African American Servicemen in Vietnam: Clashes of Race and Generation

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During the Vietnam War a disproportionate number of African Americans served in combat positions and the lowest ranks. All black servicemen faced institutional racism, but age and rank determined their response. Older servicemen and officers understood that whites had a better chance at promotions and fair treatment but they overlooked these flaws in favour of social mobility and steady employment. By the mid-to-late sixties, witnesses of urban riots and civil rights activism along with proponents of Black Power and Black Nationalism reached Vietnam and changed how young black men interacted with each other, their superiors, and their white peers.

The United States integrated all branches of the military by 1954, six years after President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981.[1] Although the Vietnam War was the first American war fought entirely with integrated units, institutional racism relegated most African Americans to low-ranking positions.[2] A high proportion of African Americans served in combat units and the junior non-commissioned officer corps. Furthermore, white commanders frequently assigned less appealing jobs to African American servicemen. High casualty rates between 1965 and 1967, together with high draft calls for black youth, stoked fears of institutional genocide. Slow rates of promotions and lopsided military justice frustrated the expectations of many black servicemen. Black Power and Black Nationalism gave young African Americans a sense of solidarity and strength in opposition to white control of the military. Although some servicemen

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[1] Herman Graham III, *The Brothers' Vietnam War: Black Power, Manhood, and the Military Experience* (Gainesville, FL: Florida UP, 2003), 14; 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, 90-1.

considered the armed forces a means of social mobility and opportunity, they tended to be older servicemen and officers.[3] The arrival of new recruits in the mid-to-late 1960s marked a radical shift in thinking for young Vietnam servicemen: Black Power, Black Nationalism, and racial solidarity supplanted older notions of social mobility through service and sacrifice for the nation.

The primary reason that young African Americans accepted military service was limited employment opportunities.[4] In 1961, 13.8 percent of African American workers were unemployed, compared to 7 percent of white workers.[5] In 1964, young black men had an unemployment rate of almost 25.5 percent; for whites, a rate of 14 percent.[6] Reginald Edwards, "the first person in [his] family to finish high school," explains that "I couldn't go to college because my folks couldn't afford it. I only weighed 117 pounds, and nobody's gonna hire me to work for them. So the only thing left to do was go into the service." He enlisted in the Marines in 1963.[7] Paradoxically, many African American men enlisted because they believed the odds of the draft were against them. In their minds it was "better to serve two years out of choice than three years through the draft."[8] Judges offered "punitive enlistment" to African American convicts, and many took up the offer.[9] The military advertised a tangible way to achieve and measure manhood.[10] Edwards thought "the Marines

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[3] Graham, 101-2.
[4] Kimberley L. Phillips, *War! What is it Good For?* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina UP, 2012), 189.
[5] Phillips, 191.
[6] *Ibid.*, 203.
[7] Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Random House, 1984), 6.
[8] Phillips, 192.
[9] Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York UP, 1997), 34.
[10] Graham, 23.

was [*sic*] bad. The Marines built men."[11] Many black servicemen reenlisted for lack of better prospects in the civilian sector.[12] Two-thirds of African American servicemen reenlisted in 1966, compared with 20 percent of whites. In 1967 this rate decreased to 32 percent, but whites reenlisted at a rate of only 12 percent in the same year.[13] In light of the few economic opportunities available to African American men, Veteran Lonnie Alexander recounted in 1974 that "we [black GIs] was really fucking up our lives, you know, by coming out of the bush."[14]

The draft affected African Americans more than whites. Young middle class whites gained the bulk of college and professional deferments in large part because only about 5 percent of African American men attended college in the 1960s. Only full-time studies qualified a student for deferment. White, middle class veterans staffed most local draft boards, and they usually turned down African American requests for service exemptions. Furthermore, historian Kimberly Phillips reveals that "nearly every black neighbourhood in the North, Midwest, and West Coast cities had recruiting offices staffed by black sergeants."[15] Twelve percent of draft-age men were black, but in 1963 they made up 18.5 percent of draftees; in 1967 black Americans still comprised 16.3 percent of draftees. Moreover, eligible black men were twice as likely to be drafted as eligible white men. Black men scored lower on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) because they had less access to health care and education.[16] Beginning in 1965, the Selective Service lowered the minimum test scores for qualification. Forty one percent of the African

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[11] Edwards, 6.
[12] Phillips, 206.
[13] Graham, 24-5.
[14] *Ibid.*, 26.
[15] Phillips, 199.
[16] Graham, 16-17.

American men that the Armed Forces admitted in 1965 scored in the two lowest categories of the AFQT, which are IV and V.[17]

Project 100,000, a draft call for recruits with low AFQT scores which ran from 1966 to 1971, drew a disproportionate number of black Americans into the military.[18] In response to Project 100,000, the Selective Service discarded the national test for college deferments. This change made it easier for middle class whites to gain deferments.[19] The Department of Defense halved the acceptable AFQT score, and because African Americans scored the lowest they represented a huge segment of Project 100,000 draftees. Black men made up 10 percent of the military and 40 percent of Project 100,000 soldiers. Project 100,000 also trained a higher percentage of men for combat: 40 percent compared with 25 percent for all the enlisted ranks. Most importantly, these men died at double the rate compared to the overall military.[20]

Very few African Americans entered domestic military service during the Vietnam War. Many whites entered the reserves or the National Guard to escape more dangerous duties abroad. Only 15,000 men in these branches served in Vietnam. African American men made up a large proportion of the many working class Americans who did not know about domestic alternatives to service abroad or who did not have access to the necessary connections in these domestic branches of the military. Among the enlisted ranks, three times as many college graduates served in the reserves than in the regular army. In 1964, black

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[17] Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina UP, 1993), 22.
[18] Phillips, 203.
[19] Graham, 20.
[20] Appy, 33.

Americans made up 1.45 percent of the National Guard, and this figure dropped to 1.26 percent by 1968.[21]

Despite the Johnson Administration's claim to racial equality in the military, racial disparity emerged as soon as basic training. Army Specialist Arthur Woodley recounted that "[w]e Bloods slept on separate sides of the barracks. And it seemed like the dark-skinned brothers got most of the dirty details, like sweepin' up underneath the barracks or KP, while the light-skinned brothers and Europeans got the easy chores."[22] White drill instructors used racially charged labels such as "nigger."[23] In 1968, Stanley Goff came across many black drill sergeants during Advanced Infantry Training, and the racial composition of his company reflected the overrepresentation of African Americans in lower infantry positions.[24] During boot camp Haywood Kirkland's instructors "told us not to call them Vietnamese. Call them gooks, dinks [...] they wouldn't allow you to talk about them as if they were people."[25] Military-sanctioned racial discrimination against the Vietnamese reminded African Americans of their own experiences with discrimination and contributed to racial tensions in the military.[26]

The frontline offered more opportunities for interracial friendship and cooperation than the rear camps. Survival trumped racial differences. Terry Whitmore remembers that "in combat the squad was the more important group. No matter what kinds of guys and colors were in the squad, it had to run smoothly if we're

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[21] Appy, 37.
[22] Terry, 245.
[23] Graham, 34.
[24] Stanley Goff, *Brothers: Black Soldiers in the Nam* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 11.
[25] Terry, 94.
[26] Graham, 42.

to stay alive."[27] Service alongside white soldiers taught one black serviceman that "the white soldier 'was just another dude without all those things to back him up and make him bigger than he is – things like a police department, big job, or salary.' " Although white soldiers also reported a sense of social levelling during combat missions, interracial friendships faded in the rear bases.[28] Men who fought in the same units developed separate social groups in base camp according to race and generation.[29] Whitmore recalls that "in the Nam we blacks pretty much kept to ourselves, no matter how close we were to our squads. The real bullshitting was always done with other blacks. Jiving about our blocks."[30] Music was another dividing interest.[31] De facto segregation in the rear camps extended to Saigon's nightlife, where black GIs frequented a district called Soul Alley.[32]

Black servicemen sustained more than their share of combat deaths. The African American proportion of American combat deaths in Vietnam was 13.1 percent from 1961 to 1972.[33] This ratio started off much higher at the beginning of the conflict. From 1965 to 1967 black servicemen made up over 20 percent of American combat deaths even though draft-age black men made up only 12.5 percent of the draft-age population.[34] The Selective Service designated a higher proportion of black servicemen to the army and marines than to the navy or air force. These branches of the military sustained more casualties during the war. Moreover,

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[27] Phillips, 221.
[28] Graham, 46-7.
[29] *Ibid.*, 64.
[30] Phillips, 221.
[31] Graham, 64.
[32] Phillips, 222; James E. Westheider*, The African American Experience in Vietnam: Brothers in Arms* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 77.
[33] Graham, 21.
[34] Appy, 19-20.

black soldiers enrolled in elite combat units in higher proportions than white soldiers. Extra pay and status led African Americans to represent 40 to 50 percent of most elite combat units.[35] In 1968 about 25 percent of paratrooper deaths were African American.[36] By the end of 1967 the black proportion of combat deaths fell to 13 percent, and from 1970 to 1972 the figure was under 10 percent.[37]

A large segment of black servicemen found themselves in dangerous or less desirable jobs. The military often channelled African Americans with low AFQT scores into combat positions, and in 1971 black servicemen made up 16.3 percent of service positions and 19.3 percent of supply positions in the military.[38] White commanders gave African American servicemen the dirtiest jobs more often than their white peers, as was the case for Arthur Woodley in boot camp. Furthermore, Private James Barnes spoke for many African Americans when he complained that "it's always the Negro who's walking point (up front)," which is the most dangerous job in a platoon.[39] On the other hand, those who volunteered for point positions rose through the ranks faster.[40] Although some in point may have volunteered for the position, when the decision arose over who to put in point, white commanders chose African Americans more often than whites.

White servicemen with the same or lower level of experience as black servicemen had a better chance at promotions. In 1971 African Americans represented 12.1 percent of enlisted men, 15.7 percent of the second-lowest ranks, and only 4.2 percent of the highest enlisted ranks. Serviceman Joel Davis

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[35] Phillips, 190.
[36] Graham, 21.
[37] Appy, 21.
[38] Graham, 90-1; 153.
[39] *Ibid.*, 91.
[40] *Ibid.,* 52.

believed that "you're one-fourth of a white, because you have to do twice as much to get one-half of what he has." Charles Griffin, an enlisted soldier, explained that in exchange for "the little rank we get we have to do twice as much as the white man to get it and we have to wait twice as long." Specialist W. H. Cooper protested that "I am disgusted and sick of being a second class soldier because of my black face." Since equal opportunity officers and inspector generals answered to the base commander, complaints of discrimination often went nowhere.[41]

Racial inequality was even more obvious in the officer corps. In 1970 African Americans represented 10.5 percent of the enlisted ranks and 2.1 percent of officers. Furthermore, few African American officers rose above the rank of captain. Most African Americans who entered the military did not have the education to become officers. Those fortunate enough to become officers lost out on vital social and work networks that prepared white officers for promotion. Mentors and ties with promotion board members gave white officers a huge advantage over their African American peers. Captain Burns informed the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971 that supervisors to black officers waited until an official review to report mistakes; white officers received feedback well in advance of reviews.[42]

Some white commanders also used the military justice system to punish African American servicemen whose dress and behaviour offended them. Historian James E. Westheider tells how "good officers used Article 15 hearings or Captain's Masts judiciously." However, many white commanders gave warnings to white soldiers and official punishments to black soldiers for similar infractions of base rules. A common cause for an Article

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[41] Graham, 92-3.
[42] *Ibid*., 93-4.

15, a nonjudicial punishment, was violation of uniform or hair-length standards. White commanders sometimes tolerated jewellery, peace symbols, longer hair, and helmets with slogans in chalk among white soldiers but persecuted black soldiers for Afros, armbands, and their own chalk sayings. In some units commanders used Article 15 against African American soldiers with "Black Power" chalked on their helmets without paying mind to white soldiers with "Fuck the War" inscribed on theirs.[43] Soldiers with an Article 15 infraction in their file were vulnerable to less-than-honourable discharges; few received promotions. Veterans who accepted less-than-honourable discharges did not receive benefits and found it even harder than other vets to find a job.[44]

World heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali gave African American servicemen a powerful new role model who espoused "militant antiwar politics rather than the hegemonic warrior role." [45] He gave masculine credence to antiwar and anti-draft sentiment.[46] Ali refused induction into the military on 28 April 1967 and became the most prominent African American draft resister.[47] He denounced the war as a "white man's war," which led many servicemen to reflect on their role in the war and their identity as black men.[48] Historian Herman Graham explains that "Ali's public opposition to the Vietnam War validated latent antiwar sentiments of black soldiers" and "probably meant more to enlisted men [. . .] than did the philosophical opposition of established black leaders like Martin Luther King Jr." At the same time, African American NCOs were less likely to sympathize

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[43] Westheider, *The African American Experience in Vietnam*, 55-6.
[44] Graham, 95-6.
[45] *Ibid.*, 67.
[46] *Ibid.*, 74.
[47] *Ibid.*, 78; 82.
[48] *Ibid.*, 83.

with Ali's resistance to the draft and the war because they invested more of their identity and career in the military.[49]

Continued racial discrimination in the military and at home led many African American servicemen by the late 1960s to frame their lives in terms of Black Power. The movement began in the United States and followed many black servicemen into Vietnam. Black Power encouraged African Americans to assert their independence from white control and to rely on each other for support. In the rear echelons, black soldiers embraced their racial identity over their military one. They formed social gatherings called "soul sessions."[50] Servicemen began to call themselves "black" instead of "Negro" and referred to the group as "brothers," "soul brothers," and "bloods." Homosocial ties also undercut the importance of rank.

Older servicemen and NCOs were more likely to accept the military's definition of manhood and to avoid outward demonstrations of Black Power. For many career soldiers, the military was a means of upward mobility rather than a source of inequality.[51] African American GIs that espoused Black Power suspected that their African American superiors had marginalized their black identity to achieve promotions. Black Powerites often accused career soldiers of being "Uncle Toms," a derogatory name for black men complicit in the oppression of their kin. Specialist Laurence Wallace found the term "Uncle Tom" too harsh: "the name 'Tom' is the lowest you can call a black man." Black NCOs in charge of African American GIs had to navigate the expectations of both white superiors and black soldiers. Black GIs saw their African American superiors more as equals and in

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[49] *Ibid.*, 84.
[50] Graham, 99-100.
[51] *Ibid.*, 101-2.

Sergeant Walter Ambrose's case, "they fe[lt] I should be more lenient."[52]

Enlisted servicemen in the lower ranks adopted a handshake called "the dap." Because there were more white officers than black in the military, when black servicemen saluted they often saluted a white man. The military salute became a symbol of black submission to whites. Black GIs adopted the dap to express social and cultural connection with their African American peers. Some commanders saw the dap as a threat to military hegemony and banned the handshake. Since the ritual could last several minutes, servicemen also used the handshake to hold up mess lines and demonstrate black solidarity and power in public areas. One serviceman described the dap as "a way to piss white people off, and anytime we could do that, we felt good."[53] Some black GIs did not adopt the dap because they saw the handshake as a threat to their friendships with white GIs.[54]

Those black servicemen who withheld criticism of the American effort and the racial inequities of the war felt more inclined to open up after the Tet Offensive. More GIs questioned anti-Communist rhetoric and their participation in the war. They had hoped to gain full citizenship as servicemen and believed in the benefit of fighting in an integrated armed forces. However, few promotions, unequal military justice, and lower-ranking jobs made an impression on black servicemen.[55] Beginning in late 1966, recruits were younger and less invested in the military as a means of social mobility.[56] Black Nationalism offered compelling reasons for why African Americans were second-class citizens

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[52] *Ibid.*, 102-3.
[53] Graham, 105-6.
[54] *Ibid.*, 107; Phillips, 223.
[55] *Ibid.*, 112-3.
[56] Phillips, 223-4.

and why the Vietnam War was not their fight.[57] In August 1967 David Parks wrote in his journal that "[I] read about the riots back in the States in some clippings [my girlfriend] sent. They leave me confused, the police brutality and all. It makes me wonder whether we're fighting the right war."[58] African Americans perceived the occupation of rioting cities by predominantly white National Guard and police forces as colonization.[59] Private James Barnes understood in May 1968 that "they say we're fighting to free the people of South Vietnam. But Newark wasn't free. Was Watts? Was Detroit? I mean, which is more important, home or here?" Private Wendell Hill raised the spectre of slavery and the Jim Crow South when he addressed his fellow soldiers in a December 1969 letter to *Sepia* that argued "it was not a Communist society that lynched your fathers and brothers, and raped your mothers and sisters."[60]

Black Power advocates referred to the Vietnam conflict as a "race war" and reworked the slogan of the Double V Campaign of World War II into the Vietnam context. During WWII the two enemies were fascism abroad and fascism at home, but in Vietnam the enemies became "Charlie and Whitey."[61] On the other hand, Black Nationalism taught that the situation of African Americans had parallels with the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Army. French colonialism and then American imperialism prevented the Vietnamese people from gaining independence, and in the United States continuing discrimination in employment, housing, and education, police occupation of neighbourhoods, and de facto segregation made African

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[57] Graham, 113.
[58] Clyde Taylor, *Vietnam and Black America: An Anthology of Protest and Resistance* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), 183.
[59] Phillips, 224.
[60] Graham, 113.
[61] Phillips, 24; Graham, 114.

Americans second-class citizens. Black Nationalism identified white imperialism as the oppressor in both Vietnam and the United States.[62]

Black soldiers witnessed the poor living conditions of the Vietnamese and many soldiers had experienced poverty firsthand: ninety percent of African American soldiers in Vietnam came from working-class and poor families.[63] David Parks noted that "this is a real poor country. Everywhere you go people are on their knees begging. Some of the Whiteys dig this sort of thing and make a game of it."[64] Specialist Emmanuel Holloman explained that "the majority of people who came over there looked down on the Vietnamese [. . . but] I could understand poverty."[65] Some soldiers thought the African American and Vietnamese experiences represented a shared hardship of people of colour.

On the other hand, many black GIs did not trust the Vietnamese because it was difficult to identify the enemy.[66] Rumours circulated about instances where the Vietcong and the NVA spared African American soldiers from death. A few of these stories are true, but whether servicemen placed much stock in them is unclear. Historian James Westheider argues that "few blacks believed the stories," but Herman Graham points out that these rumours were popular and had "currency" among African American GIs.[67]

Rumours that the Vietnam War was genocide against African Americans gained even more traction with servicemen. Early in 1967 Stokely Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent

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[62] Graham, 113.
[63] *Ibid.*, 115; Appy, 22.
[64] Taylor, 178.
[65] Terry, 87.
[66] Graham, 115-6
[67] Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts*, 156-7; Graham, 118.

Coordinating Committee (SNCC) called Project 100,000 "urban removal" in a speech at Morgan State.[68] In May 1967 Cleveland Sellers, another member of SNCC, labelled the draft "a plan to commit calculated genocide."[69] Stan Goff remembers that "word was going around, and it wasn't a quiet word, that blacks were being drafted for genocidal purposes [. . .] And we believed it. There was a general consensus in 1968 that there must be a conspiracy against black youth."[70] Rumours of genocide linked the inequities of the draft with the dangers of combat duties. The process of circulating these rumours led African American servicemen to reconsider their role in the war and its racial implications.[71]

In 1968 racial animosities exploded in the form of riots, protests, and disruptions.[72] Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination followed the end of the first phase of the Tet Offensive and deeply disheartened many black soldiers. White soldiers made disparaging comments about King's death within earshot of black troops. Occasionally, southern white soldiers displayed signs of white supremacy such as Klan robes and burning crosses, but Confederate flags became the most common display of white supremacy.[73] Between 1968 and 1972 hundreds of incidents of violence broke out in prisons and ships in and near Vietnam. Black prisoners in the overcrowded Long Binh prison near Saigon comprised almost half of the 719 inmates. Military police tortured and beat prisoners to compensate for a shortage of staff. African American inmates responded by stockpiling resources and attacking commanders and white inmates. The riot lasted from

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[68] Taylor, 271.
[69] Graham, 27; 144.
[70] Goff, 11.
[71] Graham, 115.
[72] Phillips, 225.
[73] Graham, 65.

August to September 1968. In October, smaller riots broke out among prisoners on a base in Da Nang. Units in Vietnam accounted for many of the racial incidents in the Marines, of which there were over 1000 in 1970.[74] At Camp Baxter in Da Nang in 1971, white soldiers retreated to their barracks and armed themselves with M-60 machine guns in response to African American protests against racial discrimination. At Camp Tien Sha white soldiers and black protesters almost broke into a firefight.[75]

The worst racial incidents in the navy took place in 1972. Black sailors fought with marines and white sailors on the aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* in October, and another racial fight broke out a few days later on the oiler *Hassayampa*. Black sailors staged a strike against racial discrimination on a different aircraft carrier, the *Constellation*, in November.[76] In 1971 black sailors represented 5.5 percent of the enlisted personnel in the navy, and black officers made up 0.67 percent of naval officers. To attract more African Americans the navy launched an advertising campaign and set up officer training programs at two southern black colleges. One poster suggested to prospective recruits that "You can be Black, and Navy too." By 1972, black sailors represented 12 percent of the enlisted ranks, but most of these new recruits found themselves doing menial or dirty jobs.[77] De facto segregation separated the higher decks with technicians and commanders from the lower decks with the facilities for menial jobs like laundry. Although many black sailors scored low on the AFQT, lack of education often did not explain why many white commanders chose white sailors over black sailors for promotions

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[74] Phillips, 226.
[75] Graham, 65.
[76] *Ibid.*, 120.
[77] Westheider, *The African American Experience in Vietnam*, 90.

to non-technical positions.[78] White commanders did not want to yield power to the new black sailors.[79]

On the *Kitty Hawk,* African American sailors lost faith in the military justice system. In contrast to GIs, sailors depended less on each other for survival and lacked close combat ties. White sailors commonly made racist comments in front of black sailors, and those who confronted the perpetrators often suffered a reprimand.[80] Commanders frequently used the military justice system against black sailors and often gave them harsher penalties. In one instance, the Captain of the *Kitty Hawk* punished two black sailors for assault but gave a lighter penalty to a white sailor with the same charge. In a second assault case, the Captain let a white sailor go without punishment.[81]

On 11 October 1972 a fight broke out between black and white sailors in the de facto segregated entertainment district of Subric Bay in the Philippines. Marines used tear gas to break up the brawl. On the next day investigative officers summoned only the black sailors to explain themselves. Afterwards, African American sailors formed a large social gathering in the mess hall and disrupted mess lines with the dap. White and black sailors began shoving each other, and the marines arrived to quell the fight.[82] When black sailors refused to disperse, the marines beat them. On 12 and 13 October black sailors armed themselves for a riot, but hours of negotiations between the highest-ranking African American officer present and the black dissidents defused the conflict. Black sailors accused Commander Benjamin Cloud of being "a boy of the white man," but Cloud called on the sailors

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[78] Graham, 121-2.
[79] *Ibid.*, 123.
[80] *Ibid.*, 125-6.
[81] *Ibid.*, 127-8.
[82] *Ibid.*, 128-9.

to follow the nonviolent example of Martin Luther King Jr. He removed his shirt and returned black power salutes to gain the confidence of the dissident sailors. Cloud helped bring an end to the *Kitty Hawk* riots, but he lost esteem with black sailors soon after when he embraced military hierarchy over black homosocial ties.[83]

In late 1966, younger black recruits who grew up in the context of urban riots and civil rights activism began to arrive in Vietnam with minds more receptive to Black Power and Black Nationalism. This represented a significant shift from the earlier generation of Vietnam servicemen, who came from a similar social fabric but who privileged their parents' conception of military service as a duty to your country and a way to earn a living. By the time of the Tet Offensive and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in early 1968, many black servicemen began to doubt the strategic value of the American mission in Vietnam and anti-Communist rhetoric, and they weighed the racial implications of white and black men killing Asians. Tired of patterns of institutional racism and armed with new models of masculinity in Muhammad Ali and Black Power, African American servicemen spoke out against white control of the military and against the war. At the same time, not all black servicemen shared the Black Powerites' skepticism over the war and the military establishment: older soldiers and officers valued the military's model of the individual who works within the hierarchy of the armed forces to take advantage of what his country has to offer. Furthermore, black soldiers shared combat experiences with their white peers and often shared a distrust of Vietnamese people. Black soldiers also shared death, atrocities, bravery, and acts of goodwill with white soldiers, but generation

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[83] Graham, 130-2.

and race often distanced black soldiers from their superiors and
their white peers in the rear camps.

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