

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 730027

By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05

MESS HALL # 52

BUTTE COMMUNITY OPEN MEETING

February 10, 1943

Captain Norman R. Thompson, C.M.P.

February 9, 1943
less Hall 52 Butte

1- Q. If the Government is trying to restore rights, how come we are not allowed to return to Southern California?

A. The answer at the present time is no and I will tell you the reason why. The reason is that the California Coast is a War Zone. The presence there of a large number of Japanese-Americans would be a definite aid to any attempt of invasion on the part of our enemies on the East. Infiltration would be made very simple. Furthermore, it would also jeopardize the lives of Japanese-American citizens to be there. Bear in mind that that area is occupied by a large number of troops of the 48 states of the Union. They do not know you and they know nothing about you and it would be very difficult to distinguish between you and alien enemies of Japanese blood, so there is a double thought in keeping you out of California at the present time.

2- Q. I would like to know your definition of a loyal American citizen. Japanese or not.

A. I think you might be interested in the definition of a loyal American citizen by the President of the United States, who says in his letter, "A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy". I can't improve on that answer.

3- Q. Please explain our 4C classification. Doesn't that classify us as alien enemies?

A. No. They do not classify you as enemy aliens. That classification means that you are Japanese-American citizens. It is a group classification covering every Japanese American citizen and was used simply against the time when reclassification would be possible. Under this new registration, every Japanese American between the ages of 17 and 35 will be reclassified.

3-b Q. What's to be done about boys with a parent interned. Presumably prisoners of war?

A. Nothing is to be done about it. That does not in any way effect your status as a Japanese American citizen.

4- Q. What would you do under the same circumstances as us, Captain? For instance, if you were in Germany and treated the way we are.

A. I would do exactly what I have done. I am 48 years old. I have two children and a wife. I am here.

5- Q. What have we got to fight for--especially now that we are in a camp like this?

A. If the young gentleman who wrote that question doesn't know in his own heart nor in his own conscience what he is to fight for, it is too late for me to start and try to explain now. We don't need the services of men who don't know what democracy stands for.

6- Q. Why are we being drafted--what reason.

A. You are being drafted simply because the selective service program as set up for all American citizens provides for the draft schedule and you are being treated no differently than any other group in the United States.

6-B Q. Don't you think the ones who volunteer is good enough, that they want to fight.

A. I am afraid there is a slightly selfish note in that. It has been proven not only in the last war but in this one that to portion the responsibility fairly among all citizens requires a selective service draft. There is no other way to do it. As I read the statement, there are people who are willing to let George do it just as long as there is George to do it. The selective service proposes to share the burden equally among all those of the proper age and who are physically fit.

6-C Q. I think most of our attitudes have changed since being put into these camps.

A. I can imagine that they may have. Don't feel that you are the only ones who have ever suffered under the very circumstances that you are facing today. In the past, there have been in America, cases of the same kind, cases which I may state were not dealt with nearly as well as your situation has been. There is a good American saying that "God helps those that help themselves". There is no one here, I am sure, responsible for the attack of Pearl Harbor, nevertheless many of us are paying the penalty for it.

6-D Q. If we have to be drafted, how long will our training be at the minimum before combat duty?

A. In all probability, your training will take at least a year. The Army today, and the training the men must have to be successful, is a great deal different than it was 25 years ago. There is much more to learn; there are many more specialized arts to be mastered. Just being a good soldier and lugging a gun and pack around isn't enough.

7- Q. Why does the U.S. Government change it's mind so quick, a year ago they didn't want us in the Army?

A. Well, I don't think a year's time would be considered a sudden change. It is a matter of military necessity. The attitude of the Government has not changed. It is simply the business of getting everything lined up so that we could take an additional manpower

in the different branches of the service.

- 8- Q. If you were evacuated from your home and brought out to a concentration camp like this, would you still feel loyal to U. S. after they push you around like an enemy alien(4-C).

A. I think I detect a slight heckling touch in that. In the first place, I don't consider this a concentration camp. In the second place, you haven't been pushed around. It was a gigantic problem in the first place. It had to be undertaken quickly and suddenly. I question very much, had any one in this group here been called upon to do the same job, if they could have done much better. At the same time, I am frank to admit that you have my full sympathy and at times, things were unpleasant, but the actual mechanics of evacuation, I think was handled very well under the circumstances.

- 9- Q. Will we have the same privileges of any American soldier if we enter the U.S. Army?

A. Yes you will. You will be permitted allotments for your dependents. You will be permitted to take out insurance up to ten thousand dollars, the same as any other American soldiers, and you will receive the benefits that accrue to those who serve their nation in the time of war just as any other American soldiers. In addition you will be entitled through your abilities to officers' training and in any other form of advancement open to any other American soldier.

- 10- Q. How will this effect married men without dependents. What is his classification. Will it be the same as an unmarried man?

A. At the present time, in some parts of the country where the single men have all been called into the service, married men without dependents are being drafted. What determines it is the number of single men that are in your local board registry. When I say local board, I mean the local board at which you originally registered. In the most part, I would say that would be California.

- 11- Q. If the answer to question #27 is "no" does that mean that said person is disloyal to the U.S.?

A. My interpretation is either that person is disloyal to the United States or he is a panty-waist.

- 11-b Q. What of the many who are not actually disloyal, but who, because of past treatment received; do not feel up to volunteering and yet are loyal to the extent that they would not protest or demonstrate against being drafted?

A. Volunteering is as old as the Army of the United States. It is

traditional that we have never been involved in a war in which our citizens were not permitted to volunteer. That is why this voluntary enlistment is offered to you. It is an American tradition. We would not be fair to you if we did not give you that opportunity. Now, whether a man volunteers is his own personal business. I would be the last person in the world to influence you either way, because your life and my life is a pretty precious thing and I believe every individual has the right under a democracy such as ours of determining how and where he spends it. Does that answer the question?

12- Q. I was licensed commercial pilot, owned, and operating flying school in California for 6 years. Will U.S. Army Air Corps place me in a Flight Instructor?

A. At the present time, the U. S. Air Service, the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and the Tank Corps are all studying whether or not it will be possible for them to accept voluntary enlistment from American citizens of Japanese ancestry at this time. Again it is a question of training facilities. I have reason to believe from good authority in Washington that it may be possible in the very near future.

13- Q. My parents object if I volunteer. What shall I do?

A. There again I can't advise you. I can't say tell your father and mother run up a tree. That is not right. A man owes a certain responsibility to his parents. He also owes a certain responsibility to his country and to his conscience. Those are questions that every man has to answer himself. I would be definitely wrong in trying to influence him either way.

14- Q. Last night it was mentioned that the volunteers wereto be inducted into one of six branches of the service. Is there a possibility of the Finance Division or Quartermaster Corps ever being opened to us? If so, would you advise us to volunteer into one of six branches now and chance that a transfer can be effected later or wait for the draft and leave it up to the Army to use their good judgment in placing you.

A. Very frankly, I would volunteer--for this reason; That from my own personal experience the old slogan that, "The early bird gets the worm", or "First come first Serve" is just as true in the Army as anywhere else. Your chances of affecting a transfer into any branch of the service will be much better than if you will wait for the draft.

15- Q. What would happen if I refuse to join the armed forces?

A. I don't know how you could refuse. We have, I believe, somewhere in this country a group known as conscientious objectors that do not wish to serve. Where they are, I do not know. I am not interested to find out--I don't think you would be either.

16- Q. Why is it that the Nisei were not permitted in the combat forces

after the war and then were evacuated and now are going to be put back in? It seems like there is a shortage of manpower and they are putting us in.

A. As far as shortage of manpower is concerned, I would not be alarmed if I were you. I think there are still a lot left.

17-a Q. Do you have to answer #27 and #28 (In Questionnaire)

A. Yes, You have to answer every question that you can answer. If you are in doubt answer truthfully "I don't know"--do not leave it blank as the reviewer may misunderstand and feel that you have overlooked it and return it to you.

17-b Q. Can you still be loyal American and still answer #27 "No"?

A. In my opinion you cannot be a loyal citizen.

17-c Q. What would happen if you answer #27 "yes", and still do not volunteer in the Army?

A. You can answer both 27 and 28 "yes". There is nothing binding in the answer to "yes" to those questions. That is not an enlistment form. You can answer "yes" today and change your mind tomorrow if you want to. By answering these questions in the affirmative you do not bind yourself to voluntary enlistment.

17-d Q. Do you have to volunteer if you answer #27 "yes"?

A. No, you do not have to volunteer if you answer #27 "yes".

18- A. What does the Army have in mind when it is stated that we, "the Japanese-Americans, have superior qualifications for the purposes in which they intend to use you"?

A. In that statement it spoke about combat units in the Armed services. I believe you have the qualifications to become good soldiers. I know what the 100th Infantry has done, and is doing, and I know it is one of the crack combat units of 100% Japanese Americans. Your ability to be soldiers, in my opinion, is above question. The balance of the question deals with your ability in defense activities. After riding around through this Center, and seeing what has been done in the way of agriculture there is no question in my mind as to your ability to farm. The excellent showing in the camouflage factory has proven your ability as artisans and as skilled workers. That is what the government means in the statement.

18-b Q. Approximately what period will elapse before drafting will take place.

A. I do not know. It may be a matter of weeks; it may be a matter of months.

19- Q. Will poor eye sight keep a person out of the armed forces?

A. I cannot answer that question. Poor eyesight is too general a term. That is what a medical examiner would determine.

20- Q. Would you believe in loyalty of Japanese Americans who were educated in Japan?

A. Personally, I do believe in it. There may be exceptions, but by and large, I believe it.

21- Q. How does this registration affect student relocation?

A. I will have the answer from Washington tomorrow.

22- Q. Do you think evacuating Japanese citizens out of California, leaving Germans and Italians, aliens, who don't have to fight for this country have more privilege than citizens of Japanese ancestry? Why?

A. I interpret the question to mean why was a Japanese American evacuated from California and Germans and Italians left there. The identity of Germans and Italians could never be mistaken in event of an enemy invasion by the Japanese Army or Navy, whereas, Japanese Americans could be. It is a matter of racial appearance.

23- Q. Why is it that the local draft boards do not handle the enlistments of we nisei at this time--as we know that we are under their jurisdiction?

A. They will handle enlistments of volunteers and draft inductions will go through these local boards. You will report to a local board that has facilities for handling you. The Government will pay your transportation. At the present moment, I can't tell you which one will be decided.

23-b Q. Are other citizens of other national's answering the same questionnaire? If not why are we required to do so?

A. Every American citizen that enters the Army is required to answer similar questions concerning his loyalty.

24- Q. Will our joining the Army have any bearing upon relations who are being interned?

A. No, it will not.

25- Q. In the last World War the Canadian Army sent the Japanese volunteers and Negroes in the front lines and white soldiers behind them and many Japanese and Negroes were slain. Can you guarantee that the U.S. would not do likewise.

A. Yes, I can guarantee that the United States will not do likewise. And I do not believe the Canadian Army ever did such a thing.

26- Q. If you answer #27 "yes" would you be drafted right away or do you have to volunteer?

A. You may answer it "yes" and you do not have to volunteer. You may be drafted, but when--I don't know.

27- Q. A few months after the war, I volunteered and was accepted. Three months after induction, I was suddenly informed that I was no longer wanted in the service and also informed to leave the premises within 24 hours, and not to don my uniform again. After such treatment, how do you expect me to volunteer again?

A. As I have said before the question of volunteering is entirely a personal one. Do whatever your conscience dictates for you to do. You do what you think you ought to do.

28- Q. Is there an opportunity for us to join the Army Dental Corps Reserve and continue our dental education?

A. I don't know the answer to that question. It will cover the pre-medical students. I have already contacted Washington for this information and will have the answer.

28-b Q. Will volunteers and draftees be put in the same combat unit?

A. From this voluntary group--"no"! There will be no draftees.

29- Q. If drafting of American citizens of Japanese ancestry becomes a reality, what would happen to objectors.

A. Same thing that happens to any other objectors.

30- Q. At what date will volunteers be inducted and when will drafting of non-volunteers begin?

A. Volunteers will start to be inducted on March 1 or thereabouts. It is hoped that they will all be called before the end of March. Draftees--I don't know. I can't tell you when that will start.

31- Q. How long will this combat unit receive training before actual combat duty overseas?

A. Average period of training in combat unit in the United States is one year.

32- Q. Where will these Japanese combat troops be used?

A. When a man enters the service of the United States Army he is subject to duty wherever he is ordered. Even as I am here tonight, I

can be sent to any corner of the globe. If however, in the case of Japanese Americans, it is not feasible that they will be used in the Pacific, and there are good reasons why not. In the first place, there is a possibility of infiltration of enemy in American uniforms not through the Japanese Americans, but through adjoining units which would make it a very hazardous undertaking. Consequently it is highly improbable that a Japanese American will see service in the Pacific Theater of war.

32-b Q. How much training will the soldier get before being sent?

A. Just answered it.

32-c Q. What will happen to the parents who will be left in camp?

A. Parents who are left in camp will receive the same allotment as any other soldiers parents. However, my point of view is that they have a double security, greater perhaps than 75% of the parents of other Americans because while you are gone, they have a roof over their heads enough to eat, and hospitalization. I cannot guarantee these to my own family.

32-d Q. Will war industries employ citizens of Japanese ancestry?

A. Yes, they will and we have already received here at the Center requests from several locations where they want to employ Japanese Americans.

33- Q. I don't understand the loyal and unloyal citizen.

A. If the person that sent the question up will see me later, I will try to explain the difference again.

34- Q. Is there any certain enemy we will fight.

A. I can't guarantee whom you are going to fight.

35- Q. What is the quota from this camp.

A. There is no quota for this camp. The quota rests with you-- not me.

36- Q. Will men with dependents be drafted?

A. That depends on how long the war lasts and how much of our manpower is consumed.

37- Q. If we can join the Army or in home defense work, why can't we join the Marines or the Aviation Corps like any other citizen?

A. I think in a short time you will be able to.

38- Q. Will we be able to join the Navy or the Air Force?

A. I think in all probability you will.

38-b Q. Will we be able to attend an officers' training school?

A. You will if you are found qualified.

38-c Q. Will those who want to finish his college education which was interrupted by the evacuation have a chance to finish it before induction.

A. I believe that there is a provision that applies to professions, medicine, etc., that does permit a man who has another year to go. I think he will be permitted to finish it. I have called up Washington and shall have the answer tomorrow.

39- Q. Do you mean to say that we will be drafted into the Army, volunteering or not?

A. You are all American citizens of military age and you know what is happening to American citizens. They are all being drafted into the Army if they do not choose to volunteer.

40- Q. What type of combat duty will we be serving?

A. A combat team consisting of 6 branches of the service--infantry, artillery, cavalry, engineers, signal and medical corps. Those six branches are open to volunteers for this combat group and in addition it is possible that they may be mechanized or tank corps units to which you will be eligible.

41- Q. Can you please explain fully regarding the entrance of an American soldier of Japanese descent into Zone 1 previously the prohibited area.

A. Yes, I can. Any Japanese American soldier who has served enough time in the Army to accumulate furlough time can under a new ruling be granted permission to enter Zone 1 to visit his relatives or his friends. Bear in mind that Zone 1 includes this camp and also Poston. The soldier who is granted furlough must ask his commanding officer to secure a permit for him which will be granted. It is automatic, but he has to make a request for it. The new ruling was made in January.

42- Q. Is it possible for a Japanese American to join a combat unit other than this all Japanese American unit.

A. In this particular case here, no. All volunteers taken here at this time will go into this Japanese American team.

43- Q. After the war who is going to look after the security of the old people?

A. I hope, I am the one who will have the privilege of doing that, but let us get together and win the war first.

44- Q. Please clarify the 27th question on the questionnaire. If I answer "yes" would it signify that I will volunteer. Would students be subject to the present draft? Would any consideration be given to a student attending college?

A. No, it does not signify that you will volunteer. You can answer "yes" and volunteer or not as you see fit.

45- Q. Can a person marry after he enlists?

A. Yes, he can marry.

46- Q. Will the officers' training include the West Point, Naval Academy, etc.

A. I don't know. I really don't know the answer to that question, but I will find out. I will have the answer tomorrow.

47- Q. Are elderly parents and young children considered as dependents in our case when we are here in relocation tomorrow.

A. If they are your own children and your own parents, they are considered as dependents whether they are here or outside.

48-a Q. What will happen to the obligation (financial) of those who enlist?

A. The Government has made arrangements for that. I hesitate to try and quote it cause it is quite long, and above everything, I don't want to mislead anyone. Soldiers are relieved of certain financial obligations if you join in the armed forces of your country. I believe I can secure the circular that sets forth in detail just what those things are, but I would rather not quote it from memory, because I am not sure of all the passages.

48-b Q. What is considered essential war work in defense industries?

A. That question rests with Paul V. McNutt who heads the Manpower Commission. I do not know what jobs are essential enough to defer anyone from the draft.

48-c Q. Are the Japanese Americans working in agriculture exempt from the draft?

A. At the present time, I do not believe that those working in agriculture are exempt but I do understand that there is a movement on foot whereby there will be some exemption made so we will not fall far behind in food production.

48-d Q. Will soldiers be allowed to visit on the Pacific Coast on their furloughs beside visiting their parents in the relocation centers? That is, will they be allowed to visit their former places of business to investigate the conditions under which the people who have assumed managership are operating.

A. That would be possible to the best of my knowledge. It will make a great deal of difference as to where you are located. If you are in Iceland, it would be hard to get to California and back.

49-a Q. Is there a chance that a male who has passed his 17th birthday be drafted for military service or defense work, though he desires to complete high school?

A. No one 17 years of age will be drafted until he is 18 years of age.

49-b Q. Would it be possible to help by going to work in a defense plant during summer and still come back to camp to finish school in the fall.

A. It is a good idea. I am quite sure it would be a help.

50- Q. Is this coming registration an Act of the Congress of the United States?

A. This present registration is a continuation of the original registration which was interrupted by your evacuation from the Pacific Coast.

50-b Q. If you are to be drafted, would it be conducted through the facilities of your Local Boards?

A. If you mean the local boards in California, no. If you mean the vicinity of this center, yes, it will be. Transfer will be made to your local board in California which will receive credit for your induction.

51- Q. I was born in Japan and came to this country at the age of 2. All my habits, ideals, education, mannerisms, and sympathies are with the United States. Do we have a chance to work in a national defense industry.

A. At the present time, I do not believe that anyone who is not a citizen of the United States is permitted to work in a defense industry.

51-b Q. Are we subject to the draft?

A. At the present time, you are not subject to the draft, however, that may be changed.

- 52- Q. How would invalids, sick people and others confined to their homes and the hospital register?
- A. We will have to go to the hospital and help them fill out their questionnaires there.
- 53- Q. Must all questions be answered by only "yes" or "no".
- A. No. In many cases, there are other information that you should add to qualify the statement you make. It should be filled out as completely as possible.
- 54- Q. Should there be a lack of volunteering on the part of the Nisei, will the Army in due time draft us?
- A. Yes, they will. The draft will take place regardless of volunteering.
- 55- Q. You just stated that the Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, etc., are now studying the possibility of accepting us. Will they make their decision by the time we volunteer or when we are drafted?
- A. I know of no greater influence that can be brought to bear on the Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, etc., than the number of volunteers that come out for this combat unit. That will have more weight and bearing than anything else.
- 56- Q. Are those who are in service now be combined with this separate unit? If they are, won't they come first for promotion because of their previous service?
- A. Some of them will be used in training the new combat unit, but I doubt very much if they will be retained there. They will go back to the units from which they were drawn to do this training work.
- 57- Q. What is to be done about the moves to deprive us of our citizenship while we are in the service? We have no voice, few friends, and no choice.
- A. In the first place, if you are in the armed services of the United States, nobody can take your citizenship away from you. In the second place, the more of you that are there, the less talk there will be about taking anyone's citizenship away. I wish someone would point out to me any American loyal citizens as a group whose citizenship was taken away from them.
- 58- Q. If for some reason you do not volunteer but will enter the service willingly later under the selective service, how will this fact apply to the present situation of voluntary induction?
- A. This is a matter that every man must decide for himself. It is possible that there are factors in a man's life that prompt him to wait. It is up to the individual.

- 59- Q. There are many families with many children and financially they are in a critical situation and their future is uncertain because of their property settlement back in California. What if I were the only son in the family and I was drafted? Is the Government going to assure us of the security of the family after the war?
- A. We must win the war first. Unless we win the war first, guarantees are not much good. Cross your bridges when you get there.
- 60- Q. Are you able to join the Intelligence Division at Camp Savage, Minnesota, when you are drafted?
- A. If you are eligible for the type of work carried on there, you may make application for transfer and if there are any vacancies, I am sure that you would be accepted if you are qualified.
- 61- Q. How is a theological student affected in this draft?
- A. There are certain exemptions for the clergy. I do not know exactly how it affects a student, but I will find out. At the same time, I will find out about the other student relocation problems.
- 62- Q. How does this order affect you if you are a friendly alien and not an enemy alien?
- A. This particular order does not affect you, but remember this is only the beginning and in due time I am confident that steps will be taken so that those who are truly loyal to the United States, even though they be not citizens, will receive due consideration. I cannot answer this question about Canadian citizens now. I will find out from Washington tomorrow.
- 63- Q. If a volunteer or draftee has had previous R.O.T.C. training, would that make any difference as to his chances of advancement after induction.
- A. It definitely would, if he absorbed enough information and military knowledge while he was in the R.O.T.C. It depends on the individual.
- 64- Q. How about Japanese living in Hawaii? They have not been evacuated like us.
- A. As far as voluntary induction is concerned that is being done in Hawaii right now.
- 65- Q. What length of time must we be in the service before we are eligible for a furlough?
- A. Furlough time is credited at the rate of 2½ days per month provided your conduct is excellent.

- 66- Q. Should Army men on the reserve list volunteer or wait until called?
- A. Everything else being equal, volunteers now will attain better ranks and grades than if they waited.
- 67- Q. Are Japanese American citizens outside of camps being registered?
- A. Yes, they are eligible just the same as those who are in the Center.
- 68- Q. Eventually how many American Japanese soldiers will compose the combat unit?
- A. The composition and numerical strength of a combat team is a military secret. They vary. Variation of three or four thousand men for tactical reasons. In this particular team, however, there will be approximately 5,000.
- 69- Q. How about these interested women who wish to join the WAAG's?
- A. I have called Washington and put the question to them. The WAAG's are seriously considering opening enlistment to Japanese American girls. In fact, the original plan was that a WAAG officer accompany this group here. Unfortunately, they did not have enough officers at liberty to supply all the centers. I believe I will have the answer that enlistment in the WAAG's will be opened up to Japanese American girls, and I know that if it is, they will do a fine job. I am convinced of that.

February 9, 1943
Hes Hall 52 Butte

That is the end of the questions and it is pretty near the end of my vocal strength, but there is one thought I would like to leave with you.

It was felt by the Army that a combat unit comprised of Japanese Americans was better than the infiltration of Japanese Americans throughout the Entire Army. In the first place from a tactical standpoint, if we were to take in Japanese American soldiers and put them in all units of the Army, it would be a grave error for this reason:

I said before that Japanese American troops will not be used in the Pacific theater of war. Consequently, any organization that contained one or a dozen or a hundred soldiers of Japanese American blood, if they were ordered into the Pacific theater, all Japanese Americans would be taken out and sent to some other outfit. Obviously, that would be a tip-off to the enemy where the unit was headed for. Furthermore, I can well imagine the disappointment that would be yours if you were trained in a regiment where you knew all the fellows and started off for the front and then were taken out and sent to some other regiment to start all over again. That would not be very nice and you would not like it. That is a tactical reason.

Now, the other reason is my own and not the words of the War Department, but my own, as a private American citizen. It is what I think. I am giving to you because I am qualified to speak from an unbiased standpoint.

Up to three weeks ago, I had never seen three Japanese American soldiers. But for the past two weeks, I have been living, eating, sleeping and working with ten American soldiers of Japanese ancestry. I have found that they are just as American as I am. Their reactions are just as American as mine. They have a keen sense of duty; a keen sense of humor; a keen sense of responsibility of what this war is all about, and the part they are going to play in it. They have a keen determination to see it through to final victory. In two weeks, I have formed an opinion. Consequently, I am heart and soul in this movement. I want to point out to you, if I may, the big thing that you have to overcome. The thing that we have to influence here is public opinion. I know what public opinion throughout the country is; you know what it is. I know it can be changed; you know it can be changed. What I am leading up to is why a separate combat unit. The reason for it is that you should welcome the opportunity to present to the people of the United States the fact that you are just as loyal Americans, and a lot more loyal than a lot of these people that are criticizing you. This is your opportunity. This is not without precedence.

In the war between the states there were Irish Brigades and German Divisions--what did they do? The Irish came to this country from famine ridden Ireland, poor and discouraged, and pulled themselves up to a place in American society. The Germans of that era profited greatly, as is evidenced by the settlement of the Middle West. They were repaid for their loyalty. And so it comes to our time and while we sit here tonight and

laugh and joke, at the same time, history is being made in this very room. In the next few weeks we will show the people of the United States where the loyal Japanese American citizen stands in the war for the right, and that is why I say to you to go in as a single unit; go in together. You will be twice magnified by so doing. If you are infused throughout the Army, six months or six years from now, no one will know and no one can tell what the Japanese Americans did in this war. But if they are a separate combat unit, everybody will have heard of it. The 100th U.S. Infantry, 100% Japanese Americans, are already considered one of the crack combat units of the United States Army. To you younger Japanese Americans, let me say that your efforts, from my point of view in this emergency are two fold because you serve not only your country, but you also serve the Japanese American people of this country. You serve twice and your actions will provide a post-war appreciation of Japanese American people that will be a heritage to your children, grandchildren, and their children. This is a real opportunity. I am confident that you will take advantage of it.

Thank you for your kind attention.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 730027

By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05

AMPHITHEATER

CANAL COMMUNITY OPEN MEETING

February 10, 1943

7:30 P. M.

(Issel Meeting)

Captain Norman R. Thompson, C.M.P.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to try to clarify two questions that are on the questionnaire. It seems to me those questions are designed primarily to determine what American citizens of Japanese ancestry are loyal to the United States. By answering "Yes" to those two questions you prove your loyalty, but you do not in any way volunteer for the Army. By answering "no" to those questions, you place yourselves in the very same position as an enemy alien. Any young men who have answered those questions "No", but who are really loyal at heart, and did not understand the question, will have an opportunity tomorrow night to change from "no" to "Yes" if they so desire. I will try to present some of the questions, the principal questions, bearing on this issue, that have been asked me since I have been here, and answer them.

Question: Where will we fight if we joining the Army?

Answer: I don't know where you will fight except that you will not fight in the Pacific against the Japanese Empire.

Question: Will we receive the same pay and allowances as other United States soldiers?

Answer: Yes, you will receive the same pay and allowances and the same opportunities, and you will be permitted to allot part of your pay to your relatives even though they be here in the Relocation Center.

Question: Will it be possible for us to enlist in the Air Force or in the Navy or in the Marine Corps?

Answer: At the present time that is not possible, but all three branches of the service are considering the possibility of permitting it.

Question: If we join this new combat team, how long will we be in training?

Answer: Approximately one year, and training will be at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Question: What will happen to us who volunteer for the Army but are turned down for physical reasons? Will we be returned to the Relocation Centers?

Answer: Those that are rejected for physical reasons will, if they have the ability, be placed in defense work if they so desire.

Question: As a soldier, can I make an allotment to my parents who are not citizens of the United States?

Answer: Yes, you can.

Question: If I volunteer for the combat group how soon will I be called?

Answer: Sometime during the month of March.

Question: If I do not volunteer, will I be drafted?

Answer: You most probably will.

Question: If I join the Army, may I still get married?

Answer: You may.

Question: Does this volunteer program include Japanese-American citizens in Hawaii and outside the Relocation Centers?

Answer: Yes, it does.

Question: Will those who were in the Army in non-commissioned or commissioned grades have assurance that they will be placed in the same grade?

Answer: So far as they are qualified, they will be returned in the grade in which they formerly held.

Question: Is my brother who is not a citizen eligible for induction into the Army?

Answer: No, only citizens are to be inducted into this program.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I am going to say to you now I do not say as a representative of the United States Government, I speak as a private citizen and soldier. I want to talk to you about public opinion in the United States as it affects you. There are many people, as you know, in this country who do not believe that you are loyal citizens, and public opinion after the war is going to affect materially your future life. For that reason, I urge you to take full advantage of this opportunity that the Government offers you. Your situation is not without precedent in this country. Other nationalities in the country have come here under similar circumstances, but through loyal service in time of crisis, have been able to establish themselves in the society of American democracy and secure a secure place. Especially you young men of military age, you have an opportunity to serve twice. You serve your country and you serve those of your blood, in establishing them in the post-war period. People ask me why do you want us to fight in a separate battalion by ourselves. The object of that, ladies and gentlemen, is that you may obtain the recognition that will be due you. If you are diffused throughout the various elements of the Army, you would be lost as far as number and manpower is concerned. The great majority of the American public would never know whether you served the country or not, but if organized and you go in as a body, no one can deny, and all the world would know, what you accomplish.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 730027

By AP NARA Date 9/13/05

- 3 -

If you long to return to California as I believe many of you do,
the quickest way to get there is to pitch in and win this war.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 730027

By JAB NARA Date 9/13/05

MESS HALL # 42

BUTTE COMMUNITY OPEN MEETING

February 10, 1943

Captain Norman R. Thompson, C.N.F.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Question 1: (a) In the event one volunteers, will he be placed on the list of the local board in California from where he was evacuated?

Answer: (a) He will be credited to that quota.

Question 2: (a) Why is induction on a voluntary basis instead of Selective Service?
 (b) Is the registration for both aliens and citizens?
 (c) Are the registration forms to be used for other army induction?

Answer: (a) It has been the policy of this Government since its inception in any war to permit its citizens to volunteer. That is a right which many of us regard highly, and it was extended to other citizens of this country at the beginning of this war. In all fairness it must be extended to you.

(b) Registration is for both aliens and citizens, but at the present time I cannot accept the volunteer services of aliens. Do not misunderstand me, at the present time I cannot accept it. Six months from now the conditions may be changed.

(c) Yes they are. The forms are going to be used as I stated in that original statement from the War Department to assist the Government in determining who is loyal and who is not loyal. The actual induction form has nothing whatever to do with the questionnaires. That is not the form that will be used when you volunteer or are inducted. This registration is to speed up relocation as well as the army program. In other words we will register everyone from 17 to 38 regardless. Forms will be used to speed up relocation for the reason that we are already receiving inquiries from industries in the Middle West who will want groups of people for industrial work. If they are citizens they may be employed in war plants and this is just one way of speeding up the total check and the total enlistment of everybody for both the army forces and relocation. I can say that after this has been completed the people from 17-38 which is being completed by Capt. Thompson and his men, we will then go on for people 38 and up in order to relocate them so that when these jobs come along we can move people for relocation.

- Question 3: (a) What would become of our old Selective Service Classifications?
- (b) Are we going to have another physical examination if we volunteer for the service?

- Answer: (a) Your old Selective Service classifications were originated to take care of a certain unexpected situation. They will be abolished. You will be reclassified.
- (b) Yes, you definitely will have several physical examinations.

- Question 4: (a) Kindly explain of Nisei's drafting in Relocation Centers.
- (b) Will the Nisei soldier now in the U.S. Army be placed in the same regiment as of proposed combat unit?
- (c) Should JA classification (on the outside prior to relocation) advised to volunteer that is if he feels he can do better on the home front?

- Answer: (a) I interpret that to mean what actually happens how do they do it? What will happen as far as the draft is concerned? This is not volunteer induction. Selective Service draft which will follow volunteers. They will be called just the same as any other American citizen who is of military age. They will be given physical examinations. If they are found to be physically fit they will be inducted into the service. That will not happen here. It will be necessary for the individual called to go to the nearest point where the Government has the facilities to carry on the work.
- (b) Some of them may. They will not all be placed there. I do not know whether you gentlemen know or not, but the 100th Infantry is entirely made up of Japanese-Americans. It is an outstanding organization. They are trained in Camp Shelby, Mississippi, later in Wisconsin, and is considered one of the crack combats of the U.S. Army today. I know perfectly well they are not going to break up the infantry. I may be that certain members of Japanese-American blood may be drawn in to form a nucleus for this combat team or to assist in the training of them. I do not say that were possible but actually I do not know, and no one knows, but in my estimation this combat unit will be formed from the volunteers that come from these relocation centers.

- (c) Gentlemen, I cannot answer that question. I shall not, would not urge, argue or direct a man. This is answerable only to himself.

- Question 5: (a) Will the Japanese-Americans have the opportunity to serve in the Air Forces?
- (a) At the present time there is no provision for that. I am told by good authority in Washington that there is an excellent opportunity in the not too far future and I will cover other things because some one is going to ask about the Navy. The same applies to the Navy and Coast Guard. At this time, however, that is not possible but I am confident that in the not too far distant future there will be that opportunity. Let me qualify that. There will be that opportunity particularly for those who are in at the start of this thing on a voluntary status. When you come in drafted the course is not so easy.

- Question 6: (a) If it is the purpose of the U. S. to accept the Nisei as loyal why not draft them as other Americans, including Negroes?
- (b) If the Nisei do not volunteer will they not be stigmatized as disloyal? There is a principle involved here.
- (c) In the last war Nisei served loyally and gave a good account of themselves as members of the regular army. Are they less loyal today? If the Government and Army are convinced of the Nisei's loyalty why are they suspected just because we are at war with Japan?

- Answers: (a) They will be drafted. No question about that. They will be, but first, gentlemen, you have the opportunity to volunteer.
- (b) If I may, I would like to answer that question when I have finished answering the rest of the questions. I have reason for that.
- (c) That is true, very true. No one can deny that. No, I do not think so, the United States Government does not think so. I think that is quite obvious, gentlemen, the average American citizen can not look at a Nisei and tell the difference whether he is Nisei or Issei. I can't do that, and the fact that we are at war with Japan does definitely throw a certain suspicion on everyone

with Japanese-American blood. You will remember in the last war with Germany the same thing applied. Everybody in this country of German heritage was suspected. Everybody of Italian heritage was suspected. It was only natural, and unquestionably it is true. We can go back further than that to the days of the Revolution. We fought the English. They suspected us and we suspected them. However, our great purpose is to clarify the fact that there is a difference and a vast difference. Hence this program.

Question 7:

- (a) Does work in the Camouflage Net Project here at this Center be considered war work industry for deferment?
- (b) Are those already in the service to be put into these combat teams of Japanese Americans?
- (c) Are we limited to the four branches of the services mentioned in your talk?

Answer:

- (a) I don't know but we can find out.
- (b) I have already answered that.
- (c) At the present time we are limited to that.

Question 8:

- (a) Is it intention of the U. S. Army to send Japanese (Nisei) combat team to the Pacific area to fight against Japanese Army?

Answer:

- (a) When you enter the U. S. Army you do so without any mental reservation. When you become a soldier you are subject to orders to go anywhere needed. Even as I am here tonight. I can be ordered to any corner of the globe. The same will apply to American citizens of Japanese ancestry, but let me qualify that. In my opinion and in the opinion of officers in the high place in the War Department Japanese Americans will not be sent into the Pacific. Good common sense dictates why. In the first place, were they sent in there infiltration, not through the Japanese American unit but through attached units will be a very simple thing to accomplish, if the Army secured American uniforms. Reason 2: That if we sent that force over there we would have to send an equal force to protect them from both sides believe it or not.

Question 9:

- (a) What are the chances for draftees once in the Army that are now transferred into the Reserve Enlisted Corps?

Answer:

- (a) Many of these men have held non-commissioned grades, I am sure. They will be eligible for reinstatement at their former grade. Assuming, of course, that they are physically fit, and willing to go.

Question 10:

- (a) If Nisei are drafted later on, will they also go into "special" combat teams?
- (b) Does not a "special" combat team set a dangerous precedent in the treatment of minority groups?
- (c) Isn't the proposed "combat" team a bar to further assimilation?
- (d) Couldn't we be treated as other Americans now if the weight of opinion on the part of the Nisei desire it?
- (e) Will the families of those who enter Army Service be aided in resettlement, or will they have to remain and "rot" in camp with all its abnormal conditions.
- (f) What will the Army service program do to the proposed relocation program of resettlement?

Answer:

- (a) I don't know, nobody knows whether you will or not. A great deal would depend on the success of the initial team, but if this initial combat team works out as well as the 100th Infantry has, I don't think there is any question.
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
- (e) The family of any Japanese-American who volunteers for the Army will receive preferential consideration in anything that they wish to do in the way of relocation outside.

Mr. Bennett; Subject to the Army rules as to where they may go. In other words if we have ten families going to the State of Illinois, the one who has a son in the Army would be the first one offered the opportunity.

- (f) I don't see that it will do anything to it except help it. It can't hurt it.

Question 11:

- (a) How would this plan affect those who are planning to return to school in the Medical or Dental profession, or any of the deferred lists of profession?

Answer:

- (a) I don't know but I can find out. I am not familiar enough to quote the ruling of Selective Service as to how much time a man has to be allowed to remain in medicine or dental lines.

Question 12: (a) Will you be able to travel any place in the United States if you were in the armed force?

Answer: (a) Yes, you will be able to. Subject to the same conditions that every other soldier is subject to. After you have served so long you accumulate furlough time which can be claimed to you depending on the time you serve you may accumulate 10 or 15 days in that period of time, if you get a furlough you can go anywhere you wish to. My Sgt. right here, has on his person, a pass that permits him to Zone 1 to see his parents when his term of service is over here.

Question 13: (a) Are we to be given back our original draft board (Selective Service) rating immediately.

(b) Are the limits of draftable or volunteering age to be accepted likewise, freely?

Answer: (a) Some people I believe received their ratings, others did not. It is my belief that everybody will be reclassified when this induction goes into effect.

(b) Not at the present time. At the present time the only volunteers we can accept are those of American citizenship and within age limit, 17 to 38. Let me qualify that. There may be men who are over 38 years of age who have special qualifications which would entitle them to a commission. If they are over 55 they can make application for that. Examples: Doctors, dentists, who have special talents may apply for it even though they may be over 38 years of age.

Question 14: (a) If one goes out to contribute to the war effort in any industry, would his physical safety be guaranteed by the Government?

Answer: (a) No more than the Government will guarantee my physical safety. In time of war there is no guarantee.

Question 15: (a) As volunteers in the armed forces have we a choice of any field, or is there no choice?

(b) It was stated that we are eligible for officer training-ship. Are the number of commissioned officers limited to the needs of the specified "combat Team"?

Answer: (a) I assume they mean branch of the service. In the combat group there are the five branches of the service: Infantry, Artillery, Signal Corps, Medical Detachment, Cavalry.

(b) No, the needs are not limited to that one. There is also the 100th Infantry, and I believe there will be additional units after those two.

Question 16: (a) Do volunteers have preference in advancement?

(b) If it comes to such a stage that drafting is necessary, will we be drafted through our former local boards or will a special board be set up?

Answer:

(a) I think I can answer that by an old proverb which is, "The early bird gets the worm. First in, first serve". If you are in this new combat group there will number approximately five thousand men. Therefore, you are in competition with five thousand men. If you are drafted you are brought into an army of many million men, and you are in competition with many million men. That, I think, is a logical answer to that question.

(b) You will be drafted at the nearest board to this Center but you will be credited to your original board where you registered.

Question 17: (a) Will the Selective Service reclassify the ones that are now in the 40 class?

Answer: (a) Yes, they will.

Question 18: (a) What is the attitude of the Government in respect to loyalty of enemy aliens toward U.S.A.?

Answer: (a) This question is not clear enough to answer.

Question 19: (a) How are you expecting us to volunteer after depriving of practically everything what we have. Will you tell us where is liberty and justice for us to fight for? What do you mean by saying "fair treatment"?

(b) Are you letting us to go back to California if we volunteer?

Answer: (a) I will answer question (a) later.

(b) I cannot guarantee that if you volunteer you will go back to California. I do not know, but it is my honest opinion that it is the best way to influence the public.

Question 20: (a) If and when the loyal citizens are inducted into the armed forces, are they free to travel within the Western Defense Zone?

(b) Why are the Japanese soldiers to be concentrated into the unit by themselves instead of being mingled with other Americans?

answer:

- (a) They can travel when they have accrued furlough time. If the man happens to be located in Maine, he will have quite a time to get to California and back again before his furlough date expires.
- (b) I will answer this later.

Question 21:

- (a) Today I have received a card dated February 5, from my local board classifying me as 4C. Just what is this classification?

Answer:

- (a) That was general classification that all Japanese-American citizens were placed in. That is all it meant. They were all placed in there in view of the time when it would be possible to do just what we are starting to do tomorrow. Blanket classification.

Question 22:

- (a) Would the immediate dependents get the same compensation due them even though they are living in the Relocation Centers?

Answer:

- (a) Yes, they will. Japanese-American soldiers are entitled to all the benefits that any other American soldiers are entitled to. He can allot any portion of his salary to anyone he desires. He is also entitled to take out \$10,000 worth of insurance. The cost of that insurance varies with the man in question. \$5,000 worth of insurance would cost my Sgt. \$3.25 a month. Mine costs me \$11.40 a month. I think it is a very good investment and every American soldier wherever they may be is entitled to that.

Question 23:

- (a) Why were the Japanese-Americans evacuated and not German-Americans and Italian-Americans?
- (b) Is it not the fact that only by placing Japanese-Americans side by side in the same unit the comparison can be made?
- (c) Is it not that by placing all racial groups in the same unit you can better present to the peoples of the Orient the principles of democracy?

Answer:

- (a) The threat of invasion on our West Coast was imminent. It could happen, it still can happen. The lack of German and Italian sea power makes the East Coast less dangerous.
- (b) It would certainly offer them a greater opportunity to show their individual and collective ability if they are so situated than to be diffused among other units.
- (c) I don't know of a better one. Definitely.

Question 24: (a) Is a citizen volunteering for induction have the preference of going into defense industries if he has children?

Answer: (a) No, the only thing you can volunteer for is the Army. You cannot volunteer for the Defense industry as such. In this particular program that we are going to carry on here it will be the first step for the Army.

Question 25: (a) Japanese alien are now considered "enemy aliens." Will they be considered as "friendly aliens" upon sufficient evidence of number of loyal nisei enlisting?

Answer: (a) I can't guarantee that you will but I do know that it will have a tremendous affect in shaping public opinion. There is no question about that.

Question 26: (a) What would happen to parents of those who should volunteer for service? Are you intending to keep them in this camp?

Answer: (a) I think I have answered that question. The parents of anyone volunteering are free to make request for relocation outside and will receive preferential attention from the VRA in assisting them. Or they may remain here. They cannot go back to California.

Question 27: (a) Will those who go out for outside employment be drafted in the Armed Forces?

Answer: (a) They will if they fall within Military age, 17 to 38, and are physically fit. The only exception to that might be that if they were exceptionally skilled defense workers, they can be deferred but that cannot be guaranteed to anyone.

Question 28: (a) Will volunteers be accepted in all branches of the Armed Service?

Answer: (a) Not at the present time. Only in those branches which I have listed.

Question 29: (a) Is this registration for the Army only, or are we able to go into other parts of the Armed Forces?

Answer: (a) At the present time, it is for the Army only. As I said before, the Navy and Air Forces is now studying the idea of whether or not they can open up and allow volunteer enlistment into those two branches. The only thing open at the present time is the Army.

Question 30: (a) Why were the Nisei soldiers taken out of the Armed Force and put in the Reserved Enlisted Corps?

Answer: (a) That was done because at the time and in the rush of events it was deemed the wisest and best thing to do. In other words, it was a case of military necessity. There are so many things to deal with that had to be dealt promptly that that course was adopted.

Question 31: (a) Is this registration compulsory to persons from 17 to 38? Any penalty on persons failing to register?

(b) By forming a separate Japanese combat unit will it not tend to retard the understanding of Japanese and the Caucasians, rather than increase close understanding?

Answer: (a) Yes it is. There could be. I don't say that there will be, but there could be. There is an article statute which could be construed that anyone failing to fill out a questionnaire would be a violation of this article which carries heavy penalties with it. "Espionage Act."

(b) To be answered later.

Question 32: (a) When the Japanese American War started December 7, 1941, we Japanese American soldiers were discharged from the U. S. Army. Now I would like to know why the U.S. Government starts to take Japanese Americans into the Army.

Answer: (a) You have a right to be there as loyal citizens. We now have the house in order so that there is a definite place for you in the United States Army. We are organized, regimented to the place where we now can take you into the Army and show what you can do.

Question 33: (a) A statement was given to the effect that the families of those nisei volunteering into the service would be given preference in resettlement and that it would aid this program. Actually, this is not true, due to the age composition of the group. The issei average 56 years of age; the nisei 21. The economic life of the issei has been practically eliminated. It would be extremely difficult for them to resettle without their nisei children. This would mean that the families of those volunteering actually would be handicapped in resettlement. Now, is it possible for a speedup of actual resettlement and then give the nisei a chance to volunteer?

(b) Do you honestly believe that separate combat units are not a blow at the democratic principles?

Answer:

(a) Mr. Bennett: As I understand it, the feeling is that if a nisei boy who has parents here enlists, his parents will not be able to relocate because they may be too old to resettle in a strange place. That might be true in some cases. However, they still have an opportunity to stay here and by comparison what do you think of the boy outside whose parents are 56 years old, who is going to take care of them? Actually, you are in a safer position than 75% of the children in the United States. It is true that older people can get jobs outside because there is a shortage. So could you issei, if you had the courage to try it. There will be plenty of opportunity for you. Just remember this. While your boy is out fighting you will at least have a place to stay, a place to eat and sleep. Outside, you have no such guarantee. Furthermore, your son who is in the army will have something to send home to you. Literally, you are in a safer position from the family standpoint than the people on the outside. If the people on the outside realized how safe you are here they would raise a howl about it.

(b) To be answered later.

Question 34:

(a) On questionnaire Form No. 27, if answered "So", what will become of the person who answered "No". Will they go to jail or to an internment camp?

(b) If a person has dependents or children, will he be drafted?

Answer:

(a) If you answer "So" you will not be put in jail. I do not believe you will be put in an internment camp. That question has been answered "no" by other groups of people in this country. They are known as "Conscientious Objectors." They have not been put in jail. They do not believe in the force of arms. They have been true to their conscience. They are collected as a body and are doing work which is profitable, in a sense, to the Government.

(b) At the present time the manpower of the country is great enough so that very few, if any, men with children have been drafted. In some cases they have been, but in the majority of cases the time has not arrived when they have actually been taken. But, I cannot stand here and tell you that in the next year or the year to follow that the conditions will not be such that married men with dependents will not be drafted. They will be drafted of necessity. It will be necessary. The fortunes of war will determine that.

Question 35: (a) Why were soldiers with parents or relatives in Japan "kicked out" of the Army and called a spy by some officers? There have been many complaints about this sarcastic discrimination.

Answer: (a) In any group as large as the United States Army today, there are always short-sighted individuals. There are always suspicious people. Even among the commissioned personnel. There are those who are prejudiced, and I can well understand, and I truly believe that this statement is made in good feeling. It may have happened. Why it was I would say is based primarily on ignorance, lack of understanding of the loyal Japanese Americans. It is a matter of public opinion. That's why it happened.

Question 36: (a) Why were all the nisei soldiers "kicked out" of the Signal Corps and put in the Medical Corps? This was at one camp where they had the Signal Corps.

Answer: (a) I cannot answer. I do not know.

Question 37: (a) If a nisei is willing to sign for repatriation, how would you classify him?

Answer: (a) He would most certainly not be drafted. Voluntary enlistment will be subject to reconsideration. He would be held up until the next group. Draft exempt.

Question 38: (a) Are professional men, such as M.D. and D.B.S. entitled to commissions, as are the Caucasians?

Answer: (a) Yes, if they are qualified, and if they come within the age limits, of which the top is 55.

Question 39: (a) Why is it necessary that we have a separate combat team? As we are American Citizens, why should there be such a distinction?

(b) What will be done to a man who refuses to serve in the Army? Reason: Against his will?

Answer: (a) To be answered later.

(b) He probably would be drafted just the same. What is done later is up to the individual himself.

Question 40: (a) If Nisei are proved to be unloyal, will they be drafted? If not, how will they be treated in the Relocation Center or in the future?

Answer: (a) I do not know, but I have an idea. It would take the wisdom of Solomon to answer that. They will be drafted, but if they are unloyal, they will be treated just the same as any other American Citizen who proves himself disloyal. There is no place in the Army for disloyal persons.

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Question 41: (a) Why were not the citizens of Japanese ancestry permitted into the Air Corps, and particularly the Navy, before?

Answer: (a) The reason was that in the Air Force in particular, it is a very popular branch of the Service. Everyone wants to fly. We have been absolutely jam-packed to take care of the number of men who have joined the Air Force. We have not had the facilities we would like. The same is true of the Navy. Should have the ships before you have the sailors. However, both of the branches of the services are now considering very seriously opening up enlistments to Japanese Americans.

Question 42: (a) An alien, other than Japanese, are they eligible for volunteering in the Army? (On the Allies side-- Canadian, French, Brazilian).

Answer: (a) It is not the custom of the United States Army to accept volunteer enlistments. If a Canadian came down to the United States to enlist for the United States Army, he would be turned back to his own country.

Question 43: (a) After the war what will happen to the war risk insurance which was taken when in service?

Answer: (a) I do not know, but if they follow the same program as in the last war, you will be able to continue it. For quite a period of time after the last war, I carried all the insurance that I held in the war, and then I was permitted to change it over to a commercial insurance company and I did not have to take another physical examination. It was later converted toward the children's education.

Question 44: (a) Is it not true that induction into the Army without being segregated into a separate battalion is inconsistent with the American principle? For sake of principle, would it not be of more value to be taken into the Army without segregation in order to prove that niseis can prove that they can fight shoulder to shoulder with other Americans, even sacrificing special opportunities for advancement in rank and also sacrificing an opportunity to prove their loyalty by group achievement of a separate battalion.

Answer: (a) To be answered later.

Question 45: (a) I became 38 last December 14. Do I have to register this time?

Answer: (a) Yes, you do register. However, you are not eligible for volunteering.

Question 46: (a) What assurance is there that the "Combat Unit" will see actual combat duty to be able to further prove themselves as Americans and not be relegated to just a paper combat unit.

Answer: (a) There is no assurance. That is the fortune of war.

Question 47: (a) You state that any American soldier is allowed to travel in the U. S. on furlough, but is it not true that the WRA and Army authorities will not let them come to the Relocation Centers in Military Zone 1 except in case of emergencies.

Answer: (a) That is not true. However, this particular question was brought up in Washington. Every soldier of Japanese ancestry would automatically be given a permit to visit any of the Relocation Projects that he wanted.

Question 48: (a) How soon after volunteering will the induction date take place?

Answer: (a) It will not take place prior to March 1. In all probability, for the majority, it will be a week or two weeks later than that. But the first group will be around March 1.

Question 49: (a) Are the isseis and niseis who served in the First World War in the Relocation Centers? Why?

Answer: (a) There were no exceptions made to my knowledge, as to citizens among those evacuees that were brought to the Centers. If there are, there are only a very few.

Question 50: (a) Aren't questions 27 and 28 in the application form rather doubting the Japanese Americans' loyalty when we Japanese Americans believe we have cooperated 100% to this day and are willing to defend our country?

(b) Will it be compulsory to answer all the questions?

Answer: (a) I don't think those questions, gentlemen, either one, can be considered as doubting. If I were asked the same questions tonight, I would be only too proud and glad to answer them. I think it is only fair that those questions be there, and I don't think that any American citizen would have any qualms about answering them.

(b) It will, to the best of your ability. If there are questions there that you cannot answer, then say so.

- Question 51: (a) The principle and idea behind the separate Japanese American combat unit is excellent; but how about the reaction among the other American soldiers, especially when the initial unit is known to have a high standing. There is a possibility of friction when there is a competitive spirit, in view of the fact that the Japanese Americans could not be expected to be accepted favorably by public opinion as yet.
- Answer: (a) I am not a bit afraid of that. There is a great deal of competitive spirit in the Army. Every man should feel that his organization is the best. Do not be afraid of being good. Be afraid of being poor. If you are good, they will respect you.
- Question 52: (a) Is draft coming in for defense work --that is, will manpower draft come in?
- Answer: (b) I do not know. Mr. McHutt could probably tell you better.
- Question 53: (a) Will the Japanese Combat Team have a Tank Corps?
- Answer: (a) It is conceivable that they may. Everything is a military secret. No one but the Commanding Officer and the other high officials know what the combat team is composed of.
- Question 54: (a) Did the Army revise its ruling that nisei soldiers may not visit their parents in Relocation Centers in Military Zone 1 except in extreme emergencies.
- Answer: (a) Yes, approximately December 15, 1942.
- Question 55: (a) The men who are most likely to relocate are the very ones who would be drafted or would volunteer. Then isn't it likely that relocation will suffer?
- Answer: (a) Mr. Bennett answered that. In unusual times we have to assume burdens that we wouldn't consider in peace time.
- Question 56: (a) Does the Army think that California can prevent the Japanese Americans from returning?
- Answer: (a) I don't know what the Army thinks. The Army doesn't have much to do with it. That can be determined only after the expiration of the war.

Butte
February 8, 1943
7:00 P.M.

In closing there is just one thought I would like to leave with you. What we are doing here will make history. I am not an orator. I wish I were. I am a soldier, but I feel that I am qualified to speak to you of what is in my heart as an American citizen, as an American soldier. I believe I am qualified by reason of the fact that up until two weeks I had never seen more than three Japanese-Americans in my life. I had never spoken to one. In the last two weeks I have been associating with ten Japanese-American soldiers. One of whom serves with me now. Consequently, I was unbiased. I have no preconceived ideas of what Japanese-Americans were like. I lived with these men and worked with them for two weeks. It was hard work. I observed them, not only in work but when we were eating and riding on the trains, etc. In a way I was able to evaluate the thing that we had in common which is Americanism and they are just as American. Their reactions were the same, keen sense of duty, humor, sense of responsibility to their country.

The opportunity that we have here as I see it and I do not speak officially. I speak simply as an individual. This is not War Department words you are hearing. This is what I think. The opportunity we have here is much bigger than recruiting a few thousand men for the United States Army. Let me present it to you this way. The Japanese-Americans are the smallest racial group in the United States. They are the newest racial group in the United States, due to no fault of their own. Fate has ordained that at this particular time plunged into the war from which their ancestors came. They have to win back not for today, not for ten years from now, but for all time--their place in this American democracy. They have got to change to forge public opinion. The opinion of fellow American citizens. The young man who volunteers in this service, serves twice. He serves his country and he serves his own racial blood in this country. He will make sure that in the future, in this democracy, there will be an honored place for his children, his grandchildren, and his children's children. This is not an easy thing to do, gentlemen.

If the Japanese-American people are to be reborn and forged into this democracy in the way and manner this opportunity presents, it means all the hardship, the blood, the tears, the death to accomplish it. War is not a pleasant thing, but no race, no person even as you and I were born into this world without pain and trial and that is what you face. I am glad, I am proud, that the Army recognizes your loyalty, that they offer you this opportunity, because I am confident that you are not going to fumble the ball.

I will now answer those questions. Let's talk business for a minute. All Americans can talk business. In this country the one thing that we have had over the rest of the world is the rare fine art of publicity. Being able to put up a product, exploit it to the ends of the earth by newspaper advertising, radio, magazine, etc.

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By advertising, hundreds of American goods have been sold because we put the "white light" of publicity on it, and, gentlemen, that is exactly what we are doing here. We are offering the Japanese-Americans a place in the "white light" where they will receive more publicity quicker, surer publicity than any other way we can think of. If we take a few thousand men and diffuse them in the Army, they are lost. Sixty years from now no one will know there were any Japanese-Americans in the Army. If they go out and perform an outstanding job, who can deny them? The very stones will cry out for justice. They can and will do it.

Let us be sure of this fact, let us forget for the moment, let us be sure that it is public opinion that we want to influence in our behalf because I am one of you in this. I believe it right to the soles of my feet. It is right, it is your opportunity, it is your chance, and I think you will not miss it.

Thank you.