

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE 6700, Ext. 3201-3202

SECRETARY JOHNSON APPROVES NAVY PROPOSALS
FOR EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY



Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson today approved specific actions proposed by the Department of the Navy to assure equality of treatment and opportunity for all Navy personnel.

At the same time, Secretary Johnson asked the Department of the Army to restudy its position on the subject, to consider carefully informal suggestions received from the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces (Fahy Committee), and to submit its reconsideration of the matter by June 20.

Proposals of the Department of the Air Force to assure equality for all its personnel were approved by Secretary Johnson on May 11. He then asked the Departments of the Army and the Navy to furnish clarifying information through Chairman Thomas R. Reid of the National Military Establishment's Personnel Policy Board, before making a decision in their cases.

The Department of the Navy has proposed taking these specific additional actions:

1. To promulgate a statement of the Navy Department's policy regarding minority races.
2. To augment efforts to obtain Negroes to enlist in the Navy by the assignment of Negro petty officers to duty in the Navy Recruiting Service, ordering volunteer qualified Negro Reserve officers to active duty to assist in recruitment, and slanting advertisements, posters, films, and pamphlets to attract Negroes to the Navy by use of photographs showing whites and Negroes working together in the Naval Service.
3. To exert greater effort to attract qualified Negro students to participate in the Navy ROTC program.
4. To promulgate a directive to insure that all members of the steward branch who are in all respects qualified are given an opportunity to change their rate to another rating branch.
5. To change the status of chief stewards to that of chief petty officers.
6. To disestablish within the Marine Corps the present separate Negro recruit training facility and integrate the training of Negro recruits with that of whites.

MORE

The proposed directive to all ships and stations, setting forth the Navy's revised policy regarding minority races, states:

"It is the policy of the Navy Department that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Navy and Marine Corps without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

"In their attitude and day-to-day conduct of affairs, officers and enlisted personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps shall adhere rigidly and impartially to the Navy Regulations, in which no distinction is made between individuals wearing the uniform of these Services.

"All personnel will be enlisted or appointed, trained, advanced or promoted assigned duty and administered in all respects without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

"In the utilization of housing, messing, berthing and other facilities, no special or unusual provisions will be made for the accommodation of any minority race."

In his memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Johnson said: "In my judgment, the specific actions you propose to undertake meet the spirit and intent of Executive Order 9981 of 26 July 1948 and are in accord with my memorandum of 6 April and my second memorandum on the same subject, dated 11 May. Therefore, I am pleased to approve your proposals and trust that you will begin their implementation without delay."

In asking the Department of the Army for reconsideration of its proposals for equality of treatment and opportunity, Secretary Johnson, in a memorandum to the Secretary of the Army, said:

"I have reviewed your comprehensive memorandum of 26 May concerning equality of treatment and opportunity in the Department of the Army and have noted with pleasure the significant progress made by the Army in this field in the last few years. I also note with pleasure the measures you propose in order to broaden still further the professional basis for the utilization of Negro manpower. I have read with understanding and sympathy the Army's contention that its current policies and practices are in accord with Executive Order 9981 of 26 July 1948 and my supplemental policy statement of 6 April 1949. I fully realize the grave problem presented by this question, and that it is of greater magnitude in the Army than in either the Navy or the Air Force. Nevertheless, I am forced to the conclusion that your proposals in reply to my second memorandum on this subject still fail to meet the basic intent of Executive Order 9981 and my memorandum of 6 April.

"Accordingly, I am asking you to restudy your position and your proposals and at the same time to consider very carefully the informal suggestions of the Fahy Committee which, I understand, have been made available to you. I would be pleased to have your reconsideration of this matter submitted to me by 20 June."

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