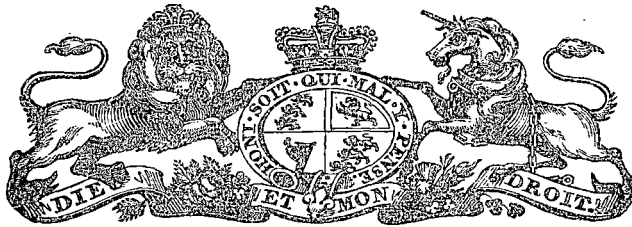


(No. 62.)



1886.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CAMP OF EXERCISE, ROSS, 1886:

REPORT BY COMMANDANT.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



EASTER ENCAMPMENT AT ROSS.

Head Quarters Office, Hobart, 15th May, 1886.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you a Report on the recent Easter Encampment at Ross.

The Northern and Southern Divisions left Launceston and Hobart by train on Thursday evening, the 22nd ult., soon after 8 o'clock, for Ross. It rained very heavily at both places at the time of parading, but, notwithstanding, the men (be it said to their credit) mustered very well. The Northern Division, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Warner, arrived at the camp between 11 and 12 o'clock, and the Southern Division, under my command, reached the ground at 1.30 A.M. Owing to the breaking down of one of the waggons laden with straw on the previous evening, and the heavy rain which occurred shortly after, the supply of straw was insufficient at the time of the arrival of the troops, but on the following morning fresh supplies were obtained, and the proper amount furnished for the next night. Likewise, owing to the Torpedo Corps having no regimental fatigue party on the ground to assist in the tent-pitching, the lines of this Corps had not been commenced by the staff labourers (owing to the press of work that had occurred throughout the day) when the heavy rain set in, and consequently the men had to be accommodated in the store tent and in the lines of other corps until the early morning parade, when the Torpedo Corps tents were pitched, and the entire Camp thus set in order.

The site of the Camp was by the Macquarie Road, 200 yards from the Ross Bridge.

The hours of parade were the same as last year,—

7.30 A.M. to 8 A.M.
10.30 A.M. to 12.30 P.M.
2.30 P.M. to 4.30 P.M.

My programme of work was drawn up so as to give each corps as much practical duty as possible, after deducting the time necessary for a general inspection on the first day, combined with a rehearsal of the movements necessary for the review before His Excellency the Governor on the last day of the training.

First Day.

The first, or early morning parade on Friday was devoted to squaring up the whole Camp. Rations were issued on that and every following morning at 6.30 A.M.

At the mid-day parade on Friday, the whole Force paraded in marching order for my inspection, and the turn-out was satisfactory. The Launceston Artillery, and both Rifle Regiments, paraded in the valise equipment, which is now very creditably put on by most of the men of these corps. It is worn at all the Quarterly Inspections in order to give the men practice in carrying the equipment necessary for service. The Force, which was brigaded, marched past after the inspection, and then returned to Camp. In the afternoon the Artillery were engaged in drilling at their respective guns—the Launceston Corps with the 40 pounder and two 7 pounder jointed guns, and the Hobart Artillery with their 13 pounder guns. Parties from both corps were likewise detailed to form a gun-pit and embrasure on the side of the hill to the south of the Camp, and 2000 yards distant from it. The Torpedo Corps furnished a third party for this work, which was necessary for gun practice on the following day. At this parade the Infantry Regiments were engaged in battalion drill, and entrenching under their Commanding Officers. The Launceston Rifles paraded for picket duty at 8 P.M., and went out to the north of the Camp furnishing a cordon of pickets and sentries from the river across both roads to the boundary fence. I visited these outlying pickets at 9.30 P.M., and then ordered the regiment to be marched back to Camp. The Force was not roused on this night owing to the men having spent the better part of the previous one in the train.

Second Day.

At the early morning parade the Launceston Artillery were occupied in laying a Clerk's platform for use with the 40-pounder gun, and also at drilling with this gun.

The Hobart Artillery went to gun drill, and a party, together with one from the Torpedo Corps, after an early breakfast, started with sand-bags and "dummies" for the gun-pit, in order to complete the same for practice at mid-day. The Hobart Rifles had battalion drill and skirmishing under the Commanding Officer; the Launceston Rifles were exercised in company drill and entrenching.

At the mid-day parade the Clerk's platform was finished by the Launceston Artillery, and a party detailed for dismounting and packing a 7-pounder mountain gun on horses, 6 of which were supplied by a carter in the township for this purpose. The gun, when packed, was transported across the run and through a swamp to exemplify the advantage of pack-saddles over wheel transport in difficult country. The Hobart Artillery drilled at their guns, and during their second hour got them into position for firing at the gun-pit when finished. This was not done until mid-day, and only two rounds were fired before dinner, but with excellent results; both guns were laid with the Scott's telescopic sights, and the slight error in the first round corrected in the 2nd gun by the use of the sight, so that the next shell passed through the embrasure and burst in the gun-pit.

The two Rifle Regiments were marched to the general parade ground and exercised in brigade movements by myself. The reserve company at this parade were instructed in light infantry drill, under their commanding officer, Colonel Bernard.

At the afternoon parade practice was carried on by both Artillery Corps under Captain Collins and Major Evans, at the gun-pit. The range was 2000 yards, and the work, having a front of not more than 25 feet, presented a small object at that distance; notwithstanding, the firing was very creditable both from the 40-pounder and 13-pounder guns. A gun detachment of 9 men, represented by wooden dummies, were placed in position in the gun-pit, and were all placed *hors de combat*. The results of the practice will be seen from the *précis* appended. Practice was likewise carried on at the same range by the Launceston Artillery, under Lieut. Harrap, from the two 7-pounder mountain guns, with good results. Four canvas targets, 8 feet square, placed in a double row 20 feet apart were used for this firing.

The advantages of having a land range, so seldom attainable at Home, can scarcely be over-estimated, as the men are enabled to see the destructive effect of common shell on an earthwork, and that of segment and shrapnel on the *personnel* of an enemy, as represented by dummies and targets placed as above mentioned. This fact should be taken into consideration in choosing a site for future encampments.

While the Artillery were at gun practice the Infantry Corps were marched out to open ground on the west side of the Hobart road, and exercised in field-firing at rows of canvas targets placed on the side of the hill. The firing was at unknown distances from 600 to 100 yards, and very fair results were obtained, especially by the Reserves under Colonel Bernard.

In the evening the Hobart Rifles paraded at 8 P.M. for picquet duty and marched to the Ross Bridge, from whence picquets were furnished to guard the approaches to the camp from the south. After the picquets had been visited by myself, accompanied by Lieut.-Colonel Warner, the regiment was marched into Camp.

At 11:30 P.M. the gun was fired and the whole Camp turned out, the Artillery with their guns, for the repulse of an attack on the position. A cordon was formed round the Camp, two rounds being fired from each gun, the infantry using their rifles without ammunition, which was not issued to save time. After my inspection of the cordon the corps were marched to their parade and dismissed, the entire time taken up from the gun-fire until the dismissal being 25 minutes.

Third Day.

The various corps were employed at the early morning parade in squaring up the Camp preparatory to my inspection at the dinner hour.

At 10:30 the Force paraded for church, each corps being marched out to a position in front of the Camp, where they were formed up in line of columns for my inspection. Hollow-square was afterwards formed, and service conducted by the Chaplain, Rev. Woolnough. After the service, Bugle-Major Best, of the Reserve Force, was presented by me with the Medal for the Soudan, he having been present in Egypt with the New South Wales Contingent. At the dinner, 1:30 P.M., I visited the whole of the men's tents in company with the Minister of Defence, and found the rations and cooking in every way satisfactory. The lines of the Torpedo Corps were conspicuous for their neatness, and the tents of the Cadets testified to the endeavours of the boys to vie with their older comrades in smartness. At 2:30 P.M. the whole of the tents occupied by the men were struck at the sound of bugle, for the purpose of airing the ground; much smartness was shown in carrying

out this service, and after a lapse of a quarter of an hour the tents were raised in the same manner. This closed the work of the day; and at 3 p.m. the men were allowed out of Camp, a considerable number proceeding on leave for the rest of the day to neighbouring localities.

Fourth Day.

The early morning parade was occupied by the Artillery in drilling and getting the 40-pounders to the station ready for entraining in the evening. Ammunition was served out, 20 rounds a gun, for the manoeuvres to be carried out at midday. The Torpedo Corps drilled in preparation for the review in the afternoon, and the two Rifle Regiments and Reserves were engaged in skirmishing and in entrenching exercise. The Reserves were clothed in their Khakee uniforms, which had been served out to Colonel Bernard, on that officer's requisition, before proceeding to camp. The colour of this dress conforms admirably with that of the Australian vegetation, and I cannot speak too highly of its use as a fighting dress in this Colony.

At the mid-day parade the various Corps were marched out of camp, having had ammunition served out, to take up offensive and defensive positions for the purpose of carrying out some manoeuvres to illustrate the resisting of an attack from the south on the camp. The attacking force, under Lieut.-Colonel Warner, consisted of the Launceston Rifle Regiment, the Hobart Rifle Regiment, and the Launceston Artillery, with two 7-pounder guns, the remainder of the Corps acting as an infantry escort for the guns. This force was directed to proceed to a position on the Hobart road, near Horton College, and there open fire from the guns on the defenders' position, which was the group of buildings forming a hamlet, just to the south of the Ross bridge.

The defending force, under Colonel Bernard, consisted of the Hobart Artillery, with two 13-pounder guns, and the remainder of the Corps as an infantry escort, the Reserves, and the Launceston Cadets. This force took up its position in the locality above named, occupying as an outpost the ruined buildings on the east side of the road, and the guns, in charge of Major Evans, were entrenched on a rise to the right rear of the hamlet. The outpost was formed of a detachment of the Cadets, and the hamlet itself was occupied by the Reserves and the remainder of the Cadets.

The attack was commenced by a round being fired from the attacking Artillery at the camp, from a distance of about 4000 yards, and this was replied to by the Artillery of the defence, upon which the fire of the attacking Artillery was forthwith directed. The advance on the right of the position was conducted by Major O'Boyle, and that on the left by Major Aikenhead, with their respective regiments. The hamlet was ably defended by Colonel Bernard with his small force. It is beyond the province of this report to enter into a descriptive account of the manoeuvres, suffice it to say that the tactics of "Artillery and Infantry combined" were fairly carried out according to instructions, but a flank attack, which I had wished carried out, was omitted, owing to the difficulty of crossing the river. At 1 o'clock the "cease fire" was sounded, and the troops were marched back to camp. His Excellency the Governor arrived from Hobart by the morning express, and visited all the lines in company with the Minister of Defence, myself, and my staff, expressing himself pleased with the general appearance of the tents and the arrangements for cooking, &c.

The Torpedo Corps, which did not take part in the manoeuvres, were marched in the morning to the battery on the hill, and there, under the Torpedo Superintendent, Lieutenant Mathieson, carried out some interesting experiments with gun-cotton.

At 2:30 the whole Force marched out of camp to the general parade-ground, where the various corps were formed up in line of quarter-columns for the purpose of being reviewed by His Excellency the Governor. The march past in brigade then took place, the men evincing much steadiness, and shewing, to a marked extent, the good results of their four days' military training. At the conclusion of the review, the Governor addressed the troops, expressing his satisfaction at their appearance, and the steady manner in which they had gone through their drill.

With this parade the programme of work terminated; and, after the corps were marched back to Camp, immediate preparations were made to strike tents and pack the luggage for transport to the railway. During the evening it was packed by baggage parties in the trucks provided for the purpose, and the Hobart contingent paraded for marching out. The men were entrained, and left for Hobart under the command of Colonel Bernard, as I desired myself to remain in Camp until the whole Force had left, and on the following day make arrangements with the Staff Officer for dismantling stores, tents, cook-houses, and leaving the ground in proper order.

The Launceston Contingent, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Warner, marched out at 11:15, and were to have left for Launceston at 11:45, but, owing to a most vexatious delay, the train did not arrive until nearly 3 a.m., during which time the men, including the cadets, who had as hard a day's work as the men, waited patiently at the station. On the arrival of the train it was found that the tank was empty, and another delay of one and a half hours took place before water was taken in and the train could proceed on its journey. This was a most unfortunate occurrence, as it tended greatly to upset the good effect produced in the men by the general success of the Camp.

Staff.

My Staff consisted of Lieut.-Col. Warner, Commanding Northern Division, Captain Wallack, (Acting Brigade-Major), and Lieut. Mathieson, who performed, among other duties, that of Camp-Quartermaster. Major Just, unattached list, acted as Deputy Commissary-General. From each of these officers I received every assistance in carrying out the discipline and duties of the Camp. Colonel Bernard, as Senior Commanding Officer, likewise rendered material assistance, his long military experience proving of value as an example to commanding officers in the performance of camp duties. Commanding Officers supported me in a praiseworthy manner by their efforts to carry out as fully as possible all orders issued to them, and ensure the due performance of all duties by their men.

General.

The daily routine of Camp, in the nature of guards, picquets, orderly duties of officers and non-commissioned officers, quartermaster's duties, issue of rations, cooking and messing, was carried out as in a Military Camp, and the consequent work devolving on officers and non-commissioned officers was, considering their limited experience, well performed.

The Officers' Mess was established and presided over by a Committee of three officers, of whom Colonel Bernard was President. The catering was satisfactorily performed by a contractor, Mr. Kean, of Campbell Town.

The commissariat arrangements were carried out by Major Just, assisted by Lieut. Freeman at the Camp while Major Just was on leave in Hobart. Both officers performed their duty zealously and well. The cooking was far more successfully carried on this year than last, owing to the careful manner in which the B. A. kitchens were constructed by Lieut. Mathieson, and the acquisition of Aldershot ovens and Soyer's stoves, which were obtained from England. Enclosed is the Report of the D.C.-General marked (A.)

Effects of Camp on Force.

The Camp of Exercise held at Mona Vale last year, which was the first of its kind in Tasmania, was conducted on the same basis, and was productive of good results among the men of the Force. The present Camp, however, marked a new feature in the history of the Defence Force of the Colony. It was for the first time, in accordance with the provisions of the new Defence Act, called out (the Torpedo Corps and Reserves excepted) to serve under the Army Discipline Act, the men being under military law. I consider it a valuable test of the military spirit existing in the Force that the men came forward so well and served cheerfully as soldiers for the time they were in Camp. The general conduct of the Force was excellent. One or two irregularities were committed, but no serious military offence was brought before me for investigation.

The good results of the four days' exercise was apparent in a marked degree in the soldier-like bearing of the men on the last day; and were it possible to retain the Force in Camp for two additional days, as in New South Wales, the Colony would be well repaid for the money so spent by the increased efficiency of the corps so serving.

Praiseworthy mention of the Launceston Cadets must not be omitted. They responded well to the call of their Commanding Officer, Major Aikenhead, and mustered 55 when marched into Camp. Their conduct was on the whole good, and they bore the hardships of Camp life very well.

The site of the Camp, though exposed, was healthy, and the water was good. The locality was admirably adapted for both artillery and infantry exercises; the fine artillery range being the most valuable feature.

The following is the strength of the Force in Camp on the last day :—

Launceston Artillery	49
Hobart Artillery	65
Torpedo Corps	39
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment.....	125
Launceston Rifle Regiment and Cadets.....	161
Reserves	47
Garrison Band	19
Staff	5
	<hr/>
	510
	<hr/>

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. V. LEGGE, *Lt.-Col., (R.), R.A.,*
Colonel Commandant.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

(A.)

DEFENCE DEPARTMENT.

EASTER ENCAMPMENT, 1886.

REPORT of the Deputy Commissary-General.

SIR,

1. I HAVE the honor to report on the Commissariat arrangements of the late Easter Encampment, held at Ross, the duties of which I took up on 7th April last. Having completed all arrangements for the despatch of stores, kit, &c. by the 21st April, I found that important official duty would detain me in town until the 23rd April; I therefore (with your approval) appointed Lieutenant E. J. Freeman, of the Rifle Regiment, to act as my deputy, and that officer proceeded to the camp on 21st April, receiving from me the instructions attached hereto (marked A.)

2. I arrived at the camp on the morning of the 24th April, and found everything in good working order, notwithstanding that severely inclement weather on the night of the 22nd April had rendered the perfection of arrangements a matter of considerable difficulty. I at once visited the "lines" with Lieutenant Freeman, found everyone satisfied, and the cooking apparatus working well.

3. As on the previous occasion (Mona Vale, 1885), the rations were issued to Corps, being received by the several Quartermasters or their Deputies. This system I find to work well. The camp kitchens and stoves were handed over to the Regimental cooks, who performed their duties most satisfactorily.

4. The cooking apparatus received from England was found of great advantage, especially the Soyer's stoves. I recommend that a few more of these be obtained at once, as the number available would be quite inadequate for a larger encampment. The Aldershot ovens also worked admirably, and I recommend that one or two additional be made in the Colony. The Broad Arrow kitchens worked well, but the stoves greatly relieved the work formerly done by the Flander's and Torren's kettles.

5. The large Hospital Marquee received from England made an admirable store tent, but as it is the only one of the kind in stock, and might on some future occasion be required for hospital purposes, I would suggest the desirability of procuring another of the same kind.

6. *Meat* of first class quality (beef and mutton) was supplied under contract by Mr. John Badkin, of Ross, at 35s. per 100lbs. The meat was delivered with regularity, conveniently cut up, and gave every satisfaction.

7. *Bread*, as on the former occasion, was supplied from H. M. Gaol. I arranged for a number of convenient boxes to convey the loaves, and thus avoided the complaints made at Mona Vale about the broken and damaged condition of the bread.

8. *General Rations*.—The groceries and general rations were supplied by the Government contractors, Messrs. William Murdoch & Co., and were all that could be desired. Tea and sugar were obtained from the Colonial Storekeeper's Department; potatoes of excellent quality by Messrs. James Fryer & Co., and vegetables of the best kind, and considerable variety, by our former contractor, Ah Ham.

9. In accordance with your instructions, I estimated the ration supply for 620 men, but the largest number of issues in any one day was 523, the total (including 35 men extra on the day the troops marched in) being 2042 for the whole encampment. Supplies were therefore considerably in excess of requirements, the surplus being disposed of in the manner indicated in the attached ration return. Tea and coffee were served out to the men on their arrival in camp, and the same with extra rations on leaving. The balance of stores remaining on hand were made use of for the sustenance of the men remaining to strike camp, and surplus stores were to be handed over to His Worship the Warden of Ross, by direction of the Hon. Minister of Defence, for distribution to the poor of that town. The officer in charge after the night of the 26th April, when I left the camp, will be able to explain the mode of distribution.

10. I desire to acknowledge the zealous services of Lieutenant Freeman as my deputy, especially on the occasion of the troops marching into camp on the night of the 22nd April. The weather was very inclement, and by his exertions Lieutenant Freeman contributed much towards the comfort of the men. A claim for £1 6s. for special cartage &c. connected with this service I recommend for approval.

Storeman A. G. Williseroft rendered most efficient service as storeman, and Mr. William Eady, as store clerk, performed his duties most satisfactorily.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOS. C. JUST, *Major T.D.F., D.C.G.*

*The Colonel Commandant,
The Barracks, Hobart.*

APPENDIX B.

PRACTICE with 40 Pr. R.B.L and 13 Pr. R.B.L. Guns against small earthwork, at 2000 yards range, with Common and Segment Shell.

<i>Gun.</i>	<i>Round.</i>	<i>Projectile.</i>	<i>Yards over.</i>	<i>Yards under.</i>	<i>Feet right.</i>	<i>Feet left.</i>	<i>Fuze.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
40 Pr. R.B.L.	1	Com. shell	—	30	in	line	Armstrong Percussion and Concussion	Gun-pit 12 feet wide and 18 feet from front to rear of ramp. Embrasure 8 feet wide at front, revetted with sand-bags. Parapet 3 feet 6 inches high, 9 feet thick, and 8 feet long at each side of mouth of excavation. Detachment of 9 "dummies" (deal wood) placed in position of "taking post on gun" in the gun-pit. <i>Effects of fire—Parapet.</i> —Left inner corner of embrasure carried away with 5 feet of parapet. Right side of embrasure cut away above sand-bags; 3 bags at the "sill" burst. Left corner of front of parapet carried away for a width of 4 feet. Superior slope of right portion of parapet carried away for a width of 6 feet. <i>"Dummies."</i> —No. 1, smashed to pieces. No. 2, head and right half of body carried away. No. 3, knocked down. No. 4, ditto. No. 5, half of head carried away. No. 6, right half of body carried away, 9 shrapnel bullets through body. No. 7, half of head carried away, 5 splinter holes through. No. 8, 15 shrapnel bullets through. No. 9, segment hole in body.
Ditto	2	Ditto	—	25	in	line		
Ditto	3	Ditto	hit	parapet				
Ditto	4	Segt. shell	hit	parapet				
Ditto	5	Ditto	—	20				
13 Pr. R.B.L.	1	Com. shell	—	5	2			
Ditto	2	Segt. shell	in	gun-pit				
Ditto	3	Ditto	10	—	in	line		
Ditto	4	Com. shell	premature burst					
Ditto	5	Segt. shell	—	50	in	line		
Ditto	6	Com. shell	—	40	in	line		

Shrapnel fire from both guns very good; bursts from 5 to 40 yards short. Not tabulated, as the Range Officer did not give the proper data. The shrapnel fire from the 7 Pr. guns at 2000 yards range, at two rows of common targets (2 in each row), to represent two companies in column, was also very creditable. The effects were as follows:—*Left-front target.*—Knocked down, framework smashed. *Right-front target.*—Shell through right portion of frame, splinter through canvas 3 feet from bull's-eye. *Left-rear target.*—Top of frame smashed, 6 splinter holes and 8 bullet holes through canvas. *Right-rear target.*—Shell through bull's-eye, 2 splinter holes and 16 bullet holes through canvas.

W. V. LEGGE, Lt.-Col. (R.) R.A.