MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services

26 May 1940

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

2. Concept of equal policy. - a. Department of the Army policy on utilization of Negro manpower is contained in War Department Circular No. 124, 27 April 1940, and visualizes two objectives.

   (1) The initial objective: The utilization of the proportionate ratio (1 Negro to 1 White) of the manpower made available to the military establishment during the peacetime 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 without 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 [initial] 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. 124, 1940):

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"Negro service in the peacetime army will be utilized on a broader professional scale than has obtained heretofore. 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 accepted policy."

c. (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 basic policy 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.

(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 either permanent or temporary in 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.)

d. Department of the Army Circular No. 121, 30 April 1948, Personal 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. Changes in War Department Circular 128.

Circular 128, quoted in part in paragraph 2(a), 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 spaces in the service (including all grades and types of jobs) for Negro personnel, the Department of the Army insures that the Negro will have an equal opportunity with the white to train for, and attain to, the position of responsibility he may be called upon to fill in event of mobilization. The Negro may and does participate in 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 recreational pursuits.

5. Practical Results of Army Policy to Date.

a. Regular Army.

(1) The Army has a Negro strength of 1,297 officers and 59,184 enlisted men. The Air Force has 309 officers and 21,029 men; the Navy 2,204 officers and 17,030 men; the Marine Corps 1,555 officers and 1,505 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, noncommissioned officers, or privates, the Army in numbers exceeds by far any other comparable activity. There are almost as many Negro noncommissioned 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 noncommissioned grade is unparalleled. Tab A lists the strengths and percentages of officers, noncommissioned officers, and privates for the three major services on a comparative basis. It will be noted that Negro noncommissioned officers total 23,135 or 9.21 per cent of the total noncommissioned officers in the Army. Negro officers total 1,297 or only 1.05 per cent of the total officer strength. However, in a Negro population select versus an equal white population also, there will be 6.2 whites with 907 of 130, or higher (necessary for commission) for each Negro possessing that score. Therefore, competition is 6.2 to 1. Multiplying this factor reveals that 1.05 per cent is equal competitively to a 10.7 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 presage 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, unhindered and unchallenged by overwhelming competition they are not yet equipped to meet. Such system has produced 13,037 officers and noncommissioned 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 regiment to separate company, totaling 299 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 on Tab B. It is significant that the Negro population of combat area and combat support units for the first time in history contains directly and favorably with the Negro population of the so-called service-type units.

(a) There are no Army schools from which Negro officers and enlisted men are barred solely because of color. At present, there are 1,647 Negroes attending 46 different Army schools along with whites. Over 1,000 Negroes have attended Officer Candidate Schools, and 36 NCOs and 268 NCO candidates are currently attending. There are 5 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 Nurse Corps and WAC. Enlisted men are actually assigned to every arm and service. Tab C shows 29 various sources used to secure 6,950 Negro officers during the war.

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

(c) The Army is presently streamlining its system of NCO job qualifications and has reduced the number of separate requirements to 431. In the latest report, Negroes are qualified for and are serving in 428 of these job descriptions. Enlisted to Grenade 124 will make available all NCOs to fully qualified personnel regardless of race or color.

(d) Negroes are assigned to overseas installation jobs without regard to race and work alongside others performing this type of duty. A recent check of 24 such installations within the overseas area 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.

(e) Negro reports from field commanders indicates that the reenlistment rate for Negroes in the Regular Army is the highest it has been in recent years, and surpasses 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 1270 units in 133 Negro colleges. The total enrollment of these units is 5,312, which is very creditable for a period so soon after the war. It is expected that 187 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 181 Negro units within the Organized Reserve Corps, engaging in wide range of activities. The authorized strength of these reserve units is 41,166, which is 10 per cent of the total authorized Organized Reserve Corps units. (See Tab D) There are 3,600 officers in the Organized Reserve Corps.

3. **National Guard Units**.—There are 43 National Guard organizations, including 125 company units, with an actual strength of 475 officers and 6,341 enlisted men. (See Tab E)

4. **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 bases. The combat soldier, on the other hand, works as part of a large group in the open. Wherever his group goes, he must go forward, he must keep up, all voluntarily. The soldier on the battlefield deserves to have, and must have, utmost confidence in his fellow soldiers. They must eat together, sleep together, and all so frequently die together. There can be no friction in their every-day 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 ratios, about 12 per cent. This is necessary for three reasons:

      (1) A slice of Negro population will show that few Negroes (36 out of each 100) have an intelligence score of 90 or higher, and that the great bulk are between 55 and 75.

      (2) The Army and Air Force are in the fortunate position of being able to maintain an enlistment standard of 90 GCT and higher, which excludes most Negroes and those that excess on the Army.

      (3) The Army is bound by the Selective Service Act to use GCT 70 as its enlistment criteria before calling on Selective Service. Recently, the Army attempted to use a GCT 90 score in recruiting, but could not get sufficient men and had to drop to 60. The standard will drop to 70 before Selective Service calls can be made. There is a
7. Provision of the Fuller Policy with Army Policy and Practice.

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

Personnel are considered on basis of individual merit and ability and rank qualify according to one single standard for enlistment. Degrees and duties do not need consideration. Promotion standards for officers are identical. As each enlisted career field is introduced (66 per cent of the Army is now composed) 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 6(2), above.

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

The foregoing is carried out in detail, as set forth in paragraph 6(3), above.

(3) Now units may continue to be composed with Negro personnel; however, all Negroes will not necessarily be assigned to Negro units. Qualified Negro personnel shall be assigned to fill any type of position on the grounds or other installations without regard to race.

This has been and is being accomplished. Army policy, issued 1 April 1942, provides that vacancies will be
For these reasons it is desired that these school-trained Negroes are allocated to your command, you provide appropriate destinations within your ranking level in your bulk overdues authorization, unless Negro 1/2/96 positions in these HDs are also open, where this personnel can actually be utilized in their school-trained primary HDs, notwithstanding the fact that you will probably be required to support existing white position in Negro position and because of surplus white personnel presently filling such positions.

In summary, since the adoption of the Gillen Board Report in April of 1946, the Army has continuously and vigorously implemented measures for the equality of treatment and opportunity for Negroes. It has drastically increased and continued 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 1/2/96 units into Negro 1/2/96 units, both combat and service, units in which Negroes had not hitherto served, units which certain 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 adopted and continued to stress the principle of duty intermixed in non-1/2/96 units and in overhead 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 occupying a suitable number of overhead positions to be displaced in order to place therein school-trained Negro personnel. It has raised and continues to raise Negro school quotas for courses producing 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 enforced the principle of competitive equality in its Career Guidance program system. It has conducted and continues to conduct special Negro recruitment campaigns for qualified Negroes to fill its 1/2/96 units converted to Negro manning and to provide equality required to fill its increased school quotas and expanded job utilization. It has utilized completely all discriminatory enlistment qualifications and opened up to Negroes within enlistment calling all of its enlistment options. It has deliberately set out to place in most of the service fields an appropriate 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
mobilization has been in effect for over a year, very little progress has been made in integration. Under a strictly voluntary system, on 15 April 1942 there were only 70 degrees in predominantly white units, of whom were in the 11th RCT, 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 800 were degrees.

9. Further progress will be made in developing Negro technicians of various types to the end that they may be used more abundantly in all technical RCT positions. The system is in operation and only time is required to accomplish this task. The most expediential step to be taken is the closing of a number of Negro companies in white battalions of the combat arms.

By military officers and field commanders have advised me that this step should not be taken until the reactions to closing Negro battalions in white regiments and Negro companies in composite battalions (already accomplished) have been observed in detail over a period of time. They recommend the step not be made, although spectacular, may result in incidents detrimental to the program and to national security, and that the step-by-step method of progress heretofore 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 concern among many junior officers of the Army that we are moving 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 inserting colored organizations in white combat units.

11. I am of the opinion that the Department of the Army policies, to be speeded as indicated above, are in accord with Executive Order 8861 of 26 July 1941, and that they express all of the revisions of the employment policies announced in your memorandum of 6 April 1942. They will insure continued equality of treatment and opportunity, and will provide progress toward the ultimate objective—the effective use of all manpower made available in the event of a major mobilization without regard to antecedent color. 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

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