

WHITE OFFICERS AND TREATMENT OF BLACK TROOPS

Washington and Lee University
Lexington, Va.
Aug. 23, 1943

Mr. Gibson:

In reply to your letter of August the twentieth as to my reactions toward the work here at the Special Service School. I haven't any thing but praise for this army school. Without a doubt, it is the most liberal school for it's location in the United States. It is too bad that all the officers in the armed forces can't attend this school. Why do I say this? My reason is based on these facts. There is no discrimination in the housing or quartering of officers as for living up or down stairs. The Negro officers are not put in the same platoon or company. No segregation in the mess-hall or class rooms. When the school gives a social it is for everyone. I do believe that I could have danced with a WAC officer at the last dance and nothing would have been said. (But I didn't) White and Negro Officers use the same officer's Club. Infact I am a member of the Officers' Club for I received my membership card just the other day. We swim in the same swimming pool on the same day, at the same time irrespective of color. If this can be done in Virginia where Lee (General) is as much alive today as he was eighty years ago, I am quite sure that it could be done throughout the United States in all army schools and camps. Don't lose sight of the fact that there are many southerners here attending school.

I am saying again. One of the main things missing here is someone who is a Negro to lecture to white officers on how to treat Negro troops. I have had any number of white officers who are at a loss as to how Negro troops should be treated. We, or Negro troops aren't any different from white troops but they are made different by these white officers. To me it seems as if it would be quite fitting if the war department would get out a lecture on "how Negro troops should be treated" and let that lecture be delivered by a Negro Officer who has had experience. If the lecture is gotten out by the War Department the officer need not have any experience. I am suggesting that a Negro be put on this faculty if possible.

At present I am the Special Service Officer of the 370th Infantry of the 92nd Division and have been for eight months. My work is up to par for I was congratulated by the Chief of Staff of the 92nd Division personally for doing a nice piece of work in my regiment. The nice piece of work was, winning all the events but three in a division tract meet; plus having or winning the basketball championship in the division.

Mr. Gibson, I would appreciate it very much if you would let me know if a job comes up that I am qualified to do. By profession, I am a Comprehensive Tester. Had a special course in testing and worked for three years as a tester. I would give the tests during the months that school was in session, and would help to work out the median, mode, quadtile deviation and correlations during the summer. I am qualified I believe to give the Army General Classification Test. I wold appreciate your kindness in helping me secure a job of this kind.

Thanks for finding time to answer my letter.

Yours very truly,

1st Lt. Edward T. Mayfield

P.S. The WAC mentioned is white.