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# THE NEGRO SOLDIER

A partial record of Negro devotion and heroism
in the cause of freedom gathered from the files
of the War and Navy Departments.

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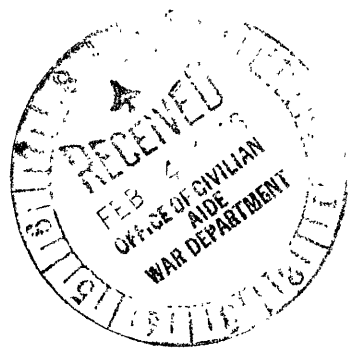

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

MR. SPEAKER:

It is about the Negro soldier I wish to speak today. I wish to pay him the respect and to express the gratitude of the American people for his contribution in the greatest battle of all time - the battle which decided whether or not we were to remain a free people.

We should be especially mindful of the Negro soldier, remembering that he fought and shed his blood for a freedom which he has not as yet been permitted fully to share.

The service record of the Negro in World War II began with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, and carried through to the day and the hour of the Japanese surrender.

Whether in the North African, European, or Pacific theater of war, the Negro service man responded to the call of duty to the fullest extent of his opportunity and to the very best of his ability.

The Negro soldier made his contribution in World War II as he has in every other war in which we, a free people, have fought. And he has again met the test of patriotism and heroism. The names of Negro heroes in this war are everlastingly recorded among the living and the dead. They won their citations in every combat area, on land, on sea, in the air.

It should never be forgotten that Negro heroes in this war achieved their proud records under handicaps that did not have to be overcome by most of their white fellow citizens.

This was the most mechanical of all wars. Training had to be based on the education and experience of the average man. The average American boy going into the service of his country had some knowledge of, some experience with the mechanical gadgets that contribute to our much boasted high standard of living. And at least he could read and write.

Three-fourths of all Negroes in the armed forces came from areas in this land of the free where their people had been held down for generations, denied education, denied the use of tools any more complicated than a hoe, denied the right to participate in self-government, denied even the right to self-respect. For them, equal educational opportunities, equal pay for equal work, practically any opportunity to work at skilled trades simply did not exist. They went into the armed forces ill equipped, through no fault of their own, for the tremendous job required of them.

But they did the job, all the same, handicap or no handicap. And they did it magnificently.

They were MEN - with the heart and the will and the courage - the stuff of which heroes are made. They may, as did one group, have had to memorize instructions because they could not read them. But while letters may have been foreign to them,

devotion was not; nor was courage foreign to them. The qualities that cannot be indoctrinated - the qualities of greatness - were there.

Some of the most outstanding units in all theaters were made up of Negroes who had been classified in the lowest Army classification categories - those very boys who had never had a chance to run a machine or even to learn to read and write before going into the Army.

Despite the Selective Service and Training Act, which established a basic policy of non-discrimination because of race or color in building up our Army, and in spite of improvement during the course of the war, it must not be forgotten that segregation, discrimination and race prejudice, in all of its varied forms, placed an added burden on the Negro in the armed forces and dogged his steps from the induction center to the front line.

Navy Crosses - for "conduct in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval service" - were won by Negro mess attendants, not permitted to enlist in their country's navy as fighting men.

It was a mess attendant - not permitted, because he was a Negro, to train as a gunner - who manned a machine gun and fought back when the Japs strafed his ship at Pearl Harbor. For this and for dragging his mortally wounded captain to safety, Dorie Miller, mess attendant first class, won the Navy Cross.

It was Leonard Roy Harmon, mess attendant first class, who won the Navy Cross, posthumously, for heroic action. He lost his life aboard the USS San Francisco in battle off the Solomon Islands. Later his mother was brought from her home in Texas,. by order of the Secretary of the Navy, to the shipyards in Bingham, Massachusetts, to sponsor the Destroyer Escort USS Harmon, named after her hero son.

It was Private Woodall I. Marsh of Pittsburgh, of the 92nd Division, who won the Silver Star for taking twelve wounded paratroopers out of the front line to safety, fording a raging torrent in his truck, after an officer had said it couldn't be done. When he was told he couldn't get through because the water was too deep, Private Marsh replied: "Well, there's dirt underneath, ain't there?"

In December, 1944, when the picture in Europe was dark, when our front line losses were mounting with tragic swiftness, a call was sent out for volunteer replacements from troops assigned to non-combat duty behind the lines. More than 5,000 Negroes eagerly responded. Because only privates were accepted, many non-commissioned officers offered to sacrifice their stripes for a chance to get into the fighting. Twenty-five hundred Negro soldiers were accepted, but 3,000 more were turned back, because a quota for Negroes among the volunteers had been set. One of those who accepted, Private First Class Leroy W. Kemp of Atlantic City, New Jersey, remarked:

"We've been giving a lot of sweat. Now I think we'll mix some blood with it."

They did mix their blood - with the blood of their white brothers - and out of

that mixing a new understanding and respect were born.

One of the finest tributes paid these volunteers came from Brig. General Charles T. Lanham, assistant commander of the 104th Infantry Division, following the presentation of combat decorations:

"I have never seen any soldiers who have performed better in combat than you," General Lanham told the Negro doughboys.

Under the Selective Service Act, Negroes were trained for every branch of the service, but, although Negro fighter pilots were shooting down German planes over Italy, although the 92nd Division fought through the Italian campaign from start to finish and came out with two Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, 16 Legion of Merit Awards, 95 Silver Stars, six Soldier's Medals, 723 Bronze Stars, 1,095 Purple Hearts and 7,996 Combat Infantry Badges, and although the 969th Field Artillery Battalion was caught at Bastogne and fought it out side by side with the celebrated 101st Airborne Division and received, with the 101st, a Presidential Unit Citation - and although there were Negro combat troops in action on every front, the fact remains that the majority of the Negroes, sometimes regardless of qualifications, found themselves in service outfits.

And what did that mean? It meant building airports, bases, roads and highways under fire, in freezing cold and blazing heat. It meant building an approach to a bridge across the Rhine, under artillery fire, unable to take cover, unable to shoot back. It meant landing ammunition on the Normandy beaches on D-Day, always under fire. It meant setting up field kitchens on those beaches, even before the fighting troops which were to be fed and heartened had all come ashore. It meant Negro Seabees winning commendation for building an airport on a Pacific Island under heavy Japanese fire. It meant stringing thousands and thousands of miles of communication wire - across rivers, through steaming jungles, over icy mountain passes, with artillery shells crashing around them, with snipers forever shooting at them. It meant trucking high explosives and octane gas over the Red Ball highway - continuously under aerial bombardment. It meant building the Ledo Road, under impossible conditions, cutting and blasting their way through jungle and over mountain passes - riding their bull-dozers down with tons of sliding rock when the narrow ledges gave way, to save the precious equipment. And again and again and again it meant dropping a shovel and picking up a gun from the stiffening hands of a fallen fighting comrade.

In 1940, when the Selective Service Act was passed, there were only 4,451 Negroes in our Army, including five commissioned officers and eleven warrant officers.

In February a year ago there were 690,282 Negroes in the Army. Of these 52,884 were in the Infantry; 27,163 in the coast and field artillery; 770 in the cavalry; 140,154 in the engineers; 63,079 in the air corps; and 406,232 in other branches of the armed services. Included in the total were 6,548 commissioned officers. Of that number, 120 were dental corps officers; 343 were nurses, 569

were medical corps officers and 260 were chaplains. The Army had 820 Negro Wacs, the Navy had 68 Negro Waves and the Coast Guard five Negro Spars.

Last August there were 695,264 Negroes in the United States Army. Of these 495,950 were overseas. On the day of final victory in Europe there were 22 Negro combat units in action on the European front.

Here are some things that "Ike" Eisenhower, the man who broke the Axis, had to say about the Negro troops who served under him:

In July, 1944 to the commanding officers and men of a Negro anti-aircraft balloon battalion, the only outfit of its kind participating in the D-Day landings:

"The commanding officer, First United States Army, has brought to my attention the splendid manner in which you have carried out your mission during the period of June 6 to July 10, 1944.

"Your battalion landed in France on June 6 under artillery, machine gun and rifle fire. Despite the losses sustained, the battalion carried out its mission with courage and determination and proved an important element to the air defense team. The cheerfulness and devotion to duty of officers and men have been commented on by the personnel of other units.

"This report is most gratifying to me. I commend you and the officers and men of your battalion for your fine effort, which has merited the praise of all who have observed it."

On the same day to the commanding officer and officers and men of a Negro truck company:

"I have received from the commanding general, First United States Army, a report of your exceptionally fine work during the landing in France and the period of a month subsequent thereto. The report confirms my own observation.

"You landed under enemy machine gun and artillery fire, which caused losses in men and equipment. Nevertheless, you salvaged most of your equipment at once and within three days, 90 percent of your vehicles were operating on a 24 hour basis, a scale which was maintained for five weeks. During this time you continued the delivery of essential supplies. I want you to know that I appreciate your splendid work. Your accomplishments are a source of gratification to me and to your Army commander."

Reviewing the war at a press conference in Paris on June 15, 1945, General Eisenhower was asked to comment upon the contribution Negro soldiers made to the European Theatre of Operations. He replied:

"To start with, I would like to say this: that I do not differentiate among soldiers. I do not say white soldiers or Negro soldiers and I do not say American or British soldiers. To my mind, I have had a task in this war that makes me look upon soldiers as soldiers. Now, I have seen Negro soldiers in this war, and I have many reports on their work where they have rendered very valuable contributions

and some of them with the greatest enthusiasm. In late November, when we were getting short of reinforcements, replacements, some 2,600 Negro soldiers volunteered for front-line service and they did good work. All my commanders reported that these volunteers did excellent work. But their major job has been in Service of Supply, engineer units, quartermaster units, ordnance units. There, so far as I know and certainly as far as any official reports, they have performed equally with every kind of ordnance battalion, quartermaster battalion and engineer battalion. They have done their job and they have done the job given them."

Mr. Speaker, I trust that all of us, as we continue our task of building a firm and lasting peace, will emulate "Ike" Eisenhower. He did not differentiate between whites and Negroes - nor between Americans, British, French, nor Russians. They were all soldiers. It is my fervent hope that we will have the wisdom to look upon citizens as citizens - neither white nor black nor yellow - but simply as citizens - of a world community.

In the next few days I wish to introduce what at this time can only be a partial record of Negro devotion and heroism in the cause of freedom. My material has been gathered from the War and Navy Departments.

AFRICAN - ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Forty-first Engineers

On June 17, 1942, eighteen months before U. S. troops were reported to have landed at Dakar - the first Negro troops landed in Africa. They were the 41st Engineer regiment - the "singing engineers" - and their mission was to protect that vital area in the trans-African lifeline of the United Nations under an agreement between the governments of the United States and Liberia. The pact, signed on March 31, 1942, gave the United States the right to construct, control, operate and defend airports in the West African republic. In return for use of lands for American troops, the United States agreed to protect Liberia's neutrality, provide $1,000,000 in lend-lease aid, undertake a road-building program and train a Liberian Army, using American equipment.

Private First Class Edward Taylor of Baltimore led ashore the first American expeditionary force ever to set foot in Africa. A handful of natives and civilian construction workers watched him step ashore. "Liberians," he said, "we are here to join hands and fight together until this world is free of tyrannical dictators."

The 41st Engineers worked at a grueling pace. A big job had to be done in record time despite malaria, bad terrain and the rainy season. But they built the airports, cantonments and other installations that were needed. They unloaded ships and dispatched supplies through three big defense areas. They laid steel landing mats in the emergency airports and waged a constant battle against the verdant undergrowth. They built permanent structures to replace temporary shacks and sheds.

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding

service" in Liberia, Master Sergeant Albert F. Williams of Waycross, Ga., Headquarters and Service Company, 41st Engineers, was awarded the Legion of Merit.

His citation stated that "As a member of the advance detachment of an expeditionary force, from April to June, 1942, he distinguished himself by his soldierly qualities, leadership and dependability. Upon arrival on a strange continent, by his example of cheerfulness, confidence, energy, and industry, he was a constant source of inspiration to his fellow soldiers and a tower of strength to his commanding officer. Sergeant Williams set the pace for all duties assigned. He supervised his men every moment of the day, protecting their health so that there was no illness in a disease-ridden country. He used his 600 native laborers with patience, understanding and skill. He was largely responsible for building up an enviable reputation for our soldiers abroad and contributing materially toward the preliminary mission of the force."

President Roosevelt stopped in Liberia on his way home from the Casablanca conference on January 27, 1943, and reviewed the 41st Engineers.

450th ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BATTALION

This battalion had the distinction of being the first Negro combat unit to land in North Africa and the first Negro combat unit to go into action on European soil.

As a matter of fact, before it even landed on the Italian peninsula, it won the commendation of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, commanding the Fifth Army, for "outstanding performance of duty" in its baptism of fire. It accounted for two German bombers before it landed in Italy.

While the Negro troops of the 450th Battalion were still aboard ship in Naples Harbor, German bombers came over. The attack occured at night. Soldiers of the 450th Battalion aboard one ship manned its 40-mm. guns. Searchlights picked up the bombers, and the Negro gun crew shot down one German bomber.

Aboard another ship, carrying personnel and equipment of the 450th Battalion, M/S Johnson Clark of Detroit, Michigan, jumped into a loaded truck parked on deck and opened fire with a 50-calibre machine gun mounted on the cab. Other fire opened up from that ship, and a second bomber crashed into the sea.

Commending troops of the 450th Battalion for this accomplishment, General Clark declared:

"I am proud of the outstanding performance of duty of these soldiers in this baptism of fire. Their conduct was excellent and reflects the training and discipline of their unit. The Fifth Army welcomes such soldiers."

99th PURSUIT SQUADRON

This unit of fighter pilots trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field. After further training by veterans of the Tunisian campaign, the unit was committed to combat on June 1, 1943. It flew its first mission, over an air base at Fardjouna,

the following day. Other early missions were over the island of Pantelleria, Italian stronghold guarding the Sicilian straits. Six of its pilots had their first brush with enemy aircraft over Pantelleria, and pilots of the 99th dive-bombed Pantelleria daily until it was surrendered on June 11th, 1943.

Next came the Sicilian campaign. During the first nine days of July, 1943, the Negro pilots of the 99th Squadron escorted bombers to Sicily. On every trip they were attacked by superior numbers of enemy fighter planes.

By the middle of July, the 99th was escorting bombers over Italy. In a dog-fight over Sciacca, Italy, one day, 1st Lieut. (now Captain) Charles B. Hall, of Brazil, Indiana, shot down the first Axis plane officially credited to the 99th Squadron. On that same day the 99th, flying close escort for medium Mitchell bombers, probably destroyed two more German planes and damaged three.

General Eisenhower was at the air base with the squadron's commander Lt. Col. (now"Colonel" Benjamin O. Davis of Washington, D. C., when Hall and the others landed after that fight and congratulated them on their first confirmed victory.

From June 1 to September 3, 1943, the 99th Squadron participated in about 800 sorties over North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

The 99th Squadron, by this time based in Italy, had its biggest day on January 27, 1944. In one of the fiercest air battles of the Italian campaign, over the Anzio beachhead, south of Rome, Negro pilots of the 99th Squadron scored eight confirmed victories over the Germans.

Bent on driving the Allied landing force out of its beachhead, a hundred or more Messerchmitt 109's and Focke-Wulf 190's came over in two attacks, morning and afternoon on that day. Twenty-eight were destroyed during the day and the 99th got eight of them, the largest number credited to any single squadron that day.

Fliers from eight states figured in this outstanding collective victory of the 99th that day. Capt. Lemuel Rodney Custis of Hartford, Conn., squadron operations officer got one "Jerry". Six other pilots of the 99th got one each: 1st. Lieuts. Robert W. Deiz of Portland, Oregon; Willie Ashley of Sumter, South Carolina; Leon C. Roberts of Pritchard, Alabama; and Edward L. Toppins of San Francisco, California; 2nd Lieuts. Charles P. Bailey of Punta Gorda, Florida; and Wilson Eagleson of Bloomington, Indiana. The 99th Squadron's eighth victory was shared by 2nd Lieuts. Clarence Allen of Mobile, Alabama and Howard L. Baugh of Petersburgh, Va.

The 99th shot down four more enemy planes on January 28, 1944, Captain Hall scoring a double.

Lieutenant Deiz was credited with his second German plane in two days, and two pilots, Lieutenants Baugh and Allen, were credited jointly with the destruction of one plane. The fourth German plane was shot down by Second Lieutenant Louis C. Smith, of Los Angeles, California.

2nd Lieut. Elwood T. Driver of Trenton, N.J., got the thirteenth German plane credited to the 99th Squadron. Planes of the squadron were just arriving over Anzio

beachhead on February 5, 1944, to take their turn at air cover, when a formation of German planes came over. The 99th swooped down, and Driver sent one Focke-Wulf 190 crashing.

On February 7, 1944, Allied fliers brought down sixteen Focke-Wulfs and three Messerschmitts, against a loss of only four of our own. Three of the German planes were brought down by pilots of the 99th, in the first of the day's engagements.

In ten days over Anzio beachhead, the 99th brought down sixteen enemy planes.

General Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, in a message to Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Allied Air Commander in the Mediterranean theater, commended the Negro 99th Fighter Squadron on its exploits over Anzio beachhead. He said:

"The results of the 99th Fighter Squadron during the past two weeks, particularly since the Nettuno landing, are very commendable. My best wishes for their continued success."

Exactly one year after they had flown their first mission over an enemy air base at Fardjouna, North Africa, pilots of the 99th Fighter Squadron, on detached service with the 332nd Fighter Group, flew their 500th combat mission.

The 99th flew 3,728 sorties during its first year of service. During the first year, the squadron lost 12 pilots - five killed in action, four reported missing, and three known to be prisoners of war.

From Allied Headquarters in Naples it was announced on March 17, 1944, that the 332nd Fighter Group, in which Negro pilots of the 99th were flying, was operating from Italian bases, as part of the Mediterranean coastal air force. This group flew P-39's on convoy protection and harbor patrol missions along the west coast of Italy. It also flew in close support of advancing Allied armies in Italy, in daily dive bombing operations against enemy supply lines, motor transport, rail yards and gun emplacements. Penetrating ahead of the 15th Army Air Force bombers bound for Munich, on June 9, 1944, the group battled more than 100 enemy fighters near Udine, Italy, and sent five of them crashing to earth. The bomber formation they were protecting suffered only a few losses.

The Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group destroyed a total of 111 enemy planes in the air and 150 on the ground. In addition, it is credited with destruction of 57 locomotives and damaging another 69. Perhaps the greatest single feat of the group was the sinking of an enemy destroyer, with machine-gun fire, off the Istrian Peninsula but its pilots are best known for the protection they gave Fifteenth Air Force bombers during concentrated raids on oil refineries at Ploesti and Vienna. On the D-day invasion of southern France the group flew cover for Allied landing forces and strafed radar installations along the coast preparatory to the landings. On March 24, 1945, the group flew escort to B-17's of the Fifteenth Air Force to Berlin and destroyed three enemy aircraft, probably destroyed three

other, and damaged three. For its outstanding performance of duty, the group was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation, which reads as follows:

"On March 23, 1945, the group was assigned the mission of escorting heavy-bombardment type aircraft attacking the vital Daimler-Benz tank-assembly plant at Berlin, Germany. Realizing the strategic importance of the mission and fully cognizant of the amount of enemy resistance to be expected and the long range to be covered, the ground crews worked tirelessly and with enthusiasm to have their aircraft at the peak of mechanical condition to insure the success of the operation.

"On March 24, 1945, fifty-nine P-51 type aircraft were air-borne and set the course for the rendezvous with the bomber formation. Through superior navigation and maintenance of strict flight discipline and group formation reached the bomber formation at the designated time and place. Nearing the target approximately 25 enemy aircraft were encountered which included ME 262's which launched relentless attacks in a desperate effort to break up and destroy the bomber formations.

"Displaying outstanding courage, aggressiveness, and combat technique, the group immediately engaged the enemy formation in aerial combat. In the ensuing engagement that continued over the target area, the gallant pilots of the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group battled against the enemy fighter to prevent the breaking up of the bomber formation and thus jeopardizing the successful completion of this vitally important mission. Through their superior skill and determination, the group destroyed three enemy aircraft, probably destroyed three, and damaged three. Among their claims were eight of the highly rated enemy jet-propelled aircraft, with no losses sustained by the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group.

"Leaving the target area and en route to base after completion of their primary task, aircraft of the group conducted strafing attacks against enemy ground installation and transportation with outstanding success. By the conspicuous gallantry, professional skill, and determination of the pilots, together with the outstanding technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group has reflected great credit on itself and the armed forces of the United States."

## COLONEL BENJAMIN O. DAVIS, JR.

The leader of the 99th Pursuit Squadron and later of the 332nd Fighter Group, of which it became a part, was Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a graduate of West Point and son of Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, the highest ranking Negro officer in the United States Army.

Colonel Davis and three other pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group - Capt. Joseph D. Elsberry of Langston, Oklahoma, and 1st Lieuts. Jack D. Holsclaw of Spokane, Washington, and Clarence D. Lester of Chicago, Illinois- were presented with Distinguished Flying Crosses in Italy on September 10, 1944. Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, in command of all Allied air forces in the Mediterranean theater, attended the ceremony.

It was held before a formation of the entire fighter group and the 15th Air Force band, which was drawn up in review.

Concerning the leadership of the Group by Colonel Davis, in a fight on June 9, 1944, when a bomber formation which his pilots were protecting was attacked by more than 100 enemy fighters, the citation said:

"Faced with the problem of protecting the larger bomber formation with the comparatively few fighters under his control, Colonel Davis so skillfully disposed his squadrons that in spite of the large number of enemy fighters, the bomber formation suffered only a few losses. During the engagement, Colonel Davis led one flight against more than 15 enemy fighters which were making repeated attacks on one group of bombers. His courage and combat ability have reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America."

Colonel Davis also has been awarded the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

CAPTAIN JOSEPH D. ELSBERRY

The award to Captain Elsberry was for "extraordinary achievement in aerial flight against the enemy in the North African and Mediterranean Theatres of Operations." His citation said:

"Throughout the extensive air offensive against the enemy in direct support of our ground troops and against targets of vital strategic importance deep within hostile territory, he, through his aggressiveness and courage, has consistently aided in the success of combat operations. Against heavy opposition from both aggressive and persistent fighter aircraft and intense, heavy and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire, with his plane frequently seriously damaged by enemy fire, he has battled his way to his targets, defeating the enemy in the air and destroying his vital installations on the ground. Through severe and adverse weather conditions over treacherous mountain terrain, he has continually surmounted overwhelming obstacles for successful completion of his assigned mission to attack and destroy the enemy. Through his outstanding leadership and personal example, completely disregarding his personal safety at times of great danger, he has contributed to the ultimate and final defeat of the armed forces of the enemy, has upheld the highest tradition of the military service, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America."

FIRST LIEUT. JACK D. HOLSCLAW

On July 18, 1944, Lieutenant Holsclaw led his flight as escort to heavy bombers attacking enemy installations in Germany and despite severe and adverse weather conditions, he brought his flight through to engage an enemy force of approximately 300 army fighters. Of Lieut. Holsclaw the citation said:

"In the ensuing engagement, despite the superiority in numbers of enemy aircraft, with complete disregard for his personal safety, Lieutenant Holsclaw with an

outstanding display of aggressiveness and combat proficiency, destroyed two enemy fighters and forced the remainder tc break off their organized attack."

LIEUTENANT CLARENCE D. LESTER

Lieutenant Lester participated in the same mission as that of Lieutenant Jack D. Holsclaw. The citation of Lieutenant Lester said:

"With complete disregard of his personal safety, Lieutenant Lester destroyed three enemy fighters, thus materially aiding in preventing the enemy from making concentrated attacks on the bombers."

The citations said of each of them that by his outstanding courage, professional skill and devotion to duty, evidenced throughout his combat career, he had reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States.

A few months later back in this country, General Eaker presented Colonel Davis to the officers and men of the 477th Composite Group in a ceremony at Godman Field, Kentucky, June 21, 1945, as the commander of the group and of Godman Field, General Eaker said:

"Along with other officers in the Army Air Forces, I have followed closely the record of Negro pilots. As the commanding officer of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, I had under my command the 99th Fighter Squadron and later the 332nd Fighter Group. I watched closely as the pilots progressed through the P-39, P-40, P-47 and P-51 aircraft. I likewise watched their assignments develop from routine but necessary coastal patrol missions to important heavy bomber close escort missions.

"The Ninety-Ninth Fighter Squadron and other squadrons of the 332nd Fighter Group have done well. They have carried out the missions assigned to them and they have destroyed enemy aircraft both in the air and on the ground. By their efforts and performance they have won a place on the great air forces team. They came on the hard way."

NINETY-SECOND DIVISION

A regimental combat team of 92nd Infantry Division went into the line on the Fifth Army front in Italy in August, 1944. Ten minutes after moving into position they went into action against some of the best trained and seasoned troops Hitler had in his whole army.

From then on, until the Italian campaign finally ended with the surrender of a million crack German troops in April, 1945, the 92nd Division fought in General Mark Clark's Fifth Army. Some of them were in the line as long as 68 days at a stretch, more than two months.

It is one of the marvels of the war that the 92nd Division with an enlisted personnel made up almost entirely of Negro boys from the South - boys who had been sent out to work in the fields before they were even adolescents, boys who in many cases never had a chance to learn to read or write, boys who had grown up in an area where

they and their people were always treated as inferiors - should have made the record it did, staying in there week in and week out, through some of the bitterest fighting in the whole war, against Hitler's best, a superb army of self-assured German veterans fighting with all they had to protect their homeland from the attack rolling up from the South.

The 92nd Division consisted of approximately 12,000 officers and men, including some 200 white officers and 600 Negro officers, three of whom were Lieutenant Colonels and six were Majors. Its enlisted personnel was all Negro a majority rated as IV and V, the lowest grades in the Army classifications. This was largely due to the fact that three fourths of them came from Southern states, where educational opportunities for the Negro are practically non-existent. And the 92nd Division was activated before the Army educational program - designed to carry a man only through the fourth grade in school - got under way.

But these men - ill equipped as they were - did their job. They stayed in there, giving their best, day in and day out, see-sawing back and forth through the rain and cold and mud, locked in a titanic death struggle with an experienced, magnificently trained enemy who knew all the tricks and who had never known defeat.

Through the whole bitter experience, the men of the 92nd Division were dogged by the racial prejudice and segregation that had followed them from the Southern camps where they trained at home. Other troops might yield temporarily, but there was no comment. But if the 92nd Division lost a yard one day - even though they might gain it back the next day - the reports went back across the Atlantic and soon their letters from home would tell them of loud mouths screaming, even on the floor of Congress, that the Negro soldiers were cracking, that the Negro soldiers were no good.

## A POLYGLOT ARMY

It was a polyglot army, the Fifth Army in which they fought made up of British, American, Brazilian, French, Italian, Greek, Polish, Palestinian, New Zealand, and East Indian troops. It was in this Fifth Army that the Japanese Americans so greatly distinguished themselves, - the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion, one of the first outfits to receive a Presidential unit citation for fighting in Italy.

On April 30, 1945, General Clark announced that the long, weary, bitter campaign, begun on the beaches of Salerno in September, 1943, had ended. His polyglot troops had so smashed the German armies in Italy that they had been virtually eliminated as a military force. Nearly 1,000,000 Germans in Northern Italy and Western Austria laid down their arms in unconditional surrender on May 2, 1945, at 2:00 P.M. The surrender had been signed in the royal palace of Caserta on April 29, by representatives of the German Commander, General Heinrich von Vietinghoff-Scheel,and of the Allied Mediterranean Commander,Field Marshall Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander,

Around this last Thanksgiving time, the 92nd Division came home, landing in Boston, New York, and Norfolk. Only 4,000 were left of the once 12,000 strong 92nd

Division whose ranks, like those of other divisions that fought overseas, had been thinned by transfers, discharges and death.

While overseas the 92nd had received 12,096 decorations - including two Distinguished Service Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, 16 Legion of Merit Awards, 7 Oak Leaf Clusters to Silver Stars, 95 Silver Stars, 6 soldier's medals, 723 Bronze Stars, 1,891 Purple Hearts and 7,996 combat infantry badges. It also received 205 commendations.

## ALMOST 25 PERCENT CASUALTIES

On the day the campaign in Italy ended, the 92nd Division had lost almost one fourth of its men through casualties. Three hundred and thirty had been killed in action, 2,215 wounded and 616 were missing in action.

A soldier of the 92nd Division, Private Woodall I. Marsh of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,, was the first Negro to win the Silver Star in Italy. He got it for taking twelve wounded paratroopers from the front lines to safety in his truck, after officers said it could not be done.

When he was told that he could not make it because the water of a raging torrent he had to ford to get to the wounded paratroopers was too deep, Private Marsh replied: "Well, there's dirt underneath ain't there?" and he proceeded to ford it.

Under terrific enemy fire, he drove his truck through water up to the hubs of the wheels to get to the wounded men. On the return trip, he tried another route, but it turned out to be just as bad. He had to dig his truck out of the muck and mire again and again. For 30 minutes during the trip, the Germans were trying to get him and his truck with heavy mortar and artillery fire.

Another hero of the 92nd Division was 2nd Lieutenant Vernon J. Baker of Cheyenne, Wyoming, a rifle platoon leader. He won the Distinguished Service Cross for the bravery he exhibited in action on two days, April 5 and 6, 1945, near Viareggio, Italy. The citation reads:

"Second Lieutenant Baker demonstrated outstanding courage and leadership in destroying enemy installations, personnel and equipment during his company's attack against a strongly entrenched enemy in mountainous terrain.

"When his company was stopped by the concentrated fire from several machine gun emplacements, he crawled to one position and destroyed it, killing three Germans. Continuing forward, he attacked an enemy observation post and killed its two occupants.

"With the aid of one of his men, Second Lieutenant Baker attacked two more machine gun nests, killing or wounding the four enemy soldiers occupying these positions. He then covered the evacuation of the wounded personnel of his company by occupying an exposed position and drawing the enemy's fire.

"On the following night Second Lieutenant Baker voluntarily led a battalion advance through enemy mine fields and heavy fire toward the division objective.

Second Lieutenant Baker's fighting spirit and daring leadership were an inspiration to his men and exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces."

One of the officers of the 92nd Division awarded posthumously the Silver Star for gallantry in action was Captain Charles F. Gandy, Jr., of Washington, D. C. On October 12, 1944, Captain Gandy was ordered to deploy his company in reinforcement of another company in position on difficult mountainous terrain. His citation states:

"He personally led his company out in broad daylight and, through further reconnaissance and by personal example and leadership, succeeded in getting his entire company across a canal, with an abrupt twelve foot wall. This was accomplished in rain and under extremely heavy enemy fire.

"Halting the company at its intermediate objective, Captain Gandy went forward alone to reconnoiter the route of the next movement. While engaged in this activity, he was mortally wounded by enemy machine gun fire. His outstanding gallantry and leadership in combat exemplifies the heroic traditions of the United States Army."

Lieutenant Theodore O. Smith, aged 24 years, was killed in action in Italy on February 11, 1945, one month after he had been awarded the Silver Star for his bravery in leading a small patrol on a mission that netted the Americans two Nazi prisoners and four enemy dead. According to the citation, Lieutenant Smith led his 14-man patrol two miles across a mined area through enemy lines to climb up a mountain where the enemy was holding out.

Risking his life to lead the mission, his action made it possible for the Americans to accomplish their objective and capture a strategically important point on the Fifth Army front. Lieutenant Smith was a native of the District of Columbia. He was graduated from Dunbar High School and received the degree of bachelor of arts from Howard University where he was a captain in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

First Lieutenant John M. Madison was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action with the Ninety-second Division in Italy on February 8, and 10, 1945. The first action for which he was cited occurred after his company had taken its objective against light enemy resistance. Immediately afterwards, the enemy subjected the position to terrific artillery and mortar fire which killed or wounded all officers except Lieutenant Madison.

"Extremely heavy casualties and the loss of leadership disorganized the company and it sought to withdraw," the citation said. "First Lieutenant Madison quickly gathered the remaining fifteen men, and regardless of continuing enemy fire, put them into positions to hold the hill. By sheer personal courage and disregard for his own life, First Lieutenant Madison inspired his men to repel three separate enemy counterattacks aimed exclusively at their position. He withdrew only upon orders. Two days later he captured seven enemy soldiers while leading his company in an

attack routed through an extensive unmarked minefield."

KILLED IN SUBSEQUENT ACTION

Lieutenant Madison was killed in subsequent action with the Ninety-second Division on April 5, 1945.

First Lieutenant William E. Porter, of Indianapolis, who was also awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, exposed himself to enemy arms while his company advanced on its objective under a hail of machinegun fire. With his unit pinned to the ground, Lieutenant Porter succeeded in eliminating the machinegun nest, killing the German officer in command and forcing the gun crews to surrender.

During a patrol action Staff Sergeant Mansfield Mason, of Baltimore, Maryland, distinguished himself by heroic conduct. Acting on information that some Germans had been seen to enter a house near a village, his patrol surrounded the building and effectively covered all of its approaches. Sergeant Mason then crawled to within thirty feet of the house in the face of withering machinegun fire. He hurled three hand grenades into the building and shifted his position slightly. Out walked five Germans, including an officer, to surrender.

Among the Negro units operating outside the 92nd Division in Italy was a Signal Construction Battalion, assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force. This battalion established a record. It installed and maintained 2,300 miles of open wire, 500 miles of field wire and 100 miles of cable in its first four months in Italy.

COMBAT TROOPS

Slightly under nine per cent of the 259,173 Negro troops reported in the European Theater of Operations on May 15, one week after V-E Day, belonged to combat organizations.

Twenty-two Negro combat units participated in the operations of the American Expeditionary Forces against the Wehrmacht. These were: the 333rd, 349th, 350th, 351st, 578th, 686th, 777th, 969th and 999th Field Artillery Battalions; 452nd Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion; 761st and 784th Tank Battalions; 614th and 827th Tank Destroyer Battalions; 183rd, 184th, 1695th, 1696th, 1697th, 1698th, 1699th and 1700th Engineer Combat Battalions.

The 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion was the only Negro combat unit to take part in the initial landings on the Normandy coast on June 6. Classified as an antiaircraft organization, it was the only American unit of its type in Europe but was transferred from the theater before the end of the war.

Men from the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion waded ashore in the early hours of D-Day, struggling with their "flying beer bottles" which they had brought across the channel on LSIs and LSTs of the first assault waves. They brought their balloons to the shoreline, dug in with infantrymen of the 1st and 29th Divisions and proceeded under fierce enemy fire to erect a protective curtain of silver barrage balloons that proved highly effective in combating strafing German aircraft.

Negro artillerymen of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion landed their 155mm howitzers in Normandy on D plus 10 and went into action shortly afterward as a unit of the VIII Corps. Their first mission was to fire in support of the 90th Infantry Division and take part in the bloody battles of St. Jores, Lessay, Hill 95 and Hill 122 in the Foret de Monte Castret.

This unit swept through the Avranches corridor with the Third Army and did considerable firing in Brittanny at St. Malo and Brest. When the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes began, the 333rd had batteries staggered in Belgium and across the German border near Schoenberg.

LOSSES SEVERE

Along with U.S. units like the 106th and 28th Infantry Divisions, the 333rd Field Artillery received the full fury of the spearhead thrust of Von Rundstedt's attack at the point of impact. Losses in men and equipment were severe. The battalion commander was captured and most of two gun batteries were casualties.

Survivors of this action and recently-liberated prisoners captured during the fight, told of stubborn resistance and examples of high courage by the artillerymen that prolonged the battle after large groups of men had been surrounded.

"We took our toll of Germans before we went down, either because we ran out of ammunition or because some of us were hopelessly cut off," reported one Negro RAMP of the unit, shortly before sailing for the U.S. from Le Havre.

The 969th Field Artillery Battalion, another medium. howitzer outfit, was the only Negro artillery unit in Europe to receive a Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation. It had fought through Normandy, and Northern France campaigns, providing artillery backing for infantrymen of a number of U.S. divisions. When the Ardennes break-through started, the 969th received orders to displace its guns and withdraw in the direction of Bastogne, Belgium.

It reached that little city in time to be pressed into service by the acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division, then Brigadier General W. A. McAuliffe, and to earn for itself a place in American military history as one of the units making up the gallant garrison that fought against overwhelming odds to save the strategically vital rail and road junction.

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

The 969th Field Artillery Battalion received its Distinguished Unit Citation along with the 101st Airborne Division and other attached units which formed the garrison that fought the epic battle of Bastogne. The citation reads:

"These units distinguished themselves in combat against powerful and aggressive enemy forces composed of elements of eight German divisions during the period from December 18 to December 27, 1944, by extraordinary heroism and gallantry in defense of the key communications center of Bastogne, Belgium.

"Essential to a large-scale exploitation of this breakthrough into Belgium and northern Luxembourg, the enemy attempted to seize Bastogne by attacking constantly and savagely with the best of his armor and infantry. Without benefit of prepared defenses, facing almost overwhelming odds and with very limited and fast-dwindling supplies, these units maintained a high combat morale and an impenetrable defense, despite extremely heavy bombing, intense artillery fire, and constant attacks from infantry and armor on all sides of their completely cut-off and encircled position.

"This masterful and grimly determined defense denied the enemy even momentary success in an operation for which he paid dearly in men, material, and eventually morale. The outstanding courage and resourcefulness and undaunted determination of this gallant force is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

FIRST ROUND ACROSS RHINE

The 777th Field Artillery Battalion was the only Negro 4.5 inch gun unit in the ETO and fought with the Ninth Army. One distinction claimed by the 777th is that it fired the first American artillery round across the Rhine River near Munchen-Gladbach.

Other veteran ETO Negro artillery units were the 999th Field Artillery Battalion, which fired its 8-inch howitzers from lower Normandy to central Germany, and the 578th, another 8-inch howitzer unit that helped to stem the Nazi tide in the Ardennes in December and January.

In early November the 761st Tank Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Paul L. Bates, of Boonton, New Jersey, was committed as attached armor of the 26th

Infantry Division in the Third U.S. Army, becoming the first Negro tank unit to go into action.

The 761st fought in six European countries, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria, and was at various times attached to the Third, Seventh and Ninth U.S. Armies. During these campaigns the battalion furnished tank support for the 26th, 71st, 87th, 79th, 103rd Infantry Divisions, and the 17th Airborne Division during the battle of the Bulge.

Eight enlisted men of the unit won battlefield commissions. Decorations included 40 Bronze Stars, 8 Silver Stars, three of them posthumously awarded.

These Negro tankers spearheaded the famous "Task Force Raine," which crashed through the rugged mountain defenses of the Siegfried Line in the Nieder Schlettenbach-Reisdorf-Klingenmunster area. "Task Force Raine" consisted of the 761st Tank Battalion, the second battalion of the 103rd Infantry Division's 409th Regiment, a detachment of combat engineers, and a recon platoon from the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, a Negro outfit. In three days the task force opened up a big hole in the Siegfried defenses through which passed the 14th Armored Division on March 24.

Another Negro tank unit, the 784th, arrived in Europe in time to assist the 35th Infantry Division in crossing both the Roer and Rhine Rivers and the subsequent fighting that followed these crossings.

MOST BRILLIANT RECORD

Probably no other Negro combat unit in Europe achieved as brilliant a record, both in terms of consistently outstanding performance in battle and excellence of morale, as did the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Frank S. Pritchard, a white officer from Lansing, Michigan, the unit was mainly officered by Negroes.

The unit moved into position with the 95th Infantry Division in front of Metz in November, but soon after was transferred to the 102nd Infantry Division of the Seventh Army where it remained as attached TD support until the end of the war.

For "outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy" at Climbach, France, on December 14, 1944, the Third Platoon of Company "C" of the 614th TD Battalion received a Distinguished Unit Citation. The citation itself tells graphically the grim, heroic nature of the action:

"The Third Platoon was an element of a task force whose mission was to storm and capture the strategically important town of Climbach, France, on the approaches of the Siegfried Line. Upon reaching the outskirts of the town, the task force was halted by a terrific hail of fire from an enemy force firmly entrenched in the surrounding woods and hills overlooking the route of approach. The only position available for direct fire upon the enemy was an open field.

"As the Third Platoon moved into position, its commander and several men were wounded. Undeterred by heavy enemy small arms, mortar and artillery fire, which

was now being directed against their position, the men of the Third Platoon valiantly set up their three-inch guns and delivered accurate and deadly fire into the enemy positions. Casualties were mounting; two of their four guns were knocked out; nevertheless, the remaining crew members heroically assisted in the loading and firing of the other guns. At the height of the battle, enemy infantry converged on the position from the surrounding woods, threatening to wipe out the platoon's position.

"While a few members of the gun crews remained firing the three-inch guns, others manned machineguns and individual weapons, laying down a devastating curtain of fire which inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy and successfully repulsed the attack. During the fire fight an ammunition shortage developed, and gun crews were reduced to skeleton size, one man loading, aiming and firing, while the other men repeatedly travelled a distance of 50 yards through a hail of mortar and small arms fire, to obtain shells from a half-track which had been set on fire by a direct hit from an enemy mortar shell.

"Heedless of possible injury men continuously exposed themselves to enemy fire to render first aid to the wounded. In this engagement, although the platoon suffered over 50 per cent casualties and lost considerable materiel, its valorous conduct, in the face of overwhelming odds, enabled the task force to capture its objective.

"The grim determination, the indomitable fighting spirit and the esprit de corps displayed by all members of the Third Platoon reflect the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States."

INFANTRY

In December 1944, several thousand Negro soldiers answered a general appeal for volunteers for training as infantry riflemen. Some 2500 volunteers from Negro units of Communications Zone were trained at a Ground Forces Reinforcement Command Depot at Noyons, France, and committed to action with infantry and armored divisions of the First and Seventh Armies as assigned platoons and companies.

The setting of a quota for these Negro infantrymen resulted in the rejection of nearly 3,000 other Negro GIs who wanted to fight at the front.

In a story carried in its Paris Edition on March 19 THE STARS AND STRIPES announced the presence in the line of Negro infantrymen and said: "Long contemplated, the plan of mixing white and colored doughboys in fighting units was launched not as an experiment in race relations but as an answer both to the needs of the military situation and repeated requests by Negro service troops for an opportunity to get into the war as combat men."

The men gave many reasons for having volunteered. Some were sick and tired of dull rear-echelon activity. Many went in for idealistic reasons, determined to disprove the myth that Negroes are poor combat soldiers and lacking in courage.

Said Private First Class Leroy ". Kemp, from Atlantic City, New Jersey: ""e're all in this thing together, now, white and Negro Americans in the same companies,

and that's how it should be. That's why I volunteered. Most Negro troops are in service units. We've been giving a lot of sweat. Now, I think, we'll mix some blood with it."

The record shows clearly that these men gave an extraordinarily fine account of themselves in combat, captured and killed hundreds of Germans, earned many decorations for front-line heroism, and won praise and respect from their white fellow-infantrymen.

Negro rifle platoons fought with the First, Second, Eighth, Ninth, 69th, 78th, 99th and 104th Infantry Divisions of the First Army and Negro companies joined armored infantry battalions of the 12th and 14th Armored Divisions.

"If comments of white personnel of these divisions are any indication, the plan of mixing white and colored troops in fighting units, a departure from previous U.S. Army practice, is operating successfully," a STARS AND STRIPES staff writer reported in an article in the paper's April 6 issue.

FRIENDLY WELCOME EVERYWHERE

Negro reinforcements reported a sincere, friendly welcome everywhere. They also spoke of excellent relations with their white fellow-doughs, of the making of inter-racial friendships.

One company commander's comment was typical, "The integration of the Negro platoon into this unit was accomplished quickly and quietly. There was no problem."

In its first action the Negro platoon of K Company of the 394th Infantry Regiment of the 99th Division, led an attack on the town of Honningen across the Rhine River, cleared one-fourth of it and captured over 250 prisoners.

Another platoon with E Company of the 393th Regiment of the same division, got its baptism of fire on March 25 when it attacked German positions near Jahrfeld, Germany. Employing marching fire, they advanced, routing the Germans, knocking out a Mark IV tank and a flak wagon, killing 48 of the enemy and capturing 60. These men gained their objective, Hill 373.

The Negro platoon of Company G of the 273rd Infantry Regiment helped the 69th Infantry Division to become the first American unit to make contact with the Russian forces. During the platoon's first combat action at Hann Munden, Staff Sergeant Ames Shipper, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, took 118 prisoners from a barn.

This platoon was later attached to the Ninth Armored Division's Combat Command A for the drive across the German plains to the Mulde River. This platoon helped in the capture of Falkenharst, Wersenfeld, and a number of other German towns during this drive.

On V-E Day, May 8, a group from the Negro platoon led by Lieutenant H. C. Hind, Los Angeles, California, and Staff Sergeant Elmans Starks, Washington, D.C., crossed the Elbe River, met Russian troops and held a victory celebration. It was the first time that these Russians had seen American Negroes and they exchanged stories and souvenirs and had a victory feast.

Sergeant Edgar E. Zeno, a member of the Negro platoon of G Company of the 39th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division, received the Silver Star for

"gallentry in action against the enemy." Near Siedlinghausen, Germany, Zeno's company met heavy enemy machinegun fire. Zeno worked his way across open terrain, armed with a BAR, firing all the while.

Twenty-five yards from the machinegun position, he hurled a hand grenade and rushed the emplacement. His action led to the capture of the machinegun position, during which he killed seven Germans, wounded three, and enabled his unit to take 60 more prisoners.

ANOTHER SILVER STAR

Another Silver Star recipient was Private First Class June Jefferson, Jr., of Company A, 414th Infantry Regiment of the 104th Infantry Division. The award citation stated:

"When an enemy tank crashed through a road block and entered a recently captured town, Private Jefferson voluntarily and at great risk of his life, crossed open, fire-swept terrain in the face of direct fire from the tank, made his way to the house where the tank was located, and dropped incendiary and fragmentation grenades into the open turret of the tank, causing it to catch fire.

"As the crew emerged, he killed them with his rifle. He then returned to his position and quickly organized an assault of the enemy riflemen who were supporting the tank, killing, wounding or capturing all of the enemy infantrymen."

One of the finest tributes paid these volunteer infantrymen came from Brigadier General Charles T. Lanham, assistant commander of the 104th Infantry Division, following the presentation of combat decorations to 11 of the men.

"I have never seen any soldiers who have performed better in combat than you," General Lanham told the Negro doughboys.

SIGNAL CORPS

During the campaign against the German Army in Europe, 5,500 Negro Signal Corps troops belonging to 20 signal units participated in the vital battle of communications.

These Negro troops worked in two main types of Signal Corps units--light and heavy signal construction battalions and companies.

Negro units that participated in various campaigns were the 25th, 29th, 37th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd and 44th Signal Construction Battalions, and the 258th, 259th, 261st, 267th, 268th, 269th, 270th, 275th, 534th, 535th, 537th, and 496th Signal Construction Companies.

Negroes comprised seven and one half per cent of the total Signal Corps personnel in the European Theater.

Several of these units made communications history. Negro Signal outfits laid wire from the hedgerowed fields of Normandy, across France, Luxembourg and Belgium deep into Germany.

A recent estimate of communications wire put in by Negro troops released by Communications Zone headquarters included these figures: over 10,000 miles of open

wire set up; over 500 miles of field wire, and over 500 miles of rubber and lead "Spiral 4" cable.

The 29th Signal Construction Battalion arrived in France on D plus 9 and 10. Its first major mission, rehabilitation of the Chef du Pont-Valognes railroad pole line, was accomplished in the face of enemy snipers, mines, and artillery fire.

After this, the 29th moved into Carentan on June 22, shortly after the towns had been liberated by U.S. forces, and repaired damaged telephone lines frequently under heavy German artillery fire.

Another Negro Signal Corps unit, the 41st Signal Construction Battalion, arrived on the continent on D plus 20 and was assigned to the rehabilitation of damaged French lines. The first line started at Valognes, Normandy and ran into Cherbourg where the 41st signal men worked before the city was completely cleared of enemy resistance.

200 MILES OF LINES

The unit set up about 200 miles of open-wire pole lines and 40 miles of underground lead-covered cable. This latter is reported to be the longest underground cable laid in Europe by any one signal unit. The 41st also installed the communications system for the Continental headquarters of Communications Zone during the Normandy campaign, and assisted with the installation of communications for the first SHEAF Continental Command Post.

The 41st Signal Construction Battalion was officially commended for its work in Normandy by Major General W. S. Rumbough, Chief Signal Officer of the ETO who said: "This is to commend the officers and enlisted men of the 41st Signal Construction Battalion upon the construction work in connection with the establishment of the Headquarters Communications Zone signal system. The work was done at high speed, and the men worked far in excess of their normal working schedule to accomplish their job."

## CHEMICAL WARFARE

Chemical Warfare Service headquarters in the European Theater of Operations has disclosed that of the 9,500 Chemical Warfare Service troops in the theater on V-E Day, 2,442 of these were Negro enlisted men and officers. Other Negro Chemical Warfare Service units were the three Chemical Decontamination Companies, the 25th, 32nd and 34th.

All of the smoke generator units were not used in their primary function of manufacturing artificial fog, several being diverted to trucking operations under Transportation Corps supervision.

The record shows that the smoke generator companies which saw action performed excellently, often under heavy enemy fire, winning praise from infantry commanders and chemical officers.

The 84th C..emical Smoke Generator Company arrived in France on D plus 1, but

did not engage in smoking operations during the early part of the Normandy campaign. Its first important combat test came when it was attached to the Fifth Infantry Division in the latter part of September, 1944.

The Fifth Division was in the Moselle River valley region and meeting severe German resistance there. The 84th provided smoke for the screening of bridge-building operations across the river and materially assisted in the winning of the first major U.S. bridgehead east of the Moselle in that part of the valley.

There ware casualties among the smoke men and a number of them distinguished themselves by gallantry under observed enemy artillery fire.

After watching men of the 84th perform under fire during this action, the commander of the 10th Infantry Regiment told them: "If I could, I ·ould award the Combat Infantryman Badge to all of you."

Some idea of the difficulties encountered during the Moselle operations can be obtained from reading the company operations report. The report covering the period November 12 to November 18 has the following facts recorded concerning the smoking of the Moselle crossing at Ancerville.

"Artillery fire was continuous over the entire area on November 15. At approximately 1200 on 16 November, artillery fire at positions 1, 2 and 3 and on the surrounding roads made it impossible to bring supplies to these generator positions. Two trucks and one generator were hit by shrapnel."

COVERED NINTH ARMY

Another Negro unit, the 74th Chemical Smoke Generator Company made smoke to cover the Ninth Army's crossing of the Roer River in February. It was attached to the 84th Infantry Division for the attack across the Roer.

The division G-3 reported that the company had completed its mission "in an excellent manner." The G-2 of the division also reported that 300 enemy artillery rounds landed in Linnich, Germany in five minutes on February 22 while the 74th was working there.

One of the greatest artificial fogs in military history was created in December, 1944 by the all-Negro 161st Chemical Smoke Generator Company when it shrouded the upper Saar River Valley with a dense cloud of fog that completely obscured the movements of one entire division, the 90th Infantry Division.

The 90th division was effectively concealed for nearly two weeks, it is reported, during which time the entire division crossed the Saar, established a bridgehead, wiped out 260 pillboxes, wrecked a portion of the Siegfried Line and killed hundreds of enemy soldiers.

During this operation the 161st fed 146,000 gallons of oil into their M2 smoke generators.

The 163rd Chemical Smoke Generator Company was assigned to the job of screening the crossing of the Neckar River at Heilbronn, Germany by the 100th Infantry Division

of the 7th Army. The mission was successfully accomplished.

A report of the operation states simply: "Hostile artillery and rocket fire was intense . . . ."

This unit also assisted in screening the crossing of the Rhine River at Speyer, Germany on March 25 and 26, in support of advance elements of the 71st Infantry Division. Its mission was to support the division's river crossing and to divert the enemy's attention from the site of the major river crossing operation which was to take in another location.

Negro chemical smoke generator companies that operated on the continent between D-Day and V-E Day were: the 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 74th, 161st, 162nd, 163rd, 164th, 165th, 167th, and 171st Chemical Smoke Generator Companies.

Other Negro units in the Chemical Warfare Service were the 25th, 32nd and 34th Chemical Decontamination companies.

ORDNANCE

Of the 6,000,000 tons of ammunition handled by Ordnance Ammunition Companies on the continent between D-Day and V-E Day, more than 4,500,000 tons passed through the hands of Negro ordnancemen, Major General Henry B. Sayler, Chief Ordnance Officer of the ETO, said recently.

In releasing the figures on the amount of ammunition made available for use by U.S. fighting men, General Sayler paid high tribute to the 14,323 Negro enlisted men who accounted for 11 per cent of the total Ordnance personnel on the continent.

"Not only did these Negro troops 'pass the ammunition'," said General Sayler, "but on numerous occasions many of them fought the Germans, participated in patrols and took prisoners."

The forward ammunition supply points operated by these Negro ordnancemen were the retail source for all types of ammunition, bullets, shells, fuses and propelling charges, served directly to infantry, artillery and armored units. As such, these Ammunition Supply Points were behind the front lines and on several occasions, in front of them, especially during periods of fluid fronts.

One ammunition company, the 626th, although it had moved into its new location, was unable to operate until the infantry had cleared the enemy artillery from a hill less than two miles away.

The peak of ammunition handling was reached shortly after the Germans were repulsed in their Ardennes break-through. During the period that followed the 101 ammunition companies received and issued 24,000 tons per day, or seven to eight thousand tons over the average of 15,000 tons per day established in the European campaign.

In carrying out their mission of supplying ammunition to the men behind the guns, the Negro ordnancemen displayed courage time and again, General Sayler declared.

An example cited by General Sayler was the bravery demonstrated by the members of the 655th Ordnance Ammunition Company which unloaded a trainload of white phosphorous mortar shells on December 26th, near Soissons, France, while shells were exploding around them. Their acts of heroism saved the French city from complete destruction.

Another non-combat Negro Ordnance Ammunition Company earned the title of the "fighting 56th" when its members engaged 51 German SS troops near the Belgian border early in September. When the shooting was over, 36 Nazis were killed, three wounded and the rest taken prisoner.

Of the twenty Ordnance motor vehicle distributing companies in the ETO, two of them were manned by 430 Negro ordnancemen. These distributing companies furnished the combat troops with armored vehicles and service troops with the trucks necessary to keep the front-liners supplied.

The remainder of the Negro personnel, 165 in number, were active in the administrative divisions of battalion headquarters.

MEDICAL CORPS

Negro personnel formed 2.2 per cent of the total ETO Medical Service strength or 5,482, a statement released by the Office of the Chief Surgeon of the European Theater of Operations disclosed.

Negro officers were distributed as follows: Medical officers, 51, Dental Corps, 28, Medical Administrative Corps, 17 and Nurse Corps, 67. Sixty-five of the Negro nurses are attached to the 168th Station Hospital in England.

Working with divisions at the front the performance of Negro medics was particularly outstanding.

The 428th Medical Battalion operating with the First Army carried more than 1,200,000 patients in their ambulances in evacuating wounded to rear areas.

Of the 230,000 patients hauled by the 592nd Ambulance Company, only two were lost, those being caused by enemy action when an ambulance was strafed by enemy aircraft at Malmedy during the German counter-offensive last winter.

Typical of the heroism displayed by the medics is the story of Corporal Waverly B. Woodson, Jr., of Philadelphia, a medic of the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion.

At about 9:30 a.m. on D-Day, Corporal Woodson was wounded by shrapnel when the LST in which he was riding was damaged by a floating mine near the shore. The ship was under continuous mortar and machinegun fire and was finally beached.

Corporal Woodson, along with three other enlisted men and an officer, went over the side of the LST onto the beach where they planned to set up a first aid station. The shrapnel wound, which he had not noticed, was dressed by a member of the party. All other participants said that Corporal Woodson began caring for the wounded as a member of the group at 10 a.m. and remained on duty treating wounds

ranging from bullet abrasions to intestinal wounds, until relieved at 4 p.m. the next day.

When they were relieved Corporal Woodson found himself without bedding and started down the beach to acquire blankets. He was called by a group of soldiers who had been completing a landing operation by a rope attached to an LST out in the harbor and anchored to the beach. The rope had broken and three of the men attempting to land had been submerged. Corporal Woodson's Red Cross brassard attracted the soldiers on the beach and they called him to assist in giving artificial respiration, which he did. The three joined their companions after his treatment. Corporal Woodson was then sent to the hospital for further treatment of his wound.

Following an investigation by Lieutenant Colonel Leon J. Reed of the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, a recommendation for an appropriate award has been made for Corporal Woodson.

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Of the 259,173 Negro troops in the European Theater of Operations as of May 15, a little more than one in every five was an engineer soldier, according to information released by the Office of the Chief Engineer of the ETO.

On May 31 there were 54,600 Negro engineer enlisted men, 320 officers and 54 warrant officers of a total of 337,000 in the theater's Engineer Command. This total includes personnel of general service regiments, engineer dump truck companies, engineer fire fighting units, aviation engineer battalions and separate battalions. There were 165 engineer units of all types.

A survey of Negro engineer units showed that Negro engineers participated in all of the main operations by U.S. Forces on the continent which required engineering, from D-Day landings and beachhead operations of June 1944, to the conquest of the Rhineland.

### Dump Truckers

One unit, the 582nd Engineer Dump Truck Company, landed on Omaha Beach shortly after H-Hour on June 6 and worked continuously up until and after the crossing and bridging of the Rhine.

The 582nd was one of 58 Negro engineer dump truck units in the ETO on May 31. This outfit came ashore on D-Day with the 1106th Engineer Combat Group, performing its "primary mission"--hauling bridging equipment and explosives. Almost immediately these dump truckers were conscripted to taxi combat personnel of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the 4th Infantry Division to forward areas.

Silver and Bronze Stars were awarded to several men of the unit for bravery under fire. First Sergeant Norman Day of Danville, Illinois, received the Silver Star for heroism on the beach where he directed U.S. traffic under heavy shelling. Day also received the Purple Heart for wounds and the British Distinguished Service Medal.

During the Rhine crossing operations the 582nd was significantly well up forward working as a XVI Corps unit, hauling crushed rock for bridge building operations.

These dump truck units worked all over Europe but rarely hit the head. The 434th, another Negro dump truck company assisted the 1056th Port Construction and Repair Group in rehabilitating the port of Cherbourg in July 1944. They worked day and night on a double shift basis, removing thousands of tons of debris that had accumulated from bombing and demolition work.

Not all of the work done by the engineer dump truck units was in the rear areas, however. The following excerpt from the unit history of the 572nd Engineer Dump Truck Company, a Negro unit, describes a front-line incident:

"July 3, 1944, Private William Wright, Jr. wounded by enemy shell fire while on operations delivering engineer supplies to a bridge site which was under enemy fire."

On July 20, this unit was given the job of hauling road-building material and debris for filling craters and building bridge approaches ahead of the armored columns which broke through the day after the capture of Lessay in Normandy.

The following account of a strafing attack on a Negro dump truck convoy near Fontainebleau, France, was written by one of the drivers and illustrates the dangers and difficulties under which the men frequently operated:

"The German planes came in very low dropping flares, lighting the area as far as one could see. The AA guns answered back with steady streams of cross-fire. The convoy was brought to a halt. The men scrambled to their guns and opened fire in unison with the ack-ack barrage.

"The accurate fire sent up by the men made it impenetrable. The barrage continued for what seemed an eternity before all was quiet. The Germans had gone on leaving the main bridge destroyed, their only damage. The men descended from their guns reluctantly. After finding a new road, the convoy continued and delivered our much needed cargo."

## General Service Regiments

According to paragraph 318 of FM 5-5, which is the Engineer Field Manual, the mission of an engineer general service regiment is defined: "The engineer general service regiment performs general engineer work--particularly that requiring most skilled labor--throughout the army service area and communications zone of the theater of operations. A general service regiment.....is capable of executing extensive and permanent work."

This general phrasing of a general service regiment's function provided sufficient latitude for Negro general service units to perform a wide variety of tasks on the continent, from erecting tent camps and welding to repairing damaged rail lines and all purpose excavations.

By V-E Day 60 per cent of all engineer general service regiments assigned or attached to Communications Zone were Negro units, 30 out of 50 reported on May 31.

When the 356th Engineer General Service Regiment moved into Granville, France, four days after the German garrison had left, it was given a few unexisting chores to do. One battalion was assigned to clearing and rehabilitating buildings and quarters in the city, removing debris, wiring, plumbing and glazing a number of three-story houses.

"In addition," the regimental record states, "two kitchens were constructed and additional latrines and washrooms erected, showers installed, and an area of some 36,000 square feet graded and cleared."

After doing this, the regiment went to work on maintenance and repair of the road net from Granville to Vire to Mortain and Avranches, and all minor roads, a total of 245 miles of road net. The work consisted of repairing bomb craters and holes, "resurfacing of shoulders and general maintenance."

By and large this is the kind of work general service regiments were given to do. But it was precisely this work of rehabilitation and maintenance that helped to keep Communications Zone functioning.

Another Negro general service regiment, the 95th arrived in France, July 8. It had worked on the Alcan Highway to Alaska and in Wales. Its first operational mission said: "road construction and maintenance, debris clearing and street reconstruction in the Valognes and Cherbourg areas."

But during this job mines and booby traps were encountered in hundreds. They had to be removed and defuzed. The regiment also built during this period a very important traffic circle in the heart of shattered Valognes. Through that circle passed a vast and vital flow of traffic between Cherbourg and the beaches, toward the front.

This regiment was officially commended by Lieutenant General C.H. Lee, Communications Zone Commander, for its work in constructing Communications Zone headquarters at Valognes.

Another job assigned to the 95th was the rehabilitation of a single rail track from Alencon to Mortagne, France. How the job was completed is told in the regimental history:

"Three days were spent on removal of explosives in the yards at Mesles-sur-Sarthe before any heavy equipment could be put to work. The railroad bridge at Bressy-Mangis was damaged as a result of enemy demolitions, but the span was not completely dropped from the abutment, and a trestle bent placed under the end after jacking provided suitable bearing. The attempted demolition of the trestles themselves were very ineffective, and they were repaired in place by welding and patching.

"On September 2 a test run was made over the line with a locomotive. On the

4th the project was finished."

Another Negro general service regiment, the 392nd, was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for work performed between September 23 and December 31.

"Despite numerous difficulties," the citation order states, "including inclement weather and limited supplies, this unit efficiently accomplished several difficult and hazardous projects. The enterprise, ingenuity and unremitting diligence displayed by the members of the 392nd Engineer General Service Regiment were in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States."

The Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded for "superior performance of duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks."

## TRANSPORTATION CORPS

Negro troops made an impressive contribution to the operations of the Transportation Corps from D-Day to V-E Day, a survey compiled from information obtained from ETO Transportation Corps headquarters showed.

The mission of the Army's Transportation Corps is to transport men and supplies. Statistics released by the office of Major General Frank S. Rose, chief of Transportation in the European Theater, indicate the magnitude of its achievements as well as the extent of Negro participation in the operations of the Corps.

Of a total of 157,327 troops in the Transportation Corps in the ETO, reported on May 3, 1944, 69,914 of these were in Negro units--or 44.4 per cent.

Thirty-two of the 41 port battalions reported were Negro, while out of 50 separate port companies in the theater 38 were Negro, making a personnel total of 31,763 in all Negro port units.

In the quartermaster truck field 316 of the 453 quartermaster truck companies operating under Transportation Corps control, were Negro companies. Ten of the 19 quartermaster groups were Negro, and there were 31 Negro battalions among the 86 quartermaster battalions listed. There was one Negro Quartermaster Car Company, the 524th, and four Negro Chemical Smoke Generator Companies under Transportation Corps command.

### Port Battalions

When the first U.S. elements reached the French coast in June, Transportation Corps units were among them and the Battle of the Beaches merged with the vital and hard fought Battle of Supply.

Negro troops of the Transportation Corps were in the initial waves on D-Day, came ashore with the engineer brigades and helped start what eventually became the greatest supply operation in military history.

The Normandy supply battle was won by units like the 490th Port Battalion, which came in with the second tide on D-Day and unloaded crucial supplies of ammunition, food and equipment to be used by the assault troops.

"We were in holes dug in on the beach when artillery fire from the bluffs

started giving us hell," Corporal Joseph McLeod, of Tampa, Florida, a checker who landed with the 490th, recalled. That was about 10 in the morning. After it slackened, we got up and went to our LCT and unloaded 105mm shells."

Another 490th man, Staff Sergeant Fred B. Jones, of Hazelhurst, Mississippi, was in charge of a platoon on an LCT carrying a load of anti-tank mines, detonators and fuzes. He said:

"We stacked the stuff up on the beach and then moved it inland. We were lucky that stuff didn't get hit by shell fire. We made a human chain and passed the cargo inshore by hand."

Other Negro units that arrived on D-Day, D plus 1 and the first week of the beachhead fight were the 494th and 502nd Port Battalions.

These operations were constantly under fire. To keep the invasion moving, men and supplies had to be discharged with split-second timing and men worked the ships until exhausted. Work shifts ran into one another and men continued to volunteer to unload ships under hazardous conditions that included direct artillery fire and strafing.

"As one of the few regularly constituted Services of Supply units selected to accompany the Combat Engineer Battalions in the establishment of the beachhead, the 502nd Port Battalion suffered some casualties," the unit history laconically reports. Their casualties included the battalion's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel James T. Pierce, of Erie, Pennsylvania.

This unit sailed for France on June 2, and started unloading on the morning of the 7th. In accomplishing its mission in "Plan Neptune," as the invasion was called, the 502nd met problems that were complicated by the element of "calculated risk." The record indicates it solved them all.

The GI stevedores had to devise special slings for handling bundles of pierced steel planking, a type of cargo that proved a problem during the ship-DUKW operation.

The job of unloading cargo at the beaches and the ports never stopped. Tonnage schedules were reached and exceeded. Unloading records were broken week after week.

By May 8, V-E Day, total U.S. Army cargo arriving by water and discharged by port units amounted to 20,432,368 tons. How much of this was unloaded by Negro port units is not precisely known, but a general estimate can be obtained from the fact that 77 per cent of all port units operating during this period were Negro units.

The next phase of the Battle of Supply following seizure of the beachhead and expansion of the Allied toehold on Europe, consisted of development of Cherbourg and the minor ports on the north side of the Normandy Peninsula. Negro port units worked all of these ports.

How the Battle of Supply during this period was won is tersely told in "The Transportation Corps in the Battle of France", Volume IV, which is the official history of the Transportation Corps operating in Europe. An excerpt reads:

"Front-line Transportation Corps units from the 'Battle of the Beaches--the port battalions and the DUKW companies--played their part in the unspectacular but equally important work of getting supplies into the port of Cherbourg. The port battalions marched to the embarkation point at 0730 where they were ferried by the Navy in LCMs to ships waiting at anchor. The same battalion was assigned every day to the same ship until it was finished, and if possible, each group was given the same hatch to work in order to increase its efficiency."

By August 15, 10,000 long tons had been discharged at this port in a single day by an unloading force that was overwhelmingly Negro.

Cherbourg was a key Allied port. Its reconstruction and development became a chief task of the Transportation Corps. Its development was vital to the speeding-up of military operations on the Continent. The whole supply build-up hinged on the exploitation of Cherbourg. Much credit for the success of the complicated and arduous Cherbourg operation must go to the port battalions and DUKW companies that brought the cargo ashore and to the port construction groups and special service engineers who repaired the harbor.

On July 21, the 11th Port moved from Omaha Beach into the small ports of St. Vasst, Carentan and Barfleur, and continued work begun at Isigny and Grandcamp. Negro Transportation Corps units participated in all these operations, as well as in the development of the port of Granville.

The Negro contribution to the supply victory further can be gauged from the following facts. Progress of the campaign and the time factor would not permit development of the large Brittany ports as called for in the original plans. The military operations were supplied and supported by Cherbourg and the smaller Normandy ports. Through these small ports and Cherbourg, sufficient supplies were funnelled to support the decisive break-through at St. Lo on July 25. Negro port and DUKW units handled the bulk of these supplies.

There were 53 ports in all, exclusive of Utah and Omaha Beaches, used by U.S. Forces between D-Day and V-E Day. The largest were Le Havre, Antwerp and Marseilles. As already stated the major share of tonnage handled came through the hands of Negro stevedores and crane operators.

## Amphibian Truck Companies

Six Negro DUKW companies, the 467th, 468th, 469th, 470th, 819th and 821st Amphibian Truck Companies, had been attached to the 11th Port for "Plan Neptune," the invasion operation. The first of these, the 468th, arrived on D plus 10. Others followed shortly after and helped importantly in the solution of the critical supply problem.

The official Transportation Corps historian states: "Great difficulty was experienced in locating ships at night. DUKWs were sunk by striking submerged objects and one was lost through the explosion of a mine.

"Guts and nerve, and the willingness to work long hours to help the soldiers struggling to enlarge the beachhead won the day, however. By June 26, these men discharged 14 coasters and 11 motor transport ships and supplies were being built up on a scale sufficient to enable the fighting men to turn the landing into an offensive of decisive proportions."

These DUKWs saved the day following the severe coastal storm of June 20-22 which wrecked all of the Loebnitz piers on the beaches and temporarily halted port battalion unloading. The DUKWs stepped into the picture and carried the cargo night and day, onto the beach and sometimes inland to the waiting combat troops.

During this period an 11th Port officer estimated that these DUKW units hauled ashore 94 per cent of all cargo unloaded at Omaha Beach.

On May 30, there were 16 amphibian truck companies in the ETO, ten of them Negro units with a total personnel of 1,730. They are still operating at Cherbourg and Le Havre. One Negro unit, the 469th, ferried supplies and personnel across the Rhine River during the attack that placed American forces on the east bank of the river.

## Truck Companies

As of May 30, 1944, 69 per cent of all truck drivers in Transportation Corps' motor transport branch in the ETO were Negro. This average has remained much the same since the beachhead phase of the Battle of Europe.

Some of these units have operated continuously since D-Day. Negro cargo truck units landed vehicles and personnel on Omaha Beach on June 6. The 3683rd Quartermaster Truck Company had vehicles ashore on D-Day. The 370th Quartermaster Truck Company, a transportation unit, was scheduled to land 55 vehicles and 115 men on the beach on D plus 1. Instead, it got 24 men and 12 trucks ashore as early as the morning of D-Day.

The 4009th Quartermaster Truck Company landed 115 men and 55 vehicles on the beach on D plus 1. The 4042nd Quartermaster Truck Company landed 6 men and 34 vehicles on D-Day.

These men went through unforgettable experiences. What they did is starkly told in comments of some of the drivers of the 3683rd Quartermaster Truck Company, D-Day veterans all:

Corporal Clavon Brown: "About 25 yards off shore 8 to 10 shells hit right near us. We hauled till 1800 on D-Day. We dug in on the beach. Hauled ammunition on D plus 2 while enemy planes strafed around us."

Private George McLain: "After we got on the beach, an 88 burst my truck radiator. Hawkins, the mechanic, used the radiator from a deadlined truck to keep it

running. On D plus 4, I was nicked on the arm by a bomb fragment."

Private Herman Copeland: "88s were hitting all around us. We were just lucky. While hauling ammunition, bullets hit the corner of the gas tank and left door, just barely missing me."

Private Walter Pearson, Jr.: "My truck drowned out and I had to swim into shore. A couple of grenades were thrown at my truck while I was hauling ammunition. On D plus 3, a bomb dropped in front of the truck and tore up the radiator and both front tires. The fragments killed several foot soldiers. I also hauled some wounded from the lines."

After Cherbourg and the smaller ports in Normandy had been opened and operating, the main burden of transporting supplies fell on truck transportation. As the tactical situation improved and the military railway service started to operate its first trains, trucks were used to clear the ports, supplementing the rail lines whenever possible, and hauling troops and supplies to the combat areas.

Supply Lines Lengthened

The St. Lo break-through lengthened American supply lines enormously. But Transportation Corps's motor transport followed General Patton's Third Army, making possible exploitation of the breakthrough and maintenance of the speed of advance.

The first motor express line--the famous Red Ball Express--was started on August 25, 1944. It was built on the one-way traffic principle. Trucks were kept operating 22 hours out of 24 with only two hours reserved for maintenance. Drivers worked an average of 36 hours on the road without sleep.

At its peak Red Ball contained 67 percent Negro Personnel. Its initial target was to haul 4,850 tons daily from the ports and beaches to army or forward destinations. Peak reached by the system was 6,000 tons daily.

Between August 25 and November 13, Red Ball's 132 companies hauled 412,193 tons from the beaches and Normandy ports to the First and Third U. S. Armies. An average Red Ball Express route round trip was 546 miles.

As the supply situation dictated the closing down of Red Ball, other motor routes were opened from other ports.

There was White Ball, ABC,XYZ, Yellow Ball, Green Diamond, Red Lion, B-B (Bayeux to Brussels), Yellow Diamond. These were all important truck express routes which combined to form the world's greatest supply operation.

The motor express lines alone accounted for transport of 3,169,744 tons between D-Day and V-E Day.

Bombing and strafing were routine dangers for Transportation Corps drivers before Red Ball started operating.

"RED BALL" CITED

On behalf of General Eisenhower, Major General E. S. Hughes, decorated Corporal Robert E. Bradley, of Lynchburg, Virginia, Negro truck driver of the Army's famed "Red Ball Highway," with a Bronze Star Medal, and lauded the work of the thousands of Negro quartermaster truck drivers who are hauling vital front-line supplies over this 400 mile one-way loop, day and night, to the fighting fronts. It was awarded in symbol of all drivers.

Sixty percent of the drivers are Negroes. Stopping a huge convoy on the outskirts of Paris, Major General Hughes pinned the decoration on Corporal Bradley in a surprise ceremony which caught the entire trucking group unaware. He told them that he would have liked to present all of them with medals, but that "Bradley was chosen as a representative of the whole Red Ball Highway, including the men who repair the roads and bridges, put up the telephone wires and do all the service work in the rear.

"General Eisenhower realizes that you men seldom get the same recognition as soldiers in the front line and wants you to know that the part you're playing is vital. His message is for every man engaged on this vast project; the troops at the front couldn't do without you,"

Major General Frank Ross, Chief of Transportation, Communications Zone, disclosed that the route is four times the length of the Burma Road, and that in its first 26 days of operation it hauled and delivered more than 200,000 tons of supplies to advance depots, where front-line units pick it up with their hauling units.

Speedier supply became acutely necessary when Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Third Army broke through at St. Lo, and began moving with lightning-like rapidity through France. And so the Red Ball Highway came into existence, with

thousands of truck drivers pulling 24-hour a day shifts, as the long convoys rolled across specially designated one-way military highways through France.

The vast line has become the biggest chain of supply being maintained by U. S. forces today.

During Von Rundstedt's break through in the Ardennes in December, hazards encountered by Transportation Corps' truckers in supporting front line troops made the Normandy and Central France operations look mild by comparison.

During the historic Bastogne fight, drivers carried ammunition and food into U. S. Pockets as German forces closed in behind them. There were times, too, when these drivers having delivered their cargo, had to take their individual weapons and dig in with the infantry.

But the most impressive testimony to the work of the drivers of the Transportation Corps, including the 35,839 members of Negro Transportation Corps truck units, is the tremendous total tonnage forwarded by Motor Transport Service in Europe between June 17, 1944 and May 31, 1945. It is 22,644,609.tons.

PACIFIC THEATRE

All through the Pacific campaign runs the story of the heroism of Negro soldiers. They were in at the start in the Philippines and at the finish, too.

In fact, the first American soldier of the armored force killed in the Pacific theatre was a Negro boy, son of a Tennessee sharecropper. He was Private Robert H. Brooks, who died on the battlefield near Fort Stotsenburg in the Philippines on December 8, 1943.. The main parade ground of the armored forces at Fort Knox, Tennessee, has been named Brooks Field in memory of Private Brooks.

In Alaska, the South, Southwest, and Central Pacific areas, and in the China-Burma-India theater, Negro troops played an important role in engineering activity. This included the construction of roads, airfields, ports, camps and storage facilities and their maintenance.

Three of the seven Army engineer regiments - the 93rd, the 95th and the 97th - which helped to build the Alcan Highway were Negro. The highway, 1,671, miles long, runs from Dawson Creek, northwest of Edmonton, Alberta to Fairbanks, Alaska. Although most of the Negro soldiers in these regiments had never before been out of the South, only 140 men were incapacitated by the cold, and all except four recovered completely with no ill effects. The four suffered minor amputations.

After helping to blast through the brutal terrain of Alaska, building the Alcan Highway, the 97th was transferred to the steaming jungles of New Guinea. There they struggled for a year or more in sweat, mud and mire. While in Alaska, this regiment adopted for its slogan: "No task too great." And it carried that slogan with it into the jungle.

A Negro aviation engineer battalion participated in the victory of the Battle of the Coral Sea which was fought on May 7 and 8, 1942. It worked twenty-four hours

a day to construct an airdrome in New Caledonia which was effectively used by Army and Navy aircraft engaged in the battle. Their accomplishment was revealed in a commendatory report by Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch.

General Patch also told how members of the battalion unloaded gasoline from a supply ship which had anchored in an uncharted roadstead of the island. The Negro troops transferred the fuel ashore in rafts and moved it rapidly to the airdrome just in time to service aircraft which engaged the enemy in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Negro soldiers were engaged in combat in the Pacific in September, 1942. An Australian dispatch of that date describes their first engagement. It relates an interview with three wounded men, who told how the tricky Japanese used a hospital ship as a shield in a surprise attack on Milne Bay at the tip of New Guinea. Two of the three soldiers were Negroes; Charles Brown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Reginald Simonds of Durham, North Carolina. They were in charge of an anti-aircraft gun emplacement watching the harbor.

They saw the hospital ship moving in and thought that it was an American Red Cross vessel. Suddenly the ship "lit up like a Christmas tree" from the searchlights focused upon it from out in the bay. They were about to relax when someone yelled:

"It's a Jap cruiser!"

They made out the outlines of a cruiser lying beyond the hospital ship.

The Americans trained their guns toward the cruiser hoping to get a chance to rake her decks, but the cruiser had the same idea. Every gun aboard her opened fire. After about ten minutes a shell from the cruiser hit the American gun position. Hanson and Brown woke up in an ambulance headed for a field hospital. All the way to the hospital the wounded men were one jump ahead of Jap shells, which were hitting the road right behind the ambulance.

Simonds set up a machine gun on the edge of the Milne Bay airfield. Others did likewise. They watched for the arrival of Japanese ground forces who had been reported advancing through the jungle. Simonds was quoted as saying:

"I guess we did a pretty good job slaughtering those Japs when they came running out of the jungle. None knew very much about firing guns, but we knew enough to aim and keep them shooting at the Japs. And I guess that's all we had to know."

Both Brown and Simonds were seriously wounded; Brown by shrapnel and explosive shells and Simonds by machine-gun bullets and shrapnel. They were credited with saving the vital airdrome at Milne Bay by their quick perception, and response to the situation.

## "ROAD TO TOKYO"

One of the most amazing construction feats of the war was the Ledo Road. Negro soldiers christened it "The Road to Tokyo." This highway from India to China via Burma was begun on December 12, 1942. Though they were originally brought in to con-

struct United States airfields in Assam, a battalion of Negro aviation engineers was pressed into service as road builders after they had finished their initial assignment of building runways and dispersal areas. The road had just been started by the British Army with Indian labor when the Americans took over.

Three companies of the battalion spearheaded the drive into Burma from the Assam jungles in Northeastern India. "A" Company cleared the point cutting a road wide enough for heavy Army vehicles. "B" Company did the drainage work, installing pipes up to six feetin diameter to carry off the monsoon rains into the huge ravines that line the winding mountain road. "C" Company widened, backfilled and graded the road.

It was a 'round-the-clock' job, seven days a week. At night, drivers pushing their bulldozers into rock and dirt were always in danger of rolling too close to the edge of cliffs, five hundred feet high. In the weird light cast by smudge pots, gasoline-saturated bamboo or flaming five-gallon fuel oil cans, they carved a road out of jungles and rock masses, 100 yards wide. They carried their highway up over mountain ranges, the Himalayas, that rise as much as 1,000 feet in two miles. One of the toughest spots was encountered just west of the India-Burma borderline. A 100 yard formation of solid rock along an almost vertical cliff stopped the lead bulldozer cold. The 16 ton D-7 could not even get a bite into the cliff. So the air-line hose and jack-hammers were put into the job, cutting eight-foot holes in the rock for the charges of dynamite that blasted ledges for the bulldozer to follow.

Ultimately these men succeeded in making the impossible possible. With blood and sweat, they vanquished both the swampy, disease-infested jungles, and the skulking Japanese to create a desperately needed supply route.

Three Negro enlisted men were awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious services rendered at Guadalcanal. They were Jesse Harris, Private, Infantry, Tuskegee, Alabama; Henry Smith, Jr., Private, Infantry, Good Pine, Louisiana; and Verna C. Neal, Private, Infantry, Ruleville, Mississippi. In announcing the awards, Secretary Stimson emphasized the fact that the recipients were all infantrymen, and that they were fighting in one of the most difficult theatres. These men abandoned the comparative safety of a slit trench, and advanced 250 yards over open terrain, exposed to bombing from an enemy air raid to assist in evacuating casualties. The undertaking was accomplished despite continued enemy action, causing impenetrable dust and confusion.

## SOUTH PACIFIC
## NINETY-THIRD DIVISION

On March 21, 1944, the Commanding General, U. S. Army Forces in the South Pacific area ordered the Ninety Third Infantry Division to move its Twenty-Fifth combat team to Empress Augusta Bay Perimeter on Bouganville Island with the least practicable delay. The combat team was composed of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment, 593rd Field Artillery Battalion, 596th Field Artillery Battalion, Company A

of the 318th Combat Engineer Battalion, Company of the 318th Medical Battalion, one Platoon of Company D, 318th Medical Battalion, Ninety-Third Reconnaissance Troop, a detachment of the Ninety-Third Signal Company, a detachment of the 793rd Ordnance Company, and a detachment of the Ninety-Third M.P. Platoon.

By March 31, the Combat Team was in position and at 2:30 p.m., on April 2, Private First Class Isaac Moore of Brooklyn, New York, pulled the lanyard on the Number two gun of Battery A of the 593rd Field Artillery which sent the first round fired by the Ninety-Third Division into enemy positions. The Ninety-Third Division was in combat.

On April 4, the Second Battalion of the Ninety-Third Division which had been detached from the American Division and passed to operational control of the Commanding General of the Thirty-Seventh Infantry Division closed with the enemy and killed approximately twenty-five Japanese soldiers.

Four men were lost by the A and P Platoon while it was returning from a supply mission to the American Division on Hill 500. These soldiers, Privates First Class Hugh Carrol, Oginal I. Rayn, William V. Ash and Joseph C. Mallory, were the first men of the Ninety-Third to be killed in action in this war.

On April 5th, the men of the 593rd Field Artillery received a commendation from Brigadier General W. C. Dunckly for their firing on the Numa Numa Trail.

On April 7th, Company K contacted the enemy before an ambush could be established and in the fire fight that resulted one officer and seventeen men were killed and seven wounded. Our forces withdrew about one hundred yards and called for artillery fire. All bodies were recovered and the men were buried in the Bouganville cemetery.

On April 15th, litterbearers were subjected to enemy fire during the night and fought with as much vigor as the infantryman. On one such occasion, Technician Fifth Grade Mose Wheeler of Company A, 318th Medical Battalion, became the first casualty of his unit.

Thirty-five Japanese were killed by Company G on April 16th in repelling an attack by an enemy force aimed at a Fiji Battalion located on the right of Company G. In this encounter the 593rd Field Artillery fired 1,216 rounds.

Battle casualties of the Twenty-Fifth Combat Team as reported through May 30, 1944, totaled twenty-six killed, thirteen seriously wounded in action, and twenty-seven slightly wounded in action.

The records of the War Department contain the names of many men such as Thomas J. Caveness, Private First Class, Corps of Engineers, a native of Los Angeles, who was cited for heroism, in risking his life in going to the assistance of his comrades buried under debris from an ammunition dump which had been set on fire by Japanese bombers.

## LEGION OF MERIT AWARDS

The following Negroes received the Legion of Merit for performance in the Pacific theatre of war:

Dennis Holt, Staff Sergeant, Infantry, Birmingham, Alabama, and Isaac McGrew, Jr., Staff Sergeant, Infantry, Yazoo City, Louisiana.

Sergeant Holt was chief of a battalion wire section from May 4, 1942, to April 20, 1943, at a base in the South Pacific Area. His leadership, skill, cheerfulness, and devotion to duty in the installation, maintenance and operation of a wire net, in many respects comparable to that of a division, assured continuous communication. Without transportation, he led his men in cutting wire trails through miles of difficult jungle, in carrying wire up to a mountain top observation post, in crossing several miles of water to nearby islands, in all kinds of weather.

Sergeant McGrew was primarily responsible for the successful installation and maintenance of three hundred miles of wire in the South Pacific Area from May 15, 1942, to February 20, 1943. This task was performed under the most rigorous of tropical, climatic and terrain conditions. By long hours, ingenuity and perseverance, he performed remarkable feats of accomplishment.

The Silver Star was awarded to Mack B. Anderson, Private, Corps of Engineers, Brenham, Texas, for gallantry displayed in the Asiatic Theatre of Operations. During an attack by Japanese Zero fighter on an airfield in India, Private Anderson, while under continuous fire from the attackers, manned a machine gun until it went out of action, then continued firing with his automatic pistol while several Japanese fighters definitely centered their attack on him.

## SOLDIER'S MEDAL FOR HEROISM

Several Negro soldiers received the Soldier's Medal for heroism in the Pacific Area. Edward Williams, Private, Quartermaster Corps, Hurtsboro, Alabama, helped to extinguish a conflagration at a U. S. truck assembly plant in Iran, Persia. He risked his life to the peril of intense heat to save quantities of government property from damage and destruction.

James Scott, Private, Corps of Engineers, Montgomery, Alabama, risked his life on June 25, 1942, near an airdrome in New Guinea to save a pilot. When a fighter plane, taking off to intercept enemy planes then overhead, struck a log and crashed into the nearby river splashing gasoline on the plane and water, and igniting both gasoline and ammunition, Private Scott in the midst of flames and exposing ammunition waded into the river and assisted in rescuing the pilot.

Roscoe E. Thomas, Master Sergeant, Corps of Engineers, Atlanta, Georgia, went to the assistance of three comrades buried under debris from an ammunition dump which had been set on fire by Japanese bombers.

James Williams, Private, Infantry, Indianapolis, Indiana, saved two of his buddies from drowning when they slipped and fell into the ocean while embarking in the Solomon Islands. He immediately dived into the water to help them.

Columbus Howard, Private First Class, Corps of Engineers, Inkster, Michigan, proceeded within 200 yards of an exploding inferno to remove hot metal fragments from inflammable materials, and fought tirelessly to prevent the fire from spreading to other vital supply dumps.

Jesse E. Evans, Private, Quartermaster Corps, Morristown, New Jersey, aided in the rescue of three sailors from the waters adjoining a United States island base in the South Pacific.

Private Evans was one of a party of soldiers working on a ship in the harbor when he heard the cry for help and located a small home made boat not far away which had capsized. One of the three sailor occupants was unconscious and being held up by another. Without regard for his own safety, Private Evans plunged 40 feet over the side of the ship, swam to the men and helped keep the unconscious man afloat until a ship's launch could come alongside.

Nathaniel Hocker, Sergeant, Coast Artillery, Brooklyn, New York, helped to save the life of a pilot on the island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, on March 24, 1944. With complete disregard for the gasoline flames and the danger of the unexploded bombs, Sergeant Hocker assisted in removing the pilot from a burning plane that had crashed near his gun position.

William Downing, Technician Fourth Grade, Quartermaster Corps, Nyack, New York, plunged into the icy waters of the Bering Sea to rescue a soldier in danger of being crushed between a barge and a freighter.

Douglas D. Hopper, Private First Class, Corps of Engineers, Shelby, North Carolina, braved the treacherous currents of a river in India to rescue an officer.

## OPINIONS ABOUT NEGRO INFANTRY PLATOONS IN WHITE COMPANIES OF 7 DIVISIONS

What do the white company grade officers and the white platoon sergeants in E.T.O. think of the combat performance of Negro rifle platoons which were attached to their companies in March and April and fought side by side with white platoons through VE-day?

This question is answered by a survey, made in late May and early June, 1945, by personally interviewing 250 respondents, namely, all available white company grade officers and a representative sample of platoon sergeants in 24 companies containing Negro platoons in several infantry divisions, namely, the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 69th, 78th, 99th, and 104th. Standardized questions were used in the survey, which was conducted by five trained interviewers of the Research Branch, I and E Division, E.T.O.

In all except one of the companies visited, the standard organization of three rifle platoons and one heavy infantry platoon had been augmented by one rifle platoon of colored soldiers. The colored platoons were made up of men from rear echelon units who <u>volunteered</u> for service with the infantry and were trained for approximately six weeks in reinforcement depots, usually by a white officer or non-com who

later led them into combat.

In generalizing the opinions here reported, the fact that the Negro infantrymen in these platoons were volunteers must be kept in mind, as must also the fact that not all of the platoons experienced heavy and arduous fighting.

Opinions of White Officers and Enlisted Men in Companies with Negro Platoons.

QUESTION: "How did you feel at first about serving in a company that had white platoons and colored platoons?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| Relatively unfavorable ("Skeptical", "didn't like it", "thought it'd cause trouble", etc.) | 64% | 64% |
| Relatively favorable ("Willing to try it", "made no difference," "didn't mind", etc.) | 33% | 35% |
| No answer | 3% | 1% |
| | 100% | 100% |

QUESTION: "Has your feeling changed since having served in the same unit with colored soldiers?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| No, my feeling is still the same | 16% | 21% |
| Yes, have become more favorable toward them*, ("feel more respect for them", "like them better", etc.) | 77% | 77% |
| No answer | 7% | 2% |
| | 100% | 100% |

*NOTE: No cases were found in which an individual reported his attitude had become less favorable.

QUESTION: "How well did the colored soldiers in this company perform in combat?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| Not well at all | 0% | 0% |
| Not so well | 0% | 1% |
| Fairly well | 16% | 17% |
| Very well | 84% | 81% |
| Undecided | 0% | 1% |
| | 100% | 100% |

NOTE: In commenting on this question, respondents frequently gave detailed accounts of combat performance, Positive qualities stressed were aggressiveness in attack, effective use of fire-power, adeptness at close-in fighting, team-work in battle. Negative qualities reported in a few instances were that at first the men sometimes went forward too rapidly -- too far in an attack. Some officers stressed the fact that these colored soldiers, being volunteers, may have had exceptional combat qualities. Others mentioned that in their units there had not been an adequate test under the most severe type of fighting, such as sustained attacks under heavy mortar or artillery fire. It should be noted, however, that the performance of the colored troops was rated just as high, if not higher, by the white officers and non-coms in those companies in which the colored platoons have had severe fighting as by respondents from other units.

QUESTION: "With the same Army training and experience, how do you think colored troops compare with white troops as infantry soldiers?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| Not as good as white troops | 5% | 4% |
| Just the same as white troops | 69% | 83% |
| Better than white troops | 17% | 9% |
| No answer | 9% | 4% |
| | 100% | 100% |

QUESTION: "How have the white and colored soldiers gotten along together?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| Not well | 0% | 0% |
| Not as well in garrison as in combat | 14% | 4% |
| Fairly well | 7% | 36% |
| Very well | 73% | 60% |
| No answer | 6% | 0% |
| | 100% | 100% |

NOTE: Replies are somewhat more favorable from white officers and white non-coms with a Northern background than from those with a Southern background, but differences in opinion are not great. Actual friction between white and colored soldiers is said to have been confined to isolated cases involving white soldiers from "outside" units who did not know the combat record of the colored troops. Evidence indicates that white and colored soldiers have gotten along best together in those units in which they have shared the heaviest combat. While many of the officers in further questioning expressed some doubt as to how well the situation would work out if their unit remains in the Army of Occupation, or other semi-permanent garrison status, 9 out of 10 said there had been no difficulties as yet.

QUESTION: "If colored soldiers are used as Infantry, do you think they should be set up by platoons as they are here, or would some other way be better?"

| | White officers | White non-coms |
|---|---|---|
| In the same platoon with white soldiers | 7% | 1% |
| In a platoon within the same company | 62% | 89% |
| In separate companies | 18% | 12% |
| In separate battalions or larger organizations | 10% | 2% |
| No answer | 3% | 0% |
| | 100% | 100% |

NOTE: Most of those interviewed volunteered one or more reasons for their answer.

Among those who favor the platoon basis, the reasons given, in order of frequency, are:

(1) Competition-emulation - ("encourages friendly competition"; "each tried to make a good showing"; "gives them something to comeup to").

(2) Avoidance of friction - ("saves any chance of trouble to have them in their own platoon"; "because of the old feeling of boys from the South").

(3) Better discipline and control among the colored soldiers - ("whites have a steadying influence on them";"colored boys feel more secure in combat this way").

(4) Feeling of participation or non-discrimination on part of the colored soldiers - ("gives them the feeling of being with the white boys"; "avoids that feeling of being set apart and discriminated against").

(5) Improved inter-racial understanding - ("work close enough together so they can each get to know the other better and see what they do").

Among the minority who favored separate companies or larger units, the main reasons given were avoidance of friction (especially in garrison situations) and better discipline. A few men gave as their reason their personal feeling of not wishing to be in a company containing colored troops.

Independent Check in a Cross-Section Survey.

In the course of a survey of a representative cross-section of 1710 white enlisted men in ETO field forces, to ascertain men's information and orientation needs, two questions were asked about the use of Negro troops. This survey was independent of the interviews tabulated above.

The responses to the two questions asked in the cross-section survey were tabulated separately for four sub-groups indicated below. The sample in some groups is small and therefore subject to a larger margin of error than is customary in Research Branch reports.

QUESTION: "Some Army divisions have companies which include Negro and white platoons. How would you feel about it if your outfit was set up something like that?"

| | Percentage of white enlisted men answering: "Would dislike it very much". |
|---|---|
| Cross-section of field force units which do not have colored platoons in white companies (1450 cases) | 62% |
| Men in same division, but not in same regiment as colored troops (112 cases) | 24% |
| Men in same regiment, but not in same company as colored troops (68 cases) | 20% |
| Men in company with a Negro platoon (80 cases) | 7% |

QUESTION: "In general, do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea to have the same company in a combat outfit include Negro platoons and white platoons?"

| | Percentage of white enlisted men saying: "Very good idea" or "fairly good idea" |
|---|---|
| Cross-section of field force units which do not have colored platoons in white companies | 18% |
| Men in same division but not in same regiment as colored troops | 50% |
| Men in same regiments but not in same company as colored troops | 66% |
| Men in company with a Negro platoon | 64% |

NOTE: These differences in attitude, varying with extent of experience with platoons of colored troops, can hardly be attributed to differences in geographical origin. For example, 31% of the white soldiers whose company has a Negro platoon are from the South; as are 34% of the soldiers in the cross-section of field force units.

Background Information About Colored Troops in those Infantry Platoons

The soldiers in the Negro platoons were somewhat superior to other colored troops in ETO in education and AGCT, but the differences actually are not striking.

Percentage who had graduated from high school:

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 22% |
| Colored in ETO (cross-section) | 18% |
| White riflemen (cross-section) | 41% |

Percentage with AGCT scores above Class IV:

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 29% |
| Colored in ETO (cross-section) | 17% |
| White riflemen (cross-section) | 71% |

Percentage from the South (including border states):

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 67% |
| Colored in ETO (cross-section) | 76% |

As compared with white riflemen the Negro infantrymen were somewhat younger. 10% of the colored were 30 years old or over -- as were 20% of the white riflemen.

Branches of service from which the transfer to infantry were made were as follows:

| | Percent of total Negro volunteers |
|---|---|
| Corps of Engineers | 38% |
| Quartermaster Corps | 29% |
| Transportation Corps | 26% |
| Signal Corps | 3% |
| Ordnance Dept | 2% |
| All other branches | 2% |

Of all who were converted to riflemen, 63% came from the following six military occupation specialties, in order of frequency:

Truck driver, light (MOS 345)
Duty soldier III (590)
Longshoreman (271)
Basic (521)
Foreman construction (059)
Cargo checker (470)

## N E G R O E S  I N  T H E  N A V Y

When the United States entered this war Navy policy restricted Negroes to the Steward's Branch of the Naval Service. This was so despite the fact that Negroes had been an integral part of our Navy from the days of John Paul Jones.

Yet, despite this restriction, when the Japanese made their infamous sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, one of the heroes of that day was Dorie Miller, a Negro messman, who took a machinegun from the dead hands of its gunner and turned it on the Japs. For his quick thinking and courage, Dorie Miller received the Navy cross. He was cited for his "distinguished devotion to duty, extreme courage and disregard for his own personal safety during the attack." Later, still a messman, Dorie Miller went down with the Liscomae Bay.

Dorie Miller's heroism symbolizes the eagerness of Negroes to get into the fight despite the restrictions which the dead weight of tradition and prejudice have imposed upon them. This eagerness was recognized by the Navy in June 1942 when the Navy for the first time accepted Negro inductees from Selective Service.

At later dates, the Navy commissioned Negroes as Naval officers, admitted Negroes into the WAVE, SPARS, AND NURSE CORPS and began to assign Negroes for general duty aboard ships of all classifications.

On August 31, 1945, there were 165,506 Negro enlisted men in the Navy and 53 Negro officers. In the Marine Corps there were 16,964 Negro enlisted men; and 3,727 Negro enlisted men and 4 Negro officers in the Coast Guard.

On the same date Negro women in the Naval service included 68 Waves and 2 officers and 38 officer candidates; while there were 4 Negro Navy Nurses and 5 Negro enlisted Spars.

As the number of Negroes in the Navy increased, and they showed their qualifications, the Navy began to relax its restrictions. On August 9, 1944, the Navy began to assign Negroes in special service to man, partially, 25 large auxiliary vessels. Most of these ships were then in combat areas as part of the Fleet Train in the Pacific. Approximately 500 Negroes were assigned to those ships, both as petty officers and non-rated men. The 25 vessels were of the following types: store ships, ammunition ships, cargo ships, oilers and miscellaneous auxiliaries.

(ALL RATINGS INCLUDED)

The petty officers assigned to these vessels included substantially all ratings required to operate the ships. Among them were coxwains, gunner's mates, quartermasters, store keepers, carpenter's mates, shipfitters. Since then, the Navy has extended the assignment of Negro personnel to Naval vessels so as to include all auxiliary and many fighting ships.

On July 13, 1945, Lester B. Granger, Executive Secretary of the National Urban League, held a press conference following completion of a tour of twelve naval stations, bases, and depots in the United States. "The Navy," Mr. Granger said, "has

made remarkable strides in the last two years toward complete equality of expression in the service.

"It is a progress which reflects great credit upon the integrity and intelligence of the Navy's leaders and which should evoke a warm spirit of cooperation from the Negro and white public which is anxious to see our armed services more completely democratized."

Some of the gains which Mr. Granger cited were:

(1) Admission of Negroes to general service.

(2) Rating of Negroes in practically every category and training of Negroes as commissioned officers.

(3) Assignment of Negro personnel to auxiliary craft up to ten percent of a ship's complement.

(4) Assignment of Negro commissioned and petty officers to these vessels to serve in their duties without regard to rank.

(5) Important elimination of racial segregation in mess and in recreational facilities.

(6) A beginning of assigning Negro personnel to combat duties on warships.

Dorie Miller was the first Negro decorated for heroism by the Navy in World War II. Some of the others were:

ELVIN BELL

Elvin Bell, mess attendant, third class, U.S.N., 20 years old, of Jamaica, New York on February 2, 1943, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps medal with the following citation:

"For distinguished heroism while serving aboard the U.S. LEXINGTON during the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942. Voluntarily joining a repair party fighting a fire in an area frequented by violent explosions of gasoline vapor and ammunition, Bell, although emerging in an exhausted condition, unhesitatingly entered the most dangerous section of the stricken carrier and assisted in removing injured personnel who had been trapped below decks. His courageous initiative and utter disregard for his own safety were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

CHARLES JACKSON FRENCH

Charles Jackson French, mess attendant, second class, U.S.N. 23, of Foreman, Ark., was commended by Admiral William F. Halsey, U.S.N. Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, for heroism while serving on a destroyer in the Pacific area.

His commendation announced May 18, 1943, reads as follows:

"For meritorious conduct in action while serving on board a destroyer transport which was badly damaged during the engagement with Japanese forces in the British Solomon Islands on September 5, 1942. After the engagement, a group of about fifteen men were adrift on a raft which was being deliberately shelled by

Japanese naval forces. French tied a line to himself and swam for more than two hours without rest, thus attempting to tow the raft. His conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

LEONARD ROY HARMON (the USS HARMON)

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox on June 8, 1943, designated Mrs. Naunita Harmon Carroll, whose address was P. O. Box 381, Cuero, Tex., to sponsor the Destroyer Escort USS HARMON, which she did when the vessel was launched July 10, 1943, at Hingham, Mass.

The HARMON received its name in honor of Mrs. Carroll's son, the late Leonard Roy Harmon, mess attendant, first class, U.S.N., who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for heroism while serving the USS SAN FRANCISCO. This is the first vessel to bear the name HARMON.

Harmon's citation issued with the award of the Navy Cross read as follows:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving aboard the USS SAN FRANCISCO during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands area on November 12 and 13, 1942. With persistent disregard for his own personal safety, Harmon rendered invaluable assistance in caring for the wounded and evacuating them to a dressing station. In addition to displaying unusual loyalty in behalf of the injured Executive Officer, he deliberately exposed himself to hostile gunfire in order to protect a shipmate and, as a result of this courageous deed, was killed in action. His heroic spirit of self-sacrifice, maintained above and beyond the call of duty, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave up his life in the defense of his country."

WILLIAM PINCKNEY

The secretary of the Navy, on behalf of the President of the United States, awarded the Navy Cross to William Pinckney, cook, third class, U.S.N. on June 10, 1943. Pinckney 28 years old, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Renty Pinckney, Box 92, Beaufort, S.C. The Navy Cross was given with the following citation:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving aboard the USS ENTERPRISE during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces near the Santa Cruz Islands on October 26, 1942. When a heavy bomb exploded in the near vicinity, Pinckney, standing at his battle station in the ammunition handling room, was knocked unconscious. With several compartments completely wrecked and four of his five companions killed, Pinckney, regaining consciousness, groped his way through the burning and tangled wreckage to a point under an open hangar deck hatch. Just as he was about to escape he found a shipmate, the only other survivor of his party, struggling up through the hatch. When the man fell unconscious, either from his wounds or from smoke and fumes, Pinckney, unmindful of his own danger, lifted his comrade through the hatch to safety before he himself battled his way out of the burning and smoke-filled compartment. By his dauntless courage in saving his comrade's life at great risk to

his own, Pinckney upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

JOSEPH CROSS

The Secretary of the Navy, in the name of the President of the U.S. awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal to Joseph Cross, steward's mate, first class, USNR, of 2510 Thalia St., New Orleans, La.,

The citation says:

"For heroic conduct during four submarine war patrols in enemy-controlled waters. Performing his duties with excellent judgment and conscientious skill, Cross contributed materially to the destruction by his ship of an important amount of Japanese shipping. His resolute courage was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

ELBERT H. OLIVER

A Silver Star Medal was awarded Elbert H. Oliver, steward's mate, first class, USN, by the Secretary of the Navy, in the name of the President of the United States. Oliver, who has been wounded in action, resided at 1112 Locust St., North Little Rock, Ark.

His citation reads:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving aboard a U.S. warship during a raid upon that vessel by approximately twenty-five Japanese torpedo planes in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands on June 30, 1943. When members of his 20mm. gun crew were severely wounded by a bursting projectile, Oliver quickly took over the station of the injured gunner and, although he himself was bleeding profusely, maintained accurate fire against the attacking planes until eventually compelled to give way to a relief gunner. His aggressive fighting spirit and grim determination to carry on in the face of acute pain and waning strength were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Every branch of the Naval Service has seen courageous acts performed by Negroes in combat. Examples from the principal branches of the services are summarized below. All of them are based on official Navy Department releases.

A story of Negro Steward's Mates who received awards for their conduct under fire is told in an official Navy release.

"Six Negro steward's mates who manned their anti-aircraft guns until a Japanese suicide plane crashed in flames among them have been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for their heroism in action aboard the USS INTREPID, the Department of the Navy said today.

"Vice Admiral John S. McCain, U.S.N. Commander of Task Force 38 made awards for their participation in the action of October 29, 1944.

"The medals were awarded to:

"Johnell Copeland, steward's mate second class, U.S.N.R. 19, Office Box 1363, Haines City, Fla;

"Que Gent, steward's mate first class U.S.N.R. 22, of 132 Center Street, Atlantic City, N.J;

"Harold Junior Clark, steward's mate first class, U.S.N.R. 25, of 916-1/2 Fourth Street, West Palm Beach, Fla;

"James Eddie Dockery, steward's mate first class, U.S.N.R. 38, of 28 Barclay Street, Newark, N.J.;

"Alonzo Alexander Swann Jr., steward's mate first class U.S.N.R. 19, of 353 Christian Street, Steelton, Pa;

"Eli Benjamin, steward's mate second class U.S.N.R. 20, of 734 Jefferson Street, Norfolk, Va;

"The six men, who volunteered to man anti-aircraft guns in the event of attack by the enemy, were stationed at a 20 millimeter machinegun by the gunnary officer of the USS INTREPID, ESSEC-class carrier that was damaged four times by attacking Japanese planes."

The citations read:

"For distinguishing himself by heroic and meritorious service in connection with operations against the enemy, while serving aboard an aircraft carrier on October 29, 1944. When a Japanese dive-bomber attacked from the starboard side of the ship, he continued to operate his portside gun in its fire over the flight deck although it became apparent that theenemy plane was headed directly for his gun tub. His gun fired until the Japanese plane crashed into his tub. The courage and skill he displayed were at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

## NEGRO MARINES

A Navy press release dated February 13, 1945, states:

"On the beach nearest the enemy on Iwo are Negro Marines of the Eighth Ammunition Company--worthy successors of the Negro Marine ammunition companies in the Marianas actions and at Peleliu.

"They carry ammunition by day, feeding the front lines and building up supply dumps, playing a vital role in what is undoubtably the toughest battle in the history of the Marine Corps. At night they lie in foxholes among their kegs of TNT and dumps of high explosives, enduring the most persistent mortar and shell fire any American troops have faced in the Pacific.

"I've been using a TNT box for a pillow" says Corp. Coleman Bagwell, of Chester, S. C. "There's nothing any softer around, and if a mortar hits anywhere near I figure the whole ammunition dump will blow up anyway, so that's not being reckless."

Four of the men of the Eighth made a run to the front lines, loaded with ammunition, then stayed there under fire to assemble rockets which were to be used

against the Japs.

The four are Pfc. Walter Moore, of 1217 A Sam Rankins Street, Corpus Christi, Texas. Simms Pattin, of Spartanburg, S. C. Pfc. William L. Stephenson, of 212 N.W. 11th Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla; and Pfc. Samuel Miller of 3780 Monroe Street, Detroit, Mich.

"It's a rough beach," said Corp. Edward White of Nacogdoches, Texas, standing beside one of the first trucks the Marines managed to bring ashore under fire.

"Some of the Negro Marines, despite wounds, returned to duty after receiving medical treatment.

"The men of the Eighth agree that it has been a rough beach. And their fellow Marines agree that they have proved they can take it.

NEGRO SEABEES

One of the important contributions of Negroes to the Navy in the war was that of the Seabees. An official Navy release tells of the work of one unit.

"Veterans of 20 months of jungle warfare in the South Pacific, and bearing a unit citation for many outstanding feats of construction completed under great difficulties, the first battalion of Negro Seabees to go overseas has returned to this country, the Navy Department announced this week.

"The unit, the 34th Construction Battalion, indoctrinated at Camp Allen in Virginia sailed outside the continental limits of the United States on January 7, 1943, and arrived in Noumea, New Caledonia, nineteen days later. Since that date, the unit has suffered casualties of five men killed in action and 35 wounded.

"The first big job tackled by the unit was the construction of the Halavo Seaplane Base at Halavo in the Florida Islands. Brigaded there with the Acorn (Red) Four, an air unit, the 34th Battalion helped carve its camp out of a deep jungle. During February and March 1943, the two outfits experienced two direct enemy bombings and were under almost nightly enemy air raids in the area for a period of five months. Casualties from these raids resulted in two killed and 28 wounded.

"A detachment of approximately 350 men were transferred on March 19, 1943 to Guadalcanal to assist other battalions in constructing fuel and gas storage facilities. This detachment remained on Guadalcanal until November 1943, constructing all types of airfield facilities and housing. They were under frequent enemy air raids for the first six months of their duty there and then less frequent raids, the last of which occurred in October 1943. No casualties resulted."

"On April 20, 1943, another detachment of approximately 200 men with 75 percent of the Battalion's heavy equipment was transported by LCT's to Russell Island where they laid out and constructed, together with the 35th Construction Battalion, the second fighter strip north of Renard Sound on Banika Island. This detachment was a

part of what was essentially a regimental command consisting of the entire 47th Battalion and one half of the 20th Battalion. It was assigned to the task of constructing a 6,000 foot bomber strip and a 4,500 foot fighter strip on the Russells in time for the New Georgia campaign. These Seabee units completed their assigned tasks on time and the first three units later enlarged the bomber facilities south of Renard, completing this assignment by August, 1943. At Russells the detachment was subjected to constant enemy bombing until the completion of the New Georgia campaign in July. The Negro detachment experienced five casualties, consisting of three killed and two injured with minor burns in the operation of the fighter strip, caused during the crash of a Navy plane on the field.

"The entire battalion was reunited in November, 1943, in the Tulagi area; with approximately one half of the battalion quartered at Halavo, and the other half scattered over the adjacent Islands of Tulagi, Savo and Phillips Peninsula on Purvis Bay. The construction tasks at Halavo varied from marine railways, fueling docks and coastal defense gun mounts, to harbor boat nests, dolphins, piers and considerable jungle and mountain roads for the Army defense. A unit at Tulagi took over and performed Naval Base maintenance, relieving the 27th Seabees until the arrival of the two CBMU'S to release the battalion for assignment to Guadalcanal in March, 1944.

"The battalion was re-equipped with new housing facilities and a small quantity of new equipment and supplies early in 1944. The movement of the entire battalion personnel and equipment from the Tulagi area to Guadalcanal was completed in approximately six days aboard three LST's.

"A new camp was set up on the beach at Kukum to accommodate 1200 men and 40 officers. The battalion duties were assigned by the Public Works Division of the Commander, Naval Base Guadalcanal. In two months the battalion has cleaned up the unfinished priority projects in addition to numerous newly authorized projects assigned during this period. The duty hours of this battalion ran from 8 to 10 hours a day, 7 days per week for the first year, and for the last five months the hours were 8 hours per day, 6 and one-half days per week.

"Just before the men embarked for home, Capt. Mark L. Halsay, Jr., USN, Commander of the Naval Base, sent them the following unit commendation:

"On the occasion of the completion of your work in this area, covering a period of 20 months, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the officers and enlisted men of your command for the splendid record which you have made and the outstanding reputation which your Battalion enjoys. During this period your battalion has accomplished many outstanding feats of construction, too many to mention in detail, which will stand as a monument to your ability and efficiency for many years after the U. S. forces leave this area.

"Many of these construction jobs were completed under great difficulties, including bombing attacks by the enemy, in which five of your men were killed and about 35 wounded. In spite of these difficulties and dangers, and the impracticability of giving your men rehabilitation leave, your battalion continued to work at top efficiency until the day it was ordered to secure.

"The best wishes of this command for future success and continued usefulness to the Naval Service go with you and the personnel of your battalion."

NEGRO COAST GUARDSMEN

Tribute was paid to Negroes in an official release on the 155th anniversary of the Coast Guard, July 20, 1945.

"Approximately 4,000 Negro enlisted men, officers and SPARS participated in the celebration, which honored the nation's oldest fighting sea service and one of the world's most diversified fleets.

"One of the outstanding Negro heroes in the Coast Guard was 26 year old Charles V. David Jr., a mess attendant who gave his life rescuing his executive officer and others from the icy waters of the Atlantic during rescue operations of a torpedoed transport.

"The Navy and Marine Corps medal, one of the highest naval awards, was presented to the coast guardsman's widow, Mrs. Kathleen W. David, of 343 West 122nd Street, New York City, on June 20, 1944, by Rear Admiral Stanley V. Parker, district Coast Guard Officer, with the Davids' three year old son, Neil Adrian, standing by.

"Lieut. R. W. Anderson of 291 East 8th Street, Brooklyn, New York, the Coast Guard officer whose life was saved by David's heroism was also present. Lieutenant Anderson, who had previously been decorated for his bravery during the dramatic rescue, paid tribute to the deceased:

"'David's bravery under the most hazardous conditions and his unselfishness in sacrificing himself was an inspiration to every officer and man on board the cutter. We were all impressed by his alertness, for his quick thinking and heroic daring in face of certain death were responsible for the saving of the lives of many men, including myself, who would be dead today."

"David was a mess attendant first class aboard a Coast Guard cutter that rescued nearly a hundred men from a torpedoed transport in the North Atlantic. In a heavy sea, with freezing temperatures hampering operations, David dived countless times into the sea, in total darkness, to haul survivors to safety.

"When the rescue operations were nearly completed, David noticed that Lieutenant Anderson was near exhaustion from his work on a life raft off the side of the cutter. Passing the word along to the bridge, David, himself near collapse from his efforts, dived overboard and hauled Lt. Anderson back aboard. He died shortly after from pneumonia, exhaustion and exposure as the result of his heroic actions."

The citation accompanying the medal, signed by Secretary of Navy James

Forrestal, for the President, reads in part:

"Quickly realizing that the benumbed and suffering men were too exhausted to climb aboard the rescue vessel because of the heavy seas and intensely cold wind, David unhesitantly volunteered to go over the side to assist them. Despite the rough, near freezing water and gale, he worked tirelessly with several comrades until ninety-three survivors had been rescued from certain death in the steadily mounting seas. His great courage and unselfish perseverance contributed to the saving of many lives and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

## THE MERCHANT MARINE

The contribution to victory of the Negroes who chose the Merchant Marine as their form of service has been a great one. It is significant that the records of the Maritime Commission, the War Shipping Administration and the Coast Guard, the licensing and certificating authority for seamen, deliberately fail to include race and color data. Because of this lack of discrimination, it is impossible to determine the number of Negroes who served in the Merchant Service, the number who survived torpedoings or the number who were killed or injured through enemy action while delivering the supplies and men essential to the conduct of the war.

Negroes are known to have served in every capacity aboard ship; from Master to ordinary seaman, chief engineer to wiper and chief steward to messman. The thirty-one War Shipping Administration Training Schools all admit Negroes. The first Negro graduate of the Maritime Academy, Joseph B. Williams of Annapolis, Maryland, went on active duty with the Navy and was the first Negro officer in the Naval Civil Engineer Corps.

There were four Liberty Ships named for Negro Merchant Seamen lost on active service in the Merchant Marine. Fourteen Liberty ships were named for noted Negroes and four Victory ships named for Negro Colleges.

No vessel under War Shipping Administration control has ever sailed with an entire Negro crew and the good relations which existed among mixed crews were a surprise to many. The United Seamens Service which operated hotels and recreation centers abroad for our Merchant Seamen reports that the crews of mixed race who sailed together, mixed excellently while ashore in foreign ports. "All Brave Sailors" by John Beecher, published by L. B. Fischer tells the story of the S. S. Booker T. Washington, manned by a black and white crew under the command of the Negro Master, Captain Hugh Mulzac.

It is competently estimated that approximately 25,000 Negroes served in the Merchant Marine out of a total seagoing labor force of 250,000 men.

The Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal, the highest decoration, was awarded to Fred Carlos Archibald, of San Francisco.

CITATION:

For distinguished service in the line of duty.

For eighteen months the ship in which he was serving operated in the southwest Pacific under especially hazardous conditions, as it was at all times in the danger zone, was unescorted, and only lightly armed. In an attack on Port Darwin, and on the nine succeeding days, when most of the crew had left the ship, he with his Captain and four officers and men, manned the two machine guns, and so successfully defended the ship that it was the only one of twelve merchant vessels in the harbor not destroyed. After the first attack, this small group protestingly left the ship upon orders of the military authorities, but subsequently returned, got underway, and took their ship out into the harbor each morning and returned to the dock each night to discharge cargo, so as not to endanger the dock during daylight. Because of the indomitable determination and courage of these six men, they succeeded in delivering the gasoline so vitally necessary to Army operations.

His loyalty to his ship and his devotion to duty have added another inspirational chapter to the history of the United States Merchant Marine.

# *The Negro Soldier*

**A Partial Record of Negro Devotion and Heroism in the Cause of Freedom Gathered From the Files of the War and Navy Departments**

**Remarks of**

## Hon. Helen Gahagan Douglas

**of California**

**in the**

**House of Representatives**

**February 1, 1946**

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REMARKS

OF

## HON. HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS

Mrs. DOUGLAS of California. Mr. Speaker, it is about the Negro soldier I wish to speak today. I wish to pay him the respect and to express the gratitude of the American people for his contribution in the greatest battle of all time—the battle which decided whether or not we were to remain a free people.

We should be especially mindful of the Negro soldier, remembering that he fought and shed his blood for a freedom which he has not as yet been permitted fully to share.

The service record of the Negro in World War II began with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, and carried through to the day and the hour of the Japanese surrender.

Whether in the North African, European, or Pacific theater of war, the Negro serviceman responded to the call of duty to the fullest extent of his opportunity and to the very best of his ability.

The Negro soldier made his contribution in World War II as he has in every other war in which we, a free people, have fought. And he has again met the test of patriotism and heroism. The names of Negro heroes in this war are everlastingly recorded among the living and the dead. They won their citations in every combat area, on land, on sea, in the air.

It should never be forgotten that Negro heroes in this war achieved their proud records under handicaps that did not have to be overcome by most of their white fellow citizens.

This was the most mechanical of all wars. Training had to be based on the education and experience of the average man. The average American boy going into the service of his country had some knowledge of, some experience with the mechanical gadgets that contribute to our much boasted high standard of living. And at least he could read and write.

Three-fourths of all Negroes in the armed forces came from areas in this land of the free where their people had been held down for generations, denied education, denied the use of tools any more complicated than a hoe, denied the right to participate in self-government, denied even the right to self-respect. For them, equal educational opportunities, equal pay for equal work, practically any opportunity to work at skilled trades simply did not exist. They went into the armed forces ill equipped, through no fault of their own, for the tremendous job required of them.

But they did the job, all the same, handicap or no handicap. And they did it magnificently.

They were men—with the heart and the will and the courage—the stuff of which heroes are made. They may, as did one group, have had to memorize instructions because they could not read them. But while letters may have been foreign to them, devotion was not; nor was courage foreign to them. The qualities that cannot be indoctrinated—the qualities of greatness—were there.

Some of the most outstanding units in all theaters were made up of Negroes who had been classified in the lowest Army classification categories—those very boys who had never had a chance to run a machine or even to learn to read and write before going into the Army.

Despite the Selective Service and Training Act, which established a basic policy of nondiscrimination because of race or color in building up our Army, and in spite of improvement during the course of the war, it must not be forgotten that segregation, discrimination, and race prejudice, in all of its varied forms, placed an added burden on the Negro in the armed forces and dogged his steps

from the induction center to the front line.

Navy Crosses—for "conduct in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service"—were won by Negro mess attendants not permitted to enlist in their country's Navy as fighting men.

It was a mess attendant—not permitted, because he was a Negro, to train as a gunner—who manned a machine gun and fought back when the Japs strafed his ship at Pearl Harbor. For this and for dragging his mortally wounded captain to safety, Dorie Miller, mess attendant first class, won the Navy Cross.

It was Leonard Roy Harmon, mess attendant first class, who won the Navy Cross, posthumously, for heroic action. He lost his life aboard the U. S. S. *San Francisco* in battle off the Solomon Islands. Later his mother was brought from her home in Texas, by order of the Secretary of the Navy, to the shipyards in Bingham, Mass., to sponsor the destroyer escort U. S. S. *Harmon*, named after her hero son.

It was Pvt. Woodall I. March, of Pittsburgh, of the Ninety-second Division, who won the Silver Star for taking 12 wounded paratroopers out of the front line to safety, fording a raging torrent in his truck, after an officer had said it could not be done. When he was told he could not get through because the water was too deep, Private Marsh replied, "Well, there's dirt underneath, ain't there?"

In December 1944 when the picture in Europe was dark, where our front-line losses were mounting with tragic swiftness, a call was sent out for volunteer replacements from troops assigned to noncombat duty behind the lines. More than 5,000 Negroes eagerly responded. Because only privates were accepted, many noncommissioned officers offered to sacrifice their stripes for a chance to get into the fighting. Twenty-five hundred Negro soldiers were accepted, but 3,000 more were turned back, because a quota for Negroes among the volunteers had been set. One of those who accepted, Pfc Leroy W. Kemp, of Atlantic City, N. J., remarked, "We've been giving a lot of sweat. Now I think we'll mix some blood with it."

They did mix their blood—with the blood of their white brothers—and out of that mixing new understanding and respect were born.

One of the finest tributes paid these volunteers came from Brig. Gen. Charles T. Lanham, assistant commander of the One Hundred and Fourth Infantry Division, following the presentation of combat decorations:

"I have never seen any soldiers who have performed better in combat than you," General Lanham told the Negro doughboys.

Under the Selective Service Act, Negroes were trained for every branch of the service, but, although Negro fighter pilots were shooting down German planes over Italy, although the Ninety-second Division fought through the Italian campaign from start to finish and came out with 2 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 16 Legion of Merit awards, 95 Silver Stars, 6 Soldier's Medals, 723 Bronze Stars, 1,095 Purple Hearts, and 7,996 Combat Infantry Badges, and although the Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth Field Artillery Battalion was caught at Bastogne and fought it out side by side with the celebrated One Hundred and First Airborne Division and received, with the One Hundred and First, a Presidential Unit Citation, and although there were Negro combat troops in action on every front, the fact remains that the majority of the Negroes, sometimes regardless of qualifications found themselves in service outfits.

And what did that mean? It meant building airports, bases, roads, and highways under fire, in freezing cold and blazing heat. It meant building an approach to a bridge across the Rhine,

684624—15135



under artillery fire, unable to take cover, unable to shoot back. It meant landing ammunition on the Normandy beaches on D-day, always under fire. It meant setting up field kitchens on those beaches, even before the fighting troops which were to be fed and heartened had all come ashore. It meant Negro Seabees winning commendation for building an airport on a Pacific island under heavy Japanese fire. It meant stringing thousands and thousands of miles of communication wire—across rivers, through steaming jungles, over icy mountain passes, with artillery shells crashing around them, with snipers forever shooting at them. It meant trucking high explosives and octane gas over the Red Ball Highway—continuously under aerial bombardment. It meant building the Ledo Road, under impossible conditions, cutting and blasting their way through jungle and over mountain passes—riding their bulldozers down with tons of sliding rock when the narrow ledges gave way, to save the precious equipment. And again and again and again it meant dropping a shovel and picking up a gun from the stiffening hands of a fallen fighting comrade.

In 1940, when the Selective Service Act was passed, there were only 4,451 Negroes in our Army, including 5 commissioned officers and 11 warrant officers.

In February a year ago there were 680,282 Negroes in the Army. Of these, 52,884 were in the Infantry, 27,163 in the Coast and Field Artillery, 770 in the Cavalry, 140,154 in the Engineers, 63,079 in the Air Corps, and 406,232 in other branches of the armed services. Included in the total were 6,548 commissioned officers. Of that number, 120 were Dental Corps officers, 343 were nurses, 569 were Medical Corps officers, and 260 were chaplains. The Army had 820 Negro Wacs, the Navy had 68 Negro Waves, and the Coast Guard 5 Negro Spars.

Last August there were 695,264 Negroes in the United States Army. Of these, 495,950 were overseas. On the day of final victory in Europe there were 22 Negro combat units in action on the European front.

Here are some things that "Ike" Eisenhower, the man who broke the Axis, had to say about the Negro troops who served under him.

In July 1944, to the commanding officers and men of a Negro antiaircraft balloon battalion, the only outfit of its kind participating in the D-day landings:

The commanding officer, First United States Army, has brought to my attention the splendid manner in which you have carried out your mission during the period of June 6 to July 10, 1944.

Your battalion landed in France on June 6 under artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire. Despite the losses sustained, the battalion carried out its mission with courage and determination and proved an important element to the air-defense team. The cheerfulness and devotion to duty of officers and men have been commented on by the personnel of other units.

This report is most gratifying to me. I commend you and the officers and men of your battalion for your fine effort, which has merited the praise of all who have observed it.

On the same day to the commanding officer and officers and men of a Negro truck company:

I have received from the commanding general, First United States Army, a report of your exceptionally fine work during the landing in France and the period of a month subsequent thereto. The report confirms my own observation.

You landed under enemy machine-gun and artillery fire, which caused losses in men and equipment. Nevertheless, you salvaged most of your equipment at once and within 3 days 90 percent of your vehicles were operating on a 24-hour basis, a scale which was maintained for 5 weeks. During this time you continued the delivery of essential supplies. I want you to know that I appreciate your splendid work. Your accomplishments are a source of gratification to me and to your Army commander.

684624—15135

Reviewing the war at a press conference in Paris on June 15, 1945, General Eisenhower was asked to comment upon the contribution Negro soldiers made to the European theater of operations. He replied:

To start with, I would like to say this: That I do not differentiate among soldiers. I do not say white soldiers or Negro soldiers and I do not say American or British soldiers. To my mind, I have had a task in this war that makes me look upon soldiers as soldiers. Now, I have seen Negro soldiers in this war, and I have many reports on their work where they have rendered very valuable contributions and some of them with the greatest enthusiasm. In late November, when we were getting short of reinforcements, replacements, some 2,600 Negro soldiers volunteered for front-line service and they did good work. All my commanders reported that these volunteers did excellent work. But their major job has been in Service of Supply, engineer units, quartermaster units, ordnance units. There, so far as I know and certainly as far as any official reports, they have performed equally with every kind of ordnance battalion, quartermaster battalion, and engineer battalion. They have done their job and they have done the job given them.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that all of us, as we continue our task of building a firm and lasting peace, will emulate "Ike" Eisenhower. He did not differentiate between whites and Negroes—nor between Americans, British, French, nor Russians. They were all soldiers. It is my fervent hope that we will have the wisdom to look upon citizens as citizens—neither white nor black nor yellow—but simply as citizens—of a world community.

At this point, I wish to introduce what at this time can only be a partial record of Negro devotion and heroism in the cause of freedom. My material has been gathered from the War and Navy Departments.

AFRICAN-ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

FORTY-FIRST ENGINEERS

On June 17, 1942, 18 months before United States troops were reported to have landed at Dakar—the first Negro troops landed in Africa. They were the Forty-first Engineer Regiment—the "singing engineers"—and their mission was to protect that vital area in the trans-African life line of the United Nations under an agreement between the Government of the United States and Liberia The pact, signed on March 31, 1942, gave the United States the right to construct, control, operate, and defend airports in the West African republic. In return for use of lands for American troops, the United States agred to protect Liberia's neutrality, provide $1,000,000 in lend-lease aid, undertake a road-building program and train a Liberian Army, using American equipment.

Pfc. Edward Taylor, of Baltimore, led ashore the first American expeditionary force ever to set foot in Africa. A handful of natives and civilian construction workers watched him step ashore. "Liberians," he said, "we are here to join hands and fight together until this world is free of tyrannical dictators."

The Forty-first Engineers worked at a grueling pace. A big job had to be done in record time, despite malaria, bad terrain, and the rainy season. But they built the airports, cantonments, and other installations that were needed. They unloaded ships and dispatched supplies through three big defense areas. They laid steel landing mats in the emergency airports and waged a constant battle against the verdant undergrowth. They built permanent structures to replace temporary shacks and sheds.

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service" in Liberia, Master Sgt. Albert F. Williams, of Waycross, Ga., Headquarters and Service Company, Forty-first Engineers, was awarded the Legion of Merit.

His citation stated that "As a member of the advance detachment of an expeditionary force, from April to June 1942, he distinguished himself by his soldierly qualities, leadership, and dependability. Upon arrival on a strange continent, by his example of cheerfulness, confidence, energy, and industry he was a constant source of inspiration to his fellow soldiers and a tower of strength to his commanding officer. Sergeant Williams set the pace for all duties assigned. He supervised his men every moment of the day, protecting their health so that there was no illness in a disease-ridden country. He used his 600 native laborers with patience, understanding, and skill. He was largely responsible for building up an enviable reputation for our soldiers abroad and contributing materially toward the preliminary mission of the force."





President Roosevelt stopped in Liberia on his way home from the Casablanca conference on January 27, 1943, and reviewed the Forty-first Engineers.

FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANTIAIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BATTALION

This battalion had the distinction of being the first Negro combat unit to land in north Africa and the first Negro combat unit to go into action on European soil.

As a matter of fact, before it even landed on the Italian peninsula, it won the commendation of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, commanding the Fifth Army, for "outstanding performance of duty" in its baptism of fire. It accounted for two German bombers before it landed in Italy.

While the Negro troops of the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Battalion were still aboard ship in Naples Harbor, German bombers came over. The attack occurred at night. Soldiers of the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Battalion aboard one ship manned its 40-mm guns. Seachlights picked up the bombers, and the Negro gun crew shot down one German bomber.

Aboard another ship, carrying personnel and equipment of the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Battalion, M/S Johnson Clark, of Detroit, Mich., jumped into a loaded truck parked on deck and opened fire with a 50-caliber machine gun mounted on the cab. Other fire opened up from that ship, and a second bomber crashed into the sea.

Commending troops of the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Battalion for this accomplishment, General Clark declared:

"I am proud of the outstanding performance of duty of these soldiers in this baptism of fire. Their conduct was excellent and reflects the training and discipline of their unit. The Fifth Army welcomes such soldiers."

NINETY-NINTH PURSUIT SQUADRON

This unit of fighter pilots trained at the Tuskegee Army Air Field. After further training by veterans of the Tunisian campaign, the unit was committed to combat on June 1, 1943. It flew its first mission, over an air base at Fardjouna, the following day. Other early missions were over the island of Pantelleria, Italian stronghold guarding the Sicilian straits. Six of its pilots had their first brush with enemy aircraft over Pantelleria, and pilots of the Ninety-ninth dive-bombed Pantelleria daily until it was surrendered on June 11, 1943.

Next came the Sicilian campaign. During the first 9 days of July 1943, the Negro pilots of the Ninety-ninth Squadron escorted bombers to Sicily. On every trip they were attacked by superior numbers of enemy fighter planes.

By the middle of July the Ninety-ninth was escorting bombers over Italy. In a dogfight over Sciacca, Italy, one day, First Lt. (now captain) Charles B. Hall, of Brazil, Ind., shot down the first Axis plane officially credited to the Ninety-ninth Squadron. On that same day the Ninety-ninth, flying close escort for medium Mitchell bombers, probably destroyed two more German planes and damaged three.

General Eisenhower was at the air base with the squadron's commander, Lt. Col. (now colonel) Benjamin O. Davis, of Washington, D. C., when Hall and the others landed after that fight and congratulated them on their first confirmed victory.

From June 1 to September 3, 1943, the Ninety-ninth Squadron participated in about 800 sorties over north Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

*Squadron's biggest day*

The Ninety-ninth Squadron, by this time based in Italy, had its biggest day on January 27, 1944. In one of the fiercest air battles of the Italian campaign, over the Anzio beachhead, south of Rome, Negro pilots of the Ninety-ninth Squadron scored eight confirmed victories over the Germans.

Bent on driving the Allied landing force out of its beachhead, a hundred or more Messerschmitt 109's and Focke-Wulf 190's came over in two attacks, morning and afternoon on that day. Twenty-eight were destroyed during the day and the Ninety-ninth got eight of them, the largest number credited to any single squadron that day.

Flyers from eight States figured in this outstanding collective victory of the Ninety-ninth that day. Capt. Lemuel Rodney Custis, of Hartford, Conn., squadron operations officer got one "Jerry." Six other pilots of the Ninety-ninth got one each: First Lts. Robert W. Deiz, of Portland, Oreg.; Willie Ashley, of Sumpter, S. C.; Leon C. Roberts,

of Pritchard, Ala.; and Edward L. Toppins, of San Francisco, Calif.; Second Lts. Charles P. Bailey, of Punta Gorda, Fla.; and Wilson Eagleson, of Bloomington, Ind. The Ninety-ninth Squadron's eighth victory was shared by Second Lts. Clarance Allen, of Mobile, Ala., and Howard L. Baugh, of Petersburg, Va.

The Ninety-ninth shot down four more enemy planes on January 28, 1944, Captain Hall scoring a double.

Lieutenant Deiz was credited with his second German plane in 2 days, and two pilots, Lieutenants Baugh and Allen, were credited jointly with the destruction of one plane. The fourth German plane was shot down by Second Lt. Louis C. Smith, of Los Angeles, Calif.

Second Lt. Elwood T. Driver, of Trenton, N. J., got the thirteenth German plane credited to the Ninety-ninth Squadron. Planes of the squadron were just arriving over Anzio beachhead on February 5, 1944, to take their turn at air cover, when a formation of German planes came over. The Ninety-ninth swooped down, and Driver sent one Focke-Wulf 190 crashing.

On February 7, 1944, Allied fliers brought down 16 Focke-Wulfs and 3 Messerschmitts, against a loss of only 4 of our own. Three of the German planes were brought down by pilots of the Ninety-ninth in the first of the day's engagements.

*Sixteen Nazis in 10 days*

In 10 days over Anzio beachhead, the Ninety-ninth brought down 16 enemy planes.

Gen. Henry H. Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces, in a message to Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Allied air commander in the Mediterranean theater, commended the Negro Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron on its exploits over Anzio beachhead. He said:

"The results of the Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron during the past 2 weeks, particularly since the Nettuno landing, are very commendable. My best wishes for their continued success."

Exactly 1 year after they had flown their first mission over an enemy air base at Fardjouna, north Africa, pilots of the Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron, on detached service with the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group, flew their five hundredth combat mission.

The Ninety-ninth flew 3,728 sorties during its first year of service. During the first year, the squadron lost 12 pilots—5 killed in action, 4 reported missing, and 3 known to be prisoners of war.

THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND FIGHTER GROUP

From Allied headquarters in Naples it was announced on March 17, 1944, that the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group, in which Negro pilots of the Ninety-ninth were flying, was operating from Italian bases, as part of the Mediterranean coastal air force. This group flew P–39's on convoy protection and harbor patrol missions along the west coast of Italy. It also flew in close support of advancing Allied armies in Italy, in daily dive-bombing operations against enemy supply lines, motor transport, rail yards, and gun emplacements. Penetrating ahead of the Fifteenth Army Air Force bombers bound for Munich on June 9, 1944, the group battled more than 100 enemy fighters near Udine, Italy, and sent 5 of them crashing to earth. The bomber formation they were protecting suffered only a few losses.

The Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group destroyed a total of 111 enemy planes in the air and 150 on the ground. In addition, it is credited with destruction of 57 locomotives and damaging another 69. Perhaps the greatest single feat of the group was the sinking of an enemy destroyer, with machine-gun fire, off the Istrian Peninsula but its pilots are best known for the protection they gave Fifteenth Air Force bombers during concentrated raids on oil refineries at Polesti and Vienna. On the D-day invasion of southern France the group flew cover for Allied landing forces and strafed radar installations along the coast preparatory to the landings. On March 24, 1945, the group flew escort to B–17's of the Fifteenth Air Force to Berlin and destroyed three enemy aircraft, probably destroyed three other, and damaged three. For its outstanding performance of duty, the group was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation, which reads as follows:

"On March 23, 1945, the group was assigned the mission of escorting heavy-bombarment type aircraft attacking the vital Daimler-Benz tank-assembly plant at Berlin, Germany. Realizing the strategic importance of the mission and fully cognizant of the amount of enemy resistance to be expected and the long range to be covered, the ground crews worked





tirelessly and with enthusiasm to have their aircraft at the peak of mechanical condition to insure the success of the operation.

"On March 24, 1945, 59 P–51 type aircraft were air-borne and set course for the rendezvous with the bomber formation. Through superior navigation and maintenance of strict flight discipline the group formation reached the bomber formation at the designated time and place. Nearing the target approximately 25 enemy aircraft were encountered which included ME 262's which launched relentless attacks in a desperate effort to break up and destroy the bomber formations.

"Displaying outstanding courage, aggressiveness, and combat technique, the group immediately engaged the enemy formation in aerial combat. In the ensuing engagement that continued over the target area, the gallant pilots of the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group battled against the enemy fighter to prevent the breaking up of the bomber formation and thus jeopardizing the successful completion of this vitally important mission. Through their superior skill and determination, the group destroyed three enemy aircraft, probably destroyed three, and damaged three. Among their claims were eight of the highly rated enemy jet-propelled aircraft with no losses sustained by the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group.

"Leaving the target area and en route to base after completion of their primary task, aircraft of the group conducted strafing attacks against enemy ground installation and transportation with outstanding success. By the conspicuous gallantry, professional skill, and determination of the pilots, together with the outstanding technical skill and devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group has reflected great credit on itself and the armed forces of the United States."

*Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.*

The leader of the Ninety-ninth Pursuit Squadron and later of the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group, of which it became a part, was Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a graduate of West Point and son of Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, the highest ranking Negro officer in the United States Army.



Colonel Davis and three other pilots of the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group—Capt. Joseph D. Elsberry, of Langston, Okla., and First Lts. Jack D. Holsclaw, of Spokane, Wash., and Clarence D. Lester, of Chicago, Ill.—were presented with Distinguished Flying Crosses in Italy on September 10, 1944. Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, in command of all Allied air forces in the Mediterranean theater, attended the ceremony. It was held before a formation of the entire fighter group and the Fifteenth Air Force band, which was drawn up in review.

Concerning the leadership of the group by Colonel Davis, in a fight on June 9, 1944, when a bomber formation which his pilots were protecting was attacked by more than 100 enemy fighters, the citation said:

"Faced with the problem of protecting the larger bomber formation with the comparatively few fighters under his control, Colonel Davis so skillfully disposed his squadrons that in spite of the large number of enemy fighters, the bomber formation suffered only a few losses. During the engagement, Colonel Davis led one flight against more than 15 enemy fighters which were making repeated attacks on one group of bombers. His courage and combat ability have reflected great credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States of America."

Colonel Davis also has been awarded the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

*Capt. Joseph D. Elsberry*

The award to Captain Elsberry was for "extraordinary achievement in aerial flight against the enemy in the north African and Mediterranean theaters of operations." His citation said:

"Throughout the extensive air offensive against the enemy in direct support of our ground troops and against targets of vital strategic importance deep within hostile territory, he, through his aggressiveness and courage, has consistently aided in the success of combat operations. Against heavy opposition from both aggressive and persistent fighter aircraft and intense, heavy, and accurate enemy antiaircraft fire, with his plane frequently seriously damaged by enemy fire, he has battled his way to his targets, defeating the enemy in the air and destroying his vital installations on the ground. Through severe and adverse weather conditions over treacherous mountain terrain, he

has continually surmounted overwhelming obstacles for successful completion of his assigned mission to attack and destroy the enemy. Through his outstanding leadership and personal example, completely disregarding his personal safety at times of great danger, he has contributed to the ultimate and final defeat of the armed forces of the enemy, has upheld the highest tradition of the military service, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States of America.

*First Lt. Jack D. Holsclaw*

On July 18, 1944, Lieutenant Holsclaw led his flight as escort to heavy bombers attacking enemy installations in Germany and despite severe and adverse weather conditions, he brought his flight through to engage an enemy force of approximately 300 Army fighters. Of Lieutenant Holsclaw the citation said:

"In ensuing engagement, despite the superiority in numbers of enemy aircraft, with complete disregard for his personal safety, Lieutenant Holsclaw with an outstanding display of aggressiveness and combat proficiency, destroyed two enemy fighters and forced the remainder to break off their organized attack."

*Lt. Clarence D. Lester*

Lieutenant Lester participated in the same mission as that of Lt. Jack D. Holsclaw. The citation of Lieutenant Lester said:

"With complete disregard of his personal safety, Lieutenant Lester destroyed three enemy fighters, thus materially aiding in preventing the enemy from making concentrated attacks on the bombers."

The citations said of each of them that by his outstanding courage, professional skill and devotion to duty, evidenced throughout his combat career, he had reflected great credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States.

A few months later back in this country, General Eaker presented Colonel Davis to the officers and men of the Four Hundred and Seventy-seventh Composite Group in a ceremony at Godman Field, Ky., June 21, 1945, as the commander of the group and of Godman Field. General Eaker said:

"Along with other officers in the Army Air Forces, I have followed closely the record of Negro pilots. As the commanding officer of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, I had under my command the Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron and later the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group. I watched closely as the pilots progressed through the P–39, P–40, P–47, and P–51 aircraft. I likewise watched their assignments develop from routine but necessary coastal patrol missions to important heavy bomber close-escort missions.

"The Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron and other squadrons of the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Fighter Group have done well. They have carried out the missions assigned to them and they have destroyed enemy aircraft both in the air and on the ground. By their efforts and performance they have won a place on the great Air Forces team. They came on the hard way."

NINETY-SECOND DIVISION

A regimental combat team of Ninety-second Infantry Division went into the line on the Fifth Army front in Italy in August 1944. Ten minutes later they went into action against some of the best trained and seasoned troops Hitler had in his whole army.

From then on, until the Italian campaign finally ended with the surrender of a million crack German troops in April 1945, the Ninety-second Division fought in Gen. Mark Clark's Fifth Army. Some of them were in the line as long as 68 days at a stretch, more than 2 months.

It is one of the marvels of the war that the Ninety-second Division with an enlisted personnel made up almost entirely of Negro boys from the South—boys who had been sent out to work in the fields before they were even adolescents, boys who in many cases never had a chance to learn to read or write, boys who had grown up in an area where they and their people were always treated as inferiors—should have made the record it did, staying in there week in and week out, through some of the bitterest fighting in the whole war, against Hitler's best, a superb army of self-assured German veterans fighting with all they had to protect their homeland from the attack rolling up from the south.

The Ninety-second Division consisted of approximately 12,000 officers and men, including some 200 white officers and 600 Negro





officers, 3 of whom were lieutenant colonels and 6 were majors. Its enlisted personnel was all Negro—a majority of them rated as IV and V, the lowest grades in the Army classifications. This was largely due to the fact that three-fourths of them came from Southern States, where educational opportunities for the Negro are practically nonexistent. And the Ninety-second Division was activated before the Army educational program—designed to carry a man only through the fourth grade in school—got under way.

But these men—ill equipped as they were—did their job. They stayed in there, giving their best, day in and day out, seesawing back and forth through the rain and cold and mud, locked in a titanic death struggle with an experienced, magnificently trained enemy who knew all the tricks and who had never known defeat.

Through the whole bitter experience, the men of the Ninety-second Division were dogged by the racial prejudice and segregation that had followed them from the southern camps where they trained at home. Other troops might yield temporarily, but there was no comment. But if the Ninety-second Division lost a yard one day—even though they might gain it back the next day—the reports went back across the Atlantic and soon their letters from home would tell them of loud-mouths screaming, even on the floor of Congress, that the Negro soldiers were cracking, that the Negro soldiers were no good.

*A polyglot army*

It was a polyglot army, the Fifth Army in which they fought, made up of British, American, Brazilian, French, Italian, Greek, Polish, Palestinian, New Zealand, and East Indian troops. It was in this Fifth Army that the Japanese Americans so greatly distinguished themselves—the Japanese American One Hundredth Infantry Battalion, one of the first outfits to receive a Presidential unit citation for fighting in Italy.

On April 30, 1945, General Clark announced that the long, weary, bitter campaign, begun on the beaches of Salerno in September 1943, had ended. His polyglot troops had so smashed the German armies in Italy that down their arms in unconditional surrender they had been virtually eliminated as a military force. Nearly 1,000,000 Germans in northern Italy and western Austria laid on May 2, 1945, at 2 p. m. The surrender had been signed in the royal palace of Caserta on April 29, by representatives of the German commander, Col. Heinrich von Vietinghoff-Scheel, and of the Allied Mediterranean commander, Field Marshal Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander.

Around this last Thanksgiving time, the Ninety-second Division came home, landing in Boston, New York, and Norfolk. Only 4,000 were left of the once 12,000-strong Ninety-second Division whose ranks, like those of other divisions that fought overseas, had been thinned by transfers, discharges, and deaths.

While overseas the Ninety-second had received 12,096 decorations—including 2 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 16 Legion of Merit awards, 7 oak-leaf clusters to Silver Stars, 95 Silver Stars, 6 Soldier's Medals, 723 Bronze Stars, 1,891 Purple Hearts, and 7,996 combat infantry badges. It also received 205 commendations.

*Almost 25 percent casualties*

On the day the campaign in Italy ended, the Ninety-second Division had lost almost one-fourth of its men through casualties. Three hundred and thirty had been killed in action, 2,215 wounded, and 616 were missing in action.

A soldier of the Ninety-second Division, Pvt. Woodall I. Marsh, of Pittsburgh, Pa., was the first Negro to win the Silver Star in Italy. He got it for taking 12 wounded paratroopers from the front lines to safety in his truck, after officers said it could not be done.

When he was told that he could not make it because the water of a raging torrent he had to ford to get to the wounded paratroopers was too deep, Private Marsh replied: "Well, there's dirt underneath ain't there?" and he proceded to ford it.

Under terrific enemy fire, he drove his truck through water up to the hubs of the wheels to get to the wounded men. On the return trip, he tried another route, but it turned out to be just as bad. He had to dig his truck out of the muck and mire again and again. For 30 minutes during the trip, the Germans were trying to get him and his truck with heavy mortar and artillery fire.

Another hero of the Ninety-second Division was Second Lt. Vernon J. Baker, of Cheyenne, Wyo., a rifle platoon leader. He won the Distinguished Service Cross for the brav-

ery he exhibited in action on 2 days, April 5 and 6, 1945, near Viareggio, Italy. The citation reads:

"Second Lieutenant Baker demonstrated outstanding courage and leadership in destroying enemy installations, personnel, and equipment during his company's attack against a strongly entrenched enemy in mountainous terrain.

"When his company was stopped by the concentrated fire from several machine-gun emplacements, he crawled to one position and destroyed it, killing three Germans. Continuing forward, he attacked an enemy observation post and killed its two occupants.

"With the aid of one of his men, Second Lieutenant Baker attacked two more machine-gun nests, killing or wounding the four enemy soldiers occupying these positions. He then covered the evacuation of the wounded personnel of his company by occupying an exposed position and drawing the enemy's fire.

"On the following night Second Lieutenant Baker voluntarily led a battalion advance through enemy mine fields and heavy fire toward the division objective. Second Lieutenant Baker's fighting spirit and daring leadership were an inspiration to his men and exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces."

One of the officers of the Ninety-second Division awarded posthumously the Silver Star for gallantry in action was Capt. Charles F. Gandy, Jr., of Washington, D. C. On October 12, 1944, Captain Gandy was ordered to deploy his company in reinforcement of another company in position on difficult mountainous terrain. His citation states:

"He personally led his company out in broad daylight and, through further reconnaissance and by personal example and leadership, succeeded in getting his entire company across a canal, with an abrupt 12-foot wall. This was accomplished in rain and under extremely heavy enemy fire.

"Halting the company at its intermediate objective, Captain Gandy went forward alone to reconnoiter the route of the next movement. While engaged in this activity, he was mortally wounded by enemy machine-gun fire. His outstanding gallantry and leadership in combat exemplifies the heroic traditions of the United States Army."

Lt. Theodore O. Smith, aged 24 years, was killed in action in Italy on February 11, 1945, 1 month after he had been awarded the Silver Star for his bravery in leading a small patrol on a mission that netted the Americans two Nazi prisoners and four enemy dead. According to the citation, Lieutenant Smith led his 14-man patrol 2 miles across a mined area through enemy lines to climb up a mountain where the enemy was holding out.

Risking his life to lead the mission, his action made it possible for the Americans to accomplish their objective and capture a strategically important point on the Fifth Army front. Lieutenant Smith was a native of the District of Columbia. He was graduated from Dunbar High School and received the degree of bachelor of arts from Howard University, where he was a captain in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

First Lt. John M. Madison was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action with the Ninety-second Division in Italy on February 8 and 10, 1945. The first action for which he was cited occurred after his company had taken its objective against light enemy resistance. Immediately afterwards the enemy subjected the position to terrific artillery and mortar fire which killed or wounded all officers except Lieutenant Madison.

"Extremely heavy casualties and the loss of leadership disorganized the company, and it sought to withdraw," the citation said. "First Lieutenant Madison quickly gathered the remaining 15 men, and regardless of continuing enemy fire put them into positions to hold the hill. By sheer personal courage and disregard for his own life, First Lieutenant Madison inspired his men to repel three separate enemy counterattacks aimed exclusively at their position. He withdrew only upon orders. Two days later he captured seven enemy soldiers while leading his company in an attack routed through an extensive unmarked mine field."

*Killed in subsequent action*

Lieutenant Madison was killed in subsequent action with the Ninety-second Division on April 5, 1945.

First Lt. William E. Porter, of Indianapolis, who was also awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, exposed himself to enemy arms while his company advanced on its objective under a hail of machine-gun fire. With his unit pinned to the ground, Lieutenant Porter succeeded in eliminating the machine-gun nest, killing the German officer in command and forcing the gun crews to surrender.

During a patrol action Staff Sgt. Mansfield Mason, of Baltimore, Md., distinguished himself by heroic conduct. Acting on information that some Germans had been seen to enter a house near a village, his patrol surrounded the building and effectively covered all of its approaches. Sergeant Mason then crawled to within 30 feet of the house in the face of withering machine-gun fire. He hurled three hand grenades into the building and shifted his position slightly. Out walked five Germans, including an officer, to surrender.

Among the Negro units operating outside the Ninety-second Division in Italy was a signal construction battalion, assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force. This battalion established a record. It installed and maintained 2,300 miles of open wire, 500 miles of field wire, and 100 miles of cable in its first 4 months in Italy.

EUROPEAN THEATER

*Combat troops*

Slightly under 9 percent of the 259,173 Negro troops reported in the European Theater of Operations on May 15, 1 week after VE-day, belonged to combat organizations.

Twenty-two Negro combat units participated in the operations of the American Expeditionary Forces against the Wehrmacht. These were: The Three Hundred and Thirty-third, Three Hundred and Forty-ninth, Three Hundred and Fiftieth, Three Hundred and Fifty-first, Five Hundred and Seventy-eighth, Six Hundred and Eighty-sixth, Seven Hundred and Seventy-seventh, Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth, and Nine Hundred and Ninety-ninth Field Artillery Battalions; Four Hundred and Fifty-second Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion; Seven Hundred and Sixty-first and Seven Hundred and Eighty-fourth Tank Battalions; Six Hundred and Fourteenth and Eight Hundred and Twenty-seventh Tank Destroyer Battalions; One Hundred and Eighty-third, One Hundred and Eighty-fourth, Sixteen Hundred and Ninety-fifth, Sixteen Hundred and Ninety-sixth, Sixteen Hundred and Ninety-seventh, Sixteen Hundred and Ninety-eighth, Sixteen Hundred and Ninety-ninth, and Seventeen Hundredth Engineer Combat Battalions.

The Three Hundred and Twentieth Barrage Balloon Battalion was the only Negro combat unit to take part in the initial landings on the Normandy coast on June 6. Classified as an antiaircraft organization, it was the only American unit of its type in Europe but was transferred from the theater before the end of the war.

Men from the Three Hundred and Twentieth Barrage Balloon Battalion waded ashore in the early hours of D-day, struggling with their "flying beer bottles" which they had brought across the channel on LSI's and LST's on the first assault waves. They brought their balloons to the shoreline, dug in with infantrymen of the First and Twenty-ninth Divisions, and proceeded under fierce enemy fire to erect a protective curtain of silver barrage balloons that proved highly effective in combating strafing German aircraft.

Negro artillerymen of the Three Hundred and Thirty-third Field Artillery Battalion landed their 155-millimeter howitzers in Normandy on D plus 10 and went into action shortly afterward as a unit of the Eighth Corps. Their first mission was to fire in support of the Ninetieth Infantry Division and take part in the bloody battles at St. Jores, Lessay, Hill 95, and Hill 122 in the Foret de Monte Castret.

This unit swept through the Avranches corridor with the Third Army and did considerable firing in Brittany at St. Malo and Brest. When the German counteroffensive in the Ardennes began, the Three Hundred and Thirty-third had batteries staggered in Belgium and across the German border near Schoenberg.

LOSSES SEVERE

Along with United States units like the One Hundred and Sixth and Twenty-eighth Infantry Divisions, the Three Hundred and Thirty-third Field Artillery received the full fury of the spearhead thrust of Von Rundstedt's attack at the point of impact. Losses in men and equipment were severe. The battalion commander was captured and most of two gun batteries were casualties.

Survivors of this action and recently liberated prisoners captured during the fight told of stubborn resistance and examples of high courage by the artillerymen that prolonged the battle after large groups of men had been surrounded.

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"We took our toll of Germans before we went down, either because we ran out of ammunition or because some of us were hopelessly cut off," reported one Negro LAMP of the unit, shortly before sailing for the United States from Le Havre.

The Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth Field Artillery Battalion, another medium howitzer outfit, was the only Negro artillery unit in Europe to receive a Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation. It had fought through the Normandy, and northern France, campaigns, providing artillery backing for infantrymen of a number of United States divisions. When the Ardennes breakthrough started, the Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth received orders to displace its guns and withdraw in the direction of Bastogne, Belgium.

It reached that little city in time to be pressed into service by the acting commander of the One Hundred and First Airborne Division, then Brig. Gen. W. A. McAuliffe, and to earn for itself a place in American military history as one of the units making up the gallant garrison that fought against overwhelming odds to save the strategically vital rail and road junction.

The Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth Field Artillery Battalion received its Distinguished Unit Citation along with the One Hundred and First Airborne Division and other attached units which formed the garrison that fought the epic Battle of Bastogne. The citation reads:

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

"These units distinguished themselves in combat against powerful and aggressive enemy forces composed of elements of eight German divisions during the period from December 18 to 27, 1944, by extraordinary heroism and gallantry in defense of the key communications center of Bastogne, Belgium.

"Essential to a large-scale exploitation of this break-through into Belgium and northern Luxemburg, the enemy attempted to seize Bastogne by attacking constantly and savagely with the best of his armor and infantry. Without benefit of prepared defenses, facing almost overwhelming odds, and with very limited and fast-dwindling supplies, these units maintained a high combat morale and an impenetrable defense, despite extremely heavy bombing, intense artillery fire, and constant attacks from infantry and armor on all sides of their completely cut-off and encircled position.

"This masterful and grimly determined defense denied the enemy even momentary success in an operation for which he paid dearly in men, matériel, and eventually morale. The outstanding courage and resourcefulness and undaunted determination of this gallant force is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

FIRST ROUND ACROSS RHINE

The Seven Hundred and Seventy-seventh Field Artillery Battalion was the only Negro 4.5-inch gun unit in the ETO and fought with the Ninth Army. One distinction claimed by the Seven Hundredth and Seventy-seventh is that it fired the first American artillery round across the Rhine River near Munchen-Gladbach.

Other veteran ETO Negro artillery units were the Nine Hundred and Ninety-ninth Field Artillery Battalion, which fired its 8-inch howitzers from lower Normandy to central Germany, and the Five Hundred and Seventy-eighth, another 8-inch howitzer unit that helped to stem the Nazi tide in the Ardennes in December and January.

In early November the Seven Hundred and Sixty-first Tank Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Paul L. Bates, of Boonton, N. J., was committed at attached armor of the Twenty-sixth Infantry Division in the Third United States Army, becoming the first Negro tank unit to go into action.

The Seven Hundred and Sixty-first fought in six European countries—France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria—and was at various times attached to the Third, Seventh, and Ninth United States Armies. During these campaigns the batallion furnished tank support for the Twenty-sixth, Seventy-first, Eighty-seventh, Seventy-ninth, One Hundred and Third Infantry Divisions, and the Seventeenth Airborne Division during the Battle of the Bulge.

Eight enlisted men of the unit won battlefield commissions. Decorations included 40 Bronze Stars, 8 Silver Stars, 3 of them posthumously awarded.

These Negro tankers spearheaded the famous Task Force Rhine, which crashed through the rugged mountain defenses of the Siegfried line in the Nieder Schlettenbach-Reisdorf-Klingenmunster area. Task Force Rhine consisted of the Seven Hundred and Sixty-first Tank Battalion, the Second





Battalion of the One Hundred and Third Infantry Division's Four Hundred and Ninth Regiment, a detachment of combat engineers, and a recon platoon from the Six Hundred and Fourteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion, a Negro outfit. In 3 days the task force opened up a big hole in the Siegfried defenses through which passed the Fourteenth Armored Division on March 24.

Another Negro tank unit, the Seven Hundred and Eighty-fourth, arrived in Europe in time to assist the Thirty-fifth Infantry Division in crossing both the Roer and Rhine Rivers and the subsequent fighting that followed these crossings.

MOST BRILLIANT RECORD

Probably no other Negro combat unit in Europe achieved as brilliant a record, both in terms of consistently outstanding performance in battle and excellence of morale, as did the Six Hundred and Fourteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion. Commanded by Lt. Col. Frank S. Pritchard, a white officer from Lansing, Mich., the unit was mainly officered by Negroes.

The unit moved into position with the Ninety-fifth Infantry Division in front of Metz in November, but soon after was transferred to the One Hundred and Second Infantry Division of the Seventh Army, where it remained as attached tank-destroyer support until the end of the war.

For outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy at Climbach, France, on December 14, 1944, the third platoon of company C of the Six Hundred and Fourteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion received a distinguished unit citation. The citation itself tells graphically the grim, heroic nature of the action:

"The third platoon was an element of a task force whose mission was to storm and capture the strategically important town of Climbach, France, on the approaches of the Siegfried line. Upon reaching the outskirts of the town, the task force was halted by a terrific hail of fire from an enemy force firmly entrenced in the surrounding woods and hills overlooking the route of approach. The only position available for direct fire upon the enemy was an open field.

"As the Third Platoon moved into position, its commander and several men were wounded. Undeterred by heavy enemy small arms, mortar and artillery fire, which was now being directed against their position, the men of the Third Platoon valiantly set up their 3-inch guns and delivered accurate and deadly fire into the enemy positions. Casualties were mounting; two of their four guns were knocked out; nevertheless, the remaining crew members heroically assisted in the loading and firing of the other guns. At the height of the battle, enemy infantry converged on the position from the surrounding woods, threatening to wipe out the platoon's position.

"While a few members of the gun crews remained firing the 3-inch guns, others manned machine guns and individual weapons, laying down a devastating curtain of fire which inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy and successfully repulsed the attack. During the fire fight an ammunition shortage developed, and gun crews were reduced to skeleton size, one man loading, aiming, and firing, while the other men repeatedly traveled a distance of 50 yards through a hail of mortar and small arms fire, to obtain shells from a half-track which had been set on by a direct hit from an enemy mortar shell.

"Heedless of possible injury men continuously exposed themselves to enemy fire to render first aid to the wounded. In this engagement, although the platoon suffered over 50 percent casualties and lost considerable matériel, its valorous conduct, in the face of overwhelming odds, enabled the task force to capture its objective.

"The grim determination, the indomitable fighting spirit and the esprit de corps displayed by all members of the Third Platoon reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States."

INFANTRY

In December 1944 several thousand Negro soldiers answered a general appeal for volunteers for training as infantry riflemen. Some 2,500 volunteers from Negro units of communications zone were trained at a ground forces reinforcement command depot at Noyons, France, and committed to action with infantry and armored divisions of the First and Seventh Armies as assigned platoons and companies.

The setting of a quota for these Negro infantrymen resulted in the rejection of nearly

8,000 other Negro GI's who wanted to fight at the front.

In a story carried in its Paris edition on March 19, the Stars and Stripes announced the presence in the line of Negro infantrymen and said: "Long contemplated, the plan of mixing white and colored doughboys in fighting units was launched not as an experiment in race relations but as an answer both to the needs of the military situation and repeated requests by Negro service troops for an opportunity to get into the war as combat men."

The men gave many reasons for having volunteered. Some were sick and tired of dull rear-echelon activity. Many went in for idealistic reasons, determined to disprove the myth that Negroes are poor combat soldiers and lacking in courage.

Said Pfc Leroy W. Kemp, from Atlantic City, N. J.: "We're all in this thing together now—white and Negro Americans in the same companies—and that's how it should be. That's why I volunteered. Most Negro troops are in service units. We've been giving a lot of sweat. Now, I think, we'll mix some blood with it."

The record shows clearly that these men gave an extraordinarily fine account of themselves in combat, captured and killed hundreds of Germans, earned many decorations for front-line heroism, and won praise and respect from their white fellow infantrymen.

Negro rifle platoons fought with the First, Second, Eighth, Ninth, Sixty-ninth, Seventy-eighth, Ninety-ninth, and One Hundred and Fourth Infantry Divisions of the First Army, and Negro companies joined armored infantry battalions of the Twelfth and Fourteenth Armored Divisions.

"If comments of white personnel of these divisions are any indication, the plan of mixing white and colored troops in fighting units, a departure from previous United States Army practice, is operating successfully," a Stars and Stripes staff writer reported in an article in the paper's April 6 issue.

### FRIENDLY WELCOME EVERYWHERE

Negro reinforcements reported a sincere, friendly welcome everywhere. They also spoke of excellent relations with their white fellow-doughs, of the making of inter-racial friendships.

One company commander's comment was typical, "The integration of the Negro platoon into this unit was accomplished quickly and quietly. There was no problem."

In its first action the Negro platoon of K Company of the Three Hundred Ninety-fourth Infantry Regiment of the Ninety-ninth Division, led an attack on the town of Honningen across the Rhine River, cleared one-fourth of it and captured over 250 prisoners.

Another platoon with E Company of the Three Hundred Ninety-third Regiment of the same division got its baptism of fire on March 25 when it attacked German positions near Jahrfeld, Germany. Employing marching fire, they advanced, routing the Germans, knocking out a Mark IV tank and a flak wagon, killing 48 of the enemy and capturing 60. These men gained their objective, Hill 373.

The Negro platoon of Company G of the Two Hundred Seventy-third Infantry Regiment helped the Sixty-ninth Infantry Division to become the first American unit to make contact with the Russian forces. During the platoon's first combat action at Hann Munden, Staff Sergeant Ames Shipper, of Philadelphia, Pa., took 118 prisoners from a barn.

This platoon was later attached to the Ninth Armored Division's Combat Command A for the drive across the German plains to the Mulde River. This platoon helped in the capture of Falkenharst, Wersenfeld, and a number of other German towns during this drive.

On VE-day, May 8, a group from the Negro platoon led by Lt. H. C. Hind, Los Angeles, Calif., and Staff Sgt. Elmans Starks, Washington, D. C., crossed the Elbe River, met Russian troops and held a victory celebration. It was the first time that these Russians had seen American Negroes and they exchanged stories and souvenirs and had a victory feast.

Sgt. Edgar E. Zeno, a member of the Negro platoon of G Company of the Thirty-ninth Infantry Regiment of the Ninth Infantry Division, received the Silver Star for "gallantry in action against the enemy." Near Siedlinghausen, Germany, Zeno's company met heavy enemy machine-gun fire. Zeno worked his way across open terrain, armed with a BAR, firing all the while.

Twenty-five yards from the machine-gun position, he hurled a hand grenade and rushed the emplacement. His action led to





the capture of the machine-gun position, during which he killed 7 Germans, wounded 3, and enabled his unit to take 60 more prisoners.

### ANOTHER SILVER STAR

Another Silver Star recipient was Pfc June Jefferson, Jr., of Company A, Four Hundred and Fourteenth Infantry Regiment of the One Hundred and Fourth Infantry Division. The award citation stated:

"When an enemy tank crashed through a road block and entered a recently captured town, Private Jefferson voluntarily and at great risk of his life, crossed open, fire-swept terrain in the face of direct fire from the tank, made his way to the house where the tank was located, and dropped incendiary and fragmentation grenades into the open turret of the tank, causing it to catch fire.

"As the crew emerged, he killed them with his rifle. He then returned to his position and quickly organized an assault of the enemy riflemen who were supporting the tank, killing, wounding, or capturing all of the enemy infantrymen."

One of the finest tributes paid these volunteer infantrymen came from Brig. Gen. Charles T. Lanham, assistant commander of the One Hundred and Fourth Infantry Division, following the presentation of combat decorations of 11 of the men.

"I have never seen any soldiers who have performed better in combat than you," General Lanham told the Negro doughboys.

### SIGNAL CORPS

During the campaign against the German Army in Europe, 5,500 Negro Signal Corps troops belonging to 20 signal units participated in the vital battle of communications.

These Negro troops worked in two main types of Signal Corps units—light and heavy signal construction battalions and companies.

Negro units that participated in various campaigns were the Twenty-fifth, Twenty-ninth, Thirty-seventh, Fortieth, Forty-first, Forty-second, Forty-third, and Forty-fourth Signal Construction Battalions, and the Two Hundred and Fifty-eighth, Two Hundred and Fifty-ninth, Two Hundred and Sixty-first, Two Hundred and Sixty-seventh, Two Hundred and Sixty-eighth, Two Hundred and Sixty-ninth, Two Hundred and Seventieth, Two Hundred and Seventy-fifth, Five Hundred and Thirty-fourth, Five Hundred and Thirty-fifth, Five Hundred and Thirty-seventh, and Four Hundred and Ninety-sixth Signal Construction Companies.

Negroes comprised 7½ percent of the total Signal Corps personnel in the European theater.

Several of these units made communications history. Negro signal outfits laid wire from the hedgerowed fields of Normandy, across France, Luxemburg, and Belgium deep into Germany.

A recent estimate of communications wire put in by Negro troops released by communications zone headquarters included these figures: Over 10,000 miles of open wire set up, over 500 miles of field wire, and over 500 miles of rubber and lead spiral 4 cable.

The Twenty-ninth Signal Construction Battalion arrived in France on D plus 9 and 10. Its first major mission—rehabilitation of the Chef du Pont-Valognes railroad pole line, was accomplished in the face of enemy snipers, mines, and artillery fire.

After this the Twenty-ninth moved into Carentan on June 22, shortly after the town had been liberated by United States forces, and repaired damaged telephone lines frequently under heavy German artillery fire.

Another Negro Signal Corps unit—the Forty-first Signal Construction Battalion—arrived on the Continent on D plus 20 and was assigned to the rehabilitation of damaged French lines. The first line started at Valognes, Normandy, and ran into Cherbourg, where the Forty-first signal men worked before the city was completely cleared of enemy resistance.

The unit set up about 200 miles of open-wire pole lines and 40 miles of underground lead-covered cable. This latter is reported to be the longest underground cable laid in Europe by any one signal unit. The Forty-first also installed the communications system for the continental headquarters of communications zone during the Normandy campaign, and assisted with the installation of communications for the first SHEAF continental command post.

The Forty-first Signal Construction Battalion was officially commended for its work in Normandy by Maj. Gen. W. S. Rumbough, chief signal officer of the ETO, who said: "This is to commend the officers and enlisted men of the Forty-first Signal Construction Battalion upon the construction work in connection with the establishment of the

headquarters communications zone signal system. The work was done at high speed, and the men worked far in excess of their normal working schedule to accomplish their job."

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Chemical Warfare Service headquarters in the European theater of operations has disclosed that of the 9,500 Chemical Warfare Service troops in the theater on VE-day, 2,442 of these were Negro enlisted men and officers. Other Negro Chemical Warfare Service units were the three chemical decontamination companies, the Twenty-fifth, Thirty-second, and Thirty-fourth.

All of the smoke-generator units were not used in their primary function of manufacturing artificial fog, several being diverted to trucking operations under Transportation Corps supervision.

The record shows that the smoke-generator companies which saw action performed excellently, often under heavy enemy fire, winning praise from infantry commanders and chemical officers.

The Eighty-fourth Chemical Smoke Generator Company arrived in France on D-plus-1, but did not engage in smoking operations during the early part of the Normandy campaign. Its first important combat test came when it was attached to the Fifth Infantry Division in the latter part of Sepember 1944.

The Fifth Division was in the Moselle River Valley region and meeting severe German resistance there. The Eighty-fourth provided smoke for the screening of bridge-building operations across the river and materially assisted in the winning of the first major United States bridgehead east of the Moselle in that part of the valley.

There were casualties among the smoke men and a number of them distinguished themselves by gallantry under observed enemy artillery fire.

After watching men of the Eighty-fourth perform under fire during this action, the commander of the Tenth Infantry Regiment told them: "If I could, I would award the combat infantryman badge to all of you."

Some idea of the difficulties encountered during the Moselle operations can be obtained from reading the company operations record. The report covering the period November 12 to November 18 has the following facts recorded concerning the smoking of the Moselle crossing at Ancerville.

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"Artillery fire was continuous over the entire area on November 15. At approximately 1200 on November 16, artillery fire at positions 1, 2, and 3 and on the surrounding roads made it impossible to bring supplies to these generator positions. Two trucks and one generator were hit by shrapnel."

Another Negro unit, the Seventy-fourth Chemical Smoke Generator Company, made smoke to cover the Ninth Army's crossing of the Roer River in February. It was attached to the Eighty-fourth Infantry Division for the attack across the Roer.

The division G–3 reported that the company had completed its mission "in an excellent manner." The G–2 of the division also reported that 300 enemy artillery rounds landed in Linnich, Germany, in 5 minutes on February 22 while the Seventy-fourth was working there.

One of the greatest artificial fogs in military history was created in December 1944 by the all-Negro One Hundred Sixty-first Smoke Generator Company when it shrouded the upper Saar River Valley with a dense cloud of fog that completely obscured the movements of one entire division, the Ninetieth Infantry Division.

The Ninetieth Division was effectively concealed for nearly 2 weeks, it is reported, during which time the entire division crossed the Saar, established a bridgehead, wiped out 260 pillboxes, wrecked a portion of the Siegfried Line and killed hundreds of enemy soldiers.

During this operation the One Hundred Sixty-first fed 146,000 gallons of oil into their M2 smoke generators.

The One Hundred Sixty-third Chemical Smoke Generator Company was assigned to the job of screening the crossing of the Neckar River at Heilbronn, Germany, by the One Hundredth Infantry Division of the Seventh Army. The mission was successfully accomplished.

A report of the operation states simply: "Hostile artillery and rocket fire was intense."

This unit also assisted in screening the crossing of the Rhine River at Speyer, Germany, on March 25 and 26, in support of advance elements of the Seventy-first Infantry Division. Its mission was to support the division's river crossing and to divert the enemy's attention from the site of the major river crossing operation which was to take in another location.



Negro chemical smoke generator companies that operated on the Continent between D-day and VE-day were: The Eighty-first, Eighty-second, Eighty-third, Eighty-fourth, Eighty-fifth, Eighty-sixth, Eighty-seventh, Seventy-fourth, One Hundred and Sixty-first, One Hundred and Sixty-second, One Hundred and Sixty-third, One Hundred and Sixty-fourth, One Hundred and Sixty-fifth, One Hundred and Sixty-seventh, and One Hundred and Seventy-first Chemical Smoke Generator Companies.

Other Negro units in the Chemical Warfare Service were the Twenty-fifth, Thirty-second, and Thirty-fourth Chemical Decontamination Companies.

ORDNANCE

Of the 6,000,000 tons of ammunition handled by ordnance ammunition companies on the Continent between D-day and VE-day, more than 4,500,000 tons passed through the hands of Negro ordnancemen, Maj. Gen. Henry B. Sayler, chief ordnance officer of the ETO, said recently.

In releasing the figures on the amount of ammunition made available for use by United States fighting men, General Sayler paid high tribute to the 14,323 Negro enlisted men who accounted for 11 percent of the total ordnance personnel on the Continent.

"Not only did these Negro troops 'pass the ammunition,'" said General Sayler, "but on numerous occasions many of them fought the Germans, participated in patrols, and took prisoners."

The forward ammunition supply points operated by these Negro ordnancemen were the retail source for all types of ammunition, bullets, shells, fuzes, and propelling charges, served directly to infantry, artillery, and armored units. As such, these ammunition supply points were behind the front lines and on several occasions, in front of them, especially during periods of fluid fronts.

One ammunition company, the Six Hundred and Twenty-sixth, although it had moved into its new location, was unable to operate until the infantry had cleared the enemy artillery from a hill less than 2 miles away.

The peak of ammunition handling was reached shortly after the Germans were repulsd in their Ardennes break-through. During the period that followed, the 101 ammunition companies received and issued 24,000 tons per day, or seven to eight thousand tons over the average of 15,000 tons per day established in the European campaign.

In carrying out their mission of supplying ammunition to the men behind the guns, the Negro ordnancemen displayed courage time and again, General Sayler declared.

An example cited by General Sayler was the bravery demonstrated by the members of the Six Hundred and Fifty-fifth Ordnance Ammunition Company which unloaded a trainload of white phosphorous mortar shells on December 26, near Soissons, France, while shells were exploding around them. Their acts of heroism saved the French city from complete destruction.

Another noncombat Negro ordnance ammunition company earned the title of the "Fighting Fifty-sixth" when its members engaged 51 German SS troops near the Belgian border early in September. When the shooting was over, 36 Nazis were killed, 3 wounded, and the rest taken prisoner.

Of the 20 ordnance motor-vehicle distributing companies in the European theater of operations, two of them were manned by 430 Negro ordnancemen. These distributing companies furnished the combat troops with armored vehicles and service troops with the trucks necessary to keep the front-liners supplied.

The remainder of the Negro personnel, 165 in number, were active in the administrative divisions of battalion headquarters.

MEDICAL CORPS

Negro personnel formed 2.2 percent of the total European theater of operation medical service strength or 5,482, a statement released by the office of the chief surgeon of the European theater of operations disclosed.

Negro officers were distributed as follows: Medical officers, 51; Dental Corps, 28; Medical Administrative Corps, 17; and Nurse Corps, 67. Sixty-five of the Negro nurses are attached to the One Hundred and Sixty-eighth Station Hospital in England.

Working with divisions at the front the performance of Negro medics was particularly outstanding.

The Four Hundred and Twenty-eighth Medical Battalion operating with the First Army, carried more than 1,200,000 patients in their ambulances in evacuating wounded to rear areas.

684624—15135

Of the 230,000 patients hauled by the Five Hundred and Ninety-second Ambulance Company, only 2 were lost, those being caused by enemy action when an ambulance was strafed by enemy aircraft at Malmedy during the German counteroffensive last winter.

Typical of the heroism displayed by the medics is the story of Corp. Waverly B. Woodson, Jr., of Philadelphia, a medic of the Three Hundred and Twentieth Barrage Balloon Battalion.

At about 9:30 a. m. on D-day Corporal Woodson was wounded by shrapnel when the LST in which he was riding was damaged by a floating mine near the shore. The ship was under continuous mortar and machine-gun fire and was finally beached.

Corporal Woodson, along with three other enlisted men and an officer, went over the side of the LST onto the beach where they planned to set up a first-aid station. The shrapnel wound, which he had not noticed, was dressed by a member of the party. All other participants said that Corporal Woodson began caring for the wounded as a member of the group at 10 a. m. and remained on duty treating wounds ranging from bullet abrasions to intestinal wounds until relieved at 4 p. m. the next day.

When they were relieved Corporal Woodson found himself without bedding and started down the beach to acquire blankets. He was called by a group of soldiers who had been completing a landing operation by a rope attached to an LST out in the harbor and anchored to the beach. The rope had broken and three of the men attempting to land had been submerged. Corporal Woodson's Red Cross brassard attracted the soldiers on the beach and they called him to assist in giving artificial respiration, which he did. The three joined their companions after his treatment. Corporal Woodson was then sent to the hospital for further treatment of his wound.

Following an investigation by Lt. Col. Leon J. Reed, of the Three Hundred and Twentieth Barrage Balloon Battalion, a recommendation for an appropriate award has been made for Corporal Woodson.

### Corps of Engineers

Of the 259,173 Negro troops in the European theater of operations as of May 15, a little more than one in every five was an engineer soldier, according to information released by the office of the chief engineer of the European theater of operations.

On May 31 there were 54,600 Negro engineer enlisted men, 320 officers, and 54 warrant officers, of a total of 337,000 in the theater's engineer command. This total includes personnel of general service regiments, engineer dump-truck companies, engineer fire-fighting units, aviation engineer battalions, and separate battalions. There were 165 engineer units of all types.

A survey of Negro engineer units showed that Negro engineers participated in all of the main operations by United States forces on the continent which required engineering, from D-day landings and beachhead operations of June 1944, to the conquest of the Rhineland.

### DUMP TRUCKERS

One unit, the Five Hundred and Eighty-second Engineer Dump Truck Company, landed on Omaha Beach shortly after H-hour on June 6 and worked continuously up until and after the crossing and bridging of the Rhine.

The Five Hundred and Eighty-second was 1 of 58 Negro engineer dump-truck units in the ETO on May 31. This outfit came ashore on D-day with the One Thousand One Hundred and Sixth Engineer Combat Group, performing its "primary mission"—hauling bridging equipment and explosives. Almost immediately these dump truckers were conscripted to taxi combat personnel of the Eighty-second and One Hundred and First Airborne Divisions and the Fourth Infantry Division to forward areas.

Silver and Bronze Stars were awarded to several men of the unit for bravery under fire. First Sgt. Norman Day of Danville, Ill., received the Silver Star for heroism on the beach where he directed United States traffic under heavy shelling. Day also received the Purple Heart for wounds and the British Distinguished Service Medal.

During the Rhine crossing operations the Five Hundred and Eighty-second was significantly well up forward working as a XVI Corps unit, hauling crushed rock for bridge building operations.

These dump truck units worked all over Europe but rarely hit the head. The Four Hundred and Thirty-fourth, another Negro dump truck company assisted the One Thousand and Fifty-sixth Port Construction and Repair Group in rehabilitating the port of Cherbourg in July 1944. They worked day and night on a double shift basis, removing thousands of tons of debris that had accumulated from bombing and demolition work.





Not all of the work done by the engineer dump-truck units was in the rear areas, however. The following excerpt from the unit history of the Five Hundred and Seventy-second Engineer Dump Truck Company, a Negro unit, describes a front-line incident:

"July 3, 1944, Pvt. William Wright, Jr., wounded by enemy shell fire while on operations delivering engineer supplies to a bridge site which was under enemy fire."

On July 20 this unit was given the job of hauling road-building material and debris for filling craters and building bridge approaches ahead of the armored columns which broke through the day after the capture of Lessay in Normandy.

The following account of a strafing attack on a Negro dump-truck convoy near Fontainebleau, France, was written by one of the drivers, and illustrates the dangers and difficulties under which the men frequently operated:

"The German planes came in very low dropping flares, lighting the area as far as one could see. The AA guns answered back with steady streams of cross-fire. The convoy was brought to a halt. The men scrambled to their guns and opened fire in unison with the ack-ack barrage.

"The accurate fire sent up by the men made it impenetrable. The barrage continued for what seemed an eternity before all was quiet. The Germans had gone on leaving the main bridge destroyed, their only damage. The men descended from their guns reluctantly. After finding a new road the convoy continued and delivered our much-needed cargo."

### GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENTS

According to paragraph 318 of FM 5–5, which is the Engineer Field Manual, the mission of an engineer general service regiment is defined: "The engineer general service regiment performs general engineer work—particularly that requiring most skilled labor—throughout the Army service area and communications zone of the theater of operations. A general service regiment * * * is capable of executing extensive and permanent work."

This general phrasing of a general service regiment's function provided sufficient latitude for Negro general service units to perform a wide variety of tasks on the Continent, from erecting tent camps and welding to repairing damaged rail lines and all purpose excavations.

By VE-day 60 percent of all engineer general service regiments assigned or attached to communications zone were Negro units, 30 out of 50 reported on May 31.

When the Three Hundred and Fifty-sixth Engineer General Service Regiment moved into Granville, France, 4 days after the German garrison had left, it was given a few unexisting chores to do. One battalion was assigned to clearing and rehabilitating buildings and quarters in the city, removing debris, wiring, plumbing, and glazing a number of three-story houses.

"In addition," the regimental record states, "two kitchens were constructed and additional latrines and washrooms erected, showers installed, and an area of some 36,000 square feet graded and cleared."

After doing this, the regiment went to work on maintenance and repair of the road net from Granville to Vire to Mortain and Avranches, and all minor roads, a total of 245 miles of road net. The work consisted of repairing bomb craters and holes, "resurfacing of shoulders and general maintenance."

By and large this is the kind of work general service regiments were given to do. But it was precisely this work of rehabilitation and maintenance that helped to keep communications zone functioning.

Another Negro general service regiment, the Ninety-fifth, arrived in France July 8. It had worked on the Alcan Highway to Alaska and in Wales. Its first operational mission said: "Road construction and maintenance, debris clearing and street reconstruction in the Valognes and Cherbourg areas."

But during this job mines and booby traps were encountered in hundreds. They had to be removed and defuzed. The regiment also built during this period a very important traffic circle in the heart of shattered Valognes. Through that circle passed a vast and vital flow of traffic between Cherbourg and the beaches, toward the front.

This regiment was officially commended by Lt. Gen. C. H. Lee, communications zone commander, for its work in constructing communications zone headquarters at Valognes.

Another job assigned to the Ninety-fifth was the rehabilitation of a single rail track from Alencon to Mortagne, France. How the job was completed is told in the regimental history:

"Three days were spent on removal of explosives in the yards at Mesles-sur-Sarthe before any heavy equipment could be put to work. The railroad bridge at Bressy-Mangis was damaged as a result of enemy demolitions, but the span was not completely dropped from the abutment, and a trestle bent placed under the end after jacking provided suitable bearing. The attempted demolition of the trestles themselves were very ineffective, and they were repaired in place by welding and patching.

"On September 2 a test run was made over the line with a locomotive. On the 4th the project was finished."

Another Negro general service regiment, the Three Hundred and Ninety-second, was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for work performed between September 23 and December 31.

"Despite numerous difficulties," the citation order states, "including inclement weather and limited supplies, this unit efficiently accomplished several difficult and hazardous projects. The enterprise, ingenuity, and unremitting diligence displayed by the members of the Three Hundred and Ninety-second Engineer General Service Regiment were in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States."

The Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded for "superior performance of duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks."

### TRANSPORTATION CORPS

Negro troops made an impressive contribution to the operations of the Transportation Corps from D-day to VE-day, a survey compiled from information obtained from ETO Transportation Corps headquarters showed.

The mission of the Army's Transportation Corps is to transport men and supplies. Statistics released by the office of Maj. Gen. Frank S. Rose, chief of transportation in the European theater, indicate the magnitude of its achievements as well as the extent of Negro participation in the operations of the corps.

Of a total of 157,327 troops in the Transportation Corps in the ETO, reported on May 3, 1944, 69,914 of these were in Negro units—or 44.4 percent.

Thirty-two of the forty-one port battalions reported were Negro, while out of 50 separate port companies in the theater 38 were Negro, making a personnel total of 31,763 in all Negro port units.

In the quartermaster truck field, 316 of the 453 quartermaster truck companies operating under Transportation Corps control were Negro companies. Ten of the nineteen quartermaster groups were Negro, and there were 31 Negro battalions among the 86 quartermaster battalions listed. There was one Negro quartermaster car company, the Five Hundred and Twenty-fourth, and four Negro chemical smoke generator companies under Transportation Corps command.

### PORT BATTALIONS

When the first United States elements reached the French coast in June, Transportation Corps units were among them and the battle of the beaches merged with the vital and hard-fought battle of supply.

Negro troops of the Transportation Corps were in the initial waves on D-day, came ashore with the engineer brigades and helped start what eventually became the greatest supply operation in military history.

The Normandy supply battle was won by units like the Four Hundred and Ninetieth Port Battalion, which came in with the second tide on D-day and unloaded crucial supplies of ammunition, food, and equipment to be used by the assault troops.

"We were in holes dug in on the beach when artillery fire from the bluffs started giving us hell," Corp. Joseph McLeod, of Tampa, Fla., a checker who landed with the Four Hundred and Ninetieth recalled. "That was about 10 in the morning. After it slackened, we got up and went to our LCT and unloaded 105 millimeter shells."

Another Four Hundred and Ninetieth man, Staff Sgt. Fred B. Jones, of Hazelhurst, Miss., was in charge of a platoon on an LCT carrying a load of antitank mines, detonators, and fuzes. He said:

"We stacked the stuff up on the beach and then moved it inland. We were lucky that stuff didn't get hit by shellfire. We made a





human chain and passed the cargo inshore by hand."

Other Negro units that arrived on D-day, D plus 1, and the first week of the beachhead fight were the Four Hundred and Ninety-fourth and Five Hundred and Second Port Battalions.

These operations were constantly under fire. To keep the invasion moving, men and supplies had to be discharged with split-second timing, and men worked the ships until exhausted. Work shifts ran into one another and men continued to volunteer to unload ships under hazardous conditions that included direct artillery fire and strafing.

"As one of the few regularly constituted Services of Supply units selected to accompany the Combat Engineer Battalions in the establishment of the beachhead, the Five Hundred and Second Port Battalion suffered some casualties," the unit history laconically reports. Their casualties included the battalion's commanding officer, Lt. Col. James T. Pierce, of Erie, Pa.

This unit sailed for France on June 2 and started unloading on the morning of the 7th. In accomplishing its mission in "Plan Neptune," as the invasion was called, the Five Hundred and Second met problems that were complicated by the element of "calculated risk." The record indicates it solved them all.

The GI stevedores had to devise special slings for handling bundles of pierced steel planking, a type of cargo that proved a problem during the ship DUKW operation.

The job of unloading cargo at the beaches and the ports never stopped. Tonnage schedules were reached and exceeded. Unloading records were broken week after week.

By May 8, VE-day, total United States Army cargo arriving by water and discharged by port units amounted to 20,432,368 tons. How much of this was unloaded by Negro port units is not precisely known, but a general estimate can be obtained from the fact that 77 percent of all port units operating during this period were Negro units.

The next phase of the battle of supply following seizure of the beachhead and expansion of the Allied toehold on Europe, consisted of development of Cherbourg and the minor ports on the north side of the Normandy Peninsula. Negro port units worked all of these ports.

How the battle of supply during this period was won is tersely told in The Transportation Corps in the Battle of France, volume IV, which is the official history of the Transportation Corps operating in Europe. An excerpt reads:

"Front-line Transportation Corps units from the battle of the beaches—the port battalions and the DUKW companies—played their part in the unspectacular but equally important work of getting supplies into the port of Cherbourg. The port battalions marched to the embarkation point at 0730 where they were ferried by the Navy in LCM's to ships waiting at anchor. The same battalion was assigned every day to the same ship until it was finished, and if possible, each group was given the same hatch to work in order to increase its efficiency."

By August 15, 10,000 long tons had been discharged at this port in a single day by an unloading force that was overwhelmingly Negro.

Cherbourg was a key Allied port. Its reconstruction and development became a chief task of the Transportation Corps. Its development was vital to the speeding-up of military operations on the Continent. The whole supply build-up hinged on the exploitation of Cherbourg. Much credit for the success of the complicated and arduous Cherbourg operation must go to the port battalions and DUKW companies that brought the cargo ashore and to the port construction groups and special service engineers who repaired the harbor.

On July 21, the 11th Port moved from Omaha Beach into the small ports of St. Vasst, Carentan, and Barfleur, and continued work begun at Isigny and Grandcamp. Negro Transportation Corps units participated in all these operations, as well as in the development of the port of Granville.

The Negro contribution to the supply victory further can be gaged from the following facts. Progress of the campaign and the time factor would not permit development of the large Brittany ports as called for in the original plans. The military operations were supplied and supported by Cherbourg and the smaller Normandy ports. Through these small ports and Cherbourg, sufficient supplies were funneled to support the decisive break-through at St. Lo on July 25. Negro port and DUKW units handled the bulk of these supplies.

There were 53 ports in all, exclusive of Utah and Omaha Beaches, used by United States forces between D-day and VE-day. The largest were Le Havre, Antwerp, and Marseilles. As already stated the major share of tonnage handled came through the hands of Negro stevedores and crane operators.

AMPHIBIAN TRUCK COMPANIES

Six Negro DUKW companies, the Four Hundred and Sixty-seventh, Four Hundred and Sixty-eighth, Four Hundred and Sixty-ninth, Four Hundred and Seventieth, Eight Hundred and Nineteenth, and Eight Hundred and Twenty-first Amphibian Truck Companies, had been attached to the Eleventh Port for Plan Neptune, the invasion operation. The first of these, the Four Hundred and Sixty-eighth, arrived on D plus 10. Others followed shortly after and helped importantly in the solution of the critical supply problem.

The official Transportation Corps historian states: "Great difficulty was experienced in locating ships at night. DUKW's were sunk by striking submerged objects and one was lost through the explosion of a mine.

"Guts and nerve, and the willingness to work long hours to help the soldiers struggling to enlarge the beachhead won the day, however. By June 26, these men discharged 14 coasters and 11 motor-transport ships and supplies were being built up on a scale sufficient to enable the fighting men to turn the landing into an offensive of decisive proportions."

These DUKW's saved the day following the severe coastal storm of June 20–22 which wrecked all of the Loebnitz piers on the beaches and temporarily halted port battalion unloading. The DUKW's stepped into the picture and carried the cargo night and day, onto the beach and sometimes inland to the waiting combat troops.

During this period an Eleventh Port officer estimated that these DUKW units hauled ashore 94 percent of all cargo unloaded at Omaha Beach.

On May 30, there were 16 amphibian truck companies in the ETO, 10 of them Negro units with a total personnel of 1,730. They are still operating at Cherbourg and Le Havre. One Negro unit, the Four Hundred and Sixty-ninth, ferried supplies and personnel across the Rhine River during the attack that placed American forces on the east bank of the river.

684624—15135

TRUCK COMPANIES

As of May 30, 1944, 69 percent of all truck drivers in Transportation Corps' motor transport branch in the ETO were Negro. This average has remained much the same since the beachhead phase of the battle of Europe.

Some of these units have operated continuously since D-day. Negro cargo truck units landed vehicles and personnel on Omaha Beach on June 6. The Three Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty-third Quartermaster Truck Company had vehicles ashore on D-day. The Three Hundred and Seventieth Quartermaster Truck Company, a transportation unit, was scheduled to land 55 vehicles and 115 men on the beach on D-plus-1. Instead, it got 24 men and 12 trucks ashore as early as the morning of D-day.

The Four Thousand and Ninth Quartermaster Truck Company landed 115 men and 55 vehicles on the beach on D-plus-1. The Four Thousand and Forty-second Quartermaster Truck Company landed 6 men and 34 vehicles on D-day.

These men went through unforgettable experiences. What they did is starkly told in comments of some of the drivers of the Three Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty-third Quartermaster Truck Company, D-day veterans all:

Corp. Clavon Brown: "About 25 yards offshore 8 to 10 shells hit right near us. We hauled till 1800 on D-day. We dug in on the beach. Hauled ammunition on D-plus-2 while enemy planes strafed around us."

Pvt. George McLain: "After we got on the beach, an 88 burst my truck radiator. Hawkins, the mechanic, used the radiator from a deadlined truck to keep it running. On D-plus-4, I was nicked on the arm by a bomb fragment."

Pvt. Herman Copeland: "Eighty-eights were hitting all around us. We were just lucky. While hauling ammunition, bullets hit the corner of the gas tank and left door, just barely missing me."

Pvt. Walter Pearson, Jr.: "My truck drowned out and I had to swim into shore. A couple of grenades were thrown at my truck while I was hauling ammunition. On D-plus-3 a bomb dropped in front of the truck and tore up the radiator and both front tires. The fragments killed several foot soldiers. I also hauled some wounded from the lines."



After Cherbourg and the smaller ports in Normandy had been opened and operating, the main burden of transporting supplies fell on truck transportation. As the tactical situation improved and the military railway service started to operate its first trains, trucks were used to clear the ports, supplementing the rail lines whenever possible, and hauling troops and supplies to the combat areas.

The St. Lo break-through lengthened American supply lines enormously. But Transportation Corps's motor transport followed General Patton's Third Army, making possible exploitation of the break-through and maintenance of the speed of advance.

The first motor express line—the famous Red Ball Express—was started on August 25, 1944. It was built on the one-way traffic principle. Trucks were kept operating 22 hours out of 24 with only 2 hours reserved for maintenance. Drivers worked an average of 36 hours on the road without sleep.

At its peak Red Ball contained 67 percent Negro personnel. Its initial target was to haul 4,850 ton daily from the ports and beaches to Army or forward destinations. Peak reached by the system was 6,000 tons daily.

Between August 25 and November 13, Red Ball's 132 companies hauled 412,193 tons from the beaches and Normandy ports to the First and Third United States Armies. An average Red Ball Express route round trip was 546 miles.

As the supply situation dictated the closing down of Red Ball, other motor routes were opened from other ports.

There was White Ball, ABC, XYZ, Yellow Ball, Green Diamond, Red Lion, B–B (Bayeux to Brussels), Yellow Diamond. These were all important truck express routes which combined to form the world's greatest supply operation.

The motor express lines alone accounted for transport of 3,169,744 tons between D-day and VE-day.

Bombing and strafing were routine dangers for Transportation Corps drivers before Red Ball started operating.

RED BALL CITED

On behalf of General Eisenhower, Maj. Gen. E. S. Hughes, decorated Corp. Robert E. Bradley, of Lynchburg, Va., Negro truck driver of the Army's famed Red Ball Highway, with a Bronze Star Medal, and lauded the work of the thousands of Negro quartermaster truck drivers who are hauling vital front-line supplies over this 400-mile one-way loop, day and night, to the fighting fronts. It was awarded in symbol of all drivers.

Sixty percent of the drivers are Negroes. Stopping a huge convoy on the outskirts of Paris, Major General Hughes pinned the decoration on Corporal Bradley in a surprise ceremony which caught the entire trucking group unaware. He told them that he would have liked to present all of them with medals, but that "Bradley was chosen as a representative of the whole Red Ball Highway, including the men who repair the roads and bridges, put up the telephone wires and do all the service work in the rear.

"General Eisenhower realizes that you men seldom get the same recognition as soldiers in the front line and wants you to know that the part you're playing is vital. His message is for every man engaged on this vast project; the troops at the front couldn't do without you."

Maj. Gen. Frank Ross, Chief of Transportation, Communications Zone, disclosed that the route is four times the length of the Burma Road, and that in its first 26 days of operation it hauled and delivered more than 200,000 tons of supplies to advance depots, where front-line units pick it up with their hauling units.

Speedier supply became acutely necessary when Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army broke through at St. Lo, and began moving with lightning-like rapidity through France. And so the Red Ball Highway came into existence, with thousand of truck drivers pulling 24-hour a day shifts, as the long convoys rolled across specially designated one-way military highways through France.

The vast line has become the biggest chain of supply being maintained by United States forces today.

During Von Rundstedt's break-through in the Ardennes in December, hazards encountered by Transportation Corps' truckers in supporting front-line trops made the Normandy and central France operations look mild by comparison.

During the historic Bastogne fight drivers carried ammunition and food into United States pockets as German forces closed in behind them. There were times, too, when these drivers having delivered their cargo had

684624—15135

to take their individual weapons and dig in with the Infantry.

But the most impressive testimony to the work of the drivers of the Transportation Corps, including the 35,839 members of Negro Transportation Corps truck units, is the tremendous total tonnage forwarded by Motor Transport Service in Europe between June 17, 1944, and May 31, 1945. It is 22,644,609 tons.

PACIFIC THEATER

All through the Pacific campaign runs the story of the heroism of Negro soldiers. They were in at the start in the Philippines and at the finish too.

In fact, the first American soldier of the armored force killed in the Pacific theater was a Negro boy, son of a Kentucky sharecropper. He was Pvt. Robert H. Brooks, who died on the battlefield near Fort Stotsenburg, in the Philippines, on December 8, 1941. The main parade ground of the armored forces at Fort Know, Tenn., has been named Brooks Field in memory of Private Brooks.

The Ninety-sixth Engineer Battalion—later the Ninety-sixth Engineer Regiment—landed in Port Moresby, New Guinea, on April 29, 1942, the first American troops in New Guinea and probably the first American troops to face the enemy after Bataan.

In Alaska, the South, Southwest, and Central Pacific areas, and in the China-Burma-India theater, Negro troops played an important role in engineering activity. This included the construction of roads, airfields, ports, camps, and storage facilities and their maintenance.

Three of the seven Army engineer regiments—the Ninety-third, the Ninety-fifth, and the Ninety-seventh—which helped to build the Alcan Highway were Negro. The highway, 1,671 miles long, runs from Dawson Creek, northwest of Edmonton, Alberta, to Fairbanks, Alaska. Although most of the Negro soldiers in these regiments had never before been out of the South, only 140 men were incapacitated by the cold, and all except 4 recovered completely with no ill effects. The four suffered minor amputations.

After helping to blast through the brutal terrain of Alaska, building the Alcan Highway, the Ninety-seventh was transferred to the steaming jungles of New Guinea. There they struggled for a year or more in sweat, mud, and mire. While in Alaska this regiment adopted for its slogan: "No task too great." And it carried that slogan with it into the jungle.

A Negro aviation engineer battalion participated in the victory of the Battle of the Coral Sea, which was fought on May 7 and 8, 1942. It worked 24 hours a day to construct an airdrome in New Caledonia, which was effectively used by Army and Navy aircraft engaged in the battle. Their accomplishment was revealed in a commendatory report by Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch.

General Patch also told how members of the battalion unloaded gasoline from a supply ship which had anchored in an uncharted roadstead of the island. The Negro troops transferred the fuel ashore in rafts and moved it rapidly to the airdrome just in time to service aircraft which engaged the enemy in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Negro soldiers were engaged in combat in the Pacific in September 1942. An Australian dispatch of that date describes their first engagement. It relates an interview with three wounded men, who told how the tricky Japanese used a hospital ship as a shield in a surprise attack on Milne Bay at the tip of New Guinea. Two of the three soldiers were Negroes—Charles Brown, of Milwaukee, Wis., and Reginald Simonds, of Durham, N. C. They were in charge of an antiaircraft gun emplacement watching the harbor.

They saw the hospital ship moving in and thought that it was an American Red Cross vessel. Suddenly the ship "lit up like a Christmas tree" from the searchlights focused upon it from out in the bay. They were about to relax when someone yelled:

"It's a Jap cruiser."

They made out the outlines of a cruiser lying beyond the hospital ship.

The Americans trained their guns toward the cruiser hoping to get a chance to rake her decks, but the cruiser had the same idea. Every gun aboard her opened fire. After about 10 minutes when a shell from the cruiser hit the American gun position.

Hanson and Brown woke up in an ambulance headed for a field hospital. All the way to the hospital the wounded men were one jump ahead of Jap shells, which were hitting the road right behind the ambulance.

Simonds set up a machine gun on the edge of the Milne Bay airfield. Others did likewise. They watched for the arrival of Japanese ground forces who had been reported advancing through the jungle. Simonds was quoted as saying:

"I guess we did a pretty good job slaughtering those Japs when they came running out of the jungle. None knew very much about firing guns, but we knew enough to aim and keep them shooting at the Japs. And I guess that's all we had to know."

Both Brown and Simonds were seriously wounded; Brown by shrapnel and explosive shells and Simonds by machine-gun bullets and shrapnel. They were credited with saving the vital airdrome at Milne Bay by their quick perception, and response to the situation.

"ROAD TO TOKYO"

One of the most amazing construction feats of the war was the Ledo Road. Negro soldiers christened it "The Road to Tokyo." This highway from India to China via Burma was begun on December 12, 1942. Though they were originally brought in to construct United States airfields in Assam, a battalion of Negro aviation engineers was pressed into service as road builders after they had finished their initial assignment of building runways and dispersal areas. The road had just been started by the British Army with Indian labor when the Americans took over.

Three companies of the battalion spearheaded the drive into Burma from the Assam jungles in northeastern India. A Company cleared the point cutting a road wide enough for heavy Army vehicles. B Company did the drainage work, installing pipes up to 6 feet in diameter to carry off the monsoon rains into the huge ravines that line the winding mountain road. C Company widened, backfilled, and graded the road.

It was a round-the-clock job, 7 days a week. At night, drivers pushing their bulldozers into rock and dirt were always in danger of rolling too close to the edge of cliffs 500 feet high. In the weird light cast by smudge pots, gasoline-saturated bamboo or flaming 5-gallon fuel oil cans, they carved a road out of jungles and rock masses, 100 yards wide. They carried their highway up over mountain ranges, the Himalayas, that rise as much as 1,000 feet in 2 miles. One of the toughest spots was encountered just west of the India-Burma border line. A 100-yard formation of solid rock along an almost vertical cliff stopped the lead bulldozer cold. The 16-ton D–7 could not even get a bite into the cliff. So the air-line hose and jack-hammers were put into the job, cutting 8-foot holes in the rock for the charges of dynamite that blasted ledges for the bulldozer to follow.

Ultimately these men succeeded in making the impossible possible. With blood and sweat, they vanquished both the swampy, disease-infested jungles, and the skulking Japanese to create a desperately-needed supply route.

Three Negro enlisted men were awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious services rendered at Guadalcanal. They were Jesse Harris, private, Infantry, Tuskegee, Ala.; Henry Smith, Jr., private, Infantry, Good Pine, La.; and Verna C. Neal, private, Infantry, Ruleville, Miss. In announcing the awards, Secretary Stimson emphasized the fact that the recipients were all infantrymen, and that they were fighting in one of the most difficult theaters. These men abandoned the comparative safety of a slit trench, and advanced 250 yards over open terrain, exposed to bombing from an enemy air raid to assist in evacuating casualties. The undertaking was accomplished despite continued enemy action, causing impenetrable dust and confusion.

SOUTH PACIFIC

NINETY-THIRD DIVISION

On March 21, 1944 the commanding general, United States Army forces in the South Pacific area ordered the Ninety-third Infantry Division to move its Twenty-fifth Combat Team to Empress Augusta Bay Perimeter on Bouganville Island with the least practicable delay. The combat team was composed of the Twenty-fifth Infantry Regiment, Five Hundred and Ninety-third Field Artillery Battalion, Five Hundred and Ninety-sixth Field Artillery Battalion, Company A of the Three Hundred and Eighteenth Combat Engineer Battalion, Company A of the Three Hundred and Eighteenth Medical Battalion, one platoon of Company D, Three Hundred and Eighteenth Medical Battalion, Ninety-third Reconnaissance Troop, a detachment of the Ninety-third Signal Company, a detachment of the Seven Hundred and Ninety-third Ordnance Company, and a detachment of the Ninety-third MP Platoon.

By March 31, the Combat Team was in position and at 2:30 p. m., on April 2,

Pfc Isaac Moore of Brooklyn, N. Y., pulled the lanyard on the No. 2 gun of Battery A of the Five Hundred and Ninety-third Field Artillery which sent the first round fired by the Ninety-third Division into enemy positions. The Ninety-third Division was in combat.

On April 4, the Second Battalion of the Ninety-third Division which had been detached from the Americal Division and passed to operational control of the Commanding General of the Thirty-seventh Infantry Division closed with the enemy and killed approximately 25 Japanese soldiers.

Four men were lost by the A and P Platoon while it was returning from a supply mission to the Americal Division on Hill 500. These soldiers, Pfcs Hugh Carrol, Oginal I. Ryan, William W. Ash and Joseph C. Mallory, were the first men of the Ninety-third to be killed in action in this war.

On April 5, the men of the Five Hundred and Ninety-third Field Artillery received a commendation from Brig. Gen. W. C. Dunckly for their firing on the Numa Numa Trail.

On April 7, Company K contacted the enemy before an ambush could be established and in the fire fight that resulted one officer and 17 men were killed and 7 wounded. Our forces withdrew about 100 yards and called for artillery fire. All bodies were recovered and the men were buried in the Bouganville cemetery.

On April 15, litterbearers were subjected to enemy fire during the night and fought with as much vigor as the infantrymen. On one such occasion T5g Mose Wheeler, of Company A, Three Hundred and Eighteenth Medical Battalion, became the first casualty of his unit.

Thirty-five Japanees were killed by Company G on April 16 in repelling an attack by an enemy force aimed at a Fiji battalion located on the right of Company G. In this encounter the Five Hundred and Ninety-third Field Artillery fired 1,216 rounds.

Battle casualties of the Twenty-fifth Combat Team as reported through May 30, 1944, totaled 26 killed, 13 seriously wounded in action, and 27 slightly wounded in action.

The records of the War Department contain the names of many men such as Thomas J. Caveness, private, first class, Corps of Engineers, a native of Los Angeles, who was cited for heroism in risking his life in going to the assistance of his comrades buried under debris from an ammunition dump which had been set on fire by Japanese bombers.

LEGION OF MERIT AWARDS

The following Negroes received the Legion of Merit for performance in the Pacific theater of war:

Dennis Holt, staff sergeant, Infantry, Birmingham, Ala., and Isaac McGrew, Jr., staff sergeant, Infantry, Yazoo City, La.

Sergeant Holt was chief of a battalion wire section from May 4, 1942, to April 20, 1943, at a base in the South Pacific area. His leadership, skill, cheerfulness, and devotion to duty in the installation, maintenance, and operation of a wire net, in many respects comparable to that of a division, assured continuous communication. Without transportation, he led his men in cutting wire trails through miles of difficult jungle, in carrying wire up to a mountain top observation post, in crossing several miles of water to nearby islands, in all kinds of weather.

Sergeant McGrew was primarily responsible for the successful installation and maintenance of 300 miles of wire in the South Pacific area from May 15, 1942, to February 20, 1943. This task was performed under the most rigorous of tropical, climatic, and terrain conditions. By long hours, ingenuity, and perseverance, he performed remarkable feats of accomplishment.

The Silver Star was awarded to Mack B. Anderson, private, Corps of Engineers, Brenham, Tex., for gallantry displayed in the Asiatic theater of operations. During an attack by Japanese Zero fighters on an airfield in India, Private Anderson, while under continuous fire from the attackers, manned a machine gun until it went out of action, then continued firing with his automatic pistol while several Japanese fighters definitely centered their attack on him.

SOLDIER'S MEDAL FOR HEROISM

Several Negro soldiers received the Soldier's Medal for heroism in the Pacific area. Edward Williams, private, Quartermaster Corps, Hurtsboro, Ala., helped to extinguish a conflagration at a United States truck assembly plant in Iran, Persia. He risked his life to the peril of intense heat to save quantities of Government property from damage and destruction.

James Scott, private, Corps of Engineers, Montgomery, Ala., risked his life on June





25, 1942, near an airdrome in New Guinea to save a pilot. When a fighter plane, taking off to intercept enemy planes then overhead, struck a log and crashed into the nearby river splashing gasoline on the plane and water, and igniting both gasoline and ammunition. Private Scott in the midst of flames and exploding ammunition waded into the river and assisted in rescuing the pilot.

Roscoe E. Thomas, master sergeant, Corps of Engineers, Atlanta, Ga., went to the assistance of three comrades buried under debris from an ammunition dump which had been set on fire by Japanese bombers.

James Williams, private, Infantry, Indianapolis, Ind., saved two of his buddies from drowning when they slipped and fell into the ocean while embarking in the Solomon Islands. He immediately dived into the water to help them.

Columbus Howard, private first-class, Corps of Engineers, Inkster, Mich., proceeded within 200 yards of an exploding inferno to remove hot metal fragments from inflammable materials, and fought tirelessly to prevent the fire from spreading to other vital supply dumps.

Jesse E. Evans, private, Quartermaster Corps, Morristown, N. J., aided in the rescue of three sailors from the waters adjoining a United States island base in the South Pacific.

Private Evans was one of a party of soldiers working on a ship in the harbor when he heard the cry for help and located a small home-made boat not far away which had capsized. One of the three sailor occupants was unconscious and being held up by another. Without regard for his own safety, Private Evans plunged 40 feet over the side of the ship, swam to the men and helped keep the unconscious man afloat until a ship's launch could come alongside.

Nathaniel Hocker, sergeant, Coast Artillery, Brooklyn, N. Y., helped to save the life of a pilot on the island of Oahu, T. H., on March 24, 1944. With complete disregard for the gasoline flames and the danger of the unexploded bombs, Sergeant Hocker assisted in removing the pilot from a burning plane that had crashed near his gun position.

William Downing, technician fourth grade, Quartermaster Corps, Nyack, N. Y., plunged into the icy waters of the Bering Sea to rescue a soldier in danger of being crushed between a barge and a freighter.

Douglas D. Hopper, private first class, Corps of Engineers, Shelby, N. C., braved the treacherous currents of a river in India to rescue an officer.

OPINIONS ABOUT NEGRO INFANTRY PLATOONS IN WHITE COMPANIES OF SEVEN DIVISIONS

What do the white company grade officers and the white platoon sergeants in the European theater of operations think of the combat performance of Negro rifle platoons which were attached to their companies in March and April and fought side by side with white platoons through VE-day?

This question is answered by a survey, made in late May and early June 1945, by personally interviewing 250 respondents, namely, all available white company grade officers and a representative sample of platoon sergeants in 24 companies containing Negro platoons in several infantry divisions, namely, the First, Second, Ninth, Sixty-ninth, Seventy-eighth, Ninety-ninth, and One Hundred and Fourth. Standardized questions were used in the survey, which was conducted by five trained interviewers of the research branch, I and E Divisions, European theater of operations.

In all except one of the companies visited, the standard organization of three rifle platoons and one heavy infantry platoon had been augmented by one rifle platoon of colored soldiers. The colored platoons were made up of men from rear echelon units who volunteered for service with the infantry and were trained for approximately 6 weeks in reinforcement depots, usually by a white officer or noncom who later led them into combat.

In generalizing the opinions here reported, the fact that the Negro infantrymen in these platoons were volunteers must be kept in mind, as must also the fact that not all of the platoons experienced heavy and arduous fighting.

OPINIONS OF WHITE OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN IN COMPANIES WITH NEGRO PLATOONS

Question. How did you feel at first about serving in a company that had white platoons and colored platoons?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| Relatively unfavorable: Skeptical, didn't like it, thought it'd cause trouble, etc | 64 | 64 |
| Relatively favorable: Willing to try it, made no difference, didn't mind, etc | 33 | 35 |
| No answer | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Question. Has your feeling changed since having served in the same unit with colored soldiers?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| No; my feeling is still the same | 16 | 21 |
| Yes; have become more favorable toward them,[1] feel more respect for them, like them better, etc | 77 | 77 |
| No answer | 7 | 2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

[1] No cases were found in which an individual reported his attitude had become less favorable.

Question. How well did the colored soldiers in this company perform in combat?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| Not well at all | 0 | 0 |
| Not so well | 0 | 1 |
| Fairly well | 16 | 17 |
| Very well | 84 | 81 |
| Undecided | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

NOTE: In commenting on this question, respondents frequently gave detailed accounts of combat performance. Positive qualities stressed were aggressiveness in attack, effective use of fire-power, adeptness at close-in fighting, team-work in battle. Negative qualities reported in a few instances were that at first the men sometimes went forward too rapidly—too far in an attack. Some officers stressed the fact that these colored soldiers, being volunteers, may have had exceptional combat qualities. Others mentioned that in their units there had not been an adequate test under the most severe type of fighting, such as sustained attacks under heavy mortar or artillery fire. It should be noted, however, that the performance of the colored troops was rated just as high, if not higher, by the white officers and noncoms in those companies in which the colored platoons have had severe fighting as by respondents from other units.

Question. With the same Army training and experience, how do you think colored troops compare with white troops as infantry soldiers?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| Not as good as white troops | 5 | 4 |
| Just the same as white troops | 69 | 83 |
| Better than white troops | 17 | 9 |
| No answer | 9 | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Question. How have the white and colored soldiers gotten along together?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| Not well | 0 | 0 |
| Not as well in garrison as in in combat | 14 | 4 |
| Fairly well | 7 | 36 |
| Very well | 73 | 60 |
| No answer | 6 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

NOTE.—Replies are somewhat more favorable from white officers and white noncoms with a northern background than from those with a southern background, but differences in opinion are not great. Actual friction between white and colored soldiers is said to have been confined to isolated cases involving white soldiers from outside units who did not know the combat record of the colored troops. Evidence indicates that white and colored soldiers have gotten along best together in those units in which they have shared the heaviest combat. While many of the officers in further questioning expressed some doubt as to how well the situation would work out if their unit remains in the army of occupation, or other semipermanent garrison status, 9 out of 10 said there had been no difficulties as yet.





Question. If colored soldiers are used as infantry, do you think they should be set up by platoons as they are here, or would some other way be better?

| | *Percent white officers* | *Percent white noncoms* |
|---|---|---|
| In the same platoon with white soldiers | 7 | 1 |
| In a platoon within the same company | 62 | 89 |
| In separate companies | 18 | 12 |
| In separate battalions or larger organizations | 10 | 2 |
| No answer | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

NOTE.—Most of those interviewed volunteered one or more reasons for their answer.

Among those who favor the platoon basis, the reasons given, in order of frequency, are:

1. Competition - emulation (encourages friendly competition; each tried to make a good showing; gives them something to come up to).

2. Avoidance of friction (saves any chance of trouble to have them in their own platoon; because of the old feeling of boys from the South).

3. Better discipline and control among the colored soldiers (whites have a steadying influence on them; colored boys feel more secure in combat this way).

4. Feeling of participation or nondiscrimination on part of the colored soldiers (gives them the feeling of being with the white boys; avoids that feeling of being set apart and discriminated against).

5. Improved interracial understanding (work close enough together so they can each get to know the other better and see what they do).

Among the minority who favored separate companies or larger units, the main reasons given were avoidance of friction (especially in garrison situations) and better discipline. A few men gave as their reason their personal feeling of not wishing to be in a company containing colored troops.

### INDEPENDENT CHECK IN A CROSS-SECTION SURVEY

In the course of a survey of a representative cross section of 1,710 white enlisted men in ETO field forces, to ascertain men's information and orientation needs, two questions were asked about the use of Negro troops. This survey was independent of the interviews tabulated above.

The responses to the two questions asked in the cross-section survey were tabulated separately for four subgroups indicated below. The sample in some groups is small and therefore subject to a larger margin of error than is customary in research branch reports.

Question. Some Army divisions have companies which include Negro and white platoons. How would you feel about it if your outfit was set up something like that?

| | |
|---|---|
| Percentage of white enlisted men answering, "Would dislike it very much": | |
| Cross section of field force units which do not have colored platoons in white companies (1,450 cases) | 62 |
| Men in same division, but not in same regiment as colored troops (112 cases) | 24 |
| Men in same regiment, but not in same company as colored troops (68 cases) | 20 |
| Men in company with a Negro platoon (80 cases) | 7 |

Question: "In general, do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea to have the same company in a combat outfit include Negro platoons and white platoons?"

| | |
|---|---|
| Percentage of white enlisted men saying, "Very good idea" or "fairly good idea": | |
| Cross section of field force units which do not have colored platoons in white companies | 18 |
| Men in same division but not in same regiment as colored troops | 50 |
| Men in same regiments but not in same company as colored troops | 66 |
| Men in company with a Negro platoon | 64 |

NOTE.—These differences in attitude, varying with extent of experience with platoons of colored troops, can hardly be attributed to differences in geographical origin. For example, 31 percent of the white soldiers whose company has a Negro platoon are from the South, as are 34 percent of the soldiers in the cross section of field force units.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT COLORED TROOPS IN THOSE INFANTRY PLATOONS

The soldiers in the Negro platoons were somewhat superior to other colored troops in

ETO in education and AGCT, but the differences actually are not striking.

Percentage who had graduated from high school:

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 22 |
| Colored in ETO (cross section) | 18 |
| White riflemen (cross section) | 41 |

Percentage with AGCT scores above class IV:

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 29 |
| Colored in ETO (cross section) | 17 |
| White riflemen (cross section) | 71 |

Percentage from the South (including border States):

| | |
|---|---|
| Colored in infantry platoons | 67 |
| Colored in ETO (cross section) | 76 |

As compared with white riflemen the Negro infantrymen were somewhat younger, 10 percent of the colored were 30 years old or over—as were 20 percent of the white riflemen.

Branches of service from which the transfer to infantry were made were as follows:

Percent of total Negro volunteers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Corps of Engineers | 38 |
| Quartermaster Corps | 29 |
| Transportation Corps | 26 |
| Signal Corps | 3 |
| Ordnance Department | 2 |
| All other branches | 2 |

Of all who were converted to riflemen, 63 percent came from the following six military occupation specialties, in order of frequency:

Truck driver, light (MOS 345).
Duty soldier III (590).
Longshoreman (271).
Basic (521).
Foreman construction (059).
Cargo checker (470).

### Negroes in the Navy

When the United States entered this war Navy policy restricted Negroes to the steward's branch of the naval service. This was so despite the fact that Negroes had been an integral part of our Navy from the days of John Paul Jones.

Yet, despite this restriction, when the Japanese made their infamous sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, one of the heroes of that day was Dorie Miller, a Negro messman, who took a machine gun from the dead hands of its gunner and turned it on the Japs. For his quick thinking and courage Dorie Miller received the Navy Cross. He was cited for his "distinguished devotion to duty, extreme courage, and disregard for his own personal safety during the attack." Later, still a messman, Dorie Miller went down with the *Liscombe Bay*.

Dorie Miller's heroism symbolizes the eagerness of Negroes to get into the fight despite the restrictions which the dead weight of tradition and prejudice have imposed upon them. This eagerness was recognized by the Navy in June 1942 when the Navy for the first time accepted Negro inductees from selective service.

At later dates, the Navy commissioned Negroes as naval officers, admitted Negroes into the WAVES, SPARS, and Nurse Corps, and began to assign Negroes for general duty aboard ships of all classifications.

On August 31, 1945, there were 165,506 Negro enlisted men in the Navy and 53 Negro officers. In the Marine Corps there were 16,964 Negro enlisted men; and 3,727 Negro enlisted men and 4 Negro officers in the Coast Guard.

On the same date Negro women in the naval service included 68 Waves and 2 officers and 38 officer candidates; while there were 4 Negro Navy nurses and 5 Negro enlisted Spars.

As the number of Negroes in the Navy increased, and they showed their qualifications, the Navy began to relax its restrictions. On August 9, 1944, the Navy began to assign Negroes in special service to man, partially, 25 large auxiliary vessels. Most of these ships were then in combat areas as part of the fleet train in the Pacific. Approximately 500 Negroes were assigned to those ships, both as petty officers and nonrated men. The 25 vessels were of the following types: Store ships, ammunition ships, cargo ships, oilers, and miscellaneous auxiliaries.

### All ratings included

The petty officers assigned to these vessels included substantially all ratings required to operate the ships. Among them were coxswains, gunner's mates, quartermasters, storekeepers, carpenter's mates, shipfitters. Since then, the Navy has extended the assignment of Negro personnel to naval vessels so as to include all auxiliary and many fighting ships.





On July 13, 1945, Lester B. Granger, executive secretary of the National Urban League, held a press conference following completion of a tour of 12 naval stations, bases, and depots in the United States. "The Navy," Mr. Granger said, "has made remarkable strides in the last 2 years toward complete equality of expression in the service. It is a progress which reflects great credit upon the integrity and intelligence of the Navy's leaders and which should evoke a warm spirit of cooperation from the Negro and white public which is anxious to see our armed services more completely democratized."

Some of the gains which Mr. Granger cited were:

1. Admission of Negroes to general service.

2 Rating of Negroes in practically every category and training of Negroes as commissioned officers.

3. Assignment of Negro personnel to auxiliary craft up to 10 percent of a ship's complement.

4. Assignment of Negro commissioned and petty officers to these vessels to serve in their duties without regard to rank.

5. Important elimination of racial segregation in mess and in recreational facilities.

6. A beginning of assigning Negro personnel to combat duties on warships.

Dorie Miller was the first Negro decorated for heroism by the Navy in World War II. Some of the others were:

*Elvin Bell*

Elvin Bell, mess attendant, third class, United States Navy, 20 years old, of Jamaica, N. Y., on February 2, 1943, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal with the following citation:

"For distinguished heroism while serving aboard the U. S. S. *Lexington* during the battle of the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942. Voluntarily joining a repair party fighting a fire in an area frequented by violent explosions of gasoline vapor and ammunition, Bell, although emerging in an exhausted condition, unhesitatingly entered the most dangerous section of the stricken carrier and assisted in removing injured personnel who had been trapped below decks. His courageous initiative and utter disregard for his own safety were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service."

*Charles Jackson French*

Charles Jackson French, mess attendant, second class, United States Navy, 23, of Foreman, Ark., was commended by Admiral William F. Halsey, United States Navy, commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, for heroism while serving on a destroyer in the Pacific area.

His commendation announced May 18, 1943, reads as follows:

"For meritorious conduct in action while serving on board a destroyer transport which was badly damaged during the engagement with Japanese forces in the British Solomon Islands on September 5, 1942. After the engagement, a group of about 15 men were adrift on a raft which was being deliberately shelled by Japanese naval forces. French tied a line to himself and swam for more than 2 hours without rest, thus attempting to tow the raft. His conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

*Leonard Roy Harmon (the U. S. S. "Harmon")*

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, on June 8, 1943, designated Mrs. Nauarita Harmon Carroll, whose address was post-office box 381, Cuero, Tex., to sponsor the destroyer escort U. S. S. *Harmon*, which she did when the vessel was launched July 10, 1943, at Hingham, Mass.

The *Harmon* received its name in honor of Mrs. Carroll's son, the late Leonard Roy Harmon, mess attendant first class, USN, who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for heroism while serving the U. S. S. *San Francisco*. This is the first vessel to bear the name *Harmon*.

Harmon's citation issued with the award of the Navy Cross read as follows:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving aboard the U. S. S. *San Francisco* during action against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands area on November 12 and 13, 1942, with persistent disregard for his own personal safety, Harmon rendered invaluable assistance in caring for the wounded and evacuating them to a dressing station. In addition to displaying unusual loyalty in behalf of the injured executive officer, he deliberately exposed himself to hostile gunfire in order to protect a shipmate and, as a result of this courageous deed, was killed in

action. His heroic spirit of self-sacrifice, maintained above and beyond the call of duty, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service. He gallantly gave up his life in the defense of his country."

*William Pinckney*

The Secretary of the Navy, on behalf of the President of the United States, awarded the Navy Cross to William Pinckney, cook third class, USN, on June 10, 1943. Pinckney, 28 years old, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Renty Pinckney, box 92, Beaufort, S. C. The Navy Cross was given with the following citation:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving aboard the U. S. S. *Enterprise* during the engagement with enemy Japanese naval forces near the Santa Cruz Islands on October 26, 1942. When a heavy bomb exploded in the near vicinity Pinckney, standing at his battle station in the ammunition handling room, was knocked unconscious. With several compartments completely wrecked and four of his five companions killed, Pinckney, regaining consciousness, groped his way through the burning and tangled wreckage to a point under an open hangar deck hatch. Just as he was about to escape he found a shipmate, the only other survivor of his party, struggling up through the hatch. When the man fell unconscious, either from his wounds or from smoke and fumes, Pinckney, unmindful of his own danger, lifted his comrade through the hatch to safety before he himself battled his way out of the burning and smoke-filled compartment. By his dauntless courage in saving his comrade's life at great risk to his own, Pinckney upheld the highest traditions of the United States naval service."

*Joseph Cross*

The Secretary of the Navy, in the name of the President of the United States, awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal to Joseph Cross, steward's mate, first class, USNR, of 2510 Thalia Street, New Orleans, La.

The citation says:

"For heroic conduct during four submarine war patrols in enemy-controlled waters. Performing his duties with excellent judgment and conscientious skill, Cross contributed materially to the destruction by his ship of an important amount of Japanese shipping. His resolute courage was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service."

*Elbert H. Oliver*

A Silver Star Medal was awarded Elbert H. Oliver, steward's mate, first class, United States Navy, by the Secretary of the Navy, in the name of the President of the United States. Oliver, who has been wounded in action, resided at 1112 Locust Street, North Little Rock, Ark.

His citation reads:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving aboard a United States warship during a raid upon that vessel by approximately 25 Japanese torpedo planes in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands on June 30, 1943. When members of his 22mm. gun crew were severely wounded by a bursting projectile, Oliver quickly took over the station of the injured gunner and, although he himself was bleeding profusely, maintained accurate fire against the attacking planes until eventually compelled to give way to a relief gunner. His aggressive fighting spirit and grim determination to carry on in the face of acute pain and waning strength were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service."

Every branch of the naval service has seen courageous acts performed by Negroes in combat. Examples from the principal branches of the services are summarized below. All of them are based on official Navy Department releases.

A story of Negro steward's mates who received awards for their conduct under fire is told in an official Navy release.

"Six Negro steward's mates who manned their antiaircraft guns until a Japanese suicide plane crashed in flames among them have been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for their heroism in action aboard the U. S. S. *Intrepid*, the Department of the Navy said today.

"Vice Adm. John S. McCain, United States Navy, commander of Task Force Thirty-eight, made awards for their participation in the action of October 29, 1944.

"The medals were awarded to—

"Johnell Copeland, steward's mate second class, USNR, 19 office box 1363, Haines City, Fla.;





"Que Gent, steward's mate first class, USNR, 22, of 132 Center Street, Atlantic City, N. J.;

"Harold Junior Clark, steward's mate first class, USNR, 25, of 916½ Fourth Street, West Palm Beach, Fla.;

"James Eddie Dockery, steward's mate first class, USNR, 38, of 28 Barclay Street, Newark, N. J.;

"Alonzo Alexander Swann, Jr., steward's mate first class, USNR, 19, of 353 Christian Street, Steelton, Pa.;

"Eli Benjamin, steward's mate second class, USNR, 20, of 734 Jefferson Street, Norfolk, Va.;

"The six men, who volunteered to man antiaircraft guns in the event of attack by the enemy, were stationed at a 20 millimeter machine gun by the gunnery officer of the U. S. S. *Intrepid, Essex*-class carrier that was damaged four times by attacking Japanese planes."

The citations read:

"For distinguishing himself by heroic and meritorious service in connection with operations against the enemy, while serving aboard an aircraft carrier on October 29, 1944. When a Japanese dive bomber attacked from the starboard side of the ship, he continued to operate his portside gun in its fire over the flight deck although it became apparent that the enemy plane was headed directly for his gun tub. His gun fired until the Japanese plane crashed into his tub. The courage and skill he displayed were at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

NEGRO MARINES

A Navy press release dated February 13, 1945, states:

"On the beach nearest the enemy on Iwo are Negro marines of the Eighth Ammunition Company—worthy successors of the Negro marine ammunition companies in the Marianas actions and at Peleliu.

"They carry ammunition by day, feeding the front lines and building up supply dumps, playing a vital role in what is undoubtably the toughest battle in the history of the Marine Corps. At night they lie in foxholes among their kegs of TNT and dumps of high explosives, enduring the most persistent mortar and shell fire any American troops have faced in the Pacific.

"I've been using a TNT box for a pillow," says. Corp. Coleman Bagwell, of Chester, S. C. "There's nothing any softer around, and if a mortar hits anywhere near I figure the whole ammunition dump will blow up anyway, so that's not being reckless."

Four of the men of the Eighth made a run to the front lines, loaded with ammunition, then stayed there under fire to assemble rockets which were to be used against the Japs.

The four are Pfc Walter Moore, of 1217A Sam Rankins Street, Corpus Christi, Tex.; Simms Pattin, of Spartanburg, S. C.; Pfc William L. Stephenson, of 212 Northwest Eleventh Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and Pfc Samuel Miller, of 3780 Monroe Street, Detroit, Mich.

"It's a rough beach," said Corp. Edward White, of Nacogdoches, Tex., standing beside one of the first trucks the marines managed to bring ashore under fire.

Some of the Negro marines, despite wounds, returned to duty after receiving medical treatment.

The men of the Eighth agree that it has been a rough beach, and their fellow marines agree that they have proved they can take it.

NEGRO SEABEES

One of the important contributions of Negroes to the Navy in the war was that of the Seabees. An official Navy release tells of the work of one unit.

"Veterans of 20 months of jungle warfare in the South Pacific, and bearing a unit citation for many outstanding feats of construction completed under great difficulties, the first battalion of Negro Seabees to go overseas has returned to this country," the Navy Department announced this week.

"The unit, the Thirty-fourth Construction Battalion, indoctrinated at Camp Allen in Virginia, sailed outside the continental limits of the United States on January 7, 1943, and arrived in Noumea, New Caledonia, 19 days later. Since that date the unit has suffered casualties of 5 men killed in action and 35 wounded.

"The first big job tackled by the unit was the construction of the Halavo Seaplane Base at Halavo in the Florida Islands. Brigaded there with the Acorn (Red) Four, an air unit, the Thirty-fourth Battalion helped carve its camp out of a deep jungle. During

February and March 1943, the two outfits experienced two direct enemy bombings and were under almost nightly enemy air raids in the area for a period of 5 months. Casualties from these raids resulted in 2 killed and 28 wounded.

"A detachment of approximately 350 men were transferred, on March 19, 1943, to Guadalcanal to assist other battalions in construcing fuel and gas storage facilities. This detachment remained on Guadalcanal until November 1943, constructing all types of air field facilities and housing. They were under frequent enemy air raids for the first 6 months of their duty there and then less frequent raids, the last of which occurred in October 1943. No casualties resulted.

"On April 20, 1943, another detachment of approximately 200 men with 75 percent of the battalion's heavy equipment was transported by LCT's to Russell Island where they laid out and constructed, together with the Thirty-fifth Construction Battalion, the second fighter strip north of Renard Sound on Banika Island. This detachment was a part of what was essentially a regimental command consisting of the entire Forty-seventh Battalion and one-half of the Twentieth Battalion. It was assigned to the task of constructing a 6,000-foot bomber strip and a 4,500-foot fighter strip on the Russells in time for the New Georgia campaign. These Seabee units completed their assigned tasks on time and the first three units later enlarged the bomber facilities south of Renard, completing this assignment by August 1943. At Russells the detachment was subjected to constant enemy bombing until the completion of the New Georgia campaign in July. The Negro detachment experienced five casualties, consisting of three killed and two injured with minor burns in the operation of the fighter strip, caused during the crash of a Navy plane on the field.

"The entire battalion was reunited in November 1943, in the Tulagi area; with approximately one-half of the battalion quartered at Halavo, and the other half scattered over the adjacent islands of Tulagi, Savo, and Phillips Peninsula on Purvis Bay. The construction tasks at Halavo varied from marine railways, fueling docks, and costal defense gun mounts, to harbor boat nests, dolphins, piers, and considerable jungle and mountain roads for the Army defense. A unit at Tulagi took over and performed naval-base maintenance, relieving the Twenty-seventh Seabees until the arrival of the two CBMU's to release the battalion for assignment to Guadalcanal in March 1944.

"The battalion was reequipped with new housing facilities and a small quantity of new equipment and supplies early in 1944. The movement of the entire battalion personnel and equipment from the Tulagi area to Guadalcanal was completed in approximately 6 days aboard three LST's.

"A new camp was set up on the beach at Kukum to accommodate 1,200 men and 40 officers. The battalion duties were assigned by the public works division of the commander, Naval Base, Guadalcanal. In 2 months the battalion has cleaned up the unfinished priority projects in addition to numerous newly authorized projects assigned during this period. The duty hours of this battalion ran from 8 to 10 hours a day, 7 days per week for the first year, and for the last 5 months the hours were 8 hours per day, 6½ days per week.

"Just before the men embarked for home, Capt. Mark L. Halsay, Jr., United States Navy, commander of the naval base, sent them the following unit commendation:

"On the occasion of the completion of your work in this area, covering a period of 20 months, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the officers and enlisted men of your command for the splendid record which you have made and the outstanding reputation which your battalion enjoys. During this period your battalion has accomplished many outstanding feats of construction, too many to mention in detail, which will stand as a monument to your ability and efficiency for many years after the United States forces leave this area.

"Many of these construction jobs were completed under great difficulties, including bombing attacks by the enemy, in which 5 of your men were killed and about 35 wounded. In spite of these difficulties and dangers, and the impracticability of giving your men rehabilitation leave, your battalion continued to work at top efficiency until the day it was ordered to secure.

"The best wishes of this command for future success and continued usefulness to the naval service go with you and the personnel of your battalion."





### NEGRO COAST GUARD MEN

Tribute was paid to Negroes in an official release on the one hundred and fifty-fifth anniversary of the Coast Guard, July 20, 1945.

"Approximately 4,000 Negro enlisted men, officers, and SPARS participated in the celebration, which honored the Nation's oldest fighting sea service and one of the world's most diversified fleets

"One of the outstanding Negro heroes in the Coast Guard was 26-year-old Charles V. David, Jr., a mess attendant who gave his life rescuing his executive officer and others from the icy waters of the Atlantic during rescue operations of a torpedoed transport.

"The Navy and Marine Corps Medal, one of the highest naval awards, was presented to the Coast Guard man's widow, Mrs. Kathleen W. David, of 343 West One Hundred and Twenty-second Street, New York City, on June 20, 1944, by Rear Adm. Stanley V. Parker, district Coast Guard officer, with the Davids' 3-year-old son, Neil Adrian, standing by.

"Lt. R. W. Anderson, of 291 East Eighth Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., the Coast Guard officer whose life was saved by David's heroic act, was also present. Lieutenant Anderson, who had previously been decorated for his bravery during the dramatic rescue, paid tribute to the deceased:

" 'David's bravery under the most hazardous conditions and his unselfishness in sacrificing himself was an inspiration to every officer and man on board the cutter. We were all impressed by his alertness, for his quick thinking, and heroic daring in face of certain death were responsible for the saving of the lives of many men, including myself, who would be dead today.'

"David was a mess attendant first class aboard a Coast Guard cutter that rescued nearly a hundred men from a torpedoed transport in the North Atlantic. In a heavy sea, with freezing temperatures hampering operations, David dived countless times into the sea, in total darkness, to haul survivors to safety.

"When the rescue operations were nearly completed, David noticed that Lieutenant Anderson was near exhaustion from his work on a life raft off the side of the cutter. Passing the word along to the bridge, David, himself near collapse from his efforts, dived overboard and hauled Lieutenant Anderson back aboard. He died shortly after from pneumonia, exhaustion, and exposure as the result of his heroic actions."

The citation accompanying the medal, signed by Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal for the President, reads in part:

"Quickly realizing that the benumbed and suffering men were too exhausted to climb aboard the rescue vessel because of the heavy seas and intensely cold wind, David unhesitantly volunteered to go over the side to assist them. Despite the rough, near-freezing water, and gale he worked tirelessly with several comrades until 93 survivors had been rescued from certain death in the steadily mounting seas. His great courage and unselfish perseverance contributed to the saving of many lives and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States naval service."

### THE MERCHANT MARINE

The contribution to victory of the Negroes who chose the merchant marine as their form of service has been a great one. It is significant that the records of the Maritime Commission, the War Shipping Administration, and the Coast Guard, the licensing and certificating authority for seamen, deliberately fail to include race and color data. Because of this lack of discrimination, it is impossible to determine the number of Negroes who served in the merchant service, the number who survived torpedoings or the number who were killed or injured through enemy action while delivering the supplies and men essential to the conduct of the war.

Negroes are known to have served in every capacity aboard ship; from master to ordinary seaman, chief engineer to wiper, and chief steward to messman. The 31 War Shipping Administration training schools all admit Negroes. The first Negro graduate of the Maritime Academy, Joseph B. Williams, of Annapolis, Md., went on active duty with the Navy and was the first Negro officer in the Naval Civil Engineer Corps.

There were four Liberty ships named for Negro merchant seamen lost on active service in the merchant marine. Fourteen Liberty ships were named for noted Negroes, and four Victory ships named for Negro colleges.

No vessel under War Shipping Administration control has ever sailed with an entire

Negro crew and the good relations which existed among mixed crews were a surprise to many. The United Seamen's Service which operated hotels and recreation centers abroad for our merchant seamen reports that the crews of mixed race who sailed together, mixed excellently while ashore in foreign ports. All Brave Sailors, by John Beecher, published by L. B. Fischer, tells the story of the steamship *Booker T. Washington,* manned by a black and white crew under the command of the Negro master, Capt. Hugh Mulzac.

It is competently estimated that approximately 25,000 Negroes served in the merchant marine out of a total seagoing labor force of 250,000 men.

The Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal, the highest decoration, was awarded to Fred Carlos Archibald, of San Francisco.

"CITATION

"For distinguished service in the line of duty.

"For 18 months the ship in which he was serving operated in the Southwest Pacific under especially hazardous conditions, as it was at all times in the danger zone, was unescorted, and only lightly armed. In an attack on Port Darwin, and on the nine succeeding days, when most of the crew had left the ship, he with his captain and four officers and men, manned the two machine guns, and so successfully defended the ship that it was the only 1 of 12 merchant vessels in the harbor not destroyed. After the first attack, this small group protestingly left the ship upon orders of the military authorities, but subsequently returned, got underway, and took their ship out into the harbor each morning and returned to the dock each night to discharge cargo, so as not to endanger the dock during daylight. Because of the indomitable determination and courage of these six men, they succeeded in delivering the gasoline so vitally necessary to Army operations.

"His loyalty to his ship and his devotion to duty have added another inspirational chapter to the history of the United States merchant marine."

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FORM CP,CSW 81
(9-1-43)

# TRANSMITTAL

(FOLD OVER MATERIAL AND CLIP)

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR

TO Miss Evelyn Chavoor
Secretary to Honor e Helen Gahagan Douglas
LOCATION

FROM Office, Civilian Aide to S/W

Room 1E-945, The Pentagon
LOCATION

4972 PHONE — 25 Feb 46 DATE

REMARKS

Attached hereto please find suggested replies to the letters we discussed. I would recommend that the letter of Mr. Stowers be not dignified by a detailed reply. It unintelligent and hate-filled.

Marcus H. Ray

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS
14th District California

COMMITTEE:
Foreign Affair

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Lt. Colonel G. Pierce
259th Ordnance Battalion
APO 713, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

Dear Colonel Pierce:

I refer to your letter of 28 January 1946, relative to my statements on the Negro soldier. I support you in the exercise of your American rights to a free expression of your opinions, but I wish to remind you of your responsibilities--fair, unbiased and unprejudiced judgment of fellow human beings.

I am fully aware of the high venereal disease rates among Negro troops. I also realize that there is a definite ratio between this condition and the intelligence of the personnel concerned. Much of the Negro's lack of capabilities can be traced not to any inherent mental status but to a lack of opportunities.

The control of the conditions which you describe and attest to by the published report is a command function. It is a matter of record that capable, interested, and understanding leadership has and will overcome such conditions.

My statements do not detract from the glorious performance of duty on the part of our fellow white Americans, but I am impelled to do justice to those Negroes who rose above the handicaps of prejudice and morale destroying obstacles and who gave an excellent account of themselves. In all fairness we must not deny recognition of this majority. We cannot condemn an entire racial group because of the individual failures within it. If this were done, the entire human race would stand condemned.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Gahagan Douglas

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS
14th District California

COMMITTEE:
Foreign Affairs

COMGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Mr. E. G. Stowers
1434 Sylvan Road, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Stowers:

I am in receipt of your letter of 29 January 1946, and thank you for giving me your point of view. As to your inquiry relative to the source of my information, every incident recounted in my study is taken from War Department files which are open for the inspection of every interested citizen.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Gahagan Douglas

AN DOUGLAS
rict California

COMMITTEE:
Foreign Affairs

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Major D. B. Conley
Gardner General Hospital
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Major Conley:

I refer to your letter of 15 January 1946, relative to my statements on the Negro soldier. I appreciate your interest and would that more Americans were willing to give thought to these problems which Americans must face in the coming post war years.

I am fully aware of the high courts-martial rate among Negro troops. At the same time I realize that a definite ratio exists between these conditions and the intelligence quotient of the personnel concerned. Army General Classification Tests revealed that Negroes represented twice the number of Class IV and Vs as did white troops whereas the reverse was true in Classes I and II. This is not due to lack of capabilities, but rather to an absence of opportunities.

In dealing with troops of lower IQs, greater demands are made upon their leaders for the maintenance of high morale which is a deterrent to the commission of military crimes. This is a function of command. In many cases the assignments of leaders to Negro troops were unfortunate for in many cases the officers brought with them pre-conceived prejudices and an attitude of indifference which made an unbiased approach to the tasks impossible.

My statements do not detract from the glorious performance of duty on the part of our fellow white Americans, but I am impelled to do justice to those Negroes who rose above the handicaps of prejudice and morale destroying obstacles and who gave an excellent account of themselves. In all fairness we must not deny recognition to this majority. We cannot condemn an entire racial group because of the individual failures within it. If this were done, the entire human race would stand condemned.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Gahagan Douglas

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS
14th District California

COMMITTEE:
Foreign Affairs

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Pfc W. J. Farthing
330 Infantry
APO 83, c/o Postmaster
New York, New York

Dear Private Farthing:

I refer to your letter of 26 January 1946 in which you take issue with my report on the Negroes' part in War II, and further make certain allegations as to the conduct of Negro soldiers in Europe.

As an American I fully support your right to express your opinion on any subject and appreciate the fact that you are thinking on this problem of the Negro which we must settle and settle soon. Our international position of moral leadership may well be jeopardized if we refuse to view our own minority problems with impartial, unbiased and unprejudiced eyes.

You make reference to the fact that but small numbers of Negroes fought in Infantry units. That is true, but let me remind you that when opportunity was offered Negro soldiers of the service forces to volunteer for Infantry and other combat arms, they responded in great excess to the numbers asked for. This was in Normandy in December, 1944. Four-fifths of the Negroes who served in the armed forces were assigned to service units. They did not request this but as Americans and soldiers, they served where sent.

Your charge of black market activities is a serious one for it destroys the respect for and faith in the integrity of our Army which foreign nations must have if our post war job is to be done. The military records of convicted black marketeers do not indicate that Negro soldiers were the only offenders.

Americans have prided themselves upon their belief in "fair play". I caution that you guard against believing the racial rumors which arise out of confusion, uncertainty and misinformation. I recommend that you weigh all the facts before you condemn an entire racial group for the acts of its individual members.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Gahagan Douglas

11 March 1946

Honorable Helen Gahagan Douglas
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Douglas:

Permit us to express appreciation again both for your address on the Negro Soldier and for the fifteen copies sent in response to our request. These have been used to a good advantage and, in terms of your proffer, we could make specific use of ten additional copies if they are available.

Sincerely yours,

James C. Evans
Assistant Civilian Aide to the
Secretary of War

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS
14TH DISTRICT CALIFORNIA
HOME ADDRESS:
2701 WILSHIRE BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CALIF

COMMITTEE:
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# Congress of the United States
## House of Representatives
### Washington, D. C.

February 28, 1946

Dear Mr. Evans:

The reprints I have had made of the material I put in the Congressional Record on the Negro Soldier have finally come. I am having fifteen copies sent to you, under separate cover, as you requested in your letter of February 5. If you want more, please let me know.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Gahagan Douglas

Helen Gahagan Douglas

James C. Evans
Assistant Civilian Aide
to the Secretary of War
War Department
Washington, D. C.