

3 November 1949

MEMORANDUM IN RE TREATMENT OF NEGROES AT LACKLAND AIR BASE

While in San Antonio on an official visit to Fort Sam Houston, I took occasion to drive over in the late evening to Lackland Air Base, with a view to seeing just how Negroes were integrated into the activities of the program at Lackland. This was not an official visit but I reported to the Provost Marshal's office in order that someone might know I was at the installation.


On the way in, I met and talked with Pfc Augusta Davis, who hails from Los Angeles, California and who is a WAF librarian. She stated that there are approximately 35 WAFs in training and there was no segregation in clubs or activities; that she enjoys life on the post and expected to make this work a career. She mentioned the fact that there are Negro flight chiefs who are in charge of mixed groups, both white and colored.

I drove around without guidance and saw the various companies going to mess. There was no segregation whatsoever, and when I stopped in two of the clubrooms, I found there both Negro and white trainees. Negro and white soldiers were found together walking to and from barracks and mess halls, and I talked with several of the Negro soldiers to learn that they were highly pleased with the situation they find at Lackland.

Subsequently, I met three of the men in Officer Candidate School while visiting the USO in San Antonio. Those with whom I talked were Hodges of Michigan, who had two years at the University of Michigan, Wicks of Minnesota and Robertson from Connecticut, who is a graduate of Howard University. Their only complaint had to do with fellowship with the men while off the post. The OCS school club has its headquarters at Hotel Gunter in San Antonio and Negro candidates are not admitted to this hotel. The men with whom I talked complained that not only did they find this discrimination harmful but that their fellow classmates have mentioned it to them. The Negro officer candidates are placed in this peculiar position - they are not supposed to associate with or attend the clubs which are open to enlisted men. In fact, they are not following strictly their orders when they go to the Negro USO club in San Antonio.

One of the factors in their rating has to do with their association with other men and how they get along with people outside of their military activities. One of the determining factors in this rating is their activity with and relation to the members of the OCS school club.

There were three or four Negro girls in Officer Candidate School but inquiry revealed that all of them have been released from school duty. The young men with whom I talked did not indicate that there was any racial discrimination involved but they felt that some investigation should be made as to the cause for separating these girls. They expressed particular concern over the fact that there are now no Negro WAFs in OCS.

  
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