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**TAXONOMY OF THE AFRICAN ARMY ANT, *AENICTUS DECOLOR*
(MAYR), WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE QUEEN
(HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)**

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Abstract.—*Aenictus batesi* Forel and *A. bidentatus* Donisthorpe are junior synonyms of *A. decolor* (Mayr), new synonymy. The worker caste of *A. decolor* is redescribed and the queen is characterized for the first time. This queen is only the third sub-Saharan *Aenictus* queen to be described. The taxonomy and distribution of *A. decolor* are discussed.

The genus *Aenictus* currently comprises the tribe Aenictini of the Old World army ant subfamily Dorylinae. *Aenictus* is represented by 34 species in the Indo-Australian Region and by at least 15 species in Africa (Wilson, 1964). While the Indo-Australian forms were taxonomically revised by Wilson (1964), those of the African continent remain in a state of taxonomic chaos. One of us (WHG) is currently revising the African species, and this paper is a contribution toward that revision.

Contributing most to the taxonomic disorder of this group of diminutive army ants are the many descriptions in the literature of unassociated phenae. That is, many species are based solely on the worker caste, others on just males, and at least two on unassociated queens. This fact no doubt accounts for many yet-to-be-discovered synonyms in the group. Thus when these phenae are collected together and described, the taxonomy of the genus is increasingly refined and stabilized.

Only two *Aenictus* queens of sub-Saharan species have been described thus far. Queens are rarely collected because most species of the genus are subterranean and biologically cryptic (Gotwald and Cunningham-van Sommeren, 1976). Four queens of *A. decolor* were collected in Ivory Coast, and these provide the basis for the description that follows. At the same time, the taxonomy of the species is reviewed. New synonymies are noted and a redescription of the worker included.