

Report of Trip to Fort Dix

October 30, 1949.

A committee from the New Jersey Chapter of The National *Council* Association of Negro Women visited Fort Dix of this date. The following is the summary of our observations.

White WAC unit consists of one officer and twenty one enlisted personnel. They are housed in a wire enclosed cantonment area consisting of two barracks each with a minimum capacity of fifty persons, a day room and a mess hall. The barracks are the open floor type with two separate rooms on each floor. One barrack is closed because of lack of personnel and the other has space for approximately thirty more WACs. Because of the small size of the detachment, it is messed by the 9th Division MP unit. The area is sown with grass, very neat in appearance, located within the center of the post, well lighted surroundings, and patrolled by an MP security guard.

The Colored WAC unit consists of two officers and seventy-one enlisted personnel. It is quartered in the Range Road cantonment area approximately two and a half miles from the Post Headquarters, the place of assignment for the enlisted personnel. They are transported daily by buses. They are housed in quarters formerly occupied by officers of the 365th Infantry who were shifted to the North end of the Range Road when the WACs came. Across the narrow street from the WAC unit is the First Battalion, 365th Infantry. There are three bachelor officer barracks type buildings, a mess hall, and a former officers club comprising the Colored WAC area. The enlisted personnel have individual rooms. Eight enlisted men from Detachment 2 (Colored,) 1262 ASCU, have been assigned to the unit to operate the unit mess.

We talked ^{with} the commanding Officer who is a member of the National Council of Negro Women. We observed that the enlisted personnel was pleased to have the enlisted men operating the unit mess. The

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enlisted personnel were mainly 18 to 20 and the problems of being so close to the combat unit, and their own adolescent problems were many. The captain did state that she was trying to have a bed check at night because the girls had been sleeping on the job and complaints were made by the officers. It seems that it is not the policy now in WAC detachments to have bed checks, this leaves the officers open to lack of cooperation and low morale in the enlisted personnel,

The 365th Infantry formerly guarded the area, but at the request of the officer, MP's were assigned as security guards. The rear of the installations is not lighted and it is too close to male units. The fact that all Negro personnel were assigned to one area lent itself to producing inefficiency and created great disciplinary problems.

We feel that the very fact of the segregated area which is known as "BBot town", "Nigger Area" presents problems of low morale, and that there was no incentive to do other than the minimum requirements.

We know that any officer is helpless in combatting the larger problem of degregation in the army. From a conversation with three officers, we were informed that there were no longer any white officers living in the officers barracks of the 365th Inf. The area is to house Negro troops exclusively. The troops from Camp Kilmer are to be transferred to this area. They are not free to talk for fear of being declared surplus, even though the duty assignments were with very small groups of men with duty assignments on Saturday mornings and often Sunday but that units of the 9th Inf. Division had the week-ends free.

The Range Road Area is very depressing. It is impossible to reach it by foot since it is four miles from the entrance. The nearest

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troop area is one and a half miles away. All types of recreational facilities are provided with the apparent design of rendering it unnecessary for Negro personnel to require going on the main post.

There is a branch of the officers club, an enlisted men's club, a service club, theatre, bowling alley, tennis courts, recreational halls, and a chapel. No white troops are quartered in the area. There were a number of vacant buildings observed. This was true, also of the main portion of the post.

The dilemma is pointed to the pattern of the segregated army. If Fort Dix were in Mississippi, the excuse would be "the traditions of the people". We have struggled long and hard for our Civil Rights Bill in the state of New Jersey, and it is against the laws of the state for discrimination.

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Women