

the "wings" of Jesse L. Brown, the first Black naval aviator. (Ensign Brown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal for bravery during the Korean conflict and is one of three Black Navy Americans for whom ships are named.)

Of the many equal opportunity initiative pursued by the Navy in recent years, resulting from civil rights acts, laws and executive orders regarding desegregation, the Navy's Affirmative Action Plan of 1976 has been called the most comprehensive and substantive program for furthering equal opportunity for everyone in the Navy. This includes an overall recruiting objective of a minimum twelve percent Black enlisted, plus over six percent other minorities.

One of the best examples of the transition from the old Navy to the new in terms of opportunity for upward mobility, plus professional and personal growth can be seen in the father and son team of the Fred E. Bonner family, from Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

The elder Bonner, a radioman master chief petty officer, (the Navy's top enlisted rate) who joined the Navy a quarter of a century ago and now is serving on board the nuclear attack submarine USS Barb, never thought he would see the day that his son,

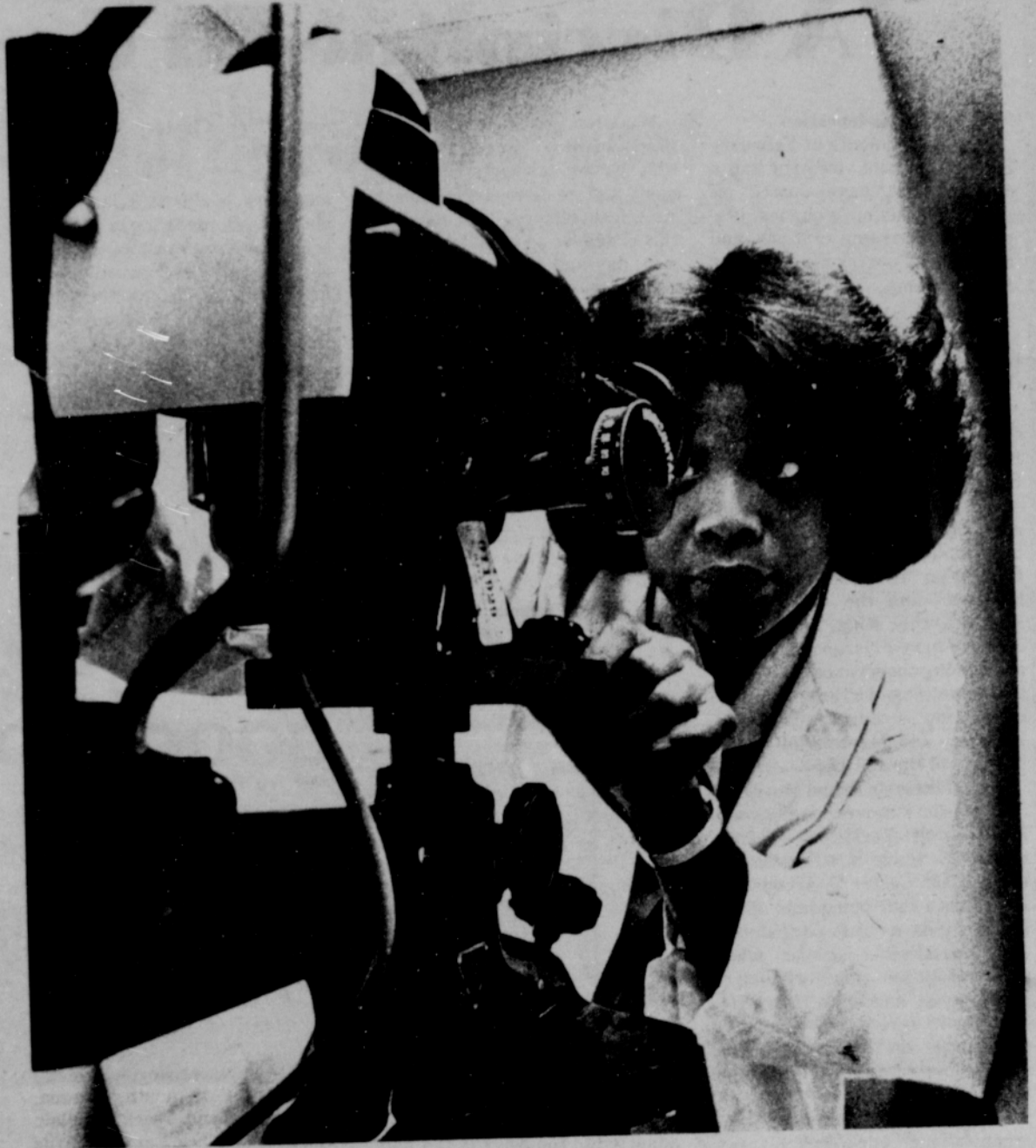
Derek, would graduate with 58 other Blacks from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1977.

"I was recruited for the steward program originally in Mississippi, but that was thrown aside when I got to boot camp and I competed with others," said the 42-year-old chief-of-the-boat. "But I was not the main inspiration for my son going to the Naval Academy."

Ensign Derek R. Bonner, 22, was temporarily assigned to Navy Recruiting District, San Diego, until January 1978, where he worked to recruit young high school students for college NROTC programs as well as the Naval Academy.

As Americans traditionally observe the achievements of Blacks in U.S. history during the month of February, one might wonder how many people are actually aware of the role that Blacks have played and continue to play in this era of the all volunteer Armed Forces and the freedom of our nation.

In the words of Admiral James L. Holloway III, chief of naval operations, "Black history month is more than the observance of a race and their upward struggle to gain their rightful place in society. It is a time for all Americans to become more fully aware of the individual deeds and achievements of Blacks."



Lt. (jg) Doris Forte: a first in the Navy medical field

Portland Public Schools and the Portland School Board join in saluting **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**



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