

Document 23

President's Committee on Civil Rights

21 April 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The following information is based on items listed in the memorandum for the Navy Department forwarded with Mr. Robert K. Carr's letter of April 14, 1947 to the Secretary of the Navy.

Item 1. The civil rights of all Navy personnel; statements of policy including report of the investigation of the court-martial system.

The civil rights of all naval personnel are protected under the "Articles for the Government of the Navy of the United States". These "Articles" are of long-standing and are considered to be adequate to protect and safeguard the civil rights of all members of the Naval Service. Certain modifications of the "Articles" are, however, now under consideration to bring them into keeping with lessons learned during the recent war.

No distinction is made between individuals wearing a naval uniform because of race or color. The Navy accepts no theory of racial differences in inborn ability, but expects that every man wearing its uniform to be trained and used in accordance with his maximum individual capacity determined on the basis of individual performance.

The General Court-Martial Sentence Review Board was directed to make appropriate recommendations with respect to court-martial procedures and policies. A copy of the report and recommendations submitted by this Board are forwarded herewith, enclosure (B). This report has not been released to the public and it is requested that it not be so released until authorized by the Navy Department. It is expected that it will be made public in the near future.

Statements of policy for the Navy are and will be equally applicable to the Marine Corps.

Item 2. A statement of the experience of the Navy Department in connection with the protection against violence of men while in uniform. Please include legislative proposals in this field.

Although isolated acts of violence against officers and men in uniform have occurred from time to time, this is not considered to be of sufficient gravity to warrant the enactment of legislation for the protection of men while in uniform against violence, therefore none has been proposed. The basic mission of the Navy shore patrol is as follows:

"The mission of the shore patrol is to maintain order and suppress any unseemly conduct on the part of naval personnel ashore on liberty, and to prevent trouble where possible before arrest becomes necessary. In addition, the shore patrol is charged with assisting all naval personnel ashore and protecting them in their relationships with civilians."

Enclosure (A)

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Item 3. Official statements of policy (including those of pre-war, war-time and post-war dates to indicate changes):

- a. Recruitment of Negro personnel
- b. Training of Negro troops
- c. Rank of Negro men
- d. Service and assignment of Negroes
- e. Use of facilities

Navy

After World War I (June 1922), the enlistment of negroes in other than Steward Branch was discontinued in order to increase the efficiency and harmony and to permit more flexibility in the assignment of enlisted personnel. In early 1942 negroes were accepted for enlistment in general service ratings of the Navy. This policy of enlistment in the general service ratings provided they meet the standard mental and physical requirements has remained in effect since that date.

During the period between World War I and World War II, since recruitment of negroes was restricted to ratings in the Steward Branch, the training was in line with the duties to be performed in the Steward Branch. No distinction was made in the assignment or training of negro personnel in other ratings who remained in the Navy after World War I. In September 1942 after the Navy Department began to accept qualified negro personnel for general service ratings, service schools were established at Naval Training Station, Great Lakes and at Hampton Institute for the training of negroes after completion of recruit training.

The requirements for advancement in rating apply to negro and white personnel alike; there is no distinction. Shortly after the opening of general service ratings to negroes and the beginning of the receipt of negroes inducted through Selective Service, it became apparent that provision would have to be made for assimilating negroes for general service up to approximately ten percent of complements. Due to the urgent need for trained personnel in the fleet in the summer of 1943 it was necessary to replace experienced ratings from shore duty with recently procured and trained negroes. This gave the negro enlisted personnel an opportunity for rapid advancement to fill vacancies in petty officers billets ashore and made available immediately for assignment to the fleet experienced men relieved by the negro personnel. A directive regarding the assignment of negroes issued at this time contained the following policy for the use of enlisted negro personnel.

- (1) That Class "A" school graduates are to be used in work for which they are trained.
- (2) That negroes are to be rated on the same basis as white personnel and the rated moved up in the same manner as do white.
- (3) That wherever possible and as soon as sufficient numbers of trained negroes make it possible, activities having large numbers of negroes will become all-negro, rated as well as non-rated.

Enclosure (A)

A school was established at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes for the purpose of training reliable and especially qualified negroes for shore patrol duty. The personnel so trained were later assigned shore patrol duty in the district where he lived during the greater portion of the last ten years prior to entering the Navy in order that he would be familiar with the laws and customs of the area in which he performed shore patrol duty. The initial assignment of large numbers of negro personnel to sea duty was to local defense and coastal craft. In order to give the negro personnel an opportunity for assignment to other sea duty, negroes for general service duty, to a maximum of ten percent of the enlisted complement of each ship excluding the Steward Branch, were transferred to twenty-five of the large auxiliary vessels of the fleet. Negroes of general service rating groups in all rates were considered eligible for this assignment. A directive issued to Commanding Officers of all auxiliary ships contained the following paragraphs:

"In general, care will be taken to assure that negro personnel are administrated in accordance with existing naval regulations and in accordance with the established policies and procedures already in effect aboard each ship without discrimination as to race. They are to be accorded the same consideration in duty assignments and rating procedures as are whites. Class "A" graduates will be used in ratings for which trained, and rated men will be assigned to duties in divisions commensurate with their specialties. Efforts will be made to prevent the assignment of all subject personnel to one division for the purpose of segregating them.

"It will be helpful to point out that past experience has proven the desirability of thoroughly indoctrinating white personnel prior to the arrival of negroes. It has been the experience that when this is done and the white personnel thoroughly understand the Commanding Officer's policy, and what is expected of them, the chances of racial friction are materially lessened."

Marine Corps

Prior to World War II, recruitment into the Marine Corps was limited to white citizens. In April 1942, the policy was established to recruit male negro personnel by voluntary enlistment into the Marine Corps Reserve (active), enlistment to be controlled by quotas periodically revised in accordance with the estimated requirements and anticipated strength of the Marine Corps. In December 1942, it was determined to procure all future male negro personnel through Selective Service, quotas not to exceed ten percent of the total Marine Corps quota, and to terminate voluntary enlistments. This policy continued in effect throughout the remainder of the war, being terminated shortly after the cessation of hostilities when the Marine Corps stopped placing calls on Selective Service. No female negro personnel were taken into the Marine Corps during World War II.

Procurement of male negro personnel was resumed in December 1945, when the policy was established to accept voluntary enlistment into the regular Marine Corps of negro personnel honorably discharged from the Corps. Recruitment under this policy was based on a quota of 2800,

which was at that time established as the estimated requirement for male negro personnel in the peacetime regular establishment. In May 1946, this policy was extended to permit first enlistments of male negro personnel from civilian sources at a rate of 200 per month, based on a quota of forty percent of the total peacetime requirement, or 1120. In September 1946, this policy was further modified to remove quota restrictions on re-enlistments, and to provide that, of the total of 200 first enlistments, 40 should be for steward duty. In January 1947, due to a reduction in the estimated peacetime requirements to 1500, the acceptance of first enlistments was terminated until 1 June 1947. In March 1947, first enlistments were reopened for applicants having the qualifications for, and indicating the intention to volunteer for, steward duty. Re-enlistments of negro personnel into the regular establishment continue to be without quota restriction. No female personnel are now being enlisted into the Marine Corps.

Training of negro personnel during the war was conducted at Montford Point Camp, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. Training facilities at that Camp consisted of a recruit depot for basic training, and training battalions and organized specialist schools to provide personnel trained in all required specialties.

The principal installations for the training of negro personnel continue to be located at Montford Point Camp. Wartime practice has been modified in that training in the steward specialties is conducted at the Supply School Battalion, located elsewhere at Camp LeJeune, and separate specialist schools are no longer provided for negro personnel. Present policy provides for the assignment of negro marines to training in all Marine Corps specialist schools, as necessary to meet billet requirements.

During the war, negro personnel were promoted in enlisted grade on the same basis as were white personnel, except that a particular effort was made to select and rapidly promote those qualified for the non-commissioned officer grades. After an interval necessary to train these personnel for the higher grades, the authorized distribution of negro personnel in all enlisted grades was the same as for the general line duty white personnel. Promotions of negro personnel in enlisted grades are now conducted on the same basis as for white personnel.

In general, it was the policy during the war to assign negro personnel to duty in negro units, with the aim of utilizing the maximum practicable number in combat units. Such units served both in the United States and overseas. This general policy continues in effect in the peacetime establishment. Due to the reduced size of the Marine Corps, however, types of units and duty assignments are substantially reduced from those in existence during the war.

During and subsequent to the war, the same or equal facilities were provided for negro as for white enlisted personnel.

Item 4. Administrative and educational efforts by these agencies to create tolerance and acceptance of minority troops*, etc.:

- a. Efforts to indoctrinate officers
- b. Efforts to indoctrinate enlisted men
- c. Special efforts to handle integrated or closely-working unit with pre-briefings or orientations
- d. Crisis situations in the forces
- e. Civilians

*"troops" has been interpreted to be "groups"

NAVY

The pamphlet GUIDE TO COMMAND OF NEGRO PERSONNEL, Enclosure (C), was prepared for use in the indoctrination of officers and as a guide to officers handling negro enlisted personnel. The section "Indoctrination of Personnel" on page 14 of this guide sets forth the principles for the indoctrination of enlisted personnel.

During the war, officers charged with the supervision of negro personnel were sent to Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois and Naval Training School, Hampton, Virginia for special courses of instruction in the handling of negro enlisted personnel. The period of training varied according to the aptitude of the individual officer, averaging three to four weeks.

Special efforts were made to assure that white Commanding Officers of negro personnel recognized the differences in the background and experience of negroes from the majority of naval personnel; that their educational opportunities had been restricted; that the percentage of skilled workers was small; and that their participation in the life of the nation had been limited. With this knowledge in mind it was the Commanding Officer's duty to utilize, without distinction as to color and race, the negro enlisted personnel to his maximum individual capacity as demonstrated by the individual's performance of duty. Since the officers and enlisted personnel of the Navy in any one command came from various sections of the country it was natural to expect some to be better prepared psychologically than others to handle and work with negro personnel. Such difficulties as occurred due to the increased percentage of negro personnel in naval activities were the result of both white and negro personnel in their efforts to adjust themselves to a closer association than they had heretofore experienced. None of these difficulties were considered to have reached the degree of a crisis, in either the Navy or the Marine Corps.

MARINE CORPS

The basic directives issued to all commanding officers enunciated the principle that all Marines were entitled to equal rights and privileges under Navy Regulations, and required commanding officers to ensure that all men were so indoctrinated. Such directives included

information on the planned employment of negroes in the Corps, directed that every effort be made to locate and develop those having the qualities requisite for non-commissioned rank, and expressed the policy that, insofar as the exigencies of the service would permit, negro marines would be grouped and assigned to the type of duty which they preferred. These policies were implemented by adherence to the principle set forth in these directives that only carefully selected officers of excellent calibre should be assigned to duty with negro units, and once assigned, should be retained in the organization for the maximum practicable period. These directives encouraged commanding officers to continually study and periodically report to the Commandant on all matters affecting the efficiency and welfare of negroes in the Corps. These general policies continue in effect. The basic directives referred to above required that all men be thoroughly indoctrinated on the principle of the equality of rights and privileges of all marines, and that they should be made to understand that it was their duty to set an example in conduct and deportment, and to guide and assist the incoming negro marines. Present policies continue to postulate the equality of rights and privileges of all marines, but, since negro marines are now of long standing in the Corps, are well adjusted, and have their own experienced non-commissioned officers, no particular emphasis is placed on their guidance by other members of the Corps, except insofar as this is the duty of all officers and non-commissioned officers generally to all marines.

No special directives have been issued pertinent to the integration of mutually supporting white and negro units, except that emphasis has been placed on the indoctrination of white units serving in the vicinity of negro units, in the principles already outlined.

Item 5. Practical implementation of policies data:

- a. Recruitment of Negro personnel.
- b. Training of Negro troops
- c. Rank of Negro men
- d. Service and assignment of Negroes
- e. Use of facilities

Navy

The total number of negro enlisted personnel at peak strength (31 August 1945) was 166,915 male and 70 Waves. The negro officer strength at this time included 54 male officers, 2 Wave officers and 4 nurses. As of 31 March 1947 there were 21,793 negro enlisted personnel in the service, 2 male officers and one nurse. Furnished herewith is a tabulation, enclosure (D), showing the number of negro personnel in the various ranks and ratings as of 31 August 1945 and 31 March 1947.

The training program for negroes at Great Lakes was under a white officer, the son of the founder of Hampton Institute and a trustee of Hampton Institute. Under his guidance, service schools were organized at Camp Robert Smalls for negro trainees in general rates. Class "A"

service schools were established for training negro enlisted personnel in the following ratings: gunner's mates, radiomen, quartermasters, signalmen, yeomen, storekeepers and cooks and bakers. In October 1942 schools for aviation machinist mates and aviation metalsmiths were organized and in September 1943, a school for the training of Shore Patrol duty was established. In the beginning, white officers and, for the most part, white instructors, were provided until qualified negro instructors could be trained. The official history of the Great Lakes Training Center shows that the equipment, facilities and quality of instruction provided for negro personnel were in all ways comparable to those provided for white personnel. These schools continued in operation until near the end of the war.

From an educational analysis of men entering the Navy during July 1943 it was determined that approximately 2.5% of the white recruits and 14.2% of the negro recruits were illiterate. To assist in eliminating this, the Navy established a special curriculum for training illiterates both white and negroes at various training stations. This program for illiterates' training for negroes was extended to the field of forward area for men already on duty. A concentration of this effort was found in the FOURTEENTH Naval District (Hawaiian Islands) where all activities who had concentrations of negro personnel were carrying on an active program for training these men under the direction and supervision of the director of training of that naval district. This training was done by competent negro instructors.

The negroes ~~were~~ taken in the Women's Reserve, met the same qualifications for admission and were judged on the same standards of work efficiency as other members of the Women's Reserve. The training program was identical in that they were trained at existing schools for Waves. All ratings and ranks were open to negroes on the same basis as to other members of the Waves. The negro women were completely assimilated into this group of naval personnel.

MARINE CORPS

In January, 1943, when voluntary enlistments into the Marine Corps Reserve were terminated, and induction initiated, approximately 800 had been enlisted. A peak negro strength of 17,119 was reached in September, 1945. Of these, 12,849 were classified as Marine Corps Reserve (Volunteer and through Selective Service), and the remainder as Regular Marine Corps (through Selective Service).

At present, there are approximately 2100 negroes in the regular Marine Corps. The modifications of postwar policy (paragraph 3 a.) have been principally due to three factors:

- (1) Re-enlistment of negro personnel proved to be substantially less in number than was originally anticipated.
- (2) Procurement of personnel suitable for steward duty proved to be extremely difficult.

(3) Estimated requirements of Negro personnel were reduced from the initial estimate of 2800 to the present estimate of 1500, concurrently with the reduction in the entire Corps.

Training facilities provided at Montford Point Camp during the war consisted of:

- Recruit Training
- Antiaircraft Training Battalions
- Infantry Training Battalions

and the following specialist schools:

- Motor Transport
- Communications
- Clerical
- Quartermaster
- Engineer
- Cooks and Bakers
- Stewards.

Except for the recruit depot at Montford Point Camp, and the stewards' courses at the Supply School Battalion, no separate training facilities for Negro personnel are now maintained.

Of the available tabulations of Negro enlisted personnel by rank, that most closely approximating peak Negro strength is the report for 31 July 1945. On that date, there were 16,675 Negro Marines, distributed in rank as follows:

1st pay grade (Master Sgt)	2nd pay grade (Technical Sgt)	3rd pay grade (Staff Sgt)	4th pay grade (Sgt)	5th pay grade (Corp)	6th pay grade (PFC)	7th pay grade (Pvt)	Total
41	124	324	837	2116	8363	4870	16675
11752	17093	26835	46525	84015	152087	84966	423273

The latest available tabulation of Negro enlisted personnel by rank was compiled as of the 15th of November, 1946, at which time the total regular Negro strength was 2596. Of this total, approximately 1100 were first enlistments from civilian life subsequent to the 1st of July, 1946. This tabulation shows the following distribution in rank:

1st pay grade	2nd pay grade	3rd pay grade	4th pay grade	5th pay grade	6th pay grade	7th pay grade	Total
11	10	41	53	401	666	1414	2596
6022	3674	5183	5843	12828	24615	42621	

Some under training OC 6-

Enclosure (A)

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Negro units consisted at various times during the war of the following types:

- Antiaircraft Battalion
- Artillery Battery
- Defense Battalion
- Infantry Battalion
- Depot Company
- Depot Battalion (U. S. only)
- Ammunition Company
- Security Force at Naval Establishment

Administrative and Training units required for the operation of Montford Point Camp, and

Provisional units for duty at logistic establishments.

These units served in the structure of the following task organizations of the Marine Corps:

- Fleet Marine Force (Ground)(including Service Command)
- Security Forces for Continental Naval Establishments
- Logistic and Training Establishments

In addition, steward personnel served with the Fleet Marine Force (Aviation), Aviation elements afloat, headquarters establishments, and posts and stations.

On V-J Day, approximately 75% of all Negro Marines had served or were serving overseas.

Types of Negro units now in existence and presently planned consist of:

- Depot Companies and Platoons
- Security Forces for Naval Establishments
- Administrative and Training units

Steward personnel continue to be employed at essentially the same types of activities as during the war.

The tabulation of 15 November 1946 (referred to above) shows the following distribution by Functional Field:

Administrative and Clerical	56	Motor Transport	43
Artillery	11	Ordnance	46
Band	2	Photographic	1
Communication	32	Quartermaster	78
Engineer	19	Security & Guard	9
Food(including 104 stewards)	178	Special Services	4
Infantry	18	Training Aids	2

Miscellaneous 2035. ("Miscellaneous" comprises the following specialties: Barber (2), Sanitary Control Man (1), Sales Clerk (3), Basic (2016), Police NCO (13).)

Enclosure (A)

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In addition to these, 62 had not been assigned a specialty.

Item 6. Legislative proposals bearing on civil rights in the Naval Forces, and court cases growing out of Navy policies on civil rights

The Navy Department is not sponsoring legislative proposals bearing on the civil rights of Naval Forces. Two court-martial cases growing out of the Navy's policy on civil rights are cited in Court-Martial Orders No. 8-1937 and No. 12-1945.

- (a) Court-Martial Order No. 8-1937, pages 10-11, "Jurisdiction: Naval Shore Patrol in Making Arrest; Interference of Civil Authorities." Enclosure (E)
- (b) Court-Martial Order No. 12-1945, page 489, "Shore Patrol; Extent of Authority in Contact with Civilians." Enclosure (F)

Item 7. The possible and probable effect of the unification of the armed forces on existing policies in the area.

It is not believed that unification of the Armed Forces will affect the existing policy of the Naval Service on civil rights.

Item 8. The role of the Navy in controlling civil disturbances growing out of race riots and similar outbreaks of violence which may pass out of control of local and state law enforcement agencies. (Constitutional procedure, war-time and peace-time plans which the Navy had or has, measures taken in specific instances, if any.)

Personnel of the Naval Service would be used to suppress race riots and similar outbreaks of violence only upon orders from the President.

Item 9. Where pertinent (Especially Points 3, 4, 5 and 6) please include information on other minority groups, particularly Japanese Americans, Mexican Americans, Indians and Chinese Americans.

Personnel of the Naval Service falling under the minority groups enumerated in item 9 including Filipinos are so thoroughly integrated within the Naval Service and assigned to duties in accordance with their individual ability that it has not been necessary to establish policies for the administration of these minority groups other than the general policy of the Navy that no differentiation shall be made in the administration of Naval personnel because of race, color or creed.

During the war restrictions were placed on the recruitment of Japanese-Americans in the Marine Corps for the reason that, since the Marine Corps was primarily employed in Pacific Area, it was felt that the inclusion of such persons in the ranks would create an undue hazard to those persons and to their fellow marines. On 29 January 1945, this policy was modified to permit their enlistment.