Sgt. L.A. van den Heever thus:
"You keep quiet, I want to talk first, don't think because you have a white skin and are a Sergeant the same as I am, you can order me to stand to attention." (169)

Consequently, they were branded as being "insolent", "disrespectful", "not amenable to discipline", "arrogant" and "insubordinate" so that applications for their discharge were submitted. (170) Naturally, there were soldiers who adopted this attitude because they were indeed bad characters and unreliable. However, it seems that the authorities did not draw the important distinction between these soldiers and those whose insolence was an expression of protest and resistance.

Another method of protest was to try to opt out of the military system altogether. Some soldiers sincerely believed they could do this by resorting to deliberate and repetitive contraventions of the MDC in the hope that such misconduct would expedite their discharge from the army. (171) In the Garawi area, near Cairo, these soldiers drank methylated spirits in order to receive a heavy sentence. Some of their fellow soldiers who had been sent to the Union to serve their sentences apparently wrote to their friends still at Garawi that on arrival in the Union they were discharged from the Army and were exempted from serving their sentences. Although the DNEAS emphatically denied this, the fact remains that a certain number believed they could be released from the army in this way without serving their sentences. (172)

Committing the strictly military offence of AWOL can also be construed as a clear indication of protest and a method to escape from army life (albeit sometimes only temporarily). Repetitive AWOL could, of course, as the other contraventions of the MDC described above, be utilised as a method to be discharged permanently. In this regard it is important to take note of the following pertinent remarks by T.P. Hartnagel:

"Innovative defiance represents a rejection of the institutionalized means to obtain a goal and the substitution of illegitimate means to reach that same goal under conditions where legitimate means are not available to the actor... For some categories of soldiers, then, going AWOL may represent a deviant means for obtaining the goal of discharge. Soldiers from lower class backgrounds in particular may find it difficult to adapt in culturally acceptable ways to the demands of the military. Their social background may, on the one hand, limit their opportunities for finding legitimate means for adjusting to the army and ultimately obtaining a discharge. Furthermore, they may not have internalized the prescribed norms to a sufficient extent such that the innovative, deviant response of going AWOL to obtain a discharge becomes more probable... Given defiant motivation, deviant behaviour will result if the consequences of such behaviour are not perceived as too negative. Negative experiences in the military may motivate the individual to escape from this noxious environment. Given the absence of constraints inhibiting
such behaviour, repetitive AWOL may result as a technique for getting out of the army." (173)

For some of the black soldiers at least, it was imperative to leave the army either for shorter periods of AWOL or to obtain a permanent discharge by repetitive AWOL. To them army life and conditions had become so unbearable that they would rather leave the system even if they had to resort to illegitimate means to do so and consequently receive a bad discharge.

An unidentified soldier, for instance, pointed out how intolerable circumstances had become to certain soldiers:

"Here at 75 Air School...is a lot of troubles to NMC soldiers some of them go away from the camp for about 4 to 5 months just trying to save their lives. We work very hard, we go to work at 7 o'clock early in the morning we drink black tea and dry bread. I think the bread is been taken from the white men mess which was there for 2 days. Then we are forced to carry slices of bread of which we eat the dry bread by 12.30 hrs. without tea or water with sugar. We only eat by 5 o'clock of which sometimes we find the porridge being finished and still we are to eat dry bread." (174)

These circumstances, the apparent absence of very strict control measures as well as an ostensible willingness on the part of the authorities to indeed discharge soldiers who were "constant defaulters", "incorrigible and a disgrace to the NMC", had become "a burden" and were "of no value as soldiers" led to numerous soldiers to AWOL deliberately. (175)

A more serious form of absenteeism, can likewise be construed as an important method of protest. As the war continued, the number of deserters increased. By 1943 the lustre of imperial service had evidently worn thin. In 1942 alone there was an increase of more than thousand deserters in the NMC with a grand total of 1,379 for that year. (176) By September 1944 the number had increased to 2,275 for the NMC alone and by May 1946 2,693 black soldiers had deserted the army. (177) This represents 3.4% of the total number of black soldiers recruited. The treatment meted out to some soldiers (178) was a major reason for desertion as Sgt. H.S. Mboyiya vouched:

"NMC personnel are deserting by the score because they are handled by people who are unfit to look after them." (179)

Some black soldiers who did not wish to resort to extreme measures, lodged their protests and complaints in different ways. A few soldiers, like Timothy Ndadine, disregarded the proper channels of communication and addressed the DNEAS directly (180) while others corresponded directly with their Parliamentary representatives. (181) The DNEAS strongly disapproved and issued strict orders prohibiting this practice. (182) Still operating within the army system, the soldiers manifested their dissatisfaction by complaining about the food. (183) This is of course not an uncommon practice within a military environment but in the case of the NMC it acquired the additional dimension of a way in which their more deep-seated grievances and feelings of
protest could be vented.

For the educated black soldier more avenues for protest were open. N. Ngcobo took the initiative and summoned a meeting in the lines to discuss the treatment they received from the white soldiers (184) whilst others wrote protest letters. In these letters the soldiers did not hesitate to speak their minds, lodge their complaints and criticise their superiors - an indication of their discontent and dissatisfaction as criticism of higher authority was strictly forbidden. (185) A few soldiers resorted to extra-military bodies such as the South African Institute of Race Relations where they vented their protests and sought help. (186) Furthermore, a number also joined societies like the Springbok Legion which they believed had a sympathetic ear for the soldiers' complaints and could redress their grievances. (187)

More serious forms of protest also occurred from behaving in a disorderly way, breaking rank and causing a racket to actions bordering on violence such as breaking camp and resisting arrest. Likewise, violent behaviour itself had various nuances ranging from flare-ups of "bad feeling" leading through the whole spectrum progressively to sporadic fighting and outbursts, revolts and all-out riots. In a military situation protest can easily become more intense because of, inter alia, military exigencies and stricter discipline than in normal society. Apart from the above forms of protest, it may culminate in open mutiny which constitutes an insurrection against lawful military authority.

Attention has already been given to the specific reasons which sparked off indiscipline, e.g. poor or inadequate food, overwork, lack of leave and so forth. (188) As far as the NMC is concerned, the following observation by J.A. Blake is indeed relevant:

"These multiple causes can be reduced to one general factor, and that is a perceived organizational irresponsibility toward the men. The men feel abused, taken advantage of, or let down by the organizational authorities, and this manifests itself in the form of resentment. At the same time, the target of this resentment remains vaguely defined and apparently inaccessible, the individuals involved frustrated and the frustration - for lack of any other target - is vented upon accessible members of the organisation." (189)

To the black soldiers the "perceived organizational irresponsibility" was the treatment they received from their superiors. (190) Thus the reasons underlying indiscipline are also applicable to the following discussion on the more serious and violent ways in which the soldiers demonstrated their protest and exercised resistance. Nevertheless, the specific reasons for each incident will be discussed briefly.

A fairly mild disturbance occurred at the NMTT Depot, West Vlakfontein on 24 June 1942 when one company formed up for rations in a disorderly manner. Staff Sergeant Jackson, the
acting Regimental Sergeant Major, rebuked the men by calling them pigs and baboons. This not only offended them but also aggravated the situation. At that stage the Training Officer, Lieutenant Carruthers arrived and in an effort to re-establish discipline, took the whole company for a 5 kilometer route march. However, this did not have the desired effect. On their return the company refused to be served with the evening meal, broke ranks and became very noisy. Only after the Officer Commanding, Captain C.H. Alexander, had taken personal control of the situation did the disturbance end. On examining their grievances the next day, he found that they were rather petty; they complained of insufficient leave, dishes being too small to contain their food and the inferior quality of the bread. Although Captain Alexander admitted that Staff Sergeant Jackson's abusive language was the direct cause of the disturbance and that Lieutenant Carruthers' route march aggravated the situation and penalised several soldiers who were not even implicated in the rowdiness but were, unfortunately, lining up for food after the initial incident, he exonerated the company commander and the white NCO's. To Captain Alexander the behaviour of the 120 undisciplined soldiers "whose personal files reflect unsavoury crime records" and who had recently been drafted to the depot, were the only cause for the disturbance. (191)

On 9 August 1943 125 soldiers who had arrived at the 12th Battalion NMC, Quaggaport from the TAC, Welgedacht that very morning, broke camp the same afternoon, ostensibly because they refused to eat "kaffir corn" (sorghum). Approximately 119 were arrested in the nearby township, Atteridgeville, of whom 100 again succeeded in escaping. The rest, by this time truculent and defiant of any authority, were locked up in the Detention Barracks awaiting further disciplinary action. The Commanding Officer stated that:

"during the handling of this affair certain of the details became violent, and it was necessary to meet such violence with violence." (192)

Violence indeed erupted at Eshowe on 2 November 1942. On the previous day a group of soldiers had seen Constable P. Biyela in civilian clothes leading two soldiers whom he had tied with a rope. He refused to respond to the soldiers' question whether he was a policeman. In the ensuing argument one of his prisoners escaped. He struck the remaining one and removed him to goal. The police arranged with the military authorities that an identification parade would be held the next day to ascertain which of the soldiers had threatened Constable Biyela. There were about 290 black soldiers on parade of whom six were picked out. They were then escorted to the police van but one of them refused to get into the van and tried to run away. Constable Biyela caught hold of him and endeavoured to lift him onto the van as he was resisting fiercely. The police appeared to be manhandling the offender. At this stage about two hundred of the soldiers still on parade broke ranks and rushed towards the police and surrounded them. They were extremely hostile and threw stones at the police. Two of the black police detectives (one being
constable Biyela) were thrown to the ground and assaulted by the soldiers. Several of the soldiers who were about to mount guard duty were armed with assegais and one of them threatened to stab another black detective whilst others held their assegais in a threatening manner. Some of the white as well as the black soldiers remonstrated with the assailants and succeeded in protecting the police from further assault. (193)

A stone throwing incident took place at the Standerton Remounts Depot on 26 April 1943. About 195 soldiers failed to resume duty after their lunch hour. On being questioned, by Lieutenant Noble and Sergeant Freer, the cliche-ridden reason for dissatisfaction with the food was advanced and the two men were warned to leave. Lieutenant Noble ignored the warning and endeavoured to induce them to return to work. Thereupon the soldiers stoned them, striking both, and injuring Sergeant Freer so badly that he had to be removed to hospital. When Lieutenant Noble and the Adjutant, Captain Barnard, returned the soldiers threatened the two officers, threw stones at them and thus forced them to leave. Assistance from the nearby 25 Air School was requested and the soldiers were arrested without any trouble. (194) In this instance, it is clear that complaints about food were only a smoke-screen. Only a few days before this incident Captain A.S. Mehan the Visiting Officer NEAS, visited 25 Air School and sensed a "current of unrest" amongst the 346 soldiers at the Air School. About 50 of these soldiers were local Standerton residents and had previously been employed as non-attested civilian labour. Earlier endeavours to enlist them into the NMC had met with a blank refusal. Negotiations ensued, the upshot of which was that these 50 labourers agreed to enlist on condition that they would be permanently stationed in Standerton, permitted to live in the Standerton township and would never be required to live under the NMC camp discipline. For Captain Mehan this concession augured trouble. It would affect the 760 soldiers attached to the 25 Air School, 4th Battalion NMC doing local security guard work and the soldiers in the Remounts Depot, would all be encamped around Standerton. The 710 soldiers not enjoying this privilege could only visit the Standerton township on alternate nights. To aggravate matters, the Town Council endeavoured to impose restrictive a curfew on the nights they were permitted in the townships, prohibiting them from passing through the town after 22h00. Captain Mehan was evidently not impressed by this arrangement:

"This means that the half of the 710 N/E's who are visiting the Location on their permitted alternate night must leave it at 21.00 hours, whilst the 50 other N/E's of 25 Air School, SAAF may carry-on there and remain all night and every night. I see in this the seeds of a first-class rumpus which will certainly contribute to fill a number of hospital beds if not cemetery plots." (195)

He had hardly submitted his report when the above-mentioned disturbance occurred, clearly not an unrelated, isolated affair.

A remonstrance of low intensity took place at the NMC camps at King's Park, Congella, Clairwood and Durban during January and
February 1943. Conditions in these camps were generally below standard and, according to reports, (196) the level of discipline was deteriorating. On 19 February 1943
"there was a feeling in the air amongst the Non-Europeans which was worrying and alarming". (197)
At one stage the company commander, Captain V. Hughes, threatened to call in white troops to ensure order but this idea was countermanded by his superiors. The trouble came to a head on 20 February 1943 when the bread issue to the troops was found to be "unpalatable and uneatable". (198) Another major reason which only came to light afterwards, was that there was no opportunity for the soldiers to raise any complaint because of the refusal of the company commander to see them. (199) A routine parade followed at which one of the two companies failed to obey the order to fall in. When the commanding officer enquired from the NCO's why the order had not been obeyed, they replied that the men had not eaten. He promised that their complaint would be looked into but they first had to obey the command to fall in which they eventually did. When they were subsequently dismissed they went quietly to their tents. Later they were given other rations of bread. It appears, therefore, that the black troops in this instance were amenable to discipline when their rightful grievances were redressed.

With regard to incidents of protest and resistance that could be categorised as riots, it is important to note that these likewise occurred on different levels of intensity. In these cases, violence against people and property, a strong sense of solidarity amongst the black soldiers as well as courage to challenge authority were outstanding features.

The Welgedacht Recruits Training Depot was the scene of a fairly low-keyed riot on 31 July 1941. After the soldiers had been given their usual beer ration, they were dismissed to line up at the kitchen for their evening meal. Some of them were rowdy and others pushed from the back of the queue causing those in the front to block the entrance to the kitchen. When the orderly officer warned them to stand back, some refused to do so. The Military Police and sentries were then instructed to force the soldiers back, with the result that a scuffle took place in which a sentry, armed with an assegai, accidentally stabbed a soldier. This infuriated the other soldiers. His friends shouted that the guards had killed him and they called for revenge. They thereupon stormed the kitchen door. One of them shouted at the Staff Sergeant, who tried to stop them from forcing their way into the kitchen,
"Ja boertjie, julle het nou daardie man seer gemaak maar vanaand sal ons julle wys." [Yes, your boer, you have injured that man but we will retaliate tonight].
It then became a free fight. They started to throw bricks, stones and pieces of coal and smashed most of the kitchen windows. By this time the main doors of the compound were closed to prevent the soldiers from leaving the compound. Seeing this, the soldiers loosened some of the corrugated iron sheets in the fence at the back of the compound, trying to force their way out.
were prevented from doing this, they threw a lighted blanket over the fence which set the grass on fire outside the compound. The riot was eventually stopped after four tear gas bombs (obtained from the Police at Springs) had been released among the rioters. Inevitably several of the black soldiers as well as whites were injured in the fracas and had to receive hospital treatment. (200)

The documents suggest that the soldiers had a grudge against the cooks as there was sometimes a shortage of meat. This may also explain why some of them pushed from the back. In addition, they greatly resented the way they had been driven back by the sentries armed with assegais. According to their perception these sentries were collaborating with the white authorities as the following exclamation which emanated from the soldiers during the riot proves:

"Yea, you sentries you listen to the white man when he tells you to kill your own people, you do it but we are going to kill you." (201)

A riot of a more serious nature occurred at Lenz on the 1st and 2nd January 1942. Apparently, the trouble arose when a Military Policeman attempted to arrest a soldier who had visited the local shebeens and was consequently "boisterous and disorderly". Some of the other soldiers assisted in resisting this arrest. In the scuffle they attacked one of the NEAS officers, Lieutenant Brent who, in an attempt to defend himself, seriously injured a soldier and caused minor injuries to two others. Three soldiers who were allegedly among the ring leaders were also arrested. Later, during the night, minor disturbances of inter alia stone throwing continued as they sought Lieutenant Brent whom they believed had killed the soldier. By chance there was a thunder storm and rain which apparently and effectively dampened the enthusiasm of the rioters. The next day, there was initially no sign of trouble until early evening when there again seemed to be a cry for Lieutenant Brent. The soldiers were also anxious to liberate the three prisoners who had been arrested the previous day. There was another storm after which there was no further trouble. (202)

A similar incident, which took place at the NMC Camp "Q" S.C. Zonderwater on 25 October 1943, is another example of a riot breaking out after a white officer had injured a soldier. Likewise, it highlights the sense of solidarity amongst the black soldiers. During the morning a soldier of the VRP was sentenced to 28 days in the detention barracks. However, he broke away from the guard tent brandishing an axe and defying Sergeant Major Thomson who wanted to arrest him. Pistol shots were then fired and the escapee was wounded in the left leg. This incident provoked a large body of the soldiers who became uncontrollable. They injured a regimental policeman, shouted remarks such as "Are we dogs?", "Because we are black", "It's easy to shoot with a pistol" and demanded that Sergeant Major Thomson who had fired the shots, should return. The situation calmed down only after the injured soldier had been driven away in an ambulance. (203)
The riot which took place at the Driefontein Reception Depot on 14 January 1945 is another example of soldiers not hesitating from manifesting their resistance despite the odds against them. The main reason for the riot was the fact that one of their fellow-soldiers had been stabbed by a guard of the 4th Battalion NMC and they were determined to find and kill the guard. A very strong feeling of solidarity is again apparent in this case. Efforts by the Commanding Officer and other officers to placate the crowd of soldiers and explain to them that they could not take the law in their own hands, were of no avail. The Commanding Officer then ordered the entire 4th Battalion NMC Guard Company to be removed from the precincts of the camp and to be taken back to Modderfontein. Nevertheless, a crowd of about 40 men, armed with sticks and stones stormed a detachment of the "Non-European" Military Police, caught one and broke his collar-bone. They thereupon stoned and damaged the roof of the guards' shelter at the camp entrance, forced an entry into the guard room and released all the prisoners.

By this time the Commanding Officer had already realised the seriousness of the situation. He called in the assistance of the Military Police at Benoni and the Welgedacht NCO's. In addition, as darkness was setting in, he decided to arm the white NCO's but instructed them not to use their fire-arms unless he issued specific orders to that effect. Moreover, he warned the crowd that he would use a tear gas bomb if they did not disperse. They took no notice and he released the bomb, driving them deeper into the compound where they immediately set about stoning and destroying property. Only by midnight, with the help of a few more gas bombs, were the officers able to restore order and arrest the ring leaders. (204)

A disturbance of a somewhat different character from the ones described above, of fairly limited proportions, was confined to certain individuals and took place in the barracks of the Native Motor Transport Training Depot (NMTTD) at Holfontein on 2 December 1941. Shortly after 16h00 some black privates accompanied by a few military police broke bounds and went to huts near Brickfields to buy beer which was freely available and in which they all indulged liberally. On the way back to the barracks a quarrel arose between Joshua Radebe and Lance Corporal Tapolo Majola who asked Radebe for dagga. On reaching the barracks, Majola threatened to arrest them on the flimsy charge of drinking beer. At their room more drinking, dancing and playing a guitar took place. This attracted a large number of soldiers to their room.

Soon afterwards the Provost, Sergeant C. Pike, and some Military Police armed with batons and assegais entered the room because, according to them, there had been fighting in the room. When Sergeant Pike and his party were asked to leave, they refused and Lance Corporal Tapolo Majola raised his baton to strike one of the soldiers but hit Joshua Radebe; someone struck a blow at Majola and the inmates of the room forcefully closed the door. Those outside tried to force the door open and they also broke
the window. At this stage the Orderly Officer, Lieutenant P.B. Davis, arrived and using vulgar language, repeatedly demanded that the door should be opened. Those inside, however, shouted that he had to go away and that they would kill anyone who came in. Lieutenant Davis fired three warning shots which frightened the men inside as Bhlose Butelezi described later:

"I heard a shot fired. This shot was followed by another shot which struck the top of the door... There was another shot fired. The third shot entered the door... By this time I thought my last day had come. I thought it was a case of defending myself and to strike at all assegais coming through the door and the window. It would be possible that a person entering the door could be struck accidentally... " (205)

Eventually, the door was forced open with Lieutenant Davis in the lead. The men in the room hit indiscriminately at anyone that tried to get in irrespective of person or rank. When Lieutenant Davis entered, he was struck and forcibly ejected.

At this stage the Commanding Officer, Major C.K. Martin having heard the shots, arrived at the scene of the disturbance where he found a crowd of black soldiers, some armed with assegais. He was informed that they were guards and military police stationed there by Sergeant Pike and Lieutenant Davis and further that the latter and two black policemen, Lance Corporals, Sebaliso Kumbo and Tapolo Majola, had been injured. Major Martin was first refused entry into the room but when the inmates realised it was their Commanding Officer speaking, they opened the door. He found the men in the room very excited, under the influence of liquor but not drunk. When he enquired after the cause of the trouble, they told him that they had joined to fight the Germans and were now being shot at by the English. He realised that it was no use attempting to pacify them while the armed guard was still outside. He ordered the removal of the armed guard and then succeeded in pacifying the recalcitrants.

This was not a concerted rising of one group against another - the majority of the soldiers were mere spectators. It is, however, important to note that a few individuals had the courage to make a stand against the authorities. This was doubtlessly bolstered by their state of intoxication. Perhaps of greater importance, was the underlying tension between the blacks and whites. Shortly before the disturbance the Commanding Officer reported that, although the establishment of the depot provided for 22 white Staff Sergeants, he had with the exception of two, only Sergeants and Corporals. He continued:

"Very few of these NCO's are sufficiently well trained to efficiently carry out the duties they are called upon to perform, and they are always at disadvantage in view of the fact they carry equal or inferior rank to many of the natives... Both Europeans and Natives are resentful owing to the present state of affairs. It is my...opinion that those Europeans who are of equal or inferior rank to the natives, should be withdrawn from the parade ground or promoted to the rank of S/Sgt. forthwith. Unless this is
done I fear repercussions, and I am told that there are already rumbblings amongst the natives." (206)

It seems as if this fact, that the white NCO's carried equal rank to the black soldiers, contributed in no small way to encourage the soldiers to challenge those of equal rank.

The Air Force Station at Germiston was the scene of one of the worst riots by black soldiers in South Africa. In this disturbance the soldiers openly defied authority. Some members of the 4th Battalion NMC, particularly those from the Msinja district, Zululand, believing that they had attested for only six months, wanted their discharge after serving approximately 10 months. This, however, was refused resulting in dissatisfaction. Although the evidence in this regard is contradictory, there was apparently also animosity between the blacks and the whites in the Battalion. At the Court of Enquiry, Staff Sergeant M.J.H. Herbst testified that one of the black soldiers had warned him that the other soldiers were preparing themselves to assault the whites. (207) This is corroborated by the evidence of Captain Marwick, Commanding Officer of "C" Company 4th Battalion NMC at the Germiston Air Port. Sgt. C.E. Dlamini had informed him that an assault on the white NCO's had been planned to take place on 12 June 1942 while Captain Marwick was away on vacuum leave. However, as a number of the black soldiers were absent attending a court martial hearing, the plan was thwarted. (208)

Matters came to a head on 23 June 1942 when six NMC soldiers, Christopher Kwela, Gideon Ngubane, Ernest Funani, Johannes Shange, Jacob Hlubi and Shadrack Mdlalose objected to the order that beer was only to be consumed under supervision at the place of issue. One reason for this instruction was that the men used to keep the beer and then later added sugar to make it stronger with the result that they would get drunk the next day. (209) The six soldiers took their beer to their tents complaining that there was a bad smell at the place where the beer was issued. Staff Sergeant Herbst tried to enforce the order and in the process kicked their tin of beer over. One of the soldiers then said:

"This is Government liquor, it does not belong to you. Why do you destroy our rations?" (210)

The atmosphere was very tense and the soldiers evidently extremely acrimonious. A few of them got up and armed themselves with knobkerries. One pushed Staff Sergeant Herbst aside and said "Suka" ["Get out of the way"]. Two NCO's, Sergeants Njieza Ngubane and A.C. Mitchell were then attacked and beaten up. Staff Sergeant Herbst was also seriously injured and had to be detained in hospital. The six mentioned above were thereupon placed under arrest for striking a superior officer. On the instruction of the Commanding Officer of 4th Battalion NMC, Major F.H. Brickhill, these men were released the following day.

On the 24th of June, Captain Marwick had a meeting with the soldiers where certain complaints were voiced, the majority of which were directed at Sergeant Major S.W. Haynes who supervised the drinking of beer. They particularly resented being herded
like cattle at these so-called beer parades.

Soon afterwards it was decided to re-arrest the offending six soldiers. According to Captain Marwick, this was done as he had only then gathered more information. He regarded the complaints against Sergeant Major Haynes as being an excuse on the part of the black soldiers for their assault. He continued:

"The disturbance...owes its origin to a certain number of disaffected details in the Detachment and the disturbance itself was engineered by these men. I know three ring leaders, namely, Mabulane Zuma, Ntimini Makunga, Cunningham Dlamini, who have a following of about 17 men. The six men who committed the assaults and are among the seventeen details mentioned, are young hotheads and were merely the instruments of the instigators...It is my view that it is essential that the six details concerned in the assaults should be placed under close arrest, forcibly if necessary. This arrest should be affected soon for the sake of discipline and the future control of the detachment as a whole. I feel that any further delay in disciplinary action being taken might be interpreted by the natives as being a sign of weakness." (211)

In order to re-arrest the men a parade was ordered on the 27th of June. The six so-called "ring leaders" were ordered to fall out and were marched off towards a troop carrier. There they asked where they were being taken to as they believed they were no longer under arrest. The Native Military Police thereupon surrounded them in order to put them into the carrier by force. They then became frightened, resisted the police and a fight ensued.

Meanwhile, some of the black soldiers on parade broke rank intending to assist their comrades. A detachment of the 1st Reserve Brigade, Witwatersrand Rifles (earlier commandeered by Captain Marwick to be present as a precautionary measure) was standing by. At that moment they were ordered to fix bayonets. When those who had broken ranks saw this, they returned to the parade.

Three of the six soldiers, Johannes Shange, Jacob Hlubi and Shadrack Mëlhalose who in their fight with the Military Police had armed themselves with the assagais left in the carrier by the police, were eventually arrested but the other three, Christopher Kwela, Gideon Nkubane and Ernest Funani, escaped and ran to the NMC camp. There they were joined by Philemon Dhladhla who had left the parade ground. Armed with assagais, knobkerries and pieces of iron piping, they were running back to the parade ground when they were confronted by the Reserve Brigade which was instructed to search, collect and remove all weapons from the NMC camp. The NCO in charge of the Reserve Brigade, Sergeant N.G. Ansell, called to the four soldiers to halt but instead of stopping they increased their pace and rushed at the Brigade in a threatening manner, shouting and brandishing their weapons. An assagai was thrown slightly wounding Private F.J. Havenga of the
Reserve Brigade. Warning shots were fired over the heads of the attackers but with no effect. When the attackers were at close range, about ten metres, and as he thought his men and the other whites were in danger of being killed, Sergeant Ansell gave the order to open fire. Then all was confusion. Two of the attacking black soldiers, Christopher Kwela and Philemon Dhladhlha were killed instantly and Ernest Funani was wounded and died soon afterwards. The fourth soldier, Gideon Ngubane, ran off but was chased, caught and after being hit on the head with the butt of a rifle, gave himself up. (212) After this, things quietened down.

It is interesting to note that the three soldiers arrested at the troop carrier denied an important aspect of the above account in their testimony before the Magistrate of Germiston. Jacob Hlubi repudiated the testimony that the three escapees had returned armed with assegais and knobkerries. According to him, they were shot at while they were running away. Together with the other two, Shadrack Mdhlaalse and Johannes Shange he also denied that they had taken possession of the assegais they had found in the troop carrier and had threatened the escort. (213) Gideon Ngubane, the only survivor of the shoot-out likewise contradicted the whites' testimony of events:

"Ernest, Christopher and I ran away in the direction of our camp. We had no particular reason for running to our tents. Before we got there, we noticed European soldiers marching after us with rifles. We ran on, but before we reached our tents they commenced shooting at us... We had no arms...and we never returned armed with assegais. If the Doctor says that the bullets entered the front portion of the bodies of the dead men and came out at the back, I cannot explain it." (214)

It was indeed the medical evidence which disposed of this conflict of opinions and made it perfectly clear that all the deceased must have been facing the squad when they were shot as the bullets had entered the bodies from the front. (215)

This incident also reverberated in society at large. The Non-European United Front sent a telegram to the Minister of Defence informing him of the "great alarm and speculation among the Non-European community" after the announcement that three soldiers had been shot and killed. (216) Likewise, the shooting and the inevitable concomitant distortions and falsehoods had a very negative effect on recruiting. (217) The military and civilian authorities repeated the standing instruction that NMC Battalions were not allowed to retain their assegais except when they performed their duties. This lapse was, in their opinion, a major reason why the whites considered it necessary to defend themselves with firearms. (218)

An extremely serious riot of major proportions occurred at Garawi, Egypt on 17 August 1943. It led to the death of three black soldiers, nine men wounded, property destroyed and stores broken into. Later a Court of Enquiry was held to be followed by a Court Martial at which six of the ten accused (Privates Joseph Dafet, Elias Moshabane, Yedwa Dumela, Tahehlo Motsobatsi, Simon Mnisi and
David Sabiya) were sentenced to death by being shot; two (Privates Moonisive Mzambo and James Mpolobe) were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for life and the remaining two were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour—one (Private Fanie Mosandiwe) for five years and the other (Private Sabie Phala) for seven years. The sentences of death were later commuted to imprisonment with hard labour for life. (219)

The course of the disturbance was as follows: Although there is no satisfactory proof of any concerted plan or of any previously arranged conspiracy, on the day prior to the rioting there was talk amongst the members of the NMC in the guard room and visitors there of a so-called "push" the following day. Ostensibly the "push" was directed against the "Non-European" Military Police for handling prisoners roughly but in reality it was to be a drive against the white men. Corporal Thompson Matumba testified that one of the prisoners, Billie Zweni, had said that "all the prisoners were going to fight the M.P.'s and the white men" whilst Lieutenant J.P.C. Heenan likewise testified that David Sabiya had also said that "he was going to kill all the Mboons today meaning 'Kill all the Dutchmen'".

Joseph Dafet himself confirmed:
"There is going to be a lot of bloodshed in this place today." (220)

During the night and the following morning considerable quantities of liquor were consumed. (221)

At about 09h00 on the morning of 17 August 1943, the trouble started at the guard tent. When the Provost personnel came to take the prisoners to the orderly room they were attacked by the latter wielding sticks. A Military Police Sergeant, Sergeant Joseph Chaka, hit a prisoner, David Sabiya, on the head with a stick felling him. The other prisoners who had been sitting outside the tent with Sabiya as well as many other soldiers besides the prisoners joined in throwing stones at the Military Police who ran away. Then Joseph Dafet picked Sabiya up and carried him to the guard room. Lieutenant J.C.F. Heenan and Sergeant B.C.P. Nicolaas entered the guard room and said that Sabiya should be taken to hospital. Sergeant Nicolaas noticed that Dafet had an Italian rifle with him and tried to wrench it from him. During the ensuing struggle Dafet hit the two whites several times with a stick and threw stones at them. (222)

Meantime, Sabiya, after having been bandaged, had recovered to such an extent that he could take an active part in the disturbance—possibly inflamed by the blow on his head.

In the meantime Major D.R. Gibson, the Commanding Officer of the NEAS Depot, after he had heard a disturbance in the camp, went to the guard room where he found a crowd of sullen soldiers in a hostile mood standing about, some armed with sticks and rifles whilst others were merely spectators. Some of them shouted derogatory remarks (especially aimed at Major Gibson), adopted an aggressive and menacing attitude and threw stones at the Military Police. Apparently, Joseph Dafet commanded the confidence of most
of the crowd. However, when he pointed a rifle in the direction of Major Gibson trying to shoot him, Private George Mlongo pushed Dafet aside so that the rifle was actually fired in another direction hitting Private Abel Sillo in the forearm. Meanwhile David Sabiya jumped about, waving sticks above his head and then hitting them on the ground. This is, according to African tradition, a clear challenge for a fight. (223) When Major Gibson called on the crowd to disperse and go to their tents, they took no notice and neither did the black NCO's who were called on to help disperse the crowd which was by now stoning the Military Police. Joseph Dafet and David Sabiya again threatened Major Gibson, calling him a fifth columnist until the former eventually said, "Leave these dogs alone". (224) They then attacked Sergeant Kirsten, who was with Major Gibson, and tried to wrestle his revolver from him. Dafet also tried to kick Sergeant Kirsten. The struggle stopped after Sergeant Major S.D. Payten had managed to remove the revolver from Sergeant Kirsten. Major Gibson absented himself believing that Dafet and Sabiya were drunk and that they would presently calm down. His presence seemed to excite them. He reported the situation to the Commanding Officer Headquarters Units at Base, Col. Swart and to the DDNEAS. Next he ordered that all available Battalion NCO's were to be mustered and armed but not to fire unless absolutely necessary.

But Major Gibson's action did not have the desired effect. Events then moved quickly. Dafet set fire to the provost tent, entered the company commander's office and broke the furniture using a large stick. With his bayonet he then threatened and attacked Lieutenants J.C.F. Heenan and S.O. Goodwin who were in the office and trying to remove the records. Next he set the tent alight and prevented the soldiers from approaching the tent by throwing large stones at them. According to Staff Sergeant J.W. Bell it would have been dangerous if not impossible to have attempted to arrest Dafet and Sabiya as the crowd's attitude was threatening and unpredictable. (225)

Thereupon, at Dafet's instigation and with other soldiers shouting "Go and get rifles", (226) he and Sabiya broke into the quartermaster's storea. They took some Italian rifles and ammunition which they distributed amongst the disaffected members of the NMC who had run to the quartermaster's stores. He then started firing from the mess nearest to the kitchen. Lt. S.O. Goodwin with four volunteers, Staff Sergeant J.W. Bell, Acting Sergeant H.C.W. Jones, Acting Sergeant Swailes and Acting Sergeant Norris then tried to catch Dafet and his comrades by first occupying the mess nearest to the NMC Quartermaster's stores. While advancing they were fired upon and a black soldier behind them was wounded. After they had reached the mess safely and were about to enter the NMC Quartermaster's store from where they could arrest the two firing soldiers, an order to cease fire and to withdraw was shouted across at Lieutenant Goodwin. He then withdrew to the Battalion Orderly Room. The order to withdraw had apparently come from Major Gibson who had meanwhile parleyed with between 50 and 60 black soldiers. Their spokesman, Billie Zweni,
suggested that if the Battalion NCO's were withdrawn and
disarmed, they would disarm the recalcitrants who had rifles.
This was done and firing ceased only to break out in full force
soon afterwards, coming apparently from all over the NMC camp —
disaffect blacks firing at white NCO's and the latter returning
the fire. It assumed the proportions of a pitched battle with
intense firing.

Major A.D. Cilliers, D.P.M., attempted to reason with the rioters
but was confronted by accused Elias Moshobane who was very
excited and gesticulated wildly with his hands. He wanted to know
why the NMC were being fired upon. He shouted
"We don't want to see your white faces here... we are the
enemy, let us get rifles and we will fight the lot of you."
(227)

Major Cilliers likewise heard other blacks shouting complaints
that
"The Battalion NCO's and M.P. assault them, that officers
assault them or ill treat them, officers don't listen to
their grievances and complaints, the white men want to
murder them and that was why they were shooting at them [the
natives], that the natives were unarmed and could not fight
back but when armed or if they could be armed would give
the white men all the fighting they wanted. They shouted
that they had fought the Germans and were not afraid of
us."
(225)

Major Cilliers' mission failed.

While he withdrew, two of the accused, Fanie Mosondiwa and Simon
Mnisi, stopped an approaching ambulance which had been called out
to the NMC lines. While threatening the driver with a bayonet,
they told Staff Sergeant H. Talbot who was at the back of the
ambulance, that they would not allow any whites in the NMC lines
and that they had to leave within five minutes. Stones were
thrown at the driver who ran away whereupon Staff Sergeant Talbot
was threatened with the bayonet. Leaving Staff Sergeant Talbot
behind, Mosondiwa then drove off to the Medical Orderly's rooms.
(229)

The firing which was directed at Lieutenant Goodwin and his men
came from a latrine on the ridge at the soldiers' camp. He took
some men to the concrete guard room and instructed them to fire
at any rifle flash they saw coming from the ridge. The order was
out that they should shoot to kill. Some black soldiers started
firing at the Battalion orderly room. The Battalion NCO's were
divided into squads, some to protect the Battalion orderly room
and others the main quartermaster's stores. Next armoured cars
were called from Headquarters; when these arrived the firing
ceased immediately and order was restored.

Due to the disorder and chaos during the riot, great difficulty
was experienced in rounding up the individuals who had actually
taken part in the riot. Some who had fired rifles had abandoned
them; others who had taken no part, save running away, were
arrested because they were found in suspicious surroundings.
Consequently, some of those in detention were not guilty at all while others who were definitely guilty were still at large in the camp. In his closing address before the Court Martial, one of the defending officers, Lieutenant Smit, indeed stated that "there was no evidence where they [the accused] were arrested and under what circumstances and whether they had rifles at the time... Everyone in the vicinity was rounded up... It was not until after the Court of Inquiry that it was decided to release some of the men and only to hold the eleven accused... in arrest as there was some evidence against them. Identification is of vital importance in this case..." (230)

Nevertheless, the abovementioned eleven soldiers were identified as being implicated as active participants in the disturbance and Joseph Dafet, David Sabyia and Elias Mashobane as the ringleaders.

While the riot was in progress, Joseph Dafet and two others, James Mpobole and Sabie Phala, forcibly took possession of an army car and armed with rifles and ammunition proceeded to the offices of the GOA in Cairo where they tried to obtain an interview with Major General F.H. Theron and lay their grievances before him. However, the Liaison Officer, Captain H. van Diggelen could not understand what they wanted as he could not speak their language and they indicated that they could not speak either English or Afrikaans. When the Military Police, according to James Mpobole, forcibly dispossessed them of their arms and ammunition, calling them "Kaffirs" and hitting him on the nose with a fist, (231) they resisted using knives and razors. They backed into the corner of the office next to a glass door. Dafet slashed with his razor at the Military Police near the door. The latter then jumped out of the door and closed it. Dafet kicked the door down, injuring his leg rather badly with the cut glass. When Captain Van Diggelen ordered them to drop their razors and they refused to do so, he drew his revolver and threatened to shoot them if they did not obey. Dafet replied, "We have come to report here, but you do not take our complaints; you are fighting us, you can do what you wish to do" (232) and "We are not soldiers, we are civilians, you can shoot us if you like". (233)

Eventually, only after Dafet had stabbed Sergeant D.J. Basson in the back while he was attempting to arrest the men, were they overpowered. (234)

During the riot three black soldiers were killed. The death of only one, that of Private Jack Tshabalala, can with certainty be attributed to rifle fire from the white NCO's. Private Wilson Ngweni was killed by an axe wielded by Private Simon Mnisi. It was difficult to establish the death of the third, Lance Corporal Thys Paulus, the possibility being that it was caused by a blow with a bayonet or point of an axe administered by an unknown person. The Court of Enquiry found that Jack Tshabalala and Thys Paulus had both taken and active part in the riot. (235) Four
soldiers received bullet wounds while ten others were treated for minor injuries due to blows with sticks or to falls, whilst running away. (236)

The authorities and the black soldiers put forward a variety of explanations as to the causes of the riot. According to the authorities the riot was led by some recalcitrant prisoners sent from various units for disciplinary training and held in the camp prior to being returned to the Union as incorrigibles. Their total strength was 97. It appears that Joseph Dafet was such a "difficult soldier" who did not hesitate to express his feelings of protest and resistance to authority. During the Court Martial he made no bones about his utter rejection of the court. He consistently insulted the court, slouched into the court in civilian clothes and refused to answer questions or to plead. (237)

Another important element emphasised by the authorities was the lack of adequate white control, because of insufficient officers and NCO's "of the right type and suitable medical category". Very often personnel unfit for other units were drafted into the NMC. In addition there were frequent changes of officer personnel which, of course, made it very difficult to know the men and hold their confidence. This naturally led to instability, indiscipline, insubordination and the total failure of the "Non-European" NCO's to disperse or control the rebellious crowds. Likewise, in the opinion of the DNEAS, it was a very serious mistake to send difficult soldiers to the Middle East contrary to his instructions:

"My definite instructions have always been that foisting off unsuitable details for drafts to M.E. will not be tolerated and the officers responsible for such alleged action should be brought to book." (238)

The authorities also attempted to attribute the riot to the soldiers' harsh experiences whilst they had been prisoners of war. However, this was often an attempt to shift responsibility elsewhere. Thus it was held, without much evidence, that "egalitarian" propaganda from the Germans" was at the root of the trouble at Garawi. (239) It is highly doubtful, however, that Nazi ideologues would have held out honorary Aryan racial membership to black soldiers.

Among the disaffected soldiers there was a strong feeling of animosity towards the whites and the discriminatory practices in the army, expressed in expletions such as, "This is the end of the colour bar" (240). Further, they were particularly dissatisfied with Major Gibson whom they blamed for all their misfortunes, such as being sent to detention barracks repeatedly. It was therefore no surprise that they attempted to shoot him during the riot. The Court of Enquiry recommended that he be posted elsewhere and removed from his command of the Depot as he was feeling the strain

"after a long period in command of this Depot - an onerous and exacting duty". (241)
The black soldiers also had serious grievances with regard to home leave and compassionate leave aggravated by the discrimination between whites and blacks. Abel Sillo testified that the prisoners had said that

"A large number of the Cape Corps were being sent home while they had to remain here under new Europeans who had been sent to us and who worry us, and we are always mixed up with new arrivals. One man asked if all the Europeans who had come up with us were still here and we replied 'No, they had all gone home to the Union!'" (242)

Apparently this was also Joseph Dafet's main grievance. According to Joseph Chaka, when he questioned Dafet, the latter said that "The white people were mixing up his head, his mother had died and he was the only one left to look after things at home. He said he was feeling very bad... He had seen his O.C. [Major Gibson] about his mother having died but nothing was done about it." (243)

The convicted soldiers later repeatedly appealed against the conviction and pleaded for mitigation of sentence. On each occasion these petitions were dismissed but eventually the sentences of death were commuted to imprisonment with hard labour for life. (244)

More than a year after the incident, Col. Melck who succeeded Major Gibson as Commanding Officer still had serious difficulties exercising discipline, especially with the ex-prisoners of war. They refused to obey orders and even nominated their own regimental police. They heaped a pile of stones outside each of their tents and refused to allow any officer or white man into their lines at all. In short, they were apparently a terror not only to the whites but also the black soldiers. (245) The Garawi camp, despite the amenities there, had therefore become anathema to all the NMC soldiers. They preferred to be sent anywhere but Garawi. (246)

METHODS TO EXERCISE AND MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE

Few social institutions have such an elaborate body of formal rules and regulations to exercise and maintain discipline and social control as an army. However, these rules and regulations can be ineffective if those who must enforce them and those who must obey them have neither internalised nor willingly accepted the necessities of enforcement and obedience. (247) It indeed appears that cases of disobedience and rioting described above, point to the ineffective and inadequate application of and unwilling adherence, in certain instances, to the army's regulations and discipline. In order to curb undisciplinary behaviour the army authorities reiterated the importance of strict adherence to the existing methods of exercising control and discipline. These methods, of course, varied from time to time, from place to place and from situation to situation.

The Military Disciplinary Code formed the basis for the methods
of exercising discipline. However, from the authorities' point of view, it was felt that the MDC was unsuitable as it did not take into consideration "that the native mind is generally unable to appreciate the full implication of military law" (248), the customs of the blacks, and that it made inadequate provision for punishment. (249) Some officers even stated that "the M.D.C. could not apply to natives, and that a good flogging or a kick in the pants or a punch on the jaw, were [sic] the only remedies [sic] for misconduct." (250)

To the black recruits, most of whom were in any case totally unfamiliar with army life, it was sometimes a bewildering experience to be confronted by the MDC. Furthermore, many were ill-informed or even completely unaware of the the provisions of the MDC. (251) Moreover, the formal rules were interpreted and applied within the context of a body of unwritten army traditions with which they were overlaid. They were enforced by officers and NCOs who themselves were sometimes unable to understand the intricacies of the MDC (252) but nevertheless held very extensive arbitrary power over their subordinates. Sometimes the formal rules conflicted with each other, sometimes with tradition, and sometimes with the demands of superiors. Crimes which in the black soldiers' eyes were quite trivial, were, in terms of the MDC, very serious. No wonder that, under these circumstances, the soldiers sometimes violated the MDC unwittingly. On a technical point some black soldiers also felt that the MDC could not apply to them. They asserted that under Act 22 of 1922, as amended, no black person could become a member of the UDF. As the MDC was constituted under UDF regulations they were not legally bound by it. (253)

Apart from relying on the MDC as a general guide to exercise discipline and social control, the authorities also adopted other specific techniques to build up and maintain morale. An appeal to the moral sense of the soldiers was frequently used especially as a social control measure outside the Union. It was important to the authorities that the soldiers should realise that Union laws and customs still applied and had to be strictly observed. Therefore fraternisation with members of the local population, especially white women, was totally forbidden. There had to be no misunderstanding that the relatively more freedom they enjoyed outside the Union would not prevail when they returned. They were taught "that social barriers could not be swept aside in one night, but that better living conditions, increase in personal prestige and higher social standing could be attained through tolerance, consistent work and assimilation of knowledge over a prolonged period." (254)

This appeal, of course, also had a practical side to it - to avoid the incidence of venereal diseases.

Alarmed by the number of instances of concerted defiance of military authority and discipline, instructions were issued that information lectures should be given on the meaning and objects
of military discipline. Numerous OC's adopted this method. (255)

A further technique was the fostering of tradition and of esprit de corps, a pride in and love of one's unit. (256) In November 1942 an application was submitted for distinctive badges for the NMC as it was thought that these badges would enhance solidarity and morale. (257) Due to shortages these badges could only be provided by May 1945, thereby minimising the effect of this strategy. Even at such a late stage they were nevertheless welcomed by Colonel H.S. Mockford who was of the opinion that the Non-European Army Services was

"now approaching a most difficult period in regard to the handling of N/E's and that anything that can be done to ameliorate that condition should be done." (258)

Personal contact with soldiers individually to ascertain and redress their grievances before these assumed serious proportions was also adopted. (259) The authorities were of the opinion that the black soldiers should, as far as possible, be controlled, particularly when under the influence of liquor, through their own NCO's.

"A Non-European when drunk will meekly accept manhandling by a member of his own race but will invariably resent and resist similar treatment, even if justified, from a European." (260)

In this regard an early mistake of promoting black NMC personnel merely because they were literate or had some standing as a tribal chief but often lacked the personality to handle men was rectified. More illiterate black NCO's were appointed, especially if they were in addition able to inculcate discipline in the troops. (261) The authorities might have sincerely believed that the black soldiers would be more amenable to discipline if it were exercised by fellow blacks; but these promotions, of course, also constituted a classic example of co-opted domination.

"Firm leadership" and being "properly handled" by whites were seen as other essential prerequisites in the maintenance of discipline. (262) Therefore, it was expected of white officers and NCO's to show themselves always superior to the black soldiers. (263) Structurally the regulations of the NEAS also made provision for this approach in that a black soldier of any rank could never exercise command over a white soldier but white soldiers of any rank could command black soldiers, irrespective of their rank. (264) Moreover, as was the case in some colonial armies, (265) in order to establish effective leadership, a fixed ratio of the number of whites required to supervise, command and secure proper control of the blacks was decided upon. (266) Thus the social structure of the South African society also found its counterpart in the army as a means of maintaining discipline.

FORMS OF PUNISHMENT

In addition, the authorities utilised harsher methods in the form of a variety of punishments to enforce discipline. The dishonourable discharge of soldiers who rendered "unsatisfactory
service", who were not amenable to discipline and exercised "a
certain amount of bad influence over others...and in that way
undermine discipline" or who
"due to unsoldierly conduct, by reason of misbehaviour or
riotous conduct or failure to conform to military
discipline are thereby unfitted for further service in the
NSAS" (267)
was resorted to in the Union but especially in the war theatres
outside the Union. (268) As from about September 1943, the
authorities in Italy, for example, had to deal with an
unprecedented wave of crime and undisciplinary behaviour which
made maintaining of adequate control and supervision particularly
difficult. The recalcitrants were discharged, transferred or
returned to the Union. By May 1944 it was reported that this
measure had a salutary effect and that discipline had improved
considerably. (269) The discharged soldiers affected in this way,
lost a regular income and were thenceforth, of course,
unemployed.

Whilst the authorities viewed regular squad drill, route marches
and physical training as basic and essential measures to ensure
morale and general discipline, (270) these measures were also
used as forms of punishment when the authorities subjected the
offenders to severe physical demands. (271) According to Col.
Stubbs, however, drill as a punishment was not effective because
the soldiers had an
"inborn discipline and the love of a parade ground. Drill
punishment dreaded by European soldiers was a pleasure to
them, in fact, drill as a punishment for native
soldiers was early ruled out." (272)

Furthermore, restrictions were placed on pass leave (273) whilst
detention sentences, some of which included hard labour, were
also passed. (274) Fines and stoppages of pay for offences were
likewise imposed. These were sometimes not only excessive,
amounting to two or three months' pay but also affected the
dependants of the soldiers detrimentally as they simultaneously
lost their allowances. (275) It appears that, officially at
least, the authorities did not resort to corporal punishment as
they had done during the First World War. (276) By adopting this
policy they followed the line taken by the British Colonial
authorities who ended summary flogging in mid-1941 and abolished
it altogether by 1944. (277) Nevertheless, there were some white
officers who were of the opinion that flogging as a punishment
would improve discipline tremendously. (278)

Granted that military discipline, especially during active war
service, is strict, the punishment meted out to some soldiers was
excessive. The Officer Commanding 202 Reserve Motor Transport
Company, Wentworth Camp, Major W.R. Carr, for example, forthright
stated that he had no scruples in awarding severe punishments as
experience had proved that it was the only way to maintain
discipline. (279) It appears that the soldiers at the Remounts
Depot, Vaal Hartz, arbitrarily received punishments out of all
proportions to the crimes they had allegedly committed. Private
Pelapakati Kuzwayo, for instance, was sentenced to 28 days detention for speaking on the parade ground while Private Arnold Nomojojo received a similar sentence because he had not carried out an order immediately. The other soldiers from the same unit who were likewise punished were apparently not even told what their offences were. In addition, all had to forfeit three pounds and 3 shillings as regulations prohibited soldiers receiving pay while in detention. (280)

REACTION TO DISCIPLINARY MEASURES, ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT

Although many blacks apparently remained stoical, mainly because the avenues through which they could vent any protest were limited, they did not necessarily acquiesce in the above-mentioned measures and punishments. A general idea prevailed (irrespective whether this could be justified or not) that they were unfairly and unjustly treated, that the punishments were draconian for (to them) apparently harmless offences and that the authorities discriminated against them when compared to the punishments and sentences received by whites. This becomes particularly pronounced when the reaction of those soldiers who did not hesitate to express their dissatisfaction is investigated.

A certain Private Jim wrote to the "Bantu Soldiers' Friend" column in Indhlovu Tlou, asking

"Why is it that European law is made to bear upon us more effectively than it does on Europeans, in spite of the fact that we are not Europeans?" (281)

Writing to the same column, Private Wireless Toloane of No. 12 Motor Transport Depot, Potchefstroom complained that anyone who entered the camp after 23h00 encountered a "nasty treatment. He is drilled about by the other soldiers". (282) This leaves the distinct impression that justice was sometimes very arbitrarily applied.

Other factors also militated against the fair execution of justice. Some of the trials were conducted mainly in Afrikaans which a number of the soldiers did not understand. (283) To make matters worse, many soldiers were completely unfamiliar with the law. Therefore they were ignorant why they were punished and sentenced to detention. Private Joseph Lethogile was one of these:

"I did not join the army to be in jail. I joined the army to be surpised [sic] in war and I am given closed arrest now and I tell you that ... if I come back I am going for good I dont come back to camp anymore. I joined the army for England but not for jail." (284)

It was unfair, unjust and incomprehensible to former Sergeant Clement Makaluza who had an excellent record, that he was reduced to rank on, according to him, uncorroborated evidence of a white corporal, that he was insubordinate to the corporal. (285) Likewise the soldiers did not know why sometimes they had to pay very stiff fines. What they knew very well though, was that these
fines caused severe hardship for their families. (286) It was indeed reported that
"Natives who are fined, write messages home to their people to send them back their savings to pay the fines as they are such that the men fined are placed in such a position that they must have money from home, instead of the home having money from the men." (287)

To some soldiers the news of their sentences was very upsetting. A soldier in the NMC camp, Zonderwater, ran amuck after he had been sentenced to detention. In the endeavour to arrest him, he was shot through the leg, causing his fellow-soldiers to take up a threatening attitude. (288) For another soldier, Corporal Joseph Kelame, the fine of 52 pounds for negligence causing damage to a UDF vehicle, was so high that he opted to absent himself without leave rather than to pay this exceptionally heavy fine. (289)

In certain official circles there was an appreciation for the fact that the MDC was not always compatible with the practical circumstances in the NMC and that the sentences were sometimes unduly harsh. The Officer Commanding of the 8th Battalion NMC, Port Elizabeth, Major, A. van der Hoff, stressed the somewhat paternalistic view that
"the application of strict Active Service Military Law in its entirety to the NMC is not conducive to good discipline by reason of the fact that the Native mind is still incapable of appreciating such drastic measures for (to them) apparently harmless offences. The Law must therefore be modified and applied not only with a view to maintaining discipline but also with a view to keeping the men contented and happy, and above all, to keep them in the camp." (290)

Likewise, Captain J.E. Mathewson of 11th Battalion NMC was of the opinion that frequent recourse to the MDC was not a deterrent but often defeated its own object. The soldiers became "sullen, hostile and discontented." (291) On similar lines, Colonel Stubbs who, of course, had a vested interest, denied that punishments were meted out and that fines were levied indiscriminately. The MDC had not been laid down to punish people but to maintain discipline. First offenders were dealt with leniently but if they habitually broke the law they should expect harsher punishments. He nevertheless suggested, that the greatest latitude should be shown before penalising action was taken against soldiers, especially with regard to fines. (292) Efforts were also made to review convictions and subsequent punishments of crimes which were not, apparently through the negligence of certain officers, conclusively proven. (293)

The authorities at the Driefontein Reception Depot dishonourably discharged a recent draft of black soldiers who had finished their service in North Africa on the grounds that "they proved obstinate and obstreperous" (294) The Discharge Certificates showed that they "were unsuited for the duties of their Unit" The discharged soldiers felt that they had been unfairly treated and
put their case before the Additional Native Commissioner at Louis Trichardt. He willingly took it up with the Secretary for Native Affairs. He pointed out that the dishonourable discharge deprived them of the privileges accorded on honourable discharge and, furthermore, that their service in the NMC ranged from two to two and a half years and if they were indeed unsuited for the duties of their Unit,

"one would have thought that the unsuitability would have become apparent while they were still in training and not after two years' service. It does seem unjust, if their statements are correct, that their conduct for the purposes of their discharge should be judged not over the whole period of their service but over the short time they spent in the reception depot after their return from the North." (295)

Although his efforts were of no avail, it proves that some white authorities were prepared to see justice done. The DNEAS himself lodged a strong complaint when the magistrate at Eshowe inflicted a sentence far beyond the gravity of the offence, namely absence without leave for a short period. The soldier appealed, the sentence was substantially reduced and the court passed a severe stricture on the magistrate's judgement. (296)

Concern about the effect of harsh sentences and punishments was, however, not solely voiced out of humane considerations or that the soldiers were deprived of proper justice; the authorities also feared that it would effect recruitment adversely. (297)

CRIME

Criminal offences which were not necessarily of a military nature but nevertheless violated civilian law, seriously increased after 1943. (298) This can be ascribed to the fact that there was no proper sifting of recruits during the recruiting campaign with the result that a criminal element inadvertently also attested. The most serious of these offences were murder and rape which had a higher incidence outside than inside the Union. This can probably be ascribed to the fact that the soldiers outside the Union had more licence. The most serious of these incidents occurred in the Okavango territory where a recruiting party virtually went on the rampage, assaulted men and raped women wantonly. (299) The perpetrators of murder and rape outside the Union apparently did not consider the rank, race, nationality or sex of the person they attacked. Corporal Tom Palandwa of 203 SARMT Company (V) NMC shot and mortally wounded his Officer Commanding, Major MacDonald, near Ben Garden in Tunisia, (300) while Private Mpumzeni Mhlangu of the same unit killed Temporary Sergeant A.H. Morgan with a spade on 16 September 1943. (301) A few soldiers with the UDF MEF murdered their fellow comrades. On 19 October 1944 Temporary Corporal Thomas M. Mbata of 209 SARMT Company (V) NMC inflicted such a serious wound on Private Lambert Motete of the same unit by stabbing him in the chest that he died two weeks later. (302) A chest wound also caused the death of Private Samson Moseki after he had been stabbed by Lance Corporal Nophawu Sotswele with a knife on 4 August 1945. (303)
In South Africa, Private Ndawonjane Mabogela was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment with hard labour after he had been found guilty of murdering another black man after a fight on 6 September 1942. (304) Nationality was likewise no barrier to crime. Thus Private Bendezha Giza attached to 2 Line of Communications Provost Company SACMF UDF CMF received the death sentence for murdering an Italian man (305) while Private John Ngama attached to No. 12 Squadron SAAP at Foggia murdered an Italian woman with a Tommy Gun when she tried to help her daughter whom Private Ngama had attempted to rape. (306) Four soldiers also received the death sentence for robbery and murder of a Jewish chemist, Moshe Yakubovitz, near Haifa in July 1943 (307) while Private Jackson Mkatshana of 209 SARMT Company (V) NMC was given a life sentence for killing an Arab, Calif Ben Amed Arati on 21 February 1945. (308) A few serious rape cases of German and Italian women also occurred. Private Pistol Letta and Private Philip Mdini who were Prisoners of War for three years raped three German women near Bronswick a few days after they had been released by the Allied Forces. An unduly lenient sentence of one year imprisonment was passed. (309) Private Jim Tahaka and Hans Mesia, both attached to No. 21 Squadron 3 Wing SAAP EDF MEF were accused of raping Italian women on 23 June 1945 and 14 July 1945 respectively. Whilst the former received the death sentence, the latter had to serve two years imprisonment due to extenuating circumstances. (310) In South Africa Private Andries Mokeni received the death sentence on a charge of rape of a 14 year old white schoolgirl. (311)

Apart from these serious criminal offences, there were also various incidents of a less serious nature. House-breaking, theft, illicit trade in liquor and sale of army clothing, trade in and smoking of dagga, hooliganism and molesting civilians were not uncommon occurrences. (312) The Commanding Officer 1st Battalion NMC estimated that at least 5% of the soldiers in his battalion had criminal tendencies and a further unspecified number were ex-convicts. He furthermore took a rather dim and racial view of their value to the army:

"Because a European ex-criminal can make a good active service soldier this does not apply to Natives, especially those employed on Guard or Special Security duties." (313)

RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE SOLDIERS

Generally speaking, it appears that despite desultory attempts by the authorities to the contrary, there was little that was unusual in the pattern of race relations in the Army, compared to that in civilian society. The Army in World War II was merely a new setting for the old racial conflict that perpetuated itself in civilian society. As is evident from the section on resistance, there was a huge gulf between whites and blacks. However, the potential for the improvement of black-white relationships was indeed present. Moreover, it was even greater in the army than in other institutions, not only because of the close living and working conditions and arrangements but also
because of the high level of interdependence, especially in a combat situation. There were efforts to utilise this potential but racial prejudices on the whole were so deeply ingrained that there was still a tremendous lack of awareness on both sides of the attitudes of the other side.

Nevertheless, the meeting of whites and blacks gave rise to new ideas on both sides about the attitudes and characteristics of the other group. It also reinforced some pre-existing notions and prejudices and disproved others. As many false conceptions developed as true ones. In the following discussion it is therefore important to bear the different perspectives which the one group held of the other in mind. Moreover, the whole issue of racial discrimination again crops up - an ever-present underlying theme which, of course, especially from the blacks' point of view, to a very large extent determined the relationships between black and white. In the words of H.S. Nkabeni,

"Then there [is] the question of so called superiority. The white man regards himself as our superior - hence he always has to control the black man. Even here in the army the relationship between the white and black is that of master and servant." (314)

In some official circles there was an awareness that the black soldiers deeply resented any differentiation in treatment on the grounds of colour. (315) Col. B.W. Martin was convinced that as the dilution policy

"necessitates the intermingling of Non-Europeans with European troops both in the forward and rear areas, we should avoid the imposition of rules which discriminate very markedly between the two sections, particularly in regard to the curtailment of the liberties of the Non-Europeans when they are not on duty." (316)

No hard and fast instructions on white-black relations were issued, the general policy being that "by judicious and tactful administrative action" frictions would be obviated and, also most important to the authorities "Up North", "any possible embarrassment to the Union Government" (317) However, in their effort to establish good relations, and, of course, to ensure the success of the dilution policy and efficiency of the diluted units, certain guidelines were laid down. These were paternalistic in the sense that they regarded the blacks as "children or growing boys with an immature mental outlook." (318) Particular emphasis was placed on the fact that the whites should treat the black soldiers fairly and sympathetically. They should not regard or treat them as "mere Kaffirs", "pick and shovel gangs" or labourers as that would inevitably recoil in discontent but treat them as soldiers who were as much volunteers as the white soldiers and were therefore entitled to the same privileges and treatment. The aim should be to gain the confidence and even affection of the soldiers under white command. The DNEAS expressed this policy thus:

"Non-Europeans cannot generally be treated in the same way as European soldiers and consequently it is
necessary to develop among the European personnel a sympathetic and understanding attitude towards the men under their command. To secure the utmost loyalty and the best of service from Non-Europeans, particularly Natives, they must always be treated with the utmost fairness which should be possible without any relaxation of normal military discipline." (319)

In addition, after representations had been made to General Smuts regarding the bullying of black troops and the use of improper language by white troops, the Adjutant General issued definite instructions that derogatory expressions should not be used when addressing the black soldiers. (320) They should not be called "kaffirs", "niggers", "boys" or "natives" but "troops". (321) Cases of unsympathetic or ill-treatment by white soldiers would not be tolerated but be dealt with promptly and severely. (322) To this end the authorities claimed that the channels for the submission of their complaints in the army were open, and they explained to the soldiers and these worked effectively. (323) Some blacks confirmed that they had experienced this to be the case (324) but others had just the opposite experience, having, for example, no one who could speak their language. (325) One soldier, Private A. Ncoeng, even claimed that should they complain about their leave or the food, they were arrested and their pay cut. (326)

Although it is impossible to gauge the effect of these efforts by the authorities to improve relations between the black and the white soldiers and to ensure that the black soldiers were well treated, the evidence suggests that the relations and treatment had a dual nature. On the one hand most of the whites and some blacks thought it was good but, on the other hand, many blacks perceived it as bad.

Apparently, both black soldiers and white soldiers succeeded in establishing good relations and blacks were well and sympathetically treated in certain units. Sergeant David P. Mothiba of the UDFI NE Wing SA Base Camp UDF in the Middle East confirmed this when he wrote as follows:

"In this camp we are very happy, and well taken care of... The Major, and Officers are very kind to us. They help us, and do all they can to make our work pleasant." (327)

It must be borne in mind that this was, of course, still strictly a working relationship and that there was never any possibility of it developing into an open social relationship. Military hierarchy and racial prejudices precluded such a likelihood.

It is noteworthy that some soldiers thought the relationship was better "Up North" than in South Africa. This may probably be ascribed to the fact that the authorities were more lenient outside South Africa, that the troops, generally speaking, enjoyed more freedom and that they were not daily faced with discrimination as in South Africa. Johannes Lesiba thus related his experience and reaction to the differential treatment:
"At Barberton, we, the UDF soldiers were eating 'pap'. Then overseas with the British armies we were given the same type of food. We did not mark that whilst we were here because we understood the type of life we lived here - we only marked the difference when we were on the other side. When coming back they were waiting for us at the railway station. They had the condensed milk [sic] containers and then we would receive tea from them. I specifically took that container with the contents and threw it away and went to a cafe and bought myself a drink. I did that because I could mark the discrimination that was still going on. Because on the other side we were all right, we were friends but coming this side the discriminatory measures were in force again. So I felt furious about it." (328)

Johannes Lesiba's remarks might have been justified because it appears that the good relations and friendly attitude of the whites towards the blacks was only a feature of the initial stages of the war. The black soldiers noticed a big change from the "palmy days of 1940 and 1941 when we were all comrades-in-arms" to 1944 when "the Europeans are bringing out the old insults and call them 'Kaffirs' and 'boy'... more frequently than at the beginning of the war." (329)

This tendency for attitudes to deteriorate in the later stages of the war is consistent with the decline in sense of personal commitment as the war neared its conclusion and with an increase in general resentment against the army.

The good relationships that did exist were, however, only one aspect of the situation. On the other hand, relations were soured to a large extent by the fact that a pronounced and deep-rooted colour complex and racial prejudice on the part of whites towards blacks could not be eradicated overnight. Although it certainly cannot be contended that all white soldiers were prejudiced, most of the whites still assigned a separate and inferior status to the blacks and constantly bore the distinction between the whites and the blacks in mind. This attitude was doubly inforced in the army by virtue of their race, backed by official government policy, and by virtue of their rank.

Many white soldiers thus continued to believe in the stereotyped image of the black man as being mentally and intellectually inferior, having "a very underdeveloped brain", an "untutored mind which is unable to understand" and a "mentality very closely allied to that of a child", lower than that of whites. (330) Because of this prejudice, black soldiers were thought to be unable readily to appreciate responsibility and consequently could not be trusted. (331) In this regard the Commanding Officer Advanced Depot of Medical Stores, Premier Mine, for example clearly had no confidence in a black soldier. He thought that the responsibilities of the MT driver who daily had to fetch valuable instruments, dangerous drugs, check these items and specifications and convey important messages, were too much to entrust to a black soldier:
"From the nature of the... duties it is obvious that should he be replaced by a native driver, it will be necessary to increase my establishment so as to enable a responsible European to accompany the native driver to accept the responsibility." (332)

White prejudice likewise almost stopped black soldiers from becoming stretcher-bearers. Initially, when the policy of replacing white personnel by blacks was mooted, there was strong apprehension in official circles that the white soldiers would not countenance black stretcher-bearers with the fighting units. (333) As pointed out in Chapter 6, black stretcher-bearers disproved this fear; they carried out their tasks effectively and distinguished themselves.

Furthermore, these comments imply that white South Africans transported their values and prejudices as well as their troops overseas where, as has been indicated, it was more difficult to enforce them due to the lack of colour bar in these areas. Nevertheless, racial separation (which implied more privileges to the whites) was still implemented. The black ex-Prisoners-of-War, for instance, were separately accommodated in Slindford while the white ex-Prisoners-of-War were housed in the more attractive surroundings of Brighton and Hove. (334)

These underlying prejudices surfaced in many concrete ways. Extensive attention has already been paid to how the army officially and structurally discriminated between white and black with regard to, inter alia, pay and allotments, leave privileges, clothing, rank and promotion, rations and amenities. (335) The point is that these prejudices and discriminating practices made it virtually impossible to establish sound relations between black and white soldiers. The effect was simply the logical one—it gave rise to ill-treatment. Whether the allegations had any merit or were true or false (and certainly some may have been false) is beside the point; what is important though, is how the black soldiers perceived and experienced the ill-treatment.

The ill-treatment meted out to these soldiers is manifested in mainly two forms: the one was on a psychological and the other on a physical level. Regarding the former, the most common behaviour of whites was to use abusive, insulting and vindictive language and to threaten, swear and mock the black soldiers. These soldiers had to tolerate being addressed as "bloody bastards, niggers, donours dom kaffirs", (336) to hear that they were "worse than a lot of monkeys", (337) or to be threatened:

"Why don't they do away with them [the black soldiers] or give them a special poison that will blot out the whole lot of these work evading loafers." (338)

Some whites like Lieutenant D.V.H. Thomas of Rietfontein XI NMC School, were evidently very hostile towards the soldiers and loathed their participation with the whites in the war effort:

"You useless lot of bastards! I don't know what you want to interfere in a European's war for. Only God and the Devil know why we have been thrown together in the same place." (339)
Of course, the soldiers loathed these derogatory remarks made about them. To a certain Corporal Joe who and his comrades, who had been told that they "do not know nothing, [sic] you are baboons", this treatment had a very discouraging effect:

"Our hearts are very sore we do not know what shall we do because we join to help the Government..." (340)

Furthermore, the attitude of some white soldiers in command of blacks to ignore their complaints, was interpreted by the latter as another form of psychologica l ill-treatment. Others drove them away when they lodged their complaints or told them to take their complaints "to General Smuts who invited the natives in this war." (341) The soldiers of "A" Company NMTD, Ladysmith were particularly upset by a certain Sergeant-Major Venter. They complained that

"He treats us like his farm servants. The trouble is that we try to speak to him he says that he has no time for kaffirs the only thing he can do with the kaffirs is to put them in the cooler if they are making trouble by complaining." (342)

Another sphere of military life where the blacks experienced vindictive treatment was in the administration of justice. The whites could exercise virtually limitless and overwhelming power and could therefore easily and arbitrarily accuse or arrest anyone, not give them a fair trial or even detain them without trial. No wonder that there occurred various instances where the blacks felt that justice was not fairly and truly administered. (343) Some of the soldiers were so intimidated that they refused to make any statements on their treatment because they feared that by doing so they might render themselves open to increased harsh treatment. (344)

On the physical level there were isolated incidents which made the blacks feel they were ill-treated. The mildest of these was probably the insistence of whites that the blacks had to work long hours. It was therefore not uncommon in certain cases that blacks who had finished a long day's work were compelled afterwards to do guard duty or that they had to perform guard duty every night without a break. (345)

There was also a fair number of so-called bullies amongst the white soldiers. (346) These bullies frequently meted out harsh treatment to the black soldiers by physically overtaxing them. They not only gave them drill instructions during their leisure time but also forced some to drill beyond the point of exhaustion. (347) On 7 March 1945 a serious incident occurred at No. 6 Air School Potchefstroom where two black soldiers were given prolonged knee-bending exercises. As a result, one was seriously injured and had to be admitted to hospital. (348)

There were also incidents of physical harrassment and assaults of the utmost cruelty and viciousness. At the 9th Casualty Clearing Station, Lieutenant I.S.W. Burger imposed sadistic punishments of
the utmost severity upon four black soldiers. For three nights he incarcerated them and placed them on a spare diet consisting of water drained off cooked crushed mealies. During the day, his accomplices, Staff Sergeant Varnfield and Sergeant Steenkamp, bound them together by the wrists with improvised handcuffs of baling wire, manacled them round a tent pole and made them stand with their backs to the pole. (349) A similar sadistic incident took place at the Boschpoort NMC Camp at Warmbaths on 17 March 1943. On the instruction of Sergeant-Major Delport to "give them Hell", five soldiers were given strenuous physical training exercises during the course of which one complained that he was unable to continue as his leg had been injured. He was then taken to the physical training store room and forced to stand on his sore leg. Another soldier was tied by a rope and hung from a rafter by his feet. (350) There were likewise incidents in which other soldiers were deliberately harassed, manhandled or assaulted by being beaten up, stabbed with a bayonet, kicked, struck in the face or whipped. (351)

Apart from these assaults from white soldiers, it appears that some of the white members of the Military Police in particular were notorious for ill-treating black soldiers, mainly by falsely accusing them, meticulously checking their passes, swearing at or assaulting them. Private John Pharase related how he had been called back three times by a Military Policeman to have his pass checked. He kept silent twice but the third time he asked the Military Policeman: "Can you not read?" He was then arrested and handed over to the Corporal-in-Charge who told him that he had been insolent; he thereupon hit Pharase in the face so that he dropped to the ground and while lying there, kicked him in the private parts, injuring him so seriously that he had to be hospitalised. (352) There is no evidence that the authorities acted against this corporal. Likewise, tense relations between the Military Policemen and the black soldiers detached at Oudtshoorn developed because of misunderstandings and a lack of communication. On 3 January 1942 this came to a head when Privates W. Hope and S. Moloi attacked black members of the Military Police Corps after the latter had ordered them to leave a house where they were visiting. Hope and Moloi alleged that they were thereupon viciously assaulted by the white Military Policemen who had arrived on the scene to assist the black policemen. (353)

There is evidence that some of the black soldiers who felt that they had been ill-treated, retaliated. They either overtly attacked the white soldiers physically or covertly broke the Military Disciplinary Code.

A serious fight which ended tragically erupted at Kliptown on 2 February 1943. It apparently started after a young white soldier accompanied by 3 other soldiers and two civilians had assaulted a civilian black man and thereafter a black soldier. A number of black soldiers came to this soldier's rescue. They adopted a threatening and hostile attitude towards the whites; a general fight then ensued between the two groups, belts, sticks and
stones were used and shouts "Kill the Boers!" were heard. The police arrived but were also attacked. As their attempts to stop the fight were in vain, they had to retire but on their way to the police station they were intercepted and again attacked with stones and sticks. A black soldier, Private Middleton, threw a large stone which narrowly missed Sergeant G.J. Joubert's head. When Private Middleton was in the act of throwing a second stone, Sergeant Joubert shot him in the upper arm. The next day he died in hospital from this wound. The other black soldiers were arrested, brought before court and remanded. (354) This incident is not only an example of the black soldiers' attempt to hold their own against the whites but also of the racial animosity between the two groups.

Sergeant Hamilton S. Mboyiya described how the black soldiers retaliated non-violently:

"Military Police who resorts [sic] to changing... details
everytime they do any little wrong thing... became
very unpopular and the details start breaking Military
Laws and Camp Standing Orders on purpose. In fact they
become unruly and lose faith in the M.P.'s." (355)

The fact that they deliberately broke the MDC, again points to the phenomenon that circumstances became so intolerable that they opted to be ignominiously discharged rather than to be ill-treated. This is one explanation of the many unfavourable discharges. (356)

An important effect this ill-treatment had on the black soldiers was that they felt inferior and not trustworthy because the white soldiers did not regard them as human beings. The black soldiers thought they were hated because of their dark skins. (357) Private Saul Molotsi felt that they were "treated worse than a dog than being treated as a soldier." (358) It appears that soldiers who had been ill-treated developed a deep sense of indignation, disillusionment and a sullen resentful attitude. (359) No wonder there were reports that the black soldiers had lost their confidence in the white man because they felt the latter had let them down. Private N. Penzgna reached the end of his tether. He stated that he was

"tired of the Army, and if he has to work with Europeans
any longer there is going to be trouble." (360)

To a large extent the following observation by P.L. Prattiss about the moral dilemma of the black American soldier during the Second World War, is also applicable to the black South African soldier:

"The morale of the Negro in the armed services of the
United States is an amalgam composed of his tendency
to share the general popular reaction to the challenge
of war and death and his reaction to the special treatment
he is the victim of in the Army and Navy. Many factors in
the armed services and outside have made the Negro
service man a victim of split morale." (361)

Ill-treatment seriously undermined the South African black soldiers' morale and, moreover, made it very difficult, if not
totally impossible for them, to tolerate the harsh treatment and still remain loyal to the cause and the Government. The following quotation pertinently expresses their predicament:

"Sir, will you help us in this troubles [ill-treatment] for we do not want to desert... for we meant to fight for our Government." (362)

An indication how low morale amongst certain soldiers had sunk is captured in Private Raseboku Matsosa's apt question:

"Now, we want to know whether this war is fighting us or Hitler?" (363)

RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACK SOLDIERS AND WHITE CIVILIANS

Having already had to deal with friction between white soldiers and their black counterparts the authorities were anxious to avoid any strain or clashes between black soldiers and white civilians. H. Rogers, Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, laid down the following policy in this regard:

"In my opinion members of the Corps should be informed quite plainly that cases are likely to occur where they may be subjected to insult and abuse or even to bodily violence as has already occurred in numerous cases with European soldiers. It should be pointed out that with the disciplinary training they have had their officers expect them to act with restraint and to endeavour to avoid breaches of the peace. They should be carefully warned that under no circumstances should they adopt a provocative attitude or make any attempt at retaliation. They should report any untoward incidents to their own officers immediately they return to Camp..." (364)

The DNEAS added that

"Natives should be warned to avoid as far as possible any contact with Europeans, as friction between natives and Europeans may re-act adversely on the natives themselves." (365)

Apparently there was indeed very limited contact between the black soldiers and white civilians so that it would appear that this precautionary tone was unnecessary. By April 1942 the DNEAS was even of the opinion that the behaviour of the blacks "Up North" had gone a long way towards breaking down much of the prejudice which existed against blacks amongst whites. (366) Where there was contact, however, the whites generally adopted an attitude of superiority. This was aggravated by the double disadvantage the black soldiers had in relation to certain whites. The latter had a prejudiced view because of these soldiers' skin colour and the fact that they took part in a war not generally popular in the white (particularly the Afrikaans speaking) community.

Some white civilians complained about minor irritating behaviour on the part of the black soldiers such as their rowdiness, that some roamed through white properties, that "they made a nuisance of themselves", "made themselves unbearable" or conducted themselves "disgracefully with black women", (367). Racial
animosity and the black soldiers' participation in the war prompted other whites to act more violently towards these soldiers. Cases, where civilians assaulted and even shot at black soldiers, were reported from Quaggapoor, Springs, Pietersburg, Ventersburg, Benoni, Johannesburg and Pretoria. (368)

The white Military Police were notorious for their vindictive behaviour towards the black soldiers; in civilian life the railway personnel, in particular the ticket examiners, adopted an equally hostile attitude towards them. For trivial offences such as using a toilet in the second class or travelling in the second class due to shortage of seats in the third class, some ticket examiners swore at, manhandled or assaulted the soldiers. Again it appears that the black soldiers had to bear the brunt because the country's participation in the war was not popular among some sections of the white population. This fact and racial animosity were at the root of these whites' behaviour. (369)

There was also ill-feeling on the part of some black soldiers towards certain civilian whites; this manifested itself mainly in unruly behaviour and assaults. (370) On 17 October E.J.J. Wilken, the Station Master at the Portland station, district of Kroonstad, ordered Private David Pule to walk around the back of the station and not among the whites who were standing in front of the station. Pule thereupon called Wilken "Jou verdomde Boer!" [You damned Boer!] A charge was brought against him that he had wilfully used libellous language. He was found guilty and because he could not pay the 5 pound fine had to go to jail for 15 days with hard labour. (371) Private Freddie Lebetsa was so upset when G.T. Vermaak, a farmer of the Boskop district, made disparaging remarks about General Smuts and persons who had joined the army that he assaulted and injured Vermaak. (372) A more serious assault on a farmer, H.S. Scheepers, occurred a month later in the Marquard district. Nineteen soldiers were travelling in a convoy when one of the trucks developed carburettor trouble near Scheepers' farm. The convoy stopped while repairs were being made to the truck. The soldiers in the meantime went to the huts of the black farm workers to ask for drinking water. Scheepers, armed with a stick, then arrived at the scene and assaulted the soldiers whereupon they retaliated and attacked Scheepers. They were charged with assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm and received sentences ranging from 7 days hard labour to 3 months hard labour. (373)

RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACK SOLDIERS AND BLACK CIVILIANS

Although there is evidence that the relations between the black soldiers and civilians were cordial, (374) there were also numerous cases where friction between these groups cropped up. In some instances this led to violent clashes. There were various reasons for this state of affairs.

Some of the black civilians taunted the soldiers and made derogatory remarks about their uniforms and their status as soldiers. They regarded the soldiers as collaborators, calling
them "sellers" of the race and saying quite openly that it was a white man's war and that they "should not be soldiers for the Europeans". The soldiers deeply resented these remarks. (375) In certain cases, members of the South African Police incited and egged on the civilian blacks to attack and beat up the soldiers. (376)

Furthermore, civilians attacked soldiers for reasons which had nothing to do with their status as soldiers. (377) The most common of these concern quarrels between the two groups regarding women. On the one hand, certain civilians were incensed at the preference shown by the women for the black soldiers compared to themselves. On the other hand, as the civilian men had more opportunities to consort with women than the soldiers the latter interfered with the wives and sweethearts of the civilians. Therefore, rivalry and even hatred which sometimes led to serious clashes, existed in some areas. (378) The fact that both sides were sometimes heavily intoxicated as well as competition for beer, also gave rise to brawls between them. (379)

The black soldiers' pay had an important bearing on the hostility which had grown between soldiers and civilians. When the soldiers enlisted it was expected that the state would take the initiative setting an example of satisfactory pay to employers of black labour. However, the black soldiers had enlisted under conditions which did not fulfill these expectations. Among civilian blacks, therefore, there was a marked tendency to regard the black volunteer as a blackleg. The black soldiers, for their part, were in a catch twenty two position. They were unable to improve their conditions and had to look with envy on the improvements which black workers could later obtain through trade union organisations. The bad blood frequently reached the pitch of violence. (380) To aggravate matters, black soldiers replaced civilian blacks as batmen, cooks and scullions at certain aerodromes. The civilians resented this as most of them lost a steady income and employment. (381) They projected their resentment by adopting a hostile attitude towards the soldiers.

The upshot was that it caused clashes, some of which were of minor magnitude and importance (382) but others were so serious that both civilians and soldiers were killed. The most important of these occurred in East London in January and November 1942 (383), Green Point Township, Kimberley in January 1942 and July 1943 (384), the Orlando railway station in January 1943 (385), Matatiele township also in January 1943 (386) and Paarl in November 1943 (387).

The picture of the black South African soldier revealed in this chapter differs from the stereotypes prevalent in South African society during the war. On the one hand, a concept of the average black as a happy, dull, indifferent human being who was quite contented with his status in the social system as a whole and in the military segment of that social system, finds little support in this study. The black soldiers were highly sensitive to evidence of racial discrimination, both real and imagined. There
was a readiness to protest which was quite inconsistent with the stereotype of happy-go-lucky indifference. On the other hand these soldiers were not revolutionaries plotting to overthrow the present social system; but they did not hesitate to act when they felt they were unjustly put at a disadvantage. Not all of them, of course, could express their dissatisfaction eloquently - the majority were still the products of a system of cultural and educational deprivation. Nevertheless, even the uneducated tended to feel and express resentments at treatment which seemed to them unjust.
FOOTNOTES

1. DNEAS NAS 3/1/1 Box 1, H.S. Mockford to DAG (O), 5/6/1943.

2. NMC NAS ETS/PERS/1 B 10 Box 56 and CGS 32/1 Vol. II, E.T. Stubbs to AG, 15/3/1943.


4. AG (3) 154/468 Vol. I Box 577, M. Sanderson, OC No. 4 G.P.C. MPC to OC Eastern Province Command, 21/11/1941. See also AG (3) 154/468 Vol. I Box 577, OC Witwatersrand Command to AG, 15/12/1941.


7. AG (3) 154/X/1235/2 Box 139, Telex from Dechief to Unidef (Main) MEF, 21/1/1946.

8. NMC NAS 3/20/1 A 2 Box 47, Notes for GOA's address, undated.

9. NMC NAS 3/28/1/5 A 15 Box 40, Confidential memorandum for GOA titled "NEAS discipline - incidence of serious crime - post war effects" by V. Grenville Lewis DJAG UDF MEF, 23/10/1943.


11. NMC NAS 3/21/C A 4 Box 15, Minute No. 97 of the UTTGC session 1943, accompanying letter Secretary for Native Affairs to DNEAS, 25/9/1943.


15. AG (3) 154/X/286 Box 30, E.T. Stubbs to P.J., 28/7/1942; NMC NAS 3/1/1 A 11 Box 37, SNA to Col. J. Mitchell Baker, 4/10/1939; and NMC NAS Authorities/3 A 15 Box 37, C.H. Blaine to D.L. Smit, 12/11/1940.


19. NMC NAS 3/36/5 A 3 Box 21, Sgt H.S. Mboyiya to SAIRR, 28/10/1944.


21. Narep Unfo, "Historical Record of the NMC", p. 14191; NMC NAS 1/3 A 5 Box 39, DNEAS to AG, 7/1/1941 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", p. 39.

22. NMC NAS 3/36/1 A 1 Box 25, Notes on a visit by Col. Stubbins to 3rd Battalion Palmietkuil North, 24/1/1941; SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, M.K. Kulele to J.D.R. Jones, 22/12/1940; NTS Box 9114 File 68/363, J.D.R. Jones to Col. D. Reitz, 4/10/1940; DNEAS NAS 3/43 Box 24, Reports from various units, April to October 1943; NMC NAS 3/41/13 A 2 Box 345, Report on NMC Welfare Officers - Port Elizabeth Fortress Command, 22/11/1943; NMC NAS 3/40 A 10 Box 44, Memorandum by Lt.-Col. E.B. Foxon and Major D.G. Hartman arising out of a recent tour of inspection of all NEAS formations, units and detachments in the Coastal Area, 28/12/1942; NMC NAS 3/40 A 1 Box 45, Training Inspectorate report on NMC. General Summary. NMC NAS 3/42/1 B 16 Box 9, undated note by Staff Sergeant S. Sebitombo on life in Rietfontein XI and Knoetze, "Historical Survey", p. 49.


26. NMC NAS ETS/PERS/1 B 10 Box 56, DNEAS to AG, 15/3/1943. See also report on 2 NCO's transferred to 3rd Battalion NMC (AG (3) 154/496 Box 500, Lt.-Col. D.R. Hunt, OC 3rd Battalion NMC to DNEAS, 22/9/1941) and NMC NAS 3/60 A 1 Box 45, Training Inspectorate Report on NMC Training Area - East Rand by Lt.-Col. J.C.V. Lyle, 24-27/11/1941; .


28. AG (3) 154/X/286 Box 30, DNEAS (O) to DNEAS, 30/11/1942 and NMC NAS 3/1/1 A 4 Box 39, DNEAS (O) to DNEAS, 8/2/1943.
29. See NMC NAS 3/38/1 B 15 Box 55 for an undated list of NEAS personnel's birthday dates and AG (3) 154/X/286 Box 30, DNEAS to DAG (O), 23/12/1942 for the numbers of white personnel above and below 40 years.


31. NMC NAS 3/1/1 A 4 Box 39, DNEAS to AG, 18/12/1943. See further discussion on the relationships within the army and the manner in which whites treated blacks infra, p. 282.


33. CGS gp 2 G137/1 Vol. 3 Box 69, DFAAT to AG, 4/4/1942 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", pp. 116-117.

34. CGS 32/3 Vol. I, DNEAS to AG, 7/5/1943; NMC NAS 3/4/1 B 5 Box 1, Minutes of recruiting conference, 10/6/1941; NMC NAS 3/28/1/5 A 15 Box 40, DNEAS to Col. H.O. Sayer, 2/2/1944 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", p. 97.

35. NMC NAS 3/40 A 1 Box 45, DCS to DNEAS, 18/2/1942 and NMC NAS BTS/PERS/1 B 10 Box 56 and CGS 32/1 Vol. II, DNEAS to AG, 15/3/1943.

36. AG (3) 154/X/286 Box 30, DNEAS to P.J., 28/7/1942.

37. CGS 32/5 Vol. I, AG to CC's of all the Commands, 8/8/1940; AG (W) 168/3/3/3/2 Box 20, DNEAS to DAG (P), 24/2/1943 and CGS (2) DMT 1229 Box 692, Extracts from Inland Area Training Report for month ended 31/3/1943.

38. See infra, pp. 255 and 286-288.


40. NMC NAS 3/1/7 A 3 Box 28, OC 1st Battalion NMC to DNEAS, 2/4/1942. See also NMC NAS 3/36/1 A 1 Box 26, undated report to the Staff Captain.

41. NMC NAS 3/1/2 A 1 Box 31, Draft of DNEAS to QMG, undated; NMC NAS 3/1/2 A 1 Box 31, Chief Inspector DDIT to DMT, 15/8/1941, Report titled "Survey of accommodation for Non-Europeans in military camps occupied by Europeans" and NMC NAS 3/41/1/2 A 9
Box 43, Report to ADNEAS on inspection of camps and sites 2nd Battalion NMC Durban Area, 14/10/1942.

42. CGS 32/15 Vol. I, ADDNERAS to GOA UDF Admin. HQ, 13/1/1942 and WO 100/4952, AFHQ Algiers to Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 10/4/1944.


46. NMC NAS 3/26/12/14 A 3 Box 41, Weekly progress report by OC NMC Wing FAAD (V) SAA Eshowe, 16/10/1942.

47. NMC NAS 3/41/1/3 A 7 Box 43, Visiting Officer NEAS, Capt. A.S. Mehan to DNEAS, 13/1/1943; NMC NAS 3/36/1 A 1 Box 26, Memorandum titled "Disciplinary control of members of the NEAS in Fortress Command, Durban when on pass in city" by OC 2nd Battalion NMC, 1/1/1943; NMC NAS 3/1/14 A 2 Box 37, Statement of present position of the Quaggapoort Detachment, 4th Battalion NMC by E. von Puttkamer, 5/5/1941 and NMC NAS 3/41/1/7 A 12 Box 43, Inspectorate Report by Maj. E.J. Robson of 3rd Company NMC Tempe, 18-21/1/1943.

48. See for example NMC NAS 3/36/1 A 1 Box 27, Circular No. AG (D) 6, 26/7/1943 as examples of places out of bounds for blacks but not for whites.


50. See further discussion, infra, pp. 260-275.

51. NMC NAS 3/26/12 A 1 Box 42, OC 7th Battalion NMC Tempe to DNEAS, 22/12/1941. See also NMC NAS 3/41/1/3 A 7 Box 43, Note on Detachment 48th Bitumen Company, undated.

52. NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/16, H. Mboyiya to SAIRR, 28/10/1944.

53. SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 108, Letter from J. Kekana, undated.

54. NMC NAS 3/1/16 A 2 Box 30, DAG (POW) to SO PW, London, 11/1/1945.

55. DC 2025 Box 3273, Director of Information to SNA, 17/2/1942; DC2025 Box 3273, DNEAS to AS(A), 11/2/1942; CGS 32/5 Vol. II,