

Transcript of Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces

Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity In the Armed Forces.

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.
2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.
3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the Armed Services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.
4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.
5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for use of the Committee such documents and other information as the Committee may require.
6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive order.

Harry Truman

July 26, 1948

Questions

1. What year was this executive order established?
2. What is an Executive Order (may need a dictionary to answer)?
3. What major world event had recently ended?
4. How might the event listed above help bring about this Executive Order?
5. What does "equality of treatment" mean?
6. Rephrase number one in your own words as much as possible.
7. How does Truman intend to oversee that number one occurs?
8. What is the committee's job?
9. How will the committee learn about policies and rules that need to be changed?
10. How long will the committee carry out its duties?

Answers

1. 1948
2. A binding rule issued by the president that has the same force as a law.
3. World War II
4. Answers will vary but might include: Seeing the effects non-democratic governments on its citizens may have motivated the US to examine its own policies, viewing the ethnic cleansing practiced by Hitler was so disturbing that the US government may have wanted to be sure it was treating its own citizens fairly, etc
5. Treating all persons the same way
6. The president wanted everyone in the military to be treated the same and be able to advance; this must happen as quickly as possible without effecting the military adversely.
7. By setting a 7 person committee: President's Committee on equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.
8. Examine all aspects of military procedures to be sure they are fair and just and advise all leaders in the military of their findings.
9. Conduct hearings if necessary and read all pertinent documents.
10. Until the president is satisfied that its mission has been carried out and equality in the military existed.