



CHICAGO-NISEI POST No.1183

The American Legion / ~~1048 West Wilson~~ / Chicago, Illinois 60640 / 312 / ~~561-9152~~

5241 N. Bernard St.,
Chicago, Ill. 60625

Please, REPLY TO;

April 8, 1988

Hubert Campney, Commander
Iowa-Great Lakes Chapter, Ex-POWs
R.R. #1, Box 105
Emmetsburg, Iowa 50536

Dear Commander Campney:

As a former Ex-POW I wish to reply to your letter of March 20, 1988.

I was a former resident of Sacramento, CA. where I was born and attended schools until I graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1936. I was working as a civil service employee of the State of California until the outbreak of the Pacific War.

Along with 120,000 others of Japanese ancestry, I was interned at the Tule Lake Relocation Center without any charges against us, without any trial or individual hearing.

From there I volunteered to serve in the U.S. military intelligence service for the war against Japan after a recruiting team came for Japanese Americans who could learn the difficult Japanese language at the U.S. military language school at Camp Savage, MN.

Over 5,000 of us (half from the Hawaiian Islands) and the rest from the internment centers either volunteered or entered the U.S. MIS.

Contrary to all the distorted information issued to the public, Japanese Americans were loyal to the country of their birth. In Hawaii where the attack took place, with the exception of a few taken into custody on suspicion only, the Japanese Americans were not interned unlike those on the west coast states of the mainland. General Emmons in charge of the Hawaiian Islands refused to panic and prevented internment of loyal Japanese Americans unlike General De Witt who ordered the internment of all Japanese Americans on the west coast after tremendous pressure from politicians and special interest groups who are still agitating against Japanese Americans after over 40 years.

It may be surprising to you that the National 34th Inf. Division Association adopted a strong resolution in 1984 recognizing the injustice of interning innocent American citizens of Japanese ancestry who proved their intense loyalty to the United States by their tremendous battle records in the Pacific and European campaigns.

Over five million members of the National Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion adopted similar resolutions in 1984 recognizing the injustice of interning loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry.

It is unfortunate that many Americans, especially, those associated with Lillian Baker confuse American-born Japanese with the Japanese nationals who attacked Pearl Harbor.

Even though Germany and Italy along with Japan were at war with the United States, the only ones interned en masse were those of Japanese ancestry.

Of the 120,000 interned on the west coast states, 70% were American citizens. Our alien parents were ineligible to become naturalized because of restrictive state laws of that time. Our parents were enabled to become naturalized citizens after Congress enacted the Walter-McCarran Act in the 1950s in recognition of the tremendous war records of Japanese Americans in both the Pacific and European theaters of war.

Perhaps it may be of surprise to you that there were Gold Star mothers who were locked up in the internment centers because their sons were willing to serve their country after leaving their loved ones in these internment centers.

I was fortunate to survive after serving with other Japanese Americans in the North Burma campaign as a member of the 124 Cavalry Regiment of Texas which was part of the Mars Task Force, a commando organization.

A number of Japanese Americans served with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team which took part in the rescue of the 'Lost Battalion' of the 36th Infantry Division of Texas in which the all-Nisei regiment lost 800 members to rescue 200 Texans. Half of the 442nd RCT members came from the internment centers. I wonder how many Americans would fight for a country who had rejected them because of their ancestry?

Very few Americans are aware that Japanese Americans were faculty members of the military intelligence schools at Boulder, Colorado and the University of Michigan and Chicago where they taught military Japanese to their students who became language officers in charge of teams composed mainly of Japanese Americans.

General Willoughby, Chief of Intelligence for General MacArthur and Colonel Mashbir, head of Allied Translation and Interpreter Section at Brisbane, Australia, both stated that the Japanese Americans in the MIS helped shorten the Pacific War by two years and saved thousands of Allied military personnel lives by their efforts.

As one of the three national officers of Pettigrew Press the publisher of the documentary book 'Yankee Samurai' the stories of Japanese Americans who served in the military intelligence services during World War II we interviewed over 2,000 former members of the MIS. To this date very few publications on the Pacific campaigns have given credit to Japanese Americans who served in the military intelligence services.

Incidentally, the Japanese Americans considered the most valuable were those called Kibei who were American born but educated in Japan and became the best instructors and students at the MIS school. Unfortunately, they were the ones most mistrusted by the FBI and individuals like Lillian Baker and David Lowman.

Enclosed are copies of letters and articles that may be of interest to you. One, in particular, is from Art Vater, then National VFW Convention Director.

I hope that you will see why the major veterans organizations of this country supported us in this campaign to redress injustice committed against loyal citizens of this country.

Sincerely,

Arthur T. Morimitsu, Past Commander
Life Member, 124 Cavalry Assn. Texas
GO FOR BROKE/MIS Midwest Chairman