

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT  
The Adjutant General's Office  
Washington

AG 370.5 (4-3-43)OB-S-E-SPOPT-M

HJP/vlt - 2B 939

IMMEDIATE ACTION  
April 5, 1943

SUBJECT: Movement of Shipment 5544 from the  
San Francisco Port of Embarkation

.....  
:Auth: T. A. G. :  
:Initials LMB :  
:Date: 4-5-43 :  
:.....

TO: The Commanding General,  
Western Defense Command  
Third Army  
San Francisco Port of Embarkation  
The Commanding Officer,  
Camp Shelby, Mississippi

1. Reference is made to letter, this office, WD 370.5 (4-3-43) OB-S-E-M  
April 4, 1943, subject as above.

2. Casual Detachment 5544-A is composed of approximately two thousand  
nine hundred and twenty-five (2,925) officers and enlisted men (American  
citizens of Japanese ancestry) referred to in radio 3668 to the Commanding  
General, Hawaiian Department dated March 27, 1943. These individuals are  
fillers for the 442d Infantry Regiment at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

3. Attention is invited to radio 3024 to the Commanding General,  
Western Defense Command which stated that in no case will the impression  
be given to the public or to these soldiers that these fillers are being  
moved under guard.

By order of Secretary of War:

(s) L. M. Burknight  
Adjutant General

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 730027  
By VCN NARA Date 8/13/94

~~SECRET~~

67 16

Authority NWD 730027By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05~~CONFIDENTIAL~~YCONFIDENTIALWAR DEPARTMENT  
Washington

WD 370.5 (4-3-43) OB-S-E-M

April 4, 1943

SUBJECT: Movement of Shipment 5544 from the  
San Francisco Port of EmbarkationTO: The Commanding Generals,  
Fourth Service Command  
Ninth Service Command  
San Francisco Port of Embarkation  
The Commanding Officer,  
Camp Shelby, Mississippi  
The Chief of Transportation,  
Army Service Forces

1. It is desired that the Commanding General, San Francisco Port of Embarkation, take the necessary action to move the detachment listed below from the San Francisco Port of Embarkation to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, upon arrival of the detachment at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation from overseas station.

UNIT	SHIPMENT NUMBER	APPROXIMATE STRENGTH OFFICERS & ENLISTED MEN	NEW STATION
Cas Det 5544-A	5544-A	2925	Cp Shelby, Mississippi

2. This is a PERMANENT change of station.

3. This movement will be made by rail and will be coordinated with the Passenger Branch, Traffic Control Division, Transportation Corps.

4. Clothing and individual equipment now in possession of these troops will be taken from the San Francisco Port of Embarkation.

5. Upon arrival at destination the detachment is assigned to the Army Ground Forces, and additionally to the Third Army and the 442nd Infantry Regiment.

6. The Commanding General, San Francisco Port of Embarkation, will notify the Commanding General, Army Ground Forces; the Commanding General, Third Army; the Commanding General, Fourth Service Command; and the Commanding Officer, Camp Shelby, Mississippi, of the strength, date of departure, mode of travel, and expected date and hour of arrival of this detachment.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
IMMEDIATE ACTIONCONFIDENTIAL

589

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

7. The Commanding Officer, Camp Shelby, Mississippi, will notify the War Department (The Adjutant General); the Commanding General, Army Ground Forces; and the Commanding General, Third Army, of the actual strength and date of arrival of this unit.

8. The cost of transportation of troops and individuals including the shipment of things will be governed by the provisions of Section II, Circular 206, W.D., 1942.

9. Attention is invited to AR 55-130, December 28, 1942; paragraph 4, AR 55-145 and circular 193, WD, July 16, 1942.

By order of the Secretary of War:

THOMAS T. HANDY  
Assistant Chief of Staff  
Operations Division, W.D.G.S.

OFFICIAL

(s) J. A. Ulio

J. A. ULIO  
Major General  
The Adjutant General

COPIES FURNISHED:

The Commanding Generals,  
Army Ground Forces  
Army Service Forces  
Western Defense Command  
Third Army  
Eighth Service Command

The Chiefs of Supply Services,  
Army Service Forces  
The Divisions of the War Department  
General Staff

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 730027

By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05

*[Handwritten signature]*

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

093 - Hawaii  
RESTRICTED

TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

Classification (~~Cancelled~~)  
(Changed to: Secret)

By Auth: CG WDC Confidential

Date: 27 Dec 45 Restricted

For the CG: [Signature]

G. J. TISON  
Major, CAC  
Actg Asst Adj Gen.

*Rev # 8  
WS families*

RESTRICTED

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CAD - WCCA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ediphone Record Nos. 5 Distribution \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 4/7/43 ~~1942~~ Time 3:50P M. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Principals Colonel Major Moffitt and Captain Benoit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subject Movement... \_\_\_\_\_  
 Transcribed by Manley Date 4/7/43 ~~1942~~

RESTRICTED

- B. These people, from here to there. In other words, we are issuing today, port orders that ~~my~~ cover the movement of the convoy, round trip.
- M. That's right.
- B. We haven't received as yet the orders for the movement of the party..the main party. That is, one way, from here to there.
- M. That is, the detachment?
- B. The entire group - 2369 enlisted men and 60 officers. (??)
- M. All right, fine. Now, there is a War Dept. confidential letter, dated April 4th, which is directed to the Commanding General, San Francisco Port of Embarkation, directing them to take the necessary action to move the detachment.
- B. In other words, to issue the orders.
- M. That's right. We thought we were going to do it because we thought we were going to be in on it, but this letter of April 4th from the WD, signed by Thomas Handy, AC of S for the Operations Division, left us out, and directed it to you people. So, it apparently is the Commanding General, SF P of E.
- B. A confidential letter dated April 4th.
- M. Yes. Now let me give you the W.D. AG number on that: WD 370.5 (repeats) then (4-4-43) , then OB-S-E-M.
- B. Yes. (Repeats at intervals)
- M. The subject~~s~~ is: Movement of shipment of 5544 from San Francisco Port of Embarkation. Now that just came in and it's an immediate action letter, and it's probably on the way into your office as well. It describes the request to take the necessary action, advising that it's a permanent change of station and requesting that the movement be made by rail and coordinated with passenger branch, Traffic Control; clothing and individual equipment to be taken from SF Port, and where, upon arrival, they're to be assigned...
- B. I see, sir.
- M. And also, certain persons which you - that is, the Commanding General, SFPE, are to notify. That is, as to date, mode of travel, and hour of arrival, etc.
- B. Yes, sir.
- M. Then it recites in there the cost of transportation, to be governed by such and such a section; also a couple of other regulations.

RESTRICTED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Major Moffitt and Captain Benoit, 4/1/43

RESTRICTED

- B. Well, fine, sir. Thank you very much.
- M. Now, if you don't have that letter - I mean if it doesn't come to you - Why, let me know, and we can get this one to you. You know, Major Baldwin was over here this morning..
- B. Yes sir.
- M. ..Looking for, apparently, the very thing which you called up about.
- B. I see, sir.
- M. And at that time we didn't know. We thought we were going to have to issue the order, too, because we'd been led all along to believe that General DeWitt - that is, WDC - would be the agency.
- B. Yes, sir.
- M. Then this letter came along and left us out in the cold. Only thing we got was a copy of it which says "for information".
- B. Okay, sir. Thank you very much. I'll go out under trail for that letter and if I can't find it, I'll ask and get yours.
- M. Yes. Dated April 4th.
- B. Thank you very much.
- M. All right, fine. Goodbye.

RESTRICTED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**CONFIDENTIAL**Authority NND 730027  
By AB NARA Date 9/13/05

CAD - WCCA

Ediphone Record Nos. 2Distribution RESTRICTEDDate 4/7/43 1942 Time 10:15 AMPrincipals Colonel Bendetsen and Major Moffitt

Subject

Transcribed by Manley Date 4/7 1942**RESTRICTED**

- B. ....is the answer to it. We'll issue no orders on that movement.
- M. We're not going to?
- B. No. General DeWitt won't do it. It's not our baby.
- M. Well, I wonder who the Port's to look to.
- B. All right, they're to look to ASF. Now, I'll call the C/S right now and talk to him about it and what I'm going to propose is that we suggest to the Port that they call troop movements, ASF, War Dept.
- M. I see. Well, I don't want to leave Fred out on the limb.
- B. No, we won't. But I'm afraid we can't do anything about it. General DeWitt's orders are very specific about it. ....handle the movement, so I'll call you back, Hub. Everything else under control?
- M. Just one moment. (Talks into Voy Call to Fullerton, Washburne, Pulsifer, and they report in the negative.) I got all the dope down on the report - they're working on it.
- B. Swell.
- M. That's fine. No, we're all here and everything's going along all right. You might as well take the rest of your five days.
- B. Okay. (Laughs) Bye.

SECOND CONVERSATION

- B. ... to the front office and that's the right dope. Be nice, of course, to Fred and tell him (one): That that radio, copy of which we sent him, paraphrase of which, states that ASF will issue further instructions to cover all details to destination.
- M. The ASF?
- B. Army Service Forces, Headquarters, War Department. That's the same as SOS. They cover all that. That radio specifically said that they would issue all instructions.
- M. Well, but here's the Port...
- B. This headquarters has no authority in the first place, in the absence of that, to issue these orders.

**RESTRICTED**  
**RESTRICTED** **CONFIDENTIAL**  
Page One

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Colonel Bendetsen and Major Moffitt, 2nd Conversation, ~~783~~

RESTRICTED

- M. Oh, I see.
- B. We're just -- we have no jurisdiction over ground force troops. These aren't evacuees.
- M. Nope, that's right, they're fillers.
- B. We have no jurisdiction whatever. We couldn't issue the order if we wanted to.
- M. Yeah.
- B. Now, just call Fred and draw his attention to that radio and suggest that if he would call troop movements, ASF, that they'll give him the dope.
- M. I see.
- B. We just have no jurisdiction over it, any more than we'd have over a movement going out the other way.
- M. Yeah.
- B. Or the many movements that pass through here right along. It's a routine troop movement, except for the fact that we didn't want it running around San Francisco.
- M. All right.
- B. Will you cover that?
- M. Yes.
- B. I mean, after all, it isn't that we don't want to be helpful; it's just a matter of who has the authority.
- M. Yes. All right.
- B. Gotcha?
- M. Yes, suh.
- B. Thank yuh.
- M. Good Mo'ning
- B. Good Mo'ning.

RESTRICTED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



Colonel Bendetsen and Captain Hall  
March 28, 1943. Time: 12:00 Noon  
Record No. 38

**CONFIDENTIAL**

SUBJECT: Nisei Inductees from Hawaii

MEM

- B Hello, Hall, Bendetsen. I've discussed the subject of our telephone conversation of yesterday afternoon with the Commanding General. His recommendations are these: A: That the movement be handled as any other troop movement in routine fashion through this port to destination. B: That there be no ceremony or publicity until arrival at destination. C: That after they have disembarked and boarded the train, that the press here be notified in routine fashion to the effect that such and such a number of inductees of Japanese ancestry, as fillers, are enroute to an eastern station, having passed through this port such and such a date.
- H Right.
- B There is one consideration which I think is very persuasive. First, any publicity, no matter how indefinite, might endanger either the ship or the convoy.
- H Right.
- B Two: Any publicity while enroute on a train might endanger the transfer. Some crank, pro-Axis-minded, or just a crank without any mind, might try to blow up the train.
- H Right.
- B That would give the Axis an awful lot, I think, to scream about. That's the recommendation here.
- H Let me get that last. Press to be notified after disembarkation and embarkation on train?
- B Yes.
- H That's supposed to be fairly -- one follows the other very quickly, I understand.
- B Yes. According to the plans of the Port of Embarkation, they are very much crowded, and such movements are handled with dispatch -- all of them. They usually try to spot the train or trains along side of the ship at the pier and handle it very smoothly.
- H I see.
- B They ask them, for example, to -- (as I understand it, -- for, of course, this isn't an affair of Western Defense Command -- ) but as I understand it, they usually instruct Army Transport Service to arrange to have the troops concerned have their "A" bags in their possession, containing any articles they need on the train. And the "B" bags in the hold, to be shipped by freight after they disembark, because they haven't got the facilities to handle all that stuff immediately upon debarkation.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Colonel Bendetsen and Captain Hall, 3/28/43

**CONFIDENTIAL**

H Right.

B In other words, to recapitulate, in the interests of security it is proposed that there merely be a routine release to the press either by you or by this headquarters, if it's all right with the War Department, to the effect that such and such a number of inductees, persons of Japanese ancestry from Hawaii, passed through this port enroute to an eastern station, without saying which, in order to preserve the security enroute.

H Right.

B Then, on arrival there, anything that you consider desirable would be appropriate after they have safely arrived.

H Right. Okay sir, thank you very much.

B Fine. How does that sound to you?

H One last detail. You would not give to the press advance notification for subsequent release?

B Well, I don't know that there's any harm in that, because so far as I know they've never violated any confidence. That would be a matter of judgment there based on what you consider to be for security requirements, but so far as I know, it is done. I don't know that it's ever done while a convoy is on the water, though.

H Yes. Well, there isn't any particular necessity for it, is there?

B No, there isn't.

H The only thing I had in mind was the thought that if the presence of the unexplained presence of such a large number of pineapples might get rumor-going, and if there wasn't any advance preparation for that, there might be some danger of rumors getting around.

B Well, I think the Public Relations Officer here feels and the Public Relations Officer at the San Francisco port also feels that, mechanically, the simple way to do it would be to have a short factual statement ready, such as I've described to you, all ready for release, after the trains clear port.

H Right.

B That's the way they think it could be handled very nicely. And I think that sounds good.

H Good.

B All right, sir

H Thank you very much

B You're welcome. Bye.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Colonel Bendetsen and Captain Hall - Record No. 32  
 March 27, 1943 Time: 11:05 A.M.  
 Transcribed by MEM

**CONFIDENTIAL**

SUBJECT: Nisei Inductees from Hawaii

H The Western Defense Command Public Relations Officer just sent in a message to the Bureau of Public Relations, War Department, as follows: (Paraphrased) Newspapers have learned from Hawaii sources that 2500 American-Jap soldiers may arrive in United States for training. Recommend advance factual press story (of unit ?) issue from War Department for release after arrival to forestall \_\_\_\_\_ report. No picture or interviews will be permitted in line with troop movement policy at Port of Embarkation. That message was received here by our Bureau of Public Relations, and they're working on something along the lines suggested. I have two questions to present to you.

The first is: Washington would like any suggestions as to the type of publicity that could issue from Washington for release in Western papers, as to how it should be played. What should be the attitude, and so forth? Also, the second question: When should the announcement be made? Should it be made while they are enroute, or should it be made only after things have arrived?

B In other words, question 1 is What? and question 2 is When?

H That's about it.

B What's 3?

H We can certainly work up factual situation from here, but I thought that you might have a few special touches that you would think it would be wise to insert, or unwise to insert. Now to question 3: Whether this does or does not present a suitable opportunity for a slight amount of publicity for the Combat Team, consistent with security regulations. I have in mind that possibly perhaps a little movie stuff away from the Port of Embarkation, or enroute through California, or enroute East from there. And I also have the possibility of some light ceremony when the troops arrive in mind. What's your reaction to that kind of thing?

B Suppose I talk those questions over with our Public Relations Office and the front office here and call you back.

H Well, I think I'd appreciate it very much if you would.

B I think that would be the best move. I'd rather not comment off-hand. Just off the hip--I might make this entirely unofficial observation: As to question No. 2, as to when. I assume that security requirements would foreclose any releases while the convoy or the ships are enroute.

H Yes, unless you make it so indefinite that there will shortly, within the next something - something there will arrive, or there is due to arrive sometime, and so forth. I think you could say it so indefinitely that it wouldn't infringe (?) security.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFID**Authority NND 730027  
By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05

Colonel Bendetsen and Captain Hall, 3/27/43.

- B I see. I get your thought. I've recorded this, Hall, and I will have it transcribed and take it up for discussion and call you back.
- H Well, I don't think we want to gild the lily here at all. We certainly don't want to do anything which would put Western Defense Command in an inconsistent or uncomfortable position at the same time.
- B Well, I think that will be fully appreciated by the General. I rather think that as to what - that's question 1 - that the Headquarters will not have any comments on it. I'm not sure. I think, having been in touch with the picture from the beginning, you would be in a better position to know what to say. It is not an affair touching any activity of this Headquarters. But, at any rate, because you have so requested, I will take that up. On question 2, as to when, I rather think that any suggestion might be to the effect that a release be withheld until after the boats dock.
- H But placed in the hands of the press services prior?
- B Well, I think so, because here is what the Public Relations Officer here had in mind in sending that, Hall. That is all he had in mind - the Message wasn't sent because it was felt that the story was any of Western Defense Command's affair. There are two things. One, his relations on behalf of the General with the press here - an important relationship - they have the story; they know they're coming, and he just can't put 'em off, you know. And I'm sure that the Bureau of Public Relations wouldn't want him to. And, second, he had in mind also the fact that you there should know of the fact that the press here has gotten flashes from Honolulu, and for your relationship with the press, you would want to know.
- H Right.
- B There was no thought that anything should be released from this Headquarters, but it was merely in line with general policies that this Headquarters, the Public Relations Officer inform the Bureau of Public Relations, so that they can have the benefit of anything that is known here and to be forewarned. That's all he had in mind. Now, as to the last part of the telegram that you mentioned. The port, of course, is under a directive for security reasons that no troop movements through the port will be subject to publicity until they've cleared - inbound. And that's all that is. That's just routine.
- H Absolutely.
- B And I think that probably my personal suggestion would be handling it through the Port; it ought to be handled like any other troops are handled. Just a troop movement - routine troop movement. And that any build-up that's given should be after their arrival.
- H Well, I have in mind a little bit, that here's some people that, first of all, there's been a very healthy reaction where they're coming from---
- B I see,---

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Colonel Bendetsen and Captain Hall, 3/27/43.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

H They've come a long way, and if they were perhaps received with a little bit of fanfare - nothing to amount to anything, but just a little something - it might look very good in the home papers, if it could be said that upon arrival met by such and such or by a band, or something like that. Now, that may not be something that you would feel would be wise or appropriate. I've also got in mind the possibility that if one of these newsreel people got out there and took a picture, and the story was built up for distribution in theatres, and were made to realize that these fellows had come all this way, and so forth, on a voluntary basis, it might help on the whole situation generally.

B I see. I'll take it up here and discuss it and call you. Probably tomorrow. There's . . . there seems to be enough time. It's about ten days, isn't it? Two weeks?

H That's another thing that I was ignorant on. I was going to ask you what the pressure was.

B Not very much. I think that it will be sometime after April 4 . . . that they leave after that time. And the Port, this morning, sent a dispatch over there and asked them to advise them in advance of all that information. If anything comes in that they tell me about that you don't know, I'll let you know.

H Right.

B Fine. Thanks.

H Thanks, goodbye.

~~**CONFIDENTIAL**~~