

THE MAKING AND BREAKING  
OF THE POST-FEDERATION  
AUSTRALIAN ARMY, 1901–09.

Craig A.J. Stockings

Land Warfare Studies Centre  
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**Cover:** R. Simkin's rendition of the uniforms and equipment of the NSW Lancers (left), the NSW Mounted Rifles (right background), and officers of the NSW Field Artillery (foreground).<sup>1</sup>

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1 G. Odgers, 'Diggers', *The Australian Army, Navy and Air Force in Eleven Wars*, Lansdowne Publishing, Sydney, 1994, p. 35.

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# Chronology

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## 1901

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1 January | Commonwealth of Australia inaugurated.  |
| 1 March   | Department of Defence takes over control of the Commonwealth's military forces. |

## 1902

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 29 January | Major General Sir E.T.H. Hutton arrives in Australia.             |
| 1 March    | Hutton establishes a national military headquarters in Melbourne. |
| 31 May     | Second Boer War (or South African War) ends.                      |

## 1903

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 27 July | Hutton receives formal approval to reorganise the Commonwealth Military Forces in accordance with his scheme of Field Forces and Garrison Troops. |
| (late)  | Crippling drought existing since mid-1890s breaks.  |

## 1904

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 11 February | Tasmanian 'refusal to parade over pay' incident.  |
| 1 March     | First <i>Defence Act 1903</i> proclaimed.   |
| 14 July     | Creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Britain out of the Elgin and Esher Committees. |
| 17 November | Canadian 'Militia Board' instituted.  |

## **1905**

- 12 January Australian Military Board and Council for Defence become operational.
- 29 May Japanese naval victory over Russia in the Straits of Tsushima.

## **1906**

- 4 September Brigadier John Charles Hoad appointed as Inspector-General.

## **1907**

- 15 December Deakin announces 'National Guard' scheme to the House of Representatives.

## **1908**

- 1 April British military abandons its system of militia and volunteers.

## **1909**

- 1 January Colonel William Throsby Bridges becomes Australia's first Chief of the General Staff.
- 25 May Hoad succeeds Bridges as Chief of the General Staff.
- 26 May *Defence Act 1909* amended to institute compulsory military service.
- 1 July 'Australian Section' of the IGS comes into operation.
- 21 December Field Marshal Lord Kitchener begins his tour of inspection of Australia.

## **1911**

- 1 January New defence system based on compulsory service proclaimed.



# Introduction

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On 1 January 1901, Lord Hopetoun, the first Governor General, inaugurated the Commonwealth of Australia in Centennial Park, Sydney. The new nation was and would remain an integral part of the British Empire—an empire that ruled a large portion of the world. The need in Australia for co-ordinated defence was, to some extent, a rallying cry that helped overcome the jealousies and rivalries of the colonies. It began when Sir Henry Parkes made his famous ‘Tenterfield Speech’, on 24 October 1889, proposing Federation for defence purposes.<sup>2</sup> Defence, however, was not the main motive. Economic interests were foremost among the factors driving the federal movement.<sup>3</sup> It was not by coincidence that the strongest impetus came from Victoria and the weakest from Western Australia, the two colonies that, respectively, suffered most and least in the depression of the 1890s.

The purpose of this monograph is to chronicle the making and breaking of the original ‘Australian’ army from March 1901 to December 1909. It begins with responsibility for Australian military forces passing from colonial to federal control, and concludes with the visit to Australia, and inspection of Commonwealth Military Forces, by the British warlord Field Marshal Viscount Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. Kitchener’s subsequent report recommended a complete restructuring of the ‘post-Federation Army’.<sup>4</sup> He brought finality to a decision already made to replace the force-in-being with a system of compulsory military training. On the ashes of the original system a new conscript army was proclaimed on 1 January 1911. The post-Federation Army, therefore, existed for

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2 E. Andrews, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 1.

3 J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1990.

4 Termed coined by W. Perry in ‘Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Hutton: The Creator of the Post-Federation Army’, *Australian Army Journal*, No. 291, August 1973, p. 14.

only a decade. This is its story. It is an account of a unique and in many respects forgotten organisation—an army of regiments and batteries, of cavalry and lances. It was the era of soldiers like Generals Hutton, Finn, Bridges and Hoad and the time of Prime Ministers Barton, Deakin and Fisher. The post-Federation Army's demise came a decade after the birth of the nation, but before the inauguration of the Australian Imperial Force—the two are all too often seen as one.

This monograph has three key strands. It shows how Australia's first army was assembled, what exactly this force represented, and why it failed to endure. As no work of this length could hope to address all aspects of this organisation, even for a restricted period, three central themes have been chosen for in-depth analysis: structure, administration and training.<sup>5</sup> Together with the reasons for dismantling the post-Federation force, they constitute the four chapters of the paper.

This account begins by assessing what the Commonwealth Government took control of in March 1901, and how these units were forged into a national force. It traces military structures from the colonial legacy through to the re-organisations of 1903 and 1906. It records the emergence of new corps and provides a running order of battle for the Commonwealth Military Forces throughout the period. After establishing this structural foundation, the administrative and control apparatus of the new federal force are examined from collective state Commandant rule, to the British General Officer Commanding (GOC) model, to the establishment of a Military Board and Council, to an Australian Inspector General and Chief of the General Staff, and, finally, to an Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff. From this point the monograph transitions to focus on issues of training and efficiency of the nascent national army, from Easter encampments to formal Schools of Instruction. Finally, it concludes by analysing some of the deep and

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5 One aspect of the post-Federation Army that, while valid for study, is beyond the scope of this monograph; the area of stores and logistics. Unavailability, unserviceability and the antiquity of equipment were serious problems that plagued the Army throughout the period. Be it guns without carriages, cartridges that did not fire, or mounted infantry without saddles, the post-Federation military was short of almost everything. J. Hutchinson, acting Minister of Defence, admitted that not one fully equipped battery of artillery could actually be put in the field in 1908. J. Hutchison, Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (hereafter CPD), 3rd Sess., 3rd Parl., p. 2853. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed account of the problems faced by the post-Federation Army with respect to ordnance.

institutional difficulties facing the fledgling force—problems that, by 1909, had convinced political elites, a large proportion of the population, and a significant section of the Army itself, that a fundamental change was required.

Much has been published on the colonial military forces of Australia. G.F. Wieck's *The Volunteer Movement in Western Australia*, P.V. Vernon's *The Royal New South Wales Lancers*, M. Buckley's *The Scottish Rifles in Northern New South Wales*, and D.H. Johnson's *Volunteers at Heart* are but four examples.<sup>6</sup> There are, of course, many others. While there is also a vast literature on Australia and World War One, with several historians making reputations for themselves in this field of study, the same cannot be said of the immediate pre-war period. No single work has been devoted to the development of the post-Federation Army. This paper aims to help rectify such an obvious historiographical shortfall. This is not to suggest, however, that the period has been entirely neglected. Perhaps the best example of scholarly work in the area is John Mordike's *An Army for a Nation*, concerning the evolution of Australian military forces from colonial times to the outbreak of the World War One.<sup>7</sup> Mordike, however, is more bent on proving 'hidden' imperial agendas than he is in accurately charting early physical and technical developments. More commonly, this period of Australian military history is covered briefly in a chapter or a sub-chapter of a larger work. There are, for example, such pieces within Jeffrey Grey's *A Military History of Australia*, R. Norris' *The Emergent Commonwealth: Australian Federation: Expectations and Fulfilment* and G. Souter's *Lion and Kangaroo - The Initiation of Australia*.<sup>8</sup> Another good example in this regard is Chris Coulthard-Clark's work on the

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6 G.F. Wieck, *The Volunteer Movement in Western Australia 1861–1903*, Paterson Brokensha Pty Ltd, Perth, WA, 1966; P.V. Vernon (ed.), *The Royal New South Wales Lancers 1885–1960*, Halstead Press, Sydney, 1961; M. Buckley, *The Scottish Rifles in Northern New South Wales*, Northern Star Ltd, Lismore, NSW, 1984; and D.H. Johnson, *Volunteers at Heart: The Queensland Defence Force 1860–1901*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, QLD, 1975.

7 J. Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: A History of Australian Military Developments, 1880–1914*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1992.

8 Grey, *A Military History of Australia*; R. Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth: Australian Federation: Expectations and Fulfilment 1889–1910*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, VIC, 1975; and G. Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo - The Initiation of Australia*, Sun, Sydney, 1976.

Australian Army from 1901–14, in *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*.<sup>9</sup> Further material can be found in the article on ‘Citizen Military Forces’ in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* and in extracts from the various editions of the *Australian Encyclopaedia*.<sup>10</sup> Some unpublished material relevant to the subject includes L.D. Atkinson on the origins of the Australian Navy and B.J.V. Johnson on Imperial Defence.<sup>11</sup> While all these sources serve their purpose, they are neither specific nor comprehensive or detailed enough to properly record the story of the post-Federation Australian Army.

This monograph does not deal with the Boer War (1899–1902), although it lasted well into the first two years of Australian nationhood. Primarily this is because those who fought in South Africa were volunteers and not strictly part of the Australian Army, just as their AIF cousins were technically separate from the Commonwealth Military Forces twelve years later. Post-Federation soldiers, under the *Defence Act 1903*, could not be ordered to fight abroad. Neither will the paper cover the rifle clubs or military cadets of the period, although one may legitimately claim both were part of the wider defence force. These organisations, while affiliated to the Army, were again not strictly part of it. Other studies can speak of them.

At the dawning of the twentieth century, responsibility for Australia’s defence rested on an odd assortment of military forces under individual state arrangements. The Governor General confirmed at the opening of the first Parliament that the new government had no great military plans. His speech promised that ‘extravagant expenditure will be avoided, and reliance will be placed, to the fullest

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9 C.D. Coulthard-Clark, ‘Formation of the Australian Armed Services, 1901–14’, M. McKernan & M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988, pp.121–43.

10 Peter Dennis, *et al* (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne, VIC, 1995. For example see ‘Military Defence’ in *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 6, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1958, pp. 74–82.

11 L. D. Atkinson, ‘Australian Defence Policy: A Study of Empire and Nation, 1897–1910’, PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1964; B.J.V. Johnson, ‘Australian, New Zealand and Imperial Defence (Military) 1902–1914’, MA thesis, Monash University, 1983.

reasonable extent, on our citizen soldiery'.<sup>12</sup> Financial expediency and resistance to reform were the order of the day. Nevertheless, during its first ten years, Australia's defence forces were transformed from proud independent colonial units, with their own unique colours and style, into a national army of slouch hats and khaki serge.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 122.

13 The slouch hat was first worn by the Victorian Rifles in 1885 and was later adopted by the Commonwealth Military Forces. The word 'slouch' refers to the fact that one side of the brim was turned slightly down while the left side was cocked up leaving room to shoulder a rifle. On the turned-up brim of the hat soldiers wore a badge that became known as the 'Rising Sun', but which, in fact, had been inspired by a trophy of socket and cut-and-thrust bayonets arranged around a brass crown in the main hall of Army Headquarters in Melbourne. When the Australian Commonwealth Horse was recruited for the Boer War in 1902 it sought a distinguishing Australian badge. After rejecting the kangaroo, emu and wattle as being not sufficiently warlike, the bayonets were chosen. Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo*, p. 150.



# Chapter 1

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## Building a Federal Force

Any attempt to chronicle the rise and fall of the post-Federation Army must first begin by establishing the physical make-up of the force. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a detailed description of the organisation and structure of the Commonwealth Military Forces from January 1901 to December 1909. It notes what the new-born federal system inherited from its colonial predecessors and how these disparate military schemes were forged into a national system. Creating a single homogenous army from six independent parts was an enormous task and tracing the efforts made to achieve it is, in many ways, to capture a large portion of the military story in these early years. The structure of the post-Federation Army was twice fundamentally altered in this period, which allows for the examination of three distinct phases of its organisational development. First, from Federation to the onset of a drastic overhaul initiated in 1903, second, an interim phase leading up to further transformation in 1906, and third, from 1906 to the beginning of Kitchener's seven-week tour of inspection in December 1909.<sup>14</sup>

The army that emerged from 1901 was heavily influenced by past colonial military developments.<sup>15</sup> Before 1870, Australian defence was the responsibility of small British garrisons quartered in the larger towns whose primary purpose was, up to 1852, guarding convicts. As time progressed and as a result of developments in Europe, rumours of war and of attacks on Australia circulated widely and encouraged the formation of local infantry companies and artillery batteries. The first such body was the 'Loyal Association', raised in New South Wales in 1801, on account of Napoleon's rampages. Such forces came and went as a response to

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14 Mordike, *An Army For A Nation*, p. 134; *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, (hereafter *Official Yearbook*) No. 12, 1919, p. 1001.

15 See Appendix 2 for a summary of colonial military developments.

perceived threats and it was only the removal of the British regiments in 1870 that provided the insecurity from which a solid basis of local defence could grow. Across Australia the colonies raised small detachments of 'permanent' soldiers to replace the British regulars. On imperial advice, the 'volunteer' systems that had spontaneously grown in the colonies were generally replaced by 'militia' forces from around 1883 with a parallel increase in expenditure and efficiency.<sup>16</sup> In this way the local forces of the colonies grew independently and in parallel as Federation approached.<sup>17</sup> Prior to 1901, each colony had, to an extent, fortified its principal coastal cities with much of this work originating from the Jervois-Scratchley Reports of 1877–78.<sup>18</sup> The defence of strategic points throughout Australia as a whole was considered prior to 1890 and as a result emplacements were also built on King George's Sound and on Thursday Island. The expense of these latter works was shared by the colonies according to geographic proximity and population.<sup>19</sup> Table 1 shows the establishments and strength of the colonial forces immediately prior to Federation and Table 2 the strength of their various arms.

- 16 A 'permanent' soldier was one who was employed full-time and with full pay. They were usually training, administrative or artillery personnel and later formed the basis of the specialist service and supporting corps. A 'volunteer' was a part-time soldier who gave of his time and services for no payment from the government. Volunteerism was the traditional method of serving for citizen-soldiers. Militia soldiers, like their volunteer counterparts, served part-time but unlike the volunteers they received payment for time spent training and parading on a daily pro-rata basis.
- 17 *Official Yearbook*, 1920, No. 13, pp. 999–1012. For more information on colonial military systems see K.S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1974 or G. Vazenny, *Reorganisation of the Australian Military Forces*, 1965 (bound and held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra).
- 18 These fortifications were modernised and upgraded throughout the next ten years. Both Jervois and Scratchley were Royal Engineers and, while they accepted that the ultimate defence of Australia lay with the supremacy of the Royal Navy, they nevertheless considered Australia susceptible to raids, bombardments and demands for ransom. They therefore recommended fortifications be built to protect the approaches to the capital and important cities and that infantry and field artillery be stationed in these forts to prevent flanking by an enemy. Reports on the defences of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were submitted in the period June–August 1877. Reports on SA and Tasmania followed in December 1877 and February 1878 respectively. Dennis, *Oxford Companion*, p. 325.
- 19 *Official Yearbook*, 1920, No. 13, pp. 999–1012.



**Table 1.** The Colonial Military Forces, December 1900.

Colony	Establishment		Strength	
	Officers	Other Ranks	Officers	Other Ranks
NSW	549	9 295	505	8 883
Victoria	394	6 050	301	6 034
Queensland	310	5 035	291	3 737
SA	141	2 847	135	2 797
WA	140	2 553	135	2 561
Tasmania	131	2 605	113	1 911
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 665</b>	<b>28 385</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>25 873</b>

Source: *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, 1919, pp. 1080–1081.<sup>20</sup>

Although Australia was federated on 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth did not take control of the state military forces until March of that year.<sup>21</sup> Prior to this date each colony had been responsible for its own defence and had administered its forces through a variety of local government arrangements with Victoria the only one to have maintained a true Department of Defence. All of this changed when the Commonwealth Department of Defence, one of the seven original departments of the fledgling Executive Council, began to carry out its functions.<sup>22</sup> From this point defence was no longer a concern of the state assemblies. Practical and executive command lay with state Commandants, who met as the Federal Military Committee, and who were responsible to the Minister for Defence, John Forrest.<sup>23</sup> Further information regarding the command and administration of the post-Federation Army may be found in Chapter Two.

<sup>20</sup> All figures quoted in tables 1 to 6 are as given in the *Official Yearbooks*.

<sup>21</sup> *Official Yearbook*, 1919, No. 12, p. 999.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

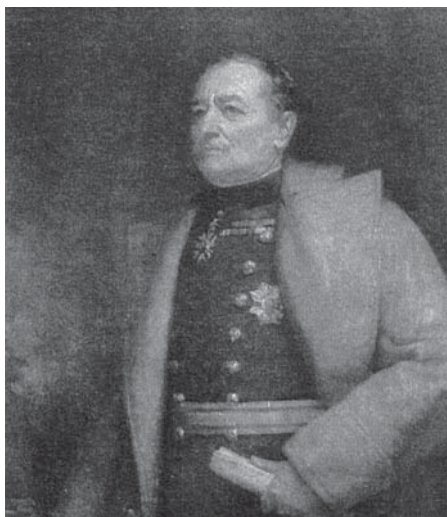
<sup>23</sup> Grey, *Military History*, p. 67.

**Table 2.** Strength of the Various Arms of the Commonwealth, December 1900.

ARMS	NSW		Victoria		QLD		SA		WA		Tasmania		TOTAL
	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	
PERMANENT													
Staff	19	98	14	58	15	57	14	5	2	8	3	9	302
Field & Garrison Artillery	18	429	12	272	7	214	1	23	2	31	-	15	1 024
Engineers & Others	5	70	1	32	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	112
MILITIA & VOLUNTEERS													
Cavalry & Mounted Rifles	88	1 695	52	1 033	53	741	33	621	32	799	5	91	5 243
Field Artillery	10	121	14	277	13	138	4	101	12	174	-	-	864
Garrison Artillery	27	441	37	901	17	212	9	165	2	66	13	197	2 087
Infantry	242	5 382	136	3 193	145	2 159	58	1 786	71	1 451	83	1 549	16 285
Engineers & Others	96	597	35	268	41	186	16	96	12	30	9	50	1 436
TOTAL	505	8 833	301	6 034	291	3737	135	2 797	135	2 561	113	1 911	25 873

N.B. Both South Australia and Western Australia had no classification of 'volunteers' at this time.  
Source: *Official Yearbook*, No. 1, 1908, p. 1082.

Under such circumstances, and according to the 1919 *Official Yearbook*, the Commonwealth took control of 28 886 military personnel.<sup>24</sup> It was decided that the best way to structure the new Australian force was with a General Officer Commanding (GOC) to take charge of the Military Branch of the Department of Defence while remaining responsible and subordinate to the Minister. Beneath the GOC, the state Commandants would continue to command the military formations in their geographic areas of responsibility. Against a backdrop of civil and political complacency with regard to defence, distrust of militarism in some quarters, and above all the overwhelming desire to restrict expenditure, Major General Sir Edward Thomas Henry ‘Curly’ Hutton was appointed GOC of the Commonwealth Military Forces on 29 January 1902.<sup>25</sup> On 1 March Hutton established a national headquarters at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, with a staff of eight officers.<sup>26</sup> Army Headquarters remained in this location until 1945.



Sir Edward Hutton was the most prominent and influential individual military figure in the post-Federation army. He was GOC of the Commonwealth Military Forces from January 1902 to December 1904. He did more than any other single person to forge a national army for the fledgling nation.<sup>27</sup>

24 *Official Yearbook*, 1919, No. 12, p. 999

25 Mordike, *Army For A Nation*, p. 131

26 Ibid.

27 Coulthard-Clark, C.D., *Duntroon, Royal Military College of Australia, 1911-1986*, (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986).

The force-in-being, as Hutton took command, was national in name alone. An examination of this organisation is therefore most effectively done on a state by state basis. New South Wales had the largest and in many cases the best organised military in 1902. It consisted of three militia regiments of mounted troops, namely the New South Wales Lancers, Australian Horse, and New South Wales Mounted Rifles, with a strength of 468, 477 and 213 personnel respectively. New South Wales also possessed four militia regiments of infantry, the 1st–4th Regiments, with between 450 and 485 men each. It also possessed a relatively well-organised volunteer force whose infantry structure mirrored that of the militia in the 5th–8th Regiments (between 530 and 630 men each). Other less organised or regulated ‘traditional’ volunteer infantry units also managed to hold onto their heritage and numbers at this time; the University Corps retained 100 men, the Drummoyne Company forty, and the New South Wales Civil Service Corps had two companies and 194 soldiers. The only surviving volunteer mounted unit, The Canterbury Volunteer Mounted Rifles, lasted until 1902 as a much reduced half-squadron of forty men. New South Wales also had strong permanent and militia artillery contingents in the New South Wales Garrison Artillery (six companies of 633 men) and the New South Wales Field Artillery (four batteries and 371 men). Finally, the state possessed 168 permanent and militia engineers divided into four companies, 142 men in the New South Wales Army Services Corps, and 148 men in Medical Corps units.<sup>28</sup>

In general terms the other states had similar military arrangements to New South Wales in 1902, if on a smaller scale, with Victoria the next by size. The militia-based Victorian Mounted Rifles, composed of no fewer than twenty-three detachments and many sub-units distributed throughout the state, had an established strength of 1100 men and an actual strength of 1184 in 1902. The remaining militia force was the Victorian Infantry Brigade, organised into five battalions totalling 1721 men. This formation originated from the Victorian Rangers which survived as a volunteer formation with a total of 690 soldiers. Other volunteer units in Victoria included the Melbourne Cavalry (forty-five men), the Victorian Railway Regiment (118), and the Victorian Scottish Regiment (350). Like New South Wales, Victoria possessed garrison artillery troops (1029), field artillerymen (233), engineers (183), a Service Corps (thirty) and a Medical Corps (fifty three).<sup>29</sup>

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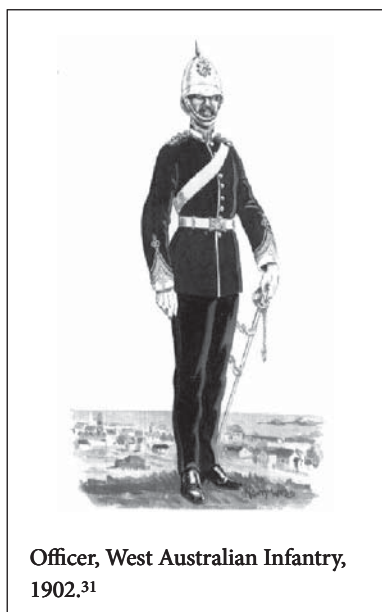
28 *The Military Forces of the Commonwealth Tables*, Australian War Memorial (hereafter AWM) Series 3, Item [22].

29 *Ibid.*

Queensland's military forces in 1902 were the next largest, consisting of four militia battalions of The Queensland Mounted Infantry, each with between 240 and 160 men. In addition to this was the militia infantry of the 'Moreton Regiment' (or 1st Queensland Infantry Regiment). Volunteer infantry units in Queensland at this time included the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Queensland Infantry Regiments numbering 268, 185, and sixty-eight men respectively, and the Queensland Rifles (223). Like the two older states, Queensland possessed both garrison and field artillery units of permanent and militia status but on a reduced scale, about 280 personnel combined. The state also maintained a company of engineers and a medical detachment of 118. It is interesting to note that Queensland had not formed a Service Corps by 1902.<sup>30</sup>

The South Australian military in 1902 was comprised of a mixed unit of the South Australia Mounted Rifles, of which one squadron was militia and the other six volunteer. This gave a total of ninety-three mounted militia and 461 volunteers in the saddle. South Australia also fielded two infantry regiments of two battalions each; a militia regiment (543), and a volunteer regiment (672), a battery of both garrison and field artillery of mixed militia and permanent status and a Medical Corps contingent of forty two. The state, in 1902, possessed neither engineers nor a Service Corps component.

'Australia's Western Third' was home to the Western Australian Mounted Infantry of four militia companies of around fifty soldiers each. The only other militia unit was the 1st Battalion, Western Australian Infantry Regiment (199). The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th battalions of this regiment were all volunteers that together totalled 686 men. Finally, in 1902



Officer, West Australian Infantry, 1902.<sup>31</sup>

30 Ibid.

31 Monty Wedd, *Australian Military Uniforms* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1982) p. 128.

Western Australia possessed a company of garrison artillery and two batteries of field artillery, totalling 111 gunners while lacking any semblance of a Service, Medical or Engineers Corps.<sup>32</sup>

The only militia units in Tasmania at this time were five troops of the Tasmanian Mounted Infantry (102). All other units were volunteer—three battalions of the Tasmanian Infantry Regiment numbering 582, 473 and 447 respectively. It is worth noting that some of these units were among the few in Australia, in 1902, to exceed their peacetime establishment strengths. Tasmania had two mixed permanent and militia artillery units, in the Southern Tasmanian Artillery and the Launceston Artillery, which were not divided along garrison and field artillery lines. Whilst Tasmania possessed engineers and a twenty-four man medical detachment in 1902, it lacked a Service Corps.<sup>33</sup>

What is not immediately obvious in the above dispositions were some of Hutton's early successes. In July 1902 the Royal Australian Artillery was formed out of various state artillery regiments and detachments while a number of the submarine mining, and field/electric companies in each state were made into the Corps of Australian Engineers in July 1903.<sup>35</sup> The Australian Army Medical Corps was formed at the same time and



32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 A version of the Royal Australian Artillery was formed on 24 August 1899, on the advice of two Inter-Colonial Military Conferences (1894 and 1896). This force consisted of the artillery regiments of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. The Royal Australian Artillery referred to in the text, however, was the true federal organisation raised in 1902. E. Andrews, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

in the same way. A Veterinary and Ordnance department was also established at federal level.<sup>36</sup> For the most part, with some notable exceptions, all states possessed elements from all the arms and services from mid-1903. These successes to one side, even at a cursory glance one cannot help but notice the non-uniformity of Commonwealth military forces in 1902. Although an issue Hutton would soon attempt to remedy, at this stage both the nomenclature and the size of various state units had little in common. For example, in New South Wales there were mounted units designated companies and squadrons of varying establishment strengths, and while this state's infantry was divided into regiments, that of Tasmania was a regiment divided into battalions. Victoria's mounted infantry consisted of detachments only with no squadrons or companies at all.<sup>37</sup>

Hutton's task of forging a federal defence force out of the components listed above was considerable. Nonetheless, the GOC began collating and re-organising the Commonwealth Military Forces with characteristic zeal. He was armed, even before he inspected the units and troops for himself, with a report on the state of Australian defence forces provided by the Minister, John Forrest, in 1901 (known as the Finn report).<sup>38</sup> It was compiled under ministerial order by the six state Commandants and was designed to advise on force structure issues and integration.<sup>39</sup> Among other things the report noted the lack of ammunition and small arms, unserviceable and incompatible equipment, the lack of Service Corps or veterinary elements in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, and medical and ordnance store departments that only truly functioned in New South Wales.<sup>40</sup> Also frustrating Hutton's enthusiasm was the fact that until Forrest could get a Defence Bill through Parliament (his first was defeated in 1901), the Commonwealth military still operated under six differing sets of colonial legislation. Despite Hutton's vigour, by the end of 1903 the national army remained nothing more than a collection of colonial forces under a federal banner; in its essence and characteristics it remained a grouping of state units. Furthermore,

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36 Not to be confused with an Ordnance Corps, this did not exist until the 1920s. *The Military Forces of the Commonwealth Tables*, AWM 3, Item [22].

37 Ibid.

38 Named after the Commandant of Queensland Military Forces, Colonel Harry Finn. *Report of the Federal Military Committee*, AWM 3, Item [1].

39 Ibid, & Mordike, *Army for a Nation*, p. 70.

40 *Report of the Federal Military Committee*, AWM 3, Item [1].

some of the problems and difficulties that would beset the Army in later years were already beginning to show. There had been a 25 per cent drop in overall numbers, for example, from the time of Federation to March 1903.<sup>41</sup>

Hutton did not come into command of the post-Federation Army without clear and preconceived ideas on how it could be improved. Paramount in the GOC's mind, from his appointment in December 1902 until his dismissal in December 1904, was a scheme of raising a national army divided into static and mobile components. The former were to primarily consist of volunteer 'Garrison Troops', responsible for local state defence and the manning of permanent fortifications. The latter was to be structured around a militia-based 'Field Force', responsible for the defence of the Commonwealth as a whole (as well as acting as a reserve for Garrison Troops).<sup>42</sup> From day one, and without formal approval (which came in late July 1903), Hutton began to make subtle changes with this scheme in mind. By early 1903, for example, on the advice of the Colonial Defence Committee and with his Field Force firmly in mind, he had already set about reducing the number of volunteers and increasing the militia.<sup>43</sup> The forces Hutton had to work with in attempting to establish his scheme from mid-1903 are shown at Table 3.

Exactly why Hutton remained so enthusiastic about the scheme of Field Forces and Garrison Troops throughout his tenure in the face of considerable opposition remains a subject of debate.<sup>44</sup> While his scheme seemed reasonable in theory, it was never a practical solution to the problem of defending continental Australia. The GOC must surely have realised that, lacking a national and uniform rail system in a country of such size, his Field Force would never be mobile in any

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41 Nield, CPD, 1st Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 6006.

42 *Scheme of Organisation of the Military Forces of the Commonwealth into a Field Force and into Garrison Troops*, AWM 3, Item 677 (hereafter *Scheme of Organisation*); *Official Yearbook*, No. 2, 1909, p. 1082–84.

43 The Colonial Defence Committee existed to examine questions of the defence of the Empire as whole. It was established on the recommendation of the Esher Report which was tabled in Great Britain after the Boer War for the purpose of reforming all aspects of the British military.

44 This is the theme of Mordike's book *An Army for a Nation*. It is the theory based on manipulation by imperial officers, working within the Commonwealth military framework, to shape the Army into a trained manpower reserve for the mother country. There is a wealth of evidence that supports this contention but, while such manoeuvring is relevant, it is beyond the purpose of this chapter.



true sense. In truth, it is more likely that he pictured it as a ready source of trained manpower for the Empire at least as much as a force for the defence of Australian soil. Mordike certainly argues this point and condemns Hutton's scheme as nothing more than a ploy to establish a pool of manpower capable of transforming into an expeditionary force for Britain when the need arose. Whatever his motive, the GOC remained a staunch advocate of this scheme throughout his appointment.

**Table 3.** Strength of Forces, June 1903.

State	Mounted Troops	Infantry	Field Artillery	Garrison Artillery	Engineers	Service Corps	Veterinary Department	Ordnance Department	Administrative & Instructional Staff	Pay Department	Totals
NSW	1 504	5 073	183	575	286	236	4	38	87	12	8 157
Victoria	1 158	3 066	366	1 041	208	72	1	36	60	11	6 070
Qld	778	1 415	155	273	68	118	-	13	50	9	2 889
SA	546	1 096	71	110	1	52	1	9	17	5	1 908
WA	309	884	122	89	1	17	1	2	20	2	1 447
Tasmania	114	1 428	90	111	61	17	-	4	24	1	1 850
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4 419</b>	<b>12 962</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>2 199</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>22 346</b>

Source: Adapted from Commonwealth Military Forces Table 1903, CPP, Vol. 2, 1903.

Following official approval in July 1903, Hutton began to restructure existing military forces into his scheme of Field Forces and Garrison Troops in earnest. Under his plan the former was to consist, in the main, of militia and permanent troops organised into six light horse brigades and three infantry brigades with supporting arms and services contained therein. Each light horse brigade was to hold three mounted regiments, numbered one to eighteen, with each retaining their historical names and ties such as the 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment,

(New South Wales Lancers).<sup>45</sup> All Field Force light horse brigades were to contain a section of engineers, a battery of field artillery, a supply column, a field hospital, a stretcher bearer company and elements from the veterinary department.<sup>46</sup> By contrast, each of the three Field Force infantry brigades was to consist of four infantry regiments, again numbered one to twelve, and again maintaining their historical ties such as the 9th Australian Infantry Regiment, (Moreton Regiment).<sup>47</sup> Each infantry brigade was also to hold three batteries of field artillery, a field company of engineers, an infantry supply column, an infantry bearer company, a field hospital and elements from the veterinary department.<sup>48</sup>

The second half of Hutton's scheme, the Garrison Troops, was allocated to each state according to the fortifications that required manning. Garrison infantry units were to be predominantly volunteer and re-named along state lines. In New South Wales, for example, the Australian Scottish Rifles would become the New South Wales Scottish Rifles and the Union Volunteer Infantry Regiment became the New South Wales Irish Rifle Regiment.<sup>49</sup> State garrisons were typically to contain a small proportion of mounted infantry (three squadrons in the case of New South Wales and one for Queensland), between two and seven regiments of infantry, between three and eight companies of militia or permanent garrison artillery, and perhaps one or two batteries of field artillery. Garrisons also usually contained an engineering field company, electric company and submarine mining company, along with one or two garrison companies of Service and Medical Corps personnel.<sup>50</sup>

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45 The peacetime establishment of a light horse regiment was four squadrons of 324 men. *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* (hereafter *Commonwealth Gazette*), No. 35, 25 July 1903.

46 Previously existing medical units were restructured and renamed under Hutton's plan. The 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Field Hospitals were established in NSW, QLD and SA. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Bearer Companies were raised in NSW, VIC and QLD. *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 61, 31 October 1903. *The Military Forces of the Commonwealth Tables*, AWM 3, Item [22].

47 The peacetime establishment of an infantry regiment was eight companies of 509 men. *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 35, 25 July 1903.

48 Ibid.

49 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 61, 31 October 1903.

50 *Scheme of Organisation*, AWM 3, Item 677.

When put into effect Hutton's new scheme twisted many existing formations almost beyond recognition. The changes wrought to units in New South Wales were an illustrative case study in this regard. New South Wales was responsible for providing the 1st and 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigades and the 1st Infantry Brigade of the Field Force.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently, six regiments of light horse were created from the mounted troops that already existed in the state. The 1st and 4th Australian Light Horse Regiments were raised out of the New South Wales Lancers while elements of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, The Australian Horse, and the New South Wales Mounted Rifles came together as the 2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment.<sup>52</sup> Again, detachments from the Australian Horse, the 3rd Infantry Regiment, and New South Wales Mounted Rifles constituted the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment. The 5th Regiment was created out of the 5th Squadron, New South Wales Lancers, parts of the 4th Infantry Regiment, and the remainder of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles. The sixth and final regiment was formed from all that was left of the 4th Infantry Regiment and the Australian Horse.<sup>53</sup> As far as infantry was concerned, all remaining foot soldiers in the state were distributed into 1st–4th Australian Infantry Regiments. With respect to artillery, four batteries of field artillery were created and christened the 1st–4th New South Wales Batteries, Australian Field Artillery, while the state's engineers were organised into 1st and 4th Field Companies, the 1st Submarine Mining Company, and the 1st Electric Company.<sup>54</sup> Medical units were forged into the 1st and 2nd Mounted Bearer Companies, 1st and 2nd Field Hospitals and the 1st Garrison Company, Australian Army Medical Corps.<sup>55</sup> After all of these units were subsumed into the Field Force, the state's volunteers and other

51 The 3rd Light Horse Brigade was Victorian while the 4th was a combination of Tasmanian and Victorian units. Queenslanders made up the 5th Light Horse Brigade while troops from South Australia and Western Australia combined to form the 6th Regiment. The 2nd Infantry Brigade consisted solely of Victorians while the 3rd was a conglomerate of Tasmanians, Western Australians, South Australians and Queenslanders. *The Military Forces of the Commonwealth Tables*, AWM 3, Item [22].

52 Not to be confused with the 'Commonwealth Horse', which was a unit raised specifically for the Boer War.

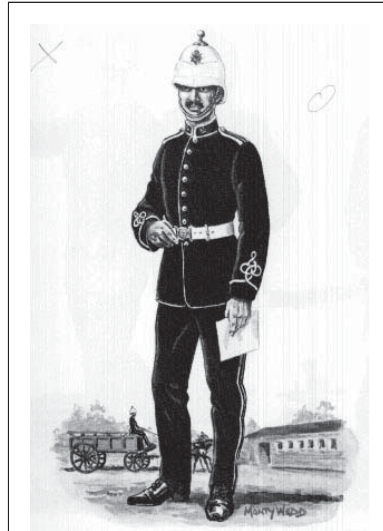
53 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 35, 25 July 1903.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 61, 31 October 1903. Victoria did not have a medical unit until one was formed on 16 April 1904. *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 23, 31 April 1904.

unallotted formations were designated as Garrison Troops. This pattern was reflected and replicated in the other states with the only real difference being the number of units.

From the outset four obstacles were placed in the path of Hutton's scheme. First, it was a radical change from past practice and caused significant turmoil in units forced to change name or role. Second, manpower became an immediate cause of concern, in many cases there existed no unit that could easily fill the position created by Hutton's plan and so, where possible, one had to be formed.<sup>56</sup> It was soon apparent, however, that the 26 000 personnel called for by the Field Force/Garrison Troop system were well beyond what could be raised, in the short term at least (see Table 4). The third of Hutton's problems was a simple lack of money. The financial situation of the early Commonwealth Government militated against financial extravagance, especially in defence.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the GOC was faced with opposition from 'nationalist' politicians who speculated about the true nature and purpose of the Field Force.<sup>58</sup> Although their fears were somewhat placated by the *Defence Act 1903*, which forbade compulsory overseas service, many, convinced that such an idea was still harboured by imperialist-minded officers, remained opposed to Hutton and his plans.



**Officer, Australian Army Service Corps, 1903. Hutton took the colonial service corps units, (which did not exist in all states), and created the Australian Service Corps in 1903.**

<sup>56</sup> *Scheme of Organisation*, AWM 3, Item 677.

<sup>57</sup> Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 122.

<sup>58</sup> In accordance with Mordike's theory.

Of the unit complaints, manpower shortages, political suspicion and financial concerns that stood in the way of Hutton's scheme, it was the last that posed the most serious threat. The re-organisation of 1903 initially foundered as the Government refused to sanction the levels of expenditure that Hutton required.<sup>59</sup> The simple reason for this was the poor financial position of the Federal Government. Monetary difficulty beset the Commonwealth in all departments and Defence was not immune. This problem was primarily due to the lack of an income tax, which did not become law until 1915; this meant that almost all federal revenue was derived from tariffs and excise duties. Australia was also in severe drought from 1895 until 1903. Finally, compounding the issue was the infamous Section 87 of the Constitution—'the Braddon Blot'—which required the Commonwealth to hand over three quarters of customs revenue to the states for the first decade of Federation. Defence was understandably low on the Government's list of essential expenditure.

**Table 4.** Strength of Forces, 1901–09.

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909
	1/3/01	1/8/02	30/6/03	30/6/04	30/6/05	30/6/06	30/6/07	30/6/08	30/6/09
Headquarters	-	26	25	26	23	21	21	26	30
NSW	9 772	9 350	8 190	7 285	7 450	7 642	7 501	7 665	7 902
Victoria	7 011	6 771	6 070	5 734	5 858	6 146	6 325	6 568	6 669
Queensland	4 310	3 199	2 889	2 830	2 877	3 011	2 979	3 176	3 224
SA	2 956	2 214	1 911	1 699	1 842	1 962	1 888	1 935	2 004
WA	2 288	1 845	1 469	1 254	1 235	1 522	1 625	1 611	1 662
Tasmania	2 554	2 199	1 850	1 052	1 214	1 645	1 662	1 650	1 870
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28 886</b>	<b>25 604</b>	<b>22 404</b>	<b>19 880</b>	<b>20 499</b>	<b>21 948</b>	<b>21 911</b>	<b>22 631</b>	<b>23 361</b>

Source: Official Yearbook, No. 1, 1908, p. 1051.

59 Grey, *Military History*, p. 72.

Hutton based his financial estimates on the number of troops serving in 1901 and assumed that he would receive the equivalent of the combined colonial defence budgets—some £937 000 in 1900.<sup>60</sup> Conversely, the government expected the cost of defence to be reduced as a function of Federation and proposed a reduction of nearly £500 000 to his budgetary forecast. The Minister for Defence, Forrest, only got the support of the Committee of Supply by initially reducing the defence budget by £175 198 with the promise of a further reduction of £84 524 in 1901–02 and £131 000 in 1902–03. Contrary to Hutton's expectations, the level of Commonwealth defence expenditure did not exceed the colonial total until 1906–07. Even worse for Hutton's plans, the above figures referred only to the general and ongoing annual defence budget and greater expenditure was still required to turn his plans into reality. The GOC requested an additional £486 283 over a four-year period from 1903–07 to implement his Field Force and Garrison plans. He received the sum total of zero. The entire defence budget in 1903 was a mere 0.38 per cent of the year's Gross Domestic Product, with the Postmaster-General's department alone receiving on average three times the amount spent on defence between 1909–10.<sup>61</sup> The net result was that Hutton's re-organisation could not be fully implemented. The GOC, however, cannot bear responsibility for the fact that his costs were not met. The Government had, after all, previously approved his plan. Hutton lamented that 'it is not too much to say that a reduction so summary and so drastic constitutes little less than the destruction of the previously existing military systems of Australia'.<sup>62</sup>

An urgent and confidential dispatch of 24 June 1903, sent to Hutton by the Minister for Defence, showed the sort of difficulty the GOC faced.<sup>63</sup> Immediately after his scheme of re-organisation was approved, Hutton was promptly told that, due to the urgent need for economy, and despite approved establishments, the forces were not to exceed their present numbers in Tasmania and Western

60 Ibid.

61 This was the lowest percentage of GDP spent on defence between 1901–09. The average expenditure for this period was 0.42 per cent. W. Vamplew (ed.), *Australians: Historical Statistics*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Sydney, 1987, pp. 133 & 412; *Official Yearbook*, 1908, No. 1, p. 653.

62 Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 126.

63 *Letter from Minister of Defence to GOC, dated 24 June 1903*, Commonwealth Record Service (hereafter CRS), Series B168, Item 02/6640.

Australia.<sup>64</sup> In the meantime recruitment was halted and the permanent artillery reduced by 39 per cent across the country. As a consequence, by mid-June 1903 the Commonwealth Military Forces numbered 22 346, 3500 men short of Hutton's 'approved' numbers.<sup>65</sup> As primarily a militia force, the six light horse and three infantry brigades called for in the Field Force were particularly hamstrung by fiscal restraint and associated manpower problems. The situation was commented on in verse by *The Bulletin* in 1906:

Every mornin' there's a levee from some bold militia corps,  
Chiefly adjutants and colonels, waitin' at the General's door;  
They are showed in, lookin' solemn, and they find him at his chair,  
And they line up in a column with a highly martial air.  
And they listen most respectfully while he tells them of his plan  
To "reorganise the army" and knock feathers off Japan!  
And he asks them "What's your muster? Is your corps a doin' well?"  
And they answer in a fluster "they can hardly rightly tell."  
Or perhaps they mention sadly  
That the corp's a been treated badly;  
That it hasn't got equipment nor a proper place to drill;  
That they need four hundred rifles'  
And a thousand other trifles'  
And practical encouragement before their ranks 'il fill.<sup>66</sup>

In the context of such parsimony, the Army almost tore itself apart trying to fit into the mould Hutton had set with units across the nation disbanded or re-designated to conform to it.<sup>67</sup> A total of 1446 volunteers, for example, were converted to militia to comply with the scheme.<sup>68</sup> Such efforts, however, even when welcome or effective—and they seldom were—could not overcome fundamental financial limitations. During Hutton's three years as GOC the emphasis remained more on

64 These states had had no militia forces before 1901 and the Government simply could not afford to raise them in 1903.

65 Grey, *Military History*, p. 70.

66 O.C. Cabot, *The Bulletin*, Vol. 27, No. 1359, 1 March 1906, p. 10.

67 Appendix A to Australia, Parliament 1903, *Organisation of the Military Forces of the Commonwealth*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 60.

68 Ibid.

issues of economy than developing combat capability. It is this issue that inspired Sir George Clarke, former secretary to the Colonial Defence Committee and the first secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, to describe Hutton's reforms as 'largely of a paper character and therefore illusionary'.<sup>69</sup>

The failure to fully implement the re-organisations of 1903 led to the postponement of further structural reform until 1906. From this point the Field Force, such as it was, was reconstituted into five light horse brigades, two infantry brigades, and four mixed brigades.<sup>70</sup> New South Wales still fielded the 1st and 2nd Light Horse Brigades and the 1st Infantry Brigade, while Victoria remained home to the 3rd and 4th Light Horse Brigades and the 2nd Infantry Brigade, the last of which now had two instead of the previous three regiments.<sup>71</sup> The rest of the Field Force, however, was completely re-modelled. The Queensland (mixed) Brigade held two squadrons of light horse (from the old 15th Australian Light Horse Regiment) and two regiments of infantry (the Moreton and Port Curtis Regiments). The South Australian Brigade contained the 16th and 17th Australian Light Horse Regiments

69 Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 128.

70 Significant confusion has arisen over time concerning the designation of infantry units as regiments or battalions in the post-Federation period. In Australia, infantry units existed as regiments of eight companies until 1908 at which time a redesignation occurred. All infantry regiments were renamed the '1st battalion' of their respective regiments. For instance the 2nd Infantry Regiment became the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment and the St Georges English Rifle Regiment became the 1st Battalion, St Georges English Rifle Regiment. The establishment, at this time, was the same for a battalion as it had been for a regiment. This would later change. *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 30, 20 June 1908.

71 The 1st Brigade contained the 1st–4th Regiments and the 2nd Brigade the 5th–8th. Both brigades had a squadron of light horse attached. The second brigade contained the 4th Australian Light Horse Regiment, which was re-named the Hunter River Lancers on 23 February 1907. The unit exists to this day with its headquarters in Tamworth. A Light Horse brigade from 1908 consisted of a headquarters troop, 3 light horse regiments, a battery of field artillery, a troop of engineers, a half-company of signallers, a field ambulance, a transport and supply column and a brigade ammunition column. An infantry brigade from 1908 consisted of a headquarters, a light horse squadron, a brigade of field artillery, a field company of engineers, 4 infantry battalions, a half-company of signallers, an infantry transport and supply column and a field ambulance. *Commonwealth Gazettes*, No. 12, 23 February 1907 & No. 6, 30 June 1909.



and the 10th Australian Infantry Regiment, while the Western Australian Brigade held the 18th Light Horse and 11th Infantry Regiments. Finally, the Tasmanian Brigade was made up of the 12th Light Horse and 12th Infantry Regiments.<sup>72</sup> The purpose of these changes was to unite the formations of each state under independent brigades—each comprising troops only from that state. The composite brigades were necessary as the smaller states could not support a purely infantry or a purely mounted formation. At least it would no longer be physically impossible to unite the brigades of the Field Force for training and mobilisation purposes, even if it was still impractical.

Between 1906 and 1909, the basic structure of the post-Federation Army remained essentially unchanged.<sup>73</sup> State garrisons were practically the same at the end of the period as they had been for the previous five years with differences due only to the size of the state fortifications and the number of troops required to staff them. So too the Field Force, with its light horse, infantry and mixed brigades, endured. The Army was still divided into permanent and citizen forces, with the former containing the Administration and Instructional staff, the Royal Australian Artillery (which provided for the garrisoning of strategic points as well as providing the nucleus around which citizen units could form), detachments of engineers and elements of the Australian Army Medical and Service Corps.<sup>74</sup> The citizen forces still contained a mixture of militia troops of all arms and volunteer infantry units (see Tables 5 and 6). Equally, the structural difficulties of the force continued without remedy. Manpower shortages, for example, were such that even by the end of the period the Field Force still required some 1269 additional personnel and the Garrison Troops needed a further 239 men to fill their peacetime establishments.

Such consistency did not mean that organisational innovation was completely absent from the post-Federation Army from 1906. A new ‘reserve’ force, for example, consisting of officers who had retired from active service and members of rifle clubs, was raised under the theory that they could bring the active forces up to strength in an emergency.<sup>75</sup> So too a Corps of Signallers was established

72 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 52, 5 October 1907.

73 One exception to this rule occurred in Queensland where a separate light horse and infantry brigades were re-raised in 1908. *Organisation and Distribution Tables*, 26 May 1908. CRS MP84/1, Item 1856/4/56.

74 *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, 1919, pp. 1082–83.

75 *Ibid.*

in 1907, whilst an Automobile Corps, an Intelligence Corps, an Army Nursing Service and Light Horse Field Ambulances were created in 1908.<sup>76</sup> The Australian Army Veterinary Corps was also formally raised in June 1909. In the spirit of originality a prize of £5000 was offered in the same year by the Government for the best design of a flying machine for military purposes.<sup>77</sup> Such developments were, however, on the periphery and the basic organisation and structure of the post-Federation Army did not and in many ways could not evolve or adapt to any significant extent from 1906.

**Table 5.** Arms of the Australian Army, 1909.

Militia Staff	53	Service Corps	299
Light Horse	5 380	Medical Corps	679
Field Artillery	1 301	Automobile Corps	35
Garrison Artillery	2 204	Nursing Service	89
Engineers	811	Veterinary Corps	15
Infantry	11 635	Ordnance Department	151
Intelligence Corps	53	Signals Corps	259
Administrative & Instructional Staff	336	Pay Department & Rifle Ranges	61
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>23 361</b>

Source: Official Yearbook, No. 1, 1908, p. 1051.

<sup>76</sup> J.W. McCay, Minister for Defence in the Reid-McLean Government from 18 August 1904 until 5 July 1905, was the first Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Corps. On 20 June 1908, a number of affiliations were made with British units that corresponded to a tightening of defence relations between Australia and the 'old country'. The 8th Australian Infantry Regiment was, for example, associated with the King's Liverpool Regiment and the 1st–6th Australian Light Horse Regiments with the King's Colonial Yeomanry. *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 30, 20 June 1908. Ibid, No. 6, 30 June 1909; *Official Yearbooks*, No. 11, 1918, p. 889 & No. 12, 1919, p. 1083.

<sup>77</sup> *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 15, 13 May 1909.

In the end, the force structure in place at the end of 1909 endured for less than a year before it was abandoned. The seeds of its demise were sown by men like Alfred Deakin, Sir Charles Thomas Ewing and James Gordon Legge, who believed that universal military service was the key to defending the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the mechanism for the change had been put in place by the *Defence Act 1909*, which provided for peacetime conscription. Such developments coincided with the visit, inspection and subsequent report of Lord Kitchener on the state of the military forces of the Commonwealth. The result was a radically new scheme of defence for Australia and the dismantling of post-Federation Army structures.

**Table 6.** Classification of Land Forces, 1909.

Branch of Service	HQ	NSW	Victoria	Queens-land	SA	WA	Tas-mania	Total
Permanent	26	517	440	262	70	77	56	1 448
Militia	4	5 371	5 133	2 832	1 383	979	1 117	16 819
Volunteers	-	2 014	1 096	130	551	606	697	5 094
Rifle Clubs	-	14 500	22 921	7 062	4 944	5 070	1 450	55 947
Cadets	-	8 658	10 974	5 093	2 822	2 979	1 662	32 188
Unattached List of Officers	-	48	107	61	31	21	39	307
Reserve of Officers	-	145	196	141	47	22	20	571
Chaplains	-	34	32	14	6	18	13	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31 287</b>	<b>40 899</b>	<b>15 595</b>	<b>9 854</b>	<b>9 772</b>	<b>5 054</b>	<b>112 491</b>

Source: Official Yearbook, No. 1, 1908, p. 1051.



# Chapter 2

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## Command & Administration

On 10 January 1901, the untimely death of the first Minister for Defence, James Dickson, after only nine days in office, meant that Sir John Forrest, previously the Postmaster-General, assumed responsibility for the fledgling department. Forrest accepted his new portfolio with no experience and not much of an idea of how to proceed. He began his tenure believing that ‘the interests of the post and telegram department are much fuller of complexity and variety than those concerned with the Department of Defence.’<sup>78</sup> He was soon disabused of such sentiment. Forrest did not inherit a completely blank slate as there had been limited moves, linked to the idea of imperial defence, to centralise defence administration prior to 1901. Such initiatives began after the Sudan crisis of 1884; in the following year the British Government re-created the Colonial Defence Committee that had been temporarily established by Disraeli in 1878 during a war scare with Russia. With the Committee’s encouragement, the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1887 requested a military inspection by a British officer. As a result, in 1889 Major General J. Bevan Edwards, visiting Australia on his way to Hong Kong, proposed a federal militia be established.<sup>79</sup> It is with cognisance of such nineteenth-century developments that this chapter traces the evolution of command and administrative relationships within the post-Federation Army, as well as between it and its political masters.

Section 51 (vi) of the *Constitution Act 1900* gave the Federal Government responsibility for ‘the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and the several states, and the control of the forces to execute and maintain the laws of the Commonwealth.’ As a consequence, under Section 69, the Federal Government

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<sup>78</sup> Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 120.

<sup>79</sup> Andrews, *Department of Defence*, p. 1.

took administrative command of naval and military defence. On 1 March 1901, after initial administrative details had been set, the nascent Department of Defence took formal control of the Commonwealth Military Forces.<sup>80</sup> Simultaneously, negotiations began between the Department of Defence, the Governor General and British authorities as to the procurement of a British officer to command the newly federalised Army.<sup>81</sup> This course of action was ratified by the Colonial Defence Committee on 20 June 1901, despite the move away from a GOC system and demands for reform of the outmoded command structure it embodied in Britain. Until such an officer could be found executive power rested with the state Commandants, just as it had in colonial times. Although the Minister for Defence and his department were developing a federal bureaucracy, at this stage practical administrative responsibility rested with the state Commands.

It was a further three months after the transfer of military responsibility to the Commonwealth before the Department of Defence actually began to function. To this end, on 1 July 1901, the pre-existing Victorian (colonial) Department of Defence was transformed into a federal organisation with the transfer of just twelve people.<sup>82</sup> The Minister and his Department were located in Victoria Barracks, Melbourne with the head of the old Victorian organisation, Captain R. M. Collins, appointed as its first Secretary and head of the 'Civilian Branch'. Along with Major General Hutton as GOC of the post-Federation Army, within the 'Military

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80 Many initial administrative details were not gazetted. The earliest orders identified are those in the Barton Papers held in the National Library of Australia. *Other Political Papers, 1892–1911*, CRS M551, Item 1028. Details of the Department in its early years may be found in *Commonwealth Gazette* No. 1, 1 January 1901, p.41; No. 9, 20 February 1901, p. 21 & No. 38, 30 July 1901, p. 127. Further information contained in *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, pp. 999, 1000, 1012 & 1018. See also C.A. Hughes & B.D. Graham, *A Handbook on Australian Government and Politics 1890–1964*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1964, p. 39.

81 The need for a GOC is expressed and explained in a memorandum from the Minister of Defence to the Prime Minister. Memorandum No. 259 for Right Honourable Prime Minister from Minister for Defence, dated April 1901. *Items of Historical Interest – Records of Department of Defence Series*, CRS A2657/T1.

82 Ibid. Correspondence files for the Victorian Department of Defence exist under CRS MP1577/1. Further records may be found in the *Sydney Record Books 1881 – 1910*, CRS MP1577/1 and the *Minute book of meetings of the Department*, under CRS B4823.

Branch' Captain W.R. Creswell was appointed as the Officer Commanding Naval Forces. Collins, Hutton and Creswell were each individually responsible to the Minister and invariably their functions overlapped. Collins went to Britain in 1906 as an official representative of the Commonwealth to pave the way for an Australian High Commission, which he became Secretary to in 1910, while back in Melbourne Sir Samuel Augustus Petherbridge became acting Secretary. He remained so until March 1910 when he was formally appointed to the post.

As Forrest began to come to grips with the magnitude of his duties Australia was formally divided into six Military Districts, roughly corresponding to the state boundaries. Although immediately operable it was not until the *Defence Act 1903* was passed and Army Regulations and Orders published that they were legal in every sense of the word.<sup>83</sup> The break up and lay out of the Military Districts is shown in Figure 1. Throughout this period the Department of Defence was not a government department in the modern sense of the word for it was not entirely independent of the military forces it 'controlled'.<sup>84</sup> The term 'department' conjures images of bureaucratic oversight that did not exist and, until federal legislation was enacted, it was little more than an 'administrative post office'. The first priority of the Minister, therefore, was to draw up a federal Defence Bill, for until it was passed he had no legal authority whatsoever. To illustrate how difficult it was to administer the Army without such legislation, until 1904 Hutton, as GOC, could not transfer personnel between military districts without their consent.<sup>85</sup> A Defence Bill was subsequently written and tabled in the first parliamentary session, but it was not passed.

Forrest's original Defence Bill evoked no enthusiasm. It was roundly criticised on technical grounds and on principle. William Morris Hughes, in a typical reaction, called it 'an olla podrida, a jumble of clauses and provisions extracted from the various [colonial] Defence Acts'.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, it aroused widespread parliamentary hostility against the purported 'militarism' it represented. The Bill was tabled for reconsideration by the Federal Military Committee in June, but so poor were its chances of being passed that it was allowed to lapse and was

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83 *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, 1919; *Army Regulations and Orders*, 1 January 1904, CRS A2657/T1.

84 Grey, *Military History*, p. 69.

85 Perry, 'Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Hutton: The Creator of Australia's Post-Federation Army', p. 19.

86 Norris, *Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 122.

subsequently withdrawn on 26 March 1902. It was more than a year later before the *Defence Act 1903* was finally passed. As a result of the debacle, Forrest's reputation was so tarnished and confidence in him so low that the Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, sent letters to the state Premiers asking that all defence-related inquiries be directed to him personally rather than through Forrest's department. It was therefore the Prime Minister, and not the Minister for Defence, who announced Hutton's appointment as GOC.<sup>87</sup>

Although Major General Hutton's appointment became effective from 26 December 1901, he physically arrived in Australia on 29 January 1902.<sup>88</sup> Hutton requested a three-year appointment and accepted Captain Cyril Brudenell Bingham White, a man destined for higher things, as his Aide-de-Camp.<sup>89</sup> Hutton was actually the third choice for the position of GOC with the first two nominees declining due to the lack of money and potentially damaging career prospects that a 'colonial' position implied. Such an appointment, however, was familiar ground for Hutton, who had previously commanded the colonial forces of New South Wales and later the militia forces of Canada. Despite a history and reputation for ignoring his colonial masters and referring questions of policy directly to his superiors in London, Hutton was a sound administrator and set about, with characteristic zeal, the task of forging six separate state forces into one homogenous army.

The *Defence Act 1903* was proclaimed on 1 March 1904—and with it were published Military Regulations, Standing Orders and the first Military Forces List—setting out the seniority of all serving officers. The Act made specific provision for the establishment of a 'board of advice', nominated by the Governor General, which was intended to discuss matters referred to it by the Minister for

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87 Andrews, *Department of Defence*, p. 12.

88 Confirmation of the appointment of Hutton as GOC is found in the *Minute for Prime Minister of Commonwealth from Governor-General of the Commonwealth*, dated 1 December 1901. CRS A2657/T1.

89 *Minute 1548 from the Department of Defence to the GOC*, dated 9 April 1902, AWM 3, Item 02/79. During the First World War Sir Cyril Brudenell Bingham White became the Chief of Staff to the 1st Anzac Corps under General Birdwood. It is generally accepted that he wielded unprecedented influence in the running of the corps and was held back from higher command due solely to his value as a staff officer. J. Grey, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 12, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1990, p. 462.



Defence. This board was not formed during Forrest's tenure (1901–03) and all military matters (excluding those involving naval forces) were discussed directly between the Minister and the GOC.

**Figure 1.** Military Districts of the Commonwealth



Source: Dennis, *Oxford Companion*, p. 395.

Hutton's first 'general order' set out the temporary appointments that constituted Army Headquarters within the 'Military Branch' of the Department of Defence.<sup>90</sup> While some positions had already been tentatively established, the GOC confirmed them while creating others according to his preferences. For example, although prescribed in the basic structure for the Department as put forth by the Colonial Defence Committee in July 1901, Hutton refused to have a 'Chief of Staff' and, instead, appointed a Deputy Adjutant General.<sup>91</sup> In total, Hutton's staff numbered only seven (not including his aide and personal secretary), as follows:

90 *General Orders, Military Forces of the Commonwealth, 1902-03*, (extract), AWM 3, Item 02/79.

91 This structure is in Appendix [1] to *Minute of Colonial Defence Committee to Minister for Defence*, dated 30 July 1901. AWM 3, Item 02/79.

Deputy Adjutant General:	Colonel J.C. Hoad
Deputy Quartermaster General:	Colonel J.E.D. Taunton
Assistant Adjutant General:	Lieutenant Colonel W.M. Bably
Assistant Adjutant General (Artillery):	Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Byron
Assistant Adjutant General (Engineer Services):	Major P.T. Owen
Director General of Medical Services:	Colonel W.D.C. Williams
Assistant Quarter Master General:	Major William Throsby Bridges

Foreshadowing future friction, despite the fact that this was actually two members less than his pre-Federation headquarters in colonial New South Wales, Hutton found himself under immediate attack over the extravagant size of his staff.<sup>92</sup> Operating with such shallow support the GOC was tasked to advise the Minister for Defence on military matters, to re-organise the colonial forces into a national army, to oversee the general operations of the military, and to establish uniformity throughout the states.<sup>93</sup> The establishment of Army Headquarters was a step in the right direction (see Figure 2).<sup>94</sup>

92 M. McKernan and M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988, p. 124.

93 Information on the departments in each state may be found in the Australian Archives (Canberra) as follows: NSW – *General Correspondence*, CRS SP1008/1, *Miscellany of Documents & Books*, CRS SP820/44 & *Register of Correspondence Received*, CRS SP820/23; QLD – *Correspondence Files*, CRS BP129/1; SA – *Miscellaneous Maps, Books & Correspondence*, CRS AP 161/1; WA – *Officers' Record Registers 1905–11*, CRS Series K339.

94 The Cabinet went on to decide that the offices of Deputy Adjutant General and Deputy Quartermaster General would not be filled once their original occupants retired. Their duties were to be redistributed among the remaining headquarters staff. Colonel J.E.D. Taunton, for example, retired at the end of June 1903 and his responsibilities went to the Assistant Quartermaster General, Major William Throsby Bridges. Chris Coulthard-Clark, *A Heritage of Spirit*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1979, p. 44. Inward correspondence and files of the Office of Deputy Adjutant General are at CRS MP372/26. Inward correspondence and files of the Office of Deputy Quartermaster General at CRS MP372/10 & /23 while outward correspondence and files of the Office of Deputy Quartermaster General are at CRS MP372/24. Inward

After raising a national headquarters, Hutton set out to standardise state Command arrangements to match his federal organisation. Each military district was headed by a Commandant who was generally the highest ranking officer present (usually of the rank of colonel, although in New South Wales and Victoria they were brigadiers due to the larger numbers of forces present). The Commandants were the executive heads of the military forces situated within their districts.<sup>95</sup> Beneath the Commandant was the office of the Assistant Adjutant General, responsible for discipline and the supervision of all other offices within the department. He was also in charge of examinations, military education within the state, annual returns and statistics, and enlistment and discharge within the states boundaries. The offices that existed in each state headquarters were as follows:

- Commandant
- Assistant Adjutant General
- Deputy Assistant Adjutant General
- Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General
- Staff Officer for Artillery
- Staff Officer for Engineering Services
- Staff Officer of Ordnance
- District Pay Master
- Principal Medical Officer

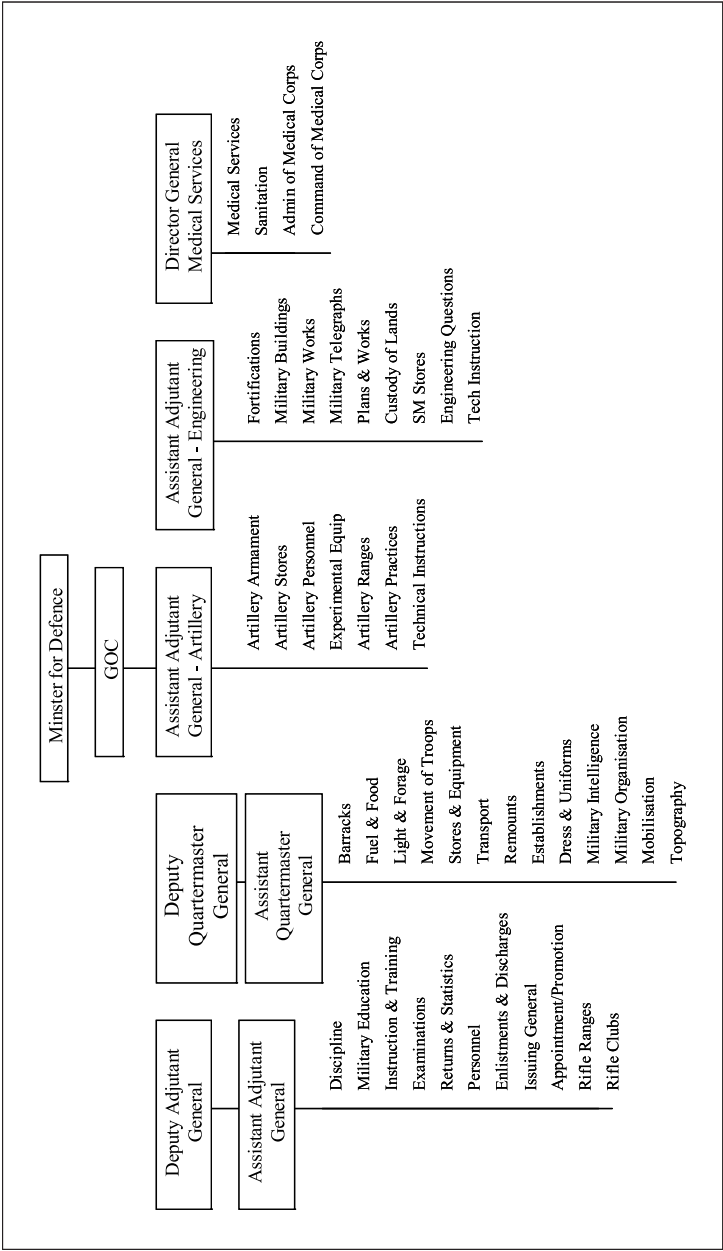
The generic structure of the state headquarters is shown in Figure 3.

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correspondence and files of the office of the Director General of Medical Services are at CRS MP372/15 while outward correspondence and files of the Office of the Director General of Medical Services are at CRS MP372/19.

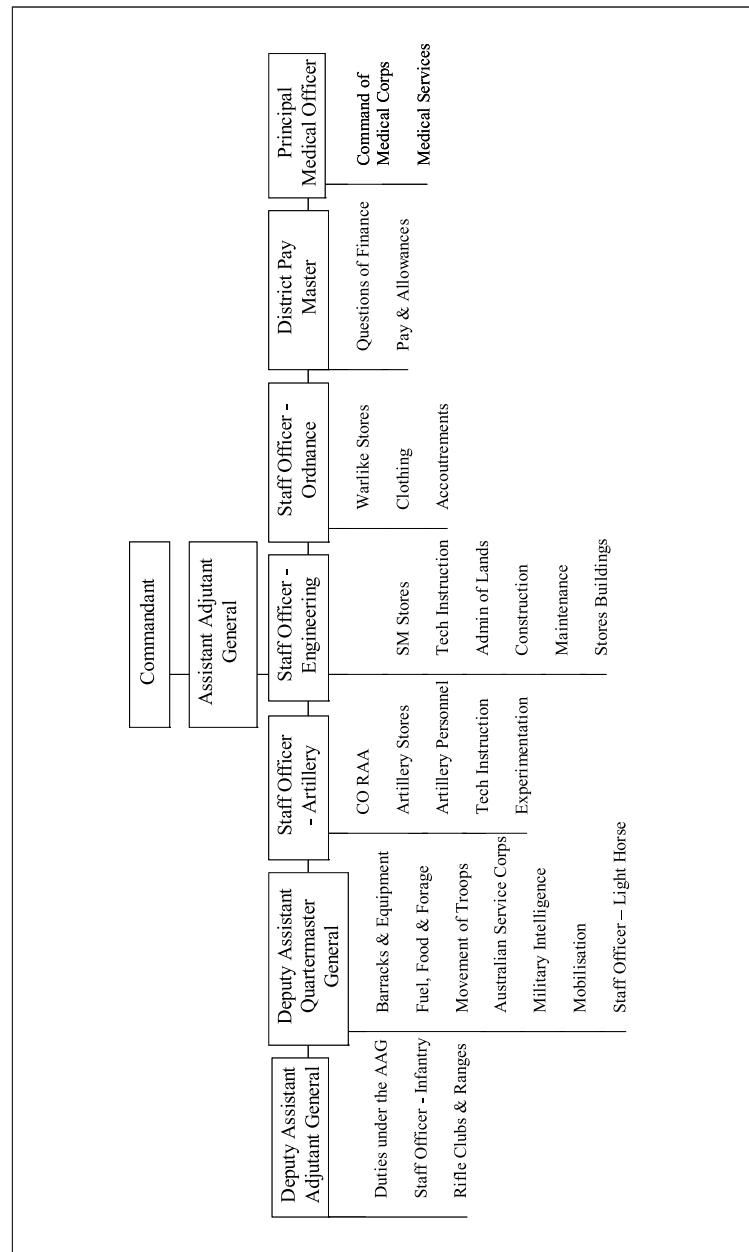
95 See Appendix 3 for state Commandants 1901–10.

Figure 2. Structure of Army Headquarters, 1902.



Source: Confidential letter from GOC to Secretary of the Department Defence & Minute No. 02/35 (confidential), dated 19 February 1902. AWM 3, Item 02/149.

**Figure 3.** Structure of State Headquarters, 1902.



Source: Central Registry File [1], CRS, Series A1194.

Like efforts to restructure the post-Federation Army, military administration in these early days was beset with financial problems. The Commonwealth, dependant on customs and excise duties and with the economy gripped by drought, had very little money to spend on anything. An overwhelming need for economy therefore marked the administrative system. From 1901 there had been pressure to keep the number of public servants down and the first Prime Minister, Barton, began his term asking the Minister for Defence and state Commandants for a list of administrative personnel who could be transferred.<sup>96</sup> The Government anticipated that a federal defence administrative system would lead to increased economy and efficiency and starved the Defence Department of revenue when it did not. Barton and Forrest struggled over estimates in 1903, which although already slashed by £125 000, fell even lower when the 'Military Branch' was directed by Sir William John Lyne (temporarily Minister for Defence), to reduce his expenditure by a further £31 000 per annum.<sup>97</sup> Hutton protested vigorously to Collins but in the end, with little real alternative, was forced to accept the reductions. The GOC saw continual financial reductions as 'highly detrimental' to the efficacy of the Army. Bickering



**John Charles Hoad was one of the principal figures of the post-Federation army. He was made Deputy Adjutant General of the Military Board on its establishment and later became Inspector-General and Chief of the General Staff.<sup>98</sup>**

96 Correspondence (various) between Barton and Forrest. CRS B168, Items 01/2930 & 01/3390.

97 Coulthard-Clark, *Heritage of Spirit*, p. 45.

98 Chris Coulthard-Clark, *No Australian Need Apply: The Troubled Career of Lieutenant-General Gordon Legge*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988), p. 191.

over expenditure was the hallmark of the early Department of Defence, and while some relief was forthcoming by 1905, whether this resulted in increased efficiency is questionable.

The command and administrative system that had controlled the Commonwealth Military Forces during Hutton's reign were completely overhauled at the beginning of 1905. Senator Andrew Dawson, during a brief stint as Minister for Defence in Watson's Labor Government (27 April 1904–18 August 1904), initiated the fundamental re-organisation. Dawson sought the establishment of a 'military board' or 'committee', as partially provided for in the *Defence Act 1903*, to control both the military and its GOC.<sup>99</sup> Although Dawson was unsuccessful in this matter his successor was not. Sir James Whiteside McCay, who served as Minister for Defence from 18 August 1904 to 5 July 1905 in the Reid-McLean Government, amended the *Defence Act* and moved to regulate the administration and command of the military. His amendments included the creation, in August 1904, of a Council for Defence and a Military Board to govern the forces. The establishment of these bodies removed the executive power of the positions held by Hutton and Creswell.<sup>100</sup> In light of such developments Hutton relinquished his command on 15 November 1904. C.E.W. Bean reflected of him that 'he was a soldier of a brilliance only too rare. His mark will always be deeply pressed on the Australian Army'.<sup>101</sup>

The transition to Council and Board was designed to avoid the military/political discord that occurred under Hutton and also to keep in line with developments in Britain. A 'General Staff' system was adopted by the mother country, despite the obstructionism of the War Office, in January 1905—the same month that the Australian Board and Council began operations.<sup>102</sup> Another

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99 The Bill provided for the establishment of a committee, at the discretion of the Governor General, for advisory purposes for the Minister.

100 Section 28, *Defence Act 1903*. This was done through the 'Dawson Committee', which consisted of the NSW Commandant, the Victorian Naval Commandant and Captain Collins.

101 C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of ANZAC, Vol. 1*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1921, p. 178.

102 A series of Royal Commissions had wrestled with the problem of a GOC in Britain and in 1890 the Hartington Commission suggested that a 'War Office Council' be established in place of a commander-in-chief. This was too radical at the time but in January 1904 the Esher Committee once again recommended this course of action.

reason for the administrative overhaul was to provide Parliament with a greater influence over defence administration. As McCay put it, to ‘bring the Cabinet as a whole... into more direct touch with defence policy ... and maintain a closer touch between the carrying out of that policy and the Parliament which, as the representative of the people, controls it.’<sup>103</sup> A baser motive, however, was no doubt the desire to avoid replacing one strong-minded imperial officer with another. Many politicians clearly did not want a second British officer dominating defence thinking and creating friction within Parliament. Following Hutton’s resignation in mid-November 1904, and until the Military Board commenced operations in January 1905, the duties of the GOC were performed by the Inspector General of Commonwealth Military Forces, Brigadier Henry Finn. The scheme of defence control from January 1905 is shown at Figure 4.

Following the precedent set by the Committee of Imperial Defence raised in Britain in December 1902, the Council for Defence was established on 5 January 1905.<sup>104</sup> The Council consisted of the Minister for Defence, who was its President, a Treasurer, the Inspector General, the Director of the Naval Forces, (replacing the Officer Commanding Naval Forces), and the Chief of Intelligence.<sup>105</sup> Provision was made for consultative members and the head of the ‘Civil Branch’ of the Department of Defence acted as Secretary. The Council for Defence was tasked to examine matters submitted to it by the Minister regarding measures necessary for the defence of Australia, including the critical issue of the defence budget and its distribution.<sup>106</sup>

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Andrews, *Department of Defence*, p. 3.

103 J.W. McCay, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 6383–4.

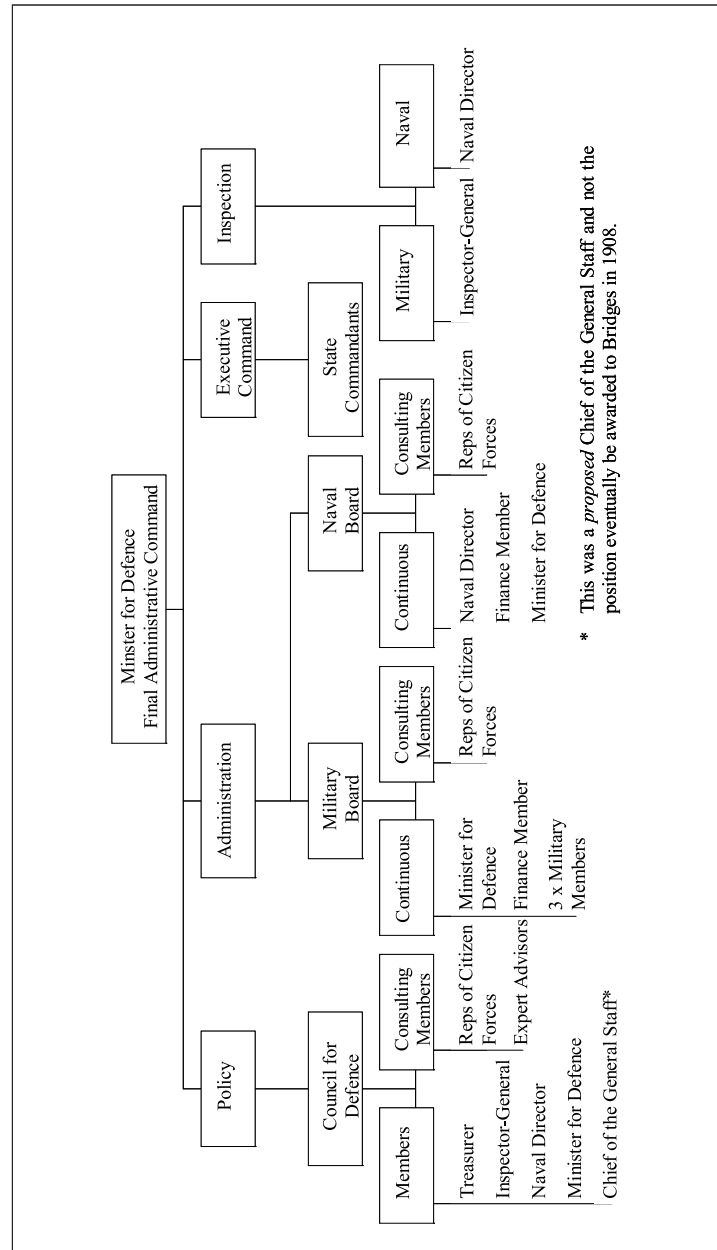
104 Although there were precedents for such a Council in Victoria and Canada, it was, in reality, inspired by reforms in Britain. In 1902 the Elgin Committee (with its dominant member, Lord Esher) began the reform process which created the Committee of Imperial Defence. The War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, known as the Esher Committee, followed it and continued the reform. The Colonial Defence Committee became a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence once the latter was operating. CRS A9790.

105 *Rule 56, Australian Military Regulations*, (loose & miscellaneous extracts), CRS A9657.

106 *Minutes and Agenda Papers of the Council for Defence*, CRS A9787; *Records and Correspondence of the Council for Defence*, CRS A9791.



**Figure 4.** Structure of the Federal Headquarters, 1905.



Source: Appendix A to 'Defence Forces: Memorandum by the Minister for Defence on Administration and Control', CPP, Vol. 2, 1904.

Although the Council was an attempt to institute some machinery of discussion on the formation of defence policy, it was never as effective as it might have been. Its impotence was obvious insofar as Cabinet was not obliged to heed its recommendations—and rarely did. The Council met only twice in ten years, on 12 May and 24 August 1905, and even these meetings bogged down in administrative details better left to the Service Boards.<sup>107</sup> It was finally abolished in 1918.<sup>108</sup>

The Military Board had its first meeting on 12 January 1905. It was composed initially of three military and two civilian members. The latter were the Minister, J.W. McCay as Chairman, and J.A. Thompson as Finance Member. The Deputy Adjutant General, Colonel Hoad, was the senior military figure. The remaining members were the Chief of Intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel William Throsby Bridges and the Chief of Ordnance, Lieutenant Colonel Havilland Le Mesurier.<sup>109</sup> Provision was again made for consultative members which were usually such officers of the citizen forces as were summoned by Chairman.<sup>110</sup> The responsibilities of the members of the Military Board in 1905 are shown at Figure 5.

The first meeting of the Military Board laid down the Minister's ideas on how it should function. All 'Orders in Council' of the forces would run through it, so too all unusual or important military promotions. McCay cultivated an informal atmosphere with members free to dissent as only final decisions were to be recorded. There was to be no military pecking order or hierarchy with each member enjoying equal status; a sentiment doomed to fall to the military mindset and efforts of W.T. Bridges in the near future.<sup>111</sup> Both the Military Board and the Council for Defence were inaugurated, despite the protests of Hutton and the Governor General, without informing either the Committee of Imperial Defence or the Colonial Office.

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107 Ibid.

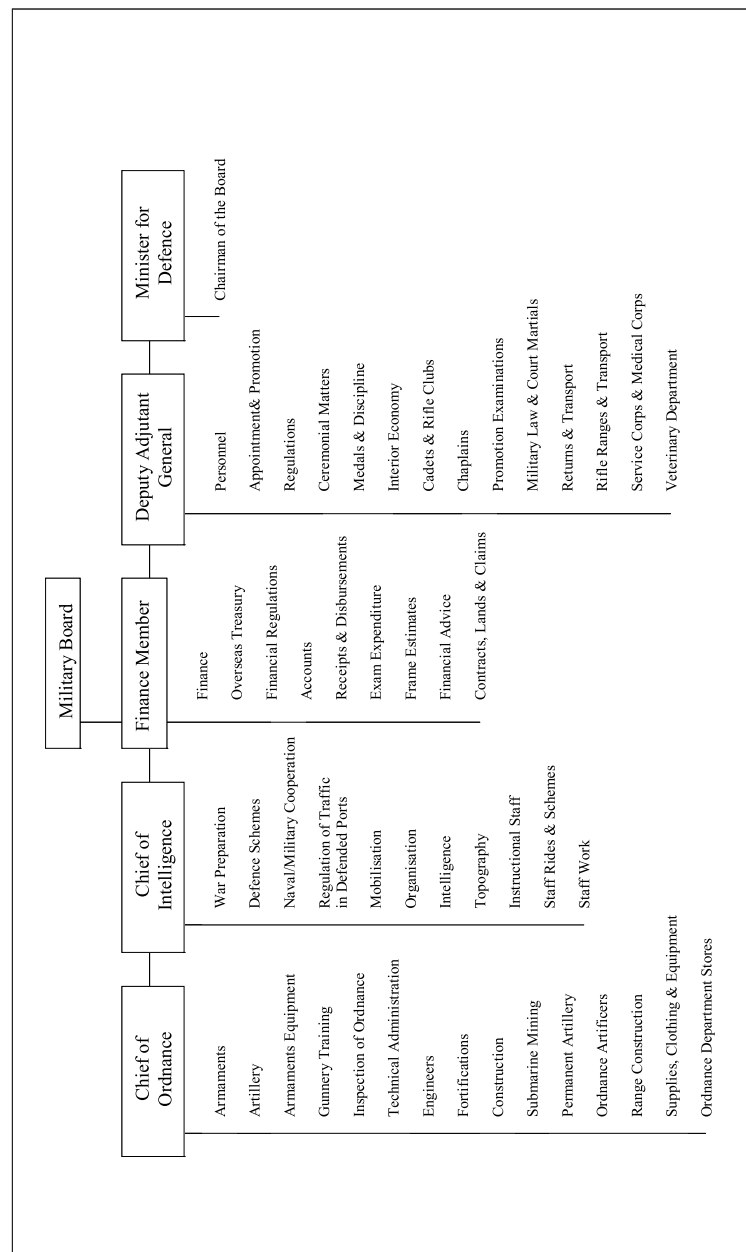
108 Further and broader information is available from Department of Defence records and files which exist under two series numbers; CRS A1573/1 & CRS A1606.

109 Department of Defence circular No. 13, dated 5 January 1905. The initial structure and responsibilities of the Military Board were outlined in a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Defence to the Inspector-General, dated January 1905. AWM 3, Item 05/27.

110 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 1, 5 January 1905.

111 All of these arrangements are in the minutes of the inaugural meeting as put forth by the Minister and may be found under CRS A2653.

**Figure 5. Duties of Members of the Military Board, January 1905.**



Source: Military Board Papers of Historical Interest, CRS A2657/T1, Vol. 1.

The establishment of the Military Board and the Council for Defence did not mark the end of command and administrative friction within the Department of Defence. Japanese success in the Straits of Tsushima in May 1905 aroused widespread doubts over Hutton's general scheme for the defence and, as a result, the Colonial Defence Committee was invited by the Reid-McLean Government to review Australian defence arrangements in July of that year. Thus began an era of open conflict between Colonel Hoad, the Deputy Adjutant General on the Military Board, and Lieutenant Colonel W.T. Bridges, the Chief of Intelligence and also a member of the Board. The Colonial Defence Committee found that Hutton's ideas were less than perfect and suggested that state-based Field Forces replace the Commonwealth organisation. Under this amended plan complete brigades would be drawn from their home states and the practicality of mobilising them dramatically increased (see Chapter One). Here a line was drawn with Bridges supporting Hutton's original scheme and Hoad advocating the Committee's recommendation. It was the first shot of a running battle between the two men.



The first Military Board, Melbourne 1905. Standing (left to right): Captain P.N. Buckley; Commander S.A. Petherbridge; Colonel W.D.C. Williams; F. Savage. Seated (left to right): Lieutenant Colonel H. Le Mesurier; Colonel J.C. Hoad; Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. J.W. McCay; Lieutenant Colonel W.T. Bridges; J.A. Thompson.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *Heritage of Spirit*, p. 102.

Financial restrictions, internal bickering and personality clashes all attributed to the failure of effective administration in the post-Federation Army. Most problems were born of ego and ambition that compounded differences of professional opinion. Co-operation was always at a premium. Officers with imperial leanings clashed with those who held 'Australianist' ideas. Commandants fought the centre, whilst the civil and military wings within the Department of Defence fought each other and politicians traded insults with military figures. Meanwhile Hutton, while he was GOC, clashed with everyone.<sup>113</sup> A major crisis broke out in 1904, for example, over Hutton's use of a military cipher in communications with the War Office in London and his subsequent refusal to reveal the contents of the messages to the Minister for Defence. This dispute, divisions over an annual report, and a clash between the Minister and GOC over a new pattern of pistol were all leaked to the *Argus* newspaper. The leak spawned the first official Department of Defence Inquiry commencing 4 July 1904—which revealed nothing. The whole episode demonstrated the stubbornness, small mindedness and poor relations that beset early defence administration. The 'cordial co-operation' mentioned by the Colonial Defence Committee in its 1901 *Memorandum on Australian Defence* was clearly absent.<sup>114</sup> The situation reached such heights that it prompted James Page, Member for Maranoa, Queensland, to observe that:

for muddle and jealousy I never came across such a lot in my life as those who control the defence forces. All they think about are long feathers, extra uniforms and higher rank. It sickens me to see them so jealous of their particular rank, instead of devoting their whole energies into the service of their country – it is selfishness on their part from beginning to end.<sup>115</sup>

Such animosity continued as the next significant step was made in the evolution of administrative control of the post-Federation Army. On the request of the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, Bridges was sent to London to assist the Committee of Imperial Defence in a review of Australia's defences. Some writers have suggested that part of the reason Bridges was despatched was to free the country of a prominent 'imperialist' officer so that Deakin could more vigorously pursue

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113 The term 'Australianist' is drawn from Coulthard-Clark's, *No Australian Need Apply: The Troubled Career of Lieutenant-General Gordon Legge*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988.

114 Andrews, *Department of Defence*, p. 24.

115 Page, CPD, 3rd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 2866.

his radical ideas on defence, some of which he had been planning to implement for some time.<sup>116</sup> Unfortunately, the Committee of Imperial Defence was less forthright than the Colonial Defence Committee and its report simply repeated imperial dogma in that the supremacy of the Royal Navy precluded any threat to Australia and that present structures should be maintained, both as a defence against raiding and for training purposes. This was not consistent with what the Prime Minister was planning. Deakin publicly criticised the report for its inability to recognise legitimate and uniquely Australian national security concerns.

The report of the Committee of Imperial Defence was referred by the Minister for Defence, Thomas Playford, for comment by another committee containing Inspector General, Brigadier Finn, Colonel Hoad and Lieutenant Colonel Le Mesurier. Again the outcome was split along 'Australianist' and imperialist lines with Finn and Le Mesurier supporting the recommendations that left Hutton's structure in place, but with Hoad speaking out against the recommendation, restating fears for national security and echoing Deakin's sentiments. As a result of Hoad's comments and intensive lobbying the Government appointed yet another committee of military officers (this time with Hoad as its president) to comment formally on the advice of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1906. The committee echoed the original advice of the Colonial Defence Committee concerning the re-brigading of forces that was, eventually, instituted. Hoad had won this round and, on 4 September 1906, he was appointed as Finn's replacement as Inspector General of Commonwealth Military Forces (despite the incumbent's efforts to ensure his replacement was another British officer). In winning this position Hoad became the first truly senior officer with 'Australianist' rather than imperial loyalties. His appointment was in no sense hollow nor without real power for the Inspector General was designated, in a time of war, to become the commander-in-chief of the military with the Military Board as his staff.<sup>117</sup> Hoad's advancement was not universally applauded. The former Commandant of Queensland and New South Wales, Major General Sir John Charles French, declared:

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116 Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, p. 231.

117 McCay, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 6384.

the idea of an Australian officer being capable of filling the post of Inspector-General of Commonwealth Military Forces with satisfaction to himself or to anyone else is absurd... The present system in Australia is highly unsatisfactory. I cannot think of an officer in Australia who is qualified for the position. But that will not stop, however, the making of a political appointment.<sup>118</sup>

The decision to re-brigade the Field Force did not put an end to arguments over the direction Australian defence policy ought to take. In truth such friction had characterised the Department of Defence since the previous Minister, J.W. McCay, had set up the 'Commonwealth Defence Committee' (not to be confused with the Colonial Defence Committee) in 1905, to prepare a draft Australian defence policy. One area of particular and enduring dissonance again paralleled events in Britain where the Admiralty and War Office flatly disagreed over broad grand strategic issues. In the same way, in Australia, Bridges differed from Creswell in the latter's claims for the supremacy of the Navy. At its heart, however, it was less an argument over the best method of defending Australia than a struggle for access to extremely limited defence funds.<sup>119</sup>

By the end of 1906 Deakin was intent on overhauling the post-Federation Army and was firmly in favour of some sort of scheme of compulsory military training.<sup>120</sup> As a result, Bridges, recently returned from his involvement with the Committee of Imperial Defence in London, was sent to report on the Swiss system of universal service. In December 1907, Deakin announced his plans for a scheme of compulsory military training to the House of Representatives. He pictured a uniquely Australian force with Australian drill books, Australian uniforms and Australian methods of fighting. Importantly, he also announced his desire to create an Australian General Staff of around ten officers to complement the work of the

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118 W. Perry, 'The Military Life of Major General Sir John Charles Hoad', *The Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 3, August 1959, p. 184.

119 Andrews, Department of Defence, p. 8.

120 The Swiss scheme of defence had all eligible males enrolled in the 'Army Reserve.' Each member kept a rifle, uniform and equipment at home and attended parades and training camps as ordered. It was based on the theory that a democracy's best defence was its citizens and that permanent standing forces were both dangerous and unnecessary.

newly established Signal and Intelligence Corps.<sup>121</sup> Bridges completed his report on the Swiss scheme in time to be dismayed, along with all other officers loyal to Hutton and his ideas, at Deakin's startling announcements. What annoyed him even more was that Deakin had consulted neither him nor the Military Board over the issue. The Prime Minister had failed to do so because of his knowledge that Bridges and his allies would have surely resisted. Finally, to rub salt into already deep wounds, and again without consultation, Major James Gordon Legge was appointed to work directly under the Minister for Defence, T.T. Ewing, to formulate Deakin's proposals of compulsory service.

Although tension between the Military Board and the Minister for Defence, Ewing, were brought to a head over Major Legge's activities and the refusal by the Minister to consult with it during Deakin's crucial pushes in 1907, they had been festering for some time. In February 1907 Bridges had written to the Minister informing him that his workload as Chief of Intelligence had increased and that a redress should be considered in line with wider reforms to the military administrative system.<sup>122</sup> He recommended that a Chief of the General Staff be appointed in place of the Chief of Intelligence and that a fourth military member, a Quartermaster General, be added to the Military Board. Bridges advocated the establishment of a General Staff to increase centralised control over the six military districts and therefore promote efficiency. He told Ewing that this had always been the intention of the former minister, J. W. McCay. In December 1907, when Deakin confirmed that such a General Staff would be created, Bridges unsurprisingly submitted his own name as a candidate for the position of Chief. To his disappointment, however, the General Staff was not immediately raised and his ambitions were put on hold.<sup>123</sup> In June 1908 Bridges repeated the proposal of February 1907, this time also calling for functional changes to military administration. He urged that the Military Board and each state command be re-organised into a field-oriented headquarters—a complete break with the thinking that had originally inspired the creation of the Military Board and certainly against the

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121 Deakin invited criticism of his scheme by members of the military. Examples of these responses, both positive and negative, are in CRS MP84/1, Items 1856/5/45, 1856/5/80, and 1856/5/47.

122 The suggestions of Bridges are in his minute 'Allotment of Duties to Military Members of the Board', in *Military Board Papers of Historical Interest*, CRS A257/T1.

123 Ibid.



sentiments of McCay when he had founded it.<sup>124</sup> Bridges roundly criticised the current Board as nothing more than an administrative committee. He was in favour of a staff structure with central control over units and formations in and out of the field. Such a change would, of course, greatly increase his own influence as the most senior member of the Board. Bridges once again pushed for a fourth military member to be added to it and, finally, he recommended that the old Chief of Ordnance be re-designated Master General of the Ordnance while retaining responsibility for the supply of stores and equipment. According to his plan the remaining military position would evolve from the Chief of Intelligence into a Chief of the General Staff—Bridges currently held the former and continued to covet the latter.<sup>125</sup>

All of these changes were considered by the Military Board over ten meetings from the 25 June–25 July 1908. They culminated in a 'Memorandum for the Consideration of the Minister of the Division of Duties among Members of the Board'. Testament to the antipathy between senior military officers and many public figures, Bridges even convinced his fellow Board members to produce and circulate a critical report on the Department of Defence in June 1908. Ewing was furious and threatened to dismiss the officers involved. The combination of these comprehensive submissions and constant pressures partially convinced Ewing, who approved the functional changes but refused to re-designate the position held by Bridges as the Chief of the General Staff for fear of elevating him into the premier military



William Throsby Bridges had an enormous individual impact on the administration and command of the early Commonwealth Military Forces. He went on to become Australia's first Chief of the General Staff and later the commander of the AIF.<sup>126</sup>

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 J.E. Lee, *Duntroon, The Royal Military College of Australia, 1911-1946*, (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952), p. 46.

member and making him a *de facto* GOC.<sup>127</sup> The Minister wished to deny the kudos and influence Bridges would gain from the title and sought to maintain the Military Board as a true committee rather than an autocracy. Since Hoad had left the Board following his appointment as Inspector General, Bridges had become the dominating military member and, in the eyes of many, continued to manoeuvre in order to further his imperial aspirations. Changes were initiated at the state headquarters-level, in accordance with Bridges' intent, making them more closely parallel the Military Board's new general staff organisation. The Staff Officers for Artillery and Engineering Services in each military district, for example, were replaced by Chiefs of Ordnance.<sup>128</sup>

Ewing introduced Deakin's Universal Military Service Bill into Parliament on 29 September 1908 and with it Bridges feared the end of the Field Force and Hutton's original scheme. For the time being, however, the imperialists were saved by the election of the Fisher Government on 13 November 1908. Less happily for Bridges, although the change of government postponed the proclamation of a new scheme of defence, it did not reverse the move toward it. As far as Bridges' immediate ambitions were concerned, however, George Foster Pearce, the new Minister for Defence, proved not nearly the obstacle that Ewing had been. In December 1908 the Military Board endorsed a submission by the Deputy Adjutant General that Bridges' position of Chief of Intelligence be re-designated as Chief of the General Staff. Unlike Ewing, Pearce gave his immediate approval.

The final factor that influenced the administration and control of the post-Federation Army was an institution known as the Imperial General Staff. As a result of a resolution at the Colonial Conference of 23 April 1907, the British War Office had announced the creation of an organisation to co-ordinate the defences

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127 Among the changes that transformed the Military Board into a General Staff were the creation of the posts of 'Military Secretary' and 'Adjutant General'. Lieutenant Colonel J.G. Legge was posted to the former on 27 June 1908 with the position becoming the post of Quartermaster General six months later. Colonel E.T. Wallack was re-posted as Adjutant General on 1 June 1908, from his former position of Deputy Adjutant General. W. Perry, 'Lieutenant-General James Gordon Legge: Australia's First Chief of the General Staff', *The Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 3, August 1977, p. 189.

128 Minute 'Allotment of Duties to Military Members of the Board', in *Military Board Papers of Historical Interest*, CRS A2657/T1.

of the Empire.<sup>129</sup> During the Conference, the British Secretary of State for War, Lord Haldane, championed the concept and explained the benefits of the new body to the colonial representatives.<sup>130</sup> Haldane argued for a united defence posture and suggested that colonial members could possibly sit on the body to offer advice on relevant military matters. This was only a tentative suggestion by Haldane but it was an idea supported by Deakin and Ewing as a way to increase Australian influence, especially since they had previously failed to secure a permanent seat on the Committee of Imperial Defence. Deakin left the Colonial Conference in 1907 still determined to keep control of Commonwealth defence arrangements. At the same time, while no specific undertakings were sought, the Prime Minister well understood the potential implications of an Imperial General Staff insofar as it might involve the subordination of Australian interests.

At its heart the concept of the Imperial General Staff implied the unified defence of the Empire using colonial forces as required.<sup>131</sup> The idea received some early support in Australia, especially from men like Bridges who always wished for greater ties to Britain. Alternatively and predictably—given his previous endeavours—Legge, now Quartermaster General on the Military Board, criticised the idea and the Minister for Defence, George Pearce, withdrew his unqualified support out of fear of undue British influence on Australian defence arrangements. While colonial governments bent over backwards to support Great Britain in her wars from 1885, the new federal organisation was distrustful of such blind commitments. There was a political feeling of independence, born from the new-found ‘nation’ status, which implied a break with this type of ‘traditional’ support. The Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, agreed with Pearce and informed Great Britain that participation in the Imperial General Staff idea did not bind Australia to raise troops to be used by Britain wherever she saw fit.

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129 The British had created their own domestic General Staff in 1905. Perry, ‘The Military Life of Major General Sir John Charles Hoad’, p. 192.

130 Australia, Parliament, 1907, *Papers on the Imperial Conference*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 173.

131 Information on discussions concerning the formation and Australian involvement in the Imperial General Staff may be found in various articles including ‘Defence: Imperial General Staff – Correspondence Relating to Proposed Formation’, ‘The Imperial General Staff, dated 7 December 1908’, and ‘Letters from the War Office to the Under Secretary of State’; all of which are in *Military Board Papers of Historical Interest*, CRS A2657/T1.

What is both interesting and important at this stage was Major General Hoad's reversal of the 'Australianist' principles he had embraced throughout his career. He strongly supported the concept of the Imperial General Staff, a body which certainly allowed for greater imperial influence over Australian defence policy and which would formally tie Commonwealth forces to Great Britain.<sup>132</sup> In this matter he allied himself with Bridges and the imperialists. Although Hoad has been criticised for acting for reasons of career enhancement, the reversal of his long-held position represented the basic dilemma faced by Australian defence thinkers at this time. Politicians and military officers were caught between pragmatism and independence. They feared Japan in the Pacific and the growing German navy and needed Britain's help but remained cautious about unqualified commitment. Perhaps Hoad became convinced that the level of threat necessitated stronger ties with Britain and that this need overruled his 'Australianist' desires.

Be this as it may, the Imperial General Staff became a reality and its 'Australian Section' came into operation on 1 July 1909.<sup>133</sup> The Government had taken the precaution of ensuring that the Australian Section remained separate from, though amalgamated with, the Australian General Staff in an effort to try and restrict Britain's ability to directly interfere with local command and administration.<sup>134</sup> Bridges was removed from the position of Chief of the General Staff by Pearce, after less than five months in the office he had fought so hard to create, and was made the first Australian representative on the Imperial General Staff in London.<sup>135</sup> Hoad subsequently replaced Bridges as Chief of the Australian General Staff and was also made head of the Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff. Hoad thus held the two most important military posts in Australia at the same time and became, in effect, the dominant military figure in the land.<sup>136</sup> Another Imperial Conference in 1909 buttressed the concept of the Imperial General Staff and gave

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132 Correspondence (various) with regard to an Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff including a memorandum from the Chief of the General Staff thereon. CRS A2657/T1, Item 6709.

133 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 15, 13 May 1909.

134 Coulthard-Clark, *Heritage of Spirit*, p. 78.

135 *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 30, 29 May 1909.

136 The factionalism that had existed at Army Headquarters did not disappear with Bridges' departure for London. Lieutenant Colonel Legge took up where Bridges left off, fighting with the Chief of the General Staff, Major General Hoad, and particularly the Adjutant General, Colonel Wallack. Coulthard-Clark, *No Australian Need Apply*, p. 54.

further agreement, in principle, in regard to military standardisation across the Empire. The effect of such moves was evidenced, for example, in the Military Board's rejection for the proposal of a flying school and aviation corps based on French rather than British aircraft.<sup>137</sup> Defence planning in Britain now ran under the firm assumption that Dominion troops would be available and able to cooperate in a time of war.<sup>138</sup>

By the end of 1909 Australia possessed a Military Board that was in reality a functional military headquarters dominated by a Chief of the General Staff who had direct links to the British War Office through the Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff. Against a backdrop of growing panic over the rising power of Germany's navy, however, the increase in imperial influence was a lot more palatable to a new government and to the population. In ten short years the administration and control of the post-Federation Army had passed from independent state control to a centralised, autocratic and purposeful GOC, and then to a Military Board that grew into a hierarchical headquarters open to British influence.

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137 Coulthard-Clark, *Heritage of Spirit*, pp. 81–85.

138 In London, the British Chief of the General Staff, General W. G. Nicholson, produced a paper, supported by the reformist Secretary for War, R.B. Haldane, on organising Dominion forces for co-ordinated action in a time of war. Andrews, *Department of Defence*, p. 14. The extent of this influence and the expectations the British had for an 'automatic' Australian support in a time of emergency can be seen in a series of letters from the War Office to the Under Secretary of State, available in *Military Board Papers of Historical Interest*, CRS A2657/T1.



# Chapter 3

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## Training and Efficiency

Our old Australian army was composed of good men but the system was bad. It only provided for a war establishment of 50 000 men and this number was insufficient. It included members of the permanent military forces, the militia forces and the rifle clubs. To send 30 000 men from Melbourne to Brisbane would have taken 62 days. Our militia troops, who served voluntarily, were so inefficient money that was spent on them was wasted. [sic]<sup>139</sup>

This chapter investigates the conduct and effectiveness of post-Federation military training. Before this study can begin, however, it is worthwhile reflecting on exactly what the organisation was expected to achieve. For the decade after Federation, Australian defence policy was based on three distinct premises. The first concerned static fortifications. The nation was compelled to defend the ports it considered important as bases for the Royal Navy, centres of commercial shipping, or harbours of refuge in a time of war. The second related to mobile forces. To this end the military undertook to organise, train and equip sufficient troops to provide for the local defence of strongpoints, and a Field Force for operation anywhere in the country. The third requirement concerned the maintenance of reserve forces. These were to come from officers and soldiers on the Reserve List, supplemented by young men from the cadet forces with a knowledge of musketry, and from

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139 Extract from an address delivered by Lieutenant Colonel J.G. Legge, 26 May 1911. Perry, 'Lieutenant General James Gordon Legge: Australia's First Wartime Chief of the General Staff', *The Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 3, August 1977 p. 179.

members of rifle clubs. Such were the roles, aims and premises under which the post-Federation Army trained.<sup>140</sup> The success of such training, however, was an entirely different proposition.

Training doctrine of the period was unequivocal; 'without proper training, numbers even when organised, tend to produce confusion and consequent disaster, and scientific weapons in untrained hands cannot develop their full power, and may become a danger to the force which employs them.'<sup>141</sup> Despite such sentiments a spirit of rigorous, methodical and 'scientific' training had not been wholeheartedly or universally embraced by colonial military formations prior to 1901. Consequently, the efficiency and effectiveness of those units inherited by the Commonwealth was mixed to say the least. Some detachments were quite competent and took their training seriously while others were little more than gentlemen's clubs and were thoroughly unprepared for combat.<sup>142</sup> The situation was well documented by Major General Hutton in his *Annual Report* of 1903. He described unit training at Federation as confined mostly to elementary drill parades of a ceremonial nature and claimed that no attempt had been made to give advanced training beyond that possible in three or four days at a standing camp under conditions inapplicable to war. Of particular concern was that no effort had ever been made to move troops or to exercise them in mobile columns. In general, the GOC maintained that before 1903 the military training in Australian had never gone beyond the elementary stage and that 'until this is rectified, and instruction of a higher order is provided, the troops of the Commonwealth cannot in themselves be regarded as fit for active operations.'<sup>143</sup>

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140 Australia, Parliament, 1909, *Memorandum on Australian Military Defence, and its Progression since Federation* (hereafter *Memorandum*, 1909), Parl. Paper Vol 2, Canberra, p. 14.

141 Ibid. *Imperial Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*, p. 4 (within *Memorandum 1909*).

142 *Imperial Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*, p. 4 (within *Memorandum 1909*), p. 4.

143 Ibid. Hutton was still making similar criticisms in 1904 when he condemned many officers as being unable to apply drill to any situation but the parade ground and of a total ignorance of minor tactics. Australia, Parliament, 1906, *Annual Report for 1905 by the Inspector General*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 10.



From this inauspicious beginning a range of facilities for military instruction was gradually created. Training became the task of the permanent corps of officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers of the Administrative and Instructional Staff.<sup>144</sup> Such personnel were attached either to the Military Board, to the headquarters staff of the military districts (where their time was divided between administration and general instruction), or to units of the citizen forces (where duties included unit training and administrative assistance to Commanding Officers).<sup>145</sup> Complementing the Administrative and Instructional Staff were the permanent soldiers of the Royal Australian Artillery who, from 1902, constituted an informal instructional cadre in addition to their primary role as gunners.<sup>146</sup> This artillery regiment was pivotal for it was the main, if not the only, means of supplying non-commissioned officers for the Administrative and Instructional Staff.<sup>147</sup> It is in this context that Hutton complained so bitterly about the reduction in their numbers in 1903.<sup>148</sup>

Within the militia and volunteer regiments, recruits were trained by attached warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of the Administrative and Instructional Staff while part-time citizen-officers were instructed by permanent staff officers.<sup>149</sup> Although training within a unit was the responsibility of its Commanding Officer, as it is to this day, in many cases commanders were hampered by their own lack of knowledge. As one extant instructional handbook noted, 'the officer is the leader and instructor of his men. He must always remember that to maintain discipline he must possess the confidence of the men in his professional ability.'<sup>150</sup> The efficiency of the citizen forces, therefore, depended directly on the effectiveness of citizen officers—a dubious proposition—and indirectly on that of the Instructional Staff. Officer training within the post-Federation Army was therefore of paramount importance. Effective officers had to be competent in military drill, training methods and tactics while maintaining a workable

144 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 11.

145 *Ibid.*

146 Australia, Parliament, 1905, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 9.

147 *Ibid.*

148 Hutton went so far as to claim 'the result of this latest reduction [in 1903] can only be to seriously compromise the security of the Commonwealth.' *Ibid.*, p. 9.

149 *Ibid.*

150 *Imperial Training and Manoeuvre Regulations*, p. 3 (within *Memorandum 1909*).

knowledge of the scientific and technical military matters of the time. To facilitate this, textbooks and military pamphlets were regularly issued.<sup>151</sup> Unfortunately, many of these went out of date rapidly and were not quickly or easily replaced. The *Mounted Service Manual*, for example, prescribed a style of drill that was impossible to perform with the Sam Brown belt universally worn from 1905 forward.<sup>152</sup> Another key training manual, *Infantry Training, 1902 (Imperial)*, was so outdated that the exercises and drills it described were completely unsuited to the new Short Magazine Lee-Enfield rifle in use from late 1904.<sup>153</sup> It was not actually until 1907 that it became official army policy to adopt the modern textbooks of the British Army as soon as they were published.<sup>154</sup>

By 1909, the poor quality of military officers was one of the most significant problems faced by the Army. Leaving aside militiamen and volunteers, a noteworthy proportion of even the permanent staff did little more than barely pass their mandatory examinations.<sup>155</sup> One attempt to rectify this concern was to send officers overseas for training. On 7 March 1905, such a scheme was initiated with a memorandum sent from the Minister for Defence, J.W. McCay, to the War Office in London, where it was favourably received.<sup>156</sup> An exchange program resulted in 1906 that, it was hoped, would not only enlarge the field of experience for selected officers but also encourage a feeling of common purpose between commissioned ranks of the Empire.<sup>157</sup> From 1902–09, seven officers and eleven non-commissioned officers of the permanent forces were sent to England or India and nine officers were exchanged (for one year or more) with a similar number from England, India and Canada. Select personnel were also sent as students to

151 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 18.

152 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, p. 20.

153 *Ibid.*

154 Australia, Parliament, 1907, *Report of the Military Board, 1906*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 8.

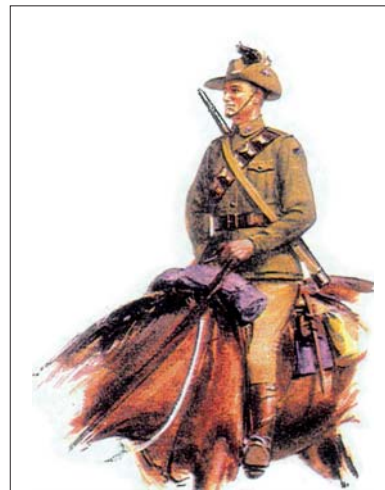
155 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 13.

156 Australia, Parliament, 1906, *Military Board Report for the Year 1905*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 10.

157 Australia, Parliament, 1906, *Report on the Department of Defence for the period 1 March 1901 to 30 June 1906*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 13; Australia, Parliament, *Report of the Military Board, 1906*, p. 4.

the British Staff College.<sup>158</sup> One notable overseas posting was that of Colonel J.C. Hoad, who was sent to observe the Japanese Army in the field during the Russo–Japanese War (1904–05). Another exchange of significance was Colonel W.T. Bridges’ visits to observe the Swiss scheme of military organisation (see Chapter Two).<sup>159</sup> While this system was a step forward, most exchanges involved permanent officers of the Staff, Artillery or Engineer Corps and they therefore did little to raise the training standards of militia and volunteer personnel—not that there existed a large pool of willing citizen-soldier candidates as for much of the period many part-time units were chronically short of officers.<sup>160</sup>

More relevant to the training of citizen-officers was the establishment in 1901 of a national system of military examinations for potential officers and for those seeking promotions or transfers.<sup>161</sup> These examinations were conducted in general and military subjects and were an improvement on the ‘appointment system’ in vogue within the old colonial forces. Preference for commissioning was given to those already in the Army and quite a number of non-commissioned officers received promotion to commissioned rank in this way. From 1905, promotion examinations in Australia were practically the same as those used in the British Army.<sup>162</sup> From the following year all examinations for transfer to the permanent forces and to militia adjutants’ positions were conducted by boards,



An officer of the NSW Lancers. It was this type of part-time officer whose knowledge was restricted by limited training opportunities.<sup>163</sup>

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid.

161 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 6.

162 Ibid, p. 25.

163 Anon., ‘Defence: Army’, *Australian Encyclopaedia*, (Sydney: The Grolier Society of Australia, 1977), 3rd Edition, Vol. 2, p. 228.

with the Deputy Adjutant General as President, and from 1909 all permanent officers were tested by British examiners.<sup>164</sup> To illustrate how the examination method worked, twelve different papers were prepared in 1905 for promotion to first commissions, adjutants' positions or for appointments to specific units, jobs, or ranks. Candidates for the examinations were selected and if they passed they were eligible for promotion/appointment, although they may have already provisionally occupied the post beforehand.<sup>165</sup> The syllabus of subjects for examination was issued annually to each branch of the Army<sup>166</sup> (see Figure 6, which provides an example of a promotion examination for the rank of Major (of infantry)). Unfortunately, the system of military examinations was not universally enforced and in 1905 some 390 officers failed to confirm their promotions or positions by passing their 'compulsory' tests. Although this number was reduced to 175 by 1906, such numbers continued to underscore the inherent weakness of the system.<sup>167</sup>

In conjunction with the examination process, a system of 'Staff Rides' was established in 1904 to give practical training to officers in the performance of duties in the field.<sup>168</sup> During these activities officers studied strategic and tactical situations, conducted reconnaissance tasks, rehearsed the allotment of bivouac positions, sited the ground to be occupied by outposts for the protection of these bivouacs, and practised writing military orders.<sup>169</sup> Staff Rides were designed to exercise a range of tactical concepts and staff administrative procedures as well as attempting to prepare officers to deal with the uncertainties and difficulties that would invariably arise in war.<sup>170</sup> They were held quite regularly with, for example,

164 Australia, Parliament, *Report of the Military Board, 1906*, p. 4.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid; *The syllabus for the examination for promotion to a major of infantry included tactics, military history, and staff duties*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1869/15/90.

167 *Return of Officers (1905)*, CRS B168, Item 1905/562; *Military Board Report for the Year 1905*, CPP, 1906, Vol. 2, p. 5.

168 The 'Staff Ride' was an activity undertaken by a group of officers for the purpose of exercising tactical and technical knowledge without the requirement of large numbers of troops. Such activities were, of course, conducted on horseback, hence the name. Australia, Parliament, 1905, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, p. 9.

169 Ibid, p. 14.

170 Ibid. Interestingly, this practice continues in the contemporary Army as 'Tactical Exercises Without Troops'.

in the twelve months from mid-1903, activities carried out in Victoria (25–27 June 1903), in New South Wales (3–5 September 1903) and in Tasmania (15–18 February 1904).<sup>171</sup> Throughout this period Major General Hutton maintained that these rides, more than anything else, proved that a citizen-based defence force without a permanent element to coordinate detailed training was a ridiculous idea given the demands of modern warfare.<sup>172</sup>

Leaving aside issues of tactical training, the ‘general education’ of officers was another enduring problem for the post-Federation Army. Higher education for senior officers included a ‘War Course’ under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff and an ‘Intelligence Course’ for officers of that Corps.<sup>173</sup> From 1907, the University of Sydney made a significant contribution in this regard by instituting a Department of Military Science headed by a British Royal Engineer, Colonel Hubert J. Foster.<sup>174</sup> The University stressed this department would not be a ‘military college with the full disciplinary powers of such a college, but an academic institution.’<sup>175</sup> A curriculum in ‘Military Science’ conducted over three years was established in March 1907, and students who successfully completed it were awarded a Diploma. Officers were invited to lecture and the Government assisted with grants of ammunition and money.<sup>176</sup> The syllabus consisted of courses in military history, strategy, staff duties, tactics, military engineering, and military law and administration.<sup>177</sup> Twenty-five Diplomas of Military Science were awarded before the department faded away in the mid-1920s.<sup>178</sup>

171 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, p. 14.

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid.

174 Despite the recommendation of Major General Hoad, Foster was unsuccessful in his subsequent application to be appointed as the first Commandant of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Coulthard-Clark, C.D., *Duntroon, The Royal Military College of Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986, p.15.


175 Ibid.

176 Australia, Parliament, *Military Board Report for the Year 1905*, p. 10.

177 Staff Duties were taught at the University from 24 August 1909. *Minute from Department of Defence to University of Sydney*. CRS MP84/1, Item 1862/8/33; *University of Sydney Paper*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1862/7/124.

178 Coulthard-Clark, *Duntroon*, p. 10. CRS MP84/1, Item 1862/7/124.

Figure 6. Army Examination of Tactics for a Major of Infantry

  
MILITARY FORCES OF THE COMMONWEALTH.  
EXAMINATION PAPER.

For rank of Major Candidate's number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arm of Service Infantry (or if no number is allotted, his name, rank, and regiment) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Letter, No., and Subject of Paper Tactics \_\_\_\_\_

8 Questions, of which all are to be answered. Full Marks 200

Instructions to Candidates. In Questions marked as *alternative*, only one of each pair is to be answered. In the event of any Candidate answering both questions of either of these pairs, one or other of his answers in each pair will be arbitrarily cancelled irrespective of which of the two may be the better. Read over all the questions carefully before you begin to write any answer. Questions may be answered in any order. Write only on one side of the paper and leave a quarter margin. Number every sheet in the right hand top corner, and put your examination number (or name, &c., if no number is allotted) at the top of each sheet. Always answer first the questions you know best and leave those you are doubtful about till the last. When you have finished, read over your work to see if you have omitted anything.

*Time allowed* \_\_\_\_\_

*This Paper to be attached to the Answers.*

No. of Question.	Marks	Notes.—Alternative questions are indicated. The one not answered is to cross through by the Candidate.
1	20	When the officer Commanding an attacking Force decides to make his main attack against one of the Enemy's Flanks, what points will be taken into consideration when deciding which Flank to attack.
2	20	Upon what does the manner in which a Defensive Position is occupied depend?
3	30	Describe the general principles upon which the Infantry will act in an attack in conjunction with other Arms.

Source: 'Examination Papers', CRS, Series MP84/1, Item 1869/15/60.

While developments like that at the University of Sydney ameliorated the issue of officer education, they were never on a scale likely to solve the problem. Indeed, such difficulties were only overcome with the establishment of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1911. With an increasing number of officers required to fill positions within the citizen forces, and later the Australian General Staff, the creation of this institution had been strongly advocated by Major General Hutton as early as 1902.<sup>179</sup> In 1906, the Inspector General, Brigadier Harry Finn, made the point that with the Australian Government set against the employment of British officers in positions of local authority, a domestic military college was essential.<sup>180</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Bridges agreed and contended in 1905 that the Army would 'never form an effective fighting machine... unless steps are taken to provide officers who can efficiently command the forces in war and administer them in peace.'<sup>181</sup> A college such as Duntroon was sorely missed from 1901–09 when officer training was restricted primarily by the amount of time and effort that individuals were willing or able to give. Sometimes this was adequate. More often it was not.

Training the rank and file of the post-Federation Army posed a number of similar and alternate challenges to those associated with educating the officer corps. As far as the tactical instruction of troops was concerned the emphasis shifted slowly from parades and ceremony to field-oriented training.<sup>182</sup> A gradual increase in the efficiency over the period was highlighted by what a soldier was required to do to become 'qualified' in 1901 compared with what was needed by 1909. The number of annual parade attendances required of citizen troops varied from state to state prior to Federation—from a minimum of twelve one-hour parades and a musketry course of forty rounds in Western Australia, to the thirteen full day parades and a similar musketry course in New South Wales.<sup>183</sup> From 1901 a uniform system was adopted that required a member of the militia to attend the equivalent of twelve full days of training (four at a continuous camp), for which they were paid, and to complete a musketry course of an average of ninety rounds.<sup>184</sup>

179 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 14.

180 Australia, Parliament, 1907, *Report of the Inspector-General of the Commonwealth Military Forces, dated 1 September 1906*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, Canberra, p. 15.

181 Coulthard-Clark, *Duntroon*, p. 10.

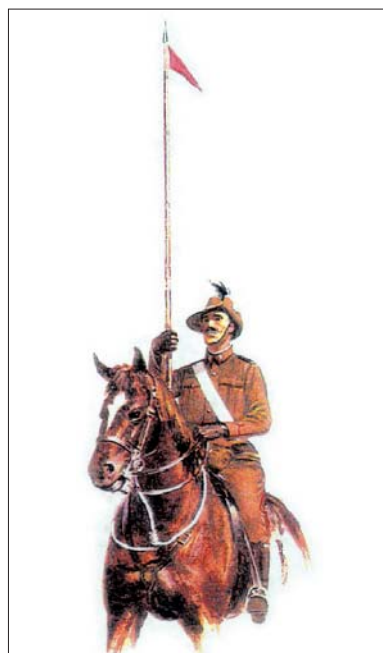
182 *Memorandum*, 1909, p. 16.

183 *Ibid.*

184 *Ibid.*



Complementing standardised parade requirements, a system of ‘Schools of Instruction’ was instituted by Major General Hutton in August 1902 under the direction of the Assistant Adjutant General at Army Headquarters.<sup>185</sup> Although these schools had significant potential, they often fell victim to local circumstances as well as the personal and professional obligations of the troops concerned. Separate schools were established for light horse, field artillery, garrison artillery, all facets of military engineering, infantry, medical and service corps personnel.<sup>186</sup> Permanent troops of the Administrative and Instructional Staff were supposed to man them but this was not always possible.<sup>187</sup> Interestingly, Royal Australian Artillery staff were often used to instruct officers at the light horse, artillery and infantry schools whereas engineers, medical and service corps staff taught their own.<sup>188</sup> The fundamental weakness of the School system was the difficulty faced by part-time troops with full-time work commitments finding opportunities to attend. This issue was only partially overcome in 1906 when classes were run early in the morning and in the evening.<sup>189</sup>



An Australian Light Horse trooper in ceremonial attire. Although these troops were not cavalry they often preferred not to train out of the saddle. Infantry skills suffered as a result.<sup>190</sup>

185 *Memorandum from Secretary for Defence on Schools of Instruction*, CRS B168, Item 02/4710.

186 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, p. 10.

187 *Ibid.*

188 *Ibid.*

189 Australia, Parliament, *Report of the Military Board, 1906*, p. 4.

190 Anon., *Australian Encyclopaedia*, p. 228



A systematic scheme of annual field training was laid down on 8 August 1902. Initially, however, it was only partly executed by the squadrons, batteries and companies of militia and to an even lesser degree by the volunteers.<sup>191</sup> This was to some extent due to state Commandants having the power to modify (usually reduce) training schedules as local circumstances required—a tempting proposition for overworked headquarters staff.<sup>192</sup> Despite this shortcoming, the annual camps system remained the single most important event of the training year. Annual field camps and exercises usually took place over the Easter period, as they had done in colonial times, to minimise the number of lost work days for part-time soldiers. The system of annual camps was intended to ensure that every soldier met minimum training standards and that uniformity was achieved between units. In keeping with the theory that ‘those who lead should be those who instructed,’ such field training exercises were usually carried out by officers for their own units, assisted where necessary by the Administrative and Instructional Staff.<sup>193</sup>



A group of Engineer Corps non-commissioned officers at an annual camp in 1905.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>192</sup> Australia, Parliament, 1904, *Annual Report on the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia*, dated May 1903, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, p. 10.

<sup>193</sup> Grey, *Military History*, p. 66.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

Continuous training camps of two, four or eight days were held in the various military districts from 1902, but they were spasmodic at best before 1905. From this date camp regularity improved and for the most part all units attended some sort of annual camp. The duration of field camp activities was gradually lengthened from 1906, but again only as local conditions permitted. By 1909, a large proportion of the post-Federation Army encamped each year for no less than eight days with some units managing longer periods. For arms requiring technical instruction, like the field artillery, pay and other expenses were provided for an additional nine days in the field. This camp training regime was basically aligned with the Committee of Imperial Defence's recommendation that the period of continuous training for all arms should be not less than ten days.<sup>195</sup>

Military instructors, not surprisingly, placed a significant emphasis on shooting standards throughout the period as the breech-loading rifles of the 1860s were replaced by magazine-fed varieties with lower trajectories and increased accuracy.<sup>196</sup> In 1903 Major General Hutton pointed out the importance of snap shooting, moving target practice, rapid aiming drills, and loose formations on the modern battlefield.<sup>197</sup> Musketry regulations were re-formulated in 1904 to improve individual marksmanship standards and a course of compulsory annual musketry was prescribed for all arms from this date.<sup>198</sup> The need for systematic and comprehensive rifle training was emphasised in 1905 by Brigadier Harry Finn, the Inspector General, when he called for all Commonwealth soldiers to be specifically trained to shoot at long distances at individual moving targets.<sup>199</sup> Finn's position was very much shaped by the experience of the Boer War. He ensured that from this point onward the previous 'static' system of training to fire at fixed white targets with black bullseyes was rejected in favour of shapes that

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195 Ibid. See Appendix 4 for an example of a syllabus of training for an infantry unit at an annual camp.

196 Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report on the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia, dated May 1903*, p. 11. Lower projectile trajectories were achieved with a combination of increased muzzle velocities and smaller calibres.

197 Ibid.

198 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, p. 13.

199 Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report for 1905 of the Inspector-General*, p. 10.

resembled men and horses in different positions.<sup>200</sup> Despite the enthusiasm of Hutton and Finn, it took considerable time for their emphasis on battle-oriented training to permeate the rank and file. By 1905, for example, troops were rarely trained to shoot at distances greater than 600 yards despite the fact that their rifles were sighted to 2800 yards.<sup>201</sup> The Inspector General was forced to concede in 1905 and 1906 that 'judging the Australian Light Horse and the Infantry as a whole, I cannot consider them sufficiently skilful in the use of their principal weapon.'<sup>202</sup> The dubious commitment of part-time soldiers did not help matters in this regard. Although 14 276 military personnel passed their compulsory annual musketry course in 1907, a significant 3626 (25 per cent) did not complete or even attempt to complete this 'compulsory training.'<sup>203</sup> Nonetheless, the official emphasis on marksmanship remained and, in 1909, a sum of £1000 was provided for the establishment of an Australian School of Musketry.<sup>204</sup>

Overall, the tactical training of infantry and light horse units did progress in the period 1901–09. Such progress, however, did not equate to efficiency. Official comment was regularly made with regards to a 'general' improvement in training standards but this is hardly surprising—it would be a rarely forthright general who reported anything else. Even by 1908 neither the infantry nor the light horse units had an up-to-date drill book and the dismounted duties of the latter were particularly poor.<sup>205</sup> Judging distances, the use of cover, and stretcher bearing techniques, for example, were rarely taught.<sup>206</sup> On a positive note, combined-arms training with artillery detachments was begun in 1907, although with very mixed results, and by the end of the period there were signs that light horse units were beginning to take their infantry work more seriously.<sup>207</sup> Some of the biggest steps from 1907

200 Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report on the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia, dated May 1903*, p. 11; Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report for 1905 of the Inspector-General*, p. 11.

201 Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report for 1905 of the Inspector-General*, p. 11.

202 Australia, Parliament, *Report of the Inspector-General of the Commonwealth Military Forces, dated 1 September 1906*, p. 7.

203 Australia, Parliament, 1908, *Military Forces Annual Report for the Year 1907*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, p. 14.

204 Ibid.

205 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces Annual Report for the Year 1907*, pp. 5–10.

206 Ibid, p. 14.

207 Ibid, pp. 7 & 14.

were in the areas of manoeuvre, outposts and marches.<sup>208</sup> From this date selected infantry personnel were trained as scouts and modern loose-formation attacks were attempted for the first time in Australia.<sup>209</sup> As a consequence of the successful use of the tactic by the Japanese in their war against the Russians, the doctrine of offensive and defensive trenches also began to be taught.<sup>210</sup>

To a far greater extent than the infantry or light horse, the arm which consistently lacked sufficient quality training was the artillery. Militia and volunteer artillery, in the early years of Federation, received little if any instruction in range or tactical manoeuvre and, consequently, standards of gunnery were poor.<sup>211</sup> Part-time artillery detachments suffered an acute shortage of adequate training opportunities—a situation compounded by the extra time needed to properly qualify a gunner. By 1904 the technical skills of field artillery units in particular was certainly not up to standard.<sup>212</sup> Apart from a deficiency of ‘modern’ guns there was an absence of suitable ranges and live-fire practices over land targets had never been attempted in some states.<sup>213</sup> The number and proficiency of gun layers was unsatisfactory, and despite efforts to remedy the problem through specialist camps, the tactical knowledge of field artillery officers was rudimentary at best.<sup>214</sup> As late as 1907 Brigadier Finn held that the artillery units of the Field Force were ineffective for want of appropriate training.<sup>215</sup> Despite such inefficiency, in 1908 field artillery units received new eighteen-pounder guns that, although superior weapons, by virtue of their complexity required more training than their predecessors to operate effectively. With this in mind, some batteries, on receipt of these new guns, had failed to fire a shot for periods of up to two years.<sup>216</sup> Part-time artillerymen were enthusiastic, but without opportunities for proper training the arm remained ineffective. Even the short courses and practice camps that were

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208 Ibid, p. 14.

209 Ibid, p. 10.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid, p. 20.

212 Australia, Parliament, *Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Second Annual Report, 1904*, p. 13.

213 Ibid.

214 Ibid.

215 Australia, Parliament, *Report of the Inspector-General of the Commonwealth Military Forces, dated 1 September, 1906*, p. 7.

216 Ibid.

carried out in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were often hamstrung by the restrictions placed on range practices by the training pamphlets used.<sup>217</sup> All were imperial publications and all were to be followed to the absolute letter.<sup>218</sup> Unfortunately, they lacked the flexibility required for part-time units under Australian conditions with even the slightest variations to prescribed programs requiring the personal approval of the Commandant, School of Gunnery.<sup>219</sup>

By far the biggest impediment to effective training for the post-Federation Army was the composition of the force itself. By their very nature militia and volunteer units caused inherent difficulties in this regard. First, there was a marked difference in training requirements and efficiency between the two. Militia infantry, for example, were required to complete twelve days of annual training, not less than four of which were to be at a continual camp, while volunteers needed to serve only six and one half days with optional attendance at a camp.<sup>220</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, that the training standards of volunteer units never matched those of their waged counterparts. Concerns were raised about volunteer effectiveness as early as 1903 when Parliament demanded to know why both their numbers and efficiency were consistently falling (as shown at Table 7). The simple reason for such poor training statistics was the fact that few volunteers regularly attended the crucial camps of continuous training (see Figure 7). In 1907, for example, the four volunteer regiments in New South Wales averaged between 38 and 59 per cent attendance at training camps.<sup>221</sup> Equally, across the country in 1909, only 56 per cent of volunteers encamped as compared with 88 per cent of the militia.<sup>222</sup> The problem was endemic and never solved. Such figures prompted Major J.B. Nash, the Commanding Officer the New South Wales Irish Rifle Regiment, to lament that:

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217 Ibid.

218 Australia, Parliament, *Annual Report for 1905 by the Inspector General*, p. 14.

219 Ibid.

220 *Minute on Training (Secret)*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1937/1/68.

221 *Views of District Commandants on Merits of Militia and Volunteer Forces (Secret)*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1937/1/68.

222 Ibid.

after my experience of twelve months with the Volunteer Irish Rifle Regiment I see no hope of doing work that will be productive of good for the public or for the military forces. The men forming the Regiment cannot be kept up to a proper standard. Those who are enrolled are not, due to irregularity of attending, brought to an efficient state.<sup>223</sup>

**Table 7.** Strength and Efficiency of the Volunteer Regiments of New South Wales, 1901–03.

Regiment	Strength (30.6.01)	Percent Efficient (30.6.01)	Strength (30.6.02)	Percent Efficient (30.6.02)	Strength (30.6.03)	Percent Efficient (30.6.03)	Strength (30.12.03)
Scottish Rifles	635	91	601	81	555	78	527
Australian Rifles	626	90	535	73	463	56	370
St. George’s Rifles	647	99	594	90	487	77	496
Irish Rifles	782	86	640	81	458	79	481

N.B. Efficiency for December 1903 was not available as testing had not yet been carried out.  
 Source: Table submitted to Parliament on request of Senator J.C. Nield, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 1181, & CRS B168, Item 1903/4672.

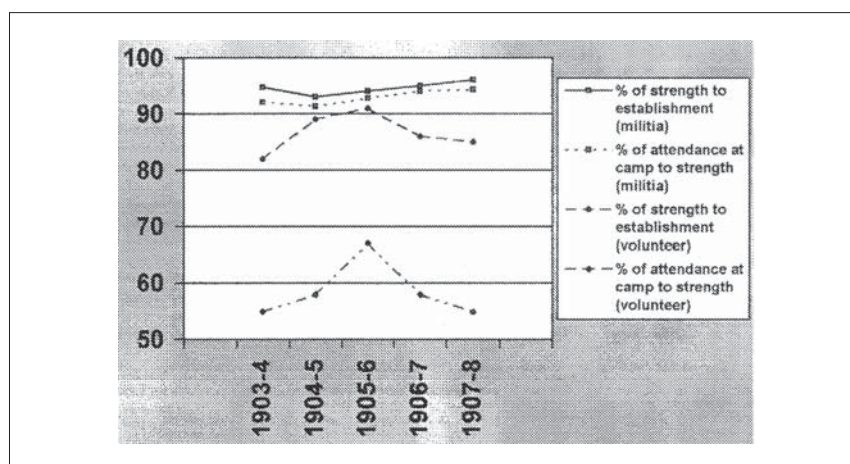
Compounding the issue of volunteer attendance rates at camps was the additional problem of their training alongside paid militiamen. The dilemma was well understood by leading military figures of the era. Why, many asked, should a volunteer put in his time, at financial cost and hardship to himself, to train for no pay when those next to him earned a wage—especially when he was under no legal requirement to do so? Some prominent permanent officers criticised the continuing

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

viability of a dual militia/volunteer system with two clearly divergent standards of efficiency. Colonel P.R. Ricardo, Commandant of Victoria (1905–07), could ‘not get over the feeling that the volunteers are inferior to partially-paid troops’.<sup>224</sup> Perhaps most damning of all in regards to the efficiency of volunteers was Colonel J.S. Lyster, Commandant of Queensland, when he concluded in 1907 that:

in a time of war, if called out for service they [the volunteers] would become permanent troops and be paid for their service. The highest standard of efficiency would be demanded and it would be discovered that the militia had reached a higher standard than the volunteers – a situation that would be fatal to success.<sup>225</sup>

**Figure 7.** Militia & Volunteer Percentages of Strength to Establishment & Attendance at Camp, 1903–08.



Source: Comparative Statement for Militia and Volunteers, CRS MP84/1, Item 1937/1/68.

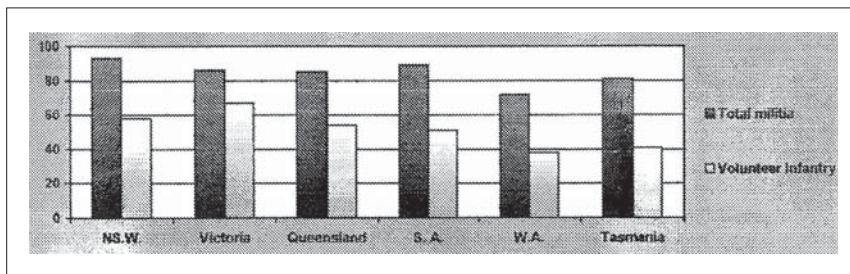
224 *Views of District Commandants on Merits of Militia and Volunteer Forces (Secret)*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1937/1/68.

225 *Ibid.*



Lyster emphasised the point by referring to a ‘most unsatisfactory and disappointing’ turnout by the volunteer Queensland Rifles at the 1908 Ormiston annual camp. The Commanding Officer of the regiment claimed he did everything in his power to secure a good attendance but his efforts were not supported by his men. The Commandant believed, with respect to volunteer effort, that ‘it is hopeless to expect any success.’<sup>226</sup> Their training was quite ineffective and destined to remain so as long as the dual system existed (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Percentage Efficiency of Militia & Volunteers, 1907.



Source: Attendance of Militia and Volunteer Forces at Camps of Continuous Training, 1906–7. CRS MP84/1, Item 1937/1/68.

The poor state of volunteer training did not mask parallel difficulties for the militia. Although to a lesser extent, partly-paid units still had difficulty in committing men to continuous training, mostly as a consequence of employers refusing to release them. In some cases militiamen were forced to pay substitute workers at trade rates to fill their places while they attended training at generally lower rates of pay. Again, like their volunteer counterparts, the militia’s difficulties did not go unnoticed or unpunished in Parliament. Senator John Cash Neild discovered that militia recruitment had been halted in July 1904, for financial reasons, and that the total number of troops had fallen from a strength of 29 569 in March 1901,

<sup>226</sup> *Minute from Queensland Commandant to Secretary of Defence.*, CRS MP84/1, Item 937/1/68.



to 18 924 in January 1904 (with only 15 688 efficient).<sup>227</sup> A case in point was the artillery garrison on Thursday Island that in 1907 maintained only fifty-two personnel (no officers) out of an establishment of eighty five (three officers)—not even enough for one relief.<sup>228</sup> The Queensland Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Plomer, went as far as calling for the disbandment of some of his own militia artillery units because of this type of poor attendance.<sup>229</sup>

Certainly one positive hallmark of military training—for the permanent, volunteer and militia soldiers of the post-Federation Army—was enthusiasm.<sup>230</sup> Passion, however, is not enough for a military force. Even with the best intentions there was only so much that could be done in twelve (militia) or six and a half (volunteer) days per year. This was, and always will be, the central problem of training part-time soldiers. Time was always at a premium. The standard of military training, from 1901–09, should not be judged against those of the standing permanent forces existing elsewhere in the world at the time for this army, by design, was not a professional force. If a judgement must be made, however, then the post-Federation Army never attained the standards expected of it by Australians who took an interest in such matters. In the words of the *Official Yearbook* in 1919, ‘the Acts of 1909 and later years were the direct outcome of

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227 An ‘efficient’ was a soldier who had passed all of his qualifications and training tests. Figures do not include South Australia. Senator Nield to Playford, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 834.

228 *Notes on Inspection of the Commonwealth Military Forces of Queensland.*, CRS MP84/1, Item 702/2/19.

229 *Minute from Queensland Commandant to Secretary of Defence*, CRS B168, Item 05/12228.

230 This was certainly true, especially in a climate of international tension and the decline of British sea power. The potential inability of the Royal Navy to protect Australia, combined with the increasing force projection capabilities of a number of emerging naval powers, including Japan, helped to create a militarily aware society. Australians were enthusiastic about defending their country. The recruiting figures of 1914 prove this was the case. At the same time, however, the author also recognises the potential danger of this conclusion if it had of been reached from official sources alone. Although these sources do concur they could not, nor would not, ever say otherwise.

the feeling existing in a large majority of the citizens of the Commonwealth that Australia was insecure under the voluntary system.<sup>231</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Legge reflected that:

prior to the year 1909 the feeling had been steadily growing in Australia that 25 000 militia were insufficient, even for local defence alone ... it was impossible to improve the military forces along the same lines as then in force. The result would not have been worth the expense.<sup>232</sup>

At the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that almost all the senior officers and non-commissioned officers who led and acquitted Australian forces so well at Gallipoli, France and Palestine between 1914 and 1918 were products of the post-Federation force. Perhaps they could have accomplished even more had they been trained more effectively between 1901 and 1909.<sup>233</sup>

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231 *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, 1919, p. 999.

232 Extract from an address delivered by Lieutenant Colonel James Gordon Legge on 26 May 1911. Perry, 'Lieutenant General James Gordon Legge: Australia's First Wartime Chief of the General Staff', p. 179.

233 Such men included Sir John Monash, Sir Harry Chauvel, Sir Cyril Brudenell Bingham White, Sir William Throsby Bridges, Sir Julius Henry Bruche, Sir James Whiteside McCay and James Gordon Legge.

# Chapter 4

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## The End of an Era

In December 1909 the post-Federation Army consisted of 1448 permanent soldiers, 16 819 militiamen and 5094 volunteers.<sup>234</sup> As has been previously indicated, however, not all was well with the force. As Lord Kitchener stepped off the boat in Darwin to begin his tour of inspection, there existed in Australia a pervading feeling of dissatisfaction and disillusionment concerning its military. Such sentiments had been growing for some time within the community, the federal Parliament and inside the Army. The first chapter dealt with the organisation of the post-Federation military and the following discussed how it was commanded, administered and trained. In simple terms, this final chapter explains why and how the Army of 1901–09 was destroyed. Some of the difficulties that beset the force, as they were pertinent to their chapters, have already been discussed. There were, however, deeper reasons why the third Parliament found it necessary to turn its back on the force-in-being and create an entirely new military system from 1909.

Much of the dissatisfaction felt by the wider community toward the post-Federation Army was a consequence of the uncertainty caused by continual restructuring and re-organisation of the force. This state of flux led to the establishment and disbanding of military units at frequent and seemingly random intervals. Many communities, for example, were dismayed to find they no longer supported an Army detachment, or that their local force had been so changed in role that they could no longer be a part of it. This was an issue of particular significance to many small and regional towns in the early part of the twentieth century. Of specific concern was that Hutton's 1903 scheme of organisation called for a preponderance of light horse units to be formed at the expense of the many small infantry formations that had previously existed throughout Australia. As many small town and

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234 *Official Yearbook*, No. 1, 1907, p. 1051.

country soldiers could not afford the horses required to convert to light horsemen, a degree of social antagonism grew between the mounted and non-mounted arms. This issue was compounded by the perception that the light horse was a social cut above the foot infantry. Jealousy and friction grew in direct proportion to Hutton's efforts to increase the number of mounted units, so much so that it became a decisive issue in many rural areas.<sup>235</sup>

This type of community resentment was clearly evident, for example, in the Monaro district of New South Wales when the local infantry company at Cooma was replaced by a light horse squadron in 1903. Residents complained stridently to their local Member, Austin Chapman, and regional newspapers claimed Hutton was attempting to exclude the 'lower classes' by replacing 141 foot soldiers with a troop of eighteen light horsemen.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, an infantry company at Glenn Innes, New South Wales, at full strength for sixteen years, was forced to disband to make way for a mounted unit.<sup>237</sup> Such unhappiness was echoed in Victoria. Allan McLean, Member for Gippsland, drew attention to the plight of the volunteer Victorian Rangers, disbanded with the loss of more than 300 men despite their long history and consistently impressive parade numbers.<sup>238</sup> As a result of McLean's agitation, and heated commentary from the *Kerang New Times*, this particular case was examined by the Victorian District headquarters.<sup>239</sup> It was to no avail, however, and—as was the case in Cooma and Glenn Innes—the local community could do nothing but grow bitter at the closure of the Ranger companies (see Figure 9).<sup>240</sup> Similar scenarios were replicated across the country and community frustration associated with military re-organisation did not cool with time. Vitriolic complaints were made in Parliament in 1904 and 1906, for example, over broken military promises to Geelong and Dungog respectively.<sup>241</sup>

235 Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, p. 232.

236 *Monaro and Southern District Advertiser*, 12 March 1903; *Cooma Express*, 26 May 1903. CRS B168, Items 02/1823 & 02/2688.

237 'J. Wilkinson to Department of Defence'. CRS B168, Item 02/2441[8].

238 McLean, CPD, 1st Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 3120.

239 Series of reports beginning 22 September 1902. CRS B168, Item 02/2688; *Victorian Commandant to Deputy Quartermaster General*, CRS B168, Item 12/2688[5].

240 The *Kerang Advertiser* complained vigorously at the change. CRS B168, Item 02/2688.

241 Geelong was promised a local detachment of light horse but never got it. Wilkinson, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 172. The member for Dungog, Dr Frank Liddell, complained that no light horse detachment was raised in his electorate despite previous

**Figure 9.** Letter of Protest at the Disbandment of 'E' Coy, Victorian Rangers, 1903.

Borough of Echura  
Echura 8<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1903

Dear Sir,

I am directed by my Council to protest through you, against the action of the Defence Department in disbanding the E. Company of Victorian Rangers stationed at Echura.

It is understood that the reason for so doing is that the men may be induced to join the Company of Light Horse, but unfortunately the men of the old company are not in a position to do so, as they would each have to purchase and keep a horse.

The E. Company (which also included the Battalion Band) was thoroughly efficient and bore a good record and it is a pity that it should be singled out for disbandment.

My Council will be very pleased if you can get the Minister of Defence to alter the decision and reconstitute the old company.

Yours faithfully  
D. Cameron.  
Town Clerk

Mr. Dixon Fraser  
The Senate  
Melbourne.

Source: Letter from Cameron to Fraser. CRS B168, Item, 02/2688.

promises and recommendations. Liddell, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 847.

As late as 1908, politicians were still responding to complaints concerning the organisational structure of the Army. In light of the fact that at no time in its history had the strength of the force reached its peace-time establishment, it was indeed a woeful situation when citizens who wished to serve could not do so for want of a local unit or for the cost of a horse. Thomas Brown, Member for Condobolin, informed Parliament in August 1908 that, despite the ideal nature of his constituency, for some reason it was policy that no light horse unit be stationed there. Dr Frank Liddell, Member for Dungog, repeatedly asked for a mounted unit in his local area but the Minister, T.T. Ewing, could only reply that there was no money available for it.<sup>242</sup> In response, the former told Parliament that 'it [was] regrettable that the defence is in such a state of chaos.'<sup>243</sup> Australians supported the idea of military service and many communities were keen to do their part, but they were, in many cases, frustrated with the nature of the post-Federation force. The South Australian Senator, J.H. Symon, believed that not only were people disillusioned with the structure of the post-Federation military but also that, as a result of Hutton's re-organisations, it had been reduced to something of a 'plaything' rather than a competent combat force. It was fit for ceremonial parades but not for serious fighting. Interestingly, such sentiments paralleled those in Britain at the time with regard to her territorials.<sup>244</sup> The *Adelaide Advertiser* gave voice to such restlessness:

Distrust and unrest are prevalent throughout the military forces of the South Australia, and no one acquainted with the causes of that feeling need wonder at the result produced... three years ago we possessed a strong and enthusiastic body of citizen soldiers... [but]... all of this was before General Hutton appeared on the scene to dislocate the military establishment.<sup>245</sup>

The Australian Natives Association (ANA), a powerful lobby group from 1871, actively agitated against what it saw as the poor state of the Army from 1901–09.<sup>246</sup> Claiming to stand for 'practical and patriotic objectives' and with an agenda to 'influence Australian life', it was little wonder that defence became one of the ANA's

242 Brown, CPD, 3rd Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 5800.

243 Liddell, CPD, 3rd Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 5799.

244 Symon, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 770.

245 *Adelaide Advertiser*, 16 December 1902. CRS B168, Item 02/2688.

246 Along with concerns over the post-Federation army the ANA supported the establishment of an Australian Navy and compulsory military service for adolescents.

highest priorities.<sup>247</sup> The organisation saw the proximity of Japan and the rise of imperial Germany as real and impending military threats. Its former President, James Hume-Cook, in a speech before the Association in 1931 revealed that 'the leaders of the ANA were greatly concerned when they saw the years pass by and practically nothing done to realise the vision of a perfected defence with which they had entered into Federation.'<sup>248</sup> Members became so exasperated with the post-Federation force that they framed their own defence policy and lobbied Parliament for its adoption in 1906. It was with significant social and political influence that the ANA publicly stated that 'the growing urgency of the times is such that something more than spasmodic and irregular attempts must be made to secure an adequate and efficient army.'<sup>249</sup> Feeding off the activism of the ANA, a number of public figures and institutions went as far as to question the character of contemporary military figures. Such sentiments were well expressed by *Punch*:

it is the urban, supple man who succeeds – the man who can plot and intrigue – the man who has friends in politics and friends in the press, who is clever enough to work these friends and to rise by favour rather than ability. To gain power in the Commonwealth military forces an officer must have all the qualities of the politician – all of his suavity, all of his self-interest, all of his sagacity.<sup>250</sup>

The periodical went on to suggest that:

there are no military colleges in Australia; but if there were the gentlemen at the head of our forces would never have passed through them. They are all soldiers by accident. They are, most of them, only half educated anyhow, and had they been sent to a military college they would never have passed through it.<sup>251</sup>

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247 B.J. Kelleher, 'ANA: Its Aims and its Influence on the Australian Scene', *Anapress*, Vol. 5 Nos. 3 & 4, April & July, 1961, p. 1. The significant influence of the ANA was well illustrated in its efforts to secure Federation prior to 1901. Brian Fitzpatrick has gone as far as to suggest that 'Federation could not have been achieved when it was had it not been for the ANA.' B. Fitzpatrick, *Australian Natives Association, 1871–1961*, ANA, Melbourne, 1961, p. 33.

248 J. Hume-Cook, *Australian Natives Association: A Historical Survey of its Genesis and Development*, Horticultural Press, Melbourne, 1931, p. 20.

249 Ibid, p. 23.

250 'A Man of Brains', *Punch*, 3 June 1909, p. 75.

251 Ibid.

Critics like the ANA and *Punch*—and there was no shortage of them—saw the post-Federation Army as disorganised and unsatisfactory for the defence of the nation. The truth of such contentions was almost beside the point for that was the widespread impression. Impressions meant votes then, as they do now, and the vulnerable parliamentarians responded.

Dissatisfaction with the state of the post-Federation Army was equally widespread within the ranks. Those in uniform often resented the treatment they had received under the new federal system. In many cases such angst was derived from unit pride and independence—both significant characteristics of most military formations existing at the turn of the century. In the colonial era citizen-units were often formed by men of like interests who shaped a faith in individual customs and traditions. They were accustomed to running their own affairs with minimal interference or regulation. Such individualism was always destined to clash with Hutton's ideas on standardisation and rationalisation for the national force.

Two examples of the type of resentment that grew between the new federal army and the units it inherited involved the New South Wales Lancers and the Melbourne Cavalry. As a result of his Field Force restructure, Hutton split the Lancers in two, with a detachment re-located to the Hunter River district. While this decision was made for logical force structuring reasons, it caused so much consternation that its influential Commanding Officer, James Burns, quit his post in disgust. The Lancers fought hard to retain



Lieutenant Colonel James Burns. The Commanding Officer of the New South Wales Lancers. Burns bitterly fought General Hutton's reforms as they applied to his unit.<sup>252</sup>

252 P.V. Vernon, *The Royal New South Wales Lancers, 1885-1960*, (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1961), p. 21.



their role, their distinctive uniform and even their traditional weapon—the lance. Hutton quite sensibly wrote to Burns pointing out that the lance and the close-order charge were outdated, and that in Australia all mounted troops were to be mounted infantry with the horse providing a means of mobility only.<sup>253</sup> What the GOC failed to grasp, however, was that the real issue had less to do with accoutrements and more to do with identity and independence. A heated battle ensued between Burns and Hutton. Although it was a conflict the GOC could never lose, as a testament to the seriousness of the emotions involved Hutton conceded to the Lancers that they could continue to carry their traditional weapon in a ceremonial role while also allowing them to keep the designation ‘New South Wales Lancers’ as part of a light horse regiment.<sup>254</sup> Hutton was well aware that if he had insisted on further changes the entire regiment would likely have disbanded itself.

Similarly, in true volunteer style the Melbourne Cavalry fought furiously to retain its identity. It was originally established by Alexander Rushall, a businessman who believed that the unit ‘would be attractive to huntsmen and gentlemen in the city’, without any consideration of its relationship to other Victorian forces.<sup>256</sup> In 1903 Rushall resisted the order to become a ‘mere’ squadron of light horse and asked for



A New South Wales Lancer in ceremonial attire. Following Hutton's dispute with Lieutenant Colonel Burns the lance pictured here remained only as a ceremonial instrument.<sup>255</sup>

253 'Burns to Hutton', Vernon Papers, August–September 1902, in Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, p. 156.

254 Ibid.

255 Vernon, *Lancers*, p. 36.

256 *Rushall to McCulloch*, AWM 3, Item 02/429.

ministerial confirmation of the unit's independent nature and role as cavalry, as well as the retention of its distinctive uniforms and weapons.<sup>257</sup> Eventually Rushall, like Burns, was forced to submit, but this incident again illustrates the level of chagrin felt by traditional detachments as they were twisted to conform to Hutton's plans. The discontent it caused persisted well beyond Hutton's tenure as GOC. In the words of William Kelly, Member for Wentworth:

Everyone who has studied the question knows that, for some reason or other, there is the gravest lack of confidence through every rank. Everywhere we see the spirit of unrest through officers and men alike. We have seen officers resigning and giving up the sword for the ploughshare.<sup>258</sup>

Certainly, Senator J.C. Neild, an outspoken critic of the post-Federation Army specifically blamed organisational instability for the problems which existed in the service.<sup>259</sup> He believed that the changes begun by Hutton in 1903 uprooted everything, from uniforms to parade trimmings, while at the same time noting that nothing new was ever brought to finality. He claimed the brigade alterations of 1906, for example, were initiated for no better reason than the 1903 reorganisation had failed.<sup>260</sup> According to Neild, everything was, and remained, in a state of chaos up to 1909.

A second source of annoyance for servicemen throughout the period concerned their pay. Hutton originally planned that Field Force units would be militia and receive a pro-rata daily salary while those who were allocated to the garrisons would be volunteers and therefore provide their services for free.<sup>261</sup> This financial transition was begun in the 1903–04 financial year.

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257 *Rushall to AAG*, CRS B168, Item 02/1631.

258 Kelly, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 609.

259 Despite efforts to silence him Neild often made his criticisms in the press, a tendency which made him a strong enemy of Hutton and a succession of Defence Ministers. Austin Chapman, for example, once specifically asked the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, to publicly renounce statements made by Neild about the condition and capability of the forces. Deakin responded by stating that while 'the condition of the arms and equipment of the forces is not all that we wish', things were not as bad as Neild had claimed. Chapman, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., pp. 2425–6.

260 Neild, CPD, 3rd Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 7545.

261 Australia, Parliament, 1901–1902, *Minute upon the Defence of Australia by General Hutton*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, 1901–2, pp. 55–56.



These four figures represent what Hutton's standardisation of the post-Federation army meant to many traditional units. From left to right are pictured a member of the Queensland Mounted Infantry,<sup>262</sup> a Victorian Mounted Infantry trooper, a member of the Australian Horse, and a New South Wales Lancer. All of these units became light horse and their distinctive uniforms were replaced by a standard Service Dress from 1903 (pictured far right).<sup>263</sup> Such units resented what they saw as a loss of identity and pride.

The physical re-organisation of the army, however, particularly the transfer of militia garrison units to the Field Force, did not proceed so rapidly. What this meant was that all garrison troops, including militia units yet to be transferred, immediately ceased to be paid. At the same time many new militia units, raised from previously volunteer detachments in order to supplement the Field Force, were not paid at all. The result was chaos, especially in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, whose citizen-soldiers had all previously received either pay or allowances. The natural result of such confusion was a serious morale problem and, on 9 July 1903, the redoubtable Colonel Tom Price, the Queensland Commandant, wrote to Army Headquarters outlining his concerns about the decision not to pay the 3rd and 5th (volunteer) Regiments of Queensland infantry.<sup>264</sup> The Western Australian Commandant, Major R. Wallace, believed that if the situation continued then few infantry units would remain operational in his state.<sup>265</sup> Wallace was supported by John Kirwan, Member for Kalgoorlie, who

262 Wedd, *Military Uniforms*.

263 Vernon, *Lancers*, p. 32.

264 Price to Bridges, CRS B168, Item 02/2688.

265 Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, p. 144.

complained on behalf of the volunteer Goldfields Regiment that no pay would be a death blow to the unit. Such feelings were echoed by the South Australian Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel M.W. Bayly, who expressed his concern over the effect of the 'pay issue' to the Deputy Adjutant General in 1904.<sup>266</sup> The Minister for Defence, Austin Chapman, in a scramble to rectify the situation, restored temporary payment to two garrison units in Queensland but nowhere else.

Problems associated with pay were most damaging in Tasmania, despite the speed at which the state's Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel E.T. Wallack, complained about them. The southern state was the most graphic example of the friction caused by a system whereby non-paid volunteers were supposed to train beside paid militia and permanent servicemen. On 11 February 1904, 500 out of 750 volunteers in Hobart refused to parade as a protest over their non-payment.<sup>267</sup> It was a deeply humiliating experience for Hutton and the Minister for Defence, Chapman, who were both present. The GOC exploded into a fit of rage and the unit's Commanding Officer openly wept.<sup>268</sup> From this point onward, pay issues continued to weaken morale and increase the sense of despondency throughout the military. They were also fodder to journalists in all states. The ever irreverent *Bulletin* concluded, as a consequence of problems associated with pay, that 'practically the only means of fending off an attack would be to mobilise General Hutton, armed with adjectives, and launch him against the foe.'<sup>269</sup> Hutton's credibility plummeted as news of the Tasmanian incident spread with the unit concerned immediately disbanded and not raised again until 1906. This heavy-handed action provoked a remark by a Tasmanian parliamentarian that 'in the meantime Hobart is defenceless.' To this the Prime Minister, J.C. Watson, replied rather pathetically, 'I can say nothing to that.'<sup>270</sup>

Tasmanian militia soldiers were no less outraged by issues of pay than their volunteer counterparts, and not without due cause. As an unjustifiable consequence of pre-Federation pay scales rates they were provided five shillings less per day than their counterparts on the mainland from 1901 and their pay was frozen

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266 A.C. Catt to Deputy Adjutant General, CRS B168, Item 02/2688.

267 *Proceeds of a Court of Inquiry, Hobart, 11 February 1904*, CRS B168, Item 04/1253.

268 Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, p. 157.

269 *Bulletin*, 17 March 1904, p. 21.

270 Storrer, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 3393

completely in 1903.<sup>271</sup> Passionate speeches were given by Tasmanian parliamentarian Cyril St. Clair Cameron over the injustice of the situation, but to no avail.<sup>272</sup> In disgust, only sixty-four of 123 militia officers attended the annual training camp in Tasmania in 1903.<sup>273</sup> Cameron concluded that ‘if the Commonwealth government and the Tasmanian government desire to destroy the local defence forces they are taking the most effectual means of carrying that purpose out.’<sup>274</sup> Questions and concerns over pay continued around the country. As late as 1909 many units were still complaining that they were treated unfairly from a financial point of view.<sup>275</sup> These issues pointed not only to the inability of the post-Federation Army to settle issues of pay justly, but also to the wider administrative ineptitude of the Department of Defence.

As previously noted, from 1901–09 dissatisfaction with and within the military was regularly seized upon by the press—a fact not lost on politicians. Newspapers often picked up a problem, highlighted it, and as a consequence often made it worse. One such example was the retirement of one Lieutenant Colonel John Macquarie Antill in June 1906. Antill retired because, according to him, he could no longer tolerate the poor state of the Army or the treatment it received at the hands of the Government. The *Sydney Morning Herald* interviewed the disgruntled officer and twisted the issue into an article on the miserable state of the forces. The headline of 15 June 1906 ran ‘The Military Muddle: Disgusted Officers: What is it Coming To?’<sup>276</sup> The paper quoted an un-named officer who concluded that ‘the same mismanagement that drove Antill from the service has proved too much for Hilliard, [another senior officer who retired in 1906].’<sup>277</sup> According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, too many men that the Army could ill afford to lose were leaving the forces because ‘soldiering in Australia has arrived at the gold braid

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271 Pay was frozen at the request of the Tasmanian government for state budgetary reasons with no concern as to the effect on the Tasmanian military. Cameron, CPD, 1st Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 3084.

272 Ibid, p. 3901

273 Ibid.

274 Ibid.

275 One dispute, for example, was over the fact that Victorian light horse troops had to pay for their own saddles whereas their NSW counterparts did not. Wynn, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 7175.

276 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 1906. CRS B168, Item 02/1823.

277 Ibid.

and button stage, there is no place for men who know their work.<sup>278</sup> This theme was also picked up by the *Daily Telegraph* and *Truth*. The former made a habit of using retired soldiers to highlight what it saw as a degenerating military situation. After interviewing one Sergeant Major Daly when he retired on 20 June 1909, the paper proclaimed 'Our Defences. Is the Service Rotten? Startling Statements. An Inquiry Demanded.'<sup>279</sup> Not to be outdone, the *Age* in Victoria ran a story entitled 'Melbourne's Danger in Time of War'.<sup>280</sup> Characteristically, *Punch* was critical: 'In the Australian Army nobody bothers to find out whether men have ability or not. If they look like it, that is quite sufficient. It is the highest recommendation a man can have.'<sup>281</sup> As a result of the problems that inspired such media comment, and as a consequence of the negative impact of the articles themselves, from 1905–10 quite significant numbers resigned from the post-Federation force. In one particular instance more than 2000 soldiers discharged following the Easter training encampments of 1908.<sup>282</sup>

The cumulative political impact of consistently negative press reporting was aptly illustrated in parliamentary speeches like those given by Senator A.J. Gould when, for example, he noted that 'we are told time and time again that there is a feeling of disgust and dissatisfaction throughout our forces.'<sup>283</sup> Similarly, Thomas Brown, Member for Calare, called for an inquiry into the state of the post-Federation military as a result of the media commotion and his own conviction that the forces had been in an unsatisfactory state for years.<sup>284</sup> The political disquiet over the state of the forces leading up to Kitchener's report was perhaps best summed up by James Hutchinson, Member for Hindmarsh, South Australia, when he noted:

I am afraid that the Forces have never been organised since Federation. The defences, generally, are not to the liking of the honourable members, or of the Minister. It is in a state of transition and has been, practically, since it was taken over.<sup>285</sup>

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278 Ibid.

279 *Daily Telegraph*, 20 June 1909. CRS B168, Item 02/1823.

280 *Report on Victoria's Defences*, CRS B168, Item 02/2688.

281 'Colonel John Stanley', *Punch* (Melbourne), 11 February 1909, p. 180.

282 Nield, CPD, 3rd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 1216.

283 Gould, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 272.

284 Brown, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 1361.

285 Hutchinson, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 2854.

Some politicians, like Gould, felt even stronger and asked:

can anyone say that our defence system is now better than it was when each state undertook its own share? Nay, more, is the condition of the defence of Australia today not infinitely worse than it was when each state was called upon to look after itself? What has been the system? Are we one whit better off?<sup>286</sup>

Importantly, while a measure of political discontent with the Army had existed since 1902, feelings grew intense enough by 1909 that some Members began to advocate a complete abandonment of the post-Federation military system. James Page, Member for Maranoa, regularly told the House of Representatives that the forces were so chaotic that they were worse off in 1909 than when they had been when taken over by the Federal Government. He believed 'the sooner we disband our forces and trust in the mother country the better.'<sup>287</sup> Dr C.C. Salmon, Member for Laanecoorie, believed that Australia possessed the stigma of having an inadequate system of defence and pledged to dismantle the post-Federation Army.<sup>288</sup> Such was the lack of confidence in the Army and its leaders that Senator Gould even demanded that the House be shown the military records of serving members of the Military Board and the state Commandants.<sup>289</sup> Political uneasiness over the capability of native-born officers in particular had a long tradition that, for example, was clearly reflected in debates over the appointment of Major General J.C. Hoad as Inspector General in 1906.<sup>290</sup>

Over time the poor opinion of the forces, propagated by the media and given voice by a number of contemporary politicians, grew strong enough that alternatives began to be seriously discussed. As early as 1905 Senator J.C. Stewart called for the disbandment of the militia in favour of a fully volunteer force, claiming that

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286 Gould, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 272.

287 Page, CPD, 3rd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 2866.

288 Salmon, CPD, 3rd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 34. The same was true of Senator Sawyers when he revealed that 'I have received letters that show me that the Defence Department is, and has been for some considerable time, in a state of utter chaos... I for one pledge that, if the Minister comes down with a properly thought out scheme, to vote a larger amount of money to put our defences upon a sound footing.' Sawyers, CPD, 3rd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 2952.

289 Gould, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 272.

290 O'Malley, CPD, 2nd Parl., 3rd Sess., p. 870.



the two concepts could never work well simultaneously.<sup>291</sup> Not surprisingly, given the money it would save, in 1906 the Federal Treasurer, John Forrest, championed a similar idea.<sup>292</sup> While the state Commandants agreed with the general sentiment, they believed a purely militia force, rather than more volunteers, was the answer. In a more extreme solution Senator David John O’Keefe went as far as to suggest that Rifle Club members be sworn in to cover the obvious weaknesses of the existing military system.<sup>293</sup> Importantly, 1906 was also the year when compulsory universal training for all adult males was first mentioned, by Senator Henry Dobson, as an alternative to the army of the day.<sup>294</sup> In time, the extension of Dobson’s suggestion became Deakin’s ‘National Guard’ scheme that almost became a reality in 1908, and a fact under a different name in 1911.<sup>295</sup> The *Times of London* made an obvious connection in that ‘the lamentable deficiencies in Australian defence... have formed the genesis of the movement in favour of universal military training.’<sup>296</sup> On 10 July 1909, the final damnation of the post-Federation Army came from the Minister for Defence, Sir Joseph Cook, when he revealed that ‘I am not at all happy with my department. I make this statement frankly, and in doing so I am not saying more than my department is not already well aware of.’<sup>297</sup>

In the end, the combination of public, military and political censure was too much for the post-Federation Army to endure. As previously noted, Lord Kitchener was invited to tour Australia to comment on defence arrangements in 1909. He arrived in Darwin on 20 December and set about his work. Cook contended that Kitchener was ‘coming to give the best advice he can offer with regards to the organisation of an adequate defence of Australia.’<sup>298</sup> The reality was quite different. The Government, having already made the decision to dismantle the post-Federation Army, knew that the imperial warlord’s reputation would add credibility and finality to it—nobody would likely question his professional judgement. A new

291 Stewart, CPD, 2nd Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 5935.

292 Forrest, CPD, 2nd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 3037.

293 O’Keefe, CPD, 2nd Parl., 2nd Sess., p. 5936.

294 Dobson, CPD, 3rd Parl., 1st Sess., p. 6340.

295 The implementation of his plan was only halted by a change of government on 13 November 1908. Nevertheless, the basis of universal training was laid down in the *Defence Act 1909*. See Chapter Two for a fuller description.

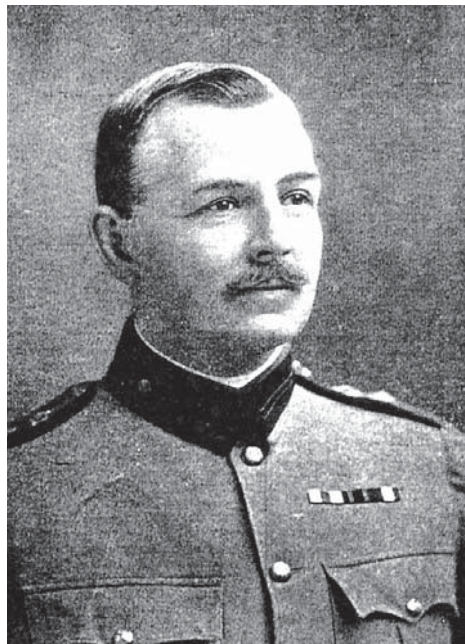
296 ‘Armed Australia,’ *The Times*, 24 March 1908. CRS MP84/1, Item 1856/5/84.

297 Cook, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 7175.

298 Cook, CPD, 3rd Parl., 4th Sess., p. 5709.



scheme of defence for Australia was subsequently proclaimed on 1 January 1911. It was a scheme based on peacetime conscription and was, therefore, fundamentally different from that which existed in the first decade after Federation. The unique Army of volunteers and militia was gone forever. It was not only the problems faced by the Army between 1901 and 1909 that prompted this action. Rather, it was these real difficulties, combined with the attitude of despondency that they created, which made it almost inevitable. In a feedback loop, the Army's problems caused widespread feelings of disappointment that returned to compound them. Rather than attempt to address its difficulties, the Government chose to dismantle the force and start again. The military problems in the period 1901–09 were significant, but perhaps not insurmountable, yet decision-makers chose a radical solution. Such was the atmosphere of disillusionment concerning the post-Federation force that the second Deakin Government considered that it had no other choice. The post-Federation Army, the unique Army of 1901–09, was no more.



James Gordon Legge worked out a scheme of military defence for Australia based on compulsory military training that formed the basis of both Deakin's National Guard and the system of universal military training proclaimed in 1911.



## Conclusion

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The challenges faced by the post-Federation Army were similar to those experienced by its British and Canadian contemporaries. Like its Australian protégé, the British Army in 1901 was made up of regular and part-time soldiers.<sup>299</sup> It was also heavily criticised by the press and in Parliament, particularly with regard to its performance in the Boer War.<sup>300</sup> In Britain, as in Australia, the militia infantry was accused of inefficiency, its volunteers of having been under-trained, and its part-time artillery as worthless.<sup>301</sup> British cavalry units even fought to retain their lances after the weapon was declared obsolete in 1903 in exactly the same way that the New South Wales Lancers resisted General Hutton's directives.<sup>302</sup> Such criticism in Britain led to the 'period of attempted reform' from 1900–05 and the rise of modern military thinkers like Lord Esher and Lord Haldane.<sup>303</sup> In April 1908 the British Army was fundamentally re-organised with its militia and volunteers abandoned in favour of a regular and a territorial force. Just as Australia's first post-Federation Army had disappeared by 1911, the British Army in 1914 had been transformed from the force that had fought in South Africa.

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299 British regular forces also contained the Army Reserve. Auxiliary forces were made up of militia, yeomanry and the volunteers, which were established in 1860 and numbered around 200 000 in the 1870's. Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Forces, A Social and Political History 1859–1908*, Croom Helm, London, 1975, p. 1.

300 A Royal Commission into the value of British militia and volunteers was established in 1904. *Ibid*, p. 2.

301 John K. Dunlop, *The Development of the British Army, 1899–1914*, Methuen, London, 1938, pp. 220–5.

302 *Ibid*, p. 225.

303 Phrase used by Dunlop, *Development of the British Army*, p. 218. Lord Esher's reports from 1904 recast the organisation of the British War Office. Lord Haldane was Secretary of State for War from 1906 and a significant force behind British military reform up to 1914.

Similarly, Canadian military developments from 1901–09 bore an almost uncanny resemblance to events unfolding in Australia. The Canadian militia, founded in 1868, was organised on a volunteer basis around a small cadre of permanent soldiers used for training and administration.<sup>304</sup> From 1901, Canada, like Australia, witnessed clashes between British GOCs and their civilian masters, saw the establishment of a ‘militia council’ to replace the GOC, the creation of a Chief of the General Staff and Canadian Section of the Imperial General Staff, and initiated military restructuring following tours of inspection by senior British officers.<sup>305</sup> The Canadians even divided themselves into military districts and re-brigaded their forces in 1906 to make mobilisation more practical, matching what had been done in Australia.<sup>306</sup> Problems concerning the efficiency of part-time forces were as real in Canada as they were in the Commonwealth Military Forces, and the British push for Empire defence influenced strategic policy in both Dominions.

It is a truism that Australian federal governments did not spend much time on defence during 1901–09: they had too many other things to do. Edmund Barton outlined the most important immediate tasks of the Government in his first policy speech as Prime Minister. They included customs, post offices, creating a civil service, a High Court, inter-state commissions, a trans-continental railway (promised to Western Australia), unification of railway gauges, universal suffrage, an old-age pension scheme, and mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration.<sup>307</sup> Deakin continued Barton’s program with the additional agenda of selecting a site for a national capital and passing the *Navigation Act 1912*.<sup>308</sup> Subsequent ministries pursued similar goals. By far the most urgent concern of federal governments in

304 J.A. Mowbray, ‘Militiaman: A Comparative Study of the Evolution of Organisation in the Canadian and British Voluntary Citizen Military Forces 1896–1939’, PhD Thesis, Department of History, Duke University: printed by University Microfilms International, 1975, p. 134; T. C. Willett, *A Heritage At Risk, The Canadian Militia as a Social Institution*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1987, p. 57.

305 Inspectors General of Imperial Forces, Sir John French and Sir Ian Hamilton visited in 1909 and 1913 respectively. Mowbray, *Militiaman*, pp. 129–219.

306 See Chapter One. Ibid, pp. 134 & 176.

307 F. Crowley, ‘1901–1914’, F. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia*, The Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1974, p. 267.

308 G. Sawyer, *Australian Federal Politics and Law 1901–1929*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, VIC, 1956, p. 34.

the first decade after Federation, however, was finance. Indeed, had Barton known where to look for an omen to as to what his most serious problems would be, he would have found it on Flemington Racecourse on 5 November 1901, where the first Melbourne Cup of the new century was won by a horse named Revenue. The two paramount fiscal concerns were customs/excise duties and the 'free-trade' versus 'protectionism' debate. Apart for a brief 'tariff truce' called by Deakin in 1905, the latter was a continual point of parliamentary conflict.<sup>309</sup> It was between all this urgent business that defence was squeezed. The lack of any immediate threat meant it did not achieve anything like pre-eminence throughout the period. The first three Parliaments passed 191 Acts, of which seventy seven directly related to financial measures, with only one Act and one amendment relating solely to defence.<sup>310</sup> In the policy speeches of all seven Prime Ministers between 1 January 1901 and 29 April 1910, defence was mentioned only once and even this was only in connection with the appropriation of funds.<sup>311</sup> The only other mention of it within a policy statement was by the then-opposition figure J.C. Watson, in 1906, and only in so far as to express his wish that compulsory military training become part of the Labor platform.<sup>312</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, that with revenue high and defence low on the list of government concerns, the post-Federation Army did not get much money. Barton had pledged that there 'must be no direct taxation by the Commonwealth unless under the pressure of some great national emergency, and not even then if it can be avoided.'<sup>313</sup> In addition, between 1901 and 1910, the main source of federal income, thanks to the 'Braddon Clause' of the Constitution, was a one quarter share of customs and excise duties. Federal politicians, therefore, had to accomplish all that has been outlined with severely limited funds. A devastating drought that began in the mid-1890s and continued until 1903 further ensured that economic frugality was the order of the day.<sup>314</sup> Indeed, from 1901–09 expenditure on defence averaged a total of only 0.42 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. By comparison,

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309 Ibid, p. 34.

310 Ibid, pp. 16–70.

311 Deakin in 1905. Sawyer, *Federal Politics*, p. 60.

312 Ibid, p. 62.

313 Ibid, p. 16.

314 Crowley, *History of Australia*, p. 277.

the portion allocated to defence in Australia in 2005 was close to two per cent.<sup>315</sup> In 1908 Australia spent six pounds, two shillings per person on its military. In Britain the amount, per capita, was twenty-seven pounds. The Australian figure was less than almost any other contemporary Western nation including the United States. Only Canada spent less per person on defence than Australia.<sup>316</sup> Alfred Deakin pleaded in 1904 that ‘without organisation or funds we are appealing to the judgement of the community to prevent us being crushed.’<sup>317</sup>

Defence was not a public issue for much of the period in question. Apart from those involved directly in military matters, interest in the military rose and fell along with perceived threats to Australian security. People were more concerned with major industrial disputes, like the three which occurred between 1903–09, deporting Queensland’s Kanakas, populating the country with white Anglo-Saxon stock, or various issues relating to trade.<sup>318</sup> In two prominent texts of the era on Australian history, the space devoted to the post-Federation Army totalled three sentences.<sup>319</sup> Those interested in the military matters at Federation looked forward to a cheaper, nationally structured, co-ordinated, efficiently administered and effective force, of which they could be proud and under which they could feel

315 *Official Yearbook*, 1997, No. 79, p. 68. In 1994 India spent practically the same amount of money on defence at 2.7 per cent of GDP and South Africa, in 1996, a total of 2.4 per cent. Anon., ‘Military Balance’, *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, Vol. XXII, No. 1/2, Jan/Feb, 1996, pp. 69–104; South African Yearbook (3rd edition), 1996, p. 210; Vamplew, *Historical Statistics*, pp. 133 & 412.

316 *Official Yearbook*, 1908, No. 1, p. 894.

317 *Ibid*, p. 60.

318 Following the disturbing industrial disturbances in the 1890s, there were strikes in the Victorian railways (1903), Broken Hill mines (1908–09), and in the NSW coal mines (1909). G. Greenwood (ed.), *Australia: A Social and Political History*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1955; Crowley, *History of Australia*, pp. 274–9; F. Cain, *Jack Lang and the Great Depression*, Australian Scholarly Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 14.

319 These books are A.W. Jose, *History of Australasia*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1909; E. Jenks, *A History of the Australasian Colonies*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1912.

safe.<sup>320</sup> This they never found. As wider interest in the military increased with the rise of Japan as a Pacific power towards the end of the period, people were not generally satisfied with the Army they read about in the newspapers.

By 1909, Australia's military forces were inadequate. Under the guidance of Major General Hutton the Army had moved from the days when it was a national force in name alone towards what resembled a federal organisation. It remained, however, clearly insufficient for the nation's needs. Nor was efficiency and co-operation the hallmark of the post-Federation Army. The system of administering the force was characterised by personality clashes and perpetual disagreements over a variety of issues. Structurally, while many positive changes were wrought in nine years, a continual state of flux did not encourage efficiency. This is not to suggest that there were no gains or successes to 1909. Rather, the post-Federation Army was not perceived as an effective organisation by either politicians or the public. Obvious and fundamental problems, like those associated with training, for example, were never rectified; essentially because most of them were derived from the dual system of volunteers and militia—the very cornerstone of the system. Colonel H. Foster, of the University of Sydney, summed up a range of pertinent concerns when he commented that:

Australia has done what she could to develop a force on land... but it is damned little... a poor show as a force... nothing in it but very good material (in men and officers anxious to learn... but all untrained and not being taught much), it has no reserves to make up war strengths, little equipment and auxiliary services, ammunition columns and no staff worth its salt, let alone trained commanders.<sup>321</sup>

The post-Federation Army ended officially on 1 January 1911 when a new system of defence, based on compulsory military training, was proclaimed. Its demise, however, had begun years before. Compulsory service had always had its champions in men like Alfred Deakin and William Morris Hughes and in

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320 Edmund Barton emphasised that defence should cost less after Federation at the Federal Convention of 1897–98. Arguments appeared in the *Bulletin* that the forces would be 'cheaper as well as more efficient' if the colonial militaries were amalgamated into a federal force. McKernan & Browne, *Two Centuries of War and Peace*, p. 123.

321 Coulthard-Clark, *Heritage of Spirit*, p. 84.

organisations such as the Australian National Defence League.<sup>322</sup> Their arguments gained credibility as time progressed, usually in response to some overseas event.<sup>323</sup> Although the *Defence Act 1909* instituted compulsory military service, Deakin's previous parliamentary and public pushes for a such a system had well and truly prepared the public and political climate for the transition.<sup>324</sup> Indeed, the concept had come out of a plan for an alternate defence organisation for Australia laid down by Major G.J. Legge, at the Prime Minister's insistence, in 1907. The only thing that prevented its implementation in 1909 was Deakin's resignation and the coming of the Fisher Government, which postponed the change but did not oppose it. Not only was Australia ready for a defence transformation, it was physically preparing for it when the Prime Minister cabled Lord Kitchener on 10 September 1909, inviting him to tour Australian defence establishments.<sup>325</sup>

Kitchener's seven-week tour began on 21 December 1909 and concluded in Melbourne on 12 February 1910. Throughout his inspection he was accompanied by Major General Hoad in his dual roles as head of the Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff and as Australian Chief of the General Staff. From the outset, the fate of the present post-Federation Army was sealed, as voluntary and militia soldiers were no favourites with Kitchener. Furthermore, his guide, Hoad, was by this time fully won over to the idea of Empire defence. If Kitchener was bent on dismantling the first post-Federation force and creating a system more easily integrated into the Empire in his recommendations of 1910, then Hoad, by this time, would not have attempted to convince him otherwise.

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322 In 1905, Hughes was the founder of the Australian National Defence League, a non-party body whose objectives included universal compulsory military training (military or naval), and a defence system modelled along Swiss lines. It was established on the example of Lord Roberts' National Service League in Britain. Hughes edited the League's monthly journal and his views gained credibility as fears of the 'yellow peril' grew out of Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905. The League's founding member president was Sir Normand MacLaurin, Chancellor of the University of Sydney. K. S. Inglis, 'Conscription in Peace and War, 1911–1945', *Teaching History*, October, 1967, p. 8.

323 The Australian National Defence League was founded on the same day the Treaty of Portsmouth ended the Russo–Japanese War.

324 'Defence Act, No. 15 of 1909', *Commonwealth Acts*, Vol. VIII, 1909.

325 *Deakin to Kitchener*, CRS MP84/1, Item 1901/13/6.





The visit in 1910 of Lord Kitchener, shown here meeting officers in NSW, provided the government with credibility and gave finality to the decision to introduce a military system based on compulsory citizen service.<sup>326</sup>

Kitchener's *Defence of Australia – Memorandum* was tabled in Parliament in the 1910 session.<sup>327</sup> Its recommendations very closely paralleled Legge's proposals of 1907. Most of Kitchener's suggestions were incorporated within the framework of the new *Defence Act*.<sup>328</sup> With compulsory military service as its cornerstone, the new Army was transformed into a territorial infantry-based force. A total of ninety-two battalion areas were formed and grouped into twenty-three brigades, each containing approximately 1300 conscripts between eighteen and twenty-five years old. Two brigades within each division provided four infantry battalions, one field artillery brigade, one field ambulance, and one company each of engineers and service corps personnel. The third brigade provided four infantry battalions, two squadrons of divisional light horse, a howitzer brigade, a divisional signals company, a field ambulance and a company of service corps soldiers. Personnel

326 Coulthard-Clark, *Duntroon*, p. 16.

327 Australia, Parliament, 1910, *Defence of Australia – Memorandum by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2.

328 'Defence Act, No. 37 of 1910', *Commonwealth Acts*, Vol. IX, 1910.

for garrison artillery duty were provided by the 'battalion areas' closest to active fortifications.<sup>329</sup> The influence of a soldier of Kitchener's reputation on Australian politicians and public was considerable, but it is important to remember that, rather than causing the change, he lent pre-existing ideas credibility and finality, while adding a few touches of his own.

The post-Federation Australian Army of 1901–09 had achieved something in its lifetime, but not enough to prevent its demise. Public opinion of the military had fallen to such an extent that change was inescapable, and the pre-First World War conscript was the result. So lived and died the post-Federation Army of 1901–09.

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329 *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, pp. 1001–1005, 1919.

## Appendix 1

### Commonwealth Ordnance, 1901–09

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This appendix is a summary of the problems faced by the post-Federation Army with respect to ordnance from 1901–09. On taking over command of the Commonwealth Military Forces in 1902, Major General Hutton wrote that:

there is in all the states a complete absence of any modern infantry equipment, and only a small percentage of magazine rifles are available. The equipment of the mounted troops is generally incomplete, and only a small and quite inadequate supply of military saddles is available. The harness, equipment and guns of the field artillery are quite unequal to modern demands. A very small and quite inadequate amount of field engineer and field hospital equipment is available. Camp equipment and blankets are also inadequate. The supply of ammunition is in a very seriously defective condition. The military stores and equipment are in a most unsatisfactory condition throughout the Commonwealth, and the situation can only be viewed with the gravest concern. Modern equipment for cavalry, artillery and infantry may be regarded as non-existent.<sup>330</sup>

The post-Federation Army suffered severely from a lack of all manner of modern military stores, weapons and equipment. Hutton estimated that a sum of £525 000 was required to rectify the situation in 1902. In this the GOC was conservative in his estimate and did not provide for everything that was needed. He allowed for the continuing use of obsolete equipment and did not include the amount required to continually update the stores. In total, despite Hutton's efforts, only £370 338 was actually spent on the problem to 1909.

At Federation, the fixed defences of Australia contained, to a large extent, a variety of obsolete artillery pieces. In 1906, on the recommendation of the Committee of Imperial Defence and Colonial Defence Committee, these defences were updated and re-armed. The type of gun generally adopted was the six-inch breech-loading variety. Despite the £140 000 spent on them to 1909, it was estimated that a further £180 000 was needed to update fixed defences to a satisfactory standard.

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330 Memorandum on Australian Military Defence and its Progress since Federation, CPP, 1909 Sess., Vol. 2, pp. 16–22.

Only a few magazine Lee-Enfield rifles were available in Australia at Federation. Although this number grew to around 48 000 by 1909, the total was still well below the number required and 28 000 of the new weapons did not have bayonets. As far as ammunition for these rifles was concerned, in 1901 there existed only nine million rounds across the country, about two-fifths of the number there should have been. Despite this shortage, by 1909 neither the small arms factory at Lithgow nor the cordite factory at Maribyrnong was in operation. In 1909 the Army also possessed ten 'Pom-Pom' guns and fifty-four Colt machineguns for the light horse regiments and infantry battalions. Both, however, required replacement as prohibitive costs forbade the maintenance of equipment no longer used by Great Britain.

Throughout the country there were only thirty-two modern field guns in 1902 and four of these were without carriages. Of wagons and limbers for the guns there existed only thirteen out of the seventy-two required. The stock of ammunition was dangerously low and most of the gun harness was unserviceable. During the next seven years only sixteen of these guns were converted to modern breech-loaders. A further thirty-six quick-fire guns were purchased from Great Britain but this only equipped seven batteries. By 1909 a total of thirty-six wagons and limbers had been produced in Australia—one third of the number required. At the same time absolutely no equipment existed for the use of the ammunition columns that would have been required in war. In an emergency the Australian Field Artillery could not have moved an inch. The artillery force, due to lack of equipment alone, could not field its 'peace' establishment in 1909. It had two guns for every 1000 men.

In 1909, the Army was not in possession of sufficient transport vehicles even for training purposes. It was estimated that to rectify this situation would have cost some £200 000. Such an amount was out of the question and the Army only continued to function by contracting vehicles as required. This solution was often unsatisfactory due to the unsuitability both of horses and of vehicles, especially for artillery work.

Although the ordnance deficiencies outlined herein were only some of the most serious faced by the Commonwealth Military Forces between 1901 and 1909, they serve to illustrate the depth of the problem. The Ordnance Department in 1909 had personnel partly employed under the *Defence Act* and partly under the *Public Service Act*. At Federation it numbered ninety and by 1909 it had added only thirty-three people to its staff despite the responsibilities it faced. It was not to be until the 1920s that a true Ordnance Corps came into being.

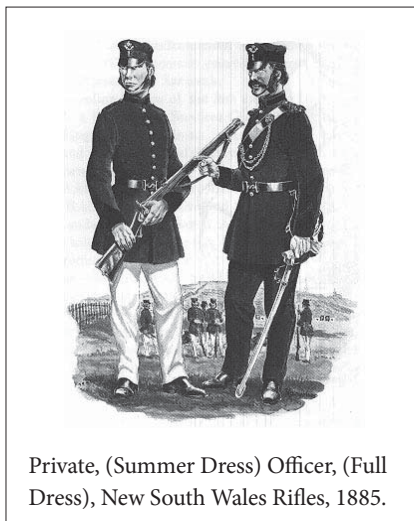
Source: Memorandum on Australian Military Defence and its Progress since Federation, CPP, 1909 Sess., Vol. 2, pp. 16–22.

## Appendix 2

### Summary of Colonial Defence Arrangements

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In 1854, inspired by a fear of Russia sparked by the Crimean War, the first volunteer military force was enrolled in Sydney. It consisted of one troop of cavalry, six companies of infantry and one battery of artillery. This unit became known as the 1st Regiment of New South Wales Rifles. With the end of the war in 1856, however, it melted away. In 1860 another force was enrolled. This time it was made up of one troop of mounted rifles, three batteries of artillery and twenty companies of infantry, totalling 1700 men. In 1862 the mounted rifles gave way for more artillery. The next noteworthy development was the withdrawal of the British garrisons from the colonies in 1870. The response to this in New South Wales was to immediately enrol a permanent force of its own in the form of one battery of artillery and two companies of infantry. This force was disbanded in the following year. In 1874 the volunteer system was amended and a 'partially paid' militia force was introduced. This was followed in 1876 by the re-raising of two permanent batteries of artillery and in 1877 by the creation of a small permanent engineering corps. The following years saw the re-emergence of the volunteers, with units springing up all over the state only to be merged once again with the militia forces. The cavalry regiment known as the New South Wales Lancers, for example, was raised in 1885 as a volunteer unit but by 1888 it had become militia. Alternatively, some units, like the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, were established as partially paid forces from the outset and volunteer infantry forces were gradually merged with the militia through the 1st, 2nd, 3rd,



Private, (Summer Dress) Officer, (Full Dress), New South Wales Rifles, 1885.

and 4th Regiments of New South Wales Rifles. By 1896 the permanent forces had expanded to include elements of a Service Corps, Veterinary Department, and Ordnance Store. The system of volunteers returned in 1895 and from this point it co-existed with the militia. To this end units like the Scottish Rifles were raised, followed by the Irish, St George's and Australian Rifles a short time later. In 1897 the 1st Australian Volunteer Horse and the Railway Corps were added, although in 1900 the former became militia and the latter was disbanded. Finally, as Federation drew near, a 'National Guard' (not to be confused with Deakin's 'National Guard' of 1908–9), of ex-serving men was established while the volunteers continued to expand with the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, Civil Service Corps and the Drummoyne Volunteer Company all appearing. New South Wales was poised for Federation with a mixture of volunteer, militia and permanent forces of all arms.

Against the backdrop of its separation from New South Wales in 1851 and the Crimean War in 1854, the first volunteer unit was raised in Victoria. It began as the Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Regiment and later became the Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment with an established strength of 2000 men. In 1860 the volunteer forces of the colony took over from the British troops stationed there when the British left for the New Zealand Wars and their strength rose to an impressive 4002 all ranks. A re-organisation of these volunteer forces was affected in 1863 and 1865 with legislation passed allowing for the compulsory raising, in an emergency, of a force of the various arms of service. The next significant change came with the final British troop withdrawal in 1870 when a paid artillery corps was instituted in Victoria. Strangely, it was soon to dissolve as its members were drafted to the police and penal services as vacancies arose. By the end of 1871 the permanent artillery in the colony numbered only 117. At the same time the volunteer force had grown to number 3799 men, including cavalry, artillery, engineers, infantry and torpedo and signal corps troops. The ensuing years were good ones for the Victorian military with the numbers of both permanents and volunteers increasing. All units



Private, Sydney Battalion,  
1st New South Wales Rifle  
Volunteers, 1861.

were armed and fortifications were under construction. In 1876, after a Royal Commission, sea and coastal defence was undertaken, along with regular drills and exercise camps for the land forces. The strength of the Victorian military at this time was 3736 with 136 permanent artillery personnel. Significant changes were made in 1883 and 1884, the first of which was the disbanding of the volunteers and the raising of a militia in their stead. A Minister for Defence was appointed, a Council for Defence created, and in 1890 the *Defence and Discipline Act* gave legal guidelines for defence. At this time Victorian officers were being exchanged with those from Britain and defence thinking was progressive. Rifle Clubs grew in Victoria in 1893, which encouraged shooting and military skills, and the Victorian Mounted Rifle Regiment was established in all districts. A small allowance was given to members who engaged for three years and attended various drills and camps. A volunteer infantry regiment was raised at this time in metropolitan areas and became known as the Victorian Rangers. The defence establishment for 1891–92 was 7360. This was reduced in 1895 to 4901 but increased again in 1899 to 5885.

In Queensland, after separation from New South Wales in 1859, steps to raise a colonial military were taken almost immediately. A troop of mounted rifles was raised in 1860 and involvement in the volunteer forces grew quickly in infantry, cavalry and artillery units. Grants of free ammunition and other necessary items were given by the Government and in 1876 the Queensland voluntary forces stood at a strength of 415 personnel. The *Volunteer Act 1878* provided for the raising of a force for defence of the colony and received a positive public response. In 1880, the total volunteer strength was 1219 all ranks. This volunteer system, however, as elsewhere in Australia, was superseded and in 1884 the *Volunteer Act 1878* was repealed after a military committee of inquiry. The desire to establish paid and militia forces grew too strong and a permanent corps was authorised while both militia and volunteers were provided for under the new Act. Under this scheme the Queensland forces were greatly augmented and new levels of efficiency were attained.

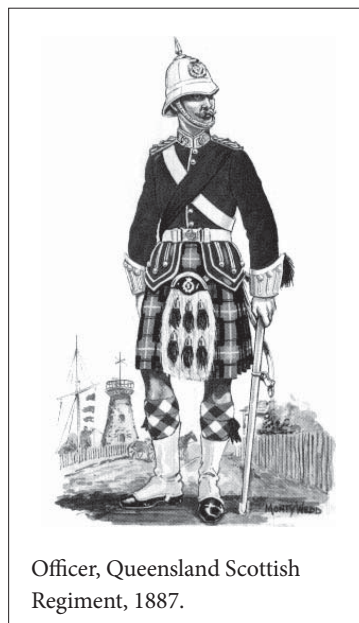


Lieutenant, Prince of Wales  
Victorian Volunteer Light  
Horse, 1872.



The first attempt at military organisation in Adelaide dates back to 1854 when the *Militia Act* authorised the Government to call out 2000 men between the ages of sixteen to forty in a time of emergency. This power was never used. Further Acts of 1859 and 1860 provided for the establishment of voluntary forces. In 1865, however, all previous military legislation was repealed and a new Act passed allowing for the call out of between 500 and 1000 men with a set rate of pay at any time. Under this framework, in 1877 one thousand men enlisted out of the fear of a war with Russia and the Government went as far as to obtain military instructors from England. The South Australian Rifle Association was established in 1877 and rifle companies were formed within it and in 1882 a small permanent force was raised consisting of one officer and twenty men. Further legislation in 1881 and 1882 allowed for paid volunteers along with a reserve without a limit on numbers. In 1882 this force numbered 1680 infantry and 200 artillery soldiers. In 1886 the paid volunteers were styled as a militia and the reserves into a volunteer force. In 1889 the strength of the permanent, militia and volunteer forces was 2720 all ranks.

Although not actually self-governing until 1890, the first volunteer forces were raised in Western Australia in 1861, and by an Act of 1883, these local forces were put under the control of Great Britain in a time of war. In 1889 the Western Australian volunteer forces totalled 603 personnel, with an increase to 712 in 1890. This force consisted of eight corps—two of artillery and six of infantry. Attached to the two infantry corps were sixty mounted infantrymen. Financial incentive was provided for each of these volunteers to pass certain tests to become ‘efficient’. Further voluntary corps were added under another Act of 1894 and a small unit of permanent artillery was raised. As with other states, Western Australia introduced a system of partly paid militia in 1896 and shortly before Federation a ‘voluntary reserve force’ was established for ex-serving personnel.



Officer, Queensland Scottish Regiment, 1887.



Excluding the presence of the British in Tasmania's early history, no local military forces were organised until 1859 when two batteries of volunteer artillery and twelve companies of volunteer infantry were raised. In 1886, however, these infantry companies were disbanded while the number of artillery batteries was increased by one. The withdrawal of the British in 1870 and a simultaneous reduction in the volunteers left the colony destitute of military forces. It was not until 1878 that this was remedied when another volunteer force was enrolled. In 1882 this force had a strength of 634 all ranks. An active force not exceeding 1200 men was authorised in 1885 with the voluntary corps to be retained. In 1893 an auxiliary force was approved with a peace-time establishment of 1500. At the end of 1896 the Tasmanian forces had a total strength of 1399, with 966 auxiliary force personnel and 200 members of the Launceston and Tasmanian Rifle Regiments. These units were consolidated in 1898 into three battalions of the Tasmanian Infantry Regiment.

Source: *Official Yearbook*, No. 12, 1919, p. 1001.

## Appendix 3

### Military Commandants of the Commonwealth (1 March 1901–31 December 1909)

State	Name Of The Commandant At 1 March 1901	Subsequent Changes		Remarks
		Date	Name	
New South Wales	Major General G. A. French, C.M.G.	1.1.02 to 23.12.04	Brigadier H. Finn.	Commandant
		24.12.04 to 31.1.05	Colonel G.W. Waddell, V.D.	Acting Commandant
		1.2.05 onwards	Brigadier J.M. Gordon, C.B.	Commandant
Victoria	Major General M.F. Downes, C.M.G.	4.3.02	Colonel T. Price, C.B.	Temporarily Commandant
		1.7.02	Brigadier J.M. Gordon C.B.	Commandant
		6.6.04 to 27.8.04	Colonel R. Robertson, V.D.	Temporarily Commandant
		1.2.05 to 4.6.07	Lieutenant Colonel P.R. Ricardo, C.B.	Commandant
		4.6.07 onwards	Lieutenant Colonel E.T. Wallack, C.B.	Commandant
Queensland	Colonel H. Finn, 21st Lancers	1.7.02	Colonel T. Price, C.B.	Commandant
		3.5.04	Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Plomer.	Temporarily Commandant
		1.8.04	Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Plomer.	Acting Commandant
		1.1.05	Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Plomer.	Commandant
		13.12.05	Colonel J.S. Lyster.	Temporarily Commandant
		15.3.06 onwards	Colonel J.S. Lyster.	Commandant

State	Name Of The Commandant At 1 March 1901	Subsequent Changes		Remarks
		Date	Name	
South Australia	Brigadier J. M. Gordon, C.B.	-	Colonel J. Stuart, V.D.	Temporality whilst Lieutenant Colonel Lyster was in South Africa
		1.7.02	Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Lyster.	Commandant
		14.1.04	Lieutenant Colonel M.W. Bayly.	Commandant
		18.4.05	Lieutenant Colonel E.T. Wallack, C.B.	Commandant
		18.4.05 onwards	Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Plomer.	Commandant
Western Australia	Colonel G.H. Chippindale.	1.10.01	Major J.A. Campbell.	Acting Commandant
		1.7.02	Lieutenant Colonel P. R. Ricardo.	Commandant
		1.2.05 to 1.1.07	Major R. Wallace.	Commandant
		1.1.07 onwards	Lieutenant Colonel H. De Mesurier.	Commandant
Tasmania	Colonel W.V. Legge	31.2.02 to 13.1.04	Lieutenant Colonel E.T. Wallack, C.B.	Acting Commandant
		14.1.04 onwards	Colonel H.D. Mackenzie.	Commandant

Source: Australia, Parliament, 1906, *Report on the Department of Defence from 1 March 1901 until 30 June 1906*, Parl. Paper Vol. 2, p. 6.

## Appendix 4

### An Example of the Syllabus for the Field Training of Infantry, 1907

SYLLABUS FOR FIELD TRAINING.		
I N F A N T R Y.		
1st Evening Lecture	Organisation, Explanation of Signals, Fire Discipline, Extended Order Drill.	
1st Half Day Drill	Extended Order Drill, Signals, Skirmishing.	
2nd Evening Lecture	Protection, Means of: Advanced, Rear and Flank Guards, Scouts, Patrols.	
2nd Half Day Drill	Advanced, Rear, and Flank Guards, Scouting, Patrolling.	
3rd Evening Lecture	Attack, Methods of: Chain of Command, Casualties, Ammunition Supply.	
3rd Half Day Drill	Company in Attack, Practising Casualties.	
4th Evening Lecture	Attack and Defence of a position, Counter Attacks, Hasty Entrenchments, Cover, Scouting.	
4th Half Day Drill	Defence of a position, Hasty Entrenchments, Covering Party, Use of Natural Features of Ground for Cover.	
5th Evening Lecture	Principles of Fire Tactics, Advanced, Rear, and Flank Guards, objects of and Composition.	
5th Half Day Drill	Advanced, Rear, and Flank Guards on the March.	
Each Lecture will occupy 20 minutes after which the work will be carried out practically.		

Source: *Syllabus for Infantry Field Training, 1907*. CRS MP84/1, Item 1099/2/2.

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