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Digest of Info. Memos & Press Releases

NAVY DEPT. PRESS RELEASE May 5, 1942

NEGROES IN THE U. S. NAVY

Negro recruits volunteering for general service in Navy to be trained at U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois. Recruiting to be begun as soon as barracks and other buildings under construction ready for use.

PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY SECRETARY KNOX, April 7, 1942

Announcement made by Secretary of Navy Frank Knox that Negroes are to be accepted as volunteers in Navy along certain lines.

Necessity for establishment of training station to give Negro volunteers same initial training as white men.

Negro outfit to be organized in Marine Corps.

Negroes to be employed in various Navy Yards for shore establishments.

When adequately trained, competent force to be used as crew on smaller craft except for petty officers, etc.

Organizing construction crews along somewhat the lines already being organized among the whites -- men of crafts and skills for work on bases wherever needed.

Whole thing to be carried along in cordial spirit of experimentation so as to make maximum use of Negro volunteer, and his employment in a way to provide least possible difficulty of racial character.

B. D. P. E., May 30, 1942

NAVY DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE, April 7, 1942

NAVY TO ACCEPT NEGROES FOR GENERAL SERVICE

Navy Department announced that Negro volunteers will be accepted for enlistment for general service in reserve components in Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. All ratings will be opened to them in three branches, recruiting to be begun as soon as suitable training station established. Same physical and mental entrance standards required as for all Navy personnel.

Negro sailors to be utilized for duty in District craft of various kinds, in maritime activities around shore establishments, in Navy Yards, and in Navy's new construction crews and companies to develop bases outside continental limits of United States.

NAVY DEPT. PRESS RELEASE, April 1, 1942

MESS ATTENDANT COMMENDED

Doris Miller, Mess Attendant 1c, Negro, Waco, Texas, commended by Secretary Knox for heroism displayed during Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

NAVY DEPT. PRESS RELEASE, May 5, 1942

NEGRO RECRUITS TO BE TRAINED AT GREAT LAKES

Negro recruits volunteering for general service in Navy to be trained at U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois. Recruiting to be begun as soon as barracks and other buildings under construction ready for occupancy, probably about June 15.

N. D. P. R., May 11, 1942

NAVY CROSS AWARDED TO MESS ATTENDANT DORIS MILLER

Doris Miller, Mess Attendant 1c, USN, Negro, Waco, Texas, commended April 1, 1942, by Secretary Knox for heroism displayed during Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, awarded Navy Cross by President of United States, being cited for "his distinguished devotion to duty, extraordinary courage and disregard for ~~own~~ personal safety during the attack." Miller, at the side of his Captain on the bridge, despite enemy strafing and bombing assisted in moving the mortally wounded Captain to a place of greater safety and later manned and operated a machine gun until ordered to leave the bridge.

N. D. P. R., May 20, 1942

RECRUITING OF NEGROES TO BEGIN JUNE 1, 1942

U. S. Navy to enlist Negroes beginning June 1, 1942 at all recruiting stations throughout the country. Estimated available facilities will accommodate approximately 1,000 a month. Training courses announced for Great Lakes Naval Training Station; Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; Naval Training Station, Norfolk, Va., (Construction battalions)

N. D. P. R., May 20, 1942

MARINES ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR RECRUITING NEGROES

First battalion of Negroes, numbering about 900, to be enlisted in U. S. Marine Corps Reserve during June and July, according to announcement at U S M C Headquarters. Volunteers to form composite battalion. Until training center ready for reception, recruits to be temporarily placed in inactive duty status. Training center to be in vicinity of New River, N. C.

N. D. P. R., Aug. 12, 1942

HAMPTON INSTITUTE FACILITIES TO BE ENLARGED
TO ACCOMMODATE NEGROES FOR ADVANCED TRAINING

New buildings to be constructed, existing facilities to undergo extensive alterations to prepare for training purposes. Many Negro recruits in training at Great Lakes Naval Training Station to be sent to Hampton Institute for further instruction before assignment to duty with rating and pay commensurate with ability.

N. D. P. R., Sept. 3, 1942

322 NEGROES COMPLETE BASIC TRAINING; ADVANCED SCHOOLS
TO OPEN SEPT. 15 AT HAMPTON AND GREAT LAKES

First groups of Negro recruits to complete basic naval training leave Camp Robert Smalls, U.S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois. Additional recruits take places of those assigned to duty or to schools for further training.

102 of first 322 completing basic training at Camp Robert Smalls to receive advanced training to fit them to become specialists at Hampton Institute and at Great Lakes. Advanced classes to start September 15.

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION PRESS RELEASE, Sept. 12, 1942

ON THE HOME FRONT

"On the Home Front", one of a number of features of the News Bureau, OWI, made available to Negro newspapers weekly, either for use in full or for editorial comment. (Release re skilled workers)

OWI, N. D., P. R., Sept. 21, 1942

Resume of training at Camp Robert Smalls, U.S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, and at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.

OWI, N. D., P. R., Sept. 21, 1942

Release re Negro singers of Zion Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., who on Sunday, September 13, 1942, made initial appearance at Church Service of the Fleet, Marine Force, Marine Barracks, New River, North Carolina, as Fifty-First Composite Defense Battalion Choir.

OWI, N. D., P. R., Sept. 24, 1942

Charles Theodore Kelley, Harrisburg, Ill., Negro, former elevator operator, graduated from training camp as honor man of the third Negro recruit company at U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill.

OWI, MARITIME COMMISSION, P. R., Sept. 28, 1942

First Liberty Ship named after outstanding American Negro, the BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, to be launched at Wilmington, California, September 29, 1943, Marion Anderson, noted Negro contralto, sponsor. Captain Hugh N. Mulzac, only Negro to hold master's certificate, to be in command of crew composed of white and Negro officers and men.

OWI P. R., Oct. 9, 1942

"On the Home Front" release re voluntary "share the meat" plan.

NINTH NAVAL DISTRICT P. R., January 7, 1943

Ninety-seven Negro Bluejackets, first of their race to complete instruction in various trades offered by Navy, graduated from Service School at U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill.

NINTH NAVAL DISTRICT P. R., Jan. 12, 1943

Rifle range at Great Lakes popular phase of training with Negro Bluejackets.

NATIONAL MARITIME UNION, CIO, P. R., Jan. 13, 1943

Captain Hugh N. Mulzac, first Negro to command a vessel in American Maritime history, and his United Nations crew of new Liberty Ship, BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, honored at dinner in New York by Greater New York Industrial Union Council, CIO.

PRESS RELEASE (by Stephen G. Kalagian), Jan. 16, 1943

COLORED BAND

All-Negro naval, military and swing band assigned to New Orleans Naval Air Station. Members recruited from night clubs and dance halls in and around New Orleans.

NINTH NAVAL DISTR. P. R., Jan. 16, 1943

Owen Dodson, one of country's leading Negro playwrights, training at U. S. Naval Training Station at Great Lakes.

NINTH NAVAL DISTR. P. R., Jan. 16, 1943

Moses Preston, Negro photographer with four years of experience, training at U. S. Naval Training Station at Great Lakes, displaying gallery of more than 7,000 negatives shot from coast to coast. Pictures range from abandoned sheep corral in Utah to Government building portico.

H.D.P.R., Feb. 13, 1943

10 AWARDED DECORATIONS

Elvin Bell, Mess Attendant 3c, USN, Negro, awarded Navy and Marine Corps Medal for service aboard USS LEXINGTON in Battle of Coral Sea. Voluntarily joined repair party fighting fire in area frequented by violent explosions and assisted in removing personnel who had been injured and trapped below decks.

NINTH NAVAL DISTR. P. R., Feb. 5, 1943

James Henry Lucas, Buffalo, New York, graduated as honor man of his Negro company at U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill.

NINTH NAVAL DISTR. P. R., Feb. 23, 1943

Former White House butler, George Clinton Fields, 31-year-old Negro, who served as President Roosevelt's valet for last four years, training at Great Lakes.

NINTH NAVAL DISTR. P. R., March 16, 1943

Clarence Lawson, widely traveled Negro sculptor and lecturer, training at Great Lakes.

11th NAVAL DISTRICT, P. R., April 8, 1943

One hundred privates, comprising first detachment of Negro Marines to be stationed at San Diego Marine Corps base, arrive to continue training. Detachment, First Marine Depot Company, came from New River, N. C.

NINTH NAVAL DISTRICT, P. R., April 10, 1943

Two Negro brother school teachers from Beaumont, Texas, who enlisted in Navy in June, announced by authorities at Great Lakes as having met requirements for promotion to quartermaster third class.

N.D.P.R., April 20, 1943

NEGRO GUN CREW ON COAST GUARD CUTTER CAMPBELL
AIDED IN ATTACK THAT SANK SUB
Crew of eleven Negro enlisted men of U. S. Coast Guard participated in attack on German submarine rammed and sunk by cruiser CAMPBELL. Coast Guard Headquarters reveal Negro gun crew fired several rounds at U-boat and scored telling hits which aided in destruction of submarine.

N.D.P.R., April 28, 1943

NUMBER OF NEGROES ENTERING NAVY INCREASING
THROUGH SELECTIVE SERVICE PROCEDURE
Increasingly greater number of Negroes entering Navy through Selective Service procedure.

Expected that approximately 15 per cent of men inducted this year will be members of Negro race.

Of thousands who volunteered for service with Navy before ban on voluntary enlistment of men between ages of 18 and 37 inclusive, (Presidential Executive Order of December 5, 1942) most have completed basic training and many advanced training at Navy's vocational schools and have been assigned to duty aboard ships or at shore establishments.

N. D. P. R., May 18, 1943

NEGRO MESS ATTENDANT COMMENDED FOR COURAGEOUS RESCUE
USN

Charles Jackson Smith, Mess Attendant 2c./Negro, commended by Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., USN, for courage in attempting to save group of shipmates on USS GREGORY after ship had been shelled and sunk by Japanese naval forces. Tied line to himself and swam for more than two hours without rest attempting to two raft on which about 15 men were adrift and which was being deliberately shelled by Japanese.

N.D.P.R., May 21, 1943

SECRETARY KNOX NAMES SHIP FOR HEROIC MESS ATTENDANT
AND AWARDS HIM NAVY CROSS POSTHUMOUSLY

Late Leonard Roy Harmon, Mess Attendant 1c, USN, Negro, awarded Navy Cross posthumously for extraordinary heroism while serving aboard USS SAN FRANCISCO in Battle of Guadalcanal when Harmon deliberately exposed himself to hostile gunfire to protect shipmate. Secretary Knox approved assignment of Name USS HARMON to destroyer escort vessel now under construction.

11th NAVAL DISTR. P. R. (No date) 1943

(PREPARED FOR DOUGLAS AIRVIEW (MAGAZINE) AND NEGRO NEWSPAPERS)

Jacob Whidbee, Navy Negro cook who prefers feeding hungry breech of anti-aircraft gun to dishing out chow to hungry bluejackets, relates South Pacific adventures and makes observations before midday shifts of Douglas El Segundo workers.