



Lancashire North Branch

## Despatch – September 2021

Fourth Email edition.



**Keeping communications open**



### Editor's Notes



Here we are in September 2021 with our fourth on-line edition of Despatch and a resumption of branch meetings on Monday 6 September. It seems an awfully long time since our first Covid-19 inspired edition but hopefully it has provided a means of communication among the branch members.

I feel sure that we have all welcomed and appreciated the excellent work done by the Western Front Association Webinars in providing such a diverse and high quality range of speakers and subjects. They deserve to be highly congratulated.

If like me you have used the lockdown to catch up on your reading or exploring your areas of interest and you have something that may be of interest to our branch members, please feel free to send in an article for Despatch. Do not feel it has to be an academic essay – all contributions are equally welcome and appreciated.

Tom Williams

(Unless otherwise indicated, articles are by the editor.)

## The Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award



I had the pleasure of meeting the late Malcolm Doolin when we were studying for our Master's Degree in First World War Studies at Birmingham University in 2011. Malcolm had spent his career in education and he combined this with his interest in the Great War when he published 'The Boys of Blackhorse Road', the story of an elementary school war memorial in 2015. As a continuation of this line of study, the WFA has established the Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award for Local History.

If you are, or you know of Primary or Secondary School Teacher then the Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award for Local History Needs You!

Do pupils know what the people who lived in their town or village did in the First World War?

Who went to war?

Who died and who came back?

Who stayed at home?

Schools are invited to participate in this local history research project - they could win one of two £500 prizes for the school. The project is intended to run from 1 September 2021 until 30 June 2022.

For further details of the project and how to register your interest:

<http://bit.ly/WFAMemorialAward2021>.

This would also be an opportunity for WFA members to use their knowledge and skills to help with the school's research.

## Thomas Steele VC

Peter Denby

Earlier this year, whilst browsing the WFA website, I saw a passing reference to Thomas Steele VC, of Saddleworth. This caught my eye because I was half-way through a self-guided walk around the Saddleworth villages, and so I made a mental note to look out for any commemoration of Thomas whilst on my travels.

Saddleworth (population about 30,000) is an area on the west side of the Pennine hills, comprising several villages and hamlets including Austerlands, Delph, Denshaw, Diggle, Dobcross, Friezland, Grasscroft, Greenfield, Grotton, Lydgate, Scouthead, Springhead and Uppermill. Access is from Junctions 21 or 22 of the M62.



Springhead village sign

The area was originally part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, but in the boundary changes of 1974 it was amalgamated into Greater Manchester and is now part of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham.

Strong cultural links to Yorkshire remain, and residents are divided as to whether they identify as Lancashire or Yorkshire. This identity crisis is illustrated by The Commie (The Commercial), a popular pub on Uppermill High Street which, to avoid any argument, displays on its signage both the red rose of Lancashire and the white rose of Yorkshire! One chap I spoke to was wearing a blue football scarf. When I asked him if it was an Oldham Athletic scarf, he was quick to point out he was a Huddersfield Town supporter.

But Saddleworth has always been something of an autonomous region - a “shire in its own right”. Saddleworth is a pleasant area and Uppermill, where I parked, is a charming village, its High Street bordered by the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the River Tame. It is the home of Saddleworth Museum. A walk northwards along the canal towpath leads to Diggle and the south portal of the Standedge Tunnel.

I soon found Saddleworth’s War Memorial in Uppermill (see photograph) which is located in St Chad’s Gardens on the High Street.

The inscription reads

“TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE MEN OF SADDLEWORTH WHO  
GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY AND JUSTICE IN THE  
GREAT WAR 1914 – 1919”.



Saddleworth War Memorial, Uppermill

This memorial was erected in the gardens of St Chad's House (which at the time housed the Council offices, and is now the library) to commemorate the 252 men (as ascertained at the time) of Saddleworth who lost their lives in WW1. However this memorial has no names on it, and so makes no mention of Thomas Steele (a roll of honour can be inspected in the library, but due to Covid restrictions that was not available for me to view).

However the chap with the football scarf pointed out to me that Saddleworth has another war memorial, a large obelisk atop the imposing Alderman's Hill (known locally as 'Pots and Pans' on account of the rock formations up there), which overlooks the whole area. This memorial does have commemorative plaques naming the dead from both world wars. Gazing up at it in the distance from Uppermill High Street, I decided I would defer a climb to it to a later date.

At the time it seems there was some controversy surrounding these two memorials. The Urban District Council favoured the memorial in Uppermill, whereas a scheme to build a prominent obelisk that was visible throughout the area was favoured by others. In the end the Uppermill memorial was paid for by Harvey Carter, a local textile mill owner, and was unveiled in 1921; the memorial obelisk atop ‘Pots and Pans’ was paid for by public subscription and unveiled in 1923. Both are now used for commemorations.

Leaving Uppermill along the A669 Oldham Road, I put Thomas Steele to the back of my mind...until, that is, I came to the village of Springhead, where I was pleased to see Thomas mentioned on the village sign (‘Birthplace of Suffragette Annie Kenney and Thomas Steele VC’ - see photograph).

I then recalled that as part of the WW1 centenary, commemorative paving stones had been laid at the place of birth of all the war’s VC recipients. Springhead is not a big place, but after searching high and low I could not find Thomas’ commemorative stone.

Another local then came to my rescue, telling me Thomas’ commemorative stone is not in Springhead itself, but rather is at St Anne Church, in Lydgate, two villages along, this being the church where his family worshipped.

Off I went to Lydgate, fortifying myself on the way at Grotton with a Covid-compliant, well-stacked takeaway bacon barm and a coffee, sat on a bench by the A669. Walking on to Lydgate, I soon found St Anne Church and sure enough there, placed in the churchyard wall, was Thomas’ commemorative stone (see photograph).



Commemorative stone for Thomas Steele VC.

I also found the grave of Thomas' parents, where after his death and cremation in 1978 his ashes were interred (see below), although the family headstone makes no mention of this.

Also in St Anne churchyard is a war grave - that of Private Robert Robinson DLI, who is buried in his family's grave ("Died of Wounds Received on the Somme February 26, 1917. 'If Death Be The Price of Victory He Nobly Paid It In Full'). Incidentally, the churchyard affords a splendid view of the distant Manchester skyline.

So what of Thomas himself? He was born in Springhead in 1891 and after leaving school became a bobbin carrier. He enlisted in the army in 1911 as a Private in the Seaforth Highlanders. In India in 1912, after the outbreak of war he went with the Indian Expeditionary Force to Marseilles for service on the Western Front, seeing action at Ypres, La Bassee, Neuve Chapelle and Loos.



He became a Lance Corporal in October 1915 and left France for Mesopotamia in November 1915 as part of the force endeavouring to relieve Kut-el-Amara.

He was promoted to Sergeant in January 1917.

It was an action in February 1917, near Sanna-y-Yat, Mesopotamia, that led to his VC:

*“No. 811 L.Sjt. Thomas Steele, Sea.Highrs.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty.*

*At a critical moment when a strong enemy counter-attack had temporarily regained some of the captured trenches, Sjt. Steele rushed forward and assisted a comrade to carry a machine gun into position. He kept the gun in action till relieved, being mainly instrumental in keeping the remainder of the line intact.*

*Some hours later another strong attack enabled the enemy to reoccupy a portion of the captured trenches. Again Sjt. Steel showed the greatest bravery, and by personal valour and example was able to rally troops who were wavering. He encouraged them to remain in their trenches and led a number of them forward, thus greatly helping to re-establish our line. On this occasion he was severely wounded.*

*These acts of valour were performed under heavy artillery and rifle fire”.*

Later in 1917 Thomas was Mentioned in Despatches. In December 1917 he went to Egypt, then to Palestine in February 1919. He received his VC medal from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 8 March 1918.

After the war he recovered from his wounds well enough to play professional rugby league for several seasons.

He later re-joined the army, serving in a searchlight unit, the Home Guard and ARP in WW2.

After marrying in 1931 he moved away from Saddleworth, but when his wife died Thomas returned to Springhead where he died on 11 July 1978. He was cremated in Oldham, and as noted above his ashes were buried in the family grave in St Anne Church, Lydgate.

His medals are in the Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum.



Sergeant Thomas Steele VC

## Shhh – DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET

Graham Kemp (Dr)



In 1925, an ex-German Naval Intelligence officer had the chance to meet Admiral Hall the head of British military intelligence and the man in charge of Room 40 during the war. They got to chatting about the Battle of the Falklands, where a British naval squadron annihilated the German East Asiatic Squadron in December 1914. The young German officer had a theory, that instead of making a run for it, the German ships under Admiral Graf Von Spee had tried instead to block the entrance to Port Stanley. This would bring his main cruisers 8.2 in guns within range and with his highly trained and skilled gunners would have done much damage to the British squadron as it got underway. This included the newly arrived British Battle cruisers, who with their powerful 12in guns once in the open sea would outrange his cruisers and, as they did, make short work of them.

Admiral Hall replied it was not ill luck, for the British knew he was coming, and the Royal Navy had assembled a fleet there to meet him. How did they know that the German asked? Because, Hall added, it was not Berlin that had ordered Admiral Spee to attack the Falklands, but us. He explained that in August 1914 a German Cruiser SMS Magdeburg had been wrecked in the Baltic. However, before she sank, and unbeknownst to the Germans the Russians had boarded her, and seized her codebooks before handing them on to the British. German naval signals were now decoded by Room 40. In this way, Russians had helped the British to frustrate the German naval plans to isolate and destroy any portion of Grand Fleet in the North Sea. Even worse it delivered the German High Sea Fleet into hands of the full Grand Fleet, at Battle of Jutland for which Germans only just managed to avoid a major naval disaster. Few books if any mention Russian's role behind that near British success.

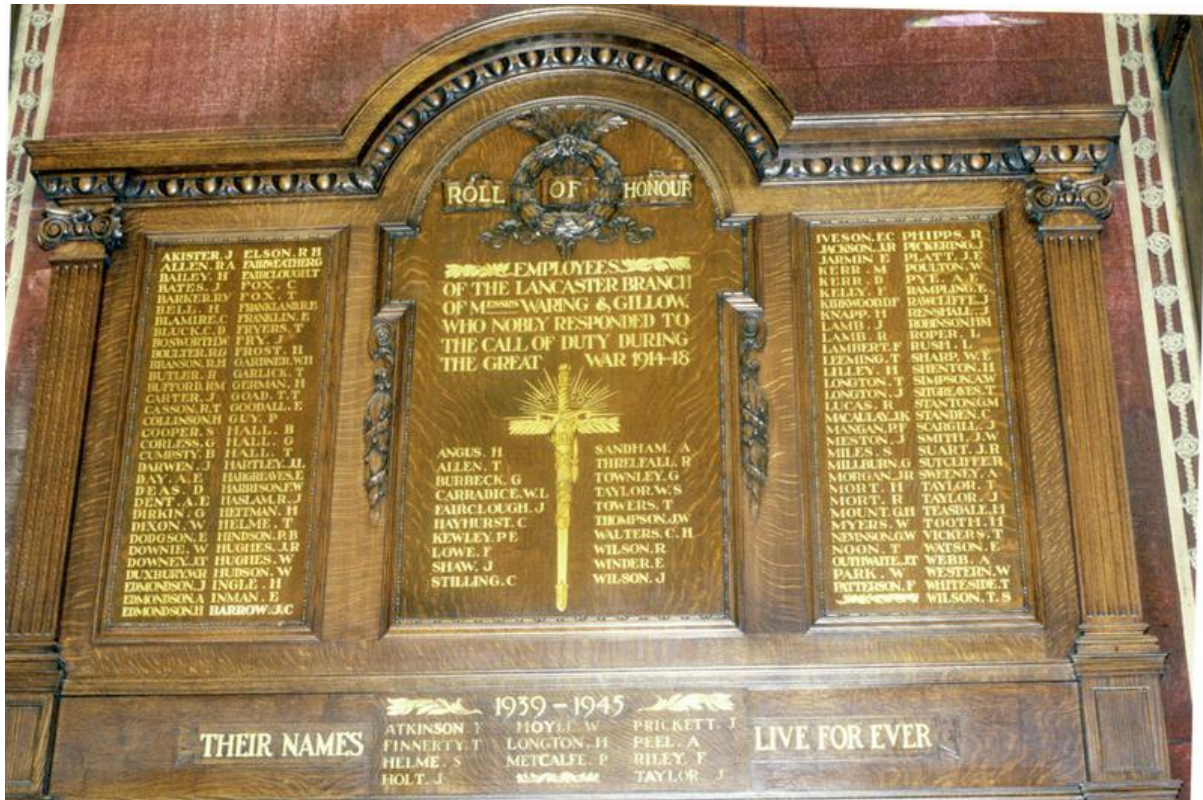
In the case of Admiral Graf Spee and the German East Asiatic Squadron, following its annihilation of a Royal Naval Squadron under Craddock at the Battle of Coronel in November 1914, off the coast of Chile, the Royal Navy was keen to reverse that humiliation. It had represented its first naval defeat in over 100 years. British Naval Intelligence came up with the plan to lure Spee to the Falkland Islands. They knew that Berlin could only communicate with Spee by telegram through the German embassy in Chile. So London sent a telegram in German Naval Code to that embassy. Being in code, the embassy and Spee would not question its authenticity. Thus Spee thinking it was from Berlin, accepted the order to attack Falklands. This allowed the Royal Navy to concentrate its forces at the Falklands and await his arrival. Luck only played a role in that the British Battle cruisers had just arrived in the nick of time, the day before Spee arrived.

As Bletchley Park reveals in the history of the Second War, there is in war no coincidences, just better intelligence – but shh that is secret. In all the books I have read on the Battle of the Falklands only this German Officer's account of his meeting with Admiral Hall, reveals the role Room 40, and the Russians had in bringing about the total destruction of Graf Spee and his squadron. It seems the British victory at the Falklands was set up by a ruse by Admiral Hall and British Naval Intelligence in (Room 40).



## **Brothers in Arms**

The war memorial dedicated to the employees of Waring & Gillow, the former luxury furniture and furnishings firm of Lancaster, is now located at Lancaster town hall. The memorial is dedicated to the 147 men of the company that served during the First World War. Included within this number are twenty men who lost their lives. Waring & Gillow like many of the larger employers of north Lancashire provided a significant number of recruits to the pre-war Territorial battalions. These numbers were swelled by the rush of volunteers following mobilisation in August 1914.



The Waring & Gillow War Memorial

The local Territorial battalion, the 5<sup>th</sup> King’s Own Royal Lancaster recruited in the Lancaster district and the north of the Fylde. The battalion landed in France on 14 February 1915 and was soon drawn into the Second Battle of Ypres when the Germans attacked using poison gas in April 1915.

As the Second Battle of Ypres progressed and the salient was strategically reduced to a more defensible line during 1– 14 May 1915, the 1/5<sup>th</sup> King’s Own were assigned to hold the exposed and poorly prepared trenches on the forward slopes of Frezenberg Ridge. Units from the old front line retired to take up positions along the newly established defensive positions to the rear.

During the early hours of 3 May 1915 the 1/5<sup>th</sup> King’s Own made its way around Ypres to the positions on Frezenberg Ridge. As the different companies

of the battalion made their way to the allotted positions they started to come under enemy shell fire.

Just as 'D' Company entered the lines a shell burst in the congested shallow trench, instantly killing five men and wounding a further thirteen. All five of the men killed had been employed at Waring & Gillow. The men were no doubt well known to each other as they all appear on the 1/5<sup>th</sup> battalion's 1914 Roll.

It was during the Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May 1915 – in which nine former employees of Waring & Gillow were killed. They included eight men from 1/5<sup>th</sup> Kings Own Royal Lancaster and one man from the 2<sup>nd</sup> King's Own Royal Lancaster. The men are all commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial to the missing at Ypres.

Pte. T5/2067 Harry Angus. Age 26, Cabinet maker.

Pte. T5/2190 James Fairclough. Age 32. Cabinet maker. Married, one child born 5 March 1915.

Pte. 2134 Frederick Lowe. Age 31. Joiner. Widower with daughter age 7.

Cpl. 901. Albert Edward Sandham. Age 23. Joiner.

Sgt. 2176 Robert Threlfall. Age 23. Furniture salesman.

Pte. 2215 Thomas Towers. Age 34. Married with two children ages 10 and 2.

Pte. 2182 John Wilson. Age 20. French Polisher

Pte. 2213 Edward Winder. Age 27. French Polisher

Of the 147 employees of Waring & Gillow who served in the war, twenty men lost their lives. The majority were the Territorial mates killed or Died of Wounds during the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915.



## BRIGADIER GENERAL REGINALD JOHN KENTISH (RJK) & HIS 13<sup>th</sup> TALE



### “REPARTEE OF THE BEST”

**Terry Dean**

In November 2013's Despatch I first told of my visit to the Imperial War Museum to view the papers of RJK and my discovery of stories (tales) he had drafted around 1940. They describe amusing incidents he experienced in WW1 and this is his 13<sup>th</sup> Tale. Tales 1 to 12 having been included in earlier editions of Despatch

SCENE: TIME: PLACE: The Battalion Headquarters of the 1st Hampshire and of the 1<sup>st</sup> East. Lancashire Regiments in the village of Hamel-sur-Ancre in July 1915.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Charles Palk, commanding the 1st Hampshire Regiment; myself commanding the 1st East Lancashire Regiment and a young “Gunner” Officer, acting as F.O.O. (Forward Observation Officer).

In July 1915 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division commanded by Major General (afterwards Lieut. General Sir) Henry M. Wilson, known throughout the Army as ‘Fatty’ Wilson to distinguish him from that other more famous Henry Wilson — I refer to the late Field Marshal, and, at the time of this story, Lieut. General Sir Henry Wilson - and my Battalion was holding a sector of the line due east of the village of Hamel-sur-l’Ancre.





Lt Gen H F M Wilson

Relieving us every six days was the 1st Hampshire Regiment, commanded by Lieut. Col. the Hon. Charles Palk, known to everybody in the Division as 'Charles Palk', an eccentric officer very much of the old school, taking unkindly to all innovations and possessed of a particularly biting tongue, which he used without let or hindrance on all and sundry who crossed his path. To anyone, however, like myself, who knew him and his eccentricities well, he occasioned no anxiety, because I knew exactly how much of what he said he meant, and therefore when and when not to take him seriously.



Lieut. Col. the Hon. Charles Palk

Those were the days, when the 'Gunners' covering our front had an F.O.O, who had his post in or very near to the front line, from which he kept the Batteries in close touch with the situation and, very often, directing their fire: he also acted

as 'liaison' Officer with the Infantry Battalion in the line at the time, having his meals in the little house in Hamel, in which either Charles Palk or I lived, when our respective Battalions were in the trenches.

Now, one of Charles Palk's pet aversions was the 'Gunnery' or, as he insisted on calling them, 'The Royal British Artillery', and in his eyes they just couldn't do anything right!

"When the Royal British Artillery," he would say, "have any shells to loose off, it's a hundred to one they'll loose them off into us rather than into the 'Huns'," or, "When at long last the Royal British Artillery do send anything over, it's always their precious beloved and, so far as trench warfare is concerned, completely ineffective and harmless shrapnel. I don't think they've ever heard of 'High Explosive!'" or, again, "I wish to God the Senior Officers of the Royal British Artillery, who, I suppose, are responsible for the lack of High Explosive, had to sit in these b----y trenches, where we have to sit all day long, being blown sky high each and every time the 'Huns open on us with their guns! They'd d--n soon find out then what 'High Explosive' is!" and so on.

Whenever he started this sort of thing on me, I either said to him: "Oh, shut up, Charles Palk," or else I took absolutely no notice, but it was quite another matter when the young Gunner Officer was in the Mess and he commenced his tirade against 'The Royal British Artillery', and one day, the whole thing came to a head, as indeed I knew it would sooner or later. We had just come into the line, and directly Charles Palk had gone, the young F.O.O. turned to me and said:- "You know sir, Colonel Palk was worse than ever this time - in fact sir, he was so abusive about us that I almost lost my temper sir, and told him what his so-called 'Royal British Artillery' thought of him! Fortunately I didn't, but I'm going to tell my Battery Commander when I go out tomorrow night." Knowing

that this would only make matters worse, I said to the boy: - "No, don't do that - or at any rate don't do it yet. I'll have a word, I said, with Colonel Palk and see what I can do. Leave it to me for the present." "Thanks very much indeed, sir," he said, "I will."

A few days later, when relief night arrived, up came Charles Palk in his usual form and after he had taken over and we were alone, I said:- "Charles Palk, my friend - a word in your ear, very confidential like," and taking him aside, I told him exactly what the young Gunner Officer had said and I asked him as a friend, to stop abusing the "Gunnery".

"You know," I said, "it not only gives these young Officers, and especially the more sensitive of them, great offence, but it also does more harm in your own Battalion, because your servant and the Mess waiters and the orderlies all hear what you say and it very soon goes right through your Battalion, and in this way you help to destroy the confidence of your men in the 'Gunnery' who are by way of covering and protecting them." To this Charles Palk, with quite a serious look on his face listened and then, after a pause, said:-

"Right Reggie, I see your point, I won't abuse them any more," and with that I wished him "Good night" and started back to my billet.

The following week, when I came again, I found the same young F.O.O. in the line, and when Charles Palk had handed over and departed, I said to the boy:- "Well, how are things with Colonel Falk this time?" "Oh sir," he said, "Colonel Palk couldn't have been kinder or nicer to me," and then he went on: "After you had left, sir, and we were having dinner, the first thing he said was:- "Colonel Kentish tells me that you young Officers all think I've got a 'down' on the 'Gunnery, and that I don't like you. If that's what you think," he said, "then

you're quite wrong, because I've always had the greatest admiration for the Royal Artillery, and so please get any such ideas out of your head!!”

“I was so taken aback sir, after all the things he's said about us,” said the boy, that for a moment or two, I didn't quite know what to say, but after a pause I said: “Well, sir, if that's the case, then all I can say sir, is that you are the most maligned Officer in the British Army!!” “And with that we changed the subject, and he never said a single uncomplimentary thing about us the whole time he was in the line!! Thank you so much sir!!” “Good for Charles Palk,” I said. “Good for the ‘Royal British Artillery’, good for you and good for everybody!!”



# The Pre-war Training of the Territorial Force and how this applied to the 5<sup>th</sup> King's Own Royal Lancaster (TF)



## **Introduction: The origins of the Territorial Force**

The Territorial Force (TF) was a mass civilian volunteer force that provided around 250,000 officers and men for immediate use by the British Army in August 1914. The efficiency of the TF had been questioned from its inception by a variety of sources including political and military critics, notably the National Service League who saw it as a poor substitute to compulsory military service and waged a public campaign of criticism that continued until August 1914.

The major criticism levelled at the TF was that it would never reach the standard of training of the Regular Army, or achieve the training and skills to counter an invasion or enemy raid. The TF would never be more than 'Saturday night soldiers'. This criticism of the Territorial Force was unjust; they were never intended during peace-time to be capable of meeting a trained army on equal terms or to achieve the same levels of efficiency found in the Regular

Army. The Territorials were to be kept in partially-trained readiness for their ultimate training only if and when, war broke out.

Prior to the establishment of the TF, it had been recognised that auxiliary forces had limited time available for training, and although unable to meet the provisions of the annual course of training for the Regular Army, at least the ‘spirit of the instructions’, were observed. The Secretary of State for War, Richard Haldane, and his military advisors were fully aware of the limitations of volunteers, and from the outset there was no plan to establish a part-trained force capable of meeting regular troops on anything approaching equal terms.

The essential part of the training for the TF would only occur when they were mobilised for six months continuous training. Any deficiencies in pre-war training would then, hopefully be resolved. On the outbreak of war in August 1914 a few TF units were despatched to serve in France with little or no additional training. Over the next six months a steady flow of individual TF units were sent to the front, mostly without the benefit of the planned six months continuous training.

Richard B Haldane entered office as the Liberal party’s Secretary of State for War in December 1905. Haldane is reputed to have had no preconceived ideas about reform of the Army but he was aware of the immediate task of reducing the costs of the army while still providing an army capable of meeting the country’s imperial obligations. This was all to be done using only a voluntary system of enlistment. Haldane firstly reduced the size and structure of the army to match the current funding. It was this concern for economy that underpinned Haldane’s strategic and military planning, an aspect that was to influence his plans for the future TF.

Haldane set about reforming the ‘home army’ with advice from his military secretary, Colonel Gerald Ellison and Major-General Douglas Haig, then Director of Military Training in the newly established General Staff.

In February 1907 Haldane delivered his Army Estimates to the House of Commons outlining his plans on the reorganisation of the army. The army would now consist of a small, professional, well-equipped first line Striking Force (later the Expeditionary Force), ready to take the field in defence of the Empire. Behind this was to be ‘a second line resting in the nation, slumbering in times of peace’, to be called upon in times of national emergency to defend our shores and to expand and support the army abroad. In releasing the Regular Army from the duties of home defence, Haldane and the General Staff were free to send the Striking Force wherever they were needed to defend the empire.

Haldane then outlined how this second line was to be trained, with an annual camp of eight to fifteen days and regular drills of instruction in between. In the event of a war, the second line would be mobilised in its units, and embodied for six months of war training. The previous Volunteer force had problems in achieving a level of efficiency that would enable it to make a valuable military contribution. By instituting a six month period of training on mobilisation, the efficiency of the force would be greatly improved. Part of this second line force was to garrison naval ports and relieve Regular troops who would depart abroad on mobilisation.

Although the primary role of the second line was home defence, there was a purely voluntary obligation for individuals to agree to overseas (Imperial) service. Haldane’s expectation was that if the second line was mobilised for war, by the end of the six months training they would volunteer en-masse to

expand and support the army. He was seeking a peace-time Auxiliary Force of 250,000 men which would in time of war hopefully reach 300,000.

Haldane summarised the findings of the Elgin Commission held following the South African War. This concluded that no military system could be satisfactory if it did not contain powers of expansion outside of the regular forces of the crown. The Crimean and South African wars had demonstrated the necessity of providing adequate reserves to maintain the forces in the field. The formation of a second line force, on a non-professional basis for home defence and to provide for some expansion of the regular forces, had become a necessity that no government could now ignore. Prior to Haldane little had been done to apply the lessons of recent wars.

The improvements made in the regular army only highlighted the unsatisfactory condition of the auxiliary forces which Haldane thought were dangerous, there were no attainable standards of military efficiency, but more importantly until improvements were made, the gap between the regular soldier and the volunteer would become only wider.

On 19 March 1908, during a House of Commons debate on the Army Estimates for 1908-9, Haldane sought to establish during the following year a force not exceeding 185,000 men to be maintained for service at home and abroad. This force if mobilised, was not for immediate fighting, but for war training on a pattern as close as possible to the regular troops. However, in order to offer some security, not all of the regular army would be sent abroad until ‘the second line hardens into efficiency’.

In recognising the limitations of a volunteer force Haldane accepted that with a volunteer army you can only give it as much training as the volunteers are able, or willing to take. The second line force would receive sufficient training so that



when mobilised for their war training, they would harden and acquire efficiency as rapidly as circumstances and public spirit allowed. The 1905 Infantry Training manual allowed sixty days for the training of new recruits before progressing to company training. Further training at battalion, brigade and divisional levels would take up to twenty-four weeks. It therefore took six months to train a regular soldier.

Haldane acknowledged in 1908 the limited expectations of the TF when he advised parliament that;

‘The Territorial Army (sic) is to be as ready as it can be on the outbreak of hostilities and to mobilise for war training,’ adding, ‘I never contemplated that the Territorial Army should be regarded as ready to meet with an equal force of highly-trained troops on these shores at the first outbreak of hostilities’. The essence of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act is that the automatic mobilisation is a mobilisation for war training’.

The Territorial Force (the regular army did not like the use of the word ‘Army’) came into existence on 1 April 1908 and was somewhat different from that first described on 25 February 1907 when Haldane stated that the Territorials would be raised for overseas service in support of the Regular army. By 4 March 1907, he had amended the Bill, taking the TF from a second line, supporting the Striking Force, to a force essentially for home defence. The support and expansion of the Strike Force which had previously formed the basis of the whole reform, and justified the six months’ training on mobilisation, had now been removed. Political difficulties in making volunteers available for overseas service had caused Haldane to take this regressive step.

The newly structured Regular army was designed for war and kept in a state of readiness for mobilisation as a Striking Force. The second line was now the Territorial Force. A line reserve capable of rapid mobilisation due to the localisation of its units. It was not intended to reach its full status until a time of war. The organisation of the new volunteer units was improved with the establishment of a divisional structure and the provision of regular army staff.

The Territorial Force was to provide a defence against enemy coastal raids. An invasion at this time was considered to be highly unlikely. They were to provide some support and expansion of the regular army. On the outbreak of war, the TF, with a projected strength of 314,094 officers and men in fourteen divisions, was to be mobilised and on embodiment they were to commence six months of war training. Where the previous training had been elementary, it would now be thorough and exhaustive. The expectation was that the interposition of the fleet and the retention of two regular divisions for home defence, would allow time for the TF to complete their six months training.

During peacetime Haldane had relied upon a large section of the TF to volunteer for overseas service. Unfortunately this did not occur until the TF was mobilised in August 1914. By which time the TF was expected to provide a home defence force, help support and expand the Expeditionary Force and simultaneously complete six months' training for war.

When the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act came into power on 1 April 1908 parliamentary discussions on the expectations of efficiency and the military role of the TF continued. During a House of Lords debate on 7 July 1909, the Earl of Portsmouth raised the question of whether over the last eighteen months the purpose for which the TF was created had changed and was the TF now

intended to be able to meet an invasion in the absence of the regular army striking force?

The question had been prompted by statements made by Haldane in which he said that the TF was designed to free the Regular Army from the duties of home defence and to protect the country from invasion, even in the absence of the Regular Army. The Earl of Portsmouth persevered in asking if the Government had made contingencies for the Strike Force being abroad or would the Strike Force be allowed to leave before the TF was ready? If so, would the TF be left to face Continental troops within weeks of war being declared? Based on their peace-time training and from the recent reports of the Inspector-General of the Forces, the TF is not yet competent. Therefore, is the TF intended to be capable of meeting an invasion in the absence of the Strike Force?

The Under Secretary of State, Lord Lucas, responded by stating that all previous discussions had included the premise that a period of training was required to take place before the TF was ready, but there was always the possibility that they would be called upon to meet an invader unassisted. Therefore, in response to the Earl's question, is the TF ready? The answer was, not at all.

It was always intended that the regular army would provide security until the TF was brought to a comparative level of military efficiency. The early training of the TF had been directed, often over-ambitiously, at repelling coastal raids. If the Strike Force required that all of the Regular Army was to serve abroad, then there would be no choice but to rely upon the TF, regardless of its state of readiness. This very question was to later disturb Kitchener sufficiently to retain two divisions of regular troops for home defence in August 1914.

**The training of the 5<sup>th</sup> King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment (TF).**

The 5<sup>th</sup> battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment (TF) (5<sup>th</sup> KORL) was typical of many of the pre-1914 Territorial battalions with its origins in the Lancashire Volunteers. In the reorganisation of the Auxiliary forces in 1908, it formed one of the two Territorial battalions of the King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment, with the battalion headquarters in Lancaster and outlying companies in Morecambe, Carnforth and Fleetwood. Drill stations were situated in Blackpool and in the larger villages of the north Fylde area of Lancashire. They formed part of the North Lancashire Brigade, West Lancashire Division.

The 5<sup>th</sup> KORL was an efficient Territorial infantry battalion whose strength and character came from the quality of its officers and men. A significant number of which had transferred from the old Volunteer battalions or were early recruits into the TF. There is evidence that from 1908 the battalion, no doubt influenced by the Regular Adjutant and staff, was professionally organised and that the training was eagerly taken up by the new Territorials.

The commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lord Richard Cavendish and his company commanders had all been commissioned from the Volunteers and had served with the TF since its inception. Most of the officers had been commissioned between 1908 -1913 followed by an influx of junior officers appointed in late 1914 and early 1915. Two officers were appointed from the ranks, one a solicitor, the other a teacher.

The officers were drawn mostly from the professional and business class. A good number of the more junior officers were keen sportsmen. Captain Bingham, although a medical practitioner, was an infantry company commander and captain of the Vale of Lunesdale cricket club. He had previously played cricket for Derbyshire County. Lieutenant Kirk, who joined the ranks in August

1914 and was commissioned in March 1915, had played football as an amateur centre half for Bradford and Leeds. Many of the others were members of local sports clubs, with two being northern archery champions. The son of Major Bates, the battalion second in command, is believed to be the youngest commissioned officer in the army, being gazetted on 10 August 1914 aged 17. Previously he was a member of the Officer Training Corps at the Royal Lancaster Grammar School.

The men of the battalion were recruited from the larger employers in the area; the mills in Lancaster, the United Alkali Works in Thornton, the fishing industry at Fleetwood and the numerous jobs within the railways, towns and villages of north west Lancashire and the Fylde. Storey Brothers one of the larger Lancaster mills, provided sufficient men to form two companies. Unlike most of the regular army recruits these men were mostly in full employment with many in skilled occupations. It was not unusual for the battalion NCOs to hold supervisory positions in their civilian jobs.

The Lancaster Guardian newspaper during the years of 1908 -1911 carried regular articles of 'Local Military News' which for the most part, were copies of the weekly battalion orders. They gave notice of the duty officer and NCO, dress code, training and movement orders, announcements of annual camp and weekend training were posted through these reports signed by the Adjutant.

A review of this period shows regular drills of two evenings per week. each of two hours, with extra drills introduced occasionally. Additional instructional courses were offered in signalling and cookery. Weekend battalion exercises were organised and held locally in conjunction with the Regular troops of the Lancaster depot. Musketry range firing was conducted prior to annual camp and both recruits and trained men were reminded to complete their efficiency

qualifying shoot before the end of October each year. The annual recruiting intake began in September each year with recruit instruction starting in October.

The duties for annual camp were organised and delegated in advance. The influence of the Regular Adjutant can be seen in the advanced appointment of brigade and regimental police, orderly room clerks, pioneers, stretcher bearers and cyclists.

In August 1908 the battalion was in camp at Ramsey, Isle of Man with 354 men of 5<sup>th</sup> KORL attending (90%). August Bank holiday week, in those days the first weekend in August, was suitable for training as the mills and building trades were closed. Five days were devoted to battalion and company training, covering outpost duties, skirmishing, machine gun practice, signalling and route marches. A further eight days were spent on field exercises aimed at intercepting and defending against an advancing enemy force

In 1909 at Caerwys in North Wales 13,000 men of the West Lancashire Division attended the camp and Major-General Bethune, the Divisional Commander, was reported as intending to treat the men as ‘ordinary troops.’ The final seven days were given to field exercises. Defending against an advancing enemy force by careful reconnaissance, involving scouts locating the enemy, preparing sketch maps and sending signals by various means back to Divisional Headquarters. The final exercise was a night attack on the enemy positions.

The annual camp in 1910 was held at Hornby near Lancaster, 31 July – 14 August. 15,000 Territorials of the West Lancashire Division attended with a total of 838 men and officers of the 5<sup>th</sup> KORL at camp. General Bethune, the Divisional Commander allotted more time for troops to train under their own commanding officers. Four days of battalion training was followed by four days

of divisional operations; the largest scheme was a defence and eventual repulsion of a rebellious army advancing from the north. Two further days were spent on brigade schemes. The brigade was inspected by the Brigadier and the Division was reviewed by General Sir John French, Inspector of the Forces.

The annual camp in 1911 was held at Holmescales, Kendal, Westmorland (now Cumbria). 670 officers and men (72%) of the 5<sup>th</sup> KORL attended the camp. During the first week, two days were given to company and battalion training. Brigade operations involving defensive positions and night operations were followed with a Divisional scheme lasting forty-eight hours. Saturday was a review by the Divisional Commander. The following week commenced with a brigade route march. The Brigadier's inspection included observation of officers' individual company drill, and field officers in battalion drill, followed by training in defensive positions. Brigade field firing exercises began at 02.00 on Wednesday, with an advance at dawn to meet an enemy represented by canvas screens. This was the first live firing exercise and the General Officer Commanding was 'well satisfied' with the men. A further two days were spent on divisional exercises and overnight operations. There appears to have been a certain wisdom in a defensive force being thoroughly acquainted with the country they might possibly have to defend from invaders.

Another Lancashire venue was arranged for the 1912 annual camp at Kirkham, located in the centre of the Fylde. The general scheme of training was less ambitious than in previous years. Most of the troops were to work under their own commanders. The aim was to advance the general efficiency of the brigades more rapidly rather than through advanced schemes of manoeuvre. During the first week there was a mix of battalion and company training with a divisional exercise in repulsing a strong invading enemy force from the

north. The division was reviewed by General Bethune, Director General of the Territorial Force. Over five days during the second week, the division dealt successfully with an overland attack from the east followed by a seaborne invasion on the coast. Battalion training resumed on return to camp.

Reports on the annual camp in 1913 at Denbigh, North Wales were rather briefer than earlier years. The divisional artillery was located at the artillery ranges at Pembrey South Wales while the North Lancashire brigade, about 4,000 men, camped at Denbigh. The first week consisted of battalion and brigade training focusing on attack and defence. The second week consisted of brigade exercises and a brigade inspection by Field Marshal Lord Methuen, General Lindsay and General Mackinnon.



*First Territorial. "Well what do you think of our manoeuvres Bill?"*

*Second Territorial (hitherto unacquainted with field days). "Thank 'evin we've got a Nivy"*



## The assessment of the Training of the Territorial Force

The overall responsibility for the training and monitoring of the efficiency of the Territorial Force lay with the War Office. The Army Council was ‘desirous of ascertaining the progress made by the force in attaining the contemplated standard of military efficiency for Home Defence’. Reports by the GOC’s were submitted to the Inspector General of the Forces, Sir J D P French by 1 November. The reports indicated the relative value of the Territorial troops under each command as compared with corresponding units of the Regular Army. The aspects of the reports relating just to the infantry are reviewed.

The format and basic criteria that were to be used for the reports were set out;

Commanders	General suitability for their position as regards age and physique, professional acquirements, and general fitness for their appointments.
Staff	Adequacy of peace establishments. Fitness for their duties in peace and war.
Regimental officers	General suitability for their position as regards age and physique, General education, professional knowledge, capacity to command and instruct men, and fitness to perform the duties that would fall to them in war.
Officers of the Administrative Services	General suitability for their position as regards age and physique, General education, professional knowledge, capacity to command and instruct men, and fitness to perform the duties that would fall to them in war.

Non-commissioned officers	Physique, capacity to instruct their men and to maintain discipline and general efficiency.
Men	Physique, discipline, marching powers, musketry, fire discipline and general efficiency.
Infantry Battalions	March discipline and powers of endurance, manoeuvre training, general training and fighting efficiency. Efficiency of machine-gun detachments.

Similar reports on the TF by the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief were drawn up along similar lines for the years 1908-13.

### **Report of the Inspector-General 1908.**

During this year of transition, the Inspector-General refrained from a complete inspection of the TF, visiting only the West Riding Territorial Division in a camp at Redcar on 5 August 1908. He noted that the marching powers and endurance seemed satisfactory and would develop with time and practice. The Division spent two nights in bivouac where the camps were clean and well laid out.

The result of this first inspection of a concentrated Territorial division was satisfactory and most encouraging. The important points noted were the extraordinary keenness, and desire to make progress with a zeal, and energy displayed by all ranks from General to private. By regular contact and inspection of the TF the Inspector-General hoped to impress the policies of the Army Council on the troops and secure a uniformity of training, while at the

same time ensuring that the limited time available for training was used to the best advantage

**Report by the Inspector-General 1909.**

The report was based on the first full year of the TF. The Inspector-General Sir John French did not attempt to make inspections in the manner applied to the regular Army. A major fault in some units was to engage in advanced manoeuvres at the expense of elementary company training. This should be stopped or it would prevent the TF from reaching a degree of peace time efficiency necessary to complete its real war training on mobilisation,

The TF had shown a remarkable advance in military knowledge, discipline, and self-reliance. The standard of training in the divisional troops observed, who have only been in existence for 18 months, had surpassed the expectations of the Inspector-General. However, he was under no illusions, and the standard was still not high enough for immediate war service. In his opinion this would never be achieved without six months of continuous training on mobilisation. With this fundamental principle in view, the condition of the Territorial Force was eminently satisfactory. The Inspector-General was convinced that the keenness and admirable spirit seen everywhere would lead to a continued improvement.

**The progress of the TF Infantry of North Western Command 1909.**

This report was completed in 1909 on the progress of the Territorial Infantry training of the Western Command.

The Regimental Infantry officers required more training, but on the whole were receptive and took every opportunity to increase their knowledge. Self-reliance was increasing and they were commanding their men with less reliance on the

Permanent Staff. In the near future a large number of the officers would become competent instructors.

Relative value compared to Regulars infantry officers is 5.5/10.

The NCOs are the weakest link in the chain of command. They are learning that promotion carries with it responsibilities that they must accept. The emphasis placed on company training is proving successful. An improved NCO will replace the previous willing, but inefficient man.

Relative value compared to Regular NCOs is 3/10.

The report on the Infantry battalions was encouraging. March discipline and powers of endurance, although considerably below the standard of Regular Infantry, was satisfactory and given a month's continuous training and good boots, at this time each man had to supply his own boots, they could achieve a high standard. Manoeuvre training is presently only fair, but attention to company training was now providing a sound foundation for improvement. In general, the training and fighting efficiency of a few selected battalions would make them immediately useful and with three months of continuous training the average battalion could give a good account of itself in the field. When the Territorial scheme has become established, and the company officers and NCOs improve in efficiency, the period of continuous training may possibly be reduced to one month.

Relative value compared to Regular infantry is 5.5/10.

In concluding his report the Commanding Officer-in-Chief, Western Command, General C J Burnett stated;

‘Hitherto I have given, step by step my opinion of the present military value of the various branches of the Territorial Force in comparison with Regular units. The

opinion now given is higher than that which I held twelve months ago, and I am convinced that it is considerably lower than it will be in each succeeding year. Only those who have been intimately associated with the Volunteer and Territorial Forces can appreciate the strides of the latter in military spirit, discipline and knowledge during the last two years. The progress already made will increase in proportion as the younger officers succeed to the higher commands.'

General Burnett's average value of Territorial Units compared with Regular Units was 5/10.

### **Report by the Inspector-General Sir John French 1910.**

The opening remarks of the report note that there appears to be a desire among the Commanding Officers to recruit the best men and this, perhaps to some extent, affects recruiting statistics. The numbers may not have reached expectations for this year, but the quality has vastly improved. The Inspector-General commented on a potential influence to recruitment;

'I think it right to place on record that complaints were made to me by more than one Commanding Officer that their endeavours to obtain recruits were much hampered by agents of the National Service League, who are said to go about certain districts advising men not to take service with the TF.'

The systems and methods adopted in the training and instruction of the Territorial units has shown a great improvement this year. Extensive field operations and ambitious schemes have been reduced but not entirely. The selection and appointment of more up-to-date Brigadiers was already bearing fruit. Some of the work carried out this year was quite extraordinary and entirely surpassed the Inspector-General's expectations. The progress made was

attributed to the boundless energy and splendid spirit that pervades all ranks of the TF.

The West Lancashire Division was inspected at Lancaster on 12 August 1910 by the Inspector-General who saw all units of the division on the line of march after they had travelled a considerable distance. He was pleased with their march discipline, extraordinary fitness and wonderful spirit. At the end of the march in bad weather the men went into bivouac and still remained cheerful. From the bivouac the division moved out after dark to carry out night operations, which were carried out on sound and practical lines.

### **Report from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command, General C J Burnett, 1910**

This report noted that some of the Infantry Regimental officers have still not absorbed the spirit born with the TF. Indifferent battalions invariably had poor commanding officers. The junior ranks were the most promising with officers becoming more resourceful and self-reliant. The attention to company training was becoming apparent.

Military value compared to Regular officers is 5/10

The NCOs are still the weakest part of the TF and the General's remarks last year still held good. There had been a slow but steady improvement, mostly due to the emphasis placed on the importance of section leaders. Most were still reluctant to exercise their authority and did not realise that their responsibility for maintaining discipline also extended to men of other units. As a rule they had little idea of battle discipline.

Military value compared to Regular NCOs 3.5/10.

The Infantry battalions were beginning to show the benefits of increased company training; junior officers are becoming more confident and resourceful. Considering the limited amount of time devoted to training in manoeuvres, the results had been better than expected. The machine gun detachments showed improvement but their tactical employment needs improving. Officers and men needed more training at the drill hall. March discipline varied but was generally good, although influenced by the quality of the men's boots. Musketry was still weak, mostly due to the lack of convenient ranges. As regards fighting efficiency, a few selected battalions would be of value at once on mobilisation; the remainder would require from 1- 3 months training before they could be considered as really reliable.

Military value compared to Regular Infantry 5.1/10.

The Infantry Brigades had shown a marked improvement in the last year. This is probably due to four of the brigades being trained by Regular officers.

Military value compared to Regular brigades 4/10

The concluding remarks of the report confirm that every branch in the Command has made real progress, and that the fighting efficiency of the Force, either as a Division or a unit, is now higher than it was a year ago.

### **Report of the Inspector-General Sir John French 1911.**

The favourable opinion that was expressed by the Inspector-General last year on the progress made by the TF was fully justified by what he had seen this year.

A great deal more work needs to be done at the drill halls. The officers of the TF need be educated, and this could only be achieved by making full use of the facilities that exist in every command for their instruction. Divisional officers, Staff, and Commanding Officers of the TF would be held to account to ensure

the fullest measure of winter training. The tendency to engage in extensive field operations and ambitious schemes previously referred to was still being carried out at the expense of general efficiency.

**Report of the Inspector-General Sir John French 1912.**

From what the Inspector-General had seen and from his experience of the TF, and allowing for the number of men who are able to attend the full 15 days of annual training, the efficiency of the Force was as satisfactory as could be expected. It was possibly somewhat higher than the standard reached last year but in his opinion it had now reached the limit of its efficiency.

In spite of their interest and keenness, the Inspector-General was of the opinion that the limited knowledge of the officers and men prevent the Force from facing Continental trained troops with any hope of success. It would take at least six months continuous training after mobilisation to make an army of the TF. It would be necessary to provide competent commanding officers and a number of trained officers for the majority of units. It would also be necessary to provide adequate facilities for Musketry and Artillery practice. Even if these facilities had been provided, he estimated it would take superiority in numbers to have any success against the best continental troops.

**Report of the Inspector-General Sir John French 1913.**

The report noted that the efficiency of the TF depended on the level of instruction received from Divisional and Brigade Commanders, their Staff officers and Adjutants. Where such instruction was in place, the units progressed well. All ranks are keen and anxious to learn, conscious of when their time is wasted on poor instruction.



There had been instances during the annual training when commanders and their Staff officers appear to think that their duties were limited to riding about correcting faults they see. It had not occurred to them that afternoons should be spent instructing the Territorial officers and explaining the objectives of the exercises to be performed the following day. It was the practice of the Territorial officers to lecture to their men in the afternoons, but the importance of teaching the officers had been overlooked. This must be addressed if the efficiency of the force was to improve.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the younger officers but there was a weak point in the confidence of the Territorial NCOs. It was suggested that, time permitting, there may be some advantage in NCOs being attached to the depot prior to attending annual training.

The reports of the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief and of the Divisional and other Commanders showed that the progress was satisfactory.

Improvements had been made by the appointment of regular Adjutants and Sergeant-instructors for a tour of service with the TF. Additional funds for the training of the TF outside of annual camp had been provided.

A committee was set up to consider how the training of the Territorial Force could be improved. The committee members of this committee were.

Chairman – The Lord Lucas

Members:	Brig-Gen W Fry	Mr C Harris
	Col. A G Hunter-Weston	Brig-Gen L E Kiggell
	Maj-Gen C F N Macready	Lt-Gen F S Maude
	Maj-Gen A J Murray	Lt-Col. C a C Repington

The terms of reference for the committee were;

1. To consider what measures can be taken to improve the training of the Territorial Force without materially increasing the amount of training laid down in section XV (Annual commitments and training) of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907 and without making any fundamental change in the divisional organisation.
2. And further to consider what form of training is best suited to the force during the annual period of camp.

The committee reviewed the reports of the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief and produced their own summary of findings which they considered would improve the future training of the TF. The committee found the reports to be unanimous in the marked improvements in the efficiency of the TF during the year 1910, although the standard still fell far short of what was desired.

In summary the general findings and those relating directly to the infantry were;

1. That a paragraph be inserted into TF Regulations explaining the responsibility of officers Commanding units and their Adjutants regarding the instruction of officers and laying down that instruction of Subalterns for Examination A be carried out regimentally.
2. That various forms of extra-regimental instruction be provided for senior Subalterns.
3. That for Infantry Subalterns there should be:
  - i. Permanent schools similar to the Chelsea school, at centres where Regular Infantry battalions are based; or
  - ii. Brigade classes on the lines recommended for Yeomanry Subalterns; and
  - iii. Attachments to Regular battalions on the lines recommended for Yeomanry Subalterns.
4. That a separate course for the instruction of Captains of Infantry for the Field Officers Certificate be formed.

5. As vacancies occur Regular officers on the Active List should be appointed as Brigade-Majors.
6. That retired officers should not be appointed until they have performed certain qualifying courses.
7. The instruction of NCOs should generally take place within the company. General Officers Commanding-in-Chief should pay special attention to improving the knowledge of NCOs in every way possible.
8. That the TF Regulations be amended as to define more clearly the position of the Permanent Staff in relation to instruction of NCOs and the rank and file.
9. That the ‘Company system’ of training is generally adopted for training the rank and file; and that General Officers Commanding-in-Chief be given, as at present, full discretion as to the expenditure of the increased training grant with a view to securing more training.
10. That no appreciable portion of the annual training is devoted to route marching; instruction in march discipline should be given in the non-training period or on the ordinary marches during camp.
11. That company officers be made to realise their responsibility for seeing their men come to camp properly shod.
12. That instruction in economy in the field should be given during company training when in camp and during the non-camp period.
13. That during annual training brigade exercises should be occasional and divisional exercises exceptional, but that each division should, when possible, be concentrated for annual training.
14. That a syllabus for annual training should not be drawn up, but the question of the form of annual training be left to the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief.
15. That the number of inspections during annual training should be limited.

The fundamental deficiency in 1910 appeared to be in the lack of instruction for junior officers and even more importantly for NCOs, who were regarded as the weakest part of the TF. One of the first tenets identified in Haldane’s *‘Principles to be kept in view in training the Territorial Force’* in 1907, was

that training should be directed towards producing an ‘efficient body of officers and NCOs to serve both as instructors and leaders’.

This deficiency was probably the fault of the battalion and company commanders, along with the Permanent Staff instructors whose duties had not been previously adequately defined. Any improvements in the knowledge and ability of the officers and NCOs would ultimately raise the efficiency of the rank and file. The frequency and quality of training outside the annual camp was identified as needing improvement. This would involve additional weekend and training camps. Again large scale tactical exercises were of limited value, the emphasis should always be on training at company level.

**Report by the General Officers Commanding-in-chief on the relative value of Territorial Troops. 3 November 1911.**

Extracts of the report are limited to the Infantry of the Western Command under Lieut-General Henry Mackinnon.

**The Infantry Brigade Commanders.**

The experiment of bringing in half-pay officers to command the Territorial Infantry Brigades has been justified and they had greatly improved the efficiency of the Force. Two Territorial officers had recently been appointed to the command of infantry brigades.

**Regimental Infantry officers.**

On the whole the officers were suitable for their positions. Almost all were businessmen who could not find time to attend courses of instruction in musketry, signalling, etc. and the training of the men in these subjects suffered accordingly.

**Men of the Infantry Brigades.**

The physique varies a great deal according to the locality, but taken as a whole, it was fair. After a reasonable time under service conditions, discipline would not be the weakest spot of the TF. The ability to march depended not only on physical fitness, but also on the boots and equipment, both of which had improved.

Attention was drawn to the fact that attendance at camp was lower this year, this is due to a great extent to the increased reluctance of employers to grant their men leave. If the number of absentees were to go on increasing at the same rate, the result would be disastrous.

The TF Infantry had made a great advance in the last few years, but it was noted that it takes a combination of many qualities to make a regiment, and still more a, brigade, efficient for war. The poor performance of two battalions during a coast defence exercise involving a night operation could have been improved if these units had been in camp for a month or two. However, once the TF was mobilised, it should be ready immediately to resist attack on any part of the coast.

**General remarks – Musketry.**

Musketry efficiency varied between regiments but on the whole, is still very unsatisfactory. It is generally the lack of ranges in the vicinity of a unit that was responsible. Insufficient elementary musketry training of the recruit is the primary cause. More time needed to be devoted to this important branch of training.

## **A Summary of Infantry Battalions by Command.**

The extracts relate to the relative value of Territorial Troops as compared with corresponding units and formations of the Regular Army, 1911.

### **Eastern Command.**

After four months' continuous training the infantry would be 50% below the efficiency of the Regular infantry.

### **Northern command.**

Northumbrian Division: Machine-gun sections improved. Guns require more modern mounting before they are really serviceable.

West Riding division: Machine-gun sections fairly well instructed in mechanism of the gun and drill, but with little knowledge of its tactical use. Each brigade should, if possible, be provided with a Regular officer instructor during annual training.

### **Scottish Command.**

Battalions vary very much in their standard of efficiency. This is partly due to where they are raised, and the occupations of the men, but largely due to the capacity and influence of commanding officers. It is difficult to find a non-professional officer who is equal to the command of a battalion. The time at the disposal of a thoroughly efficient commanding officer is very limited so that he is unlikely to make his battalion an effective instrument for war. There are problems getting sufficient numbers of men for 15 days' training in camp, and consequently training cannot be systematic and thorough. Standards in musketry are unsatisfactory owing to limited time available on ranges. The general result is that the territorial infantry cannot be considered equal to the minimum standard of training required to successfully oppose Regular troops in the field.

### **Southern Command.**

No reason to alter opinions expressed in reports of 1909 and 1910. March discipline and powers of endurance are very weak. Men are keen enough, but have no capacity

for 'sticking it out'. Moral would suffer if subjected to hardship, i.e., long marches, absence of food, wet bivouacs, little sleep, etc. At the end of camp they are usually much better. General training is fairly good, but little prospect of improving until officers have learnt their work. Fighting efficiency is at a low standard. Machine-gun detachments a little better than last year. Signalling indifferent and numbers trained considerably below establishment.

### **Western Command.**

Improved in march discipline. Attendances at camp were less than last year, due in a great extent to the increased reluctance of employers to grant their men leave. In the Lancashire Fusilier Brigade and Liverpool Infantry Brigade there were respectively, 129 and 100 absentees more than last year. This is a serious percentage, and if the number of absentees were to go on increasing in the same ratio the result would be disastrous.

A number of interesting Minutes were attached to the 1911 Report they were added by senior military officers reviewing the completed report.

At the end of January 1912 Brigadier-General Kiggell, Director of Staff Duties, accompanied by Major-General Sir A Murray, Director of Military Training and Brigadier-General K Wilson, Director of Military Operations addressed their views on the above report to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir G W Nicholson.

They specifically focus on the anticipated role of the TF and its capability of fulfilling that role. Their views on the TF suggest it was a means of providing some home defence while allowing the whole of the Expeditionary Force to be used to assist the French in the event of a continental war.

The following points raised by Generals; Kiggell, Murray and Wilson have been extracted from the document and the views expressed clearly illustrate the military thinking of the time.

1. From these reports there seems to have been little, if any, increase in the value of the TF as a fighting machine during the last two years. There is little point in looking for any increase in value without a long period of continuous training.
2. As a guide, 9 Territorial divisions might (sic) repulse an attack by 4 Regular divisions.
3. Our military strategy should be based on the assumption that Germany will not make a serious effort to invade England until she has defeated France and occupied the Low Countries, from where she would be able to launch attacks against the navy and the British Isles.
4. The way to prevent this is to maintain the balance of power on the continent by supporting the French. What part will the Territorial Force play, and is it fit for that part?
5. Kiggell and his colleagues suggest that the whole of the Expeditionary Force be on the continent and ready to fight within fifteen days of France and Germany beginning to mobilise. The Territorial Force will not face the threat of a German invasion until she dominates the continent. On the outbreak of war the Territorial Force will provide security against raids. These raids will be harmless unless they prevent the despatch of the Expeditionary Force or hinder naval operations. The task of the Territorial Force is clear and 'its fighting power is sufficient for that task'.
6. The public must be made aware of the capabilities of the Territorial Force or there is a danger that the whole or part of the Expeditionary Force will be retained for the defence of the British Isles.
7. If we are involved in a continental war, the Territorial Force will have time to complete a period of continuous training.
8. However, should France be defeated, we would be militarily defenceless. The Expeditionary Force and any re-enforcements might be of little value and the Territorial Force, even after months of continuous training, would still be unfit to meet a large force of highly trained troops.



9. Our energies and funds should be concentrated on having a sufficiently large Expeditionary Force, well prepared and ready.
10. The public should be made aware that the Territorial Force meets our present needs but it will not be improved by spending any money on it.
11. If we fail to maintain the balance of power the fate of the Empire and the Nation will be endangered. The Territorial Force, even after continuous training, would be inadequate to cope.
12. There should be no delay in completing the Expeditionary Force in every aspect and neither forces nor energies should be diverted from the Expeditionary Force to the Territorial Force.

A number of other interesting minutes were also attached to the report by General Kiggell.

#### **Minute 8. From General Bethune Director General of the Territorial Force**

‘If General Kiggell’s views (minute 2A) are taken as representing our policy, then the Territorial Force would have little time to prepare for war after mobilisation. With General Bethune’s years of experience with the Territorial Force, his view is that once mobilised and under continuous training by their own officers, they will improve in fighting efficiency quicker than people imagine. When comparing Territorials with Regulars General Bethune takes this to mean Regulars against whom they will be pitted against in war. Therefore the aim must be for the highest possible training of the Territorial Force under the existing conditions, and avoid seeking further money for training.’

General Bethune notes that the Commander in Chief’s report shows only a slight increase in efficiency in the Territorial Force each year. General Bethune calculates that the West Lancashire Division gained 20% in efficiency each year after annual camp but lost 10% during each winter.

*‘This is probably better than some southern divisions as I consider the Lancashire man to be an ideal Territorial soldier. He is earnest and thorough in all he undertakes and doggedly determined to carry a thing through which once he begins’.*

### **A review and conclusion on the training reports of the Territorial Force.**

The reports of the Inspector-General of the Forces claim a steady improvement in the efficiency of the TF, buoyed by a spirit of zeal and enthusiasm. This however, is not sufficient to cover the persistent failings of the system to provide training to the officers and NCOs. This important aspect of the Force was recognised by Haldane and his military advisors when preparing the Bill for the formation of the Territorial Force. They recognised the need for instructors and intended from the first that training be directed towards producing an efficient body of officers and NCOs who would serve ultimately as instructors and leaders.

There was a failure from the start in not anticipating where this training was to come from. With a minimum Permanent Staff of an Adjutant and three sergeant instructors in each battalion, this must have put a strain on the Regular Army to provide such instructors. There may also have been a certain reluctance by Commanding officers to release their more useful officers and NCOs. The standard of training was no doubt influenced by the ability and experience of the individual Territorial commanders.

The opinions of both the Inspector-General and the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief suggest that those commands under active list regular officers performed more efficiently than those under half-pay, retired or even the rare Territorial officer. This deficiency mirrors that of the Permanent Staff in that the basic concept was correct but little or no thought had been given to either the quality of availability of competent commanders.

During the early years of the Force a number of Commanders were attempting over ambitious field operations, when little attention was being given to elementary company training. Once this weakness had been identified and steps taken to correct it, efficiency improved. The Lucas Committee of 1911 identified and recommended a number of improvements; the training and instruction of junior officers, defined roles for the Permanent Staff and the recruitment of Regular officers to command Territorial units.

General Plumer in 1911 insisted that Territorials would need to be trained and led by capable Regular officers if they were ever to take the field. By 1912, Sir John French, the Inspector-General of Forces, concluded that the Force, in most arms had by this time reached the limit of efficiency, and only an additional six months' intensive training would convert it into an Army. This concept had been recognised and addressed by Haldane who never envisaged the TF being ready for war without six months continuous training. It would appear that the senior army officers including the Inspector General had never grasped the intended concept of the Territorials being a partly trained force that in time of war would be mobilised for six months continuous war training before being put into the field.

General Kiggell and his colleagues produced a review of the reports in 1912, claiming that the TF was 'sufficient' in securing the country against raids, but would never improve regardless of how much money was spent on it. Any additional funds and resources should be directed towards a sufficiently large Expeditionary Force. If however, the Expeditionary Force was defeated on the Continent, the TF, now considered incapable of meeting highly trained troops even after six months training, would be all that remained to defend the country and provide men for the re-building of the of what was left of the Expeditionary Force. They were forthright in their opinion that no funds of

energies should be diverted from the Expeditionary Force to the Territorial Force.

The senior military leaders had always been aware of the limitations of the Territorial Force but had not recognised that it would require the expected six months of training to be an efficient army. The TF had met the principles set down for their training but they had not been provided with sufficient capable instructors or competent commanders to lead and train the officers and NCOs. The widely recognised unsatisfactory state of Territorial musketry was symptomatic of the approach to training with the failure to provide adequate ranges and training facilities from the outset

Territorial battalions such as the 5<sup>th</sup> King's Own Royal Lancaster epitomised the spirit and enthusiasm of the TF. The evidence is that they built on the 'Training of the Territorial Force' syllabus with an energetic training programme until they embarked independently for France in February 1915. They continued their training while on active service in what can be best described as a compound of enthusiasm and empiricism before the battalion was hurriedly drawn into the Second battle of Ypres at Gravenstafel in April 1915.



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