
LEADERSHIP AND THE NEGRO SOLDIER



Headquarters, Army Service Forces •

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FOREWORD

War Department concern with the Negro is focused directly and solely on the problem of the most effective military use of colored troops. It is essential that there be a clear understanding that the Army has no authority or intention to participate in social reform as such but does view the problem as a matter of efficient troop utilization. With an imposed ceiling on the maximum strength of the Army it is the responsibility of all officers to assure the most efficient use of the manpower assigned.

It is recognized that the proportions of Negro troops in some military activities will be low, because Negro education and experience have been severely limited. The fact that race prejudice does exist cannot, in the interests of efficient operation, be disregarded. Limited education and experience, however, can be offset in part by training, and the restrictive effects of race prejudice may be reduced by a properly planned informational and orientation program.

The issue is not whether the Negro will be used in the war; it is how effectively he will be used. This question cannot be evaded. Furthermore, it cannot be met successfully by uninformed judgments on the basis of civilian associations and personal views on the subject. The problems involved are as technical as any other problem of personnel, and can be solved only with the benefit of special study, full information, and a serious interest in their resolution.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

This manual on the Negro soldier is planned to provide the main substance for a course of ten periods of instruction in schools for officers. Each of the eight chapters is intended for use as the basis for one period of lecture and discussion. Each should be supplemented by the instructor with material drawn from the reading list, from military experience, or from any other source of additional information available to him.

One period, preferably the second in the course, should be used to show the War Department Film No. RF 51, *the Negro Soldier*. Prints of this film may be obtained from post film libraries or service command headquarters.

The final period in the course should be given to the discussion of War Department Pamphlet 20-6, *Command of Negro Troops*. Copies of this pamphlet should be secured for each member of the class from the nearest adjutant general depot.

CONCLUSIONS

Military Efficiency Requires Democratic Treatment for All

First of all, the officer must never forget that he is the leader of men who but a short time ago were private citizens in a country which prides itself on its democracy and individual liberty.

Negro Americans no less than others have been taught the national ideals of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution of the United States. Limitations on their civilian activities and opportunities contrary to these ideals growing out of tradition, custom, and personal beliefs concerning group differences should not be transplanted into Army life. So far as they involve discrimination on the basis of race or color, they are contrary to specific provisions of selective service legislation. They are also fatal to military efficiency.

Manpower Cannot be Wasted

Second, as a matter of practical expediency, manpower problems are such that this country cannot afford to waste any portion of it.

One man in ten in this country is a Negro, and it is obvious that inefficient use of this tenth man would materially influence the effective prosecution of the war. Every effort has been made to induct men into the armed forces with proper regard for the needs of industry and agriculture. It is up to those who train and command troops to see to it that the portion of the Nation's manpower intrusted to their leadership makes its greatest possible contribution in the fight for victory.

Men have been well Selected

In the third place, officers should have confidence that the men assigned to them have been selected with all possible care.

Local boards, induction stations, and special training units do their best to weed out the men who are not fitted to become good soldiers. The high rejection rates for Negroes are an indication of this. In spite of all preliminary precautions, however, some slip through the physical and psycho-

logical examinations who cannot by any kind of training be used efficiently in modern warfare. These can be discharged from the Army, upon discovery, through the procedures outlined in AR 615-360.

There is no excuse, though, for failure to take advantage of Army training facilities in developing the military usefulness of those who are handicapped only by lack of education and work experience, nor for failure to make maximum use of those civilian skills men may be found to possess, even though transfer to and from other units may be involved. The Army needs practically every kind of civilian skill, and is already using Negroes with satisfactory results in all possible varieties of military tasks.

Men want to serve Fully

Fourth, the records of Selective Service show negligible malingering and delinquency in responding to requests for personal information or to calls for service among Negro registrants. *This evidence of loyalty, supported by the record of voluntary enlistments and voluntary inductions, should leave no doubts in officers' minds concerning the willingness of Negroes to serve as soldiers.* Indeed, in spite of continued complaints from the Negro public about the treatment of Negro soldiers and civilians both by the Army and in civilian communities, there has been great pressure exerted by Negroes themselves to secure opportunities to participate more fully in all aspects of the military task, including combat.

LEADERSHIP REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING

Leadership in such an army of transformed civilians for whom military duty is a temporary assignment in time of national crisis requires understanding of men in terms of their background and its relation to their military efficiency.

Building an Army is not an easy job. The selection and induction of men is but the first step. Training the new soldier and welding the whole into a unified battle force is by far the most difficult part of the job. *How* the background of the Negro soldier affects the problem of the leadership of Negro troops is the subject of the following chapters.

Attitudes of Negro Soldiers

To do his job as a leader, the officer must know how the men in his outfit feel about the Army and the war. He must approach his duties with a sympathetic understanding of their points of view. Thus a description and interpretation of the attitudes of Negro enlisted men in the Army as a whole is useful as an introduction to the problem. In the final analysis, however, no amount of theory will suffice; the officer must learn the attitudes of the men in his outfit at first hand if he is to cope with the problems of adjusting these men to the life of the unit.

A study by the Research Branch, Morale Services Division, made in the spring of 1943, among both white and Negro enlisted men gives us a better understanding of the differences between white and Negro soldier attitudes than does any other data available. About 13,000 men belonging to 92 different Army organizations and constituting a representative cross section of white and Negro enlisted men in the Continental United States were selected by lot in such a way as to give proper weighting to all types of military installations, branches of the service, and regions in which the men were stationed.

The men were assembled in class rooms, day-rooms, etc., in small groups. They completed questionnaires under the supervision of trained enlisted men. The questionnaires were entirely anonymous, and no names or serial numbers were taken. No officers were present when questionnaires were filled out. Men with low education were assisted by specially trained enlisted men in the filling out of questionnaires. Since pretests had shown that many Negro enlisted men did not express their opinions frankly to white interviewers, only Negro enlisted men were used as class leaders for Negro groups and as interviewers to assist Negroes of low literacy in the completion of questionnaires.

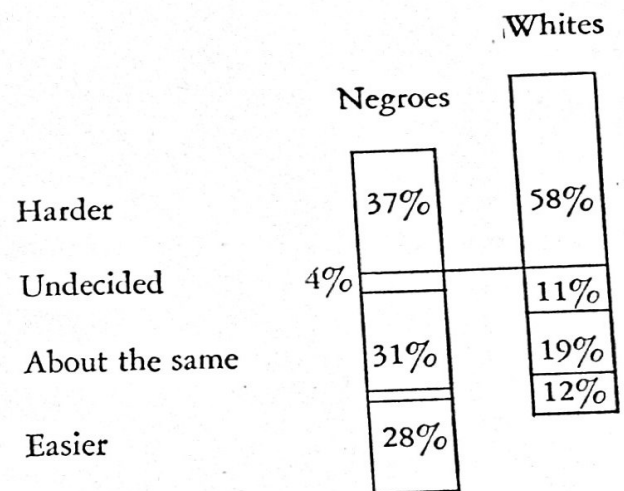
Carry-Over of Civilian Attitudes

In civilian life every Negro, at one time or another, has either been told, or has read, or has been made to feel that he is considered inferior by the majority of white people. The limited status that he has acquired in civilian life from the fact that he was born with a darker skin than other Americans, has influenced most of his thinking and be-

havior from infancy. Every Negro soldier in civilian life has had to face to a greater or less extent (depending upon his community of residence and his family's financial position) limited opportunities for education, employment, recreation, housing and participation in the life of his community. In short, his chances in America have been restricted not only by native ability and economic position—as would be the case for most other individuals growing up in the United States—but also in some part by the limited position designated for his group.

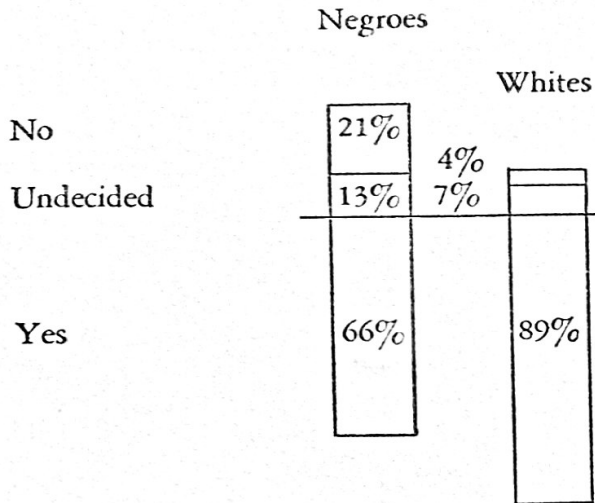
His entrance into the Army, like that of most soldiers, was not a matter of free choice. But more Negro enlisted men than white enlisted men have doubts as to whether this war is their affair and whether the United States is fighting to give everybody a fair chance for a decent living. This is apparent from the accompanying charts showing enlisted men's attitudes in spring of 1943.

"Do you think that after the war soldiers in your outfit will find it easier or harder to get jobs than they did before the war?"

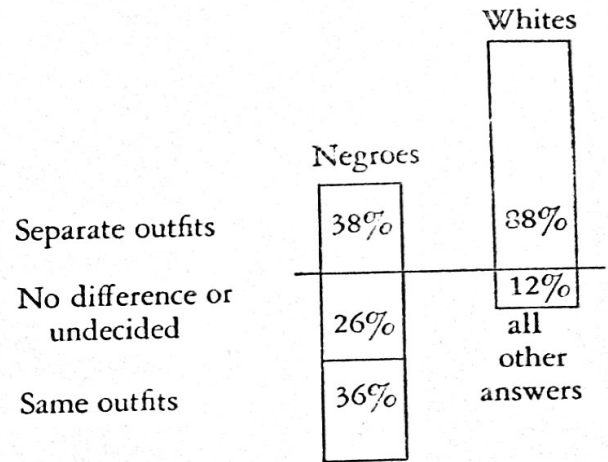


Despite these doubts, more Negro soldiers than white soldiers are optimistic about their chances for greater opportunities after the war. This greater faith in the future, however, exists only for a minority of both groups. Furthermore, many Negroes added that the greater opportunities en-

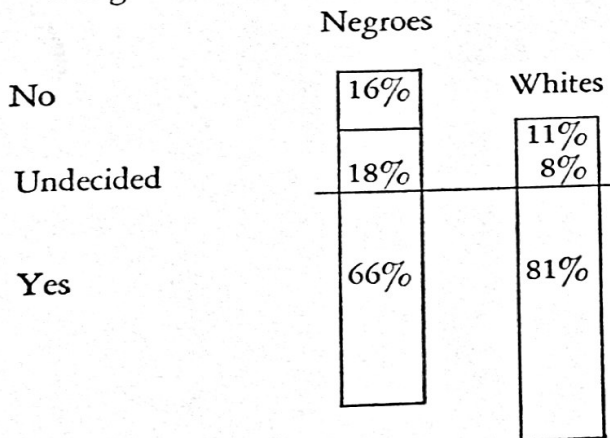
"Do you think the war is as much your affair as it is anybody else's"



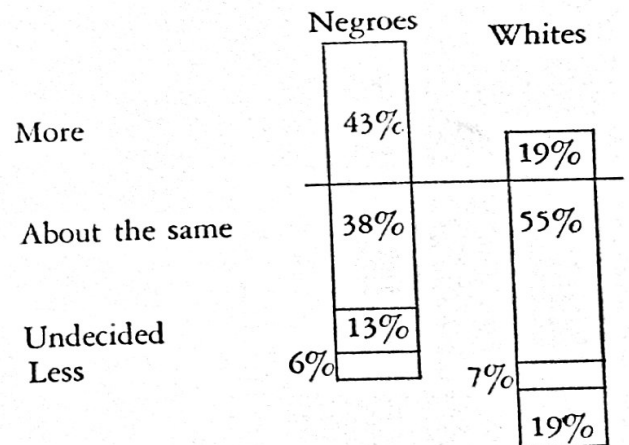
"Do you think white and Negro soldiers should be in separate outfits or should they be together in the same outfits?"



"Do you think that one of the things the United States is fighting for is to give everybody a fair chance to make a decent living?"



"After the war, do you think you yourself will have *more* rights and privileges or *less* rights and privileges than you had before the war?"



visaged would not come as an automatic consequence of the war.

In the Army, the Negro enlisted man finds himself in a separate outfit from white enlisted men. Most of his officers are white, and what Negro officers he does have, are predominantly of junior grade. The chances are that he receives his training at an Army post in a southern state, even if he was drafted from a northern state. These conditions are dictated by military necessity. But in many cases they serve to reinforce and support his

civilian doubts about the effect of the war on him. A sizable minority of Negro soldiers think white and Negro soldiers should be in separate outfits. The written comments indicate that these men believe friction can best be avoided this way, al-

though they are opposed to *segregation* in principle.

Those who think white and Negro soldiers should be in the same outfits are more often better educated and from the North. Many of this group see no justification for the present practice, either in principle or practicability.

The great majority of white soldiers favor separate outfits for Negro and white troops. This holds for both northern and southern whites.

Camp Locations Present a Problem

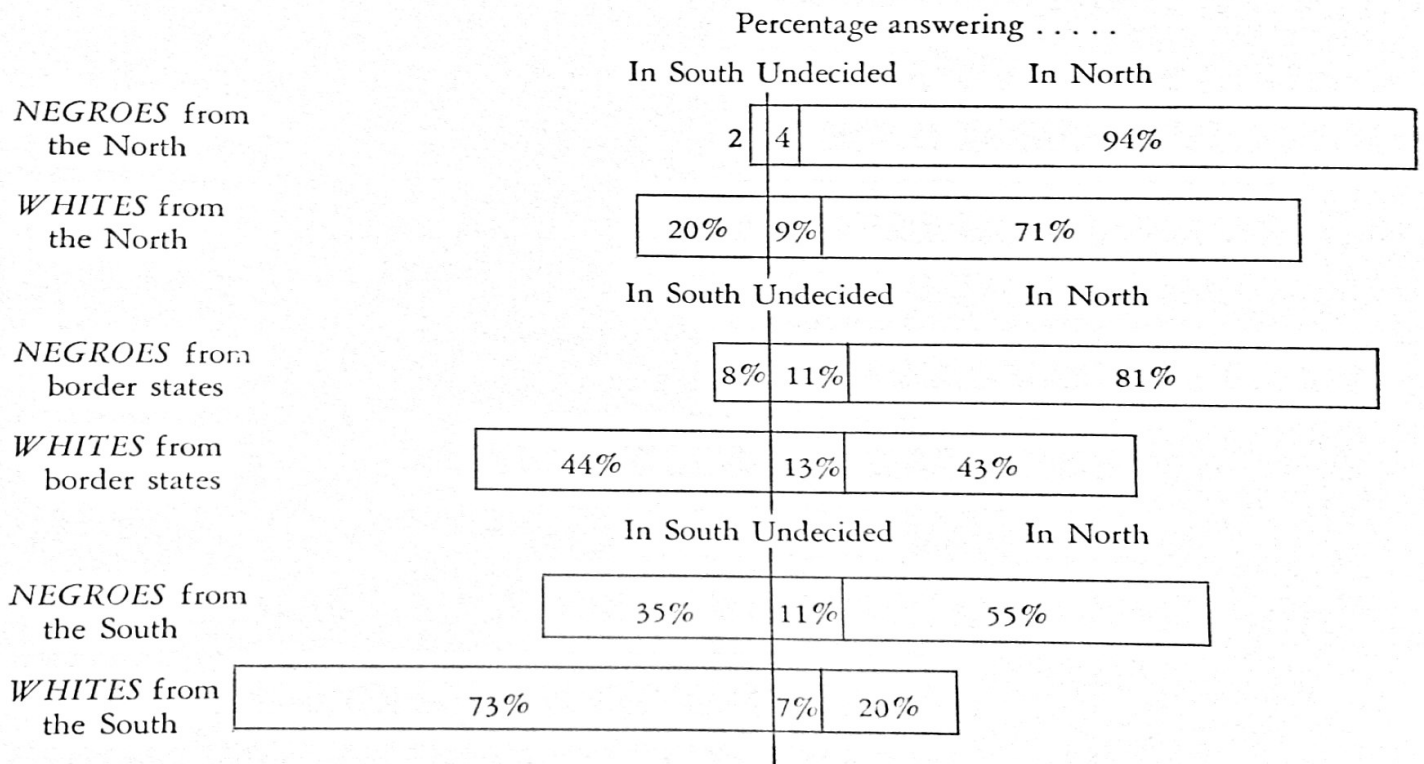
Negro troops vote strongly against southern camps for their training. This is true even of southern

Negroes, in spite of the tendency for all soldiers to want to be stationed near home.

Among white troops, 71 percent of the northern men would like best to be stationed in the North and 73 percent of the southern men would like best to be stationed in the South. In contrast, among Negro troops 94 percent of the northern men would like best to be stationed in the North and only 35 percent of the southern men would like best to be stationed in the South.

These negative attitudes of Negro troops toward southern camps stem primarily from the possibility of tension and conflict with white civilians and police.

Question: In general, where would you like best to be stationed?



The northern Negro feels most keenly about his being stationed in the South, as on the whole he has been accustomed to greater freedom of movement and security of person in his home community. Specifically, he has generally not suffered definite segregation in public conveyances, public eating places, and in theaters. He has, for the most part, been treated indifferently by the white population in the North, rather than with condescension, or hostility. He has had the protection of the law to a greater extent than he expects in the South. His opportunities for wholesome, cultural

contacts within the Negro community are on the whole greater in the North.

The southern Negro, though frequently disturbed by conditions in the South, has had to make some sort of an adjustment to these conditions during his civilian life. He is, therefore, not as likely to show as great concern as the northern Negro over day to day experiences, but the presence of a deep seated antagonism toward the Southern situation is exhibited when he feels he can talk freely without fear of penalty or bodily harm for expressing his thoughts.