


Excerpts from "Survey and Recommendations Concerning the Integration of the Negro Soldier into the Army", September 22, 1941. Army, Record Group 220: Records of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

Excerpts from

SURVEY AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE INTEGRATION
OF THE NEGRO SOLDIER INTO THE ARMY, SUBMITTED TO THE
SECRETARY OF WAR BY THE CIVILIAN AIDE TO THE SECRE-
TARY OF WAR

September 22, 1941



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E. Air Corps Training.

Training for Combat service in the Air Corps merits special mention. About 300 Negro candidates have already qualified for aviation cadet training and are awaiting appointment. The list is growing much faster than men are being called for training. The Air Corps has provided for accepting about 100 Negro aviation cadets each year. Thus, under present plans, some of the men now awaiting appointment must continue to wait three years longer, while the white cadet can expect to be called for training within one or two months after his application has been perfected.

A job is never done until it is done right. I pointed out the fundamental error in the Air Corps training program for Negroes before it was inaugurated. I have continued to do so as the results of that error have become more apparent. It is inexcusable that the Army invests in national advertising for aviation cadets, organizes units in college communities to stimulate recruiting, relaxes educational requirements for flying cadets, and inaugurates plans for noncommissioned pilots, all to meet the increasing need for Army flyers, and at the same time requires a Negro to wait three years to begin pilot training. There is no satisfactory solution to this dilemma short of admission of Negroes to various existing schools for flying cadet training, rather than directing them through the bottleneck of the separate Negro project at Tuskegee. All Arms and Services except the Air Corps are obtaining gratifying results through the training of both colored and white personnel at their existing schools.

While the training of ground crews is not officer training, it is mentioned here because of the intimate connection with pilot training. One Negro squadron is now in training. Additional Negro applicants are told that there are no vacancies for them. Yet, new ground schools at LaGuardia Field and elsewhere have been established in recent months for the training of rapidly expanding ground personnel. Thus, the training of Negro non-flying personnel is impeded by the same sort of bottleneck as is the pilot training program. Beyond this, the program of non-flying training for Negroes does not even have the continuity of the flight training program, since there is no plan for a second group to succeed the squadron now in training at Chanute Field.

F. Recommendations.

The following recommendations are implicit in what has already been written:

1. A detailed plan is needed to accomplish the progressive utilization of Negro officers in wartime Arms and Services.

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Recommendations (Continued)

2. A correlative plan is needed to assure the selection of sufficient Negro Officer Candidates for training in the established Officer Candidate Schools.

3. The assignment of Negro junior officers now available in the Reserve to Reception Centers, Replacement Training Centers, the Command of small detached units, and to perform morale functions, is strongly recommended.

4. Negro flying and non-flying personnel for Air Corps combat forces must be directed through channels other than the Tuskegee bottleneck in order to make timely use of a substantial pool of needed man-power.

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RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE AIR CORPS

The present program for training Negro fliers and the ground personnel is so limited, (1) that some 300 approved aviation cadet candidates are now on the Air Corps list awaiting assignment to duty, with their number increasing faster than men are being assigned for training, and with some approved candidates already facing the prospect of waiting more than two years before their training can begin, and, (2) that no provision is made for the training of any additional Negro ground personnel after the class now at Chanute Field shall have completed training in October.

It is believed that both situations should be corrected and that such correction can best be achieved by removing the present restriction of Negroes to the Tuskegee Training Project and authorizing the inclusion of Negroes in all phases of aviation training including the new enlisted pilots' schools.

Civilian Aide to the Secretary
of War

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RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING STATEMENT ON EQUAL TREATMENT OF SOLDIERS

The War Department cannot as a practical matter, either know of or deal with each individual case of discriminatory or abusive treatment which a soldier may suffer because of his race, yet the power of and respect for higher authority is such that a communication from the War Department to Commanders in the field stating the position of the War Department with reference to such matters should have a salutary effect.

It is contemplated that such a communication would:

1. State the general policy of equal treatment for all soldiers, regardless of race, making reference to any pertinent Army regulations;
2. Expressly disapprove the use of insulting epithets with reference to soldiers of any racial or religious group;
3. Counsel the avoidance of unnecessary practices tending to offend the sensibilities of any racial group, with specific reference to such practices as the maintenance of separate drinking fountains and toilet facilities for colored and white soldiers, the inclusion of the word colored in the official designation of service detachments or other units and racial discrimination in the division of labor between white and colored soldiers in service detachments, as illustrative of such undesirable practices.

Morale and public relations would be improved if after the issuance of such a communication, the Secretary of War should at a press conference express the concern of the War Department that there be no discriminatory treatment of any soldier because of his race and state that the importance of this policy has been brought to the attention of the commanders in the field.

Civilian Aide to the Secretary
of War

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WAR DEPARTMENT
Washington, D. C.

March 22, 1943

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Charles Poletti, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War

The Army Air Forces has no plan for the training of Negro flying and technical personnel beyond the number needed for the staffing of a fighter squadron and group. This means that only those applications already approved for Aviation Cadet Training will be considered by the Army Air Forces. These number slightly more than 300. Present plans call for the sending of all Negro pre-flight cadets to Tuskegee Institute for the five months training course in classes of about fifty-two each and from there to the Tuskegee Basic and Advanced Flying School. About 2,000 men will be trained in various aspects of the Technical and Administrative Training Program in the regular Air Force Schools.

The whole Air Force Training Program has developed along very haphazard lines. No enlisted ground crew men were trained between early in 1941 and January of 1943, in regular Air Force Schools. The first group of enlisted men trained at Chanute Field are nearly all in the 99th Fighter Squadron, which has been alerted for about nine months. Because of the failure of a continuing training program, the 2,000 men now in training will not complete their courses until Fall. Thus the fighter group will not be staffed until late in 1943 and not ready for combat until 1944.

In this connection, on September 1, 1942, the Secretary of War in a letter to Mr. Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said that by December 31, 1942, there would be more than 100,000 Negroes in the Army Air Forces. He stated further that not later than June 30, 1943, "a complete fighter group will be ready for combat."

The assumption of the Army Air Forces seems to be that Negroes can not be developed into Army pilots. If this were not so, then there would be some

be developed into Army pilots. If this were not so, then there would be some consideration of a continuing training program.

It should be further borne in mind that there are no plans existing for using Negroes in any other branch than the single engine fighter type of organization. Again, even if Negroes prove themselves the war would have long since ended before any plans could be developed for any effective utilization. Even Great Britain has found it possible to use Negroes in all types of aircraft.

/s/ Truman K. Gibson, Jr.

Acting Civilian Aide to the Secretary
of War

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Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies

March 26, 1943

Mr. Wilbur La Roe, Jr., Chairman,
Committee on Civic Affairs of the
Washington Federation of Churches,
743 Investment Building,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. La Roe:

I have your letter of March 13th in which you request replies to a number of questions on the matter of alleged discrimination against Negroes in the Army Air Forces.

I appreciate your sincere interest in the welfare of Negroes in the Air Force, as well as the success of the Air Force as a whole.

Your questions are answered as follows:

1. It is the policy of the Army, as required by the Selective Service and Training Act, to have a proportion of Negroes in the Army in proportion to the Negro population of the Country. The present ratio of induction is 10.6% and is based on registration figures.

2. Negro organizations are being established in each major branch of the service, combatant as well as non-combatant. Assignment to the Air and Ground Forces must be in the same proportion as stated above.

3. The same modern facilities have been provided at the Tuskegee Air Force Flying School for the training of Negro pilots as are provided at the Schools which train white pilots. At the Officers' Candidate School and the technical schools Negroes attend the same schools as white candidates.

4. The Army follows the general principle that it can attain its maximum strength only if its personnel is properly placed in accordance with the capabilities of individuals. All enlisted men on their entry into the service are graded by the Army General Classification Test and the Mechanical Aptitude Test. Because of the proportionately larger number of highly technical duties required of enlisted men in the Air Force, War Department policy provides that 55% of them qualify by passing the General Classification Test with a grade of 100 or better. The remaining 45% assigned to the Air Forces, who do not meet this qualification are assigned to comparatively unskilled jobs. Experience to date shows that while about 47% of all white enlisted men meet this qualification, the same minimum standard is met by less than 10% of the Negroes inducted. As a consequence, in order to absorb the same proportion of Negroes as exists in the total population, a small percentage of them who enter the Air Corps are qualified for entrance into the technical schools, and the large majority must be assigned to unskilled tasks.

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5. It is true that Negroes are so far being given the opportunity for training on single engine pursuit ships. It was believed wise to start by training a fighter group, where only one air man per plane is involved, namely the pilot. To train a heavy bomber group, it is necessary to train in addition to the pilot, a navigator, a bombardier, an aerial gunner, a radio operator, an additional mechanic and several other technicians. Because of the technical and other features present in flying, it was decided to proceed toward the formation of more complicated units after having gained experience with the simpler units.

6. While white officers have charge of the training at Tuskegee, Negroes will be given command duties as soon as they qualify for them. Examples are as follows: One Fighter Squadron, that has been fully trained, is completely officered by Negroes; Negroes command some of the Headquarters Squadrons and Aviation Squadrons (Separate) at the school; and there are administrative officers who have definite administrative responsibilities. As Negro officers become qualified, they will be advanced according to their ability.

7. There is one officers mess at Tuskegee to which all officers are eligible. However, it is customary for the white officers, when they do not eat at home, to use the facilities that are provided by the Post Exchange. These facilities are available to all the military personnel on duty at the post.

8. The reason for the establishment of Aviation Squadrons (Separate) are given in paragraph 4. They provide a place for men in the Air Forces who do not have the qualifications for more technical work. The duties they perform are to a large extent labor and housekeeping jobs that have to be done at every Air Force Base. While there are no white units actually named "Aviation Squadron (Separate)" there are many white Headquarters Squadrons which perform the same type of duties at Air Force Installations.

9. A sufficient number of qualified Negro applicants to be weather officers have been secured and are in training to support the Negro Fighter Group now in training. When new Negro units are organized there

will be opportunity for additional weather officers.

10. No Negroes qualified to be service pilots have yet been used by the Air Forces. To date there have been very few applicants for this duty, but their number will increase as individuals who are now attending school become qualified. The use of qualified Negro service pilots is now under study.

11. Until February 1st, of this year, Negro Medical officers at Tuskegee were not in residence at the School of Aviation Medicine at Randolph Field; but since that date, Negro Medical officers have been assigned

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to residence study there. This schooling was originally covered by extension courses and by commutation to Maxwell Field, as a comparatively small number were involved. When this matter was brought to the attention of the Air Force Headquarters, the change was made in order that Negro Medical officers could have the same opportunity as the white Medical officers.

12. The Air Forces is now bringing the Negro Fighter Group to strength, including the ground crew personnel, and will train them to carry out their combat mission. The question of training additional units, including a bomber group, is now under study. The Air Forces will continue to use Aviation Squadrons (Separate). These squadrons will be constantly screened to secure personnel for technical training. The Units above described will not fill the complement of Negro Personnel allotted to the Air Forces. In addition to the units being supplied to the Air Forces by the arms and services, others are being organized into Air Base Security Battalions, which are trained by the Ground Forces. These battalions have the important tactical duty of guarding air bases. They will perform this duty not only in continental United States, but also in overseas theaters.

13. You may be assured that the War Department will exert every effort to safeguard the interests of white and Negro personnel alike to the end that full use will be made of the capabilities of each individual in furtherance of our war effort.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Robert P. Patterson

ROBERT P. PATTERSON
Under Secretary of War

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