23 November
1949

Dear Mrs. Anderson:

The President has sent me a reply to your letter of November
22, 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
cross the Steward Branch, now employs Negroes in all of its
General Service ratings. The Negro enlisted men are general ratings
work side by side with whites, and are seamen and billeted in
completely integrated 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 now proposed to recruit 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 unaggregated
conditions obtain in all Navy schools as are to be found on ships
and shore stations. As you know, the Navy progress 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 Faly
Chairman

Mrs. Arthur Forrest Anderson, President
The National Board Y. W. C. A.
600 Lexington Avenue
New York 28, N. Y.