

I.H.E. to Chief of Staff, March 12, 1943. Security Classified Records, Record Group 220: Records of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

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D R A F T

March 12, 1943



MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF:

Subject: Employment of Grade V Personnel in the Army.

I. Discussion

1. The estimated Army General Classification Test percentage distributions for all men inducted into the Army during the period March 1941 to December 1942 and mechanical aptitude test percentage distribution for men processed at reception centers during the period September 1942 to December 1942 are included in Tab A. Therein it is indicated that 8.5 per cent of whites and 49.2 per cent of Negroes are classified in Grade V (inferior) as a result of the Army General Classification Test and 14.8 per cent of whites and 63.5 of Negroes are classified in Grade V as a result of the mechanical aptitude test. Combined per cent of white and Negro in Grade V is 12.5 and 19.4 respectively for the two tests.

2. Experience has indicated that all units can absorb from 5 to 10 per cent of Grade V personnel without undue harmful effect. It goes without saying, however, that the quality of any unit will be improved as this percentage is reduced.

3. Using the percentages developed by the Army General Classification Test as a basis for this discussion (they being the smaller of the two sets of figures) it is apparent at once that the percentage of Grade Vs in white units is small enough to present no particular problem but that the percentage of Grade Vs in Negro units is so high as to present an almost unsurmountable obstacle in the attempt to organize effective Negro units. Based on present policy the Army, by the time it reaches its full strength of 8,298,000 officers, men and WAAGs, will include approximately 898,000 Negroes. The majority of these Negroes must be absorbed in tactical units needed to implement our strategic plans. When it is considered that approximately half of all the personnel in these units is of inferior intelligence and that, of the remaining personnel, approximately two thirds is of below average (Grade IV) intelligence, the impossibility of developing effective Negro units is apparent.

4. Considering that shipping is and will remain a critical bottleneck, the War Department cannot afford to send Negro units overseas in proper ratio to white units since it obviously is unsound to send an inferior unit when a better unit is available. Hence, in 1944 Negro units will be piled up in the United States to an unwarranted degree, the Negro race will be denied its fair share of battle participation as well as battle losses and the Army will suffer, in effect, a cut of approximately 900,000 in the total personnel.

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5. The Army is open to severe and just criticism for this wasted manpower which, if left in civil life, would contribute materially to an important phase of the war effort. Generally speaking the majority of Negroes in the lower intelligence grades come from rural areas particularly in the South, and the majority of Negroes in the higher grades come from towns and cities particularly in the North. Of the latter class few are contributing to the war effort in a vital role since, of all Negroes classified by Selective Service to December 31, 1942, only five tenths of one per cent have been classified as "Necessary in his civilian activity" and but three tenths of one per cent have been classified as "Necessary to the war production program". On the other hand, due to the shortage of agricultural labor, the first class can be very usefully employed. The War Department should take advantage of this situation and, at the same time, solve the problem of effective employment of the Negro in the Army -- a problem which may be expected to become increasingly acute as the top limit of the Army is approached.

6. The solution proposed in the following paragraphs is believed feasible and probably can be implemented without serious repercussion either within or without the War Department. It should result in the development of Negro units of a standard comparable to white units and which can profitably be employed overseas. To avoid discrimination the plan must be applied to both white and Negro personnel. However, the gain in effectiveness of white units will not be so pronounced because of the smaller percentage of Grade V whites.

7. The plan consists of three proposals as follows:

a. A statement that the Army cannot use men, who are classified as inferior as a result of an intelligence (or aptitude) test, in excess of six per cent of the total to be inducted after April 1, 1943. This involves the setting up of machinery for giving intelligence (or aptitude) tests at induction stations. As a result the Army will reject all selectees, in excess of 6 per cent, who fail to score higher than Grade V. Authority for such procedure is contained in the Selective Training and Service Act and this screening will be applied to whites and Negroes alike. As a result approximately 2.5 per cent of white selectees now accepted would be rejected and approximately 43.2 per cent of Negro selectees now accepted would be rejected. It should be borne in mind that the Army is obligated to accept 10.6 per cent Negroes and that the above procedure would not operate to reduce the number of Negroes taken into the Army. It would simply mean that Selective Service would have to double approximately its present calls to insure that the Army got its required Negro quota in the intelligence brackets desired.



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b. Second, provide within the Army the necessary machinery (of the nature of Section VIII procedure streamlined to fit the situation) to permit the speedy discharge without stigma of men who have been found incapable of becoming effective soldiers. These discharges, in the case of Negro units, should begin at the same time screening is instituted at induction stations and should proceed at about the same rate as Negroes are inducted. The latter, except for the 6 per cent of Grade Vs, should be assigned to existing units as replacements for Grade Vs discharged until the screening of units as indicated above and in a below has been completed.

g. Third, screen approximately the lower third of the Grade IVs (about 11 per cent of the total) and the remaining Grade Vs out of tactical units and assign these men, with the 6 per cent of Grade Vs newly inducted, to rehabilitation or development battalions to be located at various of the larger posts in the United States. These battalions would be combination labor and training battalions operating on a schedule which provided alternate days of labor on the post where stationed and days of training or instruction. Assignment to one of these battalions would not be permanent and, as soon as a man was sufficiently trained to be of value to a unit, he would be so assigned.

8. It is believed that the above procedure can be applied without difficulty. Beneficial results to be expected include:

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- a. Material improvement in the quality of Negro units.
 - b. The release from the Army of men who are a military liability rather than an asset, but who can perform valuable service in a civilian capacity.
 - g. A lessening of the monthly drain on farm labor.
 - d. Release of more qualified men from labor assignments at posts in the United States through employment of part-time rehabilitation units.
 - g. Improved morale of Negro units due to the fact that they belong to a really effective organization which will have opportunity for overseas service.

9. It is not believed that the War Department need fear any violent repercussions from without due to adoption of the proposed policy. No discrimination is involved and the Negro race itself is not likely to object to a plan designed to improve the opportunity for developing good Negro units which will have a chance to acquit themselves with distinction. The Southern states are not likely to object because the plan will return to them the rural Negro - needed on the farms and not, generally speaking, a source of

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racial friction -- and will take away Negroes from the cities where, on the whole, they are employed at less essential tasks. It is possible that Selective Service may claim that it will be impossible to meet the Army's demands for manpower should such restriction be imposed. In that event, providing the claim of Selective Service is valid, the Army might well take the necessary reduction (which will amount to 600,000 men at the most) on the grounds that it is better to have quality than quantity.

II. Action recommended

The Secretary of War directs that the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, prepare and put into effect not later than April 1, 1943, a plan essentially the same in broad outline as that proposed in paragraph 7 above.



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Tab A

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ESTIMATED GENERAL CLASSIFICATION TEST ARMY GRADE PERCENTAGE
 DISTRIBUTIONS FOR ALL MEN INDUCTED INTO THE ARMY
 DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 1941 TO
 DECEMBER 1942 INCLUSIVE

GCT Army Grade	White		Colored		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
I	273,626	6.6	1,580	0.4	275,206	6.0
II	1,154,700	28.0	14,891	3.4	1,169,591	25.6
III	1,327,164	32.1	54,302	12.3	1,381,466	30.2
IV	1,021,818	24.8	152,725	34.7	1,174,543	25.7
V	351,951	8.5	216,664	49.2	568,615	12.5
Total	4,129,259	100.0	440,162	100.0	4,569,421	100.0
% of each race		90.4		9.6		100.0



MECHANICAL APTITUDE TEST ARMY GRADE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION
 FOR MEN PROCESSED AT RECEPTION CENTERS DURING PERIOD
 FROM SEPTEMBER 1942 TO DECEMBER 1942 INCLUSIVE

MA Army Grade	White		Colored		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
I	72,224	4.0	223	0.1	72,447	3.7
II	343,178	19.1	2,682	1.5	345,860	17.5
III	623,968	34.6	14,579	8.1	638,547	32.2
IV	494,305	27.5	44,836	24.8	539,141	27.2
V	266,738	14.8	118,543	65.5	385,281	19.4
Total	1,800,413	100.0	180,863	100.0	1,981,276	100.0

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