2 GREAT GENERALS; 1 WINS BATTLE:

Ft. Bragg story is saga of Americanism vs. Racism

By JAMES L. HICKS

FORT BRAGG, N.C. (NNPA) —This is the Fort Bragg story. It's an All-American story.

It's the story of how a great American military base was floundering in the throes of racial segregation and the discrimination that always goes along with it — and how two great American generals decided to do — and did something about it.

There are two parts to the Fort Bragg story. There is the old part and the new.

Old Part Reviewed

The old part was told by this correspondent after a visit there in 1951. It was an old story of trying to make first-class fighting men out of Americans who were being trained under second-class conditions because of their race.

It was the story of Spring Lake —a jim-crow housing area on a federal reservation.

It was the story of an asterisk in a War Department order written up on an All-American division and the asterisk denied. "The third battalion of this division will be composed of Negro personnel."

It was the story of federal funds being used to build new houses on a federal reservation — and of a colonel named Mallonee who said colored people couldn't live in them.

The old Fort Bragg story was a disgraceful on American story.

New Replaces The Old

But this is the new Fort Bragg story. The All-American story. It began sometime after the cold light of publicity had been thrown on conditions at Bragg.

It reached its climax early in March of this year when troops stationed at Bragg were prepared for "Operation Snowfall."

Fort Bragg at that time, even as it is now, was the home of the famous "All American" 82nd Airborne Division.

Truly All-American

This is the fighting paratroopers division in which one out of every five men is a colored man, one out of every 50 is a Mexican, one out of every 250 is a foreign-born soldier and one out of every 500 is an Indian.

The division also has its share of Chinese and Japanese-American soldiers. It is truly an All-American division.

But the War Department orders, which established this division, carried with it an asterisk which directed that one battalion of this division would be made up of colored personnel.

In the old Fort Bragg story, a general who did not have the courage of his convictions had shown his order to the writer and said, "I'd like to change all this, but you can see where the orders came from — Washington. I can't touch it."

There Was Another General

But there was another general. His name was Major Gen. Gerald J. Higgins and he was. He wanted to do something about that "colored" battalion, too.

The only difference between the two generals is that General Higgins DID do something about it.

He wrote to Washington in no uncertain terms, he said, "I want authority to mix up the colored and white men of my division."

The order came back down. "Go right ahead."

General Higgins moved with the dispatch of a military man. The division was already in the midst of getting ready for "Operation Snowfall." Things were busy around Fort Bragg. Sudden changes could mean interruptions of other plans.

But General Higgins didn't hesitate.

Chaplain Remembers

Chaplain (Captain) L. A. Thigpen, a friend of AFRO publisher Carl Murphy, remembers the change well.

He was chaplain of a jim-crow church over in Spring Lake. He didn't like it. He was glad to see the order come down that it was integrate.

When the order came, Maj. Lawrence Corriley, a white officer of the Third Battalion of the 505th Airborne Regiment, sent out an order directing that a list be made of all the military occupational specialists in the unit.

He then assigned the colored men into the white units and vice versa according to what and others got some. Some commanders hated to lose some of the men, but we couldn't help that."

The men were broken down into cadres of about 20 each and scattered throughout the division.

As each man was reassigned by the MOS qualifications, he literally picked up his bed out of the jim-crow Spring Lake housing area and moved over into the area where the rest of his division was — where he should have been living all the time.

Soon Spring Lake was empty —a mute cluster of empty barracks standing there as a monument to integration.

Other Changes Come

Other changes came about. Capt. Herbert J. Taylor of Columbus, Ohio, who had been forced to serve in the jim-crow situation suddenly found himself the commanding officer of an All-American company in which there were more white men than colored.

Chaplain Thigpen, who up to that point had been forced to teach men about the brotherhood of God and the fellowship of man in a jim-crow chapel, suddenly found himself teaching and trying white men as well as colored.

The men who had been held down on promotions because there were no men to fill in the all-colored unit went into the integrated units and found that if one soldiered hard enough there were opportunities for all.

In this connection, a corporal, who had been a corporal for a long time in the all-colored unit, became a sergeant after three weeks in the white unit.

Only Question "Will He Jump?"

New colored recruits came in to the division. General Higgins, backing up his integration to the hilt, told his command, "Put him where his qualifications meet the job."

In typical, tough paratrooper language, General Higgins asked only one question about any new man: "Will he jump?" The 82nd is a jumping outfit.

Colored officers found places in the division based on their skills.

They found homes in Mallonee Village, the new Wherry housing development built with federal funds and named for a colonel who once told this writer that you just couldn't have colored people living next door to whites in North Carolina.

It "Couldn't Be Done"

It came time for the kids at Fort Bragg to go to school. At Fort Bragg there were colored and white school children. Someone said you couldn't send colored and whites to school together in North Carolina.

But the commanding general built a school on the base and all the colored and white children suddenly became just "pupils" going to school together. They hired both colored and white teachers to teach in and teach.

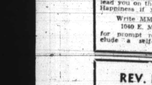
The Fort Bragg story today is there for all to see. They live together, eat together, swim together, play together, work together, jump together — they are together.

It's the All-American way.

—Calloway

(Continued From Page 1)

OFF LIMITS—Segregated religion is a thing of the past at Fort Bragg, N.C., says Chaplain (Capt.) Lee A. Thigpen, Protestant chaplain for the 505th Airborne Infantry, as he inserts the final thumbtack in the sign on the door of the 3rd Battalion's former chapel. The battalion has moved from the area and is integrated in the entire 82nd Airborne Division. 1st. Lt. Charley S. Danielly, hand on hip, is approving the sealing of the door.



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This is the general who did it at Fort Bragg

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Maj. Gen. Gerald J. Higgins, present commander of the famed 82nd Airborne Division, was born in Chicago in August, of 1900. He enlisted in the regular Army in 1927 and served with the infantry and engineers in Hawaii.

He was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy from the Army and entered West Point, July 1, 1930. Upon graduation June 12, 1934, he was commissioned in the infantry. He served at various posts and stations during the pre-war years, and attended the infantry school in 1937.

Served Overseas

The general joined the 501st Parachute Infantry when it first its activation. When the 101st Airborne Division was formed, he was reassigned there and served successively as the G-3, chief of staff and assistant division commander from 1944 until the end of World War II.

Upon return to the United States following the war, he was designated commandant of the paratrooper school at Fort Benning, Ga. In 1946, he became commandant of cadets at West Point. From there he went overseas to be assistant division commander of the 24th Infantry Division in Japan.

Following this foreign service, the general became chief of the organization and training division, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Washington, D.C., until Oct. 1, 1952. He assumed command of the 82nd Airborne here.

Maj. Gen. Gerald J. Higgins

ARE YOU READY?

Have you selected a shelter in your home? When the sirens blow can you go at once to a prepared place? Is it equipped with adequate first aid supplies, small quantity of canned foods, water, small radio? Remember your radio will be your only contact with officials. Be always ready, be prepared for the worst. Join Civil Defense now.

Cost of living at all time high

By S. EDWARD SMITH

The National cost of living has risen to an all time high since Jan. 4, 1953.

It is now 117.4. It has risen steadily and has no indication of slowing down.

There is talk about a national sales tax in order to furnish additional revenue in the event the national debt is raised. Everyone knows that sales taxes hit the lower and middle income group hardest.

New Dance In D.C.

"Tis said the Republicans have brought a new dance to Washington. It is called the Bunny Hop, and is executed so I understand it, by making like jumping over a deficit while ducking under a debt ceiling.

Remember Sept. 20, 1952 when Ike said, "The people who pay taxes will know where we are going. They will know tha. we are on our way toward a balanced budget, toward reduction in the national debt, toward lower taxes."

Sept. 30, 1953, Ike said," Isn't it time we had in Washington, an administration — which believes that an unbalanced federal budget is dangerous to everyone of us — and moves to bring that budget into balance?"

October Speech

And an Oct. 4, 1953, Ike told the American voter — "the kind of government that this crusade is determined, to offer you — will eliminate deficits as its first step toward bringing down taxes and toward making your dollar sound."

Sure they promised to reduce taxes. Taxes have not been reduced. Actually, they have been increased by an extension of taxes.

They promised to stabilize the nation's economy. Prices of many commodities are rising. The cost of living index is at an all time high. Farm income is down 15 per cent.

They promised to reduce the national debt. Instead they have added Congress to increase it. They raised interest rates on the GI, the little fellow, the home buyer, and the farmer. The bankers are doing well.

They have torn down Public Housing projects, sold others.

Send a Democratic Congress back to Washington, register and vote Democratic.

TB, no respecter of age, strikes young and old

It Isn't True

"He's too old to get TB." When you hear anyone make that statement, speak right up and say, "It isn't true."

There is no age limit on tuberculosis. The germ can and young adults, the middle-aged, and the aged.

It is true that TB causes more deaths than any other disease in the age group from 15 to 35. Fifty years ago, tuberculosis was considered a disease primarily of young people. The reason for this may have been partly because in the old days a TB patient didn't have a chance to grow old. Death within a few months or years was the usual result.

Danger Age

It may also be true that for some reason there is greater susceptibility to tuberculous infection in adolescence, just as there seems to be greater resistance to the disease in children from five to 15. When TB strikes children under five, it may cause the dreaded tuberculous meningitis.

In recent years tuberculosis has become more and more a problem of middle-aged and old men. It may be that modern life places especially heavy strains on these men or that they are careless of their general health.

However, a heavy bombardment with TB germs combined with a poor state of health can cause tuberculosis to develop at any age.

This column is sponsored, in the interest of better health, by Maryland Tuberculosis Association, 900 St. Paul St., Baltimore, Md.

Raid case trial change denied

Changes in venue sought by four defendants in disorderly conduct and gambling cases arising out of a raid on a group of Washington boulevard cabins were denied this week by Judge James Clark in Howard County Circuit court.

The court had been petitioned for removal by defense attorneys on grounds that the defendants could not get an impartial jury trial in Howard county because of "undue publicity" given the case.

Disorderly house and selling liquor without a license charges were brought against Watson Ryan and his wife, Margaret, who managed Hall's Cabins located 500 yards off Washington boulevard at Harwood, as a result of the raid conducted by a small army of State policemen.

Baltimore Man Accused

Charles C. Cluney of the 2300 block Wheeler ave. was charged with operating a gaming table. The cabin property owned by Clarence O. Furrow of Elkridge, was also charged with gambling and disorderly conduct charges.

150 In Raid

About 150 persons were flushed from the cabins during the raid.

Attorneys Francis J. Monohan, J. P. Gillard, Ormsby McMahon and Jerome Loughran submitted four articles from an Elkton City weekly as evidence of undue publicity. One was an advertisement published Aug. 27, over the name of the Republican State Central Committee. The advertisement dealt with the raid, it was reported.

The other exhibits were a news account about the advertisement and a second story about a $100,000 libel suit filed by State's Atty. Daniel M. Murphy Jr. against Charles E. Miller, county Republican figure, as a result of the raid.

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Earns first Ph.D. degree in Bombay

BOMBAY, India (ANP)—Lawrence B. Wilson, an official of the American consulate general here, has the distinction of being the first American to earn a Ph.D. degree from the Bombay university.

Mr. Wilson, a resident of Los Angeles, joined the foreign service in 1951 as cultural affairs officer and was sent to Bombay.

Being a student of politics who always liked to keep himself abreast on the subject and up-to-date, Mr. Wilson decided to spend his spare time doing research on the politics of India. He devoted Saturdays, Sundays, holidays and his free evenings to this work.

He gave much credit to his wife, Millie, for helping him in the preliminary typing of the thesis and for being a constant source of encouragement to him in this work.

Va. Tech admits Hampton youth

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Irving Linwood Peddrew, of Hampton, has been accepted for admission to Virginia Tech college as a military day student.

Peddrew is the first colored student enrolled at the college in its 81-year-old history.

He will register as a day student and live off the campus.

"Peddrew, applying for ROTC instruction towards a commission as second lieutenant, intends to take electrical engineering."

His application was accepted after a full review of his qualifications, according to Dr. Walter S. Newman, college president.

George Jackson awarded Southern Life scholarship

George Jackson, 1953 graduate of Dunbar High, has been awarded the Southern Life Insurance Company's scholarship of $1,000 a year for the next four years.

This scholarship was awarded originally last summer to George A. Green, Douglass High 1953 graduate, who relinquished it because of his coming marriage. Mr. Green was selected after a committee of judges voted by Southern Life had picked three winners from 35 outstanding high school graduates from all over the state.

2nd Choice Declined

The judges' second choice, William Cummings, Douglass High school, Upper Marlboro, declined the Southern Life award because he had already received scholarships from other sources.

George Jackson, the third choice of the committee of judges, was then awarded the scholarship.

W. Emerson Brown, Southern Life executive vice-president, said that all three of these men had done work of a very high order with the company this summer.

Lawyers fight subversive flag

NEW YORK — Vowing to use every "means and resource at its command," the national executive board of the National Lawyers Guild opened a campaign on Monday against the possible abolition of the organization as subversive.

The action came a few days after Attorney General Herbert Brownell told a meeting of the American Bar Association that he was having the Guild investigated to determine whether or not it should be included on the list of subversive organizations.

In answer the board said:

"For 17 years the Lawyers Guild has stood in the forefront of the defense of the economic, social, political and civil rights of the American people."

It also accused the Attorney General of heading a drive to strike down the many gains on behalf of the American people, made during the 20 years preceding the Eisenhower administration.

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