

June 1, 1991

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Redress Administration
P.O. Box 6670
Washington, D.C. 20035-6740

Subject: John Y. Udaka

To Whom It May Concern:

To the best of my personal knowledge I declare under penalty of perjury that the following statements are true and correct.

I have been engaged in research, for about five years on the men who served in the 525th Quartermaster's Corp. which subsequently became the 1800th General Service Battalion, using Military Archives and Freedom of Information Act files. It is this this research which is relevant to John Udaka's status with regard to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 under 128 C.F.R. 74.3 (a)(4)(iii).

Japanese Americans, among them John Udaka, who were inducted into the Army prior to and shortly after Pearl Harbor, found themselves regarded as potentially subversive by military authorities. Loyalty determination was conducted by individual commanders whose own prejudices often determined which particular Japanese Americans would be singled out for additional investigation. Japanese Americans identified as disaffected, were then subjected to further investigation by the Counter Intelligence Group, Military Intelligence Division. Their investigations included military personnel and civilians who might have knowledge of the potential subversiveness of the subject. The subjects of these investigations were not aware of these security investigations and were never given the opportunity to respond to these heresay statements relating to their loyalty.

In May 1942, the War Department decided to set up special hard labor battalions for Japanese Americans, German Americans, and Italian Americans who were classified as potentially subversive. The first of these was activated in July 1943 at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. The War Department directive ("Transfer of Potentially Subversive Personnel", National Archives, RG 404, 11-18-42),

establishing the 525th provides a clear picture of why service in this unit involved a significant "loss of liberty", beyond regular military service. "These specially formed organizations to which may be transferred the potentially more dangerous individuals... against whom evidence of disloyalty or subversive activity is not of sufficient provability to justify court martial," would be kept under strict control and given duties which would eliminate the possibility of subversive activity. This was to be a hard labor battalion under constant security surveillance, including mail censorship. The men who served in this unit were never promoted beyond the rank of private.

John Udaka was a Japanese American in the Army in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and the eruption of anti Japanese prejudices. Udaka was a Japanese American and therefore "potentially subversive." He was assigned to the 525th because of racial prejudice and served in this unit from July 1943 until December 1944.

In summary, John Udaka's service in the 525th Quartermaster's Corp. which subsequently became the 1800th General Service Battalion involved a significant "loss of liberty" as designated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

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