

ASE 98-8
C1



NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20319-5062
June 1, 1998

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF
Director of Research

Major General John S. Cowings, U.S. Army
Industrial College of the Armed Forces
Fort McNair
Washington, D.C. 20319-5062

Dear General Cowings:

I am delighted to hear that you will present the Association of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces Award for Excellence in Research. Our award winner this year is Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, U.S. Marine Corps, for his paper, "Pride, Progress and Prospects: A History of the Marine Corps' Efforts to Increase the Presence of African-American Officers (1970-1995)."

The ceremony will be held on Monday, June 8, 1998 from 9:30 to 12:00 a.m. in Building 59, Eisenhower Hall, here at Fort McNair. Your escort, Dr. Frances A'Hearn, will be prepared to meet you in front of Eisenhower Hall around 9:10 a.m. on June 8, 1998.

We have enclosed a copy of this year's winning paper, a map of Fort McNair and a parking permit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (202) 685-4306.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Goldberg

Joseph E. Goldberg
Director of Research

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 1998		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-1998 to 00-00-1998	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Pride, Progress, and Prospects. A History of the Marine Corps Efforts to Increase the Presence of African-American Officers (1970-1995)				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National War College, 300 5th Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319-6000				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT see report					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 12	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ARCHIVE COPY

ASE 98-8
C.1

PRIDE, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS

**A HISTORY
OF
THE MARINE CORPS EFFORTS
TO
INCREASE THE PRESENCE
OF
AFRICAN -AMERICAN OFFICERS
(1970-1995)**

**COL A.G. DAVIS
USMC**

PRIDE, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS

A HISTORY

OF

THE MARINE CORPS EFFORTS

TO

INCREASE THE PRESENCE

OF

AFRICAN –AMERICAN OFFICERS

(1970-1995)

**National Defense University Library
300 5th Ave. Ft. McNair
Bldg. 62
Washington, DC 20319-5366**

Preface

This has been a labor of love for me. Since my initial entry into the Marine Corps in July 1972, I have been blessed to be in the presence of Marine officers who looked like me. It started with my Officer Selection Officer, First Lieutenant Henry Ferrand. At Officer Candidates School, it continued with First Lieutenant Clifford L. Stanley and Major Clay Baker. At the Basic School, it was Captain Archie Joe Biggers. In my first assignment (as an infantry platoon leader in the Fleet Marine Force), it was my Company Commander, Captain Willie J. Oler. While I was a young Captain and Company Commander in the 1st Marine Division, it was Lieutenant Colonel George Ford. As a Major and Company Commander in the 3rd Force Service Support Group on Okinawa, it was Colonel Fred Jones. While a Lieutenant Colonel and Battalion Commander in the 2nd Force Service Support Group, it was my Group Commander, Brigadier General George Walls, Jr. As a Colonel and Commanding Officer of Officer Candidates School, it was Brigadier General Clifford L. Stanley. To the casual observer, this may not be important; however, role models are important, because they provide hope to one's goals and aspirations and they add perspective and temperance to the views, visions and impatience of untested youth.

The writing of this twenty five year history of the Marine Corps efforts to increase the presence of African –American officers was not as difficult as the experience of Ralph W. Donnelly and Henry I Shaw when they undertook the task of compiling the history of *Backs in the Marine Corps* in 1972. The reason is there has been a number of significant initiatives, events and achievements by African- American officers. With that said however, I don't dare say this task was easy. There is an abundance of information regarding the Marine Corps efforts in this area; the challenge was in gaining access to it and gathering the information within a finite period of time, given that I undertook this labor of love while assigned as a student at National Defense University's Industrial College of the Armed Forces. My burden was lightened by my previous assignments at the headquarters in recruiting and manpower. Also, the information and historical continuity provided by a number of retired and former Marines was of great value and assistance. Among them are Colonel Berthoud, Mr. Branch and Generals Petersen, Cooper and Walls.

I couldn't have done this without the help of a number of people. First of all, I want to thank Major General Cowings, the Commandant of ICAF for accepting me into the Research Fellowship Program. Secondly, Dr. Joseph Goldberg for his inspiration and professional advice. Next, my advisor, Dr.

Alan Gropman for keeping me focused on the relevant pieces of information and his review of my drafts. Dr. Nedra Huggins –Williams and Marine Colonel Kenneth Dunn, of the faculty provided timely guidance and suggestions. Ms. Judy Clark deserves a special thank you for taking “homework” and teaching me the basics of typing. There are a number of people at the Marine Corps Headquarters assigned to Recruiting, Advertising, Officer Assignments and Equal Opportunity that quickly responded to my phone calls for data and copies of documents; I thank all of you very much.

Finally, to my more than supportive wife and daughters who shared me with the computer and the paperwork for nine months, ... as usual, I owe you

Table of Contents

Introduction		1
Chapter 1	A Look at the Past	3
	Soldiers of the Sea	8
	Pride... The Beginnings	9
Chapter 2	The Efforts of the 70's	14
	Towards Progress (Solving the Problem)	17
	Department of Defense Interest	18
	Looking for A Few Good Men and Women	19
	A Change of the Guard	21
	Passing the Word	25
	Assessing the Results	26
	Highlights of the Decade	32
	Quality Begets Quality	33
Chapter 3	The Efforts of The 80's	38
	Forging Consensus	40
	Department of the Navy Interest	42
	Implementing New Strategies	42
	Assessing the Results	47
	Signs of Change Emerge	51
Chapter 4	The Efforts of the 90's	58
	A Microcosm of Society	59
	The Total Quality Approach	67
	Enlightening the Leadership	73
	Confronting a Crisis	74
	Secretary of the Navy Interest	78
	Employing New Approaches	80
	Assessing the Results	83
	Significant Accomplishments	94
Chapter 5	The Future	101
	Enhancing the Prospects	102
Conclusion		108

Bibliography

110

Introduction

This document represents a history of the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-Americans in its officer ranks during the 1970-1995 period. The word "presence" is used vice the term "number" in the title of this effort because it transcends the singular focus of quantity. "Presence" underscores the relative importance of certain areas that contribute to the career progression of commissioned officers. Among those areas are accessions, military occupational specialties, assignments, and promotions.

The primary focus will be unrestricted and restricted commissioned officers (Warrant officers are not included); however, I will briefly review the service of all ranks of African- Americans from colonial times to the Korean War.

Numerous historical sources and recognized experts in the field were consulted in the preparation of this document. Also, historical information was extracted from telephonic and personal interviews with a number of former, retired and active duty Marine officers who were instrumental in the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers. I have also drawn upon my personal experiences from nearly 15 years service in the areas of officer recruiting, entry level officer candidate

training, military equal opportunity policy formulation and implementation and as Equal Opportunity Advisor to the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Various race/ethnic terms are used when I make racial references. Terms such as “colored”, “Negro”, “black”, and “African- American” capture the relationship between time and racial references. The terms “black” and “African-American” are used interchangeably. Also, throughout this effort the term “minority” appears encased in quotation marks. This represents my personal efforts to avoid its use when it is necessary to refer to an individual or group of individuals who are non-white because the root meaning of the term connotes a value judgement of less than or not equal to. When it’s necessary to make racial references, specific race/ethnic terms are more appropriate.

My motivation for this undertaking lies in two legendary Marines; one enlisted and the other an officer. They are Sergeant Major Edgar R. Huff, USMC (Deceased) and former Lieutenant Frederick Branch, USMC; both are African-Americans of the Montford Point Marine legacy.

CHAPTER 1- A LOOK AT THE PAST

The representation of African-Americans in the officer ranks of this nation's Armed Forces emerged as a matter of national interest at the end of the Civil War. For example, as early as 1866 there were efforts to admit African-Americans to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Prior to that period, one lone individual was occasionally admitted to the Naval Academy only to leave later on his own or as a result of the machinations of a racially biased system that reflected the nation's attitude and beliefs regarding race and racial equality.

Contemporary efforts to increase the representation of African-Americans as officers in the military service were prompted by a number of interests pursuing the same end (increasing the number of African-Americans in uniform) for different reasons. Militarily, there was a need for manpower. Socially, civil rights organizations saw the military as a means for pursuing one of the inherent rights of citizenship. Politically, presidential or other political aspirants garnered support in the form of backing and votes from civil rights organizations and their constituents.

The military was not alone in its practice of bias and discrimination. During the World War II era, racial discrimination was widely practiced in the federal and civilian sectors that were supporting the war effort. As a result, two presidential directives concerning equal opportunity and treatment in the federal government

were issued. The first, Executive Order 8802, signed by President Franklin D Roosevelt in June of 1941, established the Fair Employment Practices Commission. This presidential directive was issued based on the premise that “ it is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, color, or national origin.” Specifically, Executive Order 8802 ordered: ¹

- That all departments and agencies of the Government concerned with vocational and training for defense production to take measures to ensure that the program was administered without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin,
- That all contracting agencies of the Government include provisions in all defense contracts that prohibit discrimination against any worker because of race, color, creed, or national origin;
- That a Committee on Fair Employment Practice is established in the Office of Production Management, to receive and investigate complaints of discrimination.

The second presidential directive concerned with equal treatment and opportunity in the federal sector focused exclusively on the military. Executive Order 9981 was signed by President Harry S.Truman in July 1948 and directed the Armed Forces to provide equal treatment and opportunity for black servicemen. Based on the premise that “it is essential that there be maintained in the Armed Forces 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",

Executive Order 9981 addressed six different areas: ²

- A policy of equal treatment and opportunity without regard to race, color, religion or national origin, to be implemented rapidly with due regard for the time it takes to effect changes without impairing efficiency or morale;
- The creation of a seven member presidential advisory committee on equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Services; members to be designated by the president;
- The presidential authority of the committee to examine rules, procedures and practices of the services for the purpose of recommending modifications to reflect the intent of this executive order;
- The requirement for all executive departments and agencies of the federal government to cooperate with the committee in its work, and to furnish such information and the services of such persons as it may require in the performance of its duties;
- The requirement that persons in the armed services, the executive departments, and agencies of the federal government testify before the committee if requested and make available such documents and other information the committee may require;
- The existence of the committee until such time as the President shall terminate it by Executive Order

Generally, the different branches of the services devised their own efforts to integrate their enlisted ranks and responded to Truman's order in their own ways

Nonetheless, Executive Order 9981 was significant for several reasons:

- It represented presidential interest and action;
- It responded to the concerns of a segment of society;
- It addressed the strategic concern of manpower with the onset of the Cold War emanating at the end of World War II; and it expanded opportunities for Negroes serving in the military

Similarly, on July 26, 1948, Truman issued a presidential directive (Executive Order 9980) that dealt with equal treatment and opportunity in the Civil Service; the same day he signed Executive Order 9981

The off-base equal treatment and equal opportunity efforts of the 1940's era dealt primarily with civilian problems related to housing and other off-base establishments. These problems reflected the segregationist policies and attitudes prevalent in the United States during that time. On-base efforts of equally important concern dealt with the location and integration of training facilities and the use of on-base facilities such as clubs and messes. In several instances, confrontations and riots took place between black servicemen attempting to integrate on base facilities and white servicemen attempting to enforce segregation. During the early 1940's, several camps and bases located in California, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, and Mississippi and Texas, were the sites of "riots of racial character", according to John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War and Head of the War Department's Advisory Committee on Racial Matters.³ Similar scenarios of racial unrest took place at military bases during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The initiatives implemented to achieve the intent of Executive Order 9981 varied. All of the services however, were opposed to Negroes serving alongside white Americans in combat or peacetime.

A number of unjustified and unsubstantiated rationalizations were advanced to support the widely held belief that the black man was not ready to serve beside his white counterpart, ranging from black intellectual inferiority to (the lack of) social development. The true reason was racism.

The remainder of this review of previous scholarship will focus on the early opposition of the Marine Corps to enlisting blacks and its subsequent efforts to integrate its ranks.

Military historians have more than adequately documented the issues and events that relate to the contemporary challenge of racial diversity within the officer ranks. This effort is based upon the work of a number of those historians and the verbal and written accounts of several African-Americans who served during the “Jim Crow” era and during the period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Collectively, their accounts provide the basis for recalling the Marine Corps’ earlier initiatives to enlist African-Americans and ultimately integrate and broaden the opportunities for African-Americans, to satisfy manpower needs, to meet the appeals of civil rights proponents and the intent of President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9981

Soldiers of the Sea

Amongst all the services, the Marine Corps was the staunchest opponent to accepting blacks in its ranks. There is some evidence of several black men serving in the Continental Marines, during the 1776- 1777 time frame, when the Marine Corps was a part of the Navy. However, when a separate Marine Corps was created in July of 1798, its 1st Commandant, Major William W. Burrows issued explicit guidance barring the enlistment of blacks and mulattos. This policy of exclusion continued through the World War I era. Immediately prior to the onset of World War II, the Secretary of the Navy directed the Navy to take steps to increase its enlistment of Negroes. This pronouncement also applied to the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard because both were in the Navy Department (the Coast Guard by virtue of a special requirement that it operate as part of the Navy during times of war).

The 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps (Major General Thomas Holcomb) was allowed to devise his own plan to satisfy the conceptual intent of the Secretary; however, he fell short in the numerical goals that were being pursued by the Navy and the Army. The Army used the representative percentage of blacks in the general population as a benchmark for increasing black representation but Major General Holcomb proposed the “enlistment of 1,000 Negroes... because the inevitable replacement and redistribution of men in combat would prevent the

maintenance of necessary segregation.”⁴ Despite the Marine Corps’ eventual acceptance of integration, individual Base Commanders could refuse to accept blacks, if in their opinion, their presence was contrary to the wishes of the local populace.

In Integration of the Armed Forces 1940-1945, Morris J. McGregor, Jr. provides a detailed documentation of the experiences of the Marine Corps and the other services in the evolution of the integration issue.

Pride...The Beginnings

In June of 1942, the first black Marine recruits reported for their initiation in the “best and toughest outfit going” according to the late Sergeant Major Edgar Huff. The entry of Blacks into the Marine Corps was a result of President Roosevelt’s directive to end racial discrimination. These pioneers would come to be known as “The Montford Point Marines”. In The History of Blacks in the Marine Corps, Ralph Donnelly and Henry Shaw provide an in-depth account of the assimilation of these Marines into a Corps accustomed to a heretofore exclusively white membership. Despite the resistance of Major General Holcomb, better judgement prevailed as blacks just as their white counterparts would make significant contributions to the legacy of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps' plan for complying with the Secretary of the Navy's desire for a black battalion was to recruit approximately 1,000 Marine hopefuls; most of these men would come from the South. Segregated training would be conducted at a camp in North Carolina originally known as Mumford Point and later renamed Montford Point.

Among those first recruits were former sailors and soldiers and college graduates who would form the first black Marine Corps unit upon completion of recruit training; the 51st Composite Defense Battalion. The battalion's primary mission was to train additional black recruits. Later, a second defense battalion (the 52nd Composite Defense Battalion) was formed. Both battalions were slated to be anti-aircraft defense units. Although both of the units were designated as combat units and were formed during the World War II era, to the disappointment of its Marines, neither experienced actual combat. Future manpower plans would call for the activation of a number of Depot Companies and Ammunition Companies. As indicated by their titles, plans for the employment of these units didn't include combat; rather, they were intended for the laborious jobs of unloading ships and moving ammunition. However, because of their use in direct support of combat units, a number of the Ammunition and Depot Companies did experience combat. The long term plans for the military employment of all black

Marines on active duty during World War II, was to revert them to a reserve status at the end of the war.

The utilization of Negro Marines during the Korean conflict differed from that of World War II. According to Shaw and Donnelly there are several accounts of Negro Marines in combat. One problem encountered in tracing the evolution of the military use of the Negro Marine was the absence of detailed records. What is certain, however, is that service in Korea included a tandem of “firsts”. Lieutenant William Jenkins led Marines into combat and Lieutenant Frank E. Petersen emerged as an aviator.

Although Negro officers accomplished those “firsts” during the Korean War, the Marines who initially challenged previously uncharted rough seas were of the Montford Point legacy. In March of 1945, three Montford Point Marines entered the Officer Candidates School at Quantico, Virginia but were unsuccessful in their quest to be commissioned as Marine Lieutenants. Not to be denied however, was Frederick Branch, a member of the 51st Defense Battalion. A native of Hamlet, North Carolina, Branch entered OCS in the summer of 1945 and was commissioned on November 10, 1945... the 170th birthday of the Marine Corps. The commissioning of three others in 1946 followed Branch’s groundbreaking accomplishment. Lieutenant Branch, like the others that followed him, was

released to inactive duty after commissioning. He was recalled for duty during the Korean War and served at Camp Pendleton, California. As an infantry officer, he held billets of Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer and Battery Commander in an Anti-Aircraft Weapons Battalion. Branch was in an integrated unit with four white officers under his command.⁵

After the commissioning of Branch and the notable others that followed, the door was partially opened for more blacks to pursue commissions in the Marine Corps. The ensuing chapters of this history will address the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African –American in its officer ranks during a twenty-five year period in its history (1970-1995). The focus will be on those who sought membership in an elite, exclusive military organization motivated and distinguished by PRIDE; recalling the various pivotal events that enhanced or impeded the PROGRESS of its efforts; and examining the future PROSPECTS of building an officer corps that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the nation it serves.

Notes for Chapter 1

1 Samuel I. Rosenam, *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D Roosevelt, Volume 10* (New York Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1941) pp 216-217, 233-237

2 Congressional Record Service, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, *13 F R 4313*
p 2673

3 Bernard Nalty, *Strength for the Fight* (New York The Free Press, 1986) pp 156, 159

4 Morris J McGregor Jr , *Integration of the Armed Forces* (Washington, D C The Center for Military History, U S Army, 1981) p 110.

5 Interview of Frederick Branch on January 27,1998 Branch discussed his experiences as an officer commanding a unit with white officers under his charge

CHAPTER 2 – THE EFFORTS OF THE 70'S

The attitudes, progress and relations which manifested themselves in the decade of the 1970's, from a racial perspective, were principally a result of the social and political events that took place in the 1960's:

- The 1962 review of the progress made by “minorities” in the Armed Forces since the implementation of President Truman's Executive Order 981 fourteen years earlier. The review was directed by President John F. Kennedy (believed by some blacks to be one of the most progressive presidents on the issue of racial equality);
- The protests, demonstrations and sit-ins by black America as a sign of opposition to the segregation policies in effect throughout the nation affecting employment, housing, and other civil issues;
- The 1963 March on Washington;
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- The assassination of Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, in Memphis, TN in March 1968;
- The riots in response to the assassination of Reverend Doctor King;
- The resurgence, growth, and symbols of “Black Power”, in the neighborhoods, on the college campuses and in the literature, poetry and music of black America.

The Armed Forces faced a number of challenges during the 1970's that weren't much different from those of society at large. Realizing that the military is a microcosm of the larger society from which it draws its

members, the relevance of those mutual interests is quite understandable. President Kennedy was interested in promoting better race relations among members in the services and insuring fairness and equality in promotions and assignments. The degree of difficulty encountered in addressing and solving these issues was driven by the attitudes of society at large because every individual joining the military brings with him or her beliefs, biases, and prejudices he or she were exposed to and/or practiced while a civilian. Further, the messages of racial superiority and/or inequity they were exposed to played a role in how they viewed their fellow soldier, individually and collectively. The Marine Corps faced problems similar to those of the other services. However, the Marines believed they were different, there was a mystique in being a Marine. And the Corps enjoyed a special reverence by Americans. As such, their racial problems received intense scrutiny.

According to some Marines who served during the Vietnam Era, the Vietnam War was a defining experience and period for the Marine Corps in the areas of race relations and increasing the number of black officers in its ranks. Saddled with the unintended second and third order effects of McNamara's 100,000 Project ¹, the return from Vietnam unveiled some issues that required innovative thinking and approaches.

Among those issues were.

- The increasing occurrence of inter-personal confrontations and conflicts primarily between black and white Marines, to include assaults and gang attacks;
- The disproportionate number of non-judicial punishment and courts-martial affecting black Marines (in the vast majority of cases by white Commanding Officers);
- The racial polarization of black and white Marines at on-base and off-base facilities and establishments,
- The appearance and use of signs and symbols of black solidarity and pride such as wrist bracelets and crosses fashioned of black boot laces and worn in uniform, and the “DAP” handshake ritual also known as “checking-in”;
- The emergence of the Afro haircut and its challenge to the traditional Euro-centric orientation and interpretation of Marine Corps hair cut regulations and grooming standards.

Bases and stations on the East and West Coasts had their share of racial incidents that were primarily the result of race. John McGowan, a former enlisted Marine and officer was an infantry platoon leader in the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, located at Camp Pendleton, California. McGowan offered this observation:

“While the town of Oceanside and the surrounding areas didn’t practice the discrimination the Marines on the East Coast endured from the town of Jacksonville, believe me, we had the same type of on-base problems.. the muggings, the fights, the unbelievable number of non-judicial punishments and courts-martial awarded to black Marines, and McNamara’s 100,000. . the problems we had on the West Coast were the same as those on the East

Coast and overseas. Then we tried to fix it with the Human Relations Program”.²

The response and reaction to these developments were mixed along racial, gender, age, and rank lines. The older and more senior black Marines (enlisted and officer) acknowledged that there were problems that needed to be remedied, but did not agree with the response to these issues chosen and implemented by the younger generation. The response and reaction of the senior white Marine officer and enlisted characterized these occurrences as divisive to the Corps. They blamed the causes of them on the McNamara project and the civilian judiciary system that tended to view the Marine Corps (and the other services) as a viable means of “squaring away” many a wayward youth. In reality, the young black Marines viewed these two groups (their leadership) as part of the problem rather than the solution.

TOWARDS PROGRESS (SOLVING THE PROBLEM)

In response to the challenge presented by the racial problems, a number of ideas and initiatives were explored at the local command and Headquarters Marine Corps levels. On the East Coast where the discriminatory off-base practices were as daunting and divisive as the on-base challenges, the Commanding General of the Second Marine Division, Major General Michael P. Ryan, launched an investigation in April 1969 to uncover the

reasons for the racial problems and to formulate responses. One of his resultant actions was the publication of a Division Order and pamphlet on building unit pride and “esprit de corps”.³ In less than one month after that initiative, Camp Lejeune experienced one of its more publicized racial incidents when a riot ensued between black and white Marines of the same battalion. The outcomes of that incident included the death of a white Marine, the courts-martial of a number of black Marines, and the relief of the battalion commander... the first black Marine to command an infantry battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Hurdle L. Maxwell.

Following hearings held at Camp Lejeune by a House Armed Services Subcommittee, the 24th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Leonard F. Chapman, took a number of steps (that would be continued by the Assistant Commandant and Chapman’s successor General Robert E. Cushman) to solve the racial problems and to eliminate discrimination from the Marine Corps.

Department of Defense Interest

During the late 1960’s the issue of Negro officer representation in the Marine Corps and the Navy became a matter of concern for the Department of Defense. In a May 1967 memo from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Cyrus Vance) to the Secretary of the Navy (Paul H. Nitze), concern was

expressed regarding "the distressingly low Negro officer content of the Marine Corps and the Navy." While acknowledging the increase in Negro enrollment at the Naval Academy and NROTC units, Vance suggested that "at a minimum, the Navy Department should double the number of Negro officers, by pursuing the senior enlisted ranks and the establishing of NROTC units at predominately Negro colleges "4

Looking For A Few Good Men ... (and Women)

As a result of the racial disorders that occurred and outside interests, the Marine Corps pursued several major initiatives:

- A Human Relations Training Program
- A Commandant's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs (comprised of prominent civilians of various races)
- An Equal Opportunity Staff Section
- An officer recruiting and retention strategy devised to increase the number of Negro officers

An advisory billet was created to keep the Marine Corps Manpower Chief (and subsequently the Commandant) abreast of the progress of these initiatives and related matters. Among those related matters were Negro officer recruiting, assignments, and retention. The advisory billet was initially named Special Advisor to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Manpower) for Minority Officer Procurement and was occupied by a black officer. It was used extensively from its inception in 1967 until 1977. The first officer to

occupy the Special Advisor position was Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Berthoud, a former Navy Corpsman.

Berthoud began his Marine Corps career as a combat arms officer in the tank military occupational specialty (MOS); he later changed his MOS to the supply occupational field. He became the third black officer to command at the battalion/squadron level, when he commanded the 9th Motor Transport Battalion for five months in 1973.

The Marine Corps' strategy to improve the possibilities for advancement of Negro officers during General Chapman's tenure emphasized three areas:

- Increasing the number of Negro officers;
- Assigning Negro officers to high visibility, career enhancing billets and;
- Improving the retention rate of Negro officers.

One of the first initiatives implemented in 1968 was the Negro Officer Selection Officer (NOSO) concept; the title was later changed to Minority Officer Selection Officer (MOSO).⁵ Six black officers in the rank of Captain were assigned to the six Marine Corps Recruiting Districts (of one per district) to assist white Officer Selection Officers in recruiting black officer candidate applicants. The MOSO's weren't precluded from recruiting whites, but their primary purpose and focus was black prospects.

According to Berthoud, "this strategy was to augment the number of black officer candidates we [the Marine Corps] were trying to get from the Enlisted Commissioning Programs (ECP) and The Broadened Opportunity

for Officer Selection Training Program (BOOST). Also, we needed to increase the visibility of Black officers at the Naval Academy, The Marine Barracks at 8th & I, Naval ROTC units and at Headquarters Marine Corps .. at that time [1968], I was the only black officer assigned there. Despite the tendency to lower standards, the black officers who initially worked on this issue wanted to make sure the standards were the same as they were for the white officer applicants”.⁶

The lowering of standards to attain numerical goals was implied in a June 1967 memo from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Thomas D. Morris to the Under Secretary of the Navy. Recalling the intent of Vance’s previous memo of May 8, 1967 and a discussion with two members of his staff (of the flag and general officer ranks), Morris iterates “ it was indicated that the establishment of an NROTC unit at a predominantly Negro institution appeared feasible with possible alterations to present standards.”⁷

A CHANGE OF THE GUARD

In 1970 Berthoud was replaced by another pioneer; Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Petersen. A former Navy Seaman Apprentice, Petersen became the first black Marine to earn the wings of a naval aviator, the first black to command a tactical air squadron, and the first black to reach the Marine Corps general officer ranks. Petersen’s initial assignment placed him under the staff cognizance of the Marine Corps Personnel Chief; shortly afterwards, he was assigned as the Special Assistant for Minority Affairs to

the 25th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert E. Cushman.

The continuation of energy, emphasis and focus Petersen brought to the task at hand were the result of his thoughts (regarding the direction the Marine Corps should take) while a young Captain studying at the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School.⁸

One of the first recommendations Petersen made was the expansion of the MOSO concept by assigning eleven additional black officers to recruit officer candidates in cities having sizeable populations of young black men and women attending college. The cities selected for MOSO location were:⁹

- Atlanta, GA
- Chicago, IL
- Kansas City, KS
- Los Angeles, CA
- New Orleans, LA
- New York City, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Raleigh, NC
- Richmond, VA
- San Francisco, CA
- Washington, D.C.

The officers assigned to these locations began their tours under the title of Minority Officer Selection Officers and were co-located with white officers designated as Officer Selection Officers. In 1974, the title MOSO was abandoned and all officers assigned to the officer recruiting billets were designated as Officer Selection Officers with no racial distinction attached to

their title or duties. Also, one black officer was assigned to each District Headquarters to assist OSO's nationwide

According to Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ambrewster, "two major concerns were establishing a common understanding that it was not our [black OSO's] sole responsibility to recruit more black officers. Also, we were concerned about the short-term career damaging impact of being assigned away from the Fleet Marine Force so early in our careers."¹⁰

Petersen's successor was Major Edward L. Green; a communications officer turned infantryman. During Green's tenure, the Marine Corps began to expand its approach and emphasis on the black officer retention issue to include areas such as performance at The Basic School and command assignments^{11 Prior} to his retirement in December of 1980, among his many assignments were the Naval Academy (where he was instrumental in attracting a number of midshipmen to the Marine Corps) and the Third Marine Division, where he became the second black Marine officer to command an infantry battalion. Green's successor, Major Solomon P. Hill, an infantry officer, was the last officer to occupy the Special Assistant billet until August of 1993. Hill also served as the Executive Officer of OCS during the 1970's.

In addition to increasing the number of black officers working the college campuses and communities as OSO's, emphasis was placed on assigning black officers to duties in the remaining two major officer accession sources

for Marine officers; the Naval Academy and the various NROTC units. In 1976, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) allocating the Marine Corps a 16 2/3 % share of the NROTC scholarships.¹²

A Navy and Marine Corps agreement consummated in July of 1972 allocated a similar share of the senior class at the Academy.¹³ This number was not a guarantee, however. The Marine Corps had to “attract” its share of potential Marine officers. Accordingly, the Marine Corps assigned some of its best officers to these billets. The focus for the NROTC program assignments was the historically/predominantly black colleges and universities. This was in conjunction with the Navy’s effort to increase its visibility on black college campuses and increase its black officer population (consistent with the Vance Memorandum of May 1967).

A total of five predominantly and historically black colleges and universities were selected for NROTC unit locations:¹⁴

- Florida A&M University (activated in 1972)
- Prairie View A&M University (activated in 1968)
- North Carolina Central University (activated in 1972)
- Savannah State University (activated in 1971) and;
- Southern University (activated in 1971)

Two additional areas of focus for assignments having to do with the accession of new lieutenants were Officer Candidates School and The Basic

School. In 1972, two black officers were assigned to duties in those areas; Major Clay Baker to Officer Candidates school as Executive Officer and Captain Archie Joe Biggers to The Basic School as an instructor. Both Marines were infantry officers and veterans of the Vietnam War, where Biggers was awarded the Silver Star for his heroic actions.

PASSING THE WORD

Consistent with its need to get the word out and develop target markets (in the communities and on the college campuses), the Marine Corps initiated discussions with various community, social and professional organizations. The National Association for The Advancement Colored People (NAACP), The National Newspaper Publishers Association and The Montfort Point Marine Association were among the organizations contacted ¹⁵

Relationships of this nature would later prove to be a critical element in the Marine Corps attempts to publicize its efforts, generate interest and applicants; and get valuable “grass roots” level response on the effectiveness of its strategy. Years later this idea would be expanded, producing varying degrees of success.

Assessing the Results

Logically, the effectiveness of the Marine Corps' new initiatives had to be assessed. How effective were these initiatives in attracting new black officers? The Marine Corps progress can be discussed in view of two areas: accessions and composition.

Accessions

In 1970, the initial goals for the recruitment and accession of black officers were established in a CMC memorandum which prescribed “minority” accession goals for the five-year period, 1972 through 1976. Accessions is defined as the number of second lieutenants commissioned each year as a result of fulfilling pre- commissioning training and/or educational requirements. Prior to 1972, there were no black officer recruiting and accession goals established as targets or measures of success. However, in 1971 the Marine Corps did access forty-eight black officers. Table 2.1 contains accession results from 1972 through 1976.¹⁶

Table 2.1 Black Officer Accessions (1972- 1976)

FISCAL YEAR	'72	' 73	'74	'75	'76
TOTAL ACCESSION GOAL:	1924	2325	1900	2275	2175
BLACK GOAL:	100	100	100	100	100
% OF ACCESSION GOAL:	5.2	4.3	5.3	4.4	4 6
TOTAL ACCESSIONS:	1763	2262	1927	2367	2193
TOTAL BLACK ACCESSIONS:	103	101	152	138	141
% OF TOTAL ACCESSIONS·	5.8	4.5	7.9	5.8	6.4

The information contained in Table 2.1 reveals that the Marine Corps was successful in meeting its black officer accession goals from 1972 through 1976; however, a number of subsequent developments affected future attainment prospects

In October 1976, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) levied a formal requirement for yearly “minority” officer accession goals. In 1977, the Department of Defense authorized the Marine Corps to include Hispanic accessions in its total minority accession goal calculations.¹⁷

Marine Corps “minority” officer accession figures for 1977 through 1979 reveal that the Marine Corps failed to reach its combined black and Hispanic accession goals for the remainder of the decade.¹⁸ (See Table 2.2)

Table 2.2 Minority Officer Accessions (1977- 1979)

FISCAL YEAR	‘77	‘78	‘79
TOTAL ACCESSION GOAL:	2312	1850	1903
MINORITY GOAL:	185	174	174
% OF ACCESSION GOAL.	8 0	9.4	9.1
TOTAL ACCESSIONS:	2022	1873	1919
TOTAL MINORITY ACCESSIONS .	145	143	126
% OF TOTAL ACCESSIONS .	7.2	7.6	6.6

Notes

¹ Minority numbers reflect black and Hispanic accessions

² No information available on the basis for determining the minority goals

Composition

In 1970, blacks comprised 1.3 percent of the Marine Corps officer population in the grades of O-1 through O-10.¹⁹ That percentage reflected about 300 officers in an officer corps of approximately 23,000. In 1971, the total number of officers decreased to 19,905 officers; with that reduction, black representation decreased to approximately 1.2 percent. Among a total of 234 black officers, the highest grade represented was lieutenant colonel. Five black women were also among that number; the highest rank was that of Captain. Table 2.3 contains black officer demographics as of 30 June 1971.²⁰

Table 2.3 Black Officer Population (As of 30 June 1971)

Rank	Total(All Races)	Total Black	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O- 10	2	0	0 0	-
O-9	9	0	0.0	-
O-8	25	0	0.0	-
O-7	38	0	0.0	-
O-6	742	0	0.0	-
O-5	1,638	3	0.2	-
O-4	3,328	11	0.3	-
O-3	5,609	59	1.1	1
O-2	6,039	121	2 0	2
O-1	2,485	40	1.6	2
Total	19,915	234	1.2	5

As the Marine Corps progressed through the 1970's, its Post- Vietnam War manpower reductions reflected a decrease in its officer Corps strength of approximately 3,000 officers during the period June 1971 to June of 1979. Despite this reduction in total officer strength, the black officer population grew percentage-wise and in actual numbers. Overall, black officer composition rose from 1.3 % in 1970 to 3.7 % in September of 1979.²¹ This percentage increase reflected modest gains in the total number of black female officers and increases in the number of black male officers in the field grade ranks (O-4 to O-6). Conversely, only one black female was in the field grade rank structure. That distinction belonged to Major Gloria Smith, a supply officer. Smith was a native of Rockville, Maryland.

Although the Marine Corps was showing signs of progress, it still lagged behind the Army (6.9 %) and the Air Force (4.3 %). Only the Navy's black officer composition (2.2%) was lower.²² Table 2.4 contains the black officer population as of 30 September 1979.²³

Table 2.4 Black Officer Population (as 30 September 1979)

Rank	Total (All Races)	Total Black	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O-10	2	0	0.0	-
O-09	7	0	0.0	-
O-08	23	0	0.0	-
O-07	33	0	0.0	-
O-06	576	1	0.2	-
O-05	1495	7	0.5	-
O-04	2668	36	1.3	1
O-03	4722	195	4.1	3
O-02	4446	259	5.8	8
O-01	2962	135	4.6	3
Total	16, 934	633	3.7	15

Military Occupational Specialties

Although the Marine Corps doesn't promote its officers based on occupational requirements, it is a widely held belief that the maximum opportunities for command assignments and promotions, reside within the combat arms occupational fields (i.e., aviation, infantry, artillery and armor), as opposed to combat support and combat service support fields. The latter two occupational fields include specialties such as communications, combat

engineering, supply, maintenance, motor transport and logistics. A review of September 1979 occupational field data revealed that over one-third (approximately 36 percent) of the black officers on active duty in September 1979 were in combat arms occupational fields, versus over one-half (approximately 54percent) of the white officers. The combat service support occupational fields contained about 18 percent of the black officer strength versus fifteen percent for white officers. The combat support occupational fields comprised the remaining 46 percent of blacks, versus 31 percent for white officers. The occupational fields absorbing the bulk of the combat arms disparities were aviation, infantry, artillery and armor.²⁴

Highlights of the Decade

The 1970's were an era that can best be characterized as the beginning of monumental change in the racial composition of the Marine Corps' officer corps. Nearly fifteen years after the integration of its ranks and twenty-two years after the commissioning of the first black Marine officer, the Marine Corps began to reap modest benefits from the various officer recruiting and accessions implemented ten years or so earlier. Black officers were beginning to be assigned to billets previously assigned to white officers. Assignments such as Officer Selection Officer in predominately white populated areas; The Basic School; Naval Test Pilot; and command at the

battalion and squadron levels. The most significant historical highlight of the era was the selection of Colonel Frank E. Petersen as the first black Marine to the rank of Brigadier General in February of 1979; two-hundred and four years after the birth of the Marine Corps. This event represented a significant first for the Marine Corps.

While the seasoned veterans were making their presence felt, a young Lieutenant and graduate of Hampton University made history in the area of marksmanship. In May 1974, First Lieutenant Charles H. Thorton, Jr. became the first black officer to earn the Distinguished Marksmanship Badge. In 1978, he added to his noteworthy accomplishments when he achieved another first by earning the Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge.

Quality Begets Quality

The officers assigned to the various “groundbreaking” officer accessions assignments during the 1970’s were proven performers with excellent records. Among them were Marines such as Major George Walls, Major Clay Baker, Major Clifford Stanley, Major James May, Major Edward Green, Captain Del Costin, Captain Fred Jones, Captain Charles Bolden, Captain Ramon Johnson, Captain Jim Allen, Captain Solomon Hill, Captain Archie Joe Biggers, Captain Bill Jones, Captain Dave Saddler, Captain Gill Robinson, Captain Al Whittaker, Captain Clarence Willie, Captain Tony

Ambrewster, First Lieutenant Hank Ferrand, First Lieutenant Chris Baker, First Lieutenant Al Davis and many others. All of the officers mentioned here (and a number of others not mentioned) went on to have highly successful careers in the Marine Corps and in the civilian sector. Among them are active duty, retired and former Generals, Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, astronauts, educators, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs and corporate officers. The point to be made here is two-fold: the quality of officers entering the Corps who were selected to pioneer change and the demonstrated level of commitment of the Marine Corps to assign some of its finest officers to challenging assignments.

Notes for Chapter 2

1 George Q Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press), 1993) p 209 The McNamara Project called for the enlistment of 100,000 enlistees under revised enlistment standards. The downward revision qualified a sizeable number of individuals who previously failed to meet the original enlistment criteria; black enlistment failures dropped by 20 percent, while white failures fell by 11.7 percent. Between 1966 and 1968 240,000 new enlistees qualified under the new standards. 37 percent were assigned to combat arms specialties.

2 Interview of January 17, 1998, with Major John McGowan, USMC (Ret.). A former enlisted man and infantry officer, McGowan discussed his experiences as a platoon commander assigned to a unit located at Camp Pendleton, CA.

3 Donnelly, Ralph and Shaw, Henry, *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps History and Museums Division, 1973) p 72.

4 Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance's memorandum of May 8, 1967 for Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze. The subject matter was Negro Officer Procurement Programs. In the memo Vance extols the efforts of the Navy Department regarding the increase in Naval Academy enrollment, but expresses his concern over the content of Negro officers in the Marine Corps and the Navy compared to other Services, describing it as distressingly low. He suggests that a minimum numerical objective should be to double the number of Negro officers.

5 Interview of BGen George H. Walls Jr., USMC (Ret.), on February 10, 1998. Walls was one of the first African-American officers in the Marine Corps assigned to Officer Selection Officer duty. He was assigned to the 4th Marine Corps District located in Philadelphia, PA. One of his subsequent assignments was as Marine officer instructor at North Carolina Central University.

6 Interview of Colonel Kenneth Berthoud, USMC (Ret.), on February 11, 1998. Berthoud pioneered the Marine Corps efforts to increase the number of Black officers.

7 Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas D. Morris' June 9, 1967 memorandum. It was a follow-on memo to Vance's memo approximately one month earlier. Morris mentions a previous discussion on the subject with a Major General and an Admiral who suggests that establishing NROTC units at Negro institutions could be accomplished with possible alterations to present standards and procedures.

8 Interview of Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen, USMC (Ret.) on February 13, 1998. Petersen discusses the early efforts to increase the number of black officers. He also mentions a paper he wrote as a Captain while attending Amphibious Warfare School. The paper's focus was increasing the number of black officers. Some of the ideas from the paper were implemented while he was assigned to the Special Advisor's billet.

9 The rationale for and the location of the MOSO's were extracted from several conversations with officers who were assigned to Officer Selection Officer duty during the 1970's Retired LtCols Anthony Ambrewster and Clarence E Willie, former 1st Lt Henry Ferrand, and Generals Petersen and Walls

10 Interview of LtCol Anthony Ambrewster, USMC (Ret) on February 11,1998 Ambrewster was among the first black officers assigned to Officer Selection Officer duty He cited a concern of those officers regarding the promotional and/career impact of being assigned out of their military occupational specialties and away from the Fleet Marine Force so early in their careers According to Ambrewster, those concerns were addressed satisfactorily by LtCol Petersen while he was in the Special Advisor's billet

11 Interview of LtCol Edward L Green, USMC (Ret) on February 12,1998 Green was a former aide-de-camp to General Samuel Jaskilka, a former Assistant Commandant Green was also Special Advisor and played a pivotal role in the Marine Corps' early efforts to increase the presence of black officers

12 Bureau of Naval Personnel memorandum Pers-211/tsb, Series 211/213 of March 1,1976 discusses the allocation of NROTC scholarships between the Navy and Marine Corps Enclosure (1) is the actual MOA executed by General R H Barrow and Admiral James D Watkins

13. On July 15,1972 the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Deputy Chief of Staff (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) executed the original agreement covering the accession of Naval Academy graduates in the Marine Corps A follow-on memo executed on April 22, 1983 modified the initial agreement capping the accessions at one-sixth of the graduating class Also, several other provisions of the original agreement were revised and/or clarified

14 A Chief of Naval Education and Training Command information paper discusses the history behind the establishment of NROTC units at black colleges The paper cites the Vance Memo of May 1967 as the precedent setter In 1970, the CNO set a goal of 10 percent of all units would be on HBCU campuses by 1975 In addition to the five original units, two additional units were opened as consortiums in 1982 and 1987, the units were Norfolk State University and Morehouse College, respectively Norfolk State formed a consortium with Old Dominion called the Hampton Roads (VA) Consortium Morehouse consorted with Georgia Technical University to form the Atlanta (GA) Consortium

15 Interview on February 13,1998 with LtGen Frank E Petersen, USMC (Ret)

16 Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division file document containing officer accession results from 1970 through Fiscal Year 1983 The file document was labeled *Minority Accessions by Fiscal Year* and contained information on and analysis on the Marine Corps minority (i e ,black) accessions, and future accessions requirements It is

important to note that minority accessions prior to FY 77 included blacks only, however, when referring to blacks, the term minority was used

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 Warren L Young, *Minorities and the Military A Cross-National Study in World Perspective* (Westport, CT London, England. Greenwood Press, 1982) p 227

20. Defense Manpower Data Center *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Rank, Sex and Ethnic Group* DMDC-3035. 6/30/71

21 Ibid 9/30/79

22 Ibid

23 Ibid

24 Defense Manpower Data Center. *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Occupation, Sex, and Ethnic Group* DMDC-3690 September 1979

CHAPTER 3 - THE EFFORTS OF THE 80'S

Following a decade characterized by a host of initiatives that were catalysts for significant change to the officer corps, at a cursory glance the 1980's seems to pale in comparison to the 1970's. After making considerable progress in improving the racial diversity of an officer corps which now looked different from that of the late 1960's and 1970's, the Marine Corps' officer recruiting and accessions focus expanded, encompassing other challenging areas such as replenishing the inventory of lawyers and pilots. These requirements broadened the focus of the officer recruiting strategy but diluted the concentrated efforts to increase the number of black officers and officers from other underrepresented race/ethnic groups. Several of the initiatives that were implemented to enhance racial understanding and race relations and to improve the racial diversity of the officer corps were discontinued as a result of an improved racial climate. Among those were:

- The Human Relations Training program
- The Special Advisor for Minority Affairs billet
- The Minority Officer Selection Officer concept
- The Commandant's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs

Fortunately for the Corps, the racial climate improved significantly. The enhanced state of race relations could rightfully be attributed to a number of factors; among which were enlightened leadership and an increase in

understanding and tolerance among Marines of different races. Also, a more racially diverse officer corps contributed to that state of affairs. Despite this progress, the issue of black officer recruiting and accessions continued to be a challenge to the leadership and commitment of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps entered the new decade with less than optimal results from its officer recruiting and accessions strategy. During the 1977-1979 period, the Marine Corps failed to attain its' expanded "minority" (i.e., black, Hispanic, and other racial/ethnic groups combined) officer accession goal. The early 1980's followed the same trend of nonsuccess in the area of "minority" accessions. Although the total numerical officer accession requirements for the period 1980 through 1982 were accomplished each year (at times exceeding 100 percent), the race/ethnic accession goals for the same period weren't attained. The total number of black and Hispanic officers assessed in each of those years ranged from approximately 60 to 70 percent of the yearly goals.¹ Perhaps indicating a sign of a trend reversal, accession statistics for FY 83 reveal that 121 (6.4 percent) of the 1,890 lieutenants accessed in that year were black; for black officer accessions, this represented a goal attainment in excess of 125 percent.²

In addition to the continued emphasis on black officer accessions, the Marine Corps expanded its focus to include career development and progression. Areas such as military occupational field selection, Basic School performance, assignments, promotions, and performance evaluations were added to the many issues requiring examination and analysis. This was to ensure black officers (and other underrepresented groups) were receiving the same opportunities for advancement.³ For example, in 1986 the Marine Corps completed the first phase of the *Black officer Career Development Plan*. This plan focused on a number of professional development areas that were the focus in the 1970's and the eventual objects of repeated emphasis in the years ahead. Among those areas were Basic School performance, increasing the number of role models in the entry level screening and training programs, and increasing the number of black Lieutenants in combat arms occupational fields.⁴

Forging Consensus

The accessing of new officers is the foundation for increasing racial diversity in the officer corps. A related matter that emerged as a major point of discussion in the effort to attract more black officers was the selection of a suitable benchmark upon which the black officer accession goals should be

based. There were a number of divergent views. Among the factors considered were

- The black enlisted Marine composition percentage (approximately 20% in 1985)⁵
- The percentage of minority males possessing a bachelor's degree (based on the 1980 U.S. Census, approximately 12.1%)⁶
- The percentage of blacks in the national population (based on the 1980 U S. Census , approximately 8.5 %)⁷
- The percentage of new accessions required to achieve black officer strength equal to 12% of the total officer corps in 1992 (factoring in historical black officer retention rates)

During the 1983 to 1989 time frame, the Marine Corps employed a modified version of two of the above as a basis for establishing race/ethnic accession goals. As a start point, black officer accession goals were based on the percentage of black males possessing a bachelor's degree; that figure was adjusted to consider retention rates for each group. The ultimate goal was to build an officer corps wherein the total of blacks, Hispanics and other race/ethnic groups comprised 11 percent of the total number of unrestricted officers by the beginning of fiscal year 1992.⁸ That methodology for determining accession goals resulted in "minority" officer accessions equaling 11 percent of the total yearly accessions: 6 percent blacks, 3 percent Hispanics and 2 percent other race/ethnic groups.

Department of the Navy Interest

During the 1983-1985 period, the Department of the Navy developed an interest in the racial composition of the officer rank structures of the Navy and the Marine Corps. That interest generated the assignment of two officers to the staff of the Secretary of the Navy for the purpose of tracking g the efforts of the Naval Services.⁹ The Marine Corps assigned Lieutenant Colonel Clifford Stanley to this billet. Stanley's official title was Marine Corps Aide to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and Special Assistant for Officer Programs. As a result of the Marine Corps' efforts to attract black Midshipmen Stanley was assigned to the Naval Academy in the mid- 1970's teaching leadership and psychology.

Implementing New Strategies

Intent on increasing the number of black officers and regenerating the momentum of the early 1970's, under the leadership of three successive Commandants (Generals Robert R. Barrow, P.X. Kelly and Alfred M. Gray), the Marine Corps implemented two major initiatives:

- The addition of "minority" officer recruiting billets in the 6th and 8th Marine Corps Recruiting Districts
- The assignment of race/ethnic category recruiting and accession goals

Both initiatives revived the long term focus and emphasis of the black officer recruiting and accessions effort

The “minority” officer-recruiting billet was officially designated the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement (AMOP) and was occupied by a black Captain. Two recruiting districts were selected for location of the AMOP billet; the 6th Marine Corps District headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia and the 8th Marine Corps District headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. These districts were selected based upon their black college student populations. The job of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement was to assist Officer Selection Officers throughout the district primarily in their black officer recruiting efforts. Through this initiative, the Marine Corps began to target and canvass black churches, fraternities and sororities to assist in getting the word out regarding commissioning opportunities and for potential applicants. The first two officers to serve in the billet were Captain David Jones, a supply officer (Atlanta) and Captain W. Clyde Lemon, a combat engineer (New Orleans). Lemon developed a Minority Recruiting Action Plan that provided guidance and ideas for accessing and developing the target markets. The plan is still in use today by Officer Selection Officers nationwide. The results achieved as a result of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement initiative were directly

related to the support and leadership provided by the commands and the intended utilization and employment of the AMOP. The encouraging results achieved in the 8th District were a direct result of the support rendered by Major General Jarvis Lynch (USMC, Ret.), the District Director and Colonel John Juul (USMC, Ret.), the Assistant Director for Personnel Procurement. The AMOP concept was utilized from 1983 through 1989.

The second major initiative that positively affected the black officer recruiting efforts of the 1980's, was the implementation of race/ethnic category recruiting goals. Colonel Robert Lewis (USMC, Ret.) generated this idea. Lewis was the Director of the 9th Marine Corps District headquartered in Kansas City, Kansas. The concept involved the assignment of officer recruiting "quotas" (a generic recruiting term with no racial connotation) to each Recruiting District for black, Hispanic and "other" ethnic groups (i.e., Asian- Americans, etc.), based on the demographics of each district's college population and other qualitative and quantitative factors.

The method of allocating numerical black recruiting quota allocations to each District was developed by the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), encompassed the following factors:¹⁰

- Historical black accessions data by service
- Local recruiting conditions

- The geographic distribution of college entrance examination test scores
- Estimates of the available qualified population (based upon tests scores of 1000 and higher on the SAT and 45 and higher on the ACT)

This method of computing officer candidate recruiting quota was implemented in November 1989; prior to then, officer-recruiting quotas were assigned on the basis of white and “minority applicants”. The CNA study allocated the largest black percentage share to the 6th Marine Corps District (Atlanta, GA) at 28.6 percent. The District’s territory included the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina. The second highest allocation went to the 4th Marine Corps District (Philadelphia, PA) at 21.6 per cent. Its area included the states of Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The smallest share was allocated to the 12th Marine Corps District headquartered in San Francisco. The South and Southwest regions of the country reflected a 13.1percent share assigned to the 8th Marine Corps District, headquartered in New Orleans; Louisiana and Texas were among its areas of responsibility.

The impact of this change caused the Officer Selection Officers to work harder at canvassing, prospecting and qualifying potential applicants, but this method of “quota” assignment intensified the focus on black officer recruiting and increased the number of black officer program applicants

In addition to the foregoing major initiatives several other concepts were implemented to augment the general “ minority” recruiting effort.

Some examples are.¹¹

- The assignment of newly Basic School trained black and Hispanic lieutenants to temporary Officer Selection Officer(OSO) duties for 14 day increments to assist permanently assigned OSO’s in their prospecting efforts for "minority" candidates
- The development of officer program advertisements featuring black officers
- The targeting of press releases towards minority campuses and communities highlighting the accomplishments of minority officers

Underlying the various initiatives, two General Officers provided critical leadership, and guidance to the black officer recruiting effort, Brigadier General Carl E. Mundy, Jr. and Major General Jerome G. Cooper Mundy (a former Officer Selection Officer and future Commandant), the Director of the Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division, provided top-level attention and support to the black officer recruiting and accessions issue in the form of personnel and resources. The Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement concept was implemented while he headed the Personnel Procurement Division. Cooper, a pioneer in his own right, (a reservist and future Director of the Personnel Procurement Division) consistently and vocally brought the black officer recruiting and accessions inequities to the attention of several Commandants.

Assessing the Results

Accessions

The Marine Corps' recruiting efforts from 1983-1989 reflected a 23 percent decrease in new lieutenant requirements (1890 to 1458), accompanied by a corresponding decrease of approximately 25 percent in black officer accessions (121 in FY 83 to 90 in FY 89). Black officer accession goals for six years of that seven year period were set at 6 percent of the yearly accessions goals.¹² (See Table 3 1)

Composition

Black officer composition reflected a forty percent increase in the number of black officers from 1980 to 1989, increasing from 627 to 880. During the same period, the total officer corps increased by 8.7 percent from 16,974 officers to 18,466 officers. The increase in black officers represented a net gain of over two hundred and fifty officers, averaging twenty five per year during the ten year period.¹³ Of historical significance, was the addition of a black General officer to the Marine Corps officer ranks in 1980; the first since the birth of the Corps some two hundred and five years earlier. (See Table 3.2)

Table 3.1 Black Officer Accessions (1983-1989)

FISCAL YEAR	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89
TOTAL ACCESSION GOAL:	1890	1544	1443	1563	1364	1542	1458
BLACK GOAL:	95	93	87	94	82	93	87
% OF ACCESSION GOAL:	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
TOTAL ACCESSIONS:	1890	1544	1443	1563	1364	1542	1458
TOTAL BLACK ACCESSIONS:	121	103	91	80	77	88	90
% OF TOTAL ACCESSIONS	6.4	6.7	6.3	5.1	5.6	5.7	6.2

Table 3.2 Black Officer Population (As of 30 September 1989)

Rank	Total	Total Black	% age of Total	Black Females
O-10	2	0	0.0	-
O-9	8	0	0.0	-
O-8	25	0	0.0	-
O-7	35	0	0.0	-
O-6	642	9	1.4	0
O-5	1,625	38	2.3	0
O-4	3,226	141	4.4	6
O-3	6,192	284	4.6	19
O-2	4,110	255	6.2	10
O-1	2,601	153	5.9	16
Total	18,466	880	4.8	51

Occupational Field Distribution

The emphasis placed on increasing the number of black officers in the combat arms fields (i.e., infantry, artillery, armor and aviation) in the early 1980's produced modest gains in the aviation and ground combat arms fields. These particular areas were targeted for a number of reasons. First and foremost, those specialties represented the ethos of the Marine Corps; therefore, the best opportunities for command and promotion were in those areas. Secondly, the Marine Corps believed it was important to have role models in those fields for the benefit of its enlisted Marines. Occupational field distribution statistics for the September 1979 to September 1989 period revealed that the number of black pilots increased from 35 in 1979 to 76 in 1989; this represented a net gain of just over three black aviators a year. In an aviation component that totaled nearly 4000 pilots in 1989, black officers represented slightly fewer than two percent of that number. Statistics for Hispanic pilots reveal a similar distribution, totaling fifty-four officers; eleven less than the total of blacks.¹⁴

(See Table 3.3)

Table 3.3 Marine Corps Pilot Demographics by Race (As of 30 September 1989)

Race/Ethnicity	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Fixed Wing Fighters & Bombers	1082	11	7	8
Other Fixed Wing	424	7	6	7
Helicopters	2391	48	41	41
Totals	3897	66	54	56

Ground combat arms occupational specialties (i e., infantry, artillery and armor) presented a similar situation The net gain for the same ten year period, reflected 3 officers per year, totaling 201 blacks of approximately 4800 officers; this represented about 4 percent of ground combat arms officers, while Hispanics represented approximately 3 percent.

In 1989 black officers were 4.8 percent of the officer force while Hispanics officers were 2.2 percent.¹⁰

Signs of Change Emerge

Accession and composition statistics indicated that much work was yet to be done to achieve the organizational goals articulated in the Marine Corps' its yearly Equal Opportunity Assessments. However, the Marine Corps began to show some indications that perhaps black officers would be afforded the same opportunities for success as their white counterparts. Several significant strides were made in the areas of promotions and assignments.

After being selected for advancement to Brigadier General in February 1979, Frank E Petersen was advanced to Major General and Lieutenant General in May 1983 and June 1986, respectively. Adding to a long list of personal "firsts", Lieutenant General Petersen also commanded the Marine Corps Combat Development Command. During his tenure as Commanding General, he was convening authority for perhaps two of the most highly publicized courts-martial in the history of the Marine Corps; the Sergeant Clayton Lonetree espionage trial and the racially charged Corporal Lindsey Scott sexual assault proceedings. In August of 1987, by virtue of his date of designation as a naval aviator, the General was designated as the "Gray Eagle"; the senior aviator on active duty in the entire Department of Defense. Petersen retired in July 1988.

Another significant accomplishment was achieved in the field of aviation during the 1980's when Major Charles Bolden was selected as an astronaut and subsequently qualified as space shuttle flight pilot. A Vietnam veteran and former test pilot, Bolden's first space mission was in 1986 aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia.

While two of the Marine Corps' aviation pioneers were charting new waters, throughout the 1980's a number of ground officers in the combat arms, combat support and combat service support fields were tearing down the barriers to command infantry units, supply and combat service support units. Among those officers were Lieutenant Colonels John Moffett and Henry Reed commanding infantry units, while Lieutenant Colonel George Walls commanded Wing Engineer Support Squadron 17. In the combat service support arena, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Manning and Colonel Fred Jones commanded the 3rd Supply Battalion and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Support Group, respectively. In addition to these stellar officers commanding at the battalion, squadron and group levels, the 1985 Marine Corps Equal Opportunity Assessment indicated that black officers represented five percent (62) of all commanding officers in the Marine Corps and nearly four percent (32) of executive officers ¹⁵ In 1985, black officers represented 4.4 percent (816) of the Marine Corps' officer force.¹⁶

Absent among the number of company and battalion commanders however, were aviation unit commanders. This was a clear indication that there was work yet to be done

In the supporting establishments and posts and stations of the Corps, change was also evident as groundbreaking assignments were made at the historic Marine Barracks at 8th and I and at Headquarters, U. S Marine Corps. In the summer of 1980, history was made when Major Clifford Stanley was assigned as Parade Adjutant of the ceremonial unit that performed in front of thousands of Americans in the evening parades held on the grounds of the barracks, which was also the home of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Stanley was assigned to that coveted position as a result of his professionalism, performance and knowledge of the intricacies of ceremonial drill.

At the headquarters level in the officer-recruiting arena, in July 1989 a black officer was assigned to head the Marine Corps' national officer recruiting and procurement efforts. Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a former Officer selection Officer and Assistant for Officer Procurement in the 8th Marine Corps District achieved that distinction. Davis also became the first officer in the history of the Marine Corps to serve in an officer-recruiting

billet at every level (i.e , station, district and national) with this assignment Davis served in that assignment until July of 1992.

In the command arena of recruiting, Major Willie Oler, an infantry officer and former Sergeant, became the first black officer to command a Marine Corps Recruiting Station when he assumed command of Recruiting Station Long Island, New York in June of 1981

While progress was being accomplished in the active duty component, the Marine Corps Reserve also showed signs of change with the advancement of Jerome Gary Cooper to the rank of Brigadier General. Cooper, an infantry officer and Vietnam veteran was also the first black infantry officer to lead an infantry unit in combat and the first black officer to command a Marine reserve unit. He was advanced to the rank of Major General in June of 1988. Cooper also served as the Director of the Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division while on active duty from mid June 1988 until October 28, 1988. During that period of service, he was responsible for the Marine Corps enlisted and officer recruiting operations.

Collectively, these “firsts” in assignments, promotions and personal achievements were certain signs that the Marine Corps was indeed beginning to level the playing field for all. Further, these officers were only

a few of the many who possessed the professionalism, motivation and desire to excel, if given the opportunity.

Notes for Chapter 3

- 1 Headquarters U S Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division file document containing officer accession data for Fiscal Years 1970 through 1983 The file document was labeled *Minority Accessions by Fiscal Year*
- 2 Headquarters U S Marine Corps (Code MR0A) Officer Accessions Report for Fiscal Years 1983 through 1990 The report was labeled *Annual Minority Officer Accessions (As of 30 Sep 90)*
- 3 Headquarters U S Marine Corps *Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY86* Executive Summary, p 3
- 4 Ibid p 3
- 5 Headquarters U S Marine Corps *Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY 84* p 1-3
- 6 Ibid p 2-1
- 7 *Statistical Abstract of the U S* (Washington, D C , U S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1997) p 18
- 8 Headquarters U S Marine Corps *Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY 84* p 2-1
- 9 Interview of BGen Clifford L Stanley on March 4, 1998 Stanley discussed his assignment and duties pertaining to black officer accessions
- 10 Peter F Kostuk, *Minority Officer Recruiting Goal Allocations* (Alexandria, VA The Center for Naval Analyses, 1989) pp 1-5
- 11 Headquarters U S. Marine Corps *Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY84* p.2-4,
- 12 Ibid p 2-2, Headquarters U S Marine Corps (MROA) Officer Accessions Report Fiscal Years 1983-1990
13. Defense Manpower Data Center *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Rank, Sex and Ethnic Group* (DMDC-3035) 9/30/80 & 9/30/89
- 14 Headquarters U S Marine Corp *Military Equal Opportunity assessment FY 85* p 4-2
- 15 Defense Manpower Data Center *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Occupation, Sex and Ethnic Group* (DMDC-3694) 09/30/79 & 09/30/89

16 Defense Manpower Data Center. *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Rank Sex and Ethnic Group* (DMDC-3035) 9/30/85

CHAPTER 4 – THE EFFORTS OF THE 90's

The first half of the 1990's was a period of significant accomplishments for the Marine Corps and African-American Marine officers. However, it was also a time that generated issues that resembled the ongoing debates in the civilian sector regarding equal opportunity, affirmative action and racial diversity. Despite that, several catalysts produced a number of significant achievements that cumulatively render the decade as one of the most memorable since the enlistment of the Montfort Point Marines. Those catalysts represented the interests of individual Marines, the civilian leadership of the Military Department, and the General Officer leadership of the Marine Corps

The focus on racial issues generated during the decade was the result of a combination of issues, initiatives and events. Among them were:

- The 29th Commandant's Task Force on Equal Opportunity
- Officer Candidates School attrition and the filing of a class action suit by a former Asian –American officer candidate alleging discrimination
- The inclusion of an Ethnic Diversity Seminar in the 1993 General Officer's Symposium
- A segment on African-American officer discrimination in the Marine Corps featured on the CBS television show 60 MINUTES
- The publishing of numerous articles in professional journals and Service news sources regarding the recruiting, assignment and discrimination against "minority" Marine officers
- The convening of Quality Management Boards on OCS attrition and the career development of Marine officers

- The implementing of race/ethnic category recruiting goals established by the Center for Naval Analyses Study of 1989
- The implementing of race/ethnic category accession goals

The progress attained during the 1990's was preceded by costly lessons learned in several areas; effective communications and the impact of the media were among them. Also, the Marine Corps addressed the existence of bias and institutional discrimination; two issues that were previously categorized as perceptions and misconceptions instead of stark realities. The leadership of the Marine Corps at various levels, comprised of officers of all races banded together to confront a problem that had the potential of dividing the Marine Corps along racial lines.

A Microcosm of Society

An expression often used by sociologists and military historians when referring to the military depicts it as "a microcosm of society." When examining the varied issues confronted by the Marine Corps during the 1990's that characterization is quite appropriate. While federal, state and local governments were addressing the rationale for racial and gender diversity and the relevance of affirmative action, the Marine Corps' efforts to remedy its inequity among the officer ranks began to be publicly and privately debated and questioned by some former, retired and active duty

Marines. A common theme (reminiscent of unsubstantiated comments during earlier attempts at integration), linked efforts aimed at leveling the playing field with the lowering of mental aptitude entrance standards and the erosion of quality in the officer corps.

The Marine Corps' first attempt at addressing the race and equal opportunity issues of the decade came in the form of a Commandant's Equal Opportunity Task Force convened in May 1990 by the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alfred Gray. Among Gray's reasons for convening the Task Force was the result of "the pervasive perception among minority officers that they are not being afforded an equal opportunity to compete for promotion."¹ Also, some among the General Officer leadership of the Marine Corps were of the same opinion. Major General Gary Cooper was certainly one of them. Included in the areas Gray vectored the Task force in the direction of were recruiting and accessions, promotions, professional military education, occupational field imbalances and assignments. Gray, a former enlisted Marine and a highly effective no nonsense leader and communicator, provided the results of the Task Force and his commander's intent in a "White Letter" to all General Officers, commanding officers and officers in charge. The areas targeted for

improvement related to increasing the presence of African-American officers were:²

- Assignments(to include recruiting , schools and staffs)
- Promotions (to include representation on promotion boards and promotion board precepts addressing the effects of bias and the disparate assigning of “minority ” outside of their occupational fields)
- The support of conventions of organizations such as the NAACP, NNOA and Montfort Point Marines Association, to include General Officer attendance at annual conferences and conventions)
- The implementation of progressive specific race/ethnic category recruiting and accession goals

Further examples of the discord on race and equal opportunity that existed can be found in several articles that appeared in publications primarily catering to Marines. One of those publications was the *Marine Corps Gazette*, a popular privately funded periodical with extensive Marine officer readership and institutional backing. The public debate on the Corps’ efforts, ensued with the publishing of an article in the April 1993 edition of the *Gazette* entitled, An Equal Opportunity Misconception and the Accession /Selection Paradox. The author (a white Captain assigned to the Headquarters as a Manpower Analyst) asserted that the Marine Corps’ policy of recruiting “minorities” who score between 115 and 119 on the Armed Services Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) destined them for failure.

In the article, the author states:

“ There exists a paradox in the Marine Corps’ equal opportunity philosophy with respect to officer accessions and selections (promotions). The paradox is simply that the Corps accesses the “best” qualified within race/ethnic/gender group guidelines, however, it selects only the “best” qualified for advancement to the next highest grade, irrespective of race/ethnic/gender group. The consequence of these two policies, is what I like to call the accession/selection paradox, is the crux of an equal opportunity misconception.”³

Regardless of the validity of its thesis, the article ignited a firestorm of debate that ultimately would be underscored in the national media

A companion article published in the same issue, written by a former white Officer Selection Officer addressed the issue of “minority” recruiting from an organizational development and human resources perspective. In

Minority Officer Procurement and the OSO, the author asserts “ the Corps’ minority officer recruiting process is seriously flawed, and if the Corps is to get the best, some changes are needed ”⁴ In December 1993, the *Gazette* published a response to both articles, written by the Head of the Officer Procurement Branch, Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds B. Peele (an infantry officer, former enlisted Marine and the second black to head the Corps’ officer recruiting operations). In Quality Minority Officer Recruitment: An Issue? , Peele addressed the history and relevance of the ASVAB test; the issue of quality as compared to test scores; and the concerns of those tasked with the job of recruiting officer candidates.

Peele maintained:

“ There is not a quality problem in officer recruiting. The officers that are recruited possess the requisite skills to be competitive, beginning with their experience at The Basic School. It is essential that this “quality” issue be critically evaluated in light of the dangerous misconceptions and stigmas that may develop when reading the two articles published in April, especially as they relate to the EL [electronic score] Composite and the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.”⁵

The final written salvos on this subject were fired from the *Gazette* in March 1994. Another article (this time written by a Hispanic officer) and a host of letters were published. The letters were written by a racially diverse group of active duty, retired, and former Marines, supporting both sides of the issue. The article written by the Hispanic officer, entitled The Minority Controversy: Enough is Enough, conceded that racism did exist in the Marine Corps. In doing so, the author also stated:

“ The Marine Corps is a fighting machine, not a social experiment in political correctness. I really doubt the majority of Americans want this fine organization to mirror society.”⁶

In addition to the articles featured in the *Gazette*, the *Navy Times*, another popular privately funded and widely read military oriented publication featured two pieces that addressed the existence of institutional bias in the Marine Corps. In June 1992, the *Navy Times* featured a commentary and an article; each one written by black Captains questioning the sincerity of the Marine Corps’ efforts to eliminate bias and to create an organizational

climate of equal opportunity for all Marines. In Is the Corps Keeping Blacks from Its Senior Officer Ranks? The author questions what he describes as the Marine Corps' historical lack of leadership when dealing with racial matters. He assesses the impact on the recruiting effort as follows:

“ When a young black college graduate looks for examples of blacks who have had successful careers as officers in the military, Army General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, represents a service that concerns itself with racial matters without sacrificing quality. As that same individual looks to the Marines, the service is lacking in representation and willingly sacrifices quality black officers ⁷

One week later, another article appearing in the *Navy Times* addressed the issue of institutional bias. In Bias and the Corps Looking for Leadership, the author believed:

“ The Marine Corps is laden with institutional racism, intentional or unintentional, that is slowly and systematically destroying the morale of every common Marine ⁸

In response to the latter piece published in the *Navy Times*, Brigadier General Leslie M. Palm, the Marine Corps' Assistant Deputy chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs wrote a commentary that appeared in the publication. In a commentary entitled Corps is Working Hard to Eliminate Racism, Palm agreed with the writer's premise that the Marine Corps was not a perfect institution, but strongly disagreed that it was laden with “institutional racism”. Palm also provided a synopsis of recent and future

initiatives that were implemented to ensure equality of opportunity for all Marines. In closing, Palm pledged

“ Our ultimate objective is be a leader in “minority” representation at every level, not only among the services, but also as an institution in American society I assure [the Captain], Marines everywhere and your readers that the Marine Corps’ leadership is committed to ensuring every Marine is given an equal opportunity to achieve goals and to be recognized both by assignment to positions of increasing responsibility and by selection for promotion”⁹

The articles and commentaries added another perspective to the ongoing debate The foregoing sampling of opinions and emotions provide not only a glimpse of the divergent views, but perhaps a basis to equate the Marine Corps (and the other services) to the larger society when such volatile and misunderstood issues as race, gender and equality of opportunity are addressed.

Well aware of the potentially negative impact of the race issue, the General Officer leadership of the Marine Corps in the persona of Lieutenant General Charles C. Krulak (a future Commandant) confronted the problem. In May 1993, while assigned as the Commanding General of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, (located in Quantico, Virginia, the Crossroads of the Marine Corps and the cradle of officer training and education) hosted a two day forum on “minority” and racial issues. The session was attended by officers permanently assigned to the area and those

attending the various levels of schools at Quantico; The Basic School, Amphibious Warfare School and the Command and Staff College.

Participants spanned the rank and race/ethnicity spectrums. Among the recurring items and issues discussed were:

- Promotions and the promotion process
- School selection
- Command selection
- Affirmative action and Equal Opportunity Efforts
- Long range plans to increase minority officer representation

The results of this forum revealed that the lack of cultural diversity and racial understanding were the root causes of a number of the problematic issues confronting the officer corps. There was a consensus that the Marine Corps needed to increase the number of “minority” officers. There was also a unanimous agreement among all in attendance that the lowering of standards, or “special” treatment for minority officers (real or perceived) was not in the best interest of the Marine Corps or the individual officer.

Among the follow- on actions resulting from the forum was the chartering of a Quality Management Board tasked to review the processes pertaining to the professional development of Marine Officers.

The Total Quality Approach

Prior to the Quantico forum, in March 1992, the Marine Corps launched a review of its Officer Candidates School (OCS) and officer recruiting operations as a result of "minority" attrition rates and an allegation of race/ethnic discrimination made by an Asian-American officer candidate. The charter of the OCS Quality Management Board tasked its members with studying the process of accessing and screening officer candidates in the Marine Corps to determine " why with an apparent increase in the quality of officer candidates, (a) OCS attrition has increased and (b) in particular, among "minority" and women candidates, where attrition exceeds the OCS average, what factors influence this variation." ¹⁰ The composition of the Board, chaired by Colonel David Vetter, consisted of Colonels (O-6) who held assignments in the various areas being examined. Initially, the Board was comprised of white males only. Some months later, a black officer, Colonel James Booker, an artillery officer and former battalion commander, was assigned to the Board upon being assigned to the Marine Corps Headquarters.

Historically, the Marine Corps was accustomed to high OCS attrition rates. An entry level training and program known for its screening tough and demanding physical regimen coupled with the mental challenges, OCS

had a long standing reputation for “weeding out” the faint of heart. Race was not a factor .. or, was it? Attrition data for the five-year period 1989 to 1993 revealed that black officer candidate attrition ranged from 1 percent to 12 percent higher than the attrition rates for white officer candidates.¹¹ (See Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 Selected OCS Race/Ethnic Attrition Rates

	Fall (FY93)	Winter (FY93)	Fall/Winter Avg FY (89-92)
Black	20	30	44
Hispanic	40	43	40
White	19	21	32
Other	25	50	47
Total	21	24	34

The information included in Table 4.1 isn't intended to be a complete or conclusive representation of minority attrition rates; there have been instances wherein black officer candidate attrition was lower than the overall attrition rate. Exit surveys conducted at OCS revealed that candidates attributed their failure to either inadequate physical preparation or a lack of focus. Further, a variety of physical injuries were contributing factors.

Among the many issues examined by the Vetter OCS Quality Management Board was the relevance or statistical correlation of

standardized test scores on success or failure at OCS. In this area the Board discovered there was no correlation. It concluded:

" in several years, the average Scholastic Aptitude Test Score (SAT) and/or Grade Point Average (GPA) for OCS failures were actually higher than [those of] for successful candidates." ¹²

The Vetter Board completed its deliberations in May of 1993. Among the recommendations the Board made to the Commandant were ¹³

- That more highly qualified "minority" and female officers be assigned to the OCS permanent staff
- That the Marine Corps Affirmative action Plan be reviewed and updated with consideration given to developing a more comprehensive and aggressive plan
- That the mentoring concept, under the broader dimensions of a leader's basic responsibilities, be further developed and implemented, [however,] these programs should not be designed exclusively for "minorities"
- That the Marine Corps raise the minimum officer EL score requirement to 120, but only after an expanded enlisted commissioning program with a special emphasis on "minorities" is in place
- That the Marine Corps demonstrate institutional awareness, recognition, and sensitivity to the fact that minorities face certain "special challenges" that need to be addressed
- That the Marine Corps undertake a high priority coordinated effort with the overarching goal of improving the opportunities of "minorities" and women for success. .. Process Action Teams to develop specific plans of action in the following areas:
 - Performance Evaluation System
 - Officer Assignment/MOS Patterns
 - Commissioning Programs (civilian and enlisted)
 - Education and awareness programs relating to cultural diversity/ "special challenges"
 - Marine Corps Affirmative Action Plan

While the positive intent of that Quality Management Board was widely recognized, there were some questions and concerns regarding a number of the conclusions which generated the recommendations. For example, the implication or meaning of “minorities face special challenges.” Second, did the recommendation to expand commissioning opportunities for “minority” enlisted Marines imply that the traditional sources for civilian officer candidates were no longer viable? Lastly, does the expansion of opportunities for “minority” enlisted Marines, restrict opportunities for whites? These are but a few examples of the questions and concerns generated by the Board’s recommendations. However, there were some valuable opportunities for improvement uncovered that had the potential of improving the organizational climate for equal opportunity.

Brigadier General Leslie M. Palm chaired the follow-on Quality Management Board. Palm, was a recognized leader on issues of equal opportunity and mentor to a number of African-American officers. This Board learned a valuable lesson from its predecessor; racial and gender diversity among its membership was achieved at the outset.

Chartered on 2 July 1993, the Palm Board was tasked with “analyzing the processes by which we [the Marine Corps] access, train, educate, assign, augment, promote and professionally develop our officers with the overarching goal of improving the opportunities of minorities and women for success.”¹⁴

Among the criteria for a successful career included attaining the rank of Colonel (O-6).

The Palm Board's six areas of emphasis reflected those that were recommended by the Vetter Board and comprised the core of the Process Action Teams. Later in its deliberations, the Board combined the efforts of the commissioning program teams and added two areas of emphasis: the swimming requirements at the Basic School and mentoring. The ultimate objective of the Board was to produce a *Marine Corps Campaign Plan on Minority Issues* by 1 October 1994.¹⁵

The Campaign Plan published 17 March 1995, was labeled *Operation Order 1-95 (Campaign Plan to Increase Diversity Within The Officer Corps of the Marine Corps)*. It represented the work of the various Process Action Teams and staff agencies at Headquarters, Marine Corps, the Marine Corps Recruiting Command and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command. The initial conclusions and recommendations of the Palm Board were "war-gamed" utilizing active duty officers and college students that included current officer candidates and potential applicants. The active duty officers included Lieutenants and Captains assigned to the operational forces at nearby Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. This racially diverse group provided comments and data that would prove to be useful in determining

the strengths and weaknesses of the Campaign Plan. The final plan presented to the 30th Commandant, General Carl E Mundy, was crafted to accomplish his vision and intent:

“ A Marine Corps that will access quality officers from different ethnic and racial groups who will be motivated to remain because they are proud to be Marines, and because they have the opportunity to establish a viable career, commensurate with their potential. __
We must attack this challenge. [The goal is] a Marine Corps which reflects the racial composition of America and that continues to treat all Marines fairly and affords them an equal opportunity for success.”¹⁶

The Campaign Plan reflected a three- phased approach; Phase I (Accessions), Phase II (Commissioning and MOS selection) and Phase III (Retention and Career Development). Among the tasks assigned to the supporting staff agencies and the Recruiting Command were. ¹⁷

- The implementation of an officer accession plan (*exclusive of Warrant Officers*) that yielded accessions totaling of 12 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic and 5 percent other race/ ethnic categories by Fiscal Year 2000
- A training and education plan to support the Commandant’s vision
- An analysis of the fitness report [performance evaluation] system to ensure it supported the Commandant’s intent

The Campaign Plan reflected a well-planned comprehensive approach to achieving the Commandant’s vision and intent. Although it represented nearly three years of concentrated effort, the real tasks lie ahead; a committed, well coordinated, focused attack on the impediments to

achieving an officer Corps numerically representative of the nation and free of racial bias and “glass ceilings”.

Enlightening the Leadership

In August of 1993, the yearly General Officers’ Symposium included a day- long seminar on the various racial issues that were being discussed Marine Corps wide. At the request of the Commandant, Major General Jerome G. Cooper introduced and moderated the discussion of a number of issues that were overdue for some frank discussion. Included in those issues were: ¹⁸

- Racial representation in the rank structure
- The findings and recommendations of the Quality Management Boards
- The Krulak “Minority” Officer Symposium
- The articles appearing in the *Gazette* and *Navy Times*
- Racial Diversity

In addition to the seminar, on a quarterly basis the Commandant provided his General Officer leaders with a book written by several widely read authors known for their views on subjects relating to race in America. Books by authors such as Roosevelt Thomas, Cornell West and Benjamin Hacker were included.

The seminar and the books helped to prepare the General officer leadership of the Marine Corps for their roles in implementing the numerous

initiatives that were developed. Also, they were sufficiently prepared to inform their subordinate commanders and to facilitate discussions in their commands.

Confronting A Crisis

Amid the efforts begun in the early 1990's intended to energize the black officer recruiting effort, a crisis ensued that not only had the potential of derailing the efforts to attract new officers, but also the efforts to inculcate the organizational ethos of teamwork, acceptance and mutual respect. On the heels of a bevy of events that re-opened the healing wounds of race and equal opportunity, (i e., the series of *Gazette and Navy Times* articles, the Quantico Forum, and the Yamashita Class Action Suit), now national television was the medium for surfacing the race and equal opportunity issue. This time however, the stakes were higher. Individual names, faces and reputations became part of the equation.

In late October 1993, the CBS television magazine show *60 Minutes* featured a segment on bias and discrimination against black officers in the Marine Corps. The pre-recorded segment featured a number of black company grade officers, a former black Marine officer turned Navy Pilot and one Hispanic female officer alleging that institutional bias and

discrimination against black officers existed in the Marine Corps. The official response of the Marine Corps featured its Commandant defending the allegations and responding to a series of frank, probing questions from the host of the show. During that exchange, the televised portion of General Mundy's response to a question regarding the performance of black lieutenants at The Basic School, portrayed him generalizing the lack of ability of blacks in the areas of swimming, marksmanship and land navigation. Mundy refuted the allegation and attributed the unfavorable characterization as comments taken out of context. The network stood by its assertions. The airing of that show reverberated throughout the active duty, reserve and retired communities and rekindled the firestorm on race and the lack of equal opportunity for black officers in the Marine Corps.

The comments attributed to Mundy were not consistent with the popularity and respect he enjoyed among black officers (and enlisted) and not indicative of his position on equal opportunity and increasing the number of black officers in the Marine Corps. Indicative of his support for the latter issue was his support of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement initiative during the Eighties. Despite the temporary setback caused by the *60 Minutes* episode, Mundy continued pursuing the initiatives that would improve the racial climate in the Corps and increasing the racial diversity in

the officer ranks. In response to the comments aired on the show, he immediately issued a text message to all Marines reaffirming his position on equal opportunity and laid out his plan for improving diversity and opportunities in the officer corps. Among the follow-on actions implemented by Mundy was the reestablishment of the Commandant's Special Advisor on Equal Opportunity Matters billet established in late 1960. The officer selected for the job was Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a battalion commander in the 2nd Force Service Support Group. A former infantry officer turned logistician, and former Head of the Marine Corps officer recruiting operations. Davis served in the billet from September 1993 to May of 1995. In addition to the Special Advisor billet, Mundy established a group of individuals from the civilian sector as an advisory and feedback mechanism for policies and initiatives pertaining to increasing racial diversity in the officer ranks. Referred to as the Diversity Interest Group, this body contained a mix of retirees, reservists, and civilians with backgrounds in academic, corporate and government personnel and leadership matters. Among the membership of the Group were some pioneers in the efforts of the Seventies; retired Brigadier General George H. Walls, Jr and retired Lieutenant Colonel Edward L. Green.

Another area of interest for Mundy was the organizational location and effectiveness of the Equal Opportunity Branch. In addition to his Special Advisor duties, Davis was tasked with heading an organizational development focused structure study, assisted by Mrs. DeAnna Sosnowski, a civil servant with an extensive background in officer recruiting and a Women's Executive Leadership Program graduate. The results of the structure study contained a number of recommendations that increased the relevance of the Equal Opportunity Branch.

Included among those recommendations were:

- Changing the organizational location of the Branch from the Human Affairs Division to the Manpower Policy Department
- Increasing the rank of the Branch Head to that of Colonel, vice Lieutenant Colonel
- Increasing the size of the staff
- Mandating a racially diverse staff with proven records of performance and competitiveness for future promotion
- Establishing and expanding the responsibilities of the Branch relative to the coordination and communication with other Headquarters staff agencies (to include Recruiting, Advertising and Public Affairs)

These recommendations served to increase the Branch's input on manpower policy and recruiting matters. Also, the latter recommendation was particularly important in the efforts to increase racial and gender in the officer corps. Also, it enhanced the quality of Marine Corps participation in the conferences and conventions of those identified as potential sources for

black applicants while establishing the presence of the Marine Corps in the various communities. Lastly, it presented an opportunity to integrate the specific goals and objectives of the Equal Opportunity Branch, the Public Affairs Branch and the Officer Recruiting Branch. The result was a synergistic, comprehensive organizational strategy for conference and convention participation.

Upon approval of the Commandant, the recommendations were implemented. Davis was tabbed to assume the Branch Head position in addition to his Special Advisor duties. He served in the billet until May of 1995.

Secretary of the Navy Interest

Shortly after the *60 Minutes* flap, the Secretary of the Navy, John H Dalton communicated his interest in improving opportunities for “minorities” within the Department of the Navy. In a 12 November 1993 memorandum to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Chief of Naval Operations, Dalton to “realize the Department’s goal of equal and maximum participation of minorities.”¹⁹ Secretary Dalton tasked the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs with heading the effort. In a follow-on letter to the Assistant Commandant and

the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Frederick F.Y. Pang established an Executive Policy Group to assess minority career progression and representation within the rank structure and all career fields.

The Assistant Secretary's focus included six familiar areas:²⁰

- Accessions
- Officer Commissioning Programs
- Assignments and Promotions
- Performance Evaluation System
- Retention
- Affirmative Action Plans

These areas of emphasis were very similar to those of the Palm Quality Management Board. Despite this, the Marine Corps was a major participant in the Department of the Navy's review that began in January of 1994.

Among the major directives issued as a result of the Executive Planning Group's findings were the need for a formal mentoring program and recruiting and accession goals that would produce an officer force that was racially reflective of the nation in the year 2000. The latter directive required the Marine Corps and the Navy implement officer recruiting and accessions plan that would yield 10 to 12 percent black, 10 to 12 percent Hispanic and 3 to 5 percent other race/ethnic categories by the beginning of the next millennium. This requirement became known as the "*12/12/5 Plan*". It didn't include Warrant Officer accessions.

Employing New Approaches

The decision to improve racial diversity in the officer corps by implementing several specific race/ethnic category recruiting and accession goals instead of a single collective "minority" category, mandated the requirement for an innovative supporting strategy.

The staff agency responsible for officer recruiting and accessions (MRO) was expanded to include a section whose primary area of focus was "minority " officer recruiting. The newly added section (MROM) developed strategies, tracked and analyzed "minority" application trends and provided advice and support to the Recruiting Districts and Officer Selection Officer teams. In addition, a training module was developed to provide market and prospecting expertise. The first officer to head the section was Major Keith Sewell, a former Officer Selection Officer. Sewell, a white officer was selected for this job because of his previous success in this area. His selection also proved to be of value in convincing a group comprised mostly of white males that race wasn't a limiting factor in the recruiting of African - American officer candidates. In short, it was the age old "I did it and so can you" theory at work.

Efforts in advertising and marketing would require tailoring to locate and appeal to the target market. This requirement was achieved by developing productive relationships with organizations and publications targeted towards the African - American college undergraduate and graduate markets. Headquarters staff agency coordination between Officer Recruiting, Recruiting Marketing, Public Affairs and the Equal Opportunity was the key to maximizing effectiveness.

Publications such as *Ebony*, *Black Enterprise* and *The Black Collegian* proved to effective print mediums for advertisements featuring African - American officers while extolling the benefits of becoming a Marine officer. The *Black Collegian* relationship was particularly effective in distinguishing the difference between service as an officer and that of an enlisted Marine. This point was of particular importance in the African -American community, because of the low percentage (in comparison to whites) of parents and other relatives who may have served as officers in the Marine Corps, or the other services. The *Black Collegian* regularly featured articles of African- American officers. Many of these officers were graduates of historically black colleges and universities. Also, the publication developed special edition calendars and proof source brochures to assist Officer Selection Officers in their recruiting efforts

Another opportunity to extend the appeal of the Marine Corps was developed through its advertising agency (J. Walter Thompson) with a well-known broadcasting conglomerate having nationwide African-American appeal. In 1991, the Marine Corps teamed with several well-known companies to co-sponsor the *American Urban Radio Networks Black College Football All- American Weekend*. This yearly activity linked the Marine Corps with excellence in sports and citizenship. Its participation was expanded by a Leaders to Leaders radio spots featuring African-American officers and the inclusion of a yearly Marine Corps leadership award to an athlete that best exemplified leadership in the classroom, the campus and the community. This relationship presented an opportunity to impact black colleges and universities and black college football nationwide

In addition to the relationships developed with the print and broadcasting media, relationships were developed and/or expanded with military and professional organizations such as The National Association of Black Engineers (NSBE), the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These mutually beneficial relationships which culminated with yearly national conference and convention participation, provided the Marine Corps

with an opportunity to expand its appeal, to publicize its needs for African-American officers and to develop sources for prospect leads.

Assessing the Results

The revamped recruiting strategy implemented by the Marine Corps was definitely a move in the right direction; however, the success of any good plan is always dependent upon its execution. A look at the results of four essential areas provides the basis for an analysis of the plan coupled with its implementation. Those important areas are accessions, composition, retention, occupational field distribution and command assignments.

Accessions

The Marine Corps, Affirmative Action Plan for 1988 and 1989, published 17 November 1988, established race/ethnic accession goals that placed black officer accessions at 6 percent per year from 1990 through 1992. Hispanic officer accessions were set at 3 percent while the total accessions for all other race/ethnicity categories ranged from 3.2 to 3.4 percent for the same three-year period. As mentioned earlier, the CMC Equal Opportunity Task established by General Al Gray, increased black accession goals to reflect 7.0 percent in 1991, increasing by two-tenths of a percent a year, reaching a goal of 7.8 percent in 1995. This requirement was published on 6 September

1990, in the Marine Corps Affirmative Action Plan (FY 91- 95). Accession goals were also increased for all other race/ethnic categories. The long-term implication of this move required that the Recruiting Service place more emphasis on accessions from its undergraduate programs. In the short term however, more accessions would be required from the enlisted and civilian source graduate programs (i.e , the Officer Candidates Course and the Enlisted Commissioning Program)

The first five years of the Nineties realized a decrease in the Marine Corps requirements for new lieutenants. Yearly requirements from 1990 to 1994, decreased by approximately 8.5 percent from 1404 to 1204. The resulting impact on the accessing of African -American lieutenants was yearly total accessions that never exceeded 100. Black officer accessions ranged from a low of sixty in Fiscal Year 91 to a high of 94 in Fiscal Year 94. In 1995 however, new lieutenant requirements nearly reached a level of 1500 officers. The result of this increase yielded 110 African-American lieutenants.²¹ (See Table 4.1)

In four of the six years of the 1990-1995 period, the majority of black officer accessions were from the Officer Candidates Course (OCC); the commissioning program available to enlisted Marines with college degrees and civilian college graduates who were not enrolled in the various

undergraduate commissioning programs. This was an indication that the Marine Corps was not tapping the full potential of its undergraduate Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) program, the Naval Academy (USNA), or the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC).²² (See Table 4.2)

Historically, of all the commissioning programs requiring attendance at OCS (OCC, PLC and NROTC), the OCC programs presented the lowest probability for successful completion (i.e , higher attrition rates). The various factors that contributed to that probability were age, motivation for joining and a lack of an opportunity for the structured mental and physical preparation regimen characteristic of the undergraduate programs.

Table 4.1 Black Officer Accessions (1990-1995)

FISCAL YEAR	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95
TOTAL ACCESSION GOAL:	1404	1305	1350	1026	1204	1479
BLACK GOAL:	84	91	97	76	92	115
% OF ACCESSION GOAL:	6.0	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.8
TOTAL ACCESSIONS:	1404	1305	1350	1026	1204	1479
TOTAL BLACK ACCESSIONS.	66	60	77	73	95	110
% OF TOTAL ACCESSIONS.	4.7	4.6	5.7	7.1	7.8	7.4

Table 4.2 Black Officer Accession Sources (1991-1995)

PROGRAM	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95
OCC	35	42	23	13	42
PLC	30	21	38	48	25
NROTC	22	10	16	12	10
USNA	03	14	14	17	09
ENL	10	13	09	10	14

Notes

1 Numbers reflect percentages and are rounded to the next whole number

2 ENL denotes enlisted commissioning programs

3 Figures include women

Composition

Between 1990 and 1995, the Marine Corps experienced a 12 percent reduction in its officer force (18,105 to 15,852). During that same period, the percentage of African -American officer representation increased from 4.6 percent in 1990 to 5.1 percent in 1995, despite a decline in the total number of African-American officers (834 to 801). Although the representation of African-American officers didn't equate to the percentage representation in society, there were some obvious signs of progress amid the statistics.

First, there were two General officers in the active component; this was a significant "first" in the history of the Corps. Second, from 1990 to 1995, the number of Colonels doubled to a total of eighteen. And, five African-

American women were among the Lieutenant Colonel population.

Somewhat less encouraging was the number of female African-American officers remained relatively stable during this five-year period (46 in 1990 to 43 in 1995). Table 4.3 contains African- American officer statistical data ²³

Table 4.3 African -American Officer Population (30 Sept 95)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>%age of Total</u>	<u>Black Females</u>
O-10	3	0	0.0	-
O-9	9	0	0.0	-
O-8	22	0	0.0	-
O-7	34	2	5.9	0
O-6	626	18	2.9	0
O-5	1,637	73	4.5	5
O-4	3,161	112	3.5	6
O-3	5,457	249	4.6	11
O-2	2,859	182	6.4	08
O-1	2,044	165	8.1	13
Total	15,852	801	5.1	43

Retention

A key component of the Marine Corps' efforts to racially diversify its officer force was its retention/augmentation efforts. The needs of the service (in regard to occupational specialty requirements) coupled with an officer's overall documented performance are the primary determinants of who is selected for augmentation. For example, in several years, pilots and lawyers applying for augmentation/retention enjoyed a selection rate of nearly 100 percent. In the broader context, several of the initiatives explored in the *CMC Equal Opportunity Task Force* and the *Palm Board* had a direct singular or combined impact on improving the augmentation/retention of black officers. Items such as mentoring, occupational field selections, the performance evaluation system, promotions and professional military were all relevant.

During the 1990- 1995 period, augmentation rates for black officers exceeded those of the total population considered during three years of that six-year period.²⁴ (See Table 4.4)

Table 4.4 Black Officer Augmentation Rates Vs. Total Population

	Applied	Selected	Selection Percentage
1990	43/714	11/248	26/35
1991	43/635	25/352	58/55
1992	67/1066	13/307	19/29
1993	68/1151	22/349	32/30
1994	70/1268	45/648	67/51
1995	53/1114	34/736	63/65

Notes:

1 Total population contains officers of all ranks who applied for augmentation, including females

2 The first number in each column is data for blacks, the second number represents data for the total population

Occupational Field Diversity

Racial diversity in military occupational fields became an organizational concern since the beginning of the Marine Corps' initial efforts to attract more African-American officers; the need for role models throughout the Corps coupled with increased opportunity for command were the prime determinants. However, for various reasons, the vast majority of African - Americans Lieutenants didn't consider the various Combat Arms fields when making their choices at the Basic School. The reasons were varied and understandable. Socially, the Vietnam experience did little to convince

the neighborhood “elders” or parents that the life of an infantryman improved the social status and treatment of black Vietnam veterans. Professionally, the general belief was that the infantry and other combat arms fields offered no marketable skills. Culturally, many of the black officers recruited in the early 1970’s were first generation college graduates. Their parents and grandparents desired a better quality of life for their offspring, one that was better than their lifetime. A college education that was later put to good use was considered the optimum way of achieving that. To some degree however, the Marine Corps bears some of the blame for the lack of African –Americans in the various combat arms fields. The pressures of finding and convincing the prospective young African-American that the Marine Corps is his calling, is certainly increased when the recruiting pitch dwells on the virtues and adventures of life as an infantry, artillery, or tank officer. Instead, the residual benefits of former Marine officer on a resume’ sounds more convincing.

The Palm Board addressed the occupational field diversity dilemma from several directions. African –American officers with varied occupational specialties assisted Officer Selection Officers as role models and proof sources. The Basic School staff was targeted as a priority organization for the assignment of African-American officers. In 1994, a mentoring program

was established that focused exclusively on African-American lieutenants. Staff officers were paired with the Lieutenants for the purpose of informing them of the opportunities available in combat arms fields, to include aviation. These combined efforts effected the beginning of significant change in the racial make-up of the various occupational fields. Table 4.5 contains the results of those efforts.²⁵

Table 4.5 Officer Combat Arms Representation

	'92	White/%	Black/%	Hispanic/%	Other/%
1Total in Occ Fld		9358/61.84	291/38.65	258/55.72	231/61.76
2Total Officers		15,132	753	463	374
3Total Aviators		4,867	99	117	123
	'93				
1		9276/58.10	309/33.59	273/51.03	235/57.60
2		15,965	920	535	408
3		4,785	108	124	123
	'94				
1		8964/56.37	332/33.57	285/48.22	233/54.44
2		15,871	989	591	428
3		4,700	120	137	120
	'95				
1		8569/56.75	282/29.3	247/40.65	194/46.52
2		15,098	968	609	417
3		4,134	77	85	92

Notes:

1 Total in Occupational Fields pertains to all combat arms specialties (i.e., infantry, artillery, armor, aviation, etc.)

2 Total officers pertains total number in the Marine Corps

Command Assignments

In addition to the increase of African –Americans officers in the field grade and general officer ranks, command assignments loomed as one of the most visible signs of change. Unlike the 1970's and the 1980's when the presence of African-American officers were in a few limited number of command assignments, the 1990's reflected a greater number of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels in command billets in many areas and occupational fields. In July 1992, the Marine Corps implemented a system of selecting Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels via a formal selection board. The command selection and screening process incorporated two interdependent activities; screening for probable command assignment based upon the needs of the Marine Corps and command slating. The slating process involved the actual assignment to specific commands. The major factor of consideration was an officer's documented record of performance. Prior to then, commanders at the battalion/squadron and regimental/group levels were normally selected by the Commanding General. The results of the command screening and slating boards for the period July 1992 through September 1995, reflected twenty five African –American officers in the ranks of Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel slated for command.²⁶ Those commands included armor, artillery, aviation, combat support, combat service support,

enlisted and officer entry level training/schooling, Headquarters and Service units, logistics and supply centers, and security forces. Included among those commanders were three African-American women; Lieutenant Colonels Doris Daniels, Gilda Jackson and Deborah Woodward

A number of other black Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels officers commanded units throughout the Marine Corps. In the infantry, Lieutenant Colonels John Boggs, Ronald Bailey, Walter G. Gaskin and Reynolds B. Peele commanded battalions. Artillery battalion commanders included Lieutenant Colonels Kenneth Dunn and Henry Gobar. Among the numerous combat service support commanders were Lieutenant Colonels Ronald S Coleman, Alphonse G. Davis, Marshall Hampton and Colonel James Smith. Support Group and Wing commanders included Lieutenant Colonels Ervin Rivers, Samuel Roberts and Willie Williams. In the supporting establishment, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Jackson commanded a security force, while Lieutenant Colonels Thomas Minor and Ernest Hickson commanded Inspector-Instructor units.

The educational backgrounds of all these officers included the Naval Academy and a number of historically black colleges and universities.

Significant Accomplishments

The Nineties was a period of many notable firsts for African-American Marines on the battlefield and in garrison. During Operation Desert Storm, a young Captain received the second highest award for combat bravery.

While serving as a Company Commander in the Light Armored Infantry battalion on 25 February 1991, utilizing his leadership and knowledge of coordinating arms, he led his unit in the decisive defeat of Iraqi counter-attacks. The heroics of Captain Eddie S. Ray and his Marines led to the capture of over 250 Iraqi soldiers during that ten - hour battle²⁷ Captain Ray was awarded the Navy Cross on 16 October 1991.

In addition to the heroics of Captain Ray and the other young company grade officers answering the call of duty during Operation Desert Storm, Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Fields, an infantry officer and graduate of South Carolina State University, gained prominence while commanding the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Marine Regiment.

In the 1st Tank Battalion, another black officer made history on the smoke filled battlefields of the Persian Gulf. Lieutenant Colonel Alphonso B Diggs attained the dual distinction of becoming the first black officer to command a tank battalion while leading that unit in combat.

Prior to those significant accomplishments occurring during the Iraqi hostilities, Colonel Clifford Stanley, an infantryman and fellow South Carolina State graduate, became the first African-American to command at the regimental level, assuming command of the 1st Marine Regiment on February 29, 1992

In June of 1991, the Marine Corps advanced Colonel George Walls to the rank of Brigadier General. With that promotion, Walls became the third African-American to attain the flag rank in the then 216-year history of the Marine Corps. Prior to his voluntary retirement to pursue his interests in the field of education, Brigadier General Walls commanded the 2nd Force Service Support Group from July of 1991 until his retirement in July of 1993. During his tenure as Commanding General of the Group, he was appointed as the Commanding General, Joint Task Force Operation GITMO, a humanitarian relief effort for Haitian migrants at Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba.

In August of 1994, Colonel Clifford Stanley added to his illustrious career when he became the fourth African-American to don the stars of a Marine Corps General. During his years as a Brigadier General, he served successively as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, (Manpower Plans & Policy) and as the Director of Public

Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps. Both of those assignments added to the growing list of significant “firsts” achieved by Stanley, a two-time recipient of early promotions; one to Colonel and the other to Brigadier General

In the aviation field, a Marine astronaut continued to make history while assigned to the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) Colonel Charles Bolden, a Naval Academy graduate and native South Carolinian, flew four space missions; three of which he commanded. Among his contributions while at NASA, were the Hubble Telescope experiment, Space Shuttle Atlantis, which included the Atlas-1 experiments and the joint U.S./Russian Space Shuttle Discovery Mission. Upon his return to the ranks of the Corps, his first assignment was to his alma mater as Deputy Commandant of Midshipmen. In September of 1995, Bolden teamed with Stanley for another significant milestone, when he was advanced to the rank of Brigadier General. Together, they became the first African-American General officers to simultaneously serve on active duty. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned as the Assistant Wing Commander of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

There were other areas of significant accomplishment in the Marine Corps occurring outside of the operational Fleet Marine Forces. In June of 1995, Officer Candidates School received its first African-American Commanding

Officer. Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a Graduate of Southern University and a veteran of three previous officer recruiting assignments served successfully in that billet until July of 1997.

In addition to Davis' assignment, a number of other "high visibility" assignments were occurring around the Marine Corps. For example, at the Marine Corps Headquarters, successive Commandants had African-American officers as Aide-de Camps on their personal staffs. Major Christopher M. Bourne, an infantry officer and early selection to the rank of Major, served during the tenure of General Mundy. Captain Partick R. Wilkes a former enlisted Marine was selected as an Aide –Camp for Mundy's successor, General Krulak. Staff sections at the Marine Corps Headquarters included African-American officers serving in recruiting, manpower (planning, policy and officer assignments), fiscal, administration and logistics. Collectively, these assignments reflected a significant change in assignment policies and practice and contributed to the Marine Corps efforts to demonstrate its long- term commitment to equality of opportunity for all Marines.

Notes for Chapter 4

1 Comments from a draft copy General Gray's White Letter on the subject of Equal Opportunity Goals and Objectives. The letter was drafted by the Equal Opportunity Branch, however, Gray edited the letter inserting language that reflected his style of leadership and ownership of the Equal Opportunity Task Force

2 Ibid.

3. Daniel Harrington, "The Equal Opportunity Misconception and the Accession/Selection Paradox", *The Marine Corps Gazette*, April 1993 p 38

4 Samuel J. Strotman, "Minority Officer Procurement and the OSO", *The Marine Corps Gazette*, April 1993. p 43

5 Reynolds B. Peele, "Quality Minority Officer Procurement: An Issue?", *The Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1993 p 48

6. Eugene A. Herrera, "The Minority Controversy. Enough is Enough", *The Marine Corps Gazette*, March 1994 p 37.

7 Marcus U. Hartman, "Is the Corps Keeping Blacks from Senior Ranks?", *The Navy Times*, June 22, 1992 p 29

8 Gerald H. Gaskins, "Bias and the Corps: Looking for Leadership", *The Navy Times*, June 28, 1992 p 32

9 Leslie M. Palm, "Corps is Working Hard to Eliminate Racism", *Navy Times*, July 19, 1993 p 31

10 The mission statement of the Officer Candidates School Quality Management Board chaired by Colonel David Vetter. *OCS Quality Management Board Report* June 1993 p 2

11 Ibid p 27

12 Ibid p 11

13. Ibid pp iv-iv

14 The mission statement of the Officer Career Development Quality Management Board (chaired by BGen Leslie M. Palm) as contained on page 1 of the Executive Steering Committee tasking letter 5000 over C061 dated July 2, 1993

15 Ibid p 5 The QMB Chairman's interpretation of the specific tasking relating to the Affirmative Action Plan generated an idea to develop *Operation Order 1-95, (Campaign Plan to Increase Officer Diversity)*

16 Marine Corps *Operation Order 1-95, (Campaign Plan to Increase Officer Diversity)*, p 2

17 Ibid pp 3-4

18 Marine Corps 1993 General Officer's Symposium Brochure, *Ethnic Diversity in the USMC*

19 Secretary of the Navy Memorandum for Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps, dated November 12, 1993 The subject matter was Enhancement Opportunity for Minorities The Secretary cites the significant progress made and the need to accomplish more The Secretary tasked the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Frederick Y Pang to review the Marine Corps and Navy programs to ensure maximum contribution of all

20 Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) letter dated December 10, 1993 to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Walter E Boomer This letter was a follow-up to Secretary Dalton's memorandum to the CMC and CNO It included a timeline projecting the review to last for 4 months, beginning the week of 3 January 1993 and ending during the week of 2 May 1993 Assistant Secretary Pang headed the review until his appointment to another position within DOD His replacement, Mr. Richard Danzig took a personal interest in the outcome of the review and had a particular interest in the mentoring aspect

21 Marine Corps Recruiting Command (OA) Officer Accession Data, Fiscal Years 1991-1997

22 Ibid

23 Defense Manpower Data Center. *Distribution of active Duty Forces by Service, Rank, Sex and Ethnic Group* DMDC-3035 9/30/95

24 Marine Corps *Military Equal Opportunity Assessments, Fiscal Years 1992 and 1995* pp 6-1 and 6-2

25. Marine Corps *Military equal Opportunity Assessments, Fiscal Years 1992 through 1994* pp 9-1 to 9-2, 9-1; 9-2 to 9-3, respectively. Also, Defense Manpower Data Center *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Occupation, Sex and Ethnic Group* DMDC-3694 09/30/95.

26 Naval Messages announcing the results and actual command assignments of the Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel Command Screening Boards for Fiscal Years 1993-1995

27 Information extracted from citation of Navy Cross awarded Captain Ray.

CHAPTER 5- THE FUTURE (PROSPECTS)

As the Marine Corps enters the new millenium, its prospects of increasing the presence of African –American officers are replete with challenges and opportunities.

The conditions fomenting a broad array of challenges include:

- In the post Desert Storm era, a 50 percent declination in the propensity of African –American males to join the military¹
- A general perception that military advertising is focused towards the economically disadvantaged, featuring the military as a rational solution to the lack of funds for college²
- A perception among some that civilian work world has better opportunities³
- A categorization of the military by some as a “fallback” position if other options don’t materialize⁴
- A combination of national economic trends requiring an elevation of educational standards⁵
- A rise in the average age of the population, accompanied by a reduction in the pool of young workers⁶
- A growth of predictions that question the competence and skills of new entrants into the workforce⁷

Despite the dire prognosis clouding the emergence of the new millenium, a number of forecasts for the future present opportunities for increasing the racial diversity of the Marine Corps, the other military services and the private sector. Those opportunities for enhancing racial diversity include:

- Blacks , Hispanics and other race/ethnic groups will be a larger share of the new entrants into the labor force⁸

- Black women will comprise the largest share of the increase of the non-white labor force⁹
- An increase in the percentage of black college males possessing bachelors degrees as compared to the 1980's¹⁰

It is quite obvious that the foregoing challenges and opportunities will in some fashion affect the various labor markets (and subsequently the economy). Similarly, these factors will affect the recruiting efforts of the military sector. The character and results of those singular and combined factors are depend upon the action taken to minimize the potentially negative outcome of the challenges and to maximize the potential benefits of the opportunities.

Enhancing the Prospects (A Few Recommendations)

The prescriptive solution for minimizing the potentially negative effects of the challenges and maximizing the promise of the opportunities, lie in a number of areas addressed by the Marine Corps during the last three decades. Those areas are recruiting and accessions, advertising and marketing, mentoring and equal opportunity education.

Recruiting and Accessions

Based on past results, trends and tendencies, the logical direction for the Marine Corps' officer recruiting efforts includes increasing output from its

undergraduate accession sources. The Platoon Leaders Class Program represents a service unique opportunity to counter the internships and summer job opportunities offered by corporate America.

Further, the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarships offers a definite motivation for the top all-around African –American high school students. Even more, the Naval Academy represents a pool of some of the finest African American talent this nation has to offer. The Marine Corps' targeted efforts to gain the interest of those Midshipmen prior to their First Class (senior) year will enhance the potential of maximizing the number of African-Americans under the current system

Our strategy to attract and recruit African-American women must include a method of discerning why the Marine Corps is not routinely considered as a viable career option. As of January 31, 1998, sixty nine African-American woman officers are on active duty in the Marine Corps, further, only one of those women is among the twenty-two African-American Colonels in the active component.

Lastly, the immediate requirement for numbers to satisfy near-term goals, and to lessen OCS attrition, should not be entirely focused on the enlisted accession sources. This over reliance tends to lessen the presence on campus afforded to the undergraduate programs and essentially cedes the

college market to corporations and the other military services. Smart prospecting coupled with effective supporting strategies and proper and comprehensive preparation for OCS, maximizes the opportunity for successful completion and an increase in accessions

Advertising and Marketing

The advertising efforts focused on African-Americans should reflect a strategy that includes the unique culture. Also, the perceptions about the Marine Corps that harbor thoughts of the lack of opportunity need to be addressed. The use of African-American role models and achievers featured in national and localized advertisements and commercials will contribute to self-actualization and increase awareness, potentially enhance the reputation of the Marine Corps correct misperceptions. Excellent opportunities abound in televised collegiate and professional sporting events and other venues featuring black excellence.

Finally, the marketing efforts of the Marine Corps should incorporate the relationships already existing with the various social and professional organizations to include fraternities, sororities, the NAACP, NNOA and others.

This comprehensive approach potentially positions the Marine Corps as the service of choice for those young African-Americans considering a career options as a military officer.

Mentoring

The benefits of a comprehensive mentoring effort can be realized as early as an individual is identified as a prospective officer program applicant. Pairing the potential officer candidate with an active duty or reserve officer who shares one or more common bonds such to include race, gender, hometown, fraternity, sorority and other interests can aid in influencing a variety of areas related to increasing the presence of African-American officers. Successful completion of OCS, acceptance of commissions, the proper mental attitude and focus for TBS, MOS selection and augmentation and retention are among those areas. The gender matching strategy could be particularly helpful in increasing the paucity of female African-American officers.

Equal Opportunity Education

The final area and perhaps most important to sustaining the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the long term presence of African-American officers is a progressive racial diversity education effort that will foster a paradigm shift.

African-American Marines no longer face the blatant acts of racial injustice suffered by Frederick Branch, Edgar R. Huff and other Montfort Point Marines. And, the racial problems of the late 1960's are remnants of the past. However, the Corps still has a need to inculcate a pervasive organizational attitude and atmosphere that doesn't equate efforts to ensure equality of opportunity and enhance the racial and diversity of its leadership as the lowering of standards and the erosion of quality. The thoughts and words of those who view African-Americans and others as individuals or groups facing "special challenges" and the objects of "paradoxical" actions shouldn't be adopted as the organization's official position on its timely and proper efforts to increase the presence of African –American Marine officers in America's Marine Corps.

Chapter 5 Notes

- 1 Susan G Berkowitz, Shelley Perry, Pamela Giambo, Michael J Wilson and Jerome D Lehnus *An In-Depth Study of Military Propensity Follow-up Interviews with 1995 Youth Attitude Tracking Study Respondents* (Arlington, Virginia. Defense Manpower Data Center, 1997) p1-1
- 2 Ibid p 2-5
- 3 Ibid p 2-7
- 4 Ibid p 4-19
- 5 William B Johnston and Arnold H Packer, *Work Force 2000, Work and the Workers for the 21st Century* (Indianapolis, Indiana Hudson Institute), 1987 p xiv
6. Ibid p 75
- 7 Ibid p 102
8. Ibid p 89
- 9 Ibid p 89

Conclusion

Today's Marine Corps can step forward and boast of a myriad of achievements in its efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers. There is still work to be done, but role models do abound. If "a picture's worth is one thousand words", then the photo featured on the cover of this history is truly an indication of progress. Today, there are four African-American General Officers in the Marine Corps; three in the active component and one in the Reserve component. Those officers (and a host of others from the same cultural background) are only a sampling of the talent and potential that exists. There are others like them who possess the potential to equal or exceed their achievements. The Fiscal Year 99 Colonel's command slate featured two products of historically black colleges and universities, as future commanders of an Artillery Regiment and a Marine Expeditionary Unit. In January of 1998, the first African-American woman in the history of the Marine Corps donned the rank of Colonel of Marines. In July of 1997, the Marine Corps honored its first African-American officer by dedicating a building in his honor and name at Officer Candidates School. The first African-American commander of OCS assisted him in cutting the ceremonial ribbon as a proud and tearful Marine

bride of the honoree said,“ I’m so grateful that the Marine Corps gave him his flowers while he still lives.”

Things are changing. Those young African-American Marine officers, the Lieutenants, the Captains, and the Majors have an abundance of role models to aspire to be like as they are poised to follow in their footsteps and make their contribution to and mark on the Corps. They only ask for and require an opportunity equal to that of their peers, who may or may not be of the same culture, economic or social status or educational background. Despite those differences however, they all share a common bond...MARINE! Not, however, all green. They are red, yellow, black, white and brown... different, but nonetheless, still MARINES.

SEMPER FIDELIS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Binkin, Martin and Eidleberg, Mark J. with Shexnider, Alvin J , and Smith Marvin M *Blacks and the Military*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982.

Cornish, Dudley Taylor *The Sable Arm Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1982

Gropman, Alan L. *The Air Force Integrates, 1945-1964*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1977.

Johnston, William B. and Packer, Arnold H., *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hudson Institute, June 1947.

MacGregor, Morris J. Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* Washington, D C.: Center of Military History, 1977.

Marmion, Harry A. *Selective Service. Conflict and Compromise*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968.

Millett, Allan R., *Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps* New York: The Free Press, 1980, 1991.

Moore, Brenda L., *To Serve My Country Black Women in the Military*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1996.

Moskin, Robert M., *The U.S Marine Corps Story*. Canada Little, Brown and Company, 1992.

Nalty, Bernard C., and MacGregor, Morris J., *Blacks in the Military, Essential Documents*. Wilimington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1981.

Shaw, Henry I. and Donnelly, Ralph W., *Blacks in the Marine Corps* Washington, D.C : History and Museums Division. Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.1975

Young, Warren L., *Minorities and the Military, A Cross-National Study in World Perspective* Westport, Connecticut and London, England: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy/Equal Opportunity. *Blacks in Defense of Our Nation*. Washington, D.C : Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

Articles

Green, Edward L “ Equal Opportunity”. *Naval Proceedings*. June 1974, Pp. 41-44.

Harrington, Daniel F. “An Equal Opportunity Misconception and the Accession/Selection Paradox”. *Marine Corps Gazette*. April 1993, Pp.38-42.

Herrerra, Eugene A. “ The Minority Controversy. Enough is Enough” *Marine Corps Gazette*. March 1994, Pp.36-37.

Kehrmeyer, Randall K. “ The Officer Candidate Class: A Myopic approach to 12-12-5” *Marine Corps Gazette* September 1997,Pp 38-40.

Moskos, Charles C. “ Success Story: Blacks in the Military”. *The Atlantic Monthly*. May 1986, Pp

Peele, Reynolds B. “Quality Minority Officer Procurement: An Issue?”. *Marine Corps Gazette*. December 1993, Pp. 48-50.

Strotman, Samuel J. “Minority Officer Procurement and the OSO”. *Marine Corps Gazette*. April 1993, Pp 43-44.

Studies

Kostiuk, Peter F , *Minority Officer Recruiting Goal Allocations* Alexandria, Virginia. Center For Naval Analyses, 1989.