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HEAD QUARTERS, SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE ON COLORED  
ENLISTMENTS, NO. 1210 CHESTNUT STREET.

JUNE 27, 1863.

**MEN OF COLOR:—**

At length the opportunity is offered for which you have waited so long and so patiently. A gigantic contest, in which the interests of your race are so largely involved, threatens with destruction the land which for centuries has been your home. At the very commencement of the struggle, you eagerly offered your services. They were rejected for reasons which, whether well or ill founded, were all powerful at the time. Those reasons exist no longer, and your country now invites you to arms in her defence.

Men of color, we speak to you of your country, of the land where God in his mysterious providence has placed you to work out His inscrutable purposes. Yet you have been strangers in a land of strangers, and it is now for you to decide whether that land shall be to you and your children more in the future than it has been in the past. We can make no promises; but we have an abiding faith that the Almighty has not visited us with tribulation in wrath, but in mercy; that you and we, thus tried in the fiery furnace, if true to ourselves and to Him, shall emerge purified and redeemed from the sins and the wrongs of the past.

Twice heretofore have you displayed your valor in the defence of the Republic. In two wars with Great Britain your strong arms aided to beat back the foe, and Washington and Jackson acknowledged the services which you so willingly rendered. You failed in your reward then, but circumstances now have changed, and a war in which slavery on one side is arrayed against freedom on the other, cannot leave you in your present condition, if only you show yourselves equal to the occasion. Old prejudice declared that you could not fight. Your brethren in Louisiana and Mississippi, though degraded by ages of servitude, have gloriously replied to that taunt. You who have long been free are now called upon to respond to them. Prejudice still sneeringly asserts that you will not leave your homes to fight for the flag of the white man. It is for you to repel that taunt, and to show yourselves worthy to call that flag likewise your own.

It is true that even as soldiers, with equality of hardship and of danger, there is even yet inequality of reward. Your pay is not that of the white man, and you are offered no bounty by the Government. This, rightly considered, should be to you a fresh incentive. If, a year ago, this was all that could be secured by your friends, at a time when colored enlistments had rather to be suggested than openly advocated, it is for you to dispel the remaining mists of prejudice by showing in your alacrity that you are actuated, not by love of gain, but by the promptings of patriotism; that you are capable of noble ambition, and that no longer as a servile race, but as the soldiers of a free Republic, your deeds may prove that the laborer is worthy of his hire. We feel authorized to assure you that the Administration and a powerful portion of Congress will at the next session use their influence to remove such discrimination as to pay, not only in the future, but to make up to you all arrearages. Another Port Hudson fight will carry Congress by storm. Meanwhile our exertions shall be unremitting to raise funds, which, if they exceed what may be requisite for the necessary expenditures of enlistments and organization shall be devoted to your benefit.

The world will look with interest upon the mighty experiment in which we are engaged, in which a down trodden race is invited to prove its manhood. The nation is too deeply solicitous in the success of the experiment to neglect any means requisite for that success. You may therefore rely on the most careful forethought and attention. Your officers will be tried and experienced men, selected for the purpose by a special board of examiners, that you may not be carried into battle by incompetent leaders. Every opportunity will be afforded you that skill and science can suggest, and the destinies of your race will be left in your hands, to rise or to fall as you may approve yourselves.

An opportunity which has no parallel in history is now before you. Shrink from it now, and you justify the taunts and sneers of your enemies and oppressors. Take advantage of it; show yourselves to be men

and patriots, and a grateful country watching the flags of your regiments emerging triumphantly from the smoke of battle, cannot refuse the applause which is the due of valor contending for the right.

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