

Army to look at promotion rates for black colonels

By SUSANE M. SCHAFER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The Army's promotion rate to colonel for white officers this year was about double that of blacks, a matter of "extreme concern" to Pentagon leaders, Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon said Thursday.

A lengthy study has been ordered of the files of all individuals concerned "to see if there were any differences in their assignments, their training, their mentoring ... that could explain this difference," the spokesman said.

The list, which came out in February, is the Army's pick of officers for its top jobs and leadership positions, and the group from which its generals will later be chosen.

Bacon did not have specific figures to offer for comparison with previous years, but he said this year there "was a much greater ... difference than has occurred in the past, in the recent past. So that's one of the reasons it stood out so

dramatically."

A preliminary look of the promotion system did not find any racial bias among those who took part in the board that chose the officers for promotion, Bacon said.

The process involves a highly confidential system in which an officer's records are used to judge candidates for promotion. The records include an official photo in uniform, the officer's list of assignments, evaluations, qualifications and educational history.

"We regarded this as an aberration in a military that works very hard to provide absolutely equal opportunity to everybody," Bacon said. "We regard it clearly as a matter of great concern, and it's one that we're working very hard, one, to understand, and two, to correct."

The spokesman said that there will be no changes in the current list due to the review. The review was undertaken, he said, "to make sure that there's not a pattern that begins very early in a soldier's career that might deny people of

some race the command opportunities or career opportunities that would be necessary conditions for their promotion."

Bacon was asked whether the Army had a goal of "equal opportunity or equal outcome."

"The goal is equal opportunity," the spokesman said. "But to have equal opportunity, you have to have it at every stage of the career. And what we want to make sure is that that, in fact, exists."

"If we find ... it is a question of changing assignments, if it's a question of changing training, if it's a question of the types of specialties that people go into and leads them more quickly to dead ends later in their career, we want to make sure that we understand what's happening and try to correct it," Bacon said.

For 1996, the last year for which figures were available, the Army had 9,293 black officers, or about 11.5 percent of the total. Blacks made up a much higher portion of the enlisted ranks, about 30 percent or some 122,600 soldiers in that same year.

Atlanta mulls cancellation of Freaknik

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Freaknik, the annual black college spring festival known for its traffic jams, sporadic looting and frisky flirting, may have worn out its welcome in Atlanta.

The committee that organized Freaknik '98 is urging Mayor Bill Campbell to withdraw city backing when the sprawling street party rolls around next year.

Television footage of sexual shenanigans during this year's Freaknik, held April 17-19, prompted the request. Mobs of men were shown grabbing, groping and practically disrobing women.

George Hawthorne, who heads the mayor's welcoming committee, said he pulled a woman from a swarm of 20 to 30 men who were trying to strip her.

"She had her underwear around her knees and her dress was up over her head," he said. "If it had not been for me intervening she would have potentially been raped in broad daylight."

Past Freaknik crowds reached 250,000. This year's event drew an estimated 50,000, police said. Atlanta's entire force of 1,500 officers was called in to work 12-hour shifts.

Four rapes, six sexual assaults and four shootings were reported

during the event. Police made 481 arrests, 45 for felonies.

Even some students say Freaknik has become a bit too unruly.

"I don't think it should come back anymore," said Ty Little, a senior at the University of Georgia. "If you're going to have it, have it somewhere else. It just gets too out of control."

Campbell tried to discourage the event until criticism from black leaders prompted him to for the welcoming committee in 1996. The city has since sponsored concerts and other events to help control the party.

Video broadcast last week on WSB-TV showed several women being chased by men who were grabbing the women's buttocks. One woman was seen flailing her arms to fight off a mob. Another fought to get away from men who lifted her dress as she was posing for a photograph.

If Atlanta cancels its annual Freaknik weekend, Daytona Beach could be overwhelmed during Black College Reunion, city leaders said.

"Obviously, if they cancel their weekend, they (students) would have no place to go but Daytona," Dean O'Brien, chairman of Daytona Beach's Black College Reunion Development Committee

said Wednesday. "I don't think we're ready to handle that."

Daytona Beach City Commissioner Charles Cherry expressed doubt Wednesday that a decision by Atlanta officials would eliminate crowds in that city since there are five black colleges there. But he said Daytona Beach would likely get out-of-state students who would normally go to Atlanta.

"Those college students coming into Atlanta from outside, however, will now come into Daytona," he said. "That certainly will swell the crowd (here)."

The Daytona Beach event began 14 years ago as an educational, social and cultural get-together for graduates of traditionally black colleges and universities.

In recent years, it has grown into a rolling, wall-to-wall gridlock party of more than 100,000 people along South Atlantic Avenue.

Daytona Beach Mayor Bud Asher has created a task force to review the future of Black College Reunion.

"It's disgusting and it's dangerous, but it's everywhere you have college students," said Sharita Trimuel, a senior at the University of Georgia. "Panama City Beach, Daytona Beach, Cocoa Beach - it's the same thing, only this time it's in the city."

African American teen dies near hospital when staff refuses to help

By LINDSEY TANNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - It might seem like the safest place to get shot would be outside a hospital emergency room. But it wasn't so for 15-year-old Christopher Sercye, hit by apparent gang gunfire while playing basketball in an alley just steps from Ravenswood Hospital.

His friends and a frantic neighbor sought help from hospital workers, but they said policy barred them from treating people outside. Frustrated policemen, who called an ambulance and also sought help inside, finally brought the boy in, nearly half an hour he was shot, but it was too late.

A bullet had perforated Christopher's aorta and he died about an hour after the shooting. "It's a ridiculous policy," James A. Maurer, deputy chief of patrol

for the police district that includes the hospital, said Monday. "They don't leave the campus? What's that? They're standing out there having a smoke when the kid is in the alley bleeding."

Late Monday, John E. Blair, president and chief executive officer of Ravenswood Hospital, rescinded the policy that had prevented emergency room personnel from going outside to treat the youth.

"I have instructed my staff to provide treatment to anyone who needs it in the immediate vicinity of the hospital when they are no paramedics or medical technicians available," Blair said in a written statement.

"Above all, I want to make sure that if a tragedy like this ever occurs again, we have a different result."

Blair said in an interview that

he decided to change the policy after talking with workers.

"I meet with emergency room personnel, many of the folks who were on that evening," he said. "They were saddened by the event, concerned about their own inability to administer medical treatment under the circumstances."

Blair said the 90-year-old hospital handles 27,000 emergency room patients a year.

"I had never seen anything like this in my 30-year career," he said.

Blair had said earlier Monday that the hospital is not a trauma center equipped to handle cases like Christopher's and staffers do not leave their duties to treat people outside.

Blair said the hospital planned to check with the city of Chicago on the number of calls made to 911. Authorities were reviewing reports that friends, police and

hospital staffers all called 911 before an ambulance finally arrived as the boy was being taken inside the emergency room.

Maurer said police did not bring Christopher in immediately because they are trained to not move seriously injured people, but to wait for paramedics.

"We can't pick him up and carry him. What if the bullet moves?" Maurer said.

Finally, Maurer said, an officer concerned about the teen's condition commandeered a wheelchair and brought Christopher inside the emergency room.

Ravenswood staffers "probably would have been helpful to go out and see what they could have done for this patient," said Dr. Edmund Donoghue, Cook County's medical examiner.

To have survived, Christopher would have needed an immediate

operation to repair his aorta, Donoghue said.

But, he added, there's no way of knowing whether Christopher could have survived had he received immediate treatment from Ravenswood doctors. And Donoghue noted that under Chicago's trauma response system - prompted by the 1984 fatal shooting of high school basketball star Ben Wilson - Christopher would have been taken to the nearest trauma center, about two miles away, had an ambulance arrived before he was taken inside Ravenswood.

Criticism erupted after the 1984 shooting because Wilson was taken to the nearest hospital, instead of a more sophisticated facility that some said could have provided better treatment.

Hospital spokeswoman Milli Striegl said Christopher "went into

cardiac arrest at the hospital. Everything was done to resuscitate him but unfortunately all attempts were unsuccessful."

A Fire Department spokesman denied any delay in dispatching an ambulance, saying that one arrived at the scene just four minutes after the department learned of the shooting.

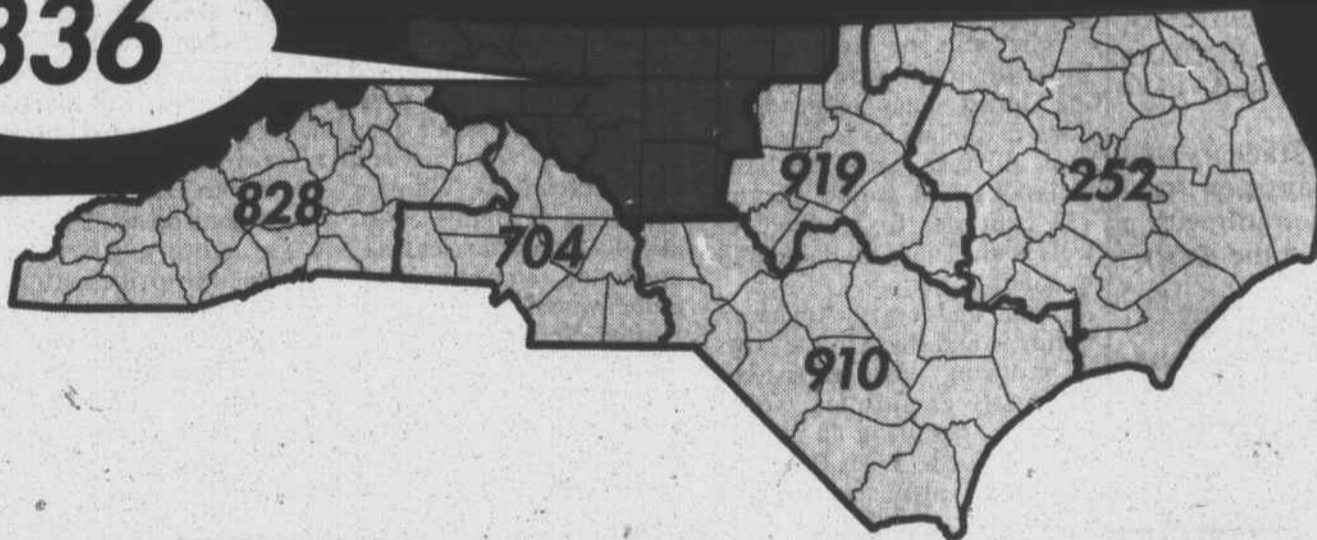
Three teens who prosecutors said have gang affiliations were charged with first-degree murder in the shooting. Christopher was described as an innocent bystander who was not the intended target.

Amidst all the finger-pointing, neighbor Donna Dudley just shook her head.

"If we cannot be responsible as human beings to help each other, it's a shame," she said. "Nobody should have to lie in an alley dying next to a hospital."

North Carolina's area code in the Triad area is now 336.

336



North Carolina is growing, with lots of new residences and businesses, increasing the demand for fax machines, computer modems, and phones.

To accommodate this growth, the Triad and surrounding area has a new area code. As of June 15, 1998, you must use the new area code, 336, instead of 910 for calls to and within the highlighted area.

If you live in the Triad area and your phone number begins with any of the prefixes listed at right, your area code will change.

Please make a note of this change and remember that you may also need to reprogram telecommunications equipment like cell phones and PBX's (consult your vendor), speed dialers, fax machines, etc., to make sure your calls reach the residence or business you want them to reach.

Local numbers and rates will not be affected by the change. If you have any questions about area code 336, please call us at 1 800 964-7941. Or visit us at www.bellsouth.com/areacode for more information.

202	241	288	342	377	416	475	537	580	631	672	712	744	775	810	861	906	956
206	242	292	344	378	418	476	538	581	632	674	713	745	776	812	869	908	957
207	243	294	345	379	420	478	541	584	633	676	714	746	777	813	870	909	961
208	246	297	348	380	421	492	542	585	634	679	715	747	778	816	871	913	963
209	248	299	349	381	422	495	543	586	635	680	716	748	779	817	873	917	969
210	249	301	351	382	430	498	544	591	636	681	717	749	781	819	874	918	970
212	250	302	352	384	431	499	545	593	637	682	718	750	782	821	877	920	971
213	257	312	356	385	434	502	546	595	638	683	719	751	783	824	878	921	972
214	258	314	357	386	441	503	547	597	643	684	720	752	784	830	879	922	973
218	260	315	359	387	446	504	548	598	644	685	721	757	785	832	880	923	977
221	261	316	361	388	447	505	549	599	650	687	722	758	786	835	881	924	978
222	263	317	362	393	448	506	550	601	651	688	723	759	787	837	882	927	981
224	264	318	363	401	449	507	553	605	656	689	724	760	788	838	883	931	982
225	266	319	364	402	454	508	554	606	657	691	725	761	789	841	884	932	983
226	269	320	365	403	460	510	556	607	658	694	726	764	795	847	885	936	984
227	271	321	366	404	461	513	558	613	659	696	727	765	797	849	886	939	985
228	272	325	367	406	463	514	559	616	660	697	728	766	798	851	887	940	992
229	273	332	368	407	465	516	562	621	661	698	729	767	801	852	888	941	993
230	274	333	370	408	466	519	565	622	663	699	730	768	802	853	889	943	994
234	275	334	372	409	467	526	566	623	664	705	731	769	803	854	896	945	996
237	279	335	373	410	468	527	570	625	665	706	732	770	805	855	898	946	998
238	282	337	374	412	469	534	573	626	667	707	733	771	806	856	902	951	
239	284	338	375	413	472	535	574	627	668	708	735	773	808	857	903	953	
240	286	339	376	414	474	536	578	629	670	710	741	774	809	859	905	954	

The prefixes indicated in plain text changed to the 336 area code on December 15, 1997. The cellular prefixes indicated in bold will not change until December 15, 1999, as ordered by the North Carolina Utilities Commission. BellSouth customers may place calls to these cellular prefixes using either the 910 or 336 area codes from December 15, 1997 through December 15, 1999. After December 15, 1999, the area code for these cellular prefixes will be 336.

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