



The Men in Charge

Following the deployment of the African American 369th New York National Guard Coastal Artillery Regiment, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters, who occupied Fort Ontario at the start of WWII, to the Pacific Theater, instruction finally began at Fort Ontario.

Colonel Ralph Manter, born March 24, 1895, in Londonderry, NH, enlisted into the armed forces on July 7, 1917, and served honorably in the First World War. On February 17, 1941, Manter re-enlisted in the army and became commander of Fort Ontario's 1210th Special Training Service Unit (STSU).

Born to a family from Poland, Anthony Slosek graduated college in 1933. During the Great Depression, Mr. Slosek began teaching at a reform school before eventually becoming a high school teacher in Oswego



From June 1943 to February 1944, approximately 1,700 recruits and draftees per month went through the program at Oswego. Though the army did not send blacks to Ft. Ontario, nationally, the skills African Americans gained through these educational efforts were critical to the post-war civil rights movement.

Colonel Manter remained active in the military and served in the Korean Conflict. He retired in 1955 and passed away on April 21, 1969, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

In September of 1943, he enlisted in the armed forces and served as an instructor with the 1210th STSU. While some instructors had prior military service, the army also drafted high school teachers from the area to serve in the program. After the war, Mr. Slosek continued to teach high school for 38 years and passed away on May 8, 1990.