

September 15, 1943

Most U. S. Japs Loyal, Says F. D.; Asks Fair Play

By WILLARD EDWARDS

President Roosevelt told the Senate yesterday that Japanese in this country must be accorded the same fair treatment as other minorities.

He reported that train movements of 6,300 admittedly disloyal Japanese were started early this month to a segregation camp at Tule Lake in northern California.

Rest Are Loyal

Most of the remaining 90,000 Japs, constituting the great majority of those evacuated from their West Coast homes after Pearl Harbor, are "loyal to the democratic institutions of the United States," Mr. Roosevelt asserted.

He announced that the War Relocation Authority proposes now to redouble its efforts to relocate this latter group "into normal homes and jobs in communities throughout the United States."

Accept Our Institutions

"Americans of Japanese ancestry," the President wrote, "like those of many other ancestries, have shown that they can, and want to, accept our institutions and work loyally with the rest of us, making their own valuable contribution to the national wealth and well being."

"In vindication of the very ideals for which we are fighting this war, it is important to us to maintain a high standard of fair, considerate and equal treatment for the people of this minority as of all other minorities."

Proposes Return to Coast

The President put himself on record not only as approving the location of all Japanese-Americans in American communities but as favoring their return to the West Coast "as soon as the military situation will make such restoration feasible."

Those being segregated in the Tule Lake center are Japs who have refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the United States, have openly avowed their loyalty to the Japanese Emperor, and who have expressed a wish to return to Japan for permanent residence.

The report has a kind word even for these outspoken disloyalists. They are mostly "law-abiding persons who have simply given up trying to become adjusted in the United States," it stated.

OREGONIAN

September 5, 1943

Nisei Soldiers Topflight, Say Army Leaders

Japanese-American Combat Team at Camp Shelby Insist They Are Not Hyphenated

BY ELLIOTT CHASE

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Sept. 4 (AP)—Don't spell Japanese-American with that hyphen, brother. Make it plain Japanese American. The black-eyed youngsters of Camp Shelby's uncommon combat team "aren't hyphenated Americans."

Private Mike Masuoka of Salt Lake City scrunched out of a slit trench (the unit has just begun its first field work) to make the point clear:

"Some of us," he said, "are abbreviated Americans. We aren't tall men. But damned if we're hyphenated. The term 'Japanese' is used merely as a descriptive adjective, see?"

I got the idea, looking at Mike and his Japanese American buddies swarming quietly over the bivouac area.

"Look," Masuoka said, "You know our combat team motto? It's 'Go for broke.' In a crap game that means: shoot the works. Well, Bub, that's what we're doing. Because the showing we make in this man's war is going to help insure the privileges of our kids as Americans after the fight."

Mike gouged a piece of red clay the size of a golf tee out of his ear and said he reckoned it is a good thing the Japanese Americans are welded into a solid combat unit, because they won't get "lost in the shuffle."

"Maybe we'll hit the jackpot on some fighting front," he said "This way, it's a credit to us all."

Even before these Nisei Americans took to the field with its mud and its chiggers, life in camp had not been a downhill breeze. Because they looked like the little men who struck Pearl Harbor, there were occasional fights in the post exchange with the white boys when the 3.2 beer was flowing. These mixups were isolated circumstances, however, and the whites fought as frequently with other whites as with the Japanese Americans.

Currently the combat team soldiers are getting along well with the white soldiers, and have interested some of them in barefoot football, a favorite Hawaiian island sport which either strengthens the toes or fractures them.

Rivalry between Japanese Americans from the mainland and those from the islands occasionally blossoms into fist-cuffs, however. Number one argument appears to be the beach at Atlantic City versus the beach at Waikiki.

Number two on the hit-and-duck parade involves the relative merits of rice and potatoes. The islanders declare potatoes originally were intended as weapons but that man eventually outgrew them.

Chief cause for grumbling by the Nisei in camp was the obstacle course. Its 10-foot barriers looked like the side of a church to the dark-skinned five footers.

"Sometimes," said Larry Sakamoto of Honolulu, "I guess we cheated a little and helped each other over the hump."

They are dead serious for the most part. Their bosses describe them as "crack soldiers—all business." But they aren't without humor.

Most of the boys, even those from the snakeless, pest-free Hawaii, can manage a laugh over such inconveniences as the southern mosquito, which they insist are land-locked because "they've never found a runway long enough to get into the air."

"As men," says Private Terry Kumagai of Seattle, Wash., "we

like the islanders. They are gay and tough and they're real soldiers. It's the same sort of friendly rivalry you have here in the United States between the north and south."

Colonel James M. Handley of Mandan, S. D., a battalion commander, expresses the consensus of opinion among white officers who work with the combat team. He says:

"I'll take these men into battle without hesitation when the time comes. They're topflight soldiers with a topflight cause. And most of them are honestly worried there won't be enough war to go around—that it will all be over before they get their chunk of it."

Captain Pershing Nakada is proud of them, too.

Nakada, commanding officer of the engineers company, was born to Japanese parents in 1918 in Mitchell, Neb. He was named for General John J. Pershing, a fact the engineers publicize with or without provocation.

General Sherwood Dixon of Dixon, Ill., swears he himself has the toughest battalion "south of the north pole." When Dixon says the Japanese Americans are tough, one listens.

A veteran of the first world war, the colonel recently startled a Washington newspaperman, John Terry, by plucking a bouquet of poison oak leaves.

"Terry," said the colonel, "have you ever seen poison oak?"

"Yes, sir," said Terry, "but you'd better put it down."

The colonel bit off a rich helping from the bouquet and chewed it thoughtfully. "The stuff," he said, "doesn't bother me a bit."

And that seems to be the way the Japanese American soldiers feel about the rigors of field training: so long as one remembers they aren't hyphenated Americans.

WRA PLACES 400 JAPANESE IN CITY

Nisei Brought Here From Relocation Centers

More than 400 Nisei—American citizens of Japanese ancestry—have found release from government "relocation centers" in jobs obtained for them in Greater Cleveland by the War Relocation Authority, it was announced yesterday by the WRA area office here.

The Nisei, one-third of whom are women, are engaged not only in work requiring manual skills, but have found places in offices as clerks, stenographers and typists, in professional fields as dental technicians, nurse aids and mechanical, architectural or civil engineers, in business as accountants.

A few have been placed as farmhands, while 75 are helping to fill the city's need for domestic help.

According to Harold S. Fistere, WRA area supervisor, and F. W. Ross, associate area supervisor, the Nisei have so impressed employers with their good work habits and particularly with their record as to absenteeism that requests for Nisei workers are now coming into the WRA office in the Union Commerce Building, whereas in the beginning it was necessary for Fistere and Ross to persuade management and labor to accept them as employees and fellow workers.

Find Reception Here Is Good

After a normal period of adjustment the Nisei have generally begun to participate in the social life of the community either through Cleveland families with whom they live or work or through sports or other activities in the places at which they work.

Housing has not proved as great a problem as expected. The men live in the lower-price downtown hotels. The women have little difficulty getting accommodations in private households, where they frequently earn their room and board by helping out with the housework.

The Nisei find their reception by the public here is "good," the WRA officials said. In fact, a recent survey of the 1,500 so far placed in Ohio and Michigan turned up but one instance of discrimination. That one involved the refusal of a barber in a southern Ohio city to give a Nisei a haircut.

The effect of the relocation program on the Nisei, who formerly were accustomed to live in colonies in Pacific Coast states, in the post-war period is something that no one can predict with certainty, the WRA officials said.

SEATTLE TIMES



Readers Have Their Say

IN BEHALF OF THE JAPANESE

Editor,
The Times.

I AM 21 years old and work for Boeing Aircraft Company. A brother, 31, who formerly worked there, is now in the A. A. F. in New York State. I wish to speak on his behalf regarding the American citizens of Japanese descent who of late have come under the public eye.

I am opposed to any form of discrimination against Japanese-Americans that is not based on concrete, specific evidence and administered under constitutional authority.

I have known some so-called "Japs." Most of them I liked and respected. All of them I consider as good Americans as my brother and myself. The small amount of security gained by persecuting

them is not worth the threat to our liberty that is contained in the unconstitutional proposals we have heard of lately. The same kind of reasoning that robs "Japs" of their birthright, regardless of their loyalty and service to our country is a weapon which can be used against Chinese, Filipinos, Negroes, Indians, Germans, Jews, Mexicans, and Catholics.

You see, the United States is composed entirely of minorities. If one brick be taken from the wall, the rest are easier to loosen—and what has become of your wall?

* * *

I DO not pretend that Japan has not tried to cultivate disloyalty to America among the native-born Japanese population. I do say it is to their credit that she has met with scant success.

Discrimination and unfair treatment will only alienate them all, and make the detection of the actively disloyal that much more difficult. We can make good Americans of the Japanese. It is even possible, although perhaps harder, to make loyal citizens of those born in Japan.

There is a world of difference between an educated Japanese,

used to the tolerance and democracy we like to regard as peculiarly our own, and the ignorant, oppressed, deluded and drug-crazed slaves of Tojo and the Black Dragon Society. Even the old drawback of a lower standard of living than ours is disappearing, especially among the younger "Japs."

* * *

REVOCA**TION** of citizenship is unjust to the boys of Japanese ancestry that are now serving in our armed forces. Deportation is impossible and inhuman because this is the only home many of them have ever known.

After all is said and done, they did not register themselves with the Japanese government; their parents did it for them, under compulsion.

Let us fight this war to win. Let us wipe the evils of fascism and aggression from the face of the earth quickly, thoroughly, and completely. But—it is not necessary to give in to hysteria and bigotry to do it. All we need is courage and the faith that ours is the better way.

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