

THE BLACK OFFICER IN THE
UNITED STATES ARMY

by

DAVID D. BRANCH

M.L.A., The Johns Hopkins University, 1973

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

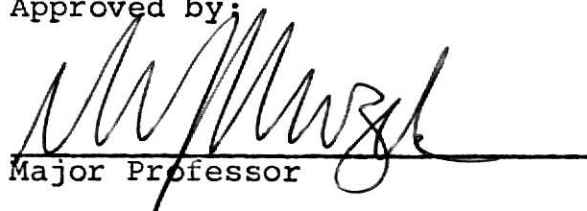
MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1975

Approved by:


Major Professor

LD
2668
R4
1975
B72
C.2
Document

ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Donald Mrozek of the History Department, Kansas State University, for the constructive criticism and advice given in the preparation of this report.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	ii
THE BLACK OFFICER IN THE U.S. ARMY	1
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

THE BLACK OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

At the outset of World War II, there were five Black officers on active duty in the Army. Of this total, three were chaplains. The two line officers were the now famous Benjamin O. Davis father and son team.¹ In addition, there were 353 Black officers in the reserves. Black enlisted personnel on active duty at the time numbered less than 5,000. This enlisted total represented about 5 per cent of the total military population. In accordance with the custom of the times, Blacks served in segregated units which were usually commanded by southern white officers. By 1944 the situation had drastically changed and the number of Black officers had increased to approximately 8,000. Black enlisted strength also rose to nearly 1 million personnel.² As impressive as the increase of 5 to 8,000 was, it must be noted that these 8,000 still reflected less than 1 per cent of the total United States Army officer corp. Included in these 8,000 Black officers were one general officer (General Benjamin Davis) and ten full colonels. Although these eleven senior officers represented a new plateau of achievement for the Black officer, in reality they were little more than showpieces or

¹Richard J. Stillman, II, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 22.

²"The Black Soldier," *Ebony*, August 1968, p. 176.

figureheads. Throughout the war in spite of their numbers, promotions, positions of responsibility and command were extremely limited for Black officers.

The conclusion of the war and the rapid demobilization of the armed forces brought a drastic decrease in the number of Black servicemen. By 1947, the Black officer corps was reduced to 1,125 officers. Black enlisted strength was also reduced to 87,000 or less than 5 per cent of the total military population.³ The reduction to less than 5 per cent was contrary to a long standing directive that Blacks serve in a ratio equal to their percentage of the total U.S. population. At the end of the war, the Black population was about ten per cent.

From these unfavorable beginnings, the Black officer corps has steadily increased in number, percentages and rank. The latest Pentagon statistics (December, 1974), show that the Black officer corps now numbers 4,760 and represents 4.6 per cent of the total Army officer corps.⁴ While this total of 4,760 does not approach the upper percentage represented by the 8,000 officers of World War II, it is a significant leap forward. With the deletion of quota restriction, Blacks now comprise over 22 per cent of the active duty enlisted strength.

The transition from ineffectiveness and insignificant numbers to full integration in the officer corps did not come

³Ibid., p. 175.

⁴"Steady Increase Seen in Black Participation," Army Times, 8 October 1975.

easily for Black officers. Stereotypes about mental and moral inferiority and a general public distaste for any form of equality, let alone superior status, for Blacks hindered them at every turn. It was a constant battle both in the military and in civilian life against tradition, racial bureaucracy, white fears and blind ignorance.

Perhaps the struggle of the Black officer could have been made easier if his general history had been more widely known. History and precedents have a way of making situations and events more acceptable, but this has not been the case with the Black officer. His history or previously supposed lack of history has worked against him. An analysis of American history will provide an abundance of material reflecting the individual contributions and bravery of Black enlisted men in all of this nation's conflicts. However, the record is not so clear for the Black officer or for Blacks who may have served in a leadership capacity during the early wars. No doubt, this is due both to the limited numbers of Blacks who served in such positions as well as the informal structures of early American militia units. These units lacked the thorough race conscious records which are so much a part of our present system. As a result of the vagueness in many of the entries of colonial records, the possibility and extent of Black leadership can only be inferred from overall Black participation.

The military and political factors which surrounded the use of Blacks in early America were clear and unhampered by

racial considerations. When manpower shortages existed, Blacks served in whatever capacity required. When the shortage disappeared, Blacks were rejected.

During the early colonial periods, whether considered a slave or indentured servant, every able bodied man was required to serve in the militia to repel Indian attacks and other dangers. The leadership structure of the organizations formed to protect the colony was not as formal as it would become in later years and it is quite possible that Blacks proposed and supervised plans which were carried out by the body. Such accomplishments would not classify them as officers in today's terms but would certainly have made them leaders.

The first noteworthy involvement of a Black as leader in one of America's armed conflicts occurred on 5 March 1770 in Boston, Massachusetts. The discontent with British rule which had swept the colonies for nearly two years finally erupted into violence between a large crowd of Boston townspeople and a contingent of British soldiers. In the ensuing melee, shots were fired by the British, and eleven colonists were wounded. Five of these later died. The first man hit and killed was Crispus Attucks, a black dock laborer and runaway slave whom history has recognized as the "leader" of the crowd.⁵

During the Revolutionary War, over 5,000 Blacks were employed in the militia and in most cases were completely

⁵Robert W. Mullen, Blacks in American Wars (New York: Monad Press, 1973), pp. 9-11.

integrated into the various units. A simple song sung by the British and Tories attest to the composition of many of the colonial ranks.

The rebel clowns, oh!
 what a sight
 Too awkward was
 their figure
 T'was yonder stood
 a pious wight
 And here and there
 a nigger.⁶

This early use of Blacks in the Revolutionary War did not reach the levels that it might have since some colonists became fearful of the consequences of arming and training men who would have to return to slavery at the end of the conflict. This fear was so great in the southern colonies that racial prejudice often undermined the war efforts. In the latter stages of the war, efforts were initiated by Congress to recruit 3,000 additional Blacks and form Black units in South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland and Virginia.⁷ Although badly needed, these units were not formed. The fear of armed Blacks was the cause, but most southern colonists cited an aversion to depriving a master of his property as the reason. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, however, did produce all Black units.⁸ Of these three units, the only one

⁶Jack D. Foner, Blacks in the Military in American History (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 8.

⁷Foner, Blacks in the Military in American History, pp. 12-14.

⁸Richard J. Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 8.

to see actual combat as a unit was the Rhode Island Battalion. In August of 1778, this unit held a position against a large British-Hessian force. The Rhode Island Battalion has been described as "ultimately composed of 5 companies numbering 226 officers and men and was headed by Colonel Christopher Green, a white."⁹ The emphasis on the fact that Colonel Green was white may imply that some, if not all, of Colonel Green's subordinate officers were Black.

As previously stated, in the integrated units of the 17th and 18th century American Armies, personnel were unidentified by either race or position, and it is possible that some experienced or exceptional Blacks received low level appointments or commissions. Although most historians disagree with this conjecture, they do not completely deny its possibility. The opinion of the Department of Defense is typical: "Although there were many Negro heroes in the Revolutionary War, all appear to have served as enlisted men."¹⁰ The possibility of Black officers in the American army seems even more plausible when one considers the French and Spanish use of Blacks. When France and Spain joined the American cause in 1779, Black troops from the French West Indies and Louisiana were introduced into the war. The Spanish in particular organized

⁹Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 10.

¹⁰Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Integration and the Negro Officer in the Armed Forces of the United States of America (Washington: Department of Defense, 1962), p. 1.

militia companies of free Blacks and slaves who were commanded by Black officers of the line."¹¹

In 1792, Congress passed a Militia Act which forbade the use of Blacks in the militia, the Army, the Navy or Marines.¹² This directive was largely ignored at the unit level, where due to personnel shortages, Blacks were allowed to participate as laborers, pioneers, and musicians. Paradoxically, South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina were the biggest violators of the Militia Act. But while these militia units were willing to relax the rules in the lower ranks, they strictly followed the provisions of the act in positions of leadership and responsibility.

A possible reason for the exclusion of Blacks from the militia may have been the success of the greatest slave rebellion in modern history, the Haitian Revolution. Toussaint L'Ouverture, a Black in command of a slave army, used guerrilla tactics to defeat a series of French and British expeditionary forces sent against him. Events in Haiti demonstrated the dangers of militarily trained Blacks under an experienced and developed Black leader.

Aside from the obvious threat that armed and trained slaves might present, the exclusion of Blacks from the militia may also have been due to the increasing importance of the

¹¹Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 16.

¹²Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 8.

militia as a social and political institution. The periodic company musters became community gatherings and festivals. In addition, leadership in the militia often served as a political stepping-stone for many officers.¹³ Clearly, white Americans of that period did not want Blacks involved in social and political matters.

However, with the advent of war in 1812, America was again willing to make a compromise in its racial practices and use Black troops. The Battle of New Orleans was the high point of Black involvement in that war. General Andrew Jackson, while responsible for the defense of New Orleans, upheld the rights of Blacks to defend their country on an equal footing with white soldiers. William C. Clairborne, Governor of the Louisiana Territory, offered General Jackson several units of free Blacks to assist in the defense of New Orleans, and Jackson readily accepted. The acceptance of these units produced the largest assembly of Black troops ever gathered on American soil up to that time. Two battalions of nearly 500 free Blacks were side by side in the center of the line, and additional Black companies were scattered among the white regiments located in other sections of the line. Unfortunately, the racial composition of the leadership structure of these "free colored" battalions is unknown. But here again it is highly possible that Blacks must have held the equivalent

¹³ Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 230-232.

of at least low-rank commissions within some if not all of these units.

Blacks played a significant role in the Seminole Wars, where they fought against federal troops. The Seminoles gave refuge to escaped slaves and accepted them as equals within the tribe. Blacks were allowed to intermarry freely and often achieved the status of chief counselors and tribal war leaders.¹⁴ Throughout the first and second Seminole Wars, Blacks and Blacks of mixed Indian blood served as warriors and war leaders. The campaigns that they conducted against the federal troops were outstanding demonstrations of guerrilla warfare.

Although many American leaders who fought in the Seminole Wars emerged with a heightened respect for the combat abilities of Blacks, the lessons were quickly forgotten. In the short space of time between the Second Seminole War and the Mexican War the deeds of Blacks were effectively erased from the minds of Americans and the pages of history. Pre-civil war America regarded Blacks as cowardly and childlike, with little ability in fighting or leadership.¹⁵ The concept was reinforced by the fact that the only participation of Blacks in the Mexican War was as body servants.

On 15 April 1861, three days after the Civil War began, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 men for the Union

¹⁴Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 28.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 30.

Army. As in past conflicts, Blacks were willing and in some cases eager to assist. However, when the Blacks of the North went to the recruiting offices, they found signs reading "White Men Only." The National Militia Act of 1792 was still in effect, and Blacks were not welcomed. This policy changed only when it became necessary to use all available manpower. The first all Black regiment was officially mustered into the Army in November of 1862.

Out of Black participation in this war, the Black officer emerged separate and identifiable for the first time. Union records show that there were at least 75 Black commissioned officers including 8 commissioned physicians.¹⁶ Two of the most notable of these officers were Lieutenant Colonel William R. Reed, who was killed while leading his regiment, the First North Carolina, in a gallant charge at the Battle of Olustee, Florida and Paris-educated Captain Andre Cailloux who commanded the First Native Guards of Louisiana.¹⁷ Examples of other units with Black officers were the First and Third Infantry of the Corps d' Afrique, each of which had a complement of 19 Black officers as part of the regularly assigned 34 officers.

Between the end of the Civil War and World War I, however, except for a brief period during the Spanish-American

¹⁶Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Integration of the Negro Officer, p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 2.

War, the Black officer virtually disappeared. In spite of the Blacks' honorable and effective service, racist thinkers within the military reasserted the myth that the Black man was unable to lead and unsuitable for commission. Only four regiments of Black enlisted men were authorized for retention on the active rolls: the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments. The 9th and 10th Cavalry, or "Buffalo Soldiers" as they were known, became famous in the latter part of the 1800's for their exploits against the American Indians. Young white officers were usually assigned to these regiments as their first tour after graduation from West Point. But an assignment to a Black regiment for a senior white officer was not a desirable one. It is said that George A. Custer refused a full Colonel's rank in the 9th Cavalry in favor of a Lieutenant Colonel's rank in the 7th Cavalry.¹⁸

The shortage of military manpower at the beginning of the Spanish-American War in 1898, encouraged the War Department to accept the need for Black officers as well as Black enlisted men. With the advent of war, the size of the Army was increased and Congress, without hesitation, authorized the formation of ten Black regiments. Due to a critical shortage of available officers, President McKinley authorized the commissioning of 100 Negro second Lieutenants to serve in these

¹⁸Edgar I. Stewart, Custer's Luck (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 168.

units.¹⁹ However, because of rapid developments in the war and the requirement for immediate deployment of troops to Cuba, the only Black units to see action were those four regular Army regiments already in service. Although the regiments fought brilliantly, their accomplishments added little justification to the Black pleas for more Black officers. The lack of sufficient Black officers in the command structure during their deployment and the success the troops achieved under white officers failed to demonstrate a need for the Black officers.

In this, as in previous wars, the conclusions drawn by Blacks about their current and future role in the army differed radically from the perceptions of the whites. Blacks in each conflict, no matter how low their rank or position, saw an opportunity to prove their full military potential to themselves, their race, and to white America. On the other hand, whites viewed Black participation not in terms of racial pride but in terms of outcome. If the Blacks failed, it was used as reinforcement of the myth that Blacks were stupid, cowardly, lazy good-for-nothings, who were unfit for tasks above cooking and cleaning. If they succeeded in difficult assignments such as combat, it was offered as proof that with proper white leadership there might be a place for the Black soldier. Black success was attributed to white leadership and Black failure to the nature of Blacks.

¹⁹Robert W. Mullen, Blacks in America's Wars (New York: Monad Press, 1975), pp. 35-36.

The Army Reorganization Act of February, 1901 coupled with the end of the war in the Philippines permitted the Army to send most of its regular units home and to disband its volunteers. Black enlisted men who wished to remain on active duty in one of the regular Black regiments were given the opportunity to do so. But the same generous terms were not extended to Black volunteer officers. The provisions of the Reorganization Act allowed for an increase in the size of the peacetime Army and the creation of 1135 new officer vacancies or positions. So critical was the need for new regular Army officers to fill these positions that every colonel of a volunteer regiment was allowed to designate any or all officers whom he considered qualified for appointment to the regular army. Hundreds of white officers were selected for appointment in this manner, but not one of the 100 Black volunteer officers.

Nevertheless, the reorganization did provide for the first time in American history an opportunity for non-West Point Blacks to become a part of the Regular Army officer structure. The first appointed was John R. Lynch, a former paymaster and Major in the volunteers. On 8 February 1901, he was appointed Captain in the Paymaster Department of the Regular Army. The second Black to receive a Regular Army commission was Benjamin O. Davis. Davis had been a First Lieutenant in the volunteers during the Spanish-American War and upon his discharge enlisted in the 9th Cavalry with the hope of obtaining a commission. On 12 March, he became one of

only twelve enlisted men (Black and white) who passed the examination for commissioning in the Regular Army. In spite of objections by numerous Regular Army Officers, on 19 May 1901 Davis was appointed to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army and became the first Black to rise from the ranks to a Regular Army commission. Corporal John E. Green passed the required examinations for a commission in July of 1901 and shortly thereafter became the third Black Regular Army officer.²⁰

Initially, the appointments of Davis and Green were hailed by many Black Americans as proof of the enlightened and fair treatment of Blacks by the Army and as examples of the opportunities available. In the opinion of many Blacks at the time, "the door was open." It was to be only a matter of time before more Blacks were accepted as commissioned officers. But as the years passed and there were no additional promotions or appointments of Blacks to officer status, the Black community began to realize that the appointments of Davis and Green had been token gestures to silence criticism. The Army, of course, denied charges of Black tokenism or a change in racial policy and continued to insist that any capable and ambitious Black could still receive a commission by merely passing the requirements as Davis and Green had done.

In spite of the Army's assurances of fair treatment for Blacks, conditions for Black officers and enlisted men

²⁰Foner, Blacks in the Military in American History, p. 94.

steadily degenerated after the turn of the century. Before 1900, although segregated, Blacks were treated with equality in pay and educational and recreational opportunities. After 1900, as heightened racism gripped the nation, it also gripped the Army. Black troop strengths in their four regiments steadily decreased, and no efforts were initiated to recruit more Blacks. Bi-racial recruiting booklets were dropped, and the practice of separating the races at such previously unsegregated facilities as recruiting depots and training centers became established.

This sudden change in attitude by the Army is not at all difficult to understand. The Army in many ways is a mirror of the society that produces it. If society is prejudiced, then the Army will be too. Similarly the number of Black officers and the rank to which they rise reflect the status of Blacks in society. Blacks normally have had to achieve stature and significance in civilian society before achieving corresponding and complementary gains in the Army. It is no oversimplification to state that if there are no Blacks in national politics or other influential positions, there can be no Black officers in the military. In the outside world, many of the small gains toward racial equality were erased. The South, where most Black troops were stationed, enacted "Jim Crow" laws. In the North, racial animosity heightened as immigrants and industrial workers feared a Black threat to the labor market. Both the Black officer and enlisted man were victims of the times. Survival for the Black officer was difficult;

progress in the military was almost impossible. The mass punishments of Black soldiers in Brownsville in 1906 and in Houston in 1917 typified the climate which Black troops endured. The rise and fall of the Black officer and enlisted man was at this time, as it had been throughout America's history, tied to the status of the Black population at large. The Black soldier and, in particular, the Black officer at this time could not exceed the status of the Black population. It is unfortunate but true that the Black officer was normally viewed by most military personnel as a Black first and then as an officer and a soldier. He was more closely identified with his race than with any other nationality or ethnic group.

Paradoxically, this period in American history was known as the Progressive Period. It was a period in which many Americans sought to reestablish economic individualism and political democracy for the nation and wipe out many of the social abuses of the day. While impressive gains were made for whites in such areas as child labor laws, graduated income tax and political reform, it was an ultraconservative period for Blacks. The Black population did not participate in or benefit from most of the progressive reforms. The economic status of Blacks improved slightly, but socially and politically they were little better off than they had been before the nation expressed its desire for change.

On the federal level, little was done to promote or insure equality for Blacks either in politics or in the military. Theodore Roosevelt vacillated between placating conservative

whites in the South and wooing Black voters in the North. Although Roosevelt reluctantly appointed a few Black men to office, his successor President Taft publicly announced that he would not make such appointments if whites objected. Candidate Wilson made vague pleas and promises in an effort to gain support from Black voters during the election campaign of 1912. Black suspicions of the southerner Wilson proved well-founded; for, under Wilson, the concepts of racial supremacy and segregation gained even more strength than under the wavering policies of Roosevelt or the racially insensitive policies of Taft.

Blacks realized that white progressivism had little to offer them; but when they looked within their own ranks, they found conflicting paths to follow. The options available centered on the gradualist, separatist policies of Booker T. Washington or the more militant policies of William E. B. DuBois. In retrospect, the activist approach of DuBois seems to have produced more results. The activism of the Niagara Movement, the legislative victories of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National League on Urban Conditions did much to widen economic and social opportunities for Blacks.²¹ The Black officer, lacking in numbers and organization, had to wait for the success of the civilian community and ride the coattails of the above organizations in order to advance.

²¹The National League on Urban Conditions is now known as the National Urban League.

Despite the racism of the day, Blacks did become actively involved in World War I. Black Americans were affected by the appeal "to make the world safe for democracy" just as white Americans were affected. Black organizations adopted resolutions subordinating the Black struggle for human rights to the war effort. At first this decision was not nationally accepted and was subjected to considerable skepticism; but in the end Black leaders agreed to muffle their grievances until the war was over. As inadequate as democracy was, most Blacks recognized that it held the best offer of justice for them. Even the militant W. E. B. DuBois temporarily dropped his crusade and advocated (in an editorial for *The Crisis* entitled "Close Ranks") that Blacks forget their special grievances, close ranks with their white fellow citizens, and fight for democracy.

Those who opposed Black participation in the war did not see such action as a struggle to preserve democracy; for American democracy as practiced meant nothing to Blacks. Rather, they saw Black participation in the war as another kind of exploitation. The same President Wilson who had transformed the Nation's capital into the most segregated city outside of the South and who had repeatedly declared this conflict a "white man's war" was now freely accepting Black troops to fight in that war. The more militant elements of the Black community saw in Wilson the kind of man who would ask you to fight for a country but not let you live in that country.

At the time of the United States' declaration of war in World War I, only 4,000 of the 650,000 men in the Army were

Black.²² Approximately one half of these men were assigned to the four Black Regular Army regiments. The remainder were in segregated National Guard units throughout the country. The need to enlist sufficient manpower to support the war effort meant that Black manpower had to be called up once again. In all about 350,000 Blacks were inducted into the Army.²³ In response to demands that Blacks be permitted to serve as combat troops, the all Black 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions were formed and sent to France. The four Black Regular Army regiments remained in the United States and provided non-commissioned officers for the 92nd and 93rd and later provided candidates for the officer training schools.

Initially, since there were few Black officers, the 92nd and 93rd Divisions followed tradition and used southern white officers to command the Black troops. Officially, as shown by Davis and Green, there were no reasons why more Blacks were not available for officer positions with the divisions. Unofficially, however, Blacks were barred from the Officer Candidate School at Plattsburg, New York where prospective white candidates were trained to become officers. In the mobilization for the war, fourteen new O.C.S. training camps were established but no provisions were made for the training of prospective Black officers. J. E. Spingarn, Chairman of

²²Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 111.

²³Stillman, Negro Integration in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 12.

the N.A.A.C.P., Black college students from the Baltimore-Washington area, the Black press and other militant groups within the Black community demonstrated and wrote to support the establishment of a Black O.C.S. training camp. Those who initially opposed the idea of a separate Black O.C.S. camp in favor of integration of the established white camps soon joined the advocates of a separate camp when they concluded that the options were either a separate facility to train Black officers or no facilities and no Black officers.

The War Department showed itself to be profoundly hostile to accepting Black officers in mass and remained firmly rooted in the assumption that Blacks were incapable of military leadership. An unidentified staff officer with the War Department, stated the Army position as follows:

The officer personnel of a fighting unit is of the first importance to military efficiency, and unfortunately for the Negro, in his present level of culture, not many men of his color can be found who are qualified for positions of command. . . . The Negro race in increasing numbers may be expected to develop this type, but as yet they are rare and difficult to discover. . . .²⁴

Others within the War Department argued as their rationale against Black officers that it was the Army's mission to win the war, not solve the race problem. Although most spokesmen for the Army carefully phrased their answers on social questions in such a way as to express only the Army's concern for quality and the good of the service, they could not hide the

²⁴Jerome Dowd, The Negro in American Life (New York: Century, 1926), pp. 233-34.

Army's resistance to increasing the number of Black officers. Such arguments as for the good of the service and the desire for quality did not conceal the illegal means used to disqualify the few Blacks who were qualified for commissions. Racism in the Army had become so open that not even the periodic display of Davis and Green added credibility to the Army's position. The Army simply did not want large numbers of Black officers even if it did need large numbers of Black enlisted men. Yielding to the need for manpower, Army planners within the War Department decided that if they must have Black officers, then they would accept them under circumstances in which they could do the least harm. Outside of the military, on the political scene, Secretary Baker, Congress and the Wilson administration, out of possible fears of Black disaffection, had already made the decision to make the use of Black officers mandatory. The Army reconciled itself to the situation forced on it with certain reservations: (1) that no more than two per cent of the officer candidates would be Black, (2) that few Black officers would ever be assigned to responsible positions, (3) that the few who were assigned meaningful positions be washed out as quickly as possible under charges of incompetence and (4) that there be no Black field grade officers.²⁵ Further it was decided that training for these Blacks would either take place at a separate facility where their presence

²⁵ Arthur T. Barbeau and Florette Henre, The Unknown Soldier (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 58.

would not undermine the efficiency of the white training program or not at all.

In reality the Army did not have the choice of having or not having Black officers. The political decision had been made that there would be Black officers and the Army had no choice but to produce them. It could train them in separate facilities or the existing facilities, but it had to train them. The Army chose to use separate facilities. Therefore a Black Officers training camp was established at Des Moines, Iowa on 15 June 1917. The news of the opening of a facility at Des Moines was greeted with excitement and hope within the Black community. Des Moines would give the Black man an opportunity to demonstrate his leadership ability to white America. Of the approximately 1,200 Blacks who received commissions from this school, about one third came directly from civilian life while the remainder came from the four Regular Army regiments. In all, although by far the largest concentration of Black officers to that date, these 1,200 represented only about seven-tenths of one per cent of the officer strength while the Black enlisted strength in the same period was thirty per cent.²⁶

Still, in terms of numbers, the total 1,200 represented the opening of another "door" for the Black officer. Yet it was to be a long time before he had either the respect or the stature of his white counterpart. Within the civilian

²⁶Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 16.

community, systematic efforts were made to harrass and humiliate him. Black officers who returned home on leave to such southern states as Mississippi were often compelled to "flee the town in disguise" because whites threatened that "they would allow no nigger to wear a uniform that a white man was bound to honor."²⁷

Within the Army, conditions were almost as bad. Black officers were barred from officers' clubs, refused accommodations in officers' quarters and in general viewed with contempt. White officers in Black units did all they could to insure that Black officers received no encouragement in such subversive ideas as social equality. The Army's use of promotion ceilings for Blacks as outlined in the conditions of the Baker agreement was another factor which suppressed Black officer morale and efficiency. The table of organization for Black units was drawn up by the War College and as in the case of the 92nd Division, the War College established the number and types of officer positions for each race. The table for the 92nd Division authorized 373 white officers and 684 Black officers.²⁸ While the proportions of this authorization seem favorable to Blacks, it should be noted that all the key positions within the division were filled by whites. The purpose of this plan according to the War Department was to insure efficiency, but its real purpose seemed more to limit Black

²⁷Foner, Blacks and the Military, p. 112.

²⁸Barbeau, The Unknown Soldier, p. 146.

officers to the grade of captain regardless of ability or performance. Even advancement to captain was limited because over half of the captain's positions in the division were restricted to whites. The case of Lieutenant T. T. Thomson is an example of the firm adherence to the authorized table. Lieutenant Thomson did an outstanding job as acting personnel officer for the division and as a result was recommended by General Ballou, the division commander, for permanent assignment to the position and promotion to captain as the position required. The request was disapproved by the War Department on the grounds that the personnel officer should be white.²⁹ With the exception of a few National Guard officers, who had been called to active duty in field grade ranks, no Black advanced beyond the rank of captain regardless of ability. While whites either looked at the Black officer as a curiosity or ignored him totally, Blacks also looked down on him and saw him as the powerless entity that he was. If the Black officer tried to do his job, he was considered either a "stuck-up nigger"³⁰ by Blacks or an "uppity nigger" who was lacking in the proper attitude by whites. If he remained ineffective, whites considered him properly submissive but Blacks thought him an "Uncle Tom." Black enlisted men witnessed the daily abuse of Black officers by whites and realized that if the officers could not protect themselves, they certainly could

²⁹ Ibid., p. 146.

³⁰ Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1969), p. 16.

not protect the interest of the enlisted men. The dilemma of the Black officer only reinforced the white stereotype that Blacks would not respond to Black leadership and that the best leaders for Blacks were southern white men. Since Blacks could not command Blacks and since Blacks certainly should not command whites, there was no place in the United States Army for the Black officer.

The questions of how and where to employ Blacks caused considerable confusion within the various planning headquarters. These problems were especially troublesome with regard to the 92nd and 93rd divisions which were shipped to France. After their initial assignment to service support missions, General Pershing offered the four regiments of the 93rd to the French. The chance to hand off four unaffiliated regiments which happened to be Black and at the same time fulfill a long standing French request for American combat troops seemed the perfect solution.

Being loaned to the French was probably one of the more fortunate events for Blacks during the war. With a long history of French-African troops and other "colored colonial" troops in their army, the French showed the Black Americans an equality denied them in their own army. Fully integrated into the French Army and operating in a more racially tolerant atmosphere, Blacks performed well. Motivation, leadership and respect which had been lacking in the relationships between Blacks and whites in American units did much to improve the service of Black troops. One French officer who served with

the 93rd Division stated, "They need respect from their fellow white soldiers before they could be expected to fight well."³¹

A Black officer commented, "I have never before experienced what it meant to be really free . . . to taste real liberty, to be a man."³²

So freely did French and Black Americans associate that Colonel Linard, of Allied Expeditionary Forces Headquarters, felt compelled to issue a memo entitled Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops to the French Army. This memo issued on 7 August 1918 was an obvious effort to undermine the status of Blacks in France:

Although a citizen of the United States, the Black man is regarded by the white American as an inferior being with whom relations of business or service only are possible.

We must prevent the rise of any pronounced degree of intimacy between French officers and black officers.

We must not commend too highly the black American troops, particularly in the presence of white Americans. . . .³³

In spite of the efforts of many Americans such as Colonel Linard, Blacks continued to perform better than expected. During the Meuse Argonne and Oise-Aisne Offensives, the 93rd Division received over 3,000 casualties with 584 killed in action. This represented a casualty rate of thirty-five per cent. Casualties for the 92nd Division amounted to over 2,100

³¹Barbeau and Henre, The Unknown Soldier, p. 111.

³²Foner, Blacks in the Military, p. 122.

³³Stillman, Negro Integration in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 14.

wounded and 176 killed. The 369th Regiment accounted for 851 of the above casualties in five days of fierce fighting. The 369th was also credited with spending 191 consecutive days at the front, which was longer than any other regiment in the American Expeditionary Force. During that 191 day period, the regiment never surrendered a foot of soil or had a man captured.³⁴ By the end of the war, over 540 officers and men of the 93rd Division had been decorated by the French or American government.

The only instance of alleged Black misbehavior in combat occurred when two companies of the 368th Infantry became disorganized in battle and had to be withdrawn from the line five days later. In this battle, the infantry was given orders that were not clear, received no artillery support, and were told to attack a fortified position without maps, grenades, signal flares, or wire cutters. The white regimental commander and battalion commanders who planned the debacle blamed the Black officers for the failure; and Major General Ballou, Commanding General of the 92nd, relieved thirty Black officers as unfit to command troops.³⁵

When the war ended and the Black officer returned home, he found that life in the United States had not significantly improved for him. Though initially welcomed home with the

³⁴ Lee Nichols, Breakthrough on the Color Front (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 31.

³⁵ Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 123.

fanfare accorded any returning soldier, it was not long before the color of his skin again became the overriding factor in his relations with white America. Although there were 1,200 Black officers in the Army at the time of the Armistice, this number declined until in 1939 there were two Black line officers on active duty. This reduction in the number of Black officers had not resulted from voluntary decision by Blacks. Many Black officers eager to remain in the service after the war submitted applications to the Adjutant General's office. Although promised the same opportunity to qualify, they were systematically rejected. In one case, when a Black officer requested a hearing to defend his request for retention of his commission, the examining board was extraordinarily frank: "The board recommends that he be not examined. Reason: unqualified by reason of qualities inherent in the Negro Race."³⁶

Two divergent views of the Black officer emerged from the war. The short lived favorable view developed from the consistently favorable news reports on the achievements and abilities of Blacks in both combat and support roles. The intent of these reports was not to promote Black prestige but to convey the image of allied progress against the "Hun." The unfavorable view gained in magnitude after the war, when white officers began to write their reports on the performance of

³⁶Foner, Blacks in the Military in American History, p. 128.

Black officers. A good example of the kind of slander aimed at the Black officer were the comments of Colonel Allen J. Greer, former chief of staff of the 92nd Division:

The average Negro officer's ignorance is colossal . . . it is well known to all people familiar with Negroes, that he is naturally cowardly. Not only are Negro officers cowardly, but they are unpatriotic because they are in the army for the advancement of their racial interest. . . . Negro troops led by Negro officers not only will fail in war, but the seed of racial ferment will be sown and we will reap the consequences thereafter. The average Negro soldier is fit only for service and labor troops because he is cowardly under fire. The Negro makes excellent teamsters better in fact than white soldiers do. They also make good chauffeurs.³⁷

Concurrently, while whites were expounding on their experiences, Black officers began relating incidents of prejudice and discrimination. The divergence of these views resulted in a confusion of information that persisted without resolution through the period between World War I and World War II. The confusion worked to the disadvantage of the Black officer.

Soon after World War I, the Army began to formulate a policy for the future use of Blacks. Most of Army planners at the War Department felt that the early guidelines provided by Secretary Baker were not definitive enough and had therefore caused the racial difficulties experienced during the war. The two factors which directed thinking of these Army planners were the mistaken belief that the four Black regiments were

³⁷Colonel Allen J. Greer to the Assistant Commandant, General Staff College, April 13, 1920, in "The Colored Soldiers in the U.S. Army," pp. 110-112.

authorized by law and could not be changed and the assumption that segregation was a fixed and necessary element in any plan to be formulated.

The guidelines established by these planners were set forth in a staff study in 1922 establishing the following policies: "Military considerations, not social, ethnological and psychological theories should determine the use of Negroes. Negro manpower should be used in proportion to its percentage of the nation's total, half of the Negro soldiers should be assigned to combat units. Past experience indicated that Negro units smaller than the division performed better and that regiments should be the largest Negro units; these could be assigned to larger white units."³⁸

By the standards of the time, the planners' conclusions about the Black officer were extremely enlightened. They recognized a future need for Black officers and attributed the poor performances of some Black officers to the Army's mistake in not requiring the Black officer candidate to meet the same standards as white candidates. Unfortunately the staff study of 1922 was never fully approved and never became practice. It was later modified by staff studies in 1927, 1933, and 1937. In each case, the modification reduced either the percentage of Black personnel authorized or the assignment of Black units to white divisions.³⁹

³⁸ Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 22.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

A 1940 War Department plan was used in 1942 as the basis for placing white officers in all-Black Regular Army units. The plan did not affect Reserve or National Guard units. Later provisions were made by the Army to detail a limited number of Black officers to designated segregated units. Jesse J. Johnson in his book, Ebony Brass: An Autobiography of Negro Frustration Amid Aspiration described the schedule and means of deployment of Black officers as follows:

As Negro officers became available from officer candidate schools, Reserve and National Guards, Negro line officers, medical and dental officers and nurses were to be assigned to designated segregated units. Negro officers were to command Negroes only. Breaking with past policy, Negroes were also to be allowed to serve in "each major branch of the Army," but were to be segregated. Negro chaplains were to be assigned whatever rank the units authorized.⁴⁰

The War Department envisioned that an over-strength of approximately 50 per cent in officer personnel would be necessary to insure that Black units would perform satisfactorily. White officers would continue to be assigned to Black units as a "needed counterbalance to the lack of military background, civilian educational and vocational experience found in Black soldiers."⁴¹ The War Department thought that the additional officers would provide the closer supervision and individual attention Blacks required. The War Department also continued to believe that white Southerners were better suited for the

⁴⁰ Jesse J. Johnson, Ebony Brass: An Autobiography of Negro Frustration Amid Aspiration (Hampton, Va.: Hampton Institute, 1970), p. 67.

⁴¹ Ulysses Lee, United States Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops, p. 179.

leadership of Black troops and therefore assigned them to Black units. The basis for this belief was rooted in the assumption that few whites from other parts of the country had frequent enough contact with Blacks to understand them.

The scheme to staff Black units with a 50 per cent over-strength in officers proved fruitless, since there were insufficient white officers for the task. Therefore, it was decided that Black officers would be used to the maximum degree possible. This decision was clearly based on necessity, since the myth that a Black officer did not have the potential for combat leadership commensurate with his white counterpart still prevailed. Similarly damaging to Blacks was the belief that they lacked the temperament and the ability to fly. This belief restricted Black participation in the Army Air Corps despite growing emphasis on military air power and the need for officer pilots.

Black officers were restricted to a small number of possible assignments in 1942. Selection to one of the few positions open to Blacks was made even more difficult by the fact that Blacks were assigned to a unit in a group. The group assignment procedure was called the "block basis." As a result of this system, officers frequently waited in pools for excessive periods before receiving an assignment. This system caused difficulty in assigning the best Black leaders to Black units. The intended purpose of the Block system was to minimize friction produced by combining white and Black officers in the same unit. It also prohibited assigning Black

senior officers (except chaplains and medical officers) to units having white officers in a junior grade. An additional unpleasant side effect for Blacks was that the system slowed promotions. Blacks were promoted only when there was a need for a group of Blacks at a certain rank, not when the individual merited promotion.

So confused and complicated were the War Department's plans for the use of Black officers that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was forced to intercede in order to obtain some degree of efficiency. President Roosevelt wrote a note to the Assistant Secretary of War which stated:

Patterson

Colored Reserve Officers must be called just as White Reserves. Assign to new units and not just to Nat. Gd. units.⁴²

The President's guidance meant that the Black reserve officers could be assigned to the three National Guard regiments or any Black unit with an opening. If there were not enough openings, additional infantry regiments could be organized and staffed by Black officers as the Black officers and Black troops became available for duty. Although this note largely resolved the problem of what to do with Black line officers, there was considerable concern over active duty assignments for Black doctors and dentists. There were numerous graduates, mainly from Howard University Medical School, who held infantry reserve commissions, which were

⁴²Lee, United States Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops, p. 195.

obtained when they completed undergraduate work, but who had since obtained medical degrees. When they sought medical assignments in the Army, they received official replies that no vacancies existed or that procurement objectives had been met. Ulysses Lee in his book United States Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops has suggested that the Army's rejection of Black requests for medical assignments was based on pre-war requirements.

The approved peacetime procurement objective for Negro Reserve officers of the corps area assignment group provided for 120 medical and 44 dental officers. In 1940, 55 medical and 34 dental officers were required to complete this objective. Many corps areas, it was then discovered, had filled their complete allotments of medical officers and all had filled their dental allotments while ignoring the existence of a Negro objective included within the larger allotments.⁴³

After much written protest from those doctors who did not want to be riflemen, the Surgeon General's office proposed a plan which would authorize the assignment of more than 4,000 Black officers and enlisted personnel to existing Black units. The solution specified using Black medical officers in all units officered by Blacks and employing Black officers and nurses in the "colored wards" of all station and general hospitals that had an average of 100 Black patients. The plan further allowed that exclusively Black hospitals be staffed by all Black medical personnel, including nurses.⁴⁴ The National

⁴³Ibid., p. 197.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 197.

Medical Association, the Black equivalent of the American Medical Association, was asked to assist in suggesting names of Black physicians for service in the Army.

As the mobilization progressed, the problem of what to do with too many Black officers soon turned into a problem of what to do about the shortage of Black officers. This shortage became especially acute in the four Black regiments which had never had a Black officer structure. Help could not come from the National Guard or the Reserves since the attrition caused by physical examinations and reclassification left the National Guard and Reserve contingents without sufficient Black officers to fill their own requirements. In addition, no Black Regular officers were available from the Regular Army for the regiments, because the only two Regular Army Black officers, the Davises, were in other slots. The senior Davis had been promoted out of his 369th Coast Artillery (AA) regimental position when he reached the landmark level of general. His son had left a short tour of duty at Fort Riley to join the Army Air Corps effort at Tuskegee, Alabama. The only logical solution was to produce more Black officers, both regular and reserve.

Even though the Army was short of Black officers, there were numerous cases in which it mismanaged the few qualified Blacks that it did have. What happened to the 366th Infantry Regiment was typical of what happened to hundreds of other Black units. Although additional officers were not needed, the 366th was assigned one white full colonel and four white

lieutenant colonels. Such assignments "displaced the Black officers who were in command of the regiment and its battalions."⁴⁵ Confusion and discord developed as the former Black Commanders were relegated to the status of "understudy" commanders by the newly assigned white officers.

Although a policy developed in 1940 had programmed Blacks for a proportionate share of combat duty, the majority of Black troops were still in the states in 1943. In fact, "in the spring of 1943 only 79,000 out of 504,000 Negro troops were overseas."⁴⁶ Consequently, there was strong public and political opposition about the failure to commit Negro troops to combat. General Benjamin O. Davis, Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Congressman William L. Dawson sought positive War Department action for fair employment of Negro troops and a halt to the practice of converting Negro combat units to service units.

Judge William H. Hastie (civilian aid to the Secretary of War and former Dean of Howard Law School) was a staunch supporter of Black equality and a critic of the administration's policy on the fair and equal employment of Black officers. He noted that, even allowing for the small number of Blacks in the army, there was still a disproportionately low number of Black O.C.S. candidates. He further advocated that Black and

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 200.

⁴⁶ Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-1953, p. 92.

white officers be trained in the same O.C.S. units. During the first months of operation in each of the various types of officer candidate school (i.e. Infantry, Signal, etc.) enrollment statistics for Blacks were far lower than what even the most pessimistic Blacks had expected. In the period from July through September 1944, only about 15 Blacks were among the nearly 2,000 students. Most of the branch O.C.S. schools had one candidate. The Quartermaster candidates totaled five. The first Negro O.C.S. class in England was graduated on 3 February 1943. All 14 candidates who started the school completed the course.

Judge Hastie also became concerned over the reluctance of the Army Air Corps to take Blacks. It was primarily through his efforts and the efforts of such enlightened white Americans as then Senator Harry Truman that a flying school was established at Tuskegee, Alabama in 1941. Even though a small victory had been won by the opening of a flying school for Blacks, morale among Black pilots was extremely low in 1942. The chief cause of the low morale was the segregation policy practiced at the school. Orders originated by the school commander prohibited social contact among Black and white officer personnel. Signs, in contravention of War Department policy, were posted identifying racially separate toilets.

Despite hardships, five new Black Army Air Corps pilots graduated from Tuskegee Army Airfield on 7 March 1942. The guest speaker at the graduation was General George E. Stratemeyer, Commanding General, Southeastern Flying Training

Command. As he looked directly at the graduates, he said: "You will furnish the nuclei of the 99th and 100th Pursuit Squadrons. Future graduates of this school will look up to you as 'Old Pilots.' They will be influenced profoundly by the examples which you set. Therefore, it will be of the highest importance that your service be of a character worthy of emulation by younger officers."⁴⁷ Included in the group were Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who later became the first commander of the newly organized 99th Pursuit Squadron and later commanded the 332nd Fighter Group. Both units compiled exceptionally impressive combat records which helped to destroy the myth that Blacks had no mechanical ability and could not handle complicated machines.

Additional proof of the Black officers' ability to command and employ the complicated machines of war was provided by the all-Black 761st Tank Battalion. While serving in combat under General George S. Patton in 1944, the officers and men of the 761st were told by Patton that he didn't care what color the Black troops were as long as they killed Germans. The 761st distinguished itself in the Battle of the Bulge and in several European countries. It destroyed more than 300 enemy machine-gun nests, captured 7 enemy towns, inflicted approximately 130,000 casualties on the enemy, and won 391 decorations for extraordinary heroism in combat. Four major

⁴⁷ Charles E. Francis, The Tuskegee Airmen: The Story of the Negro in the U.S. Air Force, p. 12.

generals and the Under Secretary of War cited the 761st Tank Battalion for its accomplishments.

Concerning the combat abilities of the Black officer in World War II, the point is often made that only in the Mediterranean theater was any question ever raised about the courage and determination of either Black units or Black officers. The one question raised concerned the 92nd Division. The unit had served in Africa prior to offensive combat duty in Italy, and was under the command of Major General Edward N. Almond at the time of the alleged misconduct in combat. Most of the other key officers in the Division were also white.

Upon entering Italy and crossing the Arno River, the 92nd Division captured several towns. When these towns were later lost, high ranking white officers from General Clark's 5th Army and the 92nd Division quickly placed the complete responsibility on the Black officers and men. No thought was given to the role of the white commanders or the low educational level of the division. The unit was also accused of cowardly behavior in February 1945 for their refusal to continue to attack during the battle for the Cinquale Canal area of Italy.

Commenting on the hardships and hazards that the 92nd faced near the Apennine Mountains, the Black commander of the 600th Field Artillery Battalion, Marcus H. Ray, emphasized that the division could have overcome the enemy if it had had better support. Ray added:

I do not believe the Ninety-second a complete failure as a combat unit, but when I think of what it might have been, I am heartsick. . . .⁴⁸

What happened to the 92nd and the historical attention that it has received is a perfect example of the plight of the Black soldier. His accomplishments were minimized and his failures were publicized. The limited attention given to the combat success of such all Black units as the 761st Tank Battalion, the 99th Fighter Squadron, the 332nd Fighter Group or even the 93rd Division clearly point out the tendency of the press and the Army to suppress the combat achievements of Blacks. Until recently, the conduct of the 92nd in Italy was used as a case study by the Command and General Staff College as an example of one of the few American Units to ever fail in combat. The true story and the combat statistics of the fighting abilities of the 92nd were seldom told as Otto Lindenmeyer describes them in his book, Black and Brave: The Black Soldier in America:

The adequacy of the 92d is best demonstrated by its overall record in World War II. The black men of the 92d were awarded more than twelve thousand decorations and citations, including two Distinguished Service Crosses, sixteen Legion of Merit awards, ninety-five Silver Stars for gallantry, and nearly eleven hundred Purple Heart medals. In the Rome Campaign, more than three thousand men were reported killed, wounded or missing in action. The Silver Star was awarded to Captain Charles F. Gandy of the 92d Division, who led his company out in broad daylight . . . personal example and leadership, he succeeded in getting his entire company across a canal, with an abrupt twelve-foot wall. This was accomplished

⁴⁸ Otto Lindenmeyer, Black and Brave: The Black Soldier in America, p. 97.

in rain and under extremely heavy fire . . . Captain Gandy went forward alone to reconnoiter [and while] engaged in this activity, he was mortally wounded by enemy machine-gun fire. His outstanding gallantry and leadership in combat exemplified the heroic traditions of the United States Army. The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded to another black officer, First Lieutenant Vernon L. Baker of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for the "extraordinary heroism" he displayed near Viareggio, Italy, when he silenced three German machine-gun nests and killed or wounded nine of the enemy. The extraordinary heroism in action of a twenty-four year old tank commander of the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion earned the Distinguished Service Cross near Climbach, France. The black officer literally shot his way through the Siegfried Line "in a blaze of fire from enemy rockets, artillery and machine guns." The hero, Captain Charles L. Thomas of Detroit, was wounded in the chest, legs and arms. Other blacks who were decorated for heroism in ground combat with the enemy included four who won the Silver Star. Lieutenants Reuben Horner, John Madison and Kenneth W. Coleman [and one noncommissioned officer].⁴⁹

Even though there was much controversy over the role and the effectiveness of the Black officer, there was one Black officer who was generally welcomed wherever Black troops were assigned. He was the Black chaplain. He was frequently sought by both Blacks and whites for answers on difficult leadership problems. Problems relative to racial matters were particularly referred to the "Man of the Spirit." Negro chaplains "of the right sort" were in high demand by the white commanders of Black troops. In addition to their spiritual advisory duties, they monitored unit morale and created recreational and athletic programs for the soldiers.

The chaplain frequently found himself the only Black officer in the unit; and as such, he was in great demand by

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 184-185.

the troops as a source of favors and counsel. He spent a great deal of his time performing such tasks as writing home for those who could not write and advising the troops on personal matters that Blacks felt they could not discuss with their white commanders. As valuable as these chaplains proved to be, it is unfortunate that they were so few in number. There were three Regular Army chaplains on active duty in 1940 and 17 in the National Guard and the Reserves. This initial shortage of Black chaplains meant that many Black units were assigned white chaplains. The disadvantage of this was that the white chaplains could not establish the same level of rapport with Black troops that Black chaplains could. Recognizing an obvious need, the Army established a quota for Black chaplains in 1943 and 116 Black chaplains were allowed to serve on active duty. By October of 1945, the quota had increased to 790, but only 174 chaplains actually served on active duty.

Ulysses Lee has suggested that although the Black chaplain was a valuable addition to any unit in which Blacks served, he too faced many problems while trying to exercise his duties. "The Negro chaplain often found that, in the process of laying the groundwork for better discipline and morale, he had already alienated either his men or his superiors with the result that he could effectively influence neither."⁵⁰ Lee

⁵⁰Ulysses Lee, U.S. Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops, p. 227.

further points out that overall effectiveness of the Black chaplain was not as high as it might have been, due to the personal and job conflict that many Black chaplains felt. This sense of conflict stemmed from the chaplain's perceived obligation to support the racist policies of the Army and at the same time provide counsel that was in the best interest of the Black soldier. This inner conflict often resulted in an ambiguous impact on the leadership and morale of the units that they advised.

Throughout World War II as in World War I, Black officers were required to function under the pressure of the "reclassification action." If he displeased his superiors, he could be ordered before a board of white officers to show cause why he should be allowed to retain his commission. As in World War I, actions which could prompt a "reclassification action" were vague and ranged all the way from inability to "poor attitude." More often than not, cases of poor attitude involved racial conflict between the Black officer and his white superior. Charges of inability normally meant that the Black officer failed to conform to white perceptions of how a Black should conduct himself. Although "reclassification action" was designed to weed out all undesirable officers, no one felt the pressures of it more than the Black officer. Ulysses Lee has commented on the reclassification procedures as follows:

Reclassification procedures for Negro officers in the divisions usually began with assignment to divisional officers' schools. Upon reports of progress in the schools depended the disposition made of the officer student. These schools, originally designed

to improve leadership and technical qualifications, soon came to be looked upon as a means of weeding out unwanted officers, especially since usually only Negro officers were assigned to them.⁵¹

Other commonly cited causes for Black reclassification proceedings were the vague charges of "lack of aggressiveness," "excessive race consciousness" and "over sensitivity." The majority of the Black officers who received reclassification actions believe that charges were actually raised against them because they had expressed resentment against the discriminatory practices of the Army. Fellow Black officers who sought to help a Black officer facing reclassification normally jeopardized their own careers and sooner or later faced "reclassification procedures" themselves.

One unidentified black officer who rebelled against the Army's discriminatory practices and his humiliating forthcoming assignment to the divisional officers' school sought to resign. Originally, his leaders had considered him exemplary. As part of his resignation the officer sought to unburden himself in the following letter to his commanding officers:

By my own admission, I can no longer willingly and cooperatively discharge the duties of an officer as I have done faithfully and cheerfully during more than two years of service in a commissioned status. A proper regard for the opinions of all concerned demands that with clarity and forthrightness I set forth the causes which do now propel this course of action.

a. I am unable to adjust myself to the handicap of being a Negro Officer in the United States Army. Realizing that minorities are always at odds for consideration commensurate with the privileges enjoyed

⁵¹Ibid., p. 234.

by the greater number, I have tried earnestly to find this expected lack of equality, and nothing more, in the relationships and situations around me here. Prolonged observation reveals that inconsistencies over and above a reasonable amount are rampant. Sins of omission, sins of commission, humiliations, insults--injustices, all, are mounted one upon another until one's zest is chilled and spirit broken.

b. In my opinion there is mutual distrust between the two groups of officers. As a result of this, it is my belief, nowhere is there wholehearted cooperation or unity of purpose. Prejudice has bred a counter-prejudice so that now neither faction can nor will see without distortion. In garrison the situation is grave; in the field where one's life and success of mission are dependent upon that cooperation and unity, disastrous.

c. Being exposed to this atmosphere for so long a time, I have not remained unchanged; to deny this would be dishonest. For so long have I endured the frustration and mental torture of being ostracized from, discriminated against, discredited, that my resentment has become an insurmountable barrier against my sense of duty. Whereas I was once fired with ambition and zeal to do a necessary job willingly, I now find myself with the willingness no longer. Enthusiasm has given way to apathy; ambition, to a sense of fairness to myself, to those who command me, and most important, to those who must serve under me directs that I can but offer my resignation.⁵²

This soul-unburdening letter resulted in indignation at battalion and regimental headquarters. Instead of being allowed to resign, the officer was held on active duty so that "reclassification procedures" could be instituted against him. The charges against him included the statement that "it has been noticed that he had developed a 'shiftiness' in his eyes and a tendency to 'wincing' which indicated insolence,

⁵²The above letter is cited by Lee, U.S. Army in World War II: Employment of the Negro Troops, p. 235, and Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 68 without identification of the author or date of the letter. The letter is quoted because of the insight that it provides as to the thinking, feelings and frustrations which must have been experienced by many Black officers.

untrustworthiness, deceit and distrust."⁵³ He was later discharged from the Army on the grounds of "prejudice against white officers and inability to adjust himself willingly and conscientiously cooperate with those in Authority."⁵⁴

Black dissent with racial policies which had mounted throughout the war, gained impetus when the war ended in September 1945. The public climate in the Black society called for a change in the rigid policies that had prevailed in the military during the war. In May of 1942, in response to pressures from the Black community and the advice of a civilian aid, Truman K. Gibson, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson directed that a board be established to provide recommendations for the peacetime use of Blacks within the military. He appointed Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., 13th Army Corps Commander, to head the board. The report of the Gillem Board was published on 4 March 1946 under the title "Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Postwar Army Policy." The report's major points were outlined in a commercially published book as: (1) maintenance of a 10 per cent quota for Negroes; (2) employment of Negroes in regimental size units or smaller, rather than divisions; (3) the promise of encouraging expansion of the number of Negro officers; (4) use of skilled NCO's (noncommissioned officers) in local post support and

⁵³Lee, U.S. Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops, p. 236.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 236.

special units permitting limited integration; (5) assignments of Negro units to locales where sentiment was favorable to colored personnel; (6) integration of on-base buses, recreational facilities and officers' messes, where this policy would not infringe on local custom.⁵⁵

Nevertheless discontent continued to mount during the next two years. A group of 16 Negro leaders met with Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall on 26 April 1948 to discuss the integration issue. Royall's approach displeased the group because he stressed that "any improvement must be made within the framework of segregation."⁵⁶ While Royall was expressing his unyielding stand, the new Secretary of Defense issued a directive to the service secretaries declaring that "the policy of his department was to provide equality of treatment and opportunity for all personnel throughout the armed forces."⁵⁷ President Truman continued the trend toward integration in the service when he issued Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948. He was assisted in reaching his decision by his two advisors on racial matters, Philleo Nash and Clifford Ewing. The order directed equal opportunity in the armed forces, but it was not really as drastic a reform as either the military or Blacks believed.

⁵⁵Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 35.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁷Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, p. 186.

Richard J. Stillman, in his book on the Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, has concluded that Truman was motivated by political rather than humanitarian goals when he issued Executive Order 9981. Stillman states that:

It was primarily an excellent political move by Truman to gain Negro votes on Election Day. It promised no integration but "equality of treatment and opportunity," an ill-defined generality. Moreover, it did not specify when "equality of treatment and opportunity" would occur. The most important achievement of 9981 was establishment of the Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces, which was an important means of stimulating discussion of military racial policies, a subject long avoided by officers.⁵⁸

Paragraphs two and three of Executive Order 9981 directed that a seven man committee be established and authorized to examine the enforcement of the order by the various services and to make recommendation for its enforcement. The committee was headed by a former U.S. Solicitor General, Charles H. Fahy. Fahy chose to integrate his committee and selected four whites and three Blacks. The group brought a much needed civilian point of view into the military complex. The military had been extremely rigid on racial matters and was bound in its own traditions. The committee created a necessary dialogue among military policy makers, collected a variety of data, and engendered a positive attitude among Defense Department officials toward the order. The committee submitted its report, "Freedom to Serve," to President Truman in May 1950.

⁵⁸ Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 43.

Later, on 1 October 1950, the Army announced a program that the Fahy Committee and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson had jointly approved. As Stillman wrote, the plan was to achieve several goals:

- 1) abolish quotas for units and schools;
- 2) develop a new promotion system based on competition without regard to race;
- 3) establish a board of Army officers to review Negro policies; and
- 4) retain segregated units but give qualified Negroes the opportunity to gain skills previously unattainable and assign Negroes who had acquired skills to positions where their specialties might be applied in a manner useful to the military.⁵⁹

In spite of all the fanfare, the Fahy Committee completed its work with Black troops still in segregated units and with promises on paper to achieve true integration. This pattern of segregation remained until the beginning of the Korean War. Korea became the proving ground for both Black warriors and the Army's plans for integration. Stillman makes the comment that in general:

Korea stimulated a breath-taking leap in the Army's attitude toward Negroes. It was a change taken not because the generals felt any new benevolence toward the Negro but because of very real professional needs: 1) training efficiency, 2) combat time strength, 3) unit uniformity, 4) equality of opportunity for battlefield casualty.⁶⁰

Much of the impetus toward integration during the Korean War stemmed as much from professions and technical reasons as it did from social reasons. Post commanders at Ford Ord, California, and Fort Jackson, South Carolina, found the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

sorting of Black and white recruits who flooded the training centers impractical. They were among the first to recognize that the Army could no longer afford to uphold a policy which required segregation. Segregation was costly, time consuming and inefficient. Therefore, shortly thereafter all basic training efforts were integrated.

By January of 1951, the practice of assigning Black troops to only service or noncombat units was discontinued in Korea. Racial quotas for Blacks were dropped and numerous Blacks volunteered for combat duty. Their presence was a welcome addition to many white combat units which had become desperately understrength due to casualties.

The noted military historian General S. L. A. Marshall was the driving force behind much of the Eighth Army's efforts at integration. During the war, he served as an infantry operations analyst for Eighth Army Headquarters and therefore had the opportunity to observe a number of integrated units in action. He became convinced that integration was successful enough to be extended throughout the Army; and thereafter he actively campaigned throughout the Army on behalf of integration. On one occasion after witnessing an integrated unit in action during the retreat from the Yalu River, Marshall told the press that "those [integrated] companies handled themselves as efficiently and courageously as any companies of the war."⁶¹

⁶¹Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, pp. 205-206.

S. L. A. Marshall's views did not meet with complete enthusiasm from all of General Douglas MacArthur's commanders and staff officers.⁶² The chief critic of Marshall's views was General Edward M. Almond, the former World War II commander of the 92nd Division. General Almond was now in command of the Tenth Corps in Korea, and ordered the resegregation of all Blacks that had been integrated into white units under his command. In other portions of Eighth Army, integration proceeded at a rapid pace.⁶³

The decision to integrate did not always come from a new appreciation of Black combat abilities or S. L. A. Marshall's views on the effectiveness of integrated units. General William B. Kean's decision to integrate his unit, the 25th Division, was based on a lack of confidence in the fighting abilities of Blacks. He believed the old World War I and II myths that large all Black combat units were unreliable, but he felt that Blacks could perform well as individuals if they were scattered throughout the division and properly supervised. When his all Black 24th Infantry Regiment received criticism for alleged misbehavior before the enemy, General Kean

⁶²Marshall did not talk to MacArthur directly about the integration of U.S. Forces, but he believes that MacArthur had no interest in the matter. The major impetus for integration in Korea came when General Matthew B. Ridgway replaced MacArthur as U.N. and U.S. commander.

⁶³Unauthorized integration also spread to other areas outside of the Far East as commanders, on their own initiative, solved the problem of overstrength Black units by integrating the excess Black soldiers into white units, that were generally understrength.

requested and received permission from Department of Army to abolish the 24th and integrate its Black soldiers in other units within the Division and throughout Korea.⁶⁴ In his request that the 24th Infantry Regiment be disbanded, General Kean emphasized that he was criticizing the regiment as a unit and not the individual Black soldiers.⁶⁵

The Black community became both confused by and critical of the Army's integration policies. All the basic training centers in the states were integrated, yet some units in Korea were segregated and some were integrated. Black leaders such as Thurgood Marshall and liberal Congressmen like Hubert H. Humphrey and Herbert H. Lehman saw the Army's mixed policy as integration in slow motion and called for a definite end to segregation. Black newspapers and other Black publications began a series of articles which called for a clarification of the Army's position on integration. The Black press proclaimed that if integration worked in the training centers and in some units in Korea, then it should be adopted as general policy.

In March of 1951, the Army yielded to the pressures caused by liberal congressmen, Black leaders and the Black

⁶⁴The charge that the 24th Infantry Regiment "fled like rabbits" before the enemy and therefore should be abolished seems especially unfair, since many white units also "fled like rabbits" during the first months of the Korean War. In view of the evidence against it, it is probably true that the 24th performed as well as most units under similar circumstances.

⁶⁵Nichols, Breakthrough on the Color Front, p. 116.

press and detailed a group of social scientists from Johns Hopkins University to study the effects of integration and segregation on the Army. This research effort was called Project Clear. Research teams from the project conducted investigations in Korea, Japan, and numerous Army posts throughout the United States. Project Clear's final report indicated that integration was an unqualified success and recommended that integration be adopted Army-wide.

Black efforts for integration of the Army received an unexpected boost in April of 1951 when General Matthew B. Ridgway replaced General MacArthur as Far Eastern commander. Shortly after taking over General Ridgway requested permission from the Pentagon to integrate all the units under his command. The Pentagon was reluctant to grant General Ridgway the authority he requested until it was certain that the members of the Congressional Armed Services Committees approved of the action. Assistant Secretary of the Army, Earl D. Johnson and Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins with the help of the results from Project Clear, were able to convince the House and Senate Armed Services Committees that integration was in the best interest of efficiency. Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr. received the President's permission for integration on 28 May 1951. On July 26, 1951 the army publicly announced that within six months all U.S. forces in Japan, Korea, and Okinawa would be integrated. In April of the following year, the last segregated command, European Command, issued orders to break up its twenty-five Black units and integrate them

throughout the Command.⁶⁶ With the desegregation of U.S. Forces in Europe, the Army became officially integrated. Black officers and enlisted men were officially entitled to fill any job and aspire to any rank. The final door had been opened.

At the height of the Korean War there were approximately 4,000 Black officers among nearly 114,000 American Army officers. Included in these 4,000 Black officers were five full colonels. The ranking Black officer was Colonel James H. Robinson.

The conclusion of the Korean War and the desegregation of the Armed Forces brought an end to the more blatant types of racist actions against Black officers. The new obstacle for the Black officer to overcome was discrimination, which was more subtle than the overt bigotry that he had faced before. This form of racism, although immoral and frustrating has allowed slow but steady progress. The passage of civil rights legislation and the general advancement of Blacks in government and private industry did much to improve the acceptance of the Black officer.

Fortunately, the mobilization and commitment of American forces to Vietnam did not involve the same type of racial indecision that plagued America in its other wars. The full-scale commitment in Vietnam was made with full-scale integration. Blacks had established themselves in previous

⁶⁶ Stillman, Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces, p. 54.

wars, but Vietnam brought the greatest public recognition of the Black man's quality and dedication as a soldier. Black officers participated in a variety of assignments. The combat performance of Black officers in Vietnam was excellent. Equally important was the fact that for the first time in history, Black officers were allowed to serve in a number of key and demanding command positions.

The most outstanding Black commander of the Vietnam War was Colonel (later retired Lieutenant General) Frederic E. Davison. General Davison earned a lasting reputation as a field commander during the Viet Cong's Tet offensive in early 1968. During February of that year, he took command of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade while the regular commander, Brigadier General Franklin Davis, Jr., was hospitalized. General Davison was often referred to as "the old man" even after the regular commander returned. Having won the distinction of being the first Black officer to command a brigade-size unit under combat conditions, General Davison became the official "old man" on 6 August 1968 when General Davis was evacuated to the United States as a result of serious wounds.

The First Air Cavalry Division produced several Black battalion commanders who went on to become General grade officers. Among these was former Lieutenant Colonel James Frank Hamlet, of Buffalo, N.Y. The former 1943 enlisted man was an accomplished aviator and consistently joined his men on dangerous missions. As a full colonel he commanded the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. As a Major General,

he later commanded the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Another battalion commander from the 1st Air Cavalry Division was Lieutenant Colonel Roscoe Robinson. He won an impressive reputation while commanding his battalion in an operation to relieve the besieged marines at Khe Sanh. He was later promoted to Brigadier General and named the Deputy Commander of Army Forces on Okinawa in the Pacific.

Four graduates of Prairie View A&M College, Texas, commanded battalions in Vietnam. Each wore the Combat Infantryman's Badge with Star. The first was Colonel Julius W. Becton, Jr. In 1967, he commanded the 2nd Squadron of the 17th Cavalry in the 101st Airborne Division. He also commanded the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. As a Colonel, General Becton further distinguished himself by becoming the first Black to become the chief of an Army service branch.

Colonel Alexander H. Hunt also commanded in Vietnam. He was the "old man" of the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. The third individual to command a battalion was Colonel James T. Bradley. Colonel Bradley later became one of the few Blacks to attend the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. The fourth Prairie View graduate to command a Battalion in Vietnam was George M. Shuffer, who commanded the famed 2nd Battalion 2nd Infantry of the 1st Division. Vietnam also produced four Black officers who won the Medal of Honor.

From the colonial period to the recent involvement in South Vietnam, the Black officer has made steady efforts toward progress and equality with his white counterparts. The level of progress attained by Black officers is reflected in the fact that as of October 1975 there were twelve general grade officers on active duty. In December of 1974, Blacks accounted for 4.6 per cent of the active duty officer corps. Included in this group were 127 colonels (2.6 per cent of the total colonels) as well as 610 lieutenant colonels (5.5 per cent of the total number). Black officers are also making impressive gains in the selection for service schools and selection for command. Thirteen Black officers were selected to attend senior service schools in 1975 and about 40 Black officers held battalion command positions. Twelve Black officers also commanded brigade level organizations in 1975.

A concerted effort has been made by the Department of the Army to recruit and retain talented, qualified junior grade Black officers. Special recruiting programs for colleges, service academies, and officer candidate schools seek to attract Blacks. Special programs such as these are designed to ensure that qualified Blacks remain a part of the Army.

Throughout the bleak eras of segregation and exclusion from opportunity, the Black officer has fought with his fellow Black enlisted man on "two fronts," against the nation's foreign enemies and against racism. Korea was the point of breakthrough. With this war came the transition from segregation to integration. Officially, the Army has opened all its

doors, and the Black officer is free to go as far as his talents will take him. The Black officer has a proud history in the U.S. Army and has a bright future ahead.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barbeau, Arthur E. and Henre, Florette. The Unknown Soldier. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974.
- Black Soldier, The. Special edition of Ebony, August 1968.
- Bogart, Leo (ed.), with John Morsell, Robert Bower, Ira Cisin, Lelio Sussmann, and Elmo C. Wilson. Social Research and the Desegregation of the U.S. Army. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1969.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. Soldiers and Civilians. New York: Mac-Millan Publishing Co., 1968.
- Dalfiume, Richard M. Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-1953. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969.
- Davis, John P. (ed.). The American Negro Reference Book. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966.
- David, Jerome. The Negro in American Life. New York: Century, 1920.
- Francis, Charles E. The Tuskegee Airmen: The Story of the Negro in the U.S. Air Force. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1955.
- Foner, Jack D. Blacks in the Military in American History. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.
- Johnson, Jesse J., Lieutenant Colonel, AUS (ret.). Ebony Brass: An Autobiography of Negro Frustration Amid Aspiration. Hampton, Va.: Hampton Institute, 1970.
- Lee, Ulysses. United States Army in World War II: The Employment of Negro Troops. Special Studies. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966.
- Lindenmeyer, Otto. Black & Brave: The Black Soldier in America. Of Black America Series. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970.
- Milton, H. S. (ed.). The Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Army, ORO 11. Chevy Chase, Md. "ORO" The Johns Hopkins University, April 1955.
- Mullen, Robert W. Blacks in American War. New York: Monad Press, 1973.

Nichols, Lee. Breakthrough on the Color Front. New York: Random House, 1954.

Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. Integration and the Negro Officer in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962.

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Rights. The Black Man in America: A Working Bibliography for Armed Forces Personnel. [Washington: Department of the Army, n.d.]

"Steady Increase Seen in Black Participation," Army Times, 8 October 1975.

Stewart, Edgar I. Custer's Luck. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

Stillman, Richard J., II. Integration of the Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces. Special Studies in U.S. Economic and Social Development, 1968.

U.S. President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, Freedom to Serve, Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950.

Vance, Samuel (Sergeant). The Courageous and the Proud: A Black Man in the White Man's Army. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970.

THE BLACK OFFICER IN THE
UNITED STATES ARMY

by

DAVID D. BRANCH

M.L.A., The Johns Hopkins University, 1973

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1975

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to examine the participation of Black officers in American military history. Emphasis will be placed on the number and percentage of participation and the degree of responsibility allowed Black officers at certain critical phases during the last three centuries. In most cases, the phases examined will correspond to the various war years, since those were the years in which the majority of the concessions were extended to the Black officer.

An analysis of American military history provides an abundance of material reflecting the individual bravery and contributions of the Black soldier; however, the record is not so clear for Black military leaders in America's early wars. The reason for this is due to the limited number of Blacks who served in such positions, the informal organization of many early units and the absence of detailed records. As a result of this, Black leadership in seventeenth and eighteenth century America can only be inferred from overall Black participation.

In later wars, the record becomes clearer and it is possible to trace not only the number of Black officers who served, but the types of assignments and the ranks they were allowed to hold as well. The records also indicate that following each of America's wars up until World War II, Black officers, with the exception of an occasional West Point graduate, were systematically eliminated from the officer corps.

The Civil War marks the point in which the Black officer emerges as a separate and identifiable entity. Union records show that at least seventy-five of the one hundred and eighty thousand Blacks who served in the Civil War held Union volunteer commissions. Some of these Black officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel William R. Reed, were fortunate enough to lead Black regiments in combat. In the Spanish American War, one hundred Blacks received commissions and led platoon and company sized units in combat. The trend toward increased numbers continued into the twentieth century where twelve hundred Blacks were commissioned in World War I and eight thousand in World War II. Unfortunately the steady increase in numbers did not signify an increase in responsibility for Blacks. Racism and misconceptions about the abilities of the Black officer limited his assignment options and the rank that he could hold. Even though Blacks had commanded large units in combat in the Civil War, it would not be until Vietnam before they again commanded a Regimental size unit in combat.

The Korean war served as a catalyst to help bring about the end of segregation in the Armed Forces and to initiate major pressures for integration and the elimination of discrimination throughout American society. The lessons to the Army from Korea were simple, the army could no longer afford the high cost of segregation. Maximum effectiveness, with respect to cost and manpower, could only be obtained through the full use of the maximum potential of every individual. The

Black officer could no longer remain the step-child of the officer corps.

The full scale commitment in Vietnam was made with full scale integration. While Blacks had established themselves in previous wars, it was the Vietnam War that brought the greatest public recognition for the Black officer as a soldier and leader.