

NON-SEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION AT LOCKBOURNE

Mention has been made above of the excellent relationships existing between White and Negro civilian personnel. At the beginning there was some apprehension on the part of citizens of Columbus, both White and Negro, as to whether this would work out satisfactorily. Now you can find citizens of both races interested in the fine results and the progress that has been made at the Air Base. The surprising thing is that there has been integration of White military personnel. Major Wilson, who is White, is the Air Installations Officer and lives on the post. First Lt. Betts, a White officer in charge of Airway Communications, is on duty assigned from Wright Air Field. Lt. Betts replaced Captain Buehler who had his quarters for himself and family on the post and whose wife was active with the Officers' Wives Club at the time the family resided there.

I visited the base hospital and went through some of the wards with Major Marchbanks, the Army medical officer assigned to this unit. To my surprise I found in the various wards more than a half dozen White patients who were not segregated and who seemed to be well satisfied with the hospital facilities and treatment afforded them. The officers of this wing have the responsibility for the training of pilots from nearby schools. There are 40 White pilots in this group and 1 Negro, a West Pointer, who is now taking graduate work at the State University. The contrast with former practices is interesting, for the information given me is to the effect that in many instances Negroes who were entitled to training and who lived far removed from Lockbourne were ordered here for their training rather than to the nearest Air Installation simply because they were colored, and the attempt was to assign all colored personnel as far as possible to Lockbourne. White men at Lockbourne have had the opportunity to see three different types of White-Negro relationships in air training:

1. There is a National Guard Wing which is all White, and not open to Negroes. This is because the National Guard follows the policy of the Army and no National Guard Units have thus far been opened to Negro participation except in cases where state action has been taken either by constitutional change or by legislative action to open the doors.
2. In the Air Reserve Corps, Negroes are attached to the corps, but their hours of training are limited and they do not have the same opportunities given to White members of the Corps.
3. The regular Air Force Fighter Wing is regarded as Negro and therefore White personnel have not been transferred to this Post.