

April 10, 1943

ASW ~~SECRET~~ 353.8 MORALE J. A. Troops

2x (Class. No. 342.18 J.A.General)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL:

Attention: Colonel R. M. Gray

This office is in receipt of a report from Lieutenant Colonel S. L. A. Marshall, with reference to the local conditions as effecting Japanese American soldiers stationed at Camp Shelby. The following paragraph from this report is considered to be of primary interest to the Provost Marshal General.

"3. The negative factors which may prove a source of trouble at some future time are all of minor character and are subject to positive treatment by the War Department. They are as follows:

- c. Uncouth treatment of the Japanese Americans by some of the local M.P.(S, which is a cause for complaint from their officers who say this has been the chief course of discrimination against them."

Elaborating upon this statement, Colonel Marshall orally reports to the undersigned that the Military Police in the city of Hattiesburg, as well as at Camp Shelby, apparently deliberately single out Japanese American soldiers for attention and in the course of addressing them use opprobrious names and swear at them.

In view of the fact that the Army will shortly have nearly 5000 additional Japanese American soldiers in Camp Shelby, members of the 442nd Combat Team, and in further view of the fact that many of these soldiers will come from Hawaii, where they have been accustomed to special considerations from the white and native population, it

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is felt by this office that if this report is correct, immediate corrective measures should be taken.

The Military Police at Hattiesburg and Camp Shelby should be informed that the Japanese American soldiers are to be treated exactly as all other soldiers.

(signed)

William P. Scobey
Colonel, G. S.
Executive

Major General Allen Gullion
The Provost Marshal General
Room 1058, Munitions Building

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WAR DEPARTMENT
ARMY SERVICE FORCESRG 107-183
Box 53
Folder 6
Item 26
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April 8, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL WILLIAM P. SCOBEEY

Subject: Situation at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

1. Confirming and amplifying the report made to your office by radio, April 6, 1943, it is herewith stated that an investigation of the situation at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, reveals no evidence that the assignment of the 442nd Combat Team to that area is likely to create new race frictions or exacerbate existing ones.

2. The factors serving to assure an orderly reception and training of additional Japanese American units within the area designated may be briefed as follows:

a. A better than average discipline and state of contentment in the Negro troops within this command and a friendly interest on their part in the Japanese Americans as another minority group, which interest is not compromised by any jealousy on the part of the Negro troops toward the Japanese Americans because the latter have greater liberties when off the reservation.

b. The soldierly bearing of the men of the 100th Battalion (Japanese Americans from Hawaii) which has won for all Japanese Americans the friendly regard of a majority of the community and within the camp, and has resulted in a consistent improvement of the position of the Japanese American soldiers both with relation to the community and to their fellow soldiers.

c. Frank acceptance by the leaders of the civilian population of the equality of the Japanese Americans and of the need to stimulate an educational program toward the end that such minor discriminations as now exist will be eliminated. Examples: House owners refusing to rent to Japanese; Caucasian girls declining to dance with Japanese American soldiers at the USO. Regarding the latter, this situation existed soon after the arrival of the 100th Battalion, but its members are now being extended the same hospitality as any white soldier. Housing, however, is extremely scarce in the Hattiesburg area, and it is to be expected that the white population will prefer not to rent to Japanese families.

d. An unusually keen awareness of the factors in the situation on the part of the command as well as of the interested unit commanders, and a general understanding of the methods to be pursued, to wit, fostering of optimum recreational facilities for Negro troops within the camp while encouraging friendly treatment of them by merchants, bus operators, etc., and, according to Japanese the same disciplinary treatment and privileges as any other other group of soldiers.

3. The fact that with the arrival of the combat team the Japanese Americans will not be any more conspicuous because of their numbers. This is so because the number of Negro troops and white troops at Camp Shelby are building up simultaneously and, therefore, the ratio of white troops to Negro troops to Japanese troops will remain approximately the same as now.

3. The negative factors which may prove a source of trouble at some future time are all of minor character and are subject to positive treatment by the War Department. They are as follows:

a. A faulty public relations situation whereby all news of the Japanese troops is bottled by the War Department, thus surrounding them with an air of mystery and creating the suspicion that they are not to be trusted and that the unit has a sinister character. This refracted is so apparent that it is openly discussed both in the camp and in the community. If not corrected it may do untold harm and generate the very frictions which the War Department is anxious to avoid. It is felt that this situation can be corrected at once, without jeopardy, if the local commanders are given the same discretionary powers regarding the news of Japanese American troops as with any other troops.

b. The likelihood of serious frictions within the Combat Team itself, due to the composition of the cadre which is nearly 100% mainland Japanese whereas the unit will be better than 60% Hawaiian Japanese. These latter, feeling themselves to be superior soldiers, will probably resent the situation from the outset. Officers of both the 100th Battalion and the 422nd Combat Team have misgivings about it and the Japanese officers of the former said positively that they felt it would lead to strife unless the present situation is reconsidered.

c. Uncouth treatment of the Japanese Americans by some of the local M.P.'s, which is a cause for complaint from their officers who say this has been the chief source of discrimination against them.

d. The tendency on the part of outside interests to see all Army situations involving the different races as ipso facto race problems rather than as problems in human relationships and adjustments to be treated with massive common sense by those directly concerned rather than to be investigated and analyzed by those who do not have final responsibility. The situation at Camp Shelby and Hattiesburg is in good hands; there is not one facet of it which is not apt to be brightened within the future by methods now being pursued.

(signed)

S. L. A. MARSHALL,
Lt. Colonel, A. U. S.
Chief, Orientation and Publications Section
Information Branch.