MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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 reviewed its practices and procedures in according equality of treatment and opportunity to the Negro, and the following reasons is submitted.

2. Concept of written policy. - a. Department of the Army policy on utilization of Negro manpower is contained in War Department Circular No. 124, 27 April 1946, and visualized 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 present 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 (United) States 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, 1946):

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"Negroes comprise in the postwar 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 war-time Army will be accomplished through the medium of installations and organizations. Structuring of Negro units with White units in composite organizations will be accepted policy."

(c) Share conditions make it desirable, per Department instructions permit the local commander to provide separate recreational facilities such as Army exchanges, theaters or outdoor areas 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. (War Department Instruction No. 600-45, 14 June 1945.)

(2) No officer or noncommissioned officers club, mess or similar association will be permitted by the post commander to encroach on 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 officers 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 1947.)

d. Department of the Army Circular No. 121, 20 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. Changes in War Department Circular 124.

Circular 124, quoted in part in paragraph 2(b), 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 troop basis (including all grades and type 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. 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 397 officers and 21,566 men; the Navy has 6 officers and 17,038 men; the Marine Corps has 1,002 officers and 1,558 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 in numbers exceeds 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 strengths and percentages of officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates for the three major services on a comparative basis. It will be noted that Negro non-commissioned officers total 28,150, or 9.21 per cent of the total non-commissioned officers in the Army. Negro officers total 1,297 or only 1.05 per cent of the total officers strength. However, in a Negro population value versus an equal white population value, there will be 0.7 white with 9 of 130, or higher (necessary for commission) for each Negro possessing that score. Therefore, competition is 6.5 to 1. Multiplying by 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 unceasing precept of success in battle. Because of social environment, few Negroes have had the opportunity to develop leadership. Against the direct competition of the better trained 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 unburdened by overloading competition they are not yet equipped to meet. Each system has produced 13,427 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.
1) The Army has been able to organize Negro units in every area and service, ranging from regimental 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 in Tab B. It is significant that the Negro population of combat areas and combat support units for the first time in history comprises directly and favorably with the Negro population of the so-called service-type units.

2) 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 24 different army schools along with whites. Over 3,000 Negroes have attended officer candidate schools, and 266 of the 3,436 officers 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 various corps and NCOs. Enlisted men are actually assigned to every arm and service. Tab C shows 29 various courses used to secure 6,590 Negro officers during the war.

3) 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 Negroes in every career field so far introduced and in process of formulation. It is the intention of the Army to continue this policy.

4) The Army is presently streamlining its system of 60,000 job qualifications and has reduced the number of separate MOC's to 395. As of this latest report, Negroes are qualified for and are serving in 432 of these job descriptions. In addition to Streamer 12c, all Negro personnel regardless of race or color, are assigned to overhead installation jobs without regard to race and work alongside those performing this type of duty. A recent check of 44 such installations within the segregated army revealed Negroes to be assigned to all activities except one. Tab D lists those activities and the numbers of whites and Negroes working in each.

5) Negroes report from field commanders indicate that the resentment rate for Negroes in the Regular Army is the highest it has been in recent years, and pounds 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 3,312, which is very creditable for a period as soon after the war. It is expected that 186 Negroes 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 165 Negro units within the Organized Reserve Corps, embracing a wide range of activities. The authorized strength of these reserves units is 4,360, which is 10 per cent of the total authorized Organized Reserve Corps units. (See Tab III) There are 3,060 officers in the Organized Reserve Corps.

3. National Guard Units.—There are 41 National Guard organizations, including 152 company units, with an actual strength of 470 officers and 6,341 enlisted men. (See Tab II)

5. 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 an compartment and goes wherever the ship goes. Similarly, with air crews and air bombers. The combat soldier, on the other hand, works as part of a large group in the open. Wherever his hopes and fears, he must move 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 13 per cent. This is necessary for three reasons:

(1) A study of Negro population will show that few Negroes (16 out of each 100) have an intelligence score of 100 or higher, and that the great bulk are between 55 and 70.

(2) The Army and Air Force are in the fortunate position of being able to maintain an enlistment standard of 70 or higher, which excludes most Negroes and those that exceed on the Army.

(3) The Army is bound by the Selective Service Act to use 100 as its enlistment criteria before calling on Selective Service. Recently, the Army attempted to use a 100 score in recruiting, but could not get sufficient men and had to drop to 70. 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 G.I.'s that the Army can absorb. To compensate for this factor by further increasing the number of Negroes in unlimited quantity—the Negro being not yet fully developed for modern combat—to jeopardize the efficiency of the Army, at the present time, my military advisors and my commanders in the field one of the opinions that an Army of even 15 percent Negroes suffer a jeopardizing decrease in efficiency. Without a quota system of any kind, Negro enrollment could rise easily to 20 or 30 percent.


(a) To meet the requirements of the services 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, attendante 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 diplomas go to the next school. Promotion standards for officers are identical. Each qualified career field is introduced (66 per cent of the Army is now covered) 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(b), above.

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

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

(d) Some units may continue to be manned 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 vacated in organizations or over strength installations without regard to race.

This has been and is being accomplished, Army policy, issued 1 March 1948, provides that vacancies will be
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reserved for Negroes. ** For these reasons it is
desired that when these school trained Negroes are
allocated to your command, you provide appropriate
destinations within your rating level in your bulk
overhead authorization, unless Negro 7/0/H positions
in those HS are also open, where this personnel can
actually be utilized in their school trained primary
HS, notwithstanding the fact that you will probably
be forced to support existing white positions in those
positions and pass on or report to surplus white per-
nnel 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 in-
creased 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 7/0/H units into Negro 7/0/H 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 existing battalions and companies
within its white combat units from White manning to Negro manning, thus in-
creasing 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 interposed in non-
7/0/H 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 occupying
a suitable number of overboard positions to be displaced in order to place
therein school trained Negro personnel. It has raised and continues to raise
the Negro school quotas for courses producing skills in which Negroes have not
hitherto been found in sufficient number in order to broaden increasingly
the range of Negro utilization. It has accepted and enforces the principle
of competitive equality in its Career Guidance promotion system. It has con-
ducted and continues to conduct specialized recruitment campaigns for qual-
ified Negroes to fill the 7/0/H units converted to Negro manning and to provide
equality required to fill its increased school quotas and expanded job utiliza-
tion. It has withdrawn completely all discriminatory enlistment quali-
fications and opened up to Negroes within enlistment calling all of its enlist-
ment options. It has deliberately set out to place in each of its career
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 speci-
fically 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-commissioned has been in effect for over a year, very little prog-

ress has been made in integration. Under a strictly voluntary system,
on 15 April 1949 there were only 70 degrees in predominantly white units,
60 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 300 were degrees.

9. Further progress will be made in developing Negro techniques of

various types to the end that they may be used more abundantly in all tech-
nical NCO positions. The system is in operation and only time is required to
accomplish this task. The next organizational steps to be taken is the closing
of a number of Negro companies in white battalions of the combat zone.

By military advisors 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 acco-
nplished) have been observed in detail over a period of time. They recom-
end that we hold our horses, although spectacular, may result in incidents detri-
mental to the program and to national security, and that the step-by-step
method of progress hitherto employed should be adhered to. I concur in their
view.

10. It would not be proper to conclude this paper without informing you

that there is a growing concern among many senior officers of the Army that
we are making to a dangerous degree the combat efficiency of our Army.
These officers are familiar with the combat performance of Negro troops
during our long trial 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

announced as indicated above, are in accord with Executive Order 9981 of 26
July 1948, and that they express all of the policies of the supplemental

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 manpower now avail-
able in the event of a major mobilization without regard to antecedent or-
race. The Army hopes in this manner to contribute its share toward the
solution of this complex problem.

/s/ Gordon Gray

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Acting Secretary of the Army


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