

Coronet

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Brig. Gen. Benjamin Davis

by WALTER WHITE



As the 1940 Presidential campaign neared its end, a southern-born White House secretary released to the newspapers an inadequate account, which later became garbled, of what had been said to the President by a Negro delegation. Shortly afterwards the same secretary kicked a colored policeman in New York City as he performed his duty of protecting the Chief Executive.

The attendant unfavorable publicity threatened grave defections in the Negro vote in some 17 states where that vote held the potential balance of power in the electoral count. One of the emollients applied to the ruffled feelings of the Negro voters was the promotion of Benjamin O. Davis to brigadier-general, the first Negro to attain this rank.

Gen. Benjamin Davis

The manner of his elevation might have been embarrassing to one of lesser stature than General Davis. But he ignored the curt gibes of newspaper commentators and anti-administration spokesmen. With the same faithfulness and self-effacement which had characterized him since he first entered the Army in July, 1898, during the war with Spain, he set about his job.

He had endured snubs because of his color and seen less able men promoted over his head without complaint. Some soldiers of his own race charge that he is not as militant as they think he should be in redressing their grievances. None of this disturbs him.

Few men have had as varied military experience in different parts of the world—Cuba, the Philippines, Liberia, France and the United States.

As Assistant to the Inspector General of the U.S. Army, General Davis today works at a pace which would exhaust most men of half his 67 years. He has traveled from the Pacific Theatre of Operations to the European Theatre, as well as to practically every training camp in the United States, investigating and adjusting the problems of the three quarters of a million Negro soldiers in our Army.

To everyone who knows him, General Davis is a soldier's soldier.

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