

Memo of the Month



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farmers
Home
Administration

Washington
D.C.
20250

FmHA AN No. 3032 (1943-A)
June 24, 1994

SUBJECT: Policy on Identifying Socially Disadvantaged
Applicants (SDAs)

TO: State Directors, District Directors, and County
Supervisors, FmHA

ATTN: Farmer Programs Chiefs

PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:

The purpose of this Administration Notice (AN) is to provide guidance to clarify FmHA's policy on identifying socially disadvantaged applicants (SDAs). The intent of this AN is to assure that SDA target assistance is provided only to eligible ethnic minorities and women in accordance with current regulations.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:

No previous AN has been issued on this subject.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

In general, FmHA policy is to accept the race/national origin designation claimed by an applicant or borrower on an application.

However, male individuals who have identified themselves as white on previous application(s), and wish to participate in FmHA's SDA Farmers Program as American Indians or members of other minority groups, should provide adequate information to prove their ancestry to the County Supervisor.

Any questions concerning this policy should be referred to Wilbert Campbell Jr., Director, Emergency Designation Staff at (703) 305-2077.

MICHAEL V. DUNN
Administrator

Political Booknotes

Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War

James Kitfield

Simon and Schuster, \$25

By Gregg Easterbrook

A preponderance of analysis of the Persian Gulf War has focused on Norman Schwarzkopf: an important figure in that conflict, of course, but one who was utterly uninvolved in its actual fighting. Schwarzkopf experienced the Gulf War from an air-conditioned office building in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, not being present with any ground unit in combat. (This is standard for a theater commander; Eisenhower wasn't at D-Day, either.) The generals who actually prosecuted the war, such as Barry McCaffrey of the Army, leader of the unit that executed the "left hook" into Iraq, and Charles Horner, who ran the air campaign, have strangely gone unnoticed in the public eye.

Or maybe not so strangely, given how superficially the U.S. media continue to cover military affairs. Schwarzkopf became a press fixation because he looks like a general, says pithy things, and appeared at numerous press conferences in air-conditioned buildings, where he could be photographed conveniently. McCaffrey, on the other hand, had to be tracked down by reporters—a few did, to their credit—while Horner, whose looks suggest your high school wood shop teacher, appears so unlike the stereotype of a general that most journalists would have walked right past him in the hall. It's now almost four years after the war, and the public has heard in mind-numbing detail about the bickering among Schwarzkopf, Colin Powell, George Bush's senior staff, and Congress—but precious little about what actually happened to the men and women who fought.

Prodigal Soldiers is among the first books to cover this ground. It concerns the military careers of McCaffrey, Horner, former Tactical Air Command leader Wilbur Creech, former Army Chief of Staff Edward Meyer, and others either involved personally or by influence in the Persian Gulf fighting. By James Kitfield, a longtime military correspondent, *Prodigal Soldiers* is somewhat top-heavy: All its major subjects are flag-rank officers except for McCaffrey's son, Sean, who also fought in the Gulf. The grunts' view of the Gulf War remains to be written. Nevertheless, *Prodigal Soldiers* is a solid, admirable work and a welcome change from the big-deal, Washington-based approach to war reporting. Kitfield understands well that what happens in little-known training exercises, in military staff colleges and, most of all, in the personal combat experiences in the early careers of the soldiers who later become generals has far more effect on the ways in which war is fought than all White House statements, think-tank studies and similar Washington paperwork combined.

Kitfield relates, for example, McCaffrey's brush with death as a lieutenant in the early years of the Vietnam War. His squad was sent out with a battalion of Vietnamese paratroopers during the days when the official line was that the North Vietnamese were not an effective fighting force. Owing to this wishful thinking, McCaffrey's group was ordered much farther into opposition territory than good sense would dictate. They were surrounded by a larger force and, through a night's fighting during which bad weather prevented air support, more than a third of the American men died. When dawn came the survivors were horrified to discover that the North Vietnamese had not stolen off at first light—a common tactic for guerrillas—but remained in place and were being reinforced, mean-

ing they intended to press the attack and destroy the surrounded battalion.

McCaffrey was further chilled to discover the Vietnamese paratroopers around him removing their helmets and donning the ceremonial red berets of their unit. Their captain was forming up his battalion to charge the larger force, knowing this to be suicide. The captain told McCaffrey that death was now inevitable, so might as well come on their own terms. Already wounded, McCaffrey joined the mad charge, which was rescued from oblivion only when an Air Force "Magic Dragon" gunship floated down as if by sorcery from the low clouds and caught the North Vietnamese force immoderately crossing an open field in hopes of staging a slaughter. McCaffrey, whose recovery took months, learned several lessons—about the foolishness of underestimating an enemy for political reasons, about the fact that Third World nations can produce distressingly effective armies, and about overconfidence in air power that may not be on target when needed.

Next, Kitfield tells readers of Horner's early Vietnam experiences. Early in the bombing campaign, he and a small group of fighter pilots were sent on a special mission to attack a missile site. Planning was poor, rear-echelon officers assumed total success owing to the official line that the North Vietnamese were no threat, and for political reasons Horner's group was far too small and lightly armed for its own protection. Several of the fighters were shot down, the pilots killed or captured; Lyndon Johnson ended up on national television trying to rationalize a failed raid. Horner learned the basic military lesson of Vietnam: Either go strong or don't go at all.

After its Vietnam chapters, *Prodigal Soldiers* covers other formative events in the careers of the officers who ended up leading the U.S. army into Desert