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OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE

FIELD OFFICE
NINTH CIVILIAN DEFENSE REGION

1355 MARKET STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

December 27, 1944

Dempsey file
Solder

Civilian Defense
Region 1943-4

Honorable John J. Dempsey
State Capitol
Santa Fe, New Mexico

My dear Governor:-

I was up in Montana last week when the news of the finding of a Japanese balloon, carrying incendiaries, was reported. The balloon had landed on December 11th, but news of it was covered up until the 19th. In the meantime, considerable investigating had been done. I thought you might be interested in a description of the thing.

It was 33 feet in diameter, and carried Japanese lettering which, interpreted, said: "Inspected October 10, 1944; completed October 31, 1944". The balloon was made of high grade processed paper, and had a gas capacity of 18,000 cubic feet, with a carrying capacity of 1200 pounds of explosive. Attached to the side was a fuze about 70 feet long, ending in a container of gasoline which would flash into the balloon, exploding it. Then the incendiaries would fall from whatever altitude the balloon had at the time. It was found 17 miles southwest of Kallispell, Montana, by a woodchopper. The place of landing is about 475 air miles from Cape Flattery on the Coast. For some reason, the fuze had failed to operate, but some thought was that perhaps this was an exploratory trip in an endeavor to learn how much fuze, etc., might be required to strike definite points.

It is pure speculation at this time to try to determine the point of release, but newspapers carried a report Saturday of the finding of another balloon near Tacoma, Washington. By now, the Japanese Intelligence may know where they landed, and since they know the time of release, it is not impossible that a lot of them may be sent over.

I am not one to become overly excited, but I really feel that we had better not be too quick in dropping any civilian defense protective services, because it is possible for these balloons to cause a lot of damage. In fact, I feel that perhaps it might be well to seriously consider a reappraisal of conditions, in light of the military situation, and the further fact that the Japanese may be able to make these balloons more than a mere nuisance.

Sincerely

Joe W. Leedom
JOE W. LEEDOM

Colonel, Field Artillery
Senior Field Protection Officer

JWL:fs

Folder
Bengtson

Civilian
Defense
Review
1943-46

RESTRICTED
OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE
FIELD OFFICE
NINTH CIVILIAN DEFENSE REGION
1355 MARKET STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 February 1945

Honorable John J. Dempsey
Governor of the State of New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Governor Dempsey:

Conforming to our policy of keeping you advised as to current conditions, this letter is being sent in confidence and it is requested that no publicity be given the matters contained herein.

Recently the finding of several Japanese balloons within our western states necessitated a check-up on your state organization's plan for the reporting of unexploded bombs or enemy missiles. You have such a plan. No change is contemplated, but recent agreements between the Army and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, working in close harmony, now require reports of enemy missiles be made concurrently to the FBI and the Army. The additional report to the FBI can be channeled through regular law enforcement agencies.

You were also recently asked to supply certain information, now made a part of an Army survey that covers a much broader field than just Civilian Defense. The information supplied by you has been very helpful and is now being carefully studied and evaluated; based upon these studies, our future course of action will be indicated. It may be that increased emphasis will need to be placed on refresher training for our Bomb Reconnaissance Agents and even their number may be increased; the Forest Fire Fighters Service may require expansion, but for the present, no additional activity is indicated.

Meanwhile, your continued aid is needed. You have helped greatly in denying the enemy information he so much desires at this time. Please be assured that the entire matter of Civilian Defense is under constant study and appraisal by the military and we will continue to keep you advised.

The Western Defense Command has expressed a willingness to have a representative address a Conference of State Directors of Civilian Defense, to be held at a later date and after the surveys have had due consideration and study. Such a conference will be called by the West Coast Office of

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