There is some excellent news at hand right now about the normally bad
situation of racial discrimination in the Armed Forces. Months ago the
President appointed the Baby Committee to push for equality in the services,
and reports from field surveys are coming in. The Army is just beginning
to integrate Negroes and whites in its jobs and schools. But Air Force and
Navy have already made some very real progress. There are 36,000 Negroes in
the Air Force; 71 per cent are now completely integrated—sleeping, studying,
working, eating, side by side with whites. In a few months, all will be
integrated. Field investigators now find the Officer and Service Clubs without
discrimination. They find Negroes and whites together at Air Force swimming
pools and dances. The amount of mixing varies from place to place. But it is
none the less a remarkable change. And in every place the transition has
occurred with remarkably little trouble. Even southern officers who personally
do not like it tell the investigators, almost invariably, that the integration is
working. There is less friction and not more. At the end of the war 95 per cent
of the Negroes in general ratings in the Navy were confined to the Steward Branch;
today only 56 per cent. One can only suggest in this limited space the full
story of what is happening. But as one of the field investigators puts it,
what is going on is a kind of quiet social revolution. We feel, he said, that
in time this will have an insurable effect upon the civilian population.