

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 139. }

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
Washington, May 18, 1863.

1. The duties of Signal Officers will be performed by officers of the Signal Corps, or by such competent and instructed officers as may be specially detailed for that purpose. Any superior commander may, in view of probable necessities, detail a limited number of officers and men for *instruction*; but no details for *service* will be made until the officers and men to be detailed have passed a satisfactory examination by a Board, of which at least two Signal Officers shall be members, and no incompetent or inexperienced officer will be permitted, by any authority, to transmit signal messages.

2. Signal officers, when on duty, will report to their immediate Commander and to the Chief Signal Officer of the army with which they may be serving, for the information of the General Commanding, all movements of the enemy, or other facts relating to the general interest of the service coming within their knowledge.

3. Communications transmitted by signals are always confidential; they will not be revealed by officers on stations to others than those officially entitled to receive them.

4. The senior officer of any command will be the chief of the signal parties serving in that command. Orders or instructions affecting their duties will be transmitted through him, and he will be held responsible that the officers and men under his charge are fully instructed and properly perform the duties assigned them. He will have charge of all signal duty, and will keep himself well informed of the position of the army and of the enemy; and will, under the instruction of the General Commanding, so establish his stations that they may be most advantageously posted. He will take care, by inspections and timely requisitions, that his party is well supplied with all equipments necessary to render it effective. He will make, from time to time, the proper reports of his operations in the field to the General Commanding, and will, with the assent of the General, forward certified copies of these reports to the office of the Signal Officer. He will make the usual returns and semi-monthly statements, and at the end of each

month a report to the Signal Officer of the army as to the condition of his party and of such matters as pertain to its particular duties.

5. The examining boards prescribed above may be appointed by the Commander of any army, army corps, or department in which signal parties have been or may be authorized.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

E. D. TOWNSEND,

*Assistant Adjutant General.*