Vanguard: Black Veterans and Civil Rights After World War I

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June 30, 2023

Abstract

In 1919, hundreds of thousands of Black soldiers returned home to face widespread racial violence and discrimination. Leveraging novel variation from the World War I draft lottery and millions of digitized military and NAACP records, we document the pioneering role that these individuals played in advocating for civil rights over the following decades. While military service provided little economic benefit, Black men who were randomly inducted into the National Army were significantly more likely to take part in the nascent NAACP. These effects are driven by soldiers who served under the most discriminatory conditions, as measured across multiple dimensions discussed in War Department reports. Detailed examination of the first Black officer candidate class in U.S. history similarly reveals the prominent role of African American officers in the early civil rights movement.

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"We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting. Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why."

– W.E.B. Du Bois
Co-founder of the NAACP

1 Introduction

Throughout American history, civil rights activism has tended to swell following major wars. Indeed, membership in the National Association for the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP), the country's oldest and largest civil rights organization, spiked dramatically after the return of Black veterans from World War I and World War II (Figure 1). These swells have, in turn, preceded landmark advances in the fight for racial equality – from the New Negro movement of the 1920s and 1930s to military and schooling desegregation in the 1940s and 1950s and the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts during the Vietnam War.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Yet, despite the transformative nature of these social movements and the central role of Black veterans like Charles Hamilton Houston, Jackie Robinson, and Medgar Evers in historical narratives thereof (Morris, 1986; Klinkner and Smith, 1999; Payne, 2007; Delmont, 2023), there exists virtually no empirical evidence of the causal impact of military service on civil rights activism. Disentangling this relationship is complicated by fundamental issues of selection and measurement. More civic-minded individuals may be more likely both to enlist and to participate in social movements. Even in settings with forced conscription, draft dodging and exemptions may lead to biases when comparing observably similar veterans and non-veterans. Equally challenging is quantifying an individual's involvement in the civil rights movement. Common political outcomes such as voter participation and party membership may be weak proxies for one's desire to advocate for racial equality. Interpretation of these measures may be further distorted by the very presence of discrimination, especially in historical settings and when aggregated to the area level. For example, low turnout rates could reflect limited civic engagement, significant voter suppression, or both.

This paper aims to document how experiences in the military affected the decisions of Black men to join the early civil rights movement. To overcome concerns about selection, we leverage novel variation from the World War I draft lottery, a historically significant event previously unexamined in the literature. The WWI draft included the first class of African American registrants in U.S. history and led to the induction of nearly 400,000 Black men. Due to systemic discrimination, Black draftees received little formal training and were relegated to racially segregated units, where they primarily toiled as day laborers under white supervisors (Barbeau and Henri, 1996). These "unknown soldiers" formed the backbone of the American war effort and their return home coincided with a radical re-imagining of Black identity that would come to define the New Negro era, a period of invigorated political and cultural assertiveness that shaped the foundations of the civil rights movement (Gilmore, 2009).

To document the military experience and civic activism of these men, we digitize millions of records from the Great War and the infancy of the NAACP. Specifically, we construct a database of the universe of Black draft registration cards – nearly 1 million – from the first World War I registration. We link these cards to detailed military service records containing information about each soldier's training camp, unit, and deployment area. Draft registrants are then matched through the 1930 full-count census to comprehensive NAACP rosters including the exact name and

home address of over 200,000 member observations from the end of the war through the 1930s, when the organization first gained national prominence.

Using random variation in enlistments induced by the draft lottery, we estimate the causal effect of military service on future membership in the NAACP. Unlike the World War II and Vietnam War drafts examined by others (e.g. Angrist, 1990; Angrist and Krueger, 1994), an individual's draft liability in World War I was not determined by his birthday. Instead, it was determined by the order in which his specific serial number was drawn in a national lottery. We capture this number from each draft card and reconstruct the draft lottery to back out each individual's order of liability, which we use to instrument for military service during World War I. We provide evidence of the instrument's exogeneity to all observed prewar registrant characteristics as well as its strong relevance with future veteran status.

Our findings reveal the pivotal role of military service in fueling early civil rights activism. The TSLS estimates suggest that African Americans randomly induced to enlist were nearly three times more likely to join the NAACP as observably similar registrants from the same draft board. These results are virtually unchanged across a host of robustness tests using alternative first-stage functional forms, instruments, and matching strategies. The effects are also not driven by changes in residential mobility or by increased participation in social organizations more generally. However, they are well-reflected in other measures of civil rights activism. Matching registrants to compendia of historically prominent African Americans, we show that draftees were significantly more likely to later gain renown as leaders in the Black community.

Examining heterogeneity across registrant characteristics, we find suggestive evidence of larger effects for individuals from less historically racist areas and for men who claimed – but did not receive – draft exemptions. While these patterns suggest that discontent arising from heightened exposure to discrimination in the military and during the draft process could have driven Black men to join the NAACP, we investigate mechanisms more directly through a series of additional analyses.

Specifically, we show that increases in civic activism are driven by Black soldiers who experienced the most discriminatory conditions. This holds across multiple salient dimensions discussed in War Department reports: induction by local boards with the largest racial disparities in draft rates, assignment to camps with the fewest opportunities for Black officer promotions, and assignment to camps that excluded African Americans from military training. Meanwhile, examining socioeconomic outcomes from the 1930 census, we find no evidence of labor market or educational benefits of military service. We also find little evidence that NAACP membership is mediated by exposure to or interaction with the French. Together, these results suggest that experiences of discrimination and injustice in the military – rather than skill gains or exposure to French egalitarianism – may have catalyzed Black veterans to fight for representation upon returning home.

Finally, we examine the first Black officer candidate class in U.S. military history. Unlike with draftees, selection of officers was not random. Nonetheless, we attempt to document the civic contributions of this historic group of African Americans by leveraging detailed biographical information for candidates attending the Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training Camp. We find that nearly 20% of commissioned officers would join the NAACP, relative to 11% of candidates who did not receive commissions and just 0.5% of Black men in the general population. Strikingly similar patterns hold when examining other measures of community leadership. While only correlational, differences in civic activism are unexplained by a rich set of biographical controls accounting for candidate age, occupation, and civic participation prior to entering Fort Des Moines.

This paper contributes to several literatures across economics and other disciplines. First, we build

on a large body of work discussing the importance of Black veterans in shaping the civil rights movement. While most of this scholarship is qualitative (Parker, 2009a; Parker, 2009b; Barbeau and Henri, 1996; Williams, 2007; Williams, 2010), recent quantitative research has shown that Black enlistments during World War II predict higher voter registration among nearby African Americans and less prejudiced racial views among nearby white civilians in the post-war period (Koch et al., 2021; Schindler and Westcott, 2021). To this, we add empirical corroboration of the prominent role of Black veterans at the onset of the civil rights movement. Digitizing hundreds of thousands of early NAACP records, we show that veterans accounted for nearly 15% of male members – relative to 8% of the adult Black male population – while 1 in 5 commissioned officers would become known for their social and civic leadership during the New Negro era.

Beyond a descriptive accounting, this paper adds to a scant empirical literature exploring the causal origins of the civil rights movement (e.g. Wang, 2021; Dippel and Heblich, 2021; Ramos-Toro, 2021). We demonstrate how America's defense of democracy abroad awakened Black political activism domestically. Our estimates imply that the World War I draft induced over 10,000 Black men to join the vanguard of America's preeminent civil rights organization. The stark pattern of effects across measures of experienced discrimination also highlights the prominent role of perceptions of injustice in galvanizing African Americans during the Jim Crow era. These same findings may provide important insight not only into the dramatic mobilization of Black Americans during the mid-20th century but also into persistent racial divisions across politics and society that continue to exist today.

Finally, to our knowledge, this study is the first to leverage random variation from the World War I draft lottery. As such, we introduce a new source of exogenous variation in military service during a critical and understudied period in American history, one that saw significant social upheaval ranging from the Tulsa Massacre and the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s to the Great Depression and Bonus March of the early 1930s. By reconstructing the World War I draft lottery, we complement a rich literature examining American conscription during later wars (e.g. Hearst et al., 1986; Angrist, 1990; Angrist and Krueger, 1994; Card and Lemieux, 2001; Bound and Turner, 2002; Bedard and Deschênes, 2006; Angrist et al., 2010; Angrist and Chen, 2011).[1] While those studies primarily focus on economic outcomes, recent work in international settings has investigated the link between exposure to war and the rise of fascism and autocracy throughout Europe (Cagé et al., 2021; Acemoglu et al., 2022; Koenig, 2023). We show that the embers of war may also spark more progressive change, catalyzing civic engagement among marginalized groups – the historical underpinning of many of the world's most consequential social movements.

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides historical context for the war, the draft lottery, and the rise of the NAACP. Section 3 describes the data and the process used to link records. Section 4 presents our empirical strategy and results, and Section 5 unpacks potential mechanisms behind these findings. Section 6 contains our analysis of African American officers and candidates, and Section 7 concludes.

[1] A much smaller set of studies examines American military service during World War I (i.e. Mazumder, 2017; Tan, 2020) and does so by comparing across birth cohorts of *white* men. This approach raises concerns about underlying differences between age groups and applicability to other populations. It is further complicated by the fact that draft eligibility was determined by a man's age as of June 5, 1917, whereas the 1920 to 1940 censuses only recorded an individual's year of birth, not his birth month or date.

2 Background and setting

2.1 World War I draft

When America first entered World War I in April 1917, the combined forces of the standing Army and National Guard totaled roughly 300,000 men. Anticipating the need to send millions of additional soldiers to the Western Front in France, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1917, authorizing the federal government to conscript a wartime National Army. The resulting draft was the first to include African Americans and led to the induction of over 2.5 million men, accounting for 72% of the U.S. soldiers who served in the war.

The draft was implemented in three registration waves.[2] The first and most consequential, on June 5, 1917, required the approximately 9.6 million men between 21 to 31 years old (i.e. those born between June 1886 and May 1896) to register. The second, conducted exactly one year later, captured the roughly 300,000 men who had recently turned 21. The third, on September 12, 1918, expanded the age eligibility cutoffs to men between the age of 18 and 45. However, as the war ended shortly thereafter – on November 11, 1918 – over 90% of inductions were from the registration, which we focus on in this paper.

Unlike later drafts, in which lottery numbers were assigned by birth date, the World War I draft was implemented as follows. Upon registering at his local board, each registrant was assigned a serial number, which was written or stamped on his card.[3] Serial numbers were unique within each board and ranged from 1 to N, the total number of registrants at that board. Serial numbers from the first registration were then drawn in a national lottery held in Washington, D.C. on July 20, 1917. Paper slips – one for each serial number (1 through 10,500, the size of the largest draft board in the country) – were placed in gelatin capsules, piled in a glass jar, and drawn one by one by a series of political figures in front of national media. The order in which serial numbers were drawn was printed in newspapers throughout the country and used to determine an individual's draft liability. In particular, the rank order that an individual's serial number was called, relative to those of other registrants in his draft board, was his "local order number" and denoted the order in which eligible men would be inducted.[4]

Following the draft registration, men were categorized by physical exam and exemptions into four classes. Exemptions could be granted for men with dependent family members as well as for occupations essential to "the maintenance of the Military Establishment," religious beliefs, and moral objections. In practice, most men who received exemptions did so under dependency claims, though local boards wielded significant discretion in the exemption process. Class I registrants primarily included unmarried men and married men without children.

Finally, Class I registrants were inducted in order of their local order number to fulfill quotas established for each draft board. Quotas were determined by the size of the eligible male population

[2]Much of this summary of the draft process relies on the description in Chambers (1987). Information about the layout of draft registration cards can be found in Newman (2001).

[3]Individuals who sought to dodge the draft were subject to harsh penalties if caught. Population estimates suggest that over 98% of eligible men actually registered for the draft. Roughly 4% of registered men were deemed "deserters." Three-quarters of this group were men who failed to appear for physical examinations at their local board during the classification process. The remaining quarter of deserters were men who failed to report to entrainment camps after being classified and having their order number called (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919).

[4]For example, the first four serial numbers drawn in the lottery were 258, 2522, 9613, and 4532. Men with serial numbers 258 and 2522 were thus assigned local order numbers 1 and 2, respectively. In boards with 9613 or more registrants, men with serial number 9613 would have local order number 3 and those with serial number 4532 would have local order number 4, while in boards with fewer than 9613 registrants, men with serial number 4532 would have local order number 3.

in a board minus deductions for prior voluntary military enlistments from the state.[5]

Of the approximately one million Black men who registered during the first and second registration waves, 557,000 were categorized as Class I and 367,710 were inducted. Due to racial disparities in the classification and exemption processes as well as strict limits on Black voluntary enlistments, Black men comprised 13% of inductees, but only 9.6% of registrants.[6]

2.2 Black soldiers in the war

Prior to the passage of the Selective Service Act, there was significant debate about whether to include Black men in the draft. Military leaders and politicians feared that arming and training Black men would result in racial insurrection (Wilson, 2015).[7] As revealed by War Plans memoranda, pervasive racial prejudice also fueled concerns that "a large percentage of colored men" lacked the "mental stamina or sturdiness to put in [combat] line against German troops." Ultimately, political pressure from Black civic leaders and the need to mobilize millions of troops led the War Department to include Black draftees and to open a pathway for Black commissioned officers (which we discuss further in Section 6).

However, these measures came with significant restrictions. To limit contact between Black and white soldiers, military units and camps were segregated. To restrict access to firearms, Black draftees were primarily relegated to non-combat units. To placate fears of racial insurrection, military officials enforced a "safe ratio" ensuring that Black troops comprised no more than one-tenth of all soldiers at any camp. Finally, to track the activities and discussions of Black soldiers, the Military Intelligence Division established an entire section focused on "Negro Subversion."

As a result of these measures, the vast majority of the 368,000 Black draftees – domestically and abroad – served essentially as day laborers, "perform[ing] some of the harshest backbreaking work of the war," such as loading and unloading cargo ships, building railways, and burying the dead (Wilson, 2015).[8] Though Army regulations stated that military training and literacy classes be provided to all soldiers, in practice, Black men were far less likely to receive these services than their white counterparts. Similarly, while non-commissioned officerships in Black labor units were theoretically open to Black draftees, in practice, military investigators found that those posts often became a "dumping ground for unfit white men who have been rejected for service in white units" and whose "attitude toward the colored soldier is such as might be expected from men coming from the lower strata of the white population" (Loving, 1918).

Only 40,000 of the 200,000 Black draftees sent overseas were placed in combat units. Due to low rates of combat service, fewer than 800 Black soldiers were killed in combat during the war, compared to more than 50,000 white soldiers (Keene, 2002). Black combatants were placed in one of two all-Black divisions: the 92nd and 93rd. The divisions were both led by majority

[5]States that had supplied larger numbers of volunteers to the National Guard, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps had proportionally lower quotas. As a result, states in New England had relatively low quotas, while Southern states had relatively high quotas.

[6]Army policy only allowed Black volunteers to fill vacancies in the four all-Black units of the Regular Army that existed prior to the war. As a result, only 4,000 new Black volunteers were accepted, with all vacancies filled by the time of the first draft registration (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919). In contrast, more than 650,000 white men were able to voluntarily enlist, often to secure more favorable assignments.

[7]These fears were reflected in and inflamed by two high-profile controversies involving Black soldiers: the Brownsville affair of 1906, in which 167 Black soldiers at Fort Brown were falsely accused and dishonorably discharged for attacking a white woman and bartender, and the Houston riots of 1917, in which 13 Black soldiers were executed and 41 were sentenced to life imprisonment for mutinying and killing several civilians and policemen after being arrested and assaulted by local police.

[8]Describing these conditions, Wilson writes that Black troops "worked as laborers on chain gangs facing *de facto* slavery with white officers serving as overseers" (Wilson, 2015). In one instance, Captain Charlie Boyd hired his Black subordinates out to civilians to cut wood and dig potatoes for his own financial gain.

Black commissioned officers but otherwise differed significantly in their composition and experience during the war.[9]

The 92nd Division comprised four regiments of Black draftees and faced intense suspicion and scrutiny from their fellow Americans. Unlike white combat divisions, the 92nd Division was prohibited from training together as a unit prior to being deployed so as not to arouse concern among local white communities.[10] Upon arriving in France, the 92nd Division quickly "became the targets of discrimination and persecution" as American officials falsely accused the men of raping French women (Wilson, 2015). Despite limited training, the division was widely disparaged by the government after the 368th Regiment failed to suppress German forces during the Argonne Offensive. Major General Bullard, commander of the Second Army in France, deemed the men of the 92nd "hopelessly inferior," prompting Congress to discuss the potential dissolution of *all* Black units in the standing army.

In contrast to the 92nd, the 93rd Division was composed of three regiments of Black National Guardsmen and only one regiment of Black draftees. On the whole, National Guard volunteers were more experienced and better trained than conscripted draftees, regardless of race. However, General Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, believed the 93rd was unfit to be deployed with American combat troops and sent the division to serve under French command, where the division experienced far less discriminatory treatment than the 92nd Division received under the Americans. Relations between the soldiers of the 93rd Division and the French became so friendly that General Pershing delivered a classified missive to his French counterparts stressing that "we must prevent the rise of any pronounced degree of intimacy between French and black officers... we cannot deal with them on the same plane as with the white American officers without deeply wounding the latter." Despite these efforts, the combat exploits of the 93rd Division were widely praised by the French with 527 soldiers receiving *Croix de Guerre* medals.

2.3 The New Negro and the rise of the NAACP

At the conclusion of the war, Black soldiers returned home to renewed racial hatred and violence, including a spate of white supremacist attacks during the Red Summer of 1919, the growing presence of "sundown towns" throughout the country (Bazzi et al., 2022), and a resurgent Ku Klux Klan that included over 4 million members by 1925 (Ang, 2023). However, the decade after Armistice Day also saw the striking emergence of the New Negro movement, which "promoted a renewed sense of racial pride, cultural self-expression, economic independence and progressive politics" in defiance of Jim Crow discrimination (Library of Congress, 2009).

Characterized by its rejection of "the conservatism, parochialism, and political accommodationism deemed outdated in the postwar period" (Williams, 2007), the movement was a transformative racial awakening spanning the spread of jazz during the Harlem Renaissance to the manifestation of Black political power in organizations like the United Negro Improvement Association (Marcus Garvey's Pan-Africanist group), the American Negro Press (deemed "the single greatest power in the Negro race" by Gunnar Myrdal), and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (the first Black labor union chartered by the AFL).

Perhaps the most enduring and influential institution to emerge from the New Negro movement was

[9] Upper-level officers in all divisions were white.

[10] This decision was in keeping with the War Department's stance of not challenging the status quo of Jim Crow. After a Black sergeant was thrown out of a local theater due to his race, Major-General Ballou, the white commander of the 92nd, issued a bulletin stating that "the theater manager is legally wrong. Nevertheless, the sergeant is guilty of the GREATER wrong in doing ANYTHING, NO MATTER HOW LEGALLY CORRECT, that will provoke race animosity." The bulletin went on to threaten that "White men made the Division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker."

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Founded in 1909, the NAACP was largely stagnant until the return of veterans at the end of World War I. Between 1914 and 1920, membership rolls exploded from 6,000 to 90,000 while the number of local branches grew from 50 to 310. Over this period, the organization's composition also changed dramatically. While its founders included a number of white progressives, by 1920, over 90% of NAACP members and officers were Black (Kellogg, 1967).

During the war, the NAACP was influential in winning the right of African Americans to serve as commissioned officers and objected to the War Department's restrictions on Black volunteers (Kellogg, 1967). These efforts aligned with the organization's wartime motto of "First your country, then your rights!", which urged Black men to "forget our special grievances and close our ranks ... with our own white fellow citizens" (Du Bois, 1918). After the war, the NAACP adopted a more confrontational stance, turning its attention to defeating the "the huns of America: lynchings, Jim Crow, and discrimination."[11] This work was largely done by local branches, which carried out a range of protest, lobbying, and legal campaigns (Sullivan, 2009).[12]

Throughout this period, participation in the NAACP was a costly endeavor. Membership fees were $1 per year, at a time when median annual income for Black families was less than $500. Participation also entailed significant personal risk as members often became "targets of violence and harassment," particularly in the South (Sullivan, 2009).[13]

3 Data and linking strategy

In this section, we describe our main data sources and outline how we link draft cards, other military records, NAACP rosters, and the 1930 full-count census.

3.1 Draft registrants

Registration cards and order numbers

We obtained draft cards for the 935,984 Black men who registered during the first draft registration. Card images are held at the National Archives and Record Administration, and an example is provided in Appendix Figure A1. We sent all cards to a data entry firm and captured information on the registrant's name, address, birth date, birth state, occupation, martial status, serial number, and order number.[14] Note that the cards only contain information on whether a registrant claimed an exemption, not whether he actually received one.

[11] In explaining the NAACP's shift away from political accommodationism, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, "I heard from the mouths of soldiers the kind of treatment that Black men got in the American army. I was convinced and said that American white officers fought more valiantly against Negroes within our ranks than they did against the Germans" (Williams, 2023).

[12] In Charleston, NAACP members organized protests challenging efforts to exclude Black women from clothing factory jobs. In Atlanta, the local branch conducted a large-scale, door-to-door voter registration drive to halt city plans to abolish seventh grade in Black public schools. Across the nation, the NAACP provided legal aid to African Americans involved in racial discrimination cases. Membership fees raised by local branches funded almost the entirety of the national organization's budget and were directed towards Congressional lobbying for (failed) anti-lynching legislation and legal appeals that ultimately led to the groundbreaking Supreme Court decision in Moore v. Dempsey (1923), which expanded federal oversight of state criminal justice systems.

[13] In Anderson, South Carolina, branch members were driven out of town after the local newspaper blamed the organization for "the increasing insolence of many Negroes in the city." In Austin, Texas, the NAACP's executive secretary was beaten by a mob – which included the county judge and local constable – for asserting that the local branch operated legally. Even at the highest levels of government, the Bureau of Investigation regularly monitored NAACP publications, activities, and members for "Bolshevik tendencies."

[14] To minimize transcription costs, we captured dummies for occupations listed as "farmer", "laborer", and "farm laborer", the three most common entries for Black registrants, and for whether any exemption claim was listed, not the specific text of the claim.

Most draft registration cards have two numbers written on them: the serial or "red ink" number, and the local order number. For each board, we identify the typical position of each of these two numbers.[15]. Then, we calculate the order number predicted by the serial number. To do this, we need to know the order of serial numbers called in the national lottery as well as the total number of first-round registrants in each board, which we obtain from the *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System* (1919). In our main analysis, we use the predicted order number to address any concerns that a card's actual order number, which was written by local officials *after* the national lottery, may have been manipulated.[16]

Military records

As we describe in the next section, our primary data source for determining World War I veteran status among draft registrants is the 1930 census. However, we supplement this information with two databases containing more detailed military service records: passenger lists from the U.S. Army Transport Service (ATS) and the Veterans Administration Master Index (VAMI).

ATS lists contain the name, home address, and military unit of all soldiers who departed to or returned from Europe during World War I. As military units were racially segregated, we identify Black soldiers by matching to the list of Black units in the Center of Military History's *Directory of Troops* (1988).[17] We then match Black soldiers from ATS lists to draft registration cards using name and residence county, tie-breaking with street address in the case of multiple potential matches. We successfully match 100,881 draft cards to the lists. For these registrants, we know not only that the individual served in the military overseas but also the exact unit he served in.

VAMI contains the names of roughly four million veterans who served between 1917 and 1920, which provides another measure of military service to correct for significant under-reporting of veteran status in the 1930 census. To appear in the database, a veteran (or their family) must have claimed benefits from the Veterans Administration between 1917 and 1940. The data does not contain information on race, so we are unable to restrict to Black veterans.[18] However, it does contain residence county and exact date of birth, which we use to match to draft registration cards. We successfully match 120,412 draft cards to VAMI.

3.2 Civil rights activism

NAACP members

To identify early members of America's oldest and best-known civil rights organization, we collected novel data from ProQuest History Vault's NAACP Papers collection. The collection includes historical membership rosters from the 46 largest NAACP branches as well as other digitized documents identifying members from smaller branches, such as attendance lists for regional and national NAACP conferences. The branch rosters are standardized, (generally) typewritten forms containing the name and exact home address of each dues-paying member enrolled in a given year. An example roster is shown in Appendix Figure A2. These forms were completed by local

[15]For almost all boards, the serial number is written in the top left of the card. The position of the order number varies much more across draft boards, but is generally recorded in the same position for all cards in a given board.

[16]Appendix Figure A6 compares the predicted order number against the order numbers written on the cards and shows a high degree of correspondence. In Appendix Table A4, we also demonstrate robustness to using the written order number in our main IV analysis.

[17]In total, the ATS lists contain 8 million incoming and outgoing passengers during World War I, about 400,000 belonging to Black units.

[18]We first use exact name and date of birth to merge VAMI with NUMIDENT, which has race information (with very poor coverage for these birth cohorts). We match 127,099 individuals, which we use to drop 25,640 non-Black individuals, leaving 3,202,013 VAMI candidates for the cards-VAMI linkage.

branches and mailed to NAACP headquarters along with the national share of membership fees. We sent all documents containing member lists in the collection to a data entry firm to capture names, addresses, branch, and year. In total, we identify 233,517 member observations across 227 branches from 1912 to 1940, with the vast majority of observations coming after 1925. Appendix Figures A3 and A4 show the distribution of NAACP records by location and year, respectively. Comparing to national membership estimates suggests that our data includes roughly 75% of all NAACP members from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s, a period when the organization established its national profile as a legislative, legal, and economic advocate.[19]

Black community leaders

To identify Black community leaders in the post-war period, we examine two electronic databases: the African American National Biography (AANB) and the ProQuest African American Biographical Database (AABD). AANB aims to "illuminate the abiding influence of persons of African descent on the life of this nation" through biographies of "historically significant black individuals." Biographies are written by modern scholars and curated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. In contrast, AABD compiles "biographical sketches of individuals from all walks of life – national activists, state and local figures, prominent women, lawyers, artists, musicians, church and missionary leaders, society leaders" from contemporaneous Black publications such as *Who's Who in Colored America* and *The Negro Yearbook*. In total, the databases include 7,554 Black men born from 1860 to 1900. For each individual, we collect identifying information on name, date and place of birth, and occupation. These data provide an expansive view of civic and social leadership during the New Negro era, when Black identity coalesced across multiple segments of society in resistance of Jim Crow.

3.3 Linking to the census

To examine the effects of military service on our primary outcome of interest – future NAACP membership – we link both the draft registration cards and the NAACP rosters to the 1930 census.[20] We employ this strategy for two reasons: first, the NAACP rosters contain only name and contemporaneous home address, not other stable identifying information with which to directly link to the 1917 cards; and second, the 1930 census is the most reliable source of WWI veteran status in the full population.[21] Figure 2 summarizes our linking strategy, which we describe in more detail below and in Appendix B.

[Figure 2 about here.]

To link draft cards to the census, we employ the procedure developed by Abramitzsky, Boustan, and Eriksson (2012; 2014; 2019, henceforth ABE), which requires an exact match on the state of birth and first and last initials, individuals' names to be sufficiently close (Jaro-Winkler distance below 0.15), and individuals' birth years to be no more than two years apart. Successful links are registration cards that we are able to uniquely link to a single census record using those criteria. In our baseline results, we achieve a 26% linking rate.[22] This is similar to Abramitzky et al.

[19] For example, we observe 16,012 unique name-branch observations from 1927-1929 when nationwide membership averaged 22,000 and 41,490 unique name-branch observations from 1938-1939 when national membership averaged 54,000.

[20] We match AABD and AANB records directly to the draft registration cards, given that those data contain date and place of birth.

[21] The 1920 census did not ask about veteran status, while veteran status was even more likely to be under-reported in the 1940 census than in the 1930 census (Tan, 2020).

[22] The linking rate is calculated relative to the number of draft cards that (1) have complete identifying information, (2) belong to individuals born between 1880 and 1900, (3) belong to boards for which we are able to obtain the total number of registrants, and (4) belong to boards for which we can identify the typical position of the order and

(2021), who link 29% of white boys across the 1910 and 1940 censuses using automated methods, and Doetsch (2012), who hand-matched 32% of draft cards to the 1930 census for a sub-sample of Black registrants. In the Appendix, we demonstrate the robustness of our main results to various other linking choices (e.g. requiring uniqueness of birth year within a 5-year band and tie-breaking multiple potential matches using middle initial, county of residence, and veteran status) that yield linking rates ranging from 12 to 30%.

To link the NAACP rosters to the 1930 census, we search for census records of Black men living in the same city or metropolitan area as a given NAACP member.[23] In cases of multiple census candidates with similar names in the same city, we tie-break links using exact residence address. Given that individuals may move over time, we also use address from the 1940 census to link NAACP records for which no 1930 census record meets the linking criteria.[24] We are able to match 57% of NAACP records to an individual in the 1930 census.[25]

3.4 Linked samples

Panel (a) of Table 1 describes the cards and the linked sample. Overall, the linked sample is comparable to the sample of draft cards on observable characteristics such as age, occupation, marital status, and exemption claims.

[Table 1 about here.]

Veteran status is significantly under-reported in the 1930 census, which contains only 247,015 Black men who report being WWI veterans relative to 367,710 actual Black inductees. As there were very few Black combat deaths, mortality or attrition alone cannot explain this gap. More likely, some individuals who did serve in the war are not recorded as such in the 1930 census. Thus, in the main analysis, the veteran indicator is equal to one if an individual reported being a veteran in the 1930 census or we matched his draft card to either VAMI or the ATS lists. Using this definition, 35% of matched registrants are veterans, nearly identical to official estimates of Black service rates from historical sources.[26]

Panel (b) of Table 1 compares Black men whom we identify as NAACP members to all other Black adult males in the 1930 census. NAACP members are positively selected across a variety of socioeconomic factors. Members are more likely to be employed, literate, or homeowners, and work in higher-income occupations than non-members. Notably, they are also much more likely to be WWI veterans. Using our combined measure, 15% of NAACP members are veterans, relative

and serial number. The denominator for the linking rate is thus 861,953.

[23] We restrict census candidates to Black men because in this era over 90% members of the NAACP were Black (Kellogg, 1967).

[24] Specifically, we attempt to link NAACP members to individuals with similar names who lived in the member's city in 1940 using the same linking procedure, keeping links only if we identify a unique individual in the 1940 census corresponding to a given NAACP record. We then use inter-census links from Abramitzky et al. (2020) to link the 1940 census individuals back to the 1930 census. If an individual is linked to two different people in the 1930 census, one directly and one through the 1940 census, we prioritize the direct link. Further details are in Appendix B.

[25] As many NAACP records correspond to the same person who signed up over multiple years, our matched sample includes 34,701 unique census individuals, relative to an estimated 72,000 unique male NAACP members. Due to errors in the recording of names and addresses as well as changes therein, there is no way to know the true number of unique members in the rosters.

[26] In addition to the 367,710 inductions, approximately 20,000 Black men were already part of the Regular Army or National Guard when the Selective Service Act was passed (Keene, 2002). In comparison, 1,078,331 Black men registered during the first and second registrations (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919).

to just 8% of non-members.[27][28]

Importantly, we find little evidence that the linking process itself introduces bias to our primary relationship of interest. As shown in Appendix Figure A5, a bivariate regression of NAACP membership on veteran status returns nearly identical estimates of 0.061 standard deviations in the linked sample (i.e. Black men in the 1930 census with matched draft registration cards) and 0.060 standard deviations in the full sample (i.e. all Black men in the 1930 census of draft-eligible age in 1917). OLS estimates are also highly similar across samples when examining other socioeconomic predictors of NAACP membership from the 1930 census.

4 Empirical strategy and results

To identify the causal effect of military service on NAACP participation, we estimate two-stage least squares regressions, instrumenting for service in WWI using random variation from the draft lottery.

4.1 Instrumental variables

Our primary relationship of interest is:

$$NAACP_i = \lambda_b + \beta\, Veteran_i + X_i'\Gamma + u_i \tag{1}$$

where $NAACP_i$ is an indicator for whether the individual was an NAACP member, $Veteran_i$ is an indicator for whether an individual served in World War I (indicated by the 1930 census, VAMI, or ATS), λ_b are draft board fixed effects, and X_i is a vector of controls including an individual's birth year and state as well as occupation, marital status, and exemption claim at time of registration. However, OLS estimates of β could be biased by the endogeneity of military service. The direction of this bias is *ex ante* ambiguous. Drafted men who refused to report for military service may have been less civically-minded than others or they may have been more willing to challenge the status quo and fight for equal rights. The exemption and physical examination processes could also generate unobservable differences between veterans and non-veterans correlated with future NAACP participation.

To account for potential endogeneity, we thus instrument for veteran status using the WWI draft lottery. Specifically, we estimate:

$$Veteran_i = \delta_b + \gamma Order_i + X_i'\Lambda + v_i. \tag{2}$$

Here, $Order_i$ is individual i's predicted local order number (as determined by his serial number) divided by the total number of registrants in his draft board.[29] The instrument is bounded from

[27] Our patterns diverge notably from the county-level correlates of NAACP branch formation documented by Aaronson et al. (2022), who find little relationship with average Black income and a significant, negative relationship with Black World War II enlistment rates. These differences highlight the difficulties that may emerge when assessing the individual-level drivers of civic activism with area-level measures.

[28] In Appendix Table A1, we show that these patterns persist when we focus on just individuals who were eligible for the first draft registration and who, as of the 1930 census, lived in an area from which we obtained NAACP rosters.

[29] We use predicted instead of actual order number because there was more scope for manipulation of order numbers than serial numbers (which were assigned before the draft lottery was conducted) and because serial numbers (which were almost always stamped in the top-left corner of a card) are more reliably recorded than order numbers (which were often handwritten and varied in where on the card they were placed). However, predicted local order number and actual local order number are highly correlated (Appendix Figure A6) and IV estimates are nearly identical

0 to 1 with higher values denoting individuals who would have been called later by their draft boards. In accordance with the lottery randomization process, we cluster standard errors by serial number.

Validity

[Figure 3 about here.]

To examine the instrument's relevance, Figure 3 displays a binned scatter plot of the relationship between the scaled local order number and WWI veteran status. We see a strong and significant negative relationship: the later an individual's position in the draft lottery, the lower their likelihood of service. The difference in likelihood of military service between individuals with the lowest and highest order numbers is approximately 10 percentage points, on average. There are at least two reasons that this difference is not 100 percentage points. First, married men and those with exemptions were unlikely to be drafted, even if they had a low order number, which in turn raises the likelihood that single men with high order numbers were drafted.[30] Second, because *whether* someone was drafted is not recorded on the draft cards themselves, imperfect linking introduces noise in our veteran status measure, further attenuating differences between individuals with low and high order numbers.

[Table 2 about here.]

Nonetheless, as shown in Table 2, the first-stage relationship between $Order_i$ and future military service is highly significant and robust to the inclusion of a rich set of controls. Across all columns, we observe negative coefficients with t-statistics above 25, indicating that individuals with higher order numbers were less likely to serve in the war, even relative to observably similar men from the same draft board. As we demonstrate later, this relationship is also robust to the use of alternative functional forms allowing for non-linearity in the mapping of order numbers to military service.

[Figure 4 about here.]

To validate exogeneity of the instrument, we regress all prewar registrant characteristics from the draft cards on our local order number measure. These results are shown in Figure 4. In all cases, coefficients are below 0.01 standard deviations in magnitude and statistically insignificant. That $Order_i$ is uncorrelated with all observed characteristics at the time of registration corroborates the random assignment of order numbers through the draft lottery.

4.2 Effects on NAACP participation

We now turn to our main results examining the effects of Black military service on participation in the nascent NAACP. Table 3 shows TSLS coefficients from estimating Equation 1. We find a significant positive effect of military service on future NAACP membership of around 3 percentage points. This result is remarkably stable as we include controls for birth state and year (column 2), the interaction of marital status and exemption claim (column 3), and prewar occupation (column 4).

[Table 3 about here.]

Importantly, in column (5), we also show that the effect persists when we control for residence in 1930 by adding county fixed effects. Thus, comparing individuals living in the same county a decade

when using actual order number (Appendix Table A4).

[30] In Appendix Figure A8, we show that the proportion of veterans among individuals who had a very low order number but were not married and did not claim an exemption is much higher, about 60%.

after the war, military service still has a positive effect on NAACP membership. While future residence could be endogenous to military service, the fact that estimates are largely unchanged when including these controls suggests that the NAACP effects are not driven by residential mobility during the first Great Migration (Collins and Wanamaker, 2015; Bazzi et al., 2021). As further evidence, Appendix Figure A7 directly examines migration and finds little impact of military service on whether registrants moved across regions, states, or counties between 1917 and 1930, or lived in a city with an NAACP chapter in 1930.[31]

Across models, IV estimates are appreciably larger than corresponding OLS estimates. This could be explained in part by differences in responses to military service among men who were forcibly conscripted and those who voluntarily enlisted. For example, if men who opposed the draft were the most inclined to join the NAACP, conditional on being drafted, we would expect local average treatment effects to exceed average treatment effects. This would be consistent with a story of perceived injustice driving civic activism among Black soldiers, which we explore in Section 5. Similarly, OLS estimates would be biased downwards if volunteers were more trusting of the government and less inclined to join organizations that it viewed as radical. Measurement error in veteran status, transcription errors in the serial numbers, and underestimation of the first-stage relationship could also increase the wedge between IV and OLS estimates.[32] However, as we discuss in the following subsection, OLS and IV estimates remain positive and significant across a number of robustness checks addressing these concerns.

Together, our findings reveal the large extent to which experiences in the military drove Black soldiers to fight for equal rights upon returning home. The magnitude of the coefficient in our preferred specification (column 4) implies that service in World War I almost tripled an individual's likelihood of joining the NAACP, on average – to 4.6%, from a baseline mean of 1.6% for non-veterans – for men induced to serve because of the draft. These men accounted for a significant coalition in the nascent civil rights movement. A back-of-the-envelope calculation implies that the war led approximately 11,000 Black men to join the NAACP, representing about 20% of the organization's membership in 1940.[33]

Robustness

Alternative matching strategies

Appendix Table A2 shows robustness to alternative matching strategies. Column (1) shows our main specification using the standard ABE matching procedure. Column (2) uses marital status and middle initial to tie-break multiple potential census matches, while columns (3) and (4) further use veteran status from VAMI and ATS lists and residence county in 1930 as tie-breakers. Panel (b) repeats this exercise using a more conservative ABE threshold.[34] The use of potentially endogenous variables like veteran status and post-war county as tie-breakers increases match rates and decreases

[31] In Appendix Figure A9, we also show that effects are not driven by existing NAACP members being more likely to be inducted, as we find no effect of military service on pre-war NAACP membership.

[32] In a simple example with a binary endogenous regressor and a binary instrument, Pischke (2007) shows that plim $\hat{\beta}_{IV} = \frac{\beta}{(q_1 - q_0)}$, where q_1 is the probability a veteran is recorded as a veteran and q_0 is the probability that a non-veteran is recorded as a veteran. Due to linking errors, we expect q_1 to be less than 1 and q_0 to be greater than 0.

[33] The 11,000 estimate comes from multiplying 0.030 by 367,710, the total number of Black men drafted. Note, however, that while our estimates refer to the total number of individuals *ever* joining the NAACP during our sample period, national membership estimates reflect total membership at a particular point in time (e.g. 51,000 members in 1940).

[34] The more conservative ABE procedure, referred to as the $x = 2$ threshold (compared to the $x = 0$ baseline), requires that each draft card only have one potential match within a two-year birth year window. For example, if a draft card with birth year 1893 was matched to two census records, one with birth year in 1894 and one with birth year in 1895, the $x = 0$ threshold would keep the 1894 match, but the $x = 2$ threshold would discard both matches.

the wedge between OLS and IV coefficients, consistent with measurement error explaining some of this gap. However, in all cases, results remain positive and significant.

Alternative measures of veteran status

Appendix Table A3 shows robustness to alternative definitions of veteran status. Given significant under-reporting of veteran status in the 1930 census, our preferred measure takes the union of the census measure and more contemporaneous military records (i.e. VAMI and ATS lists). However, we continue to find significant positive effects on NAACP membership using the census measure alone, the contemporaneous measures alone, or the intersection of both. Note, though, that the wedge between the IV and OLS estimates grows as we adopt more restrictive measures of veteran status, as increased under-reporting artificially flattens the first-stage relationship.[35]

Alternative instruments

Appendix Table A4 shows robustness to alternative instruments for veteran status. First, we redefine $Order_i$ based on actual local order number (as written on the draft card) instead of the order number predicted from the serial number. Second, we use the *un-scaled*, predicted order number (i.e. without dividing by total registrants in a board). Third, we use the rank of the individual's predicted order number scaled relative only to other Black registrants (rather than all registrants). In each case, we continue to find positive and significant effects of military service with point estimates highly similar to those from our preferred specification.

Alternative first-stage estimation

Appendix Table A5 shows robustness to alternative first-stage estimation strategies. Given the nature of the draft lottery, a linear fit may not be the best approximation of the relationship between order number and veteran status.[36] As shown in Appendix Figure A8, the relationship between order number and probability of being drafted also depended greatly on marital status and exemption claim – among those with very low order numbers, about 60% of unmarried men without exemption claims served in the war, while only about 23% of married men with exemption claims did so.

To address these concerns, we first estimate a single cubic polynomial in local order number. Second, we split the (scaled) order number into ten groups (i.e. 0 to 0.1, 0.1 to 0.2, etc.) and regress veteran status on these ten indicators. Third, we estimate this nonparametric first stage separately for each of the four unique groups based on marital status and exemption claim. In each case, we use the predicted values from the first stage *as an instrument* in the two-stage least squares regression. Results remain positive and statistically significant. Larger F-statistics indicate that these flexible first-stage models capture some of the variation that the baseline linear instrument misses, and the size of the coefficient estimate in the final specification – 0.0207 – implies that this additional flexibility shrinks the OLS-IV wedge by about one third.

[35] To understand the intuition behind this, consider a binned scatterplot of $Order_i$ and veteran status similar to Figure 3. As veteran status becomes more under-reported, the slope flattens because individuals with low order numbers were more likely to actually be veterans (and therefore proportionally more likely to be miscoded as non-veterans) than individuals with high order numbers. Given that $\beta_{IV} = \frac{\beta_{RF}}{\beta_{FS}}$, this mechanically inflates the IV estimate.

[36] Within a given draft board, the probability of being drafted could have dropped off significantly above a certain order number. However, noise and draft board discretion mean that this function is difficult to discern empirically, especially when aggregating across boards. An additional complication is that many requisition orders called for men with specific occupational backgrounds. Thus, for example, if a draft call required boards to furnish engineers, local boards would need to pull from registered men with higher order numbers than if the draft call simply requested the "next man up."

4.3 Alternative outcomes

Membership duration

To explore intensive margin changes in NAACP participation, we estimate effects on membership duration. We calculate this from the NAACP rosters by taking the number of years between the first year and last year of participation for each member (identified by name and branch).[37] We then estimate our preferred specification on a series of indicator variables set to 1 if an individual participated for $\geq N$ years and 0 otherwise.

[Figure 5 about here.]

TSLS estimates are displayed in Figure 5. We find that being drafted not only significantly increased whether Black men joined the NAACP but also how long they participated for. Indeed, the estimates suggest that one out of every 100 Black draftees was induced to participate in the NAACP for over eight years, pointing to a lasting commitment to civil rights advocacy.

Community leadership

We next examine effects on community leadership during the New Negro era by leveraging the AABD and AANB data. As both databases contain birth date and birth place information, we match entries directly to draft registration cards (i.e., without linking through the census). We then estimate Equation 1 on an indicator for whether a registrant appears in either database.

[Table 4 about here.]

Results are shown in Table 4. We find that men induced to serve by the draft were significantly more likely to become known as a community leader by Black contemporaries and modern scholars. As with the NAACP effects, point estimates indicate that military service nearly tripled an individual's likelihood of becoming a community leader. Though the fight against Jim Crow took a variety of forms during the New Negro movement, in Appendix Table A6 we show that effects are virtually unchanged when restricting our outcome to exclude athletes, artists, and military personnel. Together, these findings corroborate our main effects on NAACP membership and suggest that increased civic activism among Black veterans manifested not simply in their participation in civil rights organizations but throughout their life's work.

4.4 Heterogeneity by prewar characteristics

To explore heterogeneous effects, we next estimate Equation 1 on NAACP membership separately for groups based on prewar characteristics: whether a registrant was a farmer or laborer, whether they were married, whether they claimed an exemption, whether they lived in a former Confederate state, and whether they were younger than the median age. Figure 6 shows these estimates.

[Figure 6 about here.]

Although we lack the statistical power to distinguish between groups, we find larger point estimates for registrants residing outside of the former Confederacy. This is consistent with the potential suppressive influence that threats against NAACP members in the South may have had. Larger effects for Black soldiers from less racist areas would also be consistent with increased NAACP membership being driven by individuals who experienced a comparatively larger discrimination shock upon joining the military. Such a channel could further explain the large observed effects among Black men who claimed – but were denied – draft exemptions. In contrast, we find little

[37] Appendix Figure A10 shows similar patterns if we instead define duration by the number of unique years an individual participated. However, results are noisier under this definition due to imperfect recording and transcription of names in the NAACP rosters.

evidence of larger effects for registrants from lower-skilled occupations (i.e. farmers and laborers), as one might expect if increased civic activism were driven by increased income, education, or organizational skills obtained through military service. However, we explore these and other potential channels more directly in the following section.

5 Mechanisms

Our main results illuminate the meaningful impact that military service had on engagement in the early civil rights movement. In this section, we attempt to uncover which aspects of serving in World War I drove Black veterans to join the NAACP. To do so, we describe and provide empirical tests of the primary mechanisms discussed in the historical literature.

5.1 Perceived injustice

The catalyzing influence of perceived injustice is a dominant and recurrent theme in narrative histories of Black soldiers' post-war activism (Astor, 2001; Delmont, 2023; Williams, 2023). These narratives are perhaps best summarized by Charles Hamilton Houston, a Black lieutenant and the first special counsel of the NAACP, who recounted how "the hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me ... that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back." Recent work documenting how police killings of unarmed minority civilians may spur nearby minority turnout provides empirical corroboration of the potential mobilizing effects of state-linked injustice (Ang and Tebes, 2023). To investigate this channel, we examine how experiences of discrimination during the draft process and in the military mediate the effects on NAACP participation.

Draft discrimination

Given the significant discretion that local boards wielded in granting exemptions and deferments, racial bias in the draft process was a persistent concern throughout the war. As noted in a report from the Provost Marshal General, "it is an actual fact that in a number of instances flagrant violations have occurred in the application of the draft law to negro men in certain sections of the country." Partly because of this, Black registrants were 57% more likely than white registrants to be placed in Class I and 40% more likely to be inducted.

To examine the salience of draft board discrimination, we calculate the difference between Black and white induction rates at each draft board. Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants in the *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General* (1919). We then estimate Equation 1 separately by quartiles of induction disparities.

[Figure 7 about here.]

As shown in Figure 7, effects on NAACP membership increase monotonically with the racial disparity in induction rates. For registrants from boards where Black men were far more likely to be drafted than white men, we find large and significant increases in NAACP participation. Conversely, estimates are near zero for registrants from boards with more equal induction rates. Given that Black and white conscription rates could differ for reasons other than racial bias, Appendix Figure A11 further adjusts induction rates to account for local racial differences in marital status and agricultural employment, the two primary exemption considerations. Doing so reveals even starker differences in NAACP participation between boards with above and below median draft disparities. These patterns are consistent with the large effects we observe for men

who were denied exemption claims and suggest that the veterans who joined the NAACP may have felt unfairly targeted in the draft.

Military discrimination

To examine discrimination once in the military, we turn to reports on "Negro Subversion" produced by the Military Intelligence Division, which monitored sources of dissatisfaction among Black soldiers through surveys of camp intelligence officers. A summary of those reports reveals two systemic issues driving perceptions of discrimination among Black soldiers.[38] The first relates to the lack of Black officers: "Much of the unrest among colored troops at the various camps is due to the fact that white non-commissioned officers are assigned to colored units, viz: labor and service battalions." The second relates to the lack of training provided to Black soldiers: "The negro in noncombatant units that is not given drill feels he is not a soldier but merely a laborer ... [drill] makes him feel he is in reality a part of the army."

From the underlying military intelligence surveys, we identify for each camp the share of Black non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in Black units and the share of Black soldiers that received military training.[39] We then construct a crosswalk linking each registrant's board and order number to camps. This is generated from a map of camp recruitment areas published in the National Geographic as well as draft call lists from Southern boards.[40] Importantly, this crosswalk allows us to predict camp assignment for all registered men, not just those who were drafted. Using this information, we estimate Equation 1 separately for registrants assigned to more and less discriminatory camps.

[Figure 8 about here.]

Results are displayed in Figure 8. Panel A examines Black NCO share and reveals large and significant effects on NAACP membership for soldiers assigned to camps with few or no Black non-commissioned officers. Effects then decline as the Black NCO shares increase, with near-zero estimates for soldiers assigned to camps where the majority of NCOs in Black units were Black. Panel B suggests similar dynamics when considering military training. We find large treatment effects of attending a camp where no military training was provided to Black soldiers and smaller, insignificant effects for camps where some or all Black soldiers received training.

Given earlier evidence of heterogeneous effects by registrant characteristics and board discrimination, it is possible that the differential effects by camp type are driven by differential selection into camps along other dimensions. To account for this possibility, Appendix Figure A12 replicates our analysis using constructed samples of registrants matching the distribution of registrants assigned to the most discriminatory camps.[41] We continue to find null effects on NAACP participation

[38] Specifically, we examine the report by Major W.H. Loving to the Chief of the Military Morale Section titled "Recapitulation of Investigation of Military Camps" summarizing his visits to each camp and the report by Captain L.C. West titled "Summary of Replies to Questionnaire from Intelligence Officers at the Large Training Camps" summarizing the camp intelligence officer surveys.

[39] The intelligence surveys vary widely in the precision of reporting. Some camps provide the exact share of Black NCOs and trained Black regiments. Others provide only broad descriptions like "only a few," "most," or "nearly all". Thus, we code each of the discrimination measures into three categories: camps with Black NCO shares greater than 50%, between 25-50% and between 0-25%; and camps where military training was provided to all Black regiments, to some Black regiments and to no Black regiments.

[40] Draftees were generally sent to a camp near their home. However, due to concerns about racial insurrection, the military maintained strict limits on the share of Black draftees in each camp. As a result, many Black draftees from the South were sent to camps in other areas where fewer Black people resided. We use "Men Ordered to Report" lists from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee to identify, for each Southern draft board, the range of order numbers of registrants sent to each camp.

[41] For each registrant assigned to the most discriminatory camps (i.e. camps with 0-25% Black officer share and camps where no Black troops received training), we select registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps of the

among registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps, indicating that differences in registrant backgrounds explain very little of the differential effects by camp conditions. As samples are matched on induction disparities, the patterns are also not simply mirroring upstream exposure to draft discrimination.[42] Taken together, these findings highlight the salient role of discrimination in the Black experience during World War I. They also serve as empirical corroboration of historical narratives describing how perceptions of injustice arising from those experiences fueled Black veterans in the New Negro era.

5.2 Alternative mechanisms

French exposure

Another widely discussed mechanism is an exposure effect of living in France and interacting with French soldiers and civilians. This is well-reflected in a statement by Osceola McKaine, a Black lieutenant and co-founder of the League for Democracy, who claimed, "I have never before experienced what it meant to be really free – to taste real liberty – in a phrase to be a man. I love the French." Somewhat ironically, Ho Chi Minh also credited his time in Paris for his introduction to socialist thought and the eventual overthrow of the Vichy French colonizers in Vietnam (Duiker, 2012).[43] To test this mechanism, we compare NAACP participation rates between soldiers with more or less exposure to the French. If French egalitarianism inspired Black soldiers to advocate for equal rights in America, then we might expect higher NAACP participation rates among troops who were deployed to France or who experienced more interaction with French individuals.

[Figure 9 about here.]

As shown in Figure 9, we find, if anything, the opposite pattern. Among men assigned to labor and service battalions, NAACP membership rates are nearly identical regardless of whether they served in the U.S. or were deployed to France. Among combat troops, NAACP membership rates are actually significantly lower for the 93rd Division than for the 92nd Division. Given that the 93rd was embedded with the French military while the 92nd was subject to widespread disparagement under U.S. command, these results are more suggestive of the role of perceived injustice than of French exposure.[44] Feelings of unjust sacrifice could also explain the higher membership rates for combat versus non-combat troops, as could increased skill or camaraderie, which we explore next.[45]

Military training

Examining more modern settings, researchers have found positive effects of American military service on educational attainment (Angrist and Chen, 2011) and earnings (Greenberg et al., 2022).

same age quintile, marital status, occupation and exemption claim and from boards of the same quartile of racial disparities in induction rates. Observations are weighted by one over the number of matches to maintain sample balance on match characteristics.

[42]Notably, correlations between induction disparities at a registrant's draft board and discrimination at his camp are near zero (i.e., ρ equals 0.10 and 0.15 between the unadjusted board disparities and the military training and NCO measures, respectively. ρ equals 0.03 and -0.05 when using the adjusted board disparities).

[43]Also related, Ottinger and Rosenberger (2023) show that French soldiers who fought alongside George Washington's troops during the American Revolution were more likely to support the *French* Revolution a decade later.

[44]In Figure A13, we show that these differences persist when we control for registrant characteristics that may differ across groups.

[45]These patterns also cut against the possibility that effects were driven by active targeting of Black veterans by the NAACP. If the NAACP hoped to attract well-known and celebrated Black veterans to champion its cause, one would expect higher membership rates for the 93rd Division than for the 92nd Division, as the former "enjoyed considerable status in the black community" (Barbeau and Henri, 1996). Furthermore, any recruitment effects would need to square with the large differences across camp and board type, which at minimum suggest that soldiers who experienced more discriminatory conditions were more susceptible to recruitment efforts.

In other contexts, Jha and Wilkinson (2012) show that combat experience among South Asian soldiers in World War II fostered organizational skills, which in turn facilitated collective action in the post-war period. During World War I, military guidelines prescribed daily drills to instill discipline as well as arms training. At some camps, literacy classes were also provided to illiterate men. This could translate into higher NAACP participation either through increased income and education, which are both positively correlated with NAACP membership, or directly through increased literacy or organizational skills.[46] To examine this channel, we estimate the impact of military service on proxies for education and income from the 1930 census.

[Figure 10 about here.]

TSLS results for several outcomes are displayed in Panel A of Figure 10. We find little evidence that being drafted led to improved economic standing, with near-zero estimates for literacy, home ownership, employment, and occupation and income scores (Abramitzky et al., 2021). Given rampant labor market discrimination and segregation during this era, it is nonetheless possible that Black soldiers gained skills that facilitated civic activism, but that did not translate to economic outcomes. However, Tan (2020) also finds no evidence of economic benefit of WWI service when comparing draft-eligible and -ineligible cohorts of *white* men. That the NAACP effects are driven by draftees who attended camps without military training for Black troops further suggests the limited role of skill gains in explaining post-war activism.

Club involvement

As Williams (2007) writes, "many former soldiers, although disillusioned with the U.S. Army and its pervasive racism, valued the discipline and homo-social camaraderie of military life." Thus, a desire to replicate these bonds in civilian life may have driven Black veterans to join social organizations. Expanded social networks or elevated social status from military service (Cagé et al., 2021) could also have facilitated participation in clubs and other fraternal organizations, not just the NAACP.

While the observed increases in community leadership suggest that the effects of military service are not driven simply by increased club participation, we further explore this channel by examining broad measures of club involvement from census occupation, industry, and residence codes. Specifically, we estimate Equation 1 on indicators for individuals with occupations coded as "officials of lodge, society, union, etc.", group quarters residence coded as "club" or "YMCA", and industry coded as "nonprofit membership organizations." As shown in Panel B of Figure 10, we find, if anything, a negative relationship between military service and other measures of club participation. Together, these results suggest that changes in NAACP membership reflect increased civil rights activism specifically and not a broader desire or proclivity to participate in clubs more generally.

6 Black commissioned officers

The historical record highlights the contributions of not only conscripted soldiers but also Black officers in spearheading the civil rights movement. World War I saw the creation of the first

[46] It is unlikely that military service mechanically increased education or income as the benefits provided to veterans were far less generous than in later wars. The G.I. Bill was not passed until 1944. During WWI, Army privates were paid $30 a month, less than average Black income at the time. To compensate soldiers for lost wages, Congress enacted the World War Adjusted Compensation Act in 1924, which issued certificates worth up to $625. However, these certificates did not mature for 20 years. During the Great Depression, a "Bonus Army" of 40,000 veterans and family members descended on Washington, D.C. demanding cash payment of their certificates, but a bill approving those payments was ultimately rejected by Congress.

Black officer candidate training camp in U.S. military history, and in this section, we show that the relationship between military service and civil rights activism that we document for draftees persists for this historic and elite class of men. While officer selection was not random, we leverage rich biographical data to explore the relationship between receiving an officer commission and future community leadership.

6.1 Background

At the time of America's entrance into World War I, West Point had effectively been closed to Black men for decades, with the last African American cadet graduating in 1889.[47] Relenting to pressure from Black leaders to re-open a pathway to officer commissions, the War Department established the Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Training School, a segregated officer training camp for Black men from 25 to 40 years old.

On June 17, 1917, 1,250 volunteers were sworn into the camp. This included 1,000 civilian candidates recruited from university graduates and professional occupations and 250 experienced soldiers and non-commissioned officers from the Regular Army and National Guard. The men were trained with the intent that they would lead Black combat troops – under the strict caveat that they would never be promoted above the rank of major nor would they ever command white subordinates (Wilson, 2015).[48]

On October 15, 1917, 639 candidates received officer commissions and were sent to Army cantonments to lead members of the 92nd and 93rd divisions. Some of the men who did not receive commissions were given the option to remain in the Army to train Black draftees, while the remainder were dismissed from the Army unless or until they were conscripted through the draft.

6.2 Data and linking

We obtained the names of all candidates entering the camp and all candidates commissioned as officers from John Thompson's *The History and Views of Fort Des Moines Officer Training Camp* (1917). The book also contains rich biographical information for a subset of candidates, collected by Thompson through a survey he distributed at the inauguration of the camp. For the 574 candidates who completed the survey, we observe information not only on birth date and place, home address, marital status, occupation, and military experience, but also on participation in social and religious organizations.[49] For candidates without biographies, we attempted to hand-link to other online databases in order to obtain additional identifying information. This provides us with birth date and state for an additional 171 individuals.[50] We then linked officer candidates to NAACP rosters as well as the AABD and AANB databases of Black community leaders. For NAACP membership, we link candidates to rosters by name and residence location[51] For community leadership, we link candidates to AABD and AANB using name and birth information.

[47] From West Point's founding in 1802 until 1930, the institution graduated over 10,000 white cadets relative to three Black cadets.

[48] Government officials were particularly concerned that Lieutenant Colonel Charles Young, the third-ever Black West Point graduate and the highest-ranking Black officer in the Army, would have to be promoted to brigadier general and oversee white troops if he took part in the war. Instead, Army doctors diagnosed him with high blood pressure and he was forced to retire.

[49] We observe residence but no other biographical information for an additional 103 candidates.

[50] In particular, Thompson (1917) includes military unit and rank for all veteran candidates, even those without biographies. This allows us to identify experienced soldiers in historical Army enlistment records.

[51] While match rates to the 1930 census are similar to those for draft registrants, loss of power is more of a concern due to the small number of candidates. Thus, we define location based on the candidate's address or residence at time of entering the camp and attempt to match them directly to the NAACP rosters. Further details on linking are in Appendix B.

6.3 Results and discussion

Table 5 explores the relationship between receiving an officer commission and future civil rights engagement. Panel A examines NAACP membership, while Panel B examines community leadership. In column (1), we simply regress these outcomes on an indicator for whether the candidate received an officer commission. Column (2) adds birth year and state fixed effects for the subsample for whom we have this information, and column (3) adds controls for an individual's pre-camp marital status, prior occupation, military experience, and civic engagement (i.e. membership in a church, membership in the Freemasons, and membership in the Knights of Pythias), which further limits the sample to those with available biographical information.

[Table 5 about here.]

Across outcomes, we find positive and significant associations between receiving an officer commission and later-life civic activism. Nearly 20% of officers joined the NAACP or become known as community leaders, relative to 11% of non-officers. Strikingly, this relationship is entirely unattenuated when controlling for the rich set of biographical controls.

It is important to note that these are not causal estimates – individuals who received commissions may have been precisely those who would have joined the civil rights movement anyways. However, the fact that we document a significant relationship between military service and civil rights activity among an already highly selected group of candidates is consistent with the large causal effects observed among draftees. That commissioned officers were predominantly placed with the heavily-maligned 92nd division further accords with the salience of lived discrimination in explaining this relationship.

7 Conclusion

This paper documents the pioneering role of Black veterans in the early civil rights movement. While the U.S. military has been heralded as an engine of Black economic mobility in the modern era (Greenberg et al., 2022), we leverage novel variation from the World War I draft lottery and millions of digitized historical records to show that it also fueled widespread social activism historically. Our estimates demonstrate that military service led thousands of Black men to join the NAACP and fight for racial equality at the height of the Jim Crow era.

These results call to mind additional areas for research on a critical period in U.S. history. First, by aggregating the individual-level draft lottery variation to the county level, researchers could examine how Black veterans influenced civil rights progress in their local communities through the 1940s, when the NAACP's reach expanded dramatically (Aaronson et al., 2022) and racial disparities in labor market outcomes began to narrow significantly (Goldin and Margo, 1992). Second, by expanding the sample to include white draft registrants, researchers could investigate the role of military service in catalyzing other social transformations of the era – such as the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s (Ang and Chinoy, 2023).

Through a broader lens, our results also demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of lived discrimination and perceptions of injustice. While other research has documented effects on individuals' decisions at work (Glover et al., 2017), in school (Carlana, 2019; Ang, 2021), and at the ballot box (Ang and Tebes, 2023), our findings suggest that Black soldiers' experiences of discrimination during World War I may have served to catalyze one of the most sweeping social movements in U.S. history.

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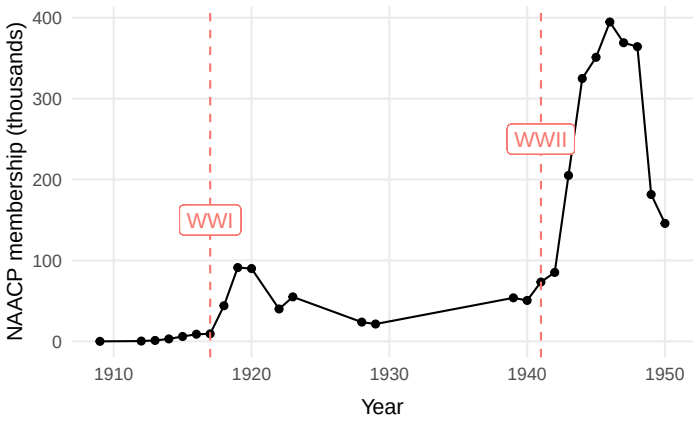


Figure 1: NAACP Membership, 1909 to 1950

Notes: Data is from Estrada and Gregory (n.d.).

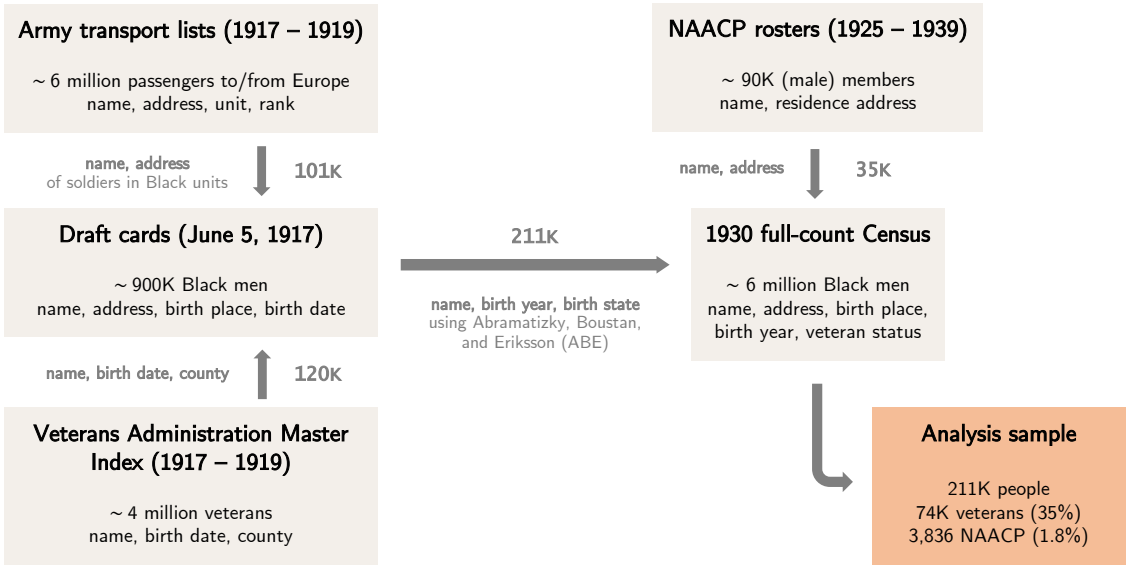


Figure 2: Overview of Linking Strategy

Notes: Figure summarizes the procedure used to link draft cards, other military records, NAACP rosters, and the 1930 full-count Census. Further details are in Section 3 and Appendix B

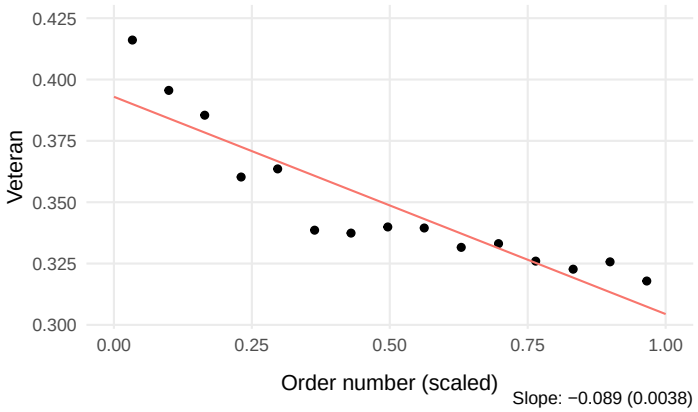


Figure 3: First-Stage Relationship Between Order Number and Veteran Status

Notes: Figure shows the relationship between the order number, scaled by the total registrants in an individual's board, and the combined measure of veteran status, incorporating information from the 1930 census, ATS lists, and VAMI.

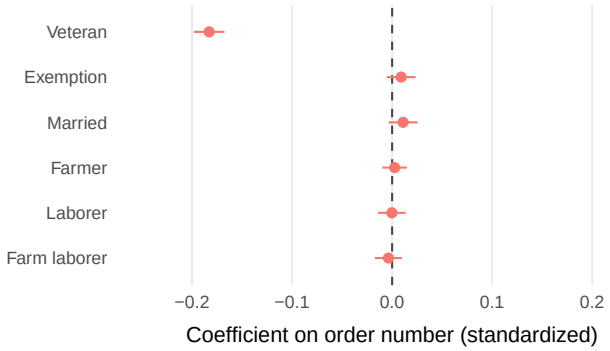


Figure 4: Relationship Between Order Number and Other Card Characteristics

Notes: Figure shows the coefficient on the order number, scaled by the total registrants in an individual's board, from separate OLS regressions. All outcomes are standardized. Regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

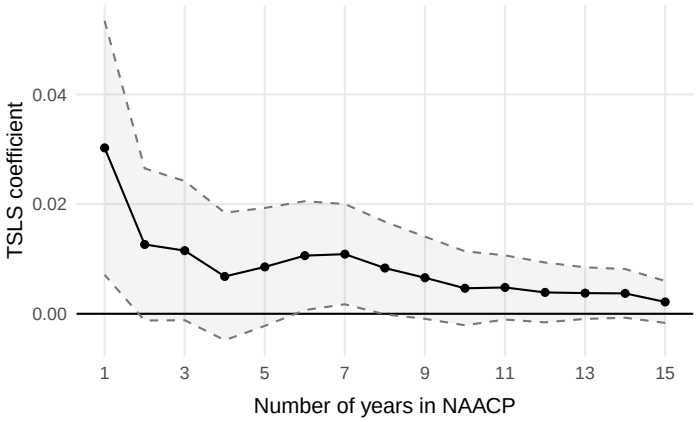


Figure 5: Effect of Military Service on Duration of NAACP Membership – TSLS Results

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card and the outcome is an indicator variable that is 1 if the individual was in the NAACP for $\geq N$ years, defined by an individual's maximum minus minimum NAACP roster year. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Shaded region is a 95% confidence interval.

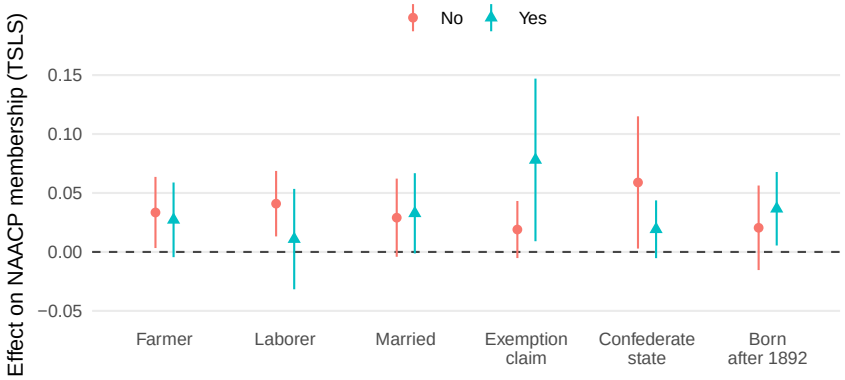


Figure 6: Heterogeneity by Prewar Characteristics

Notes: "Lives in city" refers to whether the registrant's draft board was part of a city. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects, and further control for exemption × marital status and prewar occupation when possible. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

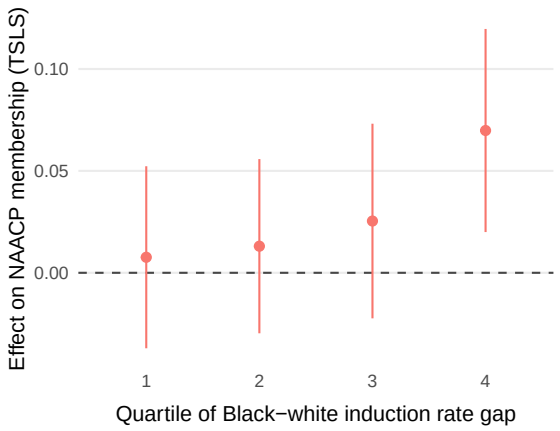


Figure 7: Heterogeneity by Board Discrimination

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card. Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants. Quartiles are defined at the card level according to the difference in Black and white induction rates at each registrant's board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

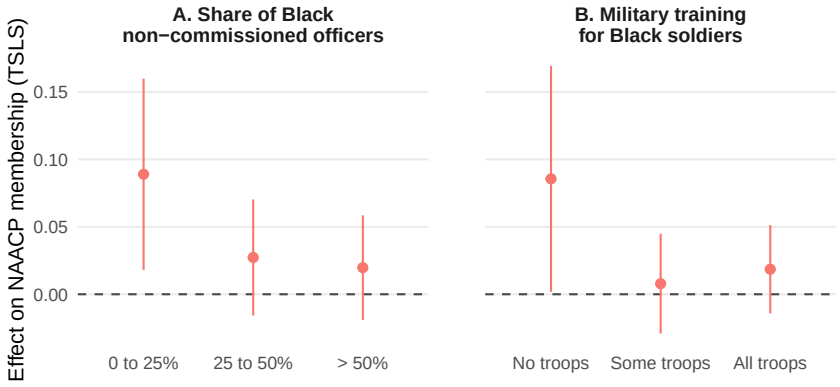


Figure 8: Heterogeneity by Camp Discrimination

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card. Share of Black non-commissioned officers and share of Black soldiers that received training in each camp are derived from reports on "Negro Subversion" produced by the Military Intelligence Division; see Section 5.1 for more details. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

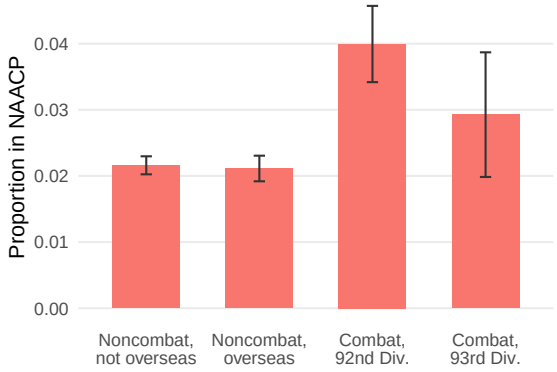


Figure 9: NAACP Membership by French Exposure

Notes: Figure shows the NAACP membership rate in four mutually exclusive groups of draft cards: veterans who were not matched to the ATS lists (i.e. non-combatants in the U.S.), veterans who were matched to the ATS lists and were part of a division other than the 92nd or 93rd (i.e., noncombatants in France), and veterans who were part of the 92nd or 93rd divisions (i.e. combatants in France under U.S. and French command, respectively). Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

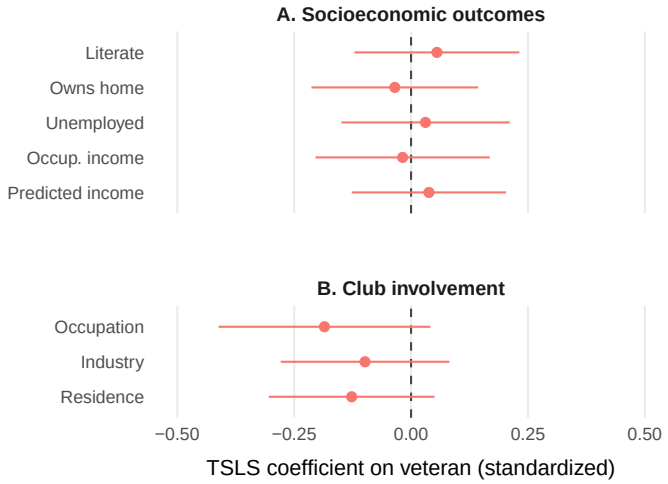


Figure 10: Effects on Socioeconomic Outcomes and Club Involvement

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card. All outcomes are from the 1930 census. The occupational income score is from IPUMS and is based on median wages by occupation in 1950. We additionally predict income in 1930, as the 1930 census did not record income directly, following Abramitzky et al. (2021). We regress wage and salary income in the 1940 census on age and age squared; state, census region, and occupation fixed effects; and interactions of coarse (one-digit) occupation and census region, for Black men ages 30 to 50 in 1940. Then, we use this regression to predict income in the 1930 census. For club involvement, "occupation" is an indicator variable that is 1 if an individual is an official of a "lodge, society, union, etc."; "industry" is an indicator variable that is 1 if an individual's industry is "Nonprofit membership organizations"; and "residence" is an indicator variable that is 1 if an individual lives in a YMCA or a club. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

(a) Draft cards

	All (1)	Matched (2)
Age in 1917	25.14	25.31
	(3.25)	(3.10)
Exemption claim	0.27	0.28
	(0.44)	(0.45)
Married in 1917	0.53	0.56
	(0.50)	(0.50)
Farmer	0.30	0.31
	(0.46)	(0.46)
Laborer	0.26	0.24
	(0.44)	(0.43)
Farm laborer	0.09	0.08
	(0.28)	(0.28)
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.19	0.22
	(0.39)	(0.42)
Veteran (Census)	–	0.24
		(0.43)
Veteran (Any)	–	0.35
		(0.48)
Observations	931,568	210,637

(b) NAACP members

	NAACP (1)	Not NAACP (2)
Age in 1930	40.37	39.58
	(11.93)	(13.92)
Employed	0.88	0.86
	(0.32)	(0.34)
Married in 1930	0.74	0.72
	(0.44)	(0.45)
Literate	0.96	0.79
	(0.19)	(0.41)
Occup. income	24.83	17.64
	(12.32)	(6.66)
Owns home	0.41	0.25
	(0.49)	(0.43)
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.03	0.01
	(0.18)	(0.12)
Veteran (Census)	0.14	0.08
	(0.34)	(0.26)
Veteran (Any)	0.15	0.08
	(0.35)	(0.28)
Observations	32,743	3,199,832

Notes: In Panel (b), the 1930 census sample is restricted to Black men ages 21 and older. Note that some individuals we identified as NAACP members were less than 21 years old as of the 1930 census. Veteran (VAMI/ATS) can only be equal to one for individuals in the census whom we link to a draft card (and subsequently to VAMI or ATS ship lists). Standard deviations in parentheses. In Appendix Table A1, we subset the sample in Panel (b) to individuals who were eligible for the first draft registration and who, as of the 1930 census, lived in an area from which we obtained NAACP rosters.

Table 2: First-Stage Relationship Between Order Number and Veteran Status

	Veteran			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Order number (scaled)	-0.0884***	-0.0872***	-0.0854***	-0.0854***
	(0.0038)	(0.0037)	(0.0036)	(0.0036)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married			✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓
Observations	202,237	202,237	202,237	202,237
R^2	0.039	0.079	0.166	0.167
Dependent variable mean	0.349	0.349	0.349	0.349

Notes: Table reports OLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table 3: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – TSLS Results

	NAACP member				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Veteran	0.0289**	0.0297**	0.0302**	0.0302**	0.0252**
	(0.0114)	(0.0116)	(0.0118)	(0.0118)	(0.0117)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married			✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓	✓
County in 1930					✓
Observations	202,237	202,237	202,237	202,237	202,193
R^2	0.035	0.036	0.037	0.038	0.089
First stage F-statistic	532.2	544.6	567.5	568.1	558.6
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0158	0.0158	0.0158	0.0158	0.0158
OLS coefficient	0.0045	0.0043	0.0038	0.0036	0.0019
OLS t-statistic	6.70	6.48	5.50	5.18	2.74

Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table 4: Effect of Military Service on Community Leadership – TSLS Results

	Community leader			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0043**	0.0043**	0.0043**	0.0043**
	(0.0020)	(0.0020)	(0.0021)	(0.0021)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓
Exemption × married			✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓
Observations	847,331	827,255	827,255	827,255
R^2	0.006	0.009	0.009	0.009
First stage F-statistic	1,771.5	1,776.1	1,801.9	1,803.7
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0013	0.0013	0.0013	0.0013
OLS coefficient	0.0008	0.0009	0.0007	0.0007
OLS t-statistic	6.96	7.03	5.72	5.46

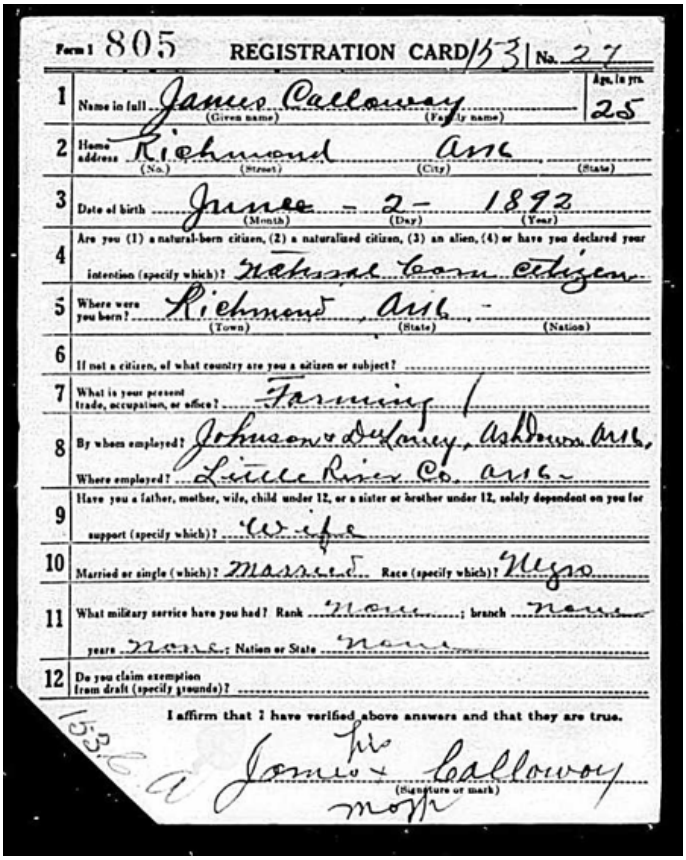
Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table 5: Officer Commissions and Civil Rights Activism

	NAACP member			Community leader		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Officer	0.0799***	0.0873***	0.1228***	0.0722***	0.0899***	0.0820**
	(0.0244)	(0.0279)	(0.0361)	(0.0242)	(0.0292)	(0.0357)
Birth year and state		✓	✓		✓	✓
Married, job, military			✓			✓
Civic engagement			✓			✓
Observations	848	745	574	848	745	574
R^2	0.011	0.153	0.296	0.009	0.138	0.253
Dep. var. mean (non-officers)	0.110	0.108	0.103	0.110	0.111	0.123

Notes: Table reports OLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual. In columns (4) to (6), "Community leader" refers to appearing in AANB or AABD. The sample is restricted to officers and candidates for whom either current location or birth state are non-missing. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

A Additional tables and figures



Form 805 REGISTRATION CARD 153 No. 27

1 Name in full: James Calloway (Given name) (Family name) Age in yrs. 25

2 Home address: Richmond (No.) (Street) Ark (City) (State)

3 Date of birth: June 2 1892 (Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? Natural born citizen

5 Where were you born? Richmond, Ark. (Town) (State) (Nation)

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Farming

8 By whom employed? Johnson & DeLaney, Ashdown Ark.
Where employed? Little River Co. Ark.

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? Wife

10 Married or single (which)? Married Race (specify which)? Negro

11 What military service have you had? Rank None; branch None
years None; Nation or State None

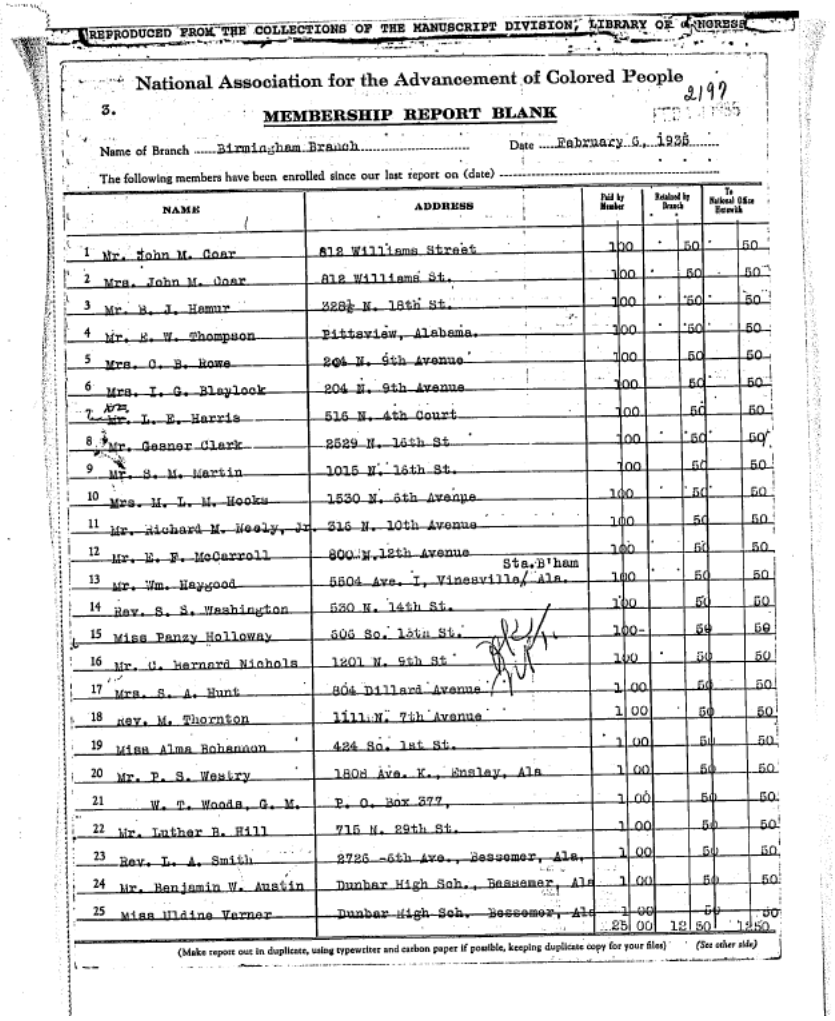
12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

James + Calloway
(Signature or mark)
his mark

Figure A1: Example World War I Draft Registration Card

Notes: The stamped number in the top left (805) is the individual's serial number. The handwritten number in the top middle and bottom left (153) is the individual's local order number.



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National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

3. 2197

MEMBERSHIP REPORT BLANK

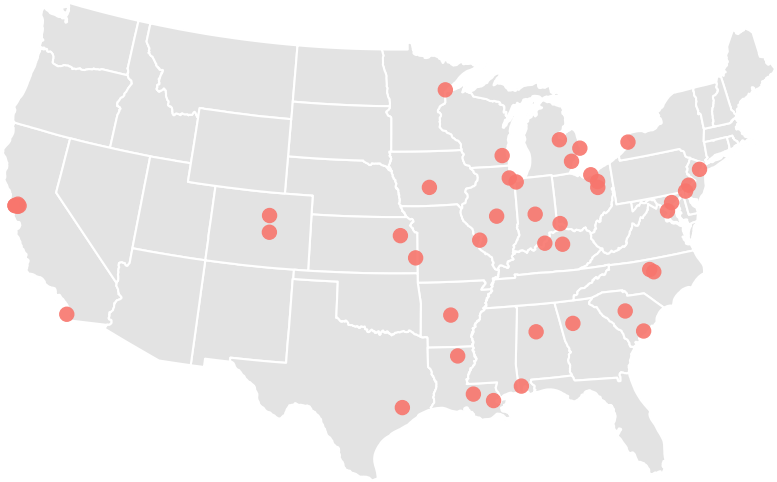
Name of Branch Birmingham Branch Date February 6, 1936

The following members have been enrolled since our last report on (date) ----------

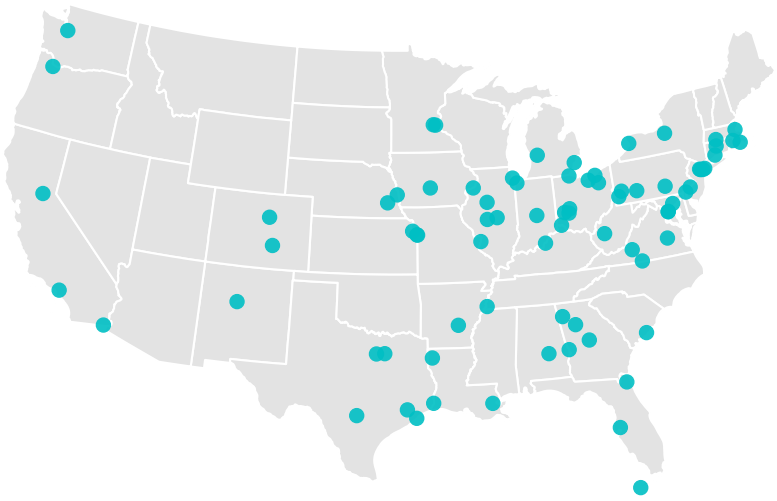
	NAME	ADDRESS	Paid by Member	Retained by Branch	To National Office Herewith
1	Mr. John M. Coar	818 Williams Street	1 00	50	50
2	Mrs. John M. Coar	818 Williams St.	1 00	50	50
3	Mr. B. J. Hemur	3283 N. 18th St.	1 00	50	50
4	Mr. E. W. Thompson	Pittsview, Alabama.	1 00	50	50
5	Mrs. O. B. Howe	204 N. 6th Avenue	1 00	50	50
6	Mrs. I. G. Blaylock	204 N. 9th Avenue	1 00	50	50
7	Mr. L. E. Harris	516 N. 4th Court	1 00	50	50
8	Mr. Gesner Clark	2529 N. 16th St	1 00	50	50
9	Mr. S. M. Martin	1015 N. 16th St.	1 00	50	50
10	Mrs. M. L. M. Hooks	1530 N. 6th Avenue	1 00	50	50
11	Mr. Richard M. Neely, Jr.	316 N. 10th Avenue	1 00	50	50
12	Mr. E. F. McCarroll	800 N.12th Avenue	1 00	50	50
13	Mr. Wm. Haygood	Sta.B'ham 5504 Ave. I, Vinesville, Ala.	1 00	50	50
14	Rev. S. S. Washington	530 N. 14th St.	1 00	50	50
15	Miss Panzy Holloway	506 So. 15th St.	1 00	50	50
16	Mr. C. Bernard Nichols	1201 N. 9th St	1 00	50	50
17	Mrs. S. A. Hunt	804 Dillard Avenue	1 00	50	50
18	Rev. M. Thornton	1111 N. 7th Avenue	1 00	50	50
19	Miss Alma Robanson	424 So. 1st St.	1 00	50	50
20	Mr. P. S. Westry	1808 Ave. K., Ensley, Ala	1 00	50	50
21	W. T. Woods, G. M.	P. O. Box 377,	1 00	50	50
22	Mr. Luther B. Hill	715 N. 29th St.	1 00	50	50
23	Rev. L. A. Smith	2726 -6th Ave., Bessemer, Ala.	1 00	50	50
24	Mr. Benjamin W. Austin	Dunbar High Sch., Bessemer, Ala	1 00	50	50
25	Miss Ulaine Verner	Dunbar High Sch. Bessemer, Ala	1 00	50	50
			25 00	12 50	1250

(Make report out in duplicate, using typewriter and carbon paper if possible, keeping duplicate copy for your files) (See other side)

Figure A2: Example NAACP Roster



(a) Branch locations from NAACP rosters



(b) Branch locations from Estrada and Gregory (n.d.)

Figure A3: Locations of NAACP Branches

Notes: In Panel (a), only branch locations with at least 100 records are shown. In Panel (b), only branches with at least 100 members in any year before 1941 are shown.

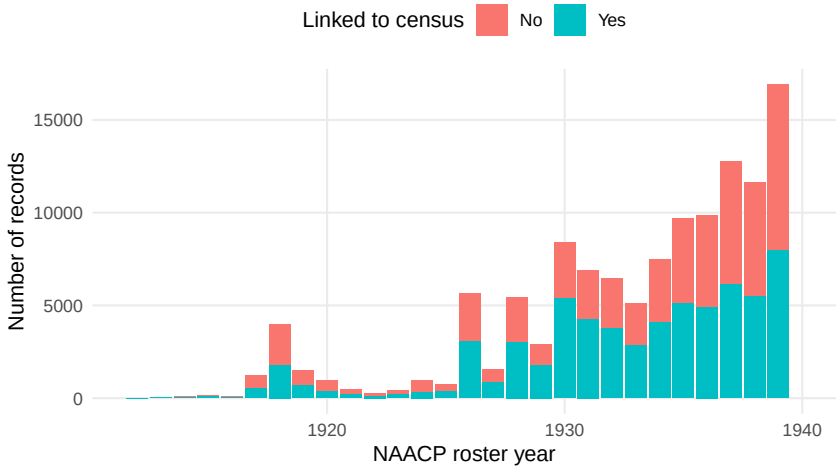


Figure A4: Number of NAACP Records by Year

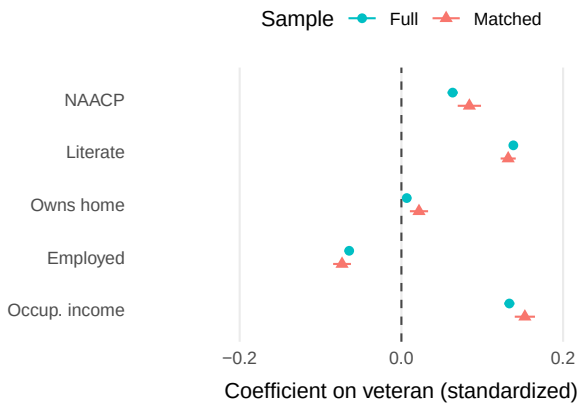


Figure A5: Matched vs. Unmatched Samples: Relationship between Veteran Status and 1930 Outcomes

Notes: Figure shows OLS estimates of the relationship between veteran status and various outcomes in the 1930 census. Outcomes are standardized, but the regressions do not include controls. The "full" sample includes all Black men born between 1886 and 1896, while the "matched" sample includes only those linked to a draft card.

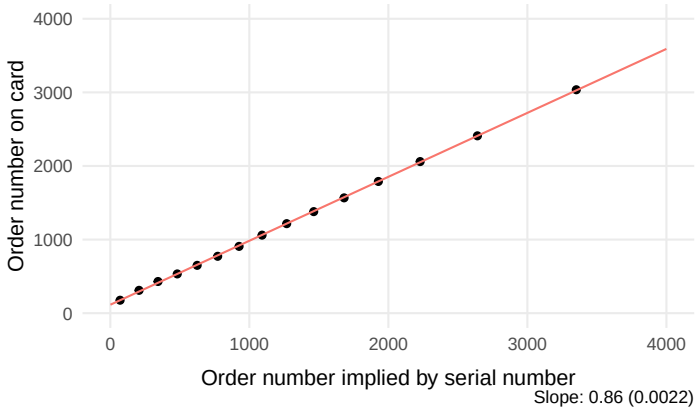


Figure A6: Order Number on Cards and Order Number Predicted from Serial Number

Notes: Figure is a binned scatter plot showing the relationship between the local order number written on the draft cards and the local order number that we predict using the serial number written on the draft cards.

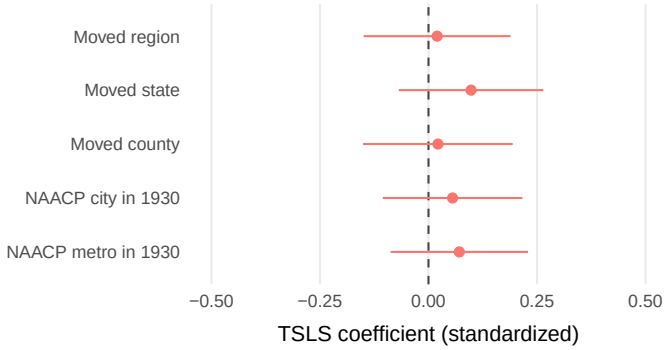


Figure A7: Effects on Registrant Migration

Notes: Figure shows TSLS estimates of the effect of military service on migration. The outcomes are indicators for whether the registrant: 1) lived in a different census region in 1917 and 1930, 2) lived in a different state in 1917 and 1930, 3) lived in a different county in 1917 and 1930, 4) lived in a city with an NAACP chapter in 1930 and 5) lived in a metropolitan area with an NAACP chapter in 1930.

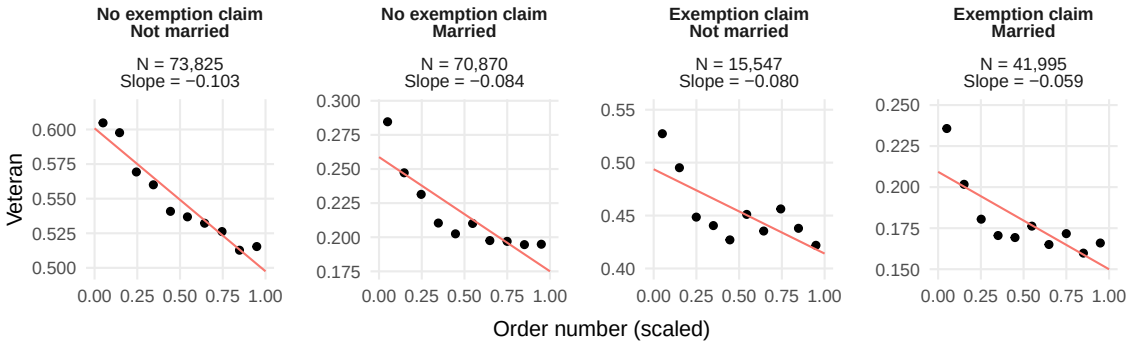


Figure A8: First-Stage Relationship By Registrant Type

Notes: Figure shows binned scatter plots of the first-stage relationship between veteran status and (scaled) order number separately for each of the four cells defined by exemption claim and marital status.

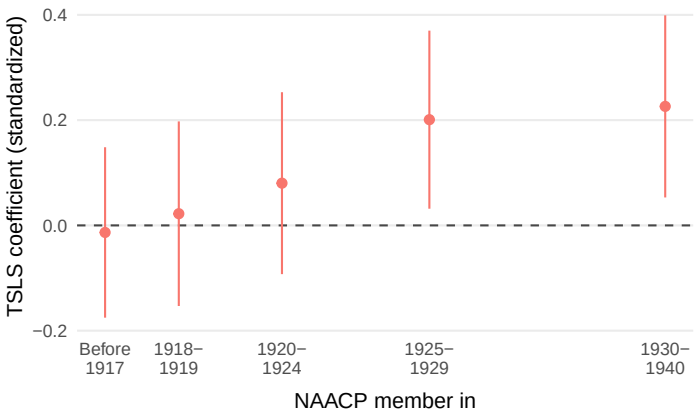


Figure A9: Effect of Military Service on Year of Membership in NAACP – TSLS Results

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card and the outcome is an indicator variable that is 1 if the individual appeared in the NAACP rosters within the indicated years. Each of these outcome variables is standardized. An individual is considered to be in the NAACP in year y if the earliest year they are observed in the rosters is $\leq y$ and the last year they are observed in the rosters is $\geq y$. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

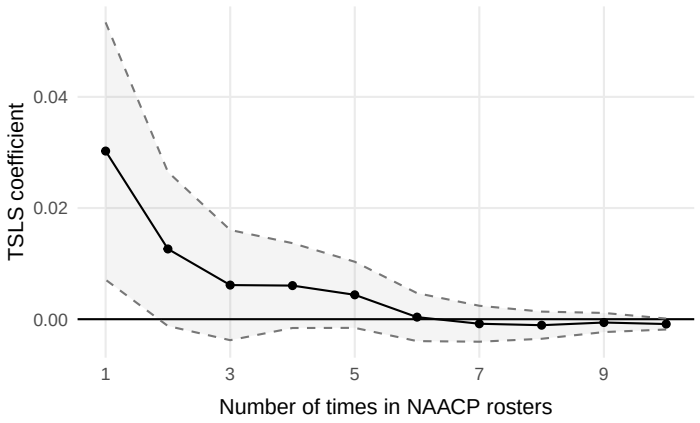


Figure A10: Effect of Military Service on Number of Times in NAACP Rosters – TSLS Results

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card and the outcome is an indicator variable that is 1 if the individual appeared in the NAACP rosters $\geq N$ times. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Shaded region is a 95% confidence interval.

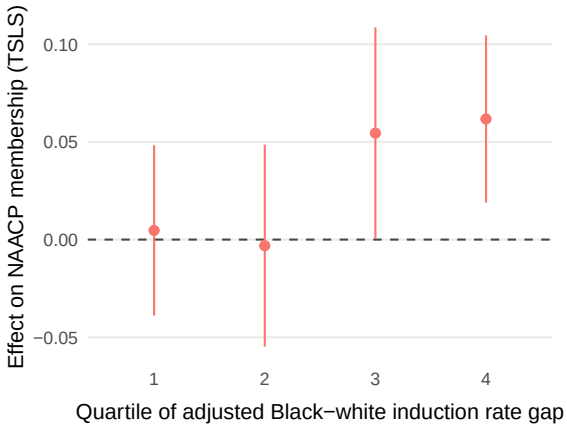


Figure A11: Heterogeneity by Board Discrimination – Adjusted for Marriage and Occupation

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft card. Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants. These rates are adjusted to account for the county-level Black-white difference in marriage and agricultural employment (farmers and farm laborers) in the 1920 census. Quartiles are defined at the card level according to the difference in Black and white induction rates at each registrant's board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

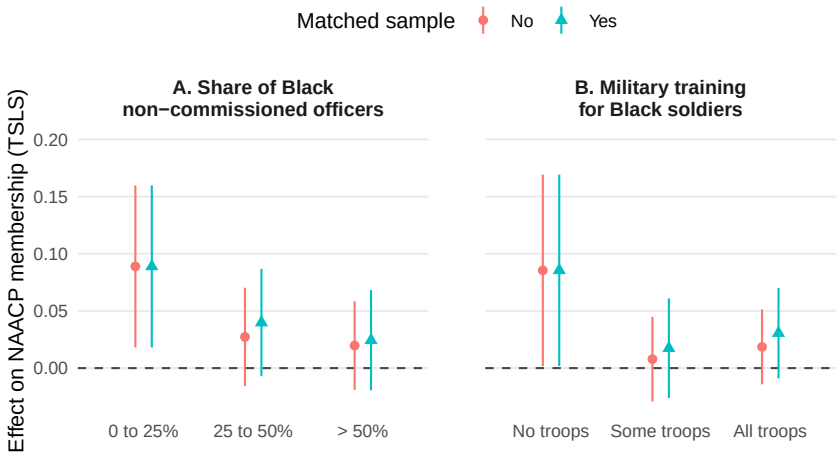


Figure A12: Heterogeneity by Camp Discrimination – Matched Samples

Notes: Figure shows coefficients from separate TSLS regressions using matched samples. For each registrant assigned to the most discriminatory camps (i.e. camps with 0-25% Black officer share and camps where no Black troops received training), we select all registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps of the same age quintile, marital status, occupation, exemption claim, and quartile of the Black-white difference in board induction rate. Observations are weighted by one over the number of matches to maintain sample balance on match characteristics. Share of Black non-commissioned officers and share of Black soldiers that received training in each camp are derived from reports on "Negro Subversion" produced by the Military Intelligence Division; see Section 5.1 for more details. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

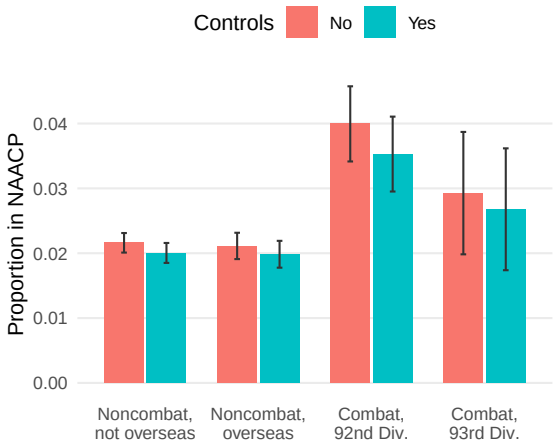


Figure A13: NAACP Membership by French Exposure – Adjusted for Card Characteristics

Notes: Figure shows the raw and adjusted NAACP membership rates in four mutually exclusive groups of draft cards corresponding to Figure 9. Adjusted estimates are coefficients from an OLS regression of an indicator for NAACP membership on an indicator for each type of military experience controlling for age, the interaction of exemption claim and marital status, and prewar occupation, added to the control means for each group. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

Table A1: Summary Statistics for 1930 Census, Restricted Sample

	NAACP (1)	Not NAACP (2)
Age in 1930	38.63	38.42
	(3.03)	(2.97)
Employed	0.90	0.83
	(0.30)	(0.37)
Married in 1930	0.80	0.75
	(0.40)	(0.43)
Literate	0.98	0.92
	(0.16)	(0.27)
Occup. income	25.63	21.12
	(12.82)	(6.58)
Owns home	0.40	0.19
	(0.49)	(0.39)
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.09	0.05
	(0.29)	(0.23)
Veteran (Census)	0.27	0.20
	(0.44)	(0.40)
Veteran (Any)	0.30	0.23
	(0.46)	(0.42)
Observations	10,747	318,159

Notes: The sample is restricted to individuals born between 1886 and 1896, who were living as of the 1930 census in an area from which we obtained NAACP rosters. Veteran (VAMI/ATS) can only be equal to one for individuals in the census whom we link to a draft card (and subsequently to VAMI or ATS ship lists). Standard deviations in parentheses.

Table A2: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Matching Strategies

(a) $x = 0$

Tie-breaking	NAACP member			
	None	Prewar	+Veteran	+County
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0302**	0.0365***	0.0302***	0.0285***
	(0.0118)	(0.0116)	(0.0107)	(0.0103)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	202,237	239,835	248,997	257,609
R^2	0.038	0.028	0.031	0.032
First stage F-statistic	568.1	591.1	641.1	680.9
Match rate	0.244	0.290	0.301	0.311
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0158	0.0156	0.0154	0.0149
OLS coefficient	0.0036	0.0029	0.0032	0.0033
OLS t-statistic	5.32	4.74	5.30	5.58

(b) $x = 2$

Tie-breaking	NAACP member			
	None	Prewar	+Veteran	+County
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0387**	0.0291**	0.0287**	0.0280***
	(0.0155)	(0.0132)	(0.0117)	(0.0098)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	101,658	144,536	157,454	195,192
R^2	0.068	0.057	0.053	0.054
First stage F-statistic	422.9	553.5	644.5	751.4
Match rate	0.123	0.175	0.190	0.236
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0183	0.0192	0.0187	0.0149
OLS coefficient	0.0030	0.0034	0.0031	0.0032
OLS t-statistic	2.82	3.86	3.84	4.54

Notes: Tables report TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. In column (2), the "prewar" tie-breaking method includes middle initial and marital status. Column (3) additionally uses veteran status (which is recorded directly in the 1930 census and, for draft cards, is whether the card was matched to VAMI or the ATS lists). Column (4) additionally uses county of residence. Panel (a) reports estimates using the ABE $x = 0$ threshold, and Panel (b) uses the more conservative $x = 2$ threshold; see text for details. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A3: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Veteran Definitions

	NAACP member			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran (Baseline)	0.0302**			
	(0.0118)			
Veteran (Census)		0.0569**		
		(0.0224)		
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)			0.0292**	
			(0.0114)	
Veteran (Intersection)				0.0532**
				(0.0208)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	202,237	202,237	202,237	202,237
R^2	0.038	0.023	0.039	0.036
First stage F-statistic	568.1	187.8	775.8	389.4
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0158	0.0159	0.0166	0.0166
Mean veteran indicator	0.349	0.239	0.225	0.115
OLS coefficient	0.0036	0.0070	0.0024	0.0090
OLS t-statistic	5.21	9.17	2.96	7.29

Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A4: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Instruments

	NAACP member			
	Baseline	Order num.	Not scaled	Rank
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0302**	0.0359***	0.0298**	0.0310***
	(0.0118)	(0.0124)	(0.0143)	(0.0117)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	202,237	183,786	202,237	202,237
R^2	0.038	0.036	0.038	0.037
First stage F-statistic	568.1	474.3	7.51	570.4

Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual. In column (1), veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number predicted from his serial number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. In column (2), veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number as written on his draft card, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. In column (3), veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number predicted from his serial number (unscaled). In column (4), veteran status is instrumented with the rank of the individual's local order number (predicted from his serial number) among draft cards for Black men in his board, scaled by the total number of Black draft cards in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A5: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative First Stage Functional Form

	NAACP member			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0302**	0.0246**	0.0211**	0.0207**
	(0.0118)	(0.0109)	(0.0107)	(0.0104)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cubic polynomial		✓		
Nonparametric fit			✓	
Nonparametric × exemption claim × married				✓
Observations	202,237	202,237	202,237	202,237
R^2	0.038	0.041	0.042	0.042
Dependent variable mean	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018
First stage F-statistic	568.1	737.1	732.7	756.7

Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A6: Effect of Military Service on Community Leadership – Restricted Occupation Types

	Community leader			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0043**	0.0044**	0.0044**	0.0043**
	(0.0021)	(0.0020)	(0.0020)	(0.0020)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	827,255	827,255	827,255	827,255
R^2	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009
First stage F-statistic	1,803.7	1,803.7	1,803.7	1,803.7
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0013	0.0013	0.0012	0.0012
OLS coefficient	0.0007	0.0007	0.0007	0.0006
OLS t-statistic	5.46	5.44	5.51	5.32

Notes: Table reports TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's local order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Column (1) is the baseline estimate. Column (2) recodes the outcome variable as 0 for individuals who achieved prominence in sports. Column (3) additionally recodes the outcome as 0 for individuals who achieved prominence in arts. Column (4) additionally recodes the outcome as 0 for individuals who achieved prominence due to military experience. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

B Further details on linking

B.1 Linking NAACP records to the census

We retrieved and transcribed images of NAACP membership rosters from the ProQuest History Vault. These rosters take the form of standardized, (generally) type-written lists containing member names, exact home address, NAACP branch and year. In total, the rosters contain 233,517 observations across 227 branches from 1912 to 1942.

We first exclude rows that correspond to businesses or clubs and remove rows that likely correspond to female members. We determine that a row corresponds to a woman if (1) the name includes the title "Mrs." or "Miss" or (2) the first name is one of the 663 first names where, in the 1930 full-count census, there are more than 500 Black people with that first name and more than 90 percent of them are female. This leaves 122,368 rows in the NAACP rosters that are candidates to be linked to the census.

The 1930 census contains the most complete information about whether an individual was a veteran of WWI, so we first attempt to link the rosters directly to this census. However, since many of our NAACP rosters are from years close to 1940, we also attempt to link the NAACP rosters to the 1940 census, and then use a 1930 to 1940 crosswalk from the Census Linking Project (Abramitzky et al., 2020) to map these links back to the 1930 census.

Candidates in the census to be linked to the NAACP rosters are Black men living in the city or metropolitan area corresponding to a city for which we have NAACP rosters. This is 1,665,428 people in the 1930 census and 1,903,688 people in the 1940 census.

We follow a modified version of the ABE procedure to link the NAACP rosters to the census. We first standardize first names using a list of nicknames and common misspellings. We then block on city and first and last initial. A pair of records is a candidate link if (1) the Jaro-Winkler distances between the first names *and* last names are less than 0.2, or the first name as recorded in the NAACP records is only an initial *and* the Jaro-Winkler distance between last names is less than 0.2; AND (2) the year of the NAACP roster minus the birth year of the individual in the census implies that the individual would have been over 21 years old, the age restriction for joining the organization.[B1]

For each record, if there is at least one potential match within the *city* as recorded in the census (as opposed to the *metropolitan area*), then we drop all candidate matches outside the city. Then, we have 6 different match types:

1. There is only one candidate census match remaining.
2. There is ≥ 1 candidate census match remaining, and the sum of the Jaro-Winkler distance in first name and last name for the *second-best* match is at least 0.2 greater than this sum for the best match.
3. There is a unique census match after restricting the middle initials to be the same.
4. There is a unique census match after restricting the first and last names to be *exactly* the same.
5. There is a unique census match after restricting the first and last names and middle initials to be *exactly* the same.

[B1] In 1936, the age restriction was increased to 26 years old. However, individuals as young as 14 could join "junior" branches (Bynum, 2009).

Table B1: NAACP to Census Linking Rates By Method

	1930		1940		Combined	
Link type	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.
1	25,992	0.212	26,842	0.219	28,012	0.229
2	27,927	0.228	28,852	0.236	30,102	0.246
3	17,713	0.145	15,092	0.123	19,043	0.156
4	18,970	0.155	18,729	0.153	20,615	0.168
5	14,660	0.120	12,413	0.101	15,733	0.129
6	28,771	0.235	27,376	0.224	30,931	0.253
7	22,375	0.183	20,074	0.164	23,815	0.195
Any	63,596	0.520	61,946	0.506	69,119	0.565
Unique	31,912	0.261	30,854	0.252	34,701	0.284

Notes: See text for description of link types.

6. There is a unique census match after restricting the names of the streets in the NAACP rosters and in the census to have a Jaro-Winkler distance of less than 0.1.
7. There is a unique census match after restricting the names of the streets in the NAACP rosters and in the census to have a Jaro-Winkler distance of less than 0.1, AND restricting the address numbers to be exactly the same.

We link 63,596 NAACP records to the 1930 census and 61,946 to the 1940 census. Using the Census Linking Project to map the 1940 links to the 1930 census, combined, we link 69,119 rows to the 1930 census either directly or through the 1940 census.[B2] Since the NAACP records contain many duplicate rows for the same individual, this corresponds to 34,701 unique people in the 1930 census whom we identify as NAACP members. Table B1 shows linking rates by method and Table B2 shows linking rates by city.

B.2 Linking ATS lists to draft cards

The Army Transport Service (ATS) lists contain records of all people departing from and arriving at U.S. ports on Army ships during WWI. They include the residence address of the individual, and while they do not include information about race, they do include information about the military unit than an individual belonged to. As the military was racially segregated at this time, we can search for links only among individuals who served in Black units. This leaves 253,362 candidate rows in the ships lists to be linked to a draft card.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, address, county, and state. When the set of linking variables does not include middle name or initial, we drop any links where the middle initial is non-missing in both datasets and conflicts. We require that each ATS record be *uniquely* linked to a card. However, we do not require that each card have only one unique link to the ATS lists, since individuals could appear on the ATS lists multiple times (i.e., on departure from and return to the U.S.).

Overall, we successfully link 109,622, or 43.3% of eligible records from the ATS lists to 100,911 draft cards.

[B2] If a row is linked to two different individuals in the 1930 and 1940 censuses, we prioritize the direct link to the 1930 census.

Table B2: NAACP to Census Linking Rates By City

City	Num. rows	Row linkage rate	Num. unique links	Unique linkage rate
Overall	**122,368**	**0.565**	**34,701**	**0.284**
Detroit	14,269	0.529	4,338	0.304
Washington	13,833	0.605	3,786	0.274
Chicago	9,320	0.614	3,313	0.355
Baltimore	7,997	0.580	2,188	0.274
New York	6,982	0.563	1,698	0.243
St. Louis	6,945	0.577	1,838	0.265
Cleveland	6,543	0.566	1,805	0.276
Philadelphia	5,825	0.631	1,829	0.314
Atlanta	5,222	0.515	1,043	0.200
New Orleans	4,646	0.542	1,407	0.303
Louisville	4,561	0.592	1,282	0.281
Cincinnati	3,783	0.554	865	0.229
Houston	3,737	0.524	1,321	0.353
Birmingham	3,470	0.582	1,143	0.329
Indianapolis	3,156	0.598	1,059	0.336
Denver	2,503	0.515	524	0.209
Des Moines	1,770	0.462	343	0.194
Akron	1,637	0.477	439	0.268
San Francisco	1,433	0.589	380	0.265
Duluth	1,391	0.217	87	0.063
Gary	1,316	0.578	535	0.407
Northern CA	1,263	0.605	410	0.325
Charleston	1,150	0.641	339	0.295
Mobile	1,123	0.601	357	0.318
Baton Rouge	1,107	0.506	214	0.193
San Diego	845	0.541	196	0.232
Buffalo	734	0.590	260	0.354
Monroe	728	0.556	158	0.217
Columbia	657	0.667	233	0.355
Little Rock	596	0.574	212	0.356

Notes: Table displays overall linking rates and branch-specific information for the 30 branches with the most records.

B.3 Linking draft cards to VAMI

The Veterans Administration Master Index (VAMI) contains records for veterans who served during WWI and who made (or whose descendants made) pension or benefits claims from the Veterans Administration between 1917 and 1940. It does not include the race of the veteran; however, it does have their exact date of birth and residence place. We first use exact name and date of birth to merge VAMI with NUMIDENT, which has race information, but with very poor coverage for these birth cohorts. We match 127,099 individuals, which we use to drop 25,640 non-Black individuals, leaving 3,202,013 VAMI candidates for linking to a draft card.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, birth date, county, and state. When the set of linking variables does not include exact birth date, we enforce that candidate links must have a difference in birth year of no more than 2 years. We do *not* require that a card be uniquely matched to a VAMI record, since we use the existence of *any* link as a source of information about whether an individual was a veteran. However, in practice, 98.6 percent of linked cards are linked to a unique VAMI record. For each card, we prioritize the link with the lowest link type.

Overall, we successfully link 120,412, or 13.0% of cards to VAMI. Note that we would not expect to obtain a link for any individuals who completed a draft card but did not join the military.

B.4 Linking draft cards to the census

To link the draft cards to the 1930 census, we first drop any card for which we are not able to assign a local order number (i.e. cards with missing serial numbers). We further restrict the set of candidate cards to individuals with a reported birth year between 1880 and 1900, inclusive.[B3] This leaves 861,953 cards. Candidates in the 1930 census to be matched to a card are the 1,621,374 Black men born between 1880 and 1900, inclusive.

Following ABE, we block on birth state, first initial, and last initial, and drop pairs with a birth year difference of more than five years. We restrict candidate links to pairs where the Jaro-Winkler distance between last names is less than 0.15 and either (1) the Jaro-Winkler distance between first names is less than 0.15, (2) either of the first names is an initial, or (3) the standardized first names match exactly.

Our baseline linking method is the standard ABE procedure, i.e. we drop any pairs with a birth year difference more than x years greater than the minimum birth year difference, and keep only links where each card is linked to exactly one census record and each census record is linked to exactly one card. We use the two thresholds suggested by ABE, $x = 0$ and $x = 2$, corresponding to less conservative and more conservative procedures. We drop any links with birth years more than two years apart. This constitutes the "standard" ABE procedure and results in a linking rate of 24.4 percent for the $x = 0$ threshold and 12.3 percent for $x = 2$.

In robustness analysis, we also modify the ABE procedure by constructing a series of tie-breaking rules as follows:

1. *Middle initial:* A card is matched to exactly one census row where the card and census row both have non-missing middle initials that agree, and the census row is likewise uniquely matched to that card.
2. *Marital status:* A card is matched to exactly one census row where the card and census row both indicate that the person was either married or unmarried before 1917, and the census row is likewise uniquely matched to that card. For the cards, marital status is measured

[B3] This also drops cards with no reported birth year.

Table B3: Cards to Census Linking Rates by Method

	$x = 0$		$x = 2$	
Link type	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.
Standard	210,637	0.244	105,830	0.123
Middle initial tie-breaker	216,608	0.251	120,928	0.140
Marital status tie-breaker	246,059	0.285	138,365	0.161
Middle initial + marital	249,785	0.290	150,456	0.175
Veteran status tie-breaker	234,425	0.272	130,412	0.151
County tie-breaker	231,184	0.268	165,005	0.191
All tie-breakers	268,369	0.311	203,272	0.236

Notes: The number of linked cards for the various tie-breaking methods include links made according to the standard method. See text for description of link types.

contemporaneously; for the 1930 census, we use birth year combined with age of first marriage to determine whether the individual was married before 1917.

3. *Veteran status:* A card is matched to exactly one census row where the card and census row both indicate that the person is either a veteran or non-veteran, and the census row is likewise uniquely matched to that card. Information on veteran status for the cards is derived from whether the card is matched to the ATS lists or to VAMI, and information on veteran status for the census is derived directly from the census data.

4. *County:* A card is matched to exactly one census row where the card and census row both are from the same county, and the census row is likewise uniquely matched to that card. The county in the cards refers to the individual's residence in 1917, and the county in the census refers to the individual's residence in 1930.

Table B3 shows the linking rates using these methods.

B.5 Linking AANB/AABD to draft cards

We combine two compendia of Black community leaders – the African American National Biography (AANB) and the ProQuest African American Biographical Database (AABD) – and attempt to link individuals in these databases to draft cards. The candidate AANB/AABD (henceforth AA) records to be linked, if they have non-missing birth year information, must have been born between 1880 and 1900. They additionally must have either non-missing birth year or birth state. This leaves 5,072 candidate AA records for linking; 94.0% have non-missing birth state and 65.1% have a birth year.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, birth date, and birth state. When the set of linking variables does not include birth year, but the variable is non-missing, we enforce that candidate links must have a difference in birth year of no more than 3 years. We additionally require that middle initials and birth state, when non-missing, do not conflict. Finally, we require that for each linking method, links are unique: one card can be matched with at most one AA record and vice versa. For each card, we we prioritize the link with the lowest link type. Overall, we successfully link 1,415, or 27.9% of AA entries to a draft card.

B.6 Linking officer candidates to NAACP rosters and AANB/AABD

The data on officer candidates contains contemporaneous location (as of 1917) for 820 individuals and birth state for 711 individuals. We attempt to link the 848 people with non-missing information for one or both of these fields to NAACP rosters and the AANB/AABD databases.

To identify NAACP membership, we first try to link the 820 people with non-missing location directly to the NAACP rosters on first name, last name, and location.[B4] We successfully identify 93 individuals, or 11.3%, in the NAACP records in this way. Then, we try to link the 711 people with non-missing birth state to the 1930 census on first name, last name, and birth state. We successfully link 302, or 42.5% of individuals to the 1930 census. Of these, 65 are linked to NAACP records. Combining these two methods leaves 135 officer candidates, or 15.9% of those eligible to be linked, whom we identify as NAACP members.

Given the much smaller number of AANB/AABD entries, we instead hand-link to officer candidates using all available name and birth information. In total, we link 132 officer candidates to an AANB or AABD entry, comprising 15.5% of candidates with non-missing location information.

[B4] Specifically, we require that the NAACP roster city appear either in the individual's address or in their residence location.