

full participation of the Negro in the Armed Forces is of recent

origin, there are relatively few Negroes with the highest seniority.

Studies show, for instance, that although 3.2 percent of all Army officers are Negroes, only 1 percent of the officers with 20 years or more service are Negroes. While this fact may explain the existence of so few high ranking Negro officers, it does not eliminate the need for all personnel concerned with recruitment, assignment and promotion to be ever mindful of the history of discriminatory practices from which this situation arose and of the desirability of closing the gap as quickly as possible.

The ability of competent Negroes to succeed is all-important. Nothing will do more to encourage the able Negro to enter military service as a career than tangible proof, as yet almost entirely lacking, that Negro officers can receive equal recognition and opportunity for advancement with whites. Actual examples of Negroes who have achieved major positions of responsibility in the Armed Forces will be worth thousands of words devoted to claims that no barriers exist.

Several problems have come to the Committee's attention concerning significant details in the machinery of officer promotions. The personnel folders reviewed by promotion boards, in the case of all the

Services, contain a photograph of the officers under consideration and, in the case of some of the Services, contain forms having racial designations. Thus, the officer's race is brought sharply to the attention of the promotion board. There do not appear to be adequate reasons for having photographs or racial designations in the materials reviewed for promotion purposes. The presence of this information raises serious questions whether individual members of a promotion board, intentionally or otherwise, might discriminate on the basis of race.

The number of Negro officers who have served on boards concerned with officer promotions is very small. This follows from the fact that the members of such boards in all Services are normally colonels (or the Navy equivalent, captain) or higher ranking officers, and, as Table I, above, indicates, the number of Negroes who have attained these ranks is extremely small. In fact, in the Navy and Marine Corps, no officers have attained these ranks. So long as promotion selection is made primarily by white officers, questions as to the impartiality of these boards will continue to arise.

Officers serving on promotion boards are selected with care and take an oath demanding objectivity, but no particular effort is made

to determine whether an officer serving on a promotion board,  
because of his background and personal

scious or unconscious bias. Experience with this delicate and  
intangible problem in commercial organizations suggests that,  
on occasion, bias exists which can be disclosed by specific in-  
quiry and attention to the individual's past performance.

#### **F. Recommendations for Improving Promotion Procedures**

In view of the numerous complaints of discrimination in  
enlisted promotions and the slight participation of Negroes in the  
higher NCO ranks, the Services should initiate, on a spot check  
basis, periodic inquiries into the operation of enlisted promotion  
procedures, particularly to the higher NCO ranks.

To minimize the possibility that conscious or unconscious  
discrimination on the basis of race or color may affect the impar-  
tiality of the officer promotion system, photographs and racial des-  
ignations in the folders reviewed by promotion boards should be elim-  
inated. Every opportunity should be taken to appoint Negro officers to  
serve on promotion boards, in normal rotation. Techniques for assuring

that all promotion board members are free from conscious or unconscious racial bias should be developed. Wherever possible, officers chosen to serve on promotion boards should be chosen from those who have had more than casual experience serving with Negro officers and enlisted personnel. To the extent that similar situations pertain in the enlisted promotion system, like steps should be taken there.

A final comment: No system is valid if the standards used to make decisions, no matter how objectively applied, are such as to operate unfairly against any group of persons. Accordingly, the Services should each periodically review their standards for promotion, selection and assignment to make certain that latent ability is always properly measured and utilized.



#### IV. ELIMINATING REMAINING ON-BASE DISCRIMINATION

##### A. The Present Lack of Communication Between Negro Personnel and Commanders Causes Discrimination to Fester

Reference has already been made to the highly successful program of the Armed Forces to bring about full integration and to the progress made toward equality of treatment and opportunity. More is required. Many of the remaining problems result from the lack of communication between Negro military personnel and the command echelon at bases.

Equality of treatment and opportunity is not the responsibility of any particular official or office in any of the Services. Rather, responsibility is Service-wide, in the sense that a general policy has been defined by broad directives. As a result, no machinery exists at any particular base by which a given officer is specifically charged with continuing responsibility in this area. There is no satisfactory method of handling complaints. Conditions conducive to discriminatory practices are often not even known to commanders. The Negro serviceman may complain to his immediate superior but it is rare that these complaints reach the attention of the base commander or members of his immediate staff. As problems become

severe, they may or may not receive attention at one or more echelons in the command. In sum, there is no affirmative and continuing effort to monitor race relations problems on base.

An important by-product of the Committee's work has been a new awareness, on the part of many of the commanders of bases visited, of the necessity for greater efforts to eliminate remaining obstacles to equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Forces. For example, on visits to bases, Committee members noted a number of discriminatory practices. Such practices were often remedied forthwith when brought to the attention of the base commander by Committee members. This illustrates the value of expanded communications between Negro military personnel and base commanders. Means must be found to keep base commanders informed of such conditions as they develop. It is clear to the Committee that only by fixing responsibility and establishing some means for monitoring these matters, base-by-base, can problems of discrimination, which will inevitably arise from time to time, be cured effectively and promptly.

At the present time, the absence of an effective procedure for dealing with complaints has led Negro personnel to complain to Congressmen and to various private groups such as the NAACP, and to

broadcast letters, sometimes anonymous, to individuals and groups interested in racial matters. The investigation of these letters through the traditional Inspector General or Department of Defense channels is often fruitless. These authorities are not geared to handle such problems and too much time elapses, making it difficult to ascertain the facts.

There exists in the minds of many Negro personnel the fear that they will be subject to criticism and reprisal if they raise matters of this kind. Procedures must be developed which eliminate this fear and encourage them to present their complaints. Merely stating that reprisals are forbidden is not enough.

Some complaints will allege that a specific individual has suffered discriminatory treatment of some kind. Such complaints, involving matters relating to a single person, such as failing to be promoted, cannot ordinarily be investigated without disclosing the identity of the aggrieved individual. This is not true, however, where the complaint discloses a discriminatory condition on base, such as a segregated NCO club. Such conditions can be investigated and eliminated without the need for identifying a particular complainant.

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It cannot be emphasized too strongly that prompt correction of what may appear on the surface to be minor examples of discrimination will contribute substantially to morale. Such actions will also serve to keep the standard of conduct which national policy has decreed before all individuals on the base.

**B. Recommendations for Improving Communication with Commanders**

In order to improve the processing of complaints at the base level, procedures must be established which will encourage Negro personnel to present complaints of discrimination while eliminating the risk that they will be subject to criticism or reprisal for so doing. In order to accomplish this, an officer should be designated at each base to receive such complaints. This officer must have free access to the base commander or his deputy for the purpose of communicating and discussing complaints of discrimination. Commanders at bases must, of course, be held personally responsible for the effectiveness of the system and for conditions on the base. Discriminatory conditions may exist even where few complaints are made, and the commander should be held accountable to discover and remedy such conditions.

All personnel, officer and enlisted, should be free to contact the officer designated to receive complaints at any time, without the consent, knowledge or approval of any person in the chain of command over them. Communications between servicemen and this officer should be privileged and Service regulations should prohibit the disclosure of such communications or the identity of the complainant without the serviceman's consent.

The officer designated to receive such complaints should be carefully chosen to ensure that he is sensitive to problems of discrimination. The confidential nature of his duties in this area should be thoroughly explained to him and others, and he should be provided with a detailed manual of instructions. In view of his role as a confidential counselor, consideration should be given to the designation of the local Legal Assistance Officer as the officer to receive such complaints, but the base commander should be free to designate the officer best qualified for such duties, regardless of the officer's other duties. However, the officer so chosen must not be so burdened with other duties that he cannot effectively deal with complaints presented to him; he should be so situated that servicemen can contact and consult him in privacy; and he should be independent and free from intimidation by any person in the performance of his duties.

Under this system, all base personnel should be repeatedly and periodically advised of the identity of the complaint officer, and further advised of their right to present complaints. Service regulations should forbid attempts to discourage the presentation of such complaints or reprisals against complainants, and all personnel should be advised that such attempts, in violation of these regulations, will subject them to disciplinary action.

Such day-to-day efforts to discover and eliminate examples of discrimination at the base level should be checked and supplemented by periodic field visits from personnel from the Department of Defense who are skilled and sensitive in handling problems of discrimination and whose full-time energies are devoted to such problems. In this way, commanders' efforts can be measured. In addition, servicemen should be free, if they choose, to present their complaints to such visiting personnel and to contact the Department of Defense office to which such personnel are assigned if they so desire.

**C. Examples of Remaining On-Base Discrimination and Recommendations for their Elimination**

Members of the Committee received complaints from Negro personnel concerning particular conditions existing at specific bases.



These complaints were received orally during base visits and by letters from servicemen. The Committee has not had the time or the resources to conduct specific investigations into such complaints, nor did the Committee conceive that this was the role assigned to it.

Personal observations and interviews have, however, pointed to discriminatory conditions which do exist at some bases. \* / These can be remedied and would appear to be of sufficient general consequence to be mentioned here, although conditions such as those discussed below are not the only ones which may exist nor are they prevalent on every base.

The Committee anticipates that if a better system of communication for dealing with racial problems suggestive of discrimination is established on base, and specific matters found on bases, such as those mentioned below, are given intelligent attention, many of the principal sources of irritation which reflect on morale, military efficiency and opportunity would be eliminated.

\* / Disturbing patterns of civilian employment at some military bases, both in the Federal Civil Service and in clubs, exchange facilities and other non-appropriated fund activities, have come to the attention of the Committee during its study. Since discrimination in Federal civilian employment is under continuing review by the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, these patterns have been called to the attention of that body.

1. NCO and Service Clubs Require  
Careful Continuing Attention

One of the principal sources of difficulty arises in connection with the operation of on-base Service and NCO clubs. The number and program of these clubs vary from base to base. Generally, they provide a place for gathering, refreshment, entertainment and occasional dances. There is sometimes more than one NCO or Service club on a base. At some bases, due to pressures brought by white personnel or other factors, forms of segregated Service clubs have developed in practice. For example, the majority of Negro servicemen may gravitate to one club and white servicemen to another. Commanding officers have permitted this condition to be imposed by the wishes of a minority of white personnel and have not taken sufficient affirmative steps to encourage utilization of all clubs by all personnel who desire to do so.

At some Service clubs, it is customary for the command, through professional or volunteer hostesses, to arrange for girls to come to the base for a dance or other entertainment. Although such Service clubs are used by whites and Negroes alike, there are instances when too few or no Negro girls are brought to the base, thus creating unnecessary tensions. There is also evidence that on occasion civilian

hostesses have imported onto the base from the civilian community attitudes which are inconsistent with Department of Defense policy.

One of the most successful Service clubs is that at an Army base in the South, operated by a very able Negro hostess, which attracts local volunteer workers and servicemen of both races.

These problems are not necessary and should be eliminated without delay. To do this, commanders should take affirmative action to insure that there is no de facto segregation or discrimination at any of these club facilities. In addition, Negro girls should be secured for dances, and greater care should be taken in the selection and training of hostesses and other civilian personnel operating Service clubs.

2. Military Police Assignments  
Require Review

Another area of fairly common complaint involves the use of military police of all Services on base, at the base gate, and on patrols sent from the base into nearby communities. At some bases Negro military police have not been used at the base gate because of possible objection by members of the white civilian community. At others, there are instances in which wholly Negro patrols are

sent into Negro areas, but not into white areas, while integrated patrols are not used for off-base assignments. These problems are particularly sensitive ones because of the status and authority of the military police.

To the extent numerically possible, regular military police patrols should be assigned on a racially integrated basis, and there should be no distinctions based on race in any type of military police assignment. Sufficient numbers of Negro personnel should be included in military police units to permit such assignment policies to be effectuated. National and defense policy on integration should be clearly spelled out to personnel undergoing military police training and to those who train and supervise military police.

3. Base-Sponsored Activities Must Adhere to National Policy

The Department of Defense and the Services have prohibited the use of their names, facilities, activities or sponsorship by any employee recreational organization practicing racial discrimination. However, policies have not been established concerning the participation of bands, sports teams, choirs and

the like, in activities off base. For example, no directive specifically prohibits the removal of Negro members from bands, choirs, marching units, or other military groups representing the base at off-base functions, where such removal is sought or suggested by community representatives.

Many base commanders on their own initiative have refused to permit groups from a base to participate outside the base in events where elimination or segregation of Negro personnel would be required because of civilian attitudes. This has been a very healthy and desirable action. To remove Negro members from bands and choruses, as has been done on occasion, or from any other Service activity in response to outside pressures, creates an indefensible form of discrimination within the Services.

Base commanders themselves have frequent opportunities to attend gatherings of local groups, as speakers or in other semi-official capacities. A number of these groups both practice segregation and support local segregation policies. Such attendance may serve a legitimate and useful function in furthering objectives of the Services.

Where commanders limit their community activities to civic groups that exclude Negroes and favor segregation - as is often the case - they fail in their mission. The commander must not appear, by his speeches to such groups and his acceptance of awards from them to condone conditions which are offensive to his men and injurious to the efficiency of his command.

To assure that these off-base functions do not undermine the atmosphere of equality developed on the base, all military commanders should be instructed to follow the lead of those who have refused to permit their personnel to participate in base-controlled activities outside the base where elimination or segregation of Negro personnel is sought. While commanders' discretion must guide their own attendance policies, they should be sensitive to avoid attending any function if such attendance might seem an endorsement of discriminatory civilian attitudes.

4. Freedom of Association and Expression  
Must be Preserved

Another example of the influence which off-base civilian attitudes have on base is reflected in the efforts of some commanders to discourage interracial association by military personnel off base



and to urge compliance with all forms of local segregation requirements. In some cases, it has been officially suggested, in effect, that friends segregate themselves off base in order to avoid local objections. In one case, it was reported that military police at the base gate systematically warned personnel that white and Negro personnel leaving the base together in private automobiles should not enter town together. In other cases, personnel have been advised to comply with local segregation policies without any protest, and have even been told that expressions of their views concerning such local policies may result in disciplinary action against them.

These actions by some commanders, restraining freedom of association and expression, are misguided and should be terminated.

5. Segregation in Transportation and School Buses Must be Eliminated

A number of bases utilize local transportation facilities which run with some frequency between the base and the local community. Some of these local operators practice segregation. In a number of instances, buses, while required to integrate during

the period the bus is on base property, enforce a segregated pattern of seating immediately upon leaving the installation.

Conversely, troops traveling to the base in segregated patterns may change seating only upon arrival at the base. In other instances, taxis which refuse Negroes transportation are permitted to serve the installation. Thus, servicemen are carried to and from the base in a segregated pattern wholly inconsistent with the existing pattern of integration on base.

There are few schools on military bases for dependents living on base. None of these schools serve all such dependents.

As a consequence, dependents living on base are sent to local public and, sometimes, private school systems. Where these public school systems are segregated, different transportation services are sometimes provided for Negro and white students.

As a consequence, during the school year separate buses for Negro and white children arrive and depart from a base daily.

The white and Negro children live and play together on base and may have gone to school together on base. The enforced separation and differentiation which the segregated school bus system

sharply exhibits is inconsistent with other conditions on base and is often the only example of on-base segregation. By appearing even in this fashion to support a segregated school system, the military establishment is lending support to a basically unconstitutional, and therefore, unlawful, condition.

These and any other examples of discrimination in transportation serving the base should be eliminated. Agreements should be sought with bus and taxi companies willing to provide non-discriminatory transportation for servicemen. If such agreements cannot be promptly obtained, the Services should provide other forms of transportation to terminate this indignity.

In addition, the Services should make every effort to have local school authorities discontinue segregation of all school buses traveling to the post without delay. If such efforts should in any case be unsuccessful, immediate provisions should be made for transporting these children in military vehicles or under contractual arrangements with other carriers. This will entail some difficulty and expense, but the clear national policy of on-base integration requires it. Moreover, such action will daily carry to the civilian community a demonstration of the Services' conviction that all such discrimination must disappear.

**V. ELIMINATING THE SERIOUS OFF-BASE DISCRIMINATION  
BY CIVILIAN COMMUNITIES AFFECTING THE MORALE  
OF NEGRO MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS**

**A. Civilian Communities Near Bases Often Segregate  
and Discriminate Against Negro Military Personnel**

The hundreds of military installations within the United States cannot exist in isolation from surrounding civilian communities. The reasons are obvious and need be only briefly covered.

Military family housing on base is, generally speaking, assigned to eligible personnel on the basis of seniority. Such housing is not sufficient, in most instances, to house more than about one-half the eligible married personnel. At many bases there is relatively little on-base housing. Therefore, it is quite usual for many of the married personnel to live off base. Statistics from the Department of Defense indicate that there are within the United States approximately 405,000 families residing in various types of off-base community housing, in communities near the service members' places of duty.

As far as schools are concerned, the overwhelming majority of school-age dependents of military personnel use the local public school system, whether they live on or off base.

G A family residing on or off base utilizes many of the normal community facilities for shopping and recreation. While the Services have attempted in some degree to provide recreational opportunities on base - and there are, among other things, service clubs, swimming pools and theatres found in some of the larger bases - the limited and institutional character of these arrangements does not satisfy the needs of the military personnel. Apart from the natural desire of military personnel to exist free from command supervision, many families reside sufficiently far from the base to make on-base facilities of limited utility.

Although the Supreme Court has declared that laws requiring segregation of public schools or other public facilities are unconstitutional, the Committee's studies have disclosed that a very substantial number of communities neighboring military bases practice various forms of segregation. Segregation is found in varying degrees throughout the United States. In some communities local laws require segregation; in others the condition derives from custom and the wishes of the local population. The pattern of discrimination and segregation is, of course, particularly noticeable in the southern communities, but

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there are substantial variations from community to community and state to state. Forms of discrimination appear in many northern

communities. Discrimination in housing is almost universal. Some bases established in states such as the Dakotas have confronted forms of segregation and discrimination which have much of the same rigidity found in certain southern communities.

In addition to its personal examination of conditions in certain communities, the Committee requested the Services to supply information indicating prevalence of segregation in communities neighboring to bases. Studies made by the Army and Navy of certain of their domestic installations and activities illustrate the typical pattern with which the Committee is concerned. The following table containing this information is illuminating; less complete analyses by the Air Force and Marine Corps indicate that their personnel confront similar patterns.



# **SEGREGATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES IN COMMUNITIES ADJACENT TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS**

Table III

Type of Segregated Public Facility	Number of Surveyed Installations and Activities With Such Segregated Facilities *		Number of Personnel Stationed Where Facilities Are Segregated		Percentage of Surveyed Installations and Activities With Segregated Facilities	
	ARMY	NAVY	ARMY	NAVY	ARMY	NAVY
Public Schools	48	143	178,109	58,500	24%	25%
Restaurants and Bars	68	238	257,893	110,000	34%	43%
Theaters	63	223	232,301	105,000	31%	40%
Swimming Pools	19	226	178,201	102,000	9%	40%
Golf Courses	38	164	190,931	82,000	19%	29%
Beaches	10	203	123,502	90,000	5%	36%
Bowling Alleys	32	194	205,901	103,000	16%	35%
Libraries	10	49	130,179	28,000	5%	9%
Public Transportation	4	47	41,091	22,000	2%	8%
Hotels, Motels	12	252	205,618	141,000	6%	45%
Churches	23	163	127,402	70,000	11%	29%

\* The Army survey for this table covered 201 installations and activities, while the Navy survey covered 559. Each installation and activity surveyed had 100 or more military personnel assigned to it.

**B. Community Segregation and Discrimination  
Adversely Affects Service Morale**

A Negro officer or serviceman is, like all military personnel, subject to orders. On short notice he may be transferred to any base. This dislocation of his affairs is one of the disadvantages of military service. The time allowed is limited and orders are immutable.

When a Negro officer or serviceman is transferred to a base where the neighboring community practices substantial forms of segregation and discrimination, he immediately faces very special and difficult problems. Assuming, as is often the case, that he must live off base, he must look for a house or an apartment; he must then arrange for the schooling of his children; he must find transportation between home and base. In short, he must obtain for himself and his family food, shelter and recreation in what to him is necessarily a new and unfriendly community. In making this transition he gets little help from the base or the community. He must cope with the problems as he finds them, on short notice.

Discrimination in housing confronts him immediately in most sections of the country. Private housing in many parts of town is not available. Many real estate agents will have nothing to do with him. He is forced to that part of town and type of housing occupied by Negroes. Here in many cases are structures well below acceptable standards, expensive, dirty, dilapidated - in all respects undesirable. Often Negro housing areas are farthest from the base. Almost always the available segregated housing is below the standard available for white military personnel. Frequently little or no housing is available and space is at a premium. After one or two nights sleeping with his family in his car or at an expensive Negro motel (if he can find one) he takes whatever turns up.

Schools are his next concern. Here again patterns of segregation often exist. Although he wears the uniform of his country, his dependents may be forced into segregated schools. In some communities near bases these schools are well below standards, overcrowded, distant from the base and otherwise undesirable. Whatever the quality of the schools, and school conditions do of course vary, his children, like himself, are again set apart, contrary to their wishes.

Usually the Negro officer or serviceman has few friends in the community where he is sent. He and his family must build a new

life, but many doors are closed outside the Negro section of town. Drug stores, restaurants and bars may refuse to serve him. Bowling alleys, golf courses, theatres, hotels and sections of department stores may exclude him. Transportation may be segregated. Churches may deny him admission. Throughout his period of service at the particular base he is in many ways set apart and denied the general freedom of the community available to his white counterpart.

Many of these Negro military personnel are well-educated, specially skilled and accustomed to home communities relatively free from discrimination. All of them have enjoyed the relative freedom from distinctions drawn on the basis of color which prevails on military bases. To all Negroes these community conditions are a constant affront and a constant reminder that the society they are prepared to defend is a society that deprecates their right to full participation as citizens. This should not be.

Letters from Negro military personnel bring these conditions into sharp focus. Visits which members of the Committee made to

~~bases and their surrounding communities have served to give them~~

special emphasis. Interviews with Negro military personnel reflect their gravity and the need for prompt action.

Complaints which the Committee has received, some in interviews and some written, show that for some Negro families, the pressures of community discrimination prove too great to bear. Homes are broken up by these conditions as Negro families coming from parts of the country which are relatively tolerant of color differences find themselves facing a situation which is both new and frightening. For them, the clock has turned back more than a generation. To protect their children and to maintain some degree of dignity they return home, and the husband is left to work out his service obligations alone. Other families never attempt to venture into these conditions in the first place. Under either of these circumstances the Negro serviceman becomes consumed with the frustration of separation and the desire for transfer. And whether his family is with him or not, the indignities suffered in the community place a load upon his service career affecting both his interest and his performance.

~~The impact of community discrimination is not solely upon those who have families. Such discrimination creates another demoralizing~~

condition, affecting all military personnel. On base many of the artificial barriers caused by race disappear as Negro and white personnel work, eat and sleep together. Friendships develop between Negro and white officers and servicemen. Normally these relationships would carry over into moments of liberty and recreation. But many communities do not tolerate relations between Negroes and whites. Leaving the base, they may not be able to ride the bus into town together, attend a movie, go bowling, get a coke at a drug store or a beer at a bar or, indeed, even stroll through a public park. This sharp taboo which the civilian community seeks to impose is particularly intolerable and its effects unusually severe in view of the easy, normal relationships which develop on base under existing military policy. The contrast makes the discrimination more biting and the affront more serious. Conditions such as these cause deep resentment among Negro and many white personnel.

The isolation caused by this type of blatant discrimination is felt keenly by the increasingly large group of Negro personnel whose education and training make the facilities available in the Negro areas of many communities unacceptable. There are many Negroes in the Armed Forces



who simply will not patronize the usual places of public recreation and accommodations available to Negroes in typical segregated communities.

Judged by standards to which they have been accustomed at home, these places seem both shabby and disreputable. They will not accept them merely because no alternative is available. Their efforts to find forms of recreation and pursue cultural interests consonant with their background go unrewarded because of the barriers placed in their way by community attitudes.

It is not surprising, but most discouraging, to have to report that there are bases where Negro personnel confront such intolerable conditions off base that almost any device will be employed to effect a change in duty assignment. Applications for transfer, <sup>\*</sup>/ infractions of rules and a general contempt for the "system" are apt to appear. The effect on Service morale and efficiency is apparent. The Committee's inquiries, including interviews with many base commanders, made it clear that the accomplishment of the military mission of a base confronted with such conditions is measurably impaired. There was

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<sup>\*</sup> / In order to maintain maximum utilization of manpower, the Services generally deny transfers to Negro servicemen when such transfers are requested upon the sole ground that they and their families are suffering racial discrimination in the communities where their places of duty are located. Exceptions may be made for particularly severe cases.

general agreement among base commanders that the morale  
of both white and Negro troops suffers in the presence of such  
indignities and inequities. A practical program for dealing with  
off-base discrimination against Negro military personnel and  
their dependents is urgently required.

C. Base Commanders Lack Adequate Instructions  
and Generally Ignore Off-Base Discrimination

The focal point of any practical approach to this most pressing problem is the base commander. <sup>\*</sup>/ He represents the military in the area. It is his duty to be concerned with the welfare of those under his command. He is in a better position than higher echelons to identify the particular discrimination forms prevalent in the community neighboring his base. On his shoulders should fall the primary responsibility for solving local problems.

The record of base commanders in dealing with such problems has not been impressive. Their failure in this regard stems from a number of causes.

\*/ At some bases, there are commanders senior to the person designated as the base commander. Where this is true, the attitudes of the senior commander are naturally given great weight by the base commander. In such situations, the considerations discussed in the context of the base commander's functions apply with equal force to the role of this senior commander located at the base.

While the failure can be explained by the absence of specific directives requiring affirmative programs, in part it stems from the attitudes and training which most base commanders bring to their job. As a group, they do not believe that problems of segregation and racial discrimination in the local community should be their concern. Base commanders express this view in various ways: That the authority of the base commander ends at the gate, that it is not his job to rearrange the social order, that it is not part of the military mission to change community attitudes, that any pressure would be misunderstood and merely stir up trouble, that questions of this kind should be left to the courts, that military personnel are traditionally non-political and should not involve themselves in controversial questions.

The failure stems also from the nature of assignments to the job of base commander. Such assignments are for a limited tour of duty, often between two and three years. Rarely does a man serve as a base commander more than once. The base commander naturally looks upon his job as an opportunity to exercise military command on a substantial scale, thus providing important experience as he moves up the promotion ladder. Quite naturally

he conceives of his job as overwhelmingly military in character, his mission being to develop the units and troops under his command to peak efficiency. While he has a multitude of duties, many of these may be delegated or subordinated to the priority which he feels must be given the strictly military aspects of his job, the aspects most familiar to him. His course of training as an officer has not been such as to bring him into contact with literature and experience in the field of equal opportunity. He operates without the guidance of persons experienced with such problems.

The typical base commander understands that he is expected to complete his limited tour of duty without "disturbances." The problems with which he might become concerned in attempting to improve treatment of his troops off base are emotionally surcharged and controversial, as well as difficult to solve. He will not venture into this area without specific instructions.

The attitudes and background of the base commander influence the manner in which he utilizes the fairly well-established procedures by which commanders discuss certain types of problems with the neighboring civilian community. The various Services' instructions concerning community relations suggest working through some sort

of committee or council. The civilian members of such a group are often designated by the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club or other civic group, or by officials of the local governments, and rarely are Negroes represented. The base is represented by the base commander and certain officers designated by him.

The principal function of the committee is to develop a smooth working relationship on certain matters of obviously common concern, such as relations with local police authorities. Base commanders are instructed by directives, quite properly, to recognize the public relations aspect of their jobs, to encourage parades and troop participation in civic affairs, and generally to project before the community a favorable image of the base and the Service. It has not been the practice for these community relations committees to concern themselves with racial matters. Indeed, in most communities where there is a substantial Negro population and serious forms of discrimination exist, the leaders of the Negro community are not represented on the committees, nor are whites who are mindful of these problems. The commander, moreover, selects no Negro personnel to represent the base. As a result, the base commander has little or no contact with local discrimination problems.

The pattern which the Committee has observed is clearly one of inaction by base commanders in the face of serious dis-

crimination affecting the morale and military efficiency of members of their commands. But while the base commander represents his Service and the Department of Defense locally, it would be unfair to ascribe to him sole responsibility for the policy of inaction. If he has failed to pursue an active program, it is largely because no higher command has directed him to do so, provided him with guidance in developing a program, or assured him that he would be given support if his affirmative actions should incur the disfavor of the community.

It is true that the Department of Defense, in recognition of the off-base problem, has made some limited moves in the direction of improving conditions. Military police, for example, are not permitted to be employed on behalf of local authorities to support enforcement of racial segregation or other forms of discrimination. Where civilian authorities initiate legal action against military personnel arising out of the enforcement of segregation or discrimination policies, limited legal assistance may be provided on an ad hoc basis to assure that such personnel are afforded due process of law.



In the field of housing, a recent Secretary of Defense memorandum

now provides that private housing leased by the Services for assignment to military personnel may be obtained only where the lessor agrees that the Services may assign it without discrimination. In dealing with the problem of segregated schools, the Services are cooperating with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Justice in a program designed to desegregate schooling in certain communities by constructing on-base schools and withdrawing payments made to local schools for educating dependents living on base.

These are, of course, policies for dealing with rather well-defined, specific problems. It is also important to consider direct instructions to bases giving general policies for attacking problems of discrimination. The existing instructions are found in the so-called Gilpatric Memorandum, issued to all branches of the Service by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on June 19, 1961, and re-issued thereafter by each of the Services, which reads in part, as follows:

- "1. The policy of equal treatment for all members of the Armed Forces without regard to race, creed or color is firmly established within the Department of Defense.

"2. Therefore, in those areas where unsegregated facilities are not readily available to members of the Armed Forces in adjacent or surrounding communities, it is the policy of the Department of Defense to provide such facilities on military installations to the extent possible. In addition, local commanders are expected to make every effort to obtain such facilities off base for members of the Armed Forces through command-community relations committees."

The policy announced by the second paragraph of this memorandum has not been carried out. While copies of this memorandum were distributed widely in the Services, there was no well-developed plan for carrying out the program outlined in these general terms, and the words "to the extent possible" vitiated its effectiveness. Except in the Navy, the policy has not been incorporated in any of the relatively permanent types of directives which are referred to by those in the field for guidance in developing base policies. Equally serious, no Service has issued detailed regulations or manuals implementing the policy, not has any systematic effort been made to determine what, if anything, base commanders were doing to carry out its letter or spirit. Indeed, the great majority of base commanders interviewed were unaware of the existence of the policy. These procedures are fairly typical of the way in which most other policies in this area have been handled.

~~Apart from the Gilpatric Memorandum, no directive or~~

policy of any Service specifically assigns to base commanders the responsibility for attempting to eliminate problems of discrimination in surrounding communities, where such problems affect the morale and military efficiency of members of their commands. The Service literature dealing with community relations has not in the past discussed the problem; apparently no higher command has censured base commanders for policies of inaction; no effort has been made to identify and commend commanders who have made efforts to solve such problems; no one has suggested to base commanders that their achievements in dealing with such problems will be considered in rating their performance of duty and in promotion selection. It is not surprising, therefore, that the base commander, without instruction, experience or technical support, keeps his emphasis solidly on the military aspect of his mission. While some commanders assert that they have quietly urged desegregation "behind the scenes" and in the course of social contacts, few, if any, have regularly and systematically sought to solve problems of discrimination.

Despite the general climate of inaction, the Committee has seen some evidence of occasional efforts by individual base commanders to deal with off-base discrimination problems, efforts which have met with some success. One commander encouraged enactment of an equal accommodations law; another has attempted to desegregate multiple housing units; others have placed considerable emphasis on breaking color lines in sports contests in which the base is involved. Occasionally, local auditoriums have been thrown open to all servicemen in the face of an established pattern of exclusion and segregation. Efforts have been made to open up cultural events in communities to Negro personnel or to permit attendance at sports events, with non-segregated seating. While, in many instances, in communities where segregation is practiced, segregated military police patrols are used - an undesirable practice - there has been some effort to use mixed military police patrols in white and Negro areas. Some commanders have been able to arrange desegregated transportation between the base and the nearby community, contrary to local practice. At least one commander started a program of meetings and discussions with local Negro civil rights leaders.

The examples given above are the rare exception, rather than the rule, but they offer an indication of the advances which a positive effort can achieve.

**D. Recommendations for an Urgently Needed Program**

**1. The Defense Department and the Services  
Must Redefine Responsibilities, Establish  
Goals and Provide Detailed Instructions**

While any worthwhile efforts to eliminate off-base discrimination must center on the functions of the base commander, a redefinition of responsibilities at all levels of command in this field is an essential preliminary. It should be the policy of the Department of Defense and part of the mission of the chain of command from the Secretaries of the Services to the local base commander, not only to remove discrimination within the Armed Forces, but also to make every effort to eliminate discriminatory practices as they affect members of the Armed Forces and their dependents within the neighboring civilian communities.

As a part of this process of redefinition, a different concept of the base commander's functions in the racial field must be involved. Interviews with base commanders have led the Committee to conclude that commanders desire more explicit instructions and clarification of their responsibilities in this regard. These commanders, concerned with morale factors, increasingly feel the need to act. Before they act, they need to have their responsibilities defined. They need more explicit orders and more detailed directives. These should be provided.

2. Commanders' Performance Must be  
Rated, Monitored and Supported

~~Redefinition is, however, not enough. There is need for~~  
a continuing program in this area, a program which must be imaginative and persistent in order to achieve the desired equality of treatment and opportunity. It must be made clear to base commanders and others concerned with these problems that they will be measured in terms of their performance. A regular system of monitoring and reporting on progress should be instituted. It should be made clear that officers showing initiative and achievement in this area will enhance their performance ratings and obtain favorable consideration for promotion and career advancement. It is especially important that such officers be assured that they will not run the risk of official disfavor for their efforts and that they will receive the support of all echelons of command if their programs are attacked by local interests.

In implementing the program to eliminate off-base discrimination against military personnel, considerable care should be taken to insure that the policies of the Department of Defense are disseminated to lower echelons by the Services in relatively



permanent media of the type maintained for continuing reference by those responsible for operating military bases.

But it is not sufficient merely to state in directives, of whatever type, the substance of the foregoing policy. There has been a great failure of communications to bases of the attitudes and policies of the Department of Defense concerning discrimination. It will be necessary to emphasize and re-emphasize that progress is required, and that a constant showing of serious, intense effort is the minimum performance accepted. While this attitude must be instilled in base commanders, it must also be part of the command philosophy of the many superior commanders who assign base commanders to duty, assess their performance, and necessarily influence their attitudes.

3. Command Training Programs and Manuals ,  
Should Treat all Aspects of Discrimination  
Problems and Solutions

Still other steps should be taken to insure that a sense of responsibility for problems of off-base discrimination replaces the prevalent notion that matters outside the gate are of no concern to the base commander. The history of Negro participation in the

**Armed Forces and the problems which he confronts in the Services**

must be emphasized and made a definite part of the curriculum at all levels of officer and command training. The Services must insure that men reaching the position of base commander are familiar with the requirements of the Constitution and the history of the Negroes' struggle to achieve equality of treatment and opportunity. In addition, it would be beneficial for base commanders to attend regional and inter-regional seminars or conferences where discussions of techniques and results are featured. Base commanders and higher commands should be made aware of other federal agencies which work with problems of discrimination and directed to cooperate with such agencies and to seek their technical assistance and advice.

Base commanders should also be provided a carefully prepared manual, which will guide their activities in this as-yet-unfamiliar area and fill some of the gaps in their experience and training.

4. Base Commanders Must Establish Biracial  
Community Committees and by This and  
Other Means Lead Efforts to Reduce  
Discrimination

An active program for eliminating off-base discrimination demands the creation of a wholly different working relationship between the commander and the local community in which discrimination is practiced. Solving such problems should be the means at his disposal in seeking solutions. One of the means base commanders should use to solve problems of discrimination is a Committee of base and community representatives. But satisfactory results cannot be obtained by relying on the types of Committees which have heretofore existed. Generally, these committees have represented a part of the white community, but not the community as a whole.

In the future the installation commander should be required to appoint such a committee in order to bring together leaders of both the white and Negro communities. He is in the best position to do this. Care should be taken to include individuals experienced and concerned with problems of racial equality, as a

recent Navy instruction has noted, and to insure that the Negro members are those who are not, by virtue of their job or position, subservient to white interests. Both white and Negro military personnel should participate.

The committees should function as working committees, identifying problem areas in the community and working toward their solution with the guidance and help of committee members and with technical assistance from experts when appropriate. It will be necessary to establish specific objectives and a timetable against which results can be measured. Problems of housing will prevail everywhere, but exclusion of Negro military personnel from theaters may be the most pressing problem in one community, while exclusion from restaurants is the principal aggravation in another. Various types of recreational facilities may have special local significance because of their proximity to the base, the lack of adequate on-base facilities or other considerations. It will be necessary to move from objective to objective and these objectives will differ from community to community.

Each community has its own special traditions and history.

In some, attitudes are more entrenched than in others. It is significant, however, that base commanders who have genuinely undertaken to accomplish progress in this area have met some degree of success, even in communities where feelings are strong. Similarly, the progress of the national USO program to eliminate segregation in all its local facilities, discussed later in this report, shows that serious effort can produce results.

It is important to emphasize that the base commander's concern should be that of correcting forms of discrimination which interfere with the morale and efficiency of members of his command. The pattern the community chooses to follow as to its own civilians cannot be accepted as the pattern which must be imposed upon men in uniform or their dependents, when that pattern is detrimental to military morale and efficiency. The significant tradition of non-involvement by military authorities in local political matters will be unimpaired if base commanders limit their concern to problems affecting the morale and efficiency of members of their commands.

It is the Committee's judgment that many communities are awaiting leadership and direction. Proprietors of local establishments and others who must live and work in the community may

understandably hesitate to urge a change in existing customs.

~~However, the enormous growth of relatively permanent military~~

installations, scattered throughout the country and economically important to the communities which surround them, enables local commanders to supply some of the necessary leadership. The

base commander not only enjoys an independence which permits

him to do so; he can also point to the successful program of

equality of treatment and opportunity which exists on his base

and to the economic dependence of the community upon the base.

The base commander should emphasize his concern for morale

and the policy of the Services concerning off-base discrimination

in conferences with individuals, in his work with the local com-

mittee, and in public expressions of his views. Such an approach,

stressing troop morale and efficiency, should lead patriotic citizens

to join together, where their business interests are common, to

find an appropriate solution.

5. Where Efforts of Base Commanders are  
Unsuccessful Sanctions are Available  
and Should be Employed

It is important to consider what further steps may be necessary where efforts to achieve progress by persuasion and discussion are unsuccessful.



Litigation, brought in the name of the Federal Government, to open some types of public establishments to members

of the Armed Forces and their dependents is one possible avenue for achieving integration. But even in those cases in which such litigation offers some hope of eventual success, it is piecemeal and time-consuming at best.

A more satisfactory approach must be developed. Segregation and other forms of discrimination in facilities in a given locality, detrimental to the morale of Negro personnel at a neighboring military base, must cease. The commander should, of course, attempt by means available to him - community committees, persuasion, emphasis of the base's importance to the local economy - to eliminate such practices. In situations in which these efforts are unsuccessful, the commander should develop a plan under which military personnel of all races would be permitted to patronize only those facilities which receive his express approval. One of the requirements for such approval should be a guarantee from the proprietor that the establishment will be open to all servicemen and their dependents without regard to race or color, and that all patrons will receive equal treatment. Qualifying establishments might be issued a display placard or decal.

Approval of an establishment is not, of course, the final step. There must be procedures for dealing with complaints

that approved establishments have not fulfilled their guarantees, and for withdrawing approval if such complaints are substantiated.

Should all other efforts fail, the Services must consider a curtailment or termination of activities at certain military installations near communities where discrimination is particularly prevalent. While compelling military considerations must prevail, it is often possible to conduct certain activities at any one of a number of locations. Where this is true, alternative communities' attitudes and practices should be carefully weighed. Such relocation of activities is particularly important at bases that play an important role in the training of new recruits or officers or in the orientation of representatives of foreign governments. The objective here should be preservation of morale, not the punishment of local communities which have a tradition of segregation.

In this context, one further comment is appropriate. The Armed Forces have, in the past, unfortunately not given attention to the important morale factors presented in off-base communities at the time that new installations are opened or changes made in the deployment of forces as between bases. Where tactical considerations