

September 27, 1940.

Honorable H. C. Lodge, Jr.,
United States Senate.

Dear Senator Lodge:

Your letter of September 10, 1940, enclosing a further request for information from Mr. Alfred Baker Lewis, with reference to the enlistment of colored men in the Army, was turned over to me by General Arnold since Mr. Lewis' inquiry involves a general War Department policy.

It is the policy of the War Department not to intermingle colored and white enlisted personnel in the same regimental organization. The condition which has made this policy necessary is not the responsibility of the Department, but to ignore it would produce situations destructive of morale and therefore definitely detrimental to the preparations for national defense in this emergency.

The War Department has been deeply concerned by unmistakable evidence of an extensive campaign being conducted at the present time to force a change in this policy. The present exceedingly difficult period of building up a respectable and dependable military force for the protection of this country is not the time for critical experiments, which would inevitably have a highly destructive effect on morale -- meaning military efficiency.

The existing policy has been proven satisfactory over a long period of years. It provides for a full percentage of colored personnel and a wide variety of military units. Our colored regiments have splendid morale, and their high percentage of reenlistments is evidence of the wisdom of the present system.

Faithfully yours,

(sgd.) G. C. Marshall,
Chief of Staff.

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