MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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SUBJECT: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services

26 May 1949

1. In compliance with your instructions, the Department of the Army has examined its practices and procedures in accordance with equality of treatment and opportunity in the Army, and the following reasons is submitted.

2. Concept of overall policy. - a. Department of the Army policy on utilization of Negro manpower is contained in War Department Circular No. 126, 27 April 1946, and visualizes two objectives.

   (1) The initial objective: The utilization of the proportionate ratio (1 Negro to 10 White) of the manpower made available to the military establishment during the posture period.

   (2) The ultimate objective: The effective use of all manpower made available to the Military Establishment in the event of a major mobilization at some unknown date against an undetermined aggressor, the manpower to be utilized in the event of another major war, in the Army with regard to antecedent or race.

   "When and if such a contingency arises, the manpower of the nation should be utilized in the best interests of the National Security."

   The (italics) Board cannot, and does not, attempt to visualize at this time intermediate objectives. Between the first and ultimate objectives, timely phasing may be interjected and adjustments made in accordance with conditions which may obtain at this undetermined date.

b. To attain the initial objective, the following statement of policy was announced (War Department Circular No. 126, 1946):
...whereas in the past the Army has been utilized on a broader professional scale than has been customary hitherto. The development of leaders and specialists based on individual merit and ability, to meet effectively the requirements of an expanded wartime Army will be accomplished through the medium of installations and organizations. Grouping of Negro units with White units in composite organizations will be an accepted policy.

e. (1) Where conditions make it desirable, War Department instructions permit the local commander to provide separate recreational facilities such as Army exchanges, theaters or sections of theaters for use of particular military units. However, it is the basis of the War Department that the provision of such separate facilities does not permit the exclusion on the basis of race or color of any member of the military unit from using any and all such facilities established in public buildings. (War Department Instruction No. 606-45, 16 June 1945.)

(2) No officer or noncommissioned officers club, mess or similar association will be permitted by the post commander to occupy any part of any public building other than the private quarters of an officer or noncommissioned officer unless such club, mess or similar association extends to all officers or noncommissioned officers on duty at the post the right to full membership or either permanent or temporary use of such club, mess or association including the right equally with any and all other members thereof to participate in the management thereof, to hold office therein, and to vote upon any and all of the affairs thereof in which the officers or noncommissioned officers concerned have an interest. In the case of organizational clubs, messes and similar associations the right of membership must be extended to all members of the organization. (Paragraph 26, AR 210-10, 6 May 1942.)

f. Department of the Army Circular No. 121, 30 April 1948, Personnel Policy of the Army, states in part: "The broad principles stated herein are Army policy, established to implement military procedures which will maintain the rights and privileges of Army personnel without discrimination."

3. Change in War Department Circular 121.

Circular 121, quoted in part in paragraph 4d, above, will be amended to assure continued progress by providing utilization of the Negro soldier on the broadest possible professional scale.
4. Equality of Treatment and Opportunity.

By reserving a proportionate number of places in the troop basis (including all grades and type jobs) for Negro personnel, the Department of the Army insures that the Negro shall have an equal opportunity with the White to train for, and attain to, the position of responsibility for any be called upon to fill in event of mobilization. The Negro may and does participate on an individual basis in all forms of off-duty activities. These include the chapel, the post exchange, the theater, the club, team athletics, transportation and other recreations.

5. Practical Results of Army Policy to Date.

a. Regular Army.

(1) The Army has a Negro strength of 1,297 officers and 69,104 enlisted men. The Air Force has 307 officers and 31,028 men; the Navy 2 officers and 17,008 men; the Marine Corps 50 officers and 1,225 men. The Army Negro strength is more than triple that of the Air Force or Navy and almost double that of all other services combined. In actual strength or percentage-wise, whether in officers, commissioned officers, or privates, the Army is numerically second by far any other comparable activity. There are almost as many Negro commissioned officers in the Army as there are Negroes of all ranks in the Air Force. The opportunity for a Negro soldier to advance to officer of non-commissioned grade is unparalleled. Tab A lists the strength and percentage of officers, noncommissioned officers, and privates for the three major services on a comparative basis. It will be noted that Negro commissioned officers total 19,197, or 0.21 per cent of the total commissioned officers in the Army. Negro officers total 3,297 or only 1.05 per cent of the total officer strength. However, in a Negro population such as 75 per cent of the total Negro population, there will be 0.7 enlisted with 907 of 307, or higher (necessary for commission) for each Negro possessing that score. Therefore, commission in 6,5 to 1. Multiplying by this factor reveals that 1.65 per cent is equal competitively to a 15.7 per cent ratio, or slightly in excess of the total Negro strength ratio.

(2) The Regular Army must be a corps of leaders. The quality of leadership in small units on the battlefield is an unfailing panacea of success in battle. Because of social environment, few Negroes have had the opportunity to develop leadership. Against the direct competition of the better educated white soldier, the average Negro soldier would find it difficult to rise above the level of service tasks. The present system of segregated units guarantees that Negro soldiers will be given the opportunity to develop leadership, unimpaired and unfettered by overlapping competition and restricted by the services. But the system has produced 50,477 officers and commissioned officers in the Army today. No other system will presently accomplish that result. The Army's position is that the utilization of its manpower must be towards attaining success on future battlefields.
(3) The Army has been able to organize Negro units in every area and service, ranging from regimental to separate company, totaling 259 organizations. There are Negro regiments in white divisions, Negro battalions in white regiments, and some Negro companies in composite battalions. A roster of these units is attached in Tab B. It is significant that the Negro population of combat area and combat support units for the first time in history compose directly and favorably with the Negro population of the so-called service-type units.

(4) There are no Army schools from which Negro officers and enlisted men are barred solely because of color. At present, there are 1,667 Negroes attending 46 different Army schools along with whites. Over 1,000 Negroes have attended Officer Candidate Schools, and 36 male and 2 female Negroes are currently attending. There are 9 cadets at the Military Academy. Officers are found in every grade up to colonel and in every branch of the service from the General Staff to the Base Forces and WAC. Enlisted men are actually assigned to every arm and service. Tab C shows 79 various sources used to secure 6,550 Negro officers during the war.

(5) The Army recently adopted a system of career fields for enlisted men whereby they would be insured the opportunity to advance in a specialized career for which fitted. There are Negroes in every career field so far introduced and in process of formulation. It is the intention of the Army to continue this policy.

(6) The Army is presently streamlining its system of MOS job qualifications and has reduced the number of separate MOS's to 251. As of this latest report, Negroes are qualified for and are serving in 430 of these job descriptions. Assignment to Soldier in Tab D will make available all MOS's to fully qualified personnel regardless of rate or color.

(7) Negroes are assigned to over 500 installation jobs without regard to race and work alongside whites performing this type of duty. A recent check of 44 such installations within the Regular Army revealed Negroes to be assigned to all activities except few. Tab D lists these activities and the numbers of whites and Negroes working in each.

(8) Negroes reports from field commanders indicates that the noncommissioned rate for Negroes in the Regular Army is the highest it has ever been in recent years, and enables that of the white soldier. This is a positive indication that the Negro soldier in general is satisfied with his present status in the Regular Army.
1. Reserve Officers Training Corps.—The Army has established ROTC units in 13 Negro colleges. The total enrollment of these units is 3,932, which is very creditable for a period so soon after the war. It is expected that 185 degrees will graduate this year. This compares most favorably with the other services since the Navy has no ROTC units and the Air Force has only two. The department of the Army plans to establish even more ROTC units in required specialties as colleges attain the necessary qualifications and apply for such units.

2. Organized Reserve Corps Units.—There are activated at this time 185 Negro units within the Organized Reserve Corps, embracing a wide range of activities. The authorized strength of these reserve units is 4,740, which is 10 per cent of the total authorized Organized Reserve Corps units. (See Tab B) There are 2,440 officers in the Organized Reserve Corps.

3. National Guard Units.—There are 41 National Guard organizations, including 12 company units, with an actual strength of 475 officers and 6,542 enlisted men. (See Tab B)

6. Factors Affecting Policy.

a. Each service has inherent problems peculiar to its method of combat. On shipboard, an individual serves in a small group in one compartment and goes wherever the ship goes. Similarly with air crews and air defense. The combat soldier, on the other hand, works as part of a large group in the open. Moreover, his hopes and fears, his love and hate, are all so frequently tied together. There can be no friction in their daily living that might bring on failure in battle. A chain is as strong as its weakest link, and this is true of the Army unit on the battlefield. These factors are of tremendous influence on Army organization, doctrine, and assignment procedures.

b. The Army currently limits Negro enlistments to their civilian population rate, about 12 per cent. This is necessary for three reasons:

1. A survey of Negro population will show that 22 Negroes (30 out of each 100) have an intelligence score of 80 or higher, and that the general bulk are between 55 and 75.

2. The Navy and Air Force are in the fortunate position of being able to maintain an enlistment standard of 90 G.E.T. and higher, which excludes most Negroes and those that exceed the Army.

3. The Army is bound by the Selective Service Act to use G.E.T. 70 as its enlistment criteria before calling on Selective Service. Recently, the Army attempted to use a G.E.T. 90 score in recruiting, but could not get sufficient men and had to drop to 80. The standard will drop to 70 before Selective Service calls can be made. There is a
definite limit to the number of men with low GIs's so that the Army can
be maintained. To accomplish that further increasing the number of
Negroes in unlimited quantity—the Negro being not yet fully developed
for modern combat—would jeopardize the efficiency of the Army. At
the present time, my military advisors and my commanders in the field
are of the opinion that an Army of even 15 percent Negroes suffers a
jeopardizing decrease in efficiency. Without a quota system of any kind,
Negro membership could rise easily to 50 or 60 percent.

7. Conversion of JMB Policy with Army Policy and Practice

(a) To meet the requirements of this service for qualified individuals, all personnel will be
considered on the basis of individual merit and ability and must qualify according to the prescribed
standards for enlisted, attendants at schools, promotion, assignment to specific duties, etc.

(b) Personnel are considered on basis of individual
merit and ability and do qualify according to one
single standard for enlistment. Degrees and duties
do attend the same schools. Promotion standards
for officers are identical as each enlisted career
field is introduced (46 percent of the Army is now
enlisted) promotion is by Army-wide competition
against a single standard. Assignments to specific
duties are made on the basis of individual merit in
accordance with paragraph 5(a), above.

(c) All individuals, regardless of race, will be
accorded equal opportunity for appointment, advancement,
professional improvement, promotion and re-
station in their respective components of the
National Military Establishment.

(d) The foregoing is carried out in detail, as set forth
in paragraph 5, above.

(e) Any units may continue to be manned with Negro
personnel; however, all Negroes will not necessarily
be assigned to Negro units. Qualified Negro per-
sonnel shall be assigned to fill any type of position
vacancy in organization or overseas establishments
without regard to race.

This has been and is being accomplished. Army policy,
issued March 1943, provides that vacancies will be
reserves for Negroes. * * * For these reasons it is desired that when these schools trained Negroes are allocated to your command, you provide appropriate destinations within your manning level in your bulk overseas authorization, unless Negro T/OE6 positions in these BES are also open, where this personnel can actually be utilized in their school trained primary BES, notwithstanding the fact that you will hereby be asked to support existing white positions in Negro positions and passages or reports or surplus white personnel presently filling such positions. * * *

8. In summary, since the adoption of the Gillen Board Report in April of 1946, the Army has continuously and vigorously implemented measures for equality of treatment and opportunity for Negroes. It has drastically increased and continues to increase the spread of jobs which Negroes can and do occupy in the Army. It has expanded and continues to expand the range of Negro utilization into every major occupational job grouping. It has converted and continues to convert White T/OE6 units into Negro T/OE6 units, both combat and service, units in which Negroes had not hitherto served, units which contain skills which had not hitherto been performed by Negroes. It has converted and continues to convert organic battalions and companies within its white combat units from White manning to Negro manning, thus increasing the number of Negroes found in an extended range of combat skills. It has opened every segment of its military schooling system until the present point has been reached where Negroes can attend all Army schools. It has adapted and continues to stress the principle of duty intermixed in non-T/OE6 units and in overseas installations. It has opened up for Negro troops duty employment, side by side with White troops, in that vast range of service skills found in those activities. It has required White personnel assigning a suitable number of overseas positions to be displaced in order to place therein school trained Negro personnel. It has raised and continues to raise Negro school quotas for those professing skills in which Negroes have not hitherto been found in sufficient numbers in order to broaden increasingly the range of Negro utilization. It has accepted and adheres to the principle of competitive equality in its Career Guidance promotion system. It has conducted and continues to conduct specialized recruitment campaigns for qualified Negroes to fill its T/OE6 units converted to Negro manning and to provide equality required to fill its increased school quotas and expanded job utilization. It has eradicated completely all discriminatory enlistment qualifications and opened up to Negroes within enlistment calling all of its enlistment options. It has deliberately set not to place in one of its career fields any proportionate number of Negroes. This concrete implementation has been accomplished in the three short years since the Gillen Board Report. This implementation and its continuation provide full equality of opportunity and treatment for Negroes without disturbing the principle of segregation specifically recommended by the Gillen Board because of the inherent organizational structure required by the tactical mission of the Army. In this connection, it is pertinent to comment on the highly-publicized New Jersey experiment in eliminating segregation in its militia. Despite the fact that
non-segregation has been in effect for over a year, very little progress has been made in integration. Under a strictly voluntary system, on 12 April 1949 there were only 70 Negroes in predominantly white units, of whom eight were in the 114th HSS, and only 10 in all other units combined.

In predominantly Negro units, there were few white officers and none white enlisted personnel. Total strength of the New Jersey Guard as of this date was approximately 11,000 of which 500 were Negroes.

9. Further progress will be made in developing Negro techniques of executive type in the and that they may be used more abundantly in all technical and non-segregation positions. The system is in operation and only time is required to accomplish this task. The most practical step to be taken in the closing of a number of Negro companies in white battalions of the combat area. Only officers and field commanders have agreed so that this step should not be taken until the reactions to closing Negro battalions in white regiments and Negro companies in composite battalions (as yet accomplished) have been observed in detail over a period of time. They recommend that a careful study, although somewhat, may result in incidents detrimental to the progress and to national security, and that the step-by-step method of progress hitherto employed should be adhered to. I agree in their view.

10. It would not be proper to conclude this paper without informing you that there is a growing consensus among many senior officers of the Army that we are reaching to a dangerous degree the combat efficiency of our Army. These officers are familiar with the combat performance of Negro troops during our past and feel that we have already gone too far in integrating colored organizations in white combat units.

11. I am of the opinion that the Department of the Army policies, to be sounded as indicated above, are in accord with Executive Order 9981 of 26 July 1948, and that they emphasize all of the evolution of the employment policies announced in your memorandum of 6 April 1949. They will insure continued equality of treatment and opportunity, and will provide progress toward the ultimate objective—the effective use of all troops now available in the event of a major mobilization without regard to antecedent service. The Army hopes in this manner to contribute its share toward the solution of this complex problem.

/S/ Gordon Gray

Gordon Gray

Acting Secretary of the Army