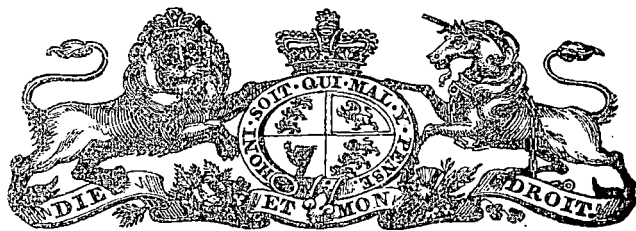


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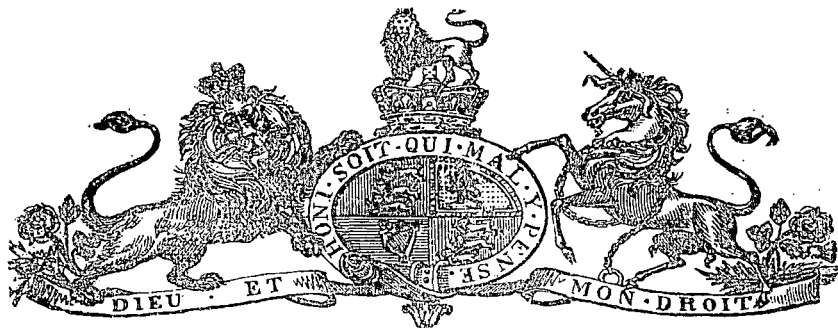
1886.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

TASMANIAN DEFENCE FORCE :

REPORT BY COMMANDANT.

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



TASMANIAN DEFENCE FORCE.

Head Quarters Office, Hobart, 16th July, 1886.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you my Report on the Tasmanian Defence Force for the period extending from the date of my last Report (15th July, 1885) up to the present time.

It will be best to deal with the history of the Force since that date, and then refer to each Corps in detail.

On reference to my last Report, it will be seen that the strength of the Force in Camp last year was 506; and that on the 30th June, three months later, the numbers were 1056, which exceeds any other total that I can find recorded since the inception of the Defence movement in the Colony. This large increase was due to the good effect the *war scare* had in arousing a military spirit in Hobart and Launceston, and likewise to the increased popularity which obtained to the service after the holding of the first military Camp organised in the Island. The principal increment consisted of the *Reserves* at Hobart and Launceston, which numbered respectively 188 and 59. An excellent spirit, therefore, existed in the Force at the above-mentioned date; and the numbers were kept up with but little variation until the end of the year.

At the latter end of the Session, the new Defence Act, framed on the lines of the Queensland Act, and the rough draft of which you were good enough to submit to me for the suggestions of myself and commanding officers, was passed, by which a three years' service was introduced, and an entire re-enrolment necessitated.

On the 17th of November a letter was addressed by me to you, pointing out that it would be necessary to draw up an entirely new set of regulations in accordance with the Act, and asking your authority to assemble a board of officers for this purpose. Regulations were drawn up in this office, carefully considered by my Staff and myself, and submitted to a board of officers on the 30th November. The board consisted of the Staff, with regimental commanding officers, and Major Just as Secretary, under my presidency. Major Aikenhead and Captain Collins were unable to be present, but Lieut.-Colonel Warner represented their views; and, after a four days' sitting, the Regulations were completed, and forthwith transmitted to you. Unfortunately, some delay occurred in their revision, and it was not until the 19th January that the board was re-assembled to consider the remarks of the Parliamentary Draftsman; the Regulations being finally issued on the 22nd February. The lateness of the hour, however, militated against the re-enrolment of the Force, as many of the men, who had been waiting for the issue of the Regulations, complained that the time then given them for consideration was too short, as the three months allowed from the date of the Act being passed expired on the 6th of March.

Instructions were issued to commanding officers to commence the re-enrolment of all who wished to join the new Force at once, so that Corps might be sufficiently strong to go into Camp at Easter; and, before long, a considerable number of men, representing what may be looked upon as a reliable nucleus, came forward and signed the Service Roll. On the other hand, many sent in their resignations, and others remained undecided until after the Easter Encampment, when, under the new Regulations, it was too late to become efficient. In the North the great drawback to enlistment for a fixed term, which has never been popular there, is the absence of a proper rifle range, and the delay which has occurred in acquiring the land for the new one. I am informed by commanding officers that the men will not come forward until they find that they can have opportunities of rifle practice, particularly as they have been without a range for two years, and have passed through no course of musketry since 1883.

I quote the following remarks by Lieut.-Colonel Warner in the last Quarterly Return :—"The Corps, with the exception of the cadets, are all very much below their strength. I think this is, in a great measure, caused by the uncertainty as to whether the new rifle range will be ready before the end of the year." Plans and estimates having been submitted, I trust that the work of construction will at once be proceeded with. I may here refer to the advisability of pushing on the negotiations for the purchase of the Hobart rifle range, as the present arrangements are very indifferent. I had hoped to have commenced work there before the musketry course began ; but as this has not been possible, another season will have to be spent in tuition at the present unsatisfactory butts. An improvement in the Hobart range will, I have no doubt, prove a stimulus to enlistment here, though not in such a marked degree as at Launceston.

Since the Easter Encampment the enlistment at Hobart has not been satisfactory. This is owing, to some extent, to the difficulty in obtaining work for the industrious classes, from which alone the ranks of the Force are reliably recruited, and who do not like joining with the prospect of having to leave Hobart at no distant date in search of employment. This is a cause which is likewise reducing the present strength of the corps. Since the 1st of May I have had to accept the following notices of retirement—Torpedo Corps, two ; Rifle Regiment, six ; Reserves, two ; and, in addition, two men left for Victoria without leave from the Torpedo Corps.

Commandant's Parades.

Under the new Regulations the Quarterly Inspection parades, which were introduced by me last year for the active force, have been continued. Half-yearly inspections are the usual custom of the military service, but it appeared to me that by bringing the Corps together at their full strength once a quarter greater efficiency would be acquired. At these inspections it is my custom to see sundry officers from the various ranks at drill, and by this means a constant interest in their work is maintained.

Inspections of the Corps in the Southern Division were held on the 16th July ; 25th and 26th September ; 3rd, 7th, and 14th December, 1885 ; 18th and 29th March, 5th April, 21st and 25th of June, and 15th July, 1886.

In the Northern Division the Corps were inspected on the 7th and 8th September ; 16th and 17th November, 1885 ; and 22nd and 23rd March, and 7th and 25th June, 1886.

Quarterly Church parades of the Southern Division have been held, with the exception of the 1st quarter of this year, when the parade had to be cancelled owing to the non-enlistment of the band. The dates of the parades are 15th September, 13th December, and 23rd of May, on all of which occasions satisfactory musters took place. On the 15th November I held a Church parade at Launceston, and on the 23rd May the annual Church parade was held. At both these parades satisfactory musters took place.

On the Queen's Birthday there was a total muster of 425 of all ranks for inspection by His Excellency the Governor. A salute and *feu de joie* were fired at noon, and the Force then marched past in brigade. The men acquitted themselves satisfactorily in the various manœuvres, having been rehearsed in them on an evening of the previous week. Lieut.-Colonel Warner had a satisfactory muster of 247 in the North, and exercised the corps throughout the morning in drill prior to the salute and *feu de joie* being fired.

Permanent Force.

The barracks for the Permanent Force have recently been completed, and the non-commissioned officer applied for to the Imperial Government as Sergt.-Major, arrived in the Colony in June ; mention is made of him under the head of "Staff." Men are waiting to be enrolled so soon as your decision relative to clothing, kit, and rations shall have been imparted to me. On the 30th of December a communication was made from this office relative to the Government obtaining the services of 15 gunners from the Royal Artillery, to provide a trained nucleus for the Force. These men are to be gunners who have joined the First Class Army Reserve, and I am of opinion that no difficulty will be experienced in getting them, provided the War Office authorities permit them to emigrate to the Colony.

Launceston Artillery.

After the war scare this Corps numbered 79 (*vide* Report for 1885), and at the end of the year the number of efficient was 69, being a very high proportion of the total number at that time on the strength of the Corps. A good many men did not re-enrol under the new Act, but I am glad to say most of the old and tried members did not quit the Corps. There are now 52 on the strength, with the prospect of a steady enlistment up to the establishment, which has this year been fixed at 82 of all ranks. A high standard of efficiency is maintained in the Launceston Artillery ; the men are well drilled, and always give me satisfaction at my inspections.

On the Prince of Wales' birthday the Corps went into camp at Bangor, on the River Tamar, for the purpose of carrying out some practice. The Marine Board found the transport, the men leaving in the steamer on the Saturday previous, which made the encampment last three days. The expense of rationing was defrayed by the officers, which fact shows a high *esprit de corps*. The Officer Commanding Northern Division, in company with Staff-Captain Hunt, visited the camp, remaining throughout the time, and at the conclusion a complimentary garrison order was issued by Lt.-Col. Warner commenting on the exemplary conduct of, and good work done by, the Corps. Reports were forwarded to me by the Commanding Officer, Captain Collins, from which it appears that the practice was creditable, though a good many fuzes were blind. There were 63 of all ranks in camp, and great praise is due to the men for so employing their holiday.

The work done by the Launceston Artillery at the camp was very satisfactory, and the conduct of the men, as last year, was exemplary.

The officers are three below the establishment at present, but it is to be hoped that these vacancies will be filled before long.

Southern Tasmanian Artillery.

At the date of my last Report the strength of this Corps was 182, including the Bellerive detachment, and at the end of the year the return of efficient shows 143. The establishment, as revised in the new Regulation, is 222 of all ranks, which is an increase of 22 above that authorised last year. On the issue of the new Regulations a great many men resigned, among whom were a considerable proportion of those who joined in the war scare—viz., 42 out of 70—and only those who really like the work of an artillerist have remained in the Corps. Not a few of the men presenting themselves as recruits have been undersized, and, consequently, refused by the commanding officer. The causes which militate against the filling up this Corps are the amount of drill necessary for efficiency, the stress of work among those who would like to join from among the industrious classes, and the innate objection to a fixed term of service which exists in the people of both Hobart and Launceston. When men could join just as they liked, and resign whenever they chose from any petty imaginary grievance, there was no difficulty in filling up the ranks; but this is not the material to depend upon for a first line of defence, as sufficient confidence cannot be placed in their stability. I am of opinion that the dislike to a fixed term of service will gradually die out, and this Corps will recruit up to its establishment; but, as I pointed out when the Act was under consideration, some inducement, some reward on the part of the Government is, in my opinion, necessary to bring men forward for a voluntary service such as that of this colony. *Deferred pay* at a small rate per diem, which will accumulate so that at the end of the three years' service a moderate sum is given to the man who has served his country faithfully, is the best means of making the service popular. It has been adopted in Queensland even with a paid service, and here it is all the more necessary, as the men receive no pay except for the Easter training.

A regular course of work has been pursued, since the re-enrolment, for the instruction of this corps. Field-gun drill, garrison-gun drill at the smaller guns in the "District," and repository, have been gone through. A course of drill at the heavy guns at Kangaroo Bluff will next be undertaken, and after that the men will be sent to the Alexandra Battery, if funds for conveyance can be procured. The Bellerive detachment drill at the 80-pounders in the Bluff Battery, and will continue to do so throughout the year. Excellent practice was made by the Corps with the 13-pounder field-guns at the Camp—(*vide* Report on Easter Encampment.)

The Commanding Officer, Major Evans, still maintains that warm interest in the corps, and Artillery service generally, which has characterised the performance of his duty since my taking up command, and it is a matter of regret that the assistance of the captains, required to complete the establishment of the corps, is wanting. The only officer eligible for this rank, viz., Lieut. Bennison, has left for Launceston, and in him the corps has sustained a loss, as his abilities and zeal made him a valuable acquisition to it. Lieuts. Castray and Lewis have been provisionally appointed, and promise very well.

Torpedo Corps.

This Corps did not go through any training in December, as in previous years; the special training during the war scare was substituted for this, and the payment made for it out of the annual vote. A short course in January was arranged for in order to reduce the interval of time between the special training and the annual course for 1886, in December next; but owing to the non-issue of the new Regulations and the unsettled state of the men, the officer commanding the corps represented that it would be better not to commence work until the corps was re-enrolled, after the issue of the Regulations.

Twenty-two men resigned under the new Act, most of whom had served their three years; their places were filled up, however, and the Corps is now up to a strength of 74, the men being for the most part of the proper stamp for the submarine mining service.

The Corps is still commanded by a Lieutenant, although the establishment of officers consists of a Captain and two Lieutenants. As I have previously pointed out, it is requisite to have an officer of considerable service and experience and high scientific qualifications to command efficiently such a Corps as this; but no such candidate has offered himself. Lieutenant Macdonald is, however, a zealous young officer, and when he acquires more experience and technical knowledge will no doubt be able to command the Corps to advantage.

There has been on two occasions a spirit manifested in the Corps to the "prejudice of good order" since my last Report, and concerning one of which I had occasion to address you in August last, and then there was required the experience and firmness of an officer of long service to cope with the evil. I anticipate favourable results, however, from the influence of the Superintendent of Torpedo Defences, Lieutenant Mathieson, who is anxious to assist the Commanding Officer in any way and give him the benefit of his experience as regards the professional work of the Corps. The other officer is Lieutenant Clarke, who was transferred from the Reserves in March last; he was formerly Adjutant of the Tasmanian Rifle Regiment, and has technical qualifications which will assist him to serve in the Torpedo branch with advantage.

The Instructor, Quartermaster-Sergeant Falconer, R.E., leaves on completion of his term of service at the latter end of the year. He will be replaced by an Instructor from the Royal Engineers, who was applied for in May last. The services of two Sappers from the Royal Engineers have likewise been applied for as a part of the Permanent Force. These men will be trained submarine miners, who will, in conjunction with the Instructor, form a trained school or nucleus in the Corps, and who, in addition to having charge, under the latter, of all the instruments and scientific apparatus used in the Corps, will assist in the instruction of the various sections into which it is divided, and also will be available for daily work in conjunction with the Torpedo Defences. As you are aware, this permanent nucleus of Imperial men has been strongly recommended by Colonel Crosman, R.E., in his Report on the Torpedo Defences of the Colonies, and his recommendations have been followed in Queensland and in Victoria.

Tasmanian Rifle Regiment.

This corps is much below the strength; I regret to say. This is owing to a good many men having retired; many of them were volunteers who joined during the war scare in the excitement of the moment, and who evidently had no permanent taste for soldiering. Those who were enrolled under the new Act contain among their numbers many members who have been for years in the regiment, and who are of value in forming a nucleus, being trustworthy men who are fond of the profession of arms, and many of them excellent shots. I have no doubt that before the next encampment takes place the regiment will be nearly up to its strength.

The results of the musketry course were, on the whole, satisfactory. This year I have increased the number of rounds by 10, so as to include volley firing. The musketry instruction of the Southern Division will this year be under the supervision of the Staff Adjutant, and one uniform system will be carried out in all the corps. When the new rifle range is completed an impetus to recruiting will be given, as firing will be conducted at longer ranges, will take less time to carry out, and greater facility will obtain for the holding of matches. Since my last return Messrs. J. C. and G. B. Penny, E. P. Wilson, and G. Richardson have received lieutenants' commissions in the regiment, and have just passed, with one exception, satisfactory examination for confirmation in their rank. The Commanding Officer, Major O'Boyle, is assiduous in the performance of his duty, and has worked the regiment up to a very fair state of proficiency, which did not fail to show itself at the camp of exercise, where the field firing was satisfactory. In this regiment 35 men out of 80 who joined in the "war scare" resigned when it became necessary to enrol for a fixed term.

Launceston Rifle Regiment.

The men of this regiment have been slower in recruiting than those of the Launceston Artillery. The number of efficient at the end of the year was 134; at present the strength is 105 out of a total establishment of 201. The Instructor, Sergt.-Major Welsh, is indefatigable in his endeavour to recruit for the corps, but I fear that until the new rifle range is opened the numbers will not be made up, for the men have had no regular musketry course during the past two years, and they have lost interest in their work.

The regiment did well at the Easter Encampment. It is frequently drilled by the Officer Commanding the Northern Division, and on the whole the men turn out very smartly at my quarterly inspection, the Commanding Officer, Major Aikenhead, striving always to ensure the greatest possible amount of proficiency in his regiment. The weakness of the companies, however, militates against satisfactory manœuvring.

The officers are one captain and two lieutenants short of the establishment, the vacancies caused last year by addition of the 3rd company not having yet been filled up.

Cadets.

The Cadet Company attached to the regiment is now in excess of its establishment of 75. Occasionally recruits join the regiment from the company, and it is a valuable recruiting ground for the ranks. The lads deserve great credit for mustering so strongly at the Encampment. Their general conduct was good, and they entered with a good will into the routine of camp life, acquitting themselves likewise in a satisfactory manner at the various parades I had them at. The company is to be armed with the Martini-Henry carbine, and when the range is open the lads will doubtless take a great interest in rifle shooting, which will be productive of excellent results.

School Cadet Corps.

Two very creditable Cadet corps have been started at the Hutchins School and Christ College through the praiseworthy exertions of the head masters. The Hutchins School corps was the first organised; the boys are very well drilled, having Sergt.-Major Reid, R.A., for their instructor. I have inspected them several times, and been much pleased with the steady manner in which the lads went through their drill and bayonet exercise. Mr. W. Buckland is the officer in charge of the corps.

The Christ College corps was started at the latter end of last year, and has Sergt.-Major Alderton for instructor. It has made satisfactory progress for the short time that it has been organised. Both corps appeared on parade at the Queen's Birthday review and acquitted themselves creditably in the march past.

Reserve Force.

On the 30th of June last the strength of the reserves in Hobart was 188, and in Launceston 59; the latter was, however, a paper number, as never more than 40 have assembled on parade. Many members who enrolled for one year retired at the expiration of that term, and as a matter of course there are as yet few available for enrolling under the Act, which stipulates an efficient service of 3 years in the active branch. The term of service in the Reserves is two years, which will make a total term of five years in both branches. The strength of the corps is now 115 in Hobart and 32 in Launceston. Attendance at the Camp by the Reserves was not compulsory, as no pay is drawn by them, and they were not called out under the Army Discipline Act. Forty-seven members from Hobart, however, attended, including most of the officers, the detachment being under the command of Colonel Bernard. The conduct of the men, and the work performed by them under their zealous and experienced Commanding Officer, was very satisfactory.

The men at present in the corps are of good physique and are well drilled, Colonel Bernard having taken great pains to make every man under his command proficient in his work.

The state of the Artillery companies, A and B, is not as it should be; they are very much below their strength, the reason being, apparently, that the men do not like the monotony of gun-drill, and officers cannot be obtained, owing to their not being able to give the necessary time to the study of Artillery duties. The Artillery are instructed by Sergt.-Major Reid, R.A., and assemble for gun-drill at the Queen's Battery.

The Launceston company has considerably fallen below the establishment, as a good many men did not re-enrol on the expiration of their first term. This company has, I regret to say, not prospered as it should have done. There has been a want of interest taken in their work by the men, and the Commanding Officer does not seem to have the time necessary for drill and instructing a body of men, who, when they enrolled, were not in that state of efficiency existent in a Reserve formed from a force actually serving.

Country Rifle Clubs.

During the past few months Rifle Clubs have been formed under the new Defence Act throughout the Country. Ten Clubs are already in existence, and the movement gives signs of steady progression. Colonel Bernard has been appointed Superintendent of these Clubs, and has worked assiduously in their organization. Snider rifles have been supplied to, and a certain amount of ammunition purchased by, the members of each Club; ranges are being constructed in each Club-district, and targets are shortly to be distributed, when musketry will be at once commenced. The Instructor of the Reserve Force, Sergt.-Major Rafferty, late of the 45th Regiment, has been appointed to instruct the Clubs in musketry; and I have laid down a modified course of instruction and firing exercise to enable members to class as efficient. The movement will be very beneficial in teaching the people of the country to use a rifle properly, and learn to shoot efficiently; but if the Clubs can be induced to learn a certain amount of drill, at the same time providing themselves with a uniform, the basis of a second line of defence will at once be formed, which will be very valuable in time of war. There is a desire to organise themselves in this manner on the part of one or two of the Clubs, and it is to be hoped that the example may be followed by others. If transport and rations be allowed by the Government, some of the Corps will go into Camp with the active force, and there they will be able to reap the benefit of a short military training.

I append a report from the Superintendent on the Clubs already formed. (Marked A.)

Mounted Infantry.

I strongly recommend the organization of a small corps of mounted Infantry either in the Campbell Town or Longford districts. Victoria has recognized the immense importance of mounted Infantry in modern tactical operations, and in that Colony there is a large body of men equipped for this service. I anticipate no difficulty whatever in raising a corps of 30 men, provided the Government will give them arms and equipment, horse and personal, and a small capitation to assist in payment for uniform. I am in receipt of a complete set of photographs showing the equipment, and kindly forwarded by the Officer Commanding this Force in Victoria.

Match for Champion Medal.

This match, the grand shooting event in the year, took place at Hobart on the 19th and 20th March, when 53 competitors fired for the gold medal at the Sandy Bay Range. The firing was on the whole satisfactory, averaging "centre" shooting for those who fired through all the stages. Lieutenant Watchorn, of the Tasmanian Rifle Regiment, who won the medal last year, was again the successful competitor, scoring 77 points out of a possible 84. He was followed by Corporal Lloyd, of the Reserves, with 76 points, Staff-Sergeant Lovett, of the Tasmanian Rifle Regiment, being third, with 75 points. Seven competitions were held prior to the match in order to qualify men to shoot, none scoring below 60 points being allowed to compete for the medal. The Northern men laboured under the disadvantage of having had no practice beyond the above-mentioned competitions.

Intercolonial Match.

A team, composed of two members of the Launceston Artillery, five of the Tasmanian Rifle Regiment, two from the Launceston Rifles, and three from the Reserves, proceeded to Melbourne in November last to compete in the Intercolonial Match. Major Davies was in charge, with Captain Walch as assistant. The Match was fired during the week 23rd to 28th November, the Tasmanian team taking third place.

Staff.

The officers serving on the Staff are:—Lt.-Colonel Warner, Commanding Northern Division; Colonel Bernard, Superintendent Rifle Clubs; Captain Wallack, Staff Adjutant; Lieut. Mathieson, Staff Officer and Superintendent Torpedo Defences.

Lt.-Colonel Warner zealously commands the force in the North, and continues to take the warmest interest in its welfare. In common with myself he is most anxious to have the new Rifle Range made, which will be the means of filling up the corps under his immediate command to their proper strength. I receive every support from him in all matters of discipline and interior economy connected with the division, and its smartness at Camp reflects much credit on his work.

Colonel Bernard, besides commanding the Reserve Forces, has undertaken the organization (as heretofore mentioned) of the Country Rifle Clubs.

The circular based on the new Regulations, which was in the first instance issued by him to Members of Parliament in connection with the formation of clubs in their districts, has had an excellent effect, and the effective system of office work which he has introduced at Head Quarters will lead to a sound organization of this branch of the Defence Force.

Captain Wallack rendered good service last year as paid Adjutant of the Reserve Force, working with zeal under his Commanding Officer to make the Corps efficient. On the issue of the new Regulations and a re-organization of my Staff, in accordance with their provisions he was removed to the General Staff, and is now charged, under my supervision, with all matters connected with the drill and discipline of the various Corps, and with the instruction of musketry of all corps in the South. An uniform system for this important branch of military instruction has been introduced for all corps, and I anticipate good results from Captain Wallack's supervision. He was acting Brigade-Major at the Camp, and worked very hard in the performance of his duties. When the Permanent Force is enrolled he will have command of it.

Lieutenant Mathieson arrived from England in January. I have placed the immediate supervision of the Forts and their armament, their upkeep and repairs, under him, in the same manner as the R.E. Officer of a "District" in England. All matters dealing with stores and equipment for all services are immediately under him. He has likewise the superintendence of the Torpedo branch of the service. In this connection he comes out with high recommendations from General Steward, and valuable testimonials from professional Officers at Home; he is the inventor of much of the

material and appliances used in submarine mining and electric lighting, and I apprehend that his services in connection with the Torpedo Defences will be a gain to the Colony. He gives me every satisfaction in the performance of his staff duties.

The Staff of Instructors has received an addition in the arrival from England of Sergeant-Major Brown, R.A., who has come out to the Colony as Instructor and Sergeant-Major of the Permanent Force. He has taken over the duties of Master Gunner from Mr. Chisholm. He was in the Instructor Staff at the School of Gunnery, Shoeburyness; and, prior to coming out here, was sent, in accordance with my recommendation on applying for an Instructor, to Elswick, to be initiated into the Hydro-Pneumatic System of Mounting; and he has now charge of the machinery of the guns in Alexandra Battery.

The following Return shows the number of Efficient in the Force, exclusive of Launceston Cadet Corps, on the 31st of December last, as compared with 471 in December, 1884; viz. :—

Launceston Artillery	69
Southern Tasmanian Artillery.....	143
Torpedo Corps	70
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment	157
Launceston Rifle Regiment	134
Reserves.....	168
Garrison Band	17
TOTAL.....	<u>758</u>

It is right to mention that all the Reserves have been authorised as Efficient, as the Corps is a new one, and there were many expenses incurred in clothing it, and which had to be met.

The strength of the Force on the 19th July was as follows :—

Launceston Artillery... ..	52
Southern Tasmanian Artillery	76
Torpedo Corps	75
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment	151
Launceston Rifle Regiment	105
Cadet Corps, attached to ditto	86
Reserves.....	147
Garrison Band	19
Staff	4
	<u>715</u>

Defences.—Land.

The armament of the forts is in good order, and the works in good repair. The equipment of the guns has been made up to the proportions recommended by me and authorised by the Minister, with the exception of a few rounds for the 70-prs. and 35 rounds a gun for the 64-pr. guns, expected from England for the Queen's Battery. I have applied for the amount, which is now deficient (under the augmented proportions), in the Estimates for next year, and I trust that Parliament will pass it, as it is of the highest importance that the Colony should keep up an adequate proportion of ammunition for every gun, on the sea-front particularly.

The machinery of the hydro-pneumatic guns is in good order; it is worked once a week, and the cylinders retain their pressure well. Glycerine, which has been imported for the purpose, will be substituted for water, and will work better than the latter fluid.

An official from the Design office at Elswick was sent out to the colonies by the firm for the purpose of inspecting and proving the new machinery put up in connection with the H.-P. system. He visited Tasmania first, and spent some weeks here overhauling the machinery in the Alexandra Battery, and, after repacking the glands of the valves, witnessed some experimental firing on the 17th and 29th of December. The behaviour of the carriages was all that could be desired, and the shooting of the guns admirable. The range on the first day was 4800 yards, and the second, 5150 and 7000 yards, and every round produced the best results. Mr. Dacres' services were very valuable in affording tuition in the care and upkeep of the carriages. Before leaving he furnished a report on the work which he did here, and highly commended the manner in which the machinery had been put together.

A bomb-proof shelter has recently been constructed for the pumps and other stores in the Alexandra Battery, which provides the additional storage room which was formerly required for this *matériel*.

The armament for the land defence of this fortification and the battery at Kangaroo Bluff, and which, when mounted, will greatly increase the strength of the positions, has not yet arrived in the Colony. Its early acquisition is a matter of vital importance, as war may not be far distant. The guns are being made, but the best system of mounting has not yet been finally determined upon. The report which I have recently furnished you on the subject will, it is to be hoped, enable our Military Adviser to proceed with the order without delay. The machine-guns made for the Colony have been tried, and are shortly to be shipped for Hobart.

The concrete glacis of the emplacement of No. 4 gun has to be continued to the corner of the parapet in order to get extreme left training without undue concussion to the work when the gun is fired. This will be done this year if the funds allow of it; but in the meantime an important addition to the emplacement of No. 3 gun is to be undertaken, with your permission.

The 64-pounder converted guns have not yet arrived; considerable delay in the "conversion" took place owing to the question of its gift to the Colony having been some time in abeyance.

The Brown's Bluff Battery for the protection of the guns destined to defend the approach to Launceston has not yet been commenced owing to delays in acquiring the land and right of way from the main road. I have prepared plans for a suitable earthwork, and when the land has been conveyed to Government the work can be commenced. The "ground" mines and cable intended for the defence of the river have arrived. I have referred in former reports to the defences of the Tamar, and I have nothing further to add while funds are not available for carrying out the scheme. The 12-pounder guns already requisitioned for are much required to complete the equipment of the Launceston Artillery as a field force.

The upkeep of the forts and armament, or what is technically called the "district work," is carried on as in the Imperial Service. Each of the forts is in sub-charge of a storeman, who acts as district gunner, and has to attend to the upkeep of all stores; a report is furnished once a fortnight from the Acting Master Gunner, who personally sees the guns shifted in the regulation manner; the Staff Officer to whom this report is rendered inspects the batteries and armament once a month, and I myself pay frequent visits to all parts of the "district."

Electric Light.

In place of the dynamo first supplied by the Electric Light Company, a more powerful machine has been mounted in the light-house. The lamps, however, though altered by the company, were not satisfactory, and are now replaced by new ones lately received from England. A powerful dynamo has also been received from England, with which it is intended to light up the Derwent, below the batteries, when funds are procurable for the engine to drive it with. It would be best employed in a barge, to be either moored or kept moving, below the Alexandra Battery in time of war. This is a step which is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a hostile vessel from ascending the river at night, and I trust that, at no distant date, this matter will receive the attention its importance warrants. I propose to ask Government for the money for the purchase of the engine in next half-year's estimates.

The enclosure and bomb-proof observing-station, for use with the electric light now in use, is about to be commenced.

Defences—Marine.

Since my last report the torpedo boat was tried at the measured mile, for report by the Inspector of Machinery on her engines. The speed obtained was 15 knots, and it would have been greater had the stoker understood firing the boiler properly, but on each run the pressure was allowed to drop and the speed slackened. The boat was driven by Mr. Pitfield, the engineer, who has driven her on former occasions.

The dropping gear and Whitehead torpedoes have recently arrived; the former can be fitted to the boat at once, she having been strengthened for the purpose by the builders in anticipation of her having to carry Whiteheads. On the 26th of November last I addressed you concerning the erection of a shop for the Whiteheads and air compressors, and I trust this work will shortly be commenced. There has been some great delay in forwarding the Whiteheads to the colony, so that they arrived long after the naval artificer for their management and upkeep came out. I have endeavoured to employ him in miscellaneous ways connected with the boat and the submarine mining department; of the former he has charge, as regards the upkeep of the machinery.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

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

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

(A.)

REPORT ON COUNTRY RIFLE CLUBS IN TASMANIA.

Hobart, 17th August, 1886.

1. The Department was formed on the 10th May, 1886. On that date an office room was provided, and a Sergeant Instructor was appointed, Colonel Bernard, a retired officer of the Bengal Staff Corps, being appointed Superintendent.

2. On the 13th May about 150 circulars were despatched to Members of the two Houses of Legislature and to Magistrates.

3. Up to date 10 Clubs have been formed; namely,—Scottsdale, Mersey, Midlands, Ulverstone, Bothwell, Forth, Derwent, Channel, Latrobe, Southern Channel. These have a total of 325 active members, and a few honorary. The Derwent Club has branch Clubs at the Ouse and at Macquarie Plains.

4. Other Clubs are in course of formation.

5. The entrance fee is Ten shillings. The annual subscription is also Ten shillings.

6. Clubs have to provide themselves with ranges, butts, marker's mantlets, flags, discs; to defray all charges for transport of arms, accoutrements, ammunition, and targets.

7. The adoption of a uniform is optional, but if adopted the cost has to be borne by the Club.

8. Seventy rounds ammunition per man is provided annually by Government free of charge (except for return carriage of empty boxes), for the purpose of the members going through a prescribed course of musketry. Ammunition for matches and private practice is sold to members at the same rate as paid by members of Volunteer Corps.

9. Drill is entirely optional; but the Sergeant Instructor will visit the different Clubs to impart instruction in musketry theory and practice, and care of the rifle, and also to teach company drill and skirmishing to those wishing it.

10. Targets are provided for by item 59, Defence Estimates. It is proposed to supply the minimum number of three plates at first, to be subsequently increased to five plates. The price of each plate is about £6.

11. Clubs whose headquarters are in the same locality as a police station will be provided with an arm-rack, of 10 stand, to be kept in the police station, for the convenience of members who reside at a distance from the range or place of meeting. The cost of these racks to be defrayed from item 59, Defence Estimates.

12. There is a feeling that the expense of transport for arms, accoutrements, and targets (the latter very heavy) should not be thrown on a Club.

The expenses the first year—for erecting butts, markers' mantlets having iron-plated doors, and for target platform,—are considerable, and leave but little if any funds available for rifle matches.

In spite, however, of these drawbacks, several of the Clubs have commenced drilling with great spirit, and have commenced rifle matches; and I have every reason to hope that, by a fairly liberal expenditure of public money, the movement will become widespread and popular.

H. BERNARD, *Colonel, Superintendent Country Rifle Clubs.*

The Colonel Commandant, Tasmanian Defence Force.