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DOD Dir. 5200.10, June 29, 1950  
NND by FRB date Oct. 5, 1961

January 1, 1944.

DIGEST OF WAR DEPARTMENT POLICY PERTAINING TO NEGRO MILITARY PERSONNEL.

I. War Department policy in regard to Negroes. (Authority: AG 291.21 (10-9-40) M-A-M, October 16, 1940).

It is the policy of the War Department that the services of Negroes will be utilized on a fair and equitable basis. In line with this policy, provision will be made as follows:

a. The strength of the Negro personnel of the Army will be maintained on the general basis of proportion of the Negro population of the country.

b. Negro organizations will be established in each major branch of the service, combatant as well as non-combatant.

c. Negro Reserve officers eligible for active duty will be assigned to Negro units officered by colored personnel.

d. When officer candidate schools are established, opportunity will be given to Negroes to qualify for Reserve commissions.

e. Negroes are being given aviation training as pilots, mechanics and technical specialists. This training will be accelerated. Negro aviation units will be formed as soon as the necessary personnel has been trained.

f. At arsenals and Army posts, Negro civilians are accorded equal opportunity for employment at work for which they are qualified by ability, education and experience.

g. The policy of the War Department is not to intermingle colored and white enlisted personnel in the same regimental organizations. This policy has proven satisfactory over a long period of years and to make changes would produce situations destructive to morale and detrimental to the preparation for national defense.

II. Appropriate military police detachments (colored) will be established at all posts, camps and stations at which substantial numbers of colored troops are located. (Authority: WD Circular No. 224, 1941)

III. The use of the word "colored" in designation of units, buildings and equipment discontinued. (Authority: Par. 7, AR 220-5 and W.D. Circular No. 351, 1942)

IV. Treatment of Negro Soldiers. (Authority: AG 322.97 (2-11-42) MSC-C-M, February 14, 1942)



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1. Organization commanders of Negro troops have found that emphasis on the substance of the following provisions of paragraph 3, Army Regulations 600-10, is especially helpful in sustaining and improving morale:

"Superiors are forbidden to injure those under their authority by tyrannical or capricious conduct or by abusive language. While maintaining discipline and the thorough and prompt performance of military duty, all officers, in dealing with enlisted men, will bear in mind the absolute necessity of so treating them as to preserve their self-respect. A grave duty rests on all officers and particularly upon organization commanders in this respect."

2. In this connection the use of any epithet deemed insulting to a racial group should be carefully avoided. Similarly commanders should avoid all practices tending to give the colored soldiers cause to feel that the Army makes any differentiation between him and any other soldier.

3. As the Army expands and new and relatively inexperienced officers assume and share functions of command, it will be increasingly important that all officers have a full realization of the significance of such factors as are discussed herein for the maintenance of discipline and high morale.

V. Negro troops to be stationed in their own section of the country.  
(Authority: Letter to Senator Bankhead from the Chief of Staff, August 10, 1942)

Therefore, while our policy in general is, when practicable, to station northern troops in northern stations and southern troops in the South, and also to station colored troops in localities where a commensurate negro civilian population exists, the implementation of the policy must be secondary to military requirements.

VI. Use of Colored Troops Overseas.  
(Authority: WDGAP/322.99 Colored Troops (4-30-42), Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, 4-30-42; approved 5-12-42)

5. The commanding generals of the Army Air Forces, Army Ground Forces, and Services of Supply will insure that colored troops are ordered overseas in a proportion not less than the percentage of such troops in his command.

VII. Commanders to be notified when colored troops are transferred to their stations.  
(Authority: WDGCT 291.21 (6-8-42), G-3 Memorandum to AGF, AFF and SOS, June 8, 1942)

1. Commanders must be advised of the transfer of colored troops in sufficient time to provide housing and other facilities.

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2. In transferring Negro troops from one station to another, consideration must be given to the recreational facilities which have been organized both on the station and in nearby communities.

VIII. Separate messing and housing facilities for colored and white officers.

(Authority: WDCSA 291.21 (7-1-42) Memorandum for Judge Hastie from Secretary, General Staff)

As a practical matter regulation of this problem must be handled in coordination with accepted social customs. For the War Department to attempt the solution by regulation or fiat of a complicated social problem which has perplexed this country for a number of years is bound to produce diversions that may go so far as to affect the full effectiveness of our war effort. The intermingling of the races in messing and housing would not only be a variation from well established policies of the Department but it does not accord with the existing customs of the country as a whole.

IX. Policy of requisitioning selectees in Puerto Rico under separate units and colored quotas.

(Authority: Memorandum to Judge Hastie from the Secretary, General Staff, July 20, 1942)

X. Recreation Facilities.

(Authority: AG 353.8 (3-5-43) OB-S-A-M, March 10, 1943.)

2. At post, camps and stations where the garrison includes units of two or more races, recreational facilities, including theaters and post, exchanges will not be designated for any particular race.

3. Where necessary, recreational facilities may be allocated to organizations in whole or in part, permanently or on a rotation basis, provided care is taken that all units and personnel are afforded equal opportunity to enjoy such facilities.

XI. Blood will be processed separately so that those receiving transfusions may be given plasma from blood of their own race.

(Authority: American Red Cross statement of policy regarding Negro blood donors, January 21, 1942)

XII. Professional qualities of officers assigned to Negro units.  
(Authority: AG 210.31 (8-10-42) MS-SPEX-M, August 12, 1942)

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2. Difficulty in handling colored troops almost without exception can be attributed to a lack of knack on the part of officers assigned to this duty. Officers must be carefully selected with the primary requirement the ability to handle Negroes. Such officers can accomplish much whereas officers who may be better trained in a military way but without the knack will only fail in accomplishing the task but create the conditions which breed trouble.

XIII. Negro Troops.

(Authority: Memorandum of the Chief of Staff to the Commanding Generals, AMF, AGF and ASF, 13 July 1943.)

5. Maintenance of discipline among soldiers and good order between soldiers and the civilian population is a definite command responsibility. Mutinous conduct will be dealt with as such and violations of the principles of military discipline will not be countenanced in any element of the Army. Prompt and effective disciplinary measures must be taken to punish those guilty of such derelictions. Failure on the part of any commander to concern himself personally and vigorously with this problem will be considered as evidence of lack of capacity and cause for reclassification and removal from assignment.

XIV. Protection of Arms and Ammunition.

(Authority: WD 470 (10 July 43) OB-S-F-M, 11 July 1943)

2. It is directed that rigid precautions be taken to insure that small arms and small arms ammunition, grenades and other weapons, do not get into the hands of unauthorized persons, military or non-military, and that such items be kept securely under lock and key when not in normal use, and that regular inspections and checks be arranged to insure that these precautions are enforced.

XV. Protection of Arms and Ammunition.

(Authority: AG 470 (28 Oct 43) OB-S-D-M, 9 November 1943)

2. The need continues to be urgent for adequate safeguards to prevent arms and ammunition getting into the hands of unauthorized and irresponsible persons.

XVI. The Negro Press.

(Authority: Letter from the Assistant Secretary of War to Mr. Sengstacke, 5 August 1943)

I hope that from this information your association will be convinced of the strong desire on the part of the War Department to see that Negro press is fairly and generously treated . . . . .

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It is, in my judgment, clearly a duty and obligation of the Negro press to report to the Negro population of the country the steps the Army has taken to work out with care and consideration the problems of the Negro soldier, rather than to concentrate on inflammatory reports which tend to impede the Army's progress in that very direction.

XVII. Assignment and Promotion of Negro Officers.

A new directive is about to be issued, which will broaden the field of assignments, and will provide for promotion under the same standards as for white officers, except that position vacancies will be created for Negro officers qualified for promotion. (AGO 210-31 (3 Jan. 44) OB-S-A-M dated 7 Jan. 1944.

XVIII. The following policies apply to all military personnel:

1. Men who do not evidence aptness for military training may be discharged under Section VIII, par. 52a, AR 615-360 and W.D. Circular No. 293, 1943.
2. Special training for illiterates. W.D. Circular No. 297, 1943.
3. Policy governing custody of members of the military service charged with offenses under civil law. Changes No. 1, 27 August 1943, AR 600-355.
4. Method of securing additional transportation for use from camp to nearby communities. Memorandum No. 55-15-43, WD, 27 April 43.

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