

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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INDIANA NAVAL OFFICER IS FIRST NEGRO
TO TRANSFER FROM RESERVES TO REGULAR NAVY

Ensign John Wesley Lee, 23, of 351 West 28th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, is the first Negro to be accepted and to serve in the capacity of an officer in the Regular Navy under the provisions of the Officer transfer Act of 1946, which authorized the transfer of Reserve Officers and temporary U.S.N. Officers to the Regular Navy.

Ensign Lee is a graduate of the Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis, and was a pre-medical student at Indiana University. On entering the Navy April 17, 1944, he was sent to Bainbridge, Maryland for training in the Steward's Branch. Qualifying for Service School and specialized training, Ensign Lee was sent to the Navy School at Adak, Alaska.

From active duty with the Fleet as an enlisted man, Ensign Lee was transferred to the V-12 program (Officer training) at DePaul University. He completed his midshipman training at Fort Schuyler, New York, and at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois.

As a Reserve Officer, Ensign Lee saw considerable active duty aboard numerous ships of the Fleet in the capacities of gunnery officer and watch officer. He served on the auxiliary oilers USS RAMAPO and USS SEPULGA, and on the auxiliary cargo ship, USS CAPRICORNUS. While on board these vessels he has visited many parts of the world.

Ensign Lee was transferred to the Regular Navy March 15, 1947, and placed on active duty in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. At present he is attending the Naval General Line School, at Newport, Rhode Island.

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(Photographs Available, Pictorial Library, Division of Public Information)