

● PSF: Walter White

BX 194

PSF
Walter White
2

August 5, 1935.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. SCHEIDER:

Dear Malvina:

I have been asked to send you a memorandum containing information for Mrs. Roosevelt concerning Walter White, Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The memorandum is sent at this time because Walter White has been bombarding the President with telegrams and letters demanding passage of the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill before the adjournment of Congress; complaining about the War Department's policy regarding the assignment of negro reserve officers in C.C.C. camps etc.

Walter White for some time has been writing and telegraphing the President. Frankly, some of his messages to the President have been decidedly insulting. For example, in a letter he wrote the President on May sixth when he resigned as a member of the Advisory Council for the Government of the Virgin Islands, after expressing great disappointment that the President did not make a public pronouncement by means of a message to the Congress which would openly endorse the Anti-Lynching Bill, he said:

"xxxxxxx In justice to the cause I serve I cannot continue to remain even a small part of your official family."

His file of correspondence is voluminous.

I am advised by those familiar with White's actions at the Capitol that it was he who some time ago went into the restaurant within the Capitol Building and demanded that he be served, apparently deliberately creating a troublesome scene, compelling his eviction from the restaurant and giving rise to an issue, made much of in the press at the time. The belief in some quarters is that he did this for publicity purposes and to arouse negroes throughout the country through press accounts of his eviction from the Capitol and the refusal of Capitol authorities to permit him to eat in the restaurant there.

Mr. Forster advises that Walter White, before President Roosevelt came to the White House, because of his activities, has been one of the worst and most continuous of trouble makers.

STEPHEN EARLY

COPY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~See letter to~~ 4-45-

PSF
Walter White

March 10, 1945.

Mr. Walter White
War Correspondent
c/o American Consulate
Sydney, Australia.

My dear Mr. White:

A careful examination has been made of the record of the 93d Infantry Division, and I believe that the discriminatory procedures which were reported to you, and which you listed in your letter and memorandum of February 12, 1945, are without basis of fact.

As you were able to confirm, the division has not yet taken part in an amphibious attack. The reinforced 25th Infantry combat team had some combat service in the later stages of our Bougainville operations. Its battle efficiency was not uniform.

The 93d Infantry Division is a combat unit. It is being prepared for combat duty. Long periods of garrison duty, and the employment of divisions over widespread areas, are characteristic conditions of the Southwest Pacific Area. Supply and transport requirements are peculiarly dominant. Few divisions have been assembled for final training in one area prior to combat.

I can say with assurance that General MacArthur is in no way prejudiced against the division by reason of race or color. He is too good a soldier to allow measures to be taken that will impair the combat value of his troops, faced by the enormous tasks which remain to be accomplished in the vast area of the Pacific.

Sincerely,

(sgd) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

March 14, 1945

The President

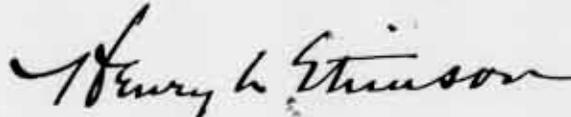
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with your memorandum of 3 March, I am enclosing a reply to Mr. Walter White concerning his report to you on the 93rd Infantry Division. I understand that he is now en route to the United States.

To obtain exact information concerning the various allegations made in Mr. White's report, a message was sent to General MacArthur on 1 March 1945. This message and General MacArthur's reply are also attached to this correspondence.

Respectfully yours,



Secretary of War

4 Incls.

1. Proposed ltr for sig of President
2. Message to MacArthur dtd 1 Mar 45
3. Message from MacArthur dtd 5 Mar 45
4. Ltr & Memo frm Mr. White dtd 12 Feb 45

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 8, 1972

By RT, NARS Date MAY 21 1973

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1 March 1945

From: General Marshall
To : General MacArthur
Nr : WAR 45550

Correspondent Walter White has written the President complaining of treatment of 93rd Division. He suggests existence of a deliberate campaign of disparagement of the division's combat performance. Specific statements include:

(1) The soldierly bearing, area and personal neatness and cleanliness of officers and men, and other visible evidences of high efficiency are unsurpassed by any division I have seen in the Pacific or any other theater. The contrast is marked between units of the 93rd in Dutch New Guinea and some of the other units on the Island.

(2) General Johnson has attempted and partly succeeded in stopping the practice of dumping onto the 93rd incompetent white officers who have failed in other divisions, many of whom have utilized their association with the 93rd to obtain promotions, not infrequently over negro officers of superior ability, education and longevity.

(3) General Johnson has taken steps to prevent assignment of white officers to the 93rd Division as "punishment".

(4) Another harmful practice, which steps are being taken to correct, has been the transfer out of the division of competent negro officers when they express disagreement with anti-negro policies. In some instances attempts were made to declare such men psychoneurotics; in other instances free use of Courts-Martial and of open or implied threats were used to break the spirit of enlisted or officer personnel.

(5) The division has had virtually no combat training since it left California because most units have been working full time loading and unloading ships.

(6) Since leaving the U.S. the division has been scattered over various islands and never together as a unit whereas all white units have been together prior to entrance into combat.

(7) There is a total absence of qualified negroes on the division General Staff and of negroes of field grade on regimental staffs.

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OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RT, NARS D. MAY 21 1973

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White inquires as to whether 93rd is to be a combat division or whether it is to be used as service troops. He recommends that if it is to be used for combat it should be relieved of all fatigue or service duties except those normal to other combat units and that it be given amphibious and other training received by other divisions. Artillery pieces which have been taken away and given to other divisions moving forward should be restored. Thorough refresher courses in all phases of warfare of an infantry division should be given. All personnel shortages should be replenished, white officers to be interviewed to determine their capabilities and lack of race prejudice.

White mentions local hearsay reports that you personally do not favor use of negro troops in combat in the Pacific.

Because it may be anticipated that War Department will be required to make specific reply, your early comments on the above statements would be appreciated. As this division served for a considerable period under General Griswold, it is requested that you include his comments in your reply.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (G)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RT, NARS Date MAY 21 1973

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From: General MacArthur

5 March 1945

To : General Marshall

Nr : UAD 62716

"Sometime ago the general question of racial discrimination with reference to promotion and assignment arose in the 93rd Division. General Johnston, the Division Commander, attached such importance to an impartial investigation of the subject that he requested, and I directed, a thorough investigation by the Inspector General Eighth Army.

This Inspector General report, submitted 8 January 1945, showed that the allegations of discrimination were without foundation in fact and that the officer who had requested an inspector should be tried for perjury. The military bearing of officers and men in the division and matters commonly grouped as housekeeping are very satisfactory.

Such divisions as the 1st Cavalry, 7th Division, 77th Division, 41st Division and 38th Division are all superior to the 93rd Division except in the matter of motor maintenance. In this item our inspection teams have shown it to be without peer among the units inspected. Transfers of officers between divisions has been resorted to for divisions about to enter combat because of our limited number of replacements, but in no case have incompetent officers been sent to the 93rd Division.

Rather has the opposite been the case, for many officers of outstanding ability have been requested from the 93rd Division and the transfers have been disapproved because of the policy to keep the 93rd Division at the highest level of efficiency. In every other division in the theater unsatisfactory officers are placed with a view to a final trial prior to reclassification. To the best of my knowledge no such assignment has ever been made to the 93rd Division.

The opportunity to train has been identical to any other division not in combat. Priority for duties assigned in all divisions is:

- First, defense of the area occupied;
- Second, necessary labor to assist unloading ships furnished in proportion to the strength of units at the particular port;
- Third, training for combat.

Elements of the 93rd Division are so rotated that each gets its proportionate share of all types of duty. Few divisions in this theater

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have enjoyed the opportunity to have the division staged in one area. The 6th, 24th, 31st, 32nd and 41st Divisions were all required to enter combat without the opportunity for final training in one area.

The absence of negroes qualified for general staff duty is not a fault of anyone in command in this area."

The following report has been received from the Commanding General XIV Corps:

"The following opinions are based on personal knowledge of the performance of one regimental combat team reinforced by a battalion of artillery, one company of engineers and the division reconnaissance troop in combat on Bougainville, Solomon Islands.

A. Equipment: The division was the best equipped division in the South Pacific Area.

B. Training:

(1) Individuals were proficient in handling and firing of individual weapons and in their care and maintenance.

(2) The artillery did good work.

(3) The engineers did fair work.

(4) The infantry did poor work.

(5) Unit training was generally poor, especially in the smaller infantry units.

(6) Vehicle maintenance was of a high order.

C. Leadership: Although there were many officers of high type and adequate qualifications in the division, the general level of leadership was poor, particularly in the companies and platoons. This applies particularly to colored officers which comprise approximately 80% of company grade officers in this division.

D. Morale: Poor-as evidenced by courts martials, homosexual activities, selfmaiming, alleged discrimination etcetera.

E. Combat efficiency: Poor.

Note: In justice to the present Division Commander, this division took on a new lease of life in the short time he had it. The unit at that time was not in combat. He initiated cleanup of poor officers and insisted on higher standards. In my opinion, this division will improve under his leadership."

Many of the statements made by Mister White have no basis of fact and others are misrepresented. His letter was dispatched before his conference with the Theater Commander in which he presented the same complaints contained in your radio. I gave him correct information and I believed that many of his ideas were changed. I am answering seriatim his statements:

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OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RT, NARS Date MAY 21 1973

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(1) The division is reported as being excellent in routine performance of duties, in appearance, cleanliness, camp discipline, etcetera. Following its only combat experience, which occurred in the South Pacific, its Infantry was reported to be as extraordinarily poor. All those to whom I have spoken regarded it as unreliable, timid in the extreme, lacking in initiative, and entirely incapable of matching the Japanese Forces in combat. Its artillery was reported to be efficient.

(2) The statement that the division has been used as a dumping ground for inferior officers from other divisions or in any way to manipulate promotions is a pure fabrication. I have the gravest doubts that the statement attributed to General Johnston was made by him.

(3) This is a pure fabrication. The very thought that assignment to this division would be used as a punishment for white officers is repulsive.

(4) This statement is a pure fabrication and has no basis of fact.

(5) Elements of the division were used in combat in the South Pacific where its work as a combat unit was deemed unsatisfactory and did not warrant the risk of putting it on the line until it had been strengthened. This service was under South Pacific and my statement is based upon reports given me by officers of that area. Since its transfer to Southwest Pacific specific instructions have been issued to prepare it for and keep it in condition for combat service. For logistical reasons its location so far to the rear (garbled) militates against its active use. It has been moved forward to Hollandia and was alerted some time ago for a move to Morotai where it will be in contact with the enemy. Its use has not been influenced in the slightest degree by race or color. As with all other divisions the only criterion is its efficiency and its logistical position. It has been used as have other combat positions for loading and unloading shipping when military necessity dictated. The scarcity of service troops in the theater has imposed such obligations at times upon all combat units.

(6) The use of the division other than as an integrated unit has been paralleled by practically every other division in this theater and has been dictated largely by logistical requirements. There has been absolutely no differentiation in this matter.

(7) The assignment of officers within the division is a matter which is determined by the Division Commander, and while I am not currently informed as to details I have the greatest confidence in the integrity and judgment of the Division Commander in making these interior assignments.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RT, NARS Date MAY 21 1973

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(8) The 93rd Division is a combat unit and will continue to be treated as such. It has never been a service unit and there is no intention whatever of attempting to convert it.

(9) The training of the division is comparable to all others in the area. It is being handled strictly upon merit with neither favoritism nor prejudice.

(10) The assignment of officers to the division follows the same general procedure applicable to any other division.

(11) The statement made by Mister White that I do not favor use of negro combat troops is a pure fabrication. I have been especially anxious to develop this division into a reliable combat unit.

The violent opinions and unfounded statements of Mister White would seem to mark him as a troublemaker and a menace to the war effort.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (C)

OSD letter, May 3, 1973

By RT, NARS D. MAY 21 1973

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Walter White
War Correspondent
APO 93, c/o PM
San Francisco

12 February 1945.

My dear Mr. President:

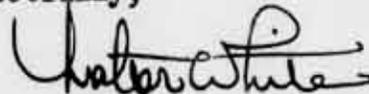
I take the liberty of transmitting to you herewith a memorandum on the status of the 93rd Division, which is in my opinion serious enough to warrant your personal interest and attention. As the largest and most publicized Negro unit in the Pacific, what happens to it has important bearing on what use is made of other Negro units.

As both the Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary of War expressed a desire before I left the United States to have an opinion on the 93rd, I have sent each of them also a copy of the memorandum.

The trip thus far has been most interesting though the time schedule could not be kept because of the variety of situations found in many of the islands. I have to date been in the Hawaiian Islands, Johnston, Kwagalein, Guam, Saipan, the Philippines, Hollandia and a few other islands. Everywhere I have been shown every courtesy and given an opportunity to see the entire picture.

With cordial personal greetings, I am

Respectfully,



Walter White

P. S. Should you wish to communicate with me during the next few weeks I can be reached in care of the American Consulate at Sydney, Australia.

Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea,
12 February 1945.

MEMORANDUM to the President
COPIES to the Under Secretary and
Assistant Secretary of War.
RE 93rd Infantry Division and other
Negro Combat Units.

FROM: WALTER WHITE.

In so many of the places in the Pacific I have visited during the past ten weeks have I encountered false statements regarding the 93rd Division in particular, and Negroes as combat troops generally, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that a deliberate if not an organized campaign is being conducted by certain persons. Typical of such statements are those of a Public Relations officer in a forward area who, when I told him I was particularly interested in Negro troops, launched into a vehement statement that Negroes were no good whatever as combat troops, that the 93rd Division had been assigned an easy beachhead to take at Bougainville, that the Division had broken under fire and run without bothering to inform the white division alongside it that it was going to run, that a large number of white officers and enlisted men lost their lives because of the cowardice of the 93rd Division, that it would take two centuries at least to develop the Negro temperamentally to the level of white men as fighters.

On another occasion an officer in the chemical warfare division, a Northerner, declared to me that Negro soldiers were utterly useless (despite the fact that he had been lauding at length the extraordinary job of construction of air strips, roads and other military installations, much of

which has been done by Negro Army, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel; that he had been told by many officers that the 93rd Division had been a complete failure in combat.

The Assistant Secretary of War informed me some months ago in Washington that he had been informed by an officer who had just returned from the South Pacific, that the 93rd had failed in an assignment to take an easy beachhead at Bougainville.

Many persons have stated that the 93rd had been transformed into a service outfit from combat status because of its cowardice and inefficiency.

THE FACTS

Upon arrival at this station, I promptly and thoroughly checked the stories told me with the records, and with responsible officers of the 93rd Division who were at Bougainville, including Brigadier General Leonard R. Boyd, Colonel James R. Urquhart, Lt. Colonel Robert Bennett and other officers and enlisted men. The falseness and viciousness of the anti-93rd Division stories are apparent in the circumstance that at no time in its operations in the Pacific has the Division been assigned to take a beachhead at Bougainville or anywhere else. General Boyd characterized any story to that effect as being "a lie out of the whole cloth". The Bougainville assault was made and the sector established in late November, 1943; the 93rd Division did not land there until April, 1944--four months later. The discrepancy between the facts and the story being industriously spread is so great that one finds difficulty in believing it to be accidental.

Upon arrival at Bougainville, one combat team of the 93rd Division

was assigned the task of defense and extension of the already established perimeter. The work done by the 593rd Field Artillery Battalion of the 25th Combat Team of the 93rd Division, elicited the following commendation, dated 4 April 1944, from Brigadier General W. C. Dunkel of the Americal Division Artillery, which was joined with the 93rd Division in this action:

"1. It is with a great deal of admiration and pride that I take this means to welcome, as a part of the Americal Artillery, the outstanding organization of the 593rd Field Artillery Battalion.

"2. Your occupation and construction of position areas has been efficiently accomplished, and the initial results of your registrations and fire on Japanese troop movements have been very successful. My observers report that your adjustments have been very accurate, a fact that implies that your personnel has been well trained in the technique of the arm and can apply that training in its first combat service.

"3. My only regret is that you did not join us earlier in the Battle of Bougainville. I know that, in the future, all officers and men of this unit will welcome, gladly, the opportunity to serve with the 593rd."

A certified true copy of the full text of General Dunkel's commendation is attached.

The 2nd Battalion of the 25th Combat Team was assigned the duty of attacking and wiping out a strongly fortified Japanese position of five concrete pill boxes. It accomplished its mission in a manner which General Boyd described to me as "commendable for a veteran outfit, outstanding for a unit in its first combat action."

Reconnaissance troops of the 25th Combat Team attacked and forced the retreat of the enemy in another phase of the action which required courage and skill.

Evidence of the courage and fearlessness of men of the 93rd Division

may be seen in the citations of two members of the Reconnaissance Troop, one a sergeant and one a private, for their action at Bougainville. The following are the texts of these citations:

"ROTHCHILD R. WEBB, 35363424, Staff Sergeant, Cavalry, 93rd Infantry Division, United States Army, for gallantry in action at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, on 17 May 1944. As a member of an ambushed patrol, he evacuated his seriously wounded commanding officer from the line of hostile machine-gun fire, dressed his wounds and assisted him to the shelter of a nearby swamp. Constantly under threat of capture for three days in Japanese-held territory, Sergeant Webb successfully led his partly blinded patrol leader to safety."

"Private ISAAC SERMON, 34063898, Infantry, United States Army. For gallantry in action at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, on 8 April 1944. When Private Sermon's patrol was fired on from ambush, he was wounded in the neck. Disregarding his wound, he went into position with his BAR and returned the fire, killing three of the enemy. After his ammunition was exhausted, he started crawling to his patrol and was shot three more times while doing so. When the patrol moved out of the area at a fast pace, Private Sermon determinedly maintained his place in the column for over 600 yards before he dropped from exhaustion and loss of blood and had to be carried in. By his devotion to duty, stamina and courage, Private Sermon enabled his patrol to reorganize, break through the ambush and return to our lines safely after accomplishing its mission."

It is not contended that the above actions exceeded those of other divisions at Bougainville or elsewhere in the Pacific. It is the fact, however, that (1) the 93rd Division performed in creditable fashion the very limited combat duties assigned to it and (2) the story circulated in the Pacific that the 93rd Division had been given and had failed in a beachhead operation, which story at least one officer had the temerity to relate to the Assistant Secretary of War, is utterly false. Further refutation of such falsehoods may be found in voluntary statements made to Colonel Urquhart by Colonels Fredericks and White of the 37th Division, that the 25th Combat Team of the 93rd Division "conducted itself as well at Bougainville, though it was then seeing its first combat action, as

the 37th, a veteran division." I have been informed that the 37th Division regretted that the entire Bougainville campaign was not turned over to the 93rd.

Following is a list of awards and decorations awarded personnel of the 93rd Division since being overseas:

Silver Star - 2
Soldiers Medal - 5
Bronze Star Medal - 76*
Air Medal - 2
Purple Heart - 77
Oak Leaf Cluster - 1*
Good Conduct Medal - 3,902
Combat Infantry Badge - 146
Expert Infantry Badge - 1,010
Drivers and Mechanics Badge - 79

*One Oak Leaf Cluster awarded in lieu of Bronze Star.

The only incident I have been able to discover which would give any basis whatever to accusations of failure in combat by any part of the 93rd Division, was that involving Company "K" of the 25th Infantry Combat Team. This company was assigned the task of attacking and taking a position held by approximately a battalion of the enemy deployed in what was roughly a horseshoe position. The company commander was ordered to go around either flank of the enemy position, but he instead ordered his men and officers to proceed through the middle, against the advice of an American Division sergeant assigned to Company "K" because of his knowledge of the terrain and of jungle fighting. The company commander ordered one of his colored

lieutenants to lead a platoon to the most advanced point towards the enemy, refusing to order withdrawal when the group found itself surrounded and greatly outnumbered. The lieutenant and eleven of his fifteen men were killed. Meanwhile the company commander became hysterical with fright, according to the statements of officers and enlisted men under his command, issuing conflicting orders and acting in a most unbecoming and unsoldierly manner, although he at all times remained safely in the rear. He is said to have been the first person to reach the command post.

The conduct of this officer under fire was such as to require an investigation by the Inspector General. He was relieved of his company command but placed in charge of Battalion S-3, virtually a promotion. Criticism of him, meanwhile, among both enlisted men and officers became so wide spread and condemnatory that the then commanding officer of the Combat Team threatened court martial of any person who criticized this captain.

In mentioning this episode I do not intend to condemn this officer for breaking under fire, retreating to safety, and causing the demoralization of the men under his command. White divisions have cracked and failed in their first baptism of fire both in the Pacific and European theaters of war, and later recouped their reputations after they had become battle seasoned. Several instances could be cited where entire divisions have exhibited fear and failed badly instead of one company commander and one company as in the case of the 93rd Division. Fear is a normal human reaction in warfare towards which is applicable the President's memorable statement in his first inaugural address, that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

The failure of Company "K" for the reasons given above is so minor and understandable that it is a travesty upon democracy and justice to condemn an entire division, and, by implication, an entire race as is being done. It is equally unfair to deny the 93rd Division further combat action and training, even in rudimentary drilling, and to confine it as has been the case for the past nine months or more to unloading ships and other non-combat fatigue duties.

INCIDENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE 93RD DIVISION

There is nothing to be gained in reciting here mistakes of policy and attitude in the past except where either such policies definitely and adversely affect the present and future situation, or where such policies continue to a greater or lesser degree.

At this point I wish to report that, in my opinion, the outstanding and most beneficial event in the history of the 93rd Division was the appointment in August 1944 of Major General Harry H. Johnson as Commanding General. Virtually without exception every officer and enlisted man of the 93rd with whom I have talked shares that opinion. Under General Johnson's command, the soldierly bearing, area and personal neatness and cleanliness of officers and men, and other visible evidence of high efficiency are unsurpassed by any division I have seen in the Pacific or any other theater of war. The contrast is marked between the units of the 93rd in Dutch New Guinea and some of the other units on this island.

General Johnson's influence is not seen only in externals. He has attempted and partly succeeded in putting a stop to the practice of dumping onto the 93rd Division incompetent white officers who have failed in other

divisions, many of whom have utilized their association with the 93rd to obtain promotions, not infrequently over Negro officers of superior ability, education and longevity of service, which they could not have attained on merit elsewhere. General Johnson has also taken such steps as lie within his power to stop the assignment of white officers to the 93rd Division as "punishment". He has also made it clear that he neither will promote any officer of the 93rd because he is a Negro nor permit the denial of earned promotion for the same reason. In this policy he has the unqualified support of Negro officers and enlisted personnel. It is recommended and vigorously urged that the War Department give its fullest support to General Johnson in the difficult task assigned him.

As far as I have been able to learn, all of the divisions now in the several Pacific theaters of war have been given training in amphibious and other warfare necessary for the type of action the Pacific requires, except the 93rd and the Americal Divisions. Most of the divisions were staged at Hawaii or Australia for several months of such training. I am informed that various units which were already in the Pacific at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor had to be so hastily united into the Americal Division there was no time to give it amphibious training, but such was later given at Guadalcanal. Thus, as far as I am able to learn, the 93rd is the only division which has not had as complete training as a combat division needs to be of maximum effectiveness.

An unfortunate policy under previous division commanders of the 93rd Division has been the transferring out of the division of some of the most able and most unprejudiced officers to other divisions. Noticeable among these have been such officers as Lieut. Col. Arthur K. Amos, Lieut. Col.

George T. Coleman, Lieut. Col. Carl D. McFerren, and Major Frederick A. Bendtson. It is my information that officers of this high type were transferred, in some instances requested transfer when it appeared to be the policy of the War Department to transform the 93rd Division from combat to service status. In too many instances highly qualified officers were replaced by incompetent ones from other divisions. The practice has resulted in a distinct lowering of morale and efficiency. However, there remains in the Division some officers of the same high type, both white and Negro, such as General Harry H. Johnson, Colonel James R. Urquhart, Colonel Warren G. MacNaught, Lieut. Colonel Robert Bennett, Captain Claude Ferebee, Captain George McKinney, and Captain William T. Ray. These form a nucleus upon which General Johnson appears to be building the necessary high type of officer personnel which is essential to the success of any division.

One practice which has been exceedingly destructive of morale, and which should be discontinued, is the insistent and frequent querying of officers of the 93rd Division, either by questionnaires or personal interview, as to whether or not the 93rd Division can or will fight if given an opportunity. It is obvious that the expression of such doubts cannot help but create doubts.

Particularly difficult for General Johnson is the circumstance that if it be true that the 93rd Division is being transformed into a service division, it will be his second such experience. The transformation of the 2nd Cavalry Division from combat to service status in North Africa in April 1944 has had most harmful results upon the morale, not only of Negroes but of other American citizens. It happened that I was in North Africa at the time, and

was asked by the Theater Commander to speak to the men of the 2nd Cavalry Division just after the transformation had been made known to the division. I have nowhere seen such depressed spirits. I have found here an apprehension among the officers and men of the 93rd Division that the same thing is about to befall it.

Another harmful practice, which steps are being taken to correct, has been the transferring out of the Division competent Negro officers when they expressed disagreement with anti-Negro practices or policies. In some instances attempts were made to declare such men psychoneurotics. In other instances excessive use of courts-martial, and of open or implied threats were used to break the spirit of enlisted or officer personnel.

Basic to the above specific and harmful practices has been the indecision on the part of the War Department itself as to what is to be the status--combat or service--of the Division. This indecision has grievously militated against attainment of maximum of morale and efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. The War Department should make up its mind definitely and irrevocably as to the disposition it and the Theater Commander will make of the 93rd Division. If the Division is to be made one of port battalions or other service units, the War Department should have the courage and honesty to say so, and to cease deluding the men of the Division and the American public, especially the Negro public. The making of such a decision would be the most destructive of morale of the Negro which could be taken. But

if that is to be the eventual fate of the 93rd, the decision should be made now, and that decision should be made public.

2. If the pledges made by the War Department that the 93rd Division is to be a combat division, the following immediate and unequivocal steps should be taken to implement that pledge:

a. The Division should be relieved of all fatigue or service duties except those normal to other combat units.

b. The Division should be given all necessary amphibious and other training which has not yet been given it, so that it will be as fully prepared to acquit itself creditably as has been done with other divisions.

c. An immediate and complete cessation of the assignment to the 93rd Division of reclassified officers, white and Negro, but especially white, who have failed elsewhere, or who have been assigned to the 93rd Division as punishment. An end should be ordered to the practice of sending inferior officers to the 93rd Division, and giving them assignments and promotions over qualified officers, Negro and white, now in the 93rd Division. Some Negro officers have been kept as Second Lieutenants for nearly three years, while less educated and less able whites have been brought in and promoted over Negro officers. In saying this, I do not for a minute recommend the promotion of Negro officers solely because they are Negroes and are serving in a division where all the enlisted personnel is Negro. The Negro officers and enlisted men of the 93rd Division are themselves opposed to this as is General Johnson.

d. It is recommended that all present white officers in the 93rd

Division who wish to serve elsewhere or who object to serving with Negro troops, or who are not free from prejudice against Negroes, should be transferred to other divisions. They should be replaced with superlatively qualified officers, both white and Negro, who wish to serve with a division like the 93rd. There are many officers in the United States Army of this type.

e. Artillery guns which have been taken away from the division and given to other divisions moving up front should be restored to the 93rd Division to permit continuation of training. Thorough refresher courses in all phases of warfare of an infantry division should be immediately ordered. I have been informed that the 93rd Division has done virtually no combat training since it left Camp Clipper California more than a year ago; it had no time for such training because most of the units have been working full time loading and unloading ships.

f. Since leaving the United States, the 93rd Division has been scattered over various islands, and has not been together as a unit. This was probably true in part because of the size of some of the islands on which the division has been stationed; part of it may have been due to the exigencies of the military situation, but every division needs to be together to gain a sense of unity and of coordination, which are necessary to effective unit action. All white combat units, as far as I have been able to learn, have been together as units in Australia and other places prior to entrance into combat.

g. It is recommended that the War Department find the most

effective means of gaining the cooperation of Theater Commanders and their subordinates with the above policy if it be adopted. I have been unable as yet to check effectively the wide spread reports I have encountered throughout the Pacific that General of the Army Douglas MacArthur does not favor the use of Negro combat troops in the Pacific. I have been informed that when it was proposed to send a highly efficient Negro anti-aircraft battalion from Hawaii to a forward area, it was stated by General MacArthur's Headquarters that such action might create "complications".

h. Special consideration should be given to the total absence of qualified Negroes on the 93rd Division General Staff, and the total absence of Negroes of field grade on Regimental Staffs throughout the Division.

i. I am informed that the 93rd Division is now short some 130 officers. It is recommended that the Division be immediately brought up to its complement of officers and enlisted personnel. In making such replacements, it is vigorously urged that such additions be of the highest type available. In both the addition of new officer personnel and replacements, it is suggested that it might be desirable to interview such officers, particularly white officers, prior to their assignment to the Division, to insure that they not only have the military ability and training, but also an intelligent and unprejudiced racial attitude.

j. Statements have been made to me by responsible persons that General MacArthur is at least partly responsible for the failure to

train properly and utilize the 93rd Division in combat. I am loathe to believe that these reports are correct. But because they are widely spread and apparently believed by many persons, it would, in my opinion, be exceedingly wise for these reports to be investigated and clarified. The only effective means of answering such statements would be the proper completion of training of Negro combat units such as the 93rd Division and their utilization in combat.

Halter White

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION ARTILLERY

4 April 1944

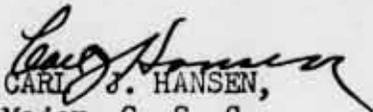
Subject: Commendation.

To : Officers and Enlisted Men, 593d Field Artillery Battalion.

1. It is with a great deal of admiration and pride that I take this means to welcome, as a part of the Americal Artillery, the outstanding organization of the 593d Field Artillery Battalion.
2. Your occupation and construction of position areas has been efficiently accomplished, and the initial results of your registrations and fire on Japanese troop movements have been very successful. My observers report that your adjustments have been very accurate, a fact that implies that your personnel has been well trained in the technique of the arm and can apply that training in its first combat service.
3. My only regret is that you did not join us earlier in the Battle of Bougainville. I know that, in the future, all officers and men of this unit will welcome, gladly, the opportunity to serve with the 593d.

/s/ W C Dunckel
W. C. DUNCKEL
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:


CARL J. HANSEN,
Major, G. S. C.,
AC of S, G - 1.

4122

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 3, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

FOR PREPARATION OF A BRIEF
REPLY FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F.D.R.

Ltr of 2/12/45 to the President from Walter White, War Correspondent, APO 93, c/o PM, San Francisco, Cal.; transmitting memo on the status of the 93rd Division, which in his opinion is serious enough to warrant personal interest and attention by the President; as the largest and most publicized Negro unit in the Pacific, what happens to it has important bearing on what use is made of other Negro units.