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THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Charles Fahy, Chairman
A. J. Donahue
Lester B. Granger
Charles Luckman
Dwight Palmer
John H. Sengstacke
William E. Stevenson

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

A PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT

June 7, 1949.

Five months have passed since the members of The President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services met with the President on January 12th. In that time the Committee, as directed by the President in Executive Order 9981, has examined with some thoroughness into the "rules, procedures and practices" of the Armed Services in order to determine how those rules, procedures and practices might be changed to effect the President's policy of equal treatment and opportunity for all men in the nation's military arms.

In the course of its examination the Committee has conferred at length with the three service secretaries, assistant secretaries, the Chief of Staff, other general staff officers and specialists in their branches dealing with military practices. Some of the Committee have also recently conferred with the Secretary of Defense. In addition the Committee and its Staff have visited several military installations. The Committee has also heard individual national organizations that have a particular interest in the matters under the Committee's enquiry.

The Committee has felt that the best way to achieve the President's objective was to seek the confidence and help of the Armed Services in working out with the Committee changes in personnel practices which would further the purposes of the Executive Order.

The Committee and its Staff have received the cooperation of the Services. The Secretaries of the three arms have put themselves and their staffs completely at the disposal of the Committee, and often on short notice have appeared to answer questions or to confer on troublesome technical points. Furthermore, the Committee has been



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granted ready access to all the documents which it required in its studies. It is difficult to see how the Committee could have had such a full understanding as it does of the policies and practices of the Services without the help which it has had from the Services themselves.

As a result of the Committee's method of working cooperatively and quietly within the Services, considerable progress already has been made toward the goal set by the President in his Executive Order. The Secretary of Defense issued a new policy statement, declaring that the National Military Establishment guarantees to all men in the nation's armed forces equality of treatment and opportunity, and directing the three Secretaries to prepare a forward plan for realizing this policy in practice.

Shortly thereafter the Air Force announced, and the Secretary of Defense approved, a plan to abolish its all-Negro fighter wing at Lockbourne Field, Ohio and to reassign to white units most, but not all, of its Negro personnel. The replies of the Navy and Army to the request of the Secretary of Defense were returned for amplification.

While the Navy and Army were considering what further steps they could take to meet the policy of the President and the Secretary of Defense, this Committee submitted to the Personnel Policy Board in the Office of the Secretary of Defense a list of suggestions to guide the Army and Navy in its determinations. The Committee is pleased to note that the Navy, in the second plan which it has submitted to the Secretary of Defense, proposes to take all the steps which the Committee recommended except one, and that exception is a proposal requiring joint acceptance by the three services and remains under consideration by the Navy.



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The Army in its second reply to the Secretary of Defense did not propose going beyond the framework of its present policy and practice. However, the Committee expects to have further conferences with the Acting Secretary of the Army and General Staff officers. It hopes these further conferences and further study by the Army will increase the efficiency of its use of manpower and at the same time bring about equality of treatment and opportunity.

Inasmuch as progress has been and is being made through study and conference with the three services, and since these studies and conferences are continuing, the Committee would prefer if the President approves not to make a formal interim report or to submit final recommendations at this time.



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