

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,

New Orleans, July 11, 1864.

GENERAL ORDERS }
No. 88. }

I. The subjoined General Order and instructions from the Headquarters Military Division of the West Mississippi, are republished for the information of those concerned.

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY DIV. OF THE WEST MISSISSIPPI,

New Orleans, La., July 7, 1864.

GENERAL ORDERS }
No. 17. }

The colored regiments of the Corps d'Afrique in the Department of the Gulf will be consolidated and reorganized as follows :

- The 73d to be formed by consolidation with the 75th and 83d.
- The 74th " " with the 91st.
- The 75th " " of the 79th, 84th and 92d.
- The 76th " " with the 78th.
- The 77th " " of the 81st, 88th and 89th.
- The 78th " " of the 82d and 86th.
- The 79th " " of the 80th and 93d.
- The 80th " " of the 90th, 96th and 98th.
- The 81st " " of the 87th and 95th.
- The 82d " " of the 97th and 99th.

The last three regiments are constituted Engineer troops.

The 73d and 75th Regiments will be organized at Morganzia ; the 74th at Forts Pike and Macomb, and Ship Island ; the 76th and 77th at

Port Hudson ; the 78th at Pensacola ; the 79th, 80th and 82d at New Orleans, and the 81st at Brazos Santiago.

The regiments of the old organizations that are now absent from the points at which the new regiments, of which they will form a part, are to be organized, will be concentrated at those points with as little delay as possible, and will be replaced, at the stations from which they are withdrawn, by colored troops not included in the original organization of the Corps d'Afrique. All recruiting and other detached parties belonging to the above named regiments, will also be sent to the points indicated without delay.

The organization of the consolidated regiments will be the maximum prescribed by law. The officers to be retained will be determined by the reports of the Examining Boards appointed for that purpose, and the supernumerary officers mustered out of service.

The Examining Boards will examine by grades, and, in order that a just and proper selection may be made, will not only determine the fitness of the officer for the grade for which he has been examined, but also the order of precedence in that grade. Supernumerary officers, who are approved by the Boards, will be recommended to the Adjutant General of the Army for appointment in regiments that are now being organized in other Departments.

BY ORDER OF MAJOR GENERAL E. R. S. CANBY :

C. T. CHRISTENSEN,
Major Assistant Adjutant General.

The following instructions are contained in letters from Headquarters Military Division of the West Mississippi :

"The enlisted men of the 77th Regiment, Corps d'Afrique, (old organization) now stationed at Fort Jackson, will be transferred to those of the new organizations in which vacancies may exist. The officers will be examined in the same manner as the other officers of the Corps d'Afrique."

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"Boards will be convened at Morganzia, Port Hudson, Pensacola, Ship Island, Brazos Santiago and New Orleans. The Board to be convened

at Ship Island to proceed first to Forts Pike and MaComb, for the purpose of examining the officers at those posts. * * * An Inspector and a Mustering Officer will also be appointed at every point where Boards are convened, who shall make it their special duty to see that the transfers are made with the greatest care, and that the status of the pay and clothing accounts and the general military history of the men is carefully noted on the muster-rolls and on the records of the new organizations, to prevent the possibility of any trouble in future settlement of accounts. Extra copies of the rolls will be forwarded through Department Headquarters to these Headquarters."

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"The Boards of Officers, ordered to be convened from Headquarters Department of the Gulf, for the examination of Officers in Regiments of Colored Troops, will be governed by the following rules :

1. The Boards will sit every day, Sunday excepted, from 9 o'clock A. M., until 5 o'clock, P. M. The place of sitting to be provided by the Quartermaster's Department.
2. The Boards will make to the Assistant Adjutant General at these Headquarters, through Department Headquarters, for record, reports of all persons examined, whether approved or rejected; the reports will be made weekly, or oftener, when specially called for.
3. The Boards shall specify for what grades of Commission the several applicants are fit, and shall also classify and number them, according to merit or proficiency.
4. The Report of the Boards, if adverse, shall be final and no person rejected by them, shall be re-examined.
5. Each applicant will be examined as to his capacity and fitness for the correct and efficient discharge of the duties of an officer, physical, moral and mental.
6. Under the first, as regards age, present state of healthfulness soundness of vision and hearing, freedom from organic disease, and capacity of bearing fatigue and exposure.
7. Under the second, as to habits past and present with full and distinct evidence of loyalty to the United States and trust-worthiness, for employment in their service.

8. All candidates for positions in the *Infantry* under the rank of Major, after fulfilling the requirements of Articles 6 and 7, must be examined and pronounced proficient in reading, writing, arithmetic and geography.

They must be thoroughly conversant with the Army Regulations, Articles of War and with tactics as far as the manna' of arms, bayonet exercise, school of the company, battalion and skirmishes, the duties of guards, sentinels, pickets and videttes, and the general duties of a picket officer ; also with the method of enlisting and discharging soldiers.

9. Candidates for promotion above the rank of Captain, must, in addition to what is required in paragraph 6, 7, and 8, be familiar with the different kinds and calibres of small arms used in the service, the Constitution and Articles of War and the practice of Courts Martial. They must be proficient in all the evolutions of the line, and be able to manœuvre brigades and divisions as well as regiments. A general knowledge of the interior economy or management of regiments, and of the duties of Adjutant, Quartermaster, Commissary and Ordnance Officer, will also be required.

10. All candidates for positions in the *Engineers* below the rank of Major, in addition to what is required for same rank in Infantry, must be proficient in Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, &c., Surveying, Linear and Topographical Drawing, the Elements of Civil Engineering, especially those which relate to building materials, and strength of materials, such as appertain to bridges, locks, dams, &c., the Elements of Field Fortifications, and manner of making reconnoissance and keeping journal of march. &c.: the different styles of pontoon bridges, their equipment, &c., and the manner of laying them down and taking them up ; the different styles of raft, flying bridges, etc.

11. For rank above Captain, in addition to what is required in Infantry and for Captain of Engineers, they must be proficient in elements of permanent fortifications, theory and practice of steam engines, general principles of architecture, familiar knowledge of all woods in general use, and general theoretical and practical knowledge of bridges, culverts, railroads, &c ; familiarity with military law, Kent's Commen-

taries and Thackery's Army Organization and Administration, will be required.

12. In the case of officers who have been but a short time in the army, and who show an aptitude for the military service, and a spirit and desire to learn and become good and efficient officers, the Boards are authorized to make special reports in their case, if they do not come up to the requirements of the preceding articles."

II. In accordance with the above, Examining Boards, Inspectors and Mustering Officers will be at once appointed from these Headquarters for Port Hudson and Morganzia.

Major General F. J. Herron, Commanding U. S. Forces Texas, will appoint a similar Board, with an Inspector and a Mustering Officer, for Brazos Santiago ; and Brigadier General T. W. Sherman, Commanding Defences of New Orleans, will make the proper appointments for the same purpose for New Orleans, Ship Island and Pensacola.

These Boards will enter upon their duties with the least possible delay.

All officers of the regiments to be consolidated now on detached duty, will at once report through the officers with whom they are serving to the proper Headquarters, to be ordered before that Board of Examiners which may be most convenient to their present station.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL BANKS :

GEORGE B. DRAKE,
Assistant Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL :

Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

