

PRIDE, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS

The Marine Corps' Efforts to Increase the Presence of African-American Officers (1970-1995)



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

COVER: Pride, progress, and prospects in the form of four Marine general officers with a common heritage, if diverse Marine Corps backgrounds. They include, from left, BGen Clifford L. Stanley, MajGen Charles F. Bolden, Jr., BGen Leo V. Williams III, and BGen Arnold Fields. Their leadership positions mark a major milestone from the integration of the Marine Corps by African-Americans and the commissioning of 2dLt Frederick C. Branch in 1945.

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The Marine Corps' Efforts
to Increase the Presence
of African-American Officers
(1970-1995)

by
Colonel Alphonse G. Davis
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired



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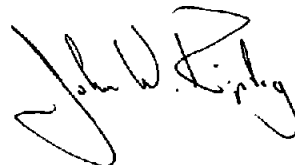
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Foreword

In today's Marine Corps, African-Americans constitute almost 10 percent of the officer corps. The fact that this was not always the case deserves explanation, as do the Marine Corps' efforts to remedy this deficiency. This monograph presents a straightforward and personalized account of the Corps' efforts during the last three decades to increase the presence of African-Americans within its officer ranks.

Originally presented as an executive research project at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, the paper has been revised and illustrated for incorporation into the History and Museums Division's Occasional Papers series. Except for minor editorial and format changes, the words and opinions expressed are those of the author. In the interests of accuracy and objectivity, the author and the History and Museums Division welcome comments on this account from interested individuals.

Colonel Alphonse G. Davis most recently served on the Joint Staff as a J-7 division chief. He is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, who graduated from Southern University in 1972 with a bachelor of arts degree in marketing. He earned a master's degree in business administration from Averett College in 1992 and also was granted a master's degree by the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1998. Following Basic School, he was assigned to the 2d Marine Division and served as a rifle platoon commander and company executive officer with the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. Additional assignments included legal officer; officer selection officer in Dallas, Texas; weapons company commander with the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines; and aide-de-camp to the commanding general, 1st Marine Division. Following an assignment as the 8th Marine Corps District's assistant for officer procurement, he reported to the 3d Force Service Support Group on Okinawa. Upon his return to the United States in 1989, he assumed the duties of head, Officer Procurement Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps. Assignments with the 2d Force Service Support Group, as advisor to the Commandant on equal opportunity matters, and as head, Equal Opportunity Branch, followed. With promotion to colonel in 1995, he assumed command of Officer Candidates School, Quantico, Virginia. Colonel Davis retired in July 1999 and is now Chief Executive Officer, New Orleans Public Schools, New Orleans, Louisiana.



JOHN W. RIPLEY

Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

Preface

This has been a labor of love for me. Since my entry into the Marine Corps in July 1972, I have been blessed to be in the presence of Marine officers who looked like me. It started with my Officer Selection Officer, First Lieutenant Henry Ferrand. At Officer Candidates School, it continued with First Lieutenant Clifford L. Stanley and Major Clay Baker. At the Basic School, it was Captain Archie Joe Biggers. In my first assignment, as an infantry platoon leader in the Fleet Marine Force, it was my company commander, Captain Willie J. Oler. While I was a young captain and company commander with the 1st Marine Division, it was Lieutenant Colonel George Ford. As a major and company commander with the 3d Force Service Support Group on Okinawa, it was Colonel Fred Jones. While a lieutenant colonel and battalion commander in the 2d Force Service Support Group, it was my group commander, Brigadier General George Walls, Jr. As a colonel and commanding officer of Officer Candidates School, it was Brigadier General Clifford L. Stanley. To the casual observer, this may not be important; however, role models are important, because they provide hope to one's goals and aspirations and they add perspective and temperance to the views, visions, and impatience of untested youth.

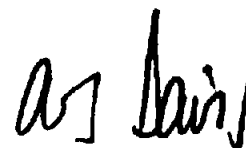
The writing of this 25-year account of the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers was not as difficult as that experienced by Ralph W. Donnelly and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., when they undertook the task of compiling *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, in 1975. This is because there have been a number of significant initiatives, events, and achievements by African-American officers during the last three decades. With that said, however, I do not dare say this task was easy. There is an abundance of information regarding the Marine Corps' efforts in this area; the challenge was in locating it and compiling the information within a finite period of time, given that I undertook this project while assigned as a student at National Defense University's Industrial College of the Armed Forces. The challenge in completing this effort was somewhat eased as a result of my previous assignments as an officer recruiter at the local, district, and national levels. Also, my assignments at Headquarters Marine Corps in the Manpower Plans and Policy Division as the head of the Equal Opportunity Branch and as the Equal Opportunity Advisor to General Alfred M. Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps, afforded me access to valuable corporate knowledge coupled with an insider's view of the various initiatives and events that shaped the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers. Lastly, the information and historical continuity provided by a number of retired Marines was of great value and assistance. Among them were Colonel Kenneth H. Berthoud, Jr., Mr. Frederick C. Branch, and Generals Frank E. Petersen, Jr., Jerome G. Cooper, and George H. Walls. Perhaps most importantly, the support provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center, the Marine Corps' Equal Opportunity Branch, the Officer Assignments Branch and the Marine Corps Recruiting Command provided the foundation and component parts of this document. Without their assistance, this record of the noteworthy accomplishments of a number of Marines and the Marine Corps would not exist.

I am certain that there are some Marines, and perhaps others, who may not agree with the facts of this account as presented. These disagreements are expected and healthy. History is always subject to the interpretations and opinions of many instead of the views of one. Accordingly, I alone take full responsibility for the facts as presented, subject to my interpretation and recall of the events as I have read, observed, and experienced them.

I could not have accomplished this task without the help of a number of people. First, I wish to thank Major General John S. Cowings, USA, Commandant of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, for accepting me into the Research Fellowship Program. Secondly, my appreciation goes to Dr. Joseph

Goldberg for his inspiration and professional advice. My advisor, Dr. Alan Gropman, kept me focused on the relevant pieces of information through his reviews of my drafts. Faculty members Dr. Nedra Huggins-Williams and Colonel Kenneth Dunn, USMC, provided timely guidance and suggestions. Ms. Judy Clark deserves a special thank you for her editorial suggestions and for teaching me the basics of typing. Also, Mrs. Iris Boon went above and beyond the call of duty in furthering my skills in word processing. This project was supported by a grant from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

There are a number of people at Headquarters Marine Corps assigned to recruiting, advertising, officer assignments, and equal opportunity who quickly responded to my phone calls for information and copies of documents; I thank all of you very much. Finally, to my more than supportive wife and daughters who shared me with the computer and the paperwork for 10 months—as usual, I owe you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Davis". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "A" and a cursive "Davis".

ALPHONSE G. DAVIS
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired

Table of Contents

Foreword	iii
Preface	v
Table of Contents	vii
Introduction	ix
Chapter 1	
A Look at the Past	1
Soldiers of the Sea	3
Pride . . . The Beginnings	4
Chapter 2	
The Efforts of the 1970s	6
Towards Progress—Solving the Problem	8
Department of Defense Interest	9
Looking for A Few Good Men and . . . Women	10
A Change of the Guard	10
Passing the Word	13
Assessing the Results	14
Highlights of the Decade	17
Quality Begets Quality	17
Chapter 3	
The Efforts of The 1980s	19
Forging a Consensus	19
Department of the Navy Interest.	20
Implementing New Strategies	21
Assessing the Results	23
Signs of Change Emerge	24
Chapter 4	
The Efforts of the 1990s	28
A Microcosm of Society	28
The Total Quality Approach	32
Enlightening the Leadership	34
Confronting a Crisis	35
Secretary of the Navy Interest	36
Employing New Approaches	37
Assessing the Results	38
Significant Accomplishments	42
Chapter 5	
Prospects	46
Enhancing the Prospects	46
Conclusion	49
Notes	50
Bibliography	53

Introduction

This narrative represents an account of the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-Americans in its officer ranks during the period from 1970 to 1995. The word "presence" is used instead of the term "number" in the title of this effort because it transcends the singular focus of quantity. "Presence" underscores the relative importance of certain areas that contribute to the career progression of commissioned officers. Among those areas are accessions, military occupational specialties, assignments, and promotions. The primary focus will be on unrestricted and restricted commissioned officers (warrant officers are not included); however, I will briefly review the service of all ranks of African-Americans from colonial times to the Korean War.

Various race and ethnic terms are used when racial references are made. Terms such as "colored," "negro," "black," and "African-American" capture the relationship between time and racial references. The terms "black" and "African-American" are used interchangeably. Also, the term "minority" appears throughout encased in quotation marks. This represents my personal efforts to avoid its use when it is necessary to refer to an individual or group of individuals who are non-white, because the root meaning of the term connotes a value judgement of less than or not equal to. When it is necessary to make racial references, specific race and ethnic terms are used.

The motivation for undertaking this account lies in two legendary Marines; one enlisted and the other an officer. They are Sergeant Major Edgar R. Huff, USMC, now deceased, and former Lieutenant Frederick C. Branch, USMC. Both are African-Americans of the Montford Point Marine legacy.

CHAPTER 1

A Look at the Past

The representation of African-Americans in the officer ranks of the nation's Armed Forces emerged as a matter of national interest at the end of the Civil War. As early as 1866, there were efforts to admit African-Americans to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Prior to that period, a few individuals occasionally were admitted to the Naval Academy only to leave later on their own or as a result of the machinations of a racially biased system that reflected the nation's attitude and beliefs regarding race and racial equality.

Efforts during the 1970s and 1980s to increase the representation of African-Americans as officers in the military service were prompted by a number of interests pursuing the same end, but for different reasons. Militarily, there was a need for manpower. Socially, civil rights organizations saw the military as a means for pursuing one of the inherent rights of citizenship. Politically, presidential or other political aspirants garnered support in the form of backing and votes from civil rights organizations and their constituents.

The military was not alone in its practice of bias and discrimination. During the World War II era, racial discrimination was widely practiced in the federal and civilian sectors supporting the war effort. As a result, two presidential directives concerning equal opportunity and treatment in the federal government were issued. The first was Executive Order 8802, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in June 1941, which established the Fair Employment Practices Commission. This presidential directive was issued based on the premise that "it is the policy of the United States to encourage full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the United States, regardless of race, color, or national origin." Specifically, Executive Order 8802 ordered: all departments and agencies of the government concerned with vocational training for defense production to take measures to ensure that the programs were administered without discrimination on the basis of race,

creed, color, or national origin; all contracting agencies of the government to include provisions in all defense contracts to prohibit discrimination against any worker because of race, color, creed, or national origin; and the establishment of a Committee on Fair Employment Practice in the Office of Production Management to receive and investigate complaints of discrimination.¹

A second presidential directive concerned with equal treatment and opportunity in the federal workplace focused exclusively on the military. Executive Order 9981 was signed by President Harry S. Truman in July 1948, and directed the Armed Forces to provide equal treatment and opportunity for black servicemen. Based on the premise that "it is essential that there be maintained in the Armed Forces of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense," Executive Order 9981 addressed six different areas:

- A policy of equal treatment and opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin, be implemented rapidly with due regard for the time it takes to effect changes without impairing efficiency or morale.
- The creation of a seven-member presidential advisory committee on equal treatment and opportunity in the Armed Services; members to be designated by the President.
- The presidential authority of the committee to examine rules, procedures, and practices of the Services for the purpose of recommending modifications to reflect the intent of the executive order.
- The requirement for all executive departments and agencies of the federal government to cooperate with the committee in its work, and to furnish such information and the services of such persons as may be

required in the performance of its duties.

- The requirement that persons in the Armed Services, the executive departments, and agencies of the federal government testify before the committee if requested and make available such documents and other information the committee may require.

- The existence of the committee, which can be terminated only by presidential executive order.²

Generally, the different branches of the Armed Services devised their own efforts to integrate their enlisted ranks, and responded to Truman's order in their own ways. Nonetheless, Executive Order 9981 was significant for several reasons: it represented presidential interest and action; it responded to the concerns of a segment of society; it addressed the strategic concern of manpower with the onset of the Cold War emanating at the end of World War II; and it expanded opportunities for Negroes serving in the military. Similarly, on 26

July 1948, Truman issued a presidential directive, Executive Order 9980, which dealt with equal treatment and opportunity in the Civil Service. The order was issued the same day he signed Executive Order 9981.

Off-base equal treatment and opportunity efforts in the 1940s dealt primarily with civilian problems related to housing and other off-base establishments. These problems reflected the segregationist policies and attitudes prevalent in the United States during that time. On-base efforts of equally important concern dealt with the location and integration of training facilities and the use of on-base facilities such as clubs and messes. In several instances, confrontations and riots took place between black servicemen attempting to integrate on-base facilities and white servicemen attempting to enforce segregation. During the early 1940s, several camps and bases located in California, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Texas were the sites of "riots of racial character," according to John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War and head of

Enlisted Marines broke the "color barrier" in the Marine Corps in World War II. Trained at segregated Montford Point, North Carolina, they were assigned to Fleet Marine Force units including the 1st Marine Division on the beach at Peleliu in September 1944.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 0285



the War Department's Advisory Committee on Racial Matters.³ Similar scenarios of racial unrest took place at military bases during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The initiatives implemented to achieve the intent of Executive Order 9981 varied. All of the Services, however, were opposed to Negroes serving alongside white Americans in combat or peacetime. A number of unjustified and unsubstantiated rationalizations were advanced to support the widely held belief that the black man was not ready to serve beside his white counterpart, ranging from black intellectual inferiority to the lack of social development. The true reason was racism.

Military historians have more than adequately documented the issues and events that relate to the contemporary challenge of racial diversity within the officer ranks. This effort is based upon the work of a number of those historians and the verbal and written accounts of several African-Americans who served during the "Jim Crow" era and during the period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Collectively, their accounts provide the basis for recalling the Marine Corps' earlier initiatives to enlist African-Americans and ultimately integrate and broaden the opportunities for African-Americans, to satisfy manpower needs, and to meet the appeals of civil rights proponents and the intent of President Truman's Executive Order 9981.

Soldiers of the Sea

Among all the Services, the Marine Corps was the staunchest opponent of accepting blacks within its ranks. There is some evidence of several black men serving in the Continental Marines in 1776 and 1777. However, when a separate Marine Corps was created in July 1798, the first Commandant, Major William W. Burrows, issued explicit guidance barring the enlistment of blacks, mulattos, and Indians. This policy of exclusion continued until World War I. Immediately prior to World War II, the Secretary of the Navy directed the Navy to take steps to increase its enlistment of Negroes. This pronouncement also applied to the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, as both were part of the Navy Department (the Coast Guard by virtue of a special requirement that it operate as part of the Navy during times of war).

Major General Thomas Holcomb, Commandant of the Marine Corps, was allowed to devise his



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 500043
On 10 November 1945, 2dLt Frederick C. Branch of Charlotte, North Carolina, had insignia of rank pinned on by his wife, Peggy. Lieutenant Branch became the first African-American commissioned officer after completing fully integrated training.

own plan to satisfy the conceptual intent of the Secretary; however, he fell short in the numerical goals that were being pursued by the Navy and the Army. The Army used the representative percentage of blacks in the general population as a benchmark for increasing black representation, but Major General Holcomb proposed the "enlistment of



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 173312

Enlisted Marines continued to pioneer integration during the Korean War, fighting on the front lines overseas as well as in the United States. A recoilless rifle gunner shifts location after firing his weapon on an enemy position at Taeui-dong in 1953.

1,000 Negroes because the inevitable replacement and redistribution of men in combat would prevent the maintenance of necessary segregation."⁴ Despite the Marine Corps' eventual enlistment of Negroes, individual base commanders could refuse to accept Negro troops, if their presence were contrary to the wishes of the local populace.*

Pride . . . The Beginnings

In June 1942, the first black Marine recruits reported for their initiation in the "best and toughest outfit going," according to Sergeant Major Edgar R. Huff. The entry of blacks into the Marine Corps was a result of President Roosevelt's directive to end racial discrimination. These pioneers would come to be known as "The Montford Point

Marines."⁵ Despite the resistance of Major General Holcomb, better judgement prevailed, as blacks, just as their white counterparts, would make significant contributions to the legacy of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps' plan for complying with the Secretary of the Navy's desire for a black battalion was to recruit approximately 1,000 Marine hopefuls, most of whom would come from the South. Segregated training would be conducted at a camp in North Carolina originally known as Mumford Point and later renamed Montford Point.

Among the first recruits were former sailors and soldiers and college graduates who would form the first black Marine Corps unit upon completion of recruit training, the 51st Composite Defense Battalion. The battalion's primary mission was to

*Morris J. McGregor, Jr., in *Integration in the Armed Forces, 1940-1945* (Washington, D.C.: The Center of Military History, 1981), provides detailed documentation of the experiences of the Marine Corps and other services in the evolution of the integration issue.

**Ralph Donnelly and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., in *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, 1975), provide an in-depth account of the assimilation of these Marines into a Corps accustomed to a heretofore exclusively white membership.

train additional black recruits. Later, a second defense battalion, the 52d Composite Defense Battalion, was formed. Both battalions were slated to become antiaircraft defense units. Although the units were designated combat units and were formed during World War II, to the disappointment of their Marines, neither experienced actual combat. Future manpower plans would call for the activation of a number of depot and ammunition companies. As indicated by their designations, plans for the employment of these units did not include combat; rather, they were intended for the laborious jobs of unloading ships and moving ammunition. However, because of their use in

Though the Korean War was fought after the 1948 Executive Order 9981, only two African-American officers served, including fighter pilot 2dLt Frank E. Petersen, Jr. Here he climbs from an aircraft while assigned to 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 01236360188



direct support of combat units, a number of the ammunition and depot companies did experience combat. The long-term plans for the military employment of all black Marines on active duty during World War II was to place them in reserve status at the end of the war.

The Marines who initially challenged previously uncharted rough seas were those of the Montford Point legacy. In March of 1945, three Montford Point Marines entered Officer Candidates School (OCS) at Quantico, Virginia, but were unsuccessful in their quest to be commissioned Marine lieutenants. Not to be denied, however, was Frederick C. Branch, a member of the 51st Defense Battalion. A native of Hamlet, North Carolina, Branch entered OCS in the summer of 1945 and was commissioned on 10 November 1945, the 170th birthday of the Marine Corps. The commissioning of three others in 1946 followed Branch's groundbreaking accomplishment. As were the others who followed him, Lieutenant Branch was released to inactive duty after commissioning. He was recalled for duty during the Korean War and served at Camp Pendleton, California. As an infantry officer, he held billets as a platoon leader, company executive officer, and battery commander in an antiaircraft artillery battalion. Branch was a member of an integrated unit with four white officers under his command.⁵

The utilization of Negro Marines during the Korean War differed from that of World War II. While there are several accounts of individual Negro Marines in combat, tracing the evolution of the military use of the Negro Marine is difficult due to the absence of detailed records. What is certain, however, is that service in Korea included a tandem of "firsts." Lieutenant William K. Jenkins would lead Marines into combat and Lieutenant Frank E. Petersen would become the first Negro Marine aviator.

Following the commissioning of Branch and others, the door was partially opened for more blacks to pursue commissions within the Marine Corps. The remaining chapters of this account will address the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the presence of African-Americans in its officer ranks. It will focus on those who sought membership in an elite, exclusive military organization motivated and distinguished by "pride"; recall the various pivotal events that enhanced or impeded the "progress" of their efforts; and examine the future "prospects" of building an officer corps that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the nation it serves.

CHAPTER 2

The Efforts of the 1970s

The attitudes, progress, and intergroup relations which manifested themselves in the decade of the 1970s, from a racial perspective, were principally a result of the social and political events that took place in the 1960s:

- The 1962 review of the progress made by "minorities" in the Armed Forces since the implementation of President Truman's Executive Order 9981, 14 years earlier. The review was directed by President John F. Kennedy (believed by some blacks to be one of the most progressive presidents on the issue of racial equality).

- The protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins by black Americans as a sign of opposition to the segregationist policies in effect throughout the nation affecting employment, housing, and other civil issues.

- The 1963 March on Washington, D.C.

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- The assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee, in March 1968.

- The riots in response to the assassination of Dr. King.

- The resurgence, growth, and symbols of "Black Power" in the neighborhoods, on college campuses, and in the literature, poetry, and music of black America.

During the 1960s, the Armed Forces faced a number of challenges that were not much different from those of society at large. Realizing that the military was a microcosm of the larger society from which it draws its members, the relevance of those mutual interests was understandable. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson were interested in promoting better race relations among members of the Services and ensuring fairness and equality in promotions and assignments. The degree of difficulty encountered in addressing

and solving these issues was driven by the attitudes of society at large, because every individual joining the military brings with him or her beliefs, biases, and prejudices to which the individual was exposed while a civilian. Further, the messages of racial superiority or inequity to which they were exposed played a role in how they viewed their fellow soldiers, individually and collectively. The Marine Corps faced problems similar to those of the other Services. However, the Marines believed they were different; there was a mystique to being a Marine. And the Corps enjoyed a special reverence from Americans. As such, its racial problems received intense scrutiny.

According to some Marines who served during the Vietnam era, the Vietnam War was a defining experience and period for the Marine Corps in the areas of race relations and increasing the number of black officers in its ranks. Saddled with the unintended second- and third-order effects of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's "Project 100,000," the returning veterans from Vietnam unveiled some issues that required innovative thinking and approaches.^{1*} Among the issues were:

- The increasing occurrence of interpersonal confrontations and conflicts primarily between black and white Marines, to include assaults and gang attacks.

- The disproportionate number of non-judicial punishments and courts martial

*The McNamara project called for the induction of 100,000 enlistees under revised enlistment standards. The downward revision qualified a sizeable number of individuals who previously failed to meet the original enlistment criteria; black enlistment failures dropped by 20 percent, while white failures fell by 11.7 percent. Between 1966 and 1968, 240,000 enlistees qualified under the new standards and 37 percent were assigned to combat arms specialties.



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A372852

The Vietnam War achieved integration at all levels, but African-American enlisted Marines greatly outnumbered commissioned officers. GySgt Earl L. Jones, left, and 1stLt John R. Rabb, right, coordinate fire support for Company L, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines.

affecting black Marines (in the vast majority of cases by white commanding officers).

- The racial polarization of black and white Marines at on- and off-base facilities and establishments.

- The appearance and use of signs and symbols of black solidarity and pride, such as wrist bracelets, crosses fashioned of black boot laces worn in uniform, and the “DAP” handshake, ritually also known as “checking-in.”

- The emergence of the “Afro” haircut and its challenge to the traditional Euro-centric orientation and interpretation of Marine Corps haircut regulations and grooming standards.

Bases and stations on the East and West Coasts had their share of incidents that were primarily the

result of racial differences. John McGowan, a former enlisted Marine, officer, and infantry platoon leader with the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, located at Camp Pendleton, California, offered this observation:

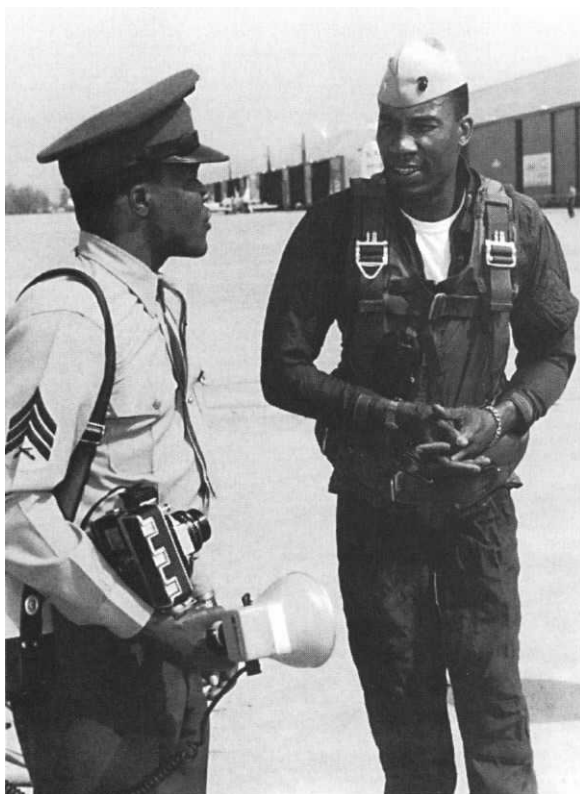
While the town of Oceanside and the surrounding areas didn’t practice the discrimination the Marines on the East Coast endured from the town of Jacksonville, believe me, we had the same type of on-base problems, . . . the muggings, the fights, the unbelievable number of non-judicial punishments and courts martial awarded to black Marines, and McNamara’s 100,000. . . . The problems we had on the West Coast were the same as those on the East Coast and overseas. Then we tried to fix it with the Human Relations Program.²



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 127NA419047

Above, Maj Hurdle L. Maxwell, the first black officer to command an infantry battalion, is shown in Vietnam in 1966 during a visit with Vietnamese villagers. Below, Frank E. Petersen, then a lieutenant colonel, commanded a fighter squadron during the Vietnam War. He is shown being interviewed by combat photographer Sgt Eddie L. Cole.

Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A416704



The response and reaction to these developments were mixed along racial, gender, age, and rank lines. The older and more senior black Marines, enlisted and officer, acknowledged that there were problems that needed to be remedied, but did not agree with the response to these issues chosen and implemented by the younger generation. The reaction and response of the senior white Marine officer and enlisted man characterized these occurrences as divisive to the Corps. They blamed the McNamara project and the civilian judiciary system, which tended to view the Marine Corps, and the other Services, as a viable means of “squaring away” many a wayward youth. In reality, the young black Marines viewed these two groups (their leadership) as parts of the problem rather than the solution.

Towards Progress—Solving the Problem

In response to the challenge presented by racial problems, a number of ideas and initiatives were explored at the local command level and at Headquarters Marine Corps. On the East Coast, where discriminatory off-base practices were as daunting and divisive as the on-base challenges, the



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo A415451

MajGen Raymond G. Davis awards the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" to LtCol Kenneth H. Berthoud for Vietnam service. The presentation was made at Headquarters, Marine Corps. Berthoud was the first Special Advisor for Minority Officer Procurement.

Commanding General, 2d Marine Division, Major General Michael P. Ryan, launched an investigation in April 1969 to uncover the reasons for the racial problems and to formulate responses. A result was the publication of a division order and pamphlet on building unit pride and esprit de corps.³ In less than one month after the initiative, Camp Lejeune experienced one of its more publicized racial incidents when a riot ensued between black and white Marines of the same battalion. The outcomes of that incident included the death of a white Marine, the courts martial of a number of black Marines, and the relief of the battalion commander—the first black Marine to command an infantry battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Hurdle L. Maxwell.

Following hearings held at Camp Lejeune by a House Armed Services Subcommittee, General Leonard F. Chapman, Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), took a number of steps to solve the

racial problems and to eliminate discrimination from the Marine Corps. The assistant commandant and Chapman's successor, General Robert E. Cushman, would continue these changes.

Department of Defense Interest

During the late 1960s, the issue of Negro officer representation within the Marine Corps and the Navy became a matter of concern for the Department of Defense. In a May 1967 memorandum from Assistant Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance to Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze, concern was expressed regarding "the distressingly low Negro officer content of the Marine Corps and the Navy." While acknowledging the increase in Negro enrollment at the Naval Academy and in Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps units, Vance suggested that "at a minimum, the Navy Depart-

ment should double the number of Negro officers, by pursuing the senior enlisted ranks and the establishing of NROTC units at predominantly Negro colleges.”^{4*}

Looking For A Few Good Men . . . and Women

As a result of the racial disorders that occurred, and outside interests, the Marine Corps pursued several major initiatives: a Human Relations Training Program; a Commandant's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs, composed of prominent civilians of various races; an Equal Opportunity Staff Section; and an officer recruiting and retention strategy devised to increase the number of Negro officers. An advisory billet also was created to keep the Marine Corps' manpower chief, and the Commandant, abreast of the progress of these initiatives and related matters. Among the related matters were Negro officer recruiting, assignments, and retention. The advisory billet was initially named Special Advisor to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Manpower) for Minority Officer Procurement and was occupied by a black officer. The first officer to occupy the special advisor position was Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth H. Berthoud, Jr., a former Navy corpsman.

Berthoud began his Marine Corps career as a combat arms officer in the tank military occupational specialty (MOS). He later changed his MOS to the supply occupational field. Berthoud became the third black officer to command at the battalion-level when he commanded the 9th Motor Transport Battalion for five months in the early 1970s.

The Marine Corps' strategy to improve the possibilities for advancement of Negro officers during General Chapman's tenure emphasized three areas: increasing the number of Negro officers; assigning Negro officers to high-visibility, career-enhancing billets; and improving the retention rate of Negro officers. One of the first initiatives implemented in 1968 was the Negro Officer Selection Officer (NOSO) concept; the title was later changed to Minority Officer Selection Officer

*In his memorandum, Vance extolled the efforts of the Navy Department regarding the increase in Naval Academy enrollment, but expressed concern over the number of Negro officers in the Marine Corps and the Navy compared to other Services, describing it as distressingly low. He suggested that a minimum numerical objective should be to double the number of Negro officers.

(MOSO).^{5*} Six black officers with the rank of captain were assigned to the six Marine Corps Recruiting Districts to assist white officer selection officers in recruiting black officer candidate applicants. The MOSOs were not precluded from recruiting whites, but their primary purpose and focus was black prospects. As Berthoud later stated:

This strategy was to augment the number of black officer candidates we [the Marine Corps] were trying to get from the Enlisted Commissioning Programs (ECP) and the Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection Training program (BOOST). Also, we needed to increase the visibility of black officers at the Naval Academy, The Marine Barracks at 8th & I, Naval ROTC units, and at Headquarters Marine Corps. At that time [1968], I was the only black officer assigned there. Despite the tendency to lower standards, the black officers who initially worked on this issue wanted to make sure the standards were the same as they were for the white officer applicants.⁶

The lowering of standards to attain numerical goals was implied in a June 1967 memorandum from Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas D. Morris to the Undersecretary of the Navy. Recalling the intent of Vance's previous memorandum of May 1967 and a discussion with two members of his staff (of flag and general officer rank), Morris repeated that "it was indicated that the establishment of an NROTC unit at a predominantly Negro institution appeared feasible with possible alterations to present standards."^{7**}

A Change of the Guard

In 1970, another pioneer, Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Petersen, replaced Berthoud. A former

*George H. Walls, Jr., was one of the first African-American officers in the Marine Corps assigned to officer selection officer duty. He was assigned to the 4th Marine Corps District located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of his subsequent assignments was as a Marine officer instructor at North Carolina Central University.

**The memorandum was a follow-on to Vance's memorandum approximately one month earlier. Morris mentions a previous discussion on the subject with a major general and an admiral who suggested that establishing NROTC units at Negro institutions could be accomplished with possible alterations to present standards and procedures.



Leaders who marked the changing of the guard included LtCol Frank E. Peterson, who rose to lieutenant general before retirement. As Special Advisor, he instituted changes in the direction of acquiring African-American officers that were not being met by existing practices. He is shown with officer selection officer Capt Henry J. Ferrand.

Navy Seaman Apprentice, Petersen became the first black Marine to earn the wings of a naval aviator, the first black to command a tactical air squadron, and the first black to reach general officer rank. Petersen's initial assignment placed him under the staff cognizance of the Marine Corps personnel chief; shortly afterwards, he was assigned as the Special Assistant for Minority Affairs to the Commandant, General Robert E. Cushman. The continuation of energy, emphasis, and focus Petersen brought to the task at hand were the result of his thoughts regarding the direction the Marine Corps should take while a young captain studying at the Marine Corps' Amphibious Warfare School.^{8*}

One of the first recommendations Petersen made was to expand the MOSO concept by assigning 11 additional black officers to recruit officer candidates in cities having sizeable populations of young black men and women attending college. The cities subsequently selected as MOSO sites were: Atlanta; Chicago; Kansas City; Los Angeles; New Orleans; New York City; Philadelphia; Raleigh; Richmond; San Francisco; and Washington, D.C.⁹

The officers assigned to these locations began their tours with the title of Minority Officer Selection Officers and were co-located with white officers designated as officer selection officers. In 1974, the title MOSO was abandoned and all officers assigned to the officer recruiting billets were designated as officer selection officers with no racial distinction attached to their title or duties. Also, one black officer was assigned to each Marine Corps District Headquarters to assist OSOs nationwide. According to Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Ambrewster, "two major concerns were establishing a common understanding that it was not our [black OSOs] sole responsibility to recruit more black officers. Also, we were concerned about the short-term, career-damaging impact of being assigned away from the Fleet Marine Force so early in our careers."^{10**}

*Lieutenant General Peterson later recalled that while a student at the Amphibious Warfare School he wrote a paper focusing on increasing the number of black officers. A number of the initiatives presented in the paper were implemented when he occupied the special advisory billet.

**Lieutenant Colonel Ambrewster was among the first black officers assigned to officer selection officer duty. He later cited a concern of among those officers regarding the promotional and career impact of being assigned out of their military occupational specialties and away from the Fleet Marine Force so early in their careers. According to Ambrewster those concerns were addressed satisfactorily by Lieutenant Colonel Peterson while he was special advisor.

Petersen's successor was Major Edward L. Green, a communications officer turned infantryman. During Green's tenure, the Marine Corps began to expand its approach and emphasis on the black officer retention issue to include areas such as performance at The Basic School and command assignments.^{11*} Among his many assignments prior to retirement in December 1980 were the Naval Academy, where he was instrumental in attracting a number of midshipmen to the Marine Corps, and the 3d Marine Division, where he became the second black Marine officer to command an infantry battalion. Green's successor, Major Solomon P. Hill, an infantry officer, was the last officer to occupy the special assistant billet until August 1993. Hill also served as the executive officer of the Corps' Officer Candidates School during the 1970s.

In addition to increasing the number of black officers working on college campuses and in communities as OSOs, emphasis was placed on assigning black officers to duties in the remaining two major Marine officer accession sources, the Naval Academy and the various NROTC units. In 1976, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps executed a memorandum of agreement allocating the Marine Corps a 16 2/3 percent share of the NROTC scholarships.¹² A Navy and Marine Corps agreement consummated in July 1972 had allocated a similar share of the senior class at the Naval Academy.^{**} The number, however, was not a guarantee. The Marine Corps had to "attract" its share of potential Marine officers. Accordingly, the Marine Corps assigned some of its best officers to these billets. The focus of the NROTC program assignments was the historically and predominantly black colleges and universities. This was in conjunction with the Navy's effort to increase its visibility on black college campuses and increase its black officer population (consistent with the Vance Memorandum of May 1967). Five black colleges and universities were selected for NROTC unit locations: Florida A&M University (activated in 1972); Prairie View

*Lieutenant Colonel Green was a former aide-de-camp to Assistant Commandant, General Samuel Jaskilka, and also special advisor, where he played a pivotal role in the Marine Corps' early efforts to increase the presence of black officers.

**On 15 July 1972, the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Marine Deputy Chief of Staff (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) executed the original agreement covering the accession of Naval Academy graduates into the Marine Corps. A follow-on memorandum of 22 April 1983 modified the initial agreement capping the accessions at one-sixth of the graduating class. Also several other provisions of the original agreement were revised and/or clarified.



A group portrait of the recruiting pioneers in the officer selection effort includes future senior Marine Corps leaders. Little did they know that their actions would result in success in facing the accessions challenge.

A&M University (activated in 1968); North Carolina Central University (activated in 1972); Savannah State University (activated in 1971); and Southern University (activated in 1971).*

Two additional areas of focus for assignments having to do with the accession of new lieutenants were Officer Candidates School and The Basic School. In 1972, two black officers were assigned to duties in those areas, Major Clay Baker to Officer Candidates School as executive officer and Captain Archie Joe Biggers to The Basic School as an

instructor. Both Marines were infantry officers and veterans of the Vietnam War, when Biggers was awarded the Silver Star.

Passing the Word

Consistent with its need to get the word out and to develop target markets in communities and on college campuses, the Marine Corps initiated discussions with various community, social, and professional organizations. The National Association for the Advancement Colored People (NAACP), the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Montfort Point Marine Association were among the organizations contacted.¹³

Relationships of this nature would later prove to be critical elements in the Marine Corps' attempts to publicize its efforts, generate interest and applicants, and receive valuable "grass roots" response as to the effectiveness of its strategy. Years later this idea would be expanded, producing varying degrees of success.

*A Chief of Naval Education and Training Command information paper discusses the history behind the establishment of NROTC units at black colleges. The paper cites the Vance Memorandum of May 1967 as the precedent setter. In 1970, the CNO set a goal that 10 percent of all units would be on HBCU campuses by 1975. In addition to the five original units, two additional units were opened as consortiums in 1982 and 1987; the units were Norfolk State University and Morehouse College, respectively. Norfolk State formed a consortium with Old Dominion called the Hampton Roads Consortium. Morehouse worked closely with Georgia Technical University to form the Atlanta Consortium.



Capt Henry J. Ferrand, as New Orleans NOSO, administers the oath of office to a newly commissioned second lieutenant early in the 1970s. The directed grass-roots effort was successful in attracting new qualified officers from previously overlooked sources.

Assessing the Results

Logically, the effectiveness of the Marine Corps' new initiatives had to be assessed. How effective were these initiatives in attracting new black officers? The Marine Corps' progress can be viewed with respect to two areas, accessions and composition.

In 1970, the initial goals for the recruitment and accession of black officers were established in a CMC memorandum, which prescribed "minority" accession goals for the five-year period, 1972 through 1976. Accessions is defined as the number of second lieutenants commissioned each year as a result of fulfilling pre-commissioning training and/or educational requirements. Prior to 1972, there were no black officer recruiting and accession goals established as targets or measures of success. However, in 1971 the Marine Corps did

access 48 black officers. Table 2.1 portrays the accession results from 1972 through 1976. It reveals that the Marine Corps was successful in meeting its black officer accession goals from 1972 through 1976; however, a number of subsequent developments affected future attainment prospects.

In October 1976, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) levied a formal requirement for yearly "minority" officer accession goals. In 1977, the Department of Defense authorized the Marine Corps to include Hispanic accessions in its total minority accession goal calculations.¹⁴ The Marine Corps' "minority" officer accession figures for 1977 through 1979 (Table 2.2) reveal that the Corps failed to reach its combined black and Hispanic accession goals for the remainder of the decade.

In 1970, blacks comprised 1.3 percent of the

Table 2.1 Black Officer Accessions (1972- 1976)^{15*}

Fiscal Year	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Total Accession Goal	1,924	2,325	1,900	2,275	2,175
Black Goal	100	100	100	100	100
Percent of Accession Goal	5.2	4.3	5.3	4.4	4.6
Total Accessions	1,763	2,262	1,927	2,367	2,193
Total Black Accessions	103	101	152	138	141
Percent of Total Accessions	5.8	4.5	7.9	5.8	6.4

*Minority accessions prior to fiscal year 1977 included blacks only; however, when referring to blacks, the term "minority" was used.

Marine Corps' officer population in the grades of second lieutenant (O-1) through general (O-10).¹⁶ That percentage reflected about 300 officers in an officer corps of approximately 23,000. In 1971, the total number of officers was reduced to 19,905; with the reduction, black representation decreased to approximately 1.2 percent. Among a

total of 234 black officers, the highest grade represented was lieutenant colonel. Five black women were also among that number; their highest rank was captain. Table 2.3 contains black officer demographics as of 30 June 1971.

As the Marine Corps progressed through the 1970s, post-Vietnam War manpower reductions

Table 2.2 Minority Officer Accessions (1977-1979)^{17*}

Fiscal Year	1977	1978	1979
Total Accession Goal	2,312	1,850	1,903
Minority Goal	185	174	174
Percent of Accession Goal	8.0	9.4	9.1
Total Accessions	2,022	1,873	1,919
Total Minority Accessions	145	143	126
Percent of Total Accessions	7.2	7.6	6.6

*Minority numbers reflect black and Hispanic accessions and there is no information available for determining minority goals.

Table 2.3 Black Officer Population (As of 30 June 1971)¹⁸

Rank	Total (all Races)	Total Black	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O-10	2	0	0.0	-
O-9	9	0	0.0	-
O-8	25	0	0.0	-
O-7	38	0	0.0	-
O-6	742	0	0.0	-
O-5	1,638	3	0.2	-
O-4	3,328	11	0.3	-
O-3	5,609	59	1.1	1
O-2	6,039	121	2.0	2
O-1	2,485	40	1.6	2
Total	19,915	234	1.2	5

reflected a decrease in its officer corps strength of approximately 3,000 officers during the period June 1971 to June 1979. Despite this reduction in total officer strength, the black officer population grew in percentage and in actual numbers. Overall, black officer composition rose from 1.3 percent in 1970 to 3.7 percent in September 1979.¹⁹ This percentage increase reflected modest gains in the total number of black female officers and increases in the number of black male officers in the field-grade ranks (O-4 to O-6). Conversely, only one black female was in the field grade rank structure. That distinction belonged to Major Gloria Smith, a supply officer.

Although the Marine Corps was showing signs of progress, it still lagged behind the Army (6.9 percent) and the Air Force (4.3 percent). Only the Navy's black officer composition (2.2 percent) was lower.²⁰ Table 2.4 contains the black officer population as of 30 September 1979.

Although the Marine Corps does not promote its officers based on occupational requirements, it is a widely held belief that the maximum opportunities for command assignments and promotions reside within the combat arms occupational fields (aviation, infantry, artillery, and armor), as opposed to combat support and combat service support fields. The latter two occupational fields include

Table 2.4 Black Officer Population (As of 30 September 1979)²¹

Rank	Total (All Races)	Total Black	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O-10	2	0	0.0	-
O-09	7	0	0.0	-
O-08	23	0	0.0	-
O-07	33	0	0.0	-
O-06	576	1	0.2	-
O-05	1,495	7	0.5	-
O-04	2,668	36	1.3	1
O-03	4,722	195	4.1	3
O-02	4,446	259	5.8	8
O-01	2,962	135	4.6	3
Total	16,934	633	3.7	15

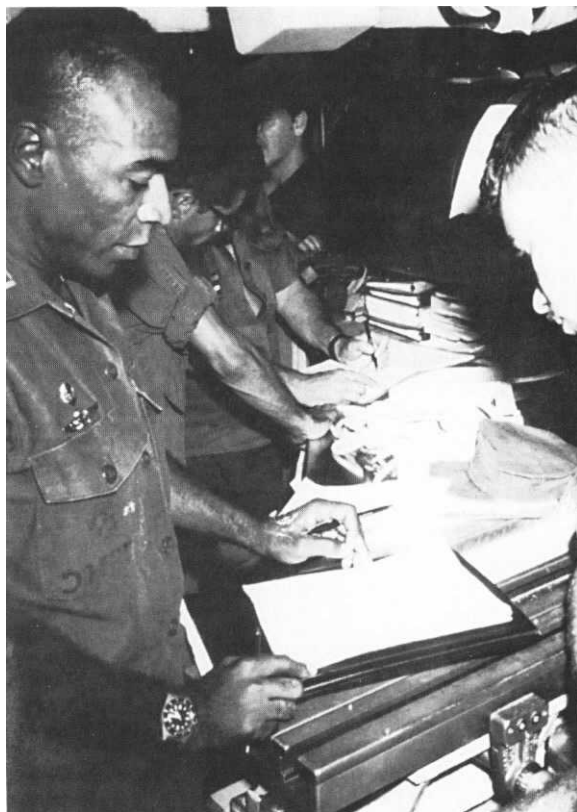
specialties such as communications, combat engineer, supply, maintenance, motor transport, and logistics. A review of September 1979 occupational field data reveals that more than one-third (approximately 36 percent) of the black officers on active duty were in combat arms occupational fields, against more than one-half (approximately 54 percent) of the white officers. The combat service support occupational fields contained about 18 percent of the black officer strength against 15 percent for white officers. The combat support occupational fields comprised the remaining 46 percent of blacks, against 31 percent for white officers. The occupational fields absorbing the bulk of the combat arms disparities were aviation, infantry, artillery and armor.²²

Highlights of the Decade

The 1970s can best be characterized as the beginning of monumental change in the racial composition of the Marine Corps' officer corps. Nearly 15 years after the integration of its ranks and 22 years after the commissioning of the first black Marine officer, the Marine Corps began to reap modest benefits from the various officer recruiting and accession implemented 10 years earlier. Black officers were beginning to be assigned to billets previously assigned to white officers, such as officer selection officers in predominantly white populated areas, The Basic School, naval test pilot, and command at the battalion and squadron levels. The most significant historical highlight of the era was the selection of Colonel Frank E. Petersen as the first black Marine to attain the rank of brigadier general in February 1979, 204 years after the birth of the Marine Corps. This event represented a significant first for the Marine Corps.

In November 1973, Lieutenant Colonel Clarence L. Davis assumed command of VMA -214, the famed "Black Sheep" squadron. As an alumnus of Texas Southern University, Davis became the second black officer to command a tactical aviation unit.

While seasoned veterans made their presence felt, a young lieutenant and graduate of Hampton University made history in the area of marksmanship. In May 1974, First Lieutenant Charles H. Thorton, Jr., became the first black officer to earn the Distinguished Marksman Badge. In 1978, he added to his noteworthy accomplishments when he achieved another first by earning the Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge. Young black



Marine Corps Historical Collection

A noted leader and role model, Maj James Capers, Jr., was commissioned on the battlefield in Vietnam and commanded a Marine Guard Detachment and Force Reconnaissance Company. This picture was on board a submarine whose crew was coordinating the underwater landing and recovery of recon teams at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the 1970s.

Marine officers were also establishing their presence in international athletic competition. First Lieutenants Lloyd Keaser and Bert Freeman represented the United States as Olympic athletes during the decade, Keaser as a wrestler and Freeman as a fencer. Freeman was the first black athlete to compete in fencing competition on the Olympic level. Both were graduates of the Naval Academy.

Quality Begets Quality

Those assigned to the various "groundbreaking" officer accessions programs during the 1970s were proven performers with excellent records. Among them were Major George Walls, Major Clay Baker, Major Clifford Stanley, Major James May, Major Edward Green, Captain Del Costin, Captain Fred Jones, Captain Charles Bolden, Captain Ramon

Johnson, Captain Jim Allen, Captain Solomon Hill, Captain Archie Joe Biggers, Captain Bill Jones, Captain Dave Saddler, Captain Gill Robinson, Captain Al Whittaker, Captain Clarence Willie, Captain Tony Ambrewster, First Lieutenant Hank Ferrand, First Lieutenant Chris Baker, First Lieutenant Al Davis, and many others. All of these officers, as well as a number of others, went on to have highly successful careers in the Marine Corps

and in the civilian sector. Among them are active duty and retired generals, colonels, lieutenant colonels, astronauts, educators, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and corporate officers. The point to be made is two-fold: the quality of officers entering the Corps who were selected to pioneer change and the demonstrated level of commitment of the Marine Corps to assign some of its finest officers to challenging assignments.

CHAPTER 3

The Efforts of the 1980s

Following a decade characterized by a host of initiatives that were catalysts for significant change in the officer corps, at a cursory glance the 1980s seemed to pale in comparison to the 1970s. After making considerable progress in improving the racial diversity of an officer corps which now looked different from that of the late 1960s and 1970s, the Marine Corps' officer recruiting and accessions focus expanded, encompassing other challenging areas such as replenishing the inventory of lawyers and pilots. These requirements broadened the focus of the officer recruiting strategy, but diluted the concentrated efforts to increase the number of black officers and officers from other under-represented racial and ethnic groups. Several of the initiatives that were implemented to enhance racial understanding and race relations and to improve the racial diversity of the officer corps were discontinued as a result of an improved racial climate. Among these initiatives were: the Human Relations Training program; the Special Advisor for Minority Affairs billet; the Minority Officer Selection Officer concept; and the Commandant's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs.

Fortunately for the Corps, the racial climate improved significantly. The enhanced state of race relations could rightfully be attributed to a number of factors, among which were enlightened leadership and an increase in understanding and tolerance among Marines of different races. Also, a more racially diverse officer corps contributed to that state of affairs. Despite this progress, the issue of black officer recruiting and accessions continued to be a challenge to the leadership and commitment of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps entered the new decade with less than optimal results from its officer recruiting and accessions strategy. During the 1977-1979 period, the Marine Corps failed to attain its expanded "minority" (e.g., black, Hispanic, and other racial and ethnic groups) officer accession goal. The

early 1980s were characterized by this same lack of success in the area of "minority" accessions. Although the total numerical officer accession requirements for the period 1980 through 1982 were accomplished each year (at times exceeding 100 percent), the race and ethnic accession goals for the same period were not attained. The total number of black and Hispanic officers accessed in each of those years ranged from approximately 60 to 70 percent of the yearly goals.¹ Perhaps indicating a reversal of the trend, accession statistics for fiscal year 1983 reveal that 121 (6.4 percent) of the 1,890 lieutenants accessed that year were black; for black officer accessions, this represented a goal attainment in excess of 125 percent.²

In addition to the continued emphasis on black officer accessions, the Marine Corps expanded its focus to include career development and progression. Areas such as military occupational field selection, Basic School performance, assignments, promotions, and performance evaluations were added to the many issues requiring examination and analysis. This was to ensure those black officers, and other under-represented groups, received the same opportunities for advancement.³ For example, in 1986 the Marine Corps completed the first phase of the Black Officer Career Development Plan. This plan focused on a number of professional development areas that were stressed in the 1970s and the eventual objects of repeated emphasis in the years ahead. Among those areas were Basic School performance, increasing the number of role models in the entry-level screening and training programs, and increasing the number of black lieutenants in combat arms occupational fields.⁴

Forging a Consensus

The accessing of new officers is the foundation for increasing racial diversity in the officer corps.

A related matter that emerged as a major point of discussion in the effort to attract more black officers was the selection of a suitable benchmark upon which the black officer accession goals should be based. There were a number of divergent views. Among the factors considered were:

- The black enlisted Marine composition percentage (approximately 20 percent in 1985).⁵

- The percentage of minority males possessing a bachelor's degree (based on the 1980 U.S. Census, approximately 12.1 percent).⁶

- The percentage of blacks in the national population (based on the 1980 U.S. Census, approximately 8.5 percent).⁷

- The percentage of new accessions required to achieve black officer strength equal to 12 percent of the total officer corps in 1992 (factoring in historical black officer retention rates).

From 1983 to 1989, the Marine Corps employed a modified version of two of the factors as a basis for establishing racial and ethnic accession goals. As a starting point, black officer accession goals were based on the percentage of black males possessing a bachelor's degree; that figure was adjusted to consider retention rates for each group. The ultimate goal was to build an officer corps wherein the total of blacks, Hispanics, and other racial and ethnic groups comprised 11 percent of the total number of unrestricted officers by the beginning of fiscal year 1992.⁸ That methodology for determining accession goals resulted in "minority" officer accessions equaling 11 percent of the total yearly accessions—six percent blacks, three percent Hispanics, and two percent for other racial and ethnic groups.

Department of the Navy Interest

During the 1983-1985 period, the Department of the Navy developed a heightened interest in the racial composition of the officer rank structures of the Navy and the Marine Corps. That interest gen-

Efforts to involve national groups included close liaison with community leaders, with such meetings as that of BGen Clifford L. Stanley and Julian Bond, center left and right. The occasion was the annual NAACP conference and community recognition program.

Photo courtesy of Joe Greezer III





Photo courtesy of Joe Geezer III

BGen Leo V. Williams III meets with Congressman Kwetsi Mfume, the present head of the NAACP, one of the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States.

erated the assignment of two officers to the staff of the Secretary of the Navy for the purpose of tracking the efforts of the Naval Services.⁹ The Marine Corps assigned Lieutenant Colonel Clifford L. Stanley to the billet. Stanley's official title was Marine Corps Aide to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and Special Assistant for Officer Programs. As a result of the Marine Corps' efforts to attract black midshipmen, Stanley was assigned to the Naval Academy in the mid-1970s to teach leadership and psychology.

Implementing New Strategies

Intent on increasing the number of black officers and regenerating the momentum of the early 1970s, the Marine Corps, under the leadership of three successive Commandants, Generals Robert R. Barrow, Paul X. Kelly, and Alfred M. Gray, implemented two major initiatives: the addition of "minority" officer recruiting billets in the 6th and 8th Marine Corps Recruiting Districts; and the assignment of racial and ethnic category recruiting and accession goals. Both initiatives revived the long-term focus and emphasis on the black officer recruiting and accessions effort.

The "minority" officer-recruiting billet was officially designated the Assistant for Minority Officer

Procurement (AMOP) and was occupied by a black captain. Two recruiting districts were selected and designated as sites for the AMOP billets, the 6th Marine Corps District headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, and the 8th Marine Corps District headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. These districts were selected based upon their black college student populations. The job of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement was to assist officer selection officers throughout the district primarily in their black officer recruiting efforts. Through this initiative, the Marine Corps began to target and canvass black churches, fraternities, and sororities to assist in getting the word out regarding commissioning opportunities and for potential applicants. The first two officers to serve in the billet were Captain David Jones, a supply officer (Atlanta), and Captain W. Clyde Lemon, a combat engineer (New Orleans). Lemon developed a minority recruiting action plan that provided guidance and ideas for accessing and developing the target markets. The plan is still in use today by officer selection officers nationwide. The results achieved as a result of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement initiative were directly related to the support and leadership provided by the commands and the intended utilization and employment of the AMOP. The encouraging results achieved in the 8th District were a direct result of the support rendered by Brigadier General Jarvis D. Lynch, Jr., the district director, and Colonel John E. Juul, the assistant director for personnel procurement. The AMOP concept was utilized from 1983 through 1989.

The second major initiative that positively affected the black officer recruiting efforts of the 1980s was the implementation of racial and ethnic category recruiting goals. Colonel Robert C. Lewis generated this idea. Lewis was the director of the 9th Marine Corps District, headquartered in Kansas City, Kansas. The concept involved the assignment of officer recruiting "quotas" (a generic recruiting term with no racial connotation) to each recruiting district for black, Hispanic, and "other" ethnic groups (e.g., Asian-Americans), based upon the demographics of each district's college population and other qualitative and quantitative factors.

The method of allocating numerical black recruiting quota allocations to each district was developed by the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) and encompassed the following factors: historical black accessions data by Service; local recruiting conditions; the geographic distribution of college entrance examination test scores; and estimates of

the available qualified population, based upon tests scores of 1,000 and higher on the SAT and 45 and higher on the ACT.¹⁰ This method of computing officer candidate recruiting quotas was implemented in November 1989; prior to that time, officer recruiting quotas were assigned on the basis of white and "minority applicants." The CNA study allocated the largest black percentage share, 28.6 percent, to the 6th Marine Corps District (Atlanta, Georgia). The district's territory included the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina. The second highest allocation, 21.6 percent, was assigned to the 4th Marine Corps District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Its area included the states of Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The smallest share was allocated to the 12th Marine Corps District headquartered in San Francisco, California. The south and southwest regions of the country reflected a 13.1 percent share assigned to the 8th Marine Corps District, headquartered in New Orleans; Louisiana and Texas were among its areas of responsibility.

The impact of this change caused the officer selection officers to work harder at canvassing, prospecting, and qualifying potential applicants, but this method of "quota" assignment intensified the focus on black officer recruiting and increased the number of black officer program applicants. In addition to these major initiatives several other concepts were implemented to augment the general "minority" recruiting effort.

Some examples were:

- The assignment of newly Basic School-trained black and Hispanic lieutenants to temporary Officer Selection Officer (OSO) duties for 14-day increments to assist permanently assigned OSOs in their prospecting efforts for "minority" candidates.

- The development of officer program advertisements featuring black officers.

- The targeting of press releases towards minority campuses and communities highlighting the accomplishments of minority officers.¹¹

Underlying the various initiatives, two general officers, Carl E. Mundy, Jr., and Jerome G. Cooper, provided critical leadership and guidance to the black officer recruiting effort. Mundy, a former officer selection officer and future Commandant, as the Director of the Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division, provided top-level attention and support to the black officer recruiting and accessions issue in the form of personnel and resources. The Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement concept was implemented while he headed the Personnel Procurement Division. Cooper, a pioneer in his own right, a reservist and future Director of the Personnel Procurement Division, consistently and vocally brought black officer recruiting and accessions inequities to the attention of several Commandants.

Table 3.1 Black Officer Accessions (1983-1989)

Fiscal Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Total Accession Goal	1,890	1,544	1,443	1,563	1,364	1,542	1,458
Black Goal	95	93	87	94	82	93	87
Percent of Accession Goal	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Total Accessions	1,890	1,544	1,443	1,563	1,364	1,542	1,458
Total Black Accessions	121	103	91	80	77	88	90
Percent of Total Accessions	6.4	6.7	6.3	5.1	5.6	5.7	6.2

Table 3.2 Black Officer Population (As of 30 September 1989)

Rank	Total	Total Black	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O-10	2	0	0.0	-
O-9	8	0	0.0	-
O-8	25	0	0.0	-
O-7	35	0	0.0	-
O-6	642	9	1.4	0
O-5	1,625	38	2.3	0
O-4	3,226	141	4.4	6
O-3	6,192	284	4.6	19
O-2	4,110	255	6.2	10
O-1	2,601	153	5.9	16
Total	18,466	880	4.8	51

Assessing the Results

The Marine Corps' recruiting efforts from 1983 to 1989 reflected a 23 percent decrease in new lieutenant requirements (from 1,890 to 1,458), accompanied by a corresponding decrease of approximately 25 percent in black officer accessions (121 in fiscal year 1983 to 90 in fiscal year 1989). Black officer accession goals for six years of the seven-year period were set at six percent of the yearly accessions goals.¹²

Black officer composition reflected a 40 percent increase in the number of black officers from 1980 to 1989, increasing from 627 to 880. During the same period, the total officer corps increased by 8.7 percent from 16,974 to 18,466. The increase in black officers represented a net gain of more than 250 officers, averaging 25 per year during the 10 year period.¹³ Of historical significance

was the addition of a black general officer to the Marine Corps' officer ranks in 1980; the first since the birth of the Corps some 205 years earlier.

The emphasis placed on increasing the number of black officers in the combat arms fields (i.e. infantry, artillery, armor, and aviation) in the early 1980s produced modest gains in the aviation and ground combat arms fields. These particular areas were targeted for a number of reasons. First and foremost, these specialties represented the ethos of the Marine Corps; therefore, the best opportunities for command and promotion were in these areas. Secondly, the Marine Corps believed it was important to have role models in these fields for the benefit of its enlisted Marines. Occupational field distribution statistics for the September 1979 to September 1989 period revealed that the number of black pilots increased from 35 in 1979 to 76 in 1989; this represented a net gain of just over

Table 3.3 Marine Corps Pilot Demographics by Race (As of 30 September 1989)

Race/Ethnicity	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Fixed Wing Fighters & Bombers	1,082	11	7	8
Other Fixed Wing	424	7	6	7
Helicopters	2,391	48	41	41
Totals	3,897	66	54	56

three black aviators per year. In an aviation component that totaled nearly 4,000 pilots in 1989, black officers represented slightly fewer than two percent of that number. Statistics for Hispanic pilots reveal a similar distribution, totaling 54 officers, 11 less than the total of blacks.¹⁴

Ground combat arms occupational specialties presented a similar situation. The net gain for the same 10-year period reflected three officers per year, totaling 201 blacks out of approximately 4,800 officers; this represented about four percent of ground combat arms officers, while Hispanics represented approximately three percent. In 1989, black officers were 4.8 percent of the officer force while Hispanic officers were 2.2 percent.¹⁵

Signs of Change Emerge

Accession and composition statistics indicated that much work was yet to be done to achieve the organizational goals articulated in the Marine Corps' yearly Equal Opportunity Assessments.

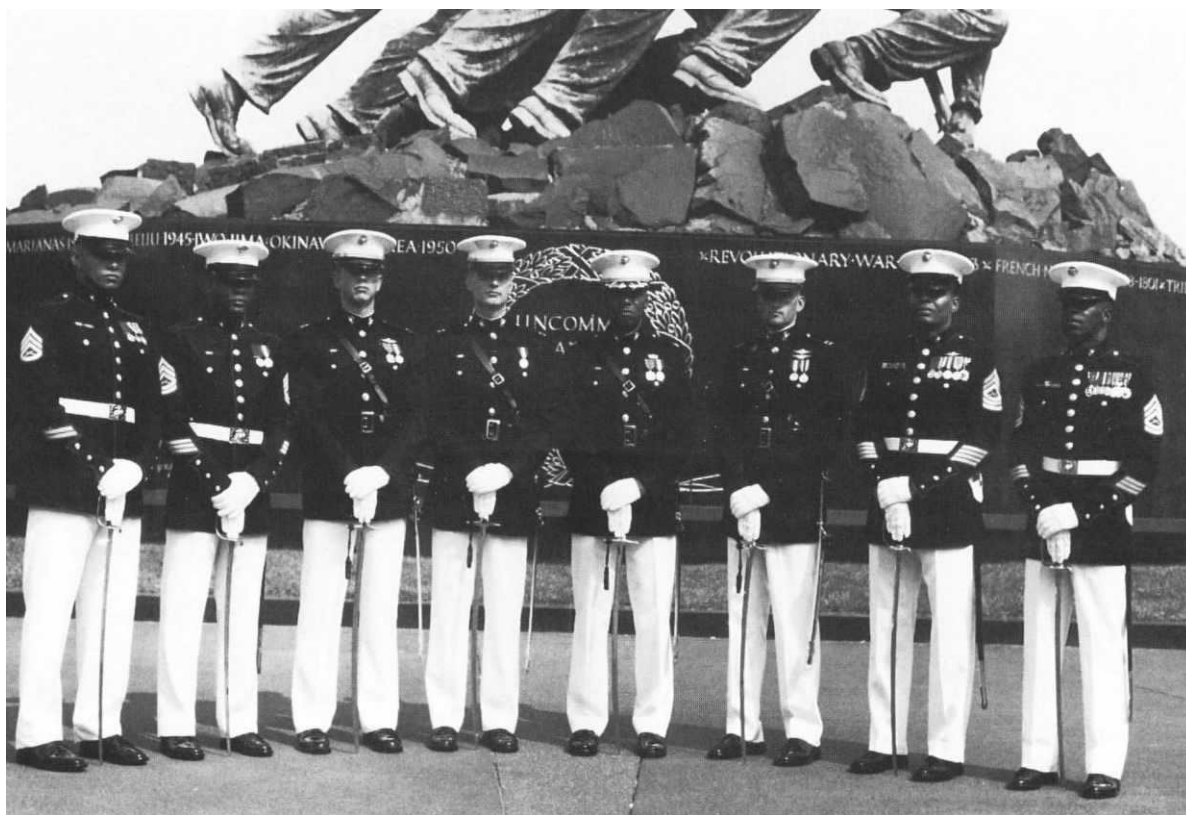
Then-Maj Charles F. Bolden's selection as a National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut and shuttle pilot made him an opinion maker and role model essential to the successful recruiting effort. Bolden was later the first Marine deputy commandant of the Brigade of Midshipmen in Annapolis, Maryland.



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 01246920186
LtGen Frank E. Petersen commanded the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico, Virginia, the "Crossroads of the Corps." He also became naval aviation's "Gray Eagle," as the longest serving naval aviator on active duty.

However, the Marine Corps began to show some indications that perhaps black officers would be afforded the same opportunities for success as their white counterparts. Several significant strides were made in the areas of promotions and assignments.

After being selected for advancement to brigadier general in February 1979, Frank E. Petersen was advanced to major general and lieutenant general in May 1983 and June 1986, respectively. Adding to a long list of personal "firsts," Lieutenant General Petersen also was given command of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Virginia. During his tenure as commanding general, he was the convening authority for perhaps two of the most highly publicized courts martial in the history of the Marine Corps, the Sergeant Clayton Lonetree espionage trial and the racially charged Corporal Lindsey Scott sexual assault proceedings. In August of 1987, by virtue of his date of designation as a naval aviator, the general was designated as the "Gray Eagle," the senior aviator on active duty in the entire Department of Defense. Petersen retired in July 1988.



A breakthrough assignment was that of Maj Clifford L. Stanley to the prestigious Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., known for its evening parades and ceremonies. Stanley and his parade staff are pictured in front of the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia.

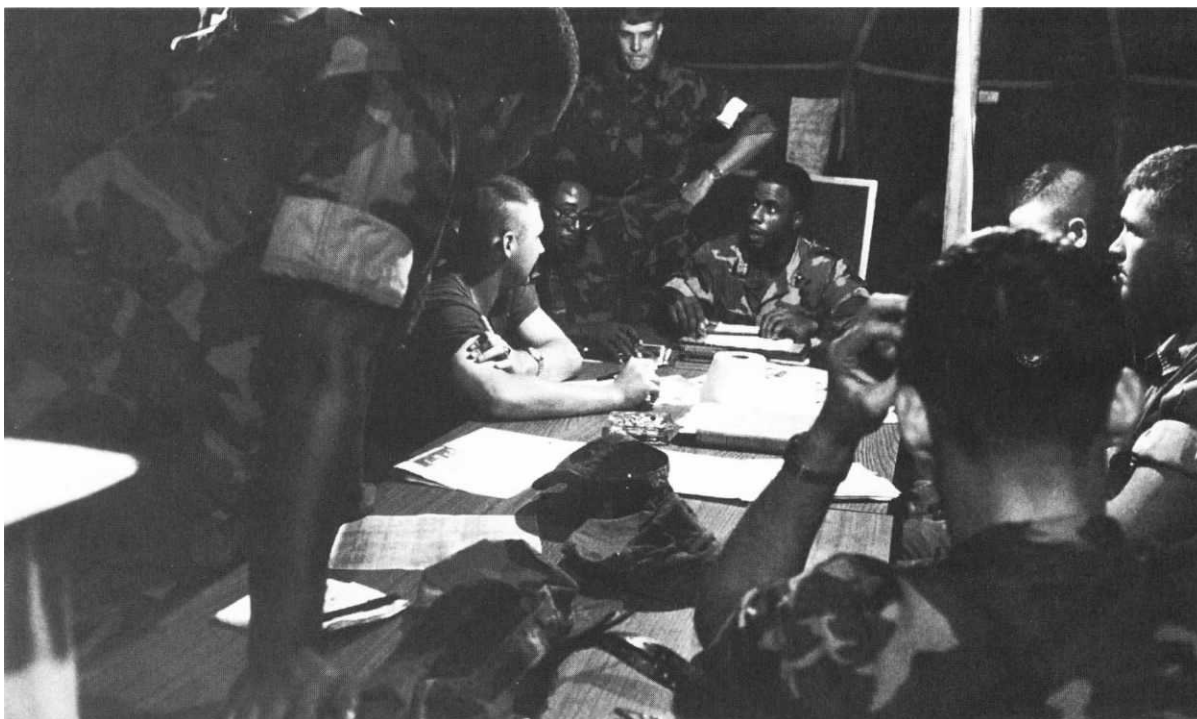
Another significant accomplishment was achieved in the field of aviation during the 1980s when Major Charles F. Bolden, Jr., was selected as an astronaut and subsequently qualified as a space shuttle flight pilot. A Vietnam veteran and former test pilot, Bolden's first space mission took place in 1986 on board the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

While two of the Marine Corps' aviation pioneers were charting new waters, throughout the 1980s a number of ground officers in the combat arms, combat support, and combat service support fields were tearing down the barriers to command infantry, supply, and combat service support units. Among them were Lieutenant Colonels John W. Moffett and Henry L. Reed, who were given command of infantry units, while Lieutenant Colonel George H. Walls, Jr., commanded Wing Engineer Support Squadron 17. In the combat service support arena, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony E. Manning and Colonel Fred L. Jones commanded the 3d Supply Battalion and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Support Group, respectively. In addition to these officers commanding at the battalion, squadron, and group level, the 1985 Marine Corps Equal

Opportunity Assessment indicated that black officers represented five percent (62) of all commanding officers in the Marine Corps and nearly four percent (32) of executive officers. In 1985, black officers represented 4.4 percent (816) of the Marine Corps' officer force.¹⁶ Absent from among the number of company and battalion commanders, however, were aviation unit commanders. This was a clear indication that there was work yet to be done.

In the supporting establishments and posts and stations of the Corps, change was also evident as groundbreaking assignments were made at the historic Marine Barracks at 8th and I, Washington, D.C., and at Headquarters, Marine Corps. In the summer of 1980, history was made when Major Clifford L. Stanley was assigned as Parade Adjutant of the ceremonial unit that performs in front of thousands of Americans at the weekly evening parades held on the grounds of the barracks. Stanley was assigned to that coveted position as a result of his professionalism, performance, and knowledge of the intricacies of ceremonial drill.

In the officer recruiting area at the headquarters



Marine Corps Historical Collection

Above, leadership opportunities presented leadership risks associated with the Marine Corps' combat role in the world since the end of the Cold War. Capt Gerald Gaskins receives reports from subordinates while commanding Company D, 2d Light Armored Infantry Battalion, Panama, in 1989 during Operation Just Cause. Below, increased focus on acquiring the right candidates coincided with the promotion of Jerome G. Cooper to general officer rank, a breakthrough that made the prospects of increased service more apparent. A reserve officer, Cooper later commanded the 4th Marine Division as a major general.



level, a black officer was assigned to head the Marine Corps' national officer recruiting and procurement efforts in July 1989. Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a former officer selection officer and assistant for officer procurement at the 8th Marine Corps District, achieved that distinction. Davis also became the first officer in the history of the Marine Corps to serve in an officer recruiting billet at every level (i.e., station, district, and national) with this assignment. Davis served in that assignment until July 1992. In the command arena of recruiting, Major Willie J. Oler, an infantry officer and former sergeant, became the first black officer to command a Marine Corps Recruiting Station when he assumed command of Recruiting Station Long Island, New York, in June 1981.

While progress was being made in the active duty component, the Marine Corps Reserve also showed signs of change with the advancement of Jerome G. Cooper to the rank of brigadier general. Cooper, an infantry officer and Vietnam veteran, was also the first black officer to lead an infantry unit in combat (1967) and the first to command a

Marine Reserve unit. He was advanced to the rank of major general in June 1988. Cooper also served as the Director of the Marine Corps Personnel Procurement Division while on active duty from mid-June 1988 until October 1988. During this period he was responsible for the Marine Corps' enlisted and officer recruiting operations.

Collectively, these "firsts" in assignments, promotions, and personal achievements were certain signs that the Marine Corps was indeed beginning to level the playing field for all. Further, these officers were only a few of the many who possessed the professionalism, motivation, and desire to excel, if given the opportunity.

CHAPTER 4

The Efforts of the 1990s

The first half of the 1990s was a period of significant accomplishments for the Marine Corps and African-American Marine officers. However, it was also a time that generated issues that resembled the ongoing debates in the civilian sector regarding equal opportunity, affirmative action, and racial diversity. Despite this, several catalysts produced a number of significant achievements that cumulatively render the decade as one of the most memorable since the enlistment of the Montfort Point Marines. Those catalysts represented the interests of individual Marines, the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense, and the general officer leadership of the Marine Corps.

The focus on racial issues generated during the decade was the result of a combination of issues, initiatives, and events. Among them were:

- The Commandant's Task Force on Equal Opportunity.
- Officer Candidates School attrition and the filing of a class action suit by a former Asian-American officer candidate alleging discrimination.
- The inclusion of an Ethnic Diversity Seminar in the 1993 General Officers' Symposium.
- A segment on African-American officer discrimination within the Marine Corps featured on the CBS television show *60 Minutes*.
- The publishing of numerous articles in professional journals and Service news sources regarding the recruiting, assignment, and discrimination against "minority" Marine officers.
- The convening of Quality Management Boards on OCS attrition and the career development of Marine officers.
- The implementation of racial and ethnic category recruiting goals established by the

Center for Naval Analyses study of 1989.

- The implementation of racial and ethnic category accession goals.

The progress attained during the 1990s was preceded by costly lessons learned in several areas, effective communications and the impact of media among them. Also, the Marine Corps addressed the existence of bias and institutional discrimination, two issues previously categorized as perceptions and misconceptions instead of stark realities. The leadership of the Marine Corps at various levels, comprised of officers of all races banded together to confront a problem that had the potential of dividing the Marine Corps along racial lines.

A Microcosm of Society

An expression often used by sociologists and military historians when referring to the military depicts it as "a microcosm of society." When examining the various issues confronted by the Marine Corps during the 1990s that characterization is quite appropriate. While federal, state, and local governments addressed the rationale for racial and gender diversity and the relevance of affirmative action, the Marine Corps' efforts to remedy the inequity among its officer ranks began to be publicly and privately debated and questioned by some active duty and retired Marines. A common theme, reminiscent of unsubstantiated comments during earlier attempts at integration, linked efforts aimed at leveling the playing field with the lowering of mental aptitude entrance standards and the erosion of quality in the officer corps.

The Marine Corps' first attempt at addressing the race and equal opportunity issues of the decade came in the form of a Commandant's Equal Opportunity Task Force convened in May 1990 by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alfred M. Gray. Among Gray's reasons for conven-



Marine Corps Historical Collection

The last decade of the century continued to make demands on the Corps, including the largest combat deployment since the Vietnam War. In the 1990-1991 Gulf War, officer and enlisted Marines served once more in the forefront of American conflicts.

ing the task force was "the pervasive perception among minority officers that they are not being afforded an equal opportunity to compete for promotion."¹ This perception was not limited to General Gray, but was prevalent among the general officer leadership of the Marine Corps. Among the areas Gray wanted the task force to examine were recruiting and accessions, promotions, professional military education, occupational field imbalances, and assignments. Gray, a former enlisted Marine, provided a summary of the task force's results and his intent in a "White Letter" to all general officers, commanding officers, and officers-in-charge. The areas targeted for improvement related to increasing the presence of African-American officers were: assignments, to include recruiting, schools, and staffs; promotions, to include repre-

sentation on promotion boards and promotion board precepts addressing the effects of bias and the disparate assignment of "minorities" outside of their occupational fields; the support of organizations such as the NAACP, NNOA, and Montfort Point Marines Association, to include general officer attendance at annual conferences and conventions; and the implementation of progressive specific racial and ethnic category recruiting and accession goals.²

Further examples of the discord on race and equal opportunity that existed can be found in several articles that appeared in publications primarily catering to Marines. One of those publications was the *Marine Corps Gazette*, a popular, privately funded magazine with extensive Marine officer readership and institutional backing. The public debate on the Corps' efforts ensued with the publication of an article in the April 1993 issue entitled, "An Equal Opportunity Misconception and the Accession/Selection Paradox." The author, a white captain assigned to Headquarters, Marine Corps as a manpower analyst, asserted that the Marine Corps' policy of recruiting "minorities" who scored between 115 and 119 on the Armed Services Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) destined them for failure. In the article the author stated:

There exists a paradox in the Marine Corps' equal opportunity philosophy with respect to officer accessions and selections (promotions). The paradox is simply that the Corps accesses the "best" qualified within race/ethnic/gender group guidelines; however, it selects only the "best" qualified for advancement to the next highest grade, irrespective of race/ethnic/gender group. The consequence of these two policies, what I like to call the accession/selection paradox, is the crux of an equal opportunity misconception.³

Regardless of the validity of its thesis, the article ignited a firestorm of debate that ultimately would be underscored in the national media.

A companion article, written by a former white officer selection officer and published in the same issue, addressed the issue of "minority" recruiting from an organizational development and human resources perspective. In "Minority Officer Procurement and the OSO," the author asserted that "the Corps' minority officer recruiting process is seriously flawed, and if the Corps is to get the best, some changes are needed."⁴ In December 1993,

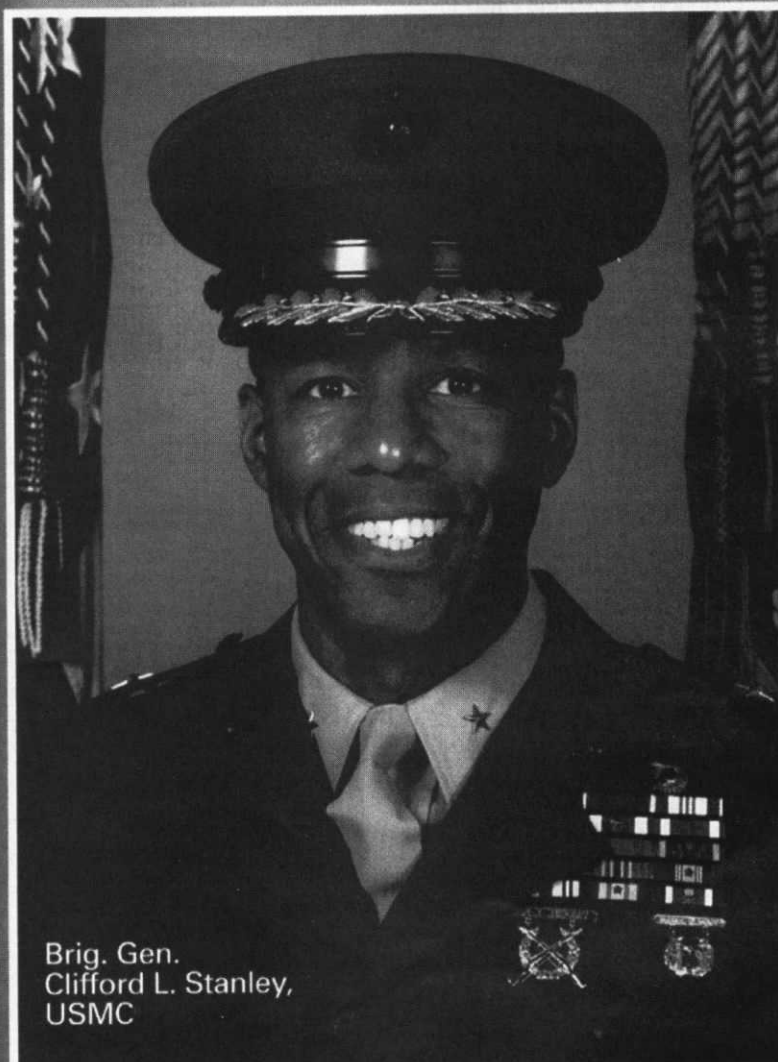
THE BLACK COLLEGIAN[®]

The Career & Self-Development Magazine for African-American Students



F O C U S O N

THE U.S. MARINE CORPS



Brig. Gen.
Clifford L. Stanley,
USMC

Targeted advertising was used to raise the image of the Marine Corps in college communities. In this example, BGen Clifford L. Stanley is featured on the front of The Black Collegian. The issue went on to explore career options available in the Marine Corps.

the *Gazette* published a response to both articles, written by the Head of the Officer Procurement Branch, Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds B. Peele, an infantry officer, former enlisted Marine, and the second black to head the Corps' officer recruiting operations. In "Quality Minority Officer Recruitment: An Issue?" Peele addressed the history and relevance of the ASVAB test, the issue of quality as compared to test scores, and the concerns of those tasked with the job of recruiting officer candidates. Peele maintained that:

There is not a quality problem in officer recruiting. The officers that are recruited possess the requisite skills to be competitive, beginning with their experience at The Basic School. It is essential that this "quality" issue be critically evaluated in light of the dangerous misconceptions and stigmas that may develop when reading the two articles published in April, especially as they relate to the EL [electronic score] Composite and the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.⁵

The final salvos on the subject were fired from the *Gazette* in March 1994, where another article and a host of letters to the editor appeared. The

letters were written by a racially diverse group of active duty and retired Marines, supporting both sides of the issue. The article, written by a Hispanic officer and entitled, "The Minority Controversy: Enough is Enough," conceded that racism did exist in the Marine Corps. However, the author concluded that: "The Marine Corps is a fighting machine, not a social experiment in political correctness. I really doubt the majority of Americans want this fine organization to mirror society."⁶

In addition to the articles featured in the *Gazette*, the *Navy Times*, another popular, privately funded, and widely read military-oriented publication featured two pieces that addressed the existence of institutional bias within the Marine Corps. In June 1992, the *Navy Times* featured a commentary and an article, each written by black captains questioning the sincerity of the Marine Corps' efforts to eliminate bias and to create an organizational climate of equal opportunity for all Marines. In "Is the Corps Keeping Blacks from Its Senior Officer Ranks?" the author questioned what he described as the Marine Corps' historical lack of leadership in dealing with racial matters. He assessed the impact on the recruiting effort as follows:

When a young black college graduate

MajGen Leslie M. Palm headed several boards which addressed the issue of officer accessions, and that eventually caused major changes to the way business was done.



looks for examples of blacks who have had successful careers as officers in the military, Army General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, represents a service that concerns itself with racial matters without sacrificing quality. As that same individual looks to the Marines, the service is lacking in representation and willingly sacrifices quality black officers.⁷

One week later, another article appeared in the *Navy Times* and addressed the issue of institutional bias. In "Bias and the Corps: Looking for Leadership," the author asserted that: "The Marine Corps is laden with institutional racism, intentional or unintentional, that is slowly and systematically destroying the morale of every common Marine."⁸

In response to the latter piece published in the *Navy Times*, Brigadier General Leslie M. Palm, the Marine Corps' Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, wrote a commentary that appeared in the publication. In "Corps is Working Hard to Eliminate Racism," Palm agreed with the writer's premise that the Marine Corps was not a perfect institution, but strongly disagreed that it was laden with "institutional racism." Palm also provided a synopsis of recent and future initiatives that had been and were to be implemented to ensure equality of opportunity for all Marines. In closing, Palm pledged:

Our ultimate objective is to be a leader in "minority" representation at every level, not only among the services, but also as an institution in American society. I assure [the captain], Marines everywhere and your readers that the Marine Corps' leadership is committed to ensuring every Marine is given an equal opportunity to achieve goals and to be recognized both by assignment to positions of increasing responsibility and by selection for promotion.⁹

The articles and commentaries added another perspective to the ongoing debate. The foregoing sampling of opinions provide not only a glimpse of the divergent views, but also perhaps a basis to equate the Marine Corps, and the other Armed Services, to the larger society when such volatile and misunderstood issues as race, gender, and equality of opportunity are addressed.

Well aware of the potentially negative impact of the race issue, Lieutenant General Charles C.

Krulak confronted the problem. In May 1993, while assigned as the commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Virginia, the cradle of Marine officer training and education, he hosted a two-day forum on "minority" and racial issues. Officers permanently assigned to the area and those attending the various schools at Quantico—The Basic School, Amphibious Warfare School, and the Command and Staff College—attended the session. Participants spanned the rank and racial and ethnic spectrums. Among the recurring issues discussed were: promotions and the promotion process; school selection; command selection; affirmative action and equal opportunity efforts; and long-range plans to increase minority officer representation.

The results of the forum revealed that the lack of cultural diversity and racial understanding were the root causes of a number of the issues confronting the officer corps. There was a consensus that the Marine Corps needed to increase the number of "minority" officers. There also was unanimous agreement among all in attendance that lowering standards or "special" treatment for minority officers, real or perceived, were not in the best interests of either the Marine Corps or the individual officer. Among the follow-on actions recommended was to be the chartering of a Quality Management Board tasked with reviewing the processes pertaining to the professional development of Marine officers.

The Total Quality Approach

In March 1992, prior to the Quantico forum, the Marine Corps launched a review of its Officer Candidates School (OCS) and officer recruiting operations as a result of "minority" attrition rates and an allegation of racial and ethnic discrimination made by an Asian-American officer candidate. The charter of the OCS Quality Management Board tasked its members with studying the process of accessing and screening officer candidates in the Marine Corps to determine "why with an apparent increase in the quality of officer candidates, (a) OCS attrition has increased and (b) in particular, among 'minority' and women candidates, where attrition exceeds the OCS average, what factors influence this variation."¹⁰ The composition of the board, chaired by Colonel David A. Vetter, consisted of colonels who held assignments in the various areas being examined. Initially, the board was comprised of only white males. Some months later, a

Table 4.1 Selected OCS Race/Ethnic Attrition Rates

	Fall (FY93)	Winter (FY93)	Fall/Winter Average (FY89-92)
Black	20	30	44
Hispanic	40	43	40
White	19	21	32
Other	25	50	47
Total	21	24	34

black officer, Colonel James Booker, an artilleryman and former battalion commander, was appointed to the board upon being assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps.

Historically, the Marine Corps was accustomed to high OCS attrition rates. An entry-level training program, known for its tough screening and demanding physical regimen coupled with mental challenges, OCS had a long-standing reputation for "weeding out" the faint of heart. Race was not a factor, or was it? Attrition data for the five-year period, 1989 to 1993, revealed that black officer candidate attrition ranged from one percent to 12 percent higher than the attrition rates for white officer candidates.¹¹

The information included in Table 4.1 is not intended to be a complete or conclusive representation of minority attrition rates; there have been instances where black officer candidate attrition was lower than the overall attrition rate. Exit surveys conducted at OCS revealed that candidates attributed their failure to either inadequate physical preparation or a lack of focus. Further, a variety of physical injuries were contributing factors.

Among the many issues examined by the OCS Quality Management Board was the relevance or statistical correlation of standardized test scores on success or failure at OCS. In this area the board discovered there was no correlation. It concluded that "in several years, the average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score and/or Grade Point Average (GPA) for OCS failures were actually higher than for successful candidates."¹²

The Vetter Board completed its deliberations in May 1993. Among the recommendations the board made to the Commandant were:

- That more highly qualified "minority" and female officers be assigned to the OCS permanent staff.
- That the Marine Corps Affirmative Action Plan be reviewed and updated with

consideration given to developing a more comprehensive and aggressive plan.

- That the mentoring concept, under the broader dimensions of a leader's basic responsibilities, be further developed and implemented; [however,] these programs should not be designed exclusively for "minorities."

- That the Marine Corps raise the minimum officer EL score requirement to 120, but only after an expanded enlisted commissioning program with a special emphasis on "minorities" is in place.

- That the Marine Corps demonstrate institutional awareness, recognition, and sensitivity to the fact that minorities face certain "special challenges" that need to be addressed.

- That the Marine Corps undertake a high priority coordinated effort with the overarching goal of improving the opportunities of "minorities" and women for success Process Action Teams to develop specific plans of action in the following areas: performance evaluation system; officer assignment/MOS patterns; commissioning programs (civilian and enlisted); education and awareness programs relating to cultural diversity/"special challenges"; and the Marine Corps Affirmative Action Plan.¹³

While the positive intent of the Quality Management Board was widely recognized, there were some questions and concerns regarding a number of the conclusions which generated the recommendations, for example, the implication or meaning of "minorities face special challenges." Second, did the recommendation to expand commissioning opportunities for "minority" enlisted Marines imply that the traditional sources for civilian officer candidates were no longer viable? Lastly, does the expansion of opportunities for

"minority" enlisted Marines restrict opportunities for whites? These are but a few examples of the questions and concerns generated by the board's recommendations. However, there were some valuable opportunities for improvement uncovered that had the potential of bettering the organizational climate for equal opportunity.

Brigadier General Leslie M. Palm chaired the follow-on Quality Management Board. Palm was a recognized leader on issues of equal opportunity and mentor of a number of African-American officers. This board learned a valuable lesson from its predecessor; racial and gender diversity among its membership was to be achieved at the outset. Chartered on 2 July 1993, the Palm Board was tasked with "analyzing the processes by which we [the Marine Corps] access, train, educate, assign, augment, promote, and professionally develop our officers with the overarching goal of improving the opportunities of minorities and women for success."¹⁴ Among the criteria for a successful career included attaining the rank of colonel.

The Palm Board's six areas of emphasis reflected those that were recommended by the Vetter Board and comprised the core of the process action teams. Later in its deliberations, the board combined the efforts of the commissioning program teams and added two areas of emphasis, the swimming requirements at The Basic School and mentoring. The ultimate objective of the board was to produce a campaign plan on minority issues by 1 October 1994.^{15*}

The plan, labeled Operation Order 1-95 (Campaign Plan to Increase Diversity Within the Officer Corps of the Marine Corps), was published on 17 March 1995. It represented the work of the various process action teams, Headquarters Marine Corps staff agencies, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command. The initial conclusions and recommendations of the Palm Board were "war-gamed" using active duty officers and college students who included current officer candidates and potential applicants. The active duty officers included lieutenants and captains assigned to the operational forces at nearby Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. This racially diverse group provided comments and data that would prove useful in

determining the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign plan. The final plan presented to the Commandant, General Carl E. Mundy, Jr., was crafted to accomplish his vision and intent:

A Marine Corps that will access quality officers from different ethnic and racial groups who will be motivated to remain because they are proud to be Marines, and because they have the opportunity to establish a viable career, commensurate with their potential.

We must attack this challenge. [The goal is] a Marine Corps which reflects the racial composition of America and that continues to treat all Marines fairly and affords them an equal opportunity for success.¹⁶

The campaign plan reflected a three-phased approach: Phase I (Accessions); Phase II (Commissioning and MOS selection); and Phase III (Retention and Career Development). Among the tasks assigned to the supporting staff agencies and the Recruiting Command were:¹⁷

- The implementation of an officer accession plan (exclusive of warrant officers) that yielded accessions totaling 12 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent other racial or ethnic categories by Fiscal Year 2000.
- A training and education plan to support the Commandant's vision.
- An analysis of the fitness report (performance evaluation system) to ensure it supported the Commandant's intent.

Although the plan represented nearly three years of concentrated effort, the real tasks were ahead: a committed, well coordinated, focused attack on the impediments to achieving an officer corps numerically representative of the nation and free of racial bias and "glass ceilings."

Enlightening the Leadership

In August 1993, the yearly General Officers' Symposium included a day-long seminar on the various racial issues that were being discussed Marine Corps-wide. Major General Jerome G. Cooper, at the request of the Commandant, introduced and moderated the discussion on a number of issues that were overdue for "some frank dis-

* The QMB chairman's interpretation of the specific tasking relating to the Affirmative Action Plan generated the idea to develop Operation Order 1-95 (Campaign Plan to Increase Officer Diversity).

cussion." Included among the issues were: racial representation in the rank structure; the findings and recommendations of the Quality Management Boards; the Krulak "Minority" Officer Symposium; the articles appearing in the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Navy Times*; and racial diversity.¹⁸ In addition to the seminar, the Commandant provided the general officers with a book each quarter on a subject relating to race in America. Included were books by widely read authors such as Roosevelt Thomas, Cornell West, and Benjamin Hacker. The seminar and readings prepared the general officer leadership of the Marine Corps for their roles in implementing the numerous initiatives that were developed, informing their subordinate commanders, and facilitating discussions within their commands.

Confronting a Crisis

Amid the efforts begun in the early 1990s intended to energize the black officer recruiting

Commanding Officer Col Alphonse G. Davis inspects candidates at the Officer Candidates School at Quantico, Virginia. This was a critical leadership post at what is known as the "Crossroads of the Corps" and provided tangible proof of challenges met.



effort, a crisis ensued that not only had the potential of derailing the efforts to attract new officers, but also the efforts to inculcate the organizational ethos of teamwork, acceptance, and mutual respect. On the heels of a series of events that reopened the healing wounds of race and equal opportunity (i.e., the series of *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Navy Times* articles, the Quantico Forum, and the Yamashita Class Action Suit), now national television was the medium for surfacing the race and equal opportunity issue. This time, however, the stakes were higher. Individual names, faces, and reputations became part of the equation.

In late October 1993, the CBS television magazine show *60 Minutes* featured a segment on bias and discrimination against black officers within the Marine Corps. The pre-recorded segment featured a number of black company-grade officers, a former black Marine officer turned Navy pilot, and one Hispanic female officer, all alleging that institutional bias and discrimination against black officers existed within the Marine Corps. The official response featured the Commandant, General Mundy, defending the allegations and responding to a series of frank, probing questions from the host of the segment. During the exchange, the televised portion of General Mundy's response to a question regarding the performance of black lieutenants at The Basic School, portrayed him generalizing about the blacks' lack of ability in the areas of swimming, marksmanship, and land navigation. Mundy refuted the allegation and attributed the unfavorable characterization to comments taken out of context. The network stood by its assertions. The airing of the segment reverberated throughout the active duty, Reserve, and retired communities, and rekindled the firestorm on race and the lack of equal opportunity for black officers within the Marine Corps.

The comments attributed to General Mundy were not consistent with the popularity and respect he enjoyed among black officers (and enlisted Marines) and not characteristic of his positions on equal opportunity and increasing the number of black officers in the Marine Corps. Indicative of his support for the latter issue was his advocacy of the Assistant for Minority Officer Procurement initiative during the 1980s. Despite the temporary setback caused by the *60 Minutes* episode, Mundy continued pursuing the initiatives that would improve the racial climate within the Corps and increase the racial diversity within the officer ranks. In response to the comments aired in the segment, he immediately issued a message to

all Marines reaffirming his position on equal opportunity and laid out his plan for improving diversity and opportunities in the officer corps.

Among the follow-on actions implemented by Mundy was the reestablishment of the Commandant's Special Advisor on Equal Opportunity Matters billet instituted in late 1960. The officer selected to fill the position was Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a battalion commander with the 2d Force Service Support Group and a former infantry officer turned logistician and head of the Marine Corps officer recruiting operations. Davis served in the billet from September 1993 to May 1995. In addition to the special advisor billet, Mundy also established a group composed of individuals from the civilian community to act as an advisory and feedback mechanism for policies and initiatives pertaining to increasing racial diversity in the officer ranks. Referred to as the Diversity Interest Group, it contained a mix of retirees, reservists, and civilians with backgrounds in academic, corporate, and government personnel and leadership matters. Among the group's membership were several pioneers in the efforts of the 1970s, such as retired Brigadier General George H. Walls, Jr., and retired Lieutenant Colonel Edward L. Green.

Another area of interest for Mundy was the organizational location and effectiveness of the Equal Opportunity Branch. In addition to his special advisory duties, Davis was tasked with heading an organizational development focused structure study, assisted by Mrs. DeAnna Sosnowski, a civil servant with extensive background in officer recruiting and a Women's Executive Leadership Program graduate. The results of the structure study contained a number of recommendations that increased the relevance of the Equal Opportunity Branch. Included among the recommendations were:

- Changing the organizational location of the branch from the Human Affairs Division to the Manpower Policy Department.
- Increasing the rank of the branch head to that of colonel, instead of lieutenant colonel.
- Increasing the size of the staff.
- Mandating a racially diverse staff with proven records of performance and competitiveness for future promotion.
- Establishing and expanding the responsibilities of the branch relative to the coordination and communication with other

Headquarters staff agencies (to include Recruiting, Advertising, and Public Affairs).

The recommendations not only served to increase the branch's input on manpower policy and recruiting matters, but also were particularly important in the efforts to increase the racial and gender mix within the officer corps. In addition, they enhanced the quality of the Marine Corps' participation in conferences and conventions identified as potential sources for black applicants while also establishing the presence of the Marine Corps in the various communities. Lastly, the recommendations presented an opportunity to integrate the specific goals and objectives of the Equal Opportunity Branch, the Public Affairs Branch, and the Officer Recruiting Branch. The result was a synergistic, comprehensive organizational strategy for conference and convention participation. With the approval of the Commandant, the recommendations were implemented and Davis was tabbed to assume the position of branch head in addition to his special advisory duties.

Secretary of the Navy Interest

Shortly after the *60 Minutes* flap, Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton communicated his interest in improving opportunities for "minorities" within the Department of the Navy. In a 12 November 1993 memorandum to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Chief of Naval Operations, Dalton stated that he wanted to "realize the Department's goal of equal and maximum participation of minorities."^{19*} Secretary Dalton tasked the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs with heading the effort. In a follow-on letter to the Assistant Commandant and the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Frederick Y. Pang established an Executive Policy Group to assess minority career progression and representation within the rank structure and all career fields.

The Assistant Secretary's focus included six familiar areas: accessions; officer commissioning programs; assignments and promotions; the perfor-

*The subject of the memorandum was enhancement opportunity for minorities. The Secretary cites the significant progress made and the need to accomplish more. He also tasks the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Frederick Y. Pang, to review the Marine Corps and Navy programs to ensure maximum contribution of all.

mance evaluation system; retention; and affirmative action plans.^{20*} These six areas of emphasis were similar to those of the Palm Quality Management Board. Despite this, the Marine Corps was a major participant in the Department of the Navy's review that began in January 1994. Among the major directives issued as a result of the Executive Planning Group's findings were the need for a formal mentoring program and recruiting and accession goals that would produce an officer force that was racially reflective of the nation in the year 2000. The directives required the Marine Corps and the Navy to implement officer recruiting and accession plans that would yield 10 to 12 percent black, 10 to 12 percent Hispanic, and 3 to 5 percent other racial and ethnic categories by the beginning of the millennium. This requirement became known as the "12/12/5 Plan." The plan did not include warrant officer accessions.

Employing New Approaches

The decision to improve racial diversity in the officer corps by implementing several specific racial and ethnic category recruiting and accession goals instead of a single collective "minority" category, mandated the requirement for an innovative supporting strategy. The staff agency responsible for officer recruiting and accessions (MRO) was expanded to include a section whose primary area of focus was "minority" officer recruiting. The newly added section (MROM) developed strategies, tracked and analyzed "minority" application trends, and provided advice and support to the Recruiting Districts and officer selection officer teams. In addition, a training module was developed to provide market and prospecting expertise. The first officer to head the section was Major Keith Sewell, a former officer selection officer. Sewell, a white officer, was selected for the job because of his previous success in this area. His selection also proved to be of value in convincing a group comprised mostly of white males that race

was not a limiting factor in the recruiting of African-American officer candidates. In short, it was the age-old "I did it and so can you" theory at work.

Efforts in advertising and marketing would require tailoring to locate and appeal to the target market. This requirement was achieved by developing productive relationships with organizations and publications targeted towards the African-American college undergraduate and graduate markets. Headquarters staff agency coordination between Officer Recruiting, Recruit Marketing, Public Affairs, and Equal Opportunity was the key to maximizing effectiveness.

Publications such as *Ebony*, *Black Enterprise*, and *The Black Collegian* proved to be effective print mediums for advertisements featuring African-American officers while extolling the benefits of becoming a Marine officer. *The Black Collegian* relationship was especially effective in distinguishing the difference between service as an officer and that of an enlisted Marine. This point was of particular importance in the African-American community because of the low percentage (in comparison to whites) of parents and other relatives who may have served as officers in the Marine Corps or the other Services. The *Collegian* regularly featured articles about African-American officers, many of whom were graduates of historically black colleges and universities. Also, the publication developed special edition calendars and brochures to assist officer selection officers in their recruiting efforts.

Another opportunity, which extended the appeal of the Marine Corps, was developed through its advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, with a well-known broadcasting conglomerate having nationwide African-American appeal. In 1991, the Marine Corps teamed with several well known companies to co-sponsor the American Urban Radio Networks' *Black College Football All-American Weekend*. This yearly activity linked the Marine Corps with excellence in sports and citizenship. The Corps' participation was expanded to a "Leaders to Leaders" radio spot, featuring African-American officers and the awarding of an annual Marine Corps leadership prize to an athlete who best exemplified leadership in the classroom, on campus, and in the community. This relationship provided an opportunity to impact black colleges and universities and black college football nationwide.

In addition to the contacts developed with the print and broadcast media, relationships were also

*The letter to Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, Assistant Commandant, was a follow-up to Secretary Dalton's memorandum to the Commandant and Chief of Naval Operations. It included a timeline projecting the review to last for four months, beginning the week of 3 January 1994 and ending the week of 2 May 1994. Assistant Secretary Pang headed the review until his appointment to another position within the Department of Defense. His replacement, Richard Danzig, took a personal interest in the outcome of the review and had a particular interest in the mentoring aspect.



LtCol Henry T. Gobar receives command supervision from Gen Robert H. Barrow during a command visit. Increased visibility in command positions was an essential draw to attracting prospective officers for inspiring juniors.

developed and/or expanded with military and professional organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These mutually beneficial relationships which culminated in annual national conference and convention participation, provided the Marine Corps an opportunity to expand its

appeal, to publicize its needs for African-American officers, and to develop sources for prospective candidates.

Assessing the Results

The revamped recruiting strategy implemented by the Marine Corps was a move in the right direction; however, the success of any good plan is always dependent upon its execution. A look at the results in four essential areas provides the basis for an analysis of the plan coupled with its implementation. Those important areas are accessions, composition, retention, occupational field distribution, and command assignments.

The Marine Corps' Affirmative Action Plan for 1988 and 1989, published 17 November 1988, established racial and ethnic accession goals that placed black officer accessions at six percent per year from 1990 through 1992. Hispanic officer accessions were set at three percent while total accessions for all other racial and ethnic categories ranged from 3.2 to 3.4 percent for the same three-year period. As noted earlier, the Commandant's Equal Opportunity Task Force, established by General Alfred Gray, increased black accession goals to seven percent in 1991 and then, increasing by two-tenths of a percent a year, reaching a goal of 7.8 percent in 1995. This requirement was published on 6 September 1990 in the Marine Corps' Affirmative Action Plan (FY 91-95). Accession goals were also increased for all other racial and ethnic categories. The long-term implication of this move required that the recruiting service place more

Table 4.2 Black Officer Accessions (1990-1995)

Fiscal Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Total Accession Goal	1,404	1,305	1,350	1,026	1,204	1,479
Black Goal	84	91	97	76	92	115
Percent of Accession Goal	6.0	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.8
Total Accessions	1,404	1,305	1,350	1,026	1,204	1,479
Total Black Accessions	66	60	77	73	95	110
Percent of Total Accessions	4.7	4.6	5.7	7.1	7.8	7.4

Table 4.3 Black Officer Accession Sources (1991-1995)*

Fiscal Year Programs	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
OCC	35	42	23	13	42
PLC	30	21	38	48	25
NROTC	22	10	16	12	10
USNA	03	14	14	17	09
ENL	10	13	09	10	14

*The figures reflect percentages, are rounded to the next whole number, and include women.
 "ENL" denotes the enlisted commissioning programs.

emphasis on accessions from its undergraduate programs. In the short term however, more accessions would be required from enlisted ranks and civilian source graduate programs (the Officer Candidates Course and the Enlisted Commissioning Program).

The first five years of the 1990s brought about a decrease in the Marine Corps' requirement for new lieutenants. Yearly requirements from 1990 to 1994 decreased by approximately 8.5 percent, from 1,404 to 1,204. The impact on the accessioning of African-American lieutenants was revealed in yearly total accessions that never exceeded 100. Black officer accessions ranged from a low of 60 in fiscal year 1991 to a high of 94 in fiscal year 1994. In 1995, however, new lieutenant requirements nearly reached a level of 1,500 officers. The result of this increase yielded 110 African-American lieutenants.²¹

In four of the six years from 1990 to 1995, the majority of black officer accessions were from the Officer Candidates Course (OCC), the commissioning program available to enlisted Marines with college degrees and civilian college graduates who were not enrolled in the various undergraduate commissioning programs. This was an indication that the Marine Corps was not tapping the full potential of its undergraduate Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) program, the Naval Academy (USNA), or the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC).²²

Historically, of all the commissioning programs requiring attendance at OCS (OCC, PLC, and NROTC), the OCC program presented the lowest probability for successful completion (i.e., higher attrition rates). The various factors that contributed to that probability were age, motivation for joining, and a lack of opportunity for the struc-

Table 4.4 African-American Officer Population (As of 30 September 1995) ²³

Rank	Total	African-American	Percentage of Total	Black Females
O-10	3	0	0.0	-
O-9	9	0	0.0	-
O-8	22	0	0.0	-
O-7	34	2	5.9	0
O-6	626	18	2.9	0
O-5	1,637	73	4.5	5
O-4	3,161	112	3.5	6
O-3	5,457	249	4.6	11
O-2	2,859	182	6.4	08
O-1	2,044	165	8.1	13
Total	15,852	801	5.1	43

tured mental and physical preparation regimen characteristic of the undergraduate programs.

Between 1990 and 1995, the Marine Corps experienced a 12 percent reduction in its officer force, from 18,105 to 15,852. During that same period, the percentage of African-American officer representation increased from 4.6 percent in 1990 to 5.1 percent in 1995, despite a decline in the total number of African-American officers (834 to 801). Although the representation of African-American officers did not reflect the percentage within the general population, there were some obvious signs of progress amid the statistics.

First, there were two general officers in the active component; this was a significant "first" in the history of the Corps. Second, from 1990 to 1995, the number of colonels doubled to a total of 18. And, five African-American women were among the lieutenant colonel population. Somewhat less encouraging was that the number of African-American women officers remained relatively stable during this five-year period (46 in 1990 to 43 in 1995).

A key component of the Marine Corps' efforts to racially diversify its officer force was in its retention and augmentation efforts. The needs of the service with regard to occupational specialty requirements, coupled with an officer's overall documented performance, are the primary determinants of who is selected for augmentation. For example, in several years, pilots and lawyers apply-



LtCol Debra A. Woodard, director of the Financial Management School, works with a staff member. She was one of the first women Marines to command a major activity.

ing for augmentation and retention enjoyed a selection rate of nearly 100 percent. In the broader context, several of the initiatives explored by the Commandant's Equal Opportunity Task Force and the Palm Board had a direct singular or combined impact on improving the augmentation and retention of black officers. Items such as mentoring,

Table 4.5 Black Officer Augmentation Rates Versus Total Population Rates*

	Applied	Selected	Selection Percentage
1990	43/714	11/248	26/35
1991	43/635	25/352	58/55
1992	67/1066	13/307	19/29
1993	68/1151	22/349	32/30
1994	70/1268	45/648	67/51
1995	53/1114	34/736	63/65

* Total population includes officers of all ranks who applied for augmentation, including females.

occupational field selections, the performance evaluation system, promotions, and professional military education were all relevant. During the 1990-1995 period, augmentation rates for black officers exceeded those of the total population considered during three of the six years.²⁴

Racial diversity in military occupational fields was an organizational concern since the beginning of the Marine Corps' efforts to attract more African-American officers. The need for role models throughout the Corps coupled with increased opportunity for command were the prime determinants. However, for various reasons, the vast majority of African-American lieutenants did not consider the various combat arms fields when making their choices at The Basic School. The reasons were varied and understandable. Socially, the Vietnam experience did little to convince the neighborhood "elders" or parents that the life of an infantryman improved the social status and treat-

ment of black Vietnam veterans. Professionally, there was a general belief that the infantry and other combat arms fields offered no marketable skills. Culturally, many of the black officers recruited in the early 1970s were first generation college graduates. Their parents and grandparents desired a better quality of life for their offspring, one that was better than their own. A college education that was later put to good use was considered the optimum way of achieving that goal.

To a degree the Marine Corps bears some of the blame for the scarcity of African-Americans in the various combat arms fields. The pressures of finding and convincing the prospective young African-American officer that the Marine Corps is his calling is certainly increased when the recruiting pitch dwells on the virtues and adventures of life as an infantry, artillery, or tank officer. Instead, the residual benefit of "Marine officer" on a resume sounds more impressive.

Table 4.6 Officer Combat Arms Representation^{25*}

	White/Percent	Black/Percent	Hispanic/Percent	Other/Percent
1992				
Total in OF	9,358/61.84	291/38.65	258/55.72	231/61.76
Total Officers	15,132	753	463	374
Total Aviators	4,867	99	117	123
1993				
Total in OF	9,276/58.10	309/33.59	273/51.03	235/57.60
Total Officers	15,965	920	535	408
Total Aviators	4,785	108	124	123
1994				
Total in OF	8,964/56.3	332/33.57	285/48.22	233/54.44
Total Officers	15,871	989	591	428
Total Aviators	4,700	120	137	120
1995				
Total in OF	8,569/56.75	282/29.3	247/40.65	194/46.52
Total Officers	15,098	968	609	417
Total Aviators	4,134	77	85	92

*Total in occupational fields (OF) pertains to all combat arms specialties (i.e., infantry, artillery, armor, aviation, etc.).



Col Gilda A. Jackson's promotion marked a milestone for Marines and African-Americans. She was one of the pioneers to command Marine units when restrictions involving women assignments were removed.

The Palm Board addressed the occupational field diversity dilemma from several directions. African-American officers with varied occupational specialties assisted officer selection officers as role models and proof sources. The Basic School staff was targeted as a priority organization for the assignment of African-American officers. In 1994, a mentoring program was established that focused exclusively on African-American lieutenants. Staff officers were paired with the lieutenants for the purpose of informing them of the opportunities available in combat arms fields, to include aviation. These combined efforts effected the beginning of a significant change in the racial make-up of the various occupational fields.

In addition to the increase of African-American officers in the field grade and general officer ranks, command assignments loomed as one of the most visible signs of change. Unlike the 1970s and 1980s, when African-American officers occupied a limited number of command assignments, the 1990s witnessed an increase in the number of colonels and lieutenant colonels in command billets in many areas and occupational fields.

In July 1992, the Marine Corps implemented a

system of selecting lieutenant colonels and colonels by formal selection board. The command selection and screening process incorporated two interdependent activities, screening for probable command assignment based upon the needs of the Marine Corps and command slating. The slating process involved the actual assignment to specific commands. The major factor for consideration was an officer's documented record of performance. Prior to then, commanders at the battalion or squadron and regimental or group levels were normally selected by the commanding general. The results of the command screening and slating boards for the period July 1992 through September 1995 reflected 25 African-American officers in the ranks of colonel and lieutenant colonel slated for command.²⁶ The commands included armor, artillery, aviation, combat support, combat service support, enlisted and officer entry-level training and schooling, headquarters and service units, logistics and supply centers, and security forces. Included among those selected for command were three African-American women, Lieutenant Colonels Doris A. Daniels, Gilda A. Jackson, and Debra A. Woodard.

A number of other black lieutenant colonels and colonels commanded units throughout the Marine Corps. In the infantry, Lieutenant Colonels John T. Boggs, Jr., Ronald L. Bailey, Walter E. Gaskin, Sr., and Reynolds B. Peele commanded battalions. Artillery battalion commanders included Lieutenant Colonels Kenneth D. Dunn and Henry T. Gobar. Among the numerous combat service support commanders were Lieutenant Colonels Ronald S. Coleman, Alphonse G. Davis, Marshall Hampton, and Colonel James E. Smith. Support group and wing commanders included Lieutenant Colonels Ervin Rivers, Samuel E. Roberts, and Willie J. Williams. In the supporting establishment, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony L. Jackson commanded a security force, while Lieutenant Colonels Thomas E. Minor and Ernest E. Hickson commanded Inspector-Instructor units. The educational backgrounds of all these officers included the Naval Academy and a number of historically black colleges and universities.

Significant Accomplishments

The 1990s was a period of many notable firsts for African-American Marines on the battlefield and in garrison. During Operation Desert Storm, a young captain received the Navy Cross for combat



Marine Corps Security Force King's Bay served as the site for an address by the Honorable John Dalton, Secretary of the Navy. Commanding Officer LtCol Anthony Jackson stands to the right.

bravery. While serving as a company commander in the light armored infantry battalion on 25 February 1991, Captain Eddie S. Ray used his leadership and knowledge of coordinating arms to lead his unit in decisively defeating several Iraqi counterattacks. The heroics of Captain Ray and his Marines led to the capture of more than 250 Iraqi soldiers during the 10-hour battle.²⁷

In addition to Captain Ray and the other young company grade officers answering the call of duty during Operation Desert Storm, Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Fields, an infantry officer and graduate of South Carolina State University, gained prominence while commanding the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. In the 1st Tank Battalion, another black officer made history on the smoke-filled battlefields of the Persian Gulf. Lieutenant Colonel Alphonso B. Diggs, Jr., attained the dual distinction of becoming the first black officer to command a tank battalion while leading that unit in combat. Prior to these significant accomplishments during the Persian Gulf War, Colonel Clifford L. Stanley, an infantryman and another South Carolina State graduate, became the first African-American to command at the regimental level, assuming command of the 1st Marine Regiment on 29 February 1992.

In June 1991, the Marine Corps advanced Colonel George H. Walls, Jr., to the rank of brigadier

general. With the promotion, Walls became the third African-American to attain flag rank in the 216-year history of the Corps. Prior to his voluntary retirement to pursue his interest in the field of education, Brigadier General Walls commanded the 2d Force Service Support Group from July 1991 until his retirement in July 1993. During his tenure as commanding general of the group, he was ap-

BGen George H. Walls, Jr., addresses personnel of the 2d Force Service Support Group at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Walls headed Joint Task Force Operation Gitmo that supported Haitian refugees.





Commanding General BGen Clifford L. Stanley of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, receives the colors from the command sergeant major.

pointed Commanding General, Joint Task Force Operation Gitmo, the humanitarian relief effort for Haitian migrants at Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba.

In August of 1994, Colonel Clifford Stanley added to an illustrious career when he became the fourth African-American to don the stars of a Marine Corps general. During his years as a brigadier general, he served successively as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (Manpower Plans & Policy) and as the Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps. Both assignments added to the growing list of significant "firsts" achieved by Stanley.

In the aviation field, a Marine astronaut continued to make history while assigned to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Colonel Charles F. Bolden, a Naval Academy graduate and native South Carolinian, flew four space missions, three of which he commanded. Among his contributions while at NASA were the Hubble Telescope experiment; Space Shuttle *Atlantis*,

which included the Atlas-1 experiments; and the joint U.S.-Russian Space Shuttle *Discovery* mission. Upon his return to the ranks of the Corps, his first assignment was to his alma mater as Deputy Commandant of Midshipmen. In September 1995, Bolden teamed with Stanley for another significant milestone, when he was advanced to the rank of brigadier general. Together, they became the first African-American general officers to simultaneously serve on active duty. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned as the assistant wing commander of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing.

There were other areas of significant accomplishment in the Marine Corps occurring outside of the operational Fleet Marine Forces. In June 1995, for the first time, an African-American was assigned to Officer Candidates School as its commanding officer. Colonel Alphonse G. Davis, a graduate of Southern University and a veteran of three previous officer recruiting assignments, served successfully in that billet until July 1997.

In addition to Davis' assignment, a number of other "high visibility" assignments were occurring around the Marine Corps. For example, at Headquarters, Marine Corps, successive Commandants had African-American officers as aide-de-camps. Major Christopher M. Bourne, an infantry officer and early selection to the rank of major, served during the tenure of General Mundy. Captain Patrick R. Wilkes, a former enlisted Marine, was selected as an aide-de-camp to Mundy's suc-

cessor, General Krulak. In addition, African-American officers served in the various staff sections at Headquarters, Marine Corps to include recruiting, manpower (planning, policy, and officer assignments), fiscal, administration, and logistics. Collectively, these assignments reflected a significant change in assignment policies and practice and contributed to the Marine Corps' efforts to demonstrate its long-term commitment to equal opportunity for all Marines.

CHAPTER 5

Prospects

As the Marine Corps enters the new millennium, its prospects of increasing the presence of African-American officers are replete with challenges and opportunities. The conditions fomenting a broad array of challenges include:

- In the post-Desert Storm era, a 50-percent decline in the propensity of African-American males to join the military.¹
- A general perception that military advertising is focused on the economically disadvantaged, featuring the military as a rational solution to the lack of funds for college.²
- A perception among some that the civilian work force offers better opportunities.³
- A categorization of the military by some as a "fallback" position if other options do not materialize.⁴
- A combination of national economic trends requiring an elevation of educational standards.⁵
- A rise in the average age of the population, accompanied by a reduction in the pool of young workers.⁶
- And predictions that question the competence and skills of new entrants into the workforce.⁷

A number of forecasts for the future present opportunities for increasing the racial diversity of the Marine Corps, the other military Services, and the private sector. These opportunities for enhancing racial diversity include:

- Blacks, Hispanics, and other racial and ethnic groups will be a larger share of the new entrants into the labor force.⁸
- Black women will comprise the largest share of the increase in the non-white labor force.⁹

- An increase in the percentage of black college males possessing bachelor's degrees as compared to the 1980s.¹⁰

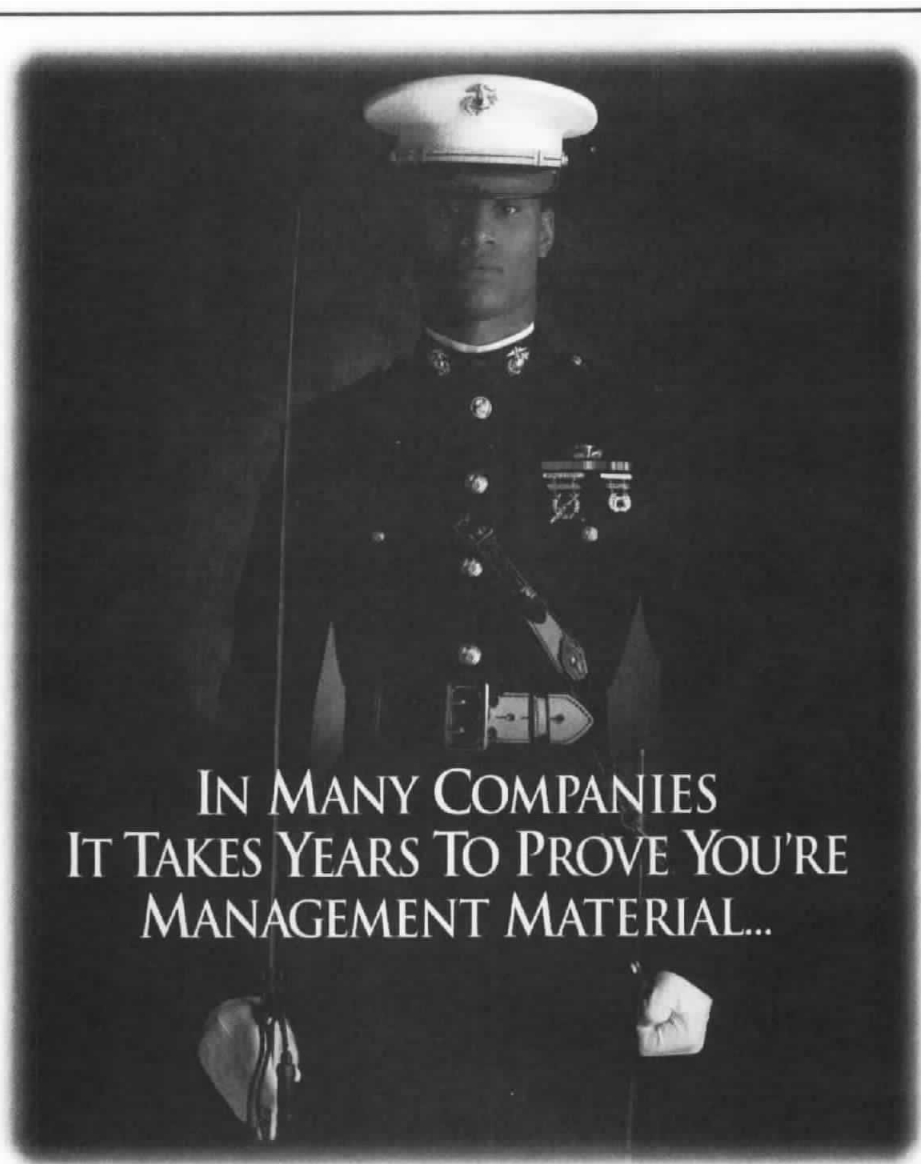
It is obvious that the foregoing challenges and opportunities will in some fashion affect the various labor markets and subsequently the economy. Similarly, these factors will affect the recruiting efforts of the military. The character and results of those singular and combined factors depend upon the action taken to minimize the potentially negative outcome of the challenges and to maximize the potential benefits of the opportunities.

Enhancing the Prospects

The solution for minimizing the potentially negative effects of the challenges and maximizing the promise of the opportunities lies in a number of areas addressed by the Marine Corps during the last three decades. Those areas are recruiting and accessions, advertising and marketing, mentoring, and equal opportunity education.

Based on past results, trends, and tendencies, the logical direction for the Marine Corps' officer recruiting efforts includes increasing output from its undergraduate accession sources. The Platoon Leaders Class Program represents a service-unique opportunity to counter the internships and summer job opportunities offered by corporate America.

Further, Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarships offer a definite motivation for the top all-around African-American high school students. Even more, the Naval Academy represents a pool of some of the finest African-American talent this nation has to offer. The Marine Corps' targeted efforts to gain the interest of those midshipmen prior to their First Class (senior) year will enhance the potential of maximizing the number of African-Americans under the current system.



IN MANY COMPANIES
IT TAKES YEARS TO PROVE YOU'RE
MANAGEMENT MATERIAL...

WE'LL GIVE YOU 10 WEEKS.

Ten weeks may not seem like much time to prove you're capable of being a leader. But if you're tough, smart and determined, ten weeks and a lot of hard work could make you an Officer of Marines. And Officer Candidates School (OCS) is where you'll get the chance to prove you've got what it takes to lead a life full of excitement, full of challenge, full of honor. Anyone can say they've got what it takes to be a leader, we'll give you ten weeks to prove it. For more information call 1-800-MARINES, or contact us on the Internet at: <http://www.Marines.com>

Marines
The Few. The Proud.

MARINE OFFICER

The Journal, Kappa Alpha Psi, February 1998

By decade's end the efforts of many paid off in the acceptance of the Marines as source of opportunity as well as service. The image became reality for those willing to accept the challenge.

The Corps' strategy to attract and recruit African-American women must include a method of discerning why the Marine Corps is not routinely considered as a viable career option. As of 31 January 1998, 69 African-American women officers were on active duty; only one of those women is among the 22 African-American colonels in the active component.

In addition, the immediate requirement for numbers to satisfy near-term goals and that lessen OCS attrition should not be entirely focused on enlisted accession sources. This over-reliance tends to lessen the presence on campus afforded to the undergraduate programs and essentially cedes the college market to corporations and the other military services. Smart prospecting coupled with effective supporting strategies and proper and comprehensive preparation for OCS, maximizes the opportunity for successful completion and an increase in accessions.

The advertising efforts focused on African-Americans should reflect a strategy that includes the unique culture. Also, the perceptions about the Marine Corps that embody thoughts of a lack of opportunity need to be addressed. The use of African-American role models featured in national

and local advertisements and commercials will contribute to self-actualization and increase awareness, potentially enhancing the reputation of the Marine Corps and correct a number of misperceptions. Opportunities abound in televised collegiate and professional sporting events and other venues featuring black excellence.

The marketing efforts of the Marine Corps should incorporate the relationships which already exist with the various social and professional organizations to include fraternities, sororities, the NAACP, NNOA, and others. This comprehensive approach could position the Marine Corps as the Armed Service of choice for those young African-Americans considering a career option as a military officer.

The benefits of a comprehensive mentoring effort can be realized as early as an individual is identified as a prospective officer program applicant. Pairing the potential officer candidate with an active duty or Reserve officer who shares one or more common bonds such as race, gender, hometown, fraternity, sorority, and other interests can aid in influencing a variety of areas related to increasing the presence of African-American officers. Successful completion of OCS, acceptance of

The naming of Branch Hall at the Officer Candidates School in 1997 marked the full circle in a journey that began in 1945. Honored by the Marine Corps for his pioneering effort, Frederick C. Branch credited his 35 years in education as his real legacy.



commissions, the proper mental attitude and focus for TBS, MOS selection, and augmentation and retention are among those areas. The gender matching strategy could be particularly helpful in increasing the number of African-American women officers.

The final area, and perhaps most important to sustaining the Marine Corps' efforts to increase the long-term presence of African-American officers, is a progressive racial diversity education effort that will foster a paradigm shift. African-American Marines no longer face the blatant acts of racial injustice suffered by Frederick Branch, Edgar R. Huff, and other Montfort Point Marines. The racial problems of the late 1960s are remnants of the past. However, the Corps still has a need to inculcate a pervasive organizational attitude and atmosphere that does not equate efforts to ensure equality of opportunity and enhance the racial diversity of its leadership with the lowering of standards and the erosion of quality. The thoughts and words of those who view African-Americans and others as individuals or groups facing "special challenges" and the objects of "paradoxical" actions should not be adopted as the organization's official position in its timely and proper efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers in America's Marine Corps.

Conclusion

Today's Marine Corps can step forward and boast a myriad of achievements in its efforts to increase the presence of African-American officers. There is still work to be done, but role models do abound. If "a picture is worth a thousand words,"

then the photograph featured on the cover of this pamphlet is truly an indication of progress.

Today, there are four African-American general officers in the Marine Corps, three in the active component and one in the Reserves. Those officers, and a host of others from the same cultural background, are only a sampling of the talent and potential that exists. There are others like them who possess the potential to equal or exceed their achievements. The fiscal year 1999 colonel command slate included two graduates of historically black colleges and universities as a future commander of an artillery regiment and a Marine Expeditionary Unit. In January 1998, the first African-American woman in the history of the Marine Corps donned the rank of colonel. In July 1997, the Marine Corps honored its first African-American officer by dedicating a building in his honor at the Officer Candidates School. The first African-American commander of OCS assisted him in cutting the ceremonial ribbon as a proud and and tearful Marine bride of the honoree said: "I'm so grateful that the Marine Corps gave him his flowers while he still lives."

Things are changing. Those young African-American Marine officers, the lieutenants, the captains, and the majors have an abundance of role models to aspire to be like as they are poised to follow in their footsteps and make their contribution to and mark on the Corps. They only ask for and require an opportunity equal to that of their peers, who may or may not be of the same culture, economic, social status, or educational background. Despite those differences however, they all share a common bond: Marine! Not, however, all green. They are red, yellow, black, white, and brown; different, but nonetheless, they are still Marines.

Notes

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