

**THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE
ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE
ARMED FORCES**

INITIAL REPORT

**EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
FOR NEGRO MILITARY PERSONNEL
STATIONED WITHIN THE UNITED STATES**

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718 JACKSON PLACE, N. W.
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

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The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

~~Mr. President:~~

There is transmitted herewith the initial report of the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces covering the work of the Committee during its first year of existence.

This report considers problems of equal opportunity affecting Negro military personnel on and off base within the United States. The recommendations emphasize matters which the Committee believes should receive the immediate attention of the Secretary of Defense. The Committee is available to consult as to any plan of action which the Department of Defense proposes to put into effect to meet the specific matters covered by this initial report.

Discrimination in the Reserve and National Guard and problems of equal opportunity affecting Negro military personnel serving in overseas areas have been under intensive study. A further report covering these matters will be completed soon.

Yours respectfully,

Nathaniel S. Colley
Abe Fortas
Gerhard A. Gesell, Chairman
Louis J. Hector
Benjamin Muse
John H. Sengstacke
Whitney M. Young, Jr.

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INITIAL REPORT

**EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
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I. INTRODUCTION

This initial report, covering the work of the Committee since its appointment in June 1962, considers certain matters involving equality of treatment and opportunity for Negro military personnel stationed within the United States.

The Committee has been actively exploring the two questions it was directed to consider, i. e.:

"1. What measures should be taken to improve the effectiveness of current policies and procedures in the Armed Forces with regard to equality of treatment and opportunity for persons in the Armed Forces?

"2. What measures should be employed to improve equality of opportunity for members of the Armed Forces and their dependents in the civilian community, particularly with respect to housing, education, transportation, recreational facilities, community events, programs and activities?" */

The Committee has held frequent sessions of two to three days' duration. During these sessions discussions were held with installation

*/ Letter from President dated June 22, 1962.

and other commanders, representatives of the Department of Defense
and the Services, officials of interested Federal agencies, and others. */

Committee members have travelled to a number of military bases and have interviewed officers and enlisted personnel of all ranks. In addition, information has been gathered through questionnaires and complaints received from servicemen.

The Committee has devoted its efforts to formulating general policies and recommendations and has not conducted detailed hearings and investigations into the merits of individual specific claims of discrimination. The Committee's inquiries have been courteously received with full cooperation.

*/ The principal organizations providing information and assistance to the Committee, apart from the Department of Defense and the Services, have been the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing, the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Housing and Home Finance Agency (especially its component, the Federal Housing Administration) and the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The Commission on Civil Rights has been especially helpful in furnishing factual information for study by the Committee. Generally, other agencies have furnished published information. None of these organizations bear any responsibility for the conclusions or recommendations of this Committee.

II. THE INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION OF THE NEGRO IN THE ARMED FORCES

Prior to 1948, the Negro had little or no opportunity in the Armed Forces. His skills and even his ability were a matter of debate. He was officially segregated, if not excluded; his duties were limited and his ability to serve his country in time of need was minimized or ignored. Such official policies no longer exist, and, in the main, the conditions which accompanied them have disappeared. Negroes have made military service their career in increasing numbers. They are formally integrated and have served well in both officer and enlisted ranks in times of war and peace.

It is desirable at the outset to review how this change occurred. In July 1948, President Truman, by Executive Order 9981, made the following declaration of principle which has since been applied throughout the Armed Forces:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services, without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale."

On this occasion, President Truman appointed a committee to advise how this policy could best be implemented. As a result of the Executive Order

~~and the work of the committee with continuing emphasis on~~
ceeding administrations during the subsequent years, the Armed Forces were gradually integrated, and recognition was given to the ability of Negroes to train for, and serve in, all capacities.

This is the first general policy review of questions of equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Forces since that committee completed its work approximately 13 years ago. It is well to keep in mind the vast changes which have occurred since that time. Not only have there been dramatic developments in the field of racial equality, but under the stress of international events and technological developments the composition and mission of the Armed Forces have substantially changed. While steps taken pursuant to President Truman's Executive Order were essential first ones in dealing with racial problems in the Armed Forces, it is wholly appropriate now to consider what further must be done to assure equality of treatment and opportunity for all qualified military personnel in the light of present day conditions.

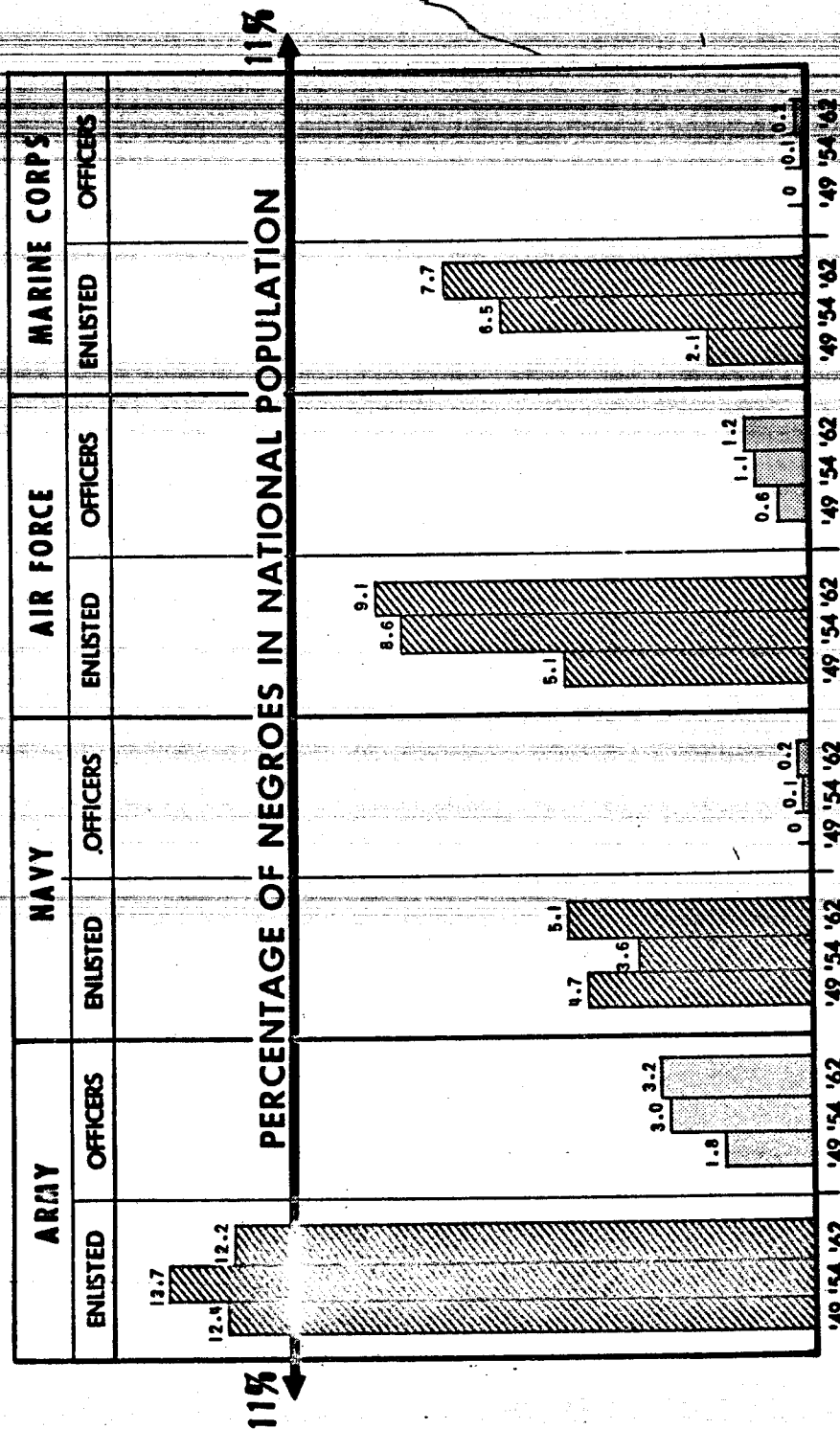
Any consideration of problems pertaining to equality of treatment and opportunity for Negroes in the Armed Forces must emphasize the vast scope and complexity of the military establishment. As of September 30,

1962, there were 2,674,000 men in uniform stationed at home and abroad. Of these, approximately 1,900,000 were stationed in the United States. Within the 50 states alone, there are 1,145 military installations to which 100 or more military personnel are assigned, and some 88,000 military personnel are assigned to many smaller installations in the United States. These installations are scattered throughout the 50 states.

There are no quotas or other forms of limitations on the recruiting of Negroes or on their assignment to career fields. All written policies governing advancement and promotion through both enlisted and commissioned ranks are non-discriminatory in character.

The number of Negroes in the Armed Forces has increased since President Truman's Executive Order was issued in 1948. Nevertheless, while about 11 percent of our population is Negro, it is significant that only 8.2 percent of all military personnel is Negro. The following chart graphically demonstrates the disparities between the overall Negro population percentage and the percentages of enlisted and officer personnel found in each Service.

CHART
NEGRO PERSONNEL AS PERCENT OF ALL PERSONNEL*
1949 TO 1962



* TO THE NEAREST ONE TENTH OF ONE PERCENT.

As these figures show, Negro participation in officer ranks is still very small for all the Services. A breakdown of the current number of Negroes and their relative percentage in both commissioned and enlisted ranks, shown in the following tables, reveals that substantial progress must yet be achieved.

Table I
STATISTICS ON NEGRO COMMISSIONED OFFICERS *

Rank		Number and Percent (in Parentheses) of Negro Personnel in Each Rank			
Army, Air Force, Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps
Generals (All types)	Admirals (All types)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.29%)	0 (0%)
Colonels	Captains	6 (0.11%)	0 (0%)	6 (0.14%)	0 (0%)
Major Generals	Commanders	117 (0.95%)	3 (0.03%)	67 (2.54%)	0 (0%)
Brigadier Generals	Lt. Commanders	424 (2.47%)	17 (0.14%)	124 (0.60%)	0 (0%)
Colonels	Lieutenants	1532 (5.21%)	88 (0.35%)	615 (1.74%)	7 (0.17%)
Lt. Colonels	Lieutenants (i.g.)	650 (4.33%)	57 (0.39%)	317 (1.56%)	16 (0.44%)
Major	Ensigns	421 (2.26%)	29 (0.22%)	170 (1.45%)	9 (0.28%)
Total Officers & Percentages		3150 (3.2%)	174 (0.24%)	1300 (1.24%)	32 (0.21%)

* Data for all Services. The Air Force figures include only officers assigned to duty in the 48 States and the continental United States. All other figures are complete and world-wide in scope.

Table II
STATISTICS ON NEGRO ENLISTED PERSONNEL*

Grade	Number and Percent (in Parentheses) of Negro Personnel in Each Grade			
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps
E-9 (highest)	76 (2.97%)	22 (1.30%)	32 (0.83%)	5 (0.71%)
E-8	586 (5.72%)	89 (1.22%)	140 (1.67%)	19 (0.81%)
E-7	3,143 (7.64%)	984 (2.42%)	616 (2.51%)	142 (2.12%)
E-6	10,496 (12.65%)	2,843 (4.43%)	2,115 (4.19%)	417 (3.93%)
E-5	21,892 (16.28%)	5,370 (6.23%)	10,287 (9.33%)	1,490 (8.65%)
E-4	21,133 (12.20%)	6,771 (6.59%)	14,321 (12.47%)	2,663 (9.08%)
E-3	26,385 (11.90%)	7,502 (5.11%)	11,505 (9.26%)	3,101 (8.14%)
E-2	10,836 (10.58%)	5,396 (5.22%)	6,951 (10.23%)	3,727 (8.01%)
E-1 (lowest)	8,456 (11.15%)	1,431 (4.77%)	597 (17.17%)	1,787 (7.55%)
Total Enlisted Men by Grade Percentages	103,603 (12.20%)	30,408 (5.22%)	46,564 (9.1 %)	13,351 (7.59%)

* 1954. Data for all Services. The Air Force figures are drawn from certain selected commands, and represent about 76% of all Air Force enlisted personnel. All other figures are complete and world-wide in scope.

The Armed Forces have made an intelligent and far-reaching advance toward complete integration, and, with some variations from Service to Service, substantial progress toward equality of treatment and opportunity. By and large, military bases reflect a clear pattern of integration. Segregation or exclusion of Negroes from barracks or other on-base housing facilities is not allowed. Military messes and all other on-base facilities are open to all personnel without regard to race. Negro personnel serve with whites in almost all types of units and at all unit levels. Negroes command white and Negro troops. Although the distribution is quite uneven, as will appear, Negroes have been placed in virtually all of the numerous job specialties and career fields which exist in the various Services.

The Committee feels, however, that the urgency of the remaining problems faced by Negro military personnel requires that this initial report be rendered at this time, so that corrective action may begin without delay. The headlines of recent weeks highlight this urgency. The great progress made is not enough. Negro military personnel and their families are daily suffering humiliation and degradation in communities near the bases at which they are compelled to serve, and a vigorous, new program of action is needed to relieve the situation. In addition, remaining problems of equality of treatment and opportunity, both service-wide

and at particular bases, call for correction. National policy requires prompt action to eliminate all these conditions. Equal opportunity for the Negro will exist only when it is possible for him to enter upon a career of military service with assurance that his acceptance and his progress will be in no way impeded by reason of his color. Clearly, distinctions based on race prevent full utilization of Negro military personnel and are inconsistent with the objectives of our democratic society.

III. IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE NEGRO IN THE ARMED FORCES

A. There is Need to Make Greater Efforts to Attract Qualified Negroes

All Services are making strenuous efforts to attract and hold personnel. Only the Army still relies to some extent on the draft, but all branches of the Armed Forces report difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel of all races. As the statistics previously presented disclose, the participation of the Negro in the Armed Forces is less than the percentage of Negroes in our total population.

Negroes are only now coming to realize that opportunity is available in the Armed Forces. Undoubtedly, the glaring lack of opportunity which existed not so many years ago and the limited progress which Negroes have as yet made to higher ranks have, in part, produced this result, as have other inequalities and conditions confronting Negro military personnel off base. Moreover, continuing educational disadvantages make many Negroes unavailable for certain types of job opportunities in the Armed Forces.

The means by which individuals are influenced to enter the Services are, of course, important. While methods differ in each Service, there is, at the present time, little recruiting directed towards

Negroes and insufficient awareness on the part of recruiting officers of special matters which would be of interest to potential Negro personnel.

For example, of the illustrative photographs in the occupational training guide of one Service, the only Negro shown is an enlisted man, in kitchen garb in the Steward field, where he appears working with a uniformed, white enlisted man. In general, Negroes rarely appear in recruiting literature - and then almost never on the cover together with other personnel or in the more appealing action shots.

Service programs to attract personnel properly emphasize **special educational backgrounds and technical training, a need resulting from the increasing complexity of military operations.** Unless Negroes with such aptitudes are encouraged to enter the Services, there is the danger that the Negro least attractive to private industry and other career fields - men not always in a position to take full advantage of the opportunity offered by the Services - will enter the Armed Forces.

Turning from the general problem of attracting Negroes to the Armed Forces to the particular question of officer selection, it should be noted at the outset that officers are obtained by the Services from several sources. For instance, there is direct commissioning of persons with special skills, including doctors, dentists and certain others.

In addition, the Services obtain officers through the respective Academies, officer candidate programs and, in significant numbers, from ROTC programs. Negroes are currently represented at all of the Academies - 14 at West Point, 10 at the Naval Academy and 15 at the Air Force Academy - and the other programs and sources are all offering Negroes for officer training. Participation of Negroes in these programs and services is discussed below in the section of this report dealing with educational opportunities.

Additional Negro officer participation can be achieved only by attracting qualified candidates through improved opportunity for Negroes in the military service. It should be noted that the standards one must meet to become an officer are necessarily high and that the military is competing for skilled personnel with other employers who can often offer greater material rewards to Negroes and whites alike.

B. Recommendations for Attracting Qualified Negroes

In order to increase the presently insufficient flow of qualified Negroes into the Armed Forces, techniques and procedures to attract persons should be carefully re-examined to ensure that they do not operate to reduce the entry of qualified Negroes into the Service. The

problems here do not appear to be ones of an affirmative discrimination encouraged by official Service policies. Rather, the condition results from a lack of adequate attention to, and review of, several aspects of the personnel selection process. The Services should initiate a more informed solicitation of colleges having substantial numbers of Negro students, develop literature appealing to Negroes and make wider use of Negro officers in recruiting assignments. Special efforts should be made to find and recruit Negroes with the special aptitudes the Services now require and affirmative steps should be taken to ensure that no recruiting personnel, consciously or unconsciously, channel Negroes to particular career fields, disregarding their aptitudes.

To increase the pitifully small number of Negro officers, energetic efforts must be made to raise the number of Negroes in the Academies and in all other programs which supply officers for the Services.

Finally, the Services should continually review all aspects of personnel selection procedures and their operation, to minimize the possibility of discrimination, especially discrimination by individuals in positions of responsibility at all Service levels.

**C. There is Need for Continuing Reappraisal
of Assignment Patterns**

The assignment of an occupational classification to an enlisted man, shortly after he enters military service, is usually one of the most significant actions affecting his entire Service career. It will have an obvious bearing upon his training and duty assignments, and upon his earnings outlook, as well, since the more technical specialties normally offer greater opportunities for grade advancement and related benefits. Initial classification action normally occurs during basic training. The bases for such classification are the results of detailed aptitude testing, an evaluation of pertinent training, work experience and interests, and a personal interview. Actual assignments to particular schools or specialties are also influenced by available quotas and changes in skill requirements.

There have been a number of complaints from Negro military personnel at particular bases to the effect that discrimination exists as to duty and career field assignments. Since many factors enter into assignment decisions, the merits of these complaints are difficult to determine without exhaustive inquiry. Statistics do show that on a Service-wide basis, Negroes are to be found assigned to virtually all occupational areas.

However, there is some evidence of a disproportionate grouping of Negro enlisted personnel in the Service area. For example, one out of every five Negroes in the Navy is in the food service career field, along with a substantial number of Filipinos. The heavy proportion of Negroes in this career field undoubtedly reflects the policy, now abandoned, of assigning Negroes only to occupations such as food service and other support-type activities.

To some extent, unevenness of assignment represents the cumulation of individual preferences. In any event, the bunching of Negro military personnel in any particular category, for whatever reasons, operates as a brake upon advancement because only a limited number of promotion vacancies are available in any particular career specialty.

Conversely, Negro participation in most technical career fields is slight, though relative participation appears to be increasing. Such fields include, for example, Electronics and Crafts in the Navy, and Electronic Maintenance in the Air Force. These patterns appear to have improved in the case of more recent entrants into Service, reflecting the impact of policies designed to provide equal treatment and opportunity for Negroes in the Armed Forces. The improvement has

been dramatic in the Navy and Marine Corps, although it is evident that some difference in relative occupational distribution persists.

The trend towards equal occupational distribution has resulted in an increasing proportion of Negroes in the "white collar" skills and in many of the more technical specialties.

Many of the Negroes in the Navy and Marine Corps are still grouped in assignments which perpetuate the image of the Negro as a menial or servant in respect to the total activities of these Services, and it will take some time before the more recent assignment trends rectify this discrepancy.

Service policies governing the assignment and advancement of military personnel find their reflection in the atmosphere of each particular base. Where assignments in any substantial way appear to reflect the relegation of Negro personnel to particular activities or where there is an unexplained absence of Negro officers in significant duty assignments, the posture of the base as a whole is unavoidably one of inequality of treatment and suggests to Negro personnel that there is a lack of opportunity. In some instances, of course, such patterns are created unconsciously since the Services generally assign personnel to particular bases without regard to race. As a result, the representation and assignments of Negroes on a particular installation may be

quite inconsistent with the pattern of the particular Service as a whole.

Since the number of Negro officers in the Armed Forces is very small, there are still relatively few Negro officers at most installations, and the commands and headquarters are often overwhelmingly white. Several installation commanders expressed the view that a greater proportion of Negro officers would be helpful to the morale of the installation as a whole.

D. Recommendations for Improving Assignment Patterns

Because of the importance of the assignment of an occupational classification to a new enlisted man, the procedures affecting such assignment, as well as their results, must be carefully and regularly reviewed to see whether they operate to ensure equality of treatment and opportunity for Negro military personnel. When new Negro personnel or applicants are interviewed, they should be made fully aware of the variety of opportunities available before being required to express preferences for career fields. Special effort should be made to recognize potential capacities of Negroes at the time of recruitment and at other appropriate times, and to encourage their entering, with proper vocational assistance, into career fields which match latent skill.

In addition, continuing efforts must be made to place Negro personnel in as many special and technical career fields and positions of troop command as possible, in order to afford Negro personnel wide training and ensure the fullest utilization of available talent. In this regard, the disproportionate bunchings of Negro personnel in certain service career fields should be re-examined, these personnel retested, carefully advised about other fields for which they are trainable, retrained accordingly and reassigned.

Although the Committee does not feel competent to recommend specific procedures for assuring the participation of Negro officers at base and regional headquarters in all sections of the country, it is advisable to point out that informal efforts to minimize Negro assignment to certain bases, however well motivated, are undesirable.

**E. There is Need to Improve Procedures
Affecting Promotions**

The slight Negro participation in higher non-commissioned and commissioned ranks, indicated in Tables I and II above, suggests strongly that Negroes, at least in the past, have not enjoyed equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Forces. In any event, this pattern acts to

deter other Negroes from choosing the Armed Forces as a career.

Generally, advancement in the non-commissioned ranks is based, among other things, upon the recommendations of commanding officers, and involves board actions of various kinds as well as certain written examinations. None of the higher NCO ranks can be achieved without long periods of duty in the Service and there are many Negroes who have not yet served the minimum time required. Satisfaction of minimum requirements does not, however, assure promotion since the number of openings available are limited by the necessities of the military organization and may be smaller than the number of men meeting minimum requirements.

Selection for promotion from among qualified personnel is based on value judgments formed from a review of the entire experience of those qualified for advancement. There is at the present time no system within any of the Services for periodic review of NCO promotions in order to investigate and eliminate the possibility that elements of racial bias may have been operative in the selection or rating of candidates at installation and other levels where crucial decisions affecting a man's career are made.

Each of the Services has established a system for selecting officers for promotion by action of specially appointed boards of senior officers. While there are variations, the systems have much in common.

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All Services seek to maintain high standards and are faced with very substantial attrition due to legislation and other factors which limit the number of officers that may hold a particular rank at a given time. Efforts have been made by all of the Services to establish fair promotion criteria. In the nature of things, however, it is inevitable that many officers fail of promotion. Competition is extremely keen and minor differences in experience, training and personality may be decisive as between individual candidates.

One factor affecting the advancement of Negro officers has been the emphasis given by the Services to specialized educational backgrounds in selecting candidates for promotion. The more limited educational opportunities available for Negroes, until recent years, have, therefore, operated to their disadvantage in the promotion selection process.

Seniority, too, plays a vital part in the officer promotion system. Indeed, promotions are possible only after minimum prescribed lengths of service. For example, under present conditions, it normally takes approximately 16 years of service as an officer to be eligible for promotion to lieutenant colonel in the Army, Air Force or Marine Corps, or to the corresponding rank of commander in the Navy. Since the