

Michael Destasio to Governor Andrew Schoeppel

In this letter to Governor Schoeppel, Michael Destasio asks Schoeppel for his assistance in helping bring the U.S. Army's 37th Infantry Division home. Made up primarily of men from the Ohio National Guard, the 37th fought in numerous campaigns during World War II. Although not directly linked to Kansas, DeStasio's letter was sent to all state Governors, U.S. Senator and Representatives, and leading newspapers with the hope that widespread recognition of their plight might speed up their demobilization.

Creator: Destasio, Michael

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Michael Destasio to Governor Andrew Schoeppel

MEMBERS OF THE
37th INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 37, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

RECEIVED
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GET US HOME

7 November 1945

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

! NO BOATS NO VOTES !

Dear Sir:

As members of the famous 37th Infantry Division, we feel that the Division is being overlooked in its redeployment to the United States. This Division has been overseas for the past forty-two months. They tell us that the high-point men are home and are being discharged, but there are still a great many men left in this Division who came overseas with it on May 10, 1942.

Robt S.

Our Division Commander, Major General Beightler, is doing everything in his power to get the Division home. The reason higher headquarters gives him is "The Shipping Shortage" but what they forget to mention is the fact that they had enough ships for the 38th and 31st Divisions. Neither of these Divisions has had as much time overseas as the 37th has had in combat alone. It seems that the only thing holding us back is the political influence among higher headquarters' staff officers. Or perhaps it is the fact that General Beightler is a National Guard General; the only one still commanding a Division. Or it could even be professional jealousy of our distinguished regular army theater commander or his regular army staff officers.

Many reasons have been given us for not being shipped home. One of them is the shortage of ships. Well, whose ships are transporting the Japanese Prisoners of War? Did there have to be a "Navy Day" that tied up available ships? What has happened to all the LST's and APA's on which we spent so much time in travelling to this war zone? Where are all the airplanes that the Air Corps boasted would carry so many men after VE Day? Is it true that Chinese troops are flown home by our ATC?

This Division was the last fighting unit to be withdrawn from the hills of Northern Luzon. During the entire Luzon campaign, which lasted nine months, we had the glorious sum of three weeks rest. The remainder of the time was spent taking Manila, Baguio and the Cagayan Valley in quick succession.

Some of the men have written letters of appeal to their congressmen but to no avail. It seems to us, who have been cut off from the outside world for the past three years, that Congress has little or nothing to say about the running of the army or they would not let favoritism or personal dislikes interfere with the redeployment of a Division.

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At the present time our date to sail is the 23d of November; this will no doubt be postponed again as it has been a number of times already. On this day, the men with above eighty points and the men who are over-age are scheduled to leave; the rest of the Division will have to wait for other ships. In our opinion, all this means that the men with only twenty-seven months overseas will set sail about the end of December or the beginning of January. If this is fair to these men, then we have lost all sense of fairness.

It would be greatly appreciated by every man in this Division if you could in some way help to get us out of this God-forsaken Pacific Area.

Respectfully yours,

Michael Destasio

P.S. A copy of this letter is being sent to all senators, representatives, and all leading newspapers.

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