The 93rd Division: A Victim of Domestic Politics, 1938-1945

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THE 93RD DIVISION: A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1938-1945

by

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ABSTRACT
THE 93RD DIVISION: A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1938-1945

Robert F. Jefferson
Old Dominion University, 1990
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The 93rd Division was an all-Negro unit that served in World War II. The formation and deployment of the unit was not planned but was the result of the Roosevelt Administration’s susceptibility to domestic pressure during World War II. The War Department’s lack of a comprehensive policy concerning Negro troops led to the Company K debacle of 1944 which reduced the unit to a combat support role for the remainder of the Pacific war effort. Furthermore, the outfit’s failures forced the Army to reassess its racial policies in the postwar era.

This study examines the War Department’s manpower policies and focuses on how they were altered by the Black press. Although the Army had developed plans for the employment of Negro units prior to the war, it allowed domestic politics to manipulate military strategy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would also like to thank Mr. Edward Boone and Jeffrey Accosta for their assistance at the Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives in Norfolk, Virginia. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Mindi Haugen and my colleagues at Old Dominion University, particularly Cindy Mays and George Delpozzo for all of the help they have given me. Finally, I thank my mother for her love and confidence expressed in so many ways and my wife, Lisa, who deepened my perspective and provided encouragement along the way.
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CHAPTER I

THE CONTROVERSIAL COMBAT RECORD OF THE NEGRO SOLDIER: 1866-1925

On 17 February 1944, the all-Black 93rd Infantry Division disembarked in the South Pacific. Scarcely two months later, Company K of the 25th Infantry Regiment was commissioned to patrol an area on the Bougainville Islands. The unit’s orders were to create a trail block in a strategic area of the islands. However, Company K reportedly panicked and fled to the rear due to mysterious circumstances. The incident was not unusual. This might have happened to any inexperienced troops committed to action in the jungle. Other units, such as the 32nd Division, had similar experiences but they were retrained and redeployed into combat.¹ The Company K debacle, however, destroyed the 93rd’s morale and damaged its credibility as a combat organization. As a result, the unit was relegated to garrison duties for the remainder of the war.

The Company K incident continued the historical debate concerning both the Negro soldier’s and officer’s combat record. Since their entrance into the armed forces in 1866, the Black servicemen’s record has been mired in

controversy. The 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry Regiments and the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry Regiments initially performed with distinction on the western frontier from 1869 to 1898. The outfits escorted settlers through Indian territory, guarded federal property from intruders, scouted Indian tribes for possible uprisings and repaired roads and telegraph lines. The high morale and pride among the men resulted in the lowest rates of desertion and alcoholism in the Army. In his annual report of 1889, Secretary of War Redfield Proctor told members of Congress that "there are now two regiments of infantry and two cavalry of Colored men, and their record for good service is excellent."

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2George F. Sanger, ed., The United States Statutes At Large (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1868), 14:332. Although the 39th Congress formally approved Public Law No. 181 on 28 July 1866 which incorporated Negro units into the Army, there were many debates on the issue of whether or not Negroes should be included in the post-Civil War Military Establishment. During the Senate and House of Representatives discussions, General of the Army Ulysses S. Grant and Senator Willard Saulsbury of Delaware opposed the creation of Negro troops. On 12 January 1866, though Grant initially favored the employment of Negro troops, he argued against the establishment of Black units because "they can perform no military duties which could not be less efficient than White men and they would be less efficient than White soldiers on the Indian frontier." On 9 July 1866 Saulsbury told House members that Negro enlistments "would be a stench in the nostrils of the people from whom I come." Congress, Senate, Senator Saulsbury of Delaware speaking against Public Law 181, 39th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Globe, (9 July 1866), (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe Office, 1866), 3667-8.

3Congress, House Executive Documents, Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1889-1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., no. 1, pt. 2, II, 5. Prior to World War II, Blacks served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War of 1848, the Civil War, the Indian Wars, the Spanish
Between 1869 and 1891, Black soldiers won fourteen Congressional Medals of Honor, nine Certificates of Merit, and twenty-nine orders of Honorable Mention. In 1898, Colonel Loomis H. Langdon claimed that the Negro soldiers "fully justified the action of the government in availing itself of their services." The period, thus, marked a high point in the relationship between the Negro soldier and the military establishment.

Buoyed by their early success on the western frontier, the Negro units, along with Black volunteer outfits, proved that they were first-rate soldiers in both the Spanish-American War and the Philippine War at the turn of the century. The 9th and 10th received many plaudits


from the press for their courageous exploits at Las Guasimas on 23 July, 1898. Quartermaster John J. Pershing, who served with the 10th Cavalry, claimed that "by relieving the Rough Riders from the volleys that were being poured into them from the Spanish lines, they may have saved lives." The unit earned the praise of First Volunteer Cavalry Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt who remarked, "I don’t think any Rough Rider will ever forget the tie that binds us to the 9th and 10th Cavalry." The 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry fought well in the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill. As a result, the Army awarded five Medals of Honor and 26 Certificates of Merit to Black servicemen for their valor in the Cuban war. In 1899, the regular Negro units, along with the other Black troops such as the 48th and 49th Infantry U.S. Volunteer units, helped defeat the Filipino rebels in the Philippines and were cited for bravery. The commander of the 48th Infantry U.S.


Volunteers, Colonel William P. Duvall, stated that "for the
ranks in either field or garrison, there was no better
soldier-material to be found than that which flourished in
the American Negro." 7

However, the Black servicemen’s status began to
decline after the Spanish-American War. Racism intensified
and events occurred that discredited Black soldiers. In
1901, Roosevelt, now Vice-President, qualified his earlier
stance on the record of the 9th and 10th Cavalry. Although
he praised the two outfits for their bravery, he now stated
that the Black units tended to "drift from the battlefield"
and were forced to return only after he threatened to use
his revolver. 8 Furthermore, he claimed that Negro troops
were "dependent upon the leadership of their White officers
for satisfactory performances." 9 In 1906, three companies
of the 25th Infantry were found guilty of firing upon

7 Colonel William P. Duvall to the Adjutant General,
Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 10 July 1898,
1780-1919, Record Group 94, Series no. 187, National
Archives, Washington, D.C.

8 Theodore Roosevelt, The Rough Riders (New York:
Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1904), 143-146. Roosevelt’s
negative account of Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill was
lambasted by critics. Presley Holliday, who served with the
Tenth Cavalry, claimed that Roosevelt made a slight error.
Presley charged that Roosevelt’s denigration of the Negro
troops was "uncalled for, uncharitable, and ungrateful." In
his recollection, Holliday stated that only when calls for
ammunition and to assist the wounded were made, did several
men volunteer for the duty. Johnson, History of Negro
Soldiers in the Spanish American War, 77.

9 Roosevelt, Rough Riders, 144.
citizens of Brownsville, Texas, and several members were dishonorably discharged. The incidents, along with the Houston Riots of 1917, both marked a decline in the Negro-Military relationship and cast doubt on the credibility of Negro troops.

Despite its apprehensions of the Negro soldier’s discipline and character, the War Department created the all-Negro 92nd and 93rd Divisions on the eve of World War I. The Army was influenced by the efforts of several Black

10"Discipline," Annual Report of Secretary of War William Taft, 1906, cited in Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, eds., Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents, vol. 3, Freedom and Jim Crow, 1865-1917 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977), 215-18. The Brownsville incident of 1906 was quite controversial. Six of the Blacks dismissed were Medal of Honor winners and thirteen had citations for bravery in the Spanish-American War. After Inspector General E. A. Garlington’s report of 4 October 1906, a congressional committee led by Senator Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio discovered that the alleged magazine clips found on the streets of Brownsville were expelled from either a Krag or Mauser Rifle, not the government issued Springfield. Furthermore, every weapon in the Fort Brown Armory was found clean on the morning after the affray. This evidence, however, was to no avail. Roosevelt’s edict was only overturned when the Army reduced the 25th’s charges from dishonorable to honorable after it admitted that the summary dismissal of the men was unfounded in 1972. For a detailed account of the debacle, see, John D. Weaver, The Brownsville Raid (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1970); and Anne I. Lane, The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction (New York: Kennikat Press, 1971).

11Report of Colonel G. O. Cress to the Commanding General, Southern Department, 13 September 1917, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 3:376. During a racial disturbance, a battalion of the 24th Infantry fired upon citizens of Houston, Texas on 23 August 1917. As a result, fifty-four men were court-martialed and nineteen men were hanged on 24 December 1917.
leaders. Within the Black community, interest in the war had evolved from those of indifference in 1914 to total optimism in 1917. Many Negro leaders believed that participation in the war effort was to ultimately yield the long-awaited rewards of racial equality, thus destroying the "Jim Crow" system. In 1918, Crisis Editor William Edward Burghardt DuBois typified this sentiment. He argued "first your country, then your rights." DuBois urged Negroes to "forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our White citizens and the Allied nations that are fighting for democracy."

Several months before Woodrow Wilson signed the resolution declaring war on Germany on 6 April 1917, various Negro political action committees were formed and demanded a greater role for Blacks in the war effort. On 9 January, 1917, a group of Negro leaders led by Attorney Giles B. Jackson testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Universal Training. The men urged that Blacks be included in the war mobilization and thought it necessary to establish a Negro military training school. In March, 1917, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People


(NAACP) demanded the establishment of an Officer Training Camp for Negroes. At meetings held during the week of May 12, the Central Committee of Negro College Men and the faculty of Howard University met with Secretary of War Newton Baker and Major John J. Kingman of the Army War College. The Negro leaders' presentation of a list of 1,500 names of Black Officer Candidates deeply impressed Baker. As a result, Baker authorized the formation of a Black officers training camp at Des Moines, Iowa, on 23 May.

Yet members of the War Department were totally divided on the issue of whether or not to raise Negro units for the newly-commissioned Black officers. On 31 August 1917 acting Chief of Staff P. D. Lochridge recommended that the officers be commissioned into engineer service battalions and stevedore regiments until Black infantry troops were organized. The graduates were to be assigned temporarily to the Officer Reserve Corps. Lochridge, however, voiced his belief that the need for such troops did not


17Night Letter, Adjutant General H. P. McCain to the Commanding General, Western Department, 22 May 1917, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:102.
exist at that time. Assistant Chief of Staff Tasker H. Bliss disagreed. On 3 September, Bliss pointed out that the Army inductions planned for that fall made the creation of Negro divisions necessary. Based upon the fact that 29,562 Negroes were to be called into the Southern National Army cantonments, Bliss felt that these men could be assembled into a combat division. He stated that the compartments of the outfit were to remain in their respective cantonments until the time came to send the division abroad. More important, Bliss realized the political implications of establishing such a unit:

The Colored race, knowing that a combatant division is being formed, will realize that in the non-combatant service, they are doing no more than their share as compared to similar White troops. Thus, there can be no reasonable cause for ill feeling.

Four days later, Baker approved Bliss's suggestions and stipulated that both Black combat and service divisions were to be formed. Hence, the 92nd and 93rd Divisions were created.

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18 Memorandum, Colonel P. D. Lochridge, Acting Chief of War College Division, for the Chief of Staff, 31 August 1917, Subject: Commissioning of Graduates, Officers Training Camp, Des Moines, Iowa, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:115.

19 Memorandum, Major General Tasker H. Bliss for Secretary of War Newton Baker, 3 September 1917, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:15.

20 Ibid.
Although plans had been made to include Negroes in the war, events occurred that shook the Black community's confidence in the military establishment. In 1917, Colonel Charles Young, the nation's highest ranking Black officer, was retired from the Regular Army due to high blood pressure. Many Blacks had hoped that Young’s appointment to a field command would enable him to train and lead Negro troops into combat. Furthermore, after a racial incident in Manhattan, Kansas, in March 1918, Officer Camp Commander, Colonel Charles C. Ballou, told Negro officers of the 92nd that they "could not force social equality down the throats of the white ninety percent." Ballou stated that the success of the division "is dependent upon the good will of the public" and that "White men made the division and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a troublemaker." None of the four veteran Black Regular Army regiments saw combat in the war. Instead, the outfits served at stations on the western boundaries of the United States. In September 1918, a battalion of the 368th Infantry Regiment,

21 Letter, Secretary of War Newton Baker to President Woodrow Wilson, 7 July 1917, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:111. In an attempt to convince the War Department that he was in good health, Colonel Charles Young rode on horseback from Ohio to Washington, D.C., but his efforts failed. Instead, Young served as a military advisor to the Adjutant General of Ohio. After the war, he served in the same capacity in Liberia and traveled to Nigeria where he died in 1922.

22 Headquarters, 92nd Division No. 35, 28 March 1918, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:277.
while assigned to the French First Dismounted Cavalry Division, ran from the enemy during a skirmish in the Argonne Wilderness. During the second attempt, the unit broke under heavy shelling and machine gun fire. As a result, the 92nd was relieved from the Argonne battle front.\textsuperscript{23} The lackluster performance of the unit was regarded by the Army high command as an abysmal failure and served to confirm the ineffectiveness of Negro units when commanded by Black officers. Although the War Department concluded that the 368th had no prior battle experience and was not expected to be an attacking force, the unit’s poor performance contributed to the negative perceptions of Black units in combat.\textsuperscript{24}

Whereas the 92nd had bitter experiences, the 93rd Division (Provisional) distinguished itself as a detachment of the French Army. Nicknamed the "hell-fighters" by their German counterparts, the 369th, formerly the Fifteenth New York National Guard, fought continuously from the Champagne-Marne operation of 15 July to the Meuse-Argonne offensive of 24 September 1918; a stretch of 191 days without rest. Colonel William Hayward, commander of the 369th, claimed that "the unit advanced steadily like seasoned veterans and never lost a foot of ground they had taken or let a prisoner


Although less celebrated, the 370th, 371st and 372nd successfully conducted operations in France. French Tenth Army Corps Commander Giraud Goybet stated that "never will the 157th Division forget the indomitable dash and the heroic rush of the Colored regiments." The French government later awarded the croix de guerre to three regiments of the division; the country's highest medal for valor in battle. It is quite possible that while the American Army were largely pessimistic about the 92nd's possible contributions, the French commanders expected and received positive results from the 93rd.

After the war, the Army appraised the performance of the Negro soldier in efforts to draw up plans for future mobilization. Critics simply focused on the 92nd Division since they were more familiar with the unit's services in the American Expeditionary Forces and ignored the 93rd's success. In March 1920, Colonel H. A. Smith of the Army Central Staff College sent questionnaires to officers who had served with Negro units. The purpose was to assess the use of Negroes in the United States military service.27

25 Scott, History of the American Negro in the World War, 278.

26 Ibid., 250.

The responses gathered were to be used in a training course entitled "The Organization and Training of Negroes" taught the next month.\textsuperscript{28}

Most of the officers who were asked to evaluate the officering, organization, training and performance of Negroes, felt that Black soldiers and officers were failures in combat and should not be organized into large units of divisional size. Ballou stated in his questionnaire that Negro soldiers and officers had tended to "drift to the rear" in battle and that the average Black infantryman "was a rank coward."\textsuperscript{29} He believed that these characteristics were due to environment and education. He felt that the Negro soldier was more dependent on White leadership because many Blacks were the children of people "in whom slavish obedience, superstitions, and ignorance were ingrained."\textsuperscript{30} Based on his assumptions, Ballou recommended against the organization of Negro combat units larger than a regiment.

In a similar vein, Lieutenant Colonel Allen J. Greer, who served as Ballou's Chief of Staff, negatively evaluated the Black officer's performance. Greer voiced his belief that the Negro officer had failed because "taken as

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., 123.

\textsuperscript{29}Army War College History of Negro Troops in the World War, 1917-1918, with appendices 14-18, 21-22, 26, 28-29, 31, 36-37, 40, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:297.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 323.
an average, his ignorance was colossal." According to Greer, White officers had to verify every report filed by Black officers for Negroes had "a total disregard of truth." Like Ballou, he claimed that Negroes were cowards and should be led by White officers. Under no circumstances should Blacks be formed into combat units. If political pressures forced the creation of Black units, Greer suggested that they should be organized entirely as service, labor, and pioneer troops. Somewhat more positive was the evaluation of Colonel Vernon A. Caldwell, who had commanded Negro troops in France. Caldwell felt that perhaps the Army's policy of forming large Black units was inefficient and that the more Negroes were segregated, the less they regarded themselves. Caldwell advised against the creation of Negro regiments and divisions. Instead, a company or battalion of Negro troops should be assigned to every White regiment.

31 Extracts from Reports of Officers, Subject: Negro Manpower, Responses of Lieutenant Colonel Allen J. Greer, Infantry, Chief of Staff, 92nd Division, 13 April 1920, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:329.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 4:330.

34 Memorandum, Colonel Vernon A. Caldwell to Assistant Commandant H. A. Smith, General Staff College, 14 March 1920, Subject: Use to be made of Negroes in the U.S. Military Service, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:342.

35 Ibid.
Each study conducted thereafter reflected the officers' negative appraisals of the Negro soldier. In May 1924, the Army War College conducted a new study entitled "The Use of Negro Manpower in War." Its faculty and staff were asked to respond to a new questionnaire which consisted of eight questions on the size, organization, and composition of Black forces. Out of the eighty-four questionnaires, seventy-six answered positively to the question concerning the use of Blacks in the Army. The majority of the respondents, however, were against the formation of all-Negro divisions. Fifty-nine emphasized the belief that the regiment should be the largest all-Black outfit organized in both the infantry and cavalry. Throughout the entire inquiry was the general thought that the history of Negro divisions constituted an unbroken record of failure.

In the summer of 1925, General Robert Lee Bullard's memoirs appeared in newspapers throughout the country. Bullard had commanded the Second Army in France during the war and had observed the 92nd Division in action. He believed that the unit was hopelessly inferior and useless

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36Course at the Army War College, 1923-1924: Miscellaneous Instruction, 7 May 1924, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:352.

37Memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel, W. C. Sweeney for the Commandant, Army War College, 30 August 1924, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:355.
in combat. Bullard pointedly remarked that the 92nd’s formation was the result of politics and advised against the use of Black servicemen in combat. He warned "if you need combat soldiers, and especially if you need them in a hurry, don’t waste your time upon Negroes."\(^{38}\)

On the basis of these responses, the Army War College issued a report entitled "The Use of Negro Manpower in War" on 30 October 1925 which announced the results of the questionnaires and made conclusions. Written by Commandant H. E. Ely, the report recommended that the Army:

1. Organize in the first months of an emergency, no Negro combat units higher than a battalion.
2. Attach Negro battalions to some higher unit for operation.
3. Have Negro battalions operate beside White regiments as a technique of arousing friendly rivalry and increasing racial pride.
4. Emphasize that the formation of Negro battalions are desirable because their failure in combat would be less disastrous than that of a regiment.\(^{39}\)

In reaching its conclusions, the Army War College Study claimed to be a sincere attempt both to appraise the Negro soldier’s efforts in World War I and to predict the contribution of the Black population in any conflict. Yet, it resulted in an indictment against the use of Black soldiers in combat. The study never considered the exemplary record of the more established Negro units. Its findings reflected


the social attitudes of the period and formed the constructs for other military studies with similar recommendations in the interwar period.\footnote{The President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, \textit{Freedom to Serve} (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 47.}

This thesis will examine the social pressures which forced the Roosevelt Administration to create the 93rd Division. I will then analyze the units’ training and the social climate that caused its premature deployment to the South Pacific theater. Lastly, I will view the outfits’ performances in both the South and Southwest Pacific areas to see whether the organization was given another chance to redeem itself in combat. The impact of the War Department’s decision to form the 93rd reverberated throughout the remainder of the Pacific war and the post-war period.

An investigation of the 93rd is significant, for the unit’s formation and activities received scant attention from the general Army histories. Ulysses Lee’s work on the Army’s employment of Negro troops during World War II was brilliant in scope and gave a brief narrative of the outfit’s combat record.\footnote{Ulysses Lee, \textit{The United States Army in World War II, Special Studies: The Employment of Negro Troops} (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966).} However, although he acknowledged the social climate of the period, Lee downplayed both the major influence that the Negro community had on the military establishment in the creation of Black divisions and their
deployment. Furthermore, he ignored the 93rd's unique contribution to the Pacific Theater. Kent R. Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley's survey generally covered the War Department's creation of segregated divisions, but failed to include the Army's policies toward Negro troops.42 Ray S. Cline's study described the reorganization of the War Department and the duties of both the War Plans and the Operations Divisions in great detail.43 But Cline disregarded the department's role in the ordering of Negro troops into action. John Miller's critical investigation of the Bougainville Operations scarcely emphasized the significance of the 24th Infantry's experience in 1944.44 The outfit's satisfactory performance in action largely contributed to the 93rd's Bougainville campaign. Bell I. Wiley's examination of Black troops was an attempt to describe the unit's shortcomings and strengths. However, Wiley scarcely touched the outfits' training performances at Fort Huachuca or Camp Claiborne, two important combat proficiency tests for the 93rd. Moreover, Wiley failed to


note the attitudes of the 93rd’s officers and how their expectations influenced the units’ combat record.45

Various operational histories failed to even discuss the 93rd’s action in a general sense. Ronald Spector’s survey of the Pacific war mentioned the 24th Infantry Regiment, but neglected the 93rd.46 In a similar vein, John Costello’s account, while throwing light upon the operations of the Pacific campaign, overlooked the deployment of the 93rd to the Southwest Pacific Theater.47 Edwin P. Hoyt’s work made a brief reference to the War Department’s problems of placing Black units in the Pacific, but declined to specify the reasoning behind it.48 Hordon Hargrave’s narrative of the 92nd Division depicted the hardships and triumphs of the all-Negro unit in great detail.49 However, Hargrave failed to examine how the 93rd’s performance evaluations in the South Pacific dramatically affected the War Department’s expectations of the


92nd. Stephen Ambrose's and James A. Barber's critical examination of the contributions of Negro servicemen in the war offered great insight into the Army's views on Negro manpower utilization, but they offered very little documentation of the 93rd's campaign. Ambrose and Barber merely summarized the War Department's expectations and after-battle evaluations of the unit.⁵⁰

In a similar light, the major Black histories failed to discern the importance of the 93rd's precarious existence. John Hope Franklin's historical survey of the Negro dealt with the unit's contributions, but neglected its limited combat performance.⁵¹ Richard Dalfiume's study represented an admirable attempt to analyze the social activism of the period, but resulted in a general observation of the Black press's role in the activation and deployment of Negro organizations.⁵² Dalfiume failed to explain the various compartments within the War Department and their relationship to the prevalent domestic attitudes of the period. Lee Finkle's work gave an accurate account of both the Negro press's role in the formulation of Black


troop policies and its impact on other minority groups. However, Finkle paid very little attention to the interactions between key participants within the War Department on the topic. More importantly, he ignored the significance of the Army's creation and deployment of the 93rd. Bernard C. Nalty's narrative of the history of Blacks in the armed forces gave a general report of the Company K episode, but failed to document the 93rd's campaign afterwards. Too selective in scope, Nalty never attempted to discern whether or not the incident had any effect on both the unit's morale and its duties afterwards.

My thesis shows that, despite its reservations concerning Negro units and their controversial combat record, the War Department reactivated the 93rd Division in 1941 due to domestic pressure. The social climate, furthermore, forced the Army to deploy the ill trained unit to the South Pacific in 1944. Prematurely ordered into combat, the outfit's lack of preparation resulted in the Company K affair of 7 April 1944. Its subsequent failure relegated it to service and security missions in the Southwest Pacific Theater for the remainder of the war.

In order to study the 93rd Division, it became necessary to study a variety of primary source material.


54 Nalty, Strength for the Fight.
That source material consisted primarily of Record Group 407 at the Military Field Branch of the National Archives at Suitland, Maryland. The records contain the unit's operations files, command messages, and field operations reports. Also helpful were Record Groups 4 and 17 at the Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives in Norfolk, Virginia. The records gave the researcher the opportunity to view the 93rd's redeployment, training, combat results, and MacArthur's plans for the unit in the invasion of Morotai during its stint in the Southwest Pacific Theater in 1945. The NAACP Papers in the George Foster Peabody Collection located at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia were very insightful and gave the investigator a first-hand glimpse into the organization's thoughts on the 93rd. More importantly, they reflected the NAACP's enormous influence in the Negro community. The Pittsburgh Courier, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Baltimore Afro-American, New York Age, and the NAACP's Crisis provided the researcher with a candid view of the sentiments within the Black community as well as a narrative of the events during the period. In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the inner workings within the Roosevelt Administration, it was necessary to consult Morris J. MacGregor's and Bernard C. Nalty's edited series of historical documents of Blacks in the U.S. armed forces. These papers included various memos between members of the Army high command and depicted the thoughts and motivations
of all who helped form and shape the Army’s policies of the era.

The 93rd’s activities during World War II were described by Ulysses Lee in his summary on the units’ contributions to the war effort:

Whether or not the 93rd Division eventually moved to the asset side depended largely upon the viewer and his interpretation of the value of doing unglamorous but necessary jobs well. At the end of the war, the 93rd had certainly not moved to the asset side as a combat division.53

After the war, General George Marshall, Chief of Staff, described the 93rd as a division whose officers "couldn’t get them out of caves to fight."56 This writer disagrees with these beliefs and demonstrates that the 93rd’s existence should be reexamined because it marked a watershed period in U.S. history in which domestic pressure manipulated military policy. It also represents a transitional phase in American military history which started with the segregated troops of the reorganized Army in 1866 and ended with its integration during the Truman Administration in 1948. More importantly, it symbolized both the War Department’s marked departure from policy due to both the social pressures of the period and the influence that international events had on the American society.

55Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 529.
56Ibid., 512.
The second chapter of this paper will examine the social forces that compelled the War Department to form the 93rd. The third chapter will describe the pressures which forced the War Department to deploy the unit into action. The fourth chapter will investigate the events of the Company K episode and the 93rd’s duties afterwards. Finally, the fifth chapter will analyze the Gillem Board’s evaluation of the 93rd and its recommendations for the post-war Army.
CHAPTER II

THE CREATION OF THE 93RD DIVISION

How should the Negro soldier be utilized in time of war? This was a manpower question posed to the War Department during the formulation of mobilization plans in the inter-war period in conjunction with the Army's negative view of Negro units in World War I. In a 1922 study entitled "The Use of Negro Manpower in the Event of Complete Mobilization," Assistant Chief of Staff William Lassiter offered the first solutions to three of the most difficult questions raised after World War I. These questions concerned Negro usage in combat, size of troops, and the composition of officers in Black units.\(^1\) Lassiter's plan concluded that the entire Black population had to be sifted in order to find suitable combat material and recommended against the grouping of Negro units in organizations as large as a division.\(^2\) Finally, the contingency plan judged that the failure of Negro divisions in World War I resulted

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1. Memorandum, Brigadier General William Lassiter for the Chief of Staff, 28 November 1922, Subject: The Use of Negro Manpower in the Event of Complete Mobilization, in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:380.

from the poor quality of their Black officers. Lassiter suggested that the same standards of intelligence be required of Negro officers as well as their white counterparts. These assumptions formed the basis of the Army's inter-war planning, but failed to provide proportional representation for Blacks in the general population. After an evaluation of the consensus figures and estimates of 1931, the War Department Personnel Division (G-1) determined that Negro manpower strength should be placed at 10.73 percent of the general population. Ulysses Lee concludes that "the lack of policy concerning the use of manpower caused the War Department to adopt a strategy that was dictated more by political and racial conditions rather than sound military policy during World War I." Furthermore, the Army refused to disseminate this information to the public. This was ironic because, although the 1922 contingency plan had been removed from secret status in 1938, the War Department had felt that it was not in its best interests to publicize the Army's mobilization studies. In 1937 the Commandant of the Army War College told the G-1:

I doubt the wisdom of the War Department announcing this policy at large. Its early announcement will give time for its careful study by those seeking

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3Ibid.
4Ibid., 36.
5Ibid.
political capital, for points on which the War Department may be attacked, or embarrassed.\footnote{Memorandum, Commandant, Army War College, for G-1, 17 April 1937, cited in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 39.}

Based on these sentiments, the discussion of the contingency plans was forbidden with anyone not directly concerned with the mobilization process. Thus, the Negro community assumed that the Army had no plans for Negro mobilization in any conflict and participated in mass movements that resulted in the reactivation of 93rd Infantry Division in World War II.

In order to adequately discuss the social forces which created the 93rd Division, the mood of the Negro community must be critically examined. The sentiments of the Negro community were quite different from those expressed in W. E. B. DuBois's 1918 article "Close Ranks." By the late 1930's, Negro leaders had not forgotten the harrowing experiences of World War I and were very critical of the military establishment. Veterans found their experiences so bitter that they vowed to prevent the same incidents from occurring in any future conflict. They were very cognizant of attempts to convert or eliminate the four segregated combat units created in 1866. As a result, the Negro community became more politically active and relied on their heavy concentration in major Northern cities such as Pittsburgh, New York, Boston, and Chicago to demonstrate
their improved voting strength and to register protests.\textsuperscript{7} Blacks reviewed the voting records of members of Congress and closely monitored the speeches and actions of presidents in order to determine friends or foes.\textsuperscript{8} Furthermore, they were very skeptical of War Department actions that contradicted stated policy. Thus, this newly developed political consciousness led to the struggle to insure fair representation in all branches of the Army.

No medium was as important as the Negro newspapers of the period as instruments to educate the Negro public on both the activities of the Black military units and the policies of the War Department. In 1940, an average of 1,276,000 Negro newspapers were purchased weekly. The circulation numbers rose steadily throughout the war years and peaked at 1,809,060 in 1945. In a study entitled "Negro Newspapers and Periodicals in the United States: Negro Statistical Bulletin Number One," the Department of Commerce established that four million Negro citizens read the Black newspapers each week. Historian Lee Finkle believes that


\textsuperscript{8}Franklin, \textit{From Slavery to Freedom}, 515.
the Black press had a following second only to the Negro church.\textsuperscript{9}

On 19 February 1938, in an effort to open all branches of the army to Blacks, the \textit{Pittsburgh Courier} demanded that President Franklin D. Roosevelt establish an all-Negro division. \textit{Courier} Editor Robert L. Vann published an open letter to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He stated that since one American in every ten was Black and service in the segregated Black units was restricted to a few combat troops and labor units, the president should form an entire division of Negro combat troops with all of its detachments and provide opportunities for the training of its Negro officers.\textsuperscript{10} Vann was disturbed by frequent reports that the soldiers of the segregated units had been required to serve as orderlies and gardeners for officers during the late 1930’s and feared that the Army had no new plans for the use of Black troops in combat. He editorialized that Negro taxpayers, which raised a portion of the revenues used to purchase armaments, deserved a Black division.\textsuperscript{11} In following issues, the \textit{Courier}, the largest Negro weekly, demanded a more prominent role for the Negro


\textsuperscript{10}"Launch Campaign for Army, Navy Recognition," \textit{The Pittsburgh Courier}, 19 February 1938, 1,4.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 4.
community in the rearmament process than it had possessed in the last war. The newspaper planned to expose the lack of opportunity for the army, educate its readers about the avenues which they could take to eliminate those racial barriers and create a lobbying committee for its cause.\textsuperscript{12}

The \textit{Courier}'s proposal demonstrated that the paper had not known the Army's mobilization plans of 1937. Therefore, it worked within the parameters of the Army's unspoken policy of segregation to exploit it. More significant, this was the first time that the idea to recreate all-Negro divisions surfaced within the Negro community.

A former Assistant United States Attorney General and a self-professed political vagabond, Vann harbored his own personal reasons for the \textit{Courier}'s initial campaign.

According to Vann, Black political fortunes rested not upon the Democratic Party, but on full political participation. An early supporter of the Democratic Party, he now believed that Roosevelt's New Deal measures re-enslaved the Black electorate. It is quite possible that Vann's advocacy of equal representation in the army concealed a subtle attempt to halt the Democratic Party's potential control over the Black vote. Therefore, he may have hoped that his subterfuge would ultimately expose the party's ambivalent attitude

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
towards the progressive social agenda concerning civil rights.\textsuperscript{13}

Roosevelt’s failure to respond to Vann’s request was probably due to his lack of a clearly defined policy for Black troops during his first eight years. During his tenure, Roosevelt seldom acted on social crises that concerned the Negro. In his 1933 inaugural address, he ignored civil rights and failed to support the anti-lynching legislation introduced in the Senate later that year.\textsuperscript{14} This was perhaps due to his determined resolve to keep the anti-Negro southern alliance in the Democratic Party. As the international crisis in Europe deepened, FDR had not considered the Negro cause important enough to jeopardize the support that he needed for his foreign and domestic policy. His secretarial staff, which consisted of Southerners such as Steven Early, Marvin McIntryre and Jonathan

\textsuperscript{13}James Brewer, "Robert Lee Vann, Democrat or Republican: An Exponent of Loose Leaf Politics," Negro History Bulletin 21 (February 1958): 100-103.

Daniels, carefully drafted replies to letters that conflicted with these political interests.15

On 26 February the Courier reminded former soldiers who had served in World War I of the social consequences of the war. It warned that the War Department had already made plans for using Negro soldiers as "laborers, stevedores, and domestic servants" and recommended that readers exert pressure on Congress through organizations such as the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Spanish-American War Veterans.16 On 2 March 1938 Vann asked Republican Congressman Hamilton Fish of New York for a complete report on regulations that affected Negro soldiers. A former officer who served with the all-Negro 369th Infantry Regiment during World War I and the ranking Republican on both the House Rules Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee, Fish was an early supporter of Negro rights.17 Vann requested that Fish ask Secretary of War

16"Courier Calls on Negro to Present," Pittsburgh Courier, 26 February 1938, 4.
17Andrew Buni, Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), 299. Fish was a Republican Congressman who represented the 26th New York District. As ranking minority member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Fish wielded enormous power within the House of Representatives from 1940 to 1944 and frequently criticized the policies of the Roosevelt Administration. A vocal American isolationist, Fish had visited Germany in 1939. An admirer of the Black soldier, after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, Fish proclaimed his desire to lead Negro troops as he had in the previous World War. See Maxine Block ed., Current Biography, Who's
Harry Woodring for the War Department's views on the possible establishment of a complete Negro division. That following day, Woodring told Fish that the War Department was against Vann's request because "it was virtually impossible to provide for the creation of any additional divisions."18

Woodring's reply reflected the budgetary restraints placed on the War Department during the inter-war period. Due to the post-war demobilization, the decline of the number of Negroes in the Army reflected the overall reduction in the peacetime Armed Forces during the 1920's and 1930's. Furthermore, the 1926 establishment of Army Air Corps units reduced the Negro regiments and scattered several of the outfits on different posts.19 Thus, there were more Negro soldiers and non-commissioned officers than places allotted for them and this created difficulties due to the fact that many servicemen re-enlisted and vacancies were rare. If Blacks wanted to enlist, they had to find the nearest place where established segregated units were stationed and where vacancies existed, apply to the unit's


18 Secretary of War Henry W. Woodring to Roy Garvin, 4 March 1938, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:472.

19 Letter, Acting Secretary of War Frederick H. Payne to NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White, 11 August 1931, cited in Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 25.
commanding officer and present themselves at the post at their own expense after the enlistment had been approved, often two to three hundred miles away. More significant, while the formation of a segregated division required the strength of no less than 175,000 men for its organization, the 1939 Military Appropriations Bill only provided for an increase of 3,000 Black enlisted men in the entire Regular Army.

As a result of his relentless efforts to form an all-Black unit, Vann’s proposal caused confusion within the Courier. On 5 March 1938 Vann wrote President Roosevelt that "Colored citizens were barred from virtually all service in the army and navy which they help support." On the assumption that Roosevelt’s silence meant total approval, Assistant Editor of the Courier, Roy Garvin, told Secretary of War Louis Johnson that he learned that Roosevelt endorsed the Courier’s campaign. Johnson


21Louis Lautier, "Army Increase Key to Division Fight," Baltimore Afro-American, 14 May 1938, 3.

22Robert L. Vann to James Roosevelt, Secretary to the President, 5 March 1938, in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:473.

23Secretary of War Louis Johnson to Hamilton Fish, 24 March 1938, in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:475.
replied that Garvin had been mistaken because "due to the authorized strength of the army, an organization of colored division was not feasible." In fact, Garvin's question was directed towards Presidential Secretary James Roosevelt; not President Roosevelt. Garvin's mistake represented some of the frustrations the Courier encountered during its quest for a Negro division. Johnson's reply also demonstrated that the War Department used form letters to answer routine inquiries from the Negro press.

In an attempt to link domestic politics to the paper's ambitions, Vann told Senator Joseph F. Guffey of Pennsylvania that "the present administration should create a Negro Division" on 7 March. Guffey remembered that the Courier's support largely contributed to Roosevelt's victory in 1932, but refused to support Vann's proposal. Guffey felt that it contradicted the agreement that he negotiated with Vann that entitled Negroes "to ten percent of the nation's patronage, no more and no less." Un- daunted, Vann and Assistant Editor Percival L. Prattis again discussed the Courier's proposal with Fish on 5 April.

24Ibid.


27Ibid.
Although Fish agreed with the resolution, he recognized that it would encounter opposition in both the army and navy as well as from the Roosevelt administration. However, Fish believed that all of the members of Congress would eventually pass the Courier proposal and supported the paper's attempt to "give proper recognition to the brave Negroes of the country." He felt that Vann's proposal could be accomplished but he never questioned the aspect of segregation itself. Fish told Vann that Congress would pass the resolution only if "the colored people in states such as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio made their wishes known" and exhorted his constituents to do so. On 19 May 1938 Fish told a mass meeting at St. Marks Church in Harlem that they "should insist on their political rights regardless of party affiliations.

Fish may have been politically motivated as well. In March 1938, a Gallup poll reported that Fish was a possible Republican candidate for president. An astute politician, Fish may have realized that Vann's proposal represented an


opportunity to improve his chances of reelection in the 1938 Congressional election year.

On 5 April Fish introduced House Resolutions 10164, 10165, 10166 in the House of Representatives. These measures called for an end to discrimination by opening all branches of the service to Blacks, the annual appointment by the president of two Blacks to the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the formation and maintenance of an all-Black Army division. H.R. 10166 amended the National Defense Act of 1916, which called for "an act to make further and more effectual provisions for the nation's defense." However, this act failed to contain provisions of race and ignored replacements of segregated units. Fish proposed that the act be amended to include the statement, "The army shall at all times be organized as far as practicable into brigades and division, of which one division shall consist of enlisted Negro men." That next day, Fish dispatched an extensive telegram to Roosevelt demanding support for the resolutions. He felt that the president's approval would induce the House Committee on Military Affairs to take action.

31 "Bills Introduced by Representative Fish to Insure Equality in Army," Pittsburgh Courier, 16 April 1938, 24; Bunin, Robert L. Vann, 306.

32 Pittsburgh Courier, 16 April 1938, 24.

33 Ibid.
Roosevelt, however, failed to acknowledge Fish's plea due to the great enmity between the two men. An isolationist and leader of the National Committee to keep America Out of Foreign Wars, Fish was a virulent critic of the Roosevelt Administration and had once threatened to start impeachment proceedings after Roosevelt's "quarantine" speech in Chicago of October, 1937. Flustered by his criticisms, Roosevelt told Bernard C. Baruch that he "wished that Fish would go back to Harvard and play tackle on the football team because he was qualified for that job." The political ramifications were also complicated. Most likely, Roosevelt may have realized that the Republicans would receive total credit for the popular bill.

Nearly two weeks later, Fish asked Representative Andrew May, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, if the bill could be granted an early hearing the next day. He felt that "no one would object to them." Fish was mistaken because the ranking members of the Committee, who were Southerners, were hostile to any special provisions for Negroes.


36 Buni, Robert L. Vann, 307.

37 "Chairman is Asked for Early Hearing on Bills," Pittsburgh Courier, 16 April 1938, 24.
Vann established the Committee for Participation of Negroes in the National Defense (CPNNDP) to guide the Fish resolutions through Congress and campaigned vocally for the bill's passage. In editorials prior to the Congressional hearing, the Courier urged its readers to use their political potential and write their Representatives and Senators demanding the opening of every branch of the army and navy or the formation of a complete Negro division and squadron. The paper's sponsorship of the resolution to form a Negro division received favorable responses from college presidents, American Legion posts, newspaper editors, the church community, and members of Congress.

In addition to the Courier's campaign, other organizations began to ask for a more effective role for Blacks in the nation's armed forces. In March, the National Bar Association protested Negro exclusion from the National Guard in various states and thirty-one posts of the Hamilton County Ohio American Legion organized groups to secure the federalization of Post No. 502, a Black National Guard unit. Other newspapers such as The Valley Evening Monitor of McAllen, Texas, The Montgomery Advertiser of Alabama, and the Daily Progress of Virginia expressed

38 "We Will Have to Fight," Pittsburgh Courier, 12 March 1938, 10.

support for the Courier bill.\textsuperscript{40} The New York Age editorialized that Fish's arguments were splendid as far as it went but they had not gone far enough.\textsuperscript{41} However, the Baltimore Afro-American stated that the bill "would allow tank units, which had previously excluded Negroes, to enlist Black soldiers."\textsuperscript{42}

Not everyone supported Fish's measure. On 14 April Assistant NAACP Secretary Roy Wilkins released a statement which implied that the NAACP initially supported the bill and demanded an immediate hearing by the House Military Affairs Committee. A strong advocate for integration, the NAACP later recognized that to support the Courier bill, which emphasized a quota system, hampered its policy of total integration for the U.S. Army. Furthermore, the legislation violated the NAACP's fundamental rules. On 26 April NAACP Executive Secretary, Walter White, asked Wilkins if "Vann had stampeded him into releasing the statement." Although he told White that he credited the Courier for publicly raising the issue, Wilkins felt that the NAACP should support the opportunity to hear the

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{42}"Bill Would Open These to Us," \textit{Baltimore Afro-American}, 16 April 1938, 14.
resolutions in Congress, not the substance of the measures. Wilkins believed that the NAACP could not afford to avoid the Courier campaign because it was too popular. NAACP Legal Counsel Thurgood Marshall disagreed because he felt that the Courier resolution was detrimental to the organization's principles. He warned that the organization should strongly oppose "separate units existing in the armed forces at the present time." Wilkins and White agreed. It is quite possible that other distractions, such as the NAACP's preoccupation with the anti-lynching measures in Congress, may have prevented it from actively supporting Fish's proposals.

The NAACP's opposition to the Courier resolution caused dissension within its own organization. On 7 April Special Counsel Charles Houston, who praised the Courier's efforts to obtain larger representation in the Army for Negroes, later disassociated himself from the NAACP.

43 "Courier Army Bill Backed by NAACP," Pittsburgh Courier, 30 April 1938, 10; Buni, Robert L. Vann, 307.

44 Buni, Robert L. Vann, 307.; As early as 1911, the NAACP had planned to bring lynching to the nation's consciousness and had conducted a rigorous campaign for public support. In 1933, the organization had drafted an anti-lynching bill and had it sponsored in the Senate. The legislation, which was in Congress from its inception in 1933 until 1940, was weakened by filibusters and died on the Senate floor. For a more detailed account, see Robert L. Zangrando, "The NAACP and a Federal Anti-Lynching Bill, 1934-1940," Journal of Negro History, 50 (April 1965): 106-117.

45 Thurgood Marshall to Walter White, 28 October 1939, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:506.
Houston warned White that "when the next war came, Negroes would have to go and unless they have served in the armed forces for war in peacetime, they would be sent to war unprepared and in menial duties." Rayford Logan, also a prominent member of the NAACP, recalled that he became active in the Courier's drive for fair treatment in the army because the NAACP refused to help other minority groups at that time.

The bill failed for various reasons. Although the House Military Affairs Committee held a hearing on the proposed Courier bill on 21 April 1938, the resolution died because twelve of its twenty-six members refused to hear the measure. The Courier's lobbying committee was not even invited to the Congressional hearings because the bill was not wholly supported within the Negro community. Furthermore, members of the War Department testified against the resolution and voiced their reluctance to provide new units for the other branches of the Armed Forces, let alone a Negro division. Due to the General Staff's Protective Mobilization Plan, Army Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, explained, it was impossible to "provide Colored personnel for such an augmented force." Craig said that in the event of an emergency, the Army would first mobilize a force of

46 "Army Bias Must be Broken Down, Claims Houston," Pittsburgh Courier, 9 April 1938, 4.

400,000, which consisted of existing Regular Army and National Guard units. These initial forces included 270,000 unassigned enlisted men who were to be used as replacements for existent organizations. The second increase would only occur if the emergency escalated. Craig ignored the segregated Black units and failed to provide replacement troops for them in a subsequent conflict. This was what the Courier bill was originally drafted to ensure. However, on the strength of Craig’s assessment, Fish’s proposal was rejected by the House and the drive to create segregated divisions was temporarily halted.

Although the War Department frustrated the Negro press’s divided efforts to create a Black division in 1938, the presidential election year of 1940 exposed the racial policies of the Army. The 25th Infantry Regiment, the only Negro unit with full combat status, had been stationed at Fort Huachuca since the end of the previous war. The 9th Cavalry and the 24th Infantry seldom participated in tactical maneuvers held during the period and the 10th Cavalry served as laborers at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1940, out of the Regular Army’s total strength of

48 "Race is ignored in Army Program," Pittsburgh Courier, 23 April 1938, 4; Buni, Robert L. Vann, 309.


229,636, only 4,451 or 1.5 percent were Negroes and Black units in the National Guard were totally depleted. In 1940, the machine gun units of the 9th Cavalry performed menial duties at Junction City, Kansas. Instead of receiving combat training, the regiment had indoor target practice only after twelve hours of strenuous labor.

In May 1940, Vann appointed Baltimore Afro-American Correspondent Louis Lautier and Houston to head to CPNNDP. The group was scheduled to appear before the Senate Appropriations Committee. Based in Washington, D.C., this committee was better organized than its predecessor and largely consisted of former officers of World War I. The group planned to present amendments to provide a quota system for the enlistment of Negro soldiers and officers in the Regular Army. In editorials prior to the hearings, the Courier again urged its readers to protest against the racial policies of the Army and Navy. "If the fight is kept up," the paper pointed out, "there will soon be a showdown,

51 House, Hearings on Compulsory Military Training Bill 1940, 586.

52 "Race Soldiers Go to Boot-Black School on Government Time," Pittsburgh Courier, 30 March 1940, 3.


54 Senate, Hearings on Appropriations Fiscal 1941, 374.
one way or another." On 14 May the CPNNDP presented its demands to the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for Military Expansion for 1941 and achieved results similar to those of 1938. Designated as its spokesman, Logan told the Senators that there were no Negroes in the Air Corps and fewer Negro National Guard troops in 1940 than in the previous war. He also added that no newly commissioned Black combat officers served in the Army under the recently enacted Thomason Act. This was significant because the measure allowed the selection of 650 officers from various colleges to train with Regular Army troops. In his closing statements, Logan remarked that although the CPNNDP deplored the continuation of segregation in the Army and Navy, it would accept separate units commanded by Negro officers. Houston also pointed out that Negroes had a low view of the armed forces and the government could not expect them to defend the country in time of war if they were excluded from the commissioned ranks and denied fair representation. 56

Senate committee members were noncommittal to the CPNNDP's proposals and avoided the Courier amendment. Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma told Logan that the Senate subcommittee could not recommend legislation because the procedure was such that if any member of the Senate ob-


56 Senate, Hearings on Appropriations Fiscal 1941, 367
jected, the Courier proposal would be rejected. Thomas added that a majority of two-thirds of the Senate was needed in order to suspend the rules. However, not all the members of the committee agreed with his rebuff. Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire told Logan that "this committee or someone ought to talk with the War Department about the matter." However, on 29 May 1940 the Senate passed the Military Appropriations bill with a roll call vote of 74 to 0. The measure provided for an enlisted strength of 280,000 men but failed to include the amendments suggested by the CPNNDP.

In August 1940, the CPNNDP appeared before the House Committee on Military Affairs as it conducted hearings on the Burke-Wadsworth Selective Service bill. Referred to as H.R. 10132, the Selective Service legislation was a measure to "protect the integrity and institutions of the United States of American through a system of selective compulsory military training and service." In an attempt to provide for the rights of Negro citizens and include enlistees for the segregated units, CPNNDP members told House members that despite the War Department's plans to increase Negro enlistments initiated in May and June of that year, the Army expansion program called for only an additional enlistment of 8,464 Blacks, 2.25 percent of the nation's

57 Ibid., 368.
58 Ibid.
total population. Logan asked the House to insert a non-discrimination clause into H.R. 10132 stating "in the selection and training of men as well as in the interpretation and execution of the provisions of this act there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race, creed, or color." However, House committee members believed the Army high command's assessment of the Negro soldiers' record in World War I and paid little attention to the CPNNDP's proposal. May stated that Negroes were not permitted to enlist in the Army Air Corps and the Regular Army because of "faulty physical examinations and lack of knowledge" and limited the time in which Logan's proposal was heard during the voting procedure. It is quite possible that the resolution was defeated because the War Department informed House members of their contingency plan to grant proportional representation to Blacks in the armed services.

On 26 August Senator Robert H. Wagner of New York introduced an anti-discrimination clause into the Burke-Wadsworth bill in the Senate and his distinction between discrimination and segregation was not discernible. Wagner proposed to insert the statement "regardless of race, creed or color" after the legislation which called for universal

59 House, Hearings on Compulsory Military Training Bill 1940, 586.

60 Ibid., 588.
military training." Many senators agreed with Wagner's resolution, but wondered whether or not its true intent was to break down segregation within the Army. Although he acknowledged that discrimination was wrong, Senator Tom Connally of Texas complained that it was "shocking that Wagner had really wanted to make it necessary for the Army to have Colored volunteers serve in the same companies, sleep in the same rooms and eat at the same tables with white soldiers." Connally stated that neither Negroes nor Wagner dictated how the Army should be organized. When asked by Senator John H. Overton of Louisiana if he favored the establishment of mixed troops, Wagner explained that he had not questioned the War Department's policy of segregation, but rather its exclusion of Negro enlistments. Although Wagner's amendment was voted into the Burke-Wadsworth bill by a vote of 53 to 21 on 26 August, the majority of spoken opposition reflected the fact that the Senate failed to question the War Department's policy of segregation, which was a form of discrimination in itself.

61U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Wagner of New York introduces an amendment to the Selective Service Act, 76th Cong., 3rd Sess., Congressional Record (26 August 1940), vol. 86, pts. 9-11, 10888; "Lautier, Houston on Delegation to have bill amended," Pittsburgh Courier, 27 April 1940, 1, 4.

62"To Introduce Anti-Jim Crow Amendment to Conscription Bill," New York Age, 31 August 1940, 1.

63Senate Debate on Senator Robert H. Wagner's Anti-Discrimination Amendment to the Selective Training and Service Act, in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 4:529.
The voting results also demonstrated that the bill was mainly opposed by Senators such as Connally, Ellender, Overton, Claude Pepper of Florida, Millard Tydings of Maryland, and Walter George of Georgia, who were all from the South. More important, the Senate's action was also probably an emergency measure to stifle the opposition of the Negro press.

In its action to insert a non-discrimination clause into the Burke-Wadsworth conscription bill, the Courier and the CPNNDP was aided enormously by the new efforts of the NAACP. The NAACP's views on quota systems reversed from those it had expressed in 1938. During its annual conferences of 1939-1940 the organization demanded the abolition of segregation within the armed forces. On 8 August 1940, however, White telegraphed 72 senators demanding a clause in the draft law to guarantee Negroes the right to serve in every branch of the armed forces, and scarcely mentioned the NAACP's policy of total integration. This was an idea long expressed by the Courier. Thus, the circular represented a truce between the two factions.

The NAACP and the Courier's joint efforts were influenced indirectly by several events which occurred in Congress earlier that year. In June 1940, Senator Edward

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Burke of Nebraska and Representative James Wadsworth of New York introduced Selective Service resolutions in the House and Senate and there was tremendous pressure from many quarters to pass the measure. In July, Roosevelt endorsed the legislation and stressed that when "modern materiel became available, it would be placed in the hands of seasoned troops." Later that month, both Marshall and Stimson urged the swift passage of the conscription measure. In a meeting with civilian aides from nine corps areas and forty-four states, Marshall declared that a fully trained and equipped United States Army of at least two million men was needed for adequate defense of the West Hemisphere but he made no mention of Negro units or the Black population. A day later, the War Department announced the formation of forty-five White divisions. On 23 July 1940 the House Military Affairs Committee revised the conscription legislation and adopted changes in the bill that lengthened military training, increased Army pay, registered men from the ages of 18 to 64 for the National Guard and the Regular Army. Though extensive, these changes ignored the


registration of the Negro population, but created a concerted effort to delay Congressional legislation.

On 5 September Fish introduced an amendment that deferred the passing of the Burke-Wadsworth legislation.68 Forever suspicious of Roosevelt’s international policies and convinced that the selective service legislation meant eminent war, Fish submitted the clause in order to halt the measure. Fish proposed that if Congress failed to produce 400,000 volunteers for the Army, then the government could make up the deficiency with the Selective Service process. The House of Representatives approved Fish’s resolution by a partisan teller vote of 185 to 155, 140 of Republican members of the House voted for it.

Fish’s amendment was immediately castigated the next day by Roosevelt’s supporters within the House of Representatives. House Majority Leader Sam Rayburn of Texas stated that the bill "was not only bad psychology, it was bad business." Rayburn warned his fellow members that "to wait means more war, sixty days would have meant a great deal for France, Belgium, Holland, and Great Britain."69 Other Congressmen believed that Fish’s proposal aided the belligerent nations in Europe. Representative Clifton Woodrum of Virginia complained that Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini would


69Ibid., 4.
have "issued a similar message in order to prevent America from defending herself." 70

During a press conference held that day, Roosevelt urged the speedy passage of the draft bill. Although Fish’s amendment was not mentioned, Roosevelt warned that any delay would affect the government’s preparation program. 71

Fish’s amendment was significant for it both allowed more time for discussion of a nondiscriminatory clause in the Selective Service bill and permitted the congealed Negro social forces to apply more pressure on key members of Congress.

During this period, Logan again proposed the establishment of a Negro division to Congressman May. Although the War Department provided for an increase of enlistees for the National Guard, no increase had been allotted for the Negro segregated units in the Regular Army. On the basis of those facts, Logan voiced his support for the creation of an all-Negro division under the Army Expansion Program and argued that the Army’s contingency plan would allow a total strength of 18,500 Blacks into the entire United States Army. These figures were roughly

70 Ibid.

proportionate to the Black population ratio of 9.7 percent of the country.72

In September 1940, after meeting with CPNNDP members, Fish introduced an amendment which forbade discrimination in the Selective Service process "based on race or religion."73 Responses varied widely and opposition attempted to stall the bill out of fear of the possible public reaction to the measure. May stated that Fish's clause was unnecessary because the same provision was already in the bill. True, the Wagner amendment forbade discrimination in the national preparation program but the previous amendment passed by the Senate in August 1940 had applied only to volunteers, not draftees. Fish replied that he was not the author of the amendment, but had merely sponsored it on the request of the CPNNDP. Although Fish's resolution was initially defeated on a standing vote of 66 to 107, Congress passed it by a teller vote of 121 to 99.74 It is quite possible that several House members may have been afraid to cast their votes aloud for political reasons. Thus, the amendment, which became section 4a of the Select-
tive Service Act, resulted from Fish’s attempts to halt draft legislation.

On 14 September 1940 Congress approved the entire Burke-Wadsworth legislation and Roosevelt signed it into Public Law No. 783 the next day. Section 4a, which proclaimed "that there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race or color" was the culmination of the Courier’s efforts which began in 1938. However, section 3 continued:

That in the selection and training of men under this act, no man will be inducted for training and service under this act unless and until he is acceptable to the land or naval forces for such training and service and his physical and mental fitness had been satisfactorily determined. No men shall be inducted for such training and service until adequate provision shall be made for such shelter, sanitary facilities, and water supplies.75

The new law was ambiguous. Section 3b circumvented clause 4a for, although Negroes had the right to join the armed forces, the War Department could refuse Negro volunteers despite pressure from the Selective Service System.

The negative attention that focused on the War Department’s racial policies worried Roosevelt. On 5 September he directed the War Department to prepare and hold a policy statement to the effect that Negroes "will have equal opportunity with White men in all departments of

the Army." During a conference with the U.S. Minister to Liberia, Roosevelt revealed the War Department’s plan which gave Negroes conscripted for Selective Service a 10 percent representation in combat units as well as labor battalions. In a cabinet meeting two days later, he voiced his concerns of the numbers of Negroes that were limited to labor battalions in the Army. After Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall informed Roosevelt that the Army planned to grant the Negro ten percent in all of its branches, the President suggested that the War Department publicize that fact.

Though Roosevelt expressed his concerns for Negroes, historians agree that civil rights was not one of his main priorities. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has stated that "as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt served with no visible discomfort under Woodrow Wilson and Josephus Daniels; two liberal Southerners who dropped their


77 "War Department to use 10 Percent of Negroes in all Combat Units," New York Age, 21 September 1940, 1.

78 Memorandum, Chief of Staff George C. Marshall for General Shedd, G-1, 14 September 1940, in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:25.
liberalism when it came to the racial question."79 According to Frank Friedel, Roosevelt "did not stand in the path of those who endeavored to obtain greater civil rights for Negroes, but neither would he fight in their behalf."80 It is clear that Roosevelt, recognizing the importance of the southern democrats in his party, felt that Negro rights should go slowly and expressed a private dislike for the NAACP.81 A shrewd politician, he realized that any move that he made in civil rights adversely affected the New Deal programs. Mary McLeod Bethune, President of Bethune Cookman College and a prominent leader of women's organizations of the period, reflected that more than once she proposed drastic steps to eliminate discrimination in the South. Each time the president demurred. A majority of key committee chairmen were Southerners and very much against


80 Frank Friedel, F.D.R. and the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 73.

81 John A. Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Negro," Journal of American History 52 (June 1965), 75-88.; Schlesinger, The Politics of Upheaval, 431-432. Roosevelt had a mild dislike of the NAACP. In 1943, President of the NAACP, Arthur Spingarn had asked the president to write a letter recognizing the twenty-five years of service by Walter White. Roosevelt's letter had a side note to his secretary which read, "He doesn't think too much of this organization. Tone it down a bit."; For more correspondence between FDR and the NAACP, see NAACP Papers, George Foster Peabody Collection, Hampton University.
the idea of civil rights. He explained that "if we do that now, we will hurt our social programs." 82

However, Roosevelt was alarmed by a Gallup poll taken in February 1940 which showed that although Negroes still supported the Democratic Party, there had been a substantial decline from 1936. 83 The Republicans excoriated the discrimination that occurred in the armed forces and blamed White House leadership. In June 1940, Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, a Republican candidate for the presidential nomination, told the Lincoln Temple Congregational Church in New York that "the Negro American should be an integral part of the increases in the Army and Navy and in the mobilization of industries." 84 The platform of the Republican convention held during that month directly opposed discrimination in the Civil Service and the armed service. Wendell Willkie, the Republican nominee, pledged to give the "Negro a square deal in the political life of the nation." 85 On the other hand, the Democratic convention platform held the next month had no forthcoming policy and scarcely mentioned Negroes in the military. Its platform merely offered a


83Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 515.

84"Put Negro in Army, Navy, and Air Force, Senator Taft Says,” Pittsburgh Courier, 8 June 1940, 1,4.

general statement which highlighted the administration's past Civil Rights performance.86

On 27 September, Roosevelt met with President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, A. Phillip Randolph, Assistant of the National Youth Administration, T. Arnold Hill, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, Walter White, and several of his military advisors. The Negro leaders demanded the use of presently available Black Reserve Officers in training recruits and other forms of active service, training centers for Negroes in the Aviation Corps, the acceptance of officer and enlisted men without regard to race, the inclusion of Negro specialists such as dentists and pharmacists, Negroes to be included in the administration of the Selective Service process, positions in the Navy other than menial services, and lastly, trained Negro women as Army and Navy nurses as well as in the Red Cross.87

The results of the meeting indicate that the policies of the War Department failed to coincide with the expectations of the Negro factions. Roosevelt announced that the War Department planned to integrate Blacks into the Army. However, when White asked him whether Blacks would continue to only serve in segregated units, Roosevelt simply


avoided the question. He stated that "it would be difficult
to have Negro regiments next to White regiments" and added
that "through the continuity of Negro and White batteries,
the Army could back into the formation of units without
segregation."\textsuperscript{88} Roosevelt implied that segregation, which
the NAACP opposed, was his administration's policy. At the
close of the conference, Roosevelt promised to write or talk
to the Negro delegation again after he conferred with other
government officials on the issue, but he endorsed Assistant
Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson's request to release a
policy statement which advocated segregation on 8 October.
Shortly after Roosevelt's suggestion, Stephen Early advised
the Democratic National Committee to publicize the state-
ment.\textsuperscript{89}

On 9 October White House Secretary Stephen Early
held a press conference to discuss Roosevelt's conference
with the Negro leaders. During the meeting, Early revealed
the War Department's policy towards Negroes in national
defense. The Army's program provided for: the maintenance
of Negro personnel in proportion to the Black population;
the representation of Negroes in all branches of the Army;

\textsuperscript{88}Report on Conference at the White House,
27 September 1940, Subject: Discrimination against Negroes
in the Armed Forces of the United States, cited in MacGregor
and Nalty, \textit{Basic Documents}, 5:26-27.

\textsuperscript{89}Letter, Stephen Early, Secretary to the President,
to Walter White, 18 October 1940, cited in MacGregor and
Nalty, \textit{Basic Documents}, 5:36.
the assignment of eligible Negro reserve officers to Negro units officered by Colored personnel; Negroes would be given the chance to attend officer candidate schools; the training of Negro pilots, mechanics, and technical specialists; and equal opportunity for Negro civilian employment at arsenals and Army installations. Early’s press release concluded:

The policy of the War Department is not to intermingle Colored and White enlisted personnel in the same regimental organizations. This policy has proven satisfactory over a long period of years, and to make changes would produce situations destructive to morale and detrimental to the preparation for national defense. For similar reasons the department does not contemplate assigning colored reserve officers other than those of the Medical Corps and chaplains to existing Negro combat units of the Regular Army.¹⁰

This was the first time that the War Department’s 1922 program had been made public. According to Ulysses Lee, had the statement been made in response to the Courier’s demand of 1938, the outcome might have been different. Early’s press release indicated that Roosevelt had not made any concessions to the Negro leaders. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes recalled that Roosevelt favored a segregated quota system but had no opinion on segregation.¹¹

Early’s press statement, which implied that the Negro leaders agreed with the War Department’s exclusionary policy, provoked a swift response from the Negro community

¹⁰Ibid.

and initiated support for Willkie. The Courier charged "White House Trickery." The Amsterdam News claimed "Jim Crow-Army Hit." The Kansas City Call's headlines read "Roosevelt charged with Trickery in Announcing Jim Crow Army Policy." The Baltimore Afro-American castigated Roosevelt and announced its support for Willkie. The New York Age complained "President Okays Jim Crowism." The Age asked "is the War Department going to refuse to send Negro soldiers into battle because they will be fighting with White soldiers?" The Philadelphia Tribune commented, "Once more the ugly head of prejudice rears itself in the United States Army." In late October White told Patterson that the three leaders had definitely stated their opposition of the Army program to Roosevelt during the 22 September meeting and he felt that their roles as leaders of the Black community had been "seriously impaired" by Early's press release. Until the White House corrected the policy, there was no reason for further conferences. White later reflected that "one of the steps the three men most emphatically urged upon Roosevelt was the immediate and total


93 "President Okays Jim Crowism," New York Age, 19 October 1940, 1.

94 "From the Press of the Nation," Crisis, 47 (November 1940): 355.

95 Telegram, Walter White to Assistant Secretary of War Robert Patterson, 18 October 1940, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:34.
abolition in the armed services of segregation based on race or color."96 Earlier that month, the NAACP's Board of Directors voted against segregation in the Army and for the establishment of mixed units. This made it virtually impossible for White to agree to any policy of segregation. In an editorial entitled "White House Blesses Jim Crow" published in November 1940, the NAACP's house organ Crisis castigated Roosevelt's approval of the War Department policy which excluded Negro officers except chaplains and doctors from service in Regular Army units. To further emphasize the point, the NAACP sent the minutes of the September 27th meeting to its 600 branches, youth councils, and college fraternity and sorority chapters throughout the country prior to election day.97 Members of the Republican National Committee, such as Francis E. Rivers, claimed that Roosevelt promoted segregation in the government. On the other hand, the Chicago Defender blamed the Courier's efforts to form a separate division rather than Roosevelt. The paper claimed that the Courier "has asked for a Negro Division, a Negro this and Negro that, without an intelligent awareness of the defeatism incurred by such a pleading."98


97 "White House Blesses Jim Crow," The Crisis (November 1940), cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:38.

98 Finkle, Forum for Protest, 147.
White and other Negro leaders failed to realize that the War Department's earlier actions of 1940 adhered to previous policy. In June, the War Department created the 9th Division with several Negro detachments and this was well within the 1922 policy which had stipulated that no Negro organizations should be larger than a regiment. In August, the Army issued Bulletin no. 17 which stated that "no Negro, because of race, shall be excluded from enlistment in the Army for service with Colored military units now organized or to be organized for such service." However, from the beginning of the Selective Service process, the War Department's practices deviated from its stated policy. Although the Protective Mobilization Plan of 1940 provided units for 9 to 10 percent of Negroes according to occurrence in the total population, the Army had only created enough units for 5.8 percent of Negroes, 3.2 percent below the policy requirement. The Mobilization Plan also required that the ratio of Negroes mobilized in combat units to service outfits be the same as White troops. A large number of the 5.7 percent of Negro personnel were assigned to the Infantry, Engineers, and Quartermaster Corps.

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100 Memorandum, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 for Chief of Staff, 3 June 1940, Subject: Employment of Negro Manpower, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:6.
The reason for the variances in policy and practice was that members of the War Department may have viewed the utilization of Negro troops as a problem instead of an untapped national resource. The Chief of the Army Air Corps, Major General Henry H. Arnold, stated that Negroes could not be used in the Air Corps because "Black officers would serve over White enlisted men, thus creating an impossible social problem." He added "in order to organize an all Negro Air Corps unit, it would take several years to train the enlisted men to become competent mechanics." Signal Corps Executive Officer Clyde L. Eastman believed that "it would be very difficult to obtain properly qualified Negro personnel for its division." Eastman conceded that "an exception might be made in the event that a Negro division was organized." The Organization and Training Division agreed with the Signal Corps and Army Air Corps exclusionary policies. However, the Army's Personnel Division (G-1) argued that:

Any limitation in the use of Negroes in the Arms and Services must be predicated upon the actual availability of personnel with required qualifications rather than upon any arbitrary elimination of

101 Memorandum, H. H. Arnold to Assistant Chief of Staff G-3, 31 May 1940, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:17.

102 Memorandum, Clyde L. Eastman to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 28 May 1940, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:18.
the Negro as a whole on grounds of lack of technical capacity.\textsuperscript{103}

The Army high command was also affected by the social attitudes of the period as well. On 27 September Marshall told Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts that to ignore the Army's segregation policy "would produce situations destructive of morale and therefore definitely detrimental to the preparation of national defense."\textsuperscript{104} On 22 October Stimson complained that "the Negro leaders took advantage of the period before the election to get anything that they could in the way of recognition from the Army."\textsuperscript{105} Stimson and Marshall's racial views were not unique within the War Department and reflected the racial attitudes within the Army. Strong advocates of segregation, the Army high command was very reluctant to form units commanded solely by Negroes.

Negro Democrats were worried about the policy statement's possible effect on Black voters. On 10 October 1940, Chairman of the Colored Division of the Democratic Party for the Midwestern Region, Bishop R. R. Wright,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{103}Memorandum, Assistant Chief of Staff, War Plans Division for Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 29 June 1940, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:19.
  \item \textsuperscript{104}George C. Marshall to Senator Henry C. Lodge, 27 September 1940, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:28.
  \item \textsuperscript{105}Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 461-464.
\end{itemize}
advised Roosevelt to make an unprecedented announcement to recapture the lost momentum. "It would be the greatest stroke of the year," he felt, "if it could be announced that Colonel Benjamin O. Davis was promoted to the rank of brigadier general."106 Wright predicted that such an announcement would swing public opinion towards Roosevelt's reelection. Will Alexander, Director of the Committee on Inter-racial Co-operation in Atlanta and an advisor to the Roosevelt Administration on racial matters, also advised Harry Hopkins that Negroes wanted a Black assistant to the Secretary of War.107

Roosevelt quickly acted to repair his damaged credibility among Black voters. On 12 October Adjutant General, Major General Emory S. Adams, released figures that demonstrated the strength of Negro personnel increased in the Regular Army during 1940.108 Four days later, the War Department announced that the Army would assign Negro Reserve Officers to Black combat units and 36,000 of the first 400,000 men called in the Selective Service process would be Negroes.109 Roosevelt met with the CPNNDP to discuss the participation of Negroes in the Army and wrote

106Dalfiume, Desegregation of the Armed Forces, 58.
107Ibid.
White, Hill, and Randolph on 25 October 1940 expressing his apologies for Early's press statement. He promised the leaders that Negroes would serve in all branches of the service. Roosevelt said, "I regret that your own position as well as the attitudes of both the White House and the War Department has been misunderstood." On that same day, Roosevelt promoted Colonel Benjamin O. Davis to the rank of general. Executive Secretary of the Washington Branch of the YMCA and a former faculty member of Howard University, Colonel Campell Johnson, was appointed as Special Assistant to Director of the Selective Service Lewis B. Hershey, and William H. Hastie as Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War. These announcements signified that Negroes would have a voice in the War Department. Thus, the Negro community applied sufficient pressure to induce the Democrats to act in its favor.

The subsequent changes in policy created numerous problems. First, the Army found that ensuring the War Department's 1940 policy, which stated that Negroes were to be included in the Army in the same percentage of which they occurred in the general population, was difficult to accomplish under the Selective Service Act. The War Department would have had to increase Negro strength in

110 "F.D.R. Regrets That Army Policy was Misinterpreted," Crisis 47 (December 1940): 390.

111 "Colonel Davis is Promoted," Baltimore Afro-American, 2 November 1940, 1-2.
order to achieve the minimum rate of 9 to 10 percent. However, from the beginning of the draft in 1940, the Army was very reluctant to create Negro units to absorb the additional Negroes. Stimson’s scheduling of the procurement of 502,822 men on 6 January 1942 meant that a minimum of 53,299 Negroes needed to be drafted in order to make 9 to 10 percent of actual Negro strength. But Arnold was reluctant to accept the increase in Negro personnel because he felt that "44,207 was the maximum number of Black enlisted men that could be absorbed in the program." Assistant Chief of Staff Harry L. Twaddle stated that if the "Army Air Forces refused to accept an additional 33,385 Negro enlisted men, several organizations would have to be converted to Negro units."112

The Army’s problems concerning Negro conscription were complicated due to both the Navy’s and the Marine Corp’s lack of participation. The Navy relied on volunteers and allowed only a limited number of Negroes into its messmen branch. By the end of 1939, Black sailors in the Navy numbered only three thousand out of a total of one hundred sixteen thousand.113 In August 1940 Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox stated that the Navy’s racial policy was essential because "men would have to live together on ships"

112 Memorandum, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, for the Chief of Staff, 6 January 1942, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:55-56.

113 Finkle, Forum for Protest, 157.
and it was impossible have "southern and northern ships." To emphasize the point, Knox's newly created Bureau of Navigation stated in 1941 that the Navy's restrictive policy was in its best interest. "The enlistment of Negroes in any other capacity leads to disruptive and undermining conditions," the bureau claimed. On 16 February 1942, Stimson complained to Roosevelt:

By voluntary recruiting the Navy has been able to avoid acceptance of any considerable number of Negroes. As a result, while the Army absorbed its proper proportion of Negro manpower, it is now faced with the possibility of having to accept an even greater proportion in the future.

However, Roosevelt refused to order the Navy to take Blacks in the Selective Service because he felt that its circumstances were quite different from the Army's.

Of the little over 476,728 Negroes registered after the Selective Service Act began, 2,069 were inducted in 1940. The number of Negro registrants peaked by 4,449 in January 1941, but declined in the subsequent months. The Selective Service System's enormous drives to register

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115 Finkle, Forum for Protest, 157-162.

Negroes created a massive influx of Black inductees. Blacks, which constituted 13 percent of those classified as I-A by the draft boards, were eligible for selection. This was well over the War Department's quota of 10 percent. The existing segregated units were filled. By September 1941, over 27,986 Negroes were not selected by the War Department. Many Black selectees assumed that registration meant immediate induction and waited for calls that seldom came.\textsuperscript{117}

One of the main reasons that the Army refused to induct Negroes was because of their educational deficiencies as a group. The Army General Classification Test, or the AGCT, was administered to sort soldiers on the basis of how easily they became effective soldiers.\textsuperscript{118} The test consisted of word comprehension, mathematical problems, and the analytical ability to visualize abstract concepts.\textsuperscript{119} In all three areas, Negroes had serious deficiencies. This was largely because of their lack of adequate school facilities, debilitating communities racked with illiteracy and overall substandard socio-economic status. In two Selective Service Registrations prior to 7 December 1941,

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid., 279.


\textsuperscript{119}Roy Davenport, "Implications of Military Selection and Classification in Relation to Universal Training," \textit{The Journal of Negro Education} 15 (Fall, 1946): 585.
220,000 Negroes were unable to write their names. On the scale of which grade I was the highest and grade V was the lowest test score, 80 percent of Black selectee scores fell within the grades of IV and V. Whites of similar educational backgrounds had comparable scores, but the policy of segregation forced the Negro units to receive a higher percentage of the lower scorers. While 351,951 White AGCT Grade V men drafted between 1941 and 1942 could be distributed among a total of 4,129,259 white soldiers, the 216,664 Negroes drafted during the same period could only be distributed among 440,162 Blacks. On 15 May 1941, Marshall ordered that the minimum of a fourth grade education was required in order to register. The Supply Division claimed that it was more practical to convert White units to Negro rather than construct additional housing for Blacks. Deputy Chief of Staff Major General William Bryden agreed. Bryden claimed that "if the Army refused to induct

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121 Army General Classification Test Ratings for the 369th Infantry Regiment, January to December 1944, Record Group 407, Box no. 13722, File 393, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

illiterates, the number of Negro selectees would be reduced. Adequate units and housing were not contemplated because the Army high command viewed the Negro soldier as undesirable and therefore wanted to induct as few as possible. Thus, the unfavorable scores were used as an excuse to restrict the selection of Negro manpower.

The Army high command and the Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies scrutinized the War Department's policies. Selective Service Director Lewis B. Hershey, hardly a proponent of improved race relations, warned Roosevelt that "it is obvious we must sooner or later come to the procedure of requisitioning and delivering in the sequence of their order numbers without regard to color." As early as October 1940, Hershey argued that the War Department must either increase the number of Negro units to absorb the Black inductees or face the embarrassment of a segregated draft; a violation of Section 4b of the Selective Service Act of 1940. On 22 September 1940, Hastie suggested that new organizations be provided as soon as possible in order to accommodate the Negro selectees backlogged in the Selective Service. Hastie told Patterson

123 Memorandum, Deputy Chief of Staff William Bryden to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 26 August 1941, cited in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 92-93.

124 Director of Selective Service Lewis Hershey to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 4 October 1941, in George Q. Flynn, Lewis B. Hershey, Mr. Selective Service (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 123.
that the Selective Service problem would "cause a nation-
wide protest from white and colored citizens, which the Army
could not ignore." In order to alleviate the problem,
he advocated the creation of integrated units.

Hastie's proposal of volunteer integrated units was
not new and coincided with the goals of other Negro social
organizations. By November 1940, the War Department was
bombarded with letters from organizations such as the NAACP,
the Council Against Intolerance, from college professors and
students urging the formation of a mixed division. Many of
the letters insisted that volunteer integrated units were
needed because it would be an encouraging gesture towards
minorities. On December 1941 the Associated Negro Press
held a conference with the War Department to discuss whether
or not a volunteer integrated division was feasible.
Associated Negro Press Editor, Claude A. Barnett, told
Marshall that "an experiment should be made with a racially
mixed battalion in which White and Colored soldiers might
have an opportunity to volunteer to serve." Barnett and
others present at the meeting felt that the battalion could
be easily recruited and quite successful in combat. Wilkins

125 Memorandum, Civilian Aide William Hastie to the
Secretary of War Henry Stimson, 22 September 1941, cited in
MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:84.

126 "Interpretation of Both Races in Army Units Held
Very Unlikely," Baltimore Afro-American, 13 December 1941,
1-2; "Negro Division by Spring of 1942, General Marshall
said that the "mixing of Black and White soldiers had never been tried because the War Department reflected the prejudices of Georgia, Florida, and other southern states." Marshall replied that "the volunteer system is an ineffective and dangerous method of raising combat units" and that the "urgency of the military situation necessitated the usage of tested and proved methods of procedure." The Chief of the Miscellaneous Section of the Adjutant General's Office, Colonel E. R. Householder emphasized that the idea was not feasible because the War Department was not a "sociological laboratory and it had to meet the fixed opinions, even the prejudices of the general public, as they had found them." After Householder's remarks, Marshall announced:

I am pleased to report to you that we now have Negroes in every branch of the service. They have not been inducted and advanced as fast as they wished, but I can tell you that the money has been secured and the plans perfected for the activation of a Negro Division." Marshall's statement was significant because it extended the War Department's long-standing segregation system, rather than introduce significant changes to its overall policy. Although the War Department had revealed that it would create new all-Black units on 21 September 1940, the Army had no intentions of creating an all Negro division. However, pressure from the Selective Service to induce more

127 *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 December 1941, 4.
128 *Baltimore Afro-American*, 13 December 1941, 2.
Blacks and the Negro Press's call to create integrated divisions greatly influenced the War Department's decision.

On 18 December 1941 the War Department formally announced the establishment of the 93rd Triangular Division at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.\textsuperscript{129} The unit was to be composed of the 25th, 368th and 369th Infantry Regiments and received 11,000 additional troops. Not only would the unit absorb the Negro enlistees that had accumulated in the Selective Service and offer Black representation in all branches of the Army, but it would also be stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, a well established training facility located far from large population centers and utilized specifically for the training of Black troops. The division would also serve as a training organization for existing Negro infantry regiments. In essence, the unit's activation represented an overall triumph of the Negro press's drive to obtain Negro representation in all branches of the Army and the War Department's general policy failure.

Previous historians have downplayed the role of the Negro press in the formation of the 93rd. Historian Ulysses Lee asserted that "the motivating influence for the 93rd's formation was more the need for additional organizations to take care of the increasing number of Negroes available to the Army than either the military or the public pressures \textsuperscript{129}"

\textsuperscript{129}"War Bulletin," \textit{Pittsburgh Courier}, 20 December 1941, 1.
included." Yet, although the War Department's decision to form the 93rd Division was not a direct result of pressure from the Negro Press, there was a strong correlation between the Army's deviation from policy and the social activism of the period. The 93rd's creation represented a compromise between the War Department and the Black press. However, the issue within the Army of whether Black soldiers were a manpower asset to be utilized or a problem to be avoided revealed itself during the War Department's ordering of the 93rd into combat in 1944.

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CHAPTER III

THE PREMATURE DEPLOYMENT OF THE 93RD DIVISION

From the outset of its official activation in May 1942 until its deployment in December 1943, the 93rd Division’s preliminary training required special attention. Eighty-five percent of the men within the unit were largely illiterate. The outfit experienced difficulties in the simulation of instruction. Few men understood commands of movement such as counter-clockwise, echelon, and rear march, that were essential to the organization’s existence. This hampered the unit’s progress for its officers spent additional hours on one subject while others were neglected. The outfit had undergone the basic training process three times during its orientation cycle. In order to compensate for the unit’s training difficulties, the War Department initially planned to extend its induction training from two years until the Army high command was confident in the outfit’s abilities. This goal, however, was never realized due to the external pressures which demanded both the unit’s premature deployment to an active theater overseas and its utilization in combat in 1944.¹

The 93rd’s orientation and its maneuver performances must be critically assessed in order to show the organization’s debilitations in training. First, the division’s basic training was similar to other units and its men were introduced to all of the latest Army doctrine and equipment. As with all other divisions of the period, the outfit trained in the Class "A" theory of warfare. This technique consisted of fire and maneuver tactics, flank attacks, and instant annihilation of the enemy. The method emphasized forward movement, not tactical defensive positioning. The War Department developed this combat doctrine as a result of the Army’s experience in World War I.2

During the 93rd’s basic training, the unit successively participated in long hikes for conditioning, repetitious exercises in reconnaissance, map reading, target practice, topography, obstacle training, and bayonet practice. Officers within the War Department were generally impressed with the unit’s performance.3 On 27 June 1942 the nation’s first Black general, Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, reviewed the 369th Infantry Regiment at Fort Huachuca and remarked that "the men’s composition and

Section, Army Ground Forces, 1946), 1-2, 8-9.

2"93rd Taking Shape," Pittsburgh Courier, 6 June 1942, 1,4.

discipline was very favorable."\(^4\) After the 368th, 369th, and the 25th Infantry Regiments marched into the sparse Arizona Desert and completed their preliminary combat efficiency tests in fire and maneuver and troop movement, the unit's officers voiced their praises of their outfit's achievements. 369th Commander, Colonel Thomas Taylor, claimed that the "93rd had passed with flying colors."\(^5\) After he observed the unit's activities on 10 October, Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph T. McNarney told Army Ground Force Commander, Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, that the 93rd is in fine shape."\(^6\) In his after-battle inspection of the division and its equipment, 93rd commander, Major General Charles P. Hall found that the unit was in better shape than its induction and the equipment had withstood all of the rigors of the exercise. Upon his transfer to the 11th Corps in October of that year, he told his subordinates that "I have every confidence that this is a good division."\(^7\)

\(^4\)Vincent Tubbs, "General Davis Reviews New 369th Regiment," Baltimore Afro-American, 1 August 1942, 1.

\(^5\)Frank Bolden, "Fort Huachuca Recruits Stand Out in Maneuvers," Pittsburgh Courier, 3 October 1942, 5.

\(^6\)Memorandum, Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph T. McNarney to Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, 11 October 1942, AGO Records, Record Group 407, Box no. 13696, File 393, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

Hall believed that the 93rd's early proficiency was the direct result of its Black junior officers' efforts. The unit's Negro officer personnel were selected on their display of demonstrated leadership ability, mature judgment, even disposition and patience, demonstrated stability under pressure, ability to handle emergency situations, and lastly, ability to organize and foster athletic and recreational programs. These criteria were approved by the War Department on 29 April and implemented upon the 93rd's formal activation the next month. Major Robert E. Cocklin, an officer with the 93rd throughout much of its training, commented that "although a few failures tended to offset the performances of the Negro officers in the unit, a good number did a great service to their race and nation by their efforts." 

The 93rd's initial success in 1942 caused dissension within the War Plans Division. Established in 1921, the War Plans Division formulated plans for the use of military forces in all theaters of war. Its staff was responsible for the estimation of forces required and the times to which they were needed, the strategic deployment plans and orders for the movement of troops, and the actual operations of


war. Though the division based its plans on the military proficiency of outfits, it was influenced by social conditions as well. Ray S. Cline stated that to fulfill its responsibilities, "the War Plans Division needed to take account of the war-waging capacity of the Army, which reflected the political and economic policies of the United States."\(^{10}\)

Although many of the War Plans Division's duties had been incorporated into Army Ground Forces on 2 March 1942, it still lacked a clearly defined policy concerning Negro troop deployment and found it difficult to disperse Negro units because of objections of foreign countries, the reluctance of theater commanders to accept them for fears of racial confrontations, and lastly, the Army's dependence on "military efficiency."

On 17 March Chief of the War Plans Division Brigadier General Dwight D. Eisenhower told the Army General Counsel that the problem of maintaining a cohesive relation with the State Department on such a matter "proved to be exceedingly difficult because he had not found a country that would accept Negro troops."\(^{11}\) Eisenhower learned that the authorities of the British West Indies and the Belgian Congo feared the deployment of Negro troops because of the

\(^{10}\)Cline, *Washington Command Post*, 130.

possible racial disturbances among its natives. Panama objected to a Negro Signal Construction Company for fear that the unit's rate of pay, which had elevated it to a position of stature, would cause social unrest. Stimson responded that "they must complete their work." "It is ridiculous to raise such objections when the Panama Canal itself was built with Black labor," he said. However, in an effort to alleviate possible friction among allies, on 22 March McNarney ordered the War Plans Division to state whether troops were White or Colored in its drafting of movement orders. He also wanted information on the training of the Negro troops and their efficiency rating from their commanding officers.

McNarney's directive ignored the question of whether other countries would accept the 93rd. A long standing proponent of racial exclusion which dated from the turn of the century, Australia informed the War Department that it would no longer accept any more Negro troops in the area on 23 March. Two days later, Marshall asked Southwest Pacific Commander, General Douglas MacArthur to comment on the


13Memorandum, Secretary of War Henry Stimson to Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 25 March 1942, in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 430.

14Cline, Washington Command Post, 127.
situation. On 29 March MacArthur replied that Australia's policy of exclusion "against everyone except the white race, known locally as the White Australia plan, is universally supported here." In order to alleviate potential hostility, he said that he was willing to use Black units and recommended that Negro troops be utilized only in zones far away from large population centers. D. Clayton James judged that MacArthur's "long and cordial association with Filipinos had rid him of any tendencies toward racial prejudice." A possible presidential hopeful, MacArthur could have had political motivations as well and used this as an opportunity to attack Roosevelt's policies. On his arrival in 1942, he told members of the Associated Negro Press that "one cannot wage war without the support of public opinion which is molded by the press."

The War Department, however, decided to send the troops to countries without informing officials of their race, but this did not alleviate the dilemma. On 12 November McNair told Colonel Edwin W. Chamberlain of the War Plans Division that the inclusion of Negro troops in combat situations was untenable because of the extremely low


17"MacArthur Gets Off to a Good Start in Australia," Baltimore Afro-American, 4 April 1942, 4.
AGCT averages as a group. McNair stated that "every shipload of troops required maximum fighting power." He believed that the Army should therefore convert Negro troops in service and support functions and disband both the 92nd and 93rd Divisions because "a Colored division is too great a concentration of Negroes to be effective." McNair may have been considering plans to utilize Negro units as defenders of communication lines. Historian Bell I. Wiley concludes that McNair's plan was feasible because it "was one of military effectiveness and social reform." This plan did not take into consideration the Roosevelt Administration's need to maintain positive morale for the war effort and its political concerns at the time. The War Department ignored the basic aspects of McNair's plan but later converted Negro combat units into service organizations when it could not send those outfits as such overseas.

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18 Memorandum, Chief of Staff, Army Ground Forces Chief Lesley McNair to Army Ground Forces, War Plans Division, W. W. Chamberlain, 12 November 1942, Subject: Negro Personnel, 1943, cited in Wiley, The Training of Negro Troops, 2-3; A brilliant organizer, Lesley McNair wielded enormous power within the War Department. In 1942, he completely reorganized the systems of training in the United States Army. Appointed Chief of Staff of the Army General Headquarters, McNair established training schools that simulated modern battle conditions. For more on McNair, see Christopher Tunney, A Biographical Dictionary of World War II (London: J. M. Dents and Sons Limited, 1972), 124.


20 Ibid.
McNair’s plan reflects his difficulty in finding a theater commander who would accept Negro troops and use them in combat. Many commanders refused to consider any Negro units other than labor battalions. In January 1943 Marshall asked several Pacific theater commanders to accept the 93rd. On 24 January South Pacific Area Commander, Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon, commented that he had preferred White divisions because every man transported to his area required maximum effectiveness. Harmon stipulated that he would use Negro units only in garrison duties on both the Solomon and Bismarck Islands if the outfits had White officers. On 3 February, Central Pacific Area Commander Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons said that although he believed that the 93rd should not be assigned to the Hawaiian Islands, the outfit could be deployed to release a White division for action in the South Pacific.

While the Army debated on the deployment of Negro units, its initial evaluation of the 93rd’s training was a bit premature. By January 1943 the division began its third and most difficult phase of training. Whereas its live munitions exercises at Charlestown, Arizona were encouraging, the maneuvers of Fort Huachuca proved otherwise. 


25 March the division conducted tests that simulated the various conditions which would be encountered in actual combat. Divided into two groups, red and blue, the unit waged war games over the arid desert. Umpires were used instead of live ammunition in order to determine which group had the overall advantage. Colonel John C. McDonald of the Third Army, who inspected the exercises, originally believed that the 93rd was thoroughly prepared and was greatly impressed by both its use of camouflage and mastery of the latest weapons. He telegraphed the unit's new commander, Major General Fred W. Miller and two days later expressed his satisfaction with the excellent manner of which the men concealed themselves in the bivouac. Encouraged by the outfit's performance, Miller replied that the "men are developing into hard, resourceful, and dependable fighters." Fort Huachuca commandant Colonel Edwin N. Hardy commented that the men "were loyal and decent."23

After the division's actions were more closely examined on 8 April, the officers changed their evaluations and all of them agreed that the unit was not ready for a campaign in an active theater. The overall view was that although the artillery units performed "satisfactorily," the infantry regiment's movements were "poor." Third Army Commander, Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges voiced his

23"Rigid Maneuvers Commence for 93rd Division, Pittsburgh Courier, 27 March 1943, 2."
belief that the outfit needed work on tactical formations. Hodges stressed that the 93rd's performances lacked the exercises' main objectives which were to emphasize the use of all available reconnaissance and security measures, maintain control and discipline of troops, and employ the tactical doctrines as now in practice. MacDonald acknowledged that "although the 93rd had great potential as a fighting unit, it was not at that moment ready for the front lines in modern day warfare." Miller agreed. He stated that most of the division's tactical decisions were sound, but the accumulation of minor deficiencies and errors had made the big picture look bad at times.24

Miller's criticisms were directed towards the unit's Black junior officers as well. He noted that the organization's discipline disintegrated after the division arrived at the bivouac site. Upon his inspection, Miller found that men were sleeping all over the command post as well as other areas. He questioned many of the Negro officers as to why the breakdown in discipline occurred and reported "some said that they just fell out because they were tired." Furious, he told the unit's Negro officers that their promotions were suspended and limited to the rank of lieutenant if reinstated.25

24Ibid.

It is quite possible that Miller’s actions were well within the War Department’s anomalous guidelines for promotion. On 10 January 1943 the Army Ground Forces delayed creating position vacancies for Negro officers because groups of Negro officers had to be elevated so that no Black officers were higher than the lowest ranking White officers. This allowed for promulgation of the War Department’s policies of segregation. In order to substantiate the policy, the Army Ground Force Deputy Chief, Lieutenant Colonel Willard S. Renshaw, granted Miller and 92nd Commander General Edward Almond enormous freedom in the promotion of Black officers within their own organizations.26

Miller’s disparaging assessment of the 93rd’s Black officers was not unusual. Major General Raymon G. Lehman, the commanding officer who succeeded him, later used Major Charles Blackwood to command the 369th’s First Battalion later that year. Blackwood was chosen because he was a World War I hero and regarded as the most promising Negro soldier in the organization. However, Lehman later stated that Blackwood was relieved of his command after only three months because of poor administration, housekeeping, and

training. On 28 April 1943 Hodges told the Operations Division that "except for 10 to 15 percent of the total Black officers in the unit, the Negro lieutenants are lacking in military background, aggressiveness, professional knowledge, and ability." Lehman's and Hodge's judgement depicted the Army's assumption that Blacks could not command combat units and were not to be entrusted with such responsibility. This must have both adversely affected the unit's morale and caused dissension in the outfit's officer corps.

Miller's assessment was forced into the background because of domestic political concerns. A report circulated in the latter part of November 1942 that the 93rd was to be used to pick cotton in Arizona. On 5 November Governor Sydney P. Osborn of Arizona asked Stimson to order the outfit to harvest the crop. Osborn warned that the war vital crop, which was used to make parachutes for airborne troops, "will not be picked and as a result, thousands of bales will be lost." Stimson was placed in an awkward position for if the War Department used the Negro unit, it


29 "Wants 93rd to Pick Cotton," Pittsburgh Courier, 7 November 1942, 1.
would arouse the suspicions of the Negro community whose fears it tried desperately to allay. Stimson did not have to make the decision for the United States Employment Service issued a call for 2,000 cotton pickers on 12 December. Furthermore, the next day, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union organized a volunteer farm labor Army of 10,000 workers to harvest the long overdue crop. The two organizations' successful efforts postponed the Army's anomalous racial policies but exposed its vulnerability to public skepticism.

However, the incident allowed the administration's opposing forces to converge. On 13 February 1943 NAACP Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins asked if "it is the purpose of the War Department to use Negro troops drawing a pay of fifty dollars a month to relieve municipalities of carrying on the regular service in various cities?" The organization's house organ entitled the Crisis stipulated that "if there are no cotton pickers available and if both White and Black troops are to be used to pick cotton, then we will be cheerful when our men are assigned to this duty." On the floor of the House of Representatives on 25 February 1943,


31"Protests Use of Troops for Snow Removal, Pittsburgh Courier, 13 February 1943, 8.

Hamilton Fish questioned the War Department's policies and asked House members "if the Army proposed to use any Colored combat troops in this war." 33

Fish's statements were indicative of part of the Republican Party's overt scheme to regain the White House. In 1943, the Republicans attempted to maintain the Negro vote it had recovered in the 1940 presidential election, and attract the anti-New Deal elements within the Democratic Party who opposed both its pro-labor and Negro policies. On 25 February, Wendell Willkie, the party's presidential candidate in 1940 and an aspirant of 1944, told the Women's Republican Club of Indianapolis that the "Negroes of America will continue their fight for social, civic, and economic equalities." 34 Willkie voiced his belief that until racial injustices and inequalities were eradicated, the Democratic Party could not claim to be ideal. In an interview with the Associated Negro Press later that week, Congresswoman Clair Boothe Luce told Pittsburgh Courier Reporter J. Robert Smith that although neither "the Democratic nor the Republican Party had not been interest in racial issues, the latter had been the more consistent of the two." 35

33 "Fish Asks Why no Combat Units in Current War," Pittsburgh Courier, 27 February 1943, 2.


On 17 April the governors of Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Louisiana held a conference in Tallahassee to voice their opposition to the New Deal. The group insisted that Roosevelt introduce a new social policy "devoid of Negro sympathies." Governor Sam Jones of Louisiana told the assembly that "the South had stood by the Democratic Party because of its stand on states rights, tariffs, and race relations." "Those reasons are gone," Jones proclaimed. The men warned Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, who was also present, that if Roosevelt wanted the support of the South in the upcoming presidential election, he should publicly endorse these policies. The members of the Republican Party must have realized that the Democratic Party's "Solid South," which it had held since the Civil War, had begun to rupture over the racial problem. The issue would eventually cause the faction to separate from the party during the 1948 presidential election year.

Evidently, Roosevelt knew the South's reservations. In his message to Congress in January 1943, he called for a renewed attack on segregation but then stated that it was a poor time to speak of building a new world. Roosevelt needed to reassure the Southern faction that largely occupied a major portion of his fragile New Deal Coalition


37"Hint Liberalism of Roosevelt May Lose Solid South," Pittsburgh Courier, 17 April 1943, 12.
because many of its committee chairmen tipped the balance of power between the two parties in Congress. For example, the hopes of many New Deal programs rested in the House Committee on Appropriations which consisted of Joe Starnes of Alabama and Joe Hendricks. Both men were adamantly opposed to the anti-lynching and anti-poll tax measures periodically introduced into the Congress.38 Furthermore, in the Congressional elections of 1942, the Republicans gained forty-seven seats in the House and the Democrats received less than half of the major party vote for the first time since 1932.39 Thus, this forced Roosevelt to proceed with his war initiatives and to retreat on all other fronts.

Nevertheless, domestic conditions again concerned the Roosevelt Administration and attempts were made to both appeal to Negro voters and subdue the growing apprehension of its manpower utilization policies. On 4 March, War Department officials announced that more than 60,000 Negroes were serving with Army units outside of the country in North Africa and the South Pacific. It was also announced that black soldiers had been trained as fighting men and would get a chance "to acquit themselves on the battlefield


of this war as their forefathers had in the past." On that same day, Stimson told Negro reporters that the troops had not been used to pick cotton. He however stated that "the decision was conditional pending an investigation to determine whether or not a real emergency exists." The War Department worked to divert public criticism during the 93rd's Louisiana exercises held from May until June of that year. The organization participated as a part of the Third Army and competed against the 85th Division for top combat honors. Ulysses Lee pointed out that the exercises were significant for it was the first time that a Negro organization as large as a division had ever engaged in a military contest against other divisions in the history of the United States. Fully aware that the unit's activities were to be closely scrutinized by the Negro periodicals and other private organizations, the War Department invited Carl Murphy of the Baltimore Afro-American, Robert Ratcliffe of the Atlanta World, Milton Bledsoe of the Kansas City Call, Eustace Gay of the Philadelphia Tribune, and other members of the Negro community to


41 Joe Shephard, "Stimson Denies Promotion Ban on Race Officers," Pittsburgh Courier, 6 March 1943, 1, 4.

42 "Troops Won't Pick Cotton," Pittsburgh Courier, 6 March 1943, 1.
view the maneuvers on 10 May. Two days later, Public Relations Officer of the Third Army, Colonel W. C. Deware, held a three day conference with the newsmen and discussed the general purpose of the exercises. Generals Davis and Miller praised the 93rd and told the press members of its progress. On 13 May, the Negro press witnessed the promotion of twenty-four junior officers from second lieutenant to first lieutenant. These gestures, thus, characterized the War Department's attempt to curb future discontent and demonstrated its subtlety. The members of the Negro press and community had neither seen the 93rd in action nor questioned the comments of its senior officers and caused blacks' expectations for the 93rd to rise beyond the reality of the period.

During its exercises, the 93rd showed the flashes of combat readiness that it had displayed during its first phase of training. The unit illustrated great familiarity with its weaponry. The 25th Infantry courageously defended a railhead and demonstrated a high degree of esprit de corps. Several men received citations and two were named for the Soldier's Medal of Honor. At the close of the

43 E. W. Baker, "Thousand of Race Soldiers on Maneuvers in Louisiana," Pittsburgh Courier, 17 April 1943, 1,4; "U.S. Army will Permit Press to Witness Louisiana Maneuvers," Pittsburgh Courier, 1 May 1943, 14; Roy Wilkins, "Maneuvers Show 93rd is Ready," Pittsburgh Courier, 10 April 1943, 2.

44 Pittsburgh Courier, 1 May 1943, 14.
exercises on 10 June, Major General Wade H. Haislip observed the 93rd's correction of its prior mistakes in the Fort Huachuca Maneuvers the previous month. The unit dramatically improved its techniques of mobile movement, command layouts, security, and the receipt and dissemination of information. Haslip stated that the outfit's blackout discipline was splendid.45

However, the 93rd's successes were superficial. On 31 May, the Third Army Headquarters negatively rated the outfit's performance. On the sole basis of solving each tactical problem, the encampment rated the 100th Battalion, excellent; the 85th Division, satisfactory; and the 93rd Division, poor.46 More significantly, Army Ground Forces learned that the unit did not retain the carefully detailed instructions of one phase of the exercises.47 On 3 May McNair told members of the War Plans Division that "when its leadership was good, especially in the non-commissioned ranks, the 93rd had performed well."48 A further indictment against the Black commissioned officership, McNair's


47Army Ground Forces Study 17, cited in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 492.

48Memorandum, 93rd Chief of Staff Stanley M. Prouty to General Lehman Miller, n.d., AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13704, File 393, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
statement reflected the Army's hesitance to deploy the unit until it had found a "reasonably productive" theater for combat. The War Department's overall view was that the organization had done better than expected. On the basis of the 93rd's uneven performance, McNair decided to send the division to Camp Clipper, California, for additional instruction.49

Not only was the division's performance in Louisiana subject to scrutiny, but its conduct during the exercises as well. In 1943, racial disturbances occurred at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi; Camp Stewart, Georgia; March Field, Louisiana; Camp San Luis Obispo, California; Fort Bliss, Texas; Camp Phillips, Kansas; Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky; and Camp Shenango, Pennsylvania.50 Lee has termed the year of turbulence a "harvest of disorder."51 Citizens at the divisions' maneuver sites harbored deep racial prejudice. Historian Richard Dalfiume has believed that this was because the Negro unit evoked "hostility, fear, and suspicion on the part of many southern Whites."52

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50 Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy for chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 3 June 1943, Subject: Negro Troops, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:267.


52 Dalfiume, The Desegregation of U.S. Forces, 72-73.
Southerners were convinced that Negro soldiers were boisterous and rapacious. This attitude was aptly reflected in a letter dated 12 April that a woman from Louisiana wrote to Congressman A. Leonard Allen:

We are patriotic and want to help win this war and hate to complain of anything the government does, but having all of these Negroes placed in our rural community is a problem. They are rude and brazen and indecent. We have not but a few men folks left in our community here in Sabine Parish and the women aren't alone."53

Although these were individual complaints, no racial incidents occurred during the 93rd's maneuvers training. On 29 June, the mayor of Sabine Parish told Stimson that "the troops have been very orderly and well disciplined, causing no trouble or apprehension that could encourage criticism for which we are thankful."54

The Negro Press railed furiously against the domestic turmoil. Many periodicals such as the Baltimore Afro-American, and the New York Age expressed grave reservations of having the unit encamped in the South.55 When Ned Turman, a Black enlisted soldier, was killed by a White


military policeman at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the Pittsburgh Courier commented:

They say this is war
For Freedom over there
Say, Mr. FDR
How about some freedom here?
T'was a Fort Bragg M.P. shot him down
One evening when he was leaving town.56

A White House solution to the crisis was not forthcoming. Roosevelt refused to respond to the racial disturbances that summer because his attention focused extensively on the diplomatic and military aspects of the war. He allowed secretary Marvin McIntyre to handle the situation. A pragmatic Southern reactionary, McIntyre viewed the civil rights issues as anathema and considered the fragile Democratic coalition more important. He had carefully screened Roosevelt's letters and blunted the complaints of all activists. NAACP Secretary Walter White stated that McIntyre "decided to halt the struggle against discrimination."57

The domestic strife caused great embarrassment to the War Department and reopened its erstwhile discussion on the employment of Negro troops. On 2 June Assistant Secretary of War and Chairman of the newly created Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies, John J. McCloy, told


Marshall that the discontent of Negro soldiers "had spread to the extent that it constitutes an immediate serious problem." Formed by Stimson on 27 August 1942 with the goal to break down racial discrimination in the War Department, the McCloy Committee discerned that the disturbances had followed a pattern which began with a few isolated incidents. After it carefully studied the reports of several cases, the organization recommended the deployment of Negro combat organizations at the next available date. The group believed that such a directive would lessen the violent demonstrations between Black units and the towns in which they were stationed.58

On 3 July Marshall told the commanding generals of the Army's strategic air forces and ground units that "vigorous leadership was needed to take positive preventive measures." He felt that the riots had been caused by the universal failure of many commanders to recognize the seriousness of the problem and to take preventive measures to avoid potential outbreaks. Marshall warned the commanders that he would dismiss anyone who did not offer any plausible solutions to the impending crisis. However, he and other members of the Army high command ignored the

58 Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy for Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 3 July 1943, Subject: Negro Troops, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:267.
Advisory Committee’s primary recommendation. On 9 August Assistant Chief of Staff Ray E. Porter instructed the Army Ground, Service, and Air Force commanders to prepare an extended Mobilization Training Program. Porter believed that the measure would intensify the Negro troop’s disciplinary training.

From 14 to 28 July, General Davis and Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War Truman K. Gibson inspected both the 92nd at Fort Huachuca and the 2nd Cavalry Division at Fort Clark, Texas, and were appalled at what they had found. Davis and Gibson learned that racial disaffection was present in both organizations. In an incident in which a lieutenant beat and injured a drunken Negro enlisted man, no official action was taken. Davis felt that the 92nd’s commander, General Edward Almond "had overlooked the human element in the training of the division" and had not given enough consideration to racial relations within his unit. Almond disagreed with Davis and Gibson’s analysis. On 7 August he told Major General Virgil L. Peterson that the

59 Memorandum, Chief of Staff George C. Marshall for Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Army Ground Forces, and Service and Supply, 3 July 1943, Subject: Negro Troops, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:270.

60 Memorandum, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, for Commanding Generals, Army Ground Forces, et al., 9 August 1943, Subject: Disturbances among Negro Troops, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:272.

61 Memorandum, Acting Civilian Aide Truman Gibson for Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, 23 August 1943, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:275.
two men’s assertions reflected the position taken by the unit’s imaginative and race conscious personnel. He blamed the Negro newspapers and officers for the unit’s racial problems. Almond believed that the 92nd had high morale and that the reported incidents were insignificant. Therefore, he did not file a formal complaint concerning Davis and Gibson’s report. In their observations of the 2nd Cavalry, the two men charged Commander, General Harry H. Johnson with ignoring the complaints of his subordinates. Both Davis and Gibson felt that Johnson’s attitude was suspect. A former Texas National Guard Commander, Johnson believed that the 2nd Cavalry’s performance evaluations, not the outfit’s race relations, were the only thing that had mattered. Gibson and Davis’s observations were largely ignored. Johnson’s attitude, which was common within the War Department, reflected the Army’s reluctance to either institute changes in order to alleviate the acute manpower shortages it faced or listen to others before a crisis had forced them to do so.

After the 93rd moved to Camp Clipper, California in the summer of 1943, it received refresher courses in basic training, physical conditioning, small units tactics, and

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63 Memorandum, Acting Civilian Aide Truman Gibson for Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, 23 August 1943, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:277.
major echelon combat exercises. In August, the unit participated in the Fourth Corps Maneuvers and Army Ground Forces Tests, passing some with satisfactory marks, and receiving retraining in others. After it successfully completed the pre-embarkation tests administered by the Army Ground Forces in the fall of 1943, Lehman proclaimed that the unit was fit for combat. During its parade ceremonies, the 93rd Commander told his men "we will run the enemy to the end of the earth and break their backs and necks in their own backyard."\(^{64}\)

Despite its completion of training, the division still had its problems. Lieutenant Colonel J. R. Dryden ordered Lehman to embark only after the outfit had received more training that summer. He advised the unit commander that the outfit's preparation and training program should render it "fully qualified to perform combat missions." Dryden felt that although the 93rd's performance had been promising, the unit still lacked military proficiency and needed time to work on its deficiencies. Though the outfit discharged 3,790 men for physical disabilities and other

\(^{64}\)E. W. Baker, "93rd Division Grads Win Ranger Award," Pittsburgh Courier, 28 August 1943, 2.; Summary of Unit Operations, 93rd Division, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13696, File 393-0.3., Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland; Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 493.
miscellaneous problems, its constant transfer of men may have debilitated its departure.65

Why did Dryden's directive omit the unit's eventual destination? The reasoning probably lies in the fact that the War Department, even at this point, had not found a theater commander who would accept the unit. As late as 4 October, the Operations Division (G-3) told Marshall that since there were no Negro units used in action which would substantiate a conclusion as to their credibility in combat, the 93rd should be deployed to the Mediterranean area. Colonel Edward J. Rehmann, Acting Chief of the Operation Division's Troop Movement Section stated that Eisenhower was willing to accept the 93rd only as a replacement for other forwarding units.66 Rehmann's proposal allowed the outfit to be sent to other theaters after the War Department declared it "combat worthy." On 7 October Secretary of the McCloy Committee, Colonel J. S. Leonard told Advisory Group members that the use of the 93rd in any theater of operations would "materially reduce the racial tensions in the country." Leonard noted that the unit's disposition would have a great impact on the Negro population but did not

65 Memorandum, Colonel J. R. Dryden to Commanding General, 93rd Division, Desert Training Center, 25 July 1943, Subject: Preparation of Unit for Overseas Service, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13699, File 393-1.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

suggest where to send the organization. He believed that its employment was a military question that should not be manipulated by public opinion.\footnote{Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies, 16 October 1943, cited in Lee, \textit{The Employment of Negro Troops}, 459.}

The Army's tentative plan to send the 93rd to the Mediterranean lapsed because of logistical problems during October. Due to Germany's active opposition, Allied shipping had been limited to combat units and supplies. Thus, it was doubtful that the unit would be used in action. On 19 October Major General Thomas T. Handy of the Operations Division informed Marshall that although a maximum of sixteen divisions could be maintained in Italy, "one of the sixteen should not be a colored unit as long as tested White divisions were available." Handy suggested that the 93rd be sent to Hawaii where it could be later deployed to either the Southwest, Central or South Pacific Commands.\footnote{Memorandum, John J. McCloy for General Osborn, 7 October 1943, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, \textit{Basic Documents}, 5:281-87.}

Marshall agreed but took no action because he knew that the Pacific Commanders, with the exception of MacArthur, refused to accept any Negro troops.\footnote{Memorandum, Operations Division for Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 19 October 1943, cited in Lee, \textit{The Employment of Negro Troops}, 460.}

The War Department's lack of a cogent racial policy caused dissension within the Army high command. The G-3
warned Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph T. McNarney that the Army's failure to commit Negro troops to action:

(1) created a backlog of combat units in the United States;
(2) forced the Army to deplete or inactivate Black organizations in order to provide personnel for service units;
(3) created numerous inquiries from Negro and other affiliated organizations without a plausible answer or excuse for its failure to commit Black units to action or for the placing of Negro personnel in service units. 70

The G-3 reiterated that all available Negro combat troops be shipped without delay to active theaters.

On 3 November Gibson told Assistant Secretary of War Robert Patterson that the Army's treatment of the Negro would be a political issue in 1944. Gibson reminded Patterson of the difficulties of Roosevelt's last campaign and how public pressure forced the president to make concessions which he wanted to avoid. 71 Seven days later, Davis told the McCloy Committee that "Colored officers and soldiers feel that they are denied the protection and rewards that ordinarily result from good behavior and proper performance of duty." Davis believed that the Negro community had lost confidence in the Army and only the

70 Memorandum, G-3 for Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph T. McNarney, 6 January 1944, cited in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 469.

71 Memorandum, Civilian Aide Truman Gibson to Assistant Secretary of War Robert Patterson, 3 November 1943, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:288.
utilization of the 93rd would uplift its morale. His suggestion, like those before, was ignored.

The Army high command failed to realize that its lackluster deployment policy for Negro combat troops rendered it susceptible to attacks from external elements. On 25 October Congressman Fish told members of the House of Representatives that the Selective Service Act of 1940 should be amended to include previously rejected Blacks who could not read or write. Fish argued that although the country had been at war for two years, Negro infantry regiments had yet to be placed in a combat zone. Fish’s proposal was defeated in the House by a vote of 24 to 70. Although defeated, Fish’s question had struck a responsive chord in the nation’s consciousness. On 23 November Eleanor Roosevelt wrote McCloy stating that Negroes should be given a chance "to prove their mettle." An enthusiastic supporter of various humanitarian causes, Roosevelt felt that the country’s national defense must be felt by every individual.

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72 Memorandum, Brigadier General B. O. Davis for Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, 10 November 1943, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:291.

73 U.S. Congress, House, Congressman Hamilton Fish Proposes an Amendment to the Selective Service Act, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., Congressional Record (26 October 1943), vol. 89, pt. 7, 8752-8771.

The Negro press increased its criticisms. *Pittsburgh Courier* correspondent Edgar T. Rouzeau openly questioned why Black ground forces failed to be utilized in combat. Rouzeau covered American troops in Egypt and traveled extensively throughout the Mediterranean Theater in order to see exactly how Negro units were treated. During his tour, Jack Thompson of the *Chicago Tribune* told Rouzeau that in the battle of Tunisia, he had seen a Negro artillery unit attached to a brigade and that the outfit had been stationed in Sicily afterwards. Upon his own investigation, however, Rouzeau learned both that Thompson's account of the skirmish was erroneous and that the only thing that the Negro troops were used for was to unload ships and haul supplies. Rouzeau believed that the whole episode was reminiscent of World War I and warned that both "the Negro press and the War Department should realize that something had to be done."75

On 27 November the NAACP asked Stimson to comment on the status of the 93rd. The inquiry was in response to the persistent rumors that the division had been broken up and the remnants of it were assigned to guard duty along the west coast. Adjutant General J. A. Ulio reassured the organization that the information was unfounded and the 93rd had just completed its intense training in the California-

Arizona Desert. However, Ulio failed to mention any embarkation plans for the unit or its future destination. He merely stated that "suitable use would be made of the 93rd at the appropriate time." 76

Ulio's vague statement on the 93rd's well-being was a rare public enunciation of the War Department's policies. Stimson ordered the 93rd from the California-Arizona Maneuver Area at Camp Clipper to the Camp Stoneman Area of the San Francisco Port of Embarkation on 23 December. He advised Lehman to "move the unit without delay and allow the men to mail post cards three days prior to departure." The mailings diverted some of the adverse attention away from the War Department. 77 Besides the obvious reason of national security, it is quite possible that the Army assumed that if the Negro press had learned of the unit's correspondence, then it would cease to focus on the Roosevelt Administration's failures to include the Negro in its contingency plans.

On 28 December Troop Movement and Equipment Division Director Melvin L. Craig issued an embarkation warning to the 93rd. The unit's men were very surprised that it had

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77 Memorandum, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson for 93rd Commander Lehman Miller, 18 December 1943, Subject: Movement, Shipment Orders, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13704, File 393-3.91, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
been ordered to action. The outfit’s quarterly report stated that "even the most skeptical of us no longer deny the fact that the division will see action." Its morale lifted to new heights. Lehman stated, "When all of the men finally awoke to the fact that we were finally definitely going over, they, as the slang goes, straightened up and flew right." However, Craig’s directive failed to mention the nature of the unit’s assignment and its subsequent mission. Furthermore, the public was not informed of his directive.

On 5 February 1944, President Roosevelt conceded that Negro troops were needed in action, but he stopped short of issuing an executive order. Forever cautious on racial situations, he evaded the question and told the Negro reporters that he would form an inspection committee to expose possible discrimination in the Army. Stimson similarly stated that "Negro organizations had been sent overseas for combat duty in accordance with priorities that

78 Administrative File, Colonel Melvin Craig to Commanding Officer, Camp Young, California, 28 December 1943, Subject: Warning Letter, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13699, File no. 393-1.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

79 History, Headquarters, and Headquarters Battery, 93rd Infantry Division Artillery Quarterly Report, 1 January-31 March 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13699, File no. 393, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

were based mainly upon the state of the unit's training."\textsuperscript{81} Like other members of the War Department, Stimson believed that discrimination could not be solved in wartime if at any time at all. Stimson told Archibald MacLeish of the Office of Facts and Figures that "our forefathers had produced a problem which is impossible of solution in this country and I myself could see no theoretical or logical solution for it in war times like these."\textsuperscript{82} On the other hand, he recognized that the War Department had been subject to sharp criticism due to its racial policies. Stimson told his staff, "We must face the situation more seriously, we have got to use the Colored race to help us in this fight."\textsuperscript{83}

Stimson had known that Black outfits were not a part of the Army's offensive plans of 1944. Faced with increasing manpower shortages in service and supply organizations overseas in early 1944, he ordered the conversion of both the 930th and 931st Field Artillery Battalions into engineers on 27 January. Stimson also converted the 2nd Cavalry Division, which contained the famous 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, into labor battalions in North Africa. These conversions were the direct result of the apparent

\textsuperscript{81}"Evasive on Combat," \textit{Pittsburgh Courier}, 12 February 1944, 3.


\textsuperscript{83}Stimson Diary, 27 January 1944, cited in Dalfiume, \textit{Desegregation of U.S. Forces}, 94.
obsolescence of anti-aircraft artillery units and Coast Guard outfits due to the decline in threats of enemy attacks to the country. However, although many White outfits were affected by similar conversions, their numbers were relatively fewer than those of Negro organizations.

This policy caused the racial issue to explode. On 1 February Fish wrote Stimson asking why were Negro combat units converted and why Black outfits were denied the opportunity to serve in action twenty-six months after Pearl Harbor. The Secretary of War responded that there had indeed been conversions but they were based on military efficiency:

It so happens that a relatively large percentage of Negroes inducted into the Army had lower educational classifications and many of the Black units, accordingly, had been unable to efficiently master the techniques of modern weapons.84

Stimson concluded that the War Department had not deliberately attempted to exclude the ordering of Negro troops overseas and any implication was "entirely without foundation." Stimson's letter, which was prepared by the Operations Division, was significant for it was approved by the War Department but was neither seen by the McCloy Committee nor by Gibson, the Civilian Aide.

On 23 February Fish angrily read Stimson’s remarks in a session of the House of Representatives. He disagreed with the Secretary of War’s negative assessments because the educational standards of Negroes had improved in the last twenty-five years. To Fish, it seemed strange that the French Senegalese and British divisions from India that had qualifications lower than American Blacks, were found to be brave and efficient soldiers. He insisted that "any American is good enough to wear the uniform of his country, regardless of race, color, or creed." On 26 February Negro Democrats, led by Congressman William L. Dawson of Illinois held a meeting to protest against the War Department’s policies. Two days later, the Chicago Citizens Committee adopted a resolution which called for the removal of the Secretary of War. Dawson wrote McCloy that "Stimson was either woefully ignorant on the matter of Negro troops or had purposely tried to discredit the Black fighting men of this nation."

Both the Negro Press and civic organizations viewed Stimson’s reply as an affirmation of its darkest suspicions of the War Department’s policies. The Pittsburgh Courier charged that Stimson "was a stubborn man who is determined to continue color discrimination and segregation in the Army

85Ibid.

and Navy, war or no war."\textsuperscript{87} The \textit{Chicago Defender} stated that the Secretary of War's comments were "a terrible blow to the morale of the Negro people."\textsuperscript{88} The \textit{Norfolk Journal and Guide} saw the episode quite differently. In an editorial entitled "The Stimson incident means more gains," the paper voiced its belief that Stimson's statement "had been chiefly responsible for the opening of all arms and services to the training of Colored soldiers."\textsuperscript{89} The \textit{Baltimore Afro-American} claimed "Mister Stimson and the War Department have treated us like half-witted step-children unworthy of democracy or the freedom to fight for it."\textsuperscript{90} The National Council on Negro Veterans, Incorporated Treasurer Mack Spears told Fish that:

The War Department or at least those in charge of operations had planned to hold up the 99th Pursuit Squadron as a shining example of what had been accorded Negroes in this war and expected him to accept anything else that might be perpetrated upon him.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{87}"Mr. Stimson is Adamant," \textit{Pittsburgh Courier}, 11 March 1944, 6.

\textsuperscript{88}\textit{Chicago Defender}, 4 March 1944, 1.; Finkle, \textit{Forum for Protest}, 183.


\textsuperscript{90}"Fish and Secretary Stimson," \textit{Baltimore Afro-American}, 4 March 1944, 4.

\textsuperscript{91}Letter, National Treasurer Mack Spears to Representative Hamilton Fish, 19 February 1944, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, \textit{Basic Documents}, 5:332.
Private citizens were just as enraged. On 29 February, Hastie, now a private citizen, told Stimson that his remarks "were unfair and insulting to the Negro soldier." Hastie interpreted that the War Department’s racial policies were deeper than the issue of discrimination. He believed that the Army’s troubles originated with their theater commander’s hesitance to accept Black units for combat. On 6 March former Eighth National Guard Battalion commander Ovid E. Harris told Stimson, "It is both amazing and shocking to find your signature laced over so gross a misstatement of fact." Harris claimed that Stimson’s allegations were false because the Eighth had been one of the most competent organizations in the Army and it passed every weapons test with credit. On 9 March NAACP spokesman Roy Wilkins wrote Roosevelt stating that there was great fear among Negroes that a conspiracy existed in the armed services to prevent Blacks from combat. He stated, "Colored people feel this insult all the more keenly because they are aware that there have been deliberate policies in the War Department designed to justify the statements in


Stimson’s letter to Fish. Wilkins demanded that the President end segregation within the War Department. In Birmingham, Alabama on 10 March, the Southern Negro Youth Congress demanded the White House end segregation. In a petition that contained fifty thousand signatures, the group stated, "The united effort of our nation is greatly weakened because of the practice of segregation against Negro troops." This reflects the perception that the issues of segregation and the viability of Negro combat troops were closely connected.

The Republican Party viewed the incident as an abysmal failure of the Roosevelt Administration. On 3 March the Republican National Committee publicly denounced Stimson’s statement. The next day, Senator Robert Taft said that "evidently the men feel that they are discriminated against because of their color." He suggested that the War Department review the matter and obtain a report on


96 "Stimson Should Quit," Pittsburgh Courier, 4 March 1944, 4.

it. At a Negro Republican Meeting, the keynote address was the non-use of Black troops.98

Stimson's remarks, which publicly exposed the Army's reluctance to employ Negro troops in combat, must have made him realize that public support was impossible if he did not face the situation. At his request, the McCloy Committee discussed its racial policies on 29 February. The McCloy Committee was very undecided as to how racial units were to be deployed. Theater Group Operations Division Deputy Chief Carl A. Russell declared that it would be disastrous to force Negro units on theater commanders because it might cause a command upheaval that the War Department could ill afford. He recommended that the Operations Division send the 93rd overseas only if the theater commander would accept it. Russell's suggestion was unfeasible for if it were left to the theater commanders, Negro outfits would never have been assigned. Personnel Section Chief Miller G. White disagreed. He told Russell that the Army could not "give ten percent of the Army to Negroes and not use any of them for combat troops."99 White believed that the outfits should be reorganized into combat teams and theater commanders should be ordered to accept them.

99Ibid., 326.
White's proposal took place only after McCloy announced the elements of a meeting with Marshall and Stimson held several hours earlier. The two senior officials of the War Department urged McCloy to create a definite policy towards Negro units because the deployment of them was not essential. Both Stimson and Marshall agreed that the unit's performance should be placed in the public record and a national policy was needed to dictate to the corps commanders. McCloy emphasized to the committee members that "it is a vital national policy to make a military asset of that part of the population." 100

The members of the committee were very reluctant to order the unit into action. Porter stated that the War Department would be forced to recommend the 93rd's conversion if it was not used in combat soon. Russell suggested that, although "the outfit was under standard," it could be reorganized into selectively smaller elements if the War Department could insure its combat proficiency. White and Davis disagreed. White felt that any unit could be trained for the task. Davis asked Russell how could the War Department say that officers couldn't train Negroes while West African troops were being used and stated, "If the Army makes up its mind, it can do it." McCloy and the others agreed and decided to publicize the 93rd's deployment after

100 Ibid.
its initial engagement. The Committee resolved to divide the unit into combat teams and train it as such.101

On 2 March, Press Secretary Jonathan Daniels met with Roosevelt to discuss the possibility of ordering Negro troops into action. Roosevelt stated his belief that Blacks were satisfactory in forward movement but were poor fighters on the firing line. Roosevelt based his assumptions on the French experiences with the Senegalese troops whom he considered "excellent in physical combat."102 Thus, the War Department's negative outlook may have emanated from the president himself.

McCloy submitted the Advisory Committee's recommendations to Stimson that same day. He explained that the War Department's military policy both excluded Negro units from action and hampered the Army's efforts to study different techniques of training. McCloy suggested that the 93rd's deployment would give the Army a chance to test its training methods in tactical skirmishes. Stimson agreed.103 Scarcely a month later, he publicly informed the Associated Negro Press that the 93rd had proceeded to bases in the

101Dalfiune, Desegregation in the U.S. Forces, 94.
103Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy for Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, 2 March 1944, cited in MacGregor and Nalty, Basic Documents, 5:334.
South Pacific but made no mention of the unit's location. Thus, the War Department deployed the 93rd as a test to either prove or disprove Army theories of warfare. More importantly, the unit's subsequent deployment, just as its creation, was a result of public pressure and represented a marked departure from previous military doctrine. Richard Dalfiume has stated that "like the drafting and assignment to units, the commitment of Negroes to combat was a reaction to pressure rather than the planned fulfillment of a need."

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105 Dalfiume, Desegregation in the U.S. Forces, 96-97.
CHAPTER IV
THE 93RD'S TRANSFER TO THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC THEATER

The last echelon of the advance party of the 93rd, which consisted of its Signal and Quartermaster Components, the 318th Medical Battalion, and the 793rd Ordinance Company arrived at Guadalcanal on 5 March 1944. As a part of the McCloy Committee's recommendations, the entire unit was divided into elements. The 368th proceeded earlier to Banika in the Russells and the 369th relieved fragments of the 43rd Infantry Division on the New Georgia Islands on 7 February.\(^1\) The 25th Infantry, the last of the 93rd's combat organizations to embark, arrived on Guadalcanal one week later. All of the units were to receive six weeks of instruction in scouting, patrolling, perimeter defense, and rifle and grenade tactics.\(^2\)

But external events preempted the 93rd's training. The unit had scarcely arrived in the South Pacific when a Japanese force of 25,000 broke through the Americal defensive perimeter on Bougainville in late March, 1944, and War

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\(^1\)Summary of Operations in World War II, 93rd Infantry Division, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13696, File 393-0.3, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Department officials feared that the island's vital airstrip would be recaptured. A small island located near New Caledonia, Bougainville was very important to the Army's objectives of the Pacific campaign. Early in 1943, the Japanese built a fighter strip on the island from which they attacked the supply lines between the United States and Australia. However, U.S. forces captured the airfield and used it to destroy Japanese garrisons and supply lines on nearby islands. On 16 March the second battalion of the all-Black 45th Coast Artillery unit attacked several Japanese strongholds on Bougainville. The outfit's intensive barrages of the enemy beachhead resulted in the defeat of Japanese forces at Rabaul and Buka. That same day, the 24th Infantry's 1st Battalion, led by Second Lieutenant Harry J. McCallister, successfully engaged Japanese forces attempting to fill a gap in the American lines. Afterwards, the battalion relieved the beleaguered 2nd Battalion, 148th Infantry after it was attacked by commander Hyutake's forces on Hill 700, properly called Cannon Hill. Major General Oscar W. Griswold reported that the unit "was given


a sector of the perimeter and did an excellent job in organizing and preparing its defensive position."\(^5\)

The success of the two Negro outfits permitted the War Department to commit the 93rd. On 18 March Marshall ordered Harmon to use the 93rd ahead of schedule. Although the unit’s training was abbreviated, Marshall emphasized that it’s deployment into battle should occur after a thorough inspection. He realized that the Negro press had widely covered the 93rd’s activities and advised Harmon that all news releases and theater reports be kept "strictly factual." Furthermore, he requested a report of the unit’s after-battle inspection.\(^6\) Three days later, Harmon ordered Lehman to move the 25th Infantry to Empress Bay on the Bougainville islands and place it with the Fourteenth Corps.\(^7\) Harmon assured Marshall that the unit would undergo substantial jungle warfare training before its implementation.\(^8\) Due to its primary training in the arid Arizona desert, the 25th was not accustomed to the island’s


\(^7\)Message, South Pacific Command to Commanding General, 93rd Infantry Division, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13704, File 393-3.11 to 393-26, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

\(^8\)Message, Harmon to Marshall, Eyes Only, 23 March 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13704, File 393 to 3.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
thick and impenetrable underbrush and thus instruction was essential. When it disembarked on 17 February, the 25th Infantry had unloaded ships and had scarcely a week's training in the jungle. Its men had no idea that they were to be ordered into action nor were they prepared for it. Instead of monitoring the outfit's combat readiness on 23 March, Harmon ordered Griswold to deploy the 25th Infantry to cut off the enemy's line of supply from the southern Bougainville area. The unit was also advised to "conduct limited offensive operations against the west flank and rear of hostile forces in the front." Harmon told Griswold that the opportunity would allow "the seasoning and employment of Negro combat troops." However, Harmon's order ignored the fact that the 93rd was totally unprepared for the horrors of the impenetrable jungle and an ambush occurred a week later. In turn, the incident considerably damaged the 93rd's credibility in combat and reduced it to service support duties for the remainder of the Pacific war.

In an attempt to assess fairly the 93rd's contribution to the Pacific Campaign, its initial combat performances on Bougainville must be critically analyzed. This will show that symptoms of inexperience were inherent in all of its initial combat missions. With each of its battalions

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9 Message, South Pacific Command to Commanding General, Fourteenth Corps, 23 March 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box no. 13704, File 393-3.11-26, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
attached to the Americal Division on Bougainville, the 25th Infantry moved to fill gaps in the Americal defensive perimeter being exploited by Japanese forces and participated in jungle patrols to observe enemy activity. On 2 April, the 25th's first battalion forged deep into the jungles enroute to Hill 500. The unit's mission was to carry ammunition and supplies to a company of the 132nd Infantry. Hardly 200 yards beyond its perimeter, the outfit encountered a machine gun nest and lost three men in the process. After the detachment regained its composure and cleared out the enemy position, the patrol became disoriented in the wilderness without a compass. However, led by Lieutenant John O. Trice, the unit followed sounds of friendly artillery until they located the command post.\textsuperscript{10} In an after-battle evaluation of the outfit's performance, Trice attributed their difficulties to the lack of Browning Automatic Rifles and knowledgeable scouts. Significantly enough, during the skirmish, he noticed that his outfit became confused when the Japanese officers issued commands in English. In an attempt to eliminate future bewilderment in the heat of battle, Trice suggested that the Fourteenth Corps Headquarters warn "patrols to make certain that the

\textsuperscript{10}Patrol Report, Lieutenant John O. Trice to 25th Infantry Headquarters, 2 April 1944, 2 April-12 May 1944, RG 407, Box 13715, File 393-2.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
commands given were not those of English speaking Japanese.\textsuperscript{11}

In contrast to this dismal combat showing, the 2nd Battalion was somewhat more successful. On 4 April, the unit crossed the Allied perimeter on the Numa Numa Trail. Instructed to ford the Laruma River and move east along its banks, the unit set up a defensive perimeter at the junction between both the Numa Numa and Jaba Creek trails. After the unit learned that a large Japanese force of fifty men was in the area, it travelled approximately 100 yards east where it destroyed the enemy unit after several volleys. Though successful, the battalion discovered that the Japanese positions south of the Laruma consisted of several well-concealed fortifications built with interlocking fields of fire. The intermittent fire from the pillboxes halted the unit's forward advancement.\textsuperscript{12} Historian Ronald H. Spector calls the Japanese pillboxes, well camouflaged in the dense jungle, "a fortress in miniature."\textsuperscript{13} The 2nd battalion's experiences with the heavily-armed Japanese defenses were no more successful than that of any of the other units in the Pacific war.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Patrol Report, Captain P. N. Eddy to 93rd Division Headquarters, 4 April 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 13715, File 393-2.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

\textsuperscript{13}Spector, \textit{Eagle Against the Sun}, 214.
Whereas the first two battalions of the 25th Infantry received limited training in jungle warfare relatively early, the Third Battalion had not participated in combat patrols. Assigned to detachments of the 164th U.S. Infantry Regiment, the unit merely formed reserve components of the 37th U.S. Division. The outfit’s lack of maturity in action was well illustrated on 6 April 1944.

The unit’s preparation was suspect. On 5 April Company K of the 25th’s 3rd battalion was ordered to form a trail block 5,000 yards from Hill 250 and set an ambush along a Japanese supply route. Company K’s commander, Captain James Curran, was accompanied by several artillery battalion observers from the 593rd U.S. Field Artillery Battalion, 164th Intelligence Sergeant Ralph Brodin, and 161st U.S. Signal Corps Photographer Charles Schumann to take pictures for a press release. Contrary to Trice’s warning several days earlier, Browning Rifles were substituted for M1 Rifles, and one instead of three 60 mm. mortars. The unit obviously did not expect any action from enemy forces. On 6 April Company K set out on its mission. The 1st Platoon provided front support of the unit; the 2nd Platoon was to guard the flanks with small detachments and provide reconnaissance. Lastly, the 3rd Platoon established
rear reconnaissance patrols and a small company headquarters.14

Approximately 3500 yards from their destination, the patrol encountered a Japanese hospital east of a small stream. As the 1st Platoon sent its patrol across the stream, light machine gun fire broke out and the outfit returned volleys in the presumed enemy direction. After the patrol killed two Japanese in the bivouac area, First Platoon Leader Will D. Jones radioed to Curran and stated that he had found several pillboxes in the area, but believed them to be unoccupied.15 Jones, however, failed to inspect the pillboxes thoroughly to ascertain whether or not they were manned by enemy machine gunners.

Jones’s miscalculation proved to be fatal. When Curran attempted to investigate the area, firing broke out once again. The 25th’s 2nd and 3rd Platoons commenced firing without orders on the 1st Platoon at its immediate front. In efforts to control 1st Platoon’s sporadic fire, Curran ordered the unit to withdraw seventy-five yards to the Company Headquarters on Hill 250, but his commands were not obeyed. Overwhelmed by the enemy barrage, the 1st


15 Patrol Report, Sergeant Will D. Jones to Major C. E. Rasor, 7 April 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 6651, File 393-2.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
Platoon Sergeant fled and the 1st Platoon fired at everything that moved in the underbrush. Meanwhile, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons fired over the heads of 1st Platoon. In a loss of composure, Curran issued commands of cease-fire.\textsuperscript{16}

The debacle only subsided after more experienced officers in the patrol directed its fire. As the senior infantryman available, Brodin restored order after he convinced the men that there were few Japanese in the area. He assured the outfit that "if they held, then everything would turn out okay."\textsuperscript{17} However, Brodin had not established control over the unit until after Lieutenant Oscar Davenport and nine enlisted men were killed and sixteen others were wounded in the skirmish. During the barrage, Company K retreated and left behind their dead along with a radio, a machine gun, a 60 mm. mortar, thirty rounds of 60 mm. ammunition, two BAR's, eighteen M1 Rifles, three carbines, and web equipment.

Company K was not the only outfit ambushed in the area. In an effort to recover Company K's dead and equipment on 7 April, Company L of the 3rd Battalion encountered a Japanese force of twenty-four men 100 yards short of the Hospital area. During the skirmish, the unit discovered that the enemy wore American helmets and fired captured machine guns from pill-boxes constructed the previous


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
evening. Frustrated by hostile fire, the company failed to complete its mission. Based on Company L’s difficulties, unit estimates of the enemy’s troop strength ranged from a squad to two regiments. However, no more than a Japanese infantry platoon may have been involved. On 8 April a party of Company L men, led by Lieutenant Abner E. Jackson of Company K, returned to the area and found six bodies and equipment. But the men were reluctant to bring them back to the command post. After Jackson threatened them with disciplinary action, two non-commissioned officers and two enlisted men covered the bodies and returned to the Americal command post.

Although the Americal Division’s investigation of the affair lasted from 14 April to 2 May 1944, the controversy surrounding the event lasted longer. The men of the 25th believed that Curran was responsible for the ambush. Lieutenant George Looney, who served as an officer with the 25th Infantry, reflected that K Company was sent out beyond the American defensive perimeter and Curran was the first member of the unit to return to the Allied command post. As others reappeared, Looney learned that the outfit had been

18Patrol Report, Captain P. N. Eddy to Colonel Roberts, S-2, Americal Division, 7 April 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 6651, File 393-2.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

19Patrol Report, Lieutenant Durrant to Colonel Roberts, 12 May 1944, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 6651, File 393-2.11, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
On the other hand, Lieutenant Walter Green, who also served with the unit, pointed out that Curran was not the only figure culpable of the incident. Green felt that the unit's lack of training was to blame and that the "outfit had entered a crossfire and was wiped out in the process."  

In early May 1944, the 25th withdrew to the original Bougainville perimeter after a month of patrolling. As a result of their efforts, the unit extended the American beachhead southeast along with the Pacific Ocean from the Torokina River to Mavavia, 5000 yards from its old holdings. The 93rd Reconnaissance Team actively participated in combat patrols and protected engineers while they constructed bridges and roads between the Saula and Reine Rivers until 25 October.

Initially satisfied with their combat performance, Griswold stated that the 25th "made an excellent start in jungle warfare and although they have not been in wholesale

\[\text{\textsuperscript{20}}\text{Motley, The Invisible Soldier, 84-5.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{21}}\text{Ibid., 92. After he was cleared of derelict of duty charges, Curran was transferred to 3rd Battalion staff duty later that year. The adverse publicity forced the Americal Headquarters to assign an armed bodyguard to him throughout the duration of his stint of duty of Bougainville.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}}\text{Fletcher Martin, "93rd in New Battle Phase," Baltimore Afro-American, 22 April 1944, 1.}\]
combat, they have accomplished their mission." However, after he had critically examined the unit's progress on 10 May, Griswold surmised:

1. It was apparent that the 93rd had little training and were not prepared to handle problems encountered in jungle operations. Although most individuals showed willingness to learn, their ability to retain what had been taught was generally inferior to that of white troops.

2. Morale of all soldiers was high. However, morale of the officers, especially white, was rather low.

3. Discipline was satisfactory. However, there was a tendency on the part of junior Negro officers to make the minimum effort to carry out instructions. This same tendency existed among the enlisted men when they received instructions from the same junior officers.

4. Initiative was generally lacking, especially among platoon commanders and lower grades. The 25th, though supposedly better trained than the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, had not improved to the point of the latter unit.

5. Field sanitation was inadequate.

Although Griswold considered the 25th's artillery outfits as "good," he adversely rated their infantry units as "poor."

Scarcely five days later, 14th Corps Headquarters released its report on the investigation of Company K. The report concluded that the 25th's performance was hindered by "a

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lack of discipline and small unit leadership." In order to correct their deficiencies, the study suggested that the unit be retrained. Griswold's appraisal, coupled with 14th Corps Headquarter's conclusions concerning the Company K incident, represented a grave indictment of the 93rd as a combat organization. Historian Ulysses Lee believes that "the evaluations created the detrimental rumor that the 93rd broke and ran to the rear in the invasion of Bougainville." Some members of the Army high command were quite divided over the 14th Corps report on the 25th. On 10 May 25th regimental commander, Colonel Everett M. Yon, voiced his reservations of the 14th Corps report. He told 93rd Assistant Division Commander Leonard Boyd that whereas the 25th's 1st and 2nd battalions were thoroughly trained with the veteran 148th and 164th U.S. Infantry Regiments, the 3rd Battalion received little instruction. Yon pointed out that the far more experienced 182nd U.S. Infantry had also encountered Japanese forces and became disoriented after nightfall. Although Yon acknowledged that his explanations of the unit's unpreparedness did not excuse the debacle, he


26 Ibid.

believed that they were mitigating factors.\textsuperscript{28} In a similar vein, after War Department officials were informed of the unit’s activities three weeks later, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy told Secretary of War Henry Stimson that the unit’s performances were not as bad as the South Pacific Command believed. Although he believed that it would take more time and effort to transform the 93rd into a creditable combat unit, McCloy assured Stimson that the unit would "eventually be brought over to the asset side." In response, Stimson voiced his doubt that the outfit could be effective without White officers.\textsuperscript{29}

Griswold’s report was damaging to the unit’s reputation. On 8 June the 93rd Provisional Brigade was dissolved and placed under MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific Command seven days later. MacArthur, contrary to contemporary belief that he did not use Negro troops in combat, welcomed the unit. As with other issues, MacArthur felt that the Southwest Pacific theater needs were being subordinated to the European war effort and the Naval operations in the area. For this and other problems related to his theater, he blamed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and the Roosevelt administration. In the summer of 1944, MacArthur

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\textsuperscript{28}Letter, Colonel Everett M. Yon to 93rd commander Leonard Boyd, 10 May 1944, cited in Lee, \textit{The Employment of Negro Troops}, 516.

\textsuperscript{29}Brief, John J. McCloy to Colonel Henry Stimson, 1 June 1944, cited in Lee, \textit{The Employment of Negro Troops}, 517.
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told correspondents that "the higher-ups in Washington have been starving me for men and supplies to fight the Japs." But due to Griswold's evaluations, he felt that the whole division had to be retrained despite external demands to recommit it into combat.

As a result, discussions concerning the usage of the 93rd were intermingled with those of Pacific war strategy. By early August, the War Department noticed that large Japanese garrisons in both the Solomons and New Guinea, which had been bypassed earlier that year, had not weakened as hoped. On 9 August, in an attempt to remedy the situation, Marshall suggested that MacArthur utilize the 93rd on dates earlier than those contemplated in Reno V. In the Reno V plans of 1944 to establish land, naval, and air bases in the Philippines later that year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to use the 93rd as forces to isolate the Rabaul and Kavieng Islands. The 93rd's operations would allow other divisions to seize beachheads in the Lingayen

Gulf area of Luzon on the Philippines. Marshall felt that the unit's deployment would accelerate the eventual disposal of large Japanese forces stationed in the Rabaul area.

MacArthur demurred. Although he favored the eventual recapture of the Philippines, he assured Marshall that the enemy fortifications were not an imminent threat to Allied operations. Thoroughly convinced that a bypass of the area would ultimately destroy the Japanese strongholds, he felt that a heavy assault on the occupied positions would involve heavy losses without equitable compensation. On the 93rd, MacArthur commented, "The unit is not a good one, but I am doing everything possible to develop it so that it can be used in combat with distinction."  

In early March 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff allocated the 14th Corps Headquarters and the 25th, 37th, 40th, 43rd, Americal, and 93rd Infantry Divisions to MacArthur. In turn, the massive influx of troops required more construction to be completed, more bases to be staffed,


32Radio Message, General Douglas MacArthur to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 9 August 1944, War Department Records, RG 4, USAFPAC, Box 17, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia.

33Joint Chiefs of Staff Minutes, 17 March 1944, cited in James, The Years of MacArthur, 395.
and more ships to transport the men and equipment to perform the duties. Thus, the abundance of troops assigned to the Southwest Pacific Command and the mounting labor requirements in the area permitted MacArthur to retrain the 93rd. Furthermore, the additional combat troops intensified MacArthur's previous shortage of service units.

In late January 1944, Marshall suggested that MacArthur abandon rear bases that were no longer important to his area and employ the minimum number of service troops in intermediate areas. Marshall felt that the concentration of supply and administrative functions along with the swift movement of headquarter units would reduce the acute manpower shortage. MacArthur disagreed stating that the labor forces in his area were necessary for the success of future operations against Japan. He believed that the War Department's delay in solving the labor problem allowed enemy forces to consolidate their scattered positions and prolong the war. "Victory is dependent upon the solution of the logistical problem," he warned. To decrease his needs for service units, MacArthur suggested that uncommitted

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combat troops in the States could be retrained as labor outfits.\textsuperscript{36}

During the War Department’s discussion of the shipping situation in the South Pacific, the 93rd had undergone an extensive retraining period. In the early days of August 1944, various segments of the unit participated in jungle warfare exercises while others served in service support roles in the New Georgia area. Placed under the control of the Fifth Army, daily selected combat teams of the unit studied mines and booby traps, compass reading over difficult terrain, the use of observation posts, camouflage, and various uses of communication. On the other hand, elements of the 25th were retrained as stevedore crews, winch operators, signalmen and checkers. For four months, the unit loaded and unloaded ships in the Southwest Pacific ports.\textsuperscript{37}

After its retraining was completed, the 369th, as part of the 41st U.S. Division, conducted security patrol missions at Wardo on Biak Island in September. By January 1945, the unit killed 144 Japanese and recovered 123 Papuan

\textsuperscript{36}Radio Message, General Douglas MacArthur to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 23 February 1944, cited in Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 461.

\textsuperscript{37}Vincent Tubbs, "415 in 93rd Division Team Qualify as Jungle Gunmen," Baltimore Afro-American, 12 August 1944, 7.
prisoners of war. On 20 January the 368th landed on Hollandia and established a defensible perimeter around the Toem area. While elements of the outfit protected troops evacuating supplies and interred remains from an American cemetery, patrol teams successfully attacked various suspected enemy encampments.

The exploits of both the 368th and 369th Infantry Regiments in action were noticed by critics of the Roosevelt Administration and prompted demands for the 93rd's redeployment. In late 1944, Crisis War Correspondent Walter White toured the Pacific Theater and learned that the outfit, which had been given a relatively accessible beachhead to secure in the invasion of Bougainville, fell back in disorder. However, during his visit to Leyte, White discovered that the unit had not participated in the initial assault of late 1943, but was instead ordered to secure the island in April of the following year. He found that K Company's captain panicked and gave orders that resulted in the men shooting each other. White ascertained that the unfortunate incident both blemished the 93rd's credibility as a combat outfit and permanently reduced it to a rear

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38 General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, G-3 Operational Reports, RG 3, Box 192, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia.

39 Ibid.

40 G-3 Field Reports, 368th, Hollandia, 20 January 1945, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 29797, File 393-0.3, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
echelon unit. On 12 February 1945 he transmitted a detailed message to President Roosevelt, Patterson, and McCloy on the division's campaign and its state of morale. White voiced his belief that the 93rd was being punished for its failure on Bougainville and demanded the outfit be relieved of its labor duties and refitted for combat. He reflected that MacArthur was reportedly opposed to Negro combat troops in his theater. Although he expressed his admiration for 93rd commander Major General Harry H. Johnson's efforts that partially restored the unit's spirits, White stated that his actions were not enough. To raise the 93rd's morale, he called for training in amphibious warfare.

Despite White's praise, Johnson's retraining methods were quite controversial. During the unit's retraining, he removed officers who were considered inefficient and demanded higher standards from the enlisted men in the outfit, but these actions were very unpopular among Negro officers. Looney reflected that Johnson's training was aimed at all Blacks who were not considered militarily proficient. In a similar light, Green stated that his instruction was only meant for Black lieutenants who failed

41 White, A Man Called White, 287.
to adapt to Army discipline. However, their assertions were not totally accurate. Johnson's training techniques were based on the War Department's training manual entitled "Plans for Success in Battle." Regardless of race, every officer in the division was required to memorize the plan before he was eligible for promotion.

The War Department responded to White's allegations with caution. On 1 March 1945, Marshall asked MacArthur whether he intended to use the 93rd as a combat or service organization. In preparation of a War Department reply to White's inquiry, Marshall requested that MacArthur comment on the unit. On 5 March MacArthur replied that White's statements were uninformed because the 93rd was assigned to duties similar to other outfits. He emphasized that elements of the division were rotated so that each unit received its proportionate share of combat activity. On White's argument that the unit had been broken up, MacArthur pointed out that few divisions within the Southwest Pacific Area were able to sustain their initial makeup. Furthermore, the 6th, 42nd, 31st, 32nd, and 41st U.S. Divisions, like the 93rd, entered combat without training. In defense of his retraining the unit, MacArthur quoted Griswold's


45Radio Message, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall to General Douglas MacArthur, 1 March 1945, War Department Records, RG 3, Box 17, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia.
evaluation which stated that the artillery had done well, the engineers fair, and the infantry was poor.46

The utilization of the 93rd became embroiled in the logistics problems of the Southwest Pacific theater. By February 1945 102 of the 446 ships in the area were idle awaiting to load or discharge supplies. Sixty-two vessels were in various ports and 165 were enroute. Since 15 January 1944, MacArthur, who had been ordered to improve the shipping difficulties, failed to do so. The debilitative shipping problem in the Southwest Pacific caused a delay in the unit's redeployment. In late February 1945 MacArthur proposed an operation to clear the Philippine Islands and reestablish the Netherlands East Indies Government in Batavia. Within the context of his plan, the units of the 93rd were to be moved from New Guinea to Morotai as reserve forces of the assaulting divisions of the Eighth Army. In addition, the 93rd's units were to be used in the latter stages of the operation after an airfield was secured on Balikpapan. MacArthur felt that the operation would eventually lead to the invasion of Japan.47

46Radio Message, General Douglas MacArthur to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 4 March 1945, War Department Records, RG 4, Box 17, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia.

47Radio Message, General Douglas MacArthur to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 25 February 1945, War Department Records, RG 4, Box 17, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia; The assault units that MacArthur proposed to use were the components of the Eighth Army which consisted of the 41st, 40th, 24th, 31st, and the
Marshall disagreed. He opposed MacArthur's plan because of the backlog of shipping in the Southwest Pacific Theater. Marshall warned MacArthur that "our global commitments cannot sustain this extraordinary tax against shipping effectiveness." With this in mind, he diplomatically requested that MacArthur rank parts of his plan to be carried out in terms of importance.

Why was MacArthur so eager to deploy the 93rd? The reasoning probably lies in the fact that he was determined to dispel the negative publicity concerning his treatment of the unit. A staunch conservative, MacArthur was surprisingly ambivalent towards the usage of Negro troops. As with other issues of the war, he tended to blame the Roosevelt Administration for public criticisms of his command. In defense of his racial policies, MacArthur remarked, "I did not ask for men by race, but merely asked Washington for Americal Divisions.


He believed that his theater accepted more Negro troops than any other in World War II.

Although MacArthur was correct, he may have missed the main thrust of White's argument. MacArthur deployed more Negro units than any other theater commander. By 1945, whereas General Dwight D. Eisenhower had 4.09 of all U.S. Army troops in the North African Theater composed of Negro troops, MacArthur had 8.14 percent of his troops comprised of Black servicemen, a higher proportion than all that existed in the other American Army commands. On the other hand, like the other theaters, his area failed to employ Negro troops in front-line combat. It is quite possible that a credibility gap may have existed between MacArthur's stated policy and his subordinate's actions within the Southwest Pacific Area.

News of the unit's recommitment to combat was publicized in order to allay further suspicions. During an interview on 1 March, MacArthur told White that "race had nothing whatsoever to do with a man's ability to fight." MacArthur stated that he knew from his observations of the 25th Infantry as a junior officer that "any man who said that another man's ability could be measured by color was


wrong." He voiced his dismay over his inspector's reports which negatively described the 93rd's progress. MacArthur advised White that the unit's morale was devastated because the men wanted to go home. However, he informed White that the outfit would be moved from New Guinea to Morotai. During his visit to Hollandia on 8 March, White learned that the 93rd prepared to move from New Guinea and Johnson dramatically improved the unit's morale. To him, MacArthur's swift actions were significant for they brought the division together for the first time since they left the United States. In a letter of great appreciation, White later wrote MacArthur and stated that his efforts "would both improve their efficiency and create a sense of unity."53

On 5 April Eighth Army commander Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger ordered the 93rd to relieve elements of the 31st U.S. Division on Morotai. Eight days later, the unit formed a defensive perimeter around all Eighth Army supply installations and prohibited the concentration of Japanese forces in the area, but they faced extreme danger

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54General Orders, Eighth Army Commander to 93rd Infantry Division Headquarters, 3 April 1945, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 21704, File 393-1.13, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
from the island's only formidable unit. The 211th Japanese Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Kisou Ouchi, constantly harassed the Eighth Army encampments in the Tilai, Wajaboeia, Tijoe, and Libano areas. Instructed to capture the large Allied fortifications, Ouchi assembled a force of 100 armed men and a machine gun platoon, that had previously arrived from the nearby island of Halmahera, and attempted to break through the American defensive perimeter on the west coast of Morotai in early May. Although U.S. patrol vessels sank a majority of the enemy supply barges, Ouchi's troops were healthy enough to threaten considerable damage to the security of the island. Ordered to locate and destroy Ouchi's swelling forces, the 93rd conducted daily patrols from April to August 1945, but to no avail. Ouchi's units successfully dodged the American outfits for months.

However, Ouchi's supply lines were gradually weakened by the continued sinking of supply barges from Halmahera and his resources were virtually spent by early August. On 2 August the 25th Infantry encountered two enemy parties of whom they killed two Japanese and captured one. After the unit interrogated the prisoner, they learned that

55 Headquarters, 93rd Infantry Division, 1 July 1945, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 21723, File 393-0.3, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

56 Operations Summary, 14, 93rd Infantry Division Headquarters, 4 August 1945, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 21723, File 393-0.3, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.
Ouchi's command post was nearby. The outfit marched north to the Tijoe River and reconnoitered downstream. After the enemy encampment was sighted, the 25th Infantry ambushed the Japanese force and captured Ouchi on 4 August. This was significant for Colonel Ouchi was one of the highest ranking Japanese officers taken prisoner before hostilities ceased later that month. Members of the Army high command were greatly impressed. The General Headquarters Coordinator for Morotai told Eighth Army Chief of Staff Clovis E. Byers:

The 93rd Division has not failed in one single instance to meet requirements which often placed a heavy strain on all facilities here. This has been done in a spirit of determination and pride in accomplishment.

After the war ended on 15 August, the 93rd negotiated the terms of surrender of all Japanese troops on Morotai. On 23 August MacArthur ordered Johnson to contact Japanese Army commander, Lieutenant General Ishii on Halmahera. Four days later, Ishii and Japanese naval commander, Captain Fujita signed a directive from Johnson to implement the terms of their later surrender. The Japanese commanders promised to deliver 79 Netherlands Menadonese soldiers and 40,000 Japanese troops to the 93rd as prisoners

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57 Ibid.

58 Letter, General Headquarters Coordinator for Morotai to Eighth Army Chief of Staff Brigadier General Clovis E. Byers, 9 July 1945, cited in Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops, 533.
of war by 30 August. The formal surrender of Morotai was made to Australian Military Force Commander General Sir Thomas Blamey with Johnson’s assistance on 2 September.59

In October the 93rd moved to Mindanao and assumed command of the Southern Islands Area (SIAC) which consisted of the Mindanao, Sulu, and Morotai islands. Upon the relief of the 31st Division on 20 October, the unit collected, guarded, and evacuated Japanese prisoners of war. In addition to these duties, the outfit participated in combat operations to kill resistant enemy troops. By November 1945, the 93rd killed 15 Japanese, captured 36,708 prisoners and interned 4,030 civilians.60

After the 93rd was mustered out of the Army on 3 February 1946, its combat performance became a matter of public debate. Some praised the unit’s efforts. In a speech before the House of Representatives two days earlier, Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas of California stated that the unit fought courageously and that the Legion of Merit was awarded for its efforts in the Bougainville campaign. Douglas claimed that the exploits of Private Thomas J. Caveness, who risked his life by assisting

593rd Commander, Major General Harry H. Johnson to Australian Military Force Commander, General Sir Thomas Blamey, 2 September 1945, AGO Records, RG 407, Box 21703, File 393-9.1, Military Field Branch, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

60Monthly Summary of Operations, October 1945, War Department Records, RG 4, Box 40, Folder 4, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia.
comrades trapped in an inflamed ammunition dump, were indicative of the outfit's valor in battle.  

However, various members of the military establishment disagreed. In May 1945, McCloy asked officers to comment on the 93rd's contribution to the Pacific War effort and to make recommendations for the Post-war Army. Despite the inspired achievements of some artillery and reconnaissance outfits mentioned by Douglas, many officers within the Southwest Pacific Area felt that the unit's combat performance was generally unacceptable. Most of the officers reported that the 93rd failed due to inadequate training, problems of small unit command, and poor discipline.  

Boyd stated that "its artillery units were generally better than its infantry outfits." On the other hand, Negro officers claimed that its inadequate jungle training hampered the division and that to judge its

61 Congress, House, Congresswoman Douglas of California speaking on the role of the Negro soldier in the war, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess., Congressional Record, (1 February 1946), vol. 92, 392-489.


brief combat action was unfair. The 25th Infantry Quartermaster, Sergeant Bill Stevens has stated, "The 93rd became demoralized when they realized that they would never be allowed to participate in the Pacific as a combat organization, the role for which they had been trained."  

Due to the sensitivity of the racial issue, the validity of the questionnaires was questioned by other members of the War Department. Civilian Aide Truman Gibson stated that the information was based on decisions made from pre-existent opinions and demanded a more objective investigation. On 8 August 1945 he told McCloy that any new Army study of Negro manpower should not reflect old prejudices. Gibson observed that the 93rd's poor showing was the result of the large numbers of uneducated personnel within the unit.  

Impressed with Gibson's conclusions and convinced that the Army could utilize Negro troops in a more efficient manner, McCloy wrote Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson requesting a committee be formed to secure an objective professional view on the matter. He stated, "This whole subject has to be dealt with rather soon and it is a matter

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64 Motley, The Invisible Soldier, 76.

65 Memorandum, Civilian Aide to the Assistant Secretary of War Truman Gibson to Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, 8 August 1945, cited in Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Forces, 148-149.
in which I feel you must become involved." Patterson agreed.

The War Department quickly acted. On 1 October 1945 Patterson assembled a board of officers, under the chairmanship of Major General Alvin C. Gillem, to analyze the Army's existing racial doctrine and to plan the use of Negroes in the postwar military establishment. For five months, the group of officers heard the testimonies of sixty-nine military witnesses and examined various investigations of the interwar period. On 4 March 1946 the board submitted a report to Army Chief of Staff, Dwight D. Eisenhower, entitled "The Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Postwar Army." The board concluded that Negroes had a constitutional right to fight and the Army was required to effectively use Black servicemen. Furthermore, the report emphasized that the War Department failed to effectively utilize the 93rd in World War II even though education and employment skills within the Black community had vastly improved after World War I. According to the Gillem Board, this was due to the War Department's hasty preparation and planning in the pre-war period. As a result of the constant reorganization and regrouping, the morale of the Negro units had been destroyed.

66 Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy to Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, 17 September 1945, cited in Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Forces, 149.

67 Foner, Blacks and the Military, 177.
Based on these assumptions, the Board suggested that the Army use Negro manpower strength proportionate to the civilian population, halt the reenlistments of Regular Army servicemen who failed to meet its standards, form an officer staff within the G-1 Division to implement or revise policies concerning Negroes, utilize skilled noncommissioned officers in limited integrated overhead and special units, include recommendations for positions that could be filled by Negro military personnel, and accept qualified Negro officers into the Regular Army.

But in its central conclusions, the Gillem Board advised against the formation of all-Negro Army divisions and suggested that they be reduced to smaller units. They pointed out that the 93rd fared well when grouped with White combat units and recommended that Negro organizations be consolidated into large White outfits. The board declared that the integration would both "build up a professional relationship between Blacks and Whites and encourage a competitive spirit among units." 68 Thus, Negroes were to be integrated into overhead units during duty hours only. The Gillem Board report demonstrated that the Army high command moved away from its previous policy of segregation to explicit approval of the integration of the U.S. Army.

68 Memorandum, General Alvin C. Gillem to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, 17 November 1945, Subject: Report of Board of General Officers on the Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Post-war Army, cited in MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces, 155.
Many historians have failed to identify the Company K incident as a turning point in U.S. military history. Major works on World War II have simply ignored the importance of the 93rd’s campaign. Lee has stated that "at the end of the war, the 93rd had certainly not moved to the asset side as a combat division." Yet, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s tentative plans for the invasion of southern Japan of November 1944, if the Japanese Army had not capitulated by August 1945, elements of the 93rd might have been used in the assault of Kyushu that fall.

The Company K incident had adversely affected the Army’s postwar evaluation of the 93rd and caused the War Department to reevaluate its previous policy of segregation. As the War Department had found in the unit’s redeployment, the Gillem Board’s recommendations were difficult to

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70 USAFPAC, Operations, Tentative List for "Olympic," War Department Records, RG 4, Box 40, Folder 3, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, Virginia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff initially believed that the Olympic operation would require the use of eight assault and five reserve divisions. Although twenty-one Army and six Marine divisions were already in the Pacific, the redeployment of units from Europe complicated the attack on Japan. Due to these difficulties, the Joint Chiefs ordered MacArthur to increase the number of divisions in the Philippines to twenty-two in March 1945. Based on the pervasive logistical situation, it was virtually impossible for the War Department to deliver the redeployed divisions from Europe before the invasion date of 1 September 1945. Therefore, it is quite conceivable that the 93rd was slated for action in the assault of Kyushu.
implement due to the Army's dissension over the issue of segregation.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Based upon its evaluation of the 93rd Division, the Gillem Board's recommendations were to effectively utilize Negro servicemen in the postwar establishment. However, the Army's administration of the board's proposals failed to occur due to opposition from many quarters. Various members of the War Department adamantly opposed the quota system. On 3 April 1946 Army Air Force Commander, General Carl Spaatz stated that the Army should abandon the system and "admit men on the basis of intelligence and professional ability." Spaatz felt that Black enlistments should be restricted to service units. Assistant Chief of Staff, Major General Idwal Edwards warned that the "Army must recognize the ineptitude and limited capacity of the Negro soldier." Edwards emphasized that the new policy should consider factors such as public opinion, military require-

1 Memorandum, Army Air Force Commander Carl Spaatz to Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower, 3 April 1946, Subject: Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Postwar Army, cited in MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces, 176.

2 G-3, Assistant Chief of Staff, Major General Idwal H. Edwards to Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower, 2 January 1946, Subject: War Department Special Board on Negro Manpower, cited in MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces, 159.
ments and the military situation. Given these suggestions, Spaatz and Edwards's responses may have been predictable due to the racial attitudes of the period.

Most of the Black press viewed the board's conclusions as the Army's extension of discrimination. Of the Gillem report, the Pittsburgh Courier complained that the "iron foot of racism is thrust into the door and a whole train of evils usually follows in its wake." Roy Wilkins stated that the policy "was a bit foggy and falls far short of its advance advertising that it would abolish segregation in the Army." Lester Granger, Executive Secretary of the National Urban League, stated that the announcement leaves unanswered certain questions on segregation and restrictions of opportunity." On the other hand, the Norfolk Journal and Guide urged caution to its readers. The newspaper warned that "a strong policy weakly enforced will be of little value to the Army."

The board's recommendations called for a massive recruiting campaign by the Army but ignored the demobilization process of U.S. forces. In July 1946, Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, Major General Willard S. Paul's


attempt to expand Black personnel in the postwar Army to 15 percent resulted in the discharge of thousands of Negroes who lacked the abilities required by the Army. Paul restricted Negroes who scored less than 100 on the Army General Classification Test and suspended Black enlistments indefinitely. This contradicted stated policy for while the War Department promoted opportunities for Blacks, it reduced Negro representation in the Army. Thus, despite the Gillem Board's suggestions, the Army perpetuated discrimination.

However, the board's policy allowed other members of the Army high command to apply it to the training of Negro troops. In March 1947, Assistant European Theater Commander, Lieutenant General Clarence R. Huebner, established a training program at the Grafenwohr Training Center in Kitzingen, Germany. For thirteen weeks, Huebner trained 3,000 unassigned Black troops, along with the 1st Division, in both basic military and academic subjects. Huebner described the program as "our first opportunity to put into effect in a large way the War Department policy on Negro soldiers as announced in the Gillem Board Report of 1946." Huebner's training of the Black outfits was successful and quickly produced some impressive results. By 1950, 1,169 Negroes had achieved a fifth grade reading level, 2,150 had finished grade school, and 418 had passed the high school

6Nalty, Strength for the Fight, 225.
equivalency test. Furthermore, the high morale and discipline of the Negro units had improved race relations with other White outfits. The Kitzingen Training Center provided the litmus test that the Army needed to prove what it had always known, that education and proper training had a major impact on the performance of Black troops. It also allowed President Harry S. Truman to officially end segregation within the armed forces with Executive Order 9981 in 1948 and may have provided precedence for the Supreme Court’s arguments in the Linda Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka case of 1954.

The 93rd’s campaign during World War II is important for it is an example of how domestic pressure influenced military policy. However, historians have judged the 93rd’s contribution as insignificant. To many historians, the outfit’s existence illustrates an adherence to policy, not an aberration. Various surveys of the war have largely obscured the unit’s place in history. One must search diligently to find even a brief mention of the 93rd.

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8 The President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, Freedom to Serve (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), vii–viii.; Truman’s edict read: “It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.”
The question of whether or not the unit’s creation was inevitable is crucial. The Army was totally against the formation of all-Negro divisions during the postwar period. Each contingency study conformed to this though and perceived the potential influence of the Negro press, but failed to stem its criticisms until it was virtually too late. Had the War Department been able to focus on the Army’s lack of policy towards the employment of Negro troops, the 93rd Division might have never existed because the drive for equal representation would not have occurred.

The creation of the 93rd coincided with the rejuvenation of political consciousness within the Black community. Previously satisfied with the mere prospect of obtaining full equality in the U.S. society through accommodation, the racist treatment of the 92nd and 93rd during World War I forced Negroes to form special interest groups to voice their grievances. In turn, the demands to create the segregated unit were ostensibly linked to protests for enfranchisement.

In many ways, the 93rd was a victim of domestic politics. FDR’s attempts to capture the Negro vote during the presidential election years of 1940 and 1944 allowed civic organization such as the NAACP, the CPNNDP, the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters, and the Negro newspapers to gain access to the Federal government. The War Department’s intransigence also permitted these groups
to shift the blame from the Roosevelt Administration to the deviations between the Army's stated policies and its practices. This made the military establishment susceptible to the whims of the general public in a period of war. One need only to follow the events of 1940 and 1944 to see that these groups had adversely affected military policy.

The Negro community can by no means be held solely culpable for the 93rd's demise. The Army's assignment of uneducated men to the unit was suspect. The concentration of Negroes of low Army General Classification Test scores to the outfit should have required a longer training period. Instead, the War Department hastily trained the unit and ordered it into battle. Had the 93rd been trained properly, the Company K incident might have been avoided. As a result of the debacle, theater commanders were reluctant to accept the unit. This led to a decline of morale within the unit and allowed the Southwest Pacific command to reduce it to service support duties for the remainder of the war.

The tragedy of the 93rd is lessened somewhat by the fact that the Gillem Board judged that its failure was not an indictment against the Negro soldier, but a product both of the Army's poor planning and its blind adherence to the policy of segregation. Although some of its suggestions contained major flaws, the board realized that both training and education were key determinants in the unit's combat performance. Had it examined the 93rd more closely, the
Gillem Board might have discovered that the unit's performance strongly correlated with the Army high command's expectations. But, this theory required an exhaustive study of which the board could not conduct due to time constraints.

The 93rd represented a transitional period in U.S. Military History which began with the advent of segregated units in the post civil war establishment and ended with the creation of fully integrated units after World War II. The unit's precarious existence forced the Army to realize that its previous studies had failed and significant policy changes were needed. As Richard Dalfiume suggests, "From viewing the Negro as a problem, members of the military establishment had come to recognition that Black manpower was an asset that had not been realized." This view became more evident during both the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

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9Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Forces, 104.
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