

In reply address not the signer of  
this letter, but Bureau of Navigation,  
Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

Refer to No.

Nav-641-K

A9-10(A) (818)

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
BUREAU OF NAVIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

21 September 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR OFFICER IN CHARGE, PUBLIC RELATIONS:

SUBJECT: NUMBER OF NEGROES IN USNAVY.

Reference: (a) O.N.I routing slip dated 18 September 1939.

Enclosure: (A) Letter dated 11 September 1939 from Mr.  
Marvel J. Cooke, New York Amsterdam News,  
2271 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y.

1. The following information is furnished in  
compliance with reference (a).

2. According to the statistics compiled as of  
30 June 1939, there were 2,807 Negroes in the U.S. Navy.  
Majority hold ratings in the messmen branch and are stationed  
on the various naval ships and stations.

3. The number of Negroes has been increased  
under the recent Presidential order to strengthen the personnel  
of the U.S. Navy.

  
H. S. ABNETT

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NAVY DEPARTMENT  
BUREAU OF NAVIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Nav-61-IBM  
A9-10(A)(806)

20 July 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Subject: Negroes in U.S. Navy.

The following answers are furnished in  
accordance with your request:

1. What is the highest rank ever to be held  
in the U.S. Navy by a negro?

Chief Petty Officer.

2. Are any negro gunner's mates in the U.S.  
Navy today?

No.

3. What ranks were held by negroes in the  
past and at present?

Various enlisted ratings.

*H. M. Briggs*  
H. M. BRIGGS