

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

May 16, 1944

TO ALL VOLUNTEERS OF THE AIRCRAFT WARNING SERVICE:

You have had a unique opportunity to see and to take part in the gradual transition from the defensive position into which your country was forced at the start of the war to the offensive that is today forcing our enemies back towards Berlin and Tokio. Many of you have served loyally and well in the Aircraft Warning Service ever since December 8, 1941. All of you have contributed your share to making this transition from retreat to advance possible.

The most crucial battles of our Nation's history are now in prospect overseas. They demand the full resources of our country, both in manpower and materiel. For that reason, the War Department has directed the further reduction of air defense measures within the continental United States and the release to the offensive of trained soldiers and equipment that could not otherwise be brought to bear upon the enemy.

The aircraft warning centers, at which so many of you have served and to which so many others have reported as ground observers, are to be closed. The Aircraft Warning Service, on a reduced scale, will be absorbed into installations used for the training of fighter pilots. The resulting savings in military personnel and equipment will be substantial.

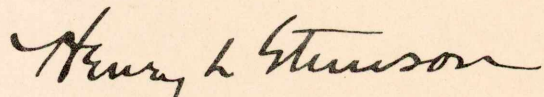
This does not mean that the War Department is of the opinion that all danger of enemy bombing has passed. On the contrary, a small-scale sneak raid is still within the capabilities of our enemies. We must win this war in Europe and Asia, however, and the calculated risk we are assuming in reducing our air defense measures is justified by the offensive power we will thereby release.

During your period of duty with the Aircraft Warning Service, you have learned many facts which, if made public, might be of service to the enemy. The War Department looks to you to maintain silence with respect to these matters of national security. The obligation you assumed to safeguard military information remains in full effect.

This war has a long way to go. We are only just entering upon its crucial phase and victory lies far ahead beyond many bloody battles. The War Department sincerely hopes that you will not relax your war effort, and urges that you transfer to one of the many remaining vitally important jobs the loyalty and self-sacrifice you have shown in your work for the Aircraft Warning Service.

The War Department is deeply grateful for the important service you have rendered your country.

Sincerely,



Secretary of War.