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WAR DEPARTMENT PAMPHLET • NO. 20-6

COMMAND OF NEGRO TROOPS



WAR DEPARTMENT • 29 FEBRUARY 1944

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Some of the historical documents contained in this curriculum guide reflect deep-seated and disturbing racial prejudices regarding African-Americans that were common among many white Americans in the early and middle years of the twentieth century. It is important to remember that these documents must be viewed in the context of their own time. While offensive to modern readers, they help us understand the intense opposition the Roosevelts and the Tuskegee Airmen faced over the issue of allowing black men to pilot military aircraft. FDR Presidential Library and Museum

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Section I

Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to help officers to command their troops more effectively by giving them information which will increase their understanding of their men.

Colored Americans, like all other Americans, have the right and duty to serve their country to the very best of their individual abilities. The Army has the right and duty to see to it that its personnel of all races do so serve. Furthermore the Selective Service Act requires that there will be no racial discrimination in the selection and training of men for military duty.

The same methods of discipline, training, and leadership apply to Negro troops that have proved successful with any other troops. Nevertheless, the Negro in the Army has special problems. This is the result of the fact that the Negro group has had a history materially different from that of the majority in the Army. Its average schooling has been inferior; its work has been generally less skilled than that of the white man; and its role in the life of the Nation has been limited. The following discussion is devoted to an examination of these special problems as they relate to military service, and to suggestions for their solution.

Section II

Negro Manpower

No statement beginning "All Negroes" is true, just as no statement beginning "All Frenchmen," "All Chinese," or "All Americans" is true.

A white soldier from California has problems of adjusting to Army life which differ from the problems of a white soldier from Maine or Florida. Likewise a Negro soldier from the rural areas has problems different from those of a Negro who has been graduated from city schools.

The period between World Wars I and II was one of unprecedented changes for the Negro population. During this period, there occurred the greatest single mass migration in American history. While the Negro population in the North was only 1,578,336 at the time of the 1910 census, the 1940 census showed 2,960,899 living there.

NEGROES IN TWO WARS

This shift in population shows up in the Army. One out of every three Negro soldiers in the Army today comes from North of the Mason and Dixon Line, while in World War I, only one Negro out of five was from the North.

One byproduct of this migration has been an increase in the Negro's opportunity for education. The extent to which educational opportunity for Negroes has increased since 1918 is strikingly illustrated in the comparison of Negro soldiers by education in World Wars I and II.

	<i>World War I</i>	<i>World War II</i>
High school graduates.....	1%	17%
High school nongraduates.....	4%	26%
Grade school.....	95%	57%

Northward and cityward migration was not, of course, the sole factor in raising the educational level of Negroes. The South, urban and rural, has taken great strides in improving its schools in the last 25 years.

These figures on the shift of Negroes from Southern rural to Northern urban localities and on the change in the level of education are cited because they show why Negro soldiers within the same regiment differ so widely in performance, in attitudes, and in their response to various leadership techniques. Knowledge that these differences are

usually the product of very different experiences helps officers to avoid difficulties and to secure a more hearty cooperation from Negro personnel.

Great as these changes have been since World War I, the average officer in command of Negro troops faces the fact that many of his soldiers—especially those from rural areas and also from the lower economic levels in cities—have had a very limited education as compared to white soldiers. Moreover, some of them have had very little opportunity to acquire through work experience the kind of skills which are most often used in their Army assignments. The differences between white and Negro soldiers in educational level are shown in the following table:

	<i>White</i>	<i>Negro</i>
High school graduates.....	41%	17%
High school nongraduates.....	29%	26%
Grade school.....	30%	57%

This is not an entirely accurate measure of education, since it does not allow for differences in length of school term for Negro and white pupils in some regions, or differences in the quality of schooling. Actually it understates the educational handicap of the Negro.

NEGRO AND WHITE AGCT SCORES

The very material differences between white and Negro soldiers in terms of knowledge and skills important to the Army is illustrated by their comparative performance on the Army General Classification Test. This test, given to all selectees at reception centers, is a roughly accurate measure of what the new soldier knows, what skills he commands, and of his aptitude in solving problems. It is not a test of inborn intelligence. Yet, it is the best single measure of the new soldier's military ability which is available to his officers. Enlisted men are classified in five categories (designated by roman numerals I through V) on the basis of their scores in this test. How colored and white soldiers are distributed in the five groups is shown in the following table based on inductions during a 6-month period in 1943.

ARMY GENERAL CLASSIFICATION TEST

Grade distributions for all white and colored men processed at reception centers during the period 1 January 1943 through 30 June 1943

	<i>AGCT Grades</i>					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
White:						
Number.....	102,143	480,330	532,215	413,006	65,818	1,593,512
Percent.....	6.4	30.1	33.5	25.9	4.1	100.0
Colored:						
Number.....	419	5,991	23,402	83,104	61,023	173,939
Percent.....	0.2	3.4	13.5	47.8	35.1	100.0

Assignment to class IV or V on the basis of a soldier's AGCT score is not to be accepted as evidence that a man is unteachable, but it does indicate that his training requires extra patience, skill, and understanding on the part of the instructor.*

PROBLEMS OF VOCABULARY

One can visualize this problem a little more clearly by observing the handicap the class V man has in comprehending directions. The Research Branch of Morale Services Division gave a vocabulary test to class V men, Negro and white, in a replacement training center. Each man was asked to define 500 words occurring frequently in the Soldier's Handbook, the Soldier's Reader, Army Life, general orders, and bulletin board notices. Only half of the words were known to all the class V men studied. Examples of words which were not comprehended by 25 to 50 percent of the men are:

Discipline	Outpost	Compensation
Individual	Sentinel	Maintain
Ornament	Chevrons	Observation

Examples of words which were comprehended by less than 25 percent of the men are:

Barrage	Echelon
Cadre	Exterior
Cantonment	Ordnance
Counterclockwise	Personnel

KNOW YOUR MEN

It is highly important for commanding officers to know how their men rank in the Army General Classification Test in order that those in the lower ranges may be singled out for special instruction. The score of any soldier can be determined by reference to his Form 20 card, which is usually on file either in the company or the regimental headquarters. On this card is entered other information about the

*Since illiteracy reflects lack of opportunity for education rather than lack of learning ability, the Army has provided an additional test for men who have difficulty reading or writing. This test, known as the II ABC Non-Language is usually administered in replacement training centers. As with the AGCT, the men taking the test are classified in five groups on the basis of their scores, the five roman numerals having the same relative value. The results tend to sort out those men with a high degree of native intelligence but inadequate schooling from those in the lower ranges of native ability. The scores are entered on the Form 20 card and, where available, provide an additional aid to officers. A shift from V on the AGCT to I, II, or III in the non-language test marks a man with potential ability who is well worth special attention, and who, if encouraged to surmount the disadvantages of inadequate formal education, may prove to be a real asset to his unit and to the Army.

soldier which his officers should know—his age, marital status, years of schooling, place of birth, employment record, hobbies and interests, etc. Company officers who feel it important to know their men and the particular problems and capacities of each individual in the unit, make a practice of studying these cards.

Knowing that men with little formal education (i. e., the AGCT IV's and V's) are more apt to go AWOL and to contract V. D., conscientious company commanders take particular pains to see that these men understand the seriousness of such conduct. These men must be taught the inevitable consequences of "going over the hill," both by simple-language explaining of penalties involved and by firm, impartial imposition of proper penalties, exactly as would be done in the case of soldiers of better education. Special care must be taken also to see that these men understand the hazards of infection and realize the necessity for prophylactic treatment.

Within practical limits, conscientious commanders also see that the most intelligent and responsible Negroes are given a good chance to earn promotion, and that all job assignments are matched as closely as possible to the capacities and employment experience of the individual as revealed on his Form 20 card.

All of these common-sense measures apply to white troops as well as Negroes. But the fact that a Negro company is likely to have a much larger proportion of class IV and V men, along with some Negroes of marked ability, justifies special attention by the company commander to individual differences in ability and training.

SPECIAL TRAINING UNITS

Special training units have been developed for illiterate and semi-literate men, non-English-speaking soldiers, and others having somewhat limited mental ability. The primary purpose of special training is to provide those literacy skills which will enable the men to pursue regular training with success.

A directive was issued in the spring of 1943 indicating that special training units would be located in reception centers after 1 June 1943. The purpose of this directive was to encourage the early identification and immediate training of men in need of basic literacy skills. By providing such training at the reception center level, organizations, unit training centers, and replacement training centers will be relieved from expending regular training effort on recruits who cannot absorb such training. There are still special training centers. However, the number of men being trained in such units is decreasing, while the units in reception centers are gradually building up to their full trainee strength.

Officers in charge of Negro troops who discover men in their units who are unable to read and write English at a fourth-grade level, who

are unable to speak or understand simple English, or who are classified in class V in the Army General Classification Test may take one of the following steps to provide for these men:

a. If the men were processed through a reception center without passing through a Special Training Unit they may be returned to the nearest reception center for special training under the provisions of letter AG 353 (24 Jul 43) OB-D-SPGAP.

b. Literacy classes may be established for the men. Such classes should be operated in addition to the regular training program and, in most cases, should be evening classes. Instructional materials for such classes may be obtained from The Adjutant General, Attention: Training Branch, The Pentagon, Washington, D. C.

c. Those men who do not evidence aptness for military training may be discharged from the Army under the provisions of section VIII, paragraph 52a, AR 615-360.

The performance of Negro soldiers on mechanical-aptitude tests is on the average markedly inferior to that of white soldiers. This is to be expected, since Negroes as a whole have not had opportunities nearly equal to those available to white men to gain mechanical experience. The three basic points for the commanding officer to bear in mind in this connection are: (1) That a Negro unit may not be expected to contain as great a proportion of men with mechanical skills of potential military value, (2) that there are nevertheless likely to be a few men with mechanical skill who must not be overlooked just because they are more rare than in a white unit of comparable size, and (3) that if men with mechanical skill are needed they can usually be developed with careful selection and training.

It is this recognition of individual differences and planned systematic effort to take these differences into account which distinguishes the successful commander of Negro troops from the officer who thinks that all Negroes are alike and all inferior.

GOOD SOLDIERS ARE MADE, NOT BORN

It is alleged by some that the Negro cannot be reliable in battle, because his race lacks the necessary qualities as a matter of heredity. Many Negroes, like any other people, do lack soldierly skills. But insofar as this belief assumes that there are some mysterious inborn factors—such as courage, fear, or a fighting heart—whose presence or absence is a matter of racial inheritance, it is enough to say that there is no scientific evidence whatever to support such a view. In all the vast number of studies by psychologists and other scientists during the past two or

three decades, there is not one piece of research which proves that Negroes are, as a group, mentally or emotionally defective by heredity. All peoples seem to be endowed by nature about equally with whatever it takes to fight a good war, if they want to and have learned how. Among Negroes, as among white people, there is the widest range of individual abilities, and most of the less mentally alert in either race can be made to learn and to fight if properly led.

FUNDAMENTAL MISTAKES

When a conscientious officer has this understanding of the men whom it is his responsibility to train and lead, he is in a position to avoid both of the fundamental mistakes too often made by leaders of Negro troops. One mistake is to overestimate the abilities of his men to learn and perform; the other is to underestimate their abilities. In the first case, impatience leads often to friction and discouragement. But the need for patience does not imply need for lowering standards of ultimate proficiency and jeopardizing the Army through inadequate training of any of its units. There is no place in this Army for the attitude, "These men are so limited in ability that there is no use trying to make good soldiers of them." This attitude—held even by some officers with a sincere but mistaken sense of fairness to the Negro—encourages laxness of discipline and is fatal to successful training. Steering a course between the two dangers of overestimating or underestimating his men, the commanding officer can bring through training and to the theater of operations a unit which will be a credit to him and to the Army.

RACIAL THEORIES WASTE MANPOWER

Waste of Negro manpower through ineffective military training, inefficient assignment, and poor leadership born of a failure to appreciate and deal with special problems, is no less costly than the purposeless destruction of munitions. Officers at all levels of command can reduce such waste by remembering that effective command cannot be based on racial theories. The Germans have a theory that they are a race of supermen born to conquer all peoples of inferior blood. This is nonsense, the like of which has no place in the Army of the United States—the Army of a Nation which has become great through the common effort of all peoples. In our Army each man must demonstrate his capacity to acquire the needed skills. Each man should be given work and responsibility in line with his proven worth. Men with skills of military value which cannot be used in their outfits should be transferred to units where they can be used, even though this may involve considerable trouble for the responsible officer. Any other course would be a waste of manpower.

Upon the company commander falls the definite and heavy responsibility to know his men, to assign them where they can be most useful, to promote them on the basis of true worth. Upon him is the responsibility for a fair and impartial discipline and for a fair and intelligent granting of such privileges as furloughs. It is not enough for the company commander to carry out these responsibilities. He should see that his junior officers also know their men. Unless they have this knowledge and unless they apply it properly, the morale and efficiency of their outfits may be seriously impaired. Higher commanders cannot afford to run the risk of seeing junior officers destroy morale through actions based on discarded racial theories. No officer should make the mistake of thinking that he can really get to know his men by even the most faithful discharge of formal duties in the course of the day's routine activities. Leadership of men in war is a 24-hour job.

Section III

Problems of Command

The white commander of Negro troops faces special problems in understanding his men. These difficulties result partly from the fact that his background and experience, both civilian and military, are apt to be different from theirs. Even more they are a product of the men's reluctance or even inability to be entirely frank with their white officers. This difficulty of communication across the race line is an inevitable result of the Negro's experience that frank expression of opinions is apt to lead to punishment of one kind or another.

Furthermore, the commander can ill afford to lean too heavily upon the advice of other officers or civilians who claim to possess a special insight into the "Negro mind." It is entirely unlikely that such advisers have any better basis for judgment than has the commander. A sure sign of inaccuracy is the tendency of such "experts" to depend on generalities. It is just as untrue to say that "All Negroes believe such and such" as to say that all Negroes have certain mental or physical traits.

Negro soldiers, like white, grumble and complain about things they do not like. When the occasion seems suitable, they try to do something about it. The long history of disadvantage and discrimination to which they have been exposed gives many of them sound reason for complaint. The Army inherits, but has no right to pass judgment on, accumulated complaints based on civilian experience. The Negro soldiers form an important force, and it is with the proper utilization of that force that the commander is concerned.

CONFLICTS OF NEGRO ATTITUDES

The mixed, conflicting feelings of the Negro soldier about his relation to the war are, in a way, typical of the feelings of Negroes in general about their position as citizens of the United States. Most Negro civilians are as American in their pride of country, in the way they want to live, and even in their prejudices, as are most whites. At the same time, they do not like the way their status as Negroes has limited their participation in the life of the country, has restricted their jobs, housing, and recreation, and has directed the prejudices of other people against them.

The wartime symbol for this two-sided line of thought is found in the response of many Negroes to the "V for victory" slogan. Among

Negroes arose a "double V" campaign: One V for victory in the war and a second V for victory in improved conditions for Negroes on the home front.

The commander of Negro troops must be aware of this conflict of ideas within the Negro group, and within the mind of many an individual Negro soldier. Acceptance of the war by the majority, and a high level of adjustment to Army life, are sources of strength. Doubts and distrust are threats to efficiency. They are handicaps to military success which, like inadequate education, are more often found among Negro than among white soldiers; and commanders of Negro troops are responsible for lessening such handicaps.

Although doubts about the cause for which they fight and about their personal stake in victory are encountered among some Negro soldiers, this does not mean that all Negro soldiers have such attitudes, and the commander should not assume that they exist until he discovers actual evidence. Neither does it mean that nothing can be done to win over men with such doubts. The commander must convince the doubters that they are wanted in the Army, that they will be used according to their abilities, and that they will be treated with justice as men and soldiers. Actions, not words, must be used to put across this idea.

The difference between the special problems of the Negro group and those of various white groups is one of degree, not of kind. Men of Greek, Italian, Latin American, French, or any other extraction have special problems. Even among native white soldiers, there are differences to be allowed for—differences in region of origin, in economic level, in educational attainments. The Tennessee mountaineer, the Vermont farmer, the Louisiana Cajun, the Pennsylvania German, the uneducated mill hand, the college-trained corporation executive, and many another type all have their special histories, attitudes, and ways of life.

The commander of Negro troops is not faced with a new and totally unknown problem. His task is simply to extend to a specific situation the teachings of everyday experience in the handling of men.

NEGRO SOLDIERS ARE AMERICANS

The Negroes in our Army are Americans in both thought and behavior, but Americans of any color are not cut to a single pattern. There is no reason why they should be, for this country prides itself upon a tradition of freedom for the individual to live his life as he desires, so long as he respects the rights of others. The Negro group is not unique in that many of its members have ideas of their own about what is proper and what is not, about what is insulting and what is just. Their history and the existing restrictions which limit their participation in the life of the community make it inevitable that most Negroes

will differ somewhat from white people in their sensitivities, thoughts, and actions.

This statement implies no criticism. It is made to call attention to those beliefs, attitudes, and traits most likely to cause trouble in the handling of Negro troops.

CAUSES OF RESENTMENT

Most Negroes resent any word or action which can be interpreted as evidence of a belief that they are by birth inferior in ability to members of other races. Since the Army is concerned only with individual soldiers as functioning members of military organizations, there is never any occasion to make such uncomplimentary references. When the training and assignment of Negro troops varies from that of white, the only sound justification is in the varying distribution of individuals in terms of educational levels, skills, and experience.

Many people who do not mean to be insulting use terms, tell jokes, and do things which are traditionally interpreted by Negroes as derogatory. Such words as "boy," "Negress," "darky," "uncle," "Mammy," "aunty," and "nigger" are generally disliked by Negroes. There is also dislike of the pronunciation of the word "Negro" as though it were spelled "Nigra," because it seems to be a sort of genteel compromise between the hated word "nigger" and the preferred term "Negro." Colored and Negro are the only words which should be used to distinguish colored soldiers from white. A safe rule on jokes is to avoid those which are dependent on the traditional ideas of the white man concerning Negro characteristics. Negroes may tell them among themselves, but resent the telling of such stories by white people. It is difficult, if not impossible, to characterize all behavior which is resented by Negroes, but perhaps the simplest, if too general, way to express it is to say that troop morale will suffer if the words or acts of officers imply either racial hostility or a patronizing, condescending attitude.

LITTLE EXPECTED, LITTLE GAINED

Officers who act on the theory that little can be expected of Negroes will naturally get little out of them. Colored soldiers are quick to learn whether their officers look on them as members of a childlike, mentally limited, primitive, or even vicious race, or whether the officer expects them to be good and useful troops. Colored commands have been known to take advantage of officers who showed that they expected nothing of them. The malingerer and trouble maker has a sure-fire technique in such situations. He need only act like the dullard his officer believes he is. Officers who are trying to do their best with colored troops should check their records to make sure that they are not using racial dogma as an excuse for their own failures as leaders.

It is easy to understand that Negroes do not like to be treated as racial inferiors. But many well-intentioned white people do not realize that many colored Americans prefer not to be credited with special, highly regarded talents.

The most common annoyance of this type is the emphasis upon supposedly inborn ability in music and dancing. Scientific studies have indicated that Negroes are not born with any special sense of rhythm, muscular control, ability to distinguish tones, or any other hereditary quality which might aid them to become outstanding in these arts. True, the American Negro group has developed original forms of both music and dancing, and there have been colored individuals who had great ability in both arts. The explanation, however, seems to lie in their history and life, not in their race.

A similar misunderstanding arises from the fact that there have been many outstanding Negro athletes. Negroes have been credited by some people with a physique that gives them an advantage in running, jumping, boxing, and a few other sports. This is also false. There is no evidence in biology, anatomy, psychology, or any other science to support the view that Negroes inherit any skeletal, muscular, nervous, or other physiological traits which fit them better than any other people for any activity. Such claims are far-fetched explanations for accomplishments which can be much more simply and directly explained by experience and training.

NEGRO ATTITUDES TOWARD RACIAL THEORIES

Negroes see in such theories, no matter how well meant, a tendency to place them in the position of a race apart. The basic desire of the group is to be considered ordinary people. Army officers have frequently gained the ill will of colored troops by arranging, with the best intentions in the world, recreation and entertainment which overplayed such supposed racial talents.

A good rule is not to ask colored troops to show off by doing the things at which white people think Negroes are especially talented as a race. Better still, let them decide for themselves, as far as possible, the kinds of recreation and entertainment in which they will take part. No doubt they will often select activities in which they are credited with superiority. The important point is that these should not be forced upon them. They should be encouraged to do what they want to, not just what some white people think they do best.

FACILITIES FOR NEGRO AND WHITE SOLDIERS

The idea of racial segregation is disliked by almost all Negroes and downright hated by most. White people and Negroes, as a rule,

fail to have a common understanding of the meaning of segregation, and as a result have difficulty in even discussing the problems involved. To many white people who have come to accept the formula of "separate but equal facilities," it seems that the protesting Negro is unreasonable, or that all that is lacking is something vaguely defined as "social equality." The protesting Negro, on the other hand, knows from experience that separate facilities are rarely equal, and that too often racial segregation rests on a belief in racial inferiority.

The Army accepts no doctrine of racial superiority or inferiority. It may seem inconsistent, therefore, that there is nevertheless a general separation of colored and white troops on duty. It is important to understand that separate organization is a matter of practical military expediency, and not an endorsement of beliefs in racial distinction.

There must be as little friction within an army as possible. A 1943 survey of attitudes of white and colored soldiers gives us some basis for judging whether there would be increased friction if the existing degrees of separation were materially reduced. The following chart summarizes the replies of white and Negro enlisted men to three questions on this subject.

Question: "Do you think white and Negro soldiers should be in separate outfits or should they be together in the same outfits?"

		Percent saying:		
		"Separate outfits"	"No preference or undecided"	"Same outfits"
NEGRO		38%	26%	36%
		All other answers		
WHITE		88%	12%	

Question: "Do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea for white and Negro soldiers to have separate P. X.'s in Army camps?"

		Percent saying:		
		"Good idea"	Undecided	"Poor idea"
NEGRO		40%	12%	48%
		All other answers		
WHITE		81%	19%	

Question: "Do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea to have separate service clubs in Army camps?"

	Percent saying:		
	"Good idea"	Undecided	"Poor idea"
NEGRO	48%	13%	39%
All other answers			
WHITE	85%	15%	

This chart may be surprising, in view of the statement made earlier that almost all Negroes dislike segregation. The number of Negroes who said they thought white and Negro soldiers should be in the same outfit was about as large as the group saying they should be in separate outfits, while a quarter of the men were undecided. The explanation is that the men were not asked whether they liked or disliked the idea of separate outfits. They were given a practical question about an immediate problem, not a question about an ideal situation in an ideal world. Men's written statements on why they favored separate outfits showed that they opposed segregation in principle, but also desired to avoid friction. On the other hand, many of the men who opposed separation in the Army thought such a policy inconsistent with the aims for which the Nation is fighting.

White soldiers, by a great majority, favored racial separation in the Army. This held true for both Northerners and Southerners. However sound their reasons may or may not be, this mass sentiment cannot be ignored.

These findings must not be taken to mean that white and colored soldiers dislike each other so much that they should never be allowed to come in contact with each other, or that there is certain to be trouble at a mixed post. There is a great body of evidence to the contrary. What the findings do indicate is no more and no less than that the odds are very much in favor of less interracial friction if colored and white enlisted men continue to be organized in separate military units.

War Department instructions provide that post exchanges and theaters, or sections of theaters, and other recreational facilities may be designated for the use of particular military units, but not for the use of a certain race or color group. Existing instructions make it clear, moreover, that it is not the policy of the War Department to require racial separation in off-duty activities. The burden of deciding whether or not there shall be some separation in the use of camp facilities is placed on the local command, with the assumption that local conditions will be taken into account. There is added the specific ban on use of resented reference to race or color.

LOCATION OF TRAINING CENTERS

The location of his unit presents special problems to the commander of Negro troops. In the 1943 survey, the majority of Negroes, Southerners as well as Northerners, said they preferred to be stationed in the North. Among Southern Negroes, 35 percent preferred a Southern station, while only 2 percent of the Northern Negroes wanted to be in the South.

Since the beginning of preparations for the war, many persons concerned with race relations have expressed regret that the Army decided to carry on a large proportion of its military training in the South. The general argument has been that such a policy greatly restricted the off-duty activities of Negroes and was especially hard on those who entered the Army from the North. In addition, it was felt that the policy would tend to spread Southern patterns of Negro-white relations to white Northerners serving in the South.

There may be much truth to these contentions, but the War Department came to the conclusion that matters of efficiency and timesaving in a national emergency outweighed the costs in interracial terms. The fact that the great majority of Negro enlisted men would prefer a reversal of this policy is a compelling reason for care on the part of officers that the morale of their men does not needlessly suffer as a consequence of Army policy.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation facilities, both local and long distance, are overtaxed in general and seriously inadequate in many localities. Where segregation on public conveyances is required by law, travel is likely to be especially difficult for colored soldiers. Negroes are more likely than white enlisted men to complain about local bus service. This is demonstrated by the following chart, based on data from the 1943 survey.

ATTITUDES TOWARD BUS SERVICE

Question: "How do you feel about the bus service to and from camp for soldiers in your outfit?"

Percent saying bus service is:					
	"Very poor"	"Poor"	Don't know	"Fairly good"	"Very good"
NEGRO	39%	20%	9%	20%	12%
WHITE	20%	19%	10%	37%	14%

Complaints of this sort refer to local conditions, and local military authorities are in a position to investigate and to take action when

action is justified. It may be possible to secure better cooperation and planning of service by the bus companies. Military police may be assigned to troublesome routes, not only to enforce good behavior of the troops, but also to protect them from unwarranted discrimination. Staggering of passes and furloughs may be increased. Army equipment may possibly be used under special circumstances when there is an acute shortage of private conveyances. Local transportation is a definite responsibility of the local commander.

Long-distance travel problems are less easily solved by local authorities. When such problems have serious effects upon morale, they should be reported through proper channels.

POLICE PROBLEMS

Another local problem with which the commander may have to deal is that of the police. A long and widespread tradition that both civilian and military police are not impartial is an obstacle that must be overcome to insure the best behavior and the proper disciplining of Negro soldiers. The following chart shows Negro and white responses to questions about the fairness of M. P.'s.

Questions: "Do you think M. P.'s usually treat soldiers fairly or unfairly?" (Asked of white soldiers.)
 "Do you think white M. P.'s usually treat Negro soldiers fairly or unfairly?" (Asked of Negroes. They were asked the same question about Negro M. P.'s.)

	Percent saying M. P.'s are:			
	"Usually not fair"	Undecided	"About half fair, half not"	"Usually fair"
NEGRO—				
Attitude toward white M. P.'s	31%	11%	37%	21%
Attitude toward Negro M. P.'s	11%	9%	44%	36%
WHITE	13%	5%	36%	46%

The survey made no attempt to get information to support or disprove the widespread belief in M. P. unfairness to Negroes. Regardless of its truth or falsity, this belief indicates that soldier-M. P. relations are a potential source of danger to be watched with great care. The fact that more colored soldiers believed that Negro M. P.'s were fair than had confidence in white M. P.'s, indicates that the use of Negro M. P.'s is desirable whenever it is feasible.

About the same proportion of Negro enlisted men had confidence in the fairness of town police as believed the white M. P.'s to be fair. Complaints about both town police and M. P.'s were most frequent among Negroes stationed in the South. But even in the North, Negroes

were more likely to be critical of police than were similarly selected groups of white soldiers. The majority of white soldiers, whether stationed in the North or South, say that town police usually treat soldiers fairly.

There is nothing to be gained by reviving the old arguments about whether Negroes get the same treatment at the hands of the law as white people. The Army's concern is that the simple rights of all men wearing the uniform be respected, not only by police but by all civilian authorities and private citizens as well.

There is no desire to obtain special consideration for the soldier, white or colored, who breaks the law or is reasonably suspected of breaking it. There is, however, no excuse for the officer who allows his men to be maltreated without the most strenuous legitimate effort to provide them with protection. The officer who fails to act, through fear of community disapproval, when the welfare of even a single one of his men is involved, risks losing the confidence and loyalty of his unit.

It will be of benefit to the morale of Negro troops if they understand that in time of war the military authorities have the paramount right to the custody of a member of the military service charged with an offense under the civil law, and that it is War Department policy that in all ordinary cases the military authorities should try all members of the military service for all offenses alleged to have been committed by them. There is provision for exceptions to this policy, but it may be noted that no military personnel will be turned over to civil authorities by commanders of units or installations without first informing the commanding general of the appropriate service command. When a member of the military service is arrested by civil authorities it is anticipated that military authorities will be notified promptly, that he will not be unnecessarily detained, and that he will be surrendered on request to the proper military authorities for disposition of charges against him. This policy is amplified in Army Regulations 600-355, Changes No. 1, 27 August 1943.

Responsibility for the proper treatment of Negro military personnel is always on the shoulders of the commanding officers. It is their duty to make certain that colored officers and men under their command are not treated unjustly or discourteously because of their race, and that white personnel show others the respect and justice becoming to the uniform of our Army. Every effort should be made to instill and enforce principles of mutual respect, courtesy, and cooperation between Negro and white soldiers.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND THE PRESS

The problems of relations between Negro soldiers and civilian communities adjacent to their stations is a matter of military importance and is the responsibility of the post, camp, or station commander. The

highest morale cannot be built among troops which have inadequate and unhappy civilian relationships. Effective commanding officers have repeatedly demonstrated that much can be done to afford protection, not only against discriminating police and local authorities, but also against racketeering and morale-destroying indifference to recreational and other needs of soldiers. Most communities have a real desire to cooperate with military authorities in safeguarding soldiers' interests, and even in the least cooperative communities there are responsible citizens who deplore mistreatment of soldiers, regardless of race. Commanding officers should take advantage of such sources of assistance in protecting the welfare of their personnel in their civilian contacts.

Negro morale, both military and civilian, as well as Negro willingness to cooperate with the Army, has been found to be closely related to the quantity and type of military news made available to the Negro press and to the public generally. Negro newspapers are often severely critical of the Army, but they never fail to print favorable material when they can get it. Experience proves that a substantial flow of good releases about Negro participation in the war reduces the critical content of the colored press. The most widely used materials issued to the press have been those concerned with achievements of Negroes in training, with participation in combat, and with recognition of colored units or individual soldiers for the praiseworthy completion of tasks in which anyone, white or colored, might take pride.

Commanding officers should see that their public relations officers make available as much positive information about colored troops as they can find, and that they adapt this material to the needs of both the white and colored press. The guiding principle in all releases should be this: Negroes very much prefer to be considered ordinary people like all others, rather than as quaint, peculiar, or curious characters. Material on Negroes should not present them in a light which a white man would consider unseemly for himself.

Many white officers believe that Negro newspapers and other publications prepared for Negro readers are a main source of low morale among their men. This is a doubtful assumption, but whether it is true or false, the thing to do is to make good news available to these publications. It is equally important that the facts of unfavorable incidents such as riots, crimes, etc., be given to the press as soon as they are available. If censorship were desired it would not be effective, and a delay in making known such facts results in the publication of exaggerated or false statements which are unfair or harmful to the Army. Effort should be made to see that the truth is made known as promptly as possible.

RUMORS

Investigation has shown that every case of serious interracial trouble has been fed by rumors, and that these rumors are never accurate. Colored soldiers have been angered into mob action by stories of mistreatment. White soldiers have been similarly goaded by distorted and utterly false tales about Negro behavior. The antidote for such inflammatory rumors is to be found neither in oppressive censorship nor in overzealous repressive discipline. Malicious rumors should be met squarely with the truth so stated that it cannot be misunderstood, ignored, or doubted. This should be done as quickly as possible, just as soon as the responsible officer learns that dangerous tales are circulating or that there is a focus of dissatisfaction among his men. Individual circumstances will dictate whether such dangers are to be met by formal official statements, by less formal group discussions led by commissioned or noncommissioned officers, or by military intelligence procedures.

CONCLUSION

The War Department desires that Negro soldiers be used in the most effective manner. It intends that men of all races and national origins be encouraged and stimulated to do anything done by members of any other group in accordance with their individual abilities. The accomplishment of this purpose involves problems that are as technical as any other problem of personnel, and can be solved only with the benefit of special study, full information, a willingness to ask questions and try experiments, and a serious interest in finding adequate and reasonable solutions.

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CHECK LIST

1. Have I made due allowances for any lack of educational opportunity in my men?
2. Have I made proper effort to teach my men skills they have not previously had opportunity to acquire?
3. Have I provided literacy classes for those needing them?
4. Have I used words and phrases that my men cannot fully comprehend?
5. Have I taken great pains with AGCT IV's and V's to explain to them the consequences of AWOL and venereal disease?
6. Have I provided the most intelligent and responsible soldiers with a good chance to earn promotion and to use their best abilities, even at the expense of having them transferred from my command?
7. Have I done or said things that might wound the sensibilities of my men?
8. Have I protected the rights of my men in their relations with other troops and with the public?
9. Have I required of my troops soldierly discipline, appearance, and conduct in their relations with the public?
10. Have I provided my public relations officer with as many items as possible relating to commendable performances by my outfit and individual soldiers in it?
11. Have I exacted the highest degree of discipline, care of equipment, care of grounds and buildings, etc., while making allowances for limitations on ability to perform where lack of education and mechanical skills may be a handicap?
12. Have I given my organization the opportunity to acquire pride and confidence in itself by giving it missions for which my men show superior qualifications?
13. Have I excused my own shortcomings as a commander by attributing inadequate training to lack of ability on the part of my command instead of to my own failure to correct shortcomings?
14. Have I constantly kept before my men the reasons why we fight?
15. Have I subordinated all else to my duties as a commander, and have my men been brought to realize the paramount place of the war effort?