

Mike M. Masacka

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

TELEPHONE [REDACTED]

January 13, 1984

Mr. Chet Tanaka
Go For Broke, Inc.
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Chet:

Just a quick note to report that my wife and I, as well as two staff members from Congressman Mineta's office, saw the TV film titled "Nisei Soldiers".

All in all, we found the film to be very satisfying and about as accurate as any that I have yet seen. As a matter of fact, aside from some minor items, I feel that the major error is that relating to the activation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team because of the earlier activation and outstanding record of the 100th Infantry Battalion. As I noted to Ms. Ding, and she agreed, the initial activation in the then Territory of Hawaii of the 100th was because of the literally hundreds of letters and resolutions, notably that of the JACL, the Army decided that it would recall those Nisei members of the Hawaii National Guard Units and observed how they reacted before they decided whether to call for volunteers for military duty in what became the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Initially, the Army thought of simply recalling the former Nisei National Guardsmen but they could not work out an acceptable procedure for placing them in various army units throughout the country and the battle fronts, so they decided to keep them together as a segregated unit. Although it was not said, probably the experience of keeping Negro troops in segregated units was the precedent for the 100th as a segregated unit composed only of Japanese Americans except for most of its officers. Moreover, since 100th Infantry was not composed of volunteers but rather a recall of former servicemen, its members on the average were somewhat older than we on the mainland who volunteered for the 442nd. And, because the 100th was a segregated unit based on racial grounds, the Army thought that the 442nd too should be, even though the JACL and the overwhelming majority of the Nisei who asked for the right to serve our country thought in terms of a non-segregated unit.

This may not seem like such a large matter, but I think it is important to indicate that the volunteers from the mainland were mostly from concentration camps to which they had been evacuated and detained.

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Again, may I repeat what I said earlier, that taken as a whole, this is the best film made about our wartime experience and why we volunteered and served as well as we did. It is a film that should be shown to as many different audiences as possible, including the TV networks and individual stations, whether they be within the PBS system or in the commercial systems.

I believe that GFB should do everything possible to promote this particular film.

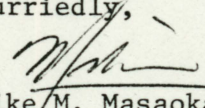
Ms. Ding tells me that she is working on another film which will deal with the problem of the Kibei and others who volunteered for the Military Intelligence Service. In many ways, I fear that there could be problems with such a film not so much that some few may have joined MIS for certain reason. But because the unquestioning loyalty and allegiance to the United States that we who served in the 442nd so spontaneously believed and espoused cannot be properly emphasized. If the delicate and sensitive issues of dual nationality and possible loyalty to Japan cannot be properly interpreted and depicted, the public at large may get the wrong picture or image of how most of us felt and give some credence and credibility to those who continue to feel as the race and warmongers felt and said back in the dark days of World War II. With our redress program moving to the fore we can hardly encourage or even tolerate any showings or pronouncements that might allow a revival of World War II racism against us Issei and Nisei.

In an abbreviated way, I tried to make this point to Ms. Ding, who seemed to appreciate what I was trying to say. Accordingly, I think that it would be most worthwhile if you and others in our community who are sensitive to these nuances would be willing to cooperate and work very closely with Ms. Ding and her associates in order that her subsequent films will be as accurate and as understanding of the real facts as is her current "Nisei Soldiers".

On another subject, may I say that Senator Spark Matsunaga is mending fast and is well on his road to recovery, though he will probably be away from his office until about the end of February. If GFB would like to do something for him, I suggest that it be in the way of a fruit basket, rather than flowers, for plants tend to steal too much oxygen from patients and may give some allergies to those who are susceptible. Some California fruit, I believe, would be most appreciated not only by the Senator but also by his family.

So much for this time. Will write more soon.

Hurriedly,


Mike M. Masaoka

MMM:mt

cc: Loni Ding ✓