

23 November
1949

Dear Mrs. Anderson:

The President has sent me for reply your letter of November 10, 1949. The present situation with respect to the racial policies and practices of the three armed services is as follows:

The Navy, which prior to World War II used Negro enlisted men only in the Steward Branch, now employs Negroes in all of its General Service ratings. The Negro enlisted men in general ratings work side by side with Whites, and are messed and billeted in completely unsegregated messes and sleeping quarters, both ashore and afloat. The Steward Branch is still almost entirely composed of Negroes, Filipinos and Guamanians. However, the Navy has not recruited for the Steward Branch since the end of the war, and this branch when reopened to recruitment will be available irrespective of race. The present proportion of Negroes as between the Steward Branch and General Service is roughly 60% in the Steward Branch and 40% in General Service. The proportion is gradually shifting, in favor of general ratings. The same unsegregated conditions obtain in all Navy schools as are to be found on ships and shore stations. As you know, the Navy program is fairly recent, and there are as yet very few Negro officers, though the Navy is making an effort to get Negroes to take the NROTC examinations under the Holloway Plan. Chief, first, second and third class stewards have recently been made chief, first, second and third class petty officers.

The Air Force instituted last May a program to break up its Negro fighter wing at Lockbourne Field, Ohio, and most of its Negro service units. Since the Air Force required six months in order to reclassify and reassign its Negro personnel, the President's Committee has not yet observed the effects of the Air Force program. However, the six months are now coming to a close, and the Committee will shortly visit Air Force installations to determine how successful the new Air Force policy is.



The Army has recently agreed to open up all Army jobs and all Army Schools to qualified Negro personnel. The President's Committee is currently working with the Army on the two problems of assignment and the 10 percent Negro quota, and it is our hope and expectation that in a fairly short time a substitute for the racial quota system will be found, and the Army will begin the assignment of personnel according to qualifications and without regard to race or color.

I wish to thank you and the National Board of the Y. W. C. A. for the interest shown in equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services. I have asked the Executive Secretary of the Committee to keep the National Board informed of future steps which the Army takes toward the achievement of the policy expressed by the President in Executive Order 9981.

Sincerely yours,

Charles Fahy
Chairman

Mrs. Arthur Forrest Anderson, President
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