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WAR DEPARTMENT  
Washington, D. C.

20 June 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Adjutant General

The White House has referred to this office a letter in which it is alleged that Negro soldiers at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona, are mistreated and are not being fully utilized.

The letter contains the following allegations:

Negro soldiers are completely segregated from the white soldiers on the base. And to make doubly sure that no mistake is made about this, the barracks and other housing facilities (supply room, mess hall, etc.) of the Negro Section C are covered with black tar paper; while all other barracks and housing facilities on the base are painted white.

It is the stated policy of the Second Air Force that "every potential fighting man must be used, as a fighting man. If you have such a man in a base job, you have no choice. His job must be eliminated or be filled by a limited service man, WAC, or civilian." And yet, leaving out the Negro soldiers working with the Medical Section, fully 50% of the Negro soldiers are working in base jobs, such as, for example, at the Resident Officers' Mess, Bachelor Officers' Quarters, and Officers' Club, as mess personnel, BOQ orderlies, and bar tenders. Leaving out the medical men again, based on the Section C average only 4% of this 50% would not be "potential fighting men."

It is also a fact that "...the employment of enlisted men as attendants at officers' clubs, whether officially designated as "Officers' Mess" or "Officers' Club" is not sanctioned by..." the Headquarters of the Army Air Forces.

Leaving out the medical men again, at least 50% of the members of the Negro Section C are being used for decidedly menial work, such as BOQ orderlies, janitors, permanent KP's and the like.

Let us assume as a basis for discussion that there are no civilians or limited service men to do the menial work on the base. The democratic way, based upon "equality and justice" would be to assign this work to both Negro and white. Instead the discriminatory and undemocratic method is used whereby all of this work is assigned to the Negro soldiers.

On the other hand suppose civilians were found to take over all of the base jobs and thus free the Negro soldiers for use as fighting men. They would not be given "on-the-job-training" to become members of the ground crew, such as is being done for the WAC members on the base, because there is no such program for Negroes at Davis-Monthan Field. They would not be trained to become aerial gunners, or bombardiers, or navigators, or pilots, or bombsight mechanics, or any of the many other specialists at Davis-Monthan Field, because there is no authorization in the Second Air Force for this training to be given to Negroes.

[REDACTED]

About 15% of the soldiers of Section C are in fighting jobs and about another 5% are receiving "on-the-job training" in Vehicle Maintenance. Thus we see that the maintenance of the ideology of "white supremacy" resulting in the undemocratic practices of jim-crow and segregation of the Negro members of the Armed Forces brings about the condition on Davis-Monthan Field whereby 80% of the whole Section is removed from the fighting activities on the base.

May these matters be investigated and a copy of the report furnished this office.

Truman K. Gibson, Jr.  
Civilian Aide to the  
Secretary of War.

[REDACTED]