THE INTEGRATION OF AFRO-AMERICANS INTO THE ARMY MAINSTREAM (1948-1954)

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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This study investigates the integration of Afro-Americans into the United States Army. On July 26, 1948, President Harry S Truman signed and issued Executive Order 9981 mandating equal treatment and opportunity for all personnel in the U.S. Armed Services. Many historians, civil rights advocates, political pundits, and other knowledgeable people, often cite this order as integrating the armed forces. However, examination of the order shows that it said nothing about integration, although President Truman clearly intended it as a desegregation tool for the services. This study also investigates how political, civil rights, and military forces coincided to produce the executive order and determines if the order integrated the U.S. Army. Of all the services, the Army was the staunchest defender of segregation within its ranks. President Truman issued the order in 1948, yet the Army inactivated its last segregated unit in 1954. The intervening years saw slow acceptance of desegregation after the issuance of the order. However, acceptance quickly grew during the Korean War because of military necessity. This study ascertains that although Executive Order 9981 did not, in and of itself, integrate the Army, it did start the process that ultimately led to desegregation.

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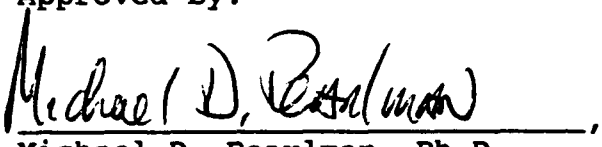 , Thesis Committee Chairman
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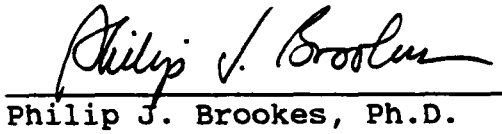 , Director, Graduate Degree Programs
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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATION OF AFRO-AMERICANS INTO THE ARMY MAINSTREAM (1948-1954) by MAJ Otis M. Darden, USA, 98 pages

This study investigates the integration of Afro-Americans into the United States Army. On July 26, 1948, President Harry S Truman signed and issued Executive Order 9981 mandating equal treatment and opportunity for all personnel in the U.S. Armed Services. Many historians, civil rights advocates, political pundits, and other knowledgeable people, often cite this order as integrating the armed forces. However, examination of the order shows that it said nothing about integration, although President Truman clearly intended it as a desegregation tool for the services.

This study also investigates how political, civil rights, and military forces coincided to produce the executive order and determines if the order integrated the U.S. Army. Of all the services, the Army was the staunchest defender of segregation within its ranks. President Truman issued the order in 1948, yet the Army inactivated its last segregated unit in 1954. The intervening years saw slow acceptance of desegregation after the issuance of the order. However, acceptance grew quickly during the Korean War because of military necessity.

This study ascertains that although Executive Order 9981 did not, in and of itself, integrate the Army, it did start the process that ultimately led to desegregation.

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To my wife, Sue and my sons, Michael and Brett
Thank you for your support and patience

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Research Question

This thesis will determine if President Harry S Truman's 1948 Executive Order 9981 integrated the Army. Today's Army is completely integrated and its ranks are represented by soldiers of many races. Ability is now the criteria for advancement and promotions. For the soldiers of today, it is hard to believe that just 45 years ago the Army was completely segregated in its utilization of Blacks. My thesis focuses on Executive Order 9981 because it represents the first tangible evidence of a high level governmental policy designed to reverse segregation in the Army.

The subordinate questions of the thesis cover three areas. First, the study examines what forces endorsed and resisted the executive order. This will be followed by a look at the benefits and problems that integration presented the Army. Finally, the thesis ascertains the benefits or problems integration presented to Black Americans.

Background

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which addressed equal treatment and

equal opportunity for all personnel serving in the United States Armed Forces.[1] Although the order in theory addressed all military personnel, it actually focused on providing equal rights for Black soldiers.

Like any landmark decision or legislation, Executive Order 9981 had its share of supporters and critics. However, the one issue that was undeniable to both camps was the interest at the highest level of government in achieving racial equality of Blacks in the armed forces. Executive Order 9981 forced the armed forces to examine their past utilization policies of black servicemen and justify why such policies should continue.

The Army's post-World War II goal was to develop a comprehensive policy that addressed the future of the Black Soldier. The policy would address the areas of Black demographics, the Army manpower needs, prevailing societal views on Blacks, and a recommendation on Black disposition.[2] Before the Army could start this process, it had to ascertain the demographics of Blacks in its ranks and in society as a whole.

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[1]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 312.

[2]Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents, Vol. 7, Planning for the Postwar Employment of Black Personnel (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977), 393-402.

During World War II, approximately 800,000 Blacks[3] served in uniform out of the general Black population of about 13 million.[4] There were approximately 126 million people in America at that time of which 10% were Black.[5] This number is key since the guideline for the maximum number of Blacks selected for Army service would be the same as the ratio of Blacks to White Americans in the nation as a whole. The sheer number of Blacks in the general population, along with the number available for Army service, made Blacks a manpower source that could not be ignored.

World War II proved that even with the popular support of American citizens and selective service, an extended war could deplete White manpower sources. Blacks, although drafted in the Army, were not initially utilized in combat until 1944, due to questions about their ability to fight.[6] Both White and Black Americans were dissatisfied with this policy. Whites disliked the policy because married men of their number were drafted while able-bodied,

[3]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 56.

[4]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 142.

[5]Ibid., 151.

[6]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 43.

single blacks were not.[7] Blacks disliked the policy, because once drafted, they were not considered competent enough to fight in defense of their country. The Army realized, for the sake of efficiency, it could not afford to use only White soldiers in combat while Blacks sat on the side-lines. It, therefore, created Black divisions and sent them to fight in Europe. These new divisions, although an attempt to introduce Black soldiers into combat, still represented the Army's continued support of segregation.[8]

The Army was a reflection of society in its views on the segregation of its Black soldiers. Society was segregated, especially in the Southern States where Blacks had held no real political power since Reconstruction. The Northern States were more progressive in their attitudes towards Blacks, but even there segregation existed, although in a more subtle form. The Army likewise created and maintained segregated units of Black soldiers. It felt that to create integrated units consisting of both races would lead to riots and wholesale resignations by White soldiers.[9]

Much of society viewed Blacks as inferior to White Americans. This view was based primarily on prejudice and the mores and norms of a social system that descended from

[7]Ibid., 32.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 351.

slavery. The Army viewed the average Black soldier as inferior to the average White soldier. Unlike society, the Army could quantify this inferiority in the form of the Army General Classification Test (AGCT).[10]

This test was administered to all potential recruits, White and Black, prior to their enlistment into the Army. The AGCT consisted of five proficiency categories ranging from I to V , with category I being the most proficient and category V the least proficient. The top three categories (I-III) produced the supervisors and technicians.[11] The bottom two categories (IV-V) produced the general laborers. Although as a whole, there were more whites in the bottom categories, the total number of Blacks soldiers in these categories was proportionately higher. Consequently, Black soldiers were limited in the types of jobs they could perform. The AGCT, which really measured formal education level, (the vast number of Blacks had not finished grade school) was perceived as a test of intelligence.[12] This issue, along with those mentioned above, presented the Army with an array of problems that it felt compelled to solve if it planned on the continued use of Black soldiers.

[10]Ibid., 25.

[11]Ibid., 24.

[12]Ibid.

In 1945, the Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson appointed a board of Army general officers to conduct a detailed study on Black soldiers and produce a comprehensive policy on their future utilization.[13] The board of general officers was called the Gillem Board, named after its chairman Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr.[14] The Gillem Board completed the study and produced the War Department Circular Number 124, Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Postwar Army Policy.[15] Circular 124 established criteria for utilization of Black soldiers, but did little in terms of integrating the Army. For the most part, it simply justified and institutionalized past policies taking a conservative or status quo approach in its recommendations.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations and delimitations are characteristics that shaped my study of the integration of Blacks in the United States Army. These characteristics determined the

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[13]Ibid., 153

[14]Gary A. Donaldson, The History of African-Americans in the Military (Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 1991), 134.

[15]MacGregor, Morris J. and Bernard C. Nalty, Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents 13 vols. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977), 393-402.

constraints and restraints of my thesis and helped define my approach to answering the primary thesis question.

I limited the scope of this thesis to the years 1948 to 1954. These years correspond to the issuance of President Truman's Executive Order 9981 in 1948 and the integration of the last Army unit in 1954.[16] Executive Order 9981 is important as a starting point because it represents the first tangible evidence of a high level governmental policy designed to reverse the tide of segregation in the Army and the rest of the armed forces. Yet, it is the important events between 1948 and 1954 that are the focus of this thesis.

The Army was not the only service coming to grips with the utilization of its Black service personnel. The Navy, Air Force, and Marines, in varying degrees, faced the same situation as the Army. However to reduce the scope of the thesis and make it manageable, I limited its focus to the Army and the integration of its ranks.

Significance of the Study

As a member of an generation born in the late 1950's, the United States Army, in my eyes, has always been an integrated organization. However, that was not the case

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[16]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 473.

before 1954. Much of my generation does not realize the amount of time and effort it took to give Black soldiers and other minorities in the Army the same equality that we take for granted today. This thesis will provide a concise reference for readers interested in the events that changed Army racial polices.

Several historians have published works on the integration of the Army citing Executive Order 9981 as a part of the process. However, their works tend to be more documentary than analytical. My intent is to create a work that is sharply focused and distills the integration process down to its key and essential parts. At the same time, I seek to avoid the pitfall of oversimplification to the point where the thesis becomes useless to serious scholars.

Finally, the armed forces currently faces issues on utilization of women and homosexuals in the military. The lessons learned from analysis of integration of Blacks in the Army may prove useful to readers as they access policies dealing with those groups.

Thesis Organization

Chapter Two analyzes Executive Order 9981. The chapter starts with background events, looks at the actual order, and closes with the effect it had on the Army. Chapter Three examines the role of the Fahy Committee in the integration process. Chapter Four looks at the Army as it

moves towards integration. The thesis concludes with Chapter Five which ensures that the research questions are answered.

CHAPTER TWO

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981

The Rise of Harry S Truman

A thorough analysis of Executive Order 9981 cannot truly begin without looking at key individuals and critical events prior to the issuance of the order. This chapter examines the rise of Harry S Truman, important events preceding the executive order, the increased urgency of eliminating segregation in the armed forces to President Truman, and the truths and myths about Executive Order 9981. This chapter seeks to array these issues in a logical and insightful manner that gives the reader a good understanding of the executive order.

The Early Truman

To gain a true understanding of Executive Order 9981, the order's signer, Harry S Truman must first be examined. He was born in 1884 in Independence, Missouri. His academic background included only high school and some law school classes at night. His military experience entailed assignment as captain of Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, Thirty-fifth Division during World War I.

Before starting his political career, he pursued occupations as a farmer and owner of a haberdashery.[17]

Truman first won political office in 1922 as judge of Jackson County, Missouri. After some set-backs, he won a Missouri United States Senate seat in 1934. In the Senate, during World War II, he made a name for himself as the head of a committee tasked to investigate defense spending, commonly called the Truman Committee. His committee was thought to have saved the United States government billions of dollars by investigating the abuses of contractors and defense officials during industrial mobilization for World War II. His efforts as chairman of the committee, along with other factors caught, the attention of the Democratic leadership, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt.[18]

Nomination for Vice-President

The 1944 Democratic Convention in Chicago started with a degree of certainty and uncertainty. President Roosevelt had decided he would run for his fourth term as President of the United States and there was little doubt that, in the midst of a war, he would win. Normally, a President during a re-election bid supports renomination of

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[17]Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), ix.

[18]Ibid., xii.

his Vice-president. However, Roosevelt chose not to vigorously support the renomination of his Vice-President Henry A. Wallace. The southern politicians and the northern political bosses opposed Wallace's renomination because his views were too far to the left. Party leaders thought that he would cost the Democratic party both votes and contributions in the upcoming campaign. Roosevelt appeared sensitive to these concerns and held back his full endorsement. His lukewarm support of Wallace opened the door for several challengers for the nomination.[19]

The struggle for the Vice-Presidency was ultimately decided by the candidate most acceptable to the Democratic Party power brokers which included the Southern Democrats, organized labor, and the northern political bosses. Vice-President Wallace was unacceptable to the northern political bosses and the Southern Democrats. The other leading contender, Senator James F. Byrnes of South Carolina, was unacceptable to organized labor. The Democratic Party needed a compromise candidate and, as the convention continued, Truman appeared to be exactly that.[20] The historian, Robert J. Donovan in his book *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1945-1948*, wrote:

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[19]Ibid., xii-xiii.

[20]Ibid., x-xi.

> Piece by piece, Truman's credentials fell into a pattern that fit the description of a compromise candidate. His border-state ties with the South appealed to conservatives. At the same time, though he had deserted Roosevelt on some lesser issues, he had been a consistent supporter of the New Deal and backed Roosevelt's war policies. That made him acceptable to the liberals. He had no trouble being cleared by [organized labor] . . . Furthermore, he had made few enemies of consequence, a fact that impressed Roosevelt. Roosevelt did not believe any vice-presidential candidate could help him on election day. His interest was in a running mate who would be least likely to hurt the ticket, and Truman best matched that qualification. Finally Truman's own background in machine politics and his popularity in the Senate made him a comfortable choice for the city bosses.[21]

By the end of the 1944 Democratic Convention, comprise politics had brought Truman out of nowhere to become the Democratic candidate for Vice-president of the United States. He had no foreign policy expertise; the majority of experience centering on domestic issues.[22]

Candidate Truman on Civil Rights

Although he had a reputation for domestic issues, there is no indication that Truman had a agenda for promoting civil rights. In 1940, Truman did describe his views on civil rights for Blacks when he said:

> In giving Negroes the rights which are theirs we are only acting in accord with our own ideals of a true democracy. If any class or race can be permanently set apart from, or pushed down below the rest in political or civil rights, so may any other class or race when it shall incur the displeasure of its more

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[21]Ibid., xii-xiii.

[22]Ibid., xiii.

> powerful associates, and we may say farewell to the principles on which we count our safety.[23]

Although publicly Truman held such a view, he did not seem to vigorously pursue attainment of civil rights as a member of the United States Senate. Like many Americans of that time, he saw civil rights and social equality as totally separate issues. He had no problem talking candidly about the need for civil rights for Blacks and at the same time criticizing social equality of Blacks and Whites. In a 1940 address to members of the National Colored Democratic Association Truman said:

> I wish to make it clear that I am not appealing for social equality of the Negro. The Negro himself knows better than that, and the highest type of Negro leaders say quite frankly that they prefer the society of their own people. Negroes want justice, not social relations.[24]

It is clear that if Truman had been a vigorous supporter of civil rights, his nomination as a Vice-presidential candidate would have been unacceptable to some of the Democratic Party's power brokers, especially the Southern Democrats. However, his civil rights record in the Senate had been credible. Truman had supported the anti-

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[23]Jonathan Daniels, Man of Independence (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1950), 339-40.

[24]William C. Berman, The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 12.

discrimination amendment to the 1940 Selective Service Act and usually supported anti-poll tax legislation.[25]

Perhaps the best way to describe the pre-Vice-Presidential Truman's approach to civil rights is that of a moderate liberal. It is clear that as a member of the Senate, he consistently voted for issues that allowed increased civil rights for Black Americans.[26]

President Roosevelt died in April, 1945, a victim of a cerebral hemorrhage. Only three months into the new term, Truman was sworn in as the Thirty-third President of the United States.[27] Several Black newspapers around the country expressed apprehension about what stance Truman would take on civil rights, for they thought his record on the issue was unclear at best.[28]

Pre-Executive Order Events

Post-World War II Changes in America

World War II deeply affected the future of America. From the invention and employment of the atomic bomb to the extensive use of women in the work force, the war fostered

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[25]Donald McCoy and Richard Ruetten, Quest and Response: Minority Rights in the Truman Administration (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1973), 15.

[26]Ibid., 13.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

many changes in our society. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. in his book *Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965*, describes three areas of change affecting Blacks in the Army. These areas included the emergence and spread of Russian Communism; Truman's civil rights policies; and the consolidation of the uniformed services under the Department of War.[29]

The Emergence of Communism

With the defeat of Japan and the Axis powers in World War II, the United States and its allies had put down global aggression. The end of World War II also saw the rise of Communism. Russia, with its leader Joseph Stalin, was pivotal to the defeat of Germany. However, by 1947 the United States considered Russia a threat to democracy and freedom around the world. President Truman realized that a policy was needed to resolve the situation.

In March 1947, Truman chose a policy of containment designed to limit Russian expansion.[30] MacGregor described the policy as:

> . . . calling for the containment of Soviet expansion and pledging economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey. A year later he asked Congress to adopt the Marshall Plan for economic aid to

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[29]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 291.

[30]Ibid.

> Europe, authorize military training, and enact a new selective service law to maintain the armed forces at expanded levels.[31]

The key issue to Blacks was selective service. A post-war quota system continued to push large numbers of Blacks into the armed forces at roughly the same percentage that Blacks represented in the general American population; about ten percent. The large number of Blacks in the military gave Black leaders leverage to effect change by the threat of boycotts at a time when America needed all the manpower it could get to fight the beginning of the Cold War.[32]

Truman's Civil Rights Policies

Truman's views on civil rights policies began to change after a series of anti-Black incidents. These incidents seemed fueled by Black expectations after World War II and the desire of many White Americans to keep things the way they had been. Richard M. Dalfiume, in his book *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-1953*, described the change caused by the war when he said:

> The race tensions in civilian life reached a new peak as the war ended, especially in the South where there was fear that the *status quo* in race relations would be further upset by many returning Negro veterans. There was evidence that Negro veterans were affected by the war's slogans of democracy and

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

by the more democratic treatment accorded them by foreign civilians.[33]

In the South, White politicians sought to rally support against Black veterans, who had organized efforts to attain civil rights. The support manifested itself in the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan and other vehicles of racial violence around the country.

In the North, where large numbers of Blacks had migrated during the War to find jobs, race riots became more frequent. Truman, like many other White Americans at that time, began to gird himself for the fallout of events.

These events and incidents of racial violence around the country markedly increased. Lynchings, assassinations, intimidation, and other acts of hostility became pervasive, especially in the South. Perhaps the two must publicized events involving Black veterans occurred in 1946. Dalfiume describes that:

> . . . In February, 1946, [sic] Isaac Woodard, a newly discharged veteran still in uniform, was blinded when South Carolina policemen pulled him off a bus and jabbed their night sticks into his eyes. In July 1946, two Negro veterans and their wives were taken from a car near Monroe, Georgia, by a mob of white men; the four Negroes were lined up and killed by approximately sixty shots pumped into their bodies . . . .[34]

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[33]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 132.

[34]Ibid., 134.

These two incidents were so powerful in President Truman's mind that he felt compelled to mention them in his memoirs. To combat these acts, President Truman created the President's Committee on Civil Rights in December 1945 to determine what actions the federal government could take to stop these atrocities. [35]

Black Americans and civil rights organizations were not entirely on the defensive while these acts of racial violence were occurring. They decided to band together and form the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence. The new organization's objective was to mobilize public opinion against racial violence and injustice.[36]

President Truman met with leaders of this new civil rights organization in September 1946. They shared with him the litany of racial violence and discrimination incidents happening around the country. Upon hearing their accounts Truman:

> . . . seemed horrified at the fresh recital of violence offered by his callers. When White [Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP] described the blinding of Sergeant Woodard. Truman rose and said, "My God. I had no idea it was as terrible as that. We got to do something." He added that "everybody seems to believe that the President by himself can do anything he wishes on such matters as

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 244.

this, but the President is helpless unless he is backed by public opinion." . . . .[37]

The committee urged him to do something to stop the violence and asked his assistance in pushing an anti-lynching bill through Congress.[38]

Unfortunately, Truman's political options for introducing any civil rights legislation through Congress at that time were extremely limited. From his earlier statement to the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence leadership, it may have seemed that the President felt his hands were tied. Instead, he decisively addressed the problem using his power of executive order.

Executive Order 9808 created the President's Committee on Civil Rights. The committee's purpose was to examine and make recommendations on issues of civil rights.[39] President Truman's unilateral use of an executive order in this case to solve a pressing political problem is indicative of things to come from his administration. Truman was not the first president to throw a fact-finding committee at a problem. Yet, when he formed a committee, there was no doubt to on-lookers outside the administration that he completely supported the committee's efforts.

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[37]Ibid., 245.

[38]Ibid., 244.

[39]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 295.

The committee proved to be more effective than many supporters and non-supporters anticipated.[40] It addressed current civil rights problems but went one step further to recommend wholesale changes in racial policies within the armed forces.[41] The committee also recommended that the armed forces:

> . . . should be used as an instrument of social change. World War II had demonstrated that the services were a laboratory in which citizens could be educated on a broad range of social and political issues, and the administration was neglecting an effective technique for teaching the public the advantages of providing equal treatment and opportunity for all citizens.[42]

President Truman accepted the committee's findings and recommendations, then sent them to Congress. However, because of other crucial military legislation he had pending before Congress, Truman chose to leave out recommendations on the armed forces' racial policies from the committee's report. His crucial legislation included a new Selective Service bill and a Universal Military Training bill.[43]

The new Selective Service bill responded to the Soviet Union's aggression in Europe in early 1948. The

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid., 296.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., 296-297.

seizure of Czechoslovakia by Communists[44] and the deterioration of Soviet and American relations in occupied Germany that resulted in the Berlin Blockade[45], compelled President Truman to look for methods to limit Communism. The armed forces had been reduced to a small fraction of the size it attained during World War II and Truman needed additional American troops to contain Communism in Western Europe.

The Universal Military Training bill addressed a problem associated with the massive draw-down of soldiers at the end of World War I and II. President Truman did not want a large standing army. Instead, he supported a method:

> . . . for providing a postwar "citizen army" that could be mobilized quickly. It would be an alternative to a large standing army, which the country was unlikely to support. . . . all men between eighteen and twenty would be called for a year of training. All would remain civilians. Although they would receive basic military instruction, they would not be trained as professional soldiers nor during their year would they be assigned to any branch of the armed services. . . .[46]

Although President Truman put desegregation in the military momentarily on hold, he went on to tell Congress that he would soon direct the services to implement equal

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[44]Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 357.

[45]Ibid., 363-365.

[46]Ibid., 136.

would soon direct the services to implement equal opportunity policies within their ranks.[47]

Consolidation of the Uniformed Services

The 1947 National Security Act changed the top level control of the armed forces. Before the act, there had been essentially two military departments; the War Department and the Department of the Navy. Each department had cabinet-level rank. With the new act, a Secretary of National Defense was created to "exercise general authority, direction, and control over the armed forces."[48]

In addition to the creation of a Secretary of Defense, the act created the National Military Establishment (forerunner of the Department of Defense), established the United States Air Force (previously the Army Air Corps), and the War Department was renamed the Department of the Army. Each newly created or changed department head held cabinet-level rank.[49]

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[47]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 296-297.

[48]Department of Defense, Armed Forces Staff College Publication 1, The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1991 (Washington: GPO, 1991), 2-10.

[49]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 297.

The first Secretary of Defense was James V. Forrestal. President Truman appointed him to head the new Department of Defense after he previously served as the Secretary of the Navy.[50] The new secretary brought two important ingredients that seemed to be important if the Army would implement desegregation within its ranks. First, he became the singular head of the armed forces. Before, each service answered directly to the President for guidance and instructions. Although the 1947 National Security Act still provided service secretaries cabinet rank, it was also clear that in policy matters they answered to the Secretary of Defense.

In President Truman's special message to Congress on 2 February 1948, he told them:

> . . . he had already instructed the Secretary of Defense [Forrestal] to take steps to eliminate remaining instances of discrimination in the services as rapidly as possible. He also promised that the personnel policies and practices of all the services would be made uniform.[51]

Forrestal's position gave him the power to formulate and implement polices that would be binding to all the services. Consequently, the Secretary of Defense became the focal point outside the National Military Establishment for issues of interest from politicians and other special

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[50]Ibid., 298

[51]Ibid., 296.

interests groups. Within the National Military Establishment he was the focal point for policy concerning the armed forces.

The second ingredient that the new Secretary of Defense brought that might affect segregation in the armed forces was Forrestal himself. He garnered a reputation for civil rights from his desegregation efforts as Secretary of the Navy. Consequently, when Forrestal was appointed to the office of Secretary of Defense, Black leaders applauded his appointment hoping that he would to bring to all the services the desegregation efforts he started in the Navy.[52]

Segregation in the Armed Forces Becomes Urgent for Truman

At the start of 1948, the issue of desegregation in the armed forces began to heat up. The three factors of Black activism, the services resistance to desegregation, and the 1948 presidential election worked together to increase the importance of this issue to President Truman.

Black Activism

President Truman's new Selective Service bill and Universal Military Training bill spurred Black activism towards the military. That is not to say that Blacks had not been previously concerned about civil rights in the military. Black leaders had fought hard to eliminate

[52]Ibid., 308-309.

segregation in the ranks. What made these two bills controversial was their perpetuation of military segregation by not explicitly outlawing it. Black leaders found this unacceptable, especially since the President was on record opposing segregation and had promised to eliminate it.

One of the most outspoken of the Black leaders on this issue was A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Randolph saw the fight for equality in the armed forces as the cornerstone for achieving equality throughout society and:

> . . . argued that hard-won gains in education, job opportunity, and housing would be nullified by federal legislation supporting segregation. How could a Fair Employment Practices Commission, he asked, dare criticize discrimination in industry if the government itself was discriminating against Negroes in the services?[53]

Black leaders took these issues very seriously and sought ways to make their concerns known to the President and Congress. A. Philip Randolph, along with Grant Reynolds, a New York state official, formed the Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training. The purpose of the committee was to prevent continuation of segregation in any new draft law.[54]

[53]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 303.

[54]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 155.

The Services Resist Desegregation

The armed forces views on desegregation were not as progressive as that of President Truman and the Black leadership. The issue boiled down to the pace of change. Many White Americans, if asked, probably would agree that someday Black Americans should have equal rights and equal opportunity in American society. The question concerning Blacks was whether that "someday" was five, ten, twenty, fifty, or even one hundred years away.

The armed forces felt that "someday" should be much further away than civil rights proponents. The failure of the Army to move forward on this issue can be attributed to lukewarm support of military desegregation by Secretary of Defense Forrestal and the adherence to traditional views by the Army itself.

Optimism on civil rights issues in the military by supporters of desegregation was initially high at the beginning of Forrestal's appointment as Secretary of Defense. That soon dissipated because Forrestal wanted to solve the issue very gradually.[55] Secretary Forrestal saw a policy of "gradualism" as the best approach for integrating the military. Desegregation would be instituted " . . .

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[55]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 308.

through a step-by-step demonstration of the practicality and reasonableness of integration."[56] These steps would achieve the objectives of all parties concerned while reducing the turmoil in the Services during the change. Forrestal, according to MacGregor, was also:

> . . . in wholehearted agreement with a presidential wish that the National Military Establishment work out the answer to its racial problems through administrative action. He wanted to see a "more nearly uniform approach to interracial problems by the three Services," but experience had demonstrated, he believed, that racial problems could not be solved simply by publishing an executive order or passing a law. Racial progress would come from education. Such had been his observation in the wartime Navy, and he was ready to promise that "even greater progress will be made in the future." But he added, "progress must be made administratively and should not be put into effect by fiat."[57]

Secretary Forrestal's approach to desegregation coincided with his belief that the services should handle their own desegregation issues.[58] Desegregation forces wanted him to champion their cause, but Forrestal resisted their requests.[59] Forrestal appeared to ignore or be unaware of the urgency of this issue to desegregation forces and stuck to his policy of "gradualism". Although civil rights advocates were quickly becoming disenchanted with

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[56]Ibid., 309.

[57]Ibid., 299.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., 301.

Forrestal's policy[60], the Army exacerbated the problem by choosing to maintain their current policies of segregation.[61]

The Army, alone out of the three services, had done little in terms of desegregation. While the Navy and the Air Force had been developing policies to eliminate segregation[62], the Army had followed the recommendations of the Gillem Board only in isolated cases, although when pressed by critics it would profess that all of its Black soldier utilization policies emanated from the board.[63] The Secretary of Defense's view that the services should solve their own desegregation problems gave the Army tremendous leeway on its actions.

Instead of taking this leeway to address segregation within its ranks, the Army chose to stonewall its critics. During a Secretary of Defense sponsored meeting for the "National Defense Conference on Negro Affairs, on 26 April 1948, Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall told a group of sixteen Black leaders and the other service representatives:

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[60]Ibid.

[61]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 158.

[62]Ibid., 165.

[63]Ibid., 155.

> . . . that the Army was of the opinion that segregation could exist without discrimination. Furthermore, the General Staff, under the leadership of Chief of Staff Omar Bradley, had recommended the maintenance of segregation. "But," Royall told the group, "even if my general staff had not recommended segregation, I would have continued it as a policy.[64]

Consequently, the Army's leadership was highly criticized by civil rights organizations on its attitude towards segregation.[65] Yet, the Secretary of the Army had enough influence to sustain his position on this issue. It was becoming rapidly clear that for real change in the Army to occur, the directive must come from outside the National Military Establishment.

The 1948 Presidential Election

For Black Americans, the successful struggle for civil rights in general society and the Army rested in part on the power of the vote. That power was magnified because the months prior to the 1948 election were a trying time for President Truman's reelection bid. Support from various political and special interest groups was then eroding.

First, the Southern Democrats or Dixecrats, begin to fall away from Truman because of his support of civil rights for Black Americans. The Dixecrats had also opposed Truman's efforts to end segregation in the armed forces.

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[64]Ibid., 165-166.

[65]Ibid., 166.

Truman's Selective Service Bill originally contained a clause to end segregation in the military. However, after a lot of threats and posturing, particularly by Dixecrats, the bill became law without a reference to desegregation.[66]

Many Jewish Americans had little respect for Truman because he did not support the partitioning of Palestine into the state of Israel. Although earlier in the year it seemed certain that Truman would support partitioning, the imminent British withdrawal created a power vacuum that would start a war between the Arab League and Israel. In order to avert this crisis, Truman directed his Ambassador to the United Nations to request a temporary trusteeship under the United Nations, instead of proceeding to partition Palestine into the state of Israel. With their dreams of a Jewish homeland put on hold, Jewish Americans lashed out at the President's actions.[67]

The liberal Democrats, who had supported President Franklin D. Roosevelt, also begin to fall away from Truman. It is not clear whether the liberals felt Truman's views diverged too far from Roosevelt's New Deal or that he was so weakened by other political events that they thought he could not win reelection. Historians have pointed out that

[66]Ibid., 167.

[67]Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 375.

Truman followed the vast majority of Roosevelt's New Deal policies and as the 1948 Democratic Convention approached, his views became increasingly more liberal.[68]

The successful reelection of President Truman seemed slim. Various magazines around the country suggested that Truman should not accept the Democratic nomination and retire. A Gallop poll from early 1948 predicted he would lose to all announced Republican challengers.[69] Truman obviously knew he needed every vote he could get. As the election approached, the votes of Black Americans became significant.

The 1948 Democratic Convention made Black votes even more important. The liberal members of the party thought that Truman should have civil rights planks in a platform that called "for federal legislation to provide for an anti-lynching law, equal opportunity for employment, the right to vote, and equal treatment in the armed forces."[70] Truman felt a civil rights platform would cost him the support of the remaining Dixecrats in the party and ignored the liberals. However, the liberals were able to pick up enough support later in the convention to overrule Truman's desires

[68]Ibid., 390.

[69]Ibid., 388.

[70]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 170.

and the civil rights issues became part of the Democratic platform. Consequently, the liberal platform cost Truman more Southern votes.[71]

Because Southerners were leaving the National Democratic Party, Truman needed to ensure that he received the Black vote in November. He had to do something that required no Congressional input and avoided the battle associated with creating controversial legislation. After looking at several alternatives, he decided the best course of action was to issue an executive order on ending segregation in the armed forces.[72]

Executive Order 9981: Fact and Fiction

When people describe President Truman's Executive Order 9981, they usually say that it was the order that integrated the armed forces. However, this executive order was not a law which carried immediate and clear consequences if not obeyed. The best way to describe Executive Order 9981 is as an implementation document, designed not to immediately integrate the armed forces, but to start a process that would lead ultimately to desegregation.

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[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid.

An Analysis of Executive Order 9981

Executive Order 9981 was worded in such a way that political, civil rights, and military forces interpreted differently the effect it would have on segregation in the Army. It is interesting that so many different interpretations could be derived from a single page document. An analysis of the purpose, goals, and limitations of the order will provide insight to the claims made by interested parties. The order signed by President Truman is as follows:

Executive Order 9981

> Whereas it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:
>
> Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:
>
> 1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency of morale.
>
> 2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.
>
> 3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and

advise with Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgement of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.

4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performing of its duties.

5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for the use of the Committee such documents and other information as the Committee may require.

6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive Order.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

The White House
July 26, 1948[73]

The first two paragraphs of the order are straightforward, starting first with purpose of the order and to whom it applies, followed by stating why the President has the authorization to issue the order. The first paragraph also has the theme or controlling idea for the order which is "equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense."

Paragraph 1 specifies "equality of treatment and opportunity" in the armed forces as the policy of the President. The order talks about "equality . . . without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin", but,

[73]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 312.

it does not say that Blacks should be integrated in the armed forces. Although we know the impetus of the order was to fight segregation within the ranks, the declaration in this paragraph is so generic that it could apply to any group of Americans. Perhaps the purpose of this portion of the paragraph was to reiterate the rights and expectations each American should have.

The second portion of the Paragraph 1 deals with the time table for implementing the policy. This gives the order a stop and go effect, where the President first wants the order's implementation done as quickly as possible but not too fast if it will cause grave problems within units. Based on this limitation, the armed forces would be in line with the policy if they implemented the President's order in one month or ten years. One could conclude that if the armed forces tried honestly and expeditiously to implement the order, but ran into problems of "efficiency or morale", that they could legally take years to complete the policy.

Paragraph 2 creates an advisory committee called the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Service and details the number of members on the committee. It also states which government agency houses the committee. In this case the order specifies the National Military Establishment, which makes

sense, since the majority of key personnel and information were located in the Pentagon.

Paragraph 3 starts off with where the committee's political power comes from, which in this case is the President, followed by its powers, goals, and objectives. The "confer and advise" clause in effect engenders bilateral cooperation between the committee and the secretaries. The clause also let the secretaries know that the committee itself cannot mandate its recommendations upon them. However, this paragraph ends acknowledging that the President is also a part this process, and implies that the secretaries cannot arbitrarily dismiss the committee's recommendations.

Paragraph 4 expands the committee's powers beyond that of the National Military Establishment into other branches of the Federal Government and formalizes the requirement for federal agencies to cooperate with them. Also, the committee consists of only seven members, therefore it did not have the resources to alone conduct extensive examination of existing armed forces' policies. Therefore, the last portion of the paragraph solicits needed information and services.

Paragraph 5 gave the committee subpoena powers to obtain needed testimony and documents from anyone or any agency in the Federal Government. This gave the committee

the ability to establish the truth about current and past policies of the armed forces.

The order closes with Paragraph 6, which addresses how long the committee would exist. Paragraph 1 sets no definitive time when the armed forces should have the policy implemented, therefore, the committee's existence likewise is indefinite. However, one may conclude that once it achieved its objectives it would be terminated. This paragraph preempts anyone or any agency from not cooperating, hoping that the committee would prematurely disband. This paragraph ends showing the President's support of the committee by stating that he would make the final decision on the disbandment of the committee. He would end the process in the same way he started it, by using an executive order.

Executive Order 9981 does not state that segregation in the armed forces ends 26 July 1948. Nor does it state that wholesale integration starts on that same date. Instead, the order starts a process of unknown length that will sometime in the future lead to desegregation. The order does this when it states that the Armed Forces will follow the President's policy to provide equal opportunity to all of its members as soon as possible. This starts the process and continues when it creates a committee, directly answerable to the President, with mandate and powers to

ensure implementation of policy. However, because of expectations and the "soft" language of the order it is easy to see why many groups interpreted what it said differently.

Reaction to Executive Order 9981

Black Americans initially reacted differently to the executive order. The Black press did not like the language of the order:

> . . . immediate reaction to the order was critical. Most Negro newspapers felt that the language of the executive order was not strong enough; its failure to call explicitly for an end to segregation left a loophole, because the separate-but-equal doctrine could still stand. To ally some of these misgivings, President Truman stated in a press conference three days after his order was issued that it was intended to end segregation in the armed forces.[74]

As time went on, Black newspapers begin to understand the importance of the executive order and actively supported Truman's issuance of it. Black Americans in general thought highly of Truman's executive order and saw it as tremendous step forward for civil rights.[75] Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of

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[74]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 173.

[75]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 315.

Colored People, called Truman the "darling of the Negroes."[76]

Congress on the other hand had little to say about the executive order. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. in his book *Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965*, describes several reasons why Congress might have been quiet about the order.

One reason may have been that Congress felt that Truman gained political strength from this issue. Therefore, they did not want to confront him directly and risk increasing his political strength even more. It may have been that Congress saw Truman's chances of being reelected as President so slim that they decided to wait until after the November election for the new President to overturn the order. Finally, Congress may have concluded that they could do little about the order since there was no legislation pending that was sufficiently important to the President to cause him to either compromise on the issue or rescind the executive order.[77]

The indications are that the armed forces did not publicly respond to issuance of Executive Order 9981. Each service had already developed their positions concerning integration of Blacks in the military and it would be up to

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid.

the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces to determine if they met the guidelines of the executive order.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FAHY COMMITTEE

Formation of the Committee

The President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services had the arduous task of implementing Executive Order 9981. However, before the committee could begin its work it had to be formed. The formation process of looking for the most qualified people to comprise the committee was another political challenge for the President.

The reason that the committees formation became a challenge for President Truman was his willingness to incorporate the Department of Defense and armed services into the process.[78] He could have easily identified and selected the members of committee using his own counsel. However, with his political astuteness, he may have concluded that all the parties involved would be more receptive to the findings and recommendations of the committee if they felt they had input in its selection.

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[78]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 313.

Timing also became a problem for President Truman. The order was signed and issued on July 26, 1948, yet the selection for the committee was still incomplete as of mid-September.[79] Truman ran the risk of being perceived as reneging on his efforts to desegregate the Army. Such a perception by Black Americans would undo all the gains he had made when he issued the order and endanger his re-election bid for 1948.

The selection process consisted chiefly of the President, the National Democratic Committee, the Secretary of Defense, and the services producing and comparing lists of possible candidates and jockeying among each other to select members for the committee that were as favorable to their point of view as possible. Also, the groups kept a close eye on all nominations to ensure that the committee was not stacked in favor of any one group.[80] For example, Secretary of the Army, Donald C. Royall wanted candidates that were unbiased on this issue and recommended that they have no public record of advocating desegregation in the services.[81]

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[79]Ibid.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 176.

The committee's membership included highly respected and learned men from a wide range of professions:

> Appointed as chairman was Charles Fahy, a Georgia-born Catholic who had held many posts in Democratic administrations since the 1930's and who was known to be a liberal on the race issue. Other members were Dwight R. G. Palmer, president of the General Cable Corporation, active in the National Urban League, and proponent of equal employment opportunities; William E. Stevenson, president of Oberlin College; Lester Granger, Negro head of the Urban League and close friend of Secretary of Defense Forrestal; and John H. Sengstake, Negro publisher of the Chicago *Defender*, the only major Negro newspaper to support Truman in 1948. Two other appointed members never took an active part in the Committee's work: Alphonsus Donahue, a prominent Catholic layman, was ill, and Charles Luckman of Lever Brothers never indicated any interest. E. W. Kenworthy, a former newspaperman and secretary of the American Embassy in London, was later chosen as executive secretary.[82]

In a ten minute meeting held on 12 January 1948, President Truman addressed the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces for the first time. He outlined what he saw as the goals and aims of the committee and thanked them for their willingness to serve.[83] Perhaps the most valuable product of the meeting for the members of the committee was the sense of strong support from the President. It was very important for the committee members to understand that

[82]Ibid.

[83]Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents, vol. 9, The Fahy Committee. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977), 393-402.

although they would be working closely with the Department of Defense and the services, they actually worked for the President.

The Fahy Committee Begins Its Works

After the initial meeting with the President, the Fahy Committee started its task of reviewing the racial polices of the services. However, it was not the only organization formed for this purpose. Secretary Forrestal created the Personnel Policy Board as a way to take the initiative on addressing the services racial policies. The four-member, interservice board and its supporting staff had the mission of identifying policy problems and developing a consensus among the services on how to solve them. The board's findings and recommendations could be used to offset the report of the Fahy Committee.[84]

The Personnel Policy Board also served another purpose in the Secretary's attempt to grasp the racial policy initiative. It would allow him to form his own policy and implement it prior to the Fahy Committee's report to the President. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. in his book *Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965*, ponders Forrestal's motives:

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[84]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 344.

> His [Forestalls] attempt to develop a new racial policy was probably in part an effort to forestall committee [Fahy] criticism and in part a wish to draw a policy that would satisfy the committee without really doing much to change things.[85]

The Personnel Policy Board, to some degree, achieved Forrestal's objective. It produced a draft directive that would integrate the armed forces by 1 July 1950.[86] However, due to the resignation of Forrestal because of ill health and the opposition of the service secretaries to the directive, it never made it out of the Pentagon.[87] The services had passed up an excellent opportunity to integrate their ranks on their own terms.

The new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, like Forrestal before him, wanted to solve the racial policy problem internally. However, Secretary Johnson decided on a different way of addressing the problem. Instead of creating the policy at the Department of Defense level and asking the services to reach a consensus on it. He decided to have each service present its policy to him for approval.[88]

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[85]Ibid., 343.

[86]Ibid., 344.

[87]Ibid., 344-345.

[88]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 184.

This decision was advantageous to Secretary Johnson in two ways. First, it eliminated the tremendous effort required to get all the services to agree on a single racial policy. Each service thought its needs and requirements were unique so they had different and often opposing views to similar problems. Consensus building also allowed the services to side-step issues because they had the luxury of spreading the blame around if they did not reach an agreement.

Secondly, this decision held each service individually accountable for their policies. The services were aware of the Fahy Committee's mission and Forrestal's draft directive. They had the opportunity, as they prepared their policy for Secretary Johnson, to bring themselves in alignment with the executive order. However, when the services submitted their policies, only the Air Force's racial policy was approved, based on its stated intention to eliminate segregation within its ranks. The Army and Navy had to revise their plans and resubmit them to Secretary Johnson several months later because they failed to adequately address segregation.[89]

Secretary Johnson, in effect, achieved the aims initially started by former Secretary Forrestal. The Secretary of Defense demonstrated that, although the

[89]Ibid., 186.

President had a committee currently examining his racial policies, he still could take action on his own to resolve the problems. Unfortunately for Johnson, the services were still not moving fast enough.

The Committee Defines its Strategy

The Fahy Committee's approach to carrying out President Truman's policy revolved around mediation instead of confrontation. A confrontational strategy could have hurt the committee's efforts in two ways. First, such a strategy might have significantly increased resistance from the services. Second, on the eve of a Presidential election, a public backlash, against the committee was possible if it was perceived by the public to be attacking a popular military that had just won World War II.[90]

Although the Fahy Committee had direct support from President Truman, it still needed the military's help in order to accomplish its goals. The committee's small size meant that its administrative capabilities were limited. It did not have the luxury to create substantial departments within itself. Therefore, it relied on the military for information and assistance. The military, if it desired,

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[90]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 349.

could slow down the committees efforts by letting it get lost within the Defense Department's bureaucracy.

The military had a very positive and strong image after World War II because many Americans had family members or friends that served in the War. They were very proud of the military's victory over Germany and Japan. Therefore, the committee's efforts to desegregate the services via Executive Order 9981 ran the very real risk of inciting constituents and making this a hot political issue.

Charles Fahy, chairman of the committee, understood these concerns. He wanted his relationship with the services to be interactive and not directive in nature. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. in his book *Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965*, describes an interview with Fahy concerning Fahy's strategy for implementing the order:

> It was important to Fahy that the committee not make the mistake of telling the services what should be done and then have to drop the matter with no assurances that anything would be done. He was determined, rather, to obtain not only a change in policy, but also a "program in being" during the life of the committee. To achieve this change the group would have to convince the Army and the other services of the need for and justice of integration. To do less, to settle for the issuance of an integration directive alone, would leave the services the option of later disregarding the reforms on the grounds of national security or for other reasons.[91]

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[91]Ibid., 349-350.

The Committee Learns to Speak "Army"

The committee faced the dilemma of making its recommendations stick. Fahy understood that if the military truly wanted to resist an issue it could always fall back on the old argument of national security and the deft use of statistics. Therefore, he needed to change the services' way of thinking about integration. To incorporate this change, the committee needed not only to convince the services that their racial policies needed improvement, but how their present polices would adversely impact their combat effectiveness.[92]

The committee could not persuade the services to change unless it could speak military jargon and understand the military way of thinking. Although it is unclear whether any of the members had a military background, it is reasonable to assume, based on the jobs each member held prior to selection and their ages, that their military experience was not recent. Therefore, they relied on the services for unbiased assistance.

Charles Fahy faced this problem while reviewing the Army's revised racial program. The Army's initial racial policy sent to Secretary of Defense Johnson had been disapproved because it not did follow the guidelines of Executive Order 9981. Yet, the Army's latest revised racial

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[92]Ibid., 351.

policy appeared to be more closely aligned with the executive order and Fahy believed that the committee might endorse the Army's position.[93]

However, Charles Fahy realized the limitations of his committee when upon the urging of the committee's executive secretary, Edwin W. Kenworthy, he sought advice independent of the Army's official channels. Kenworthy introduced Fahy to Roy K. Davenport, a Black employee in the Army manpower affairs office. Davenport explained to Fahy that the Army's latest racial plan was a deliberate deception designed to appear progressive and reasonable on the surface but easy to ignore at the unit level.[94]

Fahy was skeptical of this assertion until he reviewed the policy again with a mind sensitized to the possibility of deception. This time he saw the loopholes, generalities, and impreciseness that allowed the Army to essentially maintain its current policy. Fahy saw as his only recourse, the continued solicitation of assistance from Davenport and others, outside of official channels, who would give him unbiased information and analysis of the Army's utilization of Blacks. This approach gave him a

[93]Bernard C. Nalty, Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 251.

[94]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 352-354.

valuable new perspective that changed the very nature of the committee's approach to the integration of the Army.[95]

This new perspective changed the committee's strategy for achieving its goal in three areas. It consisted of truly understanding the Army's position, assessing the true status of the Army's utilization of Black soldiers, and developing an desegregation strategy that the Army could not ignore.

The Army publicly supported segregation of its ranks. It's position maintained:

> . . . that the Negro was unreliable as a combat soldier because he was cowardly. Although this was not stated so boldly in public, behind the scenes the Army General Staff constantly expressed this belief and quoted field commanders' statements to the effect. Integration would lead to military inefficiency, the Army reasoned, because it would require the dispersion of inherent cowards throughout the Army's combat units, thus weakening their effectiveness. Segregation allowed inferior Negroes to be used mainly in those roles for which they were "peculiarly" suited -- labor and service. The racist belief that the Negro was a natural coward was the real objections to integration by many within the Army.[96]

The committee needed to understand not merely what this statement said, but also what it meant. The Army truly believed that an integrated force may well cost it victory in the next war. Therefore, the Army, unlike the Navy and

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[95]Ibid., 354.

[96]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 188-189.

the Air Force which were making progress, strongly resisted changes to its current policies.

The Fahy Committee needed to understand the specifics on the utilization of Blacks in the Army. Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall said in a March 28, 1949 meeting with the committee and the other service secretaries, that "The Army has done so much more and gotten so much less credit for what is done [for the Negro] than any [other] Department of Government . . . ."[97] However, the revelations of Roy Davenport and other people outside of the Army's official channels, demonstrated that perhaps the Army received exactly the credit it deserved.

Davenport, along with Major James D. Fowler, a Black West Point graduate, educated the Fahy Committee on how Army manpower programs endorsed segregation and promoted inefficiency.[98] Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. in his book *Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965*, describes the inefficiencies of the Army's career guidance program when he said:

> The Army . . . as part of continuing effort to find men who *could* be trained for specialities in which it had a shortage of men, published a monthly list, the so called "40 Report," of its authorized and actual strength in each of 490 military occupational

[97]Ibid., 181-183.

[98]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 354.

> specialities. Each of these specialties was further broken down by race. The committee learned that no authorization existed at all for Negroes in 198 of these specialities, despite the fact that in many of them the Army was under authorized strength. Furthermore, for many of the specialities in which there were no authorizations of Negroes no great skill was needed. In short, it was the policy of segregated service that allowed the Army, which had thousands of jobs unfilled for lack of trained specialists, to continue to deny training and assignments to thousands of Negroes whose aptitude test scores showed them at least minimally suited for those jobs. How could the Army claim that it was operating efficiently when a shortage [personnel] existed and potentially capable persons were being ignored?[99]

One of the problems facing the Fahy Committee at the start of this process centered on finding the best strategy to convince the Army to desegregate its ranks. The moral and social arguments against the Army's policy fell on deaf ears since the Army believed that its policy represented the beliefs and attitudes of mainstream American society. Proposals for forcing desegregation on the Army could also raise serious concerns about military efficiency and national security.

The committee could do little about the beliefs and attitudes of White Americans. However, the revelations of Roy Davenport and Major James Fowler indicated that the Army's segregation policy made it a much less efficient organization than it thought itself to be because it did not utilize the skills that Blacks possessed. Therefore, the

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[99]Ibid., 354.

Fahy Committee concluded that a desegregation strategy stressing military efficiency would be effective against the Army.[100] It still faced stiff opposition from an Army convinced that its racial policy was right. The committee faced the tough, two-fold task of not only proving how segregation hurt the Black soldier but also proving how segregation hurt the Army.

The Battle for a Racial Policy in the Army

Although the Fahy Committee developed a strategy that it thought might be effective against Army segregation, the actual process of turning the strategy into Army policy would take almost a year. The committee saw two fundamental issues that were key to desegregation of the Army.

First, there must be an end to segregated units. This fundamental issue addressed the guidance of Executive Order 9981 which stipulated equal treatment and opportunity. There was little doubt in the committee's mind that it must end segregation in the military and it would not accept a racial policy that continued to support segregation. Not only did the committee think such a policy was wrong, but now it also saw that it was inefficient.

The Fahy Committee wanted the assignment of school-trained Black soldiers determined by requirements in

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[100]Ibid., 356.

individual units and not based on the desire for the Army to keep its units segregated. The committee felt that if the Army followed this policy, then desegregation would increase its efficiency as well as benefit the Black soldier.[101]

Second, the Army must end its Black quota system. Selective service or the draft, along with a ten percent quota (based on the ratio of Blacks to non-Blacks in civilian society), produced a steady stream of Black soldiers for the Army. The quota system generated many of the problems that the Army faced with its utilization of the Black soldier.

The Air Force and the Navy took only soldiers rated in the top three categories of the General Classification Test because of the high technological requirements of each service. This policy applied equally to White and Black candidates, although roughly sixteen percent of Black candidates fell in this category. Therefore, the Air Force and Navy received the best and brightest of Black candidates. This policy used by the two services tended to make their Black populations relatively small as compared to the Army.[102]

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[101]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 187.

[102]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 356.

The quota system forced the Army to bring Black candidates in at roughly ten percent of its entire force. Since many of the Army's military occupational specialties were not highly technical, its candidates tended to come from the bottom two categories of the AGCT. Roughly eighty-four percent of the Black soldiers fell into these two categories.[103] These low-scoring Black soldiers, who often could not read or write, placed a heavy burden on the Army to effectively utilize them. The Army exacerbated the problem by concentrating these Black soldiers into segregated units which often performed in mediocrity.

The Fahy Committee wanted the Army to end the quota system. It saw that in order for the Black soldier's plight to improve in the Army, it might mean endorsing a policy that excluded some Blacks from military service. The Fahy Committee suggested such a policy to the Army when it:

> . . . offered a substitute for the numerical quota it wanted abolished. So that the Army would not get too many low-scoring recruits, either black or white, the committee proposed a separate quota for each category in the classification test scores. Only so many voluntary enlistments would be accepted in categories I through III, their numbers based on the normal spread of scores that existed in both the wartime and peacetime Army. If the Army netted more high scores than average in any given period, it would induct fewer men from the next category. It

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[103]Ibid., 25. Base on percentages obtained from the AGCT distribution chart.

would also deny reenlistment to any man scoring less than eighty (category IV).[104]

The resolution of the fundamental issues of segregation, so important to the Fahy Committee, were the same issues that the Army resisted the most. The Army did not endorse the committee's recommendation on the assignment of school-trained Black soldiers based on valid Army requirements, although Black manpower would be used more efficiently than in the Army's current policies. The Army resisted this recommendation even in the face of lower efficiency because it still believed that segregation was the best policy for its forces. The Army's position caused many observers of this issue to see that this was not entirely a struggle about Army efficiency and national security but also one about tradition and continued prejudice.[105]

Likewise, the Army wanted to keep the same quota system, although it provided the Army with a tremendous number of low-scoring soldiers. The Army was concerned about a deluge of low-scoring Black soldiers entering its ranks if the quota system was stopped. It did not accept the committee's recommendation on adopting a different type

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[104]Ibid., 362.

[105]Ibid., 363.

of quota system designed to increase the quality of Black candidates.[106]

The Fahy Committee understood the Army's dilemma brought about by the quota system. It recognized the Army's problem of what to do with Black soldiers who had little or no formal education and who would probably end their careers at the same rank they started at, which was private. Although total desegregation was a goal of the committee, Charles Fahy believed that:

> . . . immediate integration was less likely to cause serious trouble than the Army's announced plan of mixing the races in progressively smaller units, he too accepted the argument that it would be dangerous to reassign the Army's group of professional black privates to white units. Fahy saw the virtue of the Army's position here; his committee never demanded the immediate, total integration of the Army.[107]

Besides the Fahy Committee, two other forces were instrumental in compelling the Army to develop a new racial policy. The forces consisted of the Secretary of Defense and the sister services.

Secretary of Defense Johnson disapproved the initial racial policies of the Army and the Navy in May 1949, while approving the Air Force's policy[108]. He disapproved the

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid., 356.

[108]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 186.

Army's policy once again while, accepting the Navy's in June 1949[109]. The first racial policy plan presented by the Army, was part of the secretary's attempt to develop a desegregation plan independent of the Fahy Committee.

In the second attempt, the Fahy Committee played a much greater role in the process. However, Secretary Johnson disapproved this latest policy because the Army had still not changed its existing policies nor used the recommendations of the committee.[110] It was clear now that Secretary Johnson wanted the Army to incorporate the committee's recommendations into its next racial policy submission.

The Fahy Committee and the Army negotiated for the next three months with no compromise. The committee's position stated:

> . . . that the Army proposals were not acceptable and would not be until the quota system was abolished and Negro soldiers were assigned to units on the basis of their training, regardless of race. In short, equality of treatment and opportunity could be accomplished only by ending segregation.[111]

The committee also made it clear to the Secretary of Defense that any racial policy submitted by the Army to his office

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[109]Ibid., 189.

[110]Ibid., 188.

[111]Ibid., 190.

not addressing these two issue would constitute noncompliance to Executive Order 9981.[112]

In September 1949, the Secretary of Defense and the Army tried an end-run around the Fahy Committee in order to resolve the Army's racial policy issue. The Army submitted its latest racial policy to Secretary of Defense Johnson, who without consultation with the committee, released it to the press. The Fahy Committee expressed outrage at being side-stepped during the process. Furthermore, although the Army's latest racial policy showed improvement, it still restricted assignments for Black soldiers and supported quotas.[113]

This incident began to set the tone on how the Fahy Committee routinely dealt with the Army's resistance to change. First, the committee announced publicly that the Army's latest policy was unacceptable. The press, both White and Black, had a field day with the issue. They brought a tremendous amount of unwanted public attention to the Secretary of Defense and the Army.[114]

Second, at the same time the Fahy Committee covered its political bases by asking President Truman not to

[112]Ibid.

[113]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 364-365.

[114]Ibid., 365-366.

approve the policy. As the public furor reached a fever pitch, President Truman stepped in to calm the crisis by calling the Army's new policy a "progress report" and stating that the Army's final policy would be submitted to the committee sometime in the future.[115] Truman fully supported the committee during this uproar. His decision provided a way for the Army to save face while still forcing it to come up with an acceptable policy.

It is not clear why Secretary of Defense Johnson decided to bypass the Fahy Committee. Some historians speculate that perhaps Johnson wanted to quickly resolve this issue because of the large amount of embarrassing press and public attention it was receiving.[116] What ever Johnson's reason for this decision, it is clear that his actions put him and the Army in a less favorable light with the Black press and many civil rights organizations.[117]

Although the Fahy Committee bent over backwards in order to resolve issues with the Army, it was very adept at flexing its political muscle and airing the Army's dirty laundry to the press when it felt it had to. Unfortunately for the Army, it took its leadership a while to figure this out.

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[115]Ibid.

[116]Ibid. 365.

[117]Ibid.

The committee reached an agreement with the Army on the unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers in January 1950.[118] The committee convinced Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray and Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins that acceptance of this alternative ensured the Army's compliance with Executive Order 9981. The committee also had strong support from President Truman as his aides had assured them that the President would order the Army to adopt their recommendations if the Army continued the stalemate.[119]

The quota system remained as the only issue of disagreement between the Fahy Committee and the Army. The Army still believed that there would be a tremendous influx of Blacks into its ranks if quotas were discontinued. The Army maintained that its Black soldier population would go well beyond the ten percent quota it was using now.[120]

On the other hand, the Fahy Committee believed eliminating quotas while also raising enlistment standards for Black candidates would give the Army the highest quality Black soldiers possible. The committee wanted the Army to

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[118]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 196.

[119]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 369.

[120]Ibid., 371-372.

have only one enlistment standard for all races.[121] This proposal ensured that the Army enlisted only quality soldiers capable of assignment into any military specialty.

The committee's assurances did not convince the Army. Secretary of the Army Gray made a personnel appeal to President Truman to give the Army the power to reinstate quotas on Black candidates if they entered the Army in the increased numbers that the Army feared. The President resolved the quota issue by supporting the Army's request.[122]

The Fahy Committee Completes its Work

With the final obstacle behind them, the last task that remained for the Fahy committee consisted of rendering the final report, *"Freedom to Serve"*, to the President. However, the committee had one more concern. Who would ensure that the Army and other services continued toward desegregation of their forces? The committee recommended a standing organization to monitor the services adherence to Executive Order 9981. However, President Truman felt it was time for the services to complete the process on their own. Therefore he tasked the Secretary of Defense to conduct a

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[121]Ibid., 372.

[122]Bernard C. Nalty, Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 253.

biannual review of the services' progress towards desegregation.[123]

President Truman dissolved the Fahy Committee on 6 July 1950. Although the committee's work was complete, the President did not cancel Executive Order 9981. He left the order active so that he might use it to review the impact that it had on the services some time in the future.[124] Theoretically, keeping the order active could also allow the reconvening of the Fahy Committee or formulation of a new committee with the same purpose, in order to resolve some major problem associated with integrating the armed forces. However, such a possibility seemed remote since all the services had complied with the committee's recommendations and the Secretary of Defense would periodically check their actions.[125]

The Fahy Committee's Legacy

The Fahy Committee had accomplished a lot during its year and a half of tackling the segregation of the military. The committee enjoyed success for three reasons. First, it had the unconditional support of the President of the United

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[123]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press), 198-199.

[124]Ibid., 199.

[125]Ibid.

States who made it clear that segregation would end in the military. Several times when the committee reached a critical impasse with the services, they had the President's support to successfully resolve the situation.

Next, although the committee had the backing of the President, it tried to resolve the vast majority of the issues at the Department of Defense and service level. This sent a message to the services that the committee was not simply a mouthpiece for President Truman, but instead a highly determined investigative body capable of making accurate assessments and realistic recommendations on its own.

Finally, the committee developed an effective strategy for desegregation that it used in changing the Army's racial policy. Its strategy was based on military efficiency; the same strategy that the Army had used for many years in the past to maintain its segregation policies. Ably assisted by people outside of the group of official Army personnel working with the committee, Charles Fahy embraced the military efficiency strategy and used it to show the Army and all parties concerned how segregation made the Army inefficient.

Of all the services, the Army most strongly resisted the recommendations of the Fahy Committee. This started with Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall who vehemently

opposed any changes to the Army's Black utilization policy while the other services were developing their policies. Although the committee reviewed and made recommendations on the racial polices of the Navy, Air Force, and Marines, these services moved forward with desegregation much faster than the Army. Consequently, the vast majority of the committee's time was spent working and negotiating with the Army to follow guidance of Executive Order 9981. The Army continued to resist until the resolve of the committee and the power of the President wore it down to the point where it accepted the committee's recommendations.

In the end, the President dissolved the Fahy Committee after a job well done and decided that the Secretary of Defense could ensure the services compliance with Executive Order 9981. However, in less than two years the services had gone from an environment of institutionalized segregation of its Black servicemen and women to an environment that now outlawed that behavior. The Fahy Committee was directly responsible for this change which was a major step forward for civil rights for all Black Americans.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS INTEGRATION

Political and Social Acceptance of Integration

The Fahy Committee's work had established the guidelines for integration in the Army. The question now remained, how long would it take for the completion of integration? The committee consciously chose not to tie the hands of the Army by setting a specific date that would force it to quickly integrate its ranks. They were cognizant of the myriad number of problems associated with implementing integration and wanted to allow the Army the latitude to do it properly.

Likewise, the committee expected the Army to achieve integration in a reasonable amount of time. They realized that the longer the present system stood, the longer Blacks would be denied equality in the Army. They also understood that although the senior civilian and military leadership of the Army now professed support of integration, it would take a tremendous amount of effort to overcome the legacy of past Negro utilization policies and the pervasiveness of prejudice.

Integration in the Army still faced an up-hill battle, but now integration and segregation forces had now

swapped places in terms of political legitimacy. Before the issuance of Executive Order 9981 and the creation of the Fahy Committee, the segregationists in the services, in Congress, and elsewhere, were in the political majority.

Political acceptance initially allowed the Army to develop and implement legal personnel polices consistently unfavorable to Black soldiers. The Army lost that acceptance after the issuance of Executive Order 9981, which mandated equal opportunity and treatment for all soldiers, and favored equatable utilization of Blacks. The executive order carried the force of law and could not be ignored by segregationists.

Social acceptance, on the other hand, would be more difficult to achieve. Many White military leaders still viewed the Black soldier as inherently inferior to his White counterpart when it came to combat performance. For integration to truly succeed in the Army, the Black soldier needed to prove his worth to all parties involved; from the Army's senior leadership down to the newest White recruit. Although Executive Order 9981 initiated the end of segregation in the Army, social acceptance of Blacks as combat soldiers would lag behind the policy changes.

The Army faced the daunting task of implementing its new Negro utilization policy within an environment of institutionalized prejudice which it had helped to

perpetuate. However, regardless of the internal resistance that existed in its ranks to the new policy, the Army possessed a potent tool that most military organizations have; that is strong control over the conduct and actions of its members. This control, coupled with a mandated need for change, would force the acceptance of the new policy.

Integration Slows Down Within the Army

When the Fahy Committee dissolved in July 1950, integration of the Army appeared certain. The major issue that remained concerned its time table. President Truman tasked the Secretary of Defense to conduct a biannual review of the progress of integration in the Services. However, the integration issue began to be less important to the Secretary of Defense because of North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Therefore, with the secretary's attention focused elsewhere, it fell upon the services to ensure implementation of integration policies.[126]

Without the continuous pressure that the Fahy Committee provided, the Army determined its own pace of change and displayed no sense of urgency in addressing the Black soldier utilization issue. In fact, little had changed in over a year after the dissolution of the Fahy

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[126]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 380.

Committee. Former members of the committee expressed deep concern that little had been done to implement their recommendations and that the Army had disbanded its internal agencies formed to monitor its progress.[127] The Army still denied Black soldiers training for military specialities that were closed to them prior to the issuance of Executive Order 9981. Consequently, they still faced assignment restrictions because the Army saw them unqualified in those specialities and therefore, not freely assignable to White units.[128]

Blacks soldiers continued to be concentrated in Black units regardless of their scores on the Army general classification test or their military specialty. Once assigned to these units, they had little chance of ever leaving.[129] The Army held in abeyance many of the agreements it made during its battle with the Fahy Committee resulting in the continuation of its old policies.

In the case of quotas, the Army wanted to go back to the old policy of limiting Black soldiers to only ten percent of its active force. It saw its worst fears realized when Black enlistment increased from 8.2 percent in March 1950, when the quota system was terminated, to 25

[127]Ibid., 378.

[128]Ibid., 430.

[129]Ibid.

percent in July 1950.[130] The Army leadership faced the dilemma of what to do with this tremendous increase of Blacks coming into the Army.

The Army looked at reinstating quotas as a viable alternative because Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray had reserved the right with President Truman to go back to quotas if Black enlistments became excessive.[131] Perhaps the flaw in this agreement was what constituted excessive enlistments? Would an enlistment rate of 25 percent or 30 percent be too high and trigger reinstating the quota? The Army apparently failed to articulate to the President what represented an unacceptable percentage. This proved to be ironic since the Army leadership had been concerned that this was a real possibility.

The increased enlistment rates also increased the number of Black soldiers who ranked in the lowest categories of the Army general classification test (AGCT) since the Army had failed to adopt a Fahy recommendation to raise its enlistment standards.[132] The intent of the recommendation

[130]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 202-203.

[131]Bernard C. Nalty, Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 253-254.

[132]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 376.

was to help the Army reduce the number of category IV and V soldiers recruited for its ranks. Raising the standards would have provided the Army with quality Black soldiers that were competent enough to hold any of its jobs. Instead, with the start of the Korean War, the Selective Service law automatically lowered the enlistment standards below the existing level and exacerbated the problem of where to assign them.[133]

The Army saw returning to the quota system and forming more Black units as its only alternatives in solving this problem. Therefore, the Army staff asked the Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr. to reinstate the quota system in order to limit the influx of Black recruits and to form additional Black units to handle the overstrength problem. The Secretary of the Army did not approve the request.[134] It could have been for political reasons that the secretary did not want to officially reverse the new racial policy. Ultimately, he would have had to ask the President for approval and explain why the Army found itself in this difficult position. It is entirely possible that the explanation to the President would have generated unwanted attention and embarrassment to the Army.

[133]Ibid., 377.

[134]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 202-203

Regardless of the secretary's motives, the Army now had no control over the number of Blacks entering its ranks. What it saw as solutions to its problem were unacceptable to the Secretary of Army. Now its hands were tied as the Korean War exacerbated the problem. Yet, the most obvious solution to the Army's problem was something it had already agreed to do, and that was integration. Integration would allow the Army to use the more efficient method of spreading less proficient Black soldiers among many units instead of concentrating them in mediocre, all-Black units. The Army wanted to determine its own rate of change for integration but now that pace might not be fast enough.

The Political Fight Over Integration

At the congressional level, the political fight over the changes in the Army had been relatively mild. The issue of integration in the Army had proponents and opponents. Now, the opponents did not appear to have the political muscle necessary to challenge outright the progressive changes started by President Truman. In the past, the strongest challenges to integration in the military came from Congress when military legislation, important to the administration, came up for vote. This time was no different.

Congress had to renew the Selective Service law in 1950. The most serious challenge to integration came from

Senator Richard B. Russell, a Democrat from Georgia, who wanted to add an amendment to the law that allowed new soldiers the opportunity to choose to serve only in units of their own race.[135] If the amendment was passed, it would reverse the integration process started by Executive Order 9981 and the Fahy Committee. This would be a return to the separate but equal policy expounded by many opponents of integration.

The segregationists were not the only ones trying to take advantage of the new Selective Service law. The civil rights advocates fought hard against the amendment, for they saw it as another attempt to reverse the progress made under President Truman. Approval of the Russell Amendment would again legitimize segregation in the services and the federal government.

The civil rights advocates wanted to go beyond defeating the Russell Amendment and add amendments of their own. In the past, Black soldiers had problems with adverse treatment by communities surrounding various Army posts. They had often been beaten and harassed with little or no reprisals taken by the Army to address the situation. Civil rights advocates wanted a federal protection amendment for Black soldiers that would protect them any time they went

[135]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 389.

off base and force the investigation and disposition of acts of racial violence.[136]

However, the civil rights advocates were not entirely successful because an amendment for federal protection never garnered enough support to bring it to a vote. It would be over a decade before such a law would be passed.[137] However in consolation, a political attempt to undermine integration in the Army had been averted and progress could still continue forward.

The segregationists could not obtain enough votes to pass the Russell Amendment. When it came to this issue, the majority of Congress appeared to think that integration of the military was the most efficient way for it to handle its manpower.[138] To accept the Russell Amendment would not only mean supporting a proposal that mandated the Army deliberately segregate its soldiers, but also mean supporting a proposal that was inherently inefficient and downgraded the Army's combat effectiveness.

Small Steps Toward Integration in the Army

One of the problems with a high visibility action like Executive Order 9981 is the expectation of immediate

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[136]Ibid., 393.

[137]Ibid., 393-394.

[138]Ibid., 390.

impact. Usually, the effect of such an action would be quickly assessed to determine if it proved significant or not. When the Fahy Committee submitted its final report to the President, the effect of the executive order seemed highly significant. The committee had exposed the weakness of segregation in the Army and charted a course towards complete integration.

Over a year after the committee's dissolution, the Army had implemented few of the committee's recommendations. With the procrastination by the Army, one might conclude that the order's effect at this point was nil and the committee had failed. This is not true because small steps were taken towards integration even during this period. These small steps would set the stage for greater advances in the future.

Many of these small steps were local decentralized decisions based on necessity. Others were centralized decisions done at or above the Army staff level but of limited scope that addressed policy. Both types of decisions challenged past Army segregation practices and sought to make the Army more efficient.

In decentralized decisions, the local commander would be presented with a problem where he had to decide to perform some task the old way, along the lines of segregation or in a more efficient way that often saved him

time and resources. The more efficient method often meant some form of integration.

The Army took one of its first steps towards integration when it abolished the quota system. In August 1950 at one of the Army's training centers located in South Carolina, the commander of Fort Jackson trained both Black and White recruits in segregated units. Under the quota system, the commander could easily program the time when each group of Black recruits would arrive and plan what personnel and resources were required to train them. When the Army abolished the quota system, the increased number of the Black recruits made it difficult for the Army training centers to forecast the number that would arrive at their gates.[139] Obviously, the commander did not have the resources to train large numbers of both races of recruits at the same time.

The commander could have chosen to continue the existing policy and train only segregated units. But he faced practical problems such as what to do with all Black recruits coming in while the training of White recruits occurred and where would the additional manpower and resources come from if both groups trained at the same time? To him, the most practical solution for training both races

[139]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 203

of soldiers would be to train them together. To do so would go against the current policy of segregation.

The commander chose the option of integration. He used the January 1950 agreement made between the Army and the Fahy Committee that allowed the unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers as the basis of his decision. Integration proved successful at Fort Jackson but it did not stop there. The Department of the Army accepted the idea and encouraged other training posts to do the same.[140]

Decentralized decisions, where local commanders on there own volition or through the urgings of others, such as Black soldiers, civil rights groups, and other interested parties, helped the Army make the small steps towards integration. But more importantly, the work of the Fahy Committee provided the framework for local commanders to make these decisions. Such decisions were not always as easy or successful for commanders as they were at Fort Jackson. But each decision striking down some form of segregation made the next decision easier to make.

For Black soldiers, although they could still be victims of violence off-post and in the surrounding community, they now found that the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers Clubs might be less restrictive in its membership than it used to be; soldiers might find the post

[140]Ibid.

recreation center open for full use by all races; or families might find that their assignment for post housing much less restrictive. These examples, plus many more, sent signals to Blacks soldiers and White soldiers as well, that the Army was changing.

Centralized decisions, at or above the Department of the Army level, did not usually address broad sweeping changes in integration policy. Instead they usually focused on specific problems that proved difficult to resolve as the Army and the other services grappled with better ways to utilize their Black soldiers. Like the decentralized decisions of local commanders, centralized decisions also proved to be significant steps as the Army moved towards integration.

An example of these centralized decisions included the Qualitative Distribution of Military Manpower Program (QDMMP). The Department of Defense created the QDMMP to address the recruiting inequalities between the services. The Air Force and the Navy claimed because of the technical nature of their services that they needed to recruit and draft the most highly qualified servicemen available. The most highly qualified candidates scored in Categories I and II of the Air Force's and the Navy's equivalent of the

AGCT.[141] The Army, less technical in nature, recruited and drafted from Categories I through V. The majority of the Army's Black soldiers scored in lowest Categories of IV and V.

This system allowed the Air Force and the Navy to accept only the most qualified Black servicemen while at the same time, some critics of this policy charged, limited the number of Blacks within their ranks. In fairness to the two services, their policies addressed all servicemen regardless of race. So although they accepted only the best Black recruits, this tended be true for White recruits as well.

The Department of Defense resolved the issue by mandating that all the services' recruits come from the top four categories of the general classification test. The services had a specific quota of enlistees that it had to accept from each category. The quota system now allowed more Blacks to enter the Air Force and the Navy, where before they were unqualified. However, the quota system put a 24 percent cap on the number of servicemen that could come from Category IV.[142] Now that the other services could not swell their ranks with just the highest scoring servicemen, the Army expected the quality of its recruits to improve.

[141]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 394.

[142]Ibid.

The QDMMP also served to control the number of Blacks entering the Army which had markedly increased after the ten percent quota was abolished. This increase had forced the Army to ask for a return to the old policy. Although the Secretary of the Army denied the request, the Army still had hopes of gaining relief from this problem. Even with the QDMMP, Blacks still had the opportunity to enter the Army at a much higher rate than ten percent.[143] But just was as important, a possible chance to again limit the opportunities of Black soldiers had been averted.

The Korean War

The Korean War represents the most important event affecting the actual integration of the Army. President Truman, Executive Order 9981, and the Fahy Committee had done much to establish the framework for eliminating segregation. However, each step towards integration after the dissolution of the Fahy Committee tended to be slow and small. The Korean War, which started in July 1950, changed that trend and accelerated the entire integration process.[144] Richard M. Dalfiume, in his book *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-*

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[143]Ibid., 395.

[144]Leo Bogart, Project Clear: Social Research and the Desegregation of the United States Army (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), xxi.

1953, described the change caused by the war when he said:

> There is no doubt that the Korean War pushed the Army to complete integration much sooner than would have been the case without a war, but this occurred only because of the foundation laid down by the Fahy Committee. Without a policy of rigid segregation to stop them, many commanders in Korea during the first days of the war adopted a policy of assigning desperately needed replacements without regard to race.[145]

It is obvious that military necessity in the form of manpower shortages in White units prompted commanders to use Black soldiers in Korea. A similar manpower shortage in World War II prompted the Army to allow Blacks to fight. Yet, in addition to military necessity, two other factors played a role in setting the stage for the integration of units in Korea: abolishing the quota system and unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers.

Abolishing the quota system in March 1950, which held Black soldier strength in the Army at ten percent, almost instantly increased the number of Blacks entering the Army each month. The enlistment rate of Blacks in March 1950 started at just over eight percent of total enlistment. In April 1950, the rate jumped to 22 percent followed by 25 percent in July 1950.[146] Since the Army did not want to start wholesale integration of White units and they were

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[145]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 201

[146]Ibid., 202.

prohibited from creating additional Black units[147], the only alternative was to assign Black soldiers to Black units that were fast becoming overstrength. Black units were as much as 60 percent overstrength in personnel as early as April 1950.[148]

Black units in Korea followed the same pattern of assignment. Since Blacks soldiers had only served in service support units, they tended to operate far from the battle front and consequently suffered fewer casualties as compared to White soldiers.[149] At the same time, the Far East Command, which ran the Korean War, received a monthly average of 22,000 replacement soldiers. The Black portion of the replacements numbered 15 percent in May 1951, 21 percent in June, 22 percent in July, and 16 percent in August.[150] Therefore, the Army had a steady stream of Black replacements going to Korea to fill units already overstrength.

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[147]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 433.

[148]Ibid., 431.

[149]Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, Fighting on Two Fronts: 1939-1953 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 203-204.

[150]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 433.

Unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers also played a part in integrating units in Korea in two ways. First, they began to enter into combat arms (i.e., infantry, armor, and field artillery) in greater numbers. After World War II, about 22 percent of Black soldiers served in combat branches. However by 1950, about 30 percent of Black soldiers served in combat branches followed by 40 percent (roughly the same as White soldiers) by June 1951.[151] This trend proved instrumental for the commanders in Korea. If the percentage of Black soldiers in combat branches had been at World War II levels, the commanders would have probably been more reluctant to integrate using non-combat arms soldiers in combat arms positions.

Second, the policy of unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers proved a boon to local commanders. Like the commander of basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, local commanders were beginning to understand that segregation of units was no longer an absolute policy. Although the Army in Korea had initially adhered to segregation at the start of the war, military necessity had empowered the commanders to use unrestricted assignment of Black soldiers to address the shortage of White soldiers.

The shortage of White military manpower made it necessary for local commanders to use Black soldiers during

[151]Ibid., 431.

the Korean War as early as 1950. The decision proved to be practical because the termination of the quota system created in Korea a large reserve of Black soldiers that could replenish attrited combat units. Since they were already stationed in the country, it proved feasible to move them forward to needy units. Black soldiers were initially attached to combat units, which implied that they were in the unit only temporarily. Later on, they were assigned permanently, which made them full fledge members of the units.

The pace of integration increased in 1951. By March 1951, nineteen percent of Black soldiers served in integrated units. Sixty percent of the infantry companies had some partial integration by May 1951. This also included some reverse integration where White soldiers were assigned to Black units. Perhaps the reason that integration went so smoothly was the absence of reports of racial violence or conflict within units. There were no reports of mass desertions by White soldiers opposing integration of their units.[152]

Military necessity forced local commanders to integrate their units. Yet, Executive Order 9981 and the work of the Fahy Committee established the guidelines for integration that gave commanders the latitude and

[152]Ibid., 434.

flexibility to use Black soldiers. The Fahy Committee and Black Americans had envisioned a time when Black soldiers served with dignity and honor along with White soldiers. If not for the Korean War, many military leaders thought it would been another ten years before this vision was realized.[153]

Complete Integration of the Army

In October 1954, the Army stood down its last segregated unit.[154] It had taken over six years for the goals of President's Truman Executive Order 9981 to be realized. The success of this achievement lies in the support that it received from many different areas. President Truman, the Fahy Committee, the Secretary of Defense, the Army, and civil rights advocates played crucial roles in bringing about integration. Although not all obstacles had been overcome, Black soldiers appeared to be on the way to equal opportunity and treatment.

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[153]Lee Nichols, Breakthrough on the Color Front (New York: Random House, 1954), 97.

[154]Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces: 1940-1965 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 472.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

President Harry S Truman's 1948 Executive Order 9981 initiated the process of integrating the Army, although the manpower necessities of the Korean War increased the rate of change. The importance of the order was three-fold. First, the order represented the first time that the federal government took an official stand opposing segregation in the Army. The fact that President Truman took the lead on this issue meant that integration of the Army had a strong advocate. Second, the order, through the work of the Fahy Committee, challenged the Army's existing polices and got the Army to agree on policies that would end segregation. Finally, the order changed the command climate around the Army in respect to the utilization of Black soldiers. Several times after the dissolution of the Fahy Committee, local commanders took the initiative to solve pressing manpower problems by integrating their units. The Korean War represents an excellent example of this initiative. They knew that the Army's agreement with the Fahy committee gave them latitude to effect change within their units.

There is no direct link between Executive Order 9981 and integration of the Army. The day that President Truman issued the order, the Army did not immediately start integrating its units. This cannot be explained solely by normal bureaucratic slowness. Integration faced deliberate resistance from the Army in the form of limited cooperation. Nor did the administration immediately admonish or discipline the Army for not complying.

The integration of the Army represented a dynamic process consisting of several steps. Issuing Executive 9981 comprised the first step forming the keystone for follow-on events. In the next step, the order mandated the formulation of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the armed services that reviewed existing Black utilization policies and ordered recommendations for improvement. Next, the committee's challenged the existing polices of the Army and conducted bilateral negotiations to move the Army towards integration. In the fourth step, the committee dissolved after completing its mission but the Army was slow to implement many of the polices it had agreed to. The fifth step was the start of the Korean War with a shortage of White manpower and an excess of Black manpower. The sixth step saw local commanders in the Korean War, empowered by Executive Order 9981, using Black soldiers to solve critical manpower

shortages. The final step was the acceptance of integration throughout the Army.

Several forces crucial to the integration process endorsed and resisted change. When President Truman issued Executive Order 9981, many Black civil rights organizations endorsed it as a crucial step towards gaining equality in not only the military, but in American society as well. The Black press closely followed the integration process and were quick to point out any governmental resistance to it.

The military establishment in the form of the Secretary of Defense and the services resisted the order. The Army, in particular, resisted for many reasons, varying from maintaining traditions to a fear of loss of unit efficiency. Members of Congress also resisted the order because many felt that the time had not arrived to mandate the integration of the races as the executive order proposed to do. There were a few Black organizations that were initially skeptical of the order because they felt that it was too ambiguous to be of use in the fight for equality. However, after President Truman assured them of his commitment to integration in the services, they supported him and the order.

Integration both benefited and produced problems for the Army. Greater efficiency proved to be the primary benefit the Army received from integration. Before

integration, the Army invested and wasted a tremendous amount of resources in running a two-race institution. When the Army began to integrate, redundant organizations and duplicate services could be consolidated saving money that could be used elsewhere.

Integration presented problems for the Army in terms of recruiting qualified Black soldiers. The majority of the Black recruits scored in the bottom half of the Army's classification test. They were poorly educated, and once accepted into the Army, found it difficult to move up in the ranks or acquire more specialized skills. Although some of this was a direct result of traditional discrimination, much of this resulted from many Blacks being ill-prepared educationally for the demands of the Army. The Fahy Committee, recognizing the problem, suggested a higher entrance score. They were willing to accept a reduction in Blacks recruited by the Army if the ones that did enlist qualified in more military specialities.

Integration also presented benefits and problems for Black Americans. Black leaders and organizations thought that it would be difficult to overcome discrimination in society if the federal government continued to endorse discrimination itself. The services represented obvious targets since Black servicemen formed a significant part of their populations. Many Black Americans felt that progress

made in the services could later be translated into progress in the rest of American society.

Although integration proved beneficial to Black soldiers they still faced the practical problem of dealing with residual prejudice within the ranks. They would have to prove their worthiness to White leaders and peers. Although some would still hold the color of their skin against them, many would see that Blacks were simply another group of Americans willing to serve their country.

Relationship to Previous Studies

This thesis does not differ radically from other studies done on this topic. These studies cite both the work of the Fahy Committee and the Korean War as crucial to integrating the Army. The majority of the studies start with President Truman's executive order, then link it with changes precipitated by the Korean War. Also, most studies question how long integration would have taken without the Korean War. Some of them indicate that the gains made by the Fahy Committee may have been stopped by a resistant Army and the Korean War reactivated the process. Others maintain that integration was still moving forward but at a much slower rate than envisioned by the Fahy Committee and the Korean War merely accelerated the process. This thesis represents the latter view and recognizes all of the events leading to integration as a single process.

This thesis differs from most previous studies in three key ways. First, it looks closely at President Truman and tries to ascertain why he decided to publish an executive order mandating equal opportunity and treatment in the armed forces. Second, it does a detailed analysis of Executive Order 9981 which is lacking in other related studies. If the reader does not have an in depth knowledge of the meaning of the order, it proves difficult later on to truly appreciate its impact on subsequent events. Finally, most related studies are historical in nature with limited analysis. This thesis is more analytical in its approach and is designed to give the reader a good working knowledge of integration in the Army within thirty minutes.

Suggestions for Further Research

Integration of Blacks into the Army appears now to be a well researched branch of history. Other studies address the post Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the early seventies. Two areas that I see ripe for further research are integration from a purely Army perspective and a comparable study of the integration of women and homosexuals in the Army.

A look at Executive Order 9981 from a purely Army viewpoint would go into greater detail to examine the Army's arguments against integration. Such a thesis would examine documented opposition to integration plus look at the causes

of many of the traditional prejudices held by the Army against Black soldiers. Keep in mind that not all of the Army's opposition to integration resided in traditional prejudices.

A comparison of the integration of Blacks, women, and homosexuals in the Army would prove to be a worthwhile topic to investigate. Each group has similarities and differences that would be quite interesting to compare and contrast. Lessons learned from the integration of Blacks might prove useful to analyzing these other groups.

Summary

President Truman's 1948 executive order did not directly integrate the Army. However, it did initiate and form the framework of the integration process that culminated with the Korean War. It proved a moral victory for civil rights forces who saw this as important step to equal rights in all of society. It also proved a reluctant victory for the Army. Although the Army strongly resisted integration initially, it recognized that it was a more efficient organization after integration was achieved.

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