



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to  
SWP

November 6, 1944

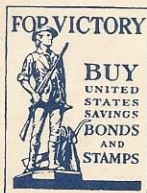
My dear Mrs. Shewmaker:

The receipt is acknowledged by reference from the White House of your letter of September 26, 1944 inquiring what action will be taken to protect American prisoners of war now incarcerated in the Philippine Islands. You state that your son is held there.

General MacArthur has warned Field Marshal Count Terauchi, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in the Philippines, that the United States Government will hold the Japanese Government fully responsible for the degradations and brutality to which American soldiers were subjected in previous campaigns. He gave solemn warning that he would hold the Japanese military authorities immediately liable for any harm which may result from failure to accord prisoners of war, civilian internees or civilian non-combatants the proper treatment and due protection to which they are of right entitled.

It is stated in Article 7 of the Geneva Prisoners of War Convention that prisoners of war shall be evacuated to depots located in a region far enough from the zone of combat for them to be out of danger. Although the Japanese Government is not a party to the Convention it has definitely committed itself to accord protection to American nationals in its custody. It is hoped that the Japanese Government will not fail to honor this commitment.

It will be heartening for you to know that on October 18, 1944 the War Department announced that all military personnel who have been prisoners of war for sixty days or more, or whose condition requires it, will be returned to the United States as soon as possible after their liberation, unless they specifically ask to remain overseas, and that they will be given priority in return over all other casual personnel except the sick and wounded.



Mrs. Ina Shewmaker,  
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Further exchanges. A complete plan was presented under which, on a reciprocal basis, accelerated exchanges might be made. The Japanese Government informed the Swiss Government that this proposal was under study. Since then the Department of State has done everything possible to obtain the Japanese Government's views in this matter and, deeply concerned about Japan's dilatory attitude, has also advanced further proposals, including one suggesting a