



TO COLORED MEN!

FREEDOM, Protection, Pay, and a Call to Military Duty!

On the 1st day of January, 1863, the President of the United States proclaimed Freedom to over THREE MILLIONS OF SLAVES. This decree is to be enforced by all the power of the Nation. On the 21st of July last he issued the following order:

PROTECTION OF COLORED TROOPS.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, July 21.

General Order, No. 231.

The following order of the President is published for the information and government of all concerned:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 20.

"It is the duty of every Government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition, and especially to those who are duly organized as soldiers in the public service. The law of nations, and the usages and customs of war, as carried on by civilized powers, permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war as public enemies. To sell or enslave any captured person on account of his color, is a relapse into barbarism, and a crime against the civilization of the age.

"The Government of the United States will give the same protection to all its soldiers, and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession. It is, therefore, ordered, for every soldier of the United States, killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one enslaved by the enemy, or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to prisoners of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

"By order of the Secretary of War.

"E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant General."

Austin Gilmore

Dying for Duty

Austin Gilmore, formerly enslaved from Tennessee, enlisted in the 111th Illinois Infantry to fight for freedom. A stretcher bearer, Austin removed bodies of wounded and dead soldiers during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. He was mortally wounded rescuing a soldier, died four days later, and was buried in an unmarked grave.

To learn more, visit: www.nps.gov/kemo

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