

arrival of my predecessor, Maj. G. L. Stearns, assistant adjutant-general, commissioner for organization U. S. colored troops in the Department of the Cumberland:

ARRIVAL.

Pursuant to orders from the War Department Major Stearns reported at the headquarters Department of the Cumberland in person to Major-General Rosecrans, commanding the department, near Trenton, Ga., on the 6th of September, 1863. General Rosecrans thereupon issued orders recognizing Major Stearns' position and work and assigning him to duty. (See Ext. VII, Special Field Orders, 243, headquarters Department of the Cumberland, 1863.) Major Stearns took post at Nashville, and upon the 20th of September, 1863, I was detailed to duty as mustering officer for colored troops, and directed to co-operate with Major Stearns in the organization of U. S. colored troops.

AT THE OUTSET.

Major Stearns, on reporting at Nashville to Governor Johnson, with whom he was ordered to co-operate, found that the raising of colored troops was, if not opposed, regarded with distrust and suspicion by influential loyal Tennesseans, and some time elapsed before harmonious relations were established between Major Stearns and these gentlemen. By the last of the month, however, the work began.

WHAT HAD BEEN DONE.

In July, 1863, General Rosecrans announced his policy of raising regiments of colored laborers and also made provisions for the proper treatment and payment of colored employes in the staff departments of the army and of officers' servants. (See General Orders, No. 172, headquarters Department of the Cumberland.) Under this policy an examining board had been constituted, before which had appeared a large number of officers and enlisted men. A tabular result of this board's examination is annexed.

One regiment had been raised—the present Twelfth U. S. Colored Troops, then named the Second Alabama. This regiment was largely composed of laborers upon fortifications about Nashville, the remnants of the large force impressed in the summer of 1862 for the service. It does not come within the province of this report to comment upon the treatment which this body of men while laborers received. Special reports upon this matter have been made to the War Department. It is sufficient to say that the change from the irregular and irresponsible treatment they received as laborers to that they had as soldiers was very grateful to them.

These men were mustered in by Capt. Howard E. Stansbury, U. S. Army, assistant commissary of musters for the department, who to a certain degree superintended the organization. A second regiment had been begun at Murfreesborough. Almost all of these men were, or had been, laborers in the staff departments at Clarksville, Gallatin, Murfreesborough, or other points.

SYSTEM OF RECRUITING.

Major Stearns brought with him several experienced recruiting agents, whose expenses, as well as those of an extraordinary character not allowed from the Government recruiting funds in raising troops,