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CHAPTER --

SOLDIERS' DEPENDENCY ALLOWANCES

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I WELFARE SECTION'S RESPONSIBILITY

Army allowances were received at the Center by all eligible Class A dependents--wives and children--and most of the eligible Class B dependents--parents, brothers and sisters--under the Servicemen's Dependents Allowance Act of 1942 Amended.

It should be noted that the enlistments of Japanese-American servicemen were confined to one branch of the services, the Army, which rendered the Welfare Section's task of information giving and correspondence less complex.

A Classes of Dependents

1 Class A Dependents. Wives and/or children at the Center received their allowances automatically, since only the submission of marriage and birth certificates was required after either spouse had applied for benefits, and their cases seldom came to the attention of the Welfare Section as a service request.

Earlier cases of Class A allowance were learned about and recorded in family-counseling interviews in 1944. Others were discovered in the month-to-month review of clothing grants made to the families of soldiers, in which event eligibility for clothing grants was canceled. A wife receiving 50 dollars per month for herself, 30 dollars for the first child, and 20 dollars monthly allowance for each additional child was obviously considered able to put aside some money for relocation, having no rent, food, or medical bills to pay at the Center.

Class A allowances starting in 1945 were usually learned about in the course of dependency surveys by this office, and in other interviews wherein resources had to be declared to qualify for public assistance or resettlement grants when relocating.

In any event, the receipt of Army allowances by wives and children became an instrument of relocation planning for this office, needing perhaps only a letter to the Red Cross via the WRA district office to effect a satisfactory relocation. Only occasional letters for wives had to be written, inasmuch as wives, financially independent otherwise, could and did receive allowances at the Center, since the terms of Public Law 625 Amended did not require dependency to be eligible. Even needy wives were in a few months able to accumulate a few hundred dollars in savings at the Center, and thus relocate with the feeling that with the help of the Red Cross they would not suffer immediate hardship.

Questions of maternity benefits for soldiers' wives were usually handled by the Manzanar Red Cross unit, with literature on the program available there.

~~2 Class A~~ ^{Class B} Dependents.. Parents, minor brothers and sisters, when approved by the War Department, received at the Center ~~\$1~~ \$37 dollars per month regardless of number of dependents. Receipt of such allowance was usually known to the Welfare Section soon after approval, although in some instances payment was received and did not become known until the family applied at the Welfare Section for a furniture grant incidental to relocation.

B-1 benefits (\$50, \$68, \$79, \$90 and more per month depending on number of eligible brothers and sisters) required principal dependency

on the soldier, impossible for most parents to claim at the Center. Only two cases of B-1 allowance were known, and these involved an invalid condition which made it hard for the aged parents to avail themselves of WRA's free mess-hall meals.

II HISTORY OF CLASS B ARMY ALLOWANCES TO CENTER RESIDENTS

A Center Evacuees Become Eligible

WRA Administrative Notice No. 44, dated March 13, 1944, announced to all Community Management Division staff that, with the opening of Army inductions to Nisei, all parents, where eligible, should be informed of their rights to Army benefits. Its key point was that "in many families the induction of a son or brother into the armed forces leaves an area of economic need not met by the WRA program."

Until November 1944, however, it was widely believed by Nisei enlisted men and officers alike that evacuee parents in the Centers did not qualify for benefits, it being assumed that WRA provided full daily maintenance. The stories of a number of soldiers seen by this interviewer while they were back in the Center on furlough, or whose letters home were seen, attested to this misunderstanding. Some said that they were told by their personnel officers that no dependency could be claimed by or for parents supported by the government. These misunderstandings of course were individual, and not a determination of the Office of Dependency Benefits itself.

A review of welfare records fails to disclose any instance of a War Department dependency certificate (ODB Form 620) filed with the help of this office prior to October 1944, although a few cases of Class B allowance are known to have been paid as far back as July 1944. Such parents submitted dependency data either "on their own" or with the

help of the Project Attorney as a function of the Legal Aid Bureau, during the period from July to December, 1944. In January 1945, the Project Attorney turned over to the Welfare Section his list of about 40 Class B applications and discontinued his service on Army allowance matters.

Control of this function was accepted and desired by the Welfare Section because of its close connection with the Section's work, and the advantage it gave the Welfare interviewers as a resource in planning relocation.

Under the date of February 2, 1945, all Project Directors received a memo from the WRA Intermountain Area office at Salt Lake City which recognized the misconceptions current at Army reception centers about the right of Nisei soldiers to apply for Class B allowance, and clarified the extent of dependency. Advices from Fort Douglas, Utah, Headquarters of the 9th Area Command, were cited to the effect that eligible families at the Centers would be given a grant "for only 49 percent of the full possibility". This restated the obvious principle that normally no more than half dependency could exist in a WRA Center, and went on to say that those rare instances of B-1 (over half) dependency claimed should have their dependency certificates accompanied by a medical report and approval of the Project Director. Soon afterward, WRA Manual Release 178 formally notified Community Management staff members that parents, brothers and sisters could receive Class B allowance regardless of Center support if all other requirements of dependency were met.

B Welfare Takes Over the Servicing of Allowance Cases

In January 1945, responsibility for the handling of all Army allowance matters was delegated to one of the Junior Counselors. This assignment was based on recognition of the following new factors:

1 With the War Department's eligibility requirements finally clarified and Army inductions at the Center continuing, the volume of applications and inquiries was sure to increase. For economy of office time and unity of purpose, the servicing of Army allowance cases could best be centered in one staff member.

2 Throughout the spring of 1945, many families at the Center were still reluctant to declare their plans or to make known their need for financial aid, or extent of need. Because of this, counselors in the first half of 1945 were obliged to seek interviews in the home rather than having the more receptive situation of the evacuee coming on his own initiative to the office for counsel. This true, a family who came to the Junior Counselor for help in preparing a dependency statement was also obliged to list resources and plans. The applicant, with a monthly grant of 37 dollars in view, was ready and willing to declare his plans and to cooperate, perhaps sooner than otherwise, in taking actual steps toward relocation.

3 The Junior Counselor chosen for this function had until July 1944 worked in the Determinations Branch of the Office of Dependency Benefits at Newark, N.J., an experience which afforded him an advance knowledge of the Servicemen's Dependents Allowance Act. This facilitated the handling of dependency forms, advice and information, and replies to letters from the War Department to the Project Director to confirm dependency.

C Typical Situations and Questions

1 Example: Mr. and Mrs. H— received, on July 1, a War Department certificate form to execute to show dependency. They read no English and the Block Manager was unable to interpret the form to them. This advice being routine, the Junior Counselor's stenographer, previously trained in

use of the form, typed out the form (ODB No. 620) and had the dependent mail it. The application was listed in a 3x5 card file, and the applicants were interviewed briefly by the counselor to encourage the family actually to relocate soon. Doubts in the parents' mind as to future support were often cleared by the advice that a letter sent ahead to the Red Cross would assure an increase of Army benefits and perhaps supplemental aid.

The counselor later dictated into the H--- record: a: the status of the Class B Army allowance as a resource; b: a summary of resettlement plans to date, and financial needs or contingent plans of relatives; and c: an outline of future steps to be taken. These might be a letter to the WRA district officer to contact a relative for family reunion, or to secure clearance through the Relocation Section about a specific housing that the evacuee might have had in mind. The Junior Counselor in charge of Army allowance matters followed through on the case if responsible for it otherwise, or provided Army information to guide other counselors in handling the case.

2 Example: "We are now getting 37 dollars a month from one son", says Mrs. D---. "May we apply for a second grant from our other son in service, Pvt. John M. D---?"

It was here necessary to advise Mrs. D--- that a claim of dependency on 2 sons would be to claim 2/3 dependency. This was impossible, since Center support itself was normally 2/3.

3 Example: Mrs. G---, a dependent widow, 62, was relocating next month. Might she request county aid, as her son's 37-dollar monthly allowance to her would not be enough? The interviewer (as set forth in Sec. 7 of Administrative Notice 200, May 16, 1945) explained that it was the national policy and obligation of the Red Cross to supplement her support until the Home Service →

could submit new budget to the War Department to effect an increase to B-1 benefits, or 50 dollars per month. If the balance of Mrs. G----'s support was not forthcoming from her own part-time earnings or from other children, the Red Cross would attend to the details of referring her to the County Welfare Department for assistance.

4. Example: Likewise, if Mr. and Mrs. A---, dependent parents, who applied for B allowance at the Center, refused to leave the Project until an approval notice was received from the War Department, the counselor again interpreted the role of the Red Cross outside.

It was explained to the apprehensive parents that the Red Cross was accustomed to instances of long delay on allowance applications, which required the consent of the soldier for authorization. When the soldier was overseas, it often required 3 months to effect payment. To convert a Class B allowance to B-1 benefits might also require 3 months, but the Red Cross would either provide interim financial aid or connect the family with other community resources until the maximum allowance was secured.

The ⁴ instances just cited, while typical, by no means covered the multiplicity of detail involved in servicing some 200 soldiers' allowance cases. Other details involved medical referrals, "Class E conversion" requests, correspondence with the soldier, transmittal of birth certificates, and replies to frequent inquiries from the War Department to the Project Director to confirm dependency of this or that family. Also, a considerable burden of interpretation was necessary to answer the questions of able-bodied parents of middle-age or younger, who assumed, contrary to fact, that an automatic increase to B-1 benefits was due them upon their departure from the Center.

Smaller details of information were often needed, such as inter-

Japanese.

ODB (War Department) Booklet FA-1 and FA-2 were distributed at the Welfare Office. These booklets gave general information on eligibility, but had to be ^{re-}interpreted to Class B applicants in the light of their more limited degree of dependency ^{at} the Center. With many aged ~~dependents~~ parents, the potential larger benefits available outside constituted a bargaining point for the Junior Counselor in making such dependents prefer early relocation.

The Junior Counselor in charge of Army allowance matters presented the essentials of the Soldiers' Dependents Allowance Act Amended to the assembled staff of Community Management at an in-service ~~staff~~ training session on June 18, 1945.

III PROBLEMS REFLECTING UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY

A Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

1 Lack of English. Families who remained in the Center through 1945 were relatively less able to speak English, and often could not understand the War Department's literature and correspondence about Army benefits. Efforts to use the counsel of Block Managers, friends, and younger Nisei children often resulted in their sending wrong data to the War Department, with resultant inquiries from the ODB (Office of Dependency Benefits) to the Project Director for clarification.

2 Interpreters' Limitations. Interpreters often were casually chosen by the dependent, on the basis of the latter's friendship or the fact of being neighbors. With the rapid break-up of evacuee personnel at the Center in 1945, competent evacuee aides could not be kept at the Welfare office for more than a few weeks at a time. Often the lay interpreter interpreted wishfully, and his emotional limitations had to be allowed for.

~~B Limitations of Service~~

B Limitations of Service

1 Clerical help. There was a definite lack of stenographic help, and a rapid turn-over of typists in the Welfare Section. Effort was made to shift some of the burden of form-filling, information service and simple law interpretation to the stenographer. Some routines were successfully handled by evacuee aides in the office, but because of the social import of this counsel and its bearing on relocation, most of the interviewing had to be done by the counselor himself.

After September 1945, no stenographers remained to keep records or to type even the routine forms required by the War Department. Meanwhile the volume of inquiries and correspondence incidental to Red Cross referrals increased with the accelerated exodus from the Center. Even those who had no increase of allowance due them outside the Center often required several minutes of explanation through an interpreter to assure them of this.

2 Specialized function. Being responsible for all Army allowance matters, the writer often found himself involved in a one-sided detail of cases that were in process by other Junior Counselors. The natural tendency was to "take over" entirely some of these cases in addition to his regular case load, because Army allowance at a given time was pivotal in a family's relocation. This caused a backlog of correspondence which, with no stenographer at hand, was not discharged until November 26, several days after close of the Center.

3 Geographical isolation. Little or no direct contact was had with Red Cross Home Service secretaries in the Los Angeles area, to which the bulk of Red Cross referrals were sent. Nor were the dependents so referred seen or heard from after they left. This left the counselor in the Center with a sense of blindness about the outcome of Welfare referrals. Since the established procedure required the channeling of Red Cross referrals through the

WRA District office, it was the social worker in the district office who attended to follow-up details and saw a given case through.

IV RELATIONSHIP TO CENTER RED CROSS UNIT

A Background

WRA Administrative Notice 164, dated September 22, 1944, set forth an operating agreement between Red Cross Home Service and the WRA. At Manzanar, as in other Centers, the Red Cross unit operated directly responsible to ~~the~~ its area office (San Francisco) and was not connected with local chapters at the nearby towns of Lone Pine and Bishop. This notice stipulated that Red Cross and Center Welfare would coordinate their activities for the best interests of the evacuee population; that to this end the Red Cross manager would clear with the Welfare Section for pertinent social data in cases where duplication might occur, or where the use of Welfare records would expedite service.

At Manzanar, this cooperation was inherently easy, since the Red Cross unit manager (an unpaid volunteer worker) in later months worked as leave officer in the Relocation Section, adjacent to Welfare. At all times, Red Cross matters involving Welfare could be cleared informally in the day-to-day contact between the counselor in charge of Army allowances and the unit manager of the Red Cross, plus consultation with the Head Counselor when needed. Disposition of such as payment for a soldier's furlough travel home, or payment of a soldier's parents' short-term leave expenses to seek housing, was confirmed later by a copy of the telegram or a memo inserted in the Welfare folder after the social worker's dictated entry therein.

Because the welfare staff were well represented at Manzanar Red Cross Board meetings,¹ the Welfare Section was able to effect the

1. Serving on the Red Cross Board, and some of them serving at intervals as Unit Manager, were the following Welfare staff members:

Mrs. Margaret D'Ille, Head Counselor, who in earlier years had done Red Cross field work abroad

Mr. Cecil F. Prichett, Junior Counselor in charge of soldiers' allowance matters at the Center. This worker also acted as Unit Manager during the absence of the regular Manager, Mrs. Alice Cowart, during the latter's absence in July 1945

Miss ^{Roslyn} ~~Maryline~~ Milk, Junior Counselor, formerly a ^{paid worker} psychiatric social worker with the Red Cross at Phoenix, Arizona

Mr. William J. Nitschke, Junior Counselor, who served as unit Red Cross manager on the Center for the six-odd months preceding the term of Mrs. Alice Cowart.

Also present at board meetings at various times were members of the project hospital staff, who were often directly acquainted with the evacuee cases whom the Red Cross assisted. Two such members whose presence was helpful were: Mrs. Virginia Carnes, medical social worker, and Miss Josephine Hawes, head nurse.

B Service to Soldiers' Dependents

In the area of soldiers' dependency, the Welfare Section cooperated with the Manzanar Red Cross unit on the following specific problems:

1. Financial aid. Grants were made to soldiers' families for needs not met by WRA, such as

a. Transportation: The Manzanar Red Cross occasionally paid part of the travel costs for soldiers home on furlough to assist their parents in relocation plans. The soldier, particularly if he was the eldest son, felt bound by Japanese custom to aid his parents with planning, packing, business and travel arrangements. If the parents were aged, infirm or crippled, the Welfare Section particularly wanted to use the resource of a Red Cross grant to utilize a soldier's help.

b. Travel costs for parents: Such grants were occasionally made by the Red Cross to service-connected parents, inasmuch as WRA did not pay any of the costs for short-term leaves. Two instances directly aiding relocation are as follows:

Mr. I---- and his wife, parents of T/5 Yukio I----, were aged and

without funds. Y---, wife of the soldier, lived with the parents but could not easily leave to seek housing because of her small baby. A Red Cross grant ~~of~~ was authorized at a board meeting in November, which afforded the 65-year-old Mr. X bus fare to and from Los Angeles and support for 3 days. Mr. X found an auto trailer in which to live at Long Beach, paid his rental deposit, and the family of 4 left the Center on their scheduled date.

Mr. Z--- and his family of 6 had a history of heart ailments and neurotic tendencies affecting all members in varying degree. Since the family, originally from Sacramento, would not be eligible for public aid at their destination, Los Angeles, it seemed well to provide every possible aid from the Center to assure successful re-settlement. The family in November, 1945, showed defeatism and opposition to leaving until a Red Cross grant of 40 dollars was made to assure support for a long enough time for Mr. Z to find a suitable job. Meanwhile, the counselor in charge of Army allowances sent a letter to the WRA district office setting forth the facts of dependency and a statement from the project physician on health and mental problems. This letter cleared the way for application to the ~~War~~ ^{War} Department for ~~reclassification~~ ^{reclassification} of the family as B-1 dependents in the event that hardship developed.

c Army Dependency Discharge Requests: At the outset, it will be understood that the soldier had always to initiate such a request, and that the Red Cross unit on the Center was not to submit a dependency report until asked to do so by the Red Cross Field Director. Not one known discharge for dependency was granted to parents at the Center, although it is believed that a number of soldiers who initiated such requests were discharged after their parents relocated.

In ~~two~~ ² instances, where data were easily available from Welfare

records, this office submitted via the Red Cross a summary of dependency, with supporting medical reports from the project physician. It was known that the soldier had requested discharge, and with the close of the Center at hand, it was certain that the dependents concerned would require referral for public aid if adequate support from the soldier was not forthcoming.

V. OTHER SERVICES TO SOLDIERS' DEPENDENTS

A Condolences and Assistance with Insurance Claims

It was the Project Director's wish that condolences to the bereaved families of soldiers lost in action not be left to the chance calls of staff members, but that the Red Cross and the Welfare Section should cooperate in an official expression of sympathy.

Accordingly, calls were made by the counselor in charge of soldiers' allowances on several bereaved families in 1945, which service was typical of the work done in earlier instances by visits of the Head Counselor and the Red Cross manager. Once, early in the spring of 1945, a community-wide memorial service was held in the project auditorium for a young Nisei soldier killed in action.

In each of the first 2 cases spoken of, the surviving mothers came to the Welfare Section later for assistance in filing application for: a: the 6 months gratuity pay made by the War Department to a deceased soldier's nearest of kin, and b: National Service Life annuity. In due time, Mrs. M--- received her initial ^{monthly} insurance payment of \$64.90, to continue for life. Mrs. F--- was helped ^{in executing} ~~XXXXXX~~ her insurance option form, and in November 1945 was to receive her first monthly life annuity of \$52.80.

B Veterans Information

Pamphlets and official releases from the Veterans Administration were given to interested parents and relatives by the counselor who advised on Army matters. An informal clipping service was maintained. Veterans information

requests were few, since discharged veterans seldom returned to the Center. In any event their benefits from the GI Bill or Rights became operative only after resettlement.

VI EXTENT OF ARMY DEPENDENCY AT THE CENTER

About 286 families were known to the Manzanar Red Cross as having sons or husbands in the Army during the summer of 1945, as revealed in a block-to-block survey made in August 1945.

Altogether, 303 Nisei men at the Center were called up for induction in 1945. The Manzanar registrar for Local Board No. 134 of Bishop, California advised that of these 303 calls, the disposition was as follows: Actual inductions 115; accepted, placed in IA, and ready for call 182; rejected 8.

It must be added that this total of 303 does not include a considerable number, perhaps 50 more, of cases involving casual contact with the Welfare section only as a matter of information. These called for perhaps 5 minutes advice given "on the run", at unscheduled times in the office and afield, when identify of the case could not always be checked against Welfare's 3x5 file.

Since Public Law 625 Amended, in Section 119 known as the "penalty clause", implied the secrecy of its records and forbade any third party a financial interest in any allowance case, it was natural that the Welfare Section would not always know whether a given soldier had an allowance in effect or not. Assistance given to Class B dependents, therefore, was extended only when voluntarily requested, and not all allowance grants were known to Welfare for service.

VII CONCLUSIONS

The extent of service rendered by this office to Army dependents indicated a wider community acceptance, and recognition by evacuees that the

welfare Section existed as a source of help beyond mere financial aid.

By having the counsel of Army allowance cases set up in the welfare Section, rather than with the Red Cross as was traditional, The welfare Section had the benefit of integrating its data on Army allowance receipts with its own social records. This enabled welfare to use Army benefits as a constructive resource. In many instances, even where no allowance has been applied for, the disclosure of a soldier-son's name on the family face-sheet obviated the need to request county aid on behalf of a widow or old couple.

Finally, this service rounded out welfare's ability to serve the evacuee's total need in the area of counseling. Army allowances, affecting perhaps 8,000,000 servicemen, was likewise an important economic factor in the lives of the small group of evacuees at Manzanar. Its monthly receipt on the Center reassured evacuees that they were sharing on equality with others the benefits of a democracy.