The Reform of the Front-Line Forces of the Regular
Army in the United Kingdom, 1895-1914.

Edward M. Spiers

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and that any errors of omission or commission are entirely my own.

Edward M. Spiers
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SUMMARY

This thesis argues that although the need for Army Reform is often revealed by wartime disaster, the content and purpose of that Reform is determined by a more complicated process than simply 'learning the lessons' of a previous defeat.

To examine that process, the first section of the thesis recounts the shortcomings of the late Victorian Army - the exclusive focus on structural reform, the neglect of modern weapons in tactical thought and the complacency derived from continual success in small colonial wars. The second section analyses the reaction of the Army, Government, and Opposition to the reverses in South Africa and maintains that their spokesmen were highly selective in interpreting these events. The third section reviews the post-war structural reforms and claims that economic and imperial considerations were as important in reform as the requirements of Continental strategy. The fourth and fifth sections describe the social origins of the officers and the rank-and-file in the Edwardian Army and argue that there was little interest, especially at Governmental level, in altering the traditional patterns of social recruitment. Finally, the sixth section claims that the essence of post-war reform was the perfection of basic military skills by the Front-Line Forces, which enabled them to exploit, in attack and defence, the advantages of recent developments in modern weaponry.
**Methodological Note.**

As outlined in the Summary, this study covers several different aspects of Army Reform, including the structural organisation of the Regular Army, its social recruitment and its reaction to technological development. Although failings in these aspects had jointly contributed towards the military shortcomings of the Army in the South African War, this analysis does not presume that they formed an integrated pattern. It recognises that the differences between them were still significant, since the spokesmen, the scope for action and the need for political commitment varied from topic to topic. It also notes that whereas some issues remained within the remit of the Army Council and the General Staff, others extended beyond the confines and the responsibility of these institutions. This thesis therefore, has not been arranged to parallel the development of Army Reform with the evolution of any particular military institution in the Edwardian period. Instead it centres upon various themes and discusses them in sections, allotting a separate pagination to each section.

The basis for this thesis has been the private and published writings of the military and civilian authorities on Edwardian Army Reform. Since some of these individuals were or became well-known public figures, their biographical details are not incorporated in text. On the other hand, those reformers who were prominent in the Edwardian period but have since faded into obscurity, are described and a list appears in Appendix I: *Dramatis Personae.*
Abbreviations

These are the main abbreviations used in the notes and references which supplement the text.

- B.M. Add. Ms. - British Museum Additional Manuscripts
- C. and Cds. - Command Papers
- Cab. - Cabinet Papers
- C.I.D. - Committee of Imperial Defence
- D.N.B. - Dictionary of National Biography
- I.W.M. - Imperial War Museum
- N.A.M. - National Army Museum
- N.L.S. - National Library of Scotland
- Parl. Deb. - Parliamentary Debates
- P.R.O. - Public Record Office
- S.R.O. - Scottish Record Office
- W.O. - War Office
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Note</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Army Reform and the late Victorian Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 The Failure of the late Victorian Army to reform itself.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 The Failure of the Campaign for Army Reform</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 The Influence of Small Colonial Warfare on the Failure of the Army to reform military training and tactics</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Concept of Army Reform held during the South African War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 The Army's Reaction to Adverse Civilian Comment during the South African War in view of its own Self-Image and Concept of Army Reform</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 The Concept of Army Reform which was held by the Unionist Government during the South African War</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 The Indifference of the Liberal Leadership to Army Reform during and after the South African War</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Structural Army Reform in the aftermath of the South African War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 The Economic Restraints on Army Reform</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 The Provision of Drafts as a Priority in Army Reform</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9 The Evolution of Military Strategy and its importance for Army Reform</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Edwardian Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10 The Social Origins of the MilitaryLeadership in the post Boer War period</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 11 The attempt to alleviate the officer shortage and create an officer reserve</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 12 The attempt to establish promotion by merit in the Edwardian Army</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The Edwardian Rank-and-File

Chapter 13 Edwardian Recruiting 1
Chapter 14 The Pay and Conditions of the Rank-and-File 13
Chapter 15 The Civilian Employment of the Edwardian Soldier 26

6. The Reform of Tactics and Armament in the Front-Line Forces

Chapter 16 Cavalry 1
Chapter 17 Artillery 17
Chapter 18 Infantry 33

7. Autumn 1914 and Conclusions 1

Appendices 15

I. Dramatis Personae

II The Military Background of the Service Members of Parliament

III The Military Expenditure in the period 1895-1914

IV Regional Background of the Military Leadership in 1899 and 1914

V Promotions from the Ranks in the Combat Arms

VI The Changes in Officers' Pay introduced on 1 January 1914

VII Average Rates of Regimental Promotion, 1898-1908

VIII The Rate of Rejections among those who offer themselves as recruits

IX The Educational Attainments of Edwardian Recruits

X Expenditure on Building and Repairing Barracks

XI The Civilian Employment of the Edwardian Soldier

Bibliography 34

Readers should note that a system of separate pagination for each section has been followed in this thesis. On each page, a number indicating the relevant section is included above the text in a central position. The page number of the section is located at the top right hand corner of the first line of text.
Section 1

Army Reform and the Late Victorian Army
Chapter I

The Failure of the Late Victorian Army to Reform itself.

"Few professions - and the army, I think, least of all - are capable of reforming themselves".

This chapter analyses the argument that an Army is an inherently conservative body by virtue of its structural organisation. It indicates that in the late Victorian Army ideas were more important than structure and that a citadel mentality stifled Reform. It asserts that the Reformers were not the hapless victims of structural rigidity, but a group whose ideas were offensive to the majority of officers, who lacked unison and persistence, and who suffered from the stigma of careerism. Finally, it claims that even when the Reformers achieved office, they failed to improve the efficiency of the Army, not because of failings in themselves or in their powers, but because their ideas were outmoded and irrelevant to the requirements of Army Reform in the altered circumstances of the modern battle.
In March, 1878, Sir Garnet Wolseley wrote, "that great reforms are seldom effected in an army except after great reverses."¹ His argument presumed that the structural organisation of an Army lessened the likelihood of internal Reform, and that external pressure by public opinion and Government action, usually evoked by a wartime disaster, was the only method of securing Reform. In his opinion, the hierarchical organisation of an Army with its clear-cut command structure and premium on the maintenance of discipline, predisposed the profession towards a 'natural conservatism'. However, this assertion raises rather than answers several questions. In the first place, what does it mean to claim that the late Victorian Army was naturally conservative? Secondly, what were the characteristics, views and difficulties of the minority of reforming officers? Finally, why was the Army after four years under an apparent Reformer as Commander-in-Chief, still unprepared for war in 1899?

To account for the Army's lack of reforming zeal, Wolseley underlined several institutional factors which were peculiar to the Army:

I think it will be found that the older men grow, the less they are disposed to changes in the institution or profession they have belonged to for most of their lives. This is peculiarly the case in an army where the young school with advanced ideas are held very much in check by habits of discipline and by their own inward respect for their military superiors, and have consequently a greater difficulty than is experienced in other professions in making their views known.²

This explanation, however, is not wholly convincing. Although discipline, deference to seniority, and a concomitant curtailment of

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² Sir G. Wolseley, op. cit., p. 441.
discussion were not ideal conditions in which to propagate Reform, these factors were only the obstacles to the dissemination of new ideas. What Wolseley described was the communications channel or support mechanism for the dominant ideas in the Army. 3 Admittedly, without a General Staff to collect military information; monitor changes in foreign armies; and present authoritative arguments in support of innovation, the mechanism itself had a built-in resistance to change. There was no institutionalised body with a recognised remit to promote military efficiency. As a result, discipline may have made parrots of the Victorian officers. 4 Nevertheless, what dimmed the prospects of Reform was not the means of communication so much as the views communicated - views which were held by the overwhelming number of officers both senior and junior. 5

The first view which inhibited Reform was the Army's belief, undiminished by the Parliamentary control of finance, in its personal fealty to the Crown. The importance of this belief has been recognised as an obstacle in the development of civil-military relations, and as a powerful factor in reinforcing military traditionalism and resistance to technological change. 6 What requires to be added is that this continual effort to depoliticise the Army, to raise it above and beyond the political realm, was in itself a consciously

3. For a description of a similar mechanism in the modern Army, see Lord Ismay, Memoire (London, 1960), p. 209.
4. "Discipline is apt to make parrots of us all; we have much less individuality than the members of civil professions." Sir C. Wolseley, 'Long and Short Service', Nineteenth Century, Vol. IX, no. XLIX (Mar., 1881), p. 560.
5. The views which will be presented comprise only the general reaction and not the detailed objections of the Army towards Reform, since the author was unable to consult the Duke of Cambridge Mss., in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle.
political effort. It presumed, not merely that civilian politicians might mismanage the Army, but also that their purposes and interests might be antithetical to those held by the Army. Indeed, the Army felt that its raison d'être transcended the vagaries of party politics, and carried a superior constitutional status. What galled in these circumstances was the very real dependence of the Army on Parliament and this only intensified the emotional frustration. For the Army to admit that it required Reform, would have implied an inability to fulfil onerous and prized responsibilities, and revealed a weakness, liable to exploitation by unsympathetic and ignorant politicians.

The desire to remain apart from the political realm was buttressed by the fear that Army Reform would damage the social status and life style of the officer corps. The social criteria of the Victorian officer were the breeding and manners of a gentleman, and the life style was one of comradeship and leisure, with boundless opportunities for sporting and social entertainment. What the officers feared in this respect was that the Army might be steadily professionalised through encroachments on the position of the Commander-in-Chief and Reforms emanating from the Liberal Secretaries of State. A critic in the *Fortnightly Review* argued that, "the army is gradually becoming less aristocratic, and more in harmony with


8. "Hitherto our army has been a pleasant home for idle men; generation after generation of officers have been attracted to it by the ease and pleasure it secured to the English gentleman - enjoyment that was only heightened by the opposite extremes of privation and hard work which an occasional campaign afforded." Sir G. Wolseley, 'Long and Short Service', *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. IX, No. XLIX (Mar., 1881), p.562.
democratic institutions", and few in the Army would not have found this prospect alarming. The writer, however, failed to appreciate that any meaningful democratisation in the Army would require a radical revision of officer attitudes. For this, there were few, if any supporters within the Army. Indeed, the failure to grasp this point was no more clearly highlighted than in the reviewer's citation of Lord Wolseley as the standard bearer of democratic reform. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Wolseley may have had respect for merit, especially his own, but he had no regard for democracy which he equated with mob rule. His recognition that aristocratic connections would inhibit a Conservative Government from Reform, only meant that he had to co-operate with the Liberals to advance Reform and his own career. But this did not make him in any way sympathetic to the priorities of Gladstonian Liberalism or to democratic procedures. He remained convinced that the Army was a career for which only gentlemen were fit, albeit diligent and capable gentlemen.

Along with the social impediments to Reform, there was a further obstacle in regimental esprit de corps. This factor proved a barrier to Reform because of its presumed fragility. The majority of officers believed that it was liable to disintegrate with almost any change in the recruitment, training and organisation of the regiments. This contention was difficult to dispute (not that many in the Army tried), since the important cohesive force of esprit de corps was singularly

10. Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 1.10.84. Wolseley Mss., W/P 13/22, and Lord Wolseley to Lord Wemyss, 1.11.1906. Wemyss Mss., Reel 17.
11. Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 18.4.80. Wolseley Mss., W/P 9/18.
intangible. What was misplaced at the time was not the emphasis on the importance of esprit de corps, but the emphasis on its supposed fragility. In practice, regimental spirit proved remarkably pliable and resilient. It survived the introduction of short service, linked battalions, the loss of numbers and facings and the territorial localisation of regiments. Friction erupted at first, especially with the loss of historic facings and numbers, but this was much less persistent, and the changes were much less deleterious, than those feared by the Army recalcitrants. Nevertheless the recalcitrants, led by the Duke of Cambridge, sincerely feared that Army Reform would impair the old Regimental system of our glorious Army. It has stood many shocks, and has done its duty nobly by the Crown and by the Country. It is worth saving.13

It would appear therefore, that the late Victorian Army was a perfect example of what Alfred Vagts has described as a militarist rather than a military Army: an Army more concerned with its customs, status and prestige than with its own efficiency.15 This conclusion, however, should be placed in its historical perspective. In the first place, the Victorian Army existed in a society wholly indifferent to its ethos and efficiency. If the officers developed a citadel mentality and feared lest Reform weaken their status and prestige, then this was largely a defensive reaction to changes in the society around them. Secondly, the Duke of Cambridge and the majority of officers saw no contradiction between the traditions and interests which they upheld, and the maintenance of military efficiency. On the

contrary, as the heirs of the Wellingtonian Army, they believed that these traditions and interests were vital to its effectiveness. War was an uncertain business: what had succeeded in the past was the only touchstone for success in the future. Finally, it was true that not all the traditions and forms of regimental esprit de corps were inimical to the development of military efficiency. Some regiments, for example, took a positive pride in their musketry talents. For the Rifle regiments and the 50th Foot, their skill with a rifle was as much a part of their esprit de corps as their history and traditions. It was after a disappointing performance in the First Boer War (1881) that the 50th Foot resolved to improve their musketry, and in 1899, they entered the War with a musketry standard averaging "marksmen". 16.

Nevertheless, the fears for the status, prestige and traditions of the Army generally inhibited efficiency and ensured that the officers who championed Reform like Sir Garnet Wolseley and his "Ring" remained a small and isolated group. The majority of officers, who resented the Liberal Reforms, put a premium not only on obedience and loyalty to the Duke, but also on conformity, on a solid wall against the enemy. Any deviant was suspect. Indeed, when the critics labelled Wolseley a Radical, it revealed more about the critics than about the criticised. 17. A distortion of this magnitude could only emanate from a Horse Guards riven by doubts and apprehension - the products of a citadel mentality. It was true that Wolseley was an

17. In fact Lord Wolseley detested Radicalism, denigrated democracy and abhorred Gladstone. See Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 20.3.80. Wolseley Mss., W/P 9/15.
opportunist and that,

His great fault is that he is so very ambitious, and that he has only a certain number of officers in whom he has any real confidence.8.

Yet, the fear of a 'Wolseley Ring' had more shadow than substance. As a group it proved much less compact and much less loyal than either Wolseley hoped or his critics feared. Indeed the apprehension expressed within the Horse Guards only reflected the feelings evoked by the Reforms of Cardwell and Childers. For the Duke of Cambridge, the endorsement of these measures by junior officers was at best impertinent, at worst disloyal.

Even so, Reform from within was not simply stifled by the choleric reaction in the clubs, regimental mess conformity, and the incubus on Reform in the Horse Guards.9. The Reformers also suffered from the very features which distinguished them as, "the young school with advanced ideas". In the first place, they were young and promotion conscious. For advancement, they depended upon the Duke's consent and at times this muted their reforming zeal.10. Secondly, they were a group distinguished by experience in small colonial wars. Wolseley first gathered his Ring to fight in the Ashanti War, and this fund of war experience was invaluable for the Reformers. It gained them public acclaim, opportunities for faster promotion, and the experience of war upon which they based so many of their proposals.

On the other hand, the Reformers had to spend a considerable period

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of time either preparing for war or fighting in war, which impaired the momentum and occasionally, the unison of the campaign for Reform.\textsuperscript{21}

The third obstacle to the process of internal Reform was the peculiar deployment of the British Army. Although the Army Reformers, like their counterparts in the German Army, tended to come from the less wealthy and only marginally wealthy backgrounds,\textsuperscript{22} they were not concentrated in Britain as they were in Germany. The reason was India. It acted as a syphon for the officer of modest means, a country in which he could enjoy the sport and social life of the home officer at much less cost. Wolseley commented upon the gulf between the Home and Indian Armies:

The great bulk of the young men who then usually went to India were socially not of a high order. Of course, though very poor, many were sons of old officers of good families, whose poverty compelled their sons to serve in India, if serve they would in the Army. But the great bulk of those I met at Chatham, and afterwards in India and Burmah, at that time, struck me, I remember, as wanting in good breeding, and all seemed badly educated.\textsuperscript{23}

The consequences of this syphon were twofold. First, a large pool of potential discontent was removed from the regimental messes in Britain. Second, what Reform movement remained was totally divorced from its

\textsuperscript{21} For example, Wolseley was abroad either fighting or administering local government in West Africa, Aug. 1873 - Mar. 1874; Natal, Mar.-Nov. 1875; Cyprus, June 1878 - June 1879; Zululand, June 1879 - June 1880; Egypt, July - Oct. 1882; and the Sudan, Aug. 1884 - July 1885.

\textsuperscript{22} W. Gorlitz, The German General Staff (London, 1953), p. 56. Men like Wolseley, Hamley, MacDougall and Brackenbury were not wealthy and one incentive for writing articles on Army Reform was the immediate financial return. Sir G. Wolseley to R. Wolseley, 3.6.73; Wolseley Mss., 163/4/21; Sir G. Cheaney to Blackwood, 8.1.72; Blackwood Mss., N.I.S., MS4287; and Sir H. Brackenbury to Blackwood, 27.11.74; Blackwood Mss., N.I.S., MS4315.

\textsuperscript{23} Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, The Story of a Soldier's Life (2 Vols., Ion., 1903), Vol. 1, p. 10.
counterpart in India. With differing 'war experiences' and strategic priorities, their proposals, which were a reflection of these contexts, were radically different in content. Army Reform therefore, had little opportunity to flourish within the Army commanded by the Duke of Cambridge.

Even the appointment of Lord Wolseley as Commander-in-Chief on 19 August 1895, failed to inaugurate a period of Army Reform. To account for this failure, so clearly exposed by the defeats at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso in December 1899, Lord Wolseley preferred two explanations. In private, he blamed the control of the Army by ignorant and parsimonious politicians in general, and by the incumbent Secretary of State, Lord Lansdowne, in particular.24 In public, he disparaged the Order in Council of 21st November 1895 as an instrument which had rendered the Commander-in-Chief a 'fifth wheel on the coach'. The Order in Council had modified the powers of the Commander-in-Chief and charged him with 'general supervision' of the military departments and the preparation and maintenance of schemes of offensive and defensive operations. The heads of the military departments were held directly responsible to the Secretary of State, although they were required to confer with the Commander-in-Chief before consulting with

24. "It is no wonder we never achieve much in war and have to struggle through obstacles created by the folly and war ignorance of civilian ministers and War Office clerks. "Lord Wolseley to Sir J. Ardagh, 23.9.99. Ardagh Mss., P.R.0.30/40/3; see also, Lord Wolseley to Sir E.T.Hutton, 5.6.1902, Hutton Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50085 ff.93. For personal criticisms of Lord Lansdowne, such as, 'I am working hard, but it is difficult to lead my little man of small mind and undecided views. He does so look like a cross between a French dancing master and a Jewess.' Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 4.7.99. Wolseley Mss., W/P 28/35. See also Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 14.7.98, 6.10.98, 9.11.98, 13.7.99, 6.9.99. Wolseley Mss., W/P 27/49, 96, 104 and W/P 28/40, 50."
Wolseley considered that this had eroded the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief for discipline and military training, and thereby had undermined the effectiveness of the Army. Nevertheless, the contemporaries of Lord Wolseley suggested an additional reason for his failure in the decline of his mental faculties. Lord Wolseley, who had assumed office in his middle sixties, suffered an acute illness in 1897, and thereafter suffered periodic lapses of memory. The deterioration of his health and increasingly infrequent visits to the War Office, enabled critics to argue that the man and not the office had failed the Army.

Whether any or all of these reasons explained the degree of friction within the War Office, this did exist and undoubtedly impeded the path of pre-War Reform. Yet, given that extraneous factors may have thwarted the realisation of Reform, what concept of Reform did the Reformers possess and was it relevant to the problems which they encountered in South Africa? At bottom the main concern of the Commander-in-Chief was the ability of the existing Army structure, as fashioned by Cardwell and Childers, to fulfil the strategic requirements of the Army. Outlined by Stanhope in his Memoranda of 1888 and 1891, these requirements included the support of the Civil Power; the maintenance of overseas garrisons; the ability to despatch an expeditionary force; and the

25. Lord Wolseley to Lord Salisbury, Nov., 1900. Cab., 37/53/78 and Memorandum by Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, addressed to the Marquis of Salisbury, relative to the working of the Order in Council of 21 Nov., 1895, Cd. 512 (1901), XXXIX.

provision for home defence.27.

For the maintenance of foreign garrisons, the Commander-in-Chief demanded an equality between the linked battalions at home and abroad - the main aim of the Cardwell system. Successive Governments had eroded this standard by stationing 'temporary' battalions abroad during the years of Imperial expansion, without the expensive creation of extra battalions on the permanent home establishment to supply and feed them. As a result, in 1896, the 65 battalions at home languished as "squeezed lemons" labouring to support, at the expense of their own efficiency, the 76 battalions abroad.28. When coupled with the constant shortage of recruits, this problem thwarted two objectives of the Cardwell system, namely short service enlistment for six years or less, and a large annual contribution to the Reserve.29. Lord Wolseley in his first Memorandum as Commander-in-Chief, asserted that the augmentation of the home Army by at least 11 Battalions of Infantry and 15 companies of Garrison Artillery, was the principal requirement of Army Reform. The aim was to restore the Cardwellian balance and re-establish the status of the home battalions as viable military cadres, capable of expansion by Reservists "into an efficient fighting machine".30.

The realisation of parity in battalions, however, would not have

27. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, 22.2.96. W.O.33/56, para.3.
28. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 22.2.96. W.O.33/56, para.10.
29. The terms of service were extended to 7 years in the Colours and 5 years in the Reserve or 8 years in the Colours (if abroad in the seventh year) and 4 years in the Reserve. This reduced the size of the Reserve and offered the soldier a term of Colours service too long for a swift readaptation to civilian work and too short to qualify for a pension.
30. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 30.10.96. W.O.32/6357, para.4. As Wolseley also wanted to reinforce the Cape, he suggested that the War Office should raise another 4 battalions, 1 battery Horse Artillery, and 1 regiment Cavalry. Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 22.2.96. W.O.33/56, Appendix I and IV.
eased the inability of the War Office to mobilise an expeditionary force without the Reserve. As the latter was only liable to recall in the event of a national emergency and the effective peace-time strength of the home battalions was considerably below their wartime requirements, the War Office faced a mobilisation dilemma for minor wars.\(^3\) Previously, parts of the Reserve or Volunteers from it had been raised for the colonial wars despite the fear that this would jeopardise their chances in civilian employment and in turn discourage recruits.\(^3\) Lord Wolseley nevertheless, dismissed the idea that the home battalions would ever be fit for foreign service without the Reserve. He suggested that the Reserve should undertake a period of training for this contingency and that a portion of first-year Reservists should be held liable for recall in the event of war. On the other hand, to lessen the dependence upon the Reserve, he requested an increase in the peacetime establishments of the additional battalions which he had sought in his first memorandum.\(^3\) However, the desire to augment the size and number of the peacetime establishments raised doubts about the ability of the recruiting market to meet the extra demand: throughout the period 1891-93 the annual intake barely covered

\(^3\) On 1 July, 1897 the average peace strength of home battalions was 742 men of whom 266 men were under 20 years of age and therefore ineligible for overseas service. As such, each battalion required 591 Reservists to mobilise at the war strength of 1,067 men. See Sir A. Haliburton, *A Short Reply to Long Service* (London, 1898), p.32 and *Memorandum on Army Organisation*, 23.7.97, W.0.33/82.

\(^32\) Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War to consider the terms and conditions of service in the army, C.6582 (1892), XIX, Appendix XXVIII.

\(^33\) Lord Wolseley, *Reply to Lord Lansdowne's Memorandum of 5.11.97*, 13.11.97, W.0.32/6357, paras. a and f.
the wastage and discharge to the Reserve. In the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, this problem was of minor importance: he consistently claimed that a sufficient number of recruits could easily be secured by the re-adjustment of the monetary inducements.

Apart from the maintenance of the Indian garrison and the ability to despatch an expeditionary force, the Army's main requirement was home defence. Stanhope had postulated that a force of two Regular Army Corps and one Corps of Regular and Militia troops should be assigned to meet a possible French invasion, which the War Office intuitively feared would number 150,000 Regular Troops. The War Office had hoped to maintain this Army in a proportion of 4 Artillery guns per 1,000 bayonets, but this standard had been reduced in eighteen-nineties to meet the demands of the peacetime economy. Whereas the Army should have included 64 batteries, on a basis of 6 guns per battery, it could only muster 54 batteries in 1896 and 52 batteries in 1897. Lord Wolseley argued that either the British standard of 4 guns per 1,000 bayonets should be realised or, preferably, this should be raised to match the Continental standard of 4.5 to 5 guns per 1,000 bayonets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Recruits Transfer to the Reserve</th>
<th>Discharges Deaths, desertsions and other wastage</th>
<th>TOTAL LOSS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1891-98</td>
<td>270,477</td>
<td>92,273</td>
<td>264,898</td>
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<td>Yearly average</td>
<td>33,810</td>
<td>11,534</td>
<td>33,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sir T. Kelly-Kenny to Lord Roberts, 18.11.02. Roberts Mas., P.R.O., W.0.105/43.

35. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 22.2.96. W.0.33/56, para.29.
(i.e. 79 batteries). Although Lord Lansdowne endorsed the former target, he rejected the related demand of Lord Wolseley to upgrade the Stanhope criteria and allot three wholly Regular Army Corps to home defence. The Secretary of State doubted that there was any strategic justification for this expensive stipulation and dismissed the unsubstantiated case which both Commanders-in-Chief had preferred since June 1888. On home defence therefore, as on the other requirements, Lord Wolseley largely equated Army Reform with Army Increase: he believed that the Army had already been reformed; that the structure was basically sound; and that the home battalions would become efficient if only the necessary increases were sanctioned.

The South African War, however, did not only reveal that these proposals lacked scale and perspective, but also that they obscured the substance of military efficiency. The demands of the War, especially the manpower requirements, far exceeded anything contemplated by either civilian or military spokesmen at the War Office. Although the mobilisation process was a success and the turnout of the Reserve a gratification for the defenders of the Cardwell system, the Army structure proved wholly inadequate for a war of this magnitude. As none of the spokesmen had conceived of the Army's participation in a major war, (there were sufficient problems in the mobilisation for a minor one), there was no foresight on the means of expansion required in such a

36. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 22.2.96. W.0.33/96,para. 22 and Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary,3.11.97. W.0.32/6357, para.16. Lord Lansdowne also hoped to raise the number of batteries to a scale of 5 guns per 1,000 bayonets but he excluded officers, engineers, departmental corps and artillery in his definition of 1,000 bayonets and thereby only aimed at raising 64 batteries. Lord Lansdowne, Outlines of Army Proposals,15.12.97. Cab,37/45/43 and Reply to Commander-in-Chief's Memorandum 3.11.97, 5.11.97. W.0.32/6357, para.g.

37. Lord Lansdowne, Reply to Commander-in-Chief's Memorandum 3.11.97, 5.11.97. W.0.32/6357, para.b. See also Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary,3.11.97.W.0.32/6357, para.5 and Lord Wolseley,Reply to Lord Lansdowne's Memorandum 5.11.97,13.11.97. W.0.32/6357, para.b.
conflict. This was the obvious oversight in the Wolseley proposals, but a more serious error was the exclusive focus on the structure of the Army to the neglect of reforms in the training and tactics of the Army. Training was the nub of military efficiency, and the cruel exposure of deficiencies in South Africa, testified to the inadequacies of pre-War preparation. Admittedly, under the Order in Council of 21st November, 1895, Wolseley only had powers of general supervision over military training, and he had correctly argued that the malfunctioning of the Army structure had impaired the ability of some home battalions to engage in realistic training. Nevertheless, Lord Wolseley had presumed that if the Cardwell structure could be realised, then the efficiency of the Army was virtually assured. To establish this structure, he had focussed on the provision of sufficient men and facilities for training, rather than reconsider how and for what purpose they were being trained.

In sum it is difficult to accept the complacent apologia that Reform was inhibited by the structure of the Army prior to 1895, and by extraneous factors during Wolseley's tenure of office as Commander-in-Chief. Originally, it was the citadel mentality rather than the structure of the Army which stifled Reform: the Army of the Duke of Cambridge felt threatened by Reform and feared for its status, prestige and traditions. Secondly, the internal movement for Reform lacked effectiveness not merely because its ideas were unpalatable, but also because it lacked cohesion and persistence, and above all, incurred the stigma of careerism. Thirdly, the notion that failings in the man or the office foiled pre-War Reform while Wolseley was Commander-in-Chief, fails to measure the potential relevance of his proposals. These

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38. Lord Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary, 30.10.96. W.0.32/6357, para.4.
conclusions highlight the general stagnation of the Army Reform debate. Both conservatives and reformers contested, throughout the eighties and nineties, the ideas and priorities which had shaped the Reform programme as established in 1881. Admittedly, that programme had never been fully completed, and the condition of the home battalions continually caused concern. Nevertheless, the exclusive interest on these topics failed to prepare the Army for its future role on battlefields dominated by smokeless magazine rifles.
Chapter 2

The Failure of the Campaign for Army Reform

"The War Office is the best criticised department in the public service; our misfortune is that the criticism is, as a rule, purely destructive."

Lord Lansdowne, 'Address to the Primrose League, Edinburgh', The Times, 10.12.97, p.10.

This chapter comments upon the proposals and presentation of Army Reform during the climax of the campaign in 1897-98. It notes that, although the Reformers exerted considerable pressure, the Secretary of State was able to defuse the situation. It claims that the shared assumptions of the War Office and its critics and the common focus upon structural Army Reform, enabled the Secretary of State to debase the concept of Army Reform and placate the Reformers with quantitative increments. It also asserts that the debate was inherently unreal and did not relate to the training deficiencies revealed in the South African War.
If the Boer War testified to the inadequacy of the War Office preparations, it also highlighted the failure of the campaign for Army Reform. The Reform agitation persisted throughout the eighties and nineties with a culmination in 1897 on the public announcement of the Commander-in-Chief that:

Our Army machinery is overstrained and is out of gear... no longer able to meet effectively the demands now made upon it.1

Thereupon, the Army Reformers intensified their campaign in Parliament, letters to the press and direct appeals to the Cabinet, but with little avail. They explained their failure by the lack of sustained public interest in the dull and technical details of Reform. Indeed, without manifest public concern, only liable to be stimulated by a military reverse, they asserted that the Government would not act.2

This argument was substantially correct, but its correctness does not reveal the reasons which underlined the Government’s reluctance to embark on further Reform. An analysis of these reasons may not merely reveal the inadequacy of the pre-War Government perspectives, but also the reaction of a Department in peacetime to the personalities, proposals and presentation of Reform.

The Reformers consisted of three distinct groups - a small clique of civilian writers; a number of officers who served in India; and a large proportion of the Service Members in the House of Commons. The civilian group included Henry Spencer Wilkinson, a journalist and military historian; Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., a


specialist on matters related to Imperial Defence; and H.C. Arnold-Forster, M.P., an enthusiast on the technical details of naval and military organisation. These writers kept abreast of military developments in Britain and Europe; attended manoeuvres, military exercises and gunnery displays; and provided the literary and intellectual leadership for the campaign. For military endorsement and information, they relied upon the officer corps in India.

This faction, who supported Lord Roberts in his rivalry with Viscount Wolseley, followed his personal support of the civilian Reformers in opposition to the ideas advanced by the Commander-in-Chief. Finally, for support in Parliament and in attempts to influence the Cabinet, the Reformers depended upon the backing of the Service Members. A large proportion of these Members had always disliked the Cardwell system and they usually professed vocal support for any proposal to mitigate its effects.3

There was a variable degree of cohesion among these bodies and even within the leading group it was initially difficult to reach an agreed consensus. In autumn 1893, Wilkinson urged that they should draft a letter of common principles on Imperial Defence but it took until 4 February 1894 to agree upon a suitable text.4 The letter which they sent on 12 February to Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, Gladstone, Balfour and Chamberlain, reflected their basic priorities. In the first place, it underlined their belief in a

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4. On this occasion the Reformers were aided by Sir George Chesney who died in 1895. For an explanation of the differences within the group, see Dilke to Arnold-Forster, 25.1.94 and Dilke to Wilkinson, 28.1.94. Wilkinson MSS., 13/9.
bi-partisan approach to an issue of national importance which transcended party political differences. Secondly, it implied that Imperial Defence was too complicated an issue to be left to the existing departments in the War Office and the Admiralty. The writers correctly feared that each institution managed its own affairs for its own purposes, and neither desired nor sought a co-ordinated approach. As such, they recommended the amalgamation of the departments under a single political head who would act on the advice of separate chiefs of staff. Although the idea failed to capture support, it indicated the belief of the writers that Imperial Defence was a topic embracing both departments, albeit one based upon the primacy of the Navy. This qualification, to which Wilkinson had converted his colleagues, emphasized the supplementary role of the Army in relation to the Senior Service. In the opinion of the group, the functions of the Army included the maintenance of overseas garrisons; home defence (against invasion by a coup de main rather than the 150,000 massed invasion which the War Office feared, and which the Reformers dismissed as incredible in view of Britain's naval power); the policing of the Empire in colonial warfare; counter attack in a major war once the command of the sea was secured; and resistance en masse in the extreme case of naval disaster.

The critics however, did not believe that the Army under its existing organisation, could fulfil these requirements. Indeed, they argued that the Army system as fashioned by Cardwell and Childers,

6. Dilke was converted to Wilkinson's emphasis on naval primacy during their joint compilation of Imperial Defence in 1891. For their view on the functions of the Army, see Sir C.W. Dilke and S. Wilkinson, Imperial Defence (London, 1892), p. 138.
directly impeded the possibility of fulfilment and undermined the efficiency of the home battalions. They agreed with Viscount Wolseley that the recent extension of the Empire had severely strained the system but utterly rejected his belief that the injection of more money and the enlistment of more men would rectify the problem. On the contrary, they maintained that the breakdown of 1897 was the logical product of a system which had failed to meet the priorities of Imperial Defence and insisted that the scale of the breakdown should be a cause of national concern. In their opinion, with the 64½ battalions at home feeding 76½ battalions abroad, the home battalions were merely depots, the officers reduced to training instructors and the recruiting undermined by the reliance upon 'specials' (i.e. recruits who failed to measure 5ft. 3½ ins. in height and/or 33 inches round the chest). The Brigade of Guards was also in a state of disarray with the unprecedented peacetime despatch of battalions to Gibraltar, a station devoid of training facilities. The Cavalry languished with one horse for every two men and sometimes only one effective horse for every three men. The Artillery was even more enfeebled with a shortage of batteries, a large proportion of unfit men and a lower ratio of guns per one thousand sabres than in any foreign Army. Finally, the Auxiliary Forces stagnated in a wholly inadequate condition. The unorganised Volunteer battalions varied in merit, were short of officers and lacked a sufficient well-trained field artillery. The Militia existed without field artillery and

cavalry, and remained, on the calculation of Arnold-Forster, 93,168 men short of the 134,746 man Establishment. 10.

The Reformers ascribed the cause of the breakdown to the basic features of the Cardwell system. In the first place, they vigorously denounced "the so-called Short Service System by which men are enlisted for a longer term of service than in any other Army in the world". 11. By the 1890s, the term of enlistment was seven years with the Colours, or eight years if the soldier was abroad in his seventh year, followed by five or four years respectively in the Reserve. For the private soldier, this was an unfortunate compromise between a genuine short-term enlistment and a full military career with pension rights. In effect, the eighteen-year-old recruit left the Colours at the age of twenty-four without a trade and with the liability of Reserve service as a deterrent to prospective employers. To ensure that a substantial proportion did enter the Reserve, (as distinct from serving on to a pension), a proportion of the soldier's pay was withheld during his period of active service and offered after termination on seven years, as £21 deferred pay. The critics considered that this rule was both unjust to the serving soldier, and an unnecessary temptation (in terms of probable squandering) to the prospective Reservist. They maintained that the interests of the private soldier would be improved by a change in the present terms of enlistment and the abolition of deferred pay. 12.

Another feature which aroused the ire of the Reformers was the system of double battalions. The basis of the arrangement was that

the battalions at home should train and supply drafts for
the battalions abroad, which presumed a parity between the battalions
at home and abroad. In an emergency when the two battalions of a
regiment were despatched abroad, the system provided for the raising
of the regimental depot to a level which would sufficiently feed
both battalions. However, this provision had not been followed and
so the system had become increasingly over-strained. For the Re-
formers, this vindicated their criticisms that the existing regimental
depots lacked any function and that the double battalions were, “a
patent and obvious absurdity”. Indeed, they asserted that it was
inherently illogical for a battalion to perform the functions of a
depot: whereas the latter was a storage centre for material and a
place for the reception and training of recruits, the former was and
should always remain a fighting unit. They regarded the attempt
of the Cardwell system to combine these functions as abortive and as
a principal factor in the emasculation of the home Army. They also
criticised the process of territorial localisation in which the regi-
mements were quartered in counties or districts in order to evoke local
attachments with the community and the auxiliary forces in the area.
The aim had some success in the populous areas where local recruit-
ment could sustain a particular regiment but little in the depopulated
regions like the Highlands. Also with the constant transfer of
battalions from barracks to barracks, some battalions were only
infrequently quartered in their own district. In short, the

p. 100 and Memorandum op.cit., Balfour MSS., B.M. Add., MSS. 49, 722 ff. 33;
and Lord Roberts, A Note on the Report of Lord Wantage’s Committee
Reformers urged that the localised double battalions should be replaced by a restoration of their predecessors - the large depots and traditional numbered battalions.

Finally, the Reformers condemned the main achievement of the Cardwell system - the Army Reserve. In their opinion, the absence of a prescribed period of training meant that the Reserve would always remain an unknown quantity in military skills, physical fitness and general discipline, until the outbreak of a major war. The need to rely upon the enthusiasm of individual Reservists alarmed the critics, not only because it was a reflection of War Office neglect, but also because the fighting efficiency of the home Army depended upon the Reserve. They recurrently complained that the wartime role of the Reserve differed from that of foreign Reserves - it was not intended to supplement the peacetime army but to substitute for the ineffectives and shortages in the home battalions. Moreover, as the home battalions substantially depended upon the Reserve, they were liable to exhaust it quickly in a major war while finding it impossible to mobilise for a minor war without the Reserve. In other words, the degree of dependence upon an unknown quantity disturbed the Reformers, who also felt that it obscured the debilitation.


17. Arnold-Forster estimated that each battalion would require between 500 to 600 Reservists to complete its War Strength of 1,067 men. H.O.Arnold-Forster,*Memorandum op.cit.*, Balfour MSS., B.M.Add.MSS.49,722, ff.22.
of the home Army and posed a restraint on the ability of the Army to fulfil its requirements in large and small scale warfare.

To remedy these deficiencies, the critics advocated the complete removal of the Cardwell system. In the first place, they adopted the proposal, previously advanced by Lord Roberts, of replacing the present terms of service by two separate terms of enlistment for the home and overseas Armies. For the home Army only, they recommended a period of three years service in the Colours, followed by nine years in the Reserve; whereas for the overseas Army, they favoured a twelve years period of enlistment with the option of either three years in the Reserve or an additional nine years service with pension rights. The arguments in favour of concomitant short and long terms of service were their attractiveness and elasticity for potential recruits, and their ability to provide seasoned soldiers for Indian service. The Reformers insisted that sufficient recruits would be obtained if the new terms of enlistment were buttressed by other inducements — the abolition of deferred pay and grocery stoppages; improvement of canteen and barrack facilities; increased employment by the Government of discharged soldiers; and the introduction of differential rates of


payment for boys and efficient soldiers. By these measures they endorsed what Lord Roberts described as an:

organisation suited to the military requirements of our empire, viz., a short service for home defence with its consequent reserve, and a long service for our Indian and colonial garrisons.

The second proposal included the unlinking of battalions, the restoration of the old regimental numbers and the feeding of overseas battalions by large depots. The intention was to end a purported erosion of regimental esprit de corps caused initially by the removal of the historic numbers and later by the over-strained condition of the home battalions.

The recommended measures were the establishment of large depots to train and supply drafts for the overseas Army, and the maintenance in the United Kingdom of viable military cadres capable of mobilisation without excessive dependence upon the Reserve.

A third proposal insisted upon remedies for the existing deficiencies in men and material, in particular, the shortage of horses in the Cavalry and the lack of guns, horses and men in the Artillery: in Dilke's opinion, the failure to provide these requirements in peace had impaired military training and compelled the mobilisation process to depend upon improvisation.

Indeed, the Reformers also claimed that fundamental impediments inhibited the Army's ability to train effectively for War, notably the absence of administrative decentralisation.

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22. See the speeches by Arnold-Forster, Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Ser., Vol. 41, 19.6 .96, col. 477 and Vol. 54, 25.2 .98, cols. 75-76, and on the need to combine large depots with long service, Sir H. Rawlinson to Roberts, 5.11.97. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/61/11.

and the dispersion of the home Army on a rationale other than that of military efficiency. In consequence, they demanded a devolution of administrative responsibility to an intermediate level between the War Office and the 141 battalions; and the replacement of territorial localisation by a quartering of the home Army in which the divisions and corps could be trained as such, and their commanders become proficient in their management. 24.

In their presentation of these proposals, the Army Reformers tried to exert pressure on the Government by three methods - Parliamentary debates, direct appeals to the Cabinet and campaigns in the press. The debates and appeals, which relied upon the support of the Service Members, were the least successful approach. After the Service Members with other back bench Conservatives had precipitated the fall of the Liberal Government over the cordite vote (21 June, 1895), they returned to the subsequent Parliament with an enhanced opinion of their own influence. 25. However, this influence on Service matters and Army Reform was more apparent than real. On the one hand, the Service Members enjoyed the caustic criticisms which Dilke and Arnold-Forster hurled at both front benches; used the literary talents of these civilians to express their own fulminations over the crisis in the home Army; and wholly agreed that the breakdown had been caused by the malfunctioning of the Cardwell system, the erosion of regimental spirit, and the malevolent influence of War Office 'clerks'. 26. On the other hand, these Members had little to


25. Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allen, M.P., thought that the opinion of the Service Members 'was of such weight and importance that it could not be disregarded by any Government however strong', Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 51, 23.7.97, cols. 942-943. For an account of the tactics used over the cordite vote, see Sir A.S.T. Griffith-Boscawen, Fourteen Years in Parliament (London, 1907), pp. 72-73.

offer in terms of a united agreement upon Reform. Some believed that the Cardwell system could be made to work; others supported the proposals of Dilke and Arnold-Forster; but the overwhelming number had neither studied the finer points of Army Organisation nor had an interest in problems outside those of their own particular regiment or military arm. In short, there was little scope for a positive and coherent campaign in favour of Army Reform within Parliament. Even when the civilian Reformers simply criticised the malaise in the home Army, the Service Members tended to provide vocal rather than voting support. They were reluctant to vote against the Government and shuddered at the prospect of sharing a lobby with the Radicals and Irish Members, who gladly supported any division against the Army Estimates. At bottom the Service Members were only an irritant for the Conservative Government, one which it occasionally felt compelled to appease, but one which it rarely, if ever, had cause to fear.

The Army Reformers had greater success in the press campaign initiated by Arnold-Forster. The well-timed campaign from November 1897 to January 1898 coincided with the discussion of the Army Estimates inside the Cabinet and followed upon the public admission


28. "It is the barrack-yard alone that is represented among the militaries in the House of Commons ..." Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman to Sir A. Halliburton, 6.1.98 quoted in J. B. Atlay, Lord Halliburton (Lon., 1909), p. 212. The civilian reformers also recognised this problem, "I appreciate keenly the difficulty of getting the service members to appreciate a sound system," Wilkinson to Dilke, 20.3.00. Dilke Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 43, 916 ff. 198.

29. When Dilke divided the House over the present system of enlistment, the Service Members voted 33 to 10 against the motion which was defeated by 197 to 63 votes. Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 45, 8.12.97, cols. 1625-1628.
by Viscount Wolseley that the home Army was no longer able to
fulfil its requirements. In six letters to The Times, Arnold-Forster
did not add anything to his previous pronouncements on Army Reform
but in the circumstances, made a greater impact. For a rare and
passing moment, the Army Reformers managed to arouse public and
Parliamentary interest. The questions subsequently raised in the
Cabinet by members unacquainted with Army administration, coupled
with the answers which the Secretary of State felt bound to provide
to the criticisms of Arnold-Forster, and his preferred resignation,
testified to the unease which the campaign had evoked.

Lord Lansdowne, however, was able to respond to this campaign on
several levels. In the first place, he reaffirmed the Departmental
belief that the principles of the Cardwell system were inherently
sound: that the enlistment terms of moderate length with the Colours
were necessary to provide a Reserve; that the double battalions
enabled the battalion at home to perform the twin functions of a depot
and military cadre; and that the territorial organisation allowed the
regiments to find some 50 per cent of their recruits locally.

Secondly, the Department emphasised that the Army of 1897 was a sub¬
stantial improvement upon the Army of 1870. As Lord Lansdowne noted,
the Establishment was 30,000 stronger, the battalions were larger and a

30. Arnold-Forster's letters on The Condition of the Army were published
in The Times on 11.11.97, 16.11.97, 18.11.97, 20.11.97, 23.11.97,
30.11.97, and 3.1.98.

31. Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Arnold-Forster's Letters to The Times, December 1897
and January 1898, 13.1.98. Cab.37/46/4; Lord Lansdowne, Linked Battles¬
lions versus depots, 25.1.98. Cab.37/46/11; Lord Salisbury to Queen
Victoria 18.12.97. Cab.41/24/24; Lord Lansdowne to Lord Salisbury
and Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne, 2.2.98 quoted in Lord Newton,

32. Lord Lansdowne, Outline of Army Proposals, 2.12.97. Cab.37/45/42,
p.1.
78,000 Reserve now existed. Although this comparison was hardly relevant, the War Office spokesmen felt that the contemporary critics had found support among those who yearned for the system discontinued in 1870. They felt that they were essentially fighting the same battle which they had fought for the past generation despite the more sophisticated presentation. 33.

To counter the present campaign, the Department offered three main criticisms. First it claimed that depots, although half as expensive as feeding battalions, would neither provide the same quality of drafts, nor be able to relieve the foreign battalions nor participate in the home garrison. Above all, they would be more depressing in morale than the present home battalions and would erode the basis of the territorial organisation. Secondly, the Department characterised long service soldiers as liable to deteriorate in quality during the latter period of their service and as duty bound to receive a pension (i.e. increase the Estimates by £2,000,000 p.a.). Thirdly, it condemned the short service Army as younger and more dependent upon the Reserve than the present force, and as an Army deprived of the advantage of short tours of service in India. 34.

However, the recently retired Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir Arthur Haliburton, was even more critical of the Army Reformers.

In answering Arnold-Forster in The Times, he only acknowledged the
need for two reforms - a limited liability upon Reservists
to serve in small wars, and an increase in the number of battalions
and batteries to realise a parity between the battalions at home and
abroad, and augment the proportion of guns to sabres. Indeed, he
ascribed the improvements in the Army since 1870 to the Cardweil
system and simply adduced in the contemporary shortcomings a failure
to develop fully the original proposals. Furthermore, he insisted
that the War Office was the true custodian of Army Reform and that
the advocates of change in 1897 were little different from the
opponents of change in 1870. He feared that any revision in the
terms of service would be a retrograde victory for those who had
opposed the system from its inception, in part because it coincided
with the abolition of purchase and in part because it sacrificed the
home battalions for the Reserve and for the battalions abroad.

Lord Lansdowne presented a less rigid defence of the Cardweil
system. As a newcomer to the War Office, he had not manned the barri-
cades for over a generation in the defence of the Cardweil principles.
Also when he became Secretary of State his relations with Viscount
Wolseley, the foremost military advocate of the existing system, were
far less cordial than those which he had already established with Lord
Roberts, an enthusiastic Reformer. Indeed, he cited Lord Roberts and
Sir Charles Dilke as 'high military authorities' in the Army Proposals

35. Sir A. Haliburton's letters were published in The Times on 3.12.97,
6.12.97, 9.12.97 and 11.1.98 and are collected in Sir A. Haliburton,
A Short Reply to Long Service (Lon., 1898), especially pp. 57-61 and
63-64.
36. Sir A. Haliburton, op. cit., p. 90 and Sir A. Haliburton, Memorandum on
Army Organisation, 23.7.97. W.O.33/82.
37. The friendship with Lord Roberts was established while Lord Lansdowne
was Governor General in India (1883-93) and lasted into the Boer War,
when Lord Roberts fiercely criticised the press attacks on the
Secretary of State. Lord Roberts to Wilkinson, 23.1.00. Wilkinson
Mss., 13/14 and Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 25.10.00. Roberts
Mss., N.A.M., R/117/1/51.
which he submitted to the Cabinet. The present difficulty in his opinion, was a reflection of more than a failure to give the system a fair trial, it was also an indication that imperfections existed within the system. Lord Lansdowne publicly admitted that the system seems to me to be wanting in elasticity and to be too easily disorganised whenever the exigencies of the service require the simultaneous absence of both battalions.

Upon this premise, he endorsed the wish of Sir A. Haliburton and Viscount Wolseley to augment the size and number of the battalions; increase the proportion of guns to sabres; and introduce a limited liability upon some Reservists for service in small colonial wars. However, he also hoped to raise the additional battalions in groups of four to offset the aforesaid lack of elasticity, undertake an experiment in three year enlistments and ameliorate the conditions of service for efficient soldiers. In particular, Lord Lansdowne proposed a number of improvements - the abolition of grocery stoppages, differential payments between boys and efficient soldiers, the promise of preference in Government employment for discharged soldiers, opportunities to learn a trade in the Colours and the reduction of deferred pay - which were in complete agreement with the suggestion of the War Office critics. In short, he offered concessions in detail and in minor structural changes and pressed for substantial increases in men and material in order to preserve the essence of the Cardwell system.


By this approach, Lord Lansdowne was able to use and control the debate. After the presentation of uncompromising positions by Arnold-Forster and Sir Arthur Maliburton, the Secretary of State appeared as the conciliatory figure, untramelled by Departmental dogma and yet unwilling to cast aside a functioning system for an unpredictable alternative. Also, he was able to use the Reform agitation and the 'public' expectations as a bargaining lever within the Cabinet. As a result, he secured the Army's largest Establishment and its greatest increase in peacetime: an achievement which mollified the Service Members and prompted Sir Charles Dilke to withdraw his ritual amendment to the Army Estimates. Nevertheless, what this success indicated was the inherent strength of the Department when assumptions were shared in common by the War Office and its critics. On this occasion there was a consensus on the existence of a crisis, its structural aspect and its repercussions among the home battalions. In turn, this enabled Lord Lansdowne to present his proposals so that they effectively limited the scope of the debate. He focussed upon increased numbers and better conditions of service as the necessary means for the correction of the malfunctioning structure. Thereby he postponed consideration of the purposes and priorities of the Army system and offered immediate satisfaction in tangible material improvements. This both placated the transitory enthusiasm for Army Reform and crowned its gradual debasement as a concept: Army Reform was reduced from a concern with the purposes

41. In support of his Artillery proposals, the Secretary of State claimed that, "public opinion is, apparently, unanimous in demanding a large augmentation of the Force." Lord Lansdowne, Note on Proposals made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 26.1.98. Cab.37/46/13.
of the Organisation to the realisation of numerical increments and minor qualitative improvements.\textsuperscript{42}

Although the Army Reformers had previously rejected this concept of Reform and continued to doubt its long term practicability,\textsuperscript{43} they acquiesced on this occasion because like the War Office, they were preoccupied with structural Army Reform - i.e. the provision of men and units in the proportion and location required by the established purposes of the Army organisation. As such, even without a revision of the purposes and the organisation itself, the provision of more men and units was a substantial consolation for those who accepted a gradual and evolutionary approach to Reform. But, while it was necessary to correct the structure and provide sufficient men to engage in realistic training, what was even more critical was the manner in which these men were being trained for war. The failure to perceive this did not reveal the sophistry of the pre-war debate so much as its inherent complacency. Both the civilian Reformers and the Departmental spokesmen regarded military training as a purely professional concern, and they had every confidence in the profession after its record of success in small colonial warfare. They engaged in an unreal debate on Army Reform because of the complacency

\textsuperscript{42} The Under-Secretary of State outlined the Departmental priorities in its attitude towards Reform. "We are still in deep water about our Army Scheme but the Cabinet - not without a struggle - have capitulated on the main question of an increased force though I fear they may not give the necessary pay." Brodrick to Curzon, 26.12.97. Curzon MSS., Bur. F.111/10A.

founded upon a series of military triumphs over the past thirty years. \(^44\).

\(^44\) "I am tempted to add one small argument which is perhaps worth your consideration - namely, that since 1870 this country has engaged in a number of military operations in different parts of the world, and that we have succeeded in getting through not only without disgrace, but with considerable credit to the forces concerned." Lord Lansdowne, 'Address to the Primrose League, Edinburgh', \textit{The Times} 10.12.97, p.10.
Chapter 3

The Influence of Small Colonial Warfare on the Failure
of the Army to reform military training and tactics.

"A prolonged period passed amid the conditions peculiar to those small
wars that Mr. Kipling has happily termed 'the wars of peace' is cal-
culated to end in a dangerous narrowing of the intellectual vision."
Major G.F. Ellison, Considerations Influencing the Selection of
Officers for Command and the Staff, July 1900, Ellison Mss.

This chapter examines the influence of small colonial warfare on
the tactics adopted by the late Victorian Army. It recognises that
these campaigns bequeathed the advantages of resourceful leadership,
practice in logistical supply, accelerated promotion and battlefield
experience. On the other hand, it claims that the High Command,
which had been conspicuously successful in this warfare, failed to
see beyond the tactical basis of their own success, i.e. crushing
attacks on ill-equipped opponents. Furthermore, the chapter asserts
that the improvements in weapon technology - the introduction of
smokeless powder and long range magazine rifles - increased the powers
of the defensive and diminished the likelihood that bold offensives
would succeed in the future. However, the senior officers always
dismissed this argument since it conflicted with their traditional
faith in the moral effects of a vigorous offensive.
In the period 1856-1899 there were only two years (1869 and 1883) in which the British Army was not engaged in small colonial warfare.\(^1\) The campaigns afforded the Army an unrivalled experience in war and enabled members of the High Command to display considerable fighting ability and personal courage. Indeed, the record of triumphs, albeit against foes of varying degrees of military competence, indicated considerable proficiency in the preparation, logistics and tactics for war at this level. Sir Garnet Wolseley claimed that this varied experience and frequent practice ensured that the British officer was "the best in the world".\(^2\) Subsequent commentators, however, asserted that fighting against inferior opponents impaired the Army by contributing to its over-confidence and faulty tactics.\(^3\) Whatever the validity of these interpretations, they underlined the connection between sustained experience in colonial warfare and the tactics and training of the pre-War Army. To assess this connection it is necessary to examine the peculiar demands of this warfare, the relevance of them to military training and their value in a period of rapidly changing technology.

The general term "small colonial wars" conceals the variety of the late Victorian campaigns and the demands which this variety made upon the Army. In the first place, the Army confronted a host of different opponents and a diversity of tactical formations. Some


forces like those of Arabi Pasha in Egypt (1882), and those in Tonkin and in the Indian Mutiny, by virtue of their European training, fought in the form and organisation of a regular army. Others, like the Afghans, had the organisation but not the armaments of a regular army. The Zulus possessed their own organisation and were capable of performing precise battlefield manoeuvres, but they lacked sophisticated weapons. The Boers, conversely, were a determined and well armed foe but one devoid of military organisation. In short, the range of opponent was enormous and the Army had to adapt in turn to the shock tactics of the tribes in East and West Africa; the guerilla campaigns of the Maoris; the hill fighting on the North-West Frontier; and the use of irregular cavalry by the Moors, Arabs and Tartars. Furthermore, while some campaigns were waged against habitual foes on familiar terrain, others took place in partially explored territory against an enemy of unknown strength, weapons and fighting qualities. As such, the campaigns required a high degree of resourcefulness and adaptability, and where possible, a knowledge of previous encounters. Frequently, these wars placed the application of textbook rules at a discount and the officers in command had to improvise or hazard disaster.4*

Another feature of these campaigns was the tendency for nature to prove as formidable an adversary as the military opponent. With a liability to lose more men through sickness and disease than in armed combat, the recurrent aim of the Army was to avoid desultory or

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prolonged warfare. In at least two campaigns, the Abyssinian War (1867-8) and the Ashanti War (1873), the generals had to conclude their campaigns as quickly as possible lest the spring rains block their retreat. Whether or not time was a restraint, a line of communications was essential to provide supplies, reinforcements and information; protect escape routes; and remove the sick and the wounded. Indeed, officers paid minute attention to the details dictated by natural and climatic factors. Sir Garnet Wolseley constantly campaigned for a loose fitting khaki coloured uniform, a more varied service diet, and a greater care for the sick and the wounded. And Sir Herbert Kitchener epitomised the general interest in transport and supply by ordering the construction of 230 miles of railway prior to his advance on Omdurman. In short, the British officers became proficient in anticipating their logistical requirements and without this facility, the South African War might have proved even more calamitous.


8. "One is too apt to forget the far more serious failure there might have been ... The army in South Africa was suitably clothed, it was excellently fed; at a distance of many hundreds of miles from bases on the coast, themselves many thousands of miles from England, it was kept supplied with food, with ammunition, with remounts and reinforcements; its strategical mobility was ensured by admirable railway and wagon transport." L.S. Amery, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 27.
The Army also found in these wars that the only possible approach was to assume a strategic offensive. The reasons were three-fold. First, a vigorous assault was essential to dissuade waverers in the disaffected population from swelling ranks of the enemy. Secondly, the Army had to overcome its natural position of strategic inferiority. Burdened by an organisation, lines of communication and elaborate technology, and faced by an opponent possessing powers of sudden dispersion and concentration, the Army always sought open battle. Only in combat could the superior armament, discipline, acknowledged chain of responsibility and esprit de corps give a real advantage to a regular army. Thirdly, the aim of this army was not simply to beat the enemy, but to beat him thoroughly. With positions in colonial warfare relatively unimportant, the infliction of the largest possible number of casualties was required to foreshorten the war and prevent a recrudescence of hostile activity. To achieve this objective, the Army had to eschew both Artillery preparations and frontal attacks lest the enemy withdraw, without substantial loss, along an unthreatened line of retreat. The favourite tactic was to combine a frontal and flank attack and to follow it up with a determined pursuit of the enemy. In this warfare, a passive defence was wholly inapposite: the attack or at least an active defence with prominent counter attacks, was the only strategic posture. The aim was to undermine the enemy's will to resist, (a wider concept than defeating the opponent in arms), and to dominate him with what Colonel Callwell termed, "the moral force of civilisation".  

Tactically, the peculiar circumstances of colonial warfare forced the Army to adopt some formations which were no longer of value in

Continental combat. Within this category was the use of 'the square' in offensive and defensive situations. A less rigid concept than implied by its name, it simply described a formation showing front to flanks and rear as well as to the proper front. It sometimes had only three sides, was an elastic arrangement in jungle and hill warfare, but was usually rigid when confronted by a fanatical attack. If 'peculiar to small wars', the square was invaluable for an Army burdened with impediments, facing a mobile and numerically superior opponent or an opponent, in an unknown position, who could attack from any quarter. Secondly, the Army had to ensure where possible that it had a decisive advantage in armaments. To obtain this objective and conserve ammunition, the Army required strict fire discipline and often relied upon volley firing. Thirdly, when the enemy launched uninhibited attack, substituting shock action for fire action, the regular force had frequently to reply in kind with bayonet charges and Cavalry attacks with the arme blanche. Finally, although the Artillery had to avoid preparatory fire, it could seek engagement at close quarters and thereby maximise its advantage over irregular warriors. Tactics, therefore, which had become less and less useful in regular warfare, were still applicable and at times imperative in small colonial wars.

Finally, the succession of small colonial campaigns provided a number of indirect benefits for the Army. In terms of career advancement, they accelerated promotion within a profession whose normal criterion was seniority. Wolseley's dictum for ambitious young officers was to do their best to get killed in battle as it was only

by a commendable war service and brevet promotion that they could leapfrog the barrier of age. Furthermore, the sensation of being under fire provided both officers and rank-and-file with a training in courage and physical endurance which peace manoeuvres could not supply. Thirdly, the Army retained, by virtue of its colonial garrisons east of Malta, a unique body of seasoned soldiers. An ever-present menace, unrivalled facilities for practical training, and complete establishments enabled this part of the Army to remain on a war footing. The hill warfare, required in the defence of the North-West Frontier, also offered a challenge in which individual skill with a rifle, open order formations and the careful use of cover were at a premium. Admittedly, these tactics never penetrated the confines of pre-War Aldershot, but the diversity of experience was invaluable in facilitating the eventual adaptation of the Army to the conditions of warfare in South Africa.

Although some of the factors which arose in small expeditions were as important in larger campaigns, they were not in themselves sufficient to ensure the success of the latter. Indeed, the South African War posed not merely larger problems of administration and strategy, but also more complex problems, markedly different from those experienced in previous wars. In particular, there was a


12. "The beardless regiments of Aldershot or the Curragh can no more compare with the masses of strong men, horse, foot and artillery, soldiers of whom no conscript army has seen the like, who hold India and Egypt." Col. G. F. R. Henderson, The Science of War (Lon., 1905), p.405.

fundamental difficulty in administration. Whereas in small wars the scope for generalship and improvisation was considerable, in larger wars the general had to be supplemented by an efficient and numerous staff. However, only thirty-two graduates emerged from the Staff College per annum and they failed to fill even the peacetime appointments. As regimental officers without a P.S.C. (passed Staff College) had to supplement the staff, the staff work suffered from a lack of uniformity. This shortage of permanent staff - except at Aldershot - also ensured that officers failed to become familiar with their staffs and continued to rely upon improvisation and their own past experience. Throughout the Boer War the Army suffered from over-centralisation with Lord Roberts as culpable as any of the commanders: the staff work remained an embarrassment, and perhaps a casualty of small colonial warfare.

The difficulty in adjusting command and staff work from armies of 20,000 to armies of 250,000 was not eased by the dearth of large-scale peacetime manoeuvres. Prior to the Army Corps Manoeuvres of autumn 1898, there had been no manoeuvres on that scale for twenty-six years. The introduction of cavalry rides, staff tours and divisional

16. "Staff work in the British Army in 1900 was in its infancy ... upon me as DAAG (1) fell press censorship, civil employment of towns occupied, requisitioning policy, charge of prisoners and all such-like work, in addition to providing guides for all marching columns, native messengers ... and the enlistment, maintenance and payment of all native scouts. Having no staff except one interpreter, I found that my day's work averaged about seventeen or eighteen hours..." Sir G. Aston, Memories of a Marine (Lon., 1919), p. 208.
manoeuvres in the eighteen-nineties was an improvement on the previous void, but the restrictions in space and in numbers limited their value. It was only with the Manoeuvres Act of 1893 and the purchase of 41,000 acres at Salisbury Plain that the Army was able to assemble two Army Corps for the purposes of peacetime training. Ironically, the value of these manoeuvres was promptly undermined by a drought which made the streams and rivers the objectives of each day's exercise. As such, the climatic and natural factors reduced the line of advance, removed the need for extended reconnaissance and curtailed each engagement in order that the troops might reach their nightly camp site. In brief, the lack of frequent large scale manoeuvres gave the home Army no opportunity to compensate for the limitations inherent in small colonial warfare.

A second aspect of the South African War was its dominance by modern armaments. For the first time the Army had to confront fire from a smokeless magazine rifle. This was a small calibre, long range, flat trajectory weapon, able to fire between twenty and thirty shots per minute. Introduced into the British Army in 1895, the Lee Enfield rifle possessed a substantial improvement over its predecessors.

17. Lt.-Col. C. Holmes Wilson, 'The Salisbury Manoeuvres - with the Artillery of an Army Corps', United Service Magazine, New Series, Vol.XVIII, No.810 (Nov., 1898), p.188. The reality of these events was not improved by the appearance of the troops. In the Aldershot exercise of 1893, "to distinguish the opponents, one side used to wear full-dress headdress. Guardsmen and Fusiliers were to be seen skirmishing and endeavouring to hide themselves in red coats and huge busbies..." Maj.-Gen. Sir S. May, Changes and Changes of a Soldier's Life (Lon., 1925), p.172.


19. Capt. W.H. James, 'Modern Weapons and their influence on Tactics and Organisation', (lecture delivered 17,5,99), Journal of Royal United Services Institution, Vol.XLIII, No.262 (Dec., 1899), p.1290. Whereas the British Lee Enfield had a .303 inch calibre and carried a magazine of ten bullets, it loaded singly; the German Mauser used by the Boers, had a .275 inch calibre, was lighter in weight and loaded by a clip containing 6 cartridges.
predecessors in a smokeless propellant. Its powder "cordite", based on the discoveries of Alfred Nobel, increased the velocity of the bullet from 1,800 feet per second to over 2,000 feet per second. It also realised the potential power of the magazine rifle by enabling riflemen to sustain their rapid, aimed fire without black powder obscuring their field of vision. The other innovations in armament technology - quick-firing artillery guns, high angled field howitzers and Maxim machine guns - although not nearly so important in the South African War, were either recently in service or under discussion at the end of the century. They indicated enormous developments in fire power, especially in its range and rapidity, and these should have inaugurated a period of wholesale reform in the tactics and training of the Army.

A few middle-ranking officers accepted that Reform should follow in the wake of technological change. They emphasised that smokeless powder had greatly increased the tactical power of the defensive, which could now sustain a rapid aimed fire without the problem of smoke; retain the advantage of cover; and shoot without fear of betraying their position. Conversely, the offensive faced more formidable problems. It lost the covering value of a smoke cloud and confronted flat trajectory bullets with an increased range of penetration: at Omdurman the Guards claimed effective fire at 2,700 yards.

20. Col. H. C. B. Rogers, Weapons of the British Soldier (Lon., 1960), p. 245. Cordite was a compound of 58% nitro glycerine, 37% gun cotton and 5% mineral jelly. First approved in 1891, it was virtually smokeless because its products were gaseous.


Consequently, in the British approach, where supports and reserves fed the front line to a depth of 1,600 yards, the supports and reserves were now liable to suffer from defensive fire. Indeed, because of this fire, daylight frontal attacks over open ground had become hazardous; the supports and reserves had to seek cover; and the front line had to revive an extended order formation. This increased fire power also posed substantial problems for the other arms. It would restrict the ability of the Cavalry to undertake effective reconnaissance, and render the mass frontal attack on unbroken infantry a redundant exercise. Furthermore, it would inhibit the Artillery in their desire to support the Infantry attack in the open, and place a premium upon effective preparatory fire from covered positions. The officers, who foresaw this enhanced role for the defensive, argued that practice in individual marksmanship and entrenchments would maximise the defensive advantage. They asserted that the only counter was either wide and sudden flanking movements or the use of shrapnel shell and high angled lyddite projectiles to search out covered positions and demoralise entrenched defenders.

Basically, they favoured employing the new technology to overcome the defensive advantages of smokeless powder: but, until it was sufficiently developed, they recommended a more cautious and extended attack.

These tactical proposals were neither original nor even wholly

heretical. In colonial campaigns, the local commanders had frequently adopted an active defensive formation to withstand an enemy attack prior to launching their own assault. Fears had previously been expressed for the viability of massed Cavalry charges with the arme blanche, and the Artillery drill books had formerly emphasised the value of seeking fire from covered positions. Even the Commander-in-Chief agreed that the various arms occasionally neglected precautionary measures. In his Report on the 1898 Manoeuvres, Viscount Wolseley criticised the proclivity for premature extensions and the failure to use cover for concealment in the line of attack. He also stressed that battalions had frequently exposed themselves to Artillery fire, and that their lines were so close together that bullets from the same shrapnell would have struck both formations.

Aspects of the Reform proposals therefore, had been periodically followed in practice, counselled previously in theory and endorsed in contemporary criticisms by the Commander-in-Chief.

What the senior officers did not accept, however, was the contention that military circumstances had radically changed in the 1890s. Tactical options and alternatives had always been available but they insisted that technological change had not altered the validity of basic military principles. In particular, after years of success in colonial warfare, they insisted that the moral effects of the offensive were immutable; to disregard the emphasis on the attack would


26. Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, Report on Manoeuvres, August and September 1898, 27.10.98, W.O. Library, pp.VII and IX.
emasculate the Army and jeopardise its likelihood of military triumph. Consequently, the senior officers both dismissed the breech loading experience in foreign wars and the theories of their interested subordinates. As Colonel G.F.R. Henderson wearily commented upon the pre-War Command:

Men, especially in practical matters, are always inclined to remember what they have seen rather than what they hear, and to give more weight to their own state experience, gained under obsolete conditions than to the impressions of others.

In short, the Command condemned any proposal which might mitigate the zeal of the Army for the offensive. Viscount Wolseley utterly deprecated the use of entrenchments as liable to depress the attacking spirit of the defending forces. Major-General J.Keith Fraser, the Inspector-General of Cavalry, maintained that the absence of smoke would increase the value of the arme blanche by heightening the moral effect of Cavalry charges upon shaken Infantry. And, the Commander of the Royal Artillery Aldershot, Major-General G.H. Marshall, insisted that technological change had not altered the principles of Artillery employment, that the quest for cover was pernicious in service, and

27. "A strong attack, strongly developed from the first with supports, provided that they are kept at an adequate distance from the firing line, seems to me likely to win the day," and "it is just as imperative for the attack to close with the defence now as it was in the days of Julius Caesar." Comments by Lt.-Col. E. Hunter and Maj. A.W. Pollock on the lecture by Capt. W.H. James, op.cit., 1899, pp.1301-1302.


29. "Defensive tactics carried on behind entrenched positions have a very dangerous tendency to unfit soldiers for all rapid offensive action." Viscount Wolseley, 'An English View of the American Civil War', North American Review, No.CCCXIV, Article IV (Sept., 1889), p.283.

that:

the best protection from the enemy's fire, is to overwhelm him with your own.31.

For the process of Army Reform, this clash of opinion underlined the importance of ideas in an Army, as distinct from its hierarchical structure. The seniority of the superior hierarchy was important, but the crucial factor was the role of this hierarchy in forming the ideas and values of the service. Their belief that technological change would not alter military tactics reflected several important presumptions about the nature of war. First it indicated their faith in the human factor as the vital arbiter of military success. A product of a heroic chivalrous concept of warfare and successive victories against numerically superior foes, this idea implied that if the human element was proven and tested in physical endurance and discipline, then all other factors were merely secondary. Above all, it underpinned the pre-War fallacy that if both sides were armed with modern weapons then the attacker, if he had the better men, was bound to triumph.32. Secondly, the failure to apprehend the significance of technological change emphasised the belief of the Army that its previous experience was the soundest guide for future combat. This was a sensitive point because it reflected upon the personal service of many of the generals, and on the traditions and regimental esprit de corps founded upon past success. When the critics argued that modern technology had rendered the lessons of past campaigns redundant, General Sir Redvers Buller replied:


But the thing that strikes me most in this lecture is the fact that there is nothing new under the sun, and when improvements are made in military arms and tactics they almost always follow along the same lines.  

The third assumption, which related to the previous two, was the belief that war was essentially a physical, moral, and practical activity, but one which allowed little scope for theoretical speculation. After years of improvisation in colonial warfare, the Army could not accept that a mere theory or 'fad' of the moment could undermine the priorities which had served it so well in the past.  

However, it would be wrong to suggest that Reform floundered simply on account of the ideas of the senior officers. In the first place, Reform did not divide a senescent High Command from a body of Young Turks in the middle ranks; rather, it divided an insignificant minority of interested Reformers from the overwhelming majority of their fellow officers in all ranks. Moreover, the characteristics of this majority was not a fervent reactionary zeal (the idea of the Army embarking upon Reform was too incongruous to prompt such a reaction), but simply a widespread feeling of complacency and self-satisfaction with the existing peacetime routine. An interest in Army Reform was out of character in the pre-War Army and if displayed in the regimental mess, would be derided as "bad form". For the majority of officers,


34. "Neglecting all study of military history and military theory, the only operations it took cognizance of were the primitive expeditions against troublesome savages, or the marches to relieve garrisons cut off by some sudden outbreak of rebellion, which it dignified by the name of wars. As tests of energy, endurance and physical courage, these expeditions were undoubtedly useful. Of the principles and methods of serious warfare between tactically equal forces they taught nothing." L.S. Amery, op. cit., Vol. III, p.350.
It was a delightful life, mostly duck shooting and hunting in the winter, and tennis and cricket in the summer.\textsuperscript{35}

In soldiering, the maintenance of routine in drill, inspections, and on the parade ground was all important, and this largely devolved upon the energies of the non-commissioned officer. Only three weeks in the year were devoted to field training with the exercises regularly finishing before the dinner hour. The critical event of the year was the annual inspection of the battalion in barracks.\textsuperscript{36} In short, since sport, routine and social entertainment, especially for those stationed in the vicinity of London, were the predominant concerns of the officer corps, an interest in professional matters conflicted with the mores of regimental life.

What military training then did the unreformed Army offer its rank-and-file? In the first place, only two months per annum could be spared for training. For the rest of the year the soldier persevered in the chores of drill, parade and guard duty, the maintenance of his equipment and the barracks, and the range of sundry tasks attached to service for the regiment and its officers.\textsuperscript{37} Apart from the three weeks field training in which entrenchments were avoided and exercises performed while erect or occasionally kneeling and the score of days devoted to route marching, the soldier practised his musketry by firing 200 rounds of ammunition at a fixed target. Although some

\textsuperscript{35} Maj.-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller, \textit{op.cit.}, p.62.

\textsuperscript{36} "There was an unwritten rule that all field days at Aldershot should end before the sacred dinner-hour, and I have seen an attack pushed at a rate which verged on absurdity where there was a doubt whether the battle would be over in time for a certain train to London", Sir C. Aston, \textit{op.cit.}, p.110; Maj.-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.61-68; Capt. W. S. Cairnes, \textit{An Absent-Minded War} (Lon., 1900), pp.31 and 62.

battalions achieved a high level of proficiency on this allowance, the standards were essentially static and volley firing remained the core of musketry training.\textsuperscript{38} In the Artillery, no less anachronistic for large scale warfare was the enthusiasm sustained for fighting by battery sections. This was the traditional English method and the battery Majors resented any incursion upon their prerogatives. As the lieutenant-Colonels, who were posted to command the brigades, sympathised with the Majors' point of view to the degree of overtly neglecting brigade practice, the pre-War training of Field Artillery in larger formations remained decidedly weak.\textsuperscript{39} Also the tactical ideas of the arm focussed exclusively upon supporting the Infantry attack in the open and discarding any protection save that of its own fire power. Finally, the Cavalry devoted itself to drill and the practice of fighting formations, in particular knee to knee charges with the arme blanche. This involved the sacrifice of more mundane tasks like scouting, reconnaissance and the unthinkable role of dismounted action, but the Cavalry never doubted its capacity to make a decisive breakthrough on the modern battlefield.\textsuperscript{40}

The Army in sum failed to appreciate that changes in technology might require changes in tactics and training. Instead it clung to a number of values which the senior officers could relate to their experience in small colonial warfare. The unswerving faith in the moral effect of the offensive; the dominant role of the human element;

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Maj.-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.67-70 and Capt.W.E.Cairnes, \textit{op.cit.}, p.86.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Maj.-Gen.J.Keith Fraser comments on lecture of Capt.W.H.James, \textit{op.cit.}, 1892,p.943; Capt.W.E.Cairnes, \textit{The Army from Within} (Lon., 1900) pp.97-99; Viscount Wolseley, \textit{Report on Manoeuvres in August and September 1898}, 27.10.98. W.O.library,p.VII.
\end{itemize}
the usefulness of previous military experience; and the
inherent value of improvisation – all were traditional values and
all could be related to immediate military experience. In other
words, the Army used its success in small colonial wars to buttress
its heroic, chivalrous concept of war. Technology in this context
was merely a tool, and the Army could not accept that this tool, even
in the hands of capable marksmen, might radically restrict or impinge
upon its performance. The consequences of this neglect were the
disasters of Black Week and their revelation of how technology had
altered the whole character of modern war:

Few people have seen two battles in succession in such
startling contrast as Omurman and Colenso. In the
first, 50,000 fanatics streamed across the open regard-
less of cover to certain death, while at Colenso I never
saw a Boer all day till the battle was over and it was
our men who were the victims.\(^41\)

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\(^41\) Gen. Sir N. G. Lyttelton, *op. cit.*, p. 212
Section 2

The Concepts of Army Reform held during the

South African War
Chapter 4

The Army's Reaction to Adverse Civilian Comment during the South African War in view of its own Self-Image and Concept of Army Reform

"I hope we shall be able to satisfy the public in their desire for 'Army Reform'. It will not be an easy matter, and I doubt much if any of those who cry out the loudest would be able to define what they really think should be done."


This chapter examines the reaction of the Army to its critics during the South African War. It notes that the Army had entered the War with a high self-esteem, which suffered a severe blow in the reverses of Black Week. The chapter claims that the Army was aware of its own shortcomings and took initiatives on Reform which did not owe anything to civilian advice. On the other hand, it indicates that the Army bitterly resented the criticism in the press, and wanted to placate the civilian writers. However the chapter concludes that the concept of Reform which was adopted by Lord Roberts, was too precise and limited and technical to interest civilians, and that the Army had to await the emergence of other issues to distract the attention of the press.
Commentators on Boer War Army Reform have persistently ignored the Army. By focusing upon the motivation which the military defeats and public outcry provided for the Government Reforms, they have ignored the impact which the defeats and outcry had upon the Army and its attitude towards Reform. Admittedly, the contribution of the Army to the War and post-War Reforms was not substantial: in a sixty-eight year old Commander-in-Chief, who had spent all his military life in India and lacked any knowledge of the War Office, the Army possessed an unpromising fountainhead for programmes of administrative reform. Further, St. John Brodrick and Arnold- Forster were Secretaries of State for War, who had devised their own structural Army Reforms and only sought the endorsement and not the advice of their military chiefs. Nevertheless, Lord Roberts and his colleagues did more than rubber stamp Government policy. As the Government stressed throughout 1900, it could only reform the Army when the War was "over" and the victor of Paardeberg had returned to lend his public support. The Government also used some of the ideas which Lord Roberts had previously espoused on Army Reform, while on training and technological reform it had to rely upon military experience. In short, the enthusiasm of the Army for its own Reform was important; and, as the issue had been promoted in a largely hostile press, any reaction to the press campaign might have had an influence on the reforming zeal of the officer corps. This reaction therefore, ought to be analysed in light of the Army's self image, its impression of the South African War and its evaluation of the civilian comment.

The self-image of the pre-War Army rested upon four components - an adherence to a gentlemanly code of conduct; a passionate loyalty to Crown and Country; a maintenance of regimental esprit de corps; and a degree of self-fulfilment and glory in martial endeavour. These
priorities reflected the legacy of a heroic, chivalrous concept of warfare founded upon the code of an officer gentleman, and the regimental traditions of personal service to the Monarch. The Army maintained these traditions by upholding the etiquette, social interests and the sporting pursuits of county society; and, by the belief, undiminished by the Parliamentary control of finance, that it was first and foremost a servant of the Crown. Moreover, the Army presumed that its raison d'être transcended any calling in civilian life: and, in juxtaposition with its gentlemanly disdain for monetary pursuits, the Army found in its national purpose a corresponding disdain for the vagaries of party politics. The majority of officers were contemptuous of the politicians who pandered to 'the mob', and Lord Wolseley summarised their sentiments in a letter to the Queen:

> The foolish public prefer believing the tradesman who has become a politician to the gentleman who wears Your Majesty's uniform.  

Esprit de corps based upon the customs, traditions and history of the regiments, was the third element in the Army's self-esteem. For the officer corps, this motive force which unified and rallied them in moments of danger, was not only an invaluable asset, but was also more


laudable than the mercenary and self-centred interests of civilian commerce. Even Viscount Wolseley, who creamed companies from different battalions to compose his expeditionary forces, had to pay lip service to the importance of regimental esprit de corps.3

The final aspect of the Army's self-esteem was a desire for active service and a glorification of wartime action. Officers did not court war for its own sake: all evinced a detestation of it. Few who had participated in the myriad of small colonial wars, had not lost friends or acquaintances in them. Yet, nineteenth century warfare still posed human challenges, especially challenges of physical strength, courage and endurance; and the officers who overcame these challenges like Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., gained an enduring respect inside and outside the Army. For Lord Wolseley, moreover, and others may have agreed, War was more than the supreme test of the military profession, it was also a therapeutic event which could purge society of its decadent elements.4

On account of these internal standards, solidarity and sense of purpose, the Army had a high self-esteem; yet it was neither a wholly confident nor an assured esteem. The Royal Navy remained the Senior Service and consistently received Government priority in its increases.


4. "I feel that a country living under our present form of government and whose better classes that is the rich as well as the old county families live as the Prince of Wales and all his abominable set of men and women do, can only be saved from annihilation by such periodical upheaval as a great war." Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 10.9.94. Wolseley MSS., w/P 23/61.
of military expenditure. Indeed Army officers recurrently bemoaned the neglect of their interests and the parsimonious attitude of their political masters. However, this anguish only acknowledged that the status of the Army in the outside world was not equal to its own pretensions: it did not imply that these pretensions were ill founded or based on out-moded concepts. Within the regimental mess, the internal standards and priorities of the Army were much more important than outside opinion. Only at War Office level were there frequent contacts with other professions, which, for the senior officers, tended to support and reinforce their self-esteem. Finally, the record of consistent success in the small colonial wars apparently testified to the Army’s professional competence: hence, it entered upon the South African War as a proud, insulated and relatively self-confident institution.

For the Army therefore, the events of Black Week were more than tactical reverses: they were a grave blow to its self respect. The officers, however, did not require civilian criticism to pinpoint the blame. In a letter to Lord Lansdowne immediately after Buller's

5. After the 1888 invasion scare, the Navy received a £21.5 million loan whereas the Army Estimates were raised from £16.7 million to £17.3 million. For an examination of the Navy’s tendency to benefit from the periodic invasion scares, see H.R. Moon, The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning 1888-1918, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Univ. of London, 1968), especially ch.1.

6. Sir G. Chesney to Lord Roberts, 18.10.91, 23.10.91 and 11.3.92; Roberts MSS., N.A.M., W/14/293, 295 and 298; and Sir R. Buller to Tremayne, 3.11.99. Buller MSS., P.R.O., W.O./132/6.

7. Lord Wolseley was appalled that he, "left the W.O. with a pension some £200 or more less than the Session Clerk did who leaves as Permanent Under Secretary." Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 1.12.00. Wolseley MSS., W/P.24/90.
disaster at Colenso, Lord Roberts commented:

Buller's reverse makes it clear that both our strategy and tactics are at fault. We have had terrible losses without one single success, and unless some radical change is made at once, our Army will be frittered away and we shall have to make an ignominious peace.*

The completeness of the British disasters at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso facilitated the outburst of military criticism, but equally important, was the appointment of Lord Roberts as the new Commander-in-Chief in the field. For once, the personal factionalism within the Army - the bitter division of officers into supporters of Wolseley and Roberts respectively - had an advantage: it enabled changes to be undertaken without any regard for offended sensibilities.9

The changes which Lord Roberts introduced covered the tactical deployment of Infantry, Artillery bombards, horsemastership, and the organisation of transport. Although the reforms were a reflection of the author's Indian experience rather than any new developments in military tactics - they still introduced important innovations,

8. Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 15.12.99. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/117/1. He and many other officers were very critical of Buller's generalship. See Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 27.3.02.
Kitchener Mss., P.R.0.30/57/20; Sir I. Hamilton to Wilkinson, 8.3.00.

9. Lord Roberts was quite prepared to criticise the pre-war and wartime policies of Wolseley. "The whole truth is that neither he nor anyone at the War Office had the slightest idea of the fighting power of the Boers." Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 16.3.01.
Kitchener Mss., P.R.0.30/57/20.

This was important for Reform, inasmuch as Buller had been Adjutant-General in the period 1.10.90 - 30.9.97 and had had responsibility for the Drill Book of 1896 and the priorities in training and tactics which it had postulated. Although these priorities had failed in South Africa, Buller was wholly unrepentant, "I think that as regards drill we went into the war very fairly equipped; I saw nothing to make me think our drill book was wrong." (Q.15,498) Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, Vol.II, Ed.1791 (1904), XLIII.
particularly in the methods of Infantry attack. In his confidential Circular Memorandum No. 5, Roberts stressed the need for careful reconnaissance; the avoidance of direct attacks in column formation; and the adoption of extended formations with troops if necessary, 6 to 8 paces apart. This change involved a delegation of responsibility onto Battalion and Company Commanders, precise communication on the field, and an emphasis on the value of taking cover. These precautionary tactics were more suitable to battle zones swept by smokeless magazine rifles and were to form the core of the post-war reform in tactics and Infantry training. To increase the effectiveness of the Artillery, Lord Roberts ordered it to eschew positions which were within Infantry range and urged continuous rather than sporadic bombardments. He exhorted cavalrymen to march where possible, and reorganised the transport by removing it from Regimental command and placing it entirely under the Army Service Corps. In sum, Lord Roberts introduced a series of tactical reforms which were the harbingers of future changes in peacetime training, within days of his arrival in Capetown and without any reliance upon civilian advice.

These reforms, however, failed to placate the press. Although Lord Roberts incurred little personal criticism, he could not conceal the shortcomings of several of his subordinates. The succession of ambushes, the small but humiliating number of surrenders, and the failure to 'mop up' the remaining Boers, once their cities


12. In fact Lord Roberts returned to a hero's welcome, a Knight of the Carter, an Earlom and a grant of £100,000. R. Kruger, op. cit., pp. 368-369.
had fallen, were sources of acute disquiet. Both Conservative and Liberal writers began to fulminate upon the military incompetence, with the former especially critical after their support for the War and desire for an early triumph. The Times reproached Army officers for the systematic "neglect of the most elementary principles of their profession", and the Morning Post maintained, "that our Army was planned for any other purpose but that of war". In the Liberal columns, the Military Correspondent of the Westminster Gazette, Captain W.E. Cairnes, rigorously exposed the social structure of the officer corps, while H.H. Munro ("Saki") lampooned the conduct of the war. After Campbell-Bannerman's speech on "methods of barbarism", the Liberal writers also became increasingly critical of the farm burning and concentration camps of the guerilla campaign. Indeed, throughout the War, the civilian commentators unfolded an extensive range of criticisms: officer incompetence, the lack of staff, inadequate marksmanship, the shortage of Mounted Infantry, anachronistic Artillery weapons, maladministration of the hospital service, the lack of strategic planning, the absence of a General Staff, and the need for a comprehensive Reform of the whole Service.

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The details of these criticisms did not especially alarm the officers in South Africa. They knew that the War had been a disappointment and they might have agreed or disagreed with particular points in particular articles. Indeed some officers, who had written on Army Reform prior to the War, saw their fears realised in practice and wanted to resume their writing upon them. However, what these officers and the majority of their colleagues detested was the vituperative and generalised presentation of many of the criticisms in the press. They resented the sweeping remarks on "the stupidity" of the British officer, and the derisory comments on their codes of social behaviour. Indeed the critics, although vague on positive suggestions for Army Reform, had heavily emphasised the personal failings of the officers and attributed them directly or indirectly to the life style of the home Army - the same life style of a gentleman which formed a corner stone of the Army's self-esteem.

16. Lord Kitchener aptly summarised the Army's reaction:

"It makes the army feel disgusted that the press at home should show delight in running down their work, and criticising from a comfortable arm-chair or railway carriage what is being done."

17. Lord Roberts on his proof reading of Amery's Vol. II, ch. 1, "I am inclined to think that your strictures on the British officer err on the side of severity." Lord Roberts to Amery, 12.7.01.

18. "This want of troops on a war footing at home was the basis of an article of mine which you published two years ago", Capt. C.E. Callwell to Blackwood, 27.12.99. See also Callwell to Blackwood, 25.6.00. Blackwood Ms., N.L.S., MS 4685 and 4698.
On account of this disgust, the Army reinforced its

citadel mentality towards the press. 19. The senior officers had to
ensure that these critical articles, which were readily available on
the veld, did not impair regimental morale. 20. As the officer corps
had a low estimation of journalism and a high self-esteem built upon
insulated internal standards, this effort to maintain morale was
generally successful. Even the self-opinionated subaltern, J.F.C.
Fuller, who had castigated his brother officers for their lack of
professional interests on arrival in South Africa, was a convert within
fifteen months, to the traditional view that sports and games were an
invaluable peacetime means of inculcating military virtues. As he
explained to his father, a factor in this volte face was:

the fashion at home to find nothing bad enough to say
about the British officer. 21.

The Army closed its ranks and maintained a surly contempt for the value
of civilian comment. Lord Roberts felt that the critics had failed to
appreciate the difficulties of war in South Africa: the size of the
country; the maintenance of a line of communications by rail over 1,000
miles in length; and the inherent problems of guerilla warfare. 22.

19. Lord Roberts to Sir R. Buller, 21.1.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/111/1/22;
Lord Kitchener to Lord Roberts, 9.10.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/33/41;
and Sir I. Hamilton to Lord Kitchener, 17.3.04. Kitchener Mss., P.R.O.
30/57/37.

20. "The Absent-Minded War...(is) everywhere, even up here in Lyndeberg."
Capt. C. E. Callwell to Blackwood, 17.2.00. Blackwood Mss., N.L.S., MS 4696.

21. Compare J. F. C. Fuller's original thoughts on British officers, who, "go
into the Army...simply to amuse themselves, to hunt, shoot and have a
jolly good time and to the devil with anything else which contains
an atom of work. The whole thing is of course a farce. It is no more
a profession than shooting pheasant and hunting foxes..." with, "Our
English games and sports create a quick eye and what is more
essential to an officer than this. I have noticed it myself that
the best sportsmen make the best officers..." J. F. C. Fuller to his
father, 6.2.00 and 7.5.01. Fuller Mss., IV/3/26 and IV/3/59, University
of London, King's Coll., Centre for Military Archives.

22. Lord Roberts to the High Commissioner Capetown, 13.1.00. Roberts
Mss., N.A.M., R/111/6/1701 and Roberts to Wilkinson, 28.9.00.
Wilkinson Mss., 13/14.
11. The officers who had served with Lord Lansdowne in India, resented the attempt to make him a scapegoat; others contrasted the volume of wartime advice with the public indifference in times of peace; and some saw financial reward as the only motive for the literary attacks on the Army. Finally, the senior officers found little of substance in the plethora of Reform proposals: these they discarded as hasty, nescient and lacking in definite purpose.

In spite of this self-esteem, initiatives on Reform and contempt for civilian comment, the military leadership or at least the Commander-in-Chief, resolved to answer the clamour for Army Reform in the national press. However, unlike the Secretary of State who hoped to use this protest as a justification for increased Estimates, Lord Roberts sought to pacify it with his own concept of Army Reform - the embodiment in the drill books, training and instructional courses of the peacetime Army, of the reforms and changes, which he had already introduced in South Africa. He refused to make any concessions to the substance of the external criticism and, on the charge of officer incompetence, reaffirmed that at all levels the human factor had proved itself in the South African War.


24. "Most of the suggestions appear to be the work of amateurs who have no thorough knowledge and no definite aim in view." Sir J. Ardagh, Army Reform, Nov., 1900. Ardagh Mss., P.R.O. 30/40/13.


26. Lord Roberts to Amery, 12.7.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M. R/122/1/82.
Whether or not these sentiments were accurate, Lord Roberts correctly implied that the priority in Army Reform was the improved professional training of the existing officers and men, and that the quest for a different source of recruitment was a secondary concern. The latter was not an unimportant issue: Lord Roberts was an old campaigner for improved and altered conditions of service, and in the War Office, saw the realisation of some of his proposals. However the issue was speculative: one thesis favoured an improvement of material benefits, living conditions and career structure as a means to improve the recruiting intake; another feared that the number who were attracted to Army life was limited and hence that expensive improvements might merely tap the same potential at a higher cost. The issue on either hypothesis was a long term consideration: the immediate requirement was to profit from the wartime experiences in the revision of peacetime training.

For Lord Roberts, therefore, Army Reform was a limited concept of pragmatic adaptation to the circumstances of the modern battlefield. With closed formations at an end, he maintained that future training should promote the development of the private soldier’s ability to think and act for himself, and the readiness of the junior officer to accept an ever-increasing amount of responsibility. The Infantry, he thought, should improve its snap shooting at short ranges; the Cavalry rely more on dismounted action than the arme blanche; and the Artillery frame their future tactics upon long range, quick-firing weapons with a heavier shell. These ideas were not self-evident relevations from


the Boer War: indeed, contrary to the popular opinion at the time, there were not any self-evident lessons in the War—only a number of experiences which received highly personal interpretations. Lord Roberts did not forget his forty years of soldiering in India and the tactical and training assumptions which he had based upon them; he used these assumptions to interpret the military experiences of the South African War. Furthermore, because Lord Roberts initiated his Reforms while the War was in progress, he viewed the process of reform as gradual and evolutionary, with the development on each issue dictated by the availability of specialist advice.

Nevertheless the Commander-in-Chief doubted that this gradual piecemeal approach to Army Reform would placate "the public." Although he neither defined this public nor indicated a perception of its wishes, Lord Roberts sought Reform both as a goal in itself, and as a means of pacifying his civilian critics. In this quest he faced a number of obstacles. First, the War lasted until 31 May 1902, a year and five months after his return and approximately two years and five months after the press and war-weary public had expected it to finish. There were no further defeats to compare with Black Week, but

29. "I have no objection to you publishing extracts from speeches I have made from time to time on 'Musketry Training and Artillery Practice'; I trust they will be found instructive. They will at any rate show that my experiences in South Africa have not caused me to modify but have rather confirmed the opinions I have expressed for the last 17 years on this most important part of a soldier's training." Lord Roberts to Editor of United Service Magazine, 13.1.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/3/217.


doubts arose over the callousness of Kitchener's campaign; the expense of a War which by winter 1901 was costing £1½ million per week; and the efficiency of the block-houses and weekly bags of captives. Scandalous revelations continued to occur even after the cessation of hostilities, and these plagued the War Office and impaired the confidence of the public. In short, disillusion with the duration and character of the War left a deeper impression than the Reforms which Lord Roberts had begun to introduce at home.

The second problem was that the issues on which the Commander-in-Chief sought Reform were highly technical and specialised and in themselves excited little outside interest. In a letter to G.W. Forrest, he catalogued the Reforms which he had commenced during his first year as Commander-in-Chief, and which had received scant recognition outside the War Office. They included experiments on rifles, new horse and field artillery guns, lighter ambulance and store wagons, cubicles in barracks and traction engines; changes in Mounted Infantry organisation, military uniforms and in Artillery and Infantry drills; and committees to inquire into instructional courses at Sandhurst and Woolwich, canteen arrangements and the curtailment of unnecessary regimental expenses. These were important Reforms for the Regular Army, and in the long term were intended to upgrade its status as a career, (particularly the construction of barrack cubicles and the limitation of mess expenses): in the short term however, they failed

32. Especially over the shortcomings of the Remounts Department, Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 11.6.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/13/212.

33. Lord Roberts to G.W. Forrest, 19.1.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/225. The critics however, doubted that anything had changed, "In the War Office there is nothing but chaos. B. is in despair and Lord R. is quite happy, hatching little jobs and beaming on everyone." Capt. W.E. Cairnes to Lord Rosebery, 4.10.01. Rosebery Mss., Box 76.
to placate the demands for Reform. The Army could not even display its new found skills before the autumn manoeuvres of 1903—an unfortunate time as they coincided with the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on the South African War and the sharp, if brief, wave of criticism which it evoked.

Indeed, the recurrent problem for Lord Roberts, in securing outside acknowledgment for his Reforms, was the 'spillover' effect from criticism on other Army problems. Apart from the War, the issue which came increasingly to the fore was the sagacity or lack of it in the presumptions which underpinned the structural Army Reforms of St. John Brodrick. The issue was especially distracting because it persisted throughout the period 1901-03 with the wave of scepticism growing, when it became increasingly apparent that the post-war arrangement of battalions, based upon a peacetime South African garrison of 12 battalions, was unlikely ever to be realised. Scepticism on this issue and the doubts cast on the War Office Administration tended to obscure the substance of the Regular Army Reforms. The critics on these specific issues continued to exhort the War Office to 'learn the lessons of the War' and undertake 'Army Reform'.

In short, the attempt of Lord Roberts to turn the criticism of the press into approbation proved utterly abortive. The fact that he tried and tried so persistently for three years, was indicative of the Army's loss of confidence during the War. In spite of a self image based on internal criteria, a citadel mentality erected to thole the wartime criticism and an initiative on the path of Reform which

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34. For example Amery, although he acknowledged an improvement in military training as revealed in the autumn manoeuvres of 1903, only devoted one page to them in a 200 page criticism of the Reforms undertaken by the Brodrick Administration. L.S. Amery, The Problem of the Army (Lon., 1903), p. 46.
preceded the advice of civilian pundits, the Army still felt aggrieved by the aspersions cast on its South African performance. Although Lord Roberts aimed to placate this criticism, the call for Army Reform periodically recurred since his concept of Reform was so precise and limited and technical. His forlorn replies to civilian critics in which he catalogued his Reforms for the Regular Army, failed to assuage those for whom the duration of the War or the shortcomings of the Brodrick proposals or the administration at the War Office or the lack of any means to expand the Army in time of war were the principal points at issue. In other words Lord Roberts failed to understand the broader, ever-changing concept of Army Reform which was held outside the War Office. Ironically this abortive attempt to placate the press proved largely unnecessary, since the interest of the latter in Army Reform rapidly waned once the War had ended, and other controversies arose over the Education Act and Tariff Reform.


36. Once he had read the Report of the Royal Commission on the South African War, Lord Roberts acknowledged, "that the Public will not be satisfied until far more drastic reforms have been made than have as yet been attempted." Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 30.9.03. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/6/514.
Chapter 5

The Concept of Army Reform which was held by the Unionist Government during the South African War.

"Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should, we have had no end of a lesson; it will do us no end of good".

R. Kipling, 'The Lesson', The Times, 29.7.01, p.6.

Chapter 5 examines the main features of the Army Reform, which was introduced in March 1901. It argues that the aims were limited in part by the assumptions of the Reformers, and in part by the attempt to introduce Reform while the War was in progress. At bottom, it maintains that Army Reform was not a tidy, self-regulating process in which wartime lessons were applied in subsequent reforms, but a process clouded by short term problems, erroneous opportunism, and a desire to protect the reputations of the Reformers. It makes exhaustive use of a correspondence between St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State for War, and his best man Lord Curzon, which has been neglected by historians in this field and is collected in the Curzon Mss. (India Office).
Commentators have accepted in all its catalytic simplicity the truism, 'that the Boer War made manifest the need for Army Reform'\(^1\). It was true that in the pre-War period, colossal indifference had thwarted the issue of Army Reform, and it was also true that the War, or at least the defeats of Black Week and Spion Kop had shocked the British Government. They had exposed weaknesses in the functioning of the Regular Army, and had provoked the call 'to learn the lessons of the War', and undertake Army Reform. However, there were not any self-evident lessons in the War. On the contrary the process of Reform was a reflection of personal, and to some extent institutional perceptions of the deficiencies to be overcome and the goals to be sought. To clarify these perceptions and goals, it is necessary to underline the salient features of the Reforms; relate them to the War and their wider context; and thereby examine the Government's concept of Army Reform.

The primary feature of the Government proposals was the determination to uphold the strategic role and structural organisation of the pre-War Army. In December 1888 and June 1891, Edward Stanhope had specified the strategic requirements of the Army: they included the effective support of the Civil Power in the United Kingdom; the maintenance of overseas garrisons; the ability, "after providing for these requirements to be able to mobilise rapidly for home defence two

Army Corps of Regular troops, and one partly composed of Regulars and partly of Militia; and finally, the ability to send two Army Corps, a Cavalry Division and Lines of Communications abroad in time of emergency. When St. John Brodrick announced his Reforms in Parliament on 8 March 1901, he reaffirmed these priorities and intimated that he merely intended to augment the allotted numbers. He also confirmed that it was the intention of the Cabinet to raise and maintain these numbers through the existing structure or 'system' of the Army. In other words, he confirmed the retention of the system fashioned by Edward Cardwell and completed by H.O. Childers in 1881, of double battalions, short service in the Colours, and the territorial localisation of regiments.

The system had received its first complete examination in the mobilisation and departure of the expeditionary force to South Africa in 1899. On 29 September, the Cabinet authorised the despatch of a field force, totalling 47,081 all ranks (one Army Corps, Cavalry Division and forces for lines of communication) to join the Garrison and reinforcements already in South Africa (22,486 officers and men). The process involved the mobilisation of eight Cavalry regiments, fifteen batteries of Field Artillery and thirty-two battalions of Infantry. As the battalions were under War Establishment and 28% of those serving were either under age or unfit for foreign service, the Government called out the First Class Army Reserve - 98% rejoined the Colours, and in a field force, which comprised only men over 20 years of age.

2. See, Viscount Wolseley to Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, 22.2.96, W.O.33/56, Appendix II.
26,000 served with the Colours and 21,000 were Reservists.4 To compensate for the home dislocation the Government embodied thirty-three battalions of Militia to form, with the immature soldiers, provisional battalions for home defence. The War Office successfully prepared and equipped the expeditionary force, and the process of mobilisation was completed by naval transportation over a 6,000 mile journey. The cause of the difficulties was neither the mobilisation nor the response of the Reserves, but the trebling of the manpower requirements by the early months of 1900: this created demands beyond the capacity of the system and denuded the United Kingdom of an organised field army for home defence.5

For the front bench Parliamentarians and the military and civilian authorities at the War Office, who had defended the Cardwell system for two decades, the initial achievements of the process were a source of profound satisfaction. The efficacy of the mobilisation arrangements and the turnout of the Reserves not only vindicated the cause of the Department, but also, in the opinion of its spokesmen, routed the arguments of the War Office critics.6 When these critics — the civilian spokesmen of the Service Members and the host of 'instant'

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4. Report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Military preparations and other matters connected with the War in South Africa, hereafter referred to as the Elgin Report, Cd.1789 (1904), XI, p.3.


experts who appeared in the columns of the wartime press reiterated their attacks, the Government held firm to the tenet that whatever else had failed, the 'system' had not been found wanting. Although it accepted the need to learn 'the lessons of the War' and undertake Army Reform, the Government had a different concept of Reform from that of its critics. In the introduction of his Reforms, Brodrick immediately eschewed, in the manner of the Departmental spokesmen before him, the main alternative to the Cardwell system—a separate Indian Army or a separate term of enlistment for the Indian Army. He was confident that the mechanics of the present system were sound; that the implementation of the alternative would prove costly and unworkable; and above all, that the reforming zeal of his back bench critics would extend only to speeches, and not to voting against the Government in time of War.

The main innovation of the Brodrick Reforms was the proposal to create six districts in the United Kingdom in each of which an Army Corps could muster, train and manoeuvre in its entirety. By

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7. For the resurgence of wartime criticism, see H.O. Arnold-Forster to Lord Rosebery, 24.1.00. Rosebery Mss., Box 76; Editorial, The Times, 12.2.00, p.9; and the speeches by Acland-Hood and Arnold-Forster in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.78, 31.1.00, cols.190 and 345.

In reply to one of the 'instant' experts, Lord Curzon who had written, "Our disasters are so unbroken, our generals so uniformly incompetent, our inability to make any headway so consistent as to engender serious suspicions that our system must be rotten at the core." Curzon to Brodrick, 8.1.00. Midleton Mss., R.M. Add. Ms. 50073, ff.274, Brodrick testily remarked, "Surely Buller's defeats do not prove our system rotten. We have put half as many again of men and horses into the field as we ever proposed to keep for foreign service and could have done it weeks earlier if the soldiers had asked." Brodrick to Curzon, 9.2.00. Curzon Ms., Eur.F.111/10A, ff.131.


9. The critics confirmed this in public and private statements. See H.O. Arnold-Forster to Lord Rosebery, 24.1.00. Rosebery Mss., Box 76 and Acland-Hood and Maj. Rasch in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.78, 31.00 and 2.2.00, cols. 192 and 518.
concentrating troops in the complete proportion of arms, officers and staff, and the appropriate stores and barracks within each district, the aim was to secure some esprit de corps and greater efficiency in the Army Corps. The two important stipulations were the appointment for peace command, of only those officers whom the military authorities had certified as fit to command in war, and the delegation to the corps commanders of a large amount of authority previously exercised in Pall Mall. The first condition accepted the possibility of supersession by younger and more active commanders over their senior colleagues, and the second sought to restore greater initiative and responsibility to the officers who would have to exercise these faculties in combat. The overall intention was to erase the image of the Army Corps as a paper force, whose primary function was not effectiveness in battle, but administrative convenience for the War Office.

The emphasis on the improvement of Command and training reflected the opinion in the Cabinet that it was this aspect, rather than the organisational structure, which had failed in the War. Indeed, the failures in battle appeared worse when contrasted with the Army's pre-War enthusiasm for a 'show of force' in South Africa. Prior to the War, Viscount Wolseley had repeatedly urged the despatch of reinforcements to Natal on the assertion that this would have deterred

10. Throughout the South African War, the Army functioned in Divisions and in smaller units but never in Army Corps. Brodrick claimed that this scheme was his own and owed nothing to military advice. "Lord Roberts is back in great spirits, full of zeal and work. He is invaluable as a critic; he originates nothing. All the schemes for next year are mine..." Brodrick to Curzon, 11.1.01. Curzon Mss., Bur.F.11/108, ff.241-242. This claim is corroborated by an earlier letter to Lord Roberts, in which he requested the latter's approval of a Scheme for the re-arrangement of Commands in the United Kingdom, Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 21.12.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/13/16.
When the Cabinet resolved on intervention, their military advisers envinced nothing but confidence in the ability of the Army to rout the opposition. The Ministers, who echoed these sentiments in public, felt bitterly misled after the news of Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso, with their feelings aggravated by the inability to express them in public. In reply to criticisms that he had failed to acknowledge War Office responsibility for the short-comings of the Army, Arthur Balfour summarised the dilemma:

I do not think these blunders were due to War Office maladministration, and until I see reason to think so, nothing will induce me to say so. The chief blunders have been made in my private opinion, by our Generals in the field - but I do not of course, think it desirable to make such a statement in public.

The aim of the Government, therefore, was to improve the capabilities of the Regular Army. Brodrick endorsed the training proposals of Lord Roberts and proposed to act upon his own perception of the related 'lesson' of the War: namely, that the country ought to maintain a larger and better organised expeditionary force, and an improved residual organisation for home defence. In the first place,


he insisted that the expeditionary force should be increased
from two to three Army Corps — a total of 120,000 men. To man this
force, he required an additional eighteen battalions to be made avail-
able for home service, which might be provided by the raising of 5
more Indian battalions; the acceptance of responsibility for several
coaling stations by the Admiralty; the raising of 8 garrison battalions
of men with more than 14 years service; and the maintenance on a peace-
time basis of only 12 battalions in South Africa. The Secretary of
State maintained that the realisation of these postulates would both
augment the home Army and improve its training. With a revised basis
in the parity of battalions at home and abroad, his aim was to ease
the strained pre-War structure in which the home battalions had lan-
guished as 'squeezed lemons', training and supplying drafts for an
excess number of battalions abroad. For home defence, Brodrick con-
ceived an increased role for the auxiliary forces and, by extra
monetary inducements, sought a Reserve of 50,000 men for the Militia;
a target of 35,000 Imperial Yeomen; and another 40,000 Volunteers.14
Overall, he aimed to enrol an extra 126,500 men for the various forms
of military service at a cost of an additional £2,000,000 on the
Estimates.15

The desire to augment the home Army reflected an issue which had
bedevilled the War Office in the early months of 1900: namely, the
provision for home defence while an increased expeditionary force

14. "But the scheme must be complete, and to obtain support, it
must include a larger recognition than heretofore of
auxiliary forces," Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 21.12.00. Roberts
Mss., N.A.M., R/13/15.

15. Parl.Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.38, 8.3.01, cols.1052-1089.
remained abroad. The dilemma over home defence was purely intuitive: the War Office never examined the logistical problems of an invasion - rather, it simply presumed that the risks to national security increased in direct proportion to the increase in the number of British troops abroad. In the aftermath of Black Week, Viscount Wolseley submitted a Memorandum, Troops to meet possible French Attack, in which he emphasised the need to recreate the Stanhope standard of three Army Corps for home defence. Although the Cabinet was desperately attempting to endorse every military request, it modified these proposals and only sanctioned an increase of the Infantry by 15 battalions from 109,000 men (1 February 1900), to 139,000 men; the creation of 43 Artillery batteries for the two Army Corps; the provision of 15 Cavalry regiments for three Brigades, corps and divisional work; and the increase of the Auxiliary Forces from 328,000 men (1 February 1900) to at least 378,000. Despite introducing these measures as expedients, the Government decided to retain the 15 battalions and cadres of the 43 batteries as part of the permanent military establishment. In short, the Cabinet endorsed the desire of the War Office to replenish depleted units, and the Reforms of the following year merely continued this policy.


17. Troops to meet possible French Attack, 29.12.99, Cab. 37/53/105 and related memoranda - Lord Lansdowne, Notes on the Commander-in-Chief's Memorandum of 29 December, 17.1.00; Minute of Defence Committee, 20.1.00; and Lord Lansdowne, Army Proposals, 8.2.00. Cab. 37/52/4, 5 and 14.

Complementary with the Departmental fears on the 'sufficiency' of the Armed Forces, were the personal forebodings of St. John Brodrick. While Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, he held grave reservations over the scale and composition of the original expeditionary force. He deprecated the despatch of one Army Corps; the initial lack of Cavalry; and the failure to re-arm the Artillery over two and a half years prior to the War. For St. John Brodrick, the main lesson of the South African War was the inadequacy of the Stanhope criteria: in future, the country would have to maintain a force, which could be despatched at any moment, of three Army Corps with proper Cavalry divisions. He dreaded a repetition of the expedient measures which had been adopted in February 1900, and insisted that the larger structure should be sustained on a permanent basis. To establish these revised criteria, Brodrick intended to capitalise upon the transitory wave of public interest in Army Reform and use it as a justification for augmenting the Army Estimates to £30,030,000 - a 50% increment on their pre-War total.

A final aspect of the Brodrick Reforms was the resolution of the author not to sacrifice his Scheme for any want of voluntary recruits. The elaboration of his proposals in wartime meant that many of the

requirements were based on conjecture: there was uncertainty whether the additional battalions or the extra recruits would be secured in the post-war circumstances. As such, the outline of the organisation in March 1901 merely provided a framework of 'necessary' objectives for which resources would have to be found. Indeed, the Secretary of State indicated that the traditional methods of voluntary recruitment would only be considered so long as they provided the required resources:

my adhesion to the voluntary system is strictly limited by our ability to obtain under it a force with which our military authorities can satisfy the Government that they have sufficient force to resist invasion. 22.

The threat of compulsory service was the only apparent change in Government policy which Brodrick introduced. Throughout the early months of 1900 when the invasion scare was at its peak and the home defence forces were in disarray, the Unionist Ministers had strongly resisted the pressure in press and Parliament for some measure of compulsory service. Lord Lansdowne had rejected the proposal to enforce the Militia Ballot as unpopular, and as liable to produce a force that could not be sent abroad. He had also thought that it would produce a surfeit of raw recruits without the appropriate cadres and non-commissioned officers, and that quota enlistments for the Militia would undermine the territorial organisation. 23. Although the new Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for War favoured compulsory service for home defence, and, to the consternation of the Opposition, stated their preferences in Parliament, they failed to alter Cabinet policy. 24.

The threats of St. John Brodrick remained more apparent than real because

22. Parl.Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.88, 8.3.01, col.1060.
other Ministers never overcame their intuitive fears for the political and economic consequences of compulsory service, and their doubts on its utility in military terms.25.

These features of the Brodrick proposals - the retention of the Cardwell system, extension of the Army Corps organisation, numerical increase of the peacetime establishment, and abortive attempt to introduce conscription - comprised a distinctive approach to Army Reform. In the first place, as the wartime reserves had occasioned the need for Reform, the main priority was to remedy the immediate shortcomings. The Secretary of State had to satisfy the requests of the Commander-in-Chief in the field, and replenish the gaps which had appeared with the departure of so many troops to South Africa. He intended that some of these short-term expedients should serve as permanent improvements; others would only result in severe dislocation once the War was over.26. To embark upon Army Reform in these circumstances meant that the Secretary of State had to gamble on the outcome of the War; the subsequent deployment of battalions; the post-war level of recruiting; and the value of formulating Reforms while advisers were 6,000 miles away. Above all, he had to risk making erroneous deductions from the short-term problems encountered in the South African War. For Brodrick, however, this risk was hardly apparent; he justified all his Reforms upon the assertion that the inadequacies exposed in the present campaign should never be allowed to recur.

25. "Cabinet put aside Compulsion, but had to consider it fully." Brodrick to Curzon, 15.2.01 see also, Brodrick to Curzon, 22.8.01. Curzon Mss., Eur.F.III/108, ff.248 and 294.

A second aspect of this approach was the sense of opportunity and emphasis on timing. Brodrick calculated that, whatever the risks in reforming the Army while the War was in progress, this was the occasion to begin the process: indeed risks of a different but still damaging nature attended delay. What underlined this feeling was Brodrick's axiom that Army Reform implied increased Estimates: as such, failure to capitalise upon the immediate wave of public interest and clamour for Reform would hazard post-war apathy and fiscal retrenchment. However, there was a converse possibility that Estimates, bloated in time of war, might be partially reduced on the return of peace - the more likely, if the Reforms undertaken reflected an excessive regard for the exigencies of the moment rather than a re-appraisal of the priorities and role of the Army. In other words, it was unlikely that well-timed measures and increased Estimates would last, unless complemented by a degree of internal coherence which would command fairly general support in normal circumstances.27 Admittedly, Brodrick believed in the coherence of his proposals, but, as few agreed with him by autumn 1903, he bequeathed to his successors the problem of fending off the post-war demands for retrenchment.

This pre-occupation with short term problems and blatant opportunism indicated that the perceptions and goals of the Reformers, were not merely occasioned by the War but were also fundamentally conditioned by it. Although the War had produced a volume of concern about the Army which had not existed for thirty years, it remained paradoxically, the least apposite moment for embarking upon Reform. The contemporary

27. There would always be an unappeasable rump in Parliament, especially the Radicals who called for the 'status quo ante bellum' in the Estimates. However, Haldane was able to secure Cabinet and Parliamentary support for his Estimates at £27,459,000 (1908-09) in comparison with the pre-war total of £20,296,000 (1898-99). See A.J. Anthony Morris, op.cit., pp.17-34.
hostilities and their repercussions at home restricted the perspective of the Reformers, since the events in South Africa served as an invaluable benchmark - 'the lessons of the War' were the justification for each and every proposal suggested by Minister and critic alike. The War also hampered the ability of the Reformers to put forward detailed proposals: this factor, above all others, devalued the substance of the Brodrick Reforms. Indeed the endeavour to reform the Army while the War was in progress, maximised the imponderables for the Reformers; minimised the likelihood of Cabinet self-criticism in public; and increased the possibility of abortive measures and a peacetime reaction.

The third characteristic of the approach was the reluctance to entertain any radical rethink of the existing priorities and structure of the Army. What assured this reluctance was the appointment of a Secretary of State who had been closely identified prior to the War with the Departmental defence of the Cardwell system. He had argued and continued to argue that the Cardwell system had met the requirements of the Army; that the War had vindicated it; and that problems had only been caused by the unexpected scale of hostilities.

The Cabinet attributed these problems (unjustly) to faulty intelligence, and claimed to have prevented their recurrence by the increase of the military forces. It did not embark upon radical Reforms as this would have acknowledged weaknesses in the pre-War Army, and discredited, as negligent and culpable, the original decision to

28. As Major Rasch remarked, "he had been the optimist apologist for everything the War Office has done since the year 1885, with the exception of five years...." *Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 88, 6 Dec. 1900*, col. 143.

In short, the issue of Army Reform became enmeshed in the acrimonious legacy of the pre-War debates on Reform; the fears of Ministers and the War Office for their own prestige; and the differing interpretations of what the War revealed and did not reveal about the efficiency of the Army.

The Unionist Government, therefore, did not consider the issue of Army Reform in isolation. If it used the same terminology as the wartime critics and professed the common desire, 'to learn the lessons of the War', it emphasised particular lessons to accord with its own priorities in Army Reform. The product was not a comprehensive revision of the Army structure, but a consolidation of the wartime expedients; an elimination of the numerical shortages; and a re-arrangement of the existing and additional units. Given the absence of change and the accent on quantitative increase, the emphasis of the Reform was to counter immediate, specific inadequacies and to be able to counter them again, if and when they recurred. The concept of Reform did not amount to anything more, and, as it involved a greatly increased expenditure on a number of dubious conjectures, it came under a rigorous and critical scrutiny once the War had ended.

30. Sir John Ardagh, The Director of Military Intelligence, was the man on whom the accusations fell, and his widow recorded the following comment by Brodrick in 1902, "if I had admitted that Sir John Ardagh told us the truth, people would naturally say: 'If you were told the truth, why did you not act upon it,' and they would think it was my fault." Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, 16.1.02. Ardgah Mss., P.R.O. 30/40/16.

31. The failure of the Brodrick Reforms will be explained in a subsequent chapter, this chapter has only argued that his concept of Reform and attitude towards the issue were wholly inadequate.
Chapter 6

The Indifference of the Liberal Leadership to Army Reform during and after the South African War.

"It is part of the Imperialist heresy to try to make war, defence, military policy etc., take precedence of all other questions."

Chapter 6 attempts to explain the liberal Party's indifference to Army Reform in 1901-05 as more than a preoccupation with fiscal economy. It argues that the Conservative Reforms raised the spectre of militarism and thereby united the liberals in Parliament. At the same time, the Liberals appreciated that the Army required reform and advocated a qualitative improvement in Army recruiting. On the other hand, they feared the inherent wastefulness of this policy in human as well as monetary terms i.e. in the encouragement of potentially productive artisans to waste their lives in an Army barracks. Indeed, the dilemma reflected a profound mixture of attitudes about the value of Army service to a liberal society, and instead of resolving the dilemma, the party simply suppressed it and reiterated their traditional call for retrenchment.
The periodic calls for retrenchment in military expenditure have rarely been examined. Soldiers have ascribed these political demands to the negative parsimony of the Treasury; shortsighted political optimism; and above all to the differing priorities of the soldier and the politician. In their opinion, the exigencies of the party struggle, the need to seek popular endorsement at the ballot box, and the refusal to submerge partisan differences for the national good are characteristics peculiar to the politician. But, while these reasons may have had real degrees of validity on particular occasions, they only indicate that the augmentation or improvement of the Army is not the constant, overriding political concern. What they fail to indicate are any of the attitudes which politicians may have held about the Army on these occasions. Indeed, to equate political indifference with a preoccupation in other matters virtually presumes, that any political attitudes towards the Army, save the maintenance of civilian control, are of only peripheral importance. This is a presumption, which may be tested by an assessment of the reaction of the Liberal Party to the issue of Army Reform, when it was raised during and immediately after the South African War.

An analysis of this reaction, however, cannot be divorced from consideration of the previous attitudes of the Liberal leadership towards Army Reform, and from the fissures and rancour which the War had precipitated within the Party. In the first place, the need for further Army Reform had been denied by the Liberal leaders in the 1890s. For them the Army had already been reformed. The measures of Cardwell and Childers, two previous Liberal Secretaries of State for War, had inaugurated Short Service in the Colours, facilitated the creation of a Reserve, and linked the battalions in pairs with the home battalion training and providing drafts for its linked battalion abroad. By the
1890s liberals acknowledged that the Army system still had its problems, but hoped that with faith and perseverance these might be gradually mitigated and lessened. 1. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had made consolidation and the defence of Cardwellian principles the main themes of his term as Secretary of State for War (1892-95). With the aim of moderate steady advances in military efficiency, he stated:

I have said that in my opinion at the present time, as to the main fabric of our Army system, the truest courage and the best reforming wisdom lies in leaving well alone. 2.

In his defence of the status quo, Campbell-Bannerman faced criticism not from the Conservative front bench, though it introduced minor modifications to the Army system in 1897-98, but from the highly critical body of Service Members. Although he had little to fear from the Service lobby, the persistent caustic criticisms and the tendency of Dilke and Arnold-Forster to lecture the front benches, left a marked personal resentment and a suspicion of Reform in the mind of Campbell-Bannerman. He found immense satisfaction in the response of the Reserve on call out and the mobilisation and transport of Britain's largest ever expeditionary force in October 1899. This appeared to

1. Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the Army Estimates, 1892-96, C.7658 (1895), LXII, pp.2-3.

2. Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.31, 15.3.95, col.1158. In this chapter, the speeches, writings and papers of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman provide the main source for the attitudes of the Liberal leadership towards the Army. Having been Financial Secretary to Cardwell and Childers and twice Secretary of State for War (1885 and 1892-95), he had become by the late nineties, the party’s foremost spokesman on Army matters. If he lacked the original thought of Sir Charles Dilke, he had powerful compensations in his departmental experience, War Office contacts and ability to utter statements on the Army which did not offend the rest of his party.
vindicate the Army system and confound the reformers. Such complacency however, was premature and was rudely shattered by the tidings of Stornberg, Magersfontein and Colenso. When Dilke reacted to this news and proffered his tactical advice to Herbert Gladstone, Campbell-Bannerman bitterly riposted:

I do not think Citizen Dilke's amendment covers the ground. It is admirably fitted as a peg on which to hang up for public admiration the intimate knowledge of facts possessed by its originator - but that is not our sole object.

On the contrary the sole object of Campbell-Bannerman and the majority of his party in January, 1900 was to question the justification and preparations for the War which had been made by the Government. To arraign the Government on these counts was their central purpose, and any other issue (i.e. the efficiency of the Army) was not merely tangential, but diversionary and liable to obscure the substance of their criticism. Indeed Campbell-Bannerman adopted a fixed attitude and held it throughout the year. In October he wrote to Sir Ralph Knox, "I have not said a word, and have discouraged others from saying a word in deprecation of the administration of the War by the W.O."

3. Campbell-Bannerman thought that the Army system, "for which hardly anybody sometimes had a good word to say... has completely fulfilled the purpose for which it was created." _Parl. Deb.,_ Fourth Ser., Vol.77, 20.10.99, cols.421-422.


5. "The organisation of the War Office, or the quality of our weapons, may be very nice subjects for enquiry by-and-by; the immediate question is the conduct of the Government in working the Transvaal quarrel up to the War-pitch without adequately preparing for war," and, "I am all against any riding off on a mere enquiry into the conduct of the War and the Departments." Campbell-Bannerman to H.Gladstone, 12.1.00 and 14.1.00. H.Gladstone Mss., B.M.Add.Mss. 45,938, ff.66 and 72.

However he was no more able to co-ordinate his party spokesmen on this issue than on any of the other issues related to the Boer War. Liberal Imperialists, for whom the origins of the War were not an embarrassment, found much to criticise in the efficiency of the Army. Like other critics in the press and Parliament, who had never previously taken an interest in Army Reform, they exhorted the Government to profit from 'the lessons of the war' and introduce reform on 'business principles'. This was fine rhetoric, but Lord Rosebery and his supporters never produced any authoritative statement on what reforms they would endorse or what Army they would countenance. For them Army Reform remained a secondary concern, albeit a very useful tactical concern, which enabled them to criticise the Government on one issue, while endorsing the main Government policy - the prosecution of the War to a successful conclusion. As a result Army Reform was left to the Conservatives and it was only when they introduced their proposals on 8th March 1901, that the Liberal reaction clarified.

For the Opposition, the recommended increase in the size and expenditure of the Army and the threat of conscription, was wholly unacceptable. In reply, Campbell-Bannerman asserted that the future scale of military forces could not be framed upon the lessons of a War, "exceptional in the demands made upon us, exceptional in the nature of the warfare". He claimed that to base Britain's future military organisation upon Army Corps was to base it upon a military fiction unsuitable for an Army whose units had to be "interchangeable and

7. Despite their concern for military efficiency, see the Preface by Lord Rosebery to H. O. Arnold-Forster, The War Office, The Army and The Empire (Lon., 1900) and R. B. Haldane, Electoral Address, Sept. 1900. Haldane Ms., N.L.S. Ms. 5904, ff. 41, the Liberal Imperialists admitted their lack of military expertise, see the speech by Asquith, Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 94, 16.5.01, col. 316.
elastic". But, above all, he attacked the threat of conscription on the grounds of political right, social convenience, strain on industrial resources and its impracticality for an Army required to garrison tropical stations in times of peace. In his opinion, a Militia Ballot if random might take the unsager and leave the enthusiastic, and if based on substitutes, would bear unfairly on the poor; while universal compulsory service, if more feasible in practice, was still devoid of strategic purpose. For the Liberals, home defence was primarily the responsibility of the Navy; if it failed, no defensive army could save the country. The Opposition therefore, rejected the Government's Reforms and the Imperialists solidly supported the main body of the party. What had made this possible, was the militarism which they believed was implicit in the Government proposals. Campbell-Bannerman concluded that:

this is running counter to the whole genius and tradition of our people. Our position in the world has been made and is held by commerce and peace and amity; it must be maintained in the same manner, and not by the stirring up of the military spirit.  

How fundamental and widely held then were these Liberal fears of militarism? What exactly did the Liberals have to fear? In the first place, their main Commons spokesmen shared Campbell-Bannerman's concern. Harcourt reiterated his appeal, and after Lord Stanley's open support for the principle of compulsory service, Asquith decried the "policy, as alien to the genius of our people, as it is unsuited to the

8. Although it was true that an Army Corps had a reality in Continental countries (where they could be localised, stereotyped, and freed from draft finding obligations) which they could never have in Britain, Campbell-Bannerman was rather late in ascertaining this point, having failed to raise any objection in the previous twenty years.

geographical position of our Empire". Indeed the repugnance of militarism was a central, if usually latent, tenet of Gladstonian Liberalism. In the opinion of Liddell Hart, the almost forgotten source of their feeling came from Cromwellian times, but a much more immediate factor was the spectre of Prussian military might. Fear lest any similar influence might arise in Britain had been the fear which underlay Campbell-Bannerman's dissent from the proposal of the Hartington Commission to create a Chief of the Staff. He argued that this office bereft of administrative or executive duties, but charged with the collection of information, speculation on military matters, and the giving of advice on military policy was unnecessary and potentially evil. It was unnecessary because Britain had no designs on her neighbours and could tackle any Imperial dispute by adapting to the circumstances of the locality involved. And, it was potentially evil because if the office lacked a specific field of activity, it might be tempted "to create such a field for itself." 

10. For the support of Harcourt and Asquith, see Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.90, 14.3.01, col.1643 and Vol.94, 14.5.01, col.322.  
12. Preliminary and Further Reports (with Appendices) of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments, and the relation of those Departments to each other, and to the Treasury, C. 5979 (1890), XIX, pp.XXIX-XXXI. "I scotched, on the Hartington Commission, the fine project of a 'Chief of the Staff' who was to invent 'military policies' for us. Military plans yes, for each occasion. But 'Military Policy' we do not want." Campbell-Bannerman to Nash, 14.9.03. Campbell-Bannerman Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 41, 236 ff. 164-165.
Indeed the Liberal Party highly prized the freedom from aggressive military policy and the yoke of Continental conscription. Yet there was an even more fundamental aspect of this fear: a belief that there was a real antagonism between the military and civil ethic. J. A. Hobson in *Imperialism* (first published in 1902) outlined many of the differences and, although his thesis that militarism was the inevitable consequence of the new Imperialism would have been questioned by Liberal Imperialists, his analysis of the evils of militarism would have aroused much wider support. Whether in the form of a greatly increased voluntary Army or in the form of conscription, he dreaded the effects of militarism for its political consequences, moral degradation and inherent wastefulness of financial and human resources.

Politically, he perceived "an absolute antagonism between the activity of the good citizen and that of the soldier." The aim of the latter was not to die for his country but to kill for his country: an aim quite alien from and antagonistic to ordinary civic duties.

Indeed Hobson clearly captured the repugnance of Liberals for the activity of warfare, a feeling much enhanced by the concentration camps and farm burning of Kitchener's guerilla campaign. The majority of Liberals were not pacifists, they accepted warfare in the last resort, but they regretted its necessity when it arose. Moreover they fortified themselves with the myth that in the past they had not had to stoop to such barbarous methods: their Empire was not a military

13. A belief shared by some soldiers, especially Lord Wolseley - "the licence of democracy and socialism will be conquered by the sword, and succeeded by cruel military despotism. Then it will be that the man of talk will give way to the man of action, and the Gladstones, Harcourts, Morleys and all the most contemptible of God's creatures will black the boots of some successful Cavalry Colonel! A new Cromwell will clear the country of these frothing talkers and the soldiers will rule. Would that my lot could have been cast in such an era." Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 1.11.90. Wolseley Mss., W/P, 19/51.

Empire but one maintained by trade, commerce and Christian
friendship.\textsuperscript{15} This was an important rationale not merely because
it eschewed the methods and consequences of warfare, which would
occur in far distant places, but also because it would eschew the
passions of warfare, which might erupt at home. Nothing more
alarmed the Liberals in 1900 than the passions and fever evoked by the
War which found their crescendo on Mafeking night.\textsuperscript{16} They abhorred
and feared such outbursts of Jingoism and saw them as the hallmarks
of a society corrupted and degraded by the stimulation of military
enthusiasm.

Another fear which Hobson felt acutely was the moral degradation
associated with military, especially barrack-room, life. He quoted
from 	extit{With Remington} by L.March-Phillips, a work sympathetic to the
ordinary soldier but one which admitted that the civil standards of
morality and behaviour did not apply within the confines of an Army
barracks. Lying, theft, drunkenness, bad language were not evils but
norms in everyday behaviour.\textsuperscript{17} Even if this was a crude caricature

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Parl. Deb.}, Fourth Ser., Vol. 118, 24.2.03, col. 705.
\item \textsuperscript{16} "However on Saturday you will all be out, waving Union Jacks and
cheering the CIVs. Thank God I am in quiet country fields, where
Union Jacks are unknown." Campbell-Bannerman to Knox, 19,9,00.
Campbell-Bannerman Mss., B.M. Add, Mss. 41, 221, ff. 276. Harcourt hoped
that peace would, "inspire a soberer sentiment in the people of
this country, and that the time will come when the melodies of the
music halls and the Mafeking mobs will not be regarded as the true
exponents of English statesmanship." \textit{Parl. Deb.}, Fourth Ser., Vol. 90,
14,3,01, col. 1640. See also G.P.C. Masterman, \textit{From the Abyss} (Lon.,
1902), pp. 2 and 7 and J.A. Hobson, \textit{The Psychology of Jingoism} (Lon.,
1901).
\item Whether there was a difference between the Mafeking cele-
brations and Jingo crowds as R.Price argues in \textit{An Imperial War}
and the British Working Class} (Lon., 1972), ch. IV is irrelevant to
the point that this difference was not perceived at the time.
\item \textsuperscript{17} J.A. Hobson, \textit{Imperialism} (Lon., 1902), p. 141.
\end{itemize}
of rank-and-file behaviour and even if the Army had improved in these respects, there was still considerable truth in these assertions and they reflected the opinion of many in civilian occupations.

Certain magistrates pardoned thieves if they promised to enter the Army; some publicans and theatre managers refused admission to soldiers in uniform; and Captain Cairnes ascribed the decline in punishments for drunkenness as evidence of a slackening in discipline rather than a slackening of drunkenness. Albert Spicer M.P., a civilian without any knowledge of the Army but prepared to reiterate the sweeping generalisations of many at the time, argued that nine out of every ten people if told about a boy who had joined the Army, "would at once think that he was a bit of a scapegrace". Indeed the War Office acknowledged this problem when it instituted the requirement of character references for all recruits in 1903. This move however, hardly weakened the Radical critique of Army life. Bad characters were only part of their objections; even more profoundly they condemned the fundamentals of Army life - the sacrifice of individual liberty, the degrading discipline, and the communal living. In their opinion these factors would always deter an increased number of recruits with good physique, character and education. And, irrespective of this, they queried, were not the slum bred majority of recruits the most suitable people for the barbarities of warfare? In short they considered that the intrinsic military requirements of enforced discipline and barracks-room life only

compounded the degrading profession of training to kill one's fellow man.

However, the Liberals most immediate fear was the wastefulness inherent in any augmentation of the country's military forces. The expenditure in monetary terms was only part of their fears, the more long term fear was the wastage of human resources. They considered that any Army recruitment from the skilled labouring classes was liable to impair directly the nation's industrial productivity. What they dreaded was more than the loss of man hours: they feared that these skills and the ability to use them would also be in jeopardy. In their opinion, if lads entered the Army instead of an apprenticeship, then their individuality, initiative and enterprise would be crushed by the mechanical discipline of the Service. 21. Once again if this fear was extreme and generalised, other Liberals echoed it and it did contain a substance of truth. Post colours employment was a problem for the Army and employers complained before the Ward Committee in 1906 that ex-soldiers, particularly from the infantry of the line, had an erect bearing and a sense of discipline, but little else. 22. Furthermore, if this was a substantial problem in itself, its consideration at the turn of the century gave it an even greater degree of significance. Given the rise of major industrial and commercial competitors to Britain, these circumstances seemed to Liberals, singularly inappropriate for the diversion of any more than the minimum of the nation's energies into the military channel. 23.

22. Especially the evidence of Mr. Harvey (Q.1110), Minutes of Evidence Taken before the Committee on Civil Employment of Ex-Soldiers and Sailors, C.2992 (1906), XIV.
These fears of militarism would have been sufficiently
difficult to assuage in themselves, without the Liberals' complimen-
tary belief that preparations for war were the worst possible means
for the preservation of peace. In answer to Brodick's Army Reforms,
Harcourt resurrected the argument that between nations, armaments were
a cause of war and great armaments the cause of great wars. More
philosophically, Campbell-Bannerman added that within a country,
policy and armaments acted and reacted upon each other with a marginal
point of difference between policy governing armaments and armaments
governing policy. What he feared was not the problem of controlling
these weapons or the soldiers who would wield them or even the indu-
trialists who would manufacture them, but rather the excitement which
they would arouse. He asserted that an increase in armaments:

may be provocative to your neighbours; and worse still
it may stimulate an ambitious and aggressive spirit
among your people.25

This was the real significance of the Liberal fears prompted by the
jingoism of the nineties and the activities of the mob on Mafeking
night; the fear lest Governments in the future might be panicked as
they believed this one had, into rash and unnecessary increases of
military expenditure and commitments. They claimed that foreign
entanglements and the necessity of despatching large forces abroad
could be avoided by judicious, rational and temperate diplomacy.

The Government Reforms therefore aroused a host of Opposition
fears and suspicions. To a degree these were not new. The frequent
proposals in the Conservative press during the previous year, which
sponsored a Militia Ballot, sweeping Army Reforms and a vast increase

in military expenditure may have prepared the Liberal reaction. However the speculation in the press was much less significant than the Government action. Brodrick's desire to increase the military forces and expenditure and above all, his threat of conscription, accounted for both the substance and vehemence of the Liberal response. Their reservations were a mixture of long held prejudices and contemporary fears, with the latter coloured and heightened by both the events in South Africa and their repercussions at home. They reflected a wide span of attitudes from popular prejudices to cherished Liberal notions about the proper and respectable methods of diplomacy. But, in terms of value, this comprehensive body of fears and objections only served to unite the parliamentary party in opposition to the Government measures. It was much less useful in the formation of a coherent Opposition policy on the issue of Army Reform. This was the real dilemma because no responsible party, which believed in the efficacy and use of the Army, could ignore its performances in the early months of the War. Certain aspects of the Army required reform: the Liberal Imperialists had acknowledged this priority; and even Campbell-Bannerman had recognised that the efficiency of the Army might be improved. The Liberals' problem was to specify which aspects required reform and posit proposals which would not be ruinous for the rest of society.

In the first place, the Liberal leaders easily agreed on the broad and general principles which determined the structure of the Army. The primary responsibility for home defence, they allotted to the Royal Navy: if it failed, no body of soldiers, however numerous, could ward off the invader. Consequently, apart from their other objections they could dismiss the strategic necessity for compulsory service. For
Imperial defence, they recognised that the constant priority was to supply drafts and reliefs for the Indian and colonial garrisons. In this role, the efficiency of the Cardwellian double battalions was difficult to question: the flower of the British Army guarded the North-West Frontier and the Liberal leaders never doubted the need to preserve this system. The real problems arose with Britain's ability to react to any Imperial emergency. The ideal requirements were a small, mobile and efficient expeditionary force fully equipped and in perfect training, which could be despatched across the seas at a moment's notice. The dilemma was how to realise these requirements within the Army at home.

Some of these requirements were outwith the expertise and concern of both the Opposition and the Government. Recommendations on training and equipment were left to the military advisors returning from South Africa, while the details of mobilisation and transport were the administrative concern of the War Office and the Admiralty. Where the Liberals could make positive suggestions was on recruiting incentives and the career prospects of the soldier, which were contributory factors to the overall efficiency of an expeditionary force. With regard to the regimental officers, Liberal opinion reflected a widely held public belief that many officers had failed to devote the requisite dedication towards their profession. Even prior to the revelations of Aker- Douglas Report, the incapacity of some officers in the field and the revelations by Captain Cairns in the Westminster Gazette of the indolence, expensive socialising and sporting interests of the officers at home suggested a lack of professional zeal on the part of junior officers.

26. For the agreement of Liberal leaders on these principles, see the speeches of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, _Parl. Deb._, Fourth Ser., Vol.90, 14.3.01, cols. 1612-1613 and Vol.94, 16.5.01, col.317.
One remedy, which Campbell-Bannerman immediately recommended, was increased promotions from the ranks. Apart from placating the Radical demand for a democratised officer corps, Campbell-Bannerman saw two main benefits in this proposal: it would increase the proportion of career orientated officers and would stimulate recruiting by providing some tangible career prospects. If the soldier could reasonably expect promotion to positions of command then a much improved quality of recruit might offer himself for the Service. Indeed Campbell-Bannerman rated promotion opportunities, improved living conditions and less humiliating rules of drill and service as more likely to attract a higher quality of recruit than a mere increase in the rates of pay.

However, there were real incongruities in the Liberal proposal to improve the quality of Army recruits at a time when so many had been alarmed by the spectre of militarism. The party was always able to oppose the Government, especially when it increased the pay of recruits in the 1902-3 Estimates, but it could not agree to persevere with any particular measure of Army Reform. This was neither the result of internal party divisions nor of pressure by the Radicals on the leadership for the issue was simply not that important. Rather it was the reflection of the internal doubts which were held by the Liberal spokesmen themselves. Campbell-Bannerman, for example, agreed with Hobson that any improvement in the quality of recruits might impinge directly upon the skilled labour resources and productive power of the country. He accepted that there was an inherent wastefulness in any

effort to attract skilled artisans into the Army. Moreover, he argued that the Army's existing recruiting patterns provided a real service for the community. The Army by its provision of regular food, exercise and discipline was helping to rehabilitate men who were recruited from among the least able of the urban poor.  

Campbell-Bannerman indeed, had held these doubts over the years, and had written prior to the War that if the Army sought a higher quality of recruit, the:  

loss to the community would be greatly heavier than that of the loafers and idlers whom we at present get and make men of. That is a side of the question often lost sight of.  

In short, when pressed by the disasters of the War and the Government Reforms, the Opposition had stumbled onto a real dilemma. First, there were considerable problems in the bland call for increased promotions from the ranks. There were problems in readjusting the rates of pay of officers which had not been raised since 1806; there were problems in the control of mess expenditure; and there were problems in the curtailment of some forms of regimental, especially cavalry, recreation. Also there were real human difficulties: the ages of promoted non-commissioned officers; the possibility of social prejudices; and the difficulty of reconciling present and potential officers to any form of sumptuary control. Although it was the prerogative of the Opposition to say that "difficulties are made to be encountered and overcome", they could not even resolve whether these difficulties ought to be overcome. Indeed this dilemma seemed so  

intractable that rather than find a solution, the Liberals simply suppressed it. Instead they concentrated on the unifying, popular but singularly negative policy of demanding retrenchment on the Estimates and in the size of the expeditionary force. 32.

The demand for retrenchment therefore reflected not merely a desire for fiscal economy and for a reduced level of military expenditure, but it also reflected the failure to resolve conflicting attitudes towards the Army. This does not mean that throughout the period as a whole, the Army did not remain a peripheral concern for the party. When the controversies arose over Education and Free Trade, attendances at the Army Debates again slumped to the forty long suffering Service Members. Lack of knowledge about the Army and indifference towards it were the prevailing norms amongst the Opposition. Indeed the main criticism of the Government came from its own back benches - the Hughligans who hounded Brodrick and the Militia Colonels who thwarted Arnold-Forster. Nevertheless, Liberal interest in Army Reform flared briefly; the efficiency of the Army was a matter of national concern; and the Opposition did suggest a remedy-promotion from the ranks - which a Government could undertake within reduced Estimates. An explanation for their failure to press this priority whether it be a preoccupation with other issues or the indolence of Campbell-Bannerman, cannot be complete unless some cognizance is taken of their fear of militarism and the dilemma which it

32. And, when Arnold-Forster became Secretary of State for War and attempted to introduce a long and short service Army, Campbell-Bannerman was able to campaign for a restoration of the Cardwell system while remaining uncommitted to any further measure of Reform. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman to Lord Halliburton, 7.4.05 and Campbell-Bannerman to Sir R. Knox, 7.4.05. Campbell-Bannerman Mss., F.M. Add. Mss. 41, 218, ff. 356 and 41, 221, ff. 291.
posed about whether they ought to improve the efficiency of the Army. Their fear was not the long term dread lest a rejuvenated Army threaten the State but rather, that any improvement in the Army might be costly in human resources, and might also be a cause for the eruption of the unruly passions in the civil population. Moreover, this failure to commit themselves in Opposition had a real significance for the future Liberal Government. It enabled Haldane to enter the War Office with considerable freedom of manoeuvre.
Section 3

The development of structural Army Reform in the aftermath of the South African War
Chapter 7

The Economic Retrains on Army Reform

"My reply was that economy and efficiency were not incompatible; that I believed we could obtain a finely organised Army for less money that at present, but that a finer Army we must have, even if it cost more."


In contrast with the historiography of the Haldane Army Reforms, Chapter 7 surveys the gradual emergence of economic restraints upon Army Reform in the aftermath of the South African War. It notes that the fear of bloated Estimates had never wholly disappeared in wartime, although the ambivalence in the Government ranks had been suppressed to promote the War and implement the Brodrick Reforms. The chapter maintains however, that once the War had ended and the Reforms been abandoned, financial considerations became increasingly important, and that any scheme of Reform had to comply with the retrenchment in the peacetime economy. For Haldane, economies were necessary to secure Parliamentary support, underline that existing resources were the only basis for Army Reform, and recognise that Army Reform was only one of the many concerns of a peacetime Government. The chapter concludes that the advocate of Reform had to justify his proposals as a bearable peacetime proposition, and that economy was a more important restraint on Haldane than he subsequently acknowledged.
Following his exclusion from the Coalition Cabinet in May 1915, Haldane prepared and circulated to his former colleagues a Memorandum of events between 1906-1915. The document was a defence of his record as Secretary of State for War and as an Anglo-German diplomat. It emphasised the political difficulties which he had encountered as Secretary of State for War; noted the foresight which he had shared with Sir Edward Grey about a likely Franco-German conflict; and testified to the success of his structural Army Reforms.\(^1\) Haldane used this document as a basis for his published Memoirs, Before the War (London, 1920) and An Autobiography (London, 1929).

In each of these accounts, Haldane argues that a perception of a new strategic purpose in January 1906 underpinned the structural reforms of the Regular Army - an interpretation which has been accepted by biographers and historians.\(^2\) Moreover, he insists that an awareness of Continental requirements led to a revision of mobilisation planning, and determined the size and organisation of the British Expeditionary Force. Haldane claims that:

\[\text{I became aware at once that there was a new army problem. It was, how to mobilise and concentrate at a place of assembly to be opposite the Belgian frontier, a force calculated as adequate... to make up for the inadequacy of the French armies.}\] \(^3\)

Nevertheless, the Memoirs and the Memorandum remain as belated attempts

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to restore an unjustly tarnished reputation. Although this purpose does not discredit their intrinsic value, it casts doubt on their reliability as historical sources, and requires further examination to see whether retrospective opinion telescoped events and simplified pre-war perceptions, and whether considerations of Continental strategy, so important in war and post-war writing, were equally important in 1906. In examining the process of Army Reform, what ought to be measured is the priority that a Secretary of State for War can accord to strategic purposes, given the immediate commitments and short term restraints, which beset him as the head of a peacetime Department.

Economy in the military budget was the primary restraint upon those who became Secretary of State for War in the aftermath of the South African War. During the War, public expenditure had reached a peak of £205.2 million in 1902 - a 74% increment on its peacetime level - with military expenditure consuming £92.3 millions. This volume of expenditure included both the cost of the War and the cost of implementing Army Reform in time of War. Indeed the Secretary of State had used the incidence of public concern over the efficiency of the Army to justify a 50% increase in normal military expenditure. Even so, the War had remained a protracted and increasingly unpopular experience: a testimony to the need for further measures of military improvement. In short, it had bequeathed a double legacy in the desires for military economy and Army Reform, and ensured that the post-war reformers would have to pay an increased regard to financial restrictions.

4. See Appendix III: Military Expenditure in the period 1895-1914. The War itself cost £217 million, adding £149 million (over 20%) to the National Debt; see J. Ehrman, Cabinet Government and War (Lon., 1958), p.25.
The concern over the level of military spending had an early origin in the wartime Cabinet: Lord Salisbury and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had feared for the consequences of wartime Army Reform and had counselled delay. Despite this advice from the senior members of the Cabinet, the majority of their colleagues had been unwilling to begrudge the Army in its moment of trial, and had supported the requests of Brodrick and the Commander-in-Chief. It was only upon the cessation of hostilities that a Unionist backbench group, the Hughligans, had begun to challenge the level of military spending. A contemporary reporter claimed that the main interests of the Hughligans were not retrenchment, but the improved distribution of Army expenditure, the need to establish the strategic primacy of the Navy, and the value of the auxiliary forces for Home Defence. However, he had mistaken the strategic and military rationalisations in the Hughligan argument for the core of their complaint. In the first place, the campaign emanated from the early opposition of Winston Churchill to the Brodrick proposals: an opposition founded upon retrenchment - the cause of his father's fall in 1886. Secondly, the Hughligans lacked any specialist spokesmen on Army Reform; were unable to agree (or even formulate) measures of Reform; and relied upon the articles of Leo Amery in

5. Sir Hicks-Beach argued, "First finish the war, then adapt your military organisation in the leisure of peace, to the work it has to do." 9.2.00. Cab. 37/60/2. Brodrick recollected that his proposals on pay and terms of service were only sanctioned, "against Lord S.-- by a majority - after an appeal such (as) he never made to the Cabinet in his life, and we all thought he would go..." Brodrick to Curzon, 15.3.03. Midleton Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50074, ff. 124.


The Times for technical suggestions on Army Organisation. Finally, the call for retrenchment was so evident in Parliament (if not in the press gallery) that it divided the Hughligans from the pre-War Army Reformers, including Sir Charles Dilke and the majority of the Service Members.

The effects of this campaign were cumulative rather than immediate, since the Hughligans were few in number and lacked any positive proposals on Army Reform. Yet, their sarcastic attacks were effective inasmuch as they coincided with the rapidly waning enthusiasm for the Brodrick Reforms. Throughout 1902-03, transparencies in the Army Corps Scheme became increasingly apparent, as Brodrick failed to form three of his six Corps because of faulty estimates in recruiting and in the post-war deployment of battalions. Furthermore, the effusion of complaints from serving officers before the Select Committees and Royal Commissions in 1903 augmented the wave of dissatisfaction with the wartime reforms. Although the Cabinet closed its ranks on appropriate occasions and Balfour continued to support St. John Brodrick, the Prime Minister, he voted with his party in support of the Hughligan Amendment, Dilke feared that retrenchment might tempt a Government to economise on guns, armaments and stores. He thought that these items might require more expenditure, and believed that real savings could only come from "revolutionary Army Reform."
Minister seized the opportunity of resignations over Tariff Reform to seek another Secretary of State for War. At that time, the general disillusion with the War Office was probably more important than concern over bloated Estimates. What the Hughligan campaign had ensured was that future Cabinets would expect from Brodrick's successor not merely plausible schemes of Army Reform, but also schemes which excited less hostility on account of their financial burden.

H.O. Arnold-Forster, the new Secretary of State for War, accepted that the cost of the Army was excessive and ought to be diminished. He considered that this was of primary importance and thereby incurred the first of several rebukes from St. John Brodrick. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State only proposed to seek economies where they did not impinge upon his own Reform proposals, (i.e. the creation of an Army with concomitant short and long terms of service in which the short service Home Army fed the Reserve while the long service Army garrisoned India and the colonies). He looked upon the Auxiliary Forces and the battalions which had been raised in the War as the likeliest items for reduction. In particular, he hoped to reduce the Militia which was not liable for service abroad, cost £1,818,000 per annum, and remained 33,767 short of its Establishment. He denied that

11. After the publication of the Elgin Report, Balfour wrote, "I am extremely indignant at the injustice which has been done to the W.O. administration since '96." Balfour to Brodrick, 8.9.03. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49,720, ff.218. Instead of dismissing Brodrick, Balfour appointed him Secretary of State for India. This was important for the future Cabinet squabbles over Army Reform, since Brodrick never accepted that a change in Secretary of State implied a change in policy.

12. "I am prepared at the proper moment to challenge very seriously the possibility of any material reduction in regulars." Brodrick, Army Estimates 1904-05, 12.2.03. Cab. 37/67/38.
the decay in the force was primarily the result of War Office neglect, and insisted that less redeemable factors, like the decrease in the rural population and the difficulty of officering the force in mining districts, were more important. As a believer in Blue Water principles, he also maintained that Home Defence was a naval responsibility and hence that the Militia lacked any strategic purpose. In brief, Arnold-Forster hoped to rationalise this situation by absorbing half of the Militia battalions into the Home Service Army while disbanding the rest. To improve the Volunteers which were 105,171 short of their 346,171 Establishment; lacked sufficient officers and an organisation; and included a number of ineffective men, Arnold-Forster proposed an Establishment of 200,000 and a strength of 180,000 men. Finally, he intended to disband the 14 Infantry battalions and the Garrison regiment, which had been raised in the War and the pre-War period.

However, the Secretary of State immediately encountered opposition from the representatives of the Militia within the Conservative Party. Primarily concerned with tradition, sentiment and their county status, the Militia Colonels protested to Balfour that any Militia inefficiency of the moment reflected generations of neglect by the War Office. They demanded that a separate Department should be created for the Auxiliary Forces to rejuvenate the "old Constitutional Force", and found sympathisers in the Army Council, who demurred at the reduction of the

13. "With regard to a portion of the Militia, facts should be recognised, and a limited number of Batteries and Battalions be reduced or amalgamated. In doing this, the War Office will only be anticipating an inevitable result." Arnold-Forster to Balfour, 5.5.04, Balfour MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 49,722, ff.153-159. See also Arnold-Forster, Proposals for the Reorganisation of the Army, 19.4.04. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50,300.

entire Militia, and in Sir George Clarke who urged Army Reform upon the basis of an enlarged Militia and reduced Line. Above all, the Militia had spokesmen in the Cabinet itself - Lords Cranborne and Selborne - who effectively blocked the proposals of the Secretary of State. After a series of Cabinet deadlocks, Balfour instructed Arnold-Forster to make a general statement of his own views to Parliament, but on no account to commit the Government. Thereupon, the debate on Army Reform stagnated, with proposal and counter-proposal floundering upon two obstacles - the reluctance of Balfour to seek another Secretary of State for War, and the refusal of Arnold-Forster to consider the Militia and the Line as interchangeable units. He noted in his diary:

"Of course I am not going to weaken the Line Regiments until I have got something to put in their place; so if they don't let me have my way about the Militia, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to whistle for his money."

Nevertheless the pressure for retrenchment did not slacken. In the aftermath of the War, the utilisation of surplus clothing stocks, the reduction of men and animals in South Africa, and the receipts from sales of stores and animals enabled Arnold-Forster to reduce the


16. Arnold-Forster maintained that Balfour had not supported him over the Militia, "because Jim Cranborne and Selborne are good fellows and good Militiamen and naturally stick up for a force which they have worked so hard to save from decay." Arnold-Forster, Diary, 29.6.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss., 50,338, ff. 152, and Arnold-Forster to Balfour, 27.2.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50,344, ff. 163.

Estimates to £28,895,624 for the year 1904-05. But, the increases required by Artillery rearmament, Service Pay, the Army Reserve, Loan annuities and non-effective services threatened to augment the following year’s total by £1,628,000. Unwilling to sacrifice the Line to the Militia, Arnold-Forster only agreed to abolish the Garrison Regiment and cut the Establishments of the Colonial battalions, thereby abridging the increase to £913,100. The statistics were less significant than the recognition that the Army Estimates had become a crucial aspect of Army Reform. The Cabinet deadlock over the proposals of Arnold-Forster only in part reflected unease about his Militia recommendations – more important was the dismay provoked by the paucity of his savings. As the original offer was only a reduction of £295,000 on the automatic increase it was a disappointment for all concerned.

A compromise was reached on Estimates of £29,813,000 if Arnold-Forster accepted a ceiling of £27 millions on the Estimates for 1906-07 and the subsequent years. He agreed to the restriction, but insisted that substantial savings could only accrue with cuts in the Auxiliary Forces: a moot point which the Government left unresolved when it fell from

18. Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the Army Estimates for 1905-06, Cd.2266 (1905), xlv.

19. "The new Army Scheme: which though it effects a reduction in the cost of the Army now appears to have that cost at a level which will bitterly disappoint public opinion, and which in the present state of public finance the country will scarcely tolerate." Balfour to the King, 14.6.04. Cab.41/28/19. Finance was a cause of even greater disagreement than the Militia. See Balfour to the King, 15.6.04 and 13.7.04. Cab.41/28/20 and 25; Brodrick to Lord Kitchener, 29.4.04. Kitchener Mss., P.R.O.30/57/22; Balfour to Lord Roberts, 12.7.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/6/11; and Arnold-Forster, Diary, 7.6.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., R.M.Add.Mss.50338, ff.93.
So when Haldane became Secretary of State the need for military economy was generally established. Indeed the Radical supporters of the Liberal Party campaigned in the Election of 1906 for a return to pre-War Army Estimates. In his own campaign, Haldane appeared to contradict this trend by acknowledging obligations, "higher even than that of economy", and by maintaining that the "business of Government was to preserve the Army and Navy in as strong a position as possible."

He also insists in his Autobiography, that military efficiency was always his principal consideration, one which he would have sought even at a higher cost. Yet this was not what Haldane emphasised in his War Office Memoranda. From the outset he stipulated that any scheme of Army Reform had to comply with a financial limit of £28 millions per annum. He reiterated in subsequent memoranda that this ceiling was mandatory because he abhorred the waste and extravagance inherent in the practice of persuading the nation, when it has a hot fit, to build up military forces which it is only anxious to destroy when a cold fit succeeds, as it naturally does sooner or later.

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20. To contain the Estimates within £27 millions in 1906-07 despite the automatic increases, required a net reduction of £4,468,200 in which Arnold-Forster postulated savings of £1,818,000 on the Militia and £302,000 on the Volunteers. Arnold-Forster, Revised Proposals for Army Reform, 27.06. Cab.37/71/92. Although Austen Chamberlain doubted if he could reach his targets, Arnold-Forster remained confident. See Arnold-Forster, Memoranda, 2.8.04 and 10.8.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., R.M.Add.Mss.50302.

21. The speeches were made in the City on 4.1.06, and in East Lothian on 11.1.06. For Haldane's retrospective wisdom, see R.B.Haldane, An Autobiography (Lon.,1929),p.186.

22. Prior to the City speech, he stated, "I think it may be laid down that the expenditure on a reorganised army ought not to exceed, as a maximum, 28 millions." R.B.Haldane, A preliminary Memorandum on the present situation. Being a rough note for consideration by the Members of the Army Council, 1.1.06. Haldane Mss., N.L.S., Ms.5918, para.4. See also R.B.Haldane, The Second Memorandum, 1.2.06, para. 6 and The Third Memorandum, 23.3.06, paras.2 and 15. (these Memoranda are collected in the Haig Mss., N.L.S., Vol.32a).
Hence, while Haldane adopted a 'bold line' in public speeches, defended his Department from radical criticism and rallied military support for himself, he still insisted that Army Reform should adhere to a rigid economy.23.

This insistence upon economy as a priority in Army Reform had four main advantages. On the purely tactical level, it was vital for Haldane to cut the draft Estimates which he had inherited (postulating a £1,630,000 increase in 1906-07), and make further reductions in the Estimates for 1907-8. Although some still considered that his measures of retrenchment were inadequate, they were sufficient to secure Cabinet and Parliamentary support for his subsequent Reforms.24. Haldane's insistence upon economy also corrected any ambivalence which the War Office may have retained over financial matters. On account of its annual confrontations with the Treasury in which the latter controlled the total Estimates, the expenditure under the Votes, and the smallest detail in those Votes requiring, "strong reasons for any increased expenditure", the War Office had rarely considered that retrenchment was its main concern. Brodrick and Arnold-Forster had only paid lip service to the importance of reductions, but Haldane had insisted upon cuts wherever the Regular Army was surplus to requirements. He

23. When Haldane took his "bold line" in the City he hoped to rally military support from the despondency which they might have felt for the appearance of a Liberal Government. See, Haldane to Campbell-Bannerman, 5.1.06. Campbell-Bannerman Ms., B.M. Add. Ms. 41,213, ff.167 and Viscount Esher to Haldane, 6.1.06. Haldane Ms., M.L.S., Ms. 5907, ff.5.

24. R.B. Haldane to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, 5.1.06. Campbell-Bannerman Ms., B.M. Add. Ms. 41,213, ff.163; Campbell-Bannerman to the King, 21.2.06, Cab. 41/30/43; and Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 2.8.06. Roberts Ms., N.A.M., R/122/9/570.
disbanded nine battalions, reduced the home Establishment and maintained his Estimates within the arbitrary limit of 26 millions for the remainder of his period in office. By these financial restrictions, Haldane ensured that any future Reforms would only be based upon existing resources. Without the possibility of increased finances, the Army Council had to make proposals upon the basis of forces at hand: a requirement which neither Brodrick nor Arnold-Forster had insisted upon. Finally, the insistence upon economy realised the essential basis for Army Reform namely, a tolerable burden of peacetime expenditure. The Army, whose raison d'etre was effective operation in War, had to remain for an indefinite period of peace as a burden on the Exchequer: only if this burden was tolerable could Reform be accepted on a lasting basis.

In the post-Boer War period therefore, finance had become an increasingly prominent concern in the presentation of Army Reform. It was not a new concern - the pre-War Army Reformers had accepted economic restrictions in order to secure wider support in the Cabinet and Parliament, and the claim of Haldane that an Army could still be efficient within economic limits was far from original. Nevertheless, the assertion was particularly important at this time, because the anxiety over the size of the Estimates reflected the uncertain status of the Army as a national priority after a long, expensive and increasingly unpopular

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war. On the other hand, it also underlined that irrespective of its future war performance, which might be improved by Reform, the Army had to be maintained for an indefinite period of peace as a burden on the Exchequer. The advocate of Reform had to justify his proposals as a bearable peacetime proposition apart from their potential value in time of war. By managing to achieve this, Haldane laid a more solid foundation than either of his predecessors, for the reform of the structure and organisation of the home Army.
Chapter 8

The Provision of Drafts as a Priority in Army Reform.

"One of the most brilliant of our military critics wrote lately that the War Minister was thought to be planning for war, when all that he was thinking of was to maintain and to relieve military policemen occupied in looking after a distant frontier."


Chapter 8 examines the attempt to restore a regular supply of drafts and reliefs to the overseas garrisons after the South African War. It notes that the maintenance of this supply had been a principal aim in the Army structure created by Cardwell, and that the War had dislocated the system providing an opportunity for Reform. It analyses the attempts of Brodrick and Arnold-Forster to restore the flow of drafts while reforming the Cardwell system, but claims that the reforms of Brodrick only aggravated the problem while those of Arnold-Forster failed to receive the necessary support. It also contrasts these abortive measures with the restoration of the Cardwell system and the pre-war terms of service by Haldane, and asserts that a steady flow of drafts was his primary concern, even if this restricted the possible size of his Expeditionary Force. Indeed the chapter concludes that the requirements of peace, rather than Continental strategy and the possible demands of war, determined the size of the British Expeditionary Force.
For Haldane and his predecessors as Secretary of State for War, the principal concern in Army Organisation was the maintenance of the overseas garrisons. As the priority in the Cardwell system, this constant peacetime requirement had limited the size and organisation of the home Army and hence of any Expeditionary Force. In the pre-war period, the annual provision of drafts had been effectively met albeit with unfortunate repercussions for some battalions in the home Army. However, the demands of War had distorted the system with the suspension of drafts to India and the bountying of 16,650 men to extend their Indian service for an average of three and three-quarter years. To compensate for this expedient in the period 1903-06, the Secretary of State for War had to find an additional 5,000 recruits per annum, besides replacing the war wastage and post-war discharges, which had reduced the Establishment by 33,500 men and the Reserve by over 20,000 men.1 The problem of post-war replenishment therefore progressively worsened during the War, and the foremost consideration in structural Army Reform was a return to the pre-war flow of drafts and garrison reliefs.

In the provision of overseas drafts, the first concern was the size of the annual requirement. Given the number of units abroad and the enlistment terms of service this was a reasonably precise calculation, one rendered even more reliable by the relatively stable demands of the Indian garrison. The strength of that garrison had been established in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny with a view to redressing the

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proportion of Native to European troops. Although Lord Lawrence had reduced the size of the British and Native forces in 1869, the Government had to restore the European garrison to 73,532 men after the Pendjeh Incident in 1885, and it remained at approximately that level for the rest of the century. In other words, the justification for the garrison was neither fear of a Russian invasion nor fear of tribal disorder on the North-West Frontier, but the maintenance of British troops in sufficient proportion to overawe the Native forces. This was a constant and invariable requirement, one which depended upon an annual draft of some 150 men per battalion, for the 52 battalions stationed in India.

To provide the normal annual draft and obviate the shortages precipitated by the wartime dislocation, St. John Brodrick recommended that the Cabinet should either improve the recruiting incentive or abandon the voluntary system. Reluctant to adopt Conscription, the Cabinet sanctioned the request for an increase in pay and an alteration in the terms of service. The main feature of the new terms of service was a three year period of enlistment in the Colours at an increased rate of pay for efficient soldiers (i.e. if 19 years or over, and if...
the soldier received 1/0 a day). Thereafter the soldier had
the option of entering the Reserve or, of extending his Colours service
with an extra 6d. a day, (subject to character suitability and a second
class standard of shooting - third class or lower received an extra 4d.
a day). The purported advantages were the ability to garrison India
with long service soldiers; the opportunity to augment the Reserve
quickly; and the possibility of the Army attracting more, and better
recruits, and thereby depending less upon 'specials' and immature boys.5

For structural Army Reform, these measures were an attempt to
secure the elasticity of terms lacking in the Cardwell system and meet
the different needs of the Indian and the home Army. They represented
a development of the reforms introduced by Lord Lansdowne, and aimed at
an improvement in the status of the soldier by removing some of his
career restrictions. Lord Roberts had likened the purpose to a policy
of "free trade and reciprocity in the army," whereby the contract:

to be made between the State and the soldier should be advantageous
to the former and satisfactory to the latter.6

Unfortunately, this policy did not allow for the brute sagacity of the
rank-and-file: rather than extend their service in the required propor-
tions, the rankers either flocked into the Reserve or waited upon the
offer of additional bounties to extend their service. To provide an
annual draft in excess of 10,000 troops, the War Office required an

5. Brodrick, Pay and Terms of Service in the Army, 4.1.02, Cab.37/60/2.
For the support of Lord Roberts, see Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 23.1.02 quoted in Brodrick, Reconstruction of the Army, 15.2.04, Cab.
37/69/27 and Lord Roberts to Arnold-Forster, 20.1.04, Roberts MSS.,

Vol.15, No.LXXXVIII (June,1884), p.1061. See also Parl. Deb., Fourth
Ser., Vol.101, 4.3.02, col.389.
extension of 71.68% of the eligible Infantry. However, by
1st May 1904, only 12.17% had extended and even the other arms had
found it difficult to meet their requisite quotas.\(^7\) As troops could
not serve in the tropics until the age of twenty, only the soldiers
in their third year embarked as drafts, and they had either to be trans¬
ported home a year later or offered bounties to extend their service.
The Reform in short, aggravated the problem, increased the expense and
virtually forced the War Office to re-enlist its soldiers after two
years service.\(^6\)

This chaotic state of affairs could not continue and Arnold-Forster
abandoned the schemes of his predecessor. On 20th October 1904, he
stopped three years recruiting and began recruiting four days later on
a nine years term of service to supply the requisite drafts while the
Reserve remained abnormally swollen. This was a temporary measure and
represented along with the deadlock over the Militia, the frustration of
Arnold-Forster's proposals. He had to discard his intention of
territorialising short service battalions in the United Kingdom and of

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Infantry of the line 71.68 12.17
Cavalry 41.90 5.64
Horse and Field Artillery 31.23 29.58
Garrison & Mountain Artillery 100.00 33.76


8. "A.G. reported that only 140 men had accepted the special offer of the
6d. to go abroad before their time. Evidently there is a cabal or ring
among the men, as I knew there would be. The object is to force us
attracting a better class of recruit with the inducement of career prospects as non-commissioned officers in the short service battalions. He also had to forego any addition in the number of units and officers, the transformation of the Militia into Line battalions, and the augmentation of the Reserve. Nevertheless, in a Parliamentary statement on 14 July 1904, he affirmed his adherence to the Army Reform proposals which he had presented in the pre-War period. He insisted that concurrent long and short service recruiting was the only means whereby India and the colonies could be garrisoned with long service soldiers while a Home Service Army fed the Reserve. Also by the withdrawal of certain Colonial battalions and the retention of 26 long service battalions at home, he hoped to maintain a striking force capable of mobilisation without the Reserve. Above all, he intended to found the system upon the replacement of the Cardwellian linked battalions by the creation of large depots for training and feeding purposes. As Sir Charles Dilke acknowledged, this was the culmination of the Army Reform campaign; an official statement in favour of the separate terms of enlistment with a recognition of their divergent strategic purposes.

In the hiatus precipitated by the suspension of these proposals, members of the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Army Council scrutinised the New Army Scheme. They condemned the proposals on three counts. First, they refused to sanction a Scheme which would require a sustained and costly period of innovation, possibly over

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four years in length, and require support on a continuous and assured basis from a Government whose own future was far from certain. Also, as the Scheme could not be introduced in a piecemeal gradual manner, the possibility of abortive Reform risked a period of total dislocation for the Army. Secondly, the civilian pundits on the Committee of Imperial Defence, Sir George Clarke and Viscount Esher, had a high regard for what the Scheme sacrificed. For Clarke, the potential value of the old Constitutional Force outweighed the expense of a projected Home Service Army. As he defined his position:

An Army which serves abroad we know. A militia which serves abroad in times of emergency, we know. A nondescript force living in county towns and composed almost wholly of boys - a force that requires to be recreated if needed for military service - we do not know.

Viscount Esher also argued that the ideas of Arnold-Forster were outdated in the circumstances of post-war Reform: in particular that they sacrificed the quality of the home Army for an increase in the size of the Reserve. Indeed he maintained that the New Army Scheme destroyed the concept of a "Field Army encamped and ready for war".

For his own scheme based on the Militia, see Clarke to Balfour, 18.6.04 and Clarke to Sandars, 27.6.04. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49,703, ff. 31-34, 53. Although he supported long service and large depots, he opposed all the other aspects of the Arnold-Forster Reforms. Clarke to Balfour, 9.12.04. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49,700, ff. 239-254.
13. Viscount Esher to J.H. Sandars, 21.11.04. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49,718, ff. 125. Esher accepted that an Expeditionary Force should be not less than 2 divisions but claimed that under Arnold-Forster’s scheme, "it is a Brigade short. This is all wrong. He says that the number of men, even so, will be greater than French now has at Aldershot. Granted - but that is our old fallacy of 'counting heads'. The real question is number of 'cadres' and not of men." Esher to Balfour, 25.9.04. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49,718, ff. 122-123.
Finally, the Army Council asserted that the aims of the Scheme were optimistic, unreal and bound to be illusory. It disputed the possibility of a 35% increase in the peacetime recruiting for the Infantry of the Line; claimed that the requisite proportion of long service recruits would not be forthcoming with concurrent long and short service recruiting; and questioned the feasibility of greatly increased officer targets. Also it thought that the provision of barracks and essential training facilities for the territorialised short service battalions would prove prohibitively expensive; and doubted the wartime efficiency of battalions in which Reservists would comprise 30% of the strength. For the Army Council therefore, Reform had to be founded upon available resources rather than upon a conjectural level of requirements determined by a particular interpretation of the Army's strategic role.¹⁴

These perspectives did not immediately prevail. Esher and Clarke could only bombard the Prime Minister with critical correspondence and submit alternative proposals from a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. They were unable to influence events because Balfour who endorsed their alternatives and underlined the impracticality of the New Army Scheme, refused to transgress upon the Ministerial Responsibility of the Secretary of State.¹⁵ He enabled Arnold-Forster to dismiss the criticism, "as a counsel of despair," and obtain a Pyrrhic victory within the Cabinet. On 22 June 1905, the Secretary of State secured authorisation for a limited experiment in short service recruiting, an experiment attenuated in its impact by the fall of the Government

¹⁴. Objections of the three military members of the Army Council to the proposals of the Secretary of State, 10.6.05. Cab.37/78/107.

¹⁵. Balfour to Arnold-Forster, 10.2.05 and 14.2.05, Balfour Mss.B.M. Add. Mss.49,723, ff.83 and Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss.50,309, ff.74. See also A.J.Balfour, Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Army Reorganisation, 30.3.05. Cab.37/75/54.
in the following December. Thereafter the failure of Arnold-Forster to convince 'informed' opinion reaped a predictable reward. His critics in the Army Council and the Committee of Imperial Defence continued to proffer advice and reiterate their fears to Haldane. In effect they were only preaching to the converted for the liberals had not overlooked the Unionist paralysis over Army Reform, and were unlikely to sustain a policy antithetical to the Cardwell system. Nevertheless, the disarray in the War Office and the volume of hostile opinion evoked by his predecessor, assured that Haldane would seek a fresh approach on the issue of Army Reform.

To underpin this new approach, Haldane had still to secure a steady flow of drafts to India, and the immediate and foreseeable size of this requirement was his primary consideration. Given the existing Establishment and the terms of service fashioned by Arnold-Forster, a Cabinet Committee on Indian Drafts had forecast a shortage of about 6,000 drafts in 1907-08. As a palliative for this impending crisis, the Committee proposed to bounty eight year men in order that they might re-engage on the expiration of their Colours service.


17. As Campbell-Bannerman remarked, "A.F. is done... All he said from first to last scarcely evoked a cheer: his colleagues gave him no support... It is quite understood that his scheme is dead... The odd thing is that the young bloods whose one cry for some years has been away with horrid linked Batt'n System, are now ardent Cardwellians, all for double batt'n and 7 & 5 years service." Campbell-Bannerman to Lord Haliburton, 7.4.05. Campbell-Bannerman Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 41,218, ff.354.

Alternatively, Sir George Clarke suggested that the Indian garrison might be depleted to the extent of the shortage, especially as the Russo-Japanese War had eroded the possibility of a Russian campaign in Afghanistan. In the early months of 1906, the Indian Office and the Committee of Imperial Defence reassessed the Indian garrison, but Lord Kitchener, despite his willingness to effect economies by reducing the size of his Establishments, would not agree that there was a military justification for the reductions. Indeed, he reaffirmed that the raison d'être for the garrison was internal security, a task rendered more difficult by the spectacular defeat of European troops in Manchuria.

In his Parliamentary statement of 12 July 1906, Haldane endorsed this explanation and accepted that the size of the Indian garrison would remain a fixed requirement upon the home Army.

For the provision of overseas drafts, Haldane sponsored a reversion to the Cardwell system. After the abortive Reforms of his predecessors, Haldane defended this return to the old conditions of service (7 or 8 years' Colours service followed by 5 or 4 years' Reserve service), on the grounds of simplicity, economy and proven viability as a draft.

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19. Cabinet Committee on Indian Drafts, 12.8.05. Cab.17/13A; and Clarke to Secretary of State for War, 16.12.05. Cab.17/13A.

20. "Japan's jump has fired the imagination of the Indians, and opened up to their minds possibilities previously unheard of. They cannot see how different they are in every way to the Japanese and feel convinced that, if given the chance, they would do as well or better." Lord Kitchener to Lord Salisbury, undated and quoted in Sir G. Arthur, Life of Lord Kitchener (3 Vols., Lon., 1920), Vol.11, p.238.

21. Haldane endorsed an Indian Establishment of 79,446 men. "We are under an obligation to keep that force up. The size of that force was determined at the time of the Mutiny. It is there, not primarily to resist aggression on the part of the Great Powers; it is there for the purpose of preserving order in India." Earl Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.160, 12.7.06, cols.1082-1083.
producing arrangement. He also repeated the pre-War arguments that the system had produced a Reserve of seasoned soldiers (albeit only one able to bring the home Army up to War Establishment), and had enabled the feeding unit, in contrast to the large depot, to fulfil the double function of draft finding in peace and of readiness for war on mobilisation. 22. However he improved on the pre-War organisation inasmuch as he realised a parity between the battalions at home and abroad. Having found a condition of characteristic strain in which the 71 battalions at home fed the 85 battalions abroad, he reduced 8 of the battalions abroad in 1906, and withdrew battalions from South Africa in 1908 to realise a balance of 74 battalions at home and abroad. Even more important, he stipulated that Army Reform would have to be based upon the size of the home Army as fashioned by its peacetime requirements. Haldane neither sought to increase the home Army as a preliminary to Reform nor to seek an Army whose size was dictated by a strategic purpose: he merely sought to reform the existing Army whose battalion strength was limited by its draft finding purposes. 23.

Commentators have rarely acknowledged that this factor had to determine the size of the Expeditionary Force. 24. In writing about the strategic purpose and military capability of the British Expeditionary

22. R.B. Haldane, Second Memorandum, 1.2.06, paras. 7-8; Third Memorandum, 23.3.06, paras. 8-10; and Memorandum on Army Reorganisation, 30.7.06, para. 7. Haig MSS., N.I.S., Vol. 32a.

23. "Two considerations completely dominate the whole problem of Army organisation. They are, in their order of urgency, as follows:-(a) The necessity for finding drafts in peace for units in India, in Egypt, and in colonial garrisons.

(b) The mobilisation as an organised field force of the units which are maintained at home in view of (a)." Haldane, Considerations governing the Peace Strength of the Regular Army, 1.2.07.

24. A force of 6 large divisions and 1 Cavalry Division - the maximum number of divisions which could be formed out of the force retained at home for draft finding purposes.
Force, they have presumed that this strategic and military purpose should have determined its size. Sir William Robertson criticised the Force as too small to intervene effectively in a European War, and Sir Henry Wilson continually queried the military significance of 6 Divisions. On the other hand, Haldane asserts in his Memoirs, that the size of the Force had been determined with a view to its effective participation on the Western Front, a point reiterated by Wilson before the Committee of Imperial Defence where he claimed that 6 Divisions "might prove to be the deciding factor". Even a recent commentator has argued that the gap between the Continental strategy and Britain's military capability revealed a determination to adhere to an independent role regardless of its viability. However, the paucity of the British Expeditionary Force was not an example of prescient thought about troop dispositions on the Western Front in 1914, and did not relate to a strategy, Continental or otherwise.

Indeed the limit upon the Army's organisation was neither martial nor strategic: it simply reflected the peacetime exigencies, in particular the draft producing requirement of the home Army. The strategic intentions and military capabilities were merely attempts to rationalise a Force, whose organisational limits reflected the restrictions of peacetime criteria.

26. R. H. Haldane, Before the War (Lon., 1920), pp. 30-31 and Sir H. Wilson, Action to be taken in the event of intervention in a European War, 23.3.11. Cab. 2/2/114.
Chapter 9

The Evolution of Military Strategy and its importance for Army Reform

"It is imperatively necessary that some qualified person or body should lay down in terms which cannot be misunderstood, the limits of work which the Army is intended to do."


Chapter 9 examines the relevance of strategic considerations for the structural reforms of Haldane. It notes that after the re-examination of national strategy in the period 1903-05, Balfour had accepted that the Navy provided an adequate defence for the homeland and that the primary responsibility of the Army was the defence of India. Furthermore, it claims that although Haldane stressed a continuous strategic policy so as not to alarm his Parliamentary colleagues, the policy was only continuous inasmuch as he accepted the maritime view on Home Defence and the commitment to an overseas military role. More significantly, he was aware from January 1906 onwards of the developments on the Continent and directed the planning of his Department towards this front. However, the chapter does not accept that this Continental commitment determined either the basic structure or the features of the British Expeditionary Force. On the contrary, it asserts that the creation of large divisions, the provision of ancillary services and the calculations to obviate wastage in war reflected more mundane factors than foresight about the nature of a future war in Europe.
A strategic commitment was undoubtedly important for Army Reform. In their pre-war campaign, the civilian reformers had insisted that strategic policy should underpin reorganisation. As Arnold-Forster maintained:

"Our existing military organisation is based upon no known and accepted principle. No person in authority has ever yet succeeded in explaining on what basis the army is maintained at its present strength, or why in any given year Parliament has been asked to sanction any particular establishment." 1

The need for an authoritative statement reflected the contradictory claims of the War Office and the Admiralty. The Departments vied with each other for the honour of defending the homeland and justified the size and structure of their forces upon this premise. In his Army Reforms, St. John Brodrick aimed to provide for Home Defence and to maintain an Expeditionary Force, the same priorities which Stanhope had underlined a decade previously. To fulfil these priorities, Brodrick had augmented the allocated forces and, like his predecessors had based this allocation upon intuition albeit an intuition coloured by the exigencies of the South African War. It was not until the formation of the Committee of Imperial Defence on 18 December 1902, that the two Departments had to justify their policies before a standing committee of the Cabinet.

In its provision for Home Defence, the War Office feared a powerful overseas assault on London and denied that the Naval deterrent would always be effective. Instead it proffered additional assurance in an efficient field army and suggested that this would free the Navy for offensive duties. Prince Louis of Battenberg and the Naval Intelligence Department derided these claims; insisted that the Navy could prevent the landing of a large force; and only admitted vulnerability to a raid of about 5,000 men. Arthur Balfour, who sustained an interest in the Committee of Imperial Defence and gave it an appearance of authority, arbitrated between these viewpoints.

On a worst case hypothesis (i.e. the United Kingdom denuded of regular troops as in March 1900), Balfour suggested with the concurrence of Lord Roberts, that the minimum invading force capable of effective assault was 70,000 troops, a brigade of Cavalry and 25 six gun batteries. For transportation, this force required at least 210,000 tons of shipping, only half of which was ever available on a single day in the ports between Dunkirk and Brest. As such the French would have to seize every British vessel in harbour, thereby losing the element of surprise; concentrate the ships in Cherbourg and one other port (as no single port

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2. Provision of Land Forces for the Defence of the United Kingdom, 14.2.03. Cab.3/1/3A. Even the few dissenting voices within the War Office, who disliked the preoccupation with insular defence and wanted to increase the size of the Expeditionary Force and the garrisons of India and Egypt, never wholly discounted a military role in Home Defence. See Lt.Col.Altham, Military Needs of the Empire in a War with France and Russia, 10.8.01. Cab.3/1/1A and Sir W.G.Nicholson to Lord Roberts, 9.10.01. Cab.3/1/1A.

3. Prince Louis of Battenberg, Naval Remarks on the Military Paper "Provision of Land Forces for the Defence of the United Kingdom" of 14 February 1903, 4.3.03. Cab.3/1/8A and Naval Intelligence Department, Possibilities of invasion during temporary loss of command of the sea in home waters, 31.3.03. Cab.3/1/11A.
could handle this tonnage); and thereafter unload, refit for horse transportation, and embark the troops - a process consuming at least six days. In the opinion of Balfour, the difficulty of embarkation, the task of manoeuvring 200 transports, performe in day-light and on a fine day, on a twenty hour's journey past a hostile array of cruisers and torpedo craft, and the final delay in disembarkation thwarted any possibility of a successful invasion. He pronounced in favour of the Admiralty, and dismissed Home Defence as a strategic priority for the Regular Army.4

As the Committee of Imperial Defence lacked the means to compel departments to act upon its findings and as Balfour lacked the energy to issue directives, the War Office continued to dispute the issue and plan its strategy on traditional lines.5 In the first place, there was the sense of tradition and honourable purpose in contributing to the defence of the homeland - a purpose, which apart from the Admiralty and the Blue Water critics, had not been questioned prior to 1903.6 Secondly, there was the perpetual inter-service rivalry for the prestige of Home Defence and a larger share of the Service Estimates. Sir William Nicholson feared that compliance with the demands of the Admiralty would lead to an increased Naval strength at the expense of the Army.7

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4. A.J. Balfour, Draft Report on the Possibility of Serious Invasions, 11.11.03. Cab.3/1/16A.
6. "It is only within the last twelve months that the necessity of a large provision for home defence has been argued as unnecessary..." Brodrick to Balfour, Sept. 1903. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 47720, ff. 228.
third reason suggested by H.R.Moon was Brodrick's preoccupation with administrative detail and acquiescence 'by default' in the prevailing Departmental opinion, "between early 1901 and September 1903." However, Brodrick fashioned his proposals on Army Reform, with Home Defence as a foremost consideration, before any of his advisers had returned from South Africa. As early as February 1900, he asserted that the occasion was ripe for a measure of compulsory service to provide for Home Defence, and far from acquiescing in the traditional view on Invasion, used this view as a rationalisation for a larger and more costly Army. Brodrick continued to doubt the efficacy of naval arrangements because his Scheme was unjustifiable without military participation in Home Defence. Indeed he feared that the Regular Army, if bereft of Home Defence as a purpose, would be liable for future reductions. 8.

These reductions did not immediately occur because of the deadlock over the proposals of Arnold-Forster. In the ensuing hiatus the Committee of Imperial Defence examined the residual overseas requirements of the home Army, in particular its capacity to reinforce the Indian garrison in time of war. The prerequisite, in this exercise was to establish the scale, composition and timing of these reinforcements. At the 32 Meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Secretary of State for India presented Kitchener's preliminary request for 100,000 Regular reinforcements with 30,000 initially (all ranks and arms) and

8. In contrast with H.R.Moon, op.cit., pp.192 and 239, see Brodrick to Curzon, 9.2.00 and 16.2.00. Curzon Miss., Cur.F11/10A ff.132 and 135-136; Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 21.12.00, Roberts Miss., N.A.M., R/13/15; and Brodrick, Remarks on the Possibility of Serious Invasion, 11.12.03. Cab.17/22. Since Arnold-Forster was a Blue Water enthusiast, Brodrick noted that the "sketch of his proposals fills me with dismay. It is retrograde in the highest degree. I believe it will decrease efficiency, confuse what is now clear, and reduce strength out of all proportion to reduced cost." Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 3.1.04. Roberts Miss., N.A.M., R/13/361.
70,000 more within a six month period. As he was still preoccupied with Home Defence, Lord Roberts feared that the fulfilment of these demands would leave the United Kingdom bereft of an organised force of regular troops. He maintained that two Army Corps should be retained at home until the auxiliary forces had so improved that they could take the field without a "stiffening of regular troops." Even more disconcerting was the subsequent communication from Lord Curzon, insisting that the request of Kitchener was liable for reassessment in view of the impending completion of the Tashkent-Orenberg Railway. With this railway augmenting the fear of an Anglo-Russian confrontation in Afghanistan, Kitchener increased his requirement by approximately fifty per cent. The Adjutant-General reiterated the fears of Lord Roberts about denuding the country of organised Regular forces, albeit "for any other Imperial purpose," and it was left to Balfour to mediate between these preferences.

In memoranda, compiled with the aid of statistics and arguments supplied by Sir George Clarke, Balfour pontificated upon The Military Needs of the Empire, and related them to his thoughts on Army Reform. He insisted that the Indian reinforcements should not exceed 100,000 men for the first twelve months of a war, that a residual Regular force should not exceed three Divisions, and that a striking force of two Divisions should remain constantly available for overseas service. To fulfill these requirements he recommended that a long service army

10. Minutes of the 33 C.I.D. Meeting, 4.3.04. Cab.2/1/33. See also the Minutes of the 36 C.I.D. Meeting, 24.3.04. Cab.2/1/36.

11. The original intimation by Viscount Curzon is recorded in the Minutes of the 43 C.I.D. Meeting, 20.5.04. Cab.2/1/43. A record of Lord Kitchener's revised request for reinforcements totalling 150,000 (this was later reduced to 143,000) and the consternation of the Adjutant-General, is in the Minutes of the 57 C.I.D. Meeting, 16.11.04. Cab.2/1/57.
should be created, in which soldiers would serve for 7 years in the Colours and 5 years in the Reserve, and that this army should be supported by an improved and enlarged Militia. In these proposals, Balfour was seeking to reconcile not only differing military perspectives but also differing political viewpoints, especially the fears of the Cabinet over the Militia and the hopes of Arnold-Forster for a long and short service Army. However, since the Prime Minister was less interested in administration than in strategic theory, he used the cloak of Ministerial Responsibility to refrain from issuing directives as a sequel to his pronouncements. As a basis for Army Reform therefore, the proposals were bound to be abortive but, in combination with the Invasion Report, they affirmed the Premier's support for the maritime view on Home Defence, his belief in an overseas role for the Army, and the primary importance of India.

Haldane endorsed these views in Parliament and used them to justify his Army Reforms. He reiterated that Home Defence was no longer a priority for the Regular Army and posited an imperial purpose for his Expeditionary Force. Above all he based his Army Reforms upon this "continuous policy" and aimed to eradicate any aspect of the Army structure incongruent with an overseas purpose. In his Memoirs, Haldane ignores these statements and maintains that his primary concern was the "new army problem" - the defence of the Channel ports and ability

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12. A.J. Balfour, A Note on Army Reform and the Military Needs of the Empire, 22.6.04, Cab. 4/1/26B; Supplementary Note on the Military Needs of the Empire, 19.12.04, Cab. 3/1/28A; Our Present Minimum Military Requirements and Proposals for fulfilling them by a Reorganisation of the Regular Army and Militia, 24.2.05, Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50309; and the Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Army Reorganisation, 30.3.05, Cab. 37/75/54.


to implement the Anglo-French entente. Sir Edward Grey had brought this issue to his attention on 8 January 1906, and the General Staff had subsequently revealed that it could only land 30,000 men on the Continent after two months preparation. Thereupon, Haldane claims that he settled upon an improvement in this capability and the fulfilment of this strategic objective as the basis of his Army Reform. Undoubtedly, this became the principal purpose for the reformed Army but it was not a consideration when Haldane embarked upon his programme. Prior to becoming Secretary of State for War, he was not bereft of strategic ideas. He had served on an Explosives Committee since May 1900, and had formed contacts with several Blue Water enthusiasts notably J.R. Thursfield, the Naval correspondent of The Times, and Admiral Fisher. He wholly agreed with Blue Water principles on Home Defence and claimed as early as 25 August 1901:

*The navy is the nation more than any other external feature. And here as to training there is a striking open controversy & as to the relation of military to naval policy about defence there is another.*

On entering the War Office, he determined to follow up the initiative of Balfour and Arnold-Forster and jettison the priority of Home Defence. In his first Memorandum, completed before his meeting with Sir Edward Grey, Haldane underlined that an overseas strategic role would form the

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16. R.B. Haldane to J.R. Thursfield, 25.8.01, Haldane Mss., N.L.S., MS.5905, ff.101. He maintained these contacts throughout the period 1901-05. See the letters from Haldane to Thursfield, 16.9.01; to Lord Rosebery, 9.1.02; and to Thursfield, 5.3.05 and 13.5.05. Haldane Mss., N.L.S., MS.5905, ff.106, 158 and MS.5906, ff.162, 167.
bedrock of his Regular Army Reform.¹⁷

To this extent there was a continuous strategic policy, although Haldane exaggerated its relevance in Parliament to conceal from his Liberal colleagues the new departure in Continental planning. Imperial military requirements did not justify an Expeditionary Force of 160,000 men but from a liberal perspective this was a more acceptable purpose than preparation for war with Germany.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Haldane authorised staff talks with France and allowed military planning to proceed upon the presumption of British involvement in a Continental war. This was vital for the mobilisation arrangements of the Director of Military Operations and, in the retrospective opinion of Haldane, for the foundation of the British Expeditionary Force. But, even if the Expeditionary Force gained a specific strategic purpose in January 1906, this did not mean that it differed as an organisational concept from the Field Force of 1895. Indeed its only distinctive features were the freedom from any commitment to Home Defence, and a degree of internal completeness which had never been attained before.¹⁹ This completeness was the product of three innovations: the designation of

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¹⁷ "Our wars take place so far as the actual fighting is concerned, mainly overseas, at a long distance, and we require an Army wholly different from that of any other nation," Haldane, A Preliminary Memorandum on the present situation. Being a rough note for consideration by the Members of the Army Council, 1.1.06, para. 2. Haldane MSS., N.L.S., MS. 5918, ff. 44.


¹⁹ Haldane's private secretary, Col. G.F. Ellison who worked with him at Clon during Christmas 1905, on the concept of an Expeditionary Force, claimed that it, "was in principle identical with the Field Force of 1895" and that it was only distinctive inasmuch as it was, "not intended solely for home defence but... for offensive action overseas." Lt.Gen. G.F. Ellison, 'Reminiscences', Lancashire Lad (Feb., 1936), pp.8-9.
new military units in the six large Divisions (each of three
brigades) utilising 66 line battalions and 6 Guards battalions to
complement the four Cavalry Brigades; the advance provision of the
ancillary services in the manning of the ammunition columns, trans-
port, supply, clerical, medical and veterinary services; and the
maintenance of a draft level in peace able to offset the first six
months war wastage (at 40% of all ranks and arms). 20.

In Before the War, Haldane claims that the large divisions were
created as self-contained units capable of rapid adjustment from con-
ditions of peace to participation in Continental warfare. Indeed he
asserts that the previous formations were considered obsolete inasmuch
as they failed to accord with "modern Continental principles." 21

These considerations, however, do not appear to have preoccupied either
Haldane or the Army Council when they examined the issue. In his
Second Memorandum, Haldane questioned the existing war establishments
on one count only - the differences between the war establishments at
home and those in India. He noted that the army in India eschewed
army corps, relied upon large divisions of three brigades and battalions
of four strong companies, whereas the home army retained an army corps
organisation, divisions comprised of two brigades and battalions based

20. As outlined in July 1906, the Expeditionary Force included 5,546
officers and 154,074 other ranks. The ancillary services and drafts
amounted to 30,857 and 56,285 men respectively. The Colours were
expected to provide 50,000 men, the Reserve 70,000 and the troops
raised on a Militia basis 30,000 men. Haldane, Memorandum on Army

21. Haldane noted that Britain possessed a good reserve. "But that
reserve was not organised in great self-contained divisions which
would be required for fighting against armies organised for rapid
action on modern Continental principles. Its formations in peace
time were not those which would be required in such a war."
Haldane, Before the War (Lon.,1920), pp.31-32.
upon eight small companies. He urged agreement upon common principles of organisation because:

these and similar differences in war establishments must prove detrimental in war should the two armies ever be required to act together.\textsuperscript{22}

Sir George Clarke and the Army Council echoed these arguments and urged a co-ordination of the home and Indian armies.\textsuperscript{23} Their support for large divisions also reflected a widely-held belief that an army corps was not a relevant formation for British military requirements. Originally borrowed from the Continent when army corps were localised and rigidly maintained at the ready for mobilisation, the formation was never applicable, other than in terms of administration, for an army whose peacetime purpose was the provision of drafts and reliefs for foreign garrisons. In the South African War, the British Army had ignored its corps formation and functioned in smaller units to campaign in a vast theatre of operations and overcome a scattered enemy. The only advantage in retaining the army corps was that it enabled the establishment of a permanent corps staff and thereby removed the need for improvisation should a combination of divisions be required in practice. As this was a rare occurrence and as it was easier to form a corps staff than individual staffs for three divisions, Sir William Nicholson - the general whom Haldane had restored to the Army Council as


\textsuperscript{23} "I have got from Clarke an admirable Memorandum on Organisation... He is probably right about the Divisional organisation being the best... Clarke's plan renders co-ordination with the Indian Army easy." Haldane to Esher, 4.2.06. Haldane Mss., N.L.S., MS. 5907, ff. 23. See also the 77 Meeting of the Army Council, Precis No. 276, 21.6.06. W.O. 163/11.
a potential successor to the Chief of the General Staff argued that the advantages of divisions were so marginal that they failed to justify disturbing the status quo. Nevertheless, the majority of the Council resolved in favour of large divisions as tactically more flexible and generally more suitable to the size and requirements of the British Army. In short, an awareness of previous tactical experience and existing Indian practice was more important in the decision than prescience about the nature of a Continental war.

The second characteristic of Haldane's New Model Army was the provision in advance of mobilisation of all the ancillary services required by the Expeditionary Force. As Haldane perceived, this was a prerequisite in the armies of France and Germany, where the mobilisation time-tables were too precise and short to admit delay in the improvisation of essential services. This perception amplified the earlier resolution to organise a fully equipped and quickly transported Expeditionary Force, but did not determine its method of organisation. Since economic reasons precluded the use of Regular troops in the ancillary services, Haldane had to consider the use of Militia for this purpose. As an organisation, the Militia urgently required reform. It was 37,000 men short of its 131,000 man Establishment; its cost amounted to about £2,000,000 per annum; 46 of the 124 battalions were under 500 men in strength; and a large number of the strength were under 20 years of age. The force also lacked any strategic purpose now that Home Defence had been established as a purely naval concern, and it only served one function, which it bitterly resented, that of providing some

25. 77 Meeting of the Army Council, Precis No.278, 21.6.06. W.O.163/11.
12,000 recruits per annum for the Regular Line. Although Haldane had accepted the need for Militia Reform before he was aware that the Army was so unprepared for a Continental war, it was only after this revelation that he took his ideas to their logical conclusion - the utilisation of the Militia for the support of the Expeditionary Force. In other words, the Continental strategy may have provided the impetus, if not the idea, for the creation of a two line Army.27.

The immediate problem in the provision of ancillary services was the inability to mobilise 51 of the 93 Field Artillery batteries. After the rearmament with quick-firing guns, the Field Artillery required a considerable increase in the size and length of the ammunition columns, and an additional 10,000 men for the purpose of immediate mobilisation. To provide these men, Haldane hoped to embody the majority of the 13,000 to 14,000 Militia Garrison Artillerymen who had been relieved of their former duties by the revision of coastal defence policy. Acting upon the suggestion of Colonel Blake from the Northumberland Militia, he resolved to train these men in the duties of ammunition columns and gunnery on a non Regular basis, in 36 Reserve batteries including the 6 batteries returned from South Africa. He allocated the remaining 63 batteries to the Expeditionary Force (on the standard of 5 guns per 1,000 bayonets), and to maximise economy.

27. In his first Memorandum, Haldane hoped to establish the Militia, "as a real Reserve, no longer to be described as 'Auxiliary', but as an integral portion of the British Army," although he eschewed the idea of making the Militia liable for foreign service. However, in his second Memorandum, he clearly indicated that the Territorial and Expeditionary Forces were to form echelons of the same Army and that the Militia should support the Expeditionary Force. Compare, Haldane, A Preliminary Memorandum on the present situation. Being a rough note for consideration by the Members of the Army Council, 1.1.06, para.8, Haldane Mss., N.L.S., MS.591B., and Haldane, Second Memorandum, 1.2.06, para.19. Haig Mss., N.L.S.,Vol.32a.
while ensuring the production of overseas drafts, he authorised that 81 of the six gun batteries should remain on a four gun peace establishment while the other 18 Reserve batteries should operate on a two gun basis for training. In short, Haldane established that ammunition columns and other ancillary services could be manned by civilians, in receipt of part-time training from Regular instructors, and should be obligated to serve abroad with their instructors in time of war. 28.

The third feature of these Reforms was the advance provision of drafts to obviate the initial wastage of war. The primary consideration was an estimate of the likely draft and to provide this calculation, Haldane relied entirely upon the Memorandum drawn up in M.T.I. on Wastage in War. The paper presumed that in a Continental war the scale and rate of wastage would markedly exceed anything previously experienced by the British Army. It claimed that modern weaponry would produce heavier casualties than in the imperial wars, with the exception of a war against Russia on the North-West Frontier, where the losses from sickness would prove an additional burden. It also presumed that the proximity of the Continental belligerents, and their rapid mobilisation schedules, would produce those casualties at an earlier period in the campaign. Indeed, the Memorandum claimed that the likelihood of decisive engagements within weeks or even days of the outbreak of hostilities posed a different problem from any confronted in colonial warfare. Consequently, it covered both the

28. _Parl. Deb._, Fourth Ser., Vol.160, 12.7.06, cols.1088-1098 and 87 Meeting of the Army Council, 1.2.07, W.O.163/12. Brodick criticised this policy because it abandoned his own attempt to raise a large Artillery Reserve on the basis of 3 years service in the Colours and 9 years in the Reserve. Haldane, however, feared that sufficient 3 year men might not extend their service for draft finding purposes and that the Reservists might not be able to handle the new quick-firing guns. Compare, Brodick, Memorandum, undated. Midleton Mss., P.R.O. 30/67/25 and Haldane, Memorandum on Army Organisation, 30.7.06, paras.3 and 10. Haig Mss., N.L.S., Vol.32a.
proportion of drafts required and the rate of their despatch.

To calculate the total draft requirement, the M.T.I. relied upon previous estimates of wastage and recent military experience. Prior to the South African War, the Army operated upon the estimate of Surgeon-General Jameson that the minimum waste would be 10% per quarter—a figure preferred to the 10% per month conjectured by Sir John Ardagh upon the experience of the Franco-Prussian War. After the War, Sir T.Kelly-Kenny reckoned that an annual draft of 60% for Infantry units, 50% for Cavalry and 40% for Artillery would have maintained the war strength of all units. However, the Boers did not possess any quick-firing artillery and the loss from wounds, especially by the Cavalry and Artillery, was relatively slight (over two thirds of the casualties were caused by disease). The wastage totals were markedly higher in the Russo-Japanese War, the first war in which both sides possessed a full array of modern technology. Captain Holman gauged the annual rate of wastage within the Russian Field Force (246,000 all ranks), at 6% exclusive of another 4% constantly sick or wounded. Even this was an optimistic calculation since it ignored the forces at Port Arthur and Vladivostock. When these troops were included, the official return recorded 238,996 casualties from all causes in the period February 1904 to September 1905. The victorious Japanese did not fare any better with an annual wastage of 95% from their field army of 250,000 men. The overall proportion of casualties was not only larger but it also included a greater percentage of war wounded. In the Japanese wastage, 43% came from wounds (13% of these

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29. Memorandum drawn up in M.T.I. on Wastage in War, 26.4.06. W.0.32/8813. M.T.I. was a branch of the Directorate of Military Training. The Director of Military Training was Sir Frederick W. Stopford who endorsed the Memorandum in a minute dated 27,4,06. W.0.32/8813.
died); 48% from disease (4% died); and 4% were constantly sick. These casualties were so enormous and so beyond anything previously recorded, that the M.T.I. could not believe that they might be equalled or even exceeded in the future. Instead it simply fixed the annual draft requirements at a level between those experienced in the South African and Russo-Japanese Wars (i.e. 80% for Infantry, 70% for Cavalry and Mounted Infantry, 60% for Artillery, 40% for Engineers, 30% for Staff and Departmental services, and 20% for services on lines of communication). 30.

On the rate of despatch to a European theatre of operations, the M.T.I. established that previous calculations based upon imperial wars were no longer relevant. Prior to the South African War, the Army had envisaged a despatch of drafts every quarter, although it improvised in the War and sent drafts whenever the transport was available. The South African War however, was an unreliable precedent since it did not occasion any early decisive engagements so likely in a European War. As the M.T.I. underlined, the battles would not only occur earlier in a European War, but could also result in considerable wastage. It compared the South African experience with the opening battles between major military powers from Bull Run (1861) to the Passage of the Yalu (April 1904), contrasting the British losses of approximately 4% in December 1899 (excluding the 24% loss at Stomberg which was largely composed of prisoners) with the 10% and 14% lost by France and Prussia.

30. In other words, what Haldane described as "calculated pretty accurately" was a mere guess. As the Memorandum stated, "by estimating for rather less than was required in this latest of great wars, and rather more than was incurred previous to it, we should arrive at a normal scale for which we must prepare." Compare, Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 160, 12.7.06, col. 1098 and M.T.I. Memorandum, op. cit.
in August 1870; the 33% and 13% suffered by Russia and Turkey in July 1877; and the 34% incurred by Russia at the Passage of the Yalu.

To offset this rate and scale of carnage, the M.T.I. recommended that drafts should be available in the theatre of operations before the losses incurred. In particular it stipulated that the drafts for the first six months had to be mobilised with the Expeditionary Force, and had to consist of fully trained and fit men.  

Haldane accepted the conclusion of the Memorandum that the Expeditionary Force required 56,000 men to offset the first six months war wastage and looked to the Militia to provide this draft. In three meetings during the summer and autumn of 1906, the Militia Colonels refused to supply the wartime drafts, and this recalcitrance compelled the formation of the Special Reserve, a semi-professional force of seventy-four battalions intended to support the seventy-four pairs of Regular battalions. In peacetime each Special Reserve battalion remained as a cadre with its 500-600 rank-and-file enlisted for a six year period. During their service the recruits received an initial course of six months training under Regular officers, followed by three  

31. Apart from battle casualties the Army had to provide against losses among the Reservists unaccustomed to long marches. Hence, the M.T.I. recommended an adherence to the usual mobilisation of 10% surplus to each war establishment and the despatch of drafts amounting to 10-20% of the Expeditionary Force within the first six weeks of the campaign. Over the six month period, it urged the despatch of drafts amounting to 44% of Infantry, 40% Cavalry and Mounted Infantry, 36% Artillery, 22% Engineers, 18% staff and departments and 10% lines of communication. M.T.I. Memorandum, op.cit.

32. Formerly the Militia Reserve had provided drafts (i.e. the 30,000 Militiamen who received a bounty of £1 per annum to commit themselves to service abroad in wartime). The Militia Colonels disliked the process and secured the abolition of the Militia Reserve in 1902. On Haldane's desire to provide drafts from the Militia, see R.B. Haldane, Second Memorandum, 12.06, para.19. Haig Mss., N.I.S., Vol.32a. For the opposition of the Militia Colonels at the meetings on 22.5.06, 26-27.6.06 and in autumn 1906 at the home of Lord Derby, see Col.J.K.Dunlop, The Development of the British Army 1899-1914 (Lon.,1938), pp.268-270.
weeks training per annum for the rest of their engagement. In wartime, the Special Reserve unlike the Militia, was under an obligation to serve abroad, and the cadres were liable for expansion to sustain the replenishment of the front-line forces. To furnish this Reserve, Haldane presumed that the core of the existing Militia (strength 94,000 men) would transfer on a bounty of £2 per man. A substantial proportion did transfer but the Special Reserve never realised to full establishment (76,166 men). The new force was more dependable for the Army and cheaper for the War Office, but in March 1914, it was still 13,699 men short of its establishment and included in its strength some 29% under 20 years of age.

In sum the retrospective writings of Haldane exaggerate the influence of the Continental strategy upon his Regular Army Reforms. Undoubtedly a Continental purpose was important as a focus for mobilisation planning and as a positive strategic alternative to Home Defence. It also provided an incentive to realise the oft-repeated intention to create a fully equipped Expeditionary Force, ready for immediate despatch. Nevertheless, Continental requirements neither determined the size of the Expeditionary Force, nor its organisation in large divisions, nor its utilisation of non-Regular troops for the provision of ancillary services and wartime drafts. Even in the estimation of war wastage, the M.T.I. concentrated upon previous wars for indications on the amount


34. At first Haldane reported a 70% turnover from the ranks and an 80% turnover from the officers of the Militia. Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.193, 27.7.08, cols. 894-895. However this was not maintained and shortages were still reported on the eve of the War, see Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.59, 11.3.14, cols.1245 and 1256. As Dunlop remarked, "in gross and in detail the Special Reserve was something new; it was not the old Militia." Dunlop, op.cit., p.272.
and rate of wastage, and revealed little or no prescience about the future scale and character of the war in Flanders. In other words, the structural Army Reforms of Haldane were founded upon, and occasionally restricted by, more mundane considerations than a perception of the future war in Europe.
Section 4

The Edwardian Officers
Chapter 10

The Social Origins of the Military Leadership in the post Boer War period

"The fact must be faced that the military profession has not been hitherto associated with protracted periods of hard work, nor are habits of industry to be acquired in a day."

Report of the Committee appointed to consider the Education and Training of Officers of the Army, Cd.982 (1902), x, p.36.

Chapter 10 examines the thesis that the officer corps lacked professionalism in the South African War because of its gentlemanly ideals and social origins, and that it became more professional during the Edwardian years. The chapter analyses the military leadership by social type, region, rural/urban origins and war service record to conclude that there was not any significant difference between the senior officers in 1914 and those in 1899 other than in wartime service. It claims that the officer corps was relatively homogeneous in social, political and religious composition, and that the Army did not have to change socially before it improved professionally.
During the South African War, the newspaper critics argued that the exclusive recruitment from the sons of the nobility and gentry had perpetuated an officer gentleman tradition to the detriment of military efficiency. As the Military Correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* remarked:

> We need an army which is an up to date fighting machine not a mere organisation for the purpose of providing an elegant employment for the leisure hours of the wealthy classes.  

Inefficiency and lack of professionalism, therefore, were attributed to the gentlemanly ideals and provenance of the officers. Since this explanation has been accepted and placed in juxtaposition with the appearance of a 'professional' officer corps in 1914, the social composition of the officers ought to be examined to measure any change in the intervening period.

In an analysis of the social composition of the officer corps, there will be no attempt to follow the previous approaches in their endeavour to relate educational background to social type. Given


2. Whereas in the British Expeditionary Force, "its officers were all professionals," in 1899, the lack of professionalism in the Army, "derived, as for two centuries, from recruiting the officers from a leisured class to whom professionalism too often appeared as vulgar careerism." C. Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509-1970* (Lon., 1970), pp. 372 and 344.

the dearth of background information on the officer corps, these examinations especially by A.H.H. MacLean, *Public Schools and the War in South Africa 1899-1902* and *Public Schools and the Great War*, offer a quantitative precision but little explanatory reasoning. To state that 62% of the Regular Officers in the South African War came from public schools, with 41% from the ten great public schools and 11% from Eton alone, does not indicate that these schools exercised a decisive influence in predisposing their pupils towards a military career.  

Admittedly, some schools had army classes and cadet corps, and most preserved an ethos and life style which harmonized with military values. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who undertook subsequent service in the Regular Army was relatively small, and the only schools in which more than one fifth of their leavers in the period 1880-1899 served in the South African War were Eton, Harrow and Wellington. Even service in the cadet corps was not an invariable sign of incipient militarism: it frequently reflected the bleak alternative between compulsory winter drill on military lines, or the marginally more interesting drill of the cadet corps. Indeed while the military flavour of public school life may have attracted or predisposed some pupils towards the Regular Army, it may also have deterred or disenchanted others; education therefore, is not a particularly useful guide as an independent variable.

6. As the commentators on Winchester remark, "All that one can say, at a minimum, is that the military flavour of Winchester life and the tendency of Wykehamists to choose military careers in large numbers are both legacies of the same gentry tradition." T.J.H. Bishop and R. Wilkinson, *Winchester and the Public School Elite* (Lon., 1967), p.73.
Similarly, the analysis will not follow the approach of a previous study which has relied upon the admission registers at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich for information on the officer corps. Although these registers provide accurate information on the background of the cadets, they are less useful as sources for a study of the officer corps because Sandhurst and Woolwich were not the only sources of officer supply. To maintain a sufficient number of officers, especially in wartime, the Army commissioned officers from the Militia and to a lesser extent, from the ranks. The Army also nominated officers to replenish the shortages which occurred in the Cavalry and the Guards after the South African War. During the period 1885-1906, Sandhurst and Woolwich only furnished 9,021 officers out of the 16,472 officers commissioned, approximately 55% of the annual intake. Furthermore, this composition may have been distorted in social composition. As Sandhurst and Woolwich provided free places for the orphans of military fathers and reduced fees for the sons of low-ranking officers, the institutions may have attracted a disproportionately large number of sons from Service families. Finally, since a substantial number of officers only served on a short commission and then left the Service.

8. These statistics are summarised from those included in the Return as to the Number of Commissions granted during each of the years 1885 to 1906 inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 153 of Session 1903). No. 111 (1907), IV, pp. 3-5.
10. For example, 605 officers were commissioned in 1891. Only 513 of these officers were still in service in 1898 (85%) and only 313 in 1910 (52%). Some 407 of the original 605 officers were graduates from Sandhurst and Woolwich. Only 347 of these officers were still in service in 1898 (86%) and only 221 in 1910 (55%). These statistics were drawn from the Army Lists for the years 1891, 1898 and 1910.
this casts doubt on the assumption that a sample of the cadet intake in one year will provide accurate information on the middle-ranking and senior officers of future years. In short, the officer corps can only be examined by studying the officers who were serving on the Active List in the period under consideration.

The approach which has been adopted, endeavours to compare the officer corps in the social types, who upheld the officer gentleman tradition in 1899, with their equivalent groupings in 1914. The approach neither presumes a statistical precision nor the existence of wholly separate groups within the officer corps: it merely recognises that there may have been differences of status and prestige within the regimental mess, and that these may have been perceived at the time. Furthermore, it emphasises that the paramount concern of the officer gentleman tradition was the maintenance of social standards (it did not merely presume a private income, but it also presumed the disposal of that income in a manner satisfactory to brother officers and in keeping with the customs of the regiment). Hence, some perception of the different social types who were especially, if by no means exclusively, identified with this tradition may form the basis of the comparison between the officers in both periods. The first two groups considered are the peerage and the landed gentry - divided by the title, greater wealth and prestige of the former - who constituted the two traditional sources of officer recruitment. Where officers in other categories had close connections with the titled aristocracy or gentry, they have been judged members of the landed classes. The third type covers self-recruitment within the Regular Army, those who entered the service as the sons of professional soldiers. The fourth and fifth types also comprise traditionally recognised sources of gentility namely, the Church of England and the professions (i.e. doctors,
barristers, architects and those in the civil service - home, diplomatic or I.C.S.). The final category includes parents who were merchants, teachers, engineers, small farmers and in the case of Major-General J.B. Richardson, an 'Arctic Traveller', who were not necessarily less genteel, but were either too small or too obscure or too wanting in detail to warrant a separate category.

There are difficulties however, in selecting a sample of the officer corps for analysis. A random sample of the entire home establishment in each of the years 1899 and 1914 is precluded for several reasons. In the first place, there is a dearth of biographical information: the Army Lists only provide name, rank and service record, and the Army Records Centre refuses to divulge private information to third parties. This diminishes the precision with which the senior ranks can be studied and renders even more unlikely the prospect of effectively examining the junior officers. The difficulty is augmented in the case of the subalterns serving in 1914 because many of them faded into obscurity with the carnage of the First World War. As such, the analysis concentrates upon the Colonels and Generals on the Active list, excluding those in the Indian Army, the A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. in the years 1899 and 1914. For some impression of junior officers an analysis is also offered of the officers who composed the staff for the First Army Corps in 1899. In each instance, the aim is not statistical exactness
but some idea of the relative proportions involved.  

Table 1: The Social Background of the Military Leadership in 1899 and 1914.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>COLONELS 1899 %</th>
<th>COLONELS 1914 %</th>
<th>GENERALS 1899 %</th>
<th>GENERALS 1914 %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peerage</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Services</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions and public service</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>(129)</td>
<td>(119)</td>
<td>(111)</td>
<td>(116)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Once tables of officers were obtained from the relevant Army Lists, background information was acquired in the volumes of *Who was Who* (1897-1970); *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Who's Who: Men of the Time*; and *Who's Who at the War* (Lon., 1900). More detailed information was found in J. Bateman, *Great Landowners of England* (Lon., 1883) and E. Walford (ed.), *County Families of the United Kingdom* (2 Vols., Lon., 1868). On the officers who were not sufficiently famous to warrant inclusion in these reference works, other sources were probed (a) the regimental records and museums with varying degrees of success; (b) the South African War Veterans Association, which was in a state of hopeless disarray having lost three secretaries and the membership rolls within the last two years; (c) the obituaries of various officers in The Times, London Gazette and Service papers; and (d) the registers of 25 public schools.

12. The Military Leadership includes all Field Marshals, Generals, Lieutenant-Generals, and Major-Generals on the Active List, and a random sample of one third of each list of active Colonels.
Table 2: The Social Background of the staff allocated to the First Army Corps 1899. 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Army Corps</th>
<th>Colonels &amp; Lt.-Colonels</th>
<th>Majors</th>
<th>Captains</th>
<th>Lieutenants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peerage</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions and public service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>(70)</td>
<td>(71)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>(31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables on social composition reveal little difference between the military leadership in 1899 and 1914 (a predictable point since the Generals in 1914 had joined the service in the 1870s and the Colonels in the 1880s and 1890s). The preponderant degree of self-recruitment and the substantial contribution of the landed aristocracy are evident in both periods. This confirms the element of family tradition so frequently mentioned in the memoirs of Army officers. However these memoirs, although limited as sources for career motivation, (i.e. they are few in number, restricted to successful soldiers and perforce impressionistic on childhood and adolescent experiences) still reflect that the element of family tradition was sustained in different ways by different families. In the first place, there were examples where it was a wholly positive influence with both the parents and the children willing to perpetuate a military connection often stretching back over several generations. Even if allowance is made for an

13. The Staff analysed exclude the 13 Generals and 1 Surgeon General.
idealistic impression of childhood, this category covers the majority of families with a service background. On the other hand, family traditions were sometimes preserved by filial determination in spite of parental discouragement: in these instances the fear of the son incurring financial hardship was the usual concern of the parents. Where there were conflicting family traditions (e.g. naval on the father's side and Army on the mother's) reasons of estate management sometimes resolved the choice. Both parents dissuaded the Earl of Dundonald from following in his father's footsteps, on the premise that the family had suffered losses of property by being so much at sea, and that the earldom would be better preserved by a military head of the family. Finally, the family tradition may have been maintained (in more cases than some would like to remember) by the meek acquiescence of the son concerned. Only a writer so candid as Lord Wavell would recollect:

I never felt any special inclination to a military career, but it would have taken more independence of character than I possessed at the time to avoid it. Nearly all my relations were military. I had been brought up amongst soldiers; and my father, while professing to give me complete liberty of choice, was determined that I should be soldier. I had no particular bent towards any other profession, and I took the line of least resistance.


15. General Abraham Roberts hoped that, "Freddy will remain at home" and that "If Freddy is clever, I hope he will not think of the Army," quoted in Field Marshal Earl Roberts, Letters written During the Indian Mutiny (Lon., 1924), preface, p. XVII.


17. Quoted in John Connell, Wavell, Scholar and Soldier (Lon., 1964), p. 34.
Contrasting patterns of career motivation are also apparent in the officers who emerged from non-service families. In the first place, some had resolved to pursue a military career in spite of their parents, and had to overcome their bias either in favour of a civilian profession or against a military career. (viewed by many as bereft of prospects and only fit for the fool of the family). On the other hand, some had attempted to fulfil their parents' civilian ambitions but had found them beyond their capabilities. For these individuals, failure in the University or Indian Civil Service examinations left the Army as the only profession within reach of their academic attainments. Thirdly, there were some who came from non-service families neither vehemently opposed to the Army nor merely tolerant of it as a substitute career: on the contrary, they received every encouragement for their military predilections. Within this category comes the father of Sir Noel Mason-Macfarlane, who abandoned his medical practice in 1896, began to devote all his energies to Volunteer soldiering, and insisted that his sons should convert his amateur passion, developed rather late in life, into a professional career.

18. Among those who defied their parents were Viscount Montgomery, whose father wanted him to enter the Church, see Viscount Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein (Lon., 1958), p.22, and Sir A. Carton de Wiart, whose father wanted him to become a lawyer, see A. Carton de Wiart, Happy Odyssey: The Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart (Lon., 1950), p.16. Lord Ismay recollected that, "my father was particularly upset at the idea of my joining the Indian Cavalry and never tired of telling the story about the cavalry officer who was so stupid that even his brother officers noticed it." Lord Ismay, The Memoirs of General the Lord Ismay (Lon., 1960), p.4.

19. Among those who failed the I.C.S. examinations but passed the examinations for Sandhurst were Sir H. Allenby and Sir H. McMahon, and among those who failed the University entrance examinations were Baden-Powell and Lord Ismay. Both Baden-Powell and Allenby were conspicuously successful in the Sandhurst examinations. See Field Marshal Wavell, Allenby, Soldier and Statesman (Lon., 1946), p.25 and W. Hillcourt, Baden-Powell (Lon., 1964), pp.33-34.
vocation. Nevertheless, what these patterns reflect is not so much the salience of parental influence (undoubtedly there were other factors as important, if not more so, in particular cases), but the relative lack of career opportunities for the sons of self-assigned gentlemen. If for some reason, participation in county life, the professions, Church or civil service was neither desired nor obtainable, then the Army was one of the few alternative professions which a gentleman might consider. When aligned to the element of family tradition, this artificial restriction helped to preserve the relative homogeneity of the social intake, and thereby the standards and pretensions of the officer gentleman tradition.

Another factor which ensured the relative homogeneity of officer intake was the connection between the Army and the land: this is affirmed in Table 3 and in the appended Table on regional background.


21. As Wavell recollects, "it was quite natural that some of those who failed for the Indian Civil Service should turn to the Army for a career; in fact, other openings were limited, for commercial business was not in those days considered a suitable occupation for a gentleman." Field Marshall Wavell, *op.cit.*, p.25.

22. Officer recruitment from the area south and east of a line from the Wash to the Bristol Channel amounted to 44% and 55% in 1899 and 1914, whereas the population of that area in 1901 and 1911 only amounted to 35% of the whole nation. The Army also recruited heavily from Ireland and Scotland, but disproportionately little from the North of England and the West Midlands. See, Appendix IV: *The Regional Background of the Military Leadership in 1899 and 1914.*
Table 3: The rural or urban background of the military leadership.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>COLONELS</th>
<th></th>
<th>GENERALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate, farm, village under 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages and towns 1,000-5,000 pop.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RURAL</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns in excess of 5,000 pop.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL URBAN</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>(90)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>(79)</td>
<td>(69)</td>
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As the traditional source for officer recruitment, the county communities appear to have sustained their connection in the late Victorian period. Within their confines, an uncomplicated patriotism and sense of duty could flourish: motives, which were reinforced in depressed rural areas by the lack of alternative economic opportunities. The military connection however, was more directly buttressed by the out-of-doors existence and the enthusiasm for hunting and shooting in county society. Apart from their relevance to the military activities of the pre-technological Army, these recreations were zealously pursued in the peacetime service. Indeed by offering abundant opportunities for sporting and social entertainment, the Army enhanced its appeal particularly among the proportion of peers and their offspring, who had no desire for a military career but were prepared to undertake a short commission (Table 2).

23. Since the estimations of community size were based on the information available for 1894, they may underestimate the rural proportion. See Cassell's Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (6 Vols., Lon., 1894).
The officer intake also appears to have been relatively uniform in religious and political beliefs. The vast majority of officers seem to have belonged to Protestant churches, especially the Church of England. Although precise figures are not available, the size of this support is indicated by the recruitment from the sons of Episcopalian ministers, and from the evidence of A.H.H. MacLean, that in the South African War less than \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the public school quota of 5,669 regular officers came from Catholic schools.\(^\text{24}\) Undoubtedly the significance of belonging to the Church of England would vary with each individual officer. For some, it might simply reflect the traditional adherence of their family; for others, the faith itself with its emphasis upon authority, ceremony and mission may have bolstered the sense of military duty; and for others especially in Ireland, an element of patriotic identification may have entwined their religious and military commitments.

In politics, the exclusive social recruitment, honorific code and gentlemanly self image of the officer corps suggests that it was a predominantly Conservative body. Other commentators have disagreed. They have argued that officers were contemptuous of party politicians, that they only took a 'personal' interest in politics, perceiving that a Conservative Government was more likely to employ their skills than a Liberal one, and that if they were conservative, this only reflected the habit of obeying regulations and not any inherent conservative

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\(^\text{24}\) The schools were Stonyhurst which furnished 41 Regular officers and St. Edmund's College Ware which furnished 10 officers (i.e. 51 officers out of the 5,669 provided by the public schools). A.H.H. MacLean, *op.cit.*, pp.12, 16-17.
Each of these points may be partially true, but while the first reflects a commonplace opinion (voiced in some instances by those who see no reason to disturb the status quo), the others beg important questions - why did officers want to employ their skills and why did they value obedience to regulations? The answers include a desire to preserve national and imperial interests; a belief in force or the threat of force as the ultimate arbiter of international disputes and an over-riding desire to serve Crown and Country. These ideas which comprised part of the officer's corporate ideology were, if not prerogatives of the Conservative Party, at least more identified with the 'national party' than its Liberal and Home Rule opponents. This neither implies that officers took an active interest in Conservative politics nor overlooks the presence of Liberal exceptions (e.g. Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Neville Lyttelton and Sir William Butler were notable exceptions). But, it does affirm that a connection existed between the majority of officers and the Conservative Party because of a coincidence of views and perspectives.


26. Even allowing for Churchillian embellishment, there may be some substance in his recollection of the Aldershot reaction to the Election of 1895. Everybody liked Lord Rosebery because he was thought to be patriotic. But then he had such bad companions! These bad companions dragged him down, and he was so weak, so they said, that he had to give way to them against his true convictions. Then too he was kept in office by the Irish Nationalists, who everyone knew would never be satisfied till they had broken up the British Empire..." W.S. Churchill, My Early Life (Lon., 1930), p.71.
Furthermore, the South African War seems to have widened the gulf between the Army and contemporary Liberalism. Although the pro-Boer views expressed by some Liberals had horrified Lord Kitchener, some of his staff suspected that the Commander-in-Chief had curbed his tactics and risked lives to soothe the sensibilities of domestic critics. For Colonel J.S. Dwart, who served on Kitchener's staff and who claimed to be a "liberal in sentiment," the expression of sympathy for the Boers was inexcusable. He claimed that Campbell-Bannerman and his supporters had encouraged the enemy, and had thereby frustrated effective action in the field, prolonged the war and increased the toll of British casualties. He was one of the many officers who neither forgot nor forgave the Liberal criticism of the South African campaign.

If service in South Africa perpetuated the Army's estrangement from some elements in civilian society, it also ensured that the military leadership would gain invaluable experience in war. To promote a more professional attitude in peacetime training (i.e. a training which endeavoured to perfect the necessary skills for a successful performance in war), the Army had to depend upon a leadership able to perceive the requirements of contemporary warfare and able to relate them to the peacetime training.

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27. He regarded *Guerilla War* written by W.Harcourt as, "a most pernicious publication. I have little doubt it will have the effect of making the war go on for three months longer than it otherwise would have done," Lord Kitchener to Brodrick, 6.12.01. Kitchener MSS, P.P.40. 30/57/22.

28. Sir J.S. Dwart, Diary, 16.1.06. Dwart MSS, item 122.

29. "How many brave men - how many of my friends - would now be alive, if Campbell-Bannerman, Lloyd George, Stead and Co. had possessed a decent sense of patriotism!" Dwart, Diary, 24.5.01. See also the Diary entries for 16.2.01, 3.3.01, 10.3.01, 10.7.01, 12.8.01 and 1.1.02. Dwart MSS, item 122.

30. The manner in which senior officers and those responsible for military training reformed training and tactics in the Edwardian Army will be discussed in Section 6.
reform was the military experience in South Africa. Indeed
the incentive furnished by the wartime service of the post-war
leadership was one respect in which there was a significant difference
between the pre and post-war leaderships.

Table 4: The War Service Records of the Military Leadership in 1899 and 1914.

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<th>COLONELS</th>
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<th>GENERALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1899 %</td>
<td>1914 %</td>
<td>1899 %</td>
<td>1914 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Service</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No War Service</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Number

(385) (356) (111) (116)

Apart from wartime service, however, there was little change in
either social composition or political and religious outlook between
the senior officers in 1914 and their predecessors in 1899. Admittedly,
the evidence only relates to the military leadership, some of whom held
positions of responsibility in both years, and if there was a change in
the post-war social intake, it had no opportunity to penetrate the
higher echelons. Further chapters will have to examine whether there
was any attempt to depart from the traditional sources of officer
recruitment, and whether the junior officers were expected to meet more
rigorous standards in their peacetime duties and their career advance-
ment. Even so, the introduction of a more professional approach in
training depended upon the attitude of senior officers, in particular
their willingness to sponsor and sanction changes in peacetime training.
Officers at this level did not have to change socially before they
improved professionally.
Chapter 11

The attempt to alleviate the officer shortage and create an officer reserve

"Many otherwise entirely suitable candidates are precluded from entering the Service by no other consideration than the insufficiency of their private incomes."

Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State to enquire into the nature of the Expenses Incurred by Officers of the Army, Cd.1421 (1903), X, p.11.

Chapter 11 argues that neither the Unionist nor the Liberal Governments had any real desire to dispense with the services of the officer gentleman. It claims that they rated any change in officer recruitment as an extremely low priority, and relied primarily upon military advice for recommendations to alleviate the officer shortage. The chapter also insists that the military leadership had no intention of departing from their traditional source of officer recruitment, either in remedying the officer shortage or in creating an officer reserve. They deprecated the officer potential of the non-commissioned officer, and ensured that there would not be any significant improvement in his promotion prospects.
The wartime critics who argued that the Army had suffered professionally on account of its socially exclusive intake, did not advocate a purge of the officer corps. They campaigned instead for a reduction in the current levels of officer expenditure, in order to widen the source of officer recruitment, attract more cadets and increase the possibility of selecting career-minded subalterns.\(^1\)

Whether or not this was an appropriate method for improving the supply of officers, the proposal seemed to offer a means for increasing the officer supply, a critical requirement in the aftermath of the South African War. The employment of 10,092 officers during the War, and the commissioning of 2,460 subalterns in 1900 (an almost fourfold increase on the peacetime average), had exposed the need for a substantial officer reserve, especially of subalterns, if the Army was to participate in any large scale war in the future. For the War Office, this requirement which presumed a massive increase in cost and in the number of officers commissioned, was made even more difficult by the likelihood of an officer shortage in the wake of the post-war discharges.\(^2\)

Even so, neither the Government nor its military advisers could ignore the issue, and an examination of their efforts to minimise excessive

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2. For Brodrick’s dismay at the cost of this reform, see Brodrick to Curzon, 10.3.01 and 7.12.01. Curzon Mss., Eur.F11/10B, ff.264-265 and ff.303, and Brodrick to Lord Roberts, 10.5.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/13/55. For the belief of Lord Roberts, that the lack of an officer reserve was the Army’s serious shortcoming see, Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 8.10.03 and Lord Roberts to Balfour, 6.7.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/6/546 and R/122/7/676.
levels of officer spending; overcome the post-war officer shortage; and create an officer reserve will indicate their willingness to use these issues as their critics urged, for a broadening of the social intake.

The Unionist Government agreed with its critics that the levels of regimental expenditure had been an obstacle in the quest for more recruits and ought to be reduced. In the late Victorian Army, the junior officer had been unable to live on his pay (5/3 per day for an Infantry subaltern and 6/8 per day for the Cavalry subaltern), a circumstance in which his degree of dependence upon private means reflected social rather than professional commitments. On entering the Army, each subaltern had to provide his own uniform, cases, furniture, mufti, servant’s outfit and incoming mess contribution. Whereas these items would cost about £200 for an Infantry officer, the more expensive uniform, saddlery, mufti and provision of two chargers would require an expenditure between £600 and £1,000 from a Cavalry officer, depending on the customs of his regiment. Thereafter, the annual expenses in the mess, on sport, social entertainment, and the constant moving of Army life presumed a private income of £100 to £150 for an Infantry officer and of £600 to £700 for a Cavalry officer.3 The subalterns either complied with these standards and some incurred debts in the process; or, if unable to do so, risked the possibility

3. Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State to enquire into the nature of the Expenses Incurred by Officers of the Army, hereafter referred to as the Stanley Report, Cd.1421 (1903), X, pp.7-8.
of social ostracism and in certain cases flagrant bullying. 4.

A Select Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Stanley recommended twelve proposals to reduce the dependence upon a private income to £60 for an Infantry officer and to £120 for a Cavalry officer. They included the supply of officer's furniture (at a small rent) by the Government; free field kit; an increased grant towards mess overheads (plate, linen etc.); and the provision of chargers, military saddlery and other accessories. The Committee also proposed that officers should no longer contribute towards the mess on appointment and promotion; forego the upkeep of regimental bands; incur stricter supervision of their uniform expenses; and receive partial defrayment towards the cost of personal servants. They insisted that the scale of regimental expenditure should be a "subject of unremitting watchfulness," on the part of Commanding Officers with the aim of more moderate levels of hospitality and a uniform level of mess expenditure. Finally, they recommended the abolition of Polo tournaments, the avoidance of frequent changes of station and an injunction on the wearing of anything other than authorised articles of uniform. 5.

Although Lord Roberts endorsed the majority of these proposals, he doubted if economies could be effected in officer's uniforms and rejected a ban on Polo, as the sport in his opinion, inculcated a host

4. For some officers like Sir W. Robertson who was promoted from the ranks, the compliance with regimental expenses was a constant struggle; others like Lord Gleichen happily went into debt, "it never worried me for a subaltern's views on the subject of cash are always pleasantly buoyant"; and occasionally those who failed to meet the standards, encountered bullying and had their cases examined in Parliament. See, Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson, From Private to Field Marshal (Lon., 1921), p. 30; Lord Edward Gleichen, A Guardsman's Memories (Lon., 1921), p. 47; and Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 38, 19.6.96, cols. 1481-4.

of military virtues. The Cavalry Colonels accepted these proposals as qualified by Lord Roberts; noted that by adhering to them, their officers could live within a private income of £300 per annum; and assured the Commander-in-Chief that they would enforce the limit in the future.

The Secretary of State accepted these modified recommendations, agreed to the provision of chargers, saddlery, field kit and officer's furniture (at a small rent), and established a departmental approach to the issue which was followed by subsequent administrations. In the first place, he deemed the interaction of officers' expenses upon the officer supply as a much less important problem than the structural reform of the Army; the overall size of the Army Estimates; and the post-war strategic reappraisal. Secondly, as the issue so intimately concerned his military advisers and the existing officer corps, Brodrick would only act with their co-operation and support. He eschewed the option of sumptuary laws, and relied entirely upon the vigilance of Commanding Officers to restrict mess expenditure. Finally, by refusing to authorise any increase in pay, which affirmed the possession of private means as the principal requirement for an Army commission, Brodrick confirmed the Government's determination with the support of

6. "Polo certainly teaches officers to become good horsemen and careful horsemasters; it develops the power of organisation, and trains men to think quickly; and act on the spur of the moment. All valuable qualities in a mounted officer." Lord Roberts, Memorandum on Committee on Officer's Expenses, included in Lord Roberts to Secretary of State, 3.10.02. Roberts MSS., N.A.M., R/242/3/585.

7. At first Cavalry Commanding Officers thought that a private income of £200 to £250 p.a. would suffice. Later, under the chairmanship of Col. H. J. Scobell, they recommended an income of £300 p.a. Minute by Commander-in-Chief on conditions for Competition for Cavalry Commissions, sent to the Secretary of State, 21.2.03 and see also Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 30.3.03. Roberts MSS., N.A.M., R/243/3/707 and 726.

8. As Brodrick noted, "you must carry the spirit of the regiment and the colonels with you." Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.119, 10.3.03, col.311.
the Liberal front bench, to uphold the officer gentleman tradition. From a Cabinet point of view, the present officer intake satisfied their military advisers; offered little prospect of an internal militarist threat; and burdened the Exchequer far less than any increase in pay and pensions. For the Opposition still preoccupied with militarist fears, Campbell-Bannerman justified the service of officer gentlemen, especially those who had no intention of pursuing a military career, as an invaluable and inexpensive safeguard for the State. He neither wished to attract officers from more productive professions nor to spread a military interest, which was currently limited and pursued in a manner harmless to liberal values. The politicians relegated the issue to their military advisers, and hence the proposals to obviate the officer shortage and create an officer reserve bore the heavy imprint of military opinion.

To rectify the officer shortage which had become especially acute in the Guards and the Cavalry, the military advisers had only one concern - the attraction of more men from their established sources of recruitment. For the Cavalry, which by the winter of 1904 was facing a likely deficit of 100 officers, (20% of its home Establishment), Sir Douglas Haig suggested that an improvement in officer conditions would attract more cadets. In a letter to the Inspector-General of Cavalry, he claimed that better quarters, a larger establishment, more

9. Campbell-Bannerman claimed that, "our Army differs from most armies in this, that there are many young men of spirit calculated to make to a certain extent, and up to a certain degree of responsibility, excellent officers, who go into the Army with no intention of pursuing it as a life career... We do not wish to do anything which will hustle young men of that sort out of the service." Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.119, 9.3.03, col.147.

leave, and facilities to rejoin the service after a discharge would attract men with private incomes of £400 to £1,000 per annum - the "very desirable class of Officer...who would otherwise be lost to the Army." He also recommended an increase in pay for gentlemen with less substantial means.\textsuperscript{11} Twenty-three Cavalry officers in evidence before Major-General Hutchinson's Committee agreed that the existing shortage reflected inadequate professional and pecuniary rewards; uncertainty about the time available for hunting and long leave; and the loss of prestige which the Army in general, and the Cavalry in particular, had incurred through, "the constant belittling of Officers by the Press."\textsuperscript{12} To alleviate a similar shortage in the Guards, senior officers complained that the increase in the number of battalions had made the Brigade less of a social club than formerly; that prolonged Aldershot service was unpopular; and that the burden on the remaining officers increased with the growing shortage.\textsuperscript{13} These officers wanted to redress the trend whereby sufficient men were no longer forthcoming from the traditional sources of recruitment. They recommended a lowering of the educational requirements, and an alternative method of entry to the normal channels of Sandhurst, the Militia and the Universities. Instead they proposed to:

\begin{quote}
let us nominate gentlemen and we will undertake to turn them into good Officers.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Report of Maj.-Gen. Hutchinson's Committee, summary of evidence, 17.5.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Ms. 50, 320, ff. 77.
\textsuperscript{13} Arnold-Forster, Officers of the Brigade of Guards, Memorandum to the Cabinet, 13.1.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Ms. 50, 320, ff. 151.
\textsuperscript{14} The Military Secretary added that, "I do not see why we should not look for a solution in this direction," suggesting that existing methods of entry could be supplemented by the nominations of Regimental Colonels, followed by a probation period of service and a confirmation of the commissions upon the passing of the requisite examinations. Military Secretary, The Supply of Officers for the Guards, 1.12.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Ms. 50, 320, ff. 41-43.
Although this proposal was suggested to overcome a short term and extreme situation, it was still a negation of any attempt to improve the quality of the officer intake. The only long term remedy was an entire reform of the Army's educational methods as suggested, in his more perceptive moments, by Arnold-Forster. He envisaged the creation of a college on the lines of a combined West Point and Osborne, with an amalgamation rather than a segregation of the various arms. Sir George Clarke endorsed these views, feared that Haig and French merely wanted to sustain a Cavalry intake from "the money class", and doubted that the efforts of the Army Council had significantly reduced the scale of expenditure in the Cavalry regiments. Both agreed however, that the Government could neither embark upon reforms, nor increase the Estimates in autumn 1905 and that the temporary expedient of nominating gentlemen was the only alternative.

The military advisers also believed that the traditional sources of recruitment would provide a long term remedy for the officer supply. The Regular Army required 10,666 officers to mobilise the Expeditionary Force and maintain it in the field for a year of active service. In 1906 the existing strength in the units, the depots and the Reserve of officers failed to meet this requirement by 4,419 men. The deficiency was predominately in the junior ranks, since promotion and the surplus of retired senior officers would be able to fill any wartime vacancies in the higher ranks. To overcome this shortage, the Ward Committee proposed the creation of a Supplementary List of Regular officers - men


16. Sir G.S. Clarke to Balfour, 27.9.05. Balfour MSS. B.M. Add. MSS. 49, 701, FF. 62-63 and Balfour endorsed the expedient of nominations, see Balfour to Arnold-Forster, 28.9.05. Arnold-Forster MSS. B.M. Add. MSS. 50, 320, FF. 61.
who had undergone a year's preparatory training; incurred a
liability to recall up to the age of 35 years; and trained in fort-
nightly sessions at annual or biennial intervals, during their period
of liability. To qualify, officers would either have to serve con-
tinuously with a Regular unit for one year, or obtain a Certificate A
after two years as a Public School Cadet followed by eight months con-
tinuous service, or obtain Certificates A and B as a School and
University Cadet, followed by four months continuous service. For
purposes of administration, the Committee proposed that the existing
School and University Corps should be reorganised in an Officers
Training Corps, and that a permanent War Office staff should supervise
all branches of cadet education. This proposal was only a long term
solution to the officer shortage, and would only furnish an optimum of
2,000 Supplementary Officers and 5,000 Auxiliary Officers after an eight
year period, (with another 2,400 in School or University Corps eligible
for wartime service).

For the Army, it was equally important to possess the ability to
react in the event of an immediate wartime emergency. In such a circum-
stance, the traditional method of concealing gaps in the War Establish-
ment was the promotion of non-commissioned officers. To minimise the
improvisation in this method, it was necessary to compile lists of
eligible non-commissioned officers in peacetime, and prepare the
financial arrangements, whereby they could be promoted without pecuniary
hardship. Among the financial measures which ought to have been
provided, were outfit allowances, messing allowances for those who were

17. Interim Report of the War Office Committee on the provision of
Officers (a) for Service with the Regular Army in War, and (b)
for the Auxiliary Forces, Cd.3294 (1907), XLIX, pp.3-7.
stationed at home, and special pension rates to facilitate the retirement of those who could not afford to retain their commissions when the war was over. To offset these expenses, the Army Council would not concede anything more than an outfit allowance of £150 for a wartime promotion. This not only reflected the parsimony of the Finance Member, but also the highly ambivalent attitude which the Council held about the non-commissioned officer. Although prepared to accept him as a potential subaltern in war, the Council discounted his ability to perform similar duties in peace and baulked at any measure which might encourage such aspirations. Sir William Nicholson insisted that the commissioning of rankers on an extended scale should not be commenced prior to mobilisation. He feared that this would incur the resentment of by-passed non-commissioned officers, require a further curb on regimental expenses, and thereby ensure that, "the present class of officer would not be forthcoming." As this class furnished the Army with its 'natural leaders', the Council would not consider any policy which might impinge on its contribution.

For a Liberal Government, the continued supply of officer gentlemen through the Officers Training Corps and the refusal to extend the promotion of non-commissioned officers, was an acceptable if limited policy. In the first place, the Officers Training Corps could be

19. The only exception on the Council was the Quarter-Master-General, Sir Ian Hamilton. See Precis No.453 and 122 Meeting of the Army Council, 21.3.10, W.O.163/15.
justified as harnessing for the nation the existing militarism of the public schools and universities. Secondly, the creation of the Corps dispensed with the need to diversify the sources of officer recruitment and thereby avoided the danger of increasing the spread of militarism. Thirdly, the long and short term methods of expanding the officer corps enabled the Government to argue that mobilisation was possible despite the shortage of serving officers. Haldane claimed that the Expeditionary Force could be mobilised at its War Establishment with the promotion of non-commissioned officers; the admission of four Special Reserve subalterns per battalion; and the use of the Supplementary and General Reserve. The Special Reserve, in spite of a deficit exceeding 1,100 subalterns, could also be mobilised with the embodiment of the Sandhurst cadets; the promotion of more non-commissioned officers; and the enrolment of officers from the Supplementary and General Reserve. Even if these measures proved inadequate - "mobilisation is always rather a ragged business and would be so with us" - Haldane believed that the passions of war would again move English 'gentlemen' to volunteer their services as frontline officers. To this extent there was agreement between the recommendations of military advisers and the preoccupations of Liberal Ministers; neither had a solution to the immediate problem, so both relied upon the traditional methods of improvisation.

21. Haldane argued that an advantage in developing the O.T.C. was that, "you are not in danger of increasing the spirit of militarism," indeed it only put the well-established militarism in the public schools and the universities, "to some good purpose," Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.169, 25.2.07, col.1321.

22. See the speeches by Viscount Haldane in the House of Lords, Fifth Ser., Vol.II, 6.3.12 and 13.5.12, cols.322 and 989.
Liberal spokesmen however, were unable to ignore completely the failure to improve the promotion prospects of the non-commissioned officer. Whereas they refrained from policies to broaden the social intake, they did not want to admit that the officers had become, in this respect at least, more exclusive in social composition. Indeed a deterioration in the promotion prospects of the non-commissioned officer was especially embarrassing, since it could not be explained as a deliberate attempt to stifle the spread of militarism. So, when Haldane revealed that 264 non-commissioned officers had been promoted in the period 1906-1910, he simply indicated that this was a proportion of about one in every twelve commissioned officers. It required the probing of an alert back-bencher to secure the admission that only 64 of these commissions were in the combat arms, while the remaining 200 were quarter-masters and riding masters. The 64 promotions represented a proportion of about one in 46 of the combat commissions granted in the period 1906-1910, whereas the proportion was one in 19 in the period 1885-1896. Although the decline in promotions reflected the lack of small colonial wars in the Edwardian period rather than deliberate Government policy, it was undeniable and especially evident in the Cavalry, where promotions from the ranks ceased altogether in the years 1903-1913.

The revelation of a decline in promotions from the ranks resurrected the impression that the scale of officer's expenses had buttressed a socially exclusive intake. For the aspiring Colour Sergeant, who was

23. In answer to Mr. Kellaway, Haldane admitted that there were only 64 promotions in the combat arms during the period 1906-1910. See, Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.21, 15.2.11, col.1193; Vol.21, 21.2.11, col.1713; and Vol.21, 15.3.11, col.2382. See also Appendix V: Promotions from the Ranks.
paid 4/- a day with an additional 1/- a day for the duty of
keeping accounts, it was hardly an attraction to receive an outfit
allowance of £100, the pay of 5/3 a day and a volume of expenses
requiring a private income of at least £100 per annum. To lessen
this hardship, the Government tardily resolved upon an increase in the
pay of the intermediate officer ranks – the first increase in 108 years. 24.
The increase amounted to an additional 2/6 a day for each Lieutenant
who had served for six years in the Colours, (in the first six years,
as in other professions, parents were expected to subsidize their
children). The non-commissioned officers were not to be promoted
until they had served for three years and would receive, if promoted,
an outfit allowance of £150 and £50 a year for each of the three years
served. These improvements by which the Government expected officers
to live on their pay, took effect from 1 January 1914. 25.

Although the outbreak of War prevented a long term assessment of
these proposals, the early returns confounded the expectations of the
Government. There were only nine recommendations for commission from
the ranks by 27 July 1914, of which seven were granted, all in the
Infantry. 26. Officer expenses remained a problem as subalterns,
especially in the Cavalry, were unable or unwilling to live on their
pay. Equally important, however, was the stipulation that non-
commissioned officers could only be promoted on the recommendation of
their commanding officers. The attitude of the latter was critical.

24. The previous pay increase was during the Napoleonic Wars in 1806.
25. See the statement by Col. J. E. B. Seely, Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol. 50,
19.3.13, cols. 1097-1101, and Appendix VI: The Changes in Officer's
Pay introduced on 1 January 1914.
26. H. J. Tennant in answer to Mr. Bennett-Goldney, Parl. Deb., Fifth
Ser., Vol. 65, 27.7.14, col. 950.
and since Radical writers and Members of Parliament championed the promotion of non-commissioned officers as a means of democratizing the officer corps, it was unlikely that commanding officers would oblige with a plethora of recommendations. At bottom, they disputed that the Army had any need for subalterns apart from those who had qualities of leadership instilled by breeding and education. They fortified themselves with the myth that this was a 'natural' relationship, one which earned the grateful (if untested) acquiescence of the rank-and-file. Indeed the officers asserted that the main objection to commissioned rankers was the dislike of them by their former comrades—a dislike of those who had ambitions above their station.

If these criticisms applied to the ordinary ranker, they also covered the gentleman ranker; indeed the military leadership had little respect for those who were raised with the breeding and advantages of a gentleman but who sought a commission by serving for a few years in the ranks. In 1891, the War Office had registered its distaste for gentleman rankers by ordering that no soldier should be promoted with less than six years service in the ranks. Even if the War Office had to


28. Sir W.G. Nicholson claimed that, 'soldiers do not like being commanded by men who have risen from the ranks.' Precis No.163 and 122 Meeting of the Army Council, 21.3.10, W.O.163/15. Maj. Morrison Bell agreed, see Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.23, 22.3.11, col.430, and John Ward accepted the possibility of dislike but accredited it to the likelihood that the ranker officer would be too familiar with the malingering tricks of the rank-and-file and would be a stricter disciplinarian. Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.14, 11.3.10, col.1830.

waive this regulation when shortages occurred in the officer corps, the official dislike of gentlemen rankers remained. Senior officers doubted that there was anything in a private soldier's duties which qualified him for promotion and hence that this short cut to a commission should be removed. As Captain G.T. Younghusband noted, the Army feared that:

most men lose more than they gain during their term of service in the ranks: in self-reliance, in manner, in polish, - even in speech. We have known, for instance, a born gentleman, who after three years in the ranks had utterly lost the proper use of the letter 'h'.

These views so permeated the officer corps that they clouded the hopes of the few who favoured reform. Sir Ian Hamilton, a critic of Cavalry extravagance and an advocate of ranker officers, doubted that the voluntary service Army could ever be democratised. Although he recommended free entrance to Sandhurst in order to open the commissioned ranks to all classes of the community, he suspected that, "the bulk of our officers would still come from the sons of professional men."

It cannot be argued therefore, that either the Government or its military advisers in the inter-war years, placed any priority on broadening the social composition of the officer corps. Once they had overcome the shortage of officers which followed in the wake of the

31. For Hamilton's criticism of Cavalry extravagance, see Hamilton to Dilke, 20.1.07. Dilke Mss., B.W. Add. Mss. 43, 919, ff. 163-164; for his belief that promoted non-commissioned officers could prove to be efficient subalterns and could attract a higher class of recruit to enlist, see Precis No. 453 and 122 Meeting of the Army Council, 21.3.10, W. 0, 163/15; and for his desire to democratise the officer corps and establish a free entrance to Sandhurst, see Hamilton to Haldane, 6.8.14. Hamilton Mss., 7/83, University of London, King's Coll., Centre for Military Archives.
South African War, and had concealed the lack of an officer reserve, neither body took any initiative on improving the promotion prospects of the non-commissioned officer. Admittedly, under external pressure, the Government conceded an increase in pay but even this reflected the caution of military and financial advice, and it evoked a meagre response from the non-commissioned officer. In short, the Army which had never admitted the need for change, was able to continue relying upon its traditional sources of officer recruitment.
Chapter 12

The attempt to establish promotion by merit in the Edwardian Army

"I think it would be a very serious blow to regimental esprit de corps if promotion in the line was made on one list."

Chapter 12 examines the opposition which the proposal to establish promotion by merit encountered within the Edwardian Army. It states that the recommendation depended upon the support of the commanding officers, who compiled the confidential reports, and claims that their co-operation was not forthcoming. The chapter also notes that the reform threatened the traditional process of regimental promotion, as well as the private interests of the junior officers. Indeed the prospect of promotion by selection raised the fear that jobbery, favouritism and unfair supersession would deprive long serving officers of their rightful promotion. To allay these suspicions, the Army Council refrained from basing regimental promotion upon selection, and compromised in its reform of extra-regimental appointments. The chapter concludes that the Council rated the contentment of its serving officers as more important than the reform of their career structure.
On their return from South Africa, senior officers echoed the criticism of war correspondents, that the junior officers had been deficient in military knowledge and had lacked any desire to excel in their profession. In statements before the Akers-Douglas Committee, they insisted:

that the majority of young officers will not work unless compelled, that 'keeness is out of fashion'; that 'it is not the correct form'; the spirit and fashion is 'rather not to show keeness'; and that the idea is...to do as little as they possibly can."

Although these witnesses claimed that the malaise partially reflected an inability to train effectively and an emphasis on theory in promotion examinations, they insisted that the basic problems were a lack of incentive in regimental work, a failure to reward proficiency, and above all, an absence of promotion on merit. Even so, it was an easier task to sponsor promotion by merit before a Select Committee than to impress it upon the service. To promote this heresy within the Army, the reformer had to overcome three well-established barriers - the reluctance of commanding officers to recommend promotions other than on the basis of seniority; the fears for regimental esprit de corps; and the suspicion that favouritism, jobbery and supersession would attend selection.

The first problem was the character of the confidential reports compiled by commanding officers. Since the formal end of promotion by seniority in 1885, these reports provided the basis for the decisions of the Selection Board and were expected to furnish some criteria for assessment. However, they tended to be either unduly favourable or

1. Report of the Committee appointed to consider the Education and Training of Officers of the Army, hereafter referred to as the Akers-Douglas Report, Cd. 982 (1902), x, p.29 especially the evidence of Sir H.E.Wood (Q.19), Sir I.S.M.Hamilton (Q.691) and Lord Roberts (Q.8427).
wholly vague in their professional comments, and some laid exclusive emphasis upon skills in polo and field sports and attributes like "success in society". By these methods they frustrated evaluation, and reinforced a system of promotion by seniority with only the blatantly incompetent liable to be rejected. Although the system eliminated the unfit, it still promoted those who had 'nothing known against them', as well as the palpably competent. Indeed the system ensured that the Commander-in-Chief had to take the responsibility of refusing a promotion and that his case had to be sufficiently strong to withstand Parliamentary questions on behalf of the aggrieved parties. Inefficiency therefore, was rarely grounds for refusing promotion and usually a specific act, involving neglect of duty or even worse, had to be proven before the Board would consider refusal. The pre-war process depended entirely upon information from the regimental commanding officers, but their co-operation was not forthcoming since they disliked selection and preferred promotion by seniority, the process by which they themselves had risen in the service.

To rectify this predicament, the pre-War administration bequeathed to its successor proposals in favour of a change towards selection. Sir Evelyn Wood recommended that commanding officers should concentrate upon professional capabilities when compiling their reports; that the criterion for promotion should only be a positive case in favour; and that seniority should not incorporate an automatic right to promotion.

Viscount Wolseley endorsed these views, and thought that the only

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3. For comments on the manner in which commanding officers had frustrated the intentions of the Selection Board, see Sir H.E. Wood to Military Secretary, System of Selection of Officers for Promotion, 15.8.00. W.O.32/8637.
additional requirement was a raising in the standard of the entrance examination at Sandhurst. After five years of inactivity, in which the Selection Board had only selected to eliminate unfit officers and appoint Major-Generals to particular appointments, this advice was little more than retrospective and spurious wisdom. The recommendations were hardly different from previous platitudes and still depended for their effectiveness upon the attitude of the commanding officer. Indeed this had to be the key requirement, so long as promotion below the rank of brevet Colonel remained within the confines of the regiment. Given this restriction, the only source of information was the regimental commanding officer, and his willingness to co-operate was crucial. In his endorsement of the existing promotion system, Lord Roberts perceptively queried:

What reason have we to suppose that a change of system would in itself lead to a change in the procedure of those who would have to carry it into effect?

Nevertheless the commanding officers were merely the personal embodiment of the regimental objections to promotion by selection. The essence of these objections was that any alternative to the existing method of promotion would be inimical to regimental esprit de corps, and deleterious to its principal support, the regimental system of promotion. In the post-war period, a few officers had had the temerity

4. Sir H.E. Wood to Military Secretary, op. cit., and Viscount Wolseley to Permanent Under Secretary of State for War, 15.10.00. W.0.32/8637.
5. Lord Roberts to Secretary of State for War, 21.1.01. W.0.32/8637. See also the comments of Lord Lansdowne on the minutes of Sir H.E. Wood and Viscount Wolseley, 30.10.00. W.0.32/8637.
to suggest the replacement of regimental by Army promotion. They had argued that regimental promotion constricted the outlook of junior officers, rendered them less interested in the Army as a profession, and precipitated a host of anomalies throughout the service. On account of the 109 different promotion lists, captains could hold their rank for as little as three or for as long as twenty-five years, and majors in some regiments could have less service than subalterns in others. The anomalies reflected the element of chance in the regimental system, in which seniority was critical and promotion determined by the occurrence of vacancies. The solitary recognition for meritorious service was the wartime award of brevet rank, but this was only a temporary award for junior officers and did not count towards promotion. Hence, although anomalies abounded between regiments, promotion within particular regiments remained predictable, assured (for all save the grossly incompetent) and usually slow. Yet, since the alternative of Army promotion denied the primary importance of the regiment, it was bound to flounder: the mere assertion that it might jeopardise regimental esprit de corps ensured that it was still born.

6. "A change or abolition of the regimental system would give you far more efficient soldiers in the higher ranks, by teaching them throughout their career that the Army is their profession, not the narrow groove of any regiment, which seems to contract their minds, dwarf their intellects and from the bright young men who join the regiments turns out the present unsatisfactory senior officer." Lord Kitchener to Brodrick, 29.6.01. Kitchener MSS., P.R.O. 30/37/22.

7. See Appendix VII: Average Rates of Regimental Promotion, 1898-1908.

The campaign in favour of promotion on merit encountered similar objections. A War Office Committee under the chairmanship of Major-General Coleridge Grove examined the issue and proposed a modified change towards selection. It recommended that promotion by regimental seniority (with the rejection of the unfit) should be retained up to the rank of Captain, but that promotion to the rank of Major and Lieutenant-Colonel should be assessed upon capability irrespective of regiment. Two members of the Committee, Major-General Ewart and Major Crawford, dissented from the majority view. They maintained that the operation of the existing system was satisfactory and met with the approval of the officer corps. On the other hand, they feared that if officers were promoted on merit either within a regiment or from one regiment to another, then this would shock county and national sentiment and disturb the harmony of the regimental mess. In his diary, Major-General Ewart added another fear that unless officers remained as well-known leaders in their particular regiments then Socialism might erupt in the ranks. The Army Council endorsed the minority report and thereby indicated its total dependence upon the contentment of the junior officers. As the majority of these officers served without the prospects of high command and in spite of personal financial sacrifice, the Council had few professional rewards to offer apart from promotion by regimental seniority. Indeed it suspected

9. On the premise that an officer until he has charge of a company, lacked any opportunity to demonstrate his fitness for command.

10. Promotion and Retirement of Regimental Officers, Report of Major-General Sir Coleridge Grove's Committee 1908, Pracis No.404 and III Meeting of the Army Council, 19.12.08. W.0.163/13. See also Col.J.S.Ewart to Sir G.S.Clarke, 25.1.04; Clarke to Ewart, 26.1.04; and the Ewart Diary, 25.1.04, 9.7.07, 8.8.07, 11.4.08 and 1.5.08; Ewart MSS., items 26, 81 and 122.
that the removal of this traditional inducement would incense serving officers and discourage potential officers. As Sir William Nicholson acknowledged, this dilemma stymied the prospects of reform:

I submit that it would be a blunder to introduce conditions of promotion which might sicken, if not kill, the goose that lays golden eggs. 11.

Another obstacle to promotion on merit was the suspicion that it would entail an unfair loss of personal security. Regimental officers presumed that they had a right to promotion, unless palpably incompetent, and that this right was equal in all respects save their length of service. Hence they held doubts over both the theory and practice of promotion on merit. In the first place, the theory contradicted established values by accepting where necessary, the supersession of senior by junior officers. Secondly, the practice raised fears of favouritism and jobbery in the allocation of appointments, since the Army lacked any precedent for the assessment of meritorious service in peacetime. Indeed, the suspicion of jobbery was already widespread and recurrently expressed in connection with the extra-regimental appointments, either in the high command (where promotion to Major-General was by selection to fill an appointment), or in the composition of expeditionary forces. As these promotions were fewer than the list of applicants, the volume of suspicion undoubtedly reflected the resentment of disappointed officers. 12. On the other hand, there were similar


12. See the comments of Sir William Nicholson, who initially denounced the system but later defended it as Quarter-Master-General and as Chief of the General Staff. Compare Nicholson to Wilkinson, 12.12.94. Wilkinson Mas., 13/13, with his comments in Precis No.275 and the 75 Meeting of the Army Council, 25.5.06, W.O.163/11 and in Precis No. 498 and the 132 Meeting of the Army Council, 29.5.11, W.O.163/16.
suspicions voiced by a former Secretary of State for War, newspaper critics and in one instance a successful officer, who attributed his appointment to backstairs influence. But, the effect of these fears was more important than their authenticity: they appeared to confirm the notion that further deviation towards promotion on merit would increase the scope for malpractice, and ensure that long serving officers were continually thwarted of their rightful promotion.

If these fears frustrated reform at regimental level, they were equally important in the attempt to reform extra-regimental promotion from Colonel upwards. Prior to the South African War, selection to fill an appointment only applied to Major-Generals and selection to fill an establishment only to Lieutenant-Generals: otherwise, seniority guided promotion to the General's establishment and the effluxion of time to the rank of Brevet Colonel. These methods produced especially absurd repercussions in the ranks of Brevet and substantive Colonel. The former rank could be obtained by appointment as Aide-de-Camp to the Sovereign or by promotion for distinguished wartime service, but more commonly it simply reflected the effluxion of time, (either three years' tenure of a Lieutenant-Colonel's post or six years' service on full pay as a Lieutenant-Colonel). Thereafter, Brevet Colonels became substantive Colonels by selection to fill an appointment, and hence, on 1 October 1905, there were 580 Colonels (Brevet and substantive) on

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13. These suspicions focused on the influence which Lady Jeune had exercised over appointments through the pre-War Adjutant General, Sir Evelyn Wood. Viscount Wolseley noted Wood's susceptibility to female flattery; see Lord Wolseley to Lady Wolseley, 1.10.94. Wolseley MSS. W/P.13/12, and journalists referred to it directly or indirectly, see Capt. W. E. Cairnes, An Absent-Minded War (Lon., 1900), pp. 54-55 and L. S. Amery, My Political Life (3 vols., Lon., 1953), Vol. 1, p. 204. Campbell-Bannerman claimed that, "Evelyn Wood whose amorous subservience to Lady J. and her daughter is the origin of all sneers about fine ladies," Campbell-Bannerman to Bryce, 26.1.03. Campbell-Bannerman MSS. E.M. Add. MSS. 52517. And W. S. Churchill acknowledged that the refusal of Kitchener to take him on the Sudan expedition was only overturned by the intercession of Lady Jeune through Sir Evelyn Wood, see W. S. Churchill, My Early Life (Lon., 1930), pp. 165-166.
the Active List but only 252 Colonel's appointments. Indeed, Britain had two and a half times as many Colonels in proportion as Germany, and three times as many as France.\textsuperscript{14} Since the majority of British Colonels incurred long periods of non-employment on half-pay, with few opportunities for appointment or promotion, they varied in age from thirty-seven to fifty-seven years. The main cause of the congestion was the promotion by seniority with only one Lieutenant-Colonel rejected out of the 472 who came up for promotion in 1904 and 1905.\textsuperscript{15}

This method of promotion also aggravated any distortion which seniority had produced within particular regiments. It ensured that those who had been fortunate in their earlier careers, had their fortune compounded and even accentuated to the relative disadvantage of their contemporaries. Within the Essex Regiment, this point was reflected in the career patterns of General Francis Ventris and Colonel William Carter:

\textbf{Francis Ventris}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
1st appointment & Captain & Major & Lieut.-Col. & Colonel & Major-General \\
Essex Regt. & Essex Regt. & Essex Regt. & brevet & Army & Army \\
11.2.75. & 5.11.81. & 16.12.83 & 15.6.85 & 15.6.89 & 17.10.03. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textbf{William G. Carter}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
1st appointment & Captain & Major & Major & Lieut.-Colonel \\
Essex Regt. & Essex Regt. & brevet & Essex Regt. & Essex Regt. \\
10.9.75. & 14.3.83 & 15.6.85 & 16.9.91 & 23.2.04. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

The two officers joined the same regiment within seven months of each other.

\textsuperscript{14} Whereas Germany had 1 Colonel to every 46 other officers and 1,235 men, and France had 1 Colonel to every 52 other officers and 1,442 men, Britain had 1 Colonel to every 18 officers and 451 men. See, \textit{The Report of the Committee on Promotion to Colonel and General}, hereafter referred to as the Coleridge Grove Report, Cd.2995 (1906), LXVII, paras. 9.

\textsuperscript{15} Coleridge Grove Report, \textit{op. cit.}, paras. 3-14.
other, and on 15 June 1885, each received a brevet for exactly similar services. However, while General Ventris received a Brevet Lieutenant-Colonelcy and automatically became an Army Colonel four years later, Colonel Carter received a Brevet Majority, which did not count towards promotion, and remained a Major until February 1904. The seven month's seniority of Francis Ventris turned into nearly 20 years seniority after 30 years service, and he became a Major-General before William Carter had become a Lieutenant-Colonel.16

Finally, there was the difficulty of adjusting officers' perspectives to selection once their careers had been cossetted and their security assured, through promotion by seniority and by effluxion of time. The subsequent promotion to the rank of substantive Colonel and Major-General was by selection to fill an appointment and this inevitably raised fears of unfair supersession. The Selection Board attempted to allay these fears by only promoting the officers with the requisite technical skills to fill a particular appointment. Hence when appointing a Director of Transport and Remounts, the Board would promote a Colonel specialised in that sphere, even if it had to bypass those who held the most important posts on the Colonel's List - brigadiers, chief staff officers of army corps and commanders of the training establishments. However this procedure, if unacceptable to those who yearned for promotion on pure seniority, was only justifiable as a form of selection for the first appointment. The new Major-General, once he had concluded his first appointment, had either to remain on half-pay (which would unduly swell the retired list) or be employed in another command, for which those over whom he had passed were equally, if not more suited. For

16. Maj.-Gen.H.S.Miles, Memorandum, 10.4.05, Appendix A to Precis No.233, 61 Meeting of the Army Council, 3.7.05. W.0.163/10.
the superseded officers this was almost as galling as the gain in seniority which the promoted Major-General would always retain.  

In short the attempt to assuage seniority fears by Brevet promotion through effluxion of time, and yet introduce selection to fill particular appointments, multiplied the contradictions and increased the disadvantages of the system. The plethora of unemployed Colonels, host of anomalies and legacy of grievance among displaced officers reflected the impossibility of reconciling the principle of selection with the fear of supersession. So long as both remained foremost considerations, any extension of the selection principle was doomed.

Indeed Sir William Nicolson feared that selection would be weakened by the reforms which the Army Council had accepted in 1906, from the Coleridge Grove Committee. These had included the abolition of the existing methods of promotion and their replacement by promotion from Lieutenant-Colonel upwards to fill establishment vacancies. The principal gain for those who feared displacement by junior officers, was that promotion and seniority (which related to the position on the establishment), remained antecedent to and independent of, allotment to particular posts.

The Committee had stipulated that officers should only be promoted to the establishments with their suitability for particular appointments in view. This presumed an ability to forecast vacancies in substantive appointments, and that well-qualified incumbents would be willing to make way for aspirants relinquishing lower commands. This fortuitous


18. Coleridge Grove Report, op.cit., para.29; Precis No.275 and 75 Meeting of the Army Council, 25.5.06. W.O.163/11.
arrangement failed to materialise, and as establishments greatly exceeded their respective number of appointments, (i.e. the Colonel's establishment was fixed at 350 whereas the number of appointments was under 250), there were grounds for the suspicion that seniority had unduly gained, by the arrangement.

Overall, the post-war attempt to extend promotion on merit throughout the Army proved abortive. Nevertheless, this failure, like the inability to broaden the social intake, did not undermine the ability of the officer corps to be better prepared for war in 1914 than in 1899. It simply indicated that the wartime critics - military and civilian - had mistaken the essence of military professionalism: they had failed to perceive that the main requirement was the development of skills in peacetime which were of relevance in time of war. An officer could gain these skills irrespective of his social background and career motivation; and, in this pre-technological Army, without a profound degree of insight or dedication. At regimental level, officers continued to indulge their sporting and social interests; mock the

19. By 1911, the Military Secretary noted that although there were 50 vacancies annually on the Colonel's establishment, there were 83.5 Brevet Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels vacating their commands on an annual basis. See Precis No.498 and 132 Meeting of the Army Council, 29.5.11. W.O.163/16.

20. Sir W.G. Nicholson expressed this suspicion, favoured selection for extra regimental promotion and agreed to differ with his colleagues over this issue. See, the Coleridge Report, op.cit., para. 31; Precis No.275 and 75 Meeting of the Army Council, 25.5.06. W.O.163/11; and Precis No.498 and 132 Meeting of the Army Council, 29.5.11. W.O.163/6.

21. They viewed professionalism as a matter of individual initiative and incentive, and argued that, "the dominant cause (of the lack of professionalism) is that the promotion of the young officer is not dependent on the zeal and ability which he may show." Akers-Douglas Report, op.cit., p.29.
pedants in the officers' mess, and sustain a cavalier attitude towards their profession, which if less pervasive than in the late Victorian period, remained a testimony to the officer gentleman tradition. These officers, however, were still able to display professional skills, if the duties which they practised in peace, were relevant in time of war. Indeed, the source of military professionalism lay in the prescription of tactical and training skills, appropriate to the new conditions of warfare, and in the provision of opportunities for their frequent practice.

22. The sporting and social predilections of the officer corps continued after the War, see Maj.-Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, The Army in my Time (Lon., 1935), pp. 40, 62-63, and Lt.-Col. J. Baynes, Morale (Lon., 1967), p. 116. Officers who took their profession too seriously were liable to rebuke, and for this reason, Lord Gort was thrown into the Basingstoke Canal by his brother officers, see J. R. Colville, Man of Valour (Lon., 1972), p. 18; and Montgomery recollects that, "it was not fashionable to study war and we were not allowed to talk about our profession in the Officers Mess," see Viscount Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein (Lon., 1958), p. 30.
Section 5

The Edwardian Rank-and-File
Chapter 13
Edwardian Recruiting

"It is perfectly true that, hitherto, the very great improvement in the conditions of the soldier's life has not produced a corresponding improvement in the number and quality of the recruits."


As an introduction to the section on the Edwardian rank-and-file, Chapter 13 surveys the failure of the Army to attract a better quality of recruit, and to sustain an adequate flow of recruits in the inter-war period. The chapter claims that these shortcomings were concealed until 1914, by the large number of Reservists and long service soldiers enlisted under the reforms of Brodrick and Arnold-Forster. It recognises that the Army was able to remedy some of the physical weaknesses and educational deficiencies of these recruits, but insists that there was not a significant improvement in recruiting during this period. Indeed, the chapter concludes that a deep-rooted distaste for military service, oblivious of marginal increments in pay and better conditions of service, thwarted the hopes of Army recruiters.
In the wake of the South African War, Lord Roberts argued that the dominance of smokeless magazine rifle had heralded the end of quarter column formations and volley firing: henceforth, soldiers would have to fight in open order alignment, learn the skills of 'fire and movement' and rely more on their individual intelligence than ever before. As the requirements of the modern battlefield, these criteria reinforced the pre-war demands for a qualitative improvement in Army recruiting. This did not occur: indeed, the post-war period witnessed neither a marked improvement in the social intake nor even an intake which was numerically sufficient. By spring 1914, recruiting had so failed to obviate the annual wastage that it evoked the alarm of interested journalists and warranted emergency measures by the Army Council. The laudable post-war intentions had floundered in the intervening years, with the scale of their failure providing a perspective within which the proposals themselves can be examined.

The recruiting problem persisted throughout the Edwardian period even if it failed to arouse concern until 1914. To sustain the reduced Haldanian establishment under the altered conditions of service, (7 years with the Colours and 5 years with the Reserve for

2. On 11 March 1914, the House of Commons debated the shortages in recruiting, see Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.59, cols.1243-1313. There were several concerned articles namely, 'Britain and Her Army', Blackwood's Magazine, Vol.CXCV, No.MCLXXI (Mar., 1914) and Lt.Col. A.W.A. Pollock, 'Our Perishing Army', Nineteenth Century, Vol.75, No.CCCCLIII (Jan., 1914). Finally, the Army Council approved a number of emergency measures in principle - payment by results for recruiters; a few brevets for recruiting officers; more Reservists allowed to return to the Colours; and bounties to men, who were serving at home, to extend their service. 167 Meeting of the Army Council, 22.5.14. W.O.163/20.
the Infantry of the Line), the Army required an annual intake of
some 34,000 to 35,000 recruits. Apart from the enlistment of
37,175 recruits in 1907-08, each succeeding year was below the
requisite total, with an annual average intake of 29,626 recruits in
the period 1909-13. By 1 May 1914, the Regular Army was 10,932 men,
or approximately 6%, short of its peacetime establishment.

The failure to remedy this annual shortfall reflected not merely the in-
trinsic difficulty of the task but also the complacency with which it
was viewed by the responsible officials in the War Office. They based
their complacency upon the double legacy from the abortive reforms of
Brodick and Arnold-Forster. In the first place, the introduction of
a nine-year period of Reserve service in 1902-04 had bloated the Army
Reserve, and had bequeathed a surplus for its 145,000 man Establishment.
Secondly, the enlistment of 38,026 recruits for nine years Colours
service in 1904-05 had ensured that there would be an abnormally low
wastage from the Colours in the years of declining intake. However,
a heavier wastage was inevitable in 1914 and 1915, as Infantrymen who
had served for nine and seven years in the Colours would pass con-
currently into the Reserve. To offset this tardy reckoning, the War
Office actuaries forecast that 50,000 recruits would be required in
the recruiting year 1914-1915. Recognising that this was an

3. For the actuarial forecasts, see the report by the Adjutant-General
in the 167 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No.815, 22.5.14.
W.0.163/20. The recruiting intake was as follows: in 1908-09,
33,837 recruits; 1909-10, 26,434 recruits; 1910-11, 29,452
recruits; 1911-12, 30,316 recruits; 1912-13, 28,091 recruits.
4. Mr. H. Tennant in answer to Sir C. Hunter, Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser.,
impossible target in view of recent trends in recruiting, the actuaries predicted that the Army would incur a further deficit of at least 19,000 men— an additional deterioration which was only averted by the outbreak of the First World War.

Qualitatively, there was also little change in Edwardian recruiting. Unskilled labour, especially "town casuals" continued to provide the largest single contribution to the annual intake.

TABLE: Trades of Men offering themselves for enlistment who were medically examined.*

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<td>Town Casuals</td>
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| Agricultural
unskilled
labour      | 11          | 11          | 11          | 11          | 12          | 12          | 11          |
| Other unskilled
labour       | 17          | 17          | 17          | 14          | 16          | 18          | 18          |
| All unskilled
labour      | 47          | 43          | 47          | 46          | 48          | 46          | 45          |
| Skilled labour| 22         | 23          | 24          | 23          | 22          | 24          | 24          |
| Other occupations| 26      | 24          | 24          | 26          | 25          | 25          | 26          |
| Professions
students      | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           |
| Boys under 17
years        |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| TOTAL %     | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         |
| Number      | (58,764)    | (61,182)    | (56,327)    | (45,085)    | (47,421)    | (47,008)    | (42,977)    |

6. Only "town casuals" and "agricultural unskilled labour" comprised more than 10% of the number inspected in each of the years examined. The categories included in:

Unskilled Labour - Agricultural and other outdoor labourers, railway workers, factory and indoor labourers, town and country casuals.

Skilled Labour - Coal miners, smiths, farriers, carpenters, butchers etc.

Other occupations - Carmen, town carters, clerks, tradesmen's assistants, servants, porters.

Professions - Musicians and students.

The tables were collated and percentaged by the author from the relevant numerical tables in each of the Annual Reports for the years in question.
However, these were only the trades claimed by or ascribed to the potential recruits: the vast majority of these men were unemployed before they offered themselves for enlistment. Although the Army never tabulated its dependence on the unemployed, the Health Report of 1909 claimed that, "well over 90 per cent" of those inspected were out of work.7 Indeed the quest for a diversified recruiting intake indicated that apart from securing a more able ranker, the Army wanted to free itself in its recruiting from the vagaries of civilian unemployment. Even if only a fraction of the unemployed ever considered a military career, the Recruiting Directors had always maintained that the condition of unemployment prompted many men to enlist, and that recruiting would fall with an increase in alternative economic opportunities. By repeating these claims over the shortages in 1911, 1912 and 1913, the Army acknowledged that it had failed to diversify its recruitment and heighten its appeal for those in regular employment.8

Another measure of this lack of improvement was the enfeebled condition of the men who offered themselves for enlistment. Their physical and medical condition reflected the ailments and want of physical development associated with their poverty stricken urban background. The majority of them failed to meet the meagre medical standards of the Regular Army - Infantry recruits had to measure 5'3" in height, 33" round the chest and 112 lbs. in weight. Throughout the Edwardian years, there was no evidence that the Army was beginning to attract a different and notably healthier section of the community. Even the decline of rejections by medical officers (from 33.6% in 1905-06 to 21.4% in 1912-13), only indicated that more potential recruits

8. See the Recruiting Reports in the General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1911, Cd.6065 (1912-13), II, p.7; for the year ending 30 September 1912, Cd.6656(1912-13), I.I, p.7; for the year ending 30 September 1913, Cd.7252(1914), I.II, p.7.
were being rejected by the recruiting officers prior to medical inspection, and that as fewer men were offering to enlist, so the Army was admitting more recruits below their medical standards. The average rejection rate per annum between those who were served with notice papers and those who joined a unit, remained at 52% for the period 1906-1913. What changes occurred in the inter-war years signified changes in the recruiting standards, and in the willingness of the Army to lower or ignore them where necessary, to ensure a numerically sufficient flow of recruits.

There was also little progress over the purportedly critical factor of individual intelligence. Prior to the South African War, the Army had tested educational attainments in a highly cursory manner and had consistently reported an illiteracy rate of under 3% per annual intake. Even after the War, Colonel Delavoye reported that recruits were still being pronounced as literate if they could scrawl their signatures and read a few words of print (but not a word of cursive writing). Hence there was not a clear impression of recruiting literacy until the War Office revised its educational standards in 1907 and correlated them with civilian criteria. On the basis of the Standard Readers used in primary and secondary schools, the Army revealed that 11% of its annual intake was illiterate and that some 70%...
failed to pass the educational standards set for eleven year old children. As these percentages persisted throughout the period 1907-1913, they confirm the impression that the Army had neither broadened its appeal nor tapped a more able source of recruits.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless it was possible to mitigate some of the physical and educational deficiencies once the recruits had entered the Army. The basic aspects of military service - physical exercise, an open air life, and regular (if unappetising) meals - were in themselves beneficial for the new recruits, especially those from the urban slums. In 1907, the Army remeasured 15,351 Infantrymen six months after enlistment to record an average gain of $\frac{3}{4}$" in height, 1" in chest measurement and nearly 10 lbs. in weight.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand, military training could be too severe for those who were unused to strenuous physical exercise. Training instructors emphasised smartness in drill and mechanical precision on the parade ground, and tried to complement these disciplines by precise exercises on the fixed gymnastic apparatus (the bars, vaults etc.). Although these exercises were invaluable in helping to co-ordinate the movements of fit soldiers, they were liable to overstrain those with any heart or general body weaknesses. In 1907, the War Office acted upon the recommendations of a Committee of gymnastic

\textsuperscript{12} See Appendix IX: The Educational Attainments of Edwardian Recruits.

\textsuperscript{13} The 15,351 recruits measured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Height</th>
<th>Average Chest</th>
<th>Average Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On enlistment</td>
<td>5'5.30&quot;</td>
<td>34.87&quot;</td>
<td>122.59 lbs.wt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 6 months</td>
<td>5'5.98&quot;</td>
<td>36.07&quot;</td>
<td>132.23 lbs.wt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

staff and medical authorities to introduce the gymnastic drill currently practised in the Danish and Swedish Armies. This drill placed greater prominence on free exercises with the body, arms and legs, and the medical authorities never ceased to stress that this had a considerable therapeutic value. Indeed, it became increasingly possible to enlist recruits below the requisite standards, and attempt to correct their defects in categories such as flat feet, deficient chest measurement and spinal curvature, once they were in the service.  

The Army was also able to offset some of the more glaring shortcomings in educational attainment. In the first place, the War Office compelled all soldiers to attend the Army Schools until they had obtained a third class certificate of education (which corresponded to Standard III in elementary schools, a Standard commonly reached by a child of nine). Secondly, under Army Order 231 of 1906, it replaced service pay, which was awarded for conduct and length of service, by proficiency pay and made the award of the latter conditional upon the possession of a third class certificate of education. Even so, this inducement only served to sustain the already increasing rate at which soldiers were obtaining educational certificates. Whereas the proportion of the strength in the possession of a certificate increased from 41.83% in 1904 to 52.34% in 1906, the increase merely continued at the same rate in the subsequent years, rising from 55.70% in 1907 to 75.34% in 1913.  

What made this increase possible was the minimal  

14. On the decision to change the gymnastic drill, see General Annual Report of the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1906, Cd.3365 (1907), IX, pp.4-5 and the statement by Haldane, see Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.135, 4.3.08, col.726. For its effects, Report on the Health of the Army for the year 1912, Cd.7201 (1913), LII, p.2.  

15. The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1913, Cd.7252 (1914), LII, p.96.
nature of the standards required: on their initial examination, some 60% of the annual intake were accorded a Class C or better rating, and thereby entered the Army with an educational attainment equal to, or in excess of, Standard III. As such, the improvement which undoubtedly occurred, was relatively modest, and the remedial efforts of the Army Schoolmaster were only a limited substitute for the failure to attract more able recruits.  

Yet the War Office spokesmen repeatedly asserted that there was a notable improvement in the character and rectitude of the new recruits. From 1903 onwards, the War Office insisted that the men who offered themselves for enlistment should present character references to confirm their sobriety, honesty and respectability. The Recruiting Directors applauded this innovation by indicating that there was a decrease in the disturbances at recruiting depots, and a reduction in the number of undesirable men who presented themselves for enlistment. Initially, these were only impressions, incapable of verification, but in the following years, there was a decline in some rank-and-file misdemeanours. Drunkenness, if "still the curse of the Army", and

16. See Appendix IX and the speech of Lord Monkswell about the educational standards of the Army, House of Lords, Fourth Ser., Vol.196, 16.11.08, cols.820-821. Although it was laudable for Lord Monkswell to press for improvements in Army education, the scope for improvement was limited. In England and Wales the number of children who continued their education beyond the age of 12 years only rose from 793,244 in 1899-1900 (or 14% of the school population for that session) to 1,118,513 in 1913-14 (or 19% of the school population for 1913-14). See Statistics of Public Education in England and Wales 1913-14, Cd.8097 (1914-16), LI, p.18.

17. The conditions required in the references are given in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.120, 25.3.05, col.257. For the effects claimed by the Recruiting Directors, see The Annual Report of the Director of Recruiting and Organisation for the year ending 30 September 1904, Cd.2265 (1904), IX, p.30; for the year ending 30 September 1906, Cd.4493 (1909), x, p.22; and, for the year ending 30 September 1902, Cd.5016 (1910), IX, p.20.
especially prevalent in the Scottish regiments was a decreasing crime in spite of an increased liability to punishment. The proportion of soldiers discharged for misconduct was also diminishing, indeed it more than halved in the period 1904-1913. On the other hand, the net loss from desertion significantly increased in the years 1910-1913, and so the claim that the Edwardian recruit was more reliable than his predecessor may have been premature. What improvement occurred was only in the elimination of the anti-social recruit which, although important, was a more modest achievement than the original aim.

The Edwardian period therefore, was not one in which a substantial change occurred in Army recruiting. Indeed an amelioration was extremely unlikely given the limited time and the intrinsic difficulty of the task. In the first place, there was the difficulty of devising appropriate measures to diversify the source and stimulate the volume of recruiting. The recruiting advisers could only speculate on why men offered themselves for enlistment and why other men might be tempted to do so. Secondly, they had to convince their political masters that these speculations were both valid and necessary. Certain Liberal politicians had always disputed that it was necessary to improve the quality and broaden the source of the ranker intake. Some had argued


19. Whereas the numbers fined for drunkenness declined from 13,537 (5.07% of the average strength) in 1903-04 to 9,230 (4.02%) in 1912-13 and those discharged for misconduct from 3,656 (7% of the annual decrease) in 1903-04 to 1,064 (3%) in 1912-13, desertions rose from an annual average of 1,196 in the years 1903-1910 to 1,601 in the period 1910-1913. See, The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1913, Cd.7252 (1914), III, pp.74-78.
that it was only the dregs of society who were suited to the barbarities of warfare, while others feared that increased recruitment from the skilled labouring classes would impair the productivity of the nation.\textsuperscript{20} Thirdly, even if suitable measures gained political approval, there was the difficulty of apprising the public. The publicity techniques of the Army - press advertisements, booklet distribution and recruiting marches supplemented by an Information Bureau at the Earl’s Court Exhibition in 1913 and a recruiting film in 1914 - achieved little in public impact.\textsuperscript{21} This failure did not reflect upon the substance of these advertisements so much as upon the profound contempt with which the military career was viewed. Indeed, there was not sufficient time in which to erode the deeply-held reservations about the character and life style of the serving soldier, and his prospects once he had returned to civilian life. As Lord Wavell remarked:

There was in the minds of the ordinary God-fearing citizen no such thing as a good soldier; to have a member who had gone for a soldier was for many families a crowning disgrace.\textsuperscript{22}

In view of these limitations which bore upon all the recommendations aimed at a qualitative improvement in recruiting, the examination of the


\textsuperscript{21} “What you want to make known to the mothers, sisters and friends of intending recruits that service in the Army is now a far better thing than it ever was before. We have practically doubled the pay without anybody being the wiser.” Viscount Haldane to Haldane, 18.12.05. Haldane Mss., N.L.S., MS.5906, ff.271. See also the similar comments which Arthur Lee made almost nine years later. \textit{Parl. Deb.}, Fourth Ser., Vol.59, 10.3.14, col.1103.

\textsuperscript{22} Field Marshal Sir A. Wavell, \textit{Soldiers and Soldiering} (Lon., 1953), p.125. Where a soldier enlisted with a blessing from his family, it was usually where there was already a service connection, it. Col.J. Baynes, \textit{op. cit.}, p.135.
proposals will not focus on their effectiveness as recruiting stimuli. The main concern will be the process by which some measures were undertaken while others were shelved within the designated areas of reform, (i.e. the pay and conditions of service for the rank-and-file, and capacity of the ex-soldier to secure civilian employment). Given the breadth of these areas and the inherently speculative nature of the recruiting problem, it was significant that some proposals were accorded priority while others were postponed or rejected. A study of these considerations may reveal the manner in which the problem was viewed, the perceptions of the interested parties and the priority attached to various aspects of Army Reform.
Chapter 14

The Pay and Conditions of Service of the Rank-and-File

"I do not think we consider sufficiently in England, with a voluntary Army like ours, that unless we can give a very high rate of pay, we shall always be obliged to take in the 'waifs and strays'."

General Viscount Wolseley, (1,448). Evidence before, The Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War to consider the terms and conditions of service in the Army, C.6582 (1892), XIX.

Chapter 14 reviews the various measures proposed by senior officers and Army Reformers for improving the pay and conditions of service in the ranks. It notes that as a means of attracting more recruits, these measures were purely speculative and did not reflect any evidence of rank-and-file opinion. It also claims that peacetime Governments were suspicious of any proposals which might tap the same number and quality of recruits at a greatly increased cost. The chapter argues that the Government only conceded an increase in pay when a recruiting crisis was imminent, and an opportunity had occurred in wartime to increase the rates of pay without evoking excessive opposition. The chapter concludes that on all other occasions, the Government baulked at any measure which required increased expenditure, and was content so long as the Army had sufficient recruits to fulfil its peacetime responsibilities.
For Viscount Wolseley and a substantial number of officers, the recruiting question depended entirely upon the offer of appropriate monetary inducements and suitable conditions of service. Aware of the ranker's meagre pay and miserable quarters, the tedious fatigues and plethora of restrictions to which he was subjected, they asserted that these aspects would always deter a better quality of recruit. Above all, they insisted that the offer of a boy's wages would only attract the 'waifs' and 'strays' and undesirable characters in society - those who were unable to find regular employment in the labour market. What this theory failed to take account of was that the limited appeal and lowly status of an Army career signified more than a disdain for the present inducements: it also reflected a profound lack of interest in the military life, and in some quarters, an antipathy towards it.

In the short term, there was possibly little which the military could recommend to alter these feelings, but their failure even to consider a revision of the career structure and offer more promotions from the ranks, indicated how little they were aware of this other dimension.

Material improvements in pay and conditions of service remained the central theme in pre-war and post-war advice on the recruiting question.*

This view was purely a matter of personal speculation, since the officers did not know why some men enlisted while others did not, and

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1. Viscount Wolseley was the leading spokesman of this approach, and argued that an extra sixpence per day would enable the Army to compete, with the civilian labour market. See, Viscount Wolseley, 'The Army', in T. H. Ward (ed.), The Reign of Queen Victoria (2 Vols., Lon., 1887), Vol. I, pp. 205-207; 'The Standing Army of Great Britain', Harper's New Monthly Magazine, European edition, Vol. LXXX (Feb., 1890), pp. 336 and 344; (Q.4468-4473) evidence before The Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War to consider the terms and conditions of service in Army, hereafter referred to as the Wantage Committee, C.6582 (1892), XIX; and (Q.9155) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol. I, Cd.1791 (1904), XLI.
they did not ask the opinion of the rank-and-file. By simply suggesting improvements for those aspects of the Service which they personally considered as unlikely to attract recruits, they arrived at a number of different recommendations. There was a minority of officers who demurred at an increase of pay, although most favoured an improvement in the conditions of service. Whereas some feared that any attempt to compete with civilian rates of pay was bound to be abortive, others either opposed a highly paid Army in principle or doubted that the present recruit was worth what he currently received.² The issue divided successive Inspector-Generals of Recruiting and aligned some officers who often found cause for disagreement, (i.e. the Duke of Cambridge and Sir Redvers Buller opposed increasing pay, while Viscount Wolseley and Lord Roberts suggested an increase). The predominant military opinion however, favoured an increase and this was endorsed by the findings of the Wantage Committee. In 1892, the Committee published its proposals to abolish deferred pay; give the private soldier in the Infantry of the Line 1/- a day free from all stoppages; a messing allowance of 3d a day; a sufficient supply of clothing; easier opportunities to earn good conduct badges; and more elastic terms of service.³ Although the Government did not implement these proposals, they remained as an independent and purportedly authoritative

² See the evidence of Sir R. Buller (3.129 and 162), the Duke of Cambridge (3.2046 and 2121), Maj.-Gen. J.H. Rocke (3.528), Col. M.W. E. Gosset (3.3894) and Col. C.S. Hope (3.7073) before the Wantage Committee, op. cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX.

³ See the 'Provisions and Recommendations' of the Wantage Report, op. cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX, pp. 26-27. Although two-thirds of the witnesses concurred with these views, they differed in the priority which they accorded to them. Whereas the majority who wanted an increase in pay also wanted to abolish deferred pay, some did not, including Viscount Wolseley who regarded an efficient Reserve as a primary objective in Army Reform.
statement in favour of the military recommendation.

The Liberal Government and its Conservative successor ignored these findings because they accepted the dissenting report of Arthur L. Halliburton, the future Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War. He had argued that recruits did not enlist on account of their pay and allowances, and hence that any change in these factors would only produce the same class of recruit at a large, permanent and unnecessary cost, (i.e. an additional £750,000 per annum). For the front bench spokesmen on both sides of the House of Commons, this was a perfect rationalisation for ignoring the issue. They could argue that the enlistment of men from a higher social class was a desirable long term objective but impractical in the eighteen nineties. If pay was the critical factor as the Wantage Report suggested, then the Government could only influence recruiting by at least doubling the current rates of pay. Even this was not assured of success and was bound to be wasteful, since the Army would still attract men from its traditional source of recruitment. The Government could also ignore the claim that (irrespective of its recruiting consequences) a pay rise was overdue and necessary, by arguing that the inducement to enlist was not pay but, "the military life, the adventurous life and the change". At bottom, the front bench spokesmen ignored the recruiting issue so long as the numbers were sufficient and the quality was adequate for service in the myriad of small colonial wars. They required more than


5. See the speeches by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.98, 13.5.01, col.1501 and Vol.131, 8.3.04, cols.611-612, and Brodrick in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.90, 8.3.01, col.1080. Within Parliament, only the Army Reform lobby campaigned for increased rates of payment, especially for differential rates between men and boys and more elastic terms of service. See Dilke in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.90, 8.3.01, col.1669 and Vol.93, 13.5.01, col.1555.
recommendations to support an increase in Government expenditure; they had to perceive the requirement as imperative in the national interest.

What provided the incentive for political action was not the humiliations and defeats in battle (although these shattered the complacency with which the Government viewed its military arm), but the circumstances and opportunities created by the South African War. As late as March 1901, the Secretary of State expressed:

the gravest reservations whether any increased pay we could give, unless we give something like double, would really bring in a different stamp of recruit.6

Indeed Brodrick did not take any initiative on recruiting until he had perceived that a manpower crisis, precipitated by the War, was liable to vitiate his Army Corps scheme: only then, did he accede to the demands of Lord Roberts for an increase in pay.7 It required a manifest recruiting crisis and an opportunity to increase pay without incurring excessive opposition, before the Government would cast aside its doubts. Although these doubts had not been superficial, the Government had used them to conceal a lack of alternative proposals and a lack of interest in the issue. Hence, when the crisis occurred, it lacked any policy options other than those which its military advisers had consistently proffered. An increase in the pay of the rank-and-file therefore, had depended upon persistent and relatively united military advice in which a high priority was placed on the issue, the perception by the Government of an imminent recruiting crisis, and the opportunity in war to grant the rise before the return of peacetime retrenchment.

6. Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.90, 8.3.01, col.1080.
7. Brodrick to Curzon, 10.5.01 and 22.11.01. Curzon Miss., Dir.P.111/10B, ff.263-265 and 291-294; Brodrick, Memorandum on the Army Estimates 1902-03, 7.12.01. Cab.37/58/128; and Brodrick, Pay and Terms of Service in the Army, 4.1.02. Cab.37/60/2.
Although spokesmen for the Government and the Army tended to agree upon the need for improvements in the living conditions of the rank-and-file, there was less insistence from either body that this was a priority for Reform. Unlike increased pay or the prospect of post-Colours employment, few reformers claimed that improved conditions of service were a vital requirement in the search for more and better recruits. On the other hand, they did insist that miserable barracks, fatigue duties and demeaning restrictions had contributed to the lowly status of an Army career. They also suggested that some recruits may have been deterred by the knowledge that soldiers rarely left their barracks, ate in the same rooms in which they slept, spent more time on fatigues and employments than on soldiering, and lived without privacy or comforts. This assertion ought to be qualified by the admission that those who were appalled by the living conditions, duties and restrictions of the rank-and-file, were the officers and well-meaning civilian reformers. For many rankers, these conditions may have been no worse and possibly even better than those which they had previously experienced in civilian life. Nevertheless, the reformers were concerned about various aspects of the rankers' living conditions, and they periodically pressed the Government about them.

8. Nineteen of the witnesses supported the need for improvements in evidence before the Wantage Committee, op.cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX, while both front benches agreed with them, see the speeches by Brodrick and Campbell-Bannerman in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 90, 8, 3, 01, col. 1080 and Vol. 93, 3, 5, 01, col. 1501.

Fatigue duties were one aspect which persistently aroused military concern. Senior officers presumed that if the Army offered any positive attraction in recruiting, it was by virtue of its fighting duties in adventurous and challenging circumstances. They also argued that this appeal could only be sustained in peace by regular military training and was liable to be dissipated by the prolonged performance of fatigue duties. However, the Army at home and abroad employed a substantial number of troops on fatigue, some 7,000 per day on permanent employments and another 10,000 per day on casual employments. The effect on the under-strength home battalions was particularly severe, and Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny, the Adjutant-General, preferred the following example of a home battalion depleted by foreign drafts:

From 1 home battalion composed of 7 companies - 430 non-commissioned officers and men, Deduct:

- Permanent Garrison Employment 54
- Permanent Regimental Employment 52
- Daily fatigues 39 = 145

Men in band, signallers, sick, transport, pioneers, Mounted Infantry, machine guns etc. = 100

Recruits = 120

Therefore, the number of troops available for daily training = 78.

In other words, the employment of men on non-military duties undermined the ability of the home battalions to indulge in realistic training, quite apart from the deleterious effect which sanitary fatigue, barrack labouring and waiting at table might have on a soldier's military enthusiasm.

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10. Adjutant-General, Minute on replacement of soldiers on non-military duties by ex-soldiers or civilians, 1.10.02. W.O.32/9120.

The Adjutant-General recommended that many of these duties should be performed by civilians or ex-soldiers. On 1 October 1902, he requested permission to hire 6,000 civilians at an average wage per head of £1,2.0. weekly. Since this proposal would increase the Estimates by £345,000 per annum, it incurred vehement opposition from the Finance Department and the Secretary of State. Three years later, when the General Officers Commanding complained that they were unable to train their troops and required civilian understudies for each employed man, the Chief of the General Staff did not even forward their objections to the Army Council. With the Government already committed to the expense of Artillery rearmament, the cost of this proposal made it utterly prohibitive. As there was not any immediate recruiting crisis and the proposal only appeared to have an indirect influence on recruiting, these factors ensured that the Edwardian soldier would continue to perform a host of non-military duties while serving with the Colours.

12. On 31 October 1902, the Finance Department costed the proposal of the Adjutant-General, op.cit., 1.10.02. Sir F. Marszials noted that, "this, as explained above, foreshadows a very heavy expenditure - so heavy that it appears to me quite prohibitive." Sir F. Marszials to Sir G. Harris, 3.11.02. At a later meeting of the War Office Council, the Secretary of State condemned the measure as too expensive. See the meeting of the War Office Council on 24.11.02. W.O.32/9120.

13. As he noted, "In fact it is not likely that the Treasury will ever consent to an expenditure of over £300,000 a year to remedy the existing state of things." Sir W.S. Lyttelton, 26.6.05, in reply to the Annual Confidential Report by the G.O.C.in C., Irish Command. W.O.32/9121.

14. It should not be accepted that the ranks resented all fatigues and employments. Some duties, especially in catering, may have been preferred to routine military drill, and the claim that rankers relished military training was only presumed by the officer corps. It was not based on any evidence of rank-and-file opinion.
The Army also considered that an improvement in barrack conditions was a prerequisite in the search for a better class of recruit. Given that the majority of barracks offered spartan facilities, poor lighting and little opportunity to enjoy any comfort or privacy, there was scope for improvement. However, there were enormous problems in the practicalities of barrack reform. In the first place, many barracks were incapable of modernisation because of their age and structure, and many were badly sited far from the exercise, recreation and manoeuvring areas. The poor situations reflected the tendency of barracks to outlive their original purpose: at the turn of the century, troops were still quartered in the centre of large cities (to control riots in the early nineteenth century), and in forts along the coastline (to thwart the apprehended French invasion in 1859). To be effective, any policy of modernisation required wholesale reconstruction. Secondly, if the barracks building programme was to aid recruiting, it required a measure of civilian supervision, since improvements by military standards would not necessarily comply with civilian expectations. As this supervision did not occur until 1905, the new barracks at Colchester and Tidworth, despite their separate dining facilities and recreation rooms, were basically a reproduction of the old style barracks. The Royal Engineers who designed, built and maintained the buildings were less enthusiastic about innovations (like cubicles) than either the Commander-in-Chief or the Secretary of

15. See Report of Committee on Lands and Buildings owned by the War Department, 1905, 27.11.05. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M., Add. MSS. 50310, ff.164. Sir D. Haig had remarked on the Cavalry barracks at Piers Hill, Edinburgh, "it is a bad place for Cavalry - no drill ground .... Indeed any place is better as a Cav. station than Edin."
Haig to Henrietta Haig, 17.9.02. Haig MSS., N.L.S., 1 Box 4, Vol.6.
Finally, the possibility of fundamental reform depended upon substantial and sustained financial support from the Government: this was critical and it was not forthcoming.

The Conservative Government financed barrack construction by long term borrowing outwith the Army Estimates. Under the *Military Works Act* (1897), the Government rated barrack building as an exceptional priority (to complement their increases in the peacetime establishment), and resolved to build on loan, incurring a repayment liability of thirty years. To meet the barrack requirements of the pre-war increases in manpower, the Government staggered its programme over five years, but these requirements were markedly less than those prefigured by the wartime exigencies and the Brodrick reforms. In the period 1900-1903, the Government doubled its barracks expenditure and borrowed another £11,852,500 in two additional loans.17

Whereas the first of these loans passed through the House of Commons at the end of a wartime session, with barely 40 Members present and

16. On the need for civilian supervision, see the statement by Arnold-Forster, *Parl. Deb.*, Fourth Ser., Vol.141, 23.2.05, col.1171. For a contrast between the enthusiasm of Lord Roberts for cubicles and the attitude of the Royal Engineers, compare Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 1.9.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., H/122/4/324, with the comment by Arnold-Forster, Rule and precedent have evidently controlled design to an extent which has gone far to exclude originality, and to stereotype that which was never satisfactory, and which is in no way in accordance with modern views and requirements. H.O. Arnold-Forster, *The Army in 1906: A Policy and A Vindication* (Lon., 1906), p.282.

17. Prior to the War, the Government borrowed £2,600,000 under the *Imperial Defence Act* (1888), £4,100,000 under the *Barracks Act* (1890), and £9,458,000 under the *Military Works Loans* (1897 and 1898). Post-War, the Government borrowed £2,352,500 in 1901 and £3,500,000 in 1903. See, *Parl. Deb.*, Fourth Ser., Vol.126, 24.7.03, col.269. For Government Expenditure, see Appendix X: *Expenditure on Building and Repairing Barracks*. 
hardly a murmur of protest; the second, requested in the immediate post-war period, incurred substantial Parliamentary criticism. All shades of political opinion evinced concern, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach claimed that the new standards of accommodation were too exalted and too expensive. Within eighteen months, the Unionist Government curtailed its building programme by £1,500,000 and its Liberal successor abolished the use of loans. The new method of financing, which incorporated the cost of barracks construction into the annual Estimates, ensured that the avoidance of unnecessary expenditure would take priority over modernisation. Haldane established new criteria for further building, (i.e. where existing barracks were insanitary and dangerous, and where a barracks was lacking for a particular portion of the military organisation), and these meant that cases of hardship and discomfort would no longer be considered and that the rebuilding programme would return to its pre-war level.

The Army was only able to improve those aspects of military service which did not involve heavy financial expenditure. Within this limitation was the individual status of the soldier, especially his freedom of movement when not performing military duties. Traditionally, the Army had subjected this freedom to endless supervision and required a non-commissioned officer to shepherd the private soldier on every furlough. Some officers, like Sir Evelyn Wood and Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, doubted

18. Compare the reaction to the statement by Lord Stanley on 1 August 1901, Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 98, cols. 934-938, with the furor which attended the subsequent request on 24 July 1903 and the amendments moved on 31 July 1903. Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 126, cols. 236-294 and 1100-1107. For the eventual reduction, see the statement by Arnold-Forster, Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 141, 23.2.05, col. 1171.

that the service could impose these restrictions and still expect to attract more able and responsible recruits. In the Southern Command, despite protests from the local clergy, Sir Evelyn Wood insisted that soldiers should be allowed to return of their own accord after an evening in town. He noted that nearly 90% reported by tattoo.

At Aldershot, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien followed suit by abolishing the picquets who used to round up tardy privates, and thereby saved the labour of nearly 700 men per week. By endorsing these measures and authorising their application throughout the Army, the War Office accepted that a less restrictive treatment was liable to enhance the self-respect of the men and augment the popularity of the Army.

Nevertheless, the Army perpetuated other restrictions, especially where connected with marital responsibilities. As the service frowned on marriage; provided few quarters for married men; and was a traditional refuge for men escaping from amatory indiscretions, there was little interest in forcing the soldier to accept his paternal responsibilities. The inevitable sufferers were the service families, particularly where the offspring were illegitimate or where the marriage was off the strength.

Marriages off the strength had to depend upon the help of


22. "I feel certain that we have only to persevere and treat our people as they would be treated in civil life in all matters when they are not required for duty, and it will not only enhance their self respect but will render the Army more popular." Sir E. Wood to Lord Roberts, 29.1.03. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., I/91/41.

23. Only a limited number of soldiers were allowed places on the married establishment and thereby quarters if there were vacancies and entitlement to separation allowances. There were no exact figures for the marriage off the strength (i.e. those who did not have £7 in the savings bank; 7 years service exclusive of boy's service; and a good conduct record) but, "in no case were the numbers negligible, while sometimes they were considerable." Report of an Enquiry by Mrs. Tennant regarding the conditions of Marriage Off the Strength, Cd. 7441 (1914), II, para. 4.
voluntary associations inasmuch as the military authorities refused them quarters and separation allowances. As late as March 1914, the Army Council declined to align the maintenance stoppages for dependents with the maximum provisions (5/- a week) of the bastardy laws Amendment Act (1872). Without an increase in pay, the authorities feared that an increase in the stoppages would merely precipitate more desertions. Indeed, the Army Council only favoured a decrease in the restrictions upon the private soldier so long as this did not rebound with additional problems for them, and an extra burden on the Army Votes.

In sum, finance was the main consideration in determining whether the proposals for improving the pay and conditions of service of the rank-and-file were either accepted or indefinitely postponed. Where the recommendations involved a substantial increment on the Estimates, they usually encountered an uncompromising rejection from the peace-time Governments. Even if the Governments were sceptical about the possibility of attracting a better class of recruit, their primary fear was financial and their main concern was to secure enough recruits within the existing financial limits. As a sufficient intake was gauged by the ability to fulfil the immediate peacetime duties of the Army (like garrisoning the overseas colonies), the Government was able to prevaricate on the need for qualitative improvement.

24. Although Lord Roberts and the Accountant-General favoured removing the restrictions on separation allowances, which had been frequently waived during the Boer War, the War Council accepted the report of Lord Stanley's Committee which recommended a return to the strict pre-war restrictions. Meeting of the War Council and Precis No.129, 15.12.03. W.O.163/7.


26. For example, the Army Council was loath to act on the Report of Mrs. Tennant's enquiry and preferred to defer the issue for the views of the Commands and the India Office. See 167 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No.311, 22.5.14. W.O.163/20.
Chapter 15
The Civilian Employment of the Edwardian Soldier.

"You may do something to make the Army more popular by increasing pay and the comforts of the soldier and by diminishing the irksomeness of the discipline to which he is subjected, but while...the old soldier is pointed out as the most helpless of human beings, you will not be able to keep up your establishment."


Chapter 15 examines the plight of the ex-soldier on his return to civilian life. It notes that although Select Committees had persistently indicated that the soldier suffered from his lack of skills, Reserve status, quarterly pensions, and lack of assistance in finding employment, other bodies took little interest in these problems. It claims that the Army had doubts about whether it could prepare soldiers for their return to civilian life, and that the trade unions were constantly fearful lest the Army provide cheap labour for civilian employers. Nevertheless, the chapter argues that the main obstacle was the attitude of the Government and its failure to accept any responsibility for the fate of the ex-soldier. Indeed, the chapter concludes that a Ministerial reluctance to endorse any measure which required increased expenditure only concealed a lack of interest in and a shortsighted indifference towards the civilian employment prospects of the ex-soldier.
"By annually sending some 16,000 or 17,000 reservists back from the colours into civil life, the State contracts towards these men a moral obligation which it should not hesitate to discharge." ¹

The dependence of the short service system upon a rapid turnover of manpower had bequeathed the problem of re-employing those who had spent their formative years in military service and had undertaken, for a small retaining fee, to return to the ranks whenever required. This responsibility challenged the authorities to rid the Army of its least flattering advertisement - the old soldier, red-coated and bo-medalled, cast out from the service as an unemployable and destitute vagrant.

Indeed, Select Committees had persistently argued that the assurance of subsequent civilian employment would raise the status of military service and attract a better quality of recruit.² The dilemma was how to realise this assurance given the capabilities of the serving soldier; the ambivalent status of the Army Reservist; and the attitudes of Government, employers and trade unions towards the plight and prospects of the ex-soldier.

The basic problem was the limited ability of the serving soldier. As the bulk of Reservists came from the Infantry of the Line, without any facility in the handling of horses or machinery, they offered little to the prospective employer other than an erect bearing and a sense of discipline. The remedy, in the opinion of successive Select Committees, was to teach the soldier a trade. However, this proposal contained

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¹ Report from the Select Committee on Retired Soldiers and Sailors' Employment, hereafter referred to as the Chesney Report, C.338 (1895), XII, p.V.

² Report from the Select Committee on Soldiers, Sailors and Marines (Civil Employment), C.383 (1877), XV, para.25; Chesney Report, op.cit., p.VII; Report of the Committee on Civil Employment of Ex Soldiers and Sailors, hereafter referred to as the Ward Report, Cd.2981 (1906), XIV, paras.76-79.
several intrinsic difficulties. The selection of trades had to avoid any which required a long apprenticeship or which were not in demand in the labour market. The selection had also to be so presented and advertised as to attract the sustained enthusiasm of the serving soldier. Indeed the lack of interest (and financial support) from the rank-and-file had foiled the previous attempts at technical instruction. These factors had closed the carpentry and turnery classes held by the Coldstream Guards, and, had limited the effectiveness of the experiment at the Eastney barracks conducted by the Royal Marine Artillery. To obviate this dependence on the enthusiasm of volunteers, the Ward Committee sponsored the notable recommendation that every soldier should be compelled to learn at least one trade. It listed thirteen trades which serving soldiers might profitably learn, and urged that the Government should defray the cost of instruction and material.

These proposals received a mixed reception. In the first place, the prospect of teaching soldiers a trade had always divided military opinion. Some officers regarded the idea as wholly improper and as liable to undermine the paramount duty of training men in their military drill. Since an abundance of obstacles already impaired military training (i.e. under strength battalions and the number of troops allocated to fatigues and other employments) any further proposal,

3. On the failure of the Coldstream Guards Club, see the evidence of Col. V. Dawson (2,1173-1176) and on the Eastney experiment, see the evidence of Maj. H. Harkness (2,753-785). The Eastney experiment had been carefully monitored and from 15 to 34 men had been taught in each of the 6 trades offered. Nevertheless, the defaulter had been a problem and Maj. Harkness favoured compulsory instruction (2,785). Evidence before the Ward Committee, op.cit., Minutes of Evidence, Cd. 2992 (1906), XIV.

4. See the Ward Report, op.cit., paras. 51-59. These proposals were much more radical than those recommended by previous Committees, see the Chesney Report, op.cit., p. VI.
which impinged on the limited time available, was immediately suspect. On the other hand, some officers viewed the teaching of trades as an obligation which the Army owed to its young recruits. They foresaw no insuperable problems in technical instruction; considered that there was ample time for instruction; and thought that it would enhance the status and prospects of the serving soldier.

Nevertheless, whatever their views on the propriety of technical instruction, the majority of officers had always doubted that it was practically possible. They argued that the experiment would flounder through the lack of workshops and tools, the shortage of instructors and time, and the peripatetic tendencies of the peacetime battalions. Lord Monkswell, an ardent supporter of compulsory technical instruction, dismissed these fears as simply an attempt to precipitate the demise of the voluntary system by casting doubt on any proposal which might enhance the prospects of the voluntary recruit. Although this charge was impossible to prove, the short service system had undoubtedly fostered the feeling that the opportunity for effective military training was extremely limited. Hence, the officers may have exaggerated the practical difficulties in technical instruction, to conceal their fear that the Army could ill afford further concern with ancillary duties.

5. Evidence of Col. C.S. Ducat (1.3150), Col. H.J. Hallowes (1.1065), and the Duke of Cambridge, who claimed that men enlisted, "not to learn a trade but avoid one" (1.2087) before the Wantage Committee, op. cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX.

6. Evidence of Sir H.E. Wood (1.1234), Col. G. Cox (1.3840-3848) and Col. A.G. Hoper (1.3548-3549) before the Wantage Committee, op. cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX.

7. For the claim of Lord Monkswell, see House of Lords, Fourth Ser., Vol. 166, 28.11.06, col. 5. Although several officers sympathised with the idea of technical instruction, they still doubted its practicability. See the evidence of Viscount Bolsley (1.4498) Sir R. Buller (1.388-391) and Maj.-Gen. J.H. Rocke (1.763) before the Wantage Committee op. cit., C.6582 (1892), XIX.
Trade unionists were also suspicious of technical instruction, ever fearful that the Army might provide cheap labour for local employers. They already resented the internal employment policies of the Army, especially the use of soldiers, at negligible rates, in barrack maintenance and the provision of certain foods and beverages. Apart from depriving local unionists of extra employment, these additional rates of pay were so derisory as to raise doubts about the military appreciation of civilian labour. What the unions feared was that the garrison commanders would second troops to local firms for the purpose of technical instruction and thereby provide these firms with cheap or free labour. As Major A.W. Taylor, the 2nd Battalion Queen's Regiment, Colchester, attempted to pursue this policy, offering soldiers to local employers, "free of charges and without wages", the unions had cause for apprehension. Although Haldane withdrew Major Taylor's offer, the War Office continued to regard the doubts of the trade union movement as a central problem in the further development of technical instruction.

Finally, the War Office expressed its own reservations about the practical difficulties involved in technical instruction. The provision of suitable teaching was an immediate problem inasmuch as the methods taught in the military schools would not necessarily commend themselves to civilian employers. Secondly, the continuity of

8. In 1899, the Army paid its engineers 1 1/2d and 2d per hour for barrack repairs. There were protests on behalf of trades associations and occasionally firms in garrison towns, who felt undercut by military practice. See, Earl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.41, 19.6.96, cols.1472-1473 and Vol.68, 7.3.99, cols.26-27.

9. The indiscretion of Major Taylor was revealed in Earl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.181, 22.8.07, cols. 1107-1108. For the opposition of trade unions and of the employers of native labour in overseas garrisons, see War Office Report on the steps taken to provide Technical Instruction to Soldiers to fit them for civil life; (2) Copies of War Office Circular Letters relating to the subject, hereafter referred to as the War Office Report, 1907, Cd.3511 (1907), XLIX, p.11.
training was difficult to ensure, given the tendency of Army units to be constantly on the move, and to be stationed abroad when composed of seasoned soldiers about to complete their period of Colours service. Thirdly, the civilian classes were costly, were not always convened near an Army barracks and included courses "too abstract or theoretical" for the serving soldier. On the other hand, the Army lacked the basic equipment to sustain the experiment itself. The regimental workshops were deficient in adequate appliances and accommodation; the material and tools were in short supply and were liable to be further diminished by inferior workmanship; and the regimental pioneers while not sufficiently skillful to act as instructors, were likely to resent the intrusion of external advisers. By emphasising these practical difficulties, the War Office may have concealed a more profound feeling - a lack of interest in the limited objectives of the scheme. As the instruction only aimed at familiarising the serving soldier with the techniques and implements used in civilian trades, (as distinct from converting him into a skilled tradesman), there were only minor advantages for the rank-and-file.10.

The critical factor however, was the attitude of the Government and the Army Council: although they accepted the principles of the Ward Report, they refused to apply them in practice.11. First, the Council only granted a preference in technical training to the soldiers in their last two years of Colours service, when they could "spare the time" for instruction. Working within a two year scheme, the Council

10. War Office Report 1907, op.cit., pp.1-3,10-11. As a subsequent Report commented, the ranks, "see that the instruction will not qualify them as masters and fail to recognise that it will qualify them as mates," War Office Report on the steps taken during 1907 to provide Technical Instruction to Soldiers to fit them for civil life, hereafter referred to as War Office Report, 1908, Cd.4059 (1908), XI, p.3.

11. 78 Meeting of the Army Council, 10.7.06. W.0.163/11.
argued that it could prepare more accurate forecasts of the labour market, and could increase the likelihood that the training would be remembered. Yet, as the majority of short service soldiers spent their last two years of Colours service in India, they were effectively precluded from receiving instruction. Secondly, the Council, under Government instruction, eschewed compulsion and limited the financial grant to accommodation and other initial expenditure. The grant was miserly (£1,000 in 1906-07; £2,500 in 1907-08; and £2,000 in 1908-09) and it forced those who volunteered for training, to pay the cost of materials and instruction. If the financial considerations were a shortcoming, the unwillingness to enforce compulsion ensured that the scheme would flounder. For the Liberal Government, the measure would prove too expensive and was not warranted by the 25% of ex-service men who failed to find employment.

If there was little concern outwith the Select Committees for the skills of the rank-and-file, there was greater interest in the plight of the Reservists and Army pensioners. As products of the short service system, the Reservists in particular, were younger and fitter men than the "old soldiers" of the early Victorian period. Despite the liability

13. Many joined the schemes but subsequently lost interest. In the Gibraltar scheme, 144 men volunteered, 42 failed to attend and only 18 completed the course. War Office Report, 1908, op.cit., Cd.4059 (1908) XI, p.3.
14. As Lord Lucas stated, "75% per cent of the men in the Army pass straight into one trade or another the moment they leave.... The remaining 25% present a problem, but the fact of such a high percentage at once finding trades makes it extremely doubtful whether it is either economically necessary or wise to start a difficult and expensive system of universal teaching." House of Lords, Fourth Ser., Vol.196, 16.11.08, col.831.
of recall to the Colours and the lack of War Office assistance in finding employment, an increasing proportion of them became employed, while a smaller proportion ended their days as paupers in the casual wards. Nevertheless, the public image of the ex-soldier as shiftless, idle and frequently drunken persisted, being periodically confirmed, whenever the Reservists and pensioners received their service remuneration. Although the Army pay was meagre (6d a day for a Reservist and 1/2 a day for a pensioner), the money had been paid since 1877 by quarterly instalments in advance - a temptation for carousing which many ex-soldiers and their friends found difficult to resist.

To remove this temptation, there was considerable pressure on the War Office for a more frequent payment of Reserve and pension remuneration. Civilian employers bemoaned the absenteeism which accompanied quarterly payments. If this was a recurrent problem for all firms employing ex-servicemen, it was worse for the firms which relied upon them and for the Scottish firms after the payment on 1 January. The traditional pension day scenes also outraged the

15. More paupers claimed to be ex-soldiers than could substantiate their claims. On 20 December 1897, 22.1% of the paupers in English and Welsh wards claimed to be ex-soldiers while 2.2% claimed to be Reservists; only 5% could prove their pension status and 1.2% could prove to be Reservists. See, Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol. 58, 7 June 1898, col. 870. The War Office never accepted that any more than about 2% of pensioners became chargeable, whereas the Boards of Guardians claimed that the percentage was higher, that the men had lost their proof, and that they amounted to 25% of their annual intake. Compare, J.C. Ashley, Minute, 28 April 1906 and Rev. E. Morris to Secretary, Royal Commission on Poor Laws, 10 November 1906. W.O. 32/9357.

16. See the evidence of Messrs. Sharpington (2, 987-988) and Randall (2, 1079-1081) before the Chesney Committee, Op. cit., p. 338 (1895), XII and Messrs. Harpe (2, 2015, 2019) and Prince (Appendix 7, para. 5) before the Ward Committee, Op. cit., p. 2981 (1906), XIV. The Secretary of Thomas Allan & Sons Ltd., complained that even after 11 days, "our workmen have not yet in our Moulding Shop got over the effects of the drinking bout which followed on the recent quarterly payment of pensions in a lump sum." P. Bags to Haldane, 11 July 1906. W.O. 32/9357. For the effects in Scotland see, General Manager of Glasgow Corporation Tramways to Seely, 20 January 1906. W.O. 32/11301.
sensibilities of respectable opinion. Concerned citizens continually urged that these pensioners and their friends should be protected against themselves and that weekly or monthly payments should be introduced.\(^{17}\) Finally, the Boards of Guardians repeatedly protested that the quarterly payments encouraged their inmates to discharge themselves on payment day only to return a few days later either drunk or suffering from the after effects of drink. In their opinion, the sudden transition from destitution to comparative affluence was an unfair temptation — "a direct cause of thriftlessness and an indirect cause of pauperism among ex-soldiers." Throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian years, they campaigned for weekly payments, a reform which several Members of Parliament and one Secretary of State for War supported.\(^{18}\)

The Finance Department opposed any change in the existing method of payment. Confronted by recurrent pressure from the Boards of Guardians, the recommendations of Select and inter-departmental Committees, and the reforming zeal of incoming Ministers, it marshalled an impressive battery of negative advice. In the first place, the pensioners appeared to like the existing system: indeed, the Department claimed to champion the thrifty and well-conducted man for whom the quarterly payments were

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17. "I was up there to-day & the whole of the Coombe and Meath St. seemed full of drunken people & the public houses full of women. It is always so on pension day & one or two days after, as long as their money lasts." Marie J. Wright to Lady Meath, 2.10.12. W.0.32/1120. See also Lady Meath to Lady Aberdeen, 6.10.12. W.0.32/1120.

18. In 1906, "no less than 120 Boards of Guardians have forwarded resolutions on this subject, and several Members of Parliament have approached the Secretary of State on the matter." War Office Circular Letter to Admiralty, 9.8.06. W.0.32/9357. See also R.E. Milkes to Sec. Local Government Board, 6.3.06; Coventry Union to Haldane, 26.3.06; and Local Government Board to Secretary, War Office, 4.4.06, 25.4.06 and 11.5.06. W.0.32/9357. For the support of a Secretary of State for War, see J. Seely to Finance Member, 11.10.12. W.0.32/1120.
a substantial asset. Secondly, the system was not inflexible. There were arrangements whereby the pensions could be paid monthly should the pensioner desire it or should the Guardians recommend it for the men in their charge. If the individuals were helpless but agreed to the process, a responsible person could receive their quarterly payments and pay them out on a weekly basis. There were exceptions in other words, although these largely depended on the pensioner's agreement. Thirdly, as all pensioners and Reservists enjoyed a legal right to quarterly payment in advance, any administrative changes required an Act of Parliament. Finally, the existing system had the decisive advantage of only costing £27,500 per annum in administration. Since the monthly or weekly systems would augment the number of transactions by an additional 600,000 or 1,460,000 per annum, the labour costs would rise in proportion. In addition to the cost of instituting a new process (estimated at £200,000), the extra annual expenses were estimated at £31,000 for the monthly payments and over £100,000 for the weekly. Mention of these additional costs ensured that the recurrent protests would fail and that the scenes on pension day would continue.

19. W. Bridgeman to Haldane, 11.6.06 enclosing a letter from a pensioner in his constituency, Arthur Davies to W. Bridgeman, 7.6.06. W.0.32/9357. See also Enclosure C: Quarterly versus Monthly or Weekly Payments of Army Pensions and Reserve Pay, 28.4.06. W.0.32/9357; F. Marzials to Clerk of Guardians, 1902, W.0.32/9357; and C. Harris to J. Sealy, 23.11.12, para.3. W.0.32/1120.

20. The arguments are summarised in C. Harris to J. Sealy, 23.11.12, paras.1-5. W.0.32/1120; and the costs in J.A. Flynn, Minute, 4.7.08. W.0.32/9359; Enclosure C, op.cit., W.0.32/9357; evidence of J. S. Davy, 28.11.06 before the Interdepartmental committee on Payment of Pensions and Reserve Pay, W.0.32/9358; and the statement by the Finance Member in 96 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No. 356, 4.12.07. W.0.163/12.
Financial considerations also foiled the attempt to improve the machinery by which soldiers found civilian employment.

For soldiers seeking employment, the only official assistance came from the employment registers kept by the War Office and the regimental districts. As this assistance only secured employment for 5% of the Reservists and pensioners, the ex-soldiers either relied on their own efforts or the help afforded by the fourteen charitable societies.  

Although these societies which relied upon voluntary donations, located a half of the posts found by the Edwardian soldier, their number ensured duplication of effort, wasted expenditure and the opportunity for unscrupulous soldiers "to ring the changes" on the various bodies. As the Ward Report recommended, these separate societies should have been replaced by a national association receiving financial support from the State. 22 Although the Army Council accepted this proposal in principle, the Government refused to provide the annual contribution of £16,000. £1,150 per annum remained the limit of the State's commitment, and the societies continued to provide what services they could within their own limitations. 23

For the ex-serviceman, the only assistance of the Government was a

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23. The Government provided £1,000 for the National Association for the Employment of Reserve and Discharged Soldiers; £100 for the Army and Navy Pensioners Society; and £50 for the Incorporated Soldiers and Sailors Help Society. See the Army Estimates of Effective and Non Effective Services for the year 1914-1915, No.131 (1914), IX, Vote 11, p.67.
tacit commitment to the policy of preferential employment.

In the opinion of Select Committees and military advisers, this policy was justified by the personal sacrifices of the short service soldier; the limited skills of the ex-soldier; and the prejudice which lingered against him in civilian society. As the soldier entered the labour market without skills, older than his civilian rivals, possibly married and with a limited ability in written examination, he was at a palpable disadvantage. Although some firms welcomed and even preferred his services, few would offer him anything more than a manual or labouring occupation, and there were not enough of these posts to employ every soldier of good character. Some employers were unwilling to employ Reservists in case they were recalled to the Colours, while others preferred civilians and categorised the ex-soldier as lacking in initiative, ability and temperance. To realise some assurance of further employment, the military authorities sought preferential employment for ex-soldiers in the State departments. They hoped that suitable posts would be wholly or in part reserved for ex-soldiers, and that the latter would not be debarred because of entrance restrictions.


25. See the evidence of Capt. Wilkinson (Q.96), Col. Shervinton (Q.211), Capt. Matheson (Q.395), and messers Hilleard (Q.338, 352), Harvey (Q.1108, 1110) and Browne (Q.986) before the Ward Committee, op.cit., Cd.2981 (1906), XIV, para.35.
as to age, marriage and examination.

Intrinsic problems however, beset the policy of preferential employment. In the first place, there was the logic of contemporary economics. For the Finance Department, the Treasury and certain employers it was only proper that if employers had to ignore market forces and accord preference to the unskilled ex-soldier, then these employers ought to be able to lower their rates of pay. From the military viewpoint, this was a degrading proposition which would confound the prospects of attracting a better quality of recruit. Indeed the military authorities successfully insisted that there should be no discrimination within State employment, even if this should mean that there would be less employment for ex-servicemen.

Nevertheless, the trade unions continued to fear that these assurances would have little influence on the private employers of ex-servicemen. Their spokesmen consistently opposed preferential employment because they disputed its justification, and suspected that it would lead to cheap labour and a reduction in wages. Where the unions

26. Although all the Select Committees had sponsored this proposal, the Ward Report specifically requested a military preference amounting to 50% in Post Office appointments beyond those as porters and postmen; 50% of Customs Officers; all permanent messengers; "all future vacancies" for Customs Preventive men; the majority of the 1,400 assistant clerkships in the Civil Service; and a proportion of the unskilled road work under County Council jurisdiction. It also wanted consideration of military service in superannuation schemes, in redundancy decisions, and in a raised age limit for the police. Ward Report, op.cit., Cd.2981 (1906), XIV, pp.15-17.

27. Compare the proposal of the Finance Department in F.Marzial to the Secretary of the Treasury, 6.11.03, W.0.32/6518, with the military reaction of Maj.-Gen.F.Howard to the Adjutant-General, 6.2.04; Sir T.Kelly-Kenny to the Commander-in-Chief, 6.2.04; Lord Roberts to Secretary of State, 8.2.04; and Maj.-Gen.Howard to the Accountant-General, 28.3.04, W.0.32/6519.
were recognised, the firms either had to employ ex-soldiers at the standard rates or forego their services. The employment of ex-soldiers because they were ex-soldiers also disregarded any apprenticeship schemes or employment policies already pursued within the civilian sector. On account of preferential employment, the Post Office had to dispense with the services of some 40% of their telegraph boys, which impaired the prospect of improving the quality of telegraph boy recruitment; ensured that the public received an inferior postal service; and rendered the Army even less popular among those who had lost their careers. Consequently, the Government only gave tacit approval to the policy of preferential employment and refrained from issuing any directives to enforce it. Throughout the Edwardian period, the State only marginally increased its employment of ex-soldiers and never realised the targets, which had been suggested by the Select Committees. This ensured that there would be no improvement in rate of post-Colours employment, which remained at 75% per annum.

In effect, the attempt to improve the employment prospects of the Edwardian soldier accomplished little. There were two principal shortcomings - the inadequate departmental machinery and the attitude of the

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28. For a detailed statement of the trade union position, see the evidence of Mr. A. Harris, Secretary of the Labour Protection League, (Q.673-818) before the Chesney Committee, op. cit., C.338 (1895), XII and in Parl. Deb., Fourth Ser., Vol.12, 29.5.93, cols.1474-1479 and Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.50, 9.3.13, col.1155.

29. Evidence of Mr. Norway, General Post Office, (Q.518-519) before the Ward Committee, op. cit., Cd.2981 (1906), XIV.

30. See Appendix XI. The percentage employed by the G.P.0. in 1913 amounted to only 22% instead of the 50% recommended by the Ward Report, see Parl. Deb., Fifth Ser., Vol.50, 9.3.13, cols.1148-1151.
Government and War Office. First there were not any regular administrative relationships between the War Office, the civilian employers and the trade unions and hence the military remained unaware of civilian requirements. Even in the presentation of the soldier's character reference on his discharge certificate, the Army failed to appreciate that anything more was required than a blunt "exemplary", "very good", "good" etc. What made the reference even less valuable, was that it simply reflected the ability of the soldier to avoid punishment for military offences, and neither denoted positive attributes nor capabilities which might be useful in civilian life. Despite the criticisms of this procedure in the Ward Report, another six years elapsed before the Army Council constituted a second Committee under Sir Edward Ward, to recommend proposals for expanding its certificate criteria. In short, the Army Council relied upon the recommendations of periodic Committees rather than seek a speedier and more accurate perception of employer's needs and trade union fears, through a permanent or semi-permanent institutional arrangement.

Even more important was the attitude of the Government and the War Office. Basically, neither body recognised that it had a responsibility for the future of the serving soldier about to return to civilian life. For the Government, such an obligation could only involve an increased financial commitment and an intervention in the labour market which it would not countenance. For the War Office, the civil employment of the ex-soldier was much less important than the military training of the serving soldier and the sustained provision

31. For the criticisms, see the Ward Report, op.cit., Cd.2981 (1906), XIV, pp.22-24. For the subsequent report and its examination in the Army Council, see 149 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No. 644, 12.12.13, para.5. W.0.163/18.
of a numerically sufficient flow of recruits. Harsh and shortsighted, these attitudes ensured that the task of finding employment would be as difficult for the Edwardian soldier as it was for any of his immediate predecessors.
Section 6
The Reform of Tactics and Armament in the Front-Line Forces
Chapter 16

The Cavalry

"Shock action, consigned to complete oblivion in South Africa and to equally complete oblivion in Manchuria, still holds the first place in the training of the Cavalry soldier."


Chapter 16 examines the attempt to reform Cavalry tactics in the wake of the South African War. It notes that the pressure for reform came from outwith the arm, from those who felt that the Cavalry had let them down in the recent campaign. These reformers claimed that modern weapons had undermined the scope for shock tactics and that the priority accorded to the arme blanche had ensured the neglect of dismounted fighting. On the other hand, the Cavalry officers discounted the recent war experience as abnormal, and insisted that although dismounted action had become more important, it could never supplant charges with the arme blanche. Furthermore, the chapter concludes that the Cavalry stifled reform because of the status within the Army of their senior officers, the limited aims of the reformers and the acceptance by officers in the Mounted Infantry of their traditionally subordinate role. In short, the Cavalry entered the War in 1914 as wedded to shock tactics as it had been in 1899.
"Of all the failures in the South African War that of the cavalry was the most conspicuous."¹ In a war dominated by smokeless powder and long range, low trajectory rifles, there was a notable absence of shock action by knee to knee charges with the armes blanche. As the sanguine casualty toll of the Russo-Japanese War confirmed this increase in the range and effectiveness of contemporary fire power, there might appear to have been little future for Cavalry action based on the sword or lance. On the other hand, the 'War of Space' in South Africa had underlined the need for a mobile force able to reconnoitre, screen and strike where necessary. A mounted force was still essential, albeit one with a modified tactical purpose. Nevertheless, the Cavalry entered the First World War as the least reformed of the combat arms, and its reaction against reform may indicate the manner in which the War experience was viewed and the factors which ensured its neglect.²

The pressure for reform came from outwith the Cavalry, especially from the new Commander-in-Chief and his associates. Although Viscount Wolseley had always encouraged Mounted Infantry as an adjunct to the Cavalry, he had never lost his faith in the ultimate value of shock tactics.³ For Lord Roberts and his colleagues however, their military

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2. The argument will not seek to duplicate existing commentaries on the doctrine and training of the Cavalry, but will attempt to explain why war experience, so often the benchmark of military thought, failed to produce any lasting Cavalry Reform. The best existing commentary is the chapter by B.J. Bond, 'Doctrine and Training in the British Cavalry 1870-1914', in M. Howard (ed.), The Theory and Practice of War (Lon., 1965), pp. 95-129.
3. Despite the reforms suggested in Sir H.M. Havelock, Three Main Military Questions of the Day (Lon., 1867) and Lt. Col. C.T. Denison, Modern Cavalry (Lon., 1868), Wolseley insisted that, "Cavalry should as far as possible be used in masses: its moral effect increases in geometrical ratio to its numbers." See, Sir G. Wolseley, The Soldiers' Pocket Book (Lon., 1869), p. 225.
service in India and the Colonies had diminished their respect for the armes blanches. If the lance or sword was useful in quelling civil disorders within the native community, it was merely an encumbrance while campaigning on the North West Frontier. Indeed, what convinced Lord Roberts that the Cavalryman would have to learn to fight dismounted, rely on his rifle and carry it on his person was not the events in the Transvaal but a chaotic day’s campaigning in the Chardeh Valley, near Kabul, on 11 December 1879. The sight of 200 troopers from the 9th Lancers struggling to fight mounted and dismounted, while clutching their lances and losing 40 carbines in the process, was one which the Commander-in-Chief constantly recollected in his quest for Cavalry Reform.

Experience of unsuitable service conditions for massed Cavalry attacks was a common factor among the principal supporters of Lord Roberts, who included Lord Kitchener, Sir Ian Hamilton and the Earl of Dundonald. They were opposed by the senior officers of the home Cavalry, led by those who had distinguished themselves in the South African War - Sir John French, Douglas Haig, M.P. Rimington and H.J. Scobell. Several military historians and journalists thrived on the controversy, and each school believed that the articulate junior officers in the opposing camp - Haig and Hamilton respectively - exploited the division and provided many of the ideas for their senior


5. Those advocating Reform included, Col. G.F.R. Henderson, The Science of War (Lon., 1901), p.379; L.S. Amery to Lord Roberts, 14.6.04. Roberts Ms., N.A.M., R/1/7; and E. Childers to Lord Roberts, 4.11.06, to the Editor of The Times, 17.5.10 and to the General Staff, 10.8.10. Roberts Ms., N.A.M., R/222. In support of the Cavalry, were C.S. Goldman, With General French and the Cavalry in South Africa (Lon., 1902); the Cavalry Journal; and C. & Court Repington, 'TheArmament of the Cavalry', The Times, 26.3.10, p.6.
colleagues. What the post-war debate reflected was not only a difference of opinion over Cavalry arms and tactics but also the legacy of wartime recriminations and the feeling retained by the other arms that the mounted branch had let them down.

In the first place, the Reformers maintained that the Cavalry officers, senior and junior, had proved themselves hopelessly inept in all facets of mounted action during the South African War. In January 1900, within days of his arrival in Capetown, Lord Roberts reported on the incapacity of the Cavalry Commanders, particularly Major-Generals Brabazon and Babington. During his eleven months in field command, he dismissed twenty-one senior officers, but these included eleven of the seventeen Cavalry Commanders, and he doubted if more than one or two of the remaining six were fit to lead a Cavalry Regiment. The Commander-in-Chief berated the arm for a lack of initiative, failures in reconnaissance and inadequate care of its horses. Apart from tactical and armament changes, he urged that post-war training should include more instruction in horse management and more practice in

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6. For the fear of General French that Hamilton had produced the preface for Cavalry Training 1904, see Arnold-Forster, Diary, 29.2.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add.Mss. 50, 336, ff. 189, while Lord Roberts considered, "it quite a misfortune that Haig should be of the Old School in regard to the role of the Cavalry in the field. He is a clever, able fellow and his views have a great effect on French, Scobell and some other senior officers." Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 28.1.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/7/608. See also Lord Roberts to Lord Kitchener, 24.9.03 and 18.10.03. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/6/532 and 546.

7. Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 30.1.00 and 16.3.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/117/1/24 and 73-75.

reconnaissance and scouting. In his opinion, the Cavalry including the successful officers like French, had failed lamentably in their basic duties and by their incapacity had prolonged the hostilities: a condemnation perceived by the Cavalry Commanders and bitterly resented by them.

Secondly, the critics claimed that the Cavalry had neglected dismounted fighting and never seriously practised their musketry. This was a predictable weakness since the essence of pre-War Cavalry training was mounted action with lance or sword. The _Cavalry Drill, 1898_ devoted five pages out of four hundred and fifty to "Dismounted Action" and stressed the exceptional nature of the subject by contrasting it with, "normal mounted action." The Cavalrymen carried their carbines on their saddles, as a weapon of defence; remained indifferent shots; and looked upon skirmishing as 'infra dig'. In short, the reliance upon the arme blanche had impeded training in the more mundane skills and had thereby limited the battlefield role of the mounted arm. What the critics wanted was a Cavalry:

9. Having perceived these failings early in the campaign, see Lord Roberts to French, 14.1.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/111/1/10, he constantly urged their remedy, see Lord Roberts, _Circular Memorandum No.2_, 26.1.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/111/1/36; Lord Roberts to Adjutant-General, 7.5.02, Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/124/2/479; and Lord Roberts, _Comments on Report by Brig.Gen.J.R.Gordon's Committee_, 8.5.02. W.0.32/6781.

10. For the criticisms of French and his Cavalry, see Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/117/1/107-108 and Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 13.10.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/2/150; the agreement of a junior Rifleman, Wilson, Diary, 11.4.00. Wilson Mss., I.W.M.; and the resentment of Haig, see Haig to Henrietta Haig, 14.5.00 and Haig, Diary, 24.2.00. Haig Mss., N.L.S., Vol.6, 1 Box 4 and Vol.38, 2 parcel 1.

able to seize and hold positions by rifle fire and therefore assist the general scheme...instead of wandering about, sometimes aimlessly, seeking for the enemy's cavalry in order to charge them as their only role in war. 12.

The complementary criticism was that charges with the arme blanche were becoming progressively less feasible in view of the developments in weapon technology. Unable to attack entrenched Infantry, or retreating Infantry when the latter was supported by Artillery and machine guns, or even opposing Cavalry when it was accompanied by fire auxiliaries, the Cavalry could only charge en masse if surprise was possible or the foe demoralised. A successful charge depended upon favourable terrain (providing shelter for the initial concealment and then open ground for the high speed charge in dense formation), and the possession of horses, in prime condition, fresh and able for the final gallop. Although the Boer mounted riflemen effected a number of surprise attacks, neither the terrain nor the condition of the remounts favoured the Cavalry in South Africa. On the other hand, the undulating and wooded countryside of Northern Europe, along with the shorter voyage and acclimatisation period, suggested that small units of Cavalry could still effect the occasional surprise in a Continental war. Charges with the arme blanche however, were only a rare possibility for future battles: to participate effectively, the Cavalry had to acknowledge the dominance of fire-power and prepare to act generally as dismounted riflemen. 13. "For this reason," Lord Roberts remarked, "I would do all in my power to

12. Lord Kitchener to Lord Roberts, 12.5.04. Roberts MSS., N.A.M., R/33/131. See also Lord Roberts to Sir E. Wood, 29.9.01. Roberts MSS., N.A.M., R/122/2/140 and the Memorandum by the Commander-in-Chief re Report of Committee on Revised Cavalry Sword Exercise, 4.7.01. Roberts MSS., N.A.M., R/124/1/27.

13. Lord Roberts to Brodrick, 3.11.00. Midleton MSS., P.R.O. 367/6, ff. 290 and Lord Roberts, Cavalry Armour, 10.3.03. W.O. 32/6782, pp.2-5. See also Col. J.S. Swart, Diary, 11.3.01 and 14.3.03. Swart MSS., item 122.
encourage musketry, and to make Cavalrymen understand that they must not think it in any way infradig being trained to fight on foot."14

In his last year as Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts acted upon these criticisms and introduced several reforms in Cavalry armament and training. To emphasise the new priority of fire-power, the Cavalry was armed with the same magazine rifle as used by the Infantry, a weapon more suitable than its predecessor for Cavalry requirements, as it was shortened by five inches in length and lightened by one pound in weight. Furthermore, the lance was withdrawn as an active service weapon and confined to duties in escort, at reviews and on ceremonial parades. Confirming the change in policy, Lord Roberts prefixed the new edition of Cavalry Training, 1904 with a short, signed Preface, urging:

that instead of the firearm being the adjunct to the sword, the sword must henceforth be an adjunct to the rifle; and that cavalry soldiers must become expert rifle shots and be constantly training to act dismounted,15

These reforms however, were relatively modest. The Cavalry retained their swords, receiving an improved model in 1908, and were able to use their lances for ceremonial duty in England and for all duties, except frontier fighting in India. If these concessions testify to the moderate views of Lord Roberts - the South African War


15. Lord Roberts, preface to Cavalry Training, 1904 (Lon., 1904), p.v. For the introduction of the magazine rifle and the abolition of the lance as an active service weapon, see the evidence of Lord Roberts (2.13, 247) before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vol.I, Cd.1791 (1904), XLI; Lord Roberts, Cavalry Armament, 10.3.03, W.O.32/6782; and Army Order 39, March 1903.
did not predispose him against the lance for he continued to consider it as an alternative to the sword.\textsuperscript{16} they also reflect his Indian experience and the requirements of India as reiterated by Lord Kitchener. The Army had a double role in India - to patrol the frontier and to maintain domestic order - and, if the lance was an encumbrance in the frontier fighting, it was still invaluable for quelling civilian disturbances: hence it was retained, especially for the native lancer regiments.\textsuperscript{17}

In opposing these Reforms, the senior Cavalry officers discounted the South African War as an abnormal and misleading experience. For them, the only standard for Cavalry armament and training was the ability to confront the traditional tactics of the French or German Cavalry. In this respect, a guerilla campaign against mounted riflemen offered little guidance in tactical thought.\textsuperscript{18} Secondly, it was unlikely that the Cavalry in Europe would encounter the difficulties of terrain and distance which had impeded their movements and hampered their supply of remounts in South Africa. Thirdly, it seemed improbable that any conventional opponent would imitate the Boers in their exclusive use of Mounted Infantry. Indeed, the Cavalry leaders continued to disparage the Mounted Infantry as ineffective when mounted.

\textsuperscript{16} Lord Roberts, Comments on Report by Brig.Gen.J.R.P.Gordon's Committee, 8.5.02, W.0.32/6781; Lord Roberts to Adjutant-General, 7.5.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/124/2/179; and Lord Roberts to Sir I.Hamilton, 13.5.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/3/280.

\textsuperscript{17} Lord Kitchener to Lord Roberts, 20.4.03, 10.6.03 and 5.5.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/33/94 and 99 and 128.

\textsuperscript{18} Evidence of Sir J.French (C.17,240) before the Elgin Commission, OP. cit., Vol.II Cd.1791 (1904), XII; Sir J.French, preface to Gen.F.von Bernhardi, Cavalry in War and Peace (Lon., 1910), pp.VIII-XL.
only offensive when dismounted and cowardly when confronted
by opposing Cavalry.19 Finally, the Cavalry asserted that despite
its handicaps in this abnormal war, it had achieved some notable
successes. By claiming that the relief of Kimberley was a vindica-
tion of the arme blanche - a highly dubious contention20 - the arm
implied that if it could charge with effect in this campaign, then it
could prove even more decisive in a normal war.

For future tactics, the principal Cavalry spokesmen had
appreciated the restrictions involved by the development of contem-
porary fire power. They accepted that this would curtail the frequency
of large scale Cavalry attacks and conceded a reduction in the number
of lancer Regiments. They also recognised an increase in the probab-
ility of dismounted action and in the need for the Cavalry to become
proficient with the rifle.21 This was not a wartime conversion since

19. Haig claimed that, "They can't ride and know nothing about their duties
as mounted men. Roberts Horse & Kitchener's Horse are good only for
looting and the greater part of them disappear the moment a shot is
fired or there is a prospect of a fight." Haig to Henrietta Haig, 16.3.00, see also Haig to Henrietta Haig, 26.11.99 and 14.4.00.
Haig Mass., N.L.S., Vol. 6, Box 4. After the War he discounted the need
for any Mounted Infantry, Haig (2.19,468) evidence before the Elgin
Commission, op.cit., Vol.II, Cd.1791 (1904), XI.

II, Cd.1791 (1904), XXI and Goldman, op.cit., pp.83-84. At Klip Drift,
where a Cavalry Division (8,000 men) and a Mounted Infantry force (6,000
men) supported by a preliminary bombardment from 56 guns, charged
in files eight yards apart, raising an enormous dust storm, to
overwhelm the 900 Boers and 2 guns spread over a 5 mile arc. Only
100 men defended the critical Nek and they retreated losing 15
casualties. See Childers, op.cit., pp.94-111.

21. French was prepared to abolish the lance for the Dragoons and
Dragoon Guards, and only retain it for the six lancer Regiments, see
French to Lord Roberts, 15.7.01 quoted in Maj.-Gen. French,
The Life of Field Marshal Sir John French (Lon., 1931), p.142 and
Sir J. French, Report to the Army Council on the Role of the
Cavalry by the Commander of the 1st Army Corps, hereafter referred
to as the French Report, 7.3.04, 42 Meeting of the Army Council and
Precis No.170, 30.1.05, W.O.163/10. Some older Cavalry officers
were more reactionary. Maj.-Gen. Brabazon proposed the restoration
of the war axe (2.6915) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.
cit., Vol.1, Cd.1790 (1904), XI.
Haig had drafted Notes on the Dismounted Action of Cavalry as early as 1892, and it was not incompatible with an overriding commitment to the arme blanche. Dismounted action remained an ancillary duty, which the arm had incurred by virtue of its ever expanding role on the modern battlefield. By developing this capability the Cavalry could develop its wartime contribution without diminishing its primary objective. In a report on the Cavalry Staff Rides of 1909, Haig underlined this battlefield perspective, arguing that the effects of a "skillfully managed dismounted action" would never compare with the rare though decisive charges with the arme blanche.

What the Cavalry leaders feared was a preoccupation with dismounted action in the post-war period. In their opinion, any subordination of mounted training would emasculate the 'Cavalry spirit' and dilute the desire for the offensive. As the arm derived its morale and self-confidence from a mobile role wielding the arme blanche, any notion that it should rely on dismounted action seemed contrary to its intrinsic purpose. Apart from a fascination with the weapons of cold steel, the power of the horse and the exhilaration of the massed charge, the Cavalry viewed its battlefield role as essentially offensive. Any passive or defensive attitude was anathema, and Haig became acutely critical of the post-war training:


23. French Report, op. cit., in 42 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No. 170, 30.1.05, W.O. 0.163/10; French (2.17, 222, 17, 238) and Rimington (2.12, 698-12, 707) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vol. II, Cd. 1791 (1904), XLI.
If we allow Cavalry to dismount in season & out of season, at long distances from their objective, we shall ruin the arm for war, whatever use they may be at peace manoeuvres. 24.

Indeed the reaction of the Cavalry implied that fire power had not stifled its offensive role and the general battlefield utility of the offensive. The arm would not flounder against magazine rifle fire from entrenched Infantrymen, because no contemporary Army would ever make a rule of entrenching itself. 25.

This divergence of opinion between the two schools of thought indicates the difficulty of basing Army Reform upon shared military experiences. In effect the South African War did not produce any self-evident lessons, only a range of common experiences, liable to whatever interpretation suited the subjective preferences of the interpreter. The Cavalry action at Zand River in May 1900 provides a classic example: whereas Sir Ian Hamilton decried it as a "fiasco", a humiliation, a culminating incident which eroded his faith in the efficacy of shock tactics; Sir John French viewed the encounter as a splendid triumph for the moral force of cold steel. 26. Indecisive engagements attracted a variety of interpretations and these were the only engagements in which the Cavalry took part. In this War, as in the Russo-Japanese War, the Cavalry never incurred a catastrophic reverse. While the Infantry marched in


25. Haig comments in his marginalia on his copy of Lord Roberts, Cavalry Armament, 10.3.03, "It is all very well to say that cavalry has no chance against infantry, because the latter will entrench themselves. Our Army is supposed to be trained in the modern school of war, and when did our troops make a rule of entrenching themselves." Haig Mss., N.L.S., Vol. 32a.

quarter column formation to the carnage of Magersfontein and the Artillery fought without concealment and protection to lose its guns at Colenso, the Cavalry simply waited. It waited upon the occasion, for suitable terrain, adequate remounts, a sufficiency of numbers - any number of reasons delayed the charge - but it was never made. The Cavalry emerged from the War without the salutary experience of disaster and faced the future, confident in its ability to charge with the arme blanche should the opportunity occur. 27.

What ensured the restoration of the arme blanche was the Army status and rank of the senior Cavalry officers. Whereas the reformers lost their War Office positions in the changes following the Esher Report, Sir John French and Douglas Haig, by virtue of their wartime record and influential patrons especially Viscount Esher, 28. secured promotions to divisional commands, inspector-generalships and influential posts on the General Staff. Once Lord Roberts had resigned as Commander-in-Chief, these officers launched the Cavalry reaction.

Sir John French successfully protested to the incoming Army Council against the publication of Cavalry Training with a preface by a former


Commander-in-Chief. As General Officer Commanding at Aldershot, he ignored the official preference for dismounted action in Cavalry training, and disregarded the flouting of regulations by the 1st Cavalry Brigade who carried their lances in drill. With Haig's promotion to the posts of Director of Military Training (1906-07) and Director of Staff Duties (1907-09) and French's elevation to Inspector-General of the Forces (1907-11), the Cavalry spokesmen became directly responsible for official doctrine and training. The revised Cavalry Training, 1907 embodied their traditional views on the arme blanche:

It must be accepted as a principle that the rifle, effective as it is, cannot replace the effect produced by the speed of the horse, the magnetism of the charge and the terror of cold steel. For when opportunities for mounted action occur, these characteristics combine to inspire such dash, enthusiasm and moral ascendency that cavalry is rendered irresistible.

Dependence upon personal appointments was an important but not sufficient method for impeding reform. If French could ignore official proposals while General Officer Commanding at Aldershot, then his

29. French Report, op.cit., in 42 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No.170, 30.1.05. W.0.163/10. See also Arnold-Forster, Diary,18,23,26 and 29 February 1906. Arnold-Forster Mss.,B.M.Add,Mss.50336, ff.148-149, 168, 179-181 and 189. The manual was provisionally published but after protests from Cavalrymen and senior officers the Army Council re-issued it without the preface. See the minutes by Col. May, D.M.T., 12.11.04; Gen. Stopford to Chief of the General Staff, 3.12.04; Gen. Lytton, Minute, 30.12.04. W.0.32/6702; Sir E. Wood to Col. J. S. Smart, 28.3.04. Smart Mss., item 1; and Arnold-Forster to Lord Roberts, 1.2.05. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/4/55.


successor Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, an Infantry officer who had once raised and commanded a Mounted Infantry force, could ignore the reactionary temper of Cavalry Training, 1907. Similarly the re-issue of Cavalry Training in 1912 was a more modest defence of the arme blanche once Haig had left the War Office, and the Reports of the Inspector-General of the Forces were more critical of the emphasis in training on shock tactics once General C.W. Douglas had replaced Sir John French. Nevertheless, the Cavalry always retained a spokesman in an influential position, able to criticise the anomalies in the early post-war reforms.

In effect, there were two principal anomalies. First, the Army Council allowed the lance to be carried on all occasions in India and on ceremonial duty in England, a compromise which posed more difficulties than it resolved. With India requiring the weapon for crowd control and the Crown desiring its presence on escort duty, the Cavalry could plausibly argue that drill with the lance was essential. However the demarcation between drill and training, and training and manoeuvres was difficult to sustain, and rather than acknowledge the constant infractions of Army Regulations, the Council restored the lance as an active service weapon. If this reflected the persistence of Cavalry pressure, it also denoted the second post-war anomaly - the failure to organise an alternative mounted force able to exploit the advantages of the magazine rifle.

On 21 August 1909, Smith-Dorrien ordered his cavalry officers to practise dismounted action. He noted that although "my attitude was resented", "the improvement in musketry was so marked that the cavalry went nearly to the head of the lists in Annual Musketry". Gen. Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, Memories of Forty-Eight Years Service (Lon., 1923), p.359.


The Mounted Infantry commanders had returned from the inconclusive guerilla campaign in South Africa, echoing the Cavalry view that the traditional arm was superior in battle. They acknowledged the decisive possibilities of the Cavalry charge, discounted their forces as an alternative mounted arm and accepted subordinate protective duties "to free the Cavalry for independent strategical action." Indeed Colonel A.J. Godley, commandant of the Mounted Infantry school at Aldershot, rejected the creation of a permanent Mounted Infantry force as liable to suffer as a hybrid and as unnecessary, given its limited opportunities in war. Bereft of a peacetime cadre organisation, the arm remained dependent on understaffed schools to train companies of Infantrymen, drawn in sections from different units, for a few months in every year. The meek acceptance of this subservient status by the Mounted Infantry officers was rightly perceived by an ardent reformer, Erskine Childers, as more of a check on reform than the uncompromising attitude of the Cavalry Commanders. The result was to confirm the Cavalry with its traditional arms as the only viable mounted force.


36. E.Childers to Lord Roberts, 3.5.10 with reference to Col.H.de B.de Lisle to Lord Roberts, 29.4.10. Roberts Mss., N.A.R., IV/223. Several years earlier, H.de B.de Lisle had refused Command of the Yeomanry school (the Yeomanry had recently been converted into a Mounted Infantry arm) in favour of a second in Command of the Royal Dragoons. See Sir H.de B.de Lisle to Col. J.S.Bwart, 3.12.03. Bwart Mss., item 44.
This affirmation of traditional Cavalry tactics underlined the difficulty of effecting Army Reform in light of wartime experience. In the first place, there were not any definitive lessons in the South African War, only a fund of common experience subject to differing interpretations. Secondly, the wartime operations of the Cavalry tended to be inconclusive and were used by both schools to bolster their preconceptions. Indeed the tendency to cite or discount the War where appropriate, reflected the legacy of inter-arm recriminations and the feeling that either the Cavalry had failed to support the other arms or that the Cavalry had been unfairly blamed for a performance under abnormal war conditions. Finally, the reformers failed to suggest any replacement for the traditional mounted arm—either an alternative arm or an alternative method of exploiting the twin needs of mobility and fire power. They only proposed a compromise between dismounted action and shock tactics: a compromise which was tilted in favour of whoever was currently directing official doctrine and training. Although the Cavalry was better armed and better trained in 1914, it still entered the First World War as wedded to shock tactics as it had been in 1899.
"The whole system of artillery tactics has been revolutionised by our recent experience in South Africa owing to our meeting with a foe untrammelled by time honoured tradition, as well as by our first experience of smokeless powder."


Chapter 17 examines the relevance of war experience in South Africa for the subsequent rearmament of the Artillery. It asserts that although the War could be used to vindicate certain technical requirements - increased mobility, longer range and greater shell power - it did not reveal anything about the possible tactical use of quick-firing artillery. Furthermore, it claims that the Artillery was not only preoccupied with technological improvement but was also tentative and selective in its interpretation of the tactical lessons revealed in the South African War. In effect the chapter argues that the impetus for reform came increasingly from officers in the other arms, impressed by the performances of the Japanese Artillery in the Manchurian War and by the French Artillery at the Picardy manoeuvres. It concludes that the early post-war rearmament failed to recognise the inter-dependence of technology and tactics and thereby neglected tactical reform, while concentrating on technological improvement.
The Artillery rearmament in the wake of the South African War, "was not only the most complete, but also the most methodically conducted of all the operations of this nature recorded in Regimental History." Every branch of the arm received a new gun embodying the latest developments of contemporary technology. In each instance, a specially constituted Artillery committee sought particular refinements from the armament manufacturers, sent them lists of technical stipulations and examined their weapons in exhaustive trials. The rationalisation was the recent war experience, especially the tactical lessons which it purportedly held for the Artillery arm. What warrants examination is the inter-relationship between war experience and tactical reform; its perception at the time; and its usefulness in justifying rearmament.

The introduction of quick-firing artillery was the main technological innovation in the post-war period. The quick-firing principle depended upon the mechanical absorption of recoil by means of brakes or buffers to eliminate the 'running up' and 'relaying' of the gun after every shot. Prior to the discovery of smokeless powder, the advantages of rapid fire were illusory since the amount of smoke precluded the possibility of accurate firing. Once smokeless powder had removed this obstacle, experiments began on stabilising the gun carriage without so increasing the weight as to impair the mobility of the weapon. This was the essence of the quick-firing principle and its mastery facilitated the protection of the gun crews, who had formerly to stand clear of the recoiling gun. They could now remain

close to the gun protected by a shield attachment. But, the real advantage of quick-firing artillery was the increase in effective artillery fire from four to five rounds per minute, to twenty to thirty rounds per minute.  

For the process of rearmament, the Artillery possessed several advantages. In the first place, Sir Henry Brackenbury, the Director-General of Ordnance, had pressed the case for rearmament during the early months of the South African War and had secured a Government commitment on the issue. Secondly, as the senior wartime Artillery commanders were not required in a guerrilla campaign, they returned home either to form or to advise the specially constituted Equipment Committees. Thirdly, the wartime purchase of 18 batteries (108 guns) from the Ehrhardt factories introduced the first quick-firing (i.e. Q.F.) field guns seen in Britain. Thus the Artillery commanders especially the Committee on Horse and Field Artillery, chaired by

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4. Maj.-Gen. Sir G.H. Marshall returned as Commanding Officer, Royal Artillery Aldershot; Maj.-Gen. Sir W. Knox as Commanding Officer, Royal Artillery Ireland; Col. F.W. Rustace as Commandant of the School of Gunnery; and Col. L.W. Parsons as Colonel on Staff, II Army Corps and Commandant of the Practice camp on Salisbury Plain. See, Callwell and Headlam, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.41-42.

5. "It will, I know, interest you to hear that the purchase of the German Field Gun has advanced us by 5, if not by 10 years in our knowledge of what Field Guns might do," Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 16.6.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/2/126. See also Lord Roberts (Q.10,564;10,580-10,583) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol.I, Cd.1790 (1904), X.I.
Major-General Sir G.H. Marshall, were able to demand the fulfilment of definite technical conditions from the British manufacturers. For the Horse Artillery, the Committee requested a Q.F. gun able to fire a 12½ lb. shell over 6,000 yards, with the weight behind the team not exceeding 28 cwt. And, for the Field Artillery, it stipulated a Q.F. gun able to fire an 18 lb. shell over a similar range, with the weight behind the team not exceeding 38 cwt. In order to standardise the Artillery requirements, Sir George Marshall insisted that the arm should limit itself to four categories of gun as distinct from the fifteen used in South Africa. Apart from Horse and Field Artillery, the arm required a longer ranging quick-firing howitzer and a 60 pounder breech loading gun able to fire over 10,000 yards.

The Committees and their War Office patrons had to defend their stipulations against contradictory advice from within the Artillery and from informed civilian sources. In the *Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution*, Brigadier-General Sir J. Wolfe Murray aired a notable heresy by casting doubt on the need for Field Artillery. He maintained that all future requirements could be met by Horse and Position Artillery. Since this view coincided with an opinion Lord Roberts had formed en route from Kabul to Kandahar (1880), it received the consideration of the highest military authorities in Britain and India.


with the new Q.F. equipment, Colonel W.B. Blewitt dissented from the majority of the Equipment Committee and recommended the adoption of a 12½ pdr. gun, armed with a 14½ lb. shell, for both the Horse and Field Artillery. He suggested that this compromise would secure the advantages of shell uniformity and a proven gain in accuracy. Sir George Clark and H.O. Arnold-Forster supported Colonel Blewitt, condemning a variety of calibres as contrary to foreign practice. They also disputed that the moral effect of an additional 64 bullets in the 12½ lb. shell warranted the excess weight of 8½ cwt. and the extra cost of £327,000.

To justify their proposals the Committee emphasised the improvements in the new technology and its comparative value in international armaments. Compared with the Horse Artillery weapon used in the Boer War (a 12½ pdr. breech loading gun), the new gun was a quick-firer possessing an additional bursting range of 1,000 yards and a higher velocity which would provide a flatter trajectory and greater accuracy. It carried an increased bullet content in the shells, new metallic cartridge cases and a reduction of 3 cwt. in the draught weight. The new Field Artillery gun was also a genuine quick-firer, had a maximum effective range of 6,500 yards and remained as light in draught as any comparable weapon. By insisting that these guns should fire a 12½ lb. and an 18½ lb. shell respectively, the aim was to excel all foreign powers in the mobility of the Horse Artillery and in the power of the Field Artillery. The comparative context was crucial inasmuch as...

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8. Master General of Ordnance, op. cit., 24.12.04, Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50314, ff. 21; Sir G.G. Clarke, Notes on Fire Effect, included in Clarke to Arnold-Forster, 21.4.04, see also Clarke to Arnold-Forster, 5.5.04. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50325, ff. 146-152 and 154; Arnold-Forster to Balfour 15.7.04 and Memorandum by Secretary of State, 13.5.04. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50306, ff. 130, 131-132; and Arnold-Forster, Diary, 18, 19 and 27 April, 1904. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50337, ff. 125, 130, 161.

the French had already rearmed with 75 mm. guns and the Germans
were preparing to rearm. For the Artillery spokesmen, the arm had
not only to keep abreast with possible rivals, but it had also to compen-
sate for its numerical inferiority by realising a qualitative advantage
in modern technology. 

Each of the technological priorities sought by the Equipment
Committee - mobility, long range capacity, and an augmented fire effect -
reflected deductions based on the South African War. Increased
mobility to turn the broader fronts of modern armies and a longer range
with greater fire effect to participate in contemporary battles,
appeared to be the essential prerequisites in Artillery rearmament.
Indeed, "a more recent and more varied experience of war", was the
justification for the departure from Continental standards, and for the
validity of the military case against civilian criticism. Although
the Artillery officers were not unanimous in their interpretation of
the wartime lessons, there was a dominant view within the senior ranks
favouring the introduction of more mobile, long range and powerful
weapons. This view determined the distinctive characteristics of the

10. When they appreciated this comparative context, some of the earlier
  critics, notably Sir J. Wolfe Murray and Lord Roberts, became staunch
  supporters of the new equipment. Lord Roberts to Brackenbury, 29, 12.03;
  to Kitchener 8.1.04; and to Arnold-Forster, 12.6.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M.,
  R/122/6/583 and 590, R/122/7/663. Minute by Master-General of Ordnance,
  25.5.04 and Master-General of Ordnance to Arnold-Forster, 11.6.04.

11. Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 16, 8.01 and Lord Roberts to Brackenbury,
  20.9.01. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/2/126 and 130. Lord Roberts to

12. Sir N.O. Lyttleton to Secretary of State, 16.5.04; Master-General of
  Ordnance to Secretary of State, 25.5.04 and 11.6.04. Arnold-Forster
  Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50306, ff. 133, 134 and 137. Lord Roberts to Arnold-
  Forster, 12.6.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/7/663;

13. Although Col. Elewitt dissented from the Equipment Report and Sir G.
  Clarke cited Col. Hickman as a supporter of his criticisms, see Clarke
  to Arnold-Forster, 5.5.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50325, ff.
  154, Maj.-Gen. Marshall had sounded Artillery opinion in South Africa
  and had no doubt about the support for his proposals, Q. 18, 536-
  18, 557) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vol. II, Cd. 1791
  (1904), XII.
post-war rearmament, and thereby the weapons with which the
Artillery entered the First World War.

For rearmament however, the significance of the War was more
apparent than real. The early reports from war correspondents had
focused on the technological advantages of the Boer Artillery, especially
its longer range; and the Government, in its search for military or
technical explanations for the early failures, had accepted these
criticisms. 14. Infantry and Artillery spokesmen also agreed that in
the War, long range bombardments from the enemy, without effective
Artillery response, had damaged morale. 15. Yet, while the War may
have indicated the need for improved long range guns, it revealed
nothing about the impact or possible advantages of quick-firing
artillery. As the Boers did not possess any quick-firing weapons,
the only fire from quick-firing equipment came from the Naval guns
(the 4.7 inch and 12 pdr. 12 cwt. gun). These were too heavy for
field firing purposes and they only discharged some 2% of the Artillery
rounds. 16. The War itself did not demonstrate the value of quick-
firing weapons, it merely provided an occasion for rearmament and an
example, in the Ehrhardt gun, of an operative quick-firer.

14. Balfour retained a file of critical letters from The Times. Balfour
Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49719, ff. 96-97; Brodrick remained critical of the
pre-war Artillery Commander, see Brodrick to Curzon, 3.1.00 and 9.2.00.
Curzon Mss., Sur. F. 111/10A, ff. 116 and 131; and Lord Lansdowne ignored
his War Office advisers to complain about "out-ranged" field guns.
Compare the Minute by Lord Lansdowne, 21.11.89 with those written
by Sir J. Anlgh, 19.11.99, Viscount Wolseley, 20.11.99 and Sir H.

15. Sir H. Brackenbury (q. 1674) and Lt.-Gen. Sir E. Warren (q. 15, 850)
evidence before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vols. I & II, Cd. 1790
and 1791 (1904), XL and XLI.

16. Quick-firing artillery fired 9,408 rounds out of a total 422,809
rounds. See, Sir H. Brackenbury (q. 1698-1699) and Sir G.H. Marshall
(q. 1696-1717) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vols. I &
II, Cd. 1790 and Cd. 1791 (1904), XL and XLI.
Indeed the desire for a quick-firing gun, able to exploit the advantages of smokeless powder, predated the outbreak of the South African War. Lord Roberts had campaigned for quick-firing artillery as early as 1893, and the War Office had commissioned technical experiments, placing six batteries of converted 12 pdr. and 15 pdr. R.L. equipments under trial in September 1899. What the Artillery officers deduced from the War was not the need for quick-firing guns (that had already been demonstrated by the furtive rearmanent of the French in 1896-97 and the distant display of 75 mm. guns at the manoeuvres in 1900), but specific refinements in armament – greater mobility for the Horse Artillery, increased fire power for the Field Artillery and a longer range capability for both. These refinements were drawn from a war between traditional armaments and they neither implied that the Equipment Committee in particular nor the Artillery in general had appreciated the tactical possibilities of quick-firing armament. For most Artillerymen, the quick-firer was merely an improved and more powerful gun, a reaction aptly summarised by General Parsons:

I confess I cannot see what changes in tactical principles are involved by the introduction of Q.F. guns. To put the co-operative role of the artillery in a nutshell, it is to hold an umbrella of shrapnel fire over its advancing Infantry, Q.F. guns only make that umbrella thicker & stronger.


Nevertheless, the ability to seize fleeting battlefield opportunities by sudden bursts of intense fire, posed new tactical questions for an arm raised in the faith of deliberate, accurate fire and economy of ammunition. The French had already developed new methods of fire to exploit this potential. At practice camp, their batteries could fire on concealed Infantry targets at 3,300 metres and claim 60% of hits within 2½ minutes. On the other hand, Q.F. guns were so powerful that they required care in their logistical preparation and in their tactical use. The Artillery had to carry more ammunition to meet the increased rate of usage and yet control the battlefield consumption since extended rapid fire could exhaust a day's ammunition supply within an hour. The battlefield context had also radically changed since the pre-war years. Early deployments, massed batteries, the artillery duel as a separate act and preparatory bombardments were no longer the decisive Artillery duties. Instead the arm had to fire effectively against Infantry in extended order, mounted troops on the move and Artillery coming into action or limbering up. In each instance the fire would lack smoke as a guideline and face the possibility of greater and more effective use of concealed positions.

In the future, when the occasion required and the ammunition supply permitted, the Artillery would have to eschew its traditional preference for accurate fire within narrow limits and spread its fire over an area, searching it in width and depth.

20. These concepts had existed in pre-war theory but the emphasis in training was on accurate observation of fire and exact correction of elevation and deflection as embodied in the basis of the pre-war doctrine, see Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe Ingelfingen, Letters on Artillery (London, 1887). For the importance of Prince Kraft's letters, see Brackenbury (Q.1678) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op. cit., Vol. I, Cd.1790 (1904), XL.
However, the immediate post-war reforms reflected a tentative and selective interpretation of the wartime experience. Dispersed batteries, unthinkable in the pre-war period, gained recognition as a valuable tactical response to the broad fronts of modern armies. New range tables doubled the pre-war distances, and cover became a primary consideration for protecting the guns, deceiving the enemy and compensating for numerical inferiority. There was also an awareness that the Artillery by itself could not clear the enemy trenches. It could only aim at confining defenders to their entrenchments, keeping the heads of the enemy down, and distracting attention from the advancing Infantry.

Even these reforms, despite their limited content, aroused controversial debate within the Regiment. Several middle-ranking officers feared that the quest for cover would impair the zeal of the gunner for the offensive. They suspected that senior colleagues had panicked, and abstracted too many lessons from the abnormal features of the War.

21. Field Artillery Training, 1902 (Lon., 1902), ch.1, sec.3; Lord Roberts, Minutes, 23.1.02 and 21.11.02, Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/124/2/350 and R/124/3/646; Sir L.W Parsons, op.cit., Parsons Mss.; and Brackenbury (2,1,647), Warren (2,15,850) and Marshall (q.18,596) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vols. I & II, Cd.1790 and 1791 (1904), XI and XII.

22. Field Artillery Training, 1902, op.cit., ch.1, sec.7; Marshall (q.18,554) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol. II, Cd.1791 (1904), XII.

These features included the primary reliance upon long range fire in the distinctive conditions of atmospheric clarity, large scale topographical features and the absence of natural obstacles. In fact, the abnormality of the War and the imperfections in the wartime technology had figured so prominently for the post-war reformers, that their doctrine retained the concepts of an Artillery duel and preliminary bombardment; the preference for an early and complete deployment of guns rather than a husbanding of resources; and the lack of detail on methods of Artillery-Infantry co-operation.24.

The Artillery required the whole inter-war period to revise its tactical doctrine. The impetus for reform came increasingly, but not exclusively, from outwith the arm, especially from Infantry officers and the General Staff, those who were concerned about the volume of fire support which the Infantry could expect in future encounters.25. For guidance, they relied upon foreign experience and foreign theory. Observation of the Russo-Japanese War provided evidence of organised and trained Artilleries operating under modern conditions, albeit bereft of quick-firing armament. The extensive use of covered positions and smokeless powder confirmed the impracticality of Artillery duels and preparatory bombards. These preliminary barrages caused little loss of life, forewarned the enemy about the point of attack and wasted

24. Field Artillery Training 1902, op.cit., ch.1, sec.7. The senior Artillery officers were selective in their interpretation of the wartime lessons. They retained preliminary bombardments in their tactics despite the barrage at Magersfontein, which averaged 1,047 rounds per battery, the largest ever fired but which only wounded 3 men and left the Boer positions undisturbed, Marshall (2.15, 517) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol. II, Cd. 1791 (1904), XLI.

ammunition. Infantry advances, however, required more sustained support from the Artillery than had ever been provided in previous wars. Japanese gunners continued to pound the enemy trenches until the assault was successfully completed, regardless of Infantry losses. The War did not cease at nightfall as presumed in *Field Artillery Training, 1902*, but continued throughout the night either in preparation for the following day, or in the movement and advance of troops under the cover of darkness. Finally, the attainment of fire superiority did not depend upon an early deployment of all available batteries. Given the mobility of the army and its ability to fire from concealed positions, the Japanese Artillery was able to husband its guns and regulate its fire according to the tactical circumstance.

Compounding the new possibilities raised by the Russo-Japanese War, was the perception of differences between the French and British theory of Artillery tactics. The enthusiastic reports from the French Artillery


Manoeuvres at Picardy (1910) prompted a wide-ranging debate in the annual conference of the General Staff, and pressure from that source for a thorough investigation of French methods and an extensive revision of the Artillery manual. Sir Douglas Haig congratulated Lieutenant-General Lawrence Kiggell, his successor as Director of Staff Duties, for his pressure on Reforms:

I am glad to see that you are stirring up the Artillery. I think that the weak point in our training is the cooperation between the Artillery and Infantry.\(^{30}\)

There were problems however, in any attempt to imitate the tactics of the French Artillery. The French gun required less relaying than the British (and hence was capable of quicker fire), by virtue of an automatic fuse setter and a more stable carriage. The French also aimed at a rapid fire effect over a prescribed area at medium ranges (on average about 2,840 yards). They relied upon the discharge of this fire from four gun batteries under a system of successive alterations in range elevation.\(^{31}\) This mechanical system of fire was ideally suited to medium range bombardments with the 75 mm. gun, but it hardly applied to long range fire (over 4,060 yards) with a heavier shell as preferred by the British. Indeed the British Artillery placed a higher premium on extreme accuracy, cherished their traditional arrangement in 6 gun batteries and accepted the slower ranging methods implicit in the larger organisation. Without the technical flexibility

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30. Haig to Kiggell, 20.7.11 and see also Haig to Kiggell, 27.9.11. Kiggell Mss., I/19 and I/24. For a detailed examination of the process, see Callwell and Headlam, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol.II, pp.184-206.

of an automatic fuse setter, the Artillery could never emulate
the standards of the French Artillery. Hence it resisted as futile
the simplification in battery organisation, and feared that the suggestion might encourage the Government to reduce the number of guns. 32

More applicable was the French concept of the Artillery role in
the modern battle. This theory eschewed the Artillery duel and independent Artillery action; viewed the arm as a subordinate force with only one objective - the tactical success of the Infantry attack; and insisted upon economy in Artillery deployment with the maintenance of an Artillery reserve. In short, the French accepted that despite the introduction of quick-firing guns, the Artillery could not exert a decisive, independent influence on the contemporary battle. 33

The purpose of the arm had to be more than accurate fire, it had to be tactically useful fire, an important refinement which found embodiment in the British Artillery manuals of 1912 and 1914. Therein the authorities accepted Economy of Force as a basic principle by which batteries would be held in observation, or limbered up to positions of readiness, or even in reserve, until specifically required. The intention was to employ only the number of guns immediately necessary

32. Sir Ian Hamilton thought that a Liberal Government would accept a four gun battery standard, so that it could, "refuse to create any more new four gun batteries, and thereby reduce expense and guns by one third. So whatever you do, my dear Repington, for God's sake keep quiet about this idea of four gun batteries." Hamilton to Repington, 27.10.10. Hamilton MSS., 7/3/14/3. See also the 136 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No. 537, 26.2.12. W.O. 163/17.

33. General Percin, The Artillery at the Picardy Manoeuvres (Lon., 1912), pp. 153-166. This theory contradicted the view which some had gained from the Manchurian War, i.e. that the "Artillery has become the leading arm," Lord Roberts to Balfour, 7.12.04. Balfour MSS., E.M. Add. MSS. 49725, ff. 105.
and where possible, supply an increased volume of fire from a more rapid rate of fire rather than from a greater number of guns. Secondly, the manuals discounted the value of independent Artillery action and underlined that the tactical role of the Artillery was to ensure the success of the Infantry offensive. Thirdly, the manuals borrowed the French concept by which the Artillery and Infantry were linked in tactical groups – the first practical application of Artillery – Infantry co-operation. By adopting this concept, the manuals accepted that the advanced observation officer would link the two arms; endorsed the need for close support from the Artillery despite the risks; and confirmed that the danger of shells falling short should not inhibit the Artillery from shelling the enemy during an Infantry attack.34

This imitation of French Artillery tactics facilitated by closer association through the Entente Cordiale underlined the shortcomings in the immediate post-war rearmament. In the first place, there was little perception that technology and tactics were inter-related and that a major development in the former would require a modification in the latter. It was also misleading to justify rearmament by reference to the South African War, and the post-war focus on the imperfections of the wartime technology obscured the inflexibility of the wartime tactics. There were tactical lessons in the War, despite its abnormality, but these received less attention than the quest for a quick-firing gun. Indeed, if the rearmament was peculiarly thorough and methodical in itself, the Artillery still required the fortuitous coincidence of a Russo-Japanese

War, an entente with France and pressure from outwith the arm, to ensure that it entered the field in 1914, "with a well-considered doctrine, which commanded general confidence." 35

"In the future the force which shoots best, and is best covered will be the victorious."


Chapter 18 examines the attempt to consolidate upon the reforms in Infantry tactics introduced in the South African War. It notes that the limitations which had beset the pre-war training did not disappear with the South African War. Shortages in manpower and facilities still existed and were periodically aggravated by retrenchment in Government spending. These restrictions impaired large scale training, limited post-war rearmament and accounted for the military doubts about the possibility of fundamental improvement. Nevertheless, the chapter argues that the Army was able to improve the shooting of the individual soldier and to inculcate skills in field work and in the use of cover, by sustained practice in small units, especially sections and companies. Indeed it was possible to remove many of the shortcomings revealed in the early South African encounters, and to produce an Expeditionary Force which excelled any conscript army in individual skills.
As the primary victim of the Boer fire power the Infantry adapted more than the other arms during the South African War. Under a new Command, it abandoned quarter column formations, frontal attacks and volley firing in favour of open order formations and out flanking manoeuvres. The field work, use of the ground and shooting improved during the War and established new standards for the post-war training. The immediate priorities were a development of individual skills in snap shooting at short ranges, in the use of cover and in constructing entrenchments; the re-examination of Infantry weapons after two and a half years of active service; and the replacement of the pre-War drill books by manuals more relevant to the contemporary battle. In short, the officers who had introduced reforms in South Africa had to aim at consolidating them in the post-war period, despite the limitations of peacetime training in the United Kingdom.

Foremost among the post-war priorities was an improvement in the shooting of the individual soldier. The deficiencies exposed in South Africa included rapid fire at short ranges and, to a lesser extent, long range fire at distances beyond the pre-war expectations. Although this conclusion was widely, if not unanimously, held the senior officers differed over the possible remedies in peacetime training.

Whereas one school favoured the imitation of wartime conditions in

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1. Sir C. Warren (2.15,697), Sir H.J.T. Hildyard (2.15,972) and the Hon. Sir F.W. Stopford (2.16,635) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol.II, Cd.1791 (1904), XII.

2. A minority thought that the British shooting was adequate, including Sir R. Buller (2.15,483) and Sir R. Pole Carew (2.16,594) but the majority did not, including Lord Roberts (2.10,426), Sir I. Hamilton (2.13,941), Sir H.J.T. Hildyard (2.15,972), Maj.-Gen. A.H. Paget (2.16,439), Sir B.M. Hamilton (2.17,477), Maj.-Gen. H.C.O. Plumer (2.17,990) and Lord Methuen (2.14,188), evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vols.I and II, Cd.1790,1791 (1904), XL and XII.
field practice by shooting at unknown distances, Lord Roberts and his advisers doubted that this was either possible or necessary. They recognised that financial considerations excluded the possibility of acquiring large tracts of land for rifle practice, and insisted that the main aim in contemporary battles was effective fire at short ranges. As such, they recommended an increase in the ammunition allotted to the annual musketry practice; a diminution in collective practice and volley firing; and a greater volume of individual firing at fixed and mobile targets over short to medium ranges.\(^3\)

An essential adjunct to effective rifle shooting was the need to take cover and to dig entrenchments. The neglect of these precautions, disparaged as cowardly in the pre-war training, proved costly in the early battles. Contemporary fighting, as confirmed by observation of the Russo-Japanese War, presumed concealment and required its improvisation by individual soldiers.\(^4\) The battalions were no longer able to enter the decisive fire zone (within 600 yards of the enemy) in mass formation; the troops had to advance in extended order, making use of depressions in the ground and all available cover. At this stage of

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the battle, the morale, initiative and skill of the individual was more important than the steadiness, precision and good order inculcated by collective discipline. This was the essence of the post-war proposals: a reaction to the increase of contemporary firepower by seeking qualitative improvements in the skill and training of the individual ranker.

To realise these improvements, the Army required not only new manuals and revised training methods but more importantly, periods of sustained practice in the field. In this respect, the Edwardian Army was extremely lucky to inherit both the Military Manoeuvres Act of 1897 and the additional ground at Salisbury Plain, acquired in the immediate pre-war period. Hence it was able to arrange exercises and manoeuvres on a larger scale and with a greater frequency than ever previously attempted.

For training, it adopted a cyclical process which began with individual instruction in the winter; graduated to squadron, company and battery training in the spring; regimental, battalion and brigade training in the summer; and to a culmination in divisional training, inter-divisional exercises and Army Manoeuvres in the late summer and early autumn.

Nevertheless, the limitations which had undermined the pre-war

5. Sir I. Hamilton (1,13,941), Lord Roberts (1,10,442) and the Hon. Sir F. W. Stopford (1,16,635) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vols. I & II, Cd. 1790, 1791 (1904) XL and XLI.

6. Problems still existed. For example, in the period October 1905 - October 1909, Allenby commanded the 4th Cavalry Brigade which was scattered over a district bounded by Colchester, Norwich and Hounslow. Other brigades were located in Ireland or equally scattered among English towns and counties. This ensured that divisional manoeuvres were a costly event, occasionally held on an annual basis but often only once in every two years.
training, did not disappear with the South African War. Although Haldane equalised the battalions at home and abroad, the perennial shortage of men remained. Whereas all battalions suffered from the 7,000 men on permanent employments and the 10,000 men on daily casual employments, the home battalions also languished from the annual loss of drafts and the large percentage of recruits, who still required basic training and were unavailable for field training. Officers never commanded full strength units, and either trained two units in one, with men who were strangers to each other, or occasionally considered theoretical schemes with imaginary troops. In the Army Exercise of 1913, Sir John French theoretically commanded four Infantry divisions and a Cavalry division - two thirds of the Expeditionary Force. Only 47,000 men participated, however, the battalions averaged 300 men apiece (less than a half of their peacetime establishment) and the field batteries appeared at half strength with teams for three guns and three wagons. In sum, the manpower shortage impeded unit training at all levels and devalued the benefits of increased field work, especially the practice in handling large formations so necessary for officers and staff.

Legal and financial considerations compounded these structural weaknesses. Although the Military Manoeuvres Acts enabled the

7. Training was, in fact, largely a case of trying to make bricks without straw.” Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson: From Private to Field Marshal (Lon., 1921) p.159. See also Adjutant-General, Minute on Replacement of soldiers on non military duties by ex-soldiers or civilians 1.10.02 and subsequent minutes. W.0.32/9120.

Government to allocate tracts of countryside for manoeuvres, there were still restrictions on the choice of land and its subsequent usage.

The expense of transporting large units of troops, which with the exception of two divisions were quartered in England, precluded consideration of the excellent manoeuvring areas in Ireland and on the Scottish moors. Manoeuvres were held on the Downs or in the Midlands, over countryside notorious for hedgerows, fences and locked gates.

These obstacles prevented marches in close formation and restricted the Cavalry movements to the roads or to dismounted action behind cover. The soldiers had not only to manoeuvre within prescribed limits—avoiding houses, schools, parks, playing fields, golf courses etc.—but they were also forbidden from billeting on the residents. If this ensured that the rankers gained practice in camping and bivouacing, it artificially simplified the problems of supply and feeding, which in turn reduced the practical value of the military exercise.9

Even where the military insisted that a provision was essential for peacetime training, it rarely gained acceptance if it conflicted with the financial priorities of the moment. The Liberal Government underlined this premise when it reduced the post-war increment in the ammunition allowance. Granted in 1902-03, this increment had raised the Cavalry allowance from 150 to 300 rounds per man and the Infantry allowance from 200 to 300 rounds per man, but it only lasted for as long as the surplus stocks of wartime ammunition. Once the concession began to impinge on the Annual Estimates and threaten an annual increase of £70,000—£80,000 per annum, the Government ignored the military

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concern with efficient training and effected an immediate reduction. 10.

A third difficulty was the lack of agreement within the Service about the efficacy of the proposed reforms. There were differing views about the methods of conducting training, especially in the new phenomenon of regular Army Manoeuvres. For some years after the War, Manoeuvres remained as little more than a series of 'field days' on which the daily movements ceased at the 'close time', whereupon each side repaired for shelter and food without any fear of danger from the other. It required Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien as General Officer Commanding at Aldershot, to introduce the more realistic concept of Manoeuvres as a period, "of continuous operations in face of an enemy." 11.

Secondly, some of the reforms, especially practice in constructing entrenchments, were extremely tedious in peacetime. The poor quality of entrenching tools and the laborious nature of the task, aggravated by the subsequent chore of refilling the trenches, ensured that this was the least relished and the least practised of the post-war proposals. Thirdly, there was uncertainty that the aphorisms expressed before the Royal Commissions were feasible propositions for peacetime training. What was meant by the concept of developing individual initiative? Did the suggestion depend upon qualitative improvements in recruiting (i.e. upon recruiting men who had some initiative to develop)? Or, did it simply mean less concentration upon parade

10. 96 Meeting of the Army Council and Precis No. 359, 24-25.10.07. W.O.163/12.
11. Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson, From Private to Field Marshal (Lon., 1921), pp. 163-165. Lord Roberts added that some older officers, "do not believe in the need for change", and that as, "the Army is a strangely conservative body, tradition and respect for seniors carries enormous weight," Lord Roberts to Balfour, 5.11.04. Balfour MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 49725, ff. 160-161.
ground discipline; but, if it did, to what extent could more attention be paid to rifle shooting and field craft in view of the existing deficiencies in facilities and the shortage of manpower? 12.

To some extent, it was possible to reform the existing patterns of training, and the new musketry course reflected the shift in emphasis from collective medium range firing to individual short range proficiency. 13. On the other hand, where the reforms implied an expansion of the existing facilities either attracting better recruits or providing an increased number of men for training or by the acquisition of more land for rifle ranges, then there were only limited possibilities of improvement. By 1906, these limits on expansion had become so apparent that Sir Ian Hamilton qualified his reforming zeal and acknowledged that the:

South African and Manchurian experiences equally tend to show that men who are smart on parade are more alert, more readily controlled, more obedient, and move more rapidly and with less hesitation or tendency to confusion or panic than troops which depend entirely on their individual qualities. 11.


13. See the 'Trained Soldiers Course, Table B' in Musketry Regulations 1905 (Lon., 1905), pp. 40-43.

14. Even if it was true that the reformers like Sir Ian Hamilton had never discounted the need for discipline, and even allowing that this speech was circulated to the Volunteer brigades, whom the Regulars generally considered to be in need of more discipline, the speech reflected a notable change in emphasis. Sir I. Hamilton, the following remarks by the Lieutenant General Commanding-in-Chief Southern Command, are circulated to Volunteer Brigadiers for their perusal and guidance, 1.8.06. Hamilton Mem., 7/1/10.
Given these limitations in numbers, finance and expansion there was considerable pessimism within the Service about the possibilities of substantial improvement. Contemporary British writers dismissed the efficiency displayed in the immediate post-war manoeuvres as a fortuitous wartime legacy. They insisted that the standards would soon relapse once the restrictions of peacetime resumed their deleterious influence. Reflected in this attitude was the belief that however efficient the organisation and training of the Army, all efforts at reform would flounder through paucity of numbers and financial parsimony. Consequently, officers tended to labour the shortcomings of peacetime training in the hope that sufficiently doleful description might secure an increase in Government expenditure. When written in this vein, these strictures undervalued the possibility of effective drill within the existing expenditure and the incentives for proficiency occasionally afforded by financial stringency.

Yet through frequent practice on the rifle range, individual skills especially rates of rapid fire, could be developed which markedly exceeded the equivalent rates in conscript armies. Moreover, by improving the individual capability in rapid shooting, the Army was able to compensate


partially for some of the fiscal economies, especially the
cuts in the ammunition allowance and the refusal to concede more than
two machine guns per battalion. 17. By means of squads or sections'
attacking each other in company training, the ability to fire and move
in attack and regulate fire from defensive positions could be recurrently
practised until the principles employed became a matter of habit. In
the same exercises officers and non-commissioned officers refrained
from issuing orders to ensure that the ranks would increasingly act on
their own initiative. 18. Even if the extent of the improvement was
not evident until August 1914, a perceptive foreign observer noted that
in the Army Exercise of 1913:

The infantry makes wonderful use of the ground, advances
as a rule, by short rushes and always at the double, and
almost invariably fires from a lying down position. 19.

Any improvement in the Infantry performance however, depended upon
the confidence which the soldiers had in their weapons, a moot point
since the Lee Metford and Lee Enfield rifles, introduced in 1888 and
1895 respectively, had incurred vehement criticism during the War.
Several civilian pundits had compared the technical qualities of the
British and the Boer weapons, the .276 and .311 Mauser, and had urged
the replacement of the former. Foremost among these critics was
W.A. Baillie-Grohman, who condemned the .303 Service rifle for its

(Lon., 1931), p. 29. Whereas British soldiers were expected, "to
reach a best rate of 15 rounds (a minute) without difficulty,"
Japan considered 8 rounds a minute excessive and France, Germany
and Russia only hoped to fire 12 rounds a minute at under 300
yards. See Lt.-Col. J. Campbell, 'Fire Action', Aldershot Military
Society, Paper CXII (14.3.11), p.6 and Brig.-Gen. J. Edmonds,
excessive weight; lower muzzle velocity and worse trajectory; inferior rigidity because of its two part framework; weaker bolt; unstable cordite; inferior trigger pull; and most importantly, its single loading magazine which ensured a slower rate of fire than the clip loading magazine on the Continental rifles. Indeed the weapon was so inadequate that it had already been discarded by civilian experts. Some 80 per cent of the British representatives at Bisley in 1899 had preferred the .256 Austrian Mannlicher; and, in the premier events the Elcho Shield and Martin Smith contests, twenty of the twenty-four participants and twelve of the fifteen prizewinners had shot with the .256.  

The Army however, was less demanding and less critical of the Lee Enfield rifle. Uninterested in a carefully adjusted and delicate piece of mechanism, the Army primarily required that its rifle should be usable in extreme conditions of climate; sufficiently durable to withstand rough treatment and scanty cleaning; and yet at all times reliable for a soldier more or less skilled in the arts of musketry. In short, active service was the main test for the service rifle and prior to the South African War, it had received favourable reports from several minor wars, the Tirah Expedition (1897) and the Sudan campaign (1898).


What doubts existed within the Service, related to the length and weight of the rifle and its loading mechanism. Prior to the South African War, a Small Arms Committee had authorised trials on a shorter and lighter weapon.\textsuperscript{23} Although the War had interrupted these trials, Lord Roberts urged in his wartime dispatches, that a short rifle should be adopted, loaded on a clip system with improved sights and a reduced calibre. He insisted that the War had confirmed the substance of previous reports, especially the durability under service conditions, of the two piece stock, barrel, bolt and magazine loading. Modifications were necessary: some 200,000 new Lee Enfield rifles had been wrongly sighted; the lack of a clip system impaired the rate of fire; and the length of the arm rendered it unwieldy for the Cavalry when manoeuvring in close formation. Yet, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, the Lee-Metford had emerged from another rigorous test without any complaints as to jamming, missfire or incorrect shooting: the War had justified a few minor refinements but not the replacement of the existing rifle.\textsuperscript{24}*

Considerations of cost however, limited the scope of these refinements. The prospect of paying £5,250,000 to replace one million rifles and two hundred and fifty million rounds of ammunition ensured that Lord Lansdowne and his successors would restrict the rearmament programme. In particular, they refused any refinement which would involve a different pattern of ammunition - a stipulation which ensured

\textsuperscript{23} See the appendix to the minute from Sir J. Wolfe Murray to the Secretary of State, 10.2.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., R.M.Add.Mss.50315, ff. 9.

\textsuperscript{24} Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 5.7.00, 29.8.00 and 18.10.00. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/117/2/25, 71 and 72 and R/117/3/16. Lord Roberts to Lord Tweedmouth, 25.6.04. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/122/7/667. On the error in sighting by which the Lee Enfield shot 18 inches to the right at 500 yards, see Sir H. Brackenbury (2.1777) evidence before the Elgin Commission, op.cit., Vol.I, Cd.1790 (1904), XI.
that the rifle calibration remained at .303 inches and that the reformers had to abandon their quest for a rifle with increased velocity and flatter trajectory.\(^\text{25}\) Abiding by these restrictions and keeping their estimated costs within £3\(\frac{1}{4}\) millions, the Small Arms Committee recommended the adoption of a short Lee Enfield loaded on a clip system, 1 lb. 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) ozs. lighter and 5" shorter than the existing weapon.\(^\text{26}\)

Once financially sanctioned, the proposal proved difficult to curtail on any other criteria. In February 1905, the new Secretary of State for War expressed his own and other civilian reservations about the content and justification for the post-war rearmament. He criticised the adoption of a shorter barrel as a deviation from the theoretical precept that if other aspects are equal, a longer barrel shoots better than a shorter barrel. He feared that the adoption was even more unwise since it departed from existing Continental practice and apparently aimed at providing a portable arm for the Cavalry instead of the most accurate arm for the Infantry.\(^\text{27}\) However, the Ordnance Department insisted that the desire for a lighter and shorter rifle predated the War and the arm blanche controversy. It had come from Infantry officers who felt that a...

\(^{25}\) Sir H. Brackenbury to Lord Roberts, 1.5.02. Roberts Mss., N.A.M., R/11/168.

\(^{26}\) Sir J. Wolfe Murray to Arnold-Forster, 10.2.05 and 20.2.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50,315, ff. 8 and 11.

\(^{27}\) See Arnold-Forster, The New Rifle, a minute to the Master-General of the Ordnance, 7.2.05. Arnold-Forster Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 50315, ff. 7 and Arnold-Forster to Balfour, 10.10.05. Balfour Mss., B.M. Add. Mss. 49723, ff. 179-180.
9 lb. 4 oz. rifle was an encumbrance on a campaign. Furthermore, the new short rifle had been thoroughly tested to prove its superior accuracy over the Continental rifles and over the long Lee Enfield at all ranges save 500 yards. Finally, as the manufacture had already begun, the Department felt effectively pledged to provide the Armaments Trade with orders and to send an early delivery to India. This commitment secured the acquiescence of the Secretary of State and the adoption of the rifle with which the Army entered the First World War.

A revision of the pre-war drill books accompanied the rearmament and the changes in Infantry training. Modifications in tactics had occurred during the South African War and their value in countering the increased fire effect of contemporary weapons merited assessment. On one axiom, however, there was no dispute - the offensive retained its primacy in Infantry tactics. Although Combined Training, 1905 acknowledged that smokeless powder, entrenchments and the flat trajectory of modern weapons favoured defensive fire, it insisted that the moral advantages of the assailant - his initiative, freedom of action and power of manoeuvre - were immutable and bound to prevail. This theme persisted in subsequent manuals, bolstered by endorsement from France and Germany and the spurious wisdom gleaned from the Boer War.

28. Wolfe Murray noted a comment by his predecessor, Sir H. Brackenbury, "But what I want particularly to note is that the short lighter rifle was demanded, and the question taken up for Infantry long before its use for Cavalry was thought of," Sir J. Wolfe Murray to Arnold-Forster, 10.2.05. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50315, ff. 7. Yet some officers always preferred the longer rifle, see Gen. H. Hamilton to Col. J. S. Ewart, 26.2.05. Ewart MSS., item 14.

29. Report on the Trial of the Short Rifle by the Army and Navy, Cd. 2264 (1905), XLVI. Arnold-Forster to Balfour, 10.10.05. Balfour MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 49723, ff. 179-180, and Arnold-Forster to Lord Lansdowne, 11.10.05. Arnold-Forster MSS., B.M. Add. MSS. 50315, ff. 43-44.

30. Combined Training, 1905 (Lon., 1905), Ch. VI, secs. 105-107.
surrender at Paardeberg and the Japanese victories at Liaoyang and Mukden. Because attacks had succeeded in the past, albeit against defenders deficient in numbers, organisation and training, the Army had no doubts that success would attend similar offensives in the future.

The question was not whether but how to attack. Few accepted that the tactics adopted in South Africa were either perfect in themselves or applicable in the European context. The abandonment of frontal attacks for wide lateral extensions combined with flanking movements was sound in principle but had occasionally been weak in execution. The extensions had usually lacked depth and the assaults had recurrently floundered through the premature use of reserves and the failure to attain fire superiority.31 In any case this approach was only assured of success where the foe was inferior in numbers, bereft of an organisation and imbued with a wholly defensive attitude: the converse of what the Army might expect from a European adversary.

What the civilian commentators urged was the adoption of a specific offensive doctrine, applicable to a European war, with its embodiment in the training manuals followed by regular practice in Army Manoeuvres.32

On the Continent there were two contrasting concepts of an offensive battle. The French believed in the tactics of penetration: a hard fought preparatory action to ascertain enemy dispositions, wear out his resistance and draw in his reserves, followed by a decisive attack

on the weakest point as revealed by the events of the preparatory action. The system relied upon manoeuvre along the whole front; the use of a strong advanced guard to drive in the enemy's protective troops; support from the main bodies of the various columns in the preparatory action; and the retention of strong reserves in the hands of the commander-in-chief for the decisive attack. The Germans preferred the tactics of envelopment: a bold advance aiming to lap round the wings of the enemy, threaten his line of retreat, enfilade his front and precipitate a crumbling in resistance from flanks to centre. As a concept of war, it limited the influence of the commander-in-chief to initial direction, delegated operational responsibility to the column commanders and left the commander-in-chief without any reserves to rectify a failure in action.

The British General Staff eschewed rigid adherence to either doctrine. The Field Service Regulations (1909 and subsequent editions) claimed that, "the fundamental principles of war are neither very numerous nor in themselves very abstruse," but it never indicated what these principles were. Whereas the manual exhorted commanders to aim at fire superiority and husband their reserves claiming that, "this method will usually be most suited to the circumstances of our Army," it also specified that the flanks would be the usual point of attack and paid tribute to the moral effect of an envelopment. The Memorandum on Army Training 1910 deplored the cultivation of any particular form of action since:

33. Field Service Regulations 1909 (Lon., 1909), Part 1: Operations, ch.1, sec.1, para.2; ch.7, sec.102, paras.3-4 and sec.103, para.2. Although later editions removed some of these ambiguities, the pragmatic disdain for one particular form of action remained, see Field Service Regulations (Lon., 1912 and 1914), Part 1; Operations, ch.1, sec.1, para.2 and ch.7, sec.102, para.3.
success depends not so much on the inherent soundness of a principle or plan of operations as on the method of application of the principle and the resolution with which the plan is carried out. 34.

Brigadier-General H.H. Wilson, while Director of Military Operations, publicly endorsed this pragmatic posture. In a lecture before the Aldershot Military Society on Initiative and the Power of Manoeuvre, he unambiguously favoured "the Napoleonic principle of restricted initiative, a momentary pause and then a smashing blow." However, he also acknowledged that the Expeditionary Force might be obliged to fight on the German system, "and trust to win by a slogging match," because it might not be sufficiently mobile to manoeuvre as the French recommended. 35.

Underlying this pragmatism was the military appreciation of their own limitations. To his students at the Staff College Camberley, Wilson repeatedly stated that:

there is no military problem to which the answer is six divisions and one cavalry division. 36.

Indeed the Army, unable to amass large formations in war, was even less able to train them in time of peace. In his Aldershot lecture, Wilson had outlined six criteria for ensuring the necessary mobility to follow the French tactics of penetration, but it was impossible to practise at least half of these requirements under peacetime conditions, (i.e. the carriage by the troops of two, three or four day's rations on their persons, the full use of motorised transport and a knowledge of

34. 'The British Army and Modern Conceptions of War', op. cit., pp.341-342.
requisitioning and billeting). As such the General Staff, especially Haig who supervised the first edition of Field Service Regulations, resented the desire in the press for an unequivocal commitment to a particular doctrine and favoured the perfection of attacking methods usable under either system.

The fountain-head of these reforms was the Musketry School at Hythe, especially the inter-war Chief Instructors: Lieutenant-Colonels C.C. Monro, N.R. McMahon and J.Campbell. They aimed to compromise between the excessive formalism of the pre-war training and the exaggerated liberty of action which immediately followed the South African War. Appalled at the deficient reconnaissance in the post-war manoeuvres, the crowding of leaders and men at successive fire positions, and the tendency to fire at the most visible and easiest targets, the Instructors sought a more systematic approach. In the first place, they urged the brigade staff to exercise their responsibility in local ground reconnaissance, indicate the desired fire positions, allot objectives and arrange communications. Company officers and non-commissioned officers had to specify favourable intermediate fire positions, dead ground, covered ways, important tactical localities and key ranges to facilitate the subsequent judging of distance. Secondly, the direction and control of fire had to reflect tactical circumstances and not merely visible targets. With companies deployed in depth (i.e. firing lines

38. Haig to Kiggell,13.7.11. Kiggell Mss.,1/12. The paucity of numbers meant that the British Army had to be especially adept in the methods of counter-attack, see Lt.-Col.L.E.Kiggell,'The Counter Attack', Aldershot Military Society, Paper LXXXV (7.3.05), p.1.
and supports) the fire direction devolved upon the company officer in the firing line. Allocated a certain sector or area by the company commander, he had to delegate subsidiary targets to the section or platoon commanders with the aim of achieving mutual fire support and a maximised volume of converging fire. In the penultimate stage of the attack, the supports would have to join the firing line, forego extended formation and increase the volume of fire to achieve a fire superiority prior to the bayonet charge. 39.

Throughout the action fire support had always to remain subsidiary to the movement of troops. Initially the firing line was expected to advance as far as possible without opening fire, to conceal its approach and to conserve ammunition. Thereafter it had to attack in successive waves, regarding fire positions as simply transitory objectives, and always aiming at the gradual working forward of units to close with the enemy. The essence of the concept was the offensive: the maximisation of the assailant’s moral advantages - his initiative, freedom of action and power of manoeuvre - to overcome the fire effect of contemporary weapons in defensive positions. 40. By 1911, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien directed that these methods, already the core of practice in battle shooting, should become the basis of company training at Aldershot. 41.


In sum, accommodation with the limitations of peacetime training was the essence of Infantry reform. Financial restrictions, the lack of political support and numerical shortages continually impeded training and thwarted many of the tactical aspirations held by the Army and its civilian sympathisers. Nevertheless, the Army was able to consolidate upon the reforms introduced after the early reverses in the South African War. By individual instruction and regular practice in sections and companies, it was able to improve the skills of the individual ranker, especially his shooting ability and his use of cover. Indeed the Infantry attained a peak in individual and company training never before achieved in the British Army and unequalled on the Continent of Europe. Observing the French Manoeuvres in 1913, Major-General H.H. Wilson summarised the British achievement:

The French Infantry are marvels of endurance & good spirits but we have nothing to learn from them in handling the actual troops on the ground.42.

42. Wilson Diary, 14.9.13. Wilson also claimed that a favourite dictum of General French was that: "Aldershot could fight its weight & a half in Germans." Diary, 30.10.07. Wilson Mss., I.W.M.
Section 7

Autumn 1974 and Conclusions
Chapter 19

Autumn 1914 and Conclusions

"Armées d'élite would be invincible if wars were fought without casualties. Things being what they are, armées d'élite are unlikely to remain so long."


Chapter 19 surveys the performance of the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders. It contrasts the problems which the Army encountered through its lack of numbers, high proportion of Reservists and inept High Command, with the performance of its front-line forces. Although the chapter recognises that the various arms displayed a high degree of professional competence in the opening battles, it underlines that they were unprepared for trench warfare and that their original numbers were decimated after three months fighting. In other words the Army which had prepared successfully for a series of short encounter battles, had to adapt itself to a more prolonged and static war when these battles did not prove to be decisive. The chapter concludes with a general assessment of Army Reform in the Edwardian period, the problems posed by the wartime revelation of military shortcomings and the relevant considerations in an attempt to analyse the process of Army Reform.
For informed civilians, the reform of tactics and training in the front-line forces was the aspect of Army Reform upon which they could speak with least authority. Whereas some like Arnold-Forster tried in vain to gain respect for their heretical opinions,\(^1\) others contented themselves with structural, administrative or institutional reform, pontificated on aspects of National Defence, and supported Haldane in his creation of a Territorial Force. The reform of the front-line forces remained primarily a concern of the Service and reflected ideas based on the previous war experience and on contemporary military thought. The ultimate test occurred on the fields of Flanders where the strengths and weaknesses of the peacetime reforms were fully revealed.

An expectation of War with Germany had undoubtedly existed within the Edwardian Army. Officially forbidden from studying the German Army at staff tours, war games and intelligence classes,\(^2\) the Army was still aware of its likely enemy and the imminence of confrontation. The mobilization of various units, front-line and auxiliary, was regularly practiced. Individual officers visited the Belgian front and attended the French Manoeuvres. At the Staff College Camberley, Major-General Robertson urged his students to prepare in peace for, "fighting the most probable and most formidable adversary for the time being.\(^3\)"

\(^1\) After a brief debate over Artillery rearmament with his advisers, H.O. Arnold-Forster conceded, acknowledging that, "the question is essentially a technical and a military one." Arnold-Forster, minute, 8.7.04. Arnold-Forster Mss., R.M. Add. Mss. 50,306, ff.137.


Furthermore, the Army had a clear impression about the character and duration of the imminent conflict. Sir Archibald Murray, Chief of the Staff to Sir John French, believed that the War if successful, would last for three months with the troops returning home by Christmas. Eight months, he suggested, was the maximum possible duration: beyond that point the financial disruption and the strain of maintaining mass armies in the field would ensure an end to hostilities. Any reservations were kept relatively private: few doubted that the War would not be one of rapid movement consummated in decisive encounter battles.

For wartime service, the General Staff had organised an Expeditionary Force able to be transported to France and concentrated in Belgium within fifteen days. The mobilisation arrangements were sufficiently flexible to overcome a delay in sending the Force and a reduction of two Divisions in the Force despatched. By 30 August 1914, four Divisions, one Cavalry Division, one additional Cavalry and one additional Infantry Brigade were concentrated on the left of the French Army between Mauverge and Le Cateau. The four Divisions were arranged into two Army Corps under the command of Sir Douglas Haig and Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, with overall command entrusted to Sir John French. Officially, the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) was entirely independent but its

5. Haig was one of the few officers to express any reservations. He feared that the War would last for many months. Haig to Haldane, 4.8.14. Haldane Ms., N.L.S., MS. 5910, ff. 251.
numbers were so small that it could only act in support of
General Lanrezac's Army.8.

Structurally, there were important differences between the B.E.F. and its predecessor in 1899. Whereas each Corps comprised two large Divisions and numbered 37,406 men, in 1899 a Division mustered only 11,006 men and formed an Army Corps whenever three were joined under one command. The larger Divisions contained a smaller proportion of front-line troops (75% as distinct from 88%) and had some provision, albeit wholly inadequate, for field ambulances, signals and a divisional train. On the other hand, the large Division included a greater proportion of Reservists (on average 60% in Infantry units as compared with 48% in 1899).9. This was crucial inasmuch as the troops encountered the rigours of warfare in Flanders far sooner than those who had served in South Africa. The battle of Mons occurred on 23 August and was followed by a thirteen day Retreat over 200 miles in a sweltering heat, with the troops surviving on three to four hours sleep per day. The task made extreme demands upon the moral and physical endurance of Reservists still wanting in physical fitness and in the process of readjusting to Army life.10.

Undoubtedly, this fatigue along with the early losses figured as a prominent consideration in the excessively prudent leadership of Sir John

8. On this front, the three German Armies comprising 34 Divisions or 760,000 men, faced General Lanrezac's Army, the Belgium Army of 6 Divisions and the B.E.F. of 4 Divisions, or 20 Divisions of allied troops. See, Edmonds, op.cit., Vol.I, p.46.


French. On 4 September, he wired Lord Kitchener:

I do not seem to be able to bring home to the cabinet the shattered condition of 2 divisions of my small force and the necessity of rest and refitment for the remainder and the impossibility of making things right as long as we are in close contact with the enemy.

In the subsequent advance, the B.E.F. required three days to cross the Marne by 9 September, and another three to cover the thirty miles to the River Aisne. An opportunity existed to sever von Kluck's three corps from the rest of the German Army if the B.E.F. had captured the bridgeheads over the Aisne and reached the high ground north of the river.

However General French did not issue any tactical guidance as to the ground to be gained and failed to impress upon his junior commanders the need for speed to exploit this fleeting opportunity. The arrival of the Seventh Army at the River Aisne on 13 September secured von Kluck's position and thwarted the last possibility for a decisive encounter battle in the early fighting.

The performance of the various arms of the Expeditionary Force contrasted markedly with the failures of the high command. The Cavalry effectively screened the movements of the B.E.F. both prior to the battle of Mons and during the subsequent Retreat. It provided accurate

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information on German strength and movements and, where necessary, joined the firing line as Mounted Infantry. In walking and caring for their mounts, the British Cavalry excelled their Allied counterparts and, on a minor scale, took effective mounted action against German patrols. Yet, despite the suitability of terrain, the absence of entrenchments and the preference of all three Cavalries for traditional Cavalry tactics, shock action was conspicuously absent. The only significant charge was attempted by the 9th Lancers near Elouges, which achieved little beyond momentarily impeding the German assault. Extremely costly in men and horses, it was not repeated in either the Retreat from Mons or the Battle of the Marne. Indeed the early encounter battles underlined that shock action with the arme blanche was useless against contemporary fire power.

For the Artillery, there was a basic difficulty in the industrial and coal mining landscape of Flanders. The deep ditches, buildings and high slag heaps hampered the long range observation favoured by British gunners. These features also exacerbated the problem of finding suitable positions for batteries or even for single guns. Consequently, the Artillery commanders pushed their batteries forward, aligned them with the Infantry positions and provided close support for the defensive fire. However, when this procedure was adopted in open positions, it proved disastrous. At Le Cateau, the Artillery on the right flank of the II Corps ignored the experience of Colenso, eschewed cover and exposed their

guns for direct fire. The batteries lost twenty-six of the forty-two guns and only extricated the rest by daring exhibitions of gallantry. Thereafter the arm avoided unnecessary exposure and preferred concealed positions behind the firing line. As a precautionary measure this had the additional merit of increasing the fire effectiveness of the arm. It enabled the guns to fire on a wider arc without having to move, and facilitated a greater concentration of fire through the engagement of the same target by several batteries.16

For the Infantry, the early battles underlined both the relevance of the pre-war training and its absorption by the rank-and-file. From concealed positions, the Infantry sustained a remarkably accurate and rapid rate of fire, and in marksmanship, there was no other Army on the Western Front to compare with the B.E.F.17 Moreover, in the use of cover and concealed positions, the Infantry markedly excelled their German opponents, although the latter quickly deployed in dispersed formations after several abortive assaults en masse. Indeed, the British battalions occasionally required heavy losses to remind them of the need for cautious deployments. At Le Cateau, the King’s Own adopted a quarter column formation which provided an ideal target for enemy fire and resulted in over 400 casualties.18 Admittedly, this kind of mistake was rare and in general, the Infantry displayed a high degree of professional competence in the opening encounters.


The main difficulty for the Expeditionary Force, reared in the doctrine of fire and movement, was the beginning of static defensive warfare. Starting at the River Aisne (13–27 September) and continuing near Ypres in the following months, the belligerents stumbled onto large scale position warfare, for which none of them had prepared. Only the Germans who had contemplated swift assaults on the fortresses of Belgium and Eastern France, possessed the appropriate apparatus for trench warfare (i.e. heavy guns, trench mortars, grenades, searchlights and periscopes). The British on the other hand, unearthed shortages in entrenching tools, barbed wire and sandbags, and sought cover in shallow shelter pits or behind natural obstacles. 19 The BEF was also deficient in Heavy Artillery. The four 60-pdr's, attached to each Division and the four batteries of the old pattern 6" howitzer provided a hopelessly inadequate response to the German batteries. 20 The onset of trench warfare revealed a further weakness in the shortage of machine guns and their tactical neglect by the pre-war Army. Discounted in its utility as a defensive weapon by the training manuals, the machine-gun had languished as an under-rated weapon with few enthusiasts in the Edwardian Army. 21 Finally, the


21. Although officers in their post-war memoirs correctly bemoaned the refusal of the peacetime Government to allow more than two machine guns per battalion, the Edwardian Army neglected the Maxim gun because it had been ineffectively used in South Africa. Although Sir H. Smith-Dorrien was interested in the weapon, most senior officers were unimpressed. See, Capt. R. V. K. Applin, 'Machine Gun in our Own and Other Armies', Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, Vol.LIV (Jan., 1919), pp.34-53; Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen 1914-1918 (2 Vols., Lon., 1926), Vol.I, p.41; A. J. Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and His Enemies (Lon., 1970), pp.145-146.
reserves of ammunition established in the wake of the South African War and unaltered with the introduction of quick-firing artillery, were barely sufficient for long periods of continuous fighting. Bereft of equipment for a war of this duration and character, the B.E.F. had to improvise where possible, and simply await replenishment from the United Kingdom.

What ensured the demise of the Old Army and the need for wartime conscription was the casualty rate on the Western Front. In 1906, the Army Council had accepted projections on war wastage which were optimistic even by the recent Manchurian standards. The projected wastage for the first six months of a war was 44% in the Infantry (24,740 men), 36% in the Artillery (10,610 men) and 40% on average for the 6 Divisions (56,285 men). By 30 November 1914, after approximately three months fighting, the British losses amounted to 3,627 officers and 86,237 other ranks. The majority of these had fallen in the Infantry of the first seven Divisions, which had originally numbered 84,000 men.

The Official History records that:

In the British battalions which fought at the Marne and Ypres, there scarcely remained in the colours an average of one officer and thirty men of those who landed in August 1914.

In sum the British Expeditionary Force performed with considerable professional competence on the fields of Flanders. Trained to fight in mobile encounter battles, it was well-armed, highly skilled on an individual level and able to fight on the defensive when required.

23. These calculations assumed that the 6 Divisions would number 140,000 men, excluding lines of communication. See, Memorandum drawn up in M.I.I. on Wastage in War, 27.4.06, W.O./9813, and R. B. Haldane, Memorandum on Army Organization, 30.7.06, Appendix. Haig Ms., N.I.S., Vol.32(a).
Unlike the Army Corps which embarked for South Africa in October 1899, the B.E.F. faced a larger, well organised and disciplined enemy within days of its mobilisation. Under immediate pressure and with a large proportion of Reservists still adjusting to Army life, the B.E.F. vindicated the efforts of the pre-war reformers. Decimated after three months fighting, it formed the nucleus of the British force which endured the depressing process of adapting to a prolonged and static war in the trenches on the Western Front.

**Conclusions**

In examining the process of Army Reform, this study has centred upon the structural distribution of an Army, its social characteristics and the relationship between changes in technology and in tactical thought. Each of these factors had a bearing upon the effectiveness of the front-line forces. The tendency of late Victorian authorities to focus exclusively upon structural reform, implying that this was the essence of Reform, only concealed deficiencies in the other aspects. Indeed, this tendency provided the complacency with which the politicians and their military advisers entered the South African War.

Undoubtedly structural weaknesses existed. They accounted for some, if not all, and not the most important failings revealed in South Africa. On the other hand, the War or rather the emergency measures adopted during the War aggravated many of the structural weaknesses by dislocating the Cardwell System. Nevertheless, the process of war and post-war Army Reform was not simply a response to the public dismay evinced in Parliament and the press. The Government and its advisers shared the surprise and despondency occasioned by the military reverses, and were equally determined to remedy the existing shortcomings.
Secondly, they were able to define these shortcomings and posit their own solutions, since the public concern was vacillating, transitory and more related to the performance of the military than to the intricacies of Reform. For Parliament and the press, Army Reform always remained a peripheral issue: it was never as important as the conduct of the War, the fear of militarism, and the state of the Economy. Whereas this lack of interest allowed the War Office scope to experiment, it also meant that the responsible Ministers would have to accommodate their measures to the imperial and financial priorities of a peacetime State.

As regards the social characteristics of the Edwardian Army, many wartime critics had urged changes in the quality of the recruiting intake. To improve the wartime performance, they had believed that a broadened social basis was essential for both the officers and the rank-and-file. However, within the period 1902-1914, there was neither the time in the case of the ranks, nor the inclination in case of the officers, to effect any substantial changes in recruitment. Even so, the B.E.F. in Flanders performed with far greater competence at the combat level than its predecessor in Natal. The difference lay in the mastery of relatively basic skills relevant to the contemporary military context - in musketry, in the use of ground, in the laying of guns for indirect fire. As these skills were not particularly difficult, they could be acquired by the serving personnel through fairly regular practice. Furthermore, their acquisition did not impair the officer gentleman tradition since that tradition had always presumed a level of military competence. In effect, the duties expected of a regimental officer in the Edwardian Army were neither so complicated nor so time consuming as to be beneath
the dignity of an English gentleman. 25.

For the reform of military tactics, the development of weapon technology, revealed in the War, was an important but not a decisive factor. The War did not provide any self-evident lessons in Army Reform. On the contrary, what were claimed as wartime lessons were subjective interpretations of the war experience either vindicating previous military experience or justifying personal opinions. The War was only important inasmuch as it provided an occasion for Reform. Thereafter pre-war theories could be tested, wartime equipment examined and new tactics practised in the peacetime training. This was not simply a retrospective process: many of the theories were tested during the War and given a practical examination prior to post-war experiment.

In the long term, moreover, the experience of a particular War was an insufficient guide for Army Reform, although not for the reasons advanced by the Edwardian officers. For them, the principles of war were immutable with the moral factor all important and the offensive, if well conducted, still decisive. The failure of these factors in South Africa only indicated the abnormality of the War and not any weakness in the principles themselves. Yet, apart from the peculiarities in topography, climate and distance, many of the abnormalities in South Africa denoted the restricting effect and defensive fire power of

25. A regimental officer in the First World War can only be regarded as 'professional' if the limited requirements of wartime professionalism are understood. Montgomery, a Lieutenant in Flanders in August 1914 records that:

The C.O. galloped up to us forward companies and shouted to us to attack the enemy on the forward hill at once. This was the only order; there was no reconnaissance, no plan, no covering fire. We rushed up the hill, came under heavy fire, my Company Commander was wounded and there were many casualties. No-body knew what to do, so we returned to the original position from which we had begun the attack.

Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, op.cit., p.32; See also S. Ridgwell, op.cit., pp.15-16.
contemporary weapons. And, if allowance was made for increased fire power in the post-war training, it was still within the traditional framework of a mobile encounter battle. This limitation ensured that the Army would fail to perceive how much the new weapons had modified the traditional battle. At a time of rapid technical change, it was futile to think in terms of normal and abnormal wars. Each war was perforce different, and neither the South African nor the Manchurian War prefigured the conflict on the Western Front.

Overall, the process of Army Reform was not automatic; it was not simply occasioned and set in motion by a military disaster. Admittedly, Reform followed the disaster and in many respects, the events in South Africa coloured the attitudes of the reformers. The War also increased the likelihood of Reform by precipitating the resignation of several officers and politicians who had defended the pre-war system, and by providing evidence of faulty training and tactics which could buttress the speculation of the post-war reformers. Nevertheless, the reformers encountered several basic problems which indicated how difficult it was to remedy a shortcoming discovered in wartime.

In the first place, the disaster itself had to be overcome. Having assured the public of an easy victory, the Government had to rectify the situation in the field prior to embarking on Army Reform. As the Boers proved unduly obdurate, the Government attempted the difficult task of formulating a programme of Reform while the War remained in progress. But, as long as the advisers remained abroad, the outcome of the hostilities uncertain, and the subsequent deployment of battalions unknown, this attempt proved hazardous. Indeed the Reform ultimately floundered, because the reformers remained primarily concerned with the immediate conflict and allowed it to cloud their long term assessment.

Secondly, the relevance of the disaster had to be analysed for its
impact on future military requirements. This presumed a perceptive observation of what had happened on the ground and an awareness of what might be required in future encounters. Whereas some aspects might overlap, others might not and others might be wholly irrelevant. What Reform required was a basis in the common factors which might link a contemporary disaster with a future conflict: in this instance, the rapid development of weapon technology and its restricting effect on military tactics.

Thirdly, the issue of Army Reform never existed as an isolated requirement. If a disaster in the field highlighted the urgency of Reform and rendered it an all important requirement for the Army, it was never as prominent a concern for the responsible politician. Indeed a military disaster far from presenting the issue of Army Reform in all its pristine clarity begged several questions. To what extent could the Army be reformed? For what purposes should it be reformed? And what priority should be attached to the process? The issue not only raised these problems but it also required a political commitment on them, prior to any reform in training, tactics or social intake.

Finally, although the purpose of the Army was to defend the State and its imperial possessions in war, and depended upon Reform to fulfil this purpose effectively, the Army did not only exist within a wartime context. For an indeterminate period, it had to remain as an annual burden on the peacetime economy. Moreover, the Government had to determine how much it was prepared to impinge on this economy for the sake of an effective performance in a future war. As the central question in Army Reform, this required a social, economic and political perspective, which would not be found in the immediate causes of a particular military defeat.
Appendix I  Dramatis Personae

Arnold-Forster, H.O. (1855-1909): Grandson of Thomas Arnold and adopted son of W.E. Forster, M.P., he gained a First Class Hon. in Mod. History at University Coll. Oxford, was secretary to his father in Ireland, and joined Cassell & Co. Ltd. in 1885. He served as Liberal Unionist M.P. for West Belfast from 1892-1906 and retained a fascination for military and naval matters. He wrote voluminously on Army Reform and was Secretary of State for War, 1903-1905.

Amery, L.S. (1873-1955): After gaining a double First at Oxford and becoming a Fellow of All Souls (1896), he became War Correspondent for The Times (1899-1900) and began The Times History of the South African African War, 7 Vols. (1900-09). He insisted upon high standards of accuracy in the work, despite the pressure from Moberly Bell for a quick and profitable publication. Amery also wrote The Problem of the Army (1903) which was the basis of the Hughligan attack on Brodrick.

Baillie-Grohman, W.A. (1851-1921): Educated in Austria, England and France, he was a big game hunter and became an advocate of improved rifle shooting in Britain after the defeat at Majuba Hill, 1881. A winner of over 70 awards for rifle shooting in England, America and on the Continent, he persistently criticised the weapons and musketry standards of the British Army in articles for the Nineteenth Century and Quarterly Review.

Gaines, Capt. W.E. (1862-1902): Entered Army through the Militia, became Adjutant 1st Volunteer Battalion, Yorks Light Infantry (1897) and was thereby unable to serve in South Africa. Though stationed at Wakefield, he wrote for the Westminster Gazette as Military Correspondent
and later served as secretary to the Select Committees on the remount department and the education and training of officers. A fierce anonymous Army critic, his best book, "The Absent-Minded War, had a great vogue, and was, perhaps, the most damaging indictment of the conduct of the war." J.A.Spender: Life Journalism and Politics, 2 Vols. (Lon., 1927), Vol.I, p.95.

Childers, R.E. (1870-1926): Educated at Trinity Coll, Cambridge, where he took the law tripos in 1893, he was a Clerk in the House of Commons and served in the Volunteers during the Boer War. He wrote The Riddle of the Sands (1903), an imaginary tale of a German raid on England, and contributed Vol.V to The Times History of the South African War. (1907). A persistent critic of traditional Cavalry tactics, he wrote War and the Arme Blanche (1910) in collaboration with Lord Roberts.

Clarke, Sir G.S., 1st Baron Sydenham of Combe (1848-1933): Passed first into and first out of R.M. Academy Woolwich, entered R.E. 1868, and saw active service in Egypt (1882) and Sudan (1885). A self-opinionated officer and life long Liberal, his promotion was slow and he became increasingly employed on non-military duties, serving as secretary to the Hartington Commission 1892 and Superintendent Royal Carriage Factory 1894-1901. However his pre war writings on Army Reform earned him membership of the W.O. Reorganisation Committee 1901 and the Esher Committee 1904. As secretary of the C.I.D. 1904-07, he became progressively disillusioned as his ideas, especially in favour of an expanded Militia, were persistently ignored. He became Governor of Bombay 1907-1913.

Dilke, Sir C.W. (1843-1911) Headed the law tripos at Trinity Hall, Cambridge (1866) and received an L.L.M. (1869). Radical M.P. for
Chelsea 1863-86, he was a Republican who visited France during the Franco-Prussian War and experienced war at first hand unlike the majority of Service M.P.s. After his Ministerial career was ended by divorce in 1886, he returned as M.P. for Forest of Dean (1892-1911) to concentrate upon Imperial and Defence issues.

Esher, Viscount (1852-1930): Educated at Eton, Trinity Coll. Cambridge, he became Liberal M.P. (1880-85) and was private secretary to Marquess of Hartington (1878-85). As secretary to H.M. Office of Works (1895-1902), he organised the Jubilee Celebrations and Royal Funeral, at which time he became a confident of Queen Victoria and Edward VII. He declined several public appointments but sought to influence events, especially over W.O. and Army Reform, through informal contacts. He chaired the War Office Reconstitution Committee (1904) and became a permanent member of the C.I.D. in 1905. Although disliked by politicians for his furtive behaviour, he proved a useful adviser and good committee man, serving as Chairman of the Territorial Force Association 1909-13.

Haliburton, A.L., 1st Baron (1832-1907): Educated in Nova Scotia, he joined the commissariat department in 1855 and became an expert on supplies and transport. Rose through the War Office to become Permanent Under-Secretary (1895-97). Having contributed a letter of dissent to the Wantage Report (1892), he continued after retirement to defend the Cardwell System in pamphlets and articles for The Times.

Henderson, Col. G.F.R. (1854-1903): An exhibitioner but did not graduate from St. John’s Coll. Oxford, he entered the Army in 1876 and saw active service in Egypt (1882) and South Africa (1900). A professor at the Staff College (1892-97), he wrote several military histories, including a notable biography of Stonewall Jackson; and frequently contributed

**Knox, Sir R.H.** (1836-1913): Educated at Trinity Coll. Dublin, he entered the War Office in 1856. A member of the committee which devised the Cardwell system, he continued to defend its principal components throughout his civil service career. He became Permanent Under-Secretary (1897-1901) and retained a close friendship with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

**Monkswell, Lord R.C.** (1845-1909): Educated at Eton and Trinity Coll. Cambridge, he served on the L.C.C. from 1889 to 1907 and was an Under-Secretary of State for War in the Liberal Government (1895). He persistently campaigned for more education and some technical instruction for the rank-and-file.

**Remington, Lt.-Col. C. à Court** (1858-1925): Educated at Eton and Sandhurst, he entered the Rifle Brigade in 1878. A brilliant service career ended when he was cited as co-respondent in divorce proceedings, while military attache in Brussels (1902). Forced to resign his commission, he became Military Correspondent of *The Times* in 1904 and the editor of *Army Review* in 1911. A provocative and controversial writer on all aspects of Army Reform, he became a notable correspondent from the Western Front.

**Wilkinson, H.Spencer** (1853-1937): A Fellow of All Souls Oxford and first Chicole Professor of Military History (1909-23), he was a
journalist with the *Manchester Guardian* (1822-92) and *Morning Post* (1895-1914). An enthusiast for the Volunteer movement and founder of the *Manchester Tactical Society*, he also translated numerous German military publications. He was a prodigious writer on Naval and Military strategy and the Volunteers.
Appendix II  The Military Background of the Service Members of Parliament.

The Service Members did not form a coherent organised group. Their interest and agreement on Service matters varied considerably, but the self-styled Service Members Committee did support the Army Reformers in a letter to Lord Lansdowne, dated 20.1.98. The composition of the Committee was as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
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<th>Auxiliary Service</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
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<thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Unionist</td>
<td>1 (Arnold-Forster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1 (Dilke)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Major</td>
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<td>Major-General</td>
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<td>Lt.-General</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arm in which Regular Army Service obtained</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guards</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Artillery &amp; Royal Marine Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
</tr>
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<th>War Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subsequent Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No War Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Still serving 3
The majority of the Committee therefore, was Conservative in party affiliation, had seen no service beyond the rank of Captain, and lacked any war experience.

This conclusion applies to all the M.P.s who had served in the Regular Army in the 1895 Parliament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service M.P.s</th>
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<th>Navy</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank in Regular Army on Retirement</th>
<th>Lieutenant</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Lt.-Colonel</th>
<th>Colonel</th>
<th>Major-General</th>
<th>Lt.-General</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Arm in which Army Service obtained</th>
<th>Guards</th>
<th>Cavalry</th>
<th>R.E.</th>
<th>R.A. &amp; Royal Marine Art.</th>
<th>Infantry</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>62</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>War Experience</th>
<th>Prior to 1860</th>
<th>Subsequent Experience</th>
<th>No War Experience</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
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Still Serving 4

### Appendix III: Military Expenditure in the period 1895-1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Gross Public Expenditure (£000,000)</th>
<th>Army &amp; Ordnance (£000,000)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Navy (£000,000)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
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<td>17</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>117.7</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>31.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>31.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
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<td>1910</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>1911</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>40.4</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>174.1</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>184.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>192.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix IV

Regional Background of the Military Leadership in 1899 and 1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIONS</th>
<th>% of nat. pop. in particular region.</th>
<th>1899 COLONELS</th>
<th>1899 GENERALS</th>
<th>COLONELS &amp; GENERALS 1899</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>11% (22%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15% (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19% (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Midlands</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>5% (35%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5% (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Counties</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17% (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number** (U.K. Pop. in 1901: 41.5m) (90) (79) (169)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIONS</th>
<th>% of nat. pop. in particular region.</th>
<th>1914 COLONELS</th>
<th>1914 GENERALS</th>
<th>COLONELS &amp; GENERALS 1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>11% (21%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15% (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10% (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Midlands</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>5% (35%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Counties</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15% (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18% (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number** (U.K. Pop. in 1911: 45.3m) (73) (69) (142)
The source for the regional population tables was B.R. Mitchell, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Univ. of Cambridge, 1971). Therein the county population tables are reproduced from the U.K. Census in 1901 and 1911.

In Appendix IV, the regions are grouped as follows:

**North of England**
- Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Yorkshire,
  Durham, Northumberland.

**West Midlands**
- Cheshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire,
  Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire,
  Shropshire.

**East Midlands**
- Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire,
  Rutland, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire.

**South Midlands**
- Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire,
  Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire.

**East Anglia**
- Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex.

**Home Counties**
- Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex.

**South & South West**
- Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Hampshire,
  Berkshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire.
### Promotions from the Ranks in the Combat Arms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cavalry Ranks</th>
<th>Cavalry All</th>
<th>Infantry &amp; A.S.C. Ranks</th>
<th>Infantry &amp; A.S.C. All</th>
<th>Royal Artillery Ranks</th>
<th>Royal Artillery All</th>
<th>Royal Engineers Ranks</th>
<th>Royal Engineers All</th>
<th>TOTAL Commissioned Ranks</th>
<th>TOTAL Commissioned All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>663</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>651</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>1894</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>338</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>547</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>478</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1525</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>258</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>384</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Return as to the Number of Commissions granted during each of the years 1885-1913 inclusive, No. 224 (1914), LI.
There were a series of these Returns but they ceased to include the total number of commissions granted after the Return No.111 (1907), XLIX.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Rate (per annum)</th>
<th>New Rate (per annum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infantry of the Line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
<td>96.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>119.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant after 7 yrs. service.</td>
<td>137.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>211.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain over 12 yrs. service &amp; 3 yrs. standing.</td>
<td>265.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major under 2 yrs. standing.</td>
<td>248.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major over 2 yrs. standing.</td>
<td>310.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel, including Command Pay</td>
<td>474.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix VII

**Average Rates of Regimental Promotion, 1898-1908**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1903</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPTAINS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>no promotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Field)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 6</td>
<td>8 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Garrison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>10 10</td>
<td>10 11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>8 8</td>
<td>6 9</td>
<td>6 9</td>
<td>8 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Army <em>(by tenure)</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1903</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
<td>Yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAJORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>15 5</td>
<td>13 11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>18 2</td>
<td>17 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Field)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Garrison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>18 7</td>
<td>17 4</td>
<td>18 6</td>
<td>19 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>18 2</td>
<td>18 9</td>
<td>18 1</td>
<td>18 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Army <em>(by tenure)</em></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Returns showing the average time taken from the date of first Commission in attaining respectively the ranks of captain and of major of officers in the Cavalry, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Infantry and Indian Army.

No. 221 (1903) XXXVIII and No. 275 (1909) LI.
Appendix VIII  

The Rate of Rejections among those who offered themselves as recruits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending</th>
<th>No. served with notice papers</th>
<th>No. who joined unit</th>
<th>Casualties &amp; desertions %</th>
<th>% rejected by Med. Officers</th>
<th>% accepted under standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.9.06</td>
<td>83,155</td>
<td>36,339</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.07</td>
<td>72,855</td>
<td>34,641</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.08</td>
<td>77,526</td>
<td>37,169</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.09</td>
<td>75,630</td>
<td>33,720</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.10</td>
<td>63,751</td>
<td>26,386</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.11</td>
<td>65,724</td>
<td>29,444</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.12</td>
<td>57,681</td>
<td>30,313</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.13</td>
<td>46,133</td>
<td>27,999</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages were calculated by the author from the numerical tables presented in The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1913, Cd.7252 (1914), LII, p.49.

Even this may have been an optimistic impression of the physical and medical condition of the potential recruits. From 1908 onwards, the Army ceased to publish the complete statistics but they do exist for 1905-06 and 1906-07.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Number who offered themselves for enlistment</th>
<th>Rejections before being served with notice papers &amp; percentage of column A.</th>
<th>Served with notice papers &amp; percentage of column A.</th>
<th>Joined Unit &amp; percentage of column A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905-06</td>
<td>108,769</td>
<td>25,614</td>
<td>83,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>91,588</td>
<td>18,733</td>
<td>72,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages were calculated by the author from the tables presented in The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1907, Cd.3798 (1908), XI, p.48.
## Appendix IX: The Educational Attainments of Edwardian Recruits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending</th>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
<th>Class C</th>
<th>Class D</th>
<th>Class E</th>
<th>TOTAL %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.9.07</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.09</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>30.9.12</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending</th>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
<th>Class C</th>
<th>Class D</th>
<th>Class E</th>
<th>TOTAL %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.9.07</td>
<td>8,644</td>
<td>34,731</td>
<td>32,065</td>
<td>25,365</td>
<td>28,195</td>
<td>29,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.08</td>
<td>32,065</td>
<td>25,365</td>
<td>28,195</td>
<td>29,019</td>
<td>27,093</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30.9.09</td>
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<tr>
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<td>30.9.12</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.9.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Classification

**Class A:** "Men of good education" i.e. read Standard VII Reader, write a composition, work compound rules of arithmetic, vulgar fractions and measure rectangles and rectangular solids.

**Class B:** "Men of fair education" i.e. read Standard V Reader (for 11 year olds), write from dictation and work compound rules of arithmetic.

**Class C:** "Men of moderate education" i.e. read Standard III Reader (for 9 year olds) write dictation from Reader and work simple rules of money.

**Class D:** "Men of inferior education" i.e. read Standard II Reader, write dictation from the Reader and work problems with small numbers on simple rules of arithmetic.

**Class E:** "Illiterate" i.e. men who fail to reach Class D.

Classification and tables (percentaged by the author) from The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30 September 1913. Cd.7252 (1914), LII, p.96. On 16.11.06, Lord Monkswell revealed the scholastic equivalents of the Standards used by the Army and received no rebuttal from the Government spokesmen. See House of Lords, Fourth Ser., Vol.196, cols.820-821.
Appendix X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>England £</th>
<th>Scotland £</th>
<th>Ireland £</th>
<th>Total £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896-97</td>
<td>498,630</td>
<td>14,774</td>
<td>156,538</td>
<td>669,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-98</td>
<td>431,141</td>
<td>18,868</td>
<td>178,168</td>
<td>628,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-99</td>
<td>484,223</td>
<td>29,645</td>
<td>176,676</td>
<td>660,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>577,194</td>
<td>24,091</td>
<td>222,842</td>
<td>824,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1901</td>
<td>1,441,343</td>
<td>34,360</td>
<td>209,437</td>
<td>1,693,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1902</td>
<td>964,938</td>
<td>24,379</td>
<td>264,176</td>
<td>1,253,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-1903</td>
<td>926,777</td>
<td>24,629</td>
<td>230,689</td>
<td>1,182,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1904</td>
<td>1,398,436</td>
<td>23,161</td>
<td>231,205</td>
<td>1,653,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-1905</td>
<td>1,554,673</td>
<td>26,959</td>
<td>196,736</td>
<td>1,778,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-1906</td>
<td>874,795</td>
<td>21,258</td>
<td>123,446</td>
<td>1,019,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-1907</td>
<td>579,460</td>
<td>27,132</td>
<td>107,085</td>
<td>713,677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics include expenditure on hospitals, hut barracks, and the cost of maintenance; and, to some extent, the purchases of land for training grounds or rifle ranges or works thereon. They exclude rents, furniture, fuel and light, cost of staff etc.

They were compiled from the reports presented in answer to Parliamentary Questions on 26.11.06 and 11.3.08.

Appendix XI  The Civilian Employment of the Edwardian Soldier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1908</th>
<th>1909</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. who were awarded characters entitling them to registration.</td>
<td>25,498</td>
<td>31,321</td>
<td>26,193</td>
<td>31,044</td>
<td>23,794</td>
<td>20,969</td>
<td>17,824</td>
<td>18,385</td>
<td>22,515</td>
<td>24,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed from previous year.</td>
<td>6,006</td>
<td>5,880</td>
<td>6,482</td>
<td>7,886</td>
<td>9,292</td>
<td>8,105</td>
<td>7,721</td>
<td>7,969</td>
<td>6,037</td>
<td>5,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25,498</td>
<td>35,358</td>
<td>31,199</td>
<td>36,924</td>
<td>30,456</td>
<td>28,855</td>
<td>27,116</td>
<td>26,490</td>
<td>30,236</td>
<td>24,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Employment Found by:

- National Assoc. for the Employment of Ex-Soldiers.
- Soldiers & Sailors Help Soc.
- Brig.of Guards Imp. Soc.
- Extents. under the W.O.

- Men known to have found their own employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1908</th>
<th>1909</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NUMBER</td>
<td>22,732</td>
<td>26,865</td>
<td>23,803</td>
<td>25,900</td>
<td>22,723</td>
<td>21,649</td>
<td>20,659</td>
<td>21,665</td>
<td>25,260</td>
<td>26,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENTAGE employed</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If 1904 and 1913 are excluded (the years in which the unemployed from...
previous years were not revealed) the average number of soldiers
who found employment every year was 75% (i.e. in the years 1905-1912).

These statistics are culled from the appropriate Annual Reports for
the years in question and have been percentaged by the author. Only the
five largest societies are included in the table, as the others were too
small to warrant inclusion in the Annual Reports.
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Cab.37 Cabinet Memoranda.
Cab.41 Royal Correspondence.
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(b) War Office

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W.0.33 Registry Files.
W.0.106 Department of Military Operations.
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