... Honestly, I tried my best to be a good soldier, but now no use because my heart isn't there any more. I want to be somebody you'll be proud of, but look as I have failed. I only wish you believe on me and remember I tried my very best.' "

"This boy went into the war a fervid American Patriot. What will he be when he comes out? And do you remember that phrase of President Roosevelt's 'we are fighting for the freedom of all peoples'? I rest the case, Fellow Christians."

When I first read this I was struck with the injustice of such an action on the part of our Army authorities. Then it occurred to me that there must have been some very logical purpose behind such an action.

It strikes me more forcibly, however, that it is some type of enemy propoganda that has been used inadvisedly by a well-meaning editor of this pamphlet.

Whatever may be the reason, I have faith enough in our military authorities to believe that some very good reason is at the root of the matter. It is unfortunate, however, that there may not be placed in the hands of the person who published this article the real facts. He is in a position to disseminate facts and knowledge to a large group of readers. I should be happy to pass on to him the true and factual explanation for this matter.

Please reply at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully yours,

