

# Veterans' Policies, Veterans' Politics

New Perspectives on Veterans in the Modern United States

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## The Long Journey Home

### African American World War I Veterans and Veterans' Policies

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It is not an exaggeration to say that the return of the Negro soldier to civil life is one of the most delicate and difficult questions confronting the Nation, north and south.

*George E. Hayes, Director of Negro Economics, Labor Department, November 1918.*

After World War I, federal aid to black veterans became a key battleground in the ongoing struggle to advance civil rights. By forcing the federal government to become a benefactor, albeit a limited one, on behalf of black veterans, this generation of African American veterans and activists breathed new life into a civil rights strategy that had proven successful during the Reconstruction Era when the federal government actively protected African American civil rights. Foreshadowing the unrelenting pressure that civil rights activists would put on the federal government in the 1950s and 1960s to spearhead the end of Jim Crow, black veterans and their advocates successfully argued that Washington, D.C., could not turn a blind eye to discrimination directed against African American veterans. The ensuing struggles over veterans' benefits served as a key milestone in the broader civil rights movement, turning veterans' personal readjustment to civilian life into a collective racial struggle for social justice.

Individual ex-servicemen, however, did not see themselves simply as foot soldiers of the civil rights movement. Reducing the disabled veteran experience simply to a story of veterans' relationship with the state or the civil rights movement obscures the collective identities that the wartime generation developed and maintained.<sup>1</sup> Preserving their distinctive identity as survivors of the world war, both within and without the African American community, also informed black veterans' efforts to influence veterans' policies.

In the aftermath of World War I, the federal government created several new agencies to handle the problem of reabsorbing veterans into civilian society. The U.S. Employment Service, a part of the Department of Labor, and the War

Department offered all returning veterans some help in finding a job, while the Federal Board of Vocational Education initiated an ambitious scheme to retrain wounded men so that they could lead self-sufficient and productive lives. In many respects these agencies raised expectations of federal support that were never fully realized for either white or black veterans. The government's determination to preserve the class, ethnic, and racial status quo meant that black veterans were not the only ones to suffer discouragement when trying to obtain government-sponsored rehabilitation services. And, like their white counterparts, black veterans did not suffer in silence. Many turned to civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), veterans' organizations, or the federal agents appointed to manage their care to press their claims forward.

Bureaucratic delay and inefficiency certainly accounted for some of the problems that veterans encountered in accessing employment and rehabilitation services. Far more important, however, were the competing ways that veterans and officials measured success for these programs. For veterans, these programs offered not just a chance to regain a useful occupation but also an opportunity to get ahead. In their minds this was an opportunity that they had earned through their service to the country. Federal officials and their surrogates in local communities throughout the nation saw the matter differently. They focused on ensuring that these men became contributing workers as soon as possible. This meant working in economic sectors that were short of workers rather than following individual dreams of advancement.

The subjective decisions of Employment Bureau agents and Veterans Bureau doctors played a large role in determining which rehabilitation programs veterans could enter as well as what disability maintenance allowances they would receive over their lifetimes. Concern over past and present problems shaped policymakers' views on how to handle the challenge of reabsorbing four million returning servicemen. Most officials accepted the prevailing orthodoxy that overly generous financial support of aging and disabled Civil War veterans had drained the treasury, and they were determined to make this generation of wartime veterans as self-sufficient as possible, as quickly as possible. Police and newspapers hysterically warned about a supposed crime wave that veterans unleashed once freed from the constraints of military discipline.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in the wake of the communist revolution in Russia, fears that U.S. soldiers might return as committed socialists added another dimension of potential political upheaval. Equally disturbing was the evidence of new militancy in the civil rights movement as African American veterans made both political and personal stands against racial discrimination.<sup>3</sup> The racist views of white officials, coupled with the fear that widespread racial rioting might result if

black veterans pressed their demands too forcefully, meant that many officials working with ex-servicemen did their best to dampen any expectations that veterans' benefits might become the opening wedge to dismantling Jim Crow.

### Jobs for Veterans

To mobilize the wartime economy, the federal government had intervened in labor conflicts, taken over the railroads, tried to keep able-bodied men on the job with its 1918 "work or fight" order to potential draftees, and channeled resources and labor to defense-oriented industries.<sup>4</sup> Putting veterans back to work continued this wartime pattern of federal management of the economy, as did the insistence on subsuming individual preferences in favor of the national good. War Department employment officials cautioned men to stay away from cities, to resist the impulse to join any radical movement, and to settle back into old jobs as quickly as possible. Those that needed help in securing employment were advised to apply for assistance. By funneling unemployed veterans into sectors of the economy experiencing labor shortages, the government hoped to easily complete the final phase of its war-related management of the economy by ensuring the smooth reintegration of veterans into the job market.

Capt. Paul B. Johnson, a medical officer charged with safeguarding troop morale in Newport News, Virginia, a major port through which many returning veterans would pass, was the first to point out that the U.S. Employment Service had failed to think through the practical implications of the idealistic rhetoric that greeted soldiers upon their return to American soil. Posters, bulletins, and pamphlets throughout the port urged men to write to the War Department if they wanted work, but they were not instructed to indicate their skin color. Pointing out that a man might have the right skills but the wrong complexion for a job, Johnson worried that black soldiers would inadvertently "go to take employment which had been secured for them by mail, only to find that they would not be acceptable on account of their color" or might intentionally withhold information about their race "to be more sure of securing a good job," only to be fired when they arrived.<sup>5</sup> Arthur Woods, the head of the U.S. Employment Service, refused to issue instructions for men to give their race, asserting that he did not know whether it was best for black men to advertise their color or "to say nothing about it."<sup>6</sup> Johnson did not give up, however, sharing his concerns during a camp visit by George E. Hayes, a graduate of Fisk and Yale Universities, who left his position as the first executive director of the Urban League to serve, from 1918 to 1921, as director of Negro Economics in the United States Department of Labor. Having established a working relationship with Hayes, Johnson now saw a way out of this dilemma. In the future, he

resolved to simply advise black soldiers to write directly to Hayes when seeking employment.<sup>7</sup>

Still in the early phases of his career as a social worker and educator, Hayes worried about the employment prospects for the increasing numbers of relatively unskilled African Americans migrating to northern cities from the South. The Urban League, where Hayes had previously worked, helped migrants secure jobs and housing. Hoping to foster an image of black migrants as serious-minded, respectable workers, the Urban League also advised them to join churches, to avoid congregating on street corners, to send their children in school, and not to flit from job to job. While placing a certain amount of responsibility upon the migrant for his employment prospects, Hayes did not ignore the ways that institutionalized racial prejudice denied opportunities to qualified, law-abiding workers. His views on this subject became critical once he agreed to serve as the head of the Labor Department's Office of Negro Economics. Hayes took his charge to foster "harmonious race relations" seriously. Throughout the war and afterward, Hayes discouraged migrants from moving to places where their employment prospects were dim, and he created interracial community committees to provide adequate housing in places experiencing an influx of migrants. Embracing a "push-pull" view of migration, Hayes worried that the disproportionate force of factors "pushing" migrants out of the South (rampant racial segregation, debt peonage, sharecropping, racial violence) meant that blacks would not return even if the "pull" of free transportation to better-paying northern industrial jobs proved more illusory than real.<sup>8</sup>

"It is impossible to deal with the negro soldier apart from the whole negro question," Woods and Hayes agreed. During the war Hayes constructed "an organization equipped to recruit and ship negro workers to any point at which there is a demand," that he now relied on to find employment for both civilians and ex-servicemen. With industrial demand for labor weakening, the Labor Department initiated a wholesale campaign to try to entice blacks who had recently left the South, either as wartime workers or as soldiers, to return to the South. Federal agents visited and wrote southern chambers of commerce to gather data on the jobs available and negotiated with the railroads so that a prospective employer could pay a laborer's fare when he arrived at his new job.<sup>9</sup> They underscored to southern businessmen and planters the importance of improving working conditions and wages for black workers so that they stayed put. Offers to employ black laborers in turpentine, nitrate, zinc, sawmill, sugar cane, cotton, and logging poured in. The Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce offered their help "in placing these colored men back in the southern states, where they really belong."<sup>10</sup> Further investigation, however, revealed that Jack-

sonville employers preferred to hire whites for nearly all higher paying factory jobs, underscoring that only the hardest and dirtiest jobs were reserved for African Americans.<sup>11</sup> The Labor Department realized that these racial realities would make relocation an uphill battle. "The negro . . . having migrated north during the war and securing jobs at good wages is reluctant to return to pre-war conditions and wages in the south," one memo correctly noted.<sup>12</sup> Hayes soon discovered that it was nearly impossible to get black veterans who joined this migratory wave to change their minds and accept jobs from southern-based companies and employers.<sup>13</sup>

While mostly content to delegate the issue of black veteran employment to Hayes, on the eve of the Chicago race riots, officials in Woods's office did worry that unemployed black veterans, many of them combat veterans, were becoming a potential source of radical discontent in the city. With the number of unemployed black veterans mounting, federal employment agencies contacted thousands of firms with letters, telephone calls, and personal visits urging them to employ black ex-servicemen.<sup>14</sup> In one case, the U.S. Employment Service specifically asked DuPont to halt labor recruiting from Kentucky for its factory in Flint, Michigan, and instead offer jobs to unemployed black veterans in Chicago.<sup>15</sup> Both Hayes and Woods also tackled the question of finding jobs for educated black veterans seeking clerical rather than laboring jobs. Besides providing individual relief, Woods and Hayes wanted to reduce the likelihood of their personal hardships becoming the spark that encouraged these former noncommissioned and commissioned officers to organize civil rights protests. Confronting head-on the limited opportunities available in white-collar occupations, War Department officials unsuccessfully reached out to major employers such as Sears to try to open up jobs.<sup>16</sup>

When racial rioting swept through Chicago from 27 July–3 August 1919, Woods and Hayes blamed the continued unemployment of veterans, along with racial friction at the workplace and over housing, as the main causes for the violence. "Returned discharged soldiers were among those active in stimulating the resistance of the Negroes," Hayes reported, noting that constant repetition of stories recounting racial discrimination within the war military stoked community anger.<sup>17</sup> In his overview of the causes of the Chicago riot, Hayes made perhaps an even more astute observation. "There is a general feeling among all classes of Negroes that the Federal Government should do something to remedy their condition," he wrote. Hayes's statement echoed the call made by Emmett J. Scott, the former secretary to the now-deceased Booker T. Washington, as he vacated his wartime position as special assistant to the secretary of war on issues concerning African Americans. Scott had used his final days in office to argue that the federal government should remain involved in

labor relations by removing the general economic barriers that all black workers faced. Proposing that the federal government replicate the temporary role it had assumed after the Civil War as the protector of African American political rights, Scott wanted federal officials to monitor interracial labor relations and living conditions in black neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup> These proposals for an activist government along with Scott's support for a federal anti-lynching bill were in keeping with the vision articulated by the NAACP. Rather than withdrawing from managing the economy now that the war was over, these black civil rights leaders wanted the federal government to redirect its focus to ensuring equal opportunity.

### Mediating Black Veterans' Relationship with the State

Securing the economic rights of disabled black veterans, the only group of African Americans that the federal government had officially pledged to help, became a critical part of this larger campaign to enlist the federal government as an ally in the struggle for civil rights. Disabled veterans, however, maintained a dual identity as both African Americans engaged in the larger struggle for racial advancement and as members of a distinct wartime generation. Membership in veterans' organizations dedicated to helping members secure their legal benefits provided a space where black veterans could cultivate a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose with other ex-servicemen. When E. P. Marrs got word that his physical exam no longer qualified him for hospital care, his role as treasurer of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War in his hometown of Bath, New York, ensured that the president of his chapter wrote directly to Sen. Robert Wagner on his behalf.<sup>19</sup>

Given the crucial role that veterans' organizations played in mediating compensation disputes between disabled veterans and the Veterans Bureau, the limited—but real—ability of black veterans to join the American Legion, either as members of integrated branches or in their own segregated branches, had concrete financial implications. In articulating their reasons for trying to organize a Legion post in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, one group of black veterans emphasized that as a Legion post, they would know "just what the Government is doing for us in the way of benefits for ourselves, our wives, mothers and children."<sup>20</sup> Yet individual state Legion headquarters had the authority to accept or reject applications for "colored posts," and Louisiana was one of several southern states that refused to grant charters for black posts. The desire of southern states to stop black veterans from organizing their own segregated posts was part of an explicit white campaign to prevent black ex-servicemen from organizing to protect their rights, ei-

ther as ex-servicemen or as citizens. In 1920 Corp. Harry Price, a combat veteran of the 370th Infantry, protested to Legion state officials when he was refused admission to an all-white Decatur, Illinois, post. After showing the reply to local Legion officials, which asked him to send the names of those who refused his application, "in a short time they told him that they would help him to put on a drive for members among the colored ex-soldiers."<sup>21</sup> Such happy endings were rare indeed. Instead "thousands of Negro soldiers are entitled to hospitalization, compensation, vocational training. But who is there to speak and act for them?" asked the organizers of the short-lived Lincoln Legion, an independent veterans organization in Chicago that tried to mount a nationwide membership drive.<sup>22</sup>

Black veterans in southern states not only had few opportunities to join the Legion, but some like Gaines Mundy in Henderson, Kentucky, faced "an organized effort . . . to keep all former colored service men from securing any compensation or other aid and assistance from the government." Mundy's problems also stemmed from his refusal to give the hospital doctor \$1.50 to report favorably on his disability claim, the type of illegal fee that other black veterans reported paying so that white doctors would sign necessary forms. While some black veterans negotiated the corrupt Veterans Bureau system on their own by paying bribes when necessary, others tried to enlist help from the NAACP. The organization received numerous letters from disabled veterans seeking help with their claims for disability ratings, allowances, and hospitalization. Mundy, for example, wanted the NAACP to pay for his private legal fees to combat the decision of the local Veterans Bureau, which he suspected of being allied with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The best that the financially strapped NAACP could offer in this case was a promise to write to the Veterans Bureau personally.<sup>23</sup> Still, the NAACP undoubtedly performed a useful service for many other disabled veterans by developing a network of "friendly contacts" with white southern lawyers who were willing take on their cases for small fees.

In other rare cases, especially concerning veterans from the famed New York 15th Infantry (a National Guard unit that fought under its federal designation, the 369th Infantry Regiment), veterans could appeal for help from their former white wartime commanders, who often saw it as their duty to continue caring for their men. Col. William Hayward, Col. Arthur Little, and Capt. Hamilton Fish Jr. (who became a congressman from New York after playing leading role in founding the American Legion) all intervened to help veterans of the 369th regiment negotiate the red tape of applying for benefits and appealing unfavorable decisions.<sup>24</sup> Having white benefactors benefited men from New York, but sometimes the interest that whites expressed in helping black veterans simply led to financial exploitation. When Neal Hamilton was confined to an insane

asylum, a white lawyer in Temple, Texas succeeded in having the local court appoint him as administrator of Hamilton's affairs. This meant that Hamilton's insurance and disability checks went to the white lawyer rather than his family, an injustice that they were fearful of contesting lest they become targets of the KKK. It took three years for the sister of David Lee, another veteran who suffered a mental collapse, to discover that a city clerk in Greenville, Mississippi, had been appointed her brother's guardian and was drawing his monthly disability allowance. Her concerns went further than money. Living in New York, she questioned the "rather mysterious way" that he had landed in an insane asylum without her family's knowledge or consent. "With the exception of a little nervousness my brother's condition was that of a normal person when he was at home the last time," Rosa Lee contended.<sup>25</sup> Whether or not whites in positions of authority helped or hindered African American veterans in their quest for disability awards, the need for mediation from whites underscored once again the disproportionate power that this racial group held in American society.

### Veteran Rehabilitation

Before a disabled soldier was discharged from the service, the Federal Board for Vocational Education was supposed to collect personal information including age, education, previous line of employment and future vocational aspirations. Once the disabled veteran arrived home, a regional counselor in possession of this card visited to advise him on what training course to pursue. A regional board then had to approve the selection. The actual language of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1918 left unclear who could ultimately decide what program a veteran entered. The law allowed veterans to attend any authorized program of their choosing unless a federal counselor concluded that a particular selection would not lead to actual employment that benefited the economy.<sup>26</sup> Like white veterans, African American veterans soon clashed with the Veterans Bureau over how to define appropriate rehabilitation opportunities. Counselors tended to focus on self-sufficiency, a criteria that put more emphasis on maintaining the economic status quo by putting men in training programs where others with a similar class, ethnic, or racial background typically found jobs. Using the collective findings of army intelligence tests to ascertain whether a disabled veteran could successfully complete a particular training program also became a strong force in favor of maintaining the existing social hierarchy. These culturally biased tests ranked the average mental ages of different ethnic and racial groups, placing native-born white men at the top with an average mental age of 13, Eastern Europeans in the middle, and American-born blacks at the bottom with a dismal average mental age of 10.4.

This “scientific” data offered reassuring evidence that unintelligent blacks and southern European immigrants who held primarily unskilled jobs were working exactly where they should.<sup>27</sup>

Many working-class veterans, black and white, saw rehabilitation training programs as a chance to change their life trajectory by attaining skills previously denied to them. The American Legion and Red Cross supported this view, seeing these programs, in the words of one Red Cross official, as “the duty of the state to repair so far as practicable this former inequality of opportunity.”<sup>28</sup> For many disabled veterans, regaining their earning potential was synonymous with retaining their masculine identity, so they shared the federal government’s goal of self-sufficiency. At the same time, however, their war wounds attested to some new rights that they had earned for sacrificing their health for their nation. These included adequate medical treatment, a disability allowance, and a chance to work in an occupation of their choosing. Government officials expected veterans to exhibit gratitude for the aid that they received, but veterans instead often complained that the government was not adequately delivering the benefits due them.<sup>29</sup>

The government view of the rehabilitation process was well articulated in the surgeon general’s office’s glossy magazine, *Carry On*, which tried to demonstrate through words and pictures how veterans could achieve a seamless integration back into their communities. With their missing limbs carefully concealed in empty sleeves or in prosthetic devices, disabled soldiers farmed, repaired automobiles, typed on typewriters, and studied in classrooms. The magazine portrayed black veterans reading or gardening under white supervision, gentle activities intended to help men suffering from tuberculosis recover.<sup>30</sup> Inherent in this image of the proper path to rehabilitation for black veterans lay a conundrum: for many men who had previously worked at hard physical labor, would their wartime injuries require that they receive training in jobs that African Americans had not traditionally held?

As early as 1919, Walter White, the general secretary of the NAACP, wrote to Hayes urging him to use his influence to get black men appointed to the regional federal boards that would determine a man’s eligibility for specific rehabilitation programs. White believed that “intelligent colored men . . . will advise the men with regard to their own best interests, instead of forcing them into those lines of employment which the Southern employer of Negro labor or the South in general wishes.”<sup>31</sup> White accurately predicted the kind of reception that black disabled veterans would get from federal rehabilitation boards staffed solely with whites. “What’s the matter with you? You are able to work aren’t you?” was a typical interrogation that applicants in Richmond faced when applying for retraining programs.<sup>32</sup> “Since the war, some of the Southern

crackers are using different means to keep we colored soldiers out of the hospitals and from getting vocational training. Their reason for keeping us out of training is to rate us in compensation as low as possible,” Joel Moore charged.<sup>33</sup>

By the time that the Veterans Bureau appointed J.R.A. Crossland in 1921 to oversee the effort to provide wounded black veterans with training opportunities in its rehabilitation division, it was clear that these programs had not lived up to their promises. By the early twenties, the frustrations that white and black veterans had encountered with federally sponsored rehabilitation programs had caused most disabled veterans to simply walk away. Only a few thousand men out of the nearly two hundred thousand men eligible for retraining ever completed their courses.<sup>34</sup> Still Crossland worked hard to improve the opportunities for black veterans, making the surely inflated claim that within a year he had increased the numbers of black veterans in training programs from a few hundred to nearly four thousand.<sup>35</sup>

Veterans had the option of several different types of rehabilitation programs, including college degree programs and trade courses at historically black schools or segregated branches of the YMCA. On-the-job placement training was another possibility for those interested in working as an apprentice to gain entry into a skilled trade. While the Federal Board of Vocational Education’s official newsletter trumpeted the “highways of progress” made available to the black veteran in “the land he helped to defend,” Crossland’s private investigations told a different story.<sup>36</sup> Revealing why black veterans had so much trouble getting into their program of choice, a white San Antonio district manager reported that there was no point in putting “the farm negro” into the retraining courses that “we are able to offer him” because most dropped out.<sup>37</sup> Crossland understood immediately that when confronted with the meager retraining opportunities that Southern vocational boards were willing to offer, some disabled black veterans decided they were not worth the trouble. Others tried to game the system, a Richmond official reported, going into these proscribed training programs “not with the view of being rehabilitated, or even ever working at the particular trade, but simply to draw the training pay for the allotted time.”<sup>38</sup>

The allure of federal money pouring into their coffers became a tremendous enticement for colleges and vocational schools to offer veteran retraining programs. A petition from fifty African American veterans enrolled in a tailoring course at the A&M State Normal School in Prairie View, Texas, revealed how some white-administered schools enriched themselves at the expense of black veterans. Complaining that they had only one instructor and four machines to use, the veterans also had to bring their own cloth and pay for needles that they broke.<sup>39</sup> Prairie View was the separate campus es-

established "for the Benefit of Colored Youth" when Texas founded the Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Texas A&M) for white students in 1876.<sup>40</sup> Making a visit to Prairie View, Crossland discovered that there were no dormitories available on campus for the veterans, who were instead housed seven miles away in Hempstead, Texas, where the local police harassed them continually.<sup>41</sup> An inspection of the A&M Normal School in Alabama revealed that veterans were living in rotting barracks with a "roof so absolutely leaky that the trainees are forced to move their beds from place to place about the room to avoid sleeping on a wet bed."<sup>42</sup>

Crossland detected a pattern of inattention to veterans' needs at southern black land-grant schools that were closely supervised by white boards and state legislatures. He and his subordinates concluded that white school administrators saw rehabilitation programs mostly as a source of ready cash to exploit. With many traditionally black schools such as Tuskegee Institute, Southern University, and Utica Normal Institute offering successful trade courses for veterans, Crossland saw no reason to continue funding subpar programs. Crossland also recommended removing black veterans from job-placement programs. Many employers, he contended, only wanted to exploit cheap, government-subsidized labor. Instead of receiving comprehensive training that would lead to profitable employment, reports from the field indicated that shops employed the men mainly to sweep and run errands.

The debate between Crossland and his supervisor, Capt. F. O. Smith, over how to address the evident problems in the trade schools and job-placement programs laid bare the competing views over the purpose of rehabilitation programs. Crossland objected to trainees being told they "would take agriculture or nothing," supporting the veterans' effort to use vocational rehabilitation to surmount the poverty and racial discrimination that had hindered their economic advancement. Smith, however, maintained that the bureau's only job was to bring "these men back to an economic status equal to that they would have had had they not seen service in the recent war."<sup>43</sup> Smith was articulating the official Veterans Bureau position, one that considered the extent of a man's physical disability along with his race, social class, and education to determine his eligibility for rehabilitation benefits. Solomon Harper, for example, had no trouble securing permission to complete a preliminary course as an electrician. Setting his sights on advanced training with the goal of becoming a vocational school teacher, he independently got approval from his local electrical workers' union to work as an apprentice so he could get the prerequisite workshop experience the program required. The Veterans Bureau, however, denied his request to obtain further training at government expense, concluding that his eighth-grade education disqualified him from becoming a teacher. Doggedly

pursuing this goal, Harper was eventually hospitalized in an insane asylum for harboring delusions about "teacher's training."<sup>44</sup>

Yet the rehabilitation results were not all so bleak. Federal funding offered a few hundred veterans the chance to attend black colleges where they found a supportive environment for their occupational aspirations. Wilberforce accepted 88 veteran trainees in the early 1920s, who were on average eight years older than the rest of the student body and often came with their wives and children.<sup>45</sup> By 1923 Howard University had enrolled 237 federally funded veterans to pursue studies in law, medicine, dentistry, teaching, and business—all programs, university president J. Stanley Durkee assured the Veterans Bureau, with "a definite employment objective."<sup>46</sup> For four years the university accommodated those veterans who, when presented with an unforeseen opportunity to go to college, lacked the required prerequisite schooling to meet Howard's entrance requirements. Temporarily waiving these requirements allowed disabled veterans to take individual courses and gave them time to meet the school's entrance requirements if they wanted to enter degree programs. Federal funding flowing to black universities helped them in their mission to create an educated, vibrant black middle class and supported the aspirations of individual veterans to take advantage of a chance to overcome the limited educational opportunities they had received in the past.

Focusing exclusively on the way that federal aid could help advance the cause of civil rights, however, can obscure the private battles that some disabled veterans waged. Still suffering from the effects of gassing and of foot and abdominal combat injuries, Greenleaf Johnson was carried from class to the hospital several times and missed so many days that he failed his course.<sup>47</sup> Austin Holliday was a shell-shocked veteran who began suffering from seizures on the battlefield of Chateau-Thierry in 1918, and his worsening symptoms forced him to drop out of Howard Law School. He intentionally left Washington, D.C., by car, "hoping to have a seizure and roll off a mountain and be killed"; he eventually ended up in a veterans' hospital in Los Angeles. A government-funded opportunity to pursue a law degree could not resolve his private physical and mental health issues.<sup>48</sup> Another veteran echoed this conclusion, lamenting that "on account of the poor condition of my health and my inability to carry on, all my hopes for doing something in life worth while have been blasted."<sup>49</sup>

The illnesses or wounds that rendered these men disabled also often required medical attention during their stint of vocational rehabilitation, and receiving adequate care posed yet another hurdle for many. Veterans Bureau officials replaced the black doctor charged with caring for veterans attending the A&M School in Normal, Alabama, with a white doctor who was so hostile that many men were afraid to go to him and opted instead to "engage outside

doctors at their own expense.”<sup>50</sup> James Sanford, a disabled veteran attending a retraining program at Hampton Institute, a vocational high school for African Americans in Hampton, Virginia, complained that when he and his classmates went to the white doctors authorized to treat him, “we are invariabl[y] received and treated as a colored man and not as a disabled soldier.”<sup>51</sup> Appealing to Crossland, Sanford reiterated the need for the Veterans Bureau to “send out the ‘life lines’ to these men and to save them.” In writing his letter on behalf of himself and his friends, Sanford retained faith that such help might be forthcoming if he could explain the situation adequately to officials in Washington who “can not see and understand the awful problem . . . ever present . . . in these isolated portions of the South.” Perhaps even more importantly, Sanford and other disabled veterans who raised their voice in protest demanded federal protection as a right that they had earned by virtue of their military service, distinguishing themselves as deserving special attention. As one disabled veteran put it, “I know my rights.”<sup>52</sup> This became a familiar refrain among disabled men seeking medical care.

### Seeking Medical Care

When most Americans thought of war injuries, they thought of amputations and gas-induced blindness, but these actually accounted for very few of the disabilities that World War I veterans suffered. Men instead brought a wide range of injuries home with them, the full impact of which occasionally took time to materialize. A poorly set broken arm, for instance, could dramatically impact the ability of a manual laborer to earn his living.<sup>53</sup> Far more common were tuberculosis and war neurosis. The mental problems attributable to shell shock, often not visible to the casual observer, were painfully obvious to families. As the child of one 369th veteran sadly concluded, “Some of them come back and they were of no use to their families, mentally and physically.”<sup>54</sup>

Seeking care for war neuroses in the poisonous racial climate of the 1920s inflicted additional stress on already ill veterans. Did racism and discrimination affect the psychological well-being of black servicemen and veterans? Many veterans believed that it did. Rayford Logan suggested in his memoir that the shell shock he suffered while in France was only partly due to the shell blast that knocked him unconscious. “My [battle] fatigue resulted from overwork and the trauma of my encounters with Colonel Young [his white commanding officer],” Logan concluded years later.<sup>55</sup> Logan attributed his rapid recovery to French doctors who let him unburden his pent-up anger against white Americans. One veteran’s wife concluded that a New York veteran hospital’s practice of bringing white patients into the black ward to die “has worked

against her husband’s health more so than his illness” and described him “as a mental wreck.”<sup>56</sup> Black patients in one hospital were threatened with losing their disability rating if they continued complaining about the long waits to see specialists.<sup>57</sup> Nick Wallace, committed to the Marion Military Home in Indianapolis, related how supervisors kept the black patients confined while white veterans had free use of the grounds. “Now this place is suppose to be a mental place . . . lots of them if they would be given a chance I believe they would regain their health but instead of giving them a chance they keep them locked up,” Wallace complained. Furthermore, Wallace wrote, “If you hold up for your wrights [sic] you are thrown” into solitary confinement in an annex reserved for violent patients, where “they will try to run you insane” by beating the men with cakes of soap put in socks.<sup>58</sup> His letter prompted the NAACP to ask a member of the Marion chapter to investigate conditions there. Cordelia Lee went to talk to Wallace and discovered that the hospital had put the men to work shoveling coal in the winter, resulting in frostbitten feet on some. Accounts such as Wallace’s essentially likened a hospital stay for war-related mental illness to a prison sentence. As Dr. James Crossland concluded, “It is impossible to effect a cure where lack of safety of life everywhere abounds,” and patients felt under constant threat of physical violence.<sup>59</sup>

The disability rating schedule determined how much compensation and treatment a veteran received for a war-related injury, rendering a judgment on how much an injury or illness would affect a veteran’s potential to earn a living.<sup>60</sup> A disability payment, therefore, was a type of adjusted compensation—a way to compensate veterans for the projected income they would lose (either temporarily or permanently) due to their war wounds. The Veterans Bureau modeled the disability rating schedule on similar charts used to determine workman compensation payments for work-related injuries, hoping to ensure that throughout the nation men with similar disabilities received comparable disability ratings. The process put enormous power in the hands of the doctors who made the initial diagnosis, with predictable consequences for black veterans being examined by white southern doctors. If successful in pressing a claim for disability, because disability payment schedules did not make allowances for race or region, black veterans could potentially receive payments that far exceeded the thirty dollars a month that an average black farm worker received. The potential of federal compensation to give southern disabled black veterans a measure of financial independence from local white employers, therefore, infused a routine medical exam with enormous political and economic significance.

Even though initially the law required proof that disabilities were war related, the large number of claims rejected because veterans lacked this evidence



soon became an embarrassing political problem. In 1921 Congress granted exceptions for tuberculosis and war neuroses, presuming that any veteran who developed these illnesses in the immediate postwar period had contracted them while in uniform.<sup>61</sup> Besides accounting for nearly half of the disability compensation awarded to World War I veterans in the 1920s, these two diagnoses guaranteed black veterans eligibility to receive treatment in a government-run hospital.

Finding beds for ill black veterans in existing hospitals posed a significant problem since the Veterans Bureau refused to challenge the "separate but equal" policies maintained in southern and even some northern communities. When a veteran's hospital in Castle Point, New York, agreed to accept Philadelphia resident Lilton Wharton as a patient, the chief medical officer was apparently unaware that Wharton was black. Ignoring the fact that Wharton was running a high fever, the medical officer followed the advice of the regional office and sent him back to Philadelphia. "The reason given for his discharge from your institution would be that there were no available beds," noted the regional officer, suggesting that the medical officer adopt the coded bureaucratic language regularly used to deny blacks care in veterans' hospitals.<sup>62</sup> Segregation by race, like segregation by disease, was an administratively effective way to care for disabled veterans, the Veterans Bureau's acting medical director contended. The idea that "Negro patients are isolated just as diseases are" infuriated local chapters of the NAACP and black American Legion posts.<sup>63</sup>

Albert White's odyssey, which also involved the Castle Point facility, illustrated the unique bureaucratic nightmare that confronted black veterans when trying to find facilities that could address their particular ailment amid the tangle of hospitals that either refused to treat black veterans or would only care for them in separate wards. In 1925 White, who was also a member of the NAACP, began experiencing respiratory problems that his doctor linked to his gas exposure while fighting with the 351st Field Artillery in France. Fading fast, the Veterans Bureau in Pittsburgh sent him, accompanied by a white nurse, to a facility in Dawson Springs, Kentucky. He was allowed to ride reclining in the Pullman car until he reached the Kentucky border but then forced to finish the journey sitting in the "Jim Crow" car. No sooner had he arrived than the hospital informed him that "no Negro soldiers were allowed there," and he returned to Pittsburgh. He fared no better in New York, where hospitals in Beacon and Castle Point refused to take him because they had not established separate wards for black and white veterans. Becoming increasingly desperate as White's condition steadily worsened, the NAACP finally secured a place for him in the National Sanatorium in Dayton, Ohio.<sup>64</sup>

Such stories of racial discrimination in Northern facilities, coupled with

tales of abuse in the South, generated a groundswell of support within the black community for establishing an all-black veterans' hospital established in Tuskegee, Alabama. African American civil rights leaders, however, remained divided over whether the hospital helped or hurt veterans seeking care. The NAACP contended that the hospital's existence made it easier for other veterans' facilities to deny beds to black veterans.

Few whites contested the idea of building a hospital just for black veterans, but the question over whether it should be staffed by white or black doctors proved much more explosive. When Maj. Robert Russa Moton (who had become the principal of Tuskegee after Washington's death in 1915) arranged for Tuskegee Institute to donate land to the government for the project, he did it with the understanding that the hospital would employ some black physicians and nurses.<sup>65</sup> The Tuskegee white community had other ideas. The chance to benefit financially from government largesse to veterans caused a flurry of interest in the project, but preserving the racial status quo was also critical. Economic independence, whether through veteran rehabilitation programs or civil service jobs in a government-run hospital, threatened to undermine white supremacy. To gain local white support for the hospital, Treasury Department officials privately agreed to staff it only with whites, and when the newly formed Veterans Bureau inherited the project, it appeared willing to stand by this covert deal.

As the hospital prepared to open in 1923, the staffing question remained unresolved. Following in Washington's footsteps, Moton wanted to cultivate the good will of white philanthropists and politicians by sidestepping controversial questions about racial discrimination. He thus agreed in January 1923 to the appointment of a white "Northern man who would properly consider the interests of colored people" as the temporary superintendent of the hospital, believing this was a necessary concession to begin the process of hiring black doctors and nurses. He soon realized his error when Col. Robert H. Stanley, Alabama born and raised, arrived in Tuskegee and a Veterans Bureau field letter announced that "the medical personnel will be composed of white persons."<sup>66</sup>

Moton now had a choice to make. To fight openly could jeopardize the conservative public image that Tuskegee maintained, but he realized that doing nothing would, "bring down on my head, and on Tuskegee Institute, an avalanche of criticism" from civil rights organizations and the black press "as I have been very active in bringing the hospital here."<sup>67</sup> Moton, along with the NAACP, and the National Medical Association (the professional organization for black physicians) appealed directly to Republican president Warren G. Harding, arguing that if black professionals were denied the chance to compete

for these civil service jobs, the president would face “a storm of protest” from African Americans throughout the country that could have serious political repercussions by alienating these usually loyal Republican voters.<sup>68</sup> Aware that the recent wartime influx of African Americans into northern cities had made the black vote crucial in many municipal elections, Harding responded favorably. The president instructed the Veterans Bureau to compile a list of black doctors and nurses qualified to fill civil service positions but stopped short of ordering the appointment of an all-black staff.

Moton now removed himself from the debate, again following the precedent that Washington had set of using proxies to challenge legalized racial discrimination. Worried about permanently damaging the relationship between Tuskegee and the local white community if he openly criticized their insistence on a white-only staff, Moton asked the NAACP to take on the public fight. “It would be disastrous if it was known here that we at Tuskegee Institute had any part, no matter how small, in organizing the colored people from here to protest against this despicable situation,” Moton’s private secretary acknowledged.<sup>69</sup>

Although the NAACP had opposed creating a segregated hospital in the South, the organization nonetheless willingly took the lead in denouncing plans to exclude black doctors and nurses from the hospital staff. In letters sent to a wide array of newspapers, the NAACP openly mocked whites for their apparent newfound desire to treat black veterans. “Some years ago Alabama passed a law prohibiting white women from nursing Negroes. Now comes this big government hospital with a monthly payroll of \$65,000” and delegations of whites travel to Washington, D.C., “to urge the President to permit whites to serve and wait upon Negro patients!”<sup>70</sup> Tuskegee whites had already thought of a way around this conundrum, however. Each white nurse, paid an average annual salary of two thousand dollars would supervise a black maid (paid fifty dollars a month) who would undertake all nursing duties that required actual contact with the patients.<sup>71</sup> Still, as the NAACP and white southerners both fully understood, the battle was about more than money. “If niggers are put at the head of this hospital, they’ll be responsible only to the United States government and we don’t want any niggers in Alabama we can’t control,” one white state senator proclaimed.

In April 1923 the steady stream of letters from black citizens to the White House paid off as Harding agreed to an all-black staff. As the Veterans Bureau began recruiting black doctors and nurses, the situation in Tuskegee turned ugly. When Moton’s life was threatened, he arranged to leave the school for an extended lecture tour. “I do not see how the situation could be worse as we are really on top of a volcano and can almost literally hear the lava sputtering down below,” wrote Albon Holsey, Moton’s personal secretary.<sup>72</sup> The day after

he composed this letter, the local Ku Klux Klan paid a visit to the hospital grounds. The robed men never violated the gates to the Tuskegee Institute, perhaps aware that students and alumni, who had been streaming onto the campus all day, were ready to take up arms to defend the school.<sup>73</sup> Who would control what happens on federal property, “the ‘Invisible Empire’ of the Klan or the War Department, through its Veterans’ Bureau,” asked the *Washington Tribune*, a black newspaper in the nation’s capital.<sup>74</sup> Hopeful that the government would crush this attempt to “nullify” federal policy, civil rights activists portrayed the stand-off as a question of respecting federal authority.

The KKK march indeed proved to be the spark that undid local whites’ hopes of excluding black staff. The NAACP unleashed a massive letter-writing campaign and urged the federal government to send troops to Tuskegee. “The whole colored population is stirred up, and meetings are beings planned by churches, lodges and other organizations,” Crossland reported.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile major southern newspapers began to ridicule the white Alabamians’ sudden desire to care for black patients. By the time Veterans Bureau head Gen. Frank Hines arrived at the hospital for a long-planned visit, this break in the ranks of white segregationists undoubtedly encouraged Hines to broker a compromise. He proposed gradually employing black doctors and nurses while leaving three white supervisors in place for the time being.<sup>76</sup> White Alabamians verbally protested but failed to receive much support from the rest of the white South. By leaving whites temporarily in charge, Hine gave the local white community a way to “save their faces” as they put aside the staffing issue and took up instead the question of where the railroad route to the hospital should go.<sup>77</sup> Moton also agreed to the plan, arousing the ire of the northern-based black press and the NAACP. After learning that Moton had assured the Veterans Bureau that the continued push for an all-black staff was the work of “northern radicals,” the NAACP withdrew from the deliberations and returned to its previous stance that creating a segregated hospital had been a mistake.

The National Medical Association refused to step away, however, determined to demonstrate there were indeed enough qualified black medical professionals to fill all available slots. Overcoming some black doctors’ reluctance to work at the hospital, either out of concern for their personal safety or anger over the compromise, took time. By 1924, however, the majority of personnel were black. Hines now felt confident enough in the stability of race relations in Tuskegee to appoint Dr. Joseph H. Ward, a black surgeon from Indianapolis, as head of the hospital. Within a few months, the entire hospital was staffed with African Americans. Over the next decade, half of all black veterans who received hospital care were treated at Tuskegee, and all the black doctors employed by the Veterans Bureau worked there.<sup>78</sup>

How would veterans, especially those suffering from mental illnesses, recover at the all-black Tuskegee Veterans Hospital located in segregated Alabama amid hostile whites when the “environment is certainly an important factor in their care and cure,” Dr. W. G. Alexander wondered in a letter to the *Journal of the National Medical Association*.<sup>79</sup> Demeaning treatment from local racist whites was not the only reason black veterans might have found it stressful to receive treatment at Tuskegee. The Tuskegee Institute’s ethos of racial uplift through hard work, economic self-sufficiency, and civility meshed well with the general values promoted by Veterans Bureau rehabilitation programs, putting tremendous responsibility on patients to help heal themselves. “You can do even more in behalf of getting well, than can be done for you,” one ward supervisor exhorted as he urged patients to eat their meals without using profanity, to scrupulously follow hospital regulations, and to rise each morning repeating the mantra, “every day in every way, I am getting better and better.”<sup>80</sup> Patient Claudius M. Pettey echoed this sentiment in the pages of a free hospital newsletter. “We must exercise cleanliness, discipline and perseverance. And this will mean much in bringing us back to life.”<sup>81</sup> The insistence on proper decorum and etiquette, not just physical healing, meant that a hospital stay in Tuskegee was a carefully regimented experience.

Did infusing the care of patients, some suffering from mental illness, with larger political goals retard or aid their treatment? Gathered together in hospital wards, the stories that veterans told each other about their wartime exploits became a way to bolster confidence and pride. As Claudius M. Perry boasted in the hospital newsletter, despite “people who predicted that our mental ability was not sufficient to operate artillery,” the 349th Field Artillery eventually “won special praise from the French and from our own white artillery; stating that there was none superior to ours.”<sup>82</sup> A film extolling their wartime achievements had quite a different effect, however, on another 92nd Division veteran receiving care in Tuskegee. Transported back in time, he saw himself walking to the front past “graves already dug with the American flag waving over them” in anticipation of the large number of casualties that his unit would suffer that day. This veteran had followed his chaplain’s advice and written a letter to his parents asking them to pray for him. These preparations for a death that did not come still haunted this man.<sup>83</sup>

In the 1930s the National Medical Association launched an ultimately unsuccessful campaign to create another government hospital for black veterans located in the North.<sup>84</sup> This time the NAACP refused to budge from its integrationist position, arguing that black veterans should receive treatment in existing hospitals. Rather than viewing the hospital as government-sponsored occupational advancement for black professionals, NAACP president Walter

White saw Tuskegee as an example of federally funded segregation. While the debate continued over which approach to veteran care would advance or retard the civil rights cause, the establishment of the *Veterans’ Herald*, a newspaper distributed among Tuskegee patients, revealed at least one benefit to placing disabled black veterans in one hospital. It was much easier to ensure that disabled black veterans received informed and accurate information about the potential benefits available to them, especially updates on veteran-related legislation working its way through Congress, including the adjusted compensation certificate that veterans received in 1924.

## Conclusion

The debates over staffing the Tuskegee Veterans Hospital, veteran job placement, and rehabilitation programs revealed the centrality of federal veteran policies to the civil rights movement in the 1920s and 1930s. The government’s acknowledgement that disabled veterans, regardless of race, were eligible to receive the same retraining, hospitalization, and maintenance benefits had the potential to undermine the racial status quo. If the civil rights movement had succeeded in persuading the government to stand by this pledge completely, then securing the special privileges awarded to disabled black veterans might have garnered benefits for the entire African American community. By forcing the federal government to offer limited protection of black veterans’ economic and medical rights, the struggle over veterans’ benefits instead served as the opening gambit for a civil rights strategy that would gain momentum throughout the twentieth century as the movement focused on enlisting the federal government as an ally, rather than a foe, in dismantling Jim Crow.

Yet the disabled black veterans’ individual and collective journey home from war necessitated renegotiating more than their relationship with the state. Their desire to access rehabilitation programs and receive medical care was not just an effort to overcome racial discrimination. It was also an attempt to reestablish themselves as self-sufficient breadwinners who could care for their families. These men sought to use veterans’ benefits to meet their own needs, not just those of the civil rights movement, by taking control of their lives and their health.

Perhaps most importantly, during the decade that saw the emergence and celebration of the “New Negro” who fought back against racial discrimination, the collective goals of the civil rights movement and the individual aspirations of disabled black men were often completely compatible. Every disabled black veteran who secured hospitalization or compensation was celebrated for achieving a minor victory in the overall campaign for equal rights, help-

ing these men avoid feeling emasculated by their dependence on government aid. With no evident resentment over the special awards given to veterans for medical care and education, civil rights organizations played a key role in helping black veterans reintegrate quickly into the African American community. Rather than viewing them as a special group with unique problems to overcome, the civil rights movement linked the disabled veteran struggle to the obstacles that every person of color faced in the United States. The civil rights movement thus inadvertently helped ensure that one of the major goals of federal veteran policy, the quick reabsorption of veterans into civilian and community life, was achieved.

## Notes

1. David Gerber advanced this argument in a path-breaking essay on disability studies that criticized scholars for assuming that veterans' social identities were mainly a by-product of their interactions with the state. I am suggesting that focusing on how black veterans interacted with the civil rights movement is also only one way of understanding their experiences as disabled men. David A. Gerber, "Disabled Veterans, the State, and the Experience of Disability in Western Societies, 1914–1950," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (2003): 899–916.
2. Richard Severo and Lewis Milford, *The Wages of War: When America's Soldiers Came Home* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 240–41.
3. Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Mark Robert Schneider, "*We Return Fighting: The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002); and Chad Williams, "Vanguards of the New Negro: African American Veterans and Post-World War I Racial Militancy," *Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 347–70.
4. For overviews of the economic mobilization, see David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
5. Port Morale Officer, Port of Embarkation, Newport News Va. to Colonel Arthur Woods, Special Assistant, Secretary of War, 24 July 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen" folder, Entry 355; RG 165, National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA].
6. Arthur Woods to Paul B. Johnson, 29 July 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen" folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
7. Paul B. Johnson to Arthur Woods, 1 August 1919; folder "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen" folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
8. James B. Stewart, "George Edmund Haynes and the Office of Negro Economics," in *A Different Vision, African American Economic Thought*, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 1997), 216–17.
9. Memo for the Secretary of War, undated, subject: Negro Situation; Memo for Colonel Woods, undated, subject: Negro situation in northern cities; Memo to Maj. John B. Reynolds, 2 May 1919. All in "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen" folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
10. Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce to Arthur Woods, 22 April 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen," folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.

11. Letter to Woods, 22 April 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen," folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
12. Memo for Colonel Woods, 19 April 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen," folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
13. Arthur Woods, memo to Major Kobbe, 31 May 1919; "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen" folder, Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
14. Director of Negro Economics to Labor Secretary, 25 March 1919; file #8/102-C; Entry 1; RG 174, NARA.
15. Maj. John B. Reynolds to DuPont Manufacturing, 10 June 1919; folder "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen," Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
16. Memo for Colonel Woods, 17 June 1919; folder "Employment of Negro Ex-Servicemen," Entry 355; RG 165, NARA.
17. Director of Negro Economics to Labor Secretary, 27 August 1919; file #8/102-C, Entry 1; RG 174, NARA.
18. Emmett J. Scott to Grosvenor Clarkson, Director, National Council of Defense, 26 March 1919; file #8/1-2-E, Entry 1, RG 174, NARA.
19. E. P. Marrs to NAACP, 28 December 1932, "Military, Gen'l, 1933-Jan-Oct." folder, Box C-376, Series I, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Papers, Library of Congress [hereafter NAACP, LOC].
20. The veterans explained that although some of them were eligible for membership in the more inclusive Veterans of Foreign Wars or Disabled American Veterans, they wanted a Legion post to maximize their numbers. Alex A. Govern to Walter White, 11 October 1934, "Military, General, January-November, 1934" folder, Box C-376, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
21. Marie E. Gray to Mary W. Ovington, 25 January 1920, "Military, General, 1920" folder, box C-374, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
22. Lincoln Legion pamphlet, 24 July 1925, "Military, General, 1925, June-Dec." folder, box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
23. Gaines Mundy to NAACP, 13 May 1922; Ernest G. Tidrington to James W. Johnson, secretary of the NAACP, 23 May 1922, and reply, 29 May 1922. Both in "Military, Gen'l, 1922, Jan.-June" folder. Undated note on Gaines Mundy case and Press Release on abuses at North Carolina Veterans' Hospital, 2 May 1924, "Military, General, 1924, Jan.-Dec." folder. Assistant Secretary to Dr. M. O. Bousfield, 3 February 1933, "Military, General, 1933, Jan.-Oct." folder. All in box C-374, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
24. See correspondence in "Military, General, 1922, Jan.-June," and "Military, General, 1933, Jan.-Oct." folders, NAACP Papers, LOC. In his autobiography Hamilton Fish talks of receiving a large amount of correspondence from veterans of the 369th Infantry Regiment; Hamilton Fish, *Memoir of an American Patriot* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1991).
25. Wallace Caldwell to NAACP, 18 January 1924, "Military, General, 1924, Jan.-Dec." folder. Rosa Lee to NAACP, 16 February 1930, and to Rep. Oscar DePriest, 15 February 1930, "Military, General, 1930, Jan.-Dec." folder. All in Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
26. Scott Gelber, "A 'Hard-Boiled Order': The Reeducation of Disabled WWI Veterans in New York City," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 1 (fall 2005): 163–64.
27. Jennifer D. Keene, *World War I* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006), 46–48.
28. Gelber, "A 'Hard-Boiled Order,'" 165, 168.
29. Ana Carden-Coyne, "Ungrateful Bodies: Rehabilitation, Resistance and Disabled American Veterans of the First World War," *European Review of History* 14, no. 4 (December 2007): 544.

30. Beth Linker, "For Life and Limb: The Reconstruction of a Nation and Its Disabled Soldiers in World War I America" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), ch. 4.
31. Memo from Walter White, 4 March 1919; and letter to Hayes, 15 March 1919; both in "Military, General, 1919, March" folder, Box C-374, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
32. James Sanford to J.R.A. Crossland, 10 November 1921, "Misc. file on training of colored men," Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
33. Joel Moore to NAACP, 29 December 1923, "Military, General, 1924, Jan.-Dec." folder, Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
34. Gelber, "A 'Hard-Boiled Order,'" 172; and Mark Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon: Voices of American Participants in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 202.
35. Assistant Director, Rehabilitation Program to Director, 29 August 1922, "A&T College, Greensboro, NC" folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
36. *The Vocational Summary* (June 1921), quoted in Gelber, "A 'Hard-Boiled Order,'" 165. Crossland was a prominent physician and public figure who had served as U.S. minister and consul-general of Liberia during the Theodore Roosevelt administration. He had also lost a son in the war and entered office determined to improve educational opportunities for returning veterans. He would end his career with the Veterans Bureau in 1923 when his back-room scheming to become head of the newly created Tuskegee Hospital for black veterans backfired. *The Crisis* (1921): 273; and Pete Daniel, "Black Power in the 1920s: The Case of the Tuskegee Veterans Hospital," *Journal of Southern History* 36, no.3 (August 1970): 384.
37. J.R.A. Crossland to Capt. F. O. Smith, Chief of Training, 3 January 1922, "Training Center for Colored Trainees" folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
38. Wiley A. Hall to J.R.A. Crossland, 23 January 1922, "Richmond, VA Colored Training Center" folder; Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
39. Signed petition, 1 May 1922, untitled folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
40. Schools such as Prairie View that used the land grants provided by the 1861 Morrill Land Grant College Act to create institutions of higher learning were known as land-grant colleges.
41. Inspection of A&M State Normal School, Prairie View, Texas, 2 June 1922, "A&T College, Greensboro, NC" folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
42. Report on A&M Normal School, 15 March 1923, untitled folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA. A&M Normal School was also a black land-grant college.
43. Chief of Training to J.R.A. Crossland, 13 December 1921; and Report on A & M School, Normal, Alabama, 15 March 1923. Both in untitled folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
44. Letter from Solomon Harper, "Military General, 1923, Jan.-Dec." folder, box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
45. Inspection Report, 10 June 1922, "A&T College, Greensboro, NC" folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
46. J. Stanley Durkee, President, Howard University, to Frank Hines, Director, U.S. Veterans Bureau, 7 June 1923; untitled folder; Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
47. Greenleaf B. Johnson memo, "Military, General, 1924, Jan.-Dec." folder, Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
48. Letter from Austin J. Holloday, 1 June 1938. "Military, General, 1938, April-December" folder, box C-376, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
49. E. P. Marrs, letter to NAACP, "Military, Gen'l, 1933, Jan.-Oct." folder, 28 December 1932, box C-376, Series I, NAACP Papers, LOC.

50. Report on A&M Normal School, 15 March 1923, untitled folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
51. James E. Sanford to J.R.A. Crossland, 10 November 1921, "Mis. file on training of colored men," Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
52. A. G. Dill, letter to NAACP, 9 May 1922, "Military General, 1922, Jan.-June" folder, box C-374, Series I, NAACP Papers, LOC.
53. Clyde [illegible last name] to NAACP, 25 July 1921, Box C-374, "Military, General, 1921-June-July" folder, NAACP; and George F. Peterson to NAACP, 12 May 1923, "Military, General, 1933 Jan.-Oct." Box C-376, Series I, NAACP
54. K. Nickson, interview in *Harlem Hellfighters*, film by George Merlis and Roscoe Lee Browne (New Video Group, 1997).
55. Rayford Logan, "Woodrow Wilson's War and Logan's War" ch. 6, unpublished autobiography. Rayford Logan Papers, folder 3, box 166-32, Manuscript Department, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
56. W. F. Davis to Walter White, 14 April 1931, "Military General, 1931, Jan.-Oct." folder, box C-374, Series I, NAACP Papers, LOC.
57. Undated petition, untitled folder, Entry 63, RG 15, NARA.
58. Wallace, 22 April 1922; and Cordelia Lee to NAACP, 16 April 1925, "Military, General, 1925, Jan.-May," Box C-375, Series I, Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
59. J. R. Crossland to Frank T. Hines, 9 July 1923, file #15.076, Hospital 91, Tuskegee Alabama, Entry 2A NM60, RG 15, NARA.
60. K. Walter Hickel, "Medicine, Bureaucracy, and Social Welfare: The Politics of Disability Compensation for American Veterans of World War I," in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 246-56.
61. *Ibid.*, 248.
62. L. M. Pastor, Regional Relief Officer, to Medical Officer-in-charge, U.S. Veterans' Hospital #98, Castle Point, NY, 19 February 1925; Isadore Martin to James Weldon Johnson, 25 February 1925; and reply 27 February 1925. All in "Military, General 1925, Jan.-May" folder, Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
63. W. L. Hutcherson to James Weldon Johnson, 23 April 1928; and Winthrop Adams, Acting Medical Director, to Congressman W. A. Ayers, 17 April 1928. Both in "Military, General, 1928, Jan.-Sept." folder, Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
64. Multiple correspondence on the Thomas White case is located in "Military, General, 1925, Jan.-May" folder Box C-375, Series I, NAACP, LOC.
65. In 1921 the board of medical experts hired by the Treasury Department to help create a national network of veterans' hospitals strongly recommended creating a segregated hospital. Vanessa Northington Gamble, *Making a Place for Ourselves: The Black Hospital Movement, 1920-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 74.
66. U.S. Veterans Bureau field letter, 2 February 1923, in "Tuskegee Institute, Nov. 3, 1921-June 28, 1923," folder, box C-410, Part I, Series C, NAACP Papers, LOC.
67. Gamble, *Making a Place for Ourselves*, 81.
68. Daniel, "Black Power in the 1920s," 371.
69. A. L. Holsley to J. W. Johnson, Notes on the Tuskegee Hospital Situation, 11 April 1923, "Tuskegee Institute, Nov. 3, 1921-June 28, 1923" folder, Box C-410, Part I, Series C, NAACP, LOC.
70. Letter to the editor, 14 May 1923, "Tuskegee Institute, Nov. 3, 1921-June 28, 1923" folder, box C-410, Part I, Series C, NAACP Papers, LOC.

71. Letter to Walter White, 21 May 1923, "Tuskegee Institute, Nov. 3, 1921–June 28, 1923" folder, box C-410, Part I, Series C, NAACP Papers, LOC. According to Alabama state law, white nurses could refuse to treat black men.
72. Holsey to Emmett J. Scott, 2 July 1923, quoted in Daniel, "Black Power in the 1920s," 377.
73. Daniel, "Black Power in the 1920s," 378.
74. "Ask Troops Guard Tuskegee Negroes," *New York World*, 8 July 1923; "Will Fight Klan on Veterans' Hospital," *New York Herald*, 9 July 1923; and Clippings in "Tuskegee Institute, Nov. 3, 1921–June 28, 1923" folder, box C-410, Part I, Series C, NAACP Papers, LOC.
75. Crossland to Hines, 9 July 1923.
76. Hines soon replaced Stanley with Maj. Charles M. Griffin as head of the hospital and charged him with training black doctors to run the hospital themselves.
77. Gamble, *Making a Place for Ourselves*, 95.
78. *Ibid.*, 102.
79. W. G. Alexander, letter to the editor, *Journal of the National Medical Association* 25, no. 1 (February 1933): 33–34; and Clipping in "Military General 1933, Jan.–Oct." folder, Box C-376, Series I, NAACP Papers, LOC.
80. *Veterans' Herald*, March 1924, 10–11, Library Division, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.
81. *Veterans' Herald*, April 1924, 16.
82. *Veterans' Herald*, March 1924, 14.
83. *Veterans' Herald*, March 1924, 12. Anne C. Rose argues that the focus on staffing Tuskegee with black professionals drew attention away from medical questions such as providing effective treatment for patients battling mental illness. Anne C. Rose, *Psychology and Selfhood in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 18–19.
84. Alexander, letter to the editor.