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May 23, 1967

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TIME MAGAZINE SALUTES THE  
NEGRO GI IN VIETNAM

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

(Mr. LONG of Maryland (at the request of Mr. Jacobs) was granted permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. LONG of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, Negro American fighting men are making major sacrifices and major contributions to our Nation by their gallantry in the Vietnam war.

Negroes are serving in combat units in Vietnam in greater numbers than their percentage of the population as a whole, and in greater numbers than their percentage in the Armed Forces generally. Their reenlistment rate is also great. have been working with the Defense Department to encourage Armed Forces publicity about Negro achievements, and to insure that these achievements are rewarded by adequate promotions.

The cover story in this week's Time magazine salutes the Negro GI in Vietnam. I would like to insert this article in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. There should be more of this kind of public attention to the heroism of the Negro fighting man.

DEMOCRACY IN THE FOXHOLE

Deep in "Indian country," the Viet Cong's jungled heartland, a lone U.S. helicopter flapped furiously down on an abandoned dirt road way. Even before the Huey hit the ground, it six passengers were out and running. Their faces streaked with camouflage paint, their black and green "tiger suits" blending into the foliage, their black-stocked M-16 automatic rifles at the ready, they faded swiftly into the perennial twilight of 80-ft. trees, impenetrable bamboo thickets, and tangles of thorn and "wait a minute" vines. This was "Lurp Team Two," a long-range reconnaissance patrol (LRP) of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, sent to seek out two Viet Cong regiments that their outfit was itching to locate, engage and destroy. Within moments, Team Two was itself in imminent danger of destruction.

It did not take long for the patrol to discover that it had landed smack in the midst of a Viet Cong concentration. As skilled as Victor Charlie in the deadly blind-man's buff of jungle warfare, Team Two soon realized that the enemy was following its every move. Each time Staff Sergeant Clide Brown Jr. halted his men, they could hear a couple of footfalls close behind—and then a bristling silence. As the jungle dusk deepened into blackness, Brown set up a defense perimeter and listened more closely. Above the keening of insects, geckos and night birds, he heard the snap of two fingers and the snick of a rifle bolt not 30 yards away. "We're getting out of here," he whispered. "They're just behind us."

Linked up head and tail like circus elephants by their "escape ropes," each humping half a hundredweight of gear,<sup>1</sup> the muzzles of their rifles still taped to keep out gunk, the scouts took advantage of distant artillery salvos to mask their footfalls on the way back to a prearranged retrieval zone. Brown, in the lead, groped his way back through the blackness by memorizing the map and counting his own steps; each time his left foot hit the ground 67 times, he calculated the team had covered 100 meters. Back at the landing zone, Brown's whispered message filtered into the PRC transceiver: "Four seven, this is Papa Two. I'm in trouble. This is Papa Two . . ." No reply. The triple-tiered jungle canopy drowned his call to the pickup helicopter. Brown moved his men

soundlessly across the clearing and set up a radial defense—each man flat on his back, head to the center of the circle, his M-16 ready—behind a tangle of fallen trees.

Hanging Tough. Team Two measured the passage of the night in careful inhalations, silent exhalations, and the clack of bamboo signal sticks used by the Viet Cong patrols that passed within 50 feet of its hideout. Then, at 2 a.m., a single shot blasted the night: Brown's radio man, shifting his M-16, had accidentally triggered a tracer round—almost certainly disclosing the team's position. Brown hung tough, hoping that the cross-wave of jungle echoes would confuse the enemy searchers. It did, and at dawn the team moved back in to hunt out the Viet Cong base camp.

Only after Brown had spotted a concentration of black pajamas did Team Two withdraw. As enemy sniper bullets stitched around and between them, the scouts blasted back with fragmentation grenades and bursts of automatic fire that chopped the brush into jungle salad. Brown "popped smoke"—yellow signal grenades—to bring in the croppers, and while hovering Huey gunships laced the weeds with rockets and .50-cal. bullets. Team Two made its getaway, mission accomplished.

Bright Strands. Sergeant Brown, 24, is a Negro from the black belt of Alabama; in 16 sorties into Indian country he has not lost anyone on his five-man team, none of whom is a Negro. The cool professionalism of Clide Brown's patrol underscores in microcosm a major lesson of Viet Nam—a hopeful and creative development in a dirty, hard-fought war. For the first time in the nation's military history, its Negro fighting men are fully integrated in combat, fruitfully employed in positions of leadership, and fiercely proud of their performance. In the unpredictable search-and-destroy missions through the Central Highlands, in the savage battles along the DMZ, in the boot-swallowing, sniper-infested mangrove swamps of the Mekong Delta, on the carrier decks and in the gun mounts of the Seventh Fleet offshore, in the cockpits of helicopters and fighter-bombers in the skies above both Viet Names, the American Negro is winning—indeed has won—a black badge of courage that his nation must forever honor.

That badge, interlaced with all the bright strands of personal bravery and professional skill that have marked their performance in battle, proclaims a truth that Americans had not yet learned about themselves before

Viet Nam: color has no place in war; merit is the only measure of the man.

Can Do, Must Win. More than anything, the performance of the Negro G.I. under fire reaffirms the success—and diversity—of the American experiment. Often inchoate and inconsistent, instinctively self-serving yet naturally altruistic, the Negro fighting man is both savage in combat and gentle in his regard for the Vietnamese. He can clean out a bunker load of Viet Cong with a knife and two hand grenades, or offer smokes to a captured V.C. and then squat beside him trying to communicate in bastard Vietnamese. He may fight to prove his manhood—perhaps as a corrective to the matriarchal dominance of the Negro ghetto back home—or to save Viet Nam for a government in Saigon about which he himself is cynical. Mostly, though, he fights for the dignity of the Negro, to shatter the stereotypes of racial inferiority, to win the judgment of noncoms and officers of whatever color; "He's got the tickets."

Even though 70% of all Negroes are rejected by the draft because of ghetto-bred ill health or non-education, the proportion of Negro army combat troops in Viet Nam is

more than double the ratio of Negroes to whites in the U.S. population at large (23% v. 11%). That, according to the Negro G.I. himself and his officers, is because those who make it into military service are the "cream of the crop"—can-do, must-win competitors who volunteer for dangerous duty both for the premium pay and the extra status it gives them. "I get my jollies jumping out of airplanes," says one Negro paratrooper of his \$55-a-month extra airborne pay. Unlike Negroes in previous wars, the Viet Nam breed is well disciplined; there are proportionately no more black than white inmates of L.B.J., as the Long Binh Jail is unfondly known. Many of the best Negro warriors are former civil rights demonstrators, men who marched on lunch counters and Washington itself to win equal rights for their race. Not surprisingly, Negroes pull a considerably higher combat death rate than whites.

Black-white relations in a slit trench or a combat-bound Huey are years ahead of Denver and Darien, decades ahead of Birmingham and Biloxi. "The only color out here is olive drab," says a white sergeant. Despite the foxhole comradeship of most G.I.s in Viet Nam, the war is not all interracial amity; vicious racist graffiti from both sides mar the walls of latrines in Saigon; whites and Negroes slug it out on occasion along the night-town streets of Tu Do and in "Soulsville," the Negro's self-imposed ghetto of joy along Saigon's waterfront. Sometimes they shoot it out. Like their people back home, many Negro G.I.s are skeptical of the aims of the war. Nonetheless, of scores of Negro servicemen interviewed by TIME in Viet Nam, all but a few volunteered the information that they were there to serve their country, however badly it may have treated them.

"With all the inadequacies and imperfections," says a Negro infantry officer, "the U.S. still offers more individual rights than any other country; it's still worth dying for." Says South Carolina-born General William C. Westmoreland: "I have an intuitive feeling that the Negro servicemen have a better understanding than the whites of what the war is about."

Gallant Gallery. Negro officers in key technical and diplomatic posts range from Major Beauregard Brown III, 31, of De Quincy, La., who supervises combat logistics in Westmoreland's headquarters, to Navy Lieut. Commander Wendall Johnson, 33, a former gunnery officer aboard the Viet Nam-based destroyed U.S.S. *Ingraham*, who is now one of Saigon's key contacts for Thai, Nationalist Chinese and other Allied cooperation with U.S. forces. They include a brace of other, unrelated Johnsons; Major Clifton R. Johnson, 31, of Baltimore, a chemical-warfare expert with the 173rd Airborne, who laid the smokescreen that kicked off an assault on the Viet Cong regiments that Clide Brown's patrol helped to locate; and Captain Wallace Johnson, 27, a former Oklahoma University fullback who now wears the Green Beret of the Special Forces and bosses a pacification

<sup>1</sup> Load per man for a two-day mission: Claymore mine and 240 rounds of ammo; four canteens of water and three meals of dried meat with rice; compass, flare gun, signal mirror, orange-and-cerise panel to signal for help; morphine for wounds, pep pills for drowsiness, codeine to kill coughs that might betray a position, antidiarrheal pills; tape to ward off leeches by closing off wrists and ankles of uniforms.

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program in Viet Nam. They include Negro women like 1st Lieut. Dorothy Harris, 27, a slender, sloc-eyed nurse who was pinned down by a mortar barrage a month after she arrived in Cu Chi last January. Nurse Harris spends much of her time beyond the Cu Chi perimeter, treating disease and malnutrition among the Vietnamese civilians, who often touch her brown skin and cry: "Same! Same!" She will extend her tour of duty by six months when it is up next year.

More numerous are the front-line warriors, commissioned and enlisted alike. Lieut. Colonel James Frank Hamlet, 45, of Buffalo, is a hard-riding Negro battalion commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the elite "First Team" that has killed more Viet Cong than any other U.S. division in the war. The 600 men who fly Hamlet's 75 Hueys—and carry many of the Air Cav's troopers into combat—respect him for riding along on even the hottest missions and for talking straight to his bosses. Hamlet, who enlisted as a private in 1943, likes to recall that "there was a time when I knew personally every Negro lieutenant colonel; thank God, I don't any more."

The list also includes aviators like Air Force Major James T. Boddie Jr., 36, of Baltimore, a Phantom fighter-bomber pilot who has flown 153 missions over North and South Viet Nam since he arrived seven months ago. Winner of nine Air Medals and recommended for both the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Silver Star, Boddie can lay bombs or napalm within 30 meters of his own troops and take as much steel as the Viet Cong can dish out. Yet he is able to say of Stateside antiwar demonstrators: "I'm here to protect their right to dissent."

Duty and Dogs. In the enlisted ranks, few Negro G.I.s are better known than Sergeant Lonnie Galley Samuel, another Silver Star winner, who leads a "Blue Team" of an Air Cav battalion. His job: to draw enemy fire from a chopper, then land and engage in hopes of provoking a major battle ("Sam" has provoked a batch in the past year). Asked why he does not apply for a commission, Sam, at 41, laughs: "I can't do that, man. I'd be the oldest lieutenant in the Army."

Just as tough is Specialist Four Roderick Johns, 22, a former airline flight checker and draftee from Washington, D.C., who has survived 69 patrols as a dog handler with the 38th Infantry Scout Dog Patrol. Communist posters offer big rewards for every handler captured dead or alive, and fully half of the 18 men who arrived in Viet Nam with Johns last July have been killed or wounded. His only wound came from a dog—not his own—that flipped under pressure and nearly tore off Johns's right hand. His own dog, a German shepherd named Kentucky, patrolling at the edge of a jungle copse, sniffed out an ambush, saved 35 lives—and won Johns a Bronze Star recommendation.

Foremost among the Negro combat heroes of Viet Nam are the two who won Medals of Honor. Pfc. Milton Olive, 19, won his award posthumously by throwing himself on a grenade and saving the lives of four multicolored squadmates during a fierce fire fight near Phu Cuong in 1965. The only living Negro Medal of Honor winner in the Viet Nam war is Medic Lawrence Joel, 39, now stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Making It Big. Product of a broken North Carolina home, reared by foster parents from the age of eight, Joel made the Army a career because he was convinced that "you couldn't make it really big" as a Negro on

the outside. Promotion came slowly, and he was once busted for arguing with a sergeant. Then, on a fiery slope near Bien Hoa in November 1965, Joel met Victor Charlie. As his platoon was devoured by enemy cross-fire, and he himself took two slugs in the legs, Joel hobbled and crept through the holocaust to patch ripped chests, plug bottles of plasma into dangling arms, give bloody mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to corpses and wounded alike, shoot Syrettes of morphine into mangled men. He allowed himself only one Syrette for his own wounds, for fear that he might dull his mind, and hamper his work. At dawn, the job done, Joel recalls looking at himself; hands encrusted with blood to the wrists, legs thick with edema and dirty bandages. He lay under a tree and cried for the first time since he was a boy in Winston-Salem.

Last week, in crisp dress whites, Joel and his wife were the guests of President Johnson at the annual White House military reception. A gentle, reticent man, who once thought of giving up military life to become a beautician, Joel responded firmly when reporters pressed him about the morality of the war: "Most of the men who have been to Viet Nam feel this war is right."

Perils & Glory. Individual Negroes have shown valor in every war: Crispus Attucks was the first American to die under British fire in the Boston Massacre; Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, himself perhaps part Negro, mustered many colored sailors aboard his men-of-war in 1812; a battalion of 600 Negroes turned the tide at the Battle of New Orleans by defeating British General Pakenham's seasoned Napoleonic veterans. Andrew Jackson paid them a glowing tribute: "To the Men of Color—Soldiers! I invited you to share in the perils and to divide the glory of your white countrymen. I expected much from you; for I was not uninformed of those qualities which must render you so formidable. I knew you could endure hunger and thirst; I knew that you loved the land of your nativity. But you surpass my hopes. Soldiers!"

Few such encomiums greeted the Negro regiments of the Civil War—though many units fought gallantly on both sides. Negro troops also served with valor in the Indian wars and the Spanish-American War. (One of their white officers, John Pershing of the 10th Negro Cavalry, became "Black Jack" to a later generation because of his service with Negro troops.) In World Wars I and II, some of the luster was lost with reports of the sometimes cowardly performance of the Negro 92nd and 93rd Divisions, and with the rioting by off-duty Negro soldiers that accompanied a rise in racial tensions.

Race as a Crutch. Though Harry Truman ordered the military services desegregated in 1948, the Korean War found Negroes still serving in all-black outfits, or else in behind-the-lines non-combat roles. White officers—particularly in the Navy and Marine Corps—stubbornly kept Negroes out of top command positions.

That situation is better today in Viet Nam—but not much. Though more than 10% of the Army troops in Viet Nam are Negroes, only 5% of the 11,000 officers are black. Of the 380 combat-battalion commands in the war, only two are held by Negro officers. Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, during his Viet Nam tour in March, received many complaints that the Negro is not given the opportunity to attain command; he cites the case of a Negro colonel who, when promoted, was given a desk job that had never existed before simply to keep him from being assigned to a line command. One reason, of course, is that too many potential Negro officers lack the educational requirements for command. In fact, Captain James R. Randall, 34, a Negro psychiatrist for the 4th Infantry Division, though agreeing that many Negro officers and enlisted men complain of discrimination, says: "Many times I

have found that the complaint because of race is not really that, but that race has been used by some as a crutch." To the argument that Negroes are too poor for college deferments must be added the fact that they like the military enough to re-enlist at a rate three times that of the white servicemen.

Still, many Negro soldiers prefer to pull their passes in Saigon's self-segregated Soulsville, a warren of bars and brothels along Khanh Hoi Street near the capital's waterfront. In the honky-tonks, they can dig the big beat of the Supremes singing *Come See About Me* or the kinky cool of Ahmad Jamal's *Heat Wave*, bob about the bars in their "shades" (sunglasses) and talk "trash" (shoot the bull). The girls of Soulsville—many of them dark-skinned Cambodians or the daughters of French Senegalese soldiers—are less costly and usually less comely than their sisters on white-dominated Tu Do Street near by. The "in" spot in Soulsville is the L. & M. Guest House, a bar-restaurant and record booth run by balding, beer-bellied "Johnny" Hill, 35, a New Orleans Negro and ex-merchant sailor whose menu of "soul food" runs from No. 4 (turnip greens) through No. 8 (barbecued spareribs) to No. 9, "Kansas City Wrinkles," better known as chitlins. In Soulsville, the sustenance is psychological as well. There, no matter how close he may be to white soldiers on the line, the Negro G.I. can get away from "Chuck," the white man (the Stateside nickname "Charlie" is reserved for the Viet Cong). "Chuck's looks in those Tu Do bars!" growls one Negro pfc. "Man, they hurt more than a Claymore."

Whatever "Keep the faith, baby" might mean to Adam Clayton Powell, the phrase is used by most soldiers in Viet Nam to mean, as Negro Captain Clifford Alexander Jr. puts it: "We are fighting over here against the Viet Cong and at home against discrimination; together we can win in both places." The Negro on duty becomes a truly invisible man: "In civilian life, somebody might look at you and say 'You're a Negro,'" remarks Navy Lieut. (j.g.) Friedel C. Greene, 25, a carrier-based radar tracker from Memphis. "Over here they just look to see if you do your job." That hopeful sentiment reflects a concern with full citizenship that goes far beyond the desperate banalities of Negro dissidents in the U.S.

Rural Deprivation. The whirlwind of civil rights protest that swept up millions of American Negroes over the past decade never touched Lurp Leader Clide Brown. In his starched khakis, cocky tan beret and flaming sword patch on the right, he is a 5-ft. 7-in., 168-lb. pillar of dignity. Great-grandson of a slave, he grew up in Brewton (pop. 7,000), a sawmill town in the pine woods of Alabama. His father, Clyde Brown Sr., is known as "Buck" to his friends because of his lively buck-and-wing dancing. Individualist Clide Brown Jr. always insisted on spelling his name differently.

"I always loved that boy so much it hurt," says Buck, a \$100-a-week construction worker. "When he'd wrestle, he'd always have to win. Now he can win with me. He's a better man than me now. He doesn't sass the captains. He's a good, red-blooded American boy." Buck taught his son to hunt and fish in the dense woods nearby. Schoolmates of Counter Guerrilla Clide still recall how, when he was twelve, he converted a cap pistol into a zip gun and shot a deer, then dived into a river to wrestle it out and into the familyarder. Clide Brown Jr. had no desire to spend his life in the pine flats "tintimin'" (notching pine trees to collect the gum for turpentine). As soon as he graduated from Brewton's all black Booker T. Washington High School, where he played halfback on the football team and shortstop for the Pony League Brewton Braves, he joined his daddy in the construction trade. Having promised

his mother not to enlist, Clide was secretly happy to be drafted into the Army in 1961.

Benefits from Sam. A tour in West Germany as a paratrooper convinced him that the Army was his life. "Number 1," he says, "the Army is a good job. You get paid good money and there are benefits and other good things Sam has for you. Then you get a chance to work with people and be a leader. What's more, any paratrooper can whup five 'legs' (infantrymen)!" Brown thought about OCS but rejected it. "I like being a noncom," he says, "and the Army always needs good NCOs. Some officers are something else."

During his West German R and R, Brown visited Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Turkey and Greece—places that few of his schoolmates in Brewton will see in their lifetime. Back in the States in 1966, he married a divorcee, Amelia Greenlee, whose Army sergeant father is a 30-year man in the infantry, and whose two children by her previous marriage Brown has adopted. Clide and Amelia also have a son of their own, two-year-old David.

Safer than the Bats. Fort Benning gave Brown a chance to join a Lurp team. The boy from the black belt taught judo at Benning's Ranger school, sat as a member of the Combat Condition Committee, and last July stitched on the coveted Ranger patch. After passing stiff interviews and skill tests in map reading, marksmanship and "maturity," Brown was picked as a Lurp leader in Viet Nam last November. "They have to be trustworthy," says Major Raymond F. Spinks, the brigade intelligence officer, who relies on Brown's reports. "It's safer than in the bats [infantry battalions]," says Brown with pragmatic insouciance.

When not on patrol, Brown reads (currently *A Thousand Days*), listens to rock 'n' roll records (favorites: the Righteous Brothers, James Brown), or sips bourbon with his buddy, Sergeant Arthur Slsby, a 26-year-old New Yorker who happens to be white. Brown eschews Soulsville forays, preferring to send his money home to his wife, and to put his 14-year-old sister Lois through college. As for Viet Nam, Brown is casual. "You stay alert, you stay alive," he says. "And that red clay do remind you of northern Alabama."

"Hell, No!" Like most soldiers, Clide Brown is basically apolitical; yet as a Negro he is a member of America's most active political minority. How does he justify the contradiction? "I don't know whether I would march if I became a civilian again," says Brown. "But nobody is going to shove me around. That goes for those peace people who don't want to support our Government, and the white bigots, and Carmichael and his bunch, who don't want to support my people." His people? By that Brown means not the Negro, but his own patrol members.

What burns Brown and most Negro fighting men is the charge—first proclaimed by Stokely Carmichael and now echoed by the likes of Martin Luther King—that Viet Nam is a "race war" in which the white U.S. Establishment is using colored mercenaries to murder brown-skinned freedom fighters. "Hell, no, man!" snaps Brown, in an unconscious parody of Carmichael's anti-draft slogan. "We're here fighting for a cause, not a white or a black cause or any crap like that. I'd like a chance to meet Stokely out there with the V.C." Most incomprehensible to men who have seen their buddies maimed by V.C. steel and booby traps is Carmichael's statement that it's better to shoot a white cop than a Vietnamese.

"Nothing Separate." A Negro Army major reflects the Negro G.I.'s deep concern for the Vietnamese civilian when he says: "I wish Martin Luther King and William Fulbright could see for themselves the savage butchery that the Viet Cong have wrought in the name of liberty." Fulbright gets a double

dose of dislike from the Negro G.I.: his anti-war sentiments dovetail with his record of support for segregation. Negro 1st Lieut. Frank Smith, 33, a platoon leader of the "Big Red One," who earned a Bronze Star last year in a fight near Di An, where four of his white soldiers died trying to save a wounded Negro, says of Fulbright: "He's actin' pink as a cranberry." Curiously, one Southern white segregationist wins grudging praise from the Negro in Viet Nam: House Armed Services Committee Chairman L. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina. "That's the man who gets us the pay raises," Specialist Five William Brent of Pensacola explains—correctly.

Cassius Clay, respected for his cool style and forensic fulminations, is nonetheless resented by the Negro G.I.s for his draft evasion. "He gave up being a man when he decided against getting inducted," says Clide Brown. "And I don't want him as no Negro either." (Anyway, most G.I.s who know him think that Marine Sergeant Percy Price could whup Clay any time—as he did at the Olympic trials in San Francisco in 1960.) Negro G.I.s blame Clay's misdirection on the Black Muslims. "They're separatists," says Clide Brown, "and there's nothing separate about this war." Adds an Army officer: "There's no difference between Elijah Muhammad and the Grand Dragon of the Klan."

The most perplexing figure to Negroes in Viet Nam is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They respect him still for his pioneering role in the civil rights revolution but are puzzled and hurt by his current stance that Negroes should refuse to fight in Viet Nam. "I don't think any American leader, black or white, can assist the cause of freedom by preaching the cause of secession," says Negro Lieut. Colonel Warren P. Kynard, 39, an operations officer on the Saigon staff of General Westmoreland. "Furthermore, I don't think Martin Luther King is qualified enough in international relations to open his mouth on American policy in Viet Nam." Harsh words from any source—but particularly since Kynard is the former fiancé of Coretta King, Martin Luther's wife, and still a close friend of the couple.

#### BRIDGE BUILDERS

Massachusetts' Brooke, first Negro elected by popular vote to the U.S. Senate, emerges clearly as the most popular leader among Negro troops, who mostly esteem the bridge builders who try to cross the racial gap rather than widen it. They were impressed with Brooke's painful reversal of opinion about the war after his firsthand look at the battleground. According to Army Sergeant Velmon D. Phillips, who won a Bronze Star recommendation after trying in vain to save the life of a white paratrooper, Ed Brooke "proves that a Negro can make it on merit alone."

Predictably, Air Force Lieut. General Benjamin O. Davis Jr., the highest-ranking Negro officer in any service—and son of the first Negro general, Benjamin O. Davis—rates high with Negro servicemen. So do such moderates as the N.A.A.C.P.'s Roy Wilkins, U.S. Solicitor General (and longtime civil rights strategist) Thurgood Marshall, Labor Leader A. Philip Randolph (who directed the 1963 March on Washington), U.N. Under Secretary Ralph Bunche and Baseball Great Jackie Robinson. Negroes in Viet Nam show the same respect for Southern-born General William C. Westmoreland as do white G.I.s. "His position on civil rights was a matter of public record even before he came to Viet Nam," notes Major Beauregard Brown.

#### CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS

Whatever the outcome of the war, whatever its length and its price in suffering, the result of the Viet Nam experience should pay high dividends in reshaping white Americans' attitudes toward social justice and integration; it has already given some 50,000

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Negroes a sense of self-confidence and a commensurate demand for deeper participation in American society. "If anybody slights one of my soldiers for racial reasons when he gets home," says Clide Brown's commanding officer, Brigadier General John R. Deane, "I expect that soldier's going to get madder than hell."

That anger could well be triggered if, on his return, the Negro veteran of Viet Nam finds himself cast back into the ghetto and a social immobility equivalent to the triple-canopy of the Southeast Asia jungle. "He's seen miles of progress in Viet Nam," says Beauregard Brown, "when there wasn't an inch of progress at home in Harlem or Jackson." The Urban League's Whitney Young Jr., one of the few Negro civil rights leaders who have visited Viet Nam, warns in Harper's June issue that, along with his "new confidence," the Negro G.I. has acquired new skills "of guerrilla warfare, of killing, of subversion, and it would be realistic to expect such experts of mines and booby traps to find good reason why they should use these skills and risk their lives against the enemy of personal injustice as they did against the enemy of Communist aggression." Negro Leader Bayard Rustin has a more constructive view: "As the students of 1960 were in the forefront of the civil rights movement back then, the Negro G.I. will be in the forefront of the next phase."

Only a Beginning. Fully 15,000 Negro veterans are returning to civilian life each year, and if the war continues to grow in its demands for more troops, their numbers will mount accordingly. To help those men find a place in civilian life worthy of their talents and proven leadership capabilities, the Urban League will begin this summer to seed ten "Veterans Affairs Offices" into its 81 nationwide centers. Funded at \$175,000, the VAO program will help Negroes use their G.I. benefits (\$150 a month for education), place them in a "skill bank," and offer on-the-job training where it is needed.

At the same time, the Federal Government is moving to eradicate some of the racial injustices that still exist back home. Last week Defense Secretary Robert McNamara announced a long overdue program to eliminate "humiliating discrimination" in off-base housing against Negro G.I.s who are often forced to travel long distances to and from their Southern bases. It might even ease the complaint of the Air Cav's Jim Hamlet, who refuses to accept post-Viet Nam duty in the segregated South—"although some of the best jobs in Army aviation are there."

Whatever the conditions when they return, Negro veterans, says Senator Brooke, "will be better able to make a better life for themselves." They will have acquired sophistication and skills along with their expectations. University of Chicago Sociologist Morris Janowitz, one of the few scholars who have given intensive thought to the re-entry problem, believes: "The experience of the military will integrate them into the larger society. They will be more likely to enter the mainstream of political American life." Military service, after all, makes a man wiliier, not angrier, and the Negro vet will probably be more attracted to politics than demonstration or riot.

Melvin Stennis Jr., 24, of the 25th Division "Wolfhounds," who as a squad leader commands the life and death movements of five whites and one other Negro, has perhaps the definitive word on the future of Negro progress. Before entering the Army, Stennis watched the Watts riot from his doorstep. "I hear people are still rioting back home," he says. "It makes you feel sore, sick and guilty. Riots don't do nothing. Instead of playing the big-time part, you got to work for what you want. Don't beg, steal or burn. You got to work for it." Then he pauses. "In Viet Nam, we are working for it."

American society also has to work for him. By channeling the energies and accommodating the ambitions of the returning Negro veteran, the nation can only enrich its own life and demonstrate that democracy can work as well in the cities and fields of America as in the foxholes of Viet Nam.