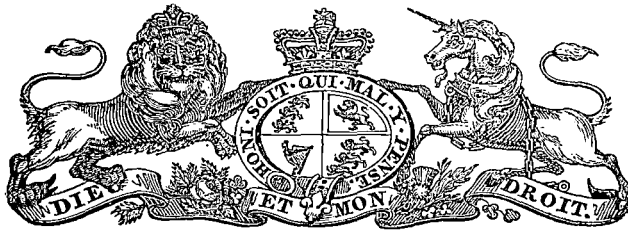


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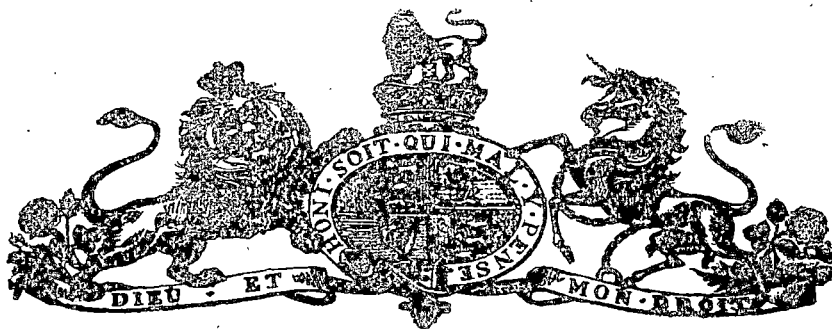
1887.

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, 1st July, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward you my Report on the Tasmanian Defence Force for the period extending from the 16th July last up to the present date.

When I rendered my last Report the Defence Force had only been serving four months under the new Regulations framed on "The Defence Act, 1885." These Regulations are referred to in the fifth paragraph of my Report for last year, and since the men have begun to understand the conditions under which they are to serve, the ranks are steadily filling up. A disadvantage, however, is experienced by the men in not having a copy of the Regulations in their possession, and I have solicited your sanction to the printing off of a number of copies for distribution. Meanwhile it has been found necessary (as is usually the case with new Regulations) to amend those that were first issued, and a Board of Officers was assembled on the 2nd ultimo to carry out this work in conjunction with a revision of the Regulations for the Country Rifle Clubs, and the revised copies are now awaiting your approval before being printed.

The Force has not been in such a healthy condition since I took up command as exists at present. It has passed through so many changes in the last three years that there has been no opportunity to settle down to a recognised system for any length of time; but the three years' service is now beginning to show favourable results in the better discipline which obtains in the ranks. Only those men join who are anxious to learn the profession of arms, and who are willing to give up three years to it; and they know that they cannot resign (after pains has been taken to train them) for any whim or fancy of their own. As regards the discipline, without which a Force is nothing but a farce and a useless expense, it is better now than it has been, and as good *as it can be with unpaid men*. This is the only unpaid force in the Australian Colonies, and as Commanding Officers are consequently unable to impose the usual penalties laid down for military offences on parade, &c., I consider that the discipline is as good as can be expected, and I have but little to complain of as regards the *esprit de corps* in the various Corps and Regiments. As regards efficiency, the number of "efficient" at the end of last year is below that at the end of 1885, but this is not an unfavourable sign, as the Force was strong in numbers that year owing to the war scare, and many of the efficient then were only temporary men who left when the scare was over and they were required to rejoin under the new Act; again, the Governor in Council sanctioned the whole of the "Reserve Force" being classed as efficient, in order to assist the Commanding Officer in clothing the new Corps. Recruiting went on slowly last year just after the new Act was passed, and therefore the Force was still weak in numbers at the end of the year. The approaching Easter Encampment, *which gives life to the movement*, and the completion of the Rifle Range at Launceston, gave a zest to recruiting last summer, which was continued, particularly in the month after Easter, so that at the present time the numbers are more than at any time during the past four years, except at the war scare in 1885; but the men in it now are, with the exception of the Reserves, more permanent than they were then.

The appointment of a Musketry Instructor to the Southern Division, which post the Staff-Adjutant fills, will be productive of good results. Instead of each corps carrying out its tuition in its own way, a proper system of instruction, as in the Imperial service, is carried out throughout the Division, and the necessary lectures to all recruits are given at the commencement of the course. Too much attention cannot be given to this important department, particularly in a Force which is numerically small, and in which every man should be more or less expert in the use of his rifle.

My quarterly inspections have been productive of good results in the training of the corps, as both officers and men are under my supervision when at drill, the former having to exercise battalions, batteries, and companies after the march past is over.

The number of drills, including Inspections and Queen's Birthday's Parade, is three times that which English volunteers are required to perform to be classed as efficient.

My remarks on the various corps are given in the order of their seniority.

Permanent Artillery.

Since my last Report was submitted 19 men have been enrolled in the Permanent Artillery. Of these, four have joined from the Royal Artillery as the result of my recommendation last year on this head. They are men who have been discharged with good character upon the completion of their engagement in the Regiment. The remainder have been enlisted in the Island, and are all men who have been in the Army, with the exception of one who served in the Mounted Police of Queensland. The result of taking only soldiers, or men in some disciplined service such as the Mounted Police, has been that the corps at once assumed a satisfactory state of smartness, and attention could be immediately given to the technical duties of the men as artillerymen. The gunners have passed through courses of gun drill at many of the guns in the defences here, and would have been instructed in the drill at all natures of ordnance by this time had it not been that their numbers have been, up till recently, so few, and the "fatigue" duties in connection with the Batteries and their armament, and at the Military Store, have been so heavy, that it is not often the necessary numbers can be got together. At the morning drills the men have been taught signalling, and most of them are proficient at it.

The corps is too small to furnish a continuous guard at Government House, as is done in the other Colonies; but if the increase to 30 men is sanctioned, a guard can be furnished, which will conduce to smartness and discipline.

The camp equipment was prepared this year by the Permanent Artillery, and the camp pitched and all work on the ground done by them.

The conduct of the men since their enlistment has been on the whole satisfactory. The excellent discipline enforced by Captain Wallack, who is in command of the Corps, has had its effect, and with one exception (that of a gunner tried for a civil offence), there has been very little crime in the Force since the commencement of its existence.

Launceston Artillery.

Inspections of this Corps were held by me on the 13th September and 6th December, 1886, 7th March and 13th June, 1887. On each occasion the attendance was good in proportion to the strength of the Corps at the time. The men always turn out well, and show a high state of proficiency in drill, which is the result both of having good officers over them and of a keen *esprit de corps*.

On the 9th of November last year the Corps again went into camp for the purpose of carrying out some practice with the field-guns in their charge. The ground selected was on the east side of Launceston and St. Leonard's road, about three-quarters of a mile from the latter. A range of about 1800 yards was obtained, and good shooting was made by the Corps with their 40-pr. and 7-pr. guns, at which I was present. After the conclusion of the practice the camp was struck, and the men left for town under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Warner, who went into camp with them the day previous. The officers present were Major Collins, Commanding the Corps, Captain Harrap, and Lieut. Croft. At the Easter Encampment the Launceston Artillery carried out their work with their accustomed zeal and steadiness, and the conduct of the men was exemplary. The establishment of officers is now complete. Major Collins received his promotion since the date of my last report, as also Captain Harrap. Lieutenant Bennison was transferred to the Corps from the S. T. Artillery, and Lieut. Croft has been appointed to the junior Lieutenancy.

The armament of this Corps is insufficient, and in order to place it in a proper state for field service I applied in 1885 for two 13-pr. field guns, but these have not yet been demanded from home. These guns are required for service on the roads leading to the Heads, where they would be used in conjunction with the 7-pr. mountain guns, which could be taken into the bush or across country. I cannot but regard the want of these guns as very serious, and I trust that my demands will shortly be forwarded to England.

The establishment of the Corps has been increased to 100, of whom 18 rank and file are to be Reserves.

Southern Tasmanian Artillery.

Inspections of this Corps were held by me on the 27th September and 13th of December, 1886, and on the 14th of March and 6th June, 1887, and on each occasion I found the men

proficient in their drill. More technical knowledge is, however, required in the non-commissioned officers, though some of them are well up in their work. The duties to be undertaken by this Corps, owing to the variety of ordnance in the forts, are manifold, and without a thorough continuous course, at which the whole of the men would be compelled to attend, the requisite amount of knowledge cannot be attained. I have endeavoured to have this course of drill properly carried out for the past three years, but the Commanding Officer, than whom no one could be more zealous, finds it impossible to get a regular and continuous attendance from the men.

The Corps is very much below its strength, the great difficulty in the way of recruiting being that the men complain of having to do the hard work of this branch of the service without the privilege of a paid training, as in the Torpedo Corps. Were this course adopted the Commanding Officer assures me he could fill the Corps up, and make it more efficient than it is. Our views on this subject have been detailed in my covering letter to Major Evans' long communication, recently transmitted to you. The men who are now in the Corps like their work as gunners, and served very satisfactorily at the recent encampment; they form a good nucleus of what should be the most valuable Corps in the Force; they always volunteer, so far as their employers give their consent, for any daylight work that may be required in the batteries. The 8-inch guns were manned by them at the visit of the Members of Parliament last year to the Kangaroo Bluff Battery, and one or two volunteered to assist at the working at the Hydro-pneumatic carriages at the Alexandra Battery on the same occasion. A course of heavy gun-drill is now being gone through at the Kangaroo Bluff Battery. The early part of the year has been devoted to field-gun exercises in preparation for the Camp, repository exercises, and garrison gun-drill at the Queen's Battery: the latter half will be occupied at heavier natures of ordnance in the other batteries.

Since my last report Lieut. Bennison has been transferred to the Launceston Artillery. The other subaltern officers, Lieuts. Castray and C. Lewis, are diligent in their duty, and are about to pass their examinations for confirmation in their appointments.

Torpedo Corps.

Inspections of this Corps were held on the 9th of December, 1886, and the 9th of June, 1887. The men turned out in the valise equipment which has recently been issued to them, and presented a smart appearance. Some time-expired men have been discharged during the year, and others have been enrolled in their places, so that the Corps is within four of its establishment.

The annual training was commenced on the 16th of November last, and finished on the 23rd of December. The men were put through a practical course of instruction under the supervision of the Torpedo Director, Lieut. Mathieson, and at the termination of the work mines were fired by "bumping," as illustrative of what would actually occur in war time, and which further tested the efficiency of the electrical apparatus used in the description of mine in our service. This has all been renewed this year, circuit closers of Lieut. Mathieson's pattern having been made in the colony and adapted to the mines, instead of those supplied by the Victorian Electrical Company in the first instance. Extempore observation mines were likewise exploded by electric light during the training, which afforded another useful practical lesson. At the Easter Encampment the Torpedo Director again had two groups of extempore mines exploded in the Tamar, which imparted valuable instruction to the Corps. On the night of the 22nd June, after the work of the day was over, four mines were fired, using the electric light to assist the Corps in their duties on the water.

There is a healthy spirit in the Corps at present, and the men take to their technical work with considerable interest. Officers are, however, still wanted to complete the establishment: the vacancy left by the removal of Lieut. Macdonald to Launceston has not yet been filled, and Lieut. Clarke is now in command. A disinclination to acquire all the technical knowledge requisite for an officer in the Torpedo Corps prevents gentlemen from joining as officers, and the smallness of the community in Hobart makes it difficult to choose from among its numbers suitable members for the commissioned ranks.

The new Instructor, Sergeant Hardy, Royal Engineers, arrived in December, with good testimonials from the submarine mining authorities at home, and took up his work on the departure of Instructor Falconer for New Zealand. Sergeant Hardy gives satisfaction in every way.

The services of the two sappers from the Royal Engineers, concerning whom I wrote in my last Report, have not been obtained. These men were intended as a permanent nucleus in the electrical department of the Corps—for instruction purposes under the Instructor in peace time, and to hold positions of grave responsibility in war time. The late Government did not approve of getting these men out from England, when they were applied for; and as their services are provided for on the Estimates, I obtained permission to enlist as one of them an engineer for the torpedo boat, who is now borne on the establishment of the Permanent Force. His services are also at the disposal of Lieut. Mathieson for work in the torpedo shops and in connection with the electric light.

Tasmanian Rifle Regiment.

Inspections of this Rifle Regiment were held on the 20th of September and 20th of December, 1886, and on the 21st of March and the 27th of June, 1887. Its numbers have increased considerably since the commencement of the year, a large number of recruits having come forward for the purpose of going into Camp, and these are now on the "Service Roll" for three years. Since the Camp the Corps has likewise received an increment of a good many members. When the rifle range at Hobart is made as good as that in the North, I have no doubt whatever but that this Corps will be up to its full strength. During the last musketry course a large number of men fired who were recruits, and, although the instruction was carefully carried out by the Instructor under the supervision of the Staff Adjutant, the shooting was not up to the average. Better results will be obtained during the next season, as the range will be improved, and there will be more "trained men" to fire. I regret to report that the Regiment is not as smart in drill as it ought to be, owing to the unsteadiness in the ranks of men who are not kept under sufficient control by some of the company officers, whose assistance to their commanding officer in this respect is essentially necessary for discipline.

As the Defence Act has recently been interpreted, it affords no power to the Commanding Officer to punish a member of the Force; consequently discipline is virtually at an end, and if men are so inclined, they can cause an infinite amount of trouble in acting against good order.

Guards of Honour were furnished by this Corps at the opening of Parliament in August last, and on the Governor's arrival in March. The usual Guard on the Queen's Birthday was likewise furnished by the Corps.

Lieutenant Richardson has been appointed Adjutant, and is zealously carrying out his duties. Lieutenant Freeman has been transferred to the Northern Division, and is now in command of the Cadet Corps of the Launceston Rifles. A similar corps is much wanted in connection with this regiment.

Launceston Rifle Regiment.

The Inspections of this Corps took place on the 14th of September and 7th of December, 1886, and the 8th March and 14th of June, 1887. The increase in the number of this regiment, which is due to better interior management, and the completion of the Launceston Rifle Range, has been very gratifying. At the first inspection the strength was 117, and at the last, 190. The men now coming forward are of good physique and eager to become proficient in their drill. The Instructor, Sergt.-Major Walsh, continues to work hard for the Regiment, and is very painstaking with the recruits. The Launceston Rifles did well at the Easter Encampment, and the Commanding Officer—who, I regret to say, is retiring from the Active List in consequence of pressure of private business—has brought it up to a higher state of efficiency than I have seen it in since my arrival. As a matter of course the Corps is somewhat behind in musketry efficiency, as the men have not been through a proper course for the past four years, but now that the new range is open I expect a high standard of shooting in the Regiment. One of the competitors from the Launceston Rifles, Sergeant Howe, made a tie with the champion at the recent match, and this augurs well for the future. The vacancy in the Captains existing last year has been filled up by Lieutenant Fairthorne, and Mr. F. J. Read has been appointed to a provisional Lieutenantcy from the position of Colour-sergeant in the Regiment. Mr. A. Kirkland, late of the 41st Regiment, and who has seen a great deal of service, has been appointed Quartermaster. He is a most energetic officer, and has done no little towards the recruiting for the Corps during the past half-year. Surgeon Maddox retired from the Regiment in March, and Dr. M. W. Gutteridge was appointed in his place.

The Cadet Corps attached to the Rifles, and commanded by Lieutenant Freeman, numbers now 74 members, and is in a satisfactory condition. Some of the lads have passed into the Regiment during the year, and in this respect the Corps is a valuable auxiliary to it. Forty-four cadets attended the Camp of Exercise, and while there acquitted themselves to my satisfaction. The lads settle down to camp life and military routine as readily as their older comrades.

The Launceston Reserve Company, which last year was not in a satisfactory condition, has recently been attached as part of the Regiment to the Launceston Rifles, and has now become a valuable increment to it. The men profit by the instruction given to them by the Instructor of the Rifles, and attend the monthly parades under Lieut.-Colonel Warner in much greater strength than heretofore. Captain Reid and Lieutenant Sadler still remain in the Company, but the former is about to retire.

Southern Reserves.

The Reserves were inspected by me on the 9th December, 1886, and the 24th March and 30th June, 1887. The Corps has been gradually dwindling down in numbers, as the term of service expired last year, when a number left, and some of those who re-enrolled for a further term of one year are leaving now. The source from which this Corps is recruited is virtually stopped owing to the formation of Regimental Reserves, which is the only system by which a proper Reserve can

be kept up. Rather than lose the services of good men who are still in the Corps, but who do not care about serving on in it in its present weak state, I have forwarded a proposal made by the Officer Commanding the Corps, Major J. G. Davies, for reorganising it as an Active Service Regiment with a Reserve of its own, the artillerymen at present in its ranks joining the S. T. Artillery as a Reserve to that corps. This latter step has been provided for in the revised Regulations.

When the new range is open there will be sufficient inducement for riflemen to serve in order to fill the ranks of two Corps, the existence of which will create that spirit of emulation which is always conducive to smartness and efficiency. I have received a number of names of recruits who will join the Active branch of the new Corps.

Seventy-six of all ranks of the Southern Reserves went into camp last Easter, the pay sanctioned for them this year being an inducement towards a voluntary service. The conduct of these men, who were not under the Army Act, was exemplary, and they did their work well.

Lieutenant N. E. Lewis has been appointed Adjutant of the Corps, and is an excellent officer, and well fitted for the post. Quartermaster Snowden has retired, owing to continued ill-health.

Country Rifle Clubs.

During the past military year this movement has spread throughout the country in the most satisfactory manner. 24 Clubs are now formed and organised, with a total of 783 members. The rifle issued to Country Clubs was originally the Snider, but recently it has been thought advisable, as the stock of Sniders was exhausted, to supply M.H. rifles, which are now being issued to senior Clubs, and their Sniders passed on to recently formed ones. The initiation of this movement has practically added a second line of defence to the Force, and has spread far and wide a knowledge of the use of the rifle,—a momentous matter in a Colony with a small population, such as this. A large proportion of the members are eager to learn drill and engage in military duty, which is proved by the fact that 92 members volunteered to go to the Camp, and while there, acquitted themselves most satisfactorily in all work. They were men of good physique, and belonged to the "Channel," "Ouse," "Mersey," "Emu Bay," "Circular Head," "Bothwell," and "Midland" Clubs. They were exercised at ball firing at field targets, among other work, and did very fairly. A course of musketry has been gone through by 13 Clubs, and a fairly satisfactory return of the shooting rendered to me by the Superintendent. There will be an improvement next year, as a large number of men have done much firing since Easter in connection with the Government prize-money, which was shot for on the Queen's Birthday. I witnessed a match between the Channel Club and the Reserve Force at Oyster Cove in March last, and was pleased at the style of firing of the Club men. They settled down to their work, and fired with the coolness of trained men.

I have not been able to inspect many of the Clubs this year, as I have been waiting until the men were sufficiently drilled to acquit themselves fairly well on inspection. On the 13th June I paraded the Midland Club, which numbered 45, and turned out as a very fine Company, nearly every man being of good physique. This Club, and those enumerated above as attending the Camp, are the only ones as yet inspected by me.

Appended is the Report of the Superintendent, marked (A.).

Mounted Infantry.

In my last year's report I alluded to the advisability of organising a corps of mounted infantry, a service which is most valuable in modern warfare. I trust that Government will not lose sight of this matter, as a small body of 30 men would well repay the cost of capitation and appointments for horses, which latter they would find themselves. The success of this movement has been marked in Victoria; and South Australia has long had a small corps of mounted infantry.

School Cadet Corps.

This movement, calculated to be of considerable use to the Defence Force, which was started last year, continues in Hobart; for, though the Corps at Christ's College has been disbanded, that at the Hutchins' School is in a flourishing condition. It numbers 53 Cadets, and among these an Artillery detachment of 20 boys has been formed. A 12-pr. howitzer has been lent to them to learn their gun-drill with, and they have made most creditable progress.

An encampment was held at Elwick from the 29th September to October 4th, which did the Cadets a great deal of good. Guards were mounted, and everything carried out strictly in military order; the arrangements for the Camp were made under the supervision of Lieutenant Buckland; and the Staff Adjutant, by my permission, carried out the training of the boys during their time in Camp. The attendance was 41.

On the 30th ultimo I witnessed a competition at gun-drill, mounting and dismounting field guns and manœuvring the same. The winning detachment advanced their gun 40 yards, unlimbered, came into action, and fired 3 rounds (as with blank cartridge, but using a tube), and dismounted the gun in 2 minutes and 10 seconds. The mounting and other exercises were done equally smartly. These detachments have been drilled and instructed by Sergt.-Major Reed, R.A., and reflect great credit on his tuition. The Corps has paraded at the various Church parades since the date of my last Report, and were present at the Queen's Birthday parade, when they turned out strongly.

I have no doubt but that this Corps will prove a feeder to some extent to both arms of the Service in the Defence Force. A few Martini-Henry carbines have been issued to the senior boys, and they have passed through a shortened course of musketry,—some of them promising to be good shots.

Miscellaneous.

Church parades have been held during the past year on the 26th of September and the 19th December, 1886, and on the 22nd May last. At each parade there was a fair muster, and the men turned out smartly; but could accommodation be found in the morning for the troops larger musters would take place, which would have a still more beneficial effect on recruiting. In Launceston there have been two church parades, one of which was held on 7th Nov. last, and the other on the 22nd May. The Artillery, Rifles, and Reserves were paraded for outpost duty and to conduct a night attack on the Alexandra Battery on the 4th of October, and after a hard evening's work returned to barracks at 12:30 A.M. The Force was taken down to the battery by steamer and landed on the beach beneath the fortification.

On the occasion of the official entry of His Excellency the Governor into the city, the Southern Division was called out, and headed the procession to the Supreme Court, where they were drawn up and received the Governor with a Royal Salute on his exit from the Court. The muster was 209 of all ranks.

On the Queen's Birthday there was a muster of 405 of all ranks, including the Hutchins' School Cadet Corps. A salute and *feu-de-joie* were fired, the troops were inspected by His Excellency, and they then marched past in brigade.

A similar parade was held on the 22nd June in honour of Her Majesty's Jubilee. The Division was inspected at 10 A.M. in the Barrack Square, and then marched to the Domain *via* Harrington and Liverpool streets, in which they headed the procession organised by the Civil Authorities. After the march past and *feu-de-joie* the troops were drawn up by the platform during the presentation of the Addresses, and then marched to the Post Office for dismissal. The muster was 396 of all ranks.

At the Queen's Birthday parade at Launceston there was an attendance of 331. The Division was exercised under Lieut.-Colonel Warner, and a salute and *feu-de-joie* fired at noon on the Windmill Hill. At the Jubilee parade there was a smaller muster—266 of all ranks—owing to the wet weather.

Annual Match for Champion Medal.

The match this year took place in Launceston on the 30th April, on which day the new range was formally opened. 55 competitors fired for the medal, which was again won (for the third time) by Lieut. Watchorn, of the Tasmanian Rifle Regiment, through his excellent shooting at the longest range, 600 yards; his score was 91 out of a possible 105, with Wimbledon scoring, which was for the first time adopted this year. This officer was, however, "tied" by two competitors from the North—Sergeant Howe, Launceston Rifle Regiment, and Sergeant Gow, of the Launceston Artillery, who did not, however, make such high scores at the long range. This was a highly creditable performance, considering the want of practice these men had.

The new range, as regards light, view of targets (which are about 25 feet above the plane of site), is all that can be desired; but it is not yet sufficiently drained, requiring cross drains leading into deeper main drains than have been made, *which should likewise be closed by sluice-gates at the river*. I trust funds will be available next summer for this purpose, and for the erection of a shelter to be used in wet weather.

Hobart Rifle Range.

No improvements have as yet been made at this range, which is most unsatisfactory, and altogether beneath the requirements of the Southern Division of the Force. Complications with regard to the title deeds have prevented the Government acquiring the land, and I have not obtained permission, therefore, to undertake any new construction for the extension of the butts and increase of the range. Having obtained your sanction, however, to remodel the existing butt and mantelets, which are now in a state of disrepair, I hope to have them in better order for the musketry course next summer. So soon as the land is acquired a very fair range can be made by placing the long-range targets on the hill at the back of the present butts, which will be retained for ranges up to 600 yards.

National Rifle Association.

This Association has at last been started, and I trust that it will have a beneficial influence upon the defence movement, as well as be the means of spreading a taste for rifle shooting throughout the Colony.

The disagreement touching certain points in the Regulations between the Officers in the North and South were disposed of at the latter end of last year, and a general meeting was held at Hobart at which the amended Rules, which had first been drawn up at the end of 1885, were approved of, and a *provisional* Council was appointed, with Major J. G. Davies as Secretary. Since then some difficulty was experienced in getting names in for the Association, and I at length issued an Order to Commanding Officers to call for names of members at their principal parades, the result of this step being that a large number of volunteers joined, and, on the 17th ult. the inaugural meeting of the Association took place at the Town Hall, at which His Excellency the Governor, at the request of the Secretary, kindly attended and took the chair. The patronage of His Excellency will have the best effect in promoting the success of the Association; and by making the subscription as low as possible to members of the Defence Force and the Country Rifle Clubs, an inducement will be held out to young men who are fond of rifle shooting to join them.

It is proposed to send a team this year to compete at the Intercolonial match to be held at Adelaide; while, next year, the Councils of the Australian Associations have expressed their wish to hold the Intercolonial match in this Colony.

The Vice-Presidents of the Association number among them the most influential public servants in the Colony, and the Council consists of 16 members of the Defence Force and Country Rifle Clubs.

Gymnastic Training.

The necessity for a course of gymnastics for recruits as in the Imperial Service is more impressed upon my mind than ever. Everything should be done to improve the physique and strengthen the frames of our defenders, so that the utmost can be required of them on active service. This end would be gained by a gymnastic training; and the "setting up," which cannot be properly carried out in a volunteer service with a limited number of parades, would be acquired in a less distasteful manner in the gymnasium. Arrangements were about to be carried out last year when the instructor left for Victoria, and since then the gymnasium in the Barracks has been virtually closed. A small subsidy from government to an instructor would enable the recruits to be brought under a course which doubtless would be liked by them, and would be most beneficial.

Staff.

Lieut.-Colonel Warner, Commanding Northern Division, and the senior officer on the Staff, has zealously worked up the corps in Launceston to a high state of efficiency. The advantage of having a military officer as the immediate head of the Force in Launceston, by whom the corps are frequently paraded and drilled together, and through whom discipline is maintained by a daily *régime* from the Staff Office there, has been the means of creating a healthy spirit in the Force, which, I trust, may long continue. Lieut.-Colonel Warner acted as Chief of the Staff at the Camp, and rendered me most valuable assistance in every way.

The numerous duties falling to the lot of the Staff Adjutant, whose position is that of a Brigade Major in an English garrison, have materially increased since the inception of the Permanent Artillery. This corps has been placed under his immediate command, and the discipline and smartness which exists in it reflect great credit on Captain Wallack. He has applied himself to the profession of an artilleryman, and has now mastered the elementary branches of it. His appointment as Musketry Instructor, which is a necessary one in all garrisons, enables me to have a uniform system of instruction imparted to all the corps in the South, the effect of which will be felt more every year.

The correspondence, which has now become very heavy at head-quarters, is checked and all orders issued by the Staff Adjutant under my direction, and he is the channel of communication on all matters of discipline with the various corps in the Force. I find him most zealous and energetic in the performance of his duties, and conscientious in carrying out the work I allot to him. I have referred in my Camp report to the satisfactory manner in which he worked there.

The Staff Officer, or, more properly speaking, the Engineer Officer, and Torpedo Director, Lieut. Mathieson, performs his duties in connection with the upkeep of the armament and the forts, and the supervision of the stores and war *matériel* in my charge, to my entire satisfaction. His inventive abilities have been most helpful in many ways since his arrival, especially in connection with a better class of fitting for the mines, and his practical and theoretical knowledge in connection with submarine mining work will conduce to a higher state of efficiency in the Torpedo Corps. Lieut. Mathieson's services in connection with the preparations for the annual Easter Encampment conducted much towards the success of the latter.

In connection with the Non-commissioned Staff, the combination of the instruction of the Volunteer Artillery and the Permanent Artillery will effect a saving of about £150 per annum; and the necessity for an artificer for the new armament in the Batteries is avoided by placing that work in the hands of the Torpedo artificer, whose capabilities as a mechanic are of a high order.

Efficients.

The following table shows the number of Efficients in the Force at the end of last year, and includes such recruits and men enrolled after the Encampment at Ross as were allowed to be classed as Effectives on the curtailed scale of attendances submitted for the approval of the Governor-in-Council.

The numbers are less than those of the year before, on account of the *temporary increase of the Force during the war scare in 1885, and the whole of the Reserve Force being classed as efficient.*

Launceston Artillery	54
Southern Tasmanian Artillery	64
Torpedo Corps	70
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment	129
Launceston Rifle Regiment, with Cadets	140
Reserve Force	120
Garrison Band	16
	<hr/>
	593
	<hr/>

This number is out of a total of 720.

As near as can be calculated prior to the rendering of the proper returns, the approximate number of Efficients, *excluding recruits*, for the half-year ending 30th of June, is as follows:—

Launceston Artillery	60
Southern Tasmanian Artillery	65
Torpedo Corps	65
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment	156
Launceston Rifle Regiment	152
Cadets.....	48
Southern Reserve Force	63
Garrison Band	26
	<hr/>
TOTAL.....	635
	<hr/>

The above is out of a total of 875.

The strength of the Force, as shown by the parade states at my last inspections, is as follows:—

Launceston Artillery	94
Southern Tasmanian Artillery	77
Torpedo Corps	71
Tasmanian Rifle Regiment	183
Launceston Rifle Regiment and Band.....	190
Cadets.....	74
Reserve Company Launceston Rifle Regiment	50
Hobart Reserve Force	92
Garrison Band	26
	<hr/>
TOTAL.....	857
Permanent Artillery	19
Torpedo Force	2
Staff (Officers).....	4
	<hr/>
TOTAL.....	882
	<hr/>

Defences of the Derwent.

The armament of the batteries is in a serviceable condition. Since the date of my last report a portion of the Nordenfelt machine-guns intended for the land defence of the Kangaroo Bluff and Alexandra Batteries have arrived, and the mountings have been completed in the positions chosen for the guns. They are provided with field carriages as well for service with infantry, and in this capacity were used at the late Easter Encampment.

Paper No. 54, 1887.

ERRATUM.

Page 11, par. 4, line 3, "once a week " should read "once a month."

I regret to say that both batteries are still incomplete in the matter of machine-guns. The two Nordenfelt rapid-fire shell guns which have been asked for are much required, as also two or three more 5-barrel guns; and I trust that some of these weapons, which are provided for in the Loans Bill, 49th Victoria, will soon be demanded. Should war break out *it will be entirely too late to do anything in the matter, as it takes so long to procure any new material from England*; and I have it on authority which is most reliable, that in war time such small orders as would be made, by the Government of this Colony for instance, would be neglected owing to the much heavier ones which would pour in from elsewhere on both the private and government factories. It is in time of peace, therefore, that the armament of our small forts should be made perfect. This is the more necessary at this station as the Infantry Force is small, and the coast line of probable hostile attack is so extended that few riflemen can be spared for the defence of the batteries, which will, therefore, have to depend upon machine guns in resisting a land attack should our outposts be by any chance defeated.

On the 29th Oct. last a visit to the forts was made by the Members of Parliament, under invitation of the late Minister of Defence, the object being to inspect the armament and see the new guns fired. The Kangaroo Bluff Battery was manned by the S. T. Artillery under Major Evans, and the Alexandra Battery by the Permanent Artillery. The shooting from both 8-inch and 6-inch guns was excellent, at ranges from 5000 to 7000 yards. Ten rounds were fired from the 6-inch at an 8-foot canvas target, placed on the opposite shore at nearly 5000 yards' range, the first round being, as a matter of course, a trial shot. The accuracy of the shooting was extraordinary: the first round passed about 3 feet above the centre of the target, and the second fell 3 yards short and one yard to the right of the target.

The 64-pounder "converted" M. L. R. guns have arrived in the Island since the date of my last Report. Four of these have been mounted in the Queen's Battery, and one sent to Launceston for the Brown's Bluff Battery.

Sergt.-Major Brown has been appointed Master Gunner, and has sub-charge of all the stores and *matériel* in the Batteries, inspecting them once a week and reporting to the Engineer Officer, Lieut. Mathieson, who makes a detailed inspection once a week, reporting on the first of the following month. My own inspections take place once a quarter, when all the guns are brought into action, and all stores and fittings laid out.

The glycerine now used in the hydro-pneumatic cylinders answers well, and a superior class of "cup-leather" has recently been inserted at the head of the cylinders which has the effect of retaining the pressure without any escape of air.

The equipment of the garrison guns will at last be completed on the arrival of the 70-pounder and 64-pounder ammunition now on the way out. It has taken three years with the funds at my disposal, and the delays which attend the supply of ammunition from England, to complete the equipment which I fixed for the forts on my arrival.

Defences of the Tamar.

Nothing has been done for the above since my last Report, save the fitting of the mines demanded for the Tamar. The Brown's Bluff Battery has not been commenced owing to the continued difficulties in connection with the transfer to Government of the required land. As writers in the press, who apparently know nothing of the purport of this work, have denounced it as useless, it may be right to mention for your information that it is merely an earthwork for the protection of the two guns of position at Launceston, placed at a point of strategical value on the river, and combined with the proposed inner torpedo defence of the same. It has never been contemplated to include this battery in the front, or advanced, defences of the river, which have always been recommended for a position much nearer the Heads, and which has been again dealt with in the late Defence Commission's Reports. To abandon the Brown's Bluff position, while doing nothing towards a defence of the river lower down, would be to act contrary to the recommendations of Sir Wm. Jervois and the late Sir Peter Scratchley.

Electric Light.

The embrasure for the protection of the Electric Light has at length been constructed in a favourable position, and a connecting channel is being formed to it from the engine-house. An alteration has been made to the intermediate driving-wheel whereby a higher speed is imparted to the dynamo machine with less strain on the engine. The new reflectors and lamp imported from England last year answers well, and the light is powerful enough now for the services required of it. The Torpedo Boat Engineer, Mr. Burrell, has charge of the engine, and the Naval Artificer, Mr. Pirie, of the Dynamo machines.

I am very desirous that some steps should be taken to place the second light in position. Its absence is a vital flaw in our defence system, as it is absolutely required for the lighting of the river

at the chief point in the system of defence. I have already stated my views on this subject, and I trust steps will be taken next year to carry out my recommendations.

Torpedo Boat.

The boat has only been run three times during the past year, and on neither occasion was she driven at full speed, but her engines worked very well each time. She has been fitted this year with "dropping gear" for the Whitehead torpedoes. She has likewise been provided with a two-barrel 1-inch Nordenfelt gun for offensive and defensive purposes.

The shop for the fitting, refitting, repairing, upkeep, and charging of the Whiteheads has also been erected, and the air-pumping machinery placed in position. The engine has been erected under the supervision of the naval artificer, Mr. Pirie, who is likewise appointed to the "battery artificer's" work in connection with the repairs and upkeep of the carriages and war *matériel* in the batteries.

The jetty, and tramway thereto, for the shipping of the Whiteheads has also been constructed in connection with the Whitehead shop, and will be used when practice with the torpedoes is carried out.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. V. LEGGE, *Lieut-Col., R., R.A.,*
Colonel Commanding Tasmanian Defence Force.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

(A.)

REPORT ON TASMANIAN COUNTRY RIFLE CLUBS.

Hobart, 9th July, 1887.

1. The Department was formed in May, 1886.

At the date of last Report, 17th August, 1886, ten Clubs had been formed, aggregating 325 members, active and honorary.

At the present date there are one branch Club of 39 members and 23 head Clubs, equivalent to 24 clubs, having 739 "active" members and 44 "honorary"; total, 783.

Some of the present honorary members were "active," and have been through the course of rifle practice.

2. Eleven Clubs went through the (recruit) annual course of rifle practice for the season 1886-87.

Considering the rawness of the men, and that scarcely any had ever fired a rifle before joining, the average shooting may be classed as very good.—(See Appendix.)

3. On the 24th May these eleven Clubs gave 186 competitors for the Government prizes, aggregating £100 7s. 6d. The competition took place simultaneously on their respective ranges (the weather being wet, cold, and windy), under the supervision of "firing committees," of which two out of the three committee-men were to be non-competitors from clubs other than the one whose firing was being supervised.

4. The quantity of ammunition fired by these eleven Clubs for their annual course of practice and for the above prizes was 23,500 rounds, supplied at Government expense, at a cost of 9s. per 100, equal to £105 15s., paid out of the Grant in Aid of Country Rifle Clubs.

5. These eleven Clubs purchased for private practice and matches during the 7 months of 1886, 31,970 rounds.

During the half year ending 30 June, 1887, seventeen Clubs have similarly purchased 61,520 rounds.

6. The maximum quantity hitherto allowed to be purchased has been 50 rounds per man per month: it was sold at a loss of 2s. 9d. per hundred, paid out of the Grant in Aid.

This maximum allowance has been reduced since the 1st July to 30 rounds per man per month, as a financial necessity. This is a matter for regret, as good shooting depends so much on practice.

7. One hundred and fifty Martini-Henry rifles were made over to me on 28th June. These have been distributed to the four senior Clubs, whose Sniders are being called in and re-distributed in equal proportions to eight new Clubs raised during the months March to June, and which Clubs have been hitherto unarmed.

8. The total number of rifles are—Martini-Henry, 150; Sniders, Infantry, 497; Sniders, Navy Pattern, 74.

The Navy pattern were purchased from a neighbouring Colony during the war scare of 1878 as “part worn.” They are, in point of fact, “worn out,” and quite “unserviceable” for shooting purposes. They were issued to some Clubs merely for *drill* purposes.

Many of the Infantry Sniders are also much worn (due to using the cleaning-rod without a muzzle protector), and are consequently quite “unreliable” for accuracy.

Excluding the Navy Pattern rifles as practically useless, the Clubs have Martini-Henrys and more or less serviceable Sniders, 647; active members, 739; balance unarmed active members, 92.

9. I receive continued assurances that the want of arms and accoutrements prevents new Clubs from being formed, and fresh members from joining the existing ones.

10. The want of a nice-looking uniform for parades is greatly felt, and has a deterring effect on men joining, since so very few are in a position to afford the expense in addition to Club subscriptions and purchase of cartridges. I have submitted a scheme by which a nice-looking uniform could be supplied at a comparatively small cost.

11. With a more liberal expenditure, I think the numbers would rapidly run up to 1500 men.

12. The Clubs take a considerable interest in drill as well as rifle practice. Those visited by me and the Sergeant Instructor mustered in good force, and showed great interest in our lectures and diagrams.

H. BERNARD, Col., Supt. C.R. Clubs.



APPENDIX. COUNTRY RIFLE CLUBS.

RETURN showing Results of Annual Course of Rifle Practice with Sniders, Season 1886-1887

Distances, 13, from 100 yards to 700 yards—Recruit Targets—Hythe scoring—Allowance, 70 rounds—Highest possible, 280 points.

Relative Order of Merit.	Clubs.	Entered upon 3rd Period.	Did not fire beyond 2nd Period.	Did not fire beyond 1st Period.	Total men fired.	Total of Rounds.	Points.			Figure of Merit.	Marksmen.			First Class.			Second Class.			Failed to classify.
							Obtained.	Deducted for Short Distances.	Allowed.		No.	Total Points.	Average.	No.	Total Points.	Average.	No.	Total Points.	Average.	
1	Channel	25	2	...	27	1815	3884	325	3559	131·81	17	2552	150·117	6	706	117·66	2	181	90·50	2
2	Bothwell	26	1	1	28	1865	3612	<i>Nil.</i>	3612	129·00	17	2542	149·53	7	790	112·86	2	166	83·00	2
3	Hollow Tree	20	...	1	21	1420	2599	<i>Nil.</i>	2599	123·76	11	1586	144·18	7	787	112·43	2	176	88·00	1
4	Latrobe	22	1	3	26	1640	3082	<i>Nil.</i>	3082	118·54	13	1955	150·38	6	647	107·83	4	357	89·25	3
5	Scottsdale	19	6	...	25	1589	2885	<i>Nil.</i>	2885	115·40	9	1397	155·22	9	1029	114·33	2	180	90·00	5
6	Derwent	18	3	5	26	1397	2322	<i>Nil.</i>	2322	89·31	5	755	151·00	5	578	115·60	5	467	93·40	11
7	Table Cape	15	3	1	19*	1117	1682	<i>Nil.</i>	1682	88·53	4	589	147·25	5	561	112·20	2	173	86·50	8
8	Onse.....	23	5	3	31	1767	2705	<i>Nil.</i>	2705	87·26	3	438	146·00	11	1265	115·00	5	452	90·40	12
9	D'Entrecasteaux	19	...	...	19	1330	1612	114	1498	78·84	1	131	131·00	5	572	114·40	6	514	85·66	7
10	Mersey.....	15	...	3	18	1110	1545	252	1293	71·83	1	149	149·00	4	446	111·50	3	254	84·66	10
11	Midlands † .....	...	...	...	29															

* *Table Cape.*—Two men fired with Martini-Henry, not included in above Return.
† *Midlands.*—The Registers not forthcoming. The Return sent cannot be checked.

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