

*Negroes*

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON:

Navy's Course of Study on Leadership Problems with Minority Groups

The Naval Academy for many years was the chief source for the training of officers of the U.S. Navy. To meet the expanded needs of the Service during and following World War II, candidates for commissions were selected from college graduates throughout the country; from non-graduates who by success in specific fields of endeavor had demonstrated their skill from among enlisted personnel; from officers who had resigned or retired - and were ordered to colleges and universities, to indoctrination schools, to specialization schools, or to refresher course centers.

Typical of the refresher-advanced school work is the Line Officers' School still in operation at Newport, Rhode Island, where naval officers are required to attend to keep abreast of new naval developments and techniques.

The Navy has long recognized that special responsibility devolves upon administrative officers for the development of leadership qualities of officers in the field, and that it is important that such training is not designed toward any particular point of view with respect to minorities.

In the development of the Course on Administration and Leadership at the Line Officers' School at Newport, a section of the curriculum is devoted to leadership problems with minority groups. This phase of study is designed primarily to indoctrinate naval officers in the best techniques available in leadership of all naval personnel, minority groups included.

In keeping with the Navy's policy of integration in the handling of minorities - the Negro being the largest - the Navy Line School at Newport with the approval of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, has developed a curriculum and course of study in leadership and leadership problems with minority groups.

The course tends to introduce the student-officer to the psychological approach to the 'understanding' of group differences; to motivate him to take an objective rather than an emotional attitude toward problems of minority groups; to teach him how to analyze and correct problems of his unit which arise from minority groups.

The staff of the school realized that there were certain obstacles, attitudes and beliefs common to most of the students that had to be overcome. Among these were such beliefs that "prejudices against groups usually are justified by the behavior of those who are the objects of prejudice; that group differences in habits or personality are usually inherited, rather than acquired as the result of environment; that less privileged groups of citizens are willing to accept lower status in the naval service than other citizens"

On the basis of the objectives set and with due recognition of obstacles to be met the following topic outline formed the skeleton form of this phase of leadership training:

1. General considerations regarding racial, religious and cultural minorities
  - a. That all American citizens have the right and duty to defend this country and its way of life.
  - b. That all members of the Armed Forces shall have the same fundamental rights and privileges, without discrimination.
  - c. That it is to the public interest that all members of the armed services receive the status and treatment which permits them to contribute effectively to the national effort
2. Importance of understanding and respecting racial, religious and cultural differences during the conduct of World War II.
  - a. The cooperation of allies from over 50 countries required mutual respect for differences in customs and beliefs.
  - b. The efficiency of our forces in occupied territories depended on the minimum interference with the normal way of life in those territories.
  - c. The contribution of minority groups in our Army depended on their feeling they had an equal stake in our way of life.
3. Findings of scientists regarding racial and national differences.
  - a. Differences among individuals in any group are many times as great as differences in the group averages.
  - b. Differences in the performance of two groups can usually be related to differences in their cultural backgrounds,
  - c. The more nearly similar the social and educational experience of two groups, the more nearly alike is their performance.
4. Outstanding performances of minority groups in World War II.
5. General principles of leadership with minority groups.
  - a. Insure that minority groups receive actual equality in status, training, equipment and leadership.
  - b. Indoctrinate all members of the outfit in the democratic principles which constitute Navy policy.
  - c. Search out all causes of inter-group friction, and find solutions which satisfy both of the opposed groups.
  - d. Give particular attention to maintaining the morale of the minority groups, since this is critical for their efficiency.
  - e. Emphasize the development of esprit de corps which submerges prejudice against individuals in the emphasis on group effort.