

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Springfield, Massachusetts

June 15, 1945

Memorandum for School Employees:

The following article concerning the Nisei appeared in the Pacific Coast Citizen:

"MANDAN, N. D. Lieut. Col. James M. Hanley, commander of the famed 2nd Battalion of the 442nd (Japanese-American) Infantry Regiment, took time recently on the Western Front to write a letter to his home town editor, Charles F. Pierce of the Mandan Daily Pioneer.

"Col. Hanley, son of James M. Hanley, Sr., of Mandan, took exception to a remark in Editor Pierce's column some weeks ago which read: 'A squib in a paper makes the statement that there are some good Jap-Americans in this country but it didn't say where they were buried.'

"Col. Hanley's letter, published in the Daily Pioneer on March 31, declared:

"Dear Charlie: Just received the Pioneer of January 20 and noted the paragraph enclosed.

"Yes, Charlie, I know where there are some GOOD Japanese-Americans -- there are some 5000 of them in this unit. They are American soldiers -- and I know where some of them are buried. I wish I could show you some of them, Charlie. I remember one Japanese-American. He was walking ahead of me in a forest in France. A German shell took the right side of his face off. I recall another boy. An .88 had been trying to get us for some time -- finally got him. When they carried him out on a stretcher the bloody meat, from the middle of the thighs down, hung over the end of the stretcher and dragged in the dirt. The bone parts were gone.

"I recall a sergeant -- a Japanese-American if you will--who had his back blown in two. What was he doing? Why, he was only lying on top of a white officer who had been wounded, to protect him from shell fragments during a barrage.

"I recall one of my boys who stopped a German counterattack single-handed. He fired all his BAR ammunition, picked up a German rifle, emptied that; used a German Luger pistol he had taken from a prisoner.

"I wish I could tell you the number of Japanese-Americans who have died in this unit alone.

"I wish I could tell you the number of wounded we have had -- the sightless eyes, the missing limbs, the broken minds. I wish I could tell you the decorations we have won. I wish the boys in the 'Lost Battalion' could tell you what they think of Japanese-Americans. I wish that all the troops we have fought beside could tell you what they know.

"The marvel is, Charlie, that these boys fight at all. They are good soldiers in spite of the type of racial prejudice shown by your paragraph.

"I know it makes a good joke -- but it is the kind of joke that prejudice thrives upon. It shows a lack of faith in the American ideal. Our system is supposed to make good Americans out of anyone -- it certainly has done it in the case of these boys. You, the Hood River Legion post, Hearst and a few others make one wonder just what we are fighting for. I hope it isn't racial prejudice.

"Come on over here, Charlie. I'll show you where 'some good Jap-Americans are buried'. -- J. M. Hanley, Hq. 442nd Inf., APO 758, in Care of P.M., NYC."

John Granrud  
Superintendent