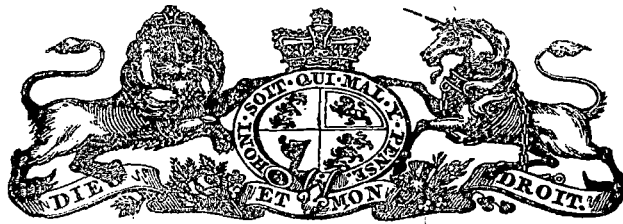


(No. 93.)



1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

TASMANIAN DEFENCE FORCE :

COMMANDANT'S REPORT.

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



TASMANIAN DEFENCE FORCES.

Head Quarters Office, 15th July, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward my Report on the Tasmanian Defence Forces for the period extending from 3rd July, 1884 (the date of my last Report), up to the present time.

Tasmanian Engineers.

Evening parades of this Corps were continued throughout the year twice a week, with extra parades as the work rendered it necessary. On Saturday, the 29th November, the Corps was called out for its annual training, which lasted till the end of the year. A mine field, consisting of sixteen electro-contact mines, was laid down on a portion of the established line of Torpedo defence, and connected to an observing station and test-room of a temporary nature, which was erected in November, and which is still kept in use. This test-room was fitted up in a very complete manner by the Instructor, on the pattern used in the Service, and was inspected by Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley during his visit to this country in the early part of the year. The General expressed himself pleased with the fittings and arrangements of the room. The mines were left down until the end of January to test their buoyancy, which was satisfactory. In addition to this field, laid down for purposes of exercise, two live mines, charged with 100 lbs. gun cotton and 100 lbs. gunpowder respectively, were laid on the line-of-mine system, with a raft moored between them. These were fired from the test-room on the day appointed for the experiments to close the annual training. The work done throughout the training by the Corps was very satisfactory in all three sections—submarine miners, testers, and signallers. Mention must not be omitted here of the fact that the Tasmanian Corps is the only Australian one which has hitherto followed the course of work carried out in the Imperial Service, and which consists in the preparation and laying down of a mine-field, with all its intricate work and details. At the end of the year 1884 the efficient strength of the Corps was 50 officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men.

Volunteer
Military
Force.

The large amount of steamer and boat work necessary during a course of submarine mining had again to be performed last year by the s.s. *Pearl*, which is in no way fitted for the work, and great inconvenience was consequently experienced in using her; in addition to which the charge for her service was very high. The necessity for a small steamer, termed a "miner," for the use of the Corps has been frequently pointed out by me since the rendering of my first Report on the Torpedo Corps in March, 1884, and the work can never be satisfactorily performed until the Government is in possession of such a boat. The Victorian Government has recently acquired a "Miner" at a cost of £1500, of the same pattern as that used at home, and I again recommend for the favourable consideration of the Government the acquisition of a similar boat, which might be used in various other ways for defence purposes besides submarine mining.

The attendance of the Engineer Corps at the Easter Encampment (the first of which was held this year) was not compulsory, but it was thought desirable that this branch of our Service should be represented at the Camp, and after consultation with you as to whether payment at the same rate as that granted to the rest of the Force would be allowed them, I called for volunteers to proceed to Mona Vale. This was well responded to, and 46 members assembled at the Camp, a detachment of 18 proceeding the day previously to assist in finishing the preparations for the Force. Lieutenants Burnett and

Macdonald were present with the Corps, which was employed on the Saturday in erecting an earthwork for Artillery practice, and on the Monday in taking part in the manoeuvres. It was the intention further to have employed the men in erecting a field telegraph line, but the time was too short to carry out this part of my programme.

With a view of making preparations consequent on the anticipated war with Russia, for the defence of the Derwent, the Corps was called out for training on the 15th April, and a complete mine-field was prepared. As, however, a large amount of work had to be carried out, and the time was short, it was thought advisable to employ a detachment, for the time being, continuously at day work, and fourteen members of the Corps, selected from the necessary trades, gave their services. The work carried out by the Corps I consider very satisfactory. Details concerning it have been given in my progress reports to His Excellency the Governor, written during the preparations for war, but these being of a confidential nature, I am not at liberty to say more here. The men worked zealously, and took the highest interest in their duties. Upon my recommendation to the Government at a Cabinet meeting held in April, an important increase was made in the Corps by the addition of twenty-five men. The establishment is now seventy-five, a sufficient number to allow of a detachment being sent to the North whenever torpedo operations in the River Tamar are required. The recruits were out during the training, and received instruction in signalling and in technical duties connected with their work as submarine miners. There was no difficulty whatever in forming this increase, which is a proof not only of the popularity of this service, but is also a test of the success of the three years' system as applied to the Defence Force of the Island. Upon the retirement of Captain Boddam in April the provisional command of the Corps devolved upon the senior subaltern, Lieut. Burnett, who still holds that position.

Reference to the torpedo boat will be found in my Report on the Defences of the Colony.

Volunteer Force.

During the latter half of the year the daylight system of parades was continued, with only the partial success which characterised the first half of the year, dealt with in my last Report. Difficulty was experienced in keeping the Corps up to their full strength owing to the flagging of recruiting. This, combined with insufficient musters at daylight parades, rendered the attendance on most occasions unsatisfactory; the reasons alleged by commanding officers being, as heretofore, the difficulty experienced by the men in getting away from their employments in the daytime. It became evident, therefore, that this system would not work in towns with a small population to draw upon, and the idea was therefore conceived of doing away with these periodical daylight drills and adopting an alternative Easter Camp of Exercise, strongly recommended in the eighth clause of my Reorganisation Report of May, 1884. My thanks are due to the Government for the support I received in allowing the introduction of this system, and to Parliament for authorising the required expenditure in the Estimates of 1885.

Meetings of officers were called at the end of the year to draw up, for the approval of the Government, certain modifications in the regulations for efficiency. These consisted of the attendance at the Easter Encampment of four days (with one day's leave), at the Queen's Birthday parade, at four quarterly inspections, and thirty-two evening parades. The Force is now serving under these modified rules, and I have every reason to be satisfied with the result.

A stimulus was first of all given to recruiting by the example of New South Wales in sending her contingent to Egypt, which, combined with the interest taken in the coming Easter encampment, and the martial spirit engendered in the country by the prospect of war with Russia, has filled the ranks of the various corps, compensating for the retirements which took place at the end of the year, and furnishing men for the increased strength of the Artillery Corps and the two Rifle Regiments recently sanctioned by Government.

Reserves.

An important addition to the Defence Force of the Island has been made in the independent formation of a Reserve Force in Hobart and Launceston, consisting of men who have served a certain time in the Local Forces or elsewhere. This branch of the service consists of four companies in Hobart and one in Launceston, two of the former companies

being enrolled as artillerymen, who would be entrusted with the manning of the Queen's Battery when on active service. The remaining companies are enrolled as riflemen, and the whole are armed for the present with the Snider rifle until the arrival of the Martini-Henry rifles applied for from England. The Reserve Force is under the command of Colonel Bernard, an officer of much experience, who has already worked it up to a creditable state of efficiency. A paid Adjutant, Captain Wallack, late of the 4th Battalion Middlesex Regiment of Militia, has also been appointed to this Corps. It is, however, proposed to utilise the services of this officer, who takes a zealous interest in his work, for other purposes.

It is a matter of the utmost importance that the Reserve Force should constitute a sister service to the Volunteer Force, and not an antagonistic one. It should only be recruited, as in the regular service, by men who have served for a specified period in the Volunteer Force, and who after carrying out the more arduous duties pertaining to that service, desire to retain their connection with the Forces on easier terms. If this rule be carried out all unwholesome rivalry will be prevented and a friendly spirit maintained. The appointment of a military officer of experience to the command of this Force, who, as a matter of course, is thoroughly conversant with the amenities of discipline, and is deeply sensible of the importance of maintaining a brotherly spirit between corps and corps, has had its effect upon the *morale* of both officers and men, and has, it is to be hoped, removed difficulties which in the first instance were somewhat apparent.

Respecting the work of the various Corps for the year, I have the honor to report as follows:—

Launceston Artillery.

The daylight parades of this Corps were carried out according to the Regulations of last year, and they were paraded by me at intervals towards the latter half of the year. On the 9th November practice was carried out, under Captain Collins, at Cormiston Battery, from a 7-pounder jointed rifle gun and a 12-pounder howitzer. Good shooting was made from the former gun, considering that it was the first time the men had handled a rifled field piece. The accurate shooting of the gun appeared to give great satisfaction to both officers and men. The ammunition for the 40-pounders had not arrived, and therefore all practice with these powerful guns had to be put off until the Easter Encampment. This Corps labours under great disadvantage in not having a practice ground near headquarters. Captain Collins and his Subaltern, Lieutenant Harrap, are both zealous officers, and the men, as a whole, exhibit a keen interest in their Artillery duties, but without opportunities for frequent practice the men must naturally fall behind-hand in this most essential part of an artilleryman's work.

In December last the Corps paraded with the Rifle Regiment, and took part in manœuvres in the vicinity of the town. At the commencement of the present year a number of retirements took place from the Corps on the part of men who could not attend the Easter Encampment, but before this was held their places were filled up by new recruits, and a total of 68 of all ranks were present at Mona Vale. Since the war scare additional recruits have joined, and the nominal strength is now 80 men.

I propose that the Launceston Artillery should have two 13-pounders, which would be a valuable addition to their equipment as a Field Force.

The establishment of officers is still one Lieutenant below its strength.

S. T. V. Artillery.

This Corps did not increase much during the latter part of the year, but the members of which it was composed were for the most part assiduous in attendance at their evening drills, three of which were held weekly. The attendance at the remainder of the daylight parades required by the Regulations of last year was not as satisfactory as could have been wished. A large number of the rank and file are engaged in trade in the town, and found it difficult to obtain leave from their employers to attend parades during business hours. Practice was carried on twice—viz., in October and November—in the Queen's Battery, and daylight drills were held at the Kangaroo Bluff and Alexandra Batteries. Shortly before the Easter Encampment there was an increase in the Corps, but it was not until the commencement of the war scare that the strength was materially increased, a good class of recruits coming forward. On my recommendation the establishment was increased to 170 in Hobart. In addition to this number a detachment has been formed at Bellerive, the limit of which is fixed at 30 men, making the total strength 200. Daylight parades have been held on several occasions since the middle of April at Kangaroo Bluff Battery, where the men have been drilled in the mechanical loading service of

the 8-inch guns with satisfactory results. The men have shown considerable aptitude in acquiring a knowledge of this drill, but under ordinary circumstances the opportunities are insufficient to secure proficiency, and a permanent force will be necessary to properly man guns of this nature.

The officers of the Corps are Major Evans (recently promoted to that rank) and Lieut. Bennison, in both of whom the same zeal for the service continues which I had the pleasure of bringing to the notice of the Government last year. I greatly regret having to report the death of two officers during the year—viz., Lieuts. Harvey and Lewis—which has still further reduced the establishment, which is now deficient to the extent of two captains and three subalterns. Mr. Featherstone, who is about to be appointed to the Bellerive detachment, will, however, supply one of these vacancies. The Commanding Officer has endeavoured to induce gentlemen to come forward to fill the vacancies, but I am informed that the expense of keeping up the position of an artillery officer, and the time necessary to be devoted to the profession of an artilleryman, prevents candidates from presenting themselves.

Arrangements have been made, regimentally, by the Commanding Officer, for the enrolment of all members for a period of twelve months. By this means a fair amount of proficiency in training and drill can be obtained.

The newly appointed Instructor, Sergeant-Major Reid, arrived on 18th September, 1884, and gives satisfaction in the discharge of his Artillery duties.

T. V. Rifle Regiment.

The requisite number of daylight Parades necessary for efficiency were carried out by this Regiment, some under the supervision of the Commanding Officer, some under my own. The musters were generally small, but those who were able to attend evinced a satisfactory interest in their work. The system of field firing introduced at the commencement of the year was continued on several occasions with blank and ball cartridge. The only locality available for the latter was Kangaroo Bluff Battery, on the parapets of which the canvas targets were erected. On the 9th November a field day was held of the Artillery and Rifle Regiments combined. An attack movement on the Battery, which was defended by the artillery, was carried out, and at the close of the day practice with ball cartridge, preliminary to shooting for a prize, was carried out at the above targets. On the 29th December a prize was shot for, the Regiment being divided into two companies, the number of rounds per man served out being 5. The winning score made by Nos. 1 and 2 companies combined was 90 points, the firing being conducted at four ranges, and the time allowed 30 seconds at each. This was an excellent result, and gave proof of the shooting capabilities of many members of the Regiment.

Shortly before the Easter Encampment a number of recruits joined, more than supplying the places of those who resigned at the beginning of the year. The new valise equipment recently imported was served out and fitted. The Volunteers of Tasmania are in this respect ahead of their brethren in England as well as the Militia, the former having no equipment, and the latter the old fashioned knapsack. The wearing of the equipment at the Easter Encampment was, on the whole, creditable, but in order that it may be put on in a soldier-like manner frequent parades require to be held with it. To this end the Commanding Officer has been instructed to keep it in store so that it may be fitted on under the superintendence of the Officers, Sergeant-Major, and the Colour-Sergeants when required to be worn. At present the storage accommodation for this purpose is insufficient.

In the months of April and May the Regiment was again considerably augmented, and permission was obtained from the Government to increase the Regimental establishment by one company. A sum of money having been voted for payment of members who might be induced to attend daylight parades, a course of instruction in field work was carried out, and the Regiment manœuvred in various localities of importance in the vicinity of Hobart, the men turning out on each occasion for an entire day's work. Entrenchments were thrown up in the vicinity of the Alexandra Battery as an outlying defence. Considerable aptitude was shown by the men in this work, which was completed by a working party of the Regiment. The practice gained here, I consider, was very valuable as a training for actual war. One company of the Regiment is equipped with the Wallace spade, with which such excellent work has recently been done in Egypt. A sufficient supply of this tool for the equipment of both Regiments is in store.

Since my last Report some promotions have taken place in the Regiment. Captain Davies, now Major in the Reserves, retired on taking his seat as a Member of Parliament. Captain O'Boyle was promoted from "Captain Commanding" to the rank of Major. Lieutenants Reid and Addison passed their examinations for the rank of Captain, and have been accordingly promoted. The Fourth Company is provisionally commanded by Lieutenant Freeman, and a nomination of officers will shortly take place to fill up the vacancies existing in the rank of Lieutenants.

As a Commanding Officer Major O'Boyle gives me every satisfaction; he takes a deep interest in his Corps, and seems very desirous to promote its efficiency. The attendance of all officers at parades has been satisfactory, and a very fair amount of proficiency has been shown in the discharge of their duties. It would be desirable to have paid Adjutants for the two Infantry Corps, whose abilities and time should be entirely devoted to the interior economy and instruction of the Regiment.

Launceston Rifle Regiment.

The remarks made as regards daylight parades in the Southern Rifle Regiment are applicable to this Regiment, the difficulty in getting the men to attend being almost still greater in Launceston. The attendance of some of the officers, both at daylight and evening parades, was not as it should be. Some morning parades were, however, well attended, both by officers and men; at one of which field movements were carried out in the outskirts of Launceston by myself, with satisfactory results. On the 13th December, at the parade mentioned in the Report on the Launceston Artillery, the attendance of this Regiment was good, and the company officers exhibited considerable skill in manœuvring their companies in the attack movements included in the programme. Several afternoon parades were likewise held by the Commanding Officer, Major Aikenhead, in which he instructed the Regiment in attack and defence movements.

Owing to the erection of houses in the rear of the Rifle Butts, and the consequent complaints of the occupiers—some of which, however, were found on investigation to be much exaggerated—I was compelled to stop the musketry practice to a great extent, limiting the firing of recruits to 150 yards, and that of marksmen and trained men of the first class to 400 yards. The proper course of musketry for 1884 has, therefore, not been carried out, and the Regiment labours under a great disadvantage in this respect.

At the commencement of the year resignations took place, which reduced somewhat the strength of the Regiment; but shortly before the Easter Encampment a much healthier spirit exhibited itself—a number of recruits came forward, and both officers and men took a warm interest in the drills and exercises preparatory to going into camp. In the month of April the prospect of war still further enhanced the military spirit; and I was enabled, with the permission of the Government, to form a Third Company. The establishment is now, therefore, 180, and the new company is being gradually filled up.

Officers have been nominated to fill up the vacancy caused by the retirement of Lieutenant Hobkirk and the formation of this company, and have been provisionally appointed, pending their examination.

Several daylight parades, with payment, as in Hobart, were held for instruction during April and May, but the Volunteers in Launceston were only able to muster during the afternoons, which very much reduced the value of these parades as regards time. The business occupations of many of the men in Launceston apparently prevented them from attending these parades as readily as their comrades in Hobart. This circumstance is much to be regretted, as the Launceston Regiment is comparatively weak in numbers.

The valise equipment has been issued to this Regiment, and the remarks as to practice in the wearing of it made in respect of the Southern Regiment will equally apply.

The want of a band was much felt last year, and one has now been organised through the exertions of Major Aikenhead, which is attached to this Regiment for discipline and training. The band is well equipped with instruments, and has made very creditable progress since its formation under Bandmaster Bryan.

The Commanding Officer, Major Aikenhead, is zealous in his efforts to maintain the efficiency of the Regiment, and I can report favorably upon the performance of their duties by the company officers.

Thirty-one members of the Cadet Corps attached to this Regiment attended the Camp, and I had every reason to be satisfied with the discipline of the lads and their uniform good conduct. They performed a fair amount of the routine duty of the Encampment.

Reserves.

The Head Quarters of this Corps are at Hobart, where, since their enrolment, they have assembled twice weekly under their zealous Commanding Officer for drill and exercise, the attendances being very creditable, as under the terms of their enrolment the Reserves are only required to muster once a month. Detachments of non-commissioned officers have also been formed for instruction in gun drill preparatory to putting the rank and file through a course. The division has paraded under my command on three occasions, and I have had every reason to be satisfied with their general appearance and efficiency. The Launceston company was formed at a later date than those of Hobart, and have only been recently clothed; they have not had, therefore, as much opportunity for drill as their comrades in the South, but they are progressing satisfactorily under their Commanding Officer, Captain Reid, formerly of the Launceston Artillery.

The Easter Encampment.

The military event of the year has been the holding of an Encampment at Easter, whereby both divisions of the Force were brought together for four days' practical training, the results of which on the whole bearing of the Force have been very marked. The good effects produced by the emulation aroused between the two divisions were observable some time prior to the holding of the Encampment, by the increased amount of drill spontaneously carried on in preparation for it. The main object was to make the Encampment a training in military work, and for this reason a suitable locality for the exercise of both Artillery and Infantry had to be chosen, and this was found at Mona Vale, the extensive open ground on which estate was kindly placed at the disposal of the country by Mr. Kermode. This central locality was popular with both divisions, a fact which had to be taken into serious consideration, inasmuch as, according to new Regulations, non-attendance at the Camp meant non-efficiency; and again, had the attendance been unsatisfactory, the character of the manœuvres would have been seriously interfered with, as the Force was numerically weak. A splendid land range for Artillery exists at Mona Vale, and the practice with the new rifled guns was quite the feature of the Encampment, and highly instructive for this branch of the service. The undulating open country presents a magnificent field for the training of Infantry in all respects, and these advantages, I consider, fully compensated for the difficulties arising from a night train service for the transport of men, material, and supplies. This, coupled with the large amount of preparatory work which had to be carried out up to the last moment, owing to the small staff of men at my disposal, naturally interfered somewhat with the interior economy of the Camp on the first day, but as soon as officers and non-commissioned officers understood the carrying out of the Regulations issued for the daily routine of the Camp everything worked smoothly, and by the evening of the first day the various Corps had settled down to work.

The Northern Division arrived on the ground about midnight, and the Southern Division about 2 A.M. on Good Friday, both Forces being conveyed by special trains placed at my disposal by the Manager of the Main Line Railway (C. H. Grant, Esq.), who, with his staff, did everything in their power to facilitate transport, and assist in carrying out my plans.

On the morning of Good Friday work was commenced at 7 A.M., and three parades a day were carried out until Monday evening, when the Camp was struck at 5 P.M., after the entire Force had been reviewed by the Hon. the Premier. The work at these parades included shell practice at earthworks, in which dummies were placed to show the effect of shrapnel fire on gun detachments. The practice made by both Northern and Southern Artillery was excellent. Still more instructive and interesting was the transport of the screw-gun into the hills by means of the pack equipment, for which horses were hired at Ross, and carrying out of shell practice from the hilly position so taken up. This is the first occasion on which such service has been carried out in the colonies. The Infantry branch of the Force were exercised in battalion drill, brigade movements, entrenching, attack and defence, outpost duty, and ball firing.

Owing to the heavy programme to be carried out, and the fatigue to which the men were subjected, I had only one night alarm, which was very successful, the whole Force being under arms and ready for work in about seven minutes.

On Sunday morning a Church Parade was held, and in the afternoon I minutely inspected the Camp and found everything in excellent order. After the inspection the whole Camp was exercised in striking and re-pitching tents, which was very smartly carried out.

Although a member of the Force was dismissed for a very serious military offence, the conduct of the Volunteers, and their submission to discipline whilst in Camp, was highly creditable; and at the close of the training the soldierly bearing acquired during this short period was most noticeable. I cannot, however, report favourably in all cases of the conduct of my Non-commissioned Staff, from whom I expected a perfect example.

My staff consisted of Captain Boddam as Brigade-Major, Captain Hunt as Assistant Quartermaster-General, and Major Just as Assistant Commissary-General, each of which officers ably assisted me in carrying out the work of the Camp. The services of the latter officer were acquired especially for the occasion, and upon him devolved the largest share in preparations for the transport of supplies and equipment.

With a view to the assembling of a larger Force at future Encampments, additional Camp equipment has been ordered from England, which will complete requirements for one thousand men. As regards marquees and the larger description of tents required at the Encampment, considerable difficulty and expense were experienced in hiring, and both Hobart and Launceston had to be drawn upon. These marquees, &c. will now be provided from England, of regulation pattern.

The total muster on marching into camp was 495, and the marching-out state, inclusive of staff and men on leave for the day, was as follows:—

	<i>Present.</i>	<i>Absent.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
S.T.V. Artillery.....	83	9	92
Launceston Artillery.....	68	1	69
Tasmanian Engineers.....	46	—	46
T.V. Rifle Regiment.....	138	19	157
Launceston Rifle Regiment....	111	—	111
Launceston Cadets.....	31	—	31
	<u>477</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>506</u>

Quarterly Inspections.

In accordance with the new Regulations for this year, quarterly inspections of all the Corps have been held, at which the attendance has been satisfactory. The second inspection of the Launceston Rifles was held during my absence in Sydney by Colonel Warner, arrangements having so far progressed that the date could not be postponed. General parades of both divisions were held at Hobart and Launceston on the Queen's Birthday. The attendance in both places was very satisfactory. At Hobart the Southern Division, consisting of two batteries of Artillery, the Engineer Corps, the Rifle Regiment, and the Reserves, were brigaded in the Domain and reviewed by His Excellency the Governor after the usual Royal Salute and *feu de joie* had been fired. His Excellency addressed the Force at the conclusion of the review, expressing himself highly gratified at the manner in which the various evolutions were performed. This was the first occasion on which the whole Force had been brigaded together in daylight, except at the church parade on the previous day, and I had every reason to be satisfied with the steadiness of the men under arms. The total muster at this parade was 525 of all ranks.

Quarterly Church Parades have been held at Hobart since the date of my last report, and at Launceston since the commencement of the year, which gives me an additional opportunity of inspecting the men in daylight, and the men a chance of turning out together at a full dress parade.

Rifle Ranges.

The want of proper Rifle Ranges both at Hobart and Launceston militates greatly against the proper training of the men in rifle shooting, which is of more importance than anything else in such a small Force as this. At Launceston I endeavoured last year to obtain a suitable range on the Trevallyn estate, but owing to the opposition of the owner negotiations fell through. Another site to the eastward of the town has now been settled upon, where, however, the acquisition of the necessary land appears to be a matter of some difficulty. It is to be hoped, notwithstanding, that the Government will be enabled to purchase a strip sufficient for the service of the Forces of the North and of the National Rifle Association about to be formed.

At Hobart the range accommodation is quite inadequate to requirements, as no breadth of ground can be obtained in the locality now used at Sandy Bay, and the Macquarie Point range is only fit for recruit firing. I have searched the whole country in the vicinity of Hobart, but, so far, have been unable to discover a suitable piece of ground without incurring the expense of travelling. No land with sufficient breadth can be obtained anywhere but at Kangaroo Point, where, I apprehend, the frequent crossing of the steamers and the low rate of fare would cause less inconvenience than a lengthy trip by rail.

Bands.

The former regimental Band at Hobart has been organised as a Garrison Band, under the supervision of Bandmaster Clerke, and is making good progress. The Launceston Band I have already referred to in my report on the Rifle Regiment. A sum of money has been authorised for a Band in connection with the Reserve Force, which is now in course of formation.

Gymnastic Instruction.

In all parts of the world instruction in gymnastics is now considered an important element in the training of recruits; in fact, it is looked upon as absolutely necessary for the development of physique, the gymnasium being an essential part of every garrison. I trust that, ere long, steps may be taken by the Government to introduce a similar system in connection with the Defence Force in this Colony. In Launceston a Regimental Gymnasium has been started, but tuition is not compulsory, as the Institution is not yet recognised by Government.

Staff.

The Staff at present consists of Lieut.-Colonel Warner, commanding the Northern Division; Colonel Bernard, commanding the Reserve Force; Captain Hunt, Staff Officer Northern Division; Major Just, who is acting as Staff Officer at Head Quarters; and Captain Wallack, Adjutant of the Reserve Force.

During the year Lieut.-Colonel Home, formerly commanding in the North, retired, after a year's sick leave, and was placed upon the unattached list with the full rank of Colonel. This officer's retirement is greatly to be regretted, as during many years' service he always took the warmest interest in all matters connected with the Volunteers. Unfortunately his health prevented him from resuming duty, and no other course was open to him but to retire. His place, however, is well filled by Colonel Warner, an infantry officer of experience and ability, who is most zealous in keeping up the Force in the North to a state of efficiency.

The Northern Staff Officer, Captain Hunt, was referred to as an excellent officer in every way in my report of last year. In matters of organisation his services are especially valuable. Since the appointment of Lt.-Colonel Warner his clerical duties have been materially reduced, and I had hoped to have seen him employed as Adjutant to the Launceston Rifle Regiment and the Reserve, in which capacity his services would have been useful to the Officer commanding the Northern Division in undertaking the drill and training of those corps.

Captain Boddam's retirement, consequent upon his having been appointed Engineer Officer in New Zealand, has deprived the Colony of the services of a scientific officer of ability, who carried out all the work usually performed by a Royal Engineer Officer in the construction of the fortifications of the Derwent. In this respect his services to the Colony have been most valuable. Since this officer's absence the correspondence of the Head Quarters Office, which has been very heavy owing to the increase of the Forces and the preparations for war, has been carried out under my direction by Major Just, whose services to me at this juncture have been invaluable. A Royal Engineer Officer to act as my adviser in torpedo defences and as Engineer at the fortifications, to superintend the sub-marine work of the Engineer Corps, and to act as Staff Officer, has been applied for, but I regret to learn that considerable difficulty will be experienced in procuring such an officer for the Colony, owing to the high salary which members of the scientific corps of the service now require.

The addition of Colonel Bernard to the Staff has been an important one, owing to his experience as a Commanding Officer. I have referred to his services in connection with the Reserve Force.

Efficiency.

The following tables show the efficient strength of the various Corps on the 31st December, 1884, and the total strength of the Force on the 30th June, 1885:—

EFFICIENTS, 31st December, 1884.

<i>Corps.</i>	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>N.C. Officers and Men.</i>
S.T.V. Artillery	3	99
Tasmanian Engineers	3	47
T.V. Rifle Regiment	9	105
Launceston Artillery	2	70
Launceston Rifle Regiment	5	103
Launceston Cadets	—	47
TOTAL		471

STRENGTH of Defence Force, 30th June, 1885.

<i>CORPS.</i>	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Warrant and N.C. Officers.</i>	<i>Band, Buglers, & Trumpeters.</i>	<i>Rank and File.</i>	<i>TOTAL.</i>	
Staff	6	6	...	...	12	
Launceston Volunteer Artillery	2	7	1	69	79	
Launceston Rifle Regiment	11	14	25	128	178	
Launceston Reserve Force	2	3	...	54	59	
S.T.V. Artillery, including Bellerive } Detachment	4	14	3	161	182	} Bellerive Detachment, 26.
Tasmanian Engineers	3	7	2	65	77	
Tasmanian Volunteer Rifle Regiment ...	12	16	23	180	231	
Reserve Force (Hobart)	13	18	3	154	188	
Cadet Corps .....	...	4	...	56	60	
Total Force .....	...	...	...	...	1056	

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. V. LEGGE, *Lt.-Col. (R), R.A.*,
and Colonel on the Staff, Commanding Tasmanian Forces.

The Hon. the Treasurer.