

E.W. Kenworthy to Charles Fahy, with attachment, April 27, 1950.  
General Correspondence, Record Group 220: Records of the  
President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in  
the Armed Services.

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27 April 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR JUDGE FAHY

I enclose a draft of a letter to Secretary of the Army Pace on the question of reenlistment. This incorporates some of the changes suggested by Committee members in the original draft of the letter which was to have gone to Secretary Gray. Most of these changes are merely verbal. I enclose the letters of the members so that you can check this new draft against their suggestions.

I have not used Mr. Palmer's wording on page 2 of his letter -- "Under prior conditions of induction and training, obviously" -- because the proportion of Negroes in the lower mental categories had nothing to do with conditions of induction and training, which were the same for both races.

Neither have I made use of Mr. Sengstacke's suggestion that the Army retest all Negroes to determine those who might have been "classified wrong." It is true that many Negroes did not get the jobs for which they were qualified, but this was a result of segregation and not a result of wrong or tampered GCT scores. The tests are objective and administered without any indication of race, and are machine scored. Furthermore, the Army has from time to time done rather extensive retesting and found, on the whole, that even after a considerable period in the Army the men made roughly the same scores on a second go-round as they did on the initial testing. I do not think we can be put in the position of intimating that the Army has doctored scores. The discrimination has been entirely in assignment to jobs and schools.

When you have edited the draft, would you return it with the Committee's letters so that I can put them in the files. I think as we have accepted practically all the suggestions made, it isn't necessary to have a second circulation.



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Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you undoubtedly know, the President's Committee for the last year and a half has been working with the services on revisions of their racial policies and practices in order to effectuate the policy of equal treatment and opportunity enunciated by the President in Executive Order 9981, issued on July 26, 1948.

With respect to the Army, the Committee made four recommendations, which it believed would not only go far towards realizing the President's objective but would also make for a more effective Army. These were: (1) the opening of all Army jobs to qualified personnel without regard to race; (2) the abandonment of racial quotas for school attendance and the opening of all Army School courses to qualified personnel; (3) the assignment of all personnel on the basis of qualification and Army need so that Negro soldiers would no longer be limited in assignment to Negro units and overhead installations; (4) the abolition of the ten per cent quota on Negro enlistments.

The Army has accepted all of these recommendations, and they are now being effected. In this cooperative undertaking Secretary Gray played a considerable part, and the successful issue of the Committee's work with the Army is due in large measure to his personal interest and cooperation.

There is one matter, however, that was not dealt with before Secretary Gray left, which we would like to bring to your attention. This is the question of reenlistments. This did not form the basis of a principal recommendation of the Committee because it affects all personnel, white as well as Negro. Nevertheless it has been a matter of considerable concern to the Committee, as indeed it is to the Army.

There has been some complaint from Army officials in their appearances before the Committee that the sister services, because of their higher enlistment standards, were able to "skim the cream" of recruiting material. While the Committee believes that each service



should of course get the best qualified men available, it is disturbed lest the Army be at some disadvantage. Therefore we are pleased to note that for some months now, the Army has been able to meet its requirements with an entrance standard of GCT 90 (percentile 31). If the Army can maintain this standard, it should be able to improve considerably the quality of its enlistments, which in turn will be reflected in the leadership of non-commissioned officers and the technical competence of enlisted men.

But while the Army now has an enlistment standard of GCT 90, it continues to reenlist men with a GCT rating of 70 or even lower. The Committee dealt with this problem in its initial recommendations to the Army on July 25, 1949, and again in a memorandum to Secretary Gray on February 9, 1950.

In its recommendations of July 25, 1949, the Committee suggested that:

1. A man in GCT Grade IV, completing his first term of enlistment and scoring below 80 in Aptitude Area I test, be not permitted to reenlist.
2. A man with more than one term of enlistment who is in GCT Grade IV and scoring below 80 in Aptitude Area I test, be not permitted to reenlist except under waiver by the Adjutant General in the interest of Army efficiency.

In the Committee's memorandum to Secretary Gray on February 9, 1950, we said:

"It is also the Committee's view that a program to eliminate from the Army those low-score men who have proved inapt, would vastly improve the quality of enlisted personnel in a peacetime training Army."

Presently the Army's policy -- as announced by Secretary Gray last September -- is to deny reenlistment to men who at the end of their first enlistment have not made private first class, if single, or corporal, if married. Since virtually all privates who have spent 12 months in grade are automatically promoted to private first class, and since men who are

incapable of this automatic promotion are usually separated before the expiration of their first enlistment, we question whether the Army's current policy is stringent enough to eliminate men who are in excess of the number required to do the Army's unskilled tasks.



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Under AR 615-369 the Army can, and does, separate men for "unaptness" or "unsuitability," if they are incapable of absorbing profitably further training. In August, 1946, the Army issued an order permitting commanders to eliminate low-score men under this regulation, and several thousand were eliminated. In April, 1947, the order was reissued, but with the modification that commanders should not eliminate men solely on the basis of low mental scores. We believe this is the situation at present.

Last fall -- the latest figures we have seen -- the Army was eliminating approximately 700 men monthly, white and Negro, for inaptitude, but this figure included men separated for other reasons than low intelligence or inability to profit by instruction.

As you know, there are proportionately more Negroes in the lower mental categories than whites. The Committee has been concerned about this heavy concentration of Negroes below GCT 80. Our principal preoccupation has steadily been with the quality of the enlisted man, both white and Negro. We have felt that gradually the Army should seek to have the spread of intelligence in the Negro element parallel that of the white element. This seems a necessary objective if the Negroes in the Army are to be of a calibre to profit by the opportunities which the Army is now offering them, and if the Army is to get maximum utilization out of the Negro soldier.

As of last March there were 69,622 Negro enlisted men in the Army. Of these, 28,538 -- 40 per cent -- were below GCT 80, and 10,840 -- 15 per cent -- were below GCT 70. We recognize, of course, that many of the low-score men, both white and Negro, are performing unskilled jobs which do not require much intelligence. Nevertheless, the proportion of Negroes in the lower grades seems unnecessarily high, especially in view of the Army's desire to keep its enlistment standards as high as possible.

It is the Committee's view that the effectiveness of the Army would be immeasurably increased by a program for eliminating an excess of men with minimum intelligence and skills, regardless of race.

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Sincerely yours,

Charles Fahy  
Chairman

The Honorable Frank Pace  
Secretary of the Army  
Washington 25, D. C.

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