

Return to [Manuscript List](#)  Return to [Navy Department Library](#)  [Search the Library Catalog](#)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060

Racial Incidents Onboard USS *Kitty Hawk* (CVA-63) and USS *Constellation* (CVA-64) in 1972.

Related resource: [African Americans and the US Navy](#)

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Forces. *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*. 92nd Cong., 2d sess., 1973, H.A.S.C. 92-81. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973.

January 2, 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

II. Findings, opinions, and recommendations

A. Findings

B. Opinions

C. Recommendations

III. Missions of the subcommittee

A. Appointment and mandate

B. Hearings and witnesses

IV. Background summary

A. *The Kitty Hawk* incident

The first confrontation

Confrontation on the hangar deck

Marauding bands

Conflicting orders

The final confrontation

B. *The Constellation* incident

Clandestine meeting

The "Sit in"

The beach detachment

Unauthorized absence

V. Discussion

A. Definition of terms

1. Permissiveness

2. Z-grams

3. Middle management

B. Discipline

Indicators of military discipline

Mission performance

Morale

Appearance

Responsiveness to command

Frequency of disciplinary infractions

Sabotage

Drug abuse

C. Race relations

Discrimination or perception?

The communication gap

Polarization

D. Problems of perception

E. The failure middle management

F. The recruit training

VI. Closing statement

REPORT BY THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. NAVY

I. INTRODUCTION

During the course of the 92d Congress, there has been increasing concern in the House Armed Services Committee over the developing of more relaxed discipline in the military services. Substantial evidence of this practice reached us directly through subcommittee investigative reports and messages from concerned service members, as well as indirectly through events reported in the news media.

While generally our men have performed in the outstanding fashion during battle and other *in extremis* circumstances, on the occasion there has been an erosion of good order and discipline under more normal operations. More disturbing have been the reports of sabotage of naval property, assaults, and others serious lapses in discipline afloat. Further, lawful orders have been subject to "committee" or "town meeting" proceedings prior to compliance by subordinates.

Capping the various reports were the recent serious incidents aboard U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk* and U.S.S. *Constellation* -- aircraft carriers of vital importance to the naval mission in the Southeast Asia.

Immediately following air operations aboard the *Kitty Hawk* on the evening of October 12, 1972, a series of incidents broke out wherein group of blacks, armed with chains, wrenches, bars, broomsticks and other dangerous weapons, went marauding through sections of the ship disobeying orders to cease, terrorizing the crew, and seeking out white personnel for senseless beating with fists and with weapons which resulted in extremely serious injury to three men and the medical treatment of many more, including some blacks. While engaged in this conduct some were heard to shout, "Kill the son-of-a-bitch; kill the white trash; wipe him out!" Others shouted, "They are killing our brothers."

Aboard the U.S.S. *Constellation*, during the period of November 3-4, 1972, what has been charitably described as "unrest" and as "sit-in" took place while the ship was underway for training exercises. The

vast majority of the dissident sailors were black and were allegedly protesting several grievances they claimed were in need of correction.

These sailors were off-loaded as part of a "beach detachment", given liberty, refused to return to the ship, and were later processed only for this *minor* disciplinary infraction (6 hours of unauthorized absence) at Naval Air Station, North Island, near San Diego.

Because of inherent seriousness of these incidents, the Honorable F. Edward Hébert, chairman, House Armed Service Committee, considered it necessary to appoint this special subcommittee on November 13, 1972, to inquire at once into disciplinary problems in the U.S. Navy with particular reference to "alleged racial and disciplinary problems which occurred recently on the aircraft carriers U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk* and U.S.S. *Constellation*."

During the course of its inquiry and hearings, which commenced on November 20, 1972, the subcommittee completed some 2,565 pages of reporter's transcript of testimony, and assembled a large volume of reports, directives, military investigations and other papers which have been the basis for this report.

II. FINDINGS, OPINIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. FINDINGS

1. The subcommittee finds that permissiveness, as defined on page 17679 of this report, exists in the Navy today. Although we have been able to investigate only certain specific incidents in depth, the total information made available to us indicates the condition could be servicewide.
2. The vast majority of the Navy men and women are performing their assigned duties loyally and efficiently. The subcommittee is fully aware and appreciative of their efforts. The cause of concern, however, rests with that segment of the naval force which is either unable or unwilling to function within the prescribed limitations and up to the established standards of performance or conduct.
3. The subcommittee has been unable to determine any precipitous cause for rampage aboard U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk*. Not only was there not one case wherein racial discrimination could be pinpointed, but there is no evidence which indicated that the blacks who participated in that incident perceived racial discrimination, either in general or any specific, of such a nature as to justify belief that violent reaction was required.
4. The subcommittee finds that the incident aboard U.S.S. *Constellation* was the result of a carefully orchestrated demonstration of passive resistance wherein a small number of blacks, certainly no more than 20-25, in a well-organized campaign, willfully created among other blacks the belief that white racism existed in the Navy and aboard that ship. The subcommittee, again in this instance as with the incident aboard *Kitty Hawk*, found no specific example of racial discrimination. In this case, however, it is obvious that the participants perceived that racial discrimination existed. Several events were made to appear as examples of racial discrimination when, in fact, such was not the case.
5. Testimony revealed that one of the triggering devices for the dissident activity aboard *Constellation* was a misunderstanding, particularly among the young blacks, which led them to believe that in order to reduce the number of personnel aboard the ship to the authorized level, general discharges were about to be awarded to 250 black crew members.

In fact, the ship was in process of reducing its complement by 250 personnel in order to make room for air wing personnel who would embark prior to the forthcoming combat deployment. At the same time the captain had directed that certain records be reviewed and that those he considered to be troublemakers, if they qualified for administrative discharge, be notified of the ship's intent to commence processing of the required paperwork.

It is unfortunate that this latter discharge procedure was initiated against six crewmembers in one day without adequate explanation of the justification for such action--especially since all six were black and this promoted the feeling that racial discrimination was the cause. In addition, the lack of counselling pertaining to the poor performance marks received by those being considered for administrative discharge caused notification of pending discharge to serve as traumatic incidents to those who were to receive them.

There is strong evidence, however, that these misunderstandings were fostered and fanned by a small group of skilled agitators within the ranks of the young black seamen.

6. The subcommittee was informed that the review, conducted by Naval Personnel Research Activity, San Diego, has found no racial discrimination in the punishments awarded by the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Constellation*.

The subcommittee found no evidence that that conclusion was in error.

7. Discipline, requiring immediate response to command, is absolutely essential to any military force. Particularly in the forces afloat there is no room for the "town meeting" concept or the employment of negotiation or appeasement to obtain obedience to order. The Navy must be controlled by command, not demand.

8. The subcommittee found that insufficient emphasis has been given to formal leadership training, particularly in the ranks of petty officers and junior officers.

9. The generally smart appearance of naval personnel, both afloat and ashore, has deteriorated markedly. While the subcommittee appreciates efforts to allow maximum reasonableness in daily routines, there is absolutely no excuse for slovenly appearance of officers and men in the Navy uniform and such appearance should not be tolerated.

10. There was no formal training of the master-at-arms force. There was not effective utilization of the Marine force. Certainly there was no contingency plan for the coordination of these two forces in events such as these. Once the activities started, there was no plan which would have acted to halt them. The result was to let them wear themselves out.

11. The members of the subcommittee did not find and are unaware of any instances of any instances of institutional discrimination on the part of the Navy toward any group of persons, majority or minority.

12. Black unity, the drive toward togetherness on the part of blacks, has resulted in a tendency on the part of black sailors to polarize. This results in a grievance of one black, real or fancied, becoming the grievance of many. Polarization is an unfortunate trend and negates efforts since 1948 to integrate the military services and to stamp out separation. This divisive trend must be reversed.

13. Nonmilitary gestures such as "passing the power" or "dapping" are disruptive, serve to enhance racial polarization, and should be discouraged.

14. After the incidents on *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation*, a meeting was called by the Secretary of the Navy of all the admirals in the Washington, D.C., area in which the CNO spoke to the failure of the Navy to meet its human relations goals. Immediately thereafter, his remarks were made available to the press and sent as a message to all hands. Because of the wording of the text, it was perceived by many to be a public admonishment by the CNO of his staff for the failure to solve racial problems within the Navy. Even though this was followed within 96 hours by Z-gram 117 which stressed the need for discipline, the speech itself, the issuance of it to the public press, and the timing of its delivery, all served to emphasize the CNO's perception of the Navy's problems. Again, concern over racial problems seemed paramount to the question of good order and discipline even though there had been incidents on two ships which may be characterized as "mutinies". The subcommittee regrets that the tradition of not criticizing seniors in front of their subordinates was ignored in this case.

15. The Navy's recruitment program for most of 1972 which resulted in the lowering of standards for enlistment, accepting a greater percentage of mental category IV and those in the lower half of category III, not requiring recruits in these categories to have completed their high school education, and accepting these people without sufficient analysis of their previous offense records, has created many of the problems the Navy is experiencing today.

16. The reduction of time in recruit training from 9 to 7 weeks, thus sending those personnel who do not qualify for advanced training in "A" schools from the street to the fleet in less than two months, appears to result in inadequate preparation for shipboard duty.

17. The investigation disclosed an alarming frequency of successful acts of sabotage and apparent sabotage on a wide variety of ships and stations within the Navy.

B. OPINIONS

1. The subcommittee is of the position that the riot on *Kitty Hawk* consisted of unprovoked assaults by a very few men, most of whom were below-average mental capacity, most of whom had been aboard for less than one year, and all of whom were black. This group, as a whole, acted as "thugs" which raises doubt as to whether they should ever have been accepted into military service in the first place.

2. The subcommittee expresses its strong objection to the procedures utilized by higher authority to negotiate with *Constellation's* dissidents and, eventually, to appease them by acquiescing to their demands and by meting out minor nonjudicial punishment for what was a major affront to good order and discipline. Moreover, the subcommittee stresses that the actions committed aboard that ship have the potential for crippling a combatant vessel in a war zone.

3. The subcommittee believes that advice concerning decisions which had to be made with regard to *Constellation*, offered by personnel in human relations billets to line officers, was uniformly poor. The decisions, made on the basis of that advice, proved unsuccessful in bringing the incident to a conclusion.

Later decisions, reflecting reversal of the policy of negotiation with the dissident sailors, resulted in the transfer of the men off the ship in a disciplinary status.

4. The statement that riots, mutinies and acts of sabotage in the Navy are a product of "the time" is not valid. If those in positions of authority who profess such arguments really believe them, they have been negligent in not taking proper precautionary action to prevent to occurrence or to deal with such once they did occur. It is incredible that the Navy was totally unprepared to cope with such incidents as occurred aboard *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation*. In view of the disturbances in recent years in the other

military services, the Navy appears to have indulged in wishful thinking, apparently believing that the similar incidents would not happen aboard ship.

5. The members of the subcommittee fully support the idea of equality of opportunity in the military and naval forces of the United States for all persons. Since there may well be individual attitudes of discrimination among some persons serving in those forces--discrimination directed toward blacks or whites, or any other ethnic or racial groups--human relation programs remain essential.

6. Where Human Relation Councils and Minority Affairs offices are manned solely by minority personnel, they become conduits for minority personnel to bypass the normal chain of command. Used properly, as another set of eyes and ears to keep the commander informed as to personnel problems, they can be worthwhile; but used as vehicle for the settlement of individual minority grievances which should be resolved within the command structure, they are divisive and disruptive of good order and discipline and encourage further polarization. The equal opportunity and human relations programs of the Navy must not, in any way, dilute the authority of the chain of command.

7. The subcommittee detects a failure in the middle management area in that there has been a reluctance to utilize the command authority inherent in those positions.

8. The Navy's recruiting advertising appears to promise more than the Navy is able to deliver, especially to personnel who are unable to qualify for "A" school training. This can create frustration and discontent. The hopes held out by this advertising, plus statements made by some Navy recruiters, present an unrealistic picture of the Navy. Any such distortions should be corrected.

9. Once a new seaman reports to a division, there too little individual contact between him and his immediate supervisors, the petty officers and junior officers assigned to that division. Too frequently the seaman is counselled regarding his performance ratings, even if they are low. There is also a failure to effectively explain to him any opportunities he has for advancement and the steps he should take to achieve promotions. As a result, the young seaman sometimes becomes frustrated concerning his future as he performs unskilled laborer's jobs on a continuing basis.

10. The Navy provides authority to a commanding officer to give a general discharge (under honorable conditions) to those who have a GCT test score of 41 or less, have no more than a tenth grade education, have had low performance marks (including: professional performance, military behavior, military appearance and adaptability), and who have been in the Navy at least one year. All other administrative discharges are decided at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

The subcommittee believes that having accepted a man into the Navy knowing his low test scores and educational background, the Navy should apply the same procedures to a determination of his discharge as apply to all others.

11. The subcommittee commends the Chief of Naval Operations for those of his programs which are designed to improve Navy life and yet maintained good order and discipline through the traditional channels of authority.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While there has been no doubt as to the overall combat effectiveness of the Navy in Southeast Asia, challenges to the maintenance of good order and discipline arising during noncombat periods cause concern for the continued total effectiveness of the service. To obviate this concern, naval leadership,

the chain of command and harmonious interpersonal relationships must be strengthened. Specifically, the subcommittee recommends that formal leadership training programs be expanded and emphasized for all personnel in the middle management positions.

2. The subcommittee recommends that if similar incidents arise on the other ships, the crew be called to general quarter. Such a tactic, as demonstrated by U.S.S. *Saratoga*, is effective in breaking up unauthorized groups and preventing shipwide rampages by placing the ship and crew in their most secure condition. Further, it provides the commanding officer with the time he needs for contemplation of his options.

3. We cannot emphasize too strongly that recruiting advertisements and literature and the promises made by recruiters should be, in all respects, absolutely accurate and objective. There is danger in overselling.

4. Policy regarding unauthorized meetings is fully covered by existing naval and ship's regulations. These should be consistently enforced.

5. The subcommittee recommends that recruit training be lengthened, both to give the recruit more time and experience in the environment of strict discipline and to provide training command personnel a greater opportunity to evaluate new recruits and to orient them to their Navy careers, particularly to the realities of shipboard life.

6. Both at the recruiting and recruit training levels there must be a greater effort to screen out agitators, troublemakers and those who otherwise fail to meet acceptable standards of performance.

7. The subcommittee recommends that newly-received seamen aboard naval vessels be placed under the direct control and supervision of an experienced line officer and that experienced and trained leaders be assigned as their petty officer supervisors. Great care must be taken to ensure that these supervisory personnel are of the highest caliber.

8. If a serviceman performs his assigned duties adequately, he should be retained in service, if he so desires, regardless of his promotion potential, provided there is work for which he is qualified and willing to perform.

9. The subcommittee recommends the establishment of a separate rating for master-at-arms personnel with duties ashore and afloat to include those presently assigned to MAA and shore patrol personnel and those functions performed in the other services by military and security police.

10. The subcommittee received a copy of a report dated October 21, 1971, which was promulgated by the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, to his subordinate commands. The report identifies common circumstances, omissions, mistakes, over- and under-reactions, etc., as observed in several incidents of racial turbulence.

The subcommittee believes that much can be learned from a detailed study of that report and recommends that it be disseminated to all major unit commanders in the Navy.

11. The subcommittee recommends that personal counselling forms, warnings, report "chits" and commendations should be made a part of a man's personnel record. All derogatory material should be removed from that record only upon his transfer or discharge.

12. The Navy should consider the reestablishment of a program to provide quarterly marks for personnel

in pay grades E-3 and below in place of the current semiannual reporting periods.

13. Every effort should be made to utilize automated devices aboard ship and contract personnel ashore to improve the day-to-day conditions and overall habitability for the ship's company.

14. While the subcommittee could recommend that the power to grant *all* administrative discharges be transferred to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, we feel a wiser course would be the transfer to unit commanders of all decisionmaking authority concerning administrative discharges which result in no loss of VA benefits. This would strengthen the commanding officer's authority.

However, in so doing, we recognize that every person who might receive such a discharge has the right to appeal his case to the Bureau of Naval Personnel and this right must be fully explained to the individual.

15. The subcommittee recommends that further attention be given to an in-depth examination of what appear to be acts of deliberate sabotage in the Navy.

16. The subcommittee recommends that the House Armed Services Committee examine the other services to evaluate any potential for incidents similar to the ones we investigated.

III. MISSION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

A. APPOINTMENT AND MANDATE

By letter dated November 13, 1972, the chairman of House Armed Services Committee, the Honorable F. Edward Hébert, appointed the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the U.S. Navy under the chairmanship of Floyd V. Hicks and including W.C. "Dan" Daniel and Alexander Pirnie.

That appointing letter directed the subcommittee to "inquire into the apparent breakdown of discipline in the United States Navy and, in particular, into the alleged racial and disciplinary problems which occurred recently on the aircraft carriers U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk* and U.S.S. *Constellation*."

The subcommittee was further directed "to undertake its study at the earliest practicable date, and to report its findings and recommendations to the full committee as soon as possible."

B. HEARINGS AND WITNESSES

Formal hearings commenced one week after the subcommittee was appointed. A total of 22 hearings were held in Washington and in San Diego, the homeport of two aircraft carriers involved. Over 74 hours of testimony was heard, covering well in excess of 2500 pages of recorded transcript. A total of 56 witnesses were called, including over 30 enlisted crewmembers of *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation*.

Although vested with the authority to subpoena witnesses, the subcommittee chose to hear only from those who would voluntarily testify. At the advice of their counsel, the crewmembers of *Kitty Hawk* who had court-martial charges pending declined the specific invitation of subcommittee to testify. The subcommittee accepted that decision, basing its judgment on the fact that the volume and extent of information received from all other sources was sufficient for its purposes.

IV. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

A. THE "*KITTY HAWK*" INCIDENT

On February 17, 1972, the attack carrier U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk* departed San Diego for its sixth combat deployment to Southeast Asia. After several extended periods of combat activity, the ship put in to the U.S. Naval Base at Subic Bay, the Philippines, for replenishment of war materiel and a week of rest and recreation for the crew. The ship's company had just recently become aware of the fact they would return to the combat zone after this rest period rather than return home as scheduled. This rescheduling apparently was due the incidents of sabotage aboard her sister ships, U.S.S. *Ranger* and U.S.S. *Forrestal*.

On the tenth of October, a fight occurred at the enlisted men's club at Subic Bay. While it cannot be unequivocally established that *Kitty Hawk* personnel participated in the fight, circumstantial evidence tend to support the conclusion that some of the ship's black sailors were involved since 15 young blacks returned to the ship on the run and in a very disheveled condition at about the time the fight at the club was brought under control.

The following morning the ship returned to combat, conducting air operations from 1 to 6 p.m. There were 348 officers and 4,135 enlisted men aboard. Of these, 5 officers and 297 enlisted men were black.

The first confrontation

At approximately 7 p.m., in October 12, 1972, the ship's investigator called a black sailor to his office for questioning about his activities in the Subic Bay. He was accompanied by nine other black men. They were belligerent, loud, and used abusive language. Those accompanying him were not allowed to sit in on the investigation. The sailor was apprised of his rights, refused to make a statement and was allowed to leave. Shortly after he left a young messcook was assaulted on the after messdeck. Within a few minutes after that, another young messcook was assaulted on the forward messdeck. In each instance, this same sailor was on the scene.

The first indication of widespread trouble aboard ship occurred at about 8 p.m. A large number of blacks congregated on the after messdeck, one of two enlisted dining areas. A messcook alerted the Marine Detachment Reaction Force. During the ensuing confrontation between the Marines and black sailors, the corporal of the guard, the only person carrying a firearm, attempted, or appeared to have attempted to draw his weapon. In any event it was not drawn. This incident appears in the testimony, at least in retrospect, to have been one of the more inflammatory events of the early evening.

At this point the Executive Officer (XO), a black man, arrived on the after messdeck, ordered the Marines to withdraw closed off the hatches into the messdeck area, and, in company with the ship's senior enlisted advisor, a white master chief petty officer, remained inside with the black sailors. As the XO attempted to calm the crowd, the Commanding Officer (CO) entered the area behind him. The XO unaware of the CO's presence, continued to address the crowd. The XO urged all to calm down, asked the apparent leaders of the group to discuss their problem in his cabin, and assured the group that the Marines had been sent below. After an hour or so of discussion, the XO, feeling that the incident was over, released the men to continue about their business.

The CO, having noted the hostile attitude of the group being addressed by the XO, left the area and instructed the Commanding Officer of the Marines to establish additional aircraft security watches and patrols on the hangar and flight decks. The Marines were given additional instructions by their CO to break up any group of three or more sailors who might appear on the aircraft decks, and disperse them.

Confrontation on the hangar deck

As the XO released the group of blacks with whom he had been talking, the major portion of them left the after messdeck by way of the hangar deck. Upon seeing the blacks come onto the hangar deck, the Marines attempted to disperse them. The Marines at the moment were some 26 strong and, trained in riot control procedures, they formed a line and advanced on the blacks, containing them to the after end of the hangar deck. Several blacks were arrested and handcuffed while the remainder, arming themselves with aircraft tie-down chains, confronted the Marines. At this point, the ship's CO appeared and, moving into the space between the Marines and the blacks, attempted to control the situation. The XO, upon being informed of this activity, headed there, arriving in time to see a heavy metal bar thrown from the area of the blacks land near and possibly hit the CO. At this point, the XO was informed that a sailor had been seriously injured below decks, so he departed. The CO, meanwhile, ordered the prisoners released and the Marines to return to their compartment while he attempted to restore order personally.

Marauding bands

The XO, after going below, became aware that small groups, ranging from 5 to 25 blacks, were marauding about the ship attacking whites, pulling many sleeping sailors from their berths and beating them with their fists and chains, dogging wrenches, metal pipes, fire extinguisher nozzles and broom handles. While engaged in this behavior, many were heard to shout, "Kill the son-of-a-bitch! Kill the white trash! Kill, kill, kill!" Others shouting, "They are killing our brothers." Understandably, the ship's dispensary was the scene of intense activity with the doctors and corpsmen working on the injured personnel. Alarmingly, another group of blacks harassed them and the men waiting to be treated.

The XO was then informed by at least two sources that the CO had been injured or killed on the hangar deck. Not sure of the facts but believing the reports could be true, the XO made an announcement over the ship's public address system ordering all the ship's blacks to the after messdeck and the Marines to the forecandle, thereby putting as much distance between the two groups as possible.

Conflicting orders

The CO, still on the hangar deck talking to a dwindling number of the black sailors, was surprised and distressed at the XO's announcement. At this point he was still unaware of the various groups of black assaulting their white shipmates in several different areas of the ship, and he was, obviously, neither dead nor injured. He headed for the nearest public address system microphone, found the XO there, held a brief conference with the XO, and made an announcement of his own to the effect that the XO had been misinformed and that all hands should return to their normal duties. The announcements by the CO and XO, occurring around midnight, were the first indication to the majority of the crew that there was troubled aboard.

The final confrontation

The blacks seemed to gravitate to the forecandle. Their attitude was extremely hostile. Of the 150 or so who were present, most were armed. The XO followed one group to the forecandle, entered and, as he later stated, he believed that had he not been black he would have been killed on the spot. He addressed the group for about two hours, reluctantly ignoring his status as the XO and instead appealing to the men as one black to another. After some time he acquired control over the group, calmed them down, had them put their weapons at his feet or over the side, and then ordered them to return to their compartments. The meeting broke up about 2:30 in the morning and for all intents and purposes, the violence aboard *Kitty Hawk* was over.

The ship fulfilled its combat mission schedule that morning and for the remainder of her time on station. During this period *Kitty Hawk* established a record 177 days on the line in a single deployment. After the incident senior enlisted men and junior officers were placed in each berthing compartment and patrolled the passageways during night-time hours to ensure that similar incidents would not recur.

The 21 men who were charged with offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and who requested civilian counsel, were put ashore at Subic Bay to be later flown to San Diego to meet the ship on its return. The remaining 5 charged were brought to trial aboard the ship during its transit back to the United States.

A total of 47 men, all but 6 or 7 of them white, were treated for injuries on the night of October 12-13, 1972; three required medical evacuation to shore hospitals while the rest were treated aboard the ship.

B. THE "CONSTELLATION" INCIDENT

On July 1, 1972, the U.S.S. *Constellation* returned to San Diego after completing her sixth combat deployment to Southeast Asia. Under current policies, a returning ship is granted a 30-day stand-down period during which time the majority of the crew is given leave. On August 1st the ship was placed in nonoperational status while her crew and shipyard personnel performed relatively extensive repairs, overhaul and renovation. During this 2-month period there was a turnover of over 1300 personnel in the crew, with over 900 new men reporting aboard for duty. On October 4th the ship commenced refresher training, putting to sea to test the new equipment and to train the new personnel.

Clandestine meeting

Late at night on the seventeenth, a group of blacks held a clandestine meeting in the ship's barbershop. The next day an open meeting was held on the portion of the after messdecks known as "sidewalk cafe". The Executive Officer (XO) attended this meeting at the Commanding Officer's (CO) suggestion. He entered into the discussion which at this time, were no more than general gripe sessions. No specific grievances were aired and no indications of possible trouble were noted. The CO decided that, in order to prevent these meetings from becoming covert, no action would be taken to prevent further meetings but surveillance of all future meetings would be closely maintained. Between the 20th and 30th of October, while the ship conducted air wing training at sea, a series of meetings were held in the "sidewalk cafe." During these meetings the blacks organized, elected representatives and assigned specific functions to members of their group. One of these functions, as so-called "legal counsel," entailed an examination of the ship's records of Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP), also known as Captain's Mast, to determine where racial discrimination had occurred.

On November 1st, the CO directed that the XO personally attend that day's meeting. There the formalization of grievances occurred but, still, no specific complaints were aired which could have been resolved by command action. While dispersing from this meeting, an unidentified group of blacks assaulted a white messcook, fracturing his jaw.

The next day the CO identified approximately 15 sailors as "agitators" and directed the XO to examine their personnel records to determine if any were eligible for command-initiated administrative discharge. Six apparently qualified, although further review later eliminated one of them. The personnel concerned were notified of the pending action.

At the same time it was general knowledge that the ship's company would have to be reduced by 250 men in order to accommodate the air wing personnel who would embark prior to the ship's forthcoming

combat deployment. Rumors circulated throughout the ship that all 250 would be administratively discharged with less than honorable discharges and all 250 men would be black. Both rumors were false.

At about 9 a.m. the next morning, November 3rd, the XO met with two representatives of the group and was asked to announce over the PA system that he would stop the administrative discharge proceedings. The XO agreed in part to that request, circulated a "flyer" announcing the halt to administrative discharges and announced over the PA system an open meeting of the Human Resources Council (HRC) for 9 p.m. that evening

The "sit-in"

At about noon the CO and XO were notified of a "sit-in" on the forward messdecks. The CO directed officers and senior petty officers to order their men to return to work since air evolutions had commenced. The "sit-in" broke up but the participants regrouped on the after messdecks.

At about 2:30 p.m. the Marine Reaction Force was called to the after messdeck to quell a "riot." Arriving simultaneously with the Marines, and determining that the Marine force was unnecessary, the ship's Chief Master-at-Arms ordered the Marines back to their compartment. The HCR members then met with the group to determine the nature of complaints. The situation remained relatively stable from then on until the official HCR meeting commenced about 9 p.m. The size of the group fluctuated between 50 and 150, with all but a few participants being black. From 9 p.m. until midnight the HCR officers and men and the personnel officer attempted to respond to the group's complaints. Even at this time, however, the grievances were too broad to be answered. No specific cases of racial discrimination, which was the group's general area of complaint, were definitely identified. The tenor of the meeting rapidly changed so that by midnight the HCR members were being subjected to considerable verbal abuse. The HCR withdrew, leaving the after messdeck to a crowd of approximately 100 sailors.

The group continued to meet, claiming that the HCR meeting had been adjourned, and soon formulated a demand for the CO's presence. This demand became the focal point from this time on. Two representatives met with the CO on the bridge and relayed the group's demand for his presence, warning that if he did not appear, members of the group might "tear up his ship." The CO refused to accede to this demand on the basis that the group was disorderly and that the conduct of flight operations required his presence on the bridge. The CO then directed that the ship be "awakened" and that senior personnel patrol the berthing compartments and passageways to preclude incidents such as had occurred aboard *Kitty Hawk*. He also directed that senior officers and petty officers encompass the group on the after messdecks. Air operations continued until 12:30 a.m. on November 4th.

The beach detachment

Shortly thereafter the CO informed his seniors by message that he was going to put in to North Island and place the dissident group ashore as a "beach detachment". The concept of a beach detachment is normally applied to a liaison group placed ashore overseas while the ship conducts operations at sea. In this case it was to be composed of the dissident group, senior supervisory personnel and members of HCR.

At approximately 4 a.m. the CO called for an all hands muster on the flight deck in an effort to break up the sit-in. The group refused to move from the messdeck in response to that order.

At 9:00 a.m. the ship tied up at North Island and the CO directed that "all those who wish to join this group" would be put ashore. At this time personnel from the air station and staff of the Commander

Naval Air Forces Pacific met with the CO. Within the hour, and at the advice of the staff personnel, the CO met with dissident sailors. Contrary to the advice of the staff, however, the CO refused to keep the men aboard his ship. At this point in time the dissident group had not yet formalized its demands.

The beach detachment was put shore and, early the next morning, the ship put back to sea. Over the next several days the beach detachment and various staff personnel met to resolve the grievances. The ship, which had returned to port to off-load a damaged aircraft and had put to sea again, was then directed by the fleet commander to return to port in order for the CO to become personally involved in the discussions. During this period a series of telephone calls were placed between the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet and the Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific during which information, advice and decisions with regard to the situation were passed.

On November 8th the CO met the group and received their demands: (1) That a review of nonjudicial punishment be conducted to determine whether he had discriminated against blacks; (2) that a review of administrative discharges be conducted for the same purpose; and (3) that all personnel involved in the incident aboard *Constellation* be received back aboard and not prosecuted for their actions. The CO agreed to the three demands with one exception: all personnel who were involved in prior offenses or who might have committed assault during the night of 3-4 November, would not be immune to prosecution. He then ordered the men to return aboard *Constellation* at the conclusion of normal overnight liberty.

Unauthorized absence

The following morning the group refused to board the ship but instead mustered on the pier. They were allegedly acting on advice from an unidentified high-level source in the Pentagon that such a muster would preclude their being charged with unauthorized absence. If such advice was given, it was erroneous. The ship then advised the men of their unauthorized absentee status and, at 9 a.m., they were transported back to the barracks.

At approximately 2 p.m., the men were informed that they had been transferred to North Island in a disciplinary status and that the charge against them would be 6 hours' unauthorized absence. A total of 122 men transferred.

V. DISCUSSION

A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Permissiveness

While Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary does not specifically define "permissiveness," the definition of "permissive" appears sufficient. Permissive: "granted on sufferance; tolerated; granting or tending to grant permission; tolerant; allowing discretion; optional."

Basically, as used in this report, permissiveness means an attitude by seniors down the chain of command which *tolerates* the use of individual discretion by juniors in areas in the services which have been strictly controlled; it means a tolerance of failure; a failure to enforce existing orders and regulations which have validity; it means a failure to require that existing standards be met, and a *sufferance* of the questioning of valid orders. Unhappily, close on the heels of permissiveness, we often find appeasement when trouble arises.

2. Z-grams

Z-grams are naval messages originating in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations and disseminated to the entire naval service. Messages of this sort are also known as NAVOPS (Naval Operations messages). The term "Z-gram" was introduced by the present Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., in an attempt to personalize the message and lend to it some added importance by conveying his personal interest in the subject matter.

The first Z-gram, Z-01, was issued on July 14, 1970. The most recent was Z-117, issued on November 14, 1972. These 117 messages deal with matters of interest to all Navy personnel and their families, are essentially personnel-oriented, and are posted in prominent locations at each Navy command so that all hands may read their contents.

The Chief of Naval Operations has traditionally issued messages to the operating forces and the shore establishment through widely disseminated messages. Normally, the contents are read by unit commanders and then transmitted to their personnel via house organs such as the Plan of the Day.

3. Middle management

The term "middle management" is relatively new in its application to the military command structure. As used in private industry, the term connotes personnel in those positions of responsibility ranging from the more senior line supervisors up through the so-called junior executives.

The term can best be identified by the relative limits of authority granted in the areas of policy-making and policy interpretation. The upper limit of middle management is that point below which the power to make or interpret policy is restricted to matters of a routine nature. Thus, a middle manager may establish work schedules and may assign areas of responsibility to those below him. He may also make judgement decisions as to the potential of the worker and the quality of the work performed by those below him. Upper management personnel are granted far broader authority.

In any organization, military or civilian, the lower a person is on the organizational chart, the more clearly defined are his instructions and the more narrow are his areas of responsibility. Upper management issues policy guidance. Middle management receives guidance and issues specific instructions.

As used in this report, middle managers are senior petty officers, usually chief petty officers (E-7) and above, but often encompassing first and second petty officers in positions of responsibility. The term also applies to officers, up the grade of lieutenant commander (O-4), but not including those officers in command billets, who may be said to have attained the first level of upper management.

B. DISCIPLINE

The term "discipline" is easily used but difficult to define and measure. It means more than mere compliance with laws and regulations, more than mere performance to a given set of standards, and more than punishment for noncompliance.

Indicators of military discipline

The subcommittee established as the criteria for the evaluation of discipline: *mission performance, morale appearance, responsiveness to command, the frequency of disciplinary infractions and the*

reaction of authority to such infractions. While none of these, taken alone, can provide an accurate measurement of discipline, a combination of these factors, some of which are admittedly subjective, can provide an adequate basis for an overall evaluation of the state of discipline in the Navy.

Mission performance

The overall performance of the Navy in its role in the Vietnam War has been commendable. The carriers *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation* performed well in six lengthy combat deployments. *Kitty Hawk's* record-breaking last deployment has already been mentioned. Surely, when measured by combat effectiveness to date, the status of naval discipline must register on the "plus" side of ledger. However, the *Kitty Hawk* incident occurred while the ship was on the firing line, clearly indicating that such problems are not limited to noncombat situations alone and emphasizing the fact that such incidents must be promptly resolved if combat effectiveness is to be assured.

The question also arises as to the status of discipline as measured during periods of noncombat. There is a unifying effect of engagement with an enemy which is not present when duties are not as clearly defined and of such immediate importance.

When operations have become routine and boredom combines with the frustrations of long deployments, cramped living conditions, lack of privacy and limited recreational opportunities, discipline in a military organization is most severely tested.

The subcommittee finds that naval discipline has been generally good in combat but lacking in noncombat situations. Of all the incidents, reported and unreported, none indicate a total breakdown of discipline in times of actual engagement with the enemy.

Most of the incidents appear to have occurred when the pressures of combat have been removed, but those of deployment may remain. Since, at any given time, the major portion of the Navy is not engaged in combat, this tendency towards a breakdown in firm discipline in noncombat environments is of great concern.

Morale

Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King once agreed that morale is a "conviction of excellence." In fact, morale too is most severely tested during periods of routine operations. In war, morale is almost self-generating. In periods of normal operations, it must be carefully nurtured.

The subcommittee observed extremes of high and low morale during its investigation. The majority of naval personnel appear to have substantial pride in the Navy, their unit and themselves. Others couldn't care less.

The subcommittee found a confusion as to what is "excellence" and what standards of excellence naval personnel are expected to meet. Clearly, in the area of good order and discipline, there has been confusion as to the expected standards. That confusion reaches to the top levels of the service. If this had not been so, why, then, while denying that permissiveness does exist and claiming that firm discipline is the order of the day, was there a need on November 14, 1972 to issue Z-117, exhorting the Navy to strengthen and maintain its control over good order?

Instances of confusion and, as discussed later, misplaced perceptions of performance standards, destroy the "conviction" so essential to good morale and esprit de corps.

The position that high morale is indicated by rising reenlistment rates is not entirely accepted by the subcommittee. The Congress has, in the past 2 years, provided far more pay, allowances and other related benefits than even the services themselves have requested. This was done to relieve the historically adverse effect of lower pay in the military than was available in comparable civilian employment. Higher enlistment and reenlistment rates were clearly influenced by these actions.

It may well be that, given the unfortunate state of the Nation's economy, with the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the civil sector, military life now has a certain appeal based upon financial rewards. Certainly this aspect cannot be overlooked when considering the meaning of rising reenlistment rates.

Appearance

Traditionally indicative of high morale has been pride in the uniform and in one's appearance in the uniform. The current relaxation of the standards of appearance for Navy men has caused a lessening in the pride that some sailors take in their appearance and, thus, in their service.

Admittedly, Z-57 and subsequent clarifying messages concerning the standards of appearance, were not designed to permit Navy personnel to become sloppy and slovenly in their appearance and grooming. Nonetheless, such has been the effect.

Considerable testimony to the effect that the uniform seems to mean less today than it did several years ago was received by the subcommittee. Through its personal observation as well as the opinions given it by active duty personnel from all grades and ranks, including retired Navy personnel, and from private citizens, the subcommittee received clear and irrefutable evidence that the men of the naval service do not present the smart appearance that once was their unique trademark.

While this has undoubtedly been as a result of individual abuse of relaxed regulations, it has, in fact, caused a service-wide problem for all Navy personnel. Until such time as there is insistence on clear-cut standards for a smart appearance while in the uniform of the United States Navy, the general morale and discipline will be adversely affected.

Responsiveness to command

"Aye, aye, sir," traditionally means, "I understand your orders and will comply with them, sir". It may well be that a general abandonment of this phrase has lessened the sense of immediacy that it implies.

It is often stated that young people today demand more than just an order; they demand to know the reasons behind such an order. This "fact" is often given as justification for their slower response to directives.

Whether young people today may be more inquisitive than those of past years has no relation to the maintenance of good order and discipline. Military discipline demands nothing less than immediate response to orders. The need for this immediacy is obvious in situations where lives are at stake. To demand a similar response during routine operations and on "minor" matters is essential to proper training for emergency situations and appropriate responsiveness to commands which may be given in wartime.

The subcommittee found a reluctance on the part of some petty officers, junior officers and seniors alike, to demand strict and immediate response to orders. Instead, there seems to be an attitude on the part of

certain supervisory personnel that if they fail to explain in detail every order or command, the junior may not comply. Indeed, there is also the feeling that such failure to comply will be supported by various senior personnel and/or representatives of the juniors; be they councils, committees, or representatives.

The Special Subcommittee on Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel stated: "While we have an 'army of the democratic', we cannot have a 'democratic army'... Working by consensus or majority rule would not run an assembly line, nor would it be effective in a governmental agency." This statement has clear application to the military services.

Young men and women, especially in an all-volunteer force such as the Navy, must know from the beginning of their service that immediate and unquestioning response is expected of them at all times and that failure to meet that expectation will result in disciplinary action.

This is not to say, however, that the reasons for a particular order should never be given. The subcommittee believes, however, that the option to explain an order must remain with the person issuing that order and that the response by the junior will be immediate regardless of his senior's decision as to whether or not the directive is to be explained.

The subcommittee was particularly concerned to find that some petty officers and commissioned officers were willing to accept noncompliance until such time as they had fully explained the reasons for their orders. This attitude is not acceptable.

Frequency of disciplinary infractions

Soon after the appointment of this subcommittee, the Navy released to the press statistics which indicated that the number of court-martial cases and the numbers of cases tried by Captain's Mast (nonjudicial punishment) had declined over the past several years. The Navy has suggested that this decrease indicates that sailors are more responsive to commands and, therefore, that discipline is being maintained at a greater level than previously experienced.

The subcommittee is concerned that the figures may indicate a tendency on the part of authority to ignore or appease rather than to prosecute offenders.

The preponderance of testimony indicates that those in authority turn too frequently to negotiation and then to appeasement rather than immediately to fair and firm enforcement of existing regulations. As an illustration, we cite the efforts on the part of senior officers to *deal with* the members of the so-called "beach detachment" from U.S.S. *Constellation* rather than to invoke basic disciplinary procedures for offenses committed aboard the ship. That the decision in this matter was made far above the commanding officer of *Constellation* is clear. The result has been the creation of an environment of leniency, appeasement, and permissiveness.

The maintenance of good order and discipline *relies* on the certain knowledge that offenses will not be tolerated and will be subject to swift and equitable action. There is nothing wrong with punishment when it is deserved. A system which hesitates to punish when it is deserved is very wrong.

The subcommittee believes that the Uniform Code of Military Justice is an equitable system of law for the military, and may even surpass civil law in the protection of an individual's rights in court actions. Its appropriate utilization is a deterrent to unlawful conduct and is essential to the maintenance of good order and discipline.

Sabotage

The subcommittee has received a list of literally hundreds of instances of damage to naval property wherein sabotage is suspected. This list covers only the last 2 years. The magnitude of the problem, both in the frequency of "suspicious" incidents and in the total damage to Government property, is alarming.

While many of the incidents reported to date have not been fully investigated and may be determined to be accidental, there is reason to believe that some of those incidents already investigated and declared accidental or "cause unknown," might well fall within the definition of sabotage.

There has been no evidence or even any indication that these incidents are part of any organized effort to "sink the fleet." The subcommittee, therefore, has great difficulty pinpointing any single cause which might explain the frequency of possible, probable and proven sabotage over the past 2 years. It would appear to the subcommittee that antiwar, antimilitary, antiestablishment movements in the civilian sector have had some effect.

It is the subcommittee's belief, however, that such activities could be better controlled if the available screening, weeding and control elements of military discipline were utilized to the fullest. This problem doesn't breed on a "taut ship."

Drug abuse

During the course of this inquiry, it became abundantly clear that there continues to be illicit use of a variety of drugs aboard ship and that the drug abuse problem afloat has not abated to any significant degree, especially where there is a supply of drugs available ashore. The House Armed Services Committee found, after extensive investigation in the 91st Congress, that there is a serious drug abuse problem in the military largely because there is a serious drug abuse problem in our civilian society. Extensive reports on that subject are contained in House Armed Services Committee document 92-4 and House Report 92-992. Since the drug abuse problem continues to be serious in the civilian sector, it continues to be a serious problem in the Navy. Obviously, drug abuse prevention programs must be continued and strengthened. During its investigation, the subcommittee received evidence indicating that drugs are used extensively aboard ship. If this serious problem continues, the safety of the ships and the personnel embarked are in jeopardy.

There is, however, no evidence linking drug abuse with the incidents aboard *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation*. However, the subcommittee learned that apparently there has been an abundant supply of illicit drugs available to our ships in the Philippine Islands area. Further, during the recent declaration of martial law, that source dried up almost completely. So, too, did the supply of illegal drugs aboard naval vessels.

C. RACE RELATIONS

On December 15, 1969, the House Armed Services Committee completed a detailed investigation of racial problems at Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Again on February 25, 1970, a report was submitted on the brig disturbances at Camp Pendleton, California-disturbances which had racial overtones. In those reports, the committee commented that the Department of Defense had "long been in the vanguard of integration of the races." We believe this still to be true today. We commend the Navy, as all the other services, for seriously pursuing this objective.

Of all the parts of our society, we believe the best opportunity exists in the military for a young man to

establish a dialog between himself and his superiors, of all grades and ranks.

Discrimination or perception?

During the course of this investigation we found no *substantial evidence* of racial discrimination upon which we could place true responsibility for causation of these serious disturbances. Certainly there were many *perceptions* of discrimination by young blacks, who, because of their sensitivity to real or fancied oppression, often enlist with a "chip on their shoulder." Those young blacks, who enter the service from the ghetto with a complete black awareness, probably for the first time find themselves immersed in a predominantly white society which, in civilian life, they had come to mistrust. These young men are subject to being easily led-as was the case in the *Constellation* uprising where about 15 agitators orchestrated the entire affair.

To repeat, what many of these men view as discrimination is, more often than not, a perception rather than a reality. That subject is treated in more detail in another section of this report.

The communication gap

With communications as a primary tool, and beginning with the *very first* exposure in the recruiting system, we are convinced that a much better mutual understanding of racial matters, the needs of the service, and the requirements of good order and discipline can be achieved in the Navy, as well as in the other services. For example, it is wrong to mislead a young recruit in a low mental group with respect to his opportunities for attending service school or "learning a trade" while in on-the-job training-particularly on a ship. His chances are limited and he must clearly understand this from the beginning, though examples abound that with superior effort he can advance to the fullest extent. While some degree of incompetence, inexperience or low intelligence can be absorbed in duties ashore, there should be no compromises aboard ship. Unquestioned discipline, instant response to orders and an acceptable standard of performance are absolutely essential to the operation of a naval vessel. This every man must understand clearly. It is not a racial consideration.

So, too, with the untrained recruit who reports to a ship only to find himself swallowed up in mess-cooking for 3 months, followed by what seems to be an endless period of compartment cleaning or chipping paint in a deck division. This experience is accompanied by serious trauma after the excitement and high sense of accomplishment in recruit training. Many blacks view this as an injustice and a breach of faith. In reality it is routine and a fact of life in duty afloat-a situation that every recruit should understand.

Similarly with questions of discipline. There is much misconception among young blacks with regard to the theory of punishment. They do not seem to understand that a poor disciplinary record or a history of poor performance is considered when meting out punishment for an offense-particularly at Captain's Mast (nonjudicial punishment).

This "complaint" occurs if a white and a black are punished for the same transgression and the white receives a lesser punishment because of a better record of prior conduct. All personnel must receive careful explanation of the system and be advised further that the same system obtains in comparable civilian proceedings.

Polarization

The vast majority of blacks and whites are fine members of the military and go about their daily routines doing their jobs quietly and effectively. It appears that the militants and agitators comprise but a small

minority of black membership of units inspected during this inquiry. But apparently there is a polarization of the races developing in many quarters which is most distressing. Some 2 years ago the committee warned of this turn of events during the Camp Lejeune investigation. Now, apparently, it has come to pass. Although this tendency manifests itself typically during off-duty hours, in the mess-hall, and in making berthing arrangements, it certainly is not stunted or discouraged by convening ad hoc councils and committees composed of all black members to provide guidance to command on racial matters. It can encourage a white sailor to view this polarization as a threat to his own security.

In that regard, there has been evidence that after the *Kitty Hawk* incident, certain blacks in the ship were "proud of the riot" and bragged of a "victory"-of "winning the fight on the *Hawk*"-and "having it under control". The subcommittee is anxious that any such notion will be completely and effectively dispelled. There was no victory for anybody-but there was written in the ship's log a sad chapter in the history of the Navy.

Polarization is an unfortunate development which presents a clear challenge to the general welfare and good order and discipline. It is a priority item for correction-particularly in the forces afloat.

D. PROBLEMS OF PERCEPTION

One of the most complex problems in the Navy is dealing with what an individual believes to be a fact rather than with the fact itself. It is equally as essential to correct a perception of wrong as it is to provide equal treatment to all.

While the members of the subcommittee were unable to find institutional discrimination, many young blacks, particularly those in the 18- to 22-year-old range who have been in the Navy for less than a year, perceive that there is a racial discrimination in the Navy.

Because of the black unity movement, they find it difficult to accept punishment on an individual basis. Rather, they perceive that punishment to one is punishment to all.

This, coupled with a view that every crime there must be fixed punishment prescribed, causes them perceive they have been unfairly treated at Captain's Mast (nonjudicial proceedings). Unlike more experienced sailors, blacks and whites, they would prefer not to have performance and prior offense records taken into consideration when punishment is given. This reflects a distrust for both the civil and military justice systems. They feel that the entire justice system in the United States has been weighted against blacks in a low-income status. Even though Captain's Mast provides an opportunity to provide justice tempered with mercy, the young black perceives that two different punishments for the same offense means, in itself, an abuse of authority and thus prejudice, especially if one of their members receives the greater punishment.

The young black also perceives that performance ratings given to blacks are discriminatory-although little evidence was given to substantiate this allegation. The semiannual performance evaluation considers not only job performance but also the sailor's appearance, military behavior, adaptability and potential for leadership. Obviously, these are judgmental considerations. It is apparent that senior petty officers and junior officers failed in their responsibility to counsel with their men by not pointing out the areas in which they were deficient so that when a man learned of his poor performance marks at the time an administrative discharge was given him, he perceived that it was given only because of his color. To the members of the subcommittee this perception, misplaced though it may be, indicates a failure in leadership and a failure in communication but it does not, in itself, have any connotation of racial prejudice.

There were complaints that work assignments were discriminatory. The subcommittee could find no evidence that any assignments were given to blacks that were also not given to white seamen of the same grade, mental category and time in service. Obviously, those who have had service-school training have a head start for advancement over those who do not have that training. Personnel in mental category IV and the lower half of category III are not sent to service schools. But this does not prevent any individual, utilizing his own initiative and personal efforts, from competing for higher rates. Many of the senior petty officers in the Navy today have used this route. It appears to the young black, since the majority of his petty officers and officers are white and since his initial job aboard a ship has been mess cooking or paint chipping, that his opportunities are limited. That this is racial discrimination is a false perception of the situation.

But the perception problem is not limited to black seamen alone. The Chief of Naval Operations does not admit to any severe breakdown of discipline in today's Navy. He asserts that the Navy is operating under the most arduous conditions in its history and has proved itself to be combat effective. In his view, combat effectiveness is the proof of the Navy's maintenance of good order and discipline.

He feels, however, that there has been less than a full measure of success in assuring equal opportunity in the Navy and in fostering a successful program of race relations. Therefore, he has placed primary emphasis on a program to resolve racial problems. Because of this emphasis on racial problems, his subordinates may have perceived his attitude and his directives in a manner that has caused a lessening of discipline, creating a situation wherein racial problems have been overemphasized.

As an example, we cite the handling of *Constellation* personnel who engaged in mutiny or a "sit down strike". The primary officer from the staff of the Commander, Naval Air Forces, Pacific, assigned to work with this group was one whose field was human relations and equal opportunity programs. His attitude and approach toward the dissidents was one of negotiation rather than discipline, with his major objective being the voluntary return of the dissidents to the ship. He held meetings to let the young blacks air their grievances. He called in personnel from the Human Relations Development Center to counsel the dissidents. He held meetings with their spokesmen and so-called "representatives" who alleged they were qualified to speak for the entire group. He urged the recall of *Constellation* so that the captain could personally negotiate with the group. He acted as a mediator for the group with the ship's captain, taking with him a list of three demands and urging their acceptance-which he subsequently obtained. These demands were the establishment of a board, external to the ship to (1) review all nonjudicial punishments given aboard the ship, (2) review all administrative discharges given to black personnel and, (3) amnesty for all personnel for their involvement in their "sitdown strike". The ship's captain made it known that he did not want certain of the group returned to his ship but the Commander, Naval Forces, Pacific and those in even higher headquarters made it perfectly clear that the men were to be offered the opportunity to return to the ship. Each dissident was given that opportunity. As events turned out, only five or six of the approximately 130 returned to the ship. Those who refused were charged only with an unauthorized absence of 6 hours and were given \$25 fines.

From the incident alone, it appears obvious that the maintenance of discipline was secondary to satisfying demands of the young black personnel.

But of equal interest is the perception of the captain who yielded to the demands of the dissidents upon the persuasion of the staff of his immediate superior. He testified that it was his belief that the primary objective of the Navy in this case was to return the dissident personnel to his ship, that he perceived the higher staff personnel accepted as fact the claims and grievances of the dissidents and that the staff had the preconceived notion that these blacks had actually been mistreated. He further believed that it was desired that his efforts be oriented toward maintaining the credibility of the human relations staff personnel who were negotiating.

The record is replete with testimony that middle management, the junior officers and senior petty officers, perceived their authority to have been diluted by the Chief of Naval Operations when he addressed all naval personnel in a series of Z-grams which, being general in nature, permitted individual interpretation of his directions.

It should be clearly understood that many of these perceptions are clearly contrary to the facts and do not necessarily represent the thinking of the major portion of the Navy. Nevertheless, as long as individuals perceive these to be facts, the Navy will continue to have problems in maintaining good order and discipline

E. THE FAILURE OF MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

One of the most alarming features of the investigation was the discovery of lack of leadership by middle management in the Navy.

It became apparent that while junior officers, chief petty officers and senior petty officers were performing their technical duties in a proficient manner, there was a lack of leadership in dealing with the seamen.

Examples of this lack of leadership are numerous: the poor personal grooming of the crew, the poor standards of cleanliness on at least one of the ships, the failure to counsel with subordinates concerning their "quarterly marks" or personal problems, the failure to take corrective action when corrective action was warranted, and the failure to demand an immediate response to lawful orders.

Undoubtedly, one of the primary factors is that as the Navy becomes more technical, grade or rank is obtained on the basis of technical skills rather than on leadership ability. There are insufficient on-going formal programs within the Navy to provide adequate training for petty officers, chief petty officers, and junior officers with respect to the basic elements of leadership.

One black chief petty officer described the change in discipline and the attitude toward discipline, as "just one gigantic cop-out by people like us. When the CNO sends a direct message to everybody in the field, the senior petty officer community and the middle management officer community have thrown up their hands and said, 'He has taken all our power away and we can't do anything.'"

Obviously, there has not been any removal of the tools to maintain discipline aboard a ship or anywhere else in the Navy, but the attitude toward the use of such tools has changed.

The change, in part, has been occasioned by the use of minority affairs representatives, human relations councils and human resources staffs which too frequently bypass the chain of command.

When a seaman can go to some "special interest group" outside the chain of command to discuss his specific grievance without first attempting to resolve his problem through his immediate superior, and, in turn, when someone on that council or committee attempts to mediate that problem with the seaman's supervisor, then the authority of that supervisor is inevitably diluted. The result is that, too often, the supervisor later gives in to an unwarranted request or fails to take corrective action rather than fighting the auxiliary chain of command.

Also, because of a general feeling of permissiveness that we found prevailed among many personnel in the Navy, there is a tendency on the part of many junior officers, chief petty officers, and senior petty officers to take the attitude of "don't make waves." A good example of this was given the members of

the subcommittee wherein a chief was preventing some men from going on liberty because of dirty shoes and unkempt appearance. A lieutenant told the chief to let them go on liberty and not rock the boat. This attitude breeds contempt by the seamen for their superiors and sows seeds for the destruction of the system.

We cannot and must not permit the middle management team to adopt a passive attitude which lets the men do anything they want to do. Superiors in the Navy are supposed to command, not give in to demands. Otherwise, there is no authority.

F. RECRUIT TRAINING

During the course of this inquiry, the subcommittee looked into the present syllabus for recruit training in the Navy and the fashion in which graduates were meeting the requirements of the fleet. Of particular note, the subcommittee found, was the lot of the average sailor in the lower mental group (group IV) who was not school-qualified and was ordered directly from recruit training to the fleet. As noted earlier, his initial shock comes with immediate full-time assignment to mess cooking (work in the galley and messdecks) for 3 months, and then, more than likely to ship's maintenance work that seems to offer little chance for advancement, dampens his recruit-oriented enthusiasm, and puts the lie to recruiting posters and other similar advertising. There is need for more direct indoctrination on routine shipboard procedures in recruit training to blunt the impact of the early drudgery.

A priority item might be return to a 9-week cycle of training. The present 7-week program appears inadequate on all accounts and particularly in the short-circuited exposure of recruits to counseling and informal group discussion with company staff personnel. Also, the added exposure to the rigors of recruit discipline and regimentation-again with proper counseling-would aid immeasurably in accomplishing the transition from "street to fleet."

Anyone who has thrilled to the splendor of a recruit graduation exercise, with the well-scrubbed recruits marching erect and swelling with pride, a sense of accomplishment and an anxiety to join the fleet, must realize that there is no lack of desire in these men to be a part of the real Navy. It seems, then, that in what we have been told is "today's society," the service has a responsibility to maintain that recruit's momentum to the maximum possible degree and not allow it to be destroyed by such policies as spawned the *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation* episodes.

Again, with reference to the lower mental group input, we have been told, and agree, that these men must be otherwise well-adjusted and psychiatrically fit if they are to have any chance of success in the Navy. Thus, all men in that category should be carefully screened at the recruit level, ideally to include a realistic psychiatric evaluation. As a test of the adaptability of these men, there should be instituted an organized follow-up program to score each such recruit's performance in the fleet. Such an arrangement, we believe, would be invaluable to the future testing and screening of these individuals in the various recruit evaluation units in the Recruit Training Command.

Finally, more effort is needed to screen out the agitators and troublemakers at the recruit level. If there is doubt, that doubt should be resolved in favor of the Navy.

VI. CLOSING STATEMENT

Discipline is the keystone of the armed services of any nation. If discipline collapses, a military force becomes a leaderless, uniformed mob, capable only of accomplishing its own destruction.

The United States Navy is now confronted with pressures, both from within and without, which if not controlled, will surely destroy its enviable tradition of discipline.

Recent instances of sabotage, riot, willful disobedience of orders, and contempt for authority, instances which have occurred with increased frequency, are clear-cut symptoms of a dangerous deterioration of discipline.

The leaders of our Nation must make a critical decision-shall we tolerate a continued decline in naval discipline, or shall we adhere to traditional concepts of military discipline tempered with humanitarianism? That is the question.

The subcommittee believes that the latter option is the only response which will provide an effective fighting force.

Acknowledgements: Dr. Guy Botata of Lille University, France; and Moussa Sawadogo, a student at Paris 10 University (University of Nanterre), Paris, France, prepared the online version of this publication during summer and fall 2002 internships at the Navy Department Library.

7 November 2003