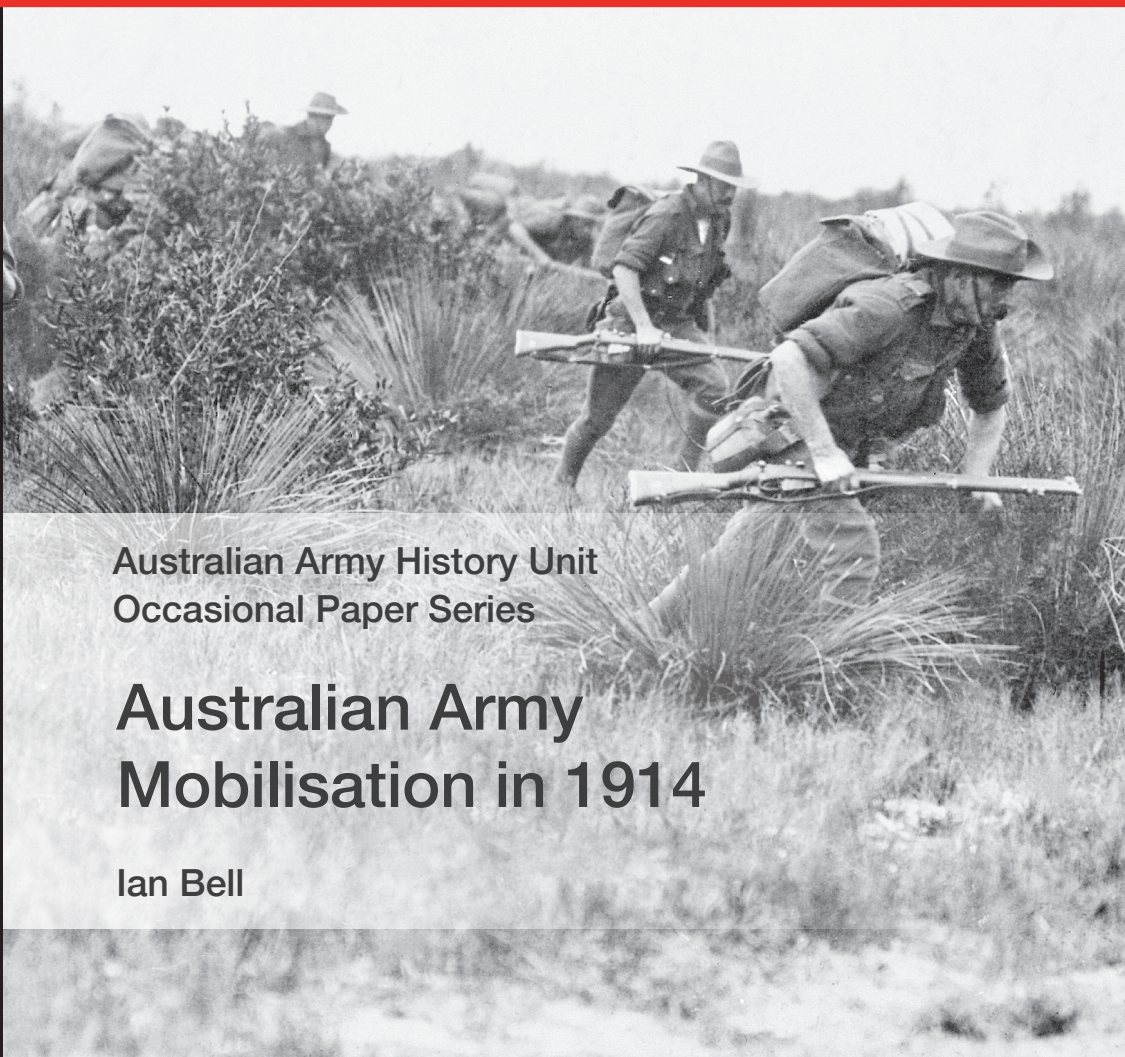




# Army



Australian Army History Unit  
Occasional Paper Series

## Australian Army Mobilisation in 1914

Ian Bell

*Serving our Nation*



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# Introduction

In 1914 Australia formed two expeditionary forces: the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), which would fight in the Middle East and Europe and ultimately become the nation's primary contribution to the war, and the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF), which travelled north to seize German New Guinea in September. The country's part-time citizen forces were also mobilised to safeguard vital assets within Australia and protect the main ports. The rapid despatch of expeditionary forces and the garrisoning of ports and crucial infrastructure represented a remarkable achievement and its success owed a great deal to the often imperfect but nonetheless significant military preparations completed prior to 1914.

In 1914, the pre-war mostly part-time Commonwealth Military Forces were in a period of transition. The small, previously all-volunteer force was expanding to become a much larger force of over 100 battalions and regiments created on the basis of almost universal compulsory military service. This force was partially mobilised in August 1914 to provide basic security within Australia. At the same time, Australia formed the two expeditionary forces for overseas service, the largest of which — the AIF — would eclipse the pre-war army.

This paper describes the establishment, recruiting and mobilisation of Australia's military forces in 1914 and examines a range of factors that proved crucial to this process.

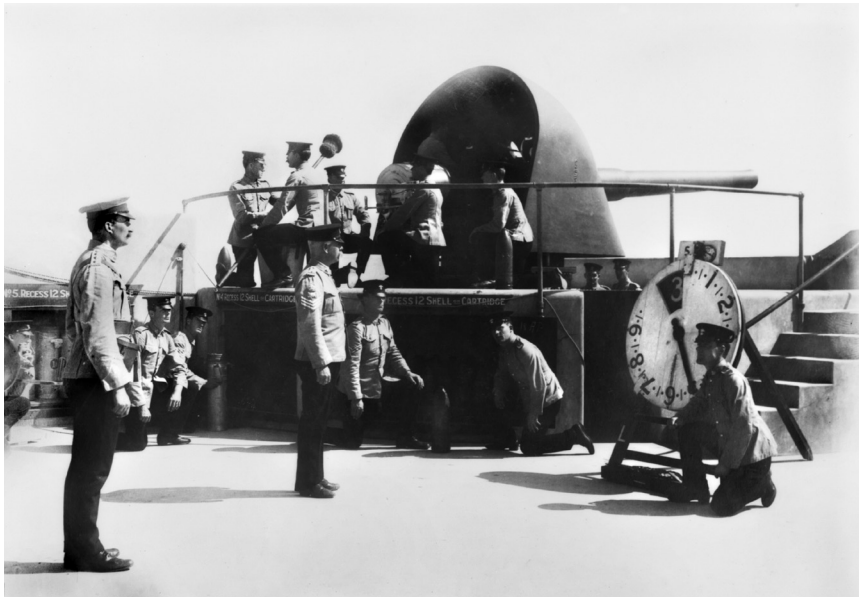
## War comes to Australia

### Stop the *Pfalz*

Late on the morning of 5 August 1914, the German Norddeutsche Lloyd line's cargo steamer SS *Pfalz* approached the heads of Port Phillip, near Melbourne. The ship had secured authorisation to leave and there was a palpable sense of relief among those on board. The threat of all-out war in Europe was increasing and the British government had demanded that Germany withdraw its forces from Belgium. By this time several other German ships had adopted a prudent course and left Australian ports.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Scott, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, University of Queensland Press with the Australian War Memorial, St Lucia, 1989, p. 36; C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, University of Queensland Press with the Australian War Memorial, St Lucia, 1981, p. 26.



*The 6-inch gun and detachment that fired Australia's (and probably the British Empire's) first shot of the First World War at the SS Pfalz from Fort Nepean, Port Melbourne. This photo is a recreation and there is some dispute as to its accuracy. (AWM A01184).*

What the *Pfalz's* captain did not know was that the forts guarding the heads had just received notice of the declaration of war. Within its walls there was some confusion as to whether a 'live round' or reduced charge was appropriate as a means to halt the progress of the ship. The gunners telephoned Defence Headquarters in St Kilda Road, Melbourne, for instructions. A delay ensued while the acting Secretary of Defence, the Minister for Defence and the Attorney-General were consulted. In the meantime, Captain Moreton Williams at Fort Nepean took matters into his own hands, signalling the *Pfalz* to stop immediately. When it failed to do so he ordered a 6-inch Mark VII gun to be loaded and a shot fired across the ship's bow. The *Pfalz* promptly stopped, changed direction and steamed into Portsea.<sup>2</sup> What is widely held to be the British Empire's first shot of the war had been fired by the Australian Garrison Artillery (AGA).

<sup>2</sup> Keith Quinton, *Stop the Pfalz*, Fort Queenscliff Museum, 2013, p. 56.

# The pre-war Australian military

Australia created its first army, known as the Commonwealth Military Forces, from the military organisations inherited from the six colonies at Federation. Inevitably, with the amalgamation of a disparate range of colonial institutions, there followed a period of reform to standardise training, organisation, weapons, equipment and uniforms. There was also a need to absorb the lessons of the Boer War. In this Australia was not alone. The British Army was also going through a sometimes painful process of reform during the same period. While the Australian development would in some ways parallel that of Britain, New Zealand and Canada, a number of significant differences would remain.

In 1914, the nation's total military establishment was a broad church and included a small full-time element, the Permanent Military Forces, with the most significant component the part-time Citizen Military Forces (usually abbreviated to just 'Citizen Forces'). There was also a Reserve, which included a range of men in the Reserve of Officers, another listing of 'unattached' but theoretically active officers, the Senior Cadets and finally the members of the nation's rifle clubs who were supported in their pastime by a government that hoped to use them as a further defence reserve should the need arise. The Permanent Forces were primarily technical troops employed for the defence of the ports — garrison gunners and engineers — and the members of the Administrative and Instructional Staff who oversaw, trained and administered the far more numerous part-timers. The Citizen Forces of 1914 was an organisation in the midst of a massive expansion based on the principle of compulsory universal part-time military service for all able-bodied males. This program, known as the Universal Training Scheme, had been introduced just a few years earlier.

In 1910 the Australian government had invited Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, Britain's foremost and most famous soldier, to review Australia's defences. Following an extensive tour of inspection he had concluded that 'the present forces are inadequate in numbers, training, organisation and munitions of war to defend Australia from the dangers that are due to the present conditions that prevail in the country as well as its isolated position.'<sup>3</sup> The Commonwealth government, having received largely what it wanted from Kitchener, heartily concurred and used the report to usher in a program of reform. A number of politicians, including Alfred Deakin, had contemplated compulsory service or a universal training scheme for several years.<sup>4</sup> With voluntary enlistments, numbers fluctuated with public interest and enlistment periods proved too brief to achieve

<sup>3</sup> Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener, *Memorandum on the Defence of Australia*, 12 February 1910.

<sup>4</sup> John Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: History of Australian Military Developments 1880-1914*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, pp. 177–78.



competence. Compulsory service would increase numbers and, by starting with cadet training from an early age, men would have a range of basic military skills by the time they transferred to the ranks. The government introduced the Universal Training Scheme in early 1911 with compulsory cadet training commencing in July that year. The first intake of 18-year-old recruits into the newly organised militia followed in July 1912.



*Field Marshal Lord Kitchener in Sydney during his 1910 tour to inspect and report on Australia's military forces. While his name gave the report moral and political weight, most of the work that underpinned it had been completed by local officers (AWM P00595.006).*

Technically, under the Defence Act, all adult males from 18 to 60 were liable for military service. The only qualifiers were that they had to be British subjects and have resided in Australia for six months. In practice, the training obligation only applied to those under the age of 26, and the scheme gave exemptions to those medically unfit, to police and prison officers, teachers who were officers of cadets, those living more than five miles from a place of parade (a large number in rural areas) and 'persons who are not substantially of European origin or descent'.<sup>5</sup> This latter provision effectively excluded Aborigines and non-European migrants.

<sup>5</sup> Section 138(1) (b), *Defence Act, 1903*, Albert J. Mullett Government Printer, Melbourne, 1913.

A number of other categories such as conscientious objectors were exempt from war service, but not from militia training. By 1914 the total number of exemptions equalled that of active members.<sup>6</sup> However, the scheduled annual intake of 16,000 (after exemptions) was sufficient to allow planning to raise the militia to 80,000 men by 1919–20.<sup>7</sup>

Service for a militiaman commenced on 1 July of the year he reached 18 and continued for seven years. The annual training obligation for an infantryman was 16 days, including eight days of continuous training in camp. Artillery and engineers served for 25 days with 17-day camps of continuous training. By August 1914 the force was still in its early stages with just over 45,000 militiamen serving in its ranks.<sup>8</sup>

The introduction of compulsory service saw the infantry reorganised. All the existing units were disbanded and their members transferred to new battalions numbered nationally. Abolished too were the colourful uniforms and local designations. This caused considerable controversy and, by 1914, political pressure saw battalions given local titles. Each battalion was around 1000 men strong and divided into eight companies, a machine gun-section (with two Maxim machine-guns), and a signals section. Also re-raised were the ethnic battalions (most states had a Scottish battalion while Sydney also had explicitly English and Irish units).

Not everyone serving in the militia was doing so under government compulsion. There were also numerous professionals who offered their services voluntarily, providing technical expertise such as medical and veterinary skills. These men provided the bulk of the light horse units. While the light horse was a critical component of Australia's defence, volunteers provided the bulk of soldiers since many rural workers were exempt due to their remoteness and because the government would not buy horses for the men who then had to supply their own. Militiamen serving under the universal scheme could enlist in the light horse, but could only do so once they agreed to provide their own horses at no expense to the government. By 30 June 1913, volunteers under the Universal Training Scheme represented 17 per cent of the light horse strength of 6401.<sup>9</sup>

To command the new militia the military transferred the existing officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from the old volunteer 'part-paid' force to the new units. Selection of officers prior to the war was a casual affair: there had to be

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<sup>6</sup> 'The Australian Navy and Army', *The Register*, 1 August 1914 reported the militia strength as 36,546 with 37,836 exemptions at the end of June 1914.

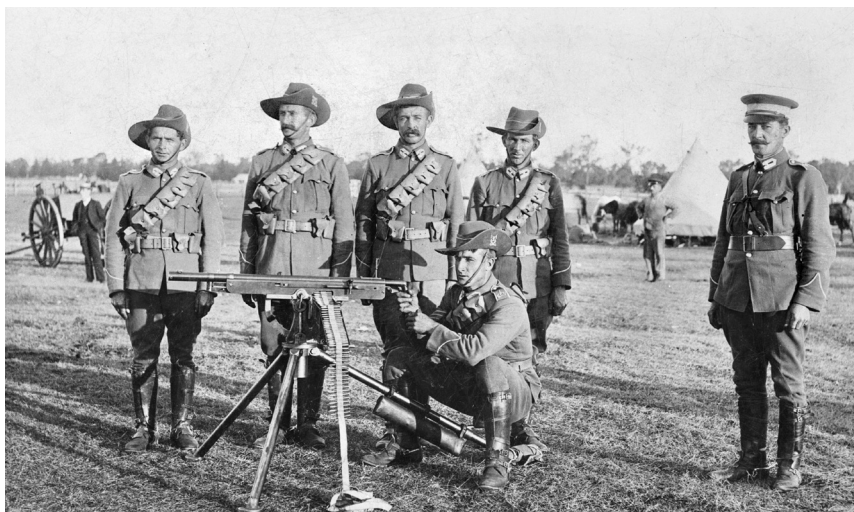
<sup>7</sup> Australian Military Forces, *Tables, Peace Organisation and Establishments 1914–15*, Albert J. Mullet Government Printer, Melbourne, 1914, p. 95; Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 194.

<sup>8</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Bou, *Light Horse: A History of Australia's Mounted Arm*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009, p. 104.



a vacancy in the unit and the candidate had to be recommended. Potential officers received no specialised training and their selection often owed much to their social standing and education, although some may have initially served as NCOs. However, a second lieutenant's commission was only probationary, and confirmation in rank and promotion was through examination. Officers were trained by attending courses of instruction (which ranged from nine days to three weeks), private study and by attending lectures. To assist with this training the United Service Institutions of each state were subsidised by the Department of Defence to provide lectures and war games.<sup>10</sup>



*Men of the machine-gun section of the Citizen Force 4th Light Horse Regiment in camp in 1910 with one of their 1895 pattern Colt machine-guns. The level of military proficiency within the Citizen Forces was generally low, but in 1914-15 the best of its officers and men became the backbone of the AIF (AWM P01796.002).*

Such an on-the-job approach had its limitations. At one point South Australia's 10th Battalion, for example, gave command of its machine-gun section to a newly commissioned lieutenant, despite his never having seen a machine-gun before.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the significant burden imposed on officers who commanded troops, had to develop their own military skills and lead busy civilian lives was never resolved. One light horse commanding officer complained that he gave up three months a year to his regiment, but with so many junior officers and only one

<sup>10</sup> General Sir Ian Hamilton, *Extracts from the Report of an Inspection of the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Hobart, 24 April 1914.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Williams, *These are the facts: the autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE CB DSO*, The Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, pp. 9-11.

suitable squadron commander dispersed over a large area, officer training was almost impossible.<sup>12</sup> The intention was that future officers would be selected from those already in the Universal Training Scheme, thus ensuring that all officers had at least the same starting point. In 1914, however, this step had yet to be taken.

The final element of the Citizen Forces was the Reserve. This included officers on the Unattached List, the Reserve List of Officers and members of subsidised rifle clubs. The Unattached List allowed officers unable to actively serve to remain in the service and parade from time to time (the minimum was four days every two years). The Reserve List of Officers comprised those who were no longer active and were transferring out of committed military involvement. An officer could remain on the Unattached List for five years and the Reserve List for seven years before compulsory retirement.

The inclusion of rifle club members may appear odd, but in the nineteenth century rifle shooting was a popular national sport. By the 1880s, in an age in which the rifle appeared to dominate the battlefield, the various Australian colonial governments had recognised rifle clubs as a potential resource for national defence. The Boer War of 1899–1902 further demonstrated the lethality of modern long-range rifle fire. With the formation of the Commonwealth Military Forces, the Defence Act recognised the rifle clubs as the third tier of defence. In return for grants to construct and maintain rifle ranges, the loan of rifles, subsidised ammunition and free rail travel to shooting matches, they provided a very cheap reserve. By 1914 there were 35,000 efficient rifle club members across the country.<sup>13</sup> However, the issue of utilising rifle club members as a third line of defence proved problematic as, while they clearly possessed an ability to shoot, the members proved resistant to military discipline or any form of military training, no matter how basic. Attempts to encourage the rifle clubs to undertake military-style shooting at various ranges against moving and falling targets also proved unsuccessful. Generally these rifle clubs were more interested in sporting matches at fixed ranges than military marksmanship.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the Permanent Military Forces (or Permanent Forces) was a full-time force tasked with administering and training the Citizen Forces and providing a skeleton staff for the coastal fortifications of Australia's major ports. The Permanent Forces included a small number of British Army officers and NCOs who ensured the standardisation of training across the Empire. Officer entry to the Permanent Forces was very competitive, with one applicant recalling that, at his examination,

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<sup>12</sup> Bou, *Light Horse*, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Military Order 585/1914.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Kilsby, 'The Rifle Clubs' in Craig Stockings and John Connor (eds), *Before the Anzac Dawn: A Military History of Australia to 1915*, New South Publishing, Sydney, 2013.

just seven of the 77 applicants were successful. Applicants for officer admission were primarily former British Army and Royal Marine NCOs, with some Australian Permanent Forces NCOs and a handful of Citizen Forces officers also applying.<sup>15</sup>

Permanent Force numbers increased as the militia expanded, but there were never enough staff to cover the administration and training responsibilities. Just prior to the war, for example, the then subaltern, but future air marshal, Richard Williams was appointed adjutant of the 73rd Infantry and discovered that he had oversight for the training of 13 militia depots, some not readily accessible by train. He was also the battalion quartermaster, responsible for battalion weapons and stores, and the assistant brigade major. In this last role he was the brigade machine-gun instructor and the compensation officer, responsible for negotiating with farmers over damage to fences during training.<sup>16</sup>

The Royal Military College was established in 1911 to train more permanent officers under the system of pre-war reforms. While no classes had graduated by August 1914, the college represented a philosophical shift from on-the-job training to professional development through a four-year course to ensure that a cadre of trained graduate officers would strengthen the Permanent Forces each year.<sup>17</sup>



*The first class of cadets at RMC Duntroon pose around a field gun in 1914. They were graduated early to provide badly needed military expertise to the AIF when it was raised (AWM A04189).*

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<sup>15</sup> Williams, *These are the facts*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Dayton McCarthy, "Carefully selected, trained in his profession and scientifically educated": the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and the professionalisation of the officer corps' in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), *1911 Preliminary Moves*, proceedings of the 2011 Chief of Army History Conference, Army History Unit and Big Sky Publishing, Sydney, 2011, p. 163.

## State of military forces in 1914

The Universal Training Scheme increased the strength of Australia's military forces from 23,696 on 30 June 1912 to 45,645 by 1914, spread across 20 light horse regiments and 55 infantry battalions.<sup>18</sup> Universal training solved the problem of fluctuating numbers inherent in voluntary service and was on track to provide a force of 80,000 militiamen when the process matured in the early 1920s (see table 1).

**Table 1: Strength of the forces in 1914 and planned expansion**

	Established by 1914	Target
Light horse	6 brigade headquarters 20 regiments 8 divisional squadrons	8 brigade headquarters 26 regiments 12 divisional squadrons
Field artillery	9 brigade headquarters 25 field artillery batteries 1 howitzer battery	14 brigade headquarters 42 field artillery batteries 6 howitzer batteries 4 horse batteries
Infantry	14 brigade headquarters 55 battalions	22 brigade headquarters 84 battalions
Engineers	9 field companies 6 signal troops 7 divisional signal companies	13 field companies 6 signal troops 7 divisional signal companies 2 wireless companies
Army Service Corps	18 companies 6 light horse companies	22 companies 8 light horse companies 6 headquarter companies
Army Medical Corps	151/2 field ambulances 6 light horse field ambulances	221/2 field ambulances 8 light horse field ambulances
Fortress troops	13 companies garrison artillery 8 fortress companies	13 companies garrison artillery 8 fortress companies

(Source: *Australian Military Forces, Tables, peace organisation and establishments 1914–15*, p. 95. Note that the largest established formation was the brigade of four infantry battalions. In July 1914 the Military Board decided to begin forming divisions, but none had been formed when war broke out.)

<sup>18</sup> *Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1919, p. 1008.

The government was understandably proud of its work, with the Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce (during the period 1910–13 and again from September 1914 throughout the First World War), claiming in August 1914:

He could say things now that he dared not say in 1910, which was before the Labor Administration came along to take up the Commonwealth's defence. Had an expedition been then required to leave our shores, with 20,000 rifles shouldered on behalf of the Motherland, there would not have been left enough guns for those who remained behind to defend her shores. Had Australia been faced, with invasion then, and had ammunition been used at the rate witnessed in the Russo-Japanese war, the whole of the ammunition in the land would have gone in one week.

Rather more extravagantly, Pearce further claimed that: 'To-day there were 85,000 cadets throughout Australia, being trained to become highly efficient soldiers, and there were 50,000 men in the citizen forces – all armed, all thoroughly equipped, all trained for the real business.' In terms of armament and equipment, Pearce was correct. Ten years earlier, Australia had just 35,190 assorted .303 calibre rifles.<sup>19</sup> By 1914 the military possessed 87,240 modern Short Magazine Lee-Enfield rifles – the standard British Army rifle for both infantry and cavalry from 1903. These were adequate to meet the immediate needs of 55 infantry battalions and 20 light horse regiments, although additional rifles were required for further expansion.

As far back as 1907, the government of Alfred Deakin had embarked on a policy of self-sufficiency with the major plank of its program the establishment of a small arms factory. The government selected Lithgow in New South Wales as the appropriate site due to its existing iron and coal industries, and road and rail connections. The American company Pratt and Whitney won the contract in 1909 for the supply of a complete set of machinery.<sup>20</sup> With an initial design capacity of 15,000 rifles per annum, subsequently increased to 20,000, this was more than sufficient to meet Australia's peacetime needs. However, it would only meet 25 per cent of the military's future wartime requirements (see table 2).<sup>21</sup>

In the same period, the government established an explosives factory at Maribyrnong, a clothing factory in South Melbourne and a harness, saddlery and leather factory at Clifton Hill in Victoria. Private companies were also encouraged and the government contracted the Colonial Ammunition Company of Footscray

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<sup>19</sup> Ian Skennerton, *The British Service Lee, Lee Medford and Lee Enfield Rifles and Carbines 1880-1980*, self-published, Margate, 1987, p. 73. These 35,190 were primarily Lee-Enfields of various models, 1000 commercially made Lee-Speed rifles, 64 Lee-Medford rifles and an unknown number of obsolete Martini-Enfields. Presumably the Department of Defence had transferred or sold most Lee-Medfords and all Martini-Medfords to rifle clubs by 1904.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Griffiths, *Lithgow's Small Arms Factory and its People*, Vol. I, 1907 to 1950, Toptech, Terry Hills, 2006, pp. 28–45.

<sup>21</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 62–63.

to manufacture .303 ammunition.<sup>22</sup> Regular orders for wagons, camp equipment and medical stores were part of the plan to encourage local manufacture.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of artillery, in 1914 Australia possessed an adequate supply of 116 modern 18-pounder field guns.<sup>24</sup> The biggest deficiencies in local artillery stocks were in field howitzers and heavy guns. The militia had just one battery of obsolete 5-inch howitzers and one of obsolescent 4.7-inch guns.<sup>25</sup> Plans for an additional five howitzer batteries remained unfulfilled.

**Table 2: Rifle production by the Lithgow Small Arms Factory to 30 June 1919**

Financial Year	Rifle production
1912–13	40
1913–14	4760
1914–15	13,786
1915–16	30,460
1916–17	23,960
1917–18	23,251
1918–19	42,129

(Source: Griffiths, *Lithgow's Small Arms Factory*, pp. 186–87.)

## Sir Ian Hamilton's review

By 1914 the military was stronger and better equipped than ever before, but was arguably no better trained than prior to the Kitchener reforms. General Sir Ian Hamilton, Inspector-General of Overseas Forces (later the allied commander of the 1915 Dardanelles campaign), inspected the Commonwealth Military Forces in early 1914 at the invitation of the Australian government. He was an ideal choice, having fought in both Boer Wars, was experienced with colonial volunteers and had inspected the Canadian militia in 1913.<sup>26</sup> He had also been an observer with the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly for the Australian government's Universal Training Scheme, Hamilton (publicly) opposed compulsory military service in Britain.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Environment information on ADI Footscray site at: [http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place\\_detail;place\\_id=19122](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=19122), accessed 28 January 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, pp. 179–80.

<sup>24</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> Steve Gower, *Guns of the Regiment*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1981, pp. 39–40.

<sup>26</sup> James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier 1896-1921*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2010, p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrap-Book during the Russo-Japanese War*, E. Arnold, London, 1905.

<sup>28</sup> Ian Hamilton, *Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience*, J. Murray, London, 1910.



Hamilton's report was generally supportive but managed to convey the message that the Australian military was far from a professional force. For a fledgling nation that had relied on imperial protection, retained separate colonial forces and had maintained inadequate public spending on defence in the decade since Federation, this was perhaps unsurprising. Hamilton's conclusion was that Australia's army was likely to be capable of holding its own against any invader if it managed to outnumber the enemy two to one.

Hamilton noted that the infantry soldiers were very young, as were their NCOs. While the men were enthusiastic, the standard of musketry was poor with too large a percentage 'not exercised' in 1913. There was an obvious need for recruit training. In this regard he viewed the cadet system as a failure. The cadet officers were too few and too inexperienced and there were numerous complaints concerning cadets requiring retraining in basic skills on their transfer to the militia. Most of the junior officers were eager and resourceful, but in many cases unqualified, and Hamilton singled out those in command of machine-gun sections as particularly deficient. He was even less complimentary about field grade officers, considering some to have the wrong temperament for leadership roles. The light horse attracted more praise and he considered these men exceedingly keen, riding boldly and well. However he also concluded that they lacked what he termed 'cohesion', and were effective as squadrons but lacked the training to operate in large formations.

Hamilton regarded the field artillery as competent but in need of more extended training and greater experience. The Royal Australian Garrison Artillery and its militia AGA were not faulted, apart from comments on the age of some permanent staff. The engineers of all ranks were complimented for the alignment of civilian skills with their military roles and the increased capability this brought. The Army Service Corps and the Army Medical Corps also escaped criticism. He praised



*General Sir Ian Hamilton was one of the empire's most prominent and respected soldiers, and toured Australia in 1914 to inspect and report on the local military scheme. Often cherry-picked for encouraging remarks, a complete reading of his report reveals a military force with much to learn. He soon commanded Australian troops at Gallipoli, where his career came to a sudden end (AWM A03549).*

the Royal Military College and echoed Lord Kitchener's proposal that, once officer cadets graduated as young officers, they should serve in the imperial forces to broaden their experience.

General Hamilton dismissed rifle clubs as 'a temporary and provisional measure', tolerated only until the Universal Training Scheme matured. The real role of the rifle clubs in his view was to raise the standard of shooting generally, rather than form part of the militia.<sup>29</sup> This was sound advice given the very limited defence capability that rifle clubs provided and the degree to which they could be relied on to produce marksmen of military quality.

The newspaper responses to Hamilton's report were generally positive.<sup>30</sup> With so many men involved in training, there was overall agreement that the process could be dull, mechanical and repetitive.<sup>31</sup> One correspondent noted the popular assumption that Australians were born horsemen, good shots and bushmen as an 'unhealthy after-effect of the Boer War',<sup>32</sup> while another assessed that Australia's army as 'not ready for war'.<sup>33</sup> A more constructive suggestion was to separate the annual intake of new recruits for special training. This addressed one of the central problems of universal training: the need to absorb increasing numbers of recruits without the capacity to provide them anything but the most basic of training.<sup>34</sup> In short, while universal training had delivered increased numbers, it had yet to demonstrate an improvement in quality.<sup>35</sup>

All this effort and organisation had one key restriction, however: the Commonwealth Military Forces could only be used for the defence of Australia and were not available for the defence of the British Empire or to support British foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> Like other self-governing dominions in the Empire, Australia had resisted attempts to form such a force for imperial deployment worldwide. Indeed, this was little different to the policy in Britain itself where its analogous militia, the part-time Territorial Army, was also conceived for home defence only.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> General Sir Ian Hamilton, *Extracts from the report of an inspection of the military forces of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Hobart, 24 April 1914, para 23.

<sup>30</sup> 'The Citizen Army', *The Mail*, 23 May 1914, p. 8; 'General Hamilton's Report on Australia's Citizen Army', *Daily Herald*, 21 May 1914, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> 'Australia's Army', *The Cairns Post*, 21 May 1914, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> *The Mail*, 4 July 1914, p. 7. Graham Wilson demolishes the myth of the Australian 'natural born soldier' being a 'crack shot from the bush' in his book *Bullybeef and balderdash: some myths of the AIF examined and debunked*, Big Sky Publishing, Sydney, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> *Sunday Times*, 19 July 1914, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> *The Mail*, 4 July 1914, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Jean Bou, 'Ambition and adversity: developing an Australian military force, 1901-1914' in Dennis and Grey (eds), *1911 Preliminary Moves*, p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> *Defence Act 1903*, section 49.

<sup>37</sup> Geoffrey Cousins, *The Defenders: A History of the British Volunteer*, Fredrick Muller, London, 1968, pp. 155-56.

# The defence scheme and mobilisation of the Commonwealth Military Forces

On 30 July 1914, the British government advised the Australian government that there was imminent danger of war. Two days later, the British advised the Australian government to undertake 'precautionary measures'.<sup>38</sup> The Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, decided on a partial mobilisation (the Minister for Defence was in Sydney at the time) and this was authorised by the Governor-General the following day by proclamation. The defence scheme for Australia specified a number of such 'precautionary measures' which were similar to those employed across the British Empire. In Australia, guards were placed on cable stations and cable landing points. Military censorship of overseas cables commenced and, after some hesitation, the Postal Department held up a German ciphered cablegram to German New Guinea. On 4 August 1914, Britain advised Australia to be alert to an attack in advance of any formal declaration of war.<sup>39</sup>

Britain formally declared war at 11.00 pm on 4 August 1914, with the news reaching the Governor-General in Melbourne at 12.30 pm on 5 August 1914. The Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, advised the press at 12.45 pm.<sup>40</sup> The Melbourne *Argus* reported that the general feeling was 'one of relief, that the terrible waiting and uncertainty of the last few days was over.'<sup>41</sup> Famously, the leader of the opposition and soon to be Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, had already declared that Australia would support Britain 'to our last man and our last shilling'.

At 1.20 pm on 5 August 1914, within 50 minutes of the Prime Minister receiving news of the declaration of war, defence headquarters issued orders by telegram to all military district commandants to 'adopt War Stage of Defended Ports Defence Scheme against Germany'.<sup>42</sup> They in turn called up Citizen Forces selectively to defend each designated 'protected port' — Thursday Island, Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Albany and Fremantle. This call-up included all the citizen units of the AGA and the fortress engineers, but only sufficient infantry and light horse to provide local protection.<sup>43</sup> In most cases, the citizen units lived close to their mobilisation positions. The Sydney-based AGA partially mobilised on the night of 4 August.<sup>44</sup> For other citizen units whose personnel lived more remotely the mobilisation process took far longer.

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<sup>38</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 1, 26.

<sup>39</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> *The Argus*, 6 August 1914.

<sup>42</sup> Chief of the General Staff war diary, AWM4, 1/1/1, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 196.

<sup>44</sup> 'Call out Circular to Garrison Artillery', *The Evening News*, 6 August 1914, p. 6.

The AGA companies which would defend Port Phillip Heads (the forts at Queenscliff, Point Nepean and Swan Island) came from Williamstown (7th Company AGA) and Geelong (8th and 9th companies AGA). The Geelong companies received orders on 4 August to mobilise and be ready to move to Queenscliff the following evening.<sup>45</sup> The Engineers of the 34th and 38th fortress companies presented themselves for duty at Queenscliff and Swan Island. The call-up of the supporting troops from the 46th Infantry (Brighton Rifles), the 70th Infantry (Ballarat Regiment), and the 29th Light Horse Regiment (Port Phillip Horse) took longer.<sup>46</sup> The 70th Battalion received its orders at 3.30 pm on 5 August, the commander delegating this task to his company commanders and their subordinates. By 7.00 pm they had notified all members by phone and cars (with three exceptions) to parade at 7.00 am the following morning when a full day would be required to complete medical inspections and issue kit.<sup>47</sup>

## Mobilising the 2nd Infantry (Kennedy Regiment)

As Thursday Island had no militia, rifle club volunteers and naval reservists provided security as an interim measure.<sup>48</sup> Given the possible threat to Australian interests from German New Guinea, the 2nd Infantry (Kennedy Regiment) headquartered in Charters Towers, was mobilised to provide a garrison.<sup>49</sup> Notified on 4 August, the battalion responded immediately, sending telegrams to its scattered depots in Townsville, Cairns, Bowen, Ayr and Mackay. Public notices in local newspapers and in shop windows notified the battalion to parade the following day at 10.00 am in marching order (with weapons and field equipment). Excluded from the call-up were the 18-year-old recruits from the 1 July 1914 intake, as they were untrained. Once paraded, the unit issued soldiers with equipment and completed medical examinations. This latter process took all day, although the doctors rejected few. The next day most of the battalion concentrated at Townsville — speeches and bands accompanied the departure from hometowns.<sup>50</sup> Given the recent introduction of the Universal Training Scheme, most soldiers were aged 20 or less. Accompanying the battalion was its allocation of rifle club members, called out to supplement the force. One member of the public, thwarted in his attempts to enlist in the Kennedy Regiment, found that he could join the force via his local rifle club.<sup>51</sup> The total force numbered 29 officers and 475 men, supplemented by some 200 rifle club members, the latter without uniforms. Once at Townsville the battalion joined the 1st Garrison Artillery Company (a Townsville-based militia company) and a medical detachment.

<sup>45</sup> 'Geelong Men for Action', *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> 'Victorian Troops Mobilising', *The Advertiser*, 7 August 1914, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup> 'Geelong Troops Called Out', *Geelong Advertiser*, 6 August 1914, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> 'Torres Strait', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 August 1914, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 202.

<sup>50</sup> 'Brisbane Preparation', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 August 1914, p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> 'Australian Mobilisation', *The Northern Miner*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

The combined force then embarked for Thursday Island in the SS *Kanowna* on 8 August 1914, just four days after Britain had declared war on Germany. Over 6000 people lined the wharves, including local politicians and a combined band playing 'Rule Britannia'. Once at Thursday Island, there was little to do, notwithstanding rumours of a German cruiser in New Guinea.<sup>52</sup>

The opportunity for these 2nd Battalion men to volunteer for the AN&MEF, then being raised in Sydney, proved some relief and 500 did so. The volunteers also included some of the rifle club members.<sup>53</sup> While approximately half of the battalion's troops remained on Thursday Island, the remainder (AN&MEF volunteers) travelled to Port Moresby where they were inspected by the commander of the AN&MEF, Colonel William Holmes, who was decidedly unimpressed. He declared them too immature for tropical service, insisting that 25 was the ideal minimum age. The 2nd Battalion troops were poorly equipped, missing essential items such as mosquito nets. Once in Port Moresby, the stokers of the troopship SS *Kanowna* went on strike, arguing that they had not volunteered to take soldiers to German New Guinea. At that point, Holmes had had enough, and ordered the battalion back to Townsville.<sup>54</sup> The battalion was discharged at Townsville on 18 September 1914.

Most of the men from the battalion who had remained on Thursday Island returned to Townsville on 26 November 1914.<sup>55</sup> Detachments continued to provide security on Thursday Island until as late as April 1915, with some men stationed there the entire eight months.<sup>56</sup> By May 1915 all had returned and a notice in the local press ordered any members of the 2nd Infantry Battalion still with rifles and equipment on issue to return them to the drill hall by at their earliest convenience as other units would need them.<sup>57</sup>

By May 1915 many of the Kennedy Regiment had volunteered for AIF service and some had already been killed in action. Captain John Francis Walsh, formerly with the Kennedy Regiment on Thursday Island and with the AN&MEF, was killed at Gallipoli on 28 April 1914.<sup>58</sup> Captain Walsh was serving with the 15th Infantry Battalion in which recruits from the Kennedy district made up A Company.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 'The Departure of the First Contingent', *The Northern Miner*, 10 August 1914; *Brisbane Courier*, 5 August 1914, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> 'Charters Towers Rifle Club Annual Meeting', *The Northern Miner*, 17 July 1915, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> S.S. Mackenzie, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Vol. X, *The Australians at Rabaul: The Capture and Administration of the German Possessions in the Southern Pacific*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1941, pp. 31–33.

<sup>55</sup> 'Thursday Island Contingent', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 27 November 1915, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> 'Return of Charters Towers Troops', *The Northern Miner*, 23 April 1915, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *The Northern Miner*, 8 May 1915, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> 'The European war', *The Northern Miner*, 6 May 1915, p. 4; *The Northern Miner*, 8 May 1915, p. 4; see also: [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll\\_of\\_honour/person/R1669142/](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person/R1669142/)

<sup>59</sup> 15th Battalion war diary, AWM4 23/32.

One other former member of the Kennedy Regiment with a similar history of service on Thursday Island and in the AN&MEF achieved grim immortality with the 15th Battalion. Major Hugh Quinn gave his name to Quinn's Post, the 'deadliest position' at Gallipoli.<sup>60</sup> Major Quinn was killed in action on 29 May 1915.<sup>61</sup>



*Captain Hugh Quinn in the uniform of the AN&MEF, but with a Kennedy Regiment cap and badge. After enlisting in the AIF he gave his name to Quinn's Post at Gallipoli where he was killed in May 1915 (AWM H17225).*

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<sup>60</sup> Peter Stanley, *Quinn's Post, Anzac, Gallipoli*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 34. See also [http://secure.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll\\_of\\_honour/person/R1654003/](http://secure.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person/R1654003/); 'Quinn's Post', *The Capricornian*, 14 August 1915, p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Service record NAA: B2455 Quinn Hugh. His application for a commission in the AIF is dated 24 September 1914 and states that he joined the Kennedy Regiment in 1906 and reached the rank of Assistant Quartermaster Sergeant within two years before being commissioned on 8 April 1908. He served as adjutant of the 2nd Battalion, AN&MEF.



## On guard with the Citizen Forces

The Citizen Forces remained on duty throughout the rest of 1914. In order to reduce the burden on these men, the Department of Defence called up units in rotation for two-week periods.<sup>62</sup> For those mobilised, the hours were long and tiring and the routine monotonous. As one soldier wrote to a newspaper under a pseudonym:

I am helping to defend the coast in the region of Sydney from the possibilities of an attack. Unfortunately, the possibility of an attack from one of the enemy's men-o'-war is too remote to be romantic. You might not be aware of it, but the whole coast in the vicinity of Sydney is more or less entrenched, and is guarded by outposts, piquet's and companies and half companies. The defence is serious — not sham. Ball ammunition is on hand, ready to be served out to every man should the necessity arise. That is the only sore point with the Australian Tommy Atkins — the 'occasion' is not likely to arise...yet! We have the machine guns imposingly positioned on a hill commanding a beach [name deleted by military censor] about 11/2 miles long. Throughout the long watches of the night a searchlight throws an unbroken flood of light on every square inch of this surface-washed shore...<sup>63</sup>

The tasks allocated to the Citizen Forces included the guarding of munitions factories, cable and wireless stations, important railway bridges and other essential points.<sup>64</sup> The internment of German and Austrian nationals also required the mobilisation of infantry companies. The military soon relaxed its exclusion of the 1914 recruits from mobilisation due to the need to reinforce militia infantry battalions.<sup>65</sup> They also assisted with training the AIF, as one soldier recalled:

One day we were called upon to give a demonstration with the machine guns to the machine gun sections of the Australian Expeditionary Force. Needless to say, we opened their eyes to the terrors which the gun possesses. You should have seen their eyes sparkle as the prospect of getting it into action on the Germans loomed up before their vision.<sup>66</sup>

Citizen officers also quickly became essential in managing and instructing at AIF training facilities, replacing those permanent officers who had volunteered for the AIF.

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<sup>62</sup> 'Mobilisation of Troops', *The West Australian*, 17 August 1914, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> 'News from Barclay: how an army is being trained', *The Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 18 September 1914, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 237.

<sup>65</sup> Chief of the General Staff war diary, AWM4, 1/1/1, pp. 26, 34.

<sup>66</sup> 'News from Barclay: how an army is being trained', *The Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 18 September 1914, p. 2.

The only occasion that the Citizen Forces engaged an enemy occurred on 1 January 1915 when two men opened fire on a train of picnickers outside Broken Hill. By the end of the day four civilians had been killed and seven wounded. Some 50 militiamen from the 82nd Infantry (Barrier Regiment) joined police, rifle club members and the local adjutant of cadets in a gun battle with the two assailants. The force killed both men (identified as Turks, but more likely from what is now Pakistan) who had been fired with zeal by the Ottoman call for a jihad on entering the war. That night rioters burnt down the German club in retribution, although a company from the 82nd prevented them attacking a camel drivers' camp on the edge of town.<sup>67</sup>

The government reduced national defence precautions at the end of 1914. At the beginning of the war, the naval threat had been considered real; by the end of 1914, however, the allies had largely eliminated the German naval presence from the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The allies had also seized German colonies: the Japanese captured the main German naval base at Tsingtao in China after a siege, Australia captured New Guinea, and New Zealand seized Samoa. HMAS *Sydney* had destroyed the German cruiser SMS *Emden* off Cocos Island. This terminated a three-month rampage in which the *Emden* sank two warships and sank or captured 17 merchant ships. The Royal Navy destroyed most of the East Asian Squadron at the Battle of Falkland Islands in December 1914. Of the remaining ships, the Royal Navy hunted down those that did not intern themselves in neutral countries.

Nevertheless the requirement remained for several hundred troops to be stationed in each major port to guard ships and wharves and other critical points. Service for those selected for guard duty was not too onerous. By March 1915 the guards at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory had boarded floors in their tents and meals prepared by two lady caterers; they had also hired a piano and installed a phonograph.<sup>68</sup> Unemployed militiamen volunteered to replace those drawn by ballot who were reluctant to serve.<sup>69</sup> Those who could not find a substitute and failed to attend to their duties received little sympathy from the courts.<sup>70</sup>

The citizen component of the garrison artillery and engineers was subject to periodic duty and occasional full mobilisation throughout the war. As the AGA had to remain available, its members were forbidden to enlist in the AIF for almost two

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<sup>67</sup> 'Story of Tragedy', *Chronicle*, 9 January 1915 and 'War in Broken Hill', *Barrier Miner*, 1 January 1915, p. 2. The *Barrier Miner* provides an incomplete list of 48 militiamen who turned out. One of the civilians was killed by a stray bullet.

<sup>68</sup> 'Small Arms Factory Guard', *Bathurst Times*, 29 March 1915, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Bathurst Times*, 15 and 18 January 1915, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> 'Neglect of Duty', *Bathurst Times*, 22 January 1916, p. 4. The Bathurst court fined Cyril Kenna 10 shillings for failing to report for militia duty, even though his employer had refused to release him, a claim that could have led to their prosecution.

years, causing considerable resentment and social stigma.<sup>71</sup> They were eventually given approval to join the AIF in April 1916.<sup>72</sup> The final mobilisation of the AGA occurred in April 1918 when the men prepared to meet a threat from the German raiders *Wolf* and *Seeadler*.<sup>73</sup>

The Citizen Forces continued to increase throughout the war, reaching 105,000 by 1918.<sup>74</sup> However, in reality this was a shadow force: by June 1917, 75 per cent of officers and almost 50 per cent of men still on its books had actually enlisted in the AIF.<sup>75</sup> A shortage of instructors led to the suspension of Citizen Forces training in 1915.<sup>76</sup> The shortage of officers meant that, in some cases, officers as junior as captains and lieutenants commanded battalions. Training resumed in 1917 but, not surprisingly, the quality of training and discipline was poor. In fact, the entire force became increasingly irrelevant to Australia's contribution to the war.<sup>77</sup> For garrison duties, it was simpler to employ a permanent force for the duration of hostilities. This force was eventually raised from those volunteers rejected by the AIF and those returning from overseas. The Royal Australian Navy took over responsibility for the security of ports and wireless stations.<sup>78</sup>

The real value of the Citizen Forces was realised in 1914. Its major contribution was as a source of officers, NCOs and soldiers for the AIF and in training the initial AIF enlistees.<sup>79</sup> Officers in particular provided the core of AIF units raised in 1914. While the Department of Defence maintained pressure on the remaining citizen officers to volunteer for the AIF, in truth, this was a diminishing asset.

## The rifle clubs at war

Rifle club membership increased following the declaration of war, their visible presence assisting the militia to boost its profile. Rifle club members proved invaluable in assisting with musketry training of the AIF, and their members were granted the honorary rank and pay of sergeants.<sup>80</sup> By the end of September rifle club members were also authorised to guard cable stations, although in locations remote from militia units some had been doing this since August.<sup>81</sup> The Minister for

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<sup>71</sup> See <http://nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au/history/defence/defence-in-the-20th-century/>, accessed 17 January 2014.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, pp. 197–98.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Oppenheim, *The fragile forts: the fixed defences of Sydney Harbour 1788-1963*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2005, p. 199.

<sup>74</sup> *Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1919, p. 1009.

<sup>75</sup> Albert Palazzo, *The Australian Army: A History of its Organisation 1901-2001*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 75.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 196.

<sup>77</sup> Bou, *Light Horse*, p. 183.

<sup>78</sup> Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p. 71.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas Tanner, *Compulsory Citizen Soldiers*, Alternative Publishing Co-operative Limited, 1980, p. 227.

<sup>80</sup> Military Order 498/1914.

<sup>81</sup> On 5 August 1914, 15 men from the Fitzroy rifle club left for Flinders Island to guard the cable station connecting Tasmania to the mainland. 'Victoria, Military Men Offer', *The Advertiser*, 6 August 1914, p. 12.

Defence publicly promoted enrolment, even extravagantly promising one rifle per member.<sup>82</sup> Such promises were unrealistic once further expansion of the AIF began in 1915 and the government stopped selling Lee Enfields to rifle clubs in January that year.<sup>83</sup> To address the shortage of rifles for the AIF, the government recalled all Lee Enfields on loan and offered obsolete Martini-Enfields in their place. In April 1915 the government offered to purchase any Lee Enfields in private hands.<sup>84</sup> By the end of the year, the lack of rifles effectively prevented the formation of new clubs.

By late 1915, however, the importance of rifle clubs to national defence had diminished. AIF training was well established and did not require their support. Rifle club members were still liable for call-out, but with both the 1914 and 1915 militia intakes now available there was little need for their services.<sup>85</sup>

## Raising the AIF

The day before Britain declared war, Cabinet met hastily in Melbourne. With the government in the middle of an election, only five of the 10 cabinet ministers were available. Nevertheless, Cabinet agreed that Australia would offer 20,000 troops to Britain in the event of war. As draft plans already existed for the raising of 12,000 troops for overseas deployment, Major Cyril Brudenell White, the acting Chief of the General Staff, was confident of achieving this within six weeks. The Australian press had reported (incorrectly) that Canada had offered 30,000 (in fact Canada had offered 20,000 with more if required), and so the Australian government decided that 20,000 would be the minimum offer.<sup>86</sup> News of the offers was widely reported in the press the following day.

There was no immediate acceptance from the British government, which still clung to the slim hope that Germany would halt its invasion of Belgium. However, with war declared on 4 August 1914, all offers from the dominions were accepted. The acceptance of the offer was public knowledge by 8 August 1914. The Governor-General formally approved the creation of a new force specifically for overseas service on 15 August 1914. Known as the Australian Imperial Force, it was commanded by Brigadier-General (promoted to major-general) W.T. Bridges, the former Inspector-General.<sup>87</sup> Recruiting had commenced just four days before.

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<sup>82</sup> 'Rifle Clubs', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1915, p. 10; 'How to help the rifle club movement and further the cause of national defence', *The Northern Miner*, 6 March 1915, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Bendigo Advertiser*, 29 January 1915, p. 3. Martini-Enfields could still be purchased at just £1/5 each.

<sup>84</sup> *The Maffra Spectator*, 19 April 1915, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Democrat*, 14 August 1915, p. 12. The Hampton club was called to provide 18 reservists for militia service.

<sup>86</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 20–27.

<sup>87</sup> Military Order 465/1914.

## Recruiting targets for the AIF

An early decision was made that the AIF would be a new force, separate from the existing the Commonwealth Military Forces. One factor in this decision was the youth of the Citizen Forces. Because the Universal Training Scheme was just a few years old, the majority of its rank and file were 18– to 21–years–old and were considered too young to form the basis of an expeditionary force.<sup>88</sup> Regardless of this, as discussed earlier, the Citizen Forces were intended purely for national defence and the Defence Act forbade the despatch of anyone who did not volunteer for overseas service. Citizen units were not a suitable basis and a specially raised force would have to be created.

General Bridges and his Chief of Staff, Major (soon to be lieutenant-colonel) Brudenell White, drafted the principles for recruitment. Preference would be given to those with military experience, with recruitment occurring by state and region. In terms of military experience, their expectation was that up to half the force would come from the Citizen Forces and the other half would comprise Boer War veterans, former militiamen and former British Army servicemen.<sup>89</sup> Despite the enthusiasm for volunteering, none of these goals was entirely achieved.<sup>90</sup> To reach the AIF target each state had a quota based on its population:

**Table 3: State quotas and actual enlistments August to December 1914**

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	Total
Quota of 8 August 1914	7076	6563	2537	1677	1004	918	19,775
Actual enlistments in 1914	20,761	14,847	6150	4812	4096	1895	52,561

(Source: Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, pp. 205, 871.)

<sup>88</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 34.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Stevenson, *To win the battle: the 1st Australian Division in the Great War, 1914-1918*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 18–20.

## Recruiting commences

The formal call for recruits was issued on 10 August 1914 and was published in the daily and evening newspapers.<sup>91</sup> Embarkation overseas was scheduled for 12 September 1914. In fact, thousands of volunteers sought enlistment prior to this, besieging army depots across Australia.<sup>92</sup> The authorities defused this early enthusiasm by taking the men's details and advising country residents to apply in writing. In New South Wales alone, 170 officers volunteered for the 150 officer positions required for the state before recruiting even began.<sup>93</sup>



*AIF recruits are sworn in at Melbourne's Town Hall. Men like this were plentiful in 1914 and 1915, but became increasingly scarce as the war progressed and the country was riven by the debate over conscription for overseas service (AWMM J00321).*

Enlistment commenced in the capital cities on 11 August 1914 and it soon became clear that quotas were unnecessary (see chart 1). In Sydney over 3600 volunteered at Victoria Barracks on the first day. By 20 August 10,000 had enlisted, exceeding the state quota.<sup>94</sup> In Perth recruiting ceased after six days because no more recruits were required.<sup>95</sup> A new quota for Western Australia was established

<sup>91</sup> 'Australia's Force for Overseas Service', *The Daily News*, 10 August 1914, p. 4; *Evening News*, 10 August 1914, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 August 1914, p. 10.

<sup>93</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 August 1914, p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, pp. 210–21.

<sup>95</sup> 'The Expeditionary Force', *The West Australian*, 18 August 1914, p. 5.



and exceeded by 23 August 1914.<sup>96</sup> Two further companies were then authorised and more recruits subsequently accepted.<sup>97</sup> The story was similar in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Hobart (Tasmania had over half its quota within two days).<sup>98</sup> By the middle of August 1914, just as men from rural areas were arriving at urban recruiting depots, there were already more men than required.<sup>99</sup>

A typical example of the raising of an AIF unit occurred with the 5th Battalion. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel David Wanliss, was appointed on 12 August 1914. A 50-year-old militia officer and barrister, his assigned recruiting area included that of his militia battalion, the 52nd Infantry (Victorian Scottish Regiment). His second-in-command and adjutant arrived on 13 August. The battalion temporarily took over five militia depots in South Melbourne, Elsternwick, Prahran and Albert Park and recruiting commenced at the depots on 14 August 1914 under the supervision of six provisional company commanders. The focus was on existing militiamen (particularly the Victorian Scottish and the Victorian Rifles) and others with military experience. The first draft of 790 men reported to the camp at Broadmeadows, constructed on a property north of Melbourne on loan to the Department of Defence. On 29 August 1914 recruiting ceased and the depots closed. Recruiting recommenced briefly on 2 September with the granting of authority to recruit 5 per cent over establishment.<sup>100</sup>

There was little publicity to attract recruits. The district commandants advertised for recruits but there were no posters or recruiting marches — these would come in 1915. There were, however, offers of other assistance. There were offers to raise units, or offers of special motorists and cyclist units and, in one case, a balloon.<sup>101</sup> Donations, particularly of horses (such as 200 by Sydney Kidman), were gratefully accepted.<sup>102</sup> Cars were also accepted with the proviso that they might not be returned.<sup>103</sup> Offers to raise entire units, a common practice in the nineteenth century, were rejected by the authorities, as were similar attempts to raise units based on ethnic groups (such as Scots or Irish) in Australia.<sup>104</sup> The AIF had a firm 'no kilts' policy throughout the war despite assurances that suitable uniforms and music would unleash a flood of Celtic-Australian recruits.

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<sup>96</sup> 'Expeditionary Force Quota Nearing Completion', *The West Australian*, 24 August 1914, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> 'More Volunteers', *The Daily News*, 27 August 1914, p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> 'Volunteers in Tasmania', *Brisbane Courier*, 12 August 1914, p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, pp. 210–11.

<sup>100</sup> 5th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/22. For a biography of Lieutenant Colonel Wanliss see <[http://www.awm.gov.au/units/people\\_1074799.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/units/people_1074799.asp)>; and his service record, NAA: N2455, Wanliss, David Sydney.

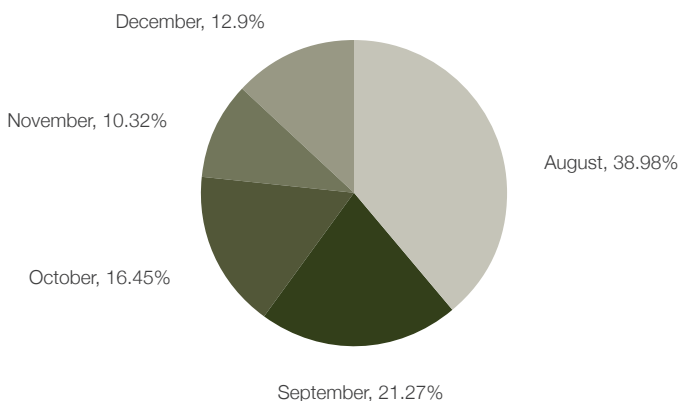
<sup>101</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 August 1914, p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> 'The Expeditionary Force Horses Wanted', *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 August 1914, p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> *Geelong Advertiser*, 29 December 1914, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> 'Scottish Regiment: Volunteers Called For', *The Argus*, 12 August 1914, p. 10.

**Chart 1: Enlistments by percentage by month in 1914**



(Source: Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 871.)

## Standards

The first part of the enlistment process involved a medical examination. Medical problems were generally the reason for the rejection of new recruits. Technically, the standards were not high for the day. In fact, other than the age limits, they were the same as those for the Citizen Forces. The minimum height accepted was 5 feet 6 inches with a chest measurement of 34 inches. Men of lighter build could enlist as drivers in the artillery. Age limits were 19 to 38 with provision for older senior officers, warrant officers and NCOs.<sup>105</sup> These regulations differed from the Citizen Forces where enlistment commenced in the year a man turned 18, but were consistent with enlistment in the British Army. As proof of age was not always possible, some recruiting officers accepted younger recruits and it is likely that many older men lowered their age.<sup>106</sup> Anyone under the age of 20 required the written permission of a parent or guardian.

The recruiting regulations decreed that recruits must be 'physically fit on medical examination'.<sup>107</sup> Medical examiners routinely interpreted these standards for themselves and, with an embarrassment of enlistees, they often sought the best physical examples they could find. At a time before the long Gallipoli campaign and falling recruitment rates, there was no need to relax the physical standards to expand the AIF.

<sup>105</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 60.

<sup>106</sup> L.L. Robson, *The First AIF: A Study of its Recruitment 1914-1918*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1982, p. 23.

<sup>107</sup> A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-18*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, Australian War Memorial, Melbourne, 1930, p. 20.

Defective, lost or false teeth were also grounds for rejection. Dentists did a roaring trade, advertising discount rates for would-be enlistees, and many others operated free of charge out of a sense of patriotism. In some cases, dentists who enlisted as soldiers operated on fellow soldiers. The emphasis on good dental health made military sense. In the early AIF, as in the British Army, dental health was an individual's responsibility. Only in July 1915, given burgeoning dental problems at Gallipoli, were dental sections authorised.<sup>108</sup>

At a time when most adult males smoked, being a smoker was sufficient in at least one case to have the applicant rejected.<sup>109</sup> The eyesight test was conducted without glasses. Officially, the most common reason for medical rejection, representing almost 70 per cent of cases, was the non-specific 'defects and deformities of civilised life'. Other reasons were similarly general: secondary dysfunctions; degeneration and terminal states; sundries, primary infections; infestations by living agents; psycho-physical factors; disorders of the mind; and metabolic dysfunctions. Other reasons were undiagnosed and, in some cases, unintelligible from the records.<sup>110</sup> Venereal disease represented automatic grounds for rejection.

Following the medical examination there were other criteria to be satisfied for enlistment, although these were applied inconsistently. Lack of military training or experience was grounds for rejection as the authorities hoped the bulk of recruits would have recent military experience, ideally within the last five years.<sup>111</sup> Ultimately, this was unrealistic; as one commanding officer recorded, 'the very small percentage of citizen forces volunteering was disappointing.'<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, unless the recruit could demonstrate other useful skills, this was grounds for rejection in the first few weeks.<sup>113</sup> Conversely, in Adelaide some recruiting officers turned away Boer War veterans.<sup>114</sup> Presumably, their experience was not sufficiently recent.

The Minister for Defence expressed a preference for single men when recruiting commenced and soon decreed that only single men could apply, placing an immediate dampener on recruitment.<sup>115</sup> While he soon retracted his edict, his words were taken literally in many cases.<sup>116</sup> The 1st Artillery Brigade, for example, experiencing difficulty attracting recruits from the Citizen Force artillery, formally applied for permission to recruit married men.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 60; Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, pp. 26, 520.

<sup>109</sup> Robson, *The First AIF*, p. 33.

<sup>110</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. III, *Special Problems and Services*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1943, p. 937.

<sup>111</sup> Robson, *The First AIF*, p. 29.

<sup>112</sup> 8th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/25.

<sup>113</sup> 5th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/22.

<sup>114</sup> 'South African soldiers', *Daily Herald*, 27 August 1914, p. 6. However, age may well have been a factor as the youngest Boer War veteran would have been in his thirties.

<sup>115</sup> 'Australia's Call for Volunteers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1914, p. 12; *The West Australian*, 20 August 1914.

<sup>116</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 211.

<sup>117</sup> 1st Artillery Brigade war diary, 19 August 1914, AWM4, 13/29.

In the first year of the war, the AIF rejected 33 per cent of its recruits. From September 1914, the force lowered its standards by raising the maximum age to 45, reducing the minimum height to 5 feet 4 inches and decreasing the minimum chest measurement to 33 inches.<sup>118</sup> Further lowering of standards continued as the war progressed and the need for men grew as the gap between quotas and new enlistments increased. Dental issues and venereal disease became matters for treatment rather than grounds for rejection. Eyesight tests were relaxed and spectacles permitted. By the end of 1915 the authority to reject recruits had passed from individual medical officers to medical boards (staffed by several medical officers) to ensure consistency.<sup>119</sup>



**The original 4th Battalion in training**

*Men of the recently raised 4th Battalion, AIF, train in the sand dunes at Kensington, today a southern Sydney suburb, before embarking for the war in 1914 (AWM A034117).*

Over the course of the war, the rejection rate of recruits for the AIF was 30.31 per cent. By contrast, the rejection rate for the Citizen Forces was just 17.98 per cent, although officially the standards were the same.<sup>120</sup> There is little doubt that recruiting officers and medical officers rejected physically able men in 1914 because better recruits were available.<sup>121</sup> It is hardly surprising that descriptions of the first contingent refer to perfect specimens with superb physique:<sup>122</sup> ‘a splendid force of well knit, lithe, clear-eyed, bronzed men - resourceful, vigilant, and tireless - and they should worthily represent the State and the Commonwealth.’<sup>123</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Robson, *The First AIF*, pp. 33–39.

<sup>119</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, p. 525.

<sup>120</sup> *Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1919, p. 1009. By way of comparison, the Second World War rejection rate was 18.89%. See Joan Beaumont, *Australian Defence Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 111.

<sup>121</sup> *The West Australian*, 27 August 1914.

<sup>122</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 211.

<sup>123</sup> ‘The Expeditionary Force, Queensland’s Quota’, *Brisbane Courier*, 28 August 1914, p. 8.

Naturally there was stigma and embarrassment attached to rejection. This was particularly the case for men from the country where catching the train to enlist was a public event.<sup>124</sup> At Adelong in New South Wales, for example, 2000 people saw off just 17 men in a spectacle that demonstrated the civic pride of small towns.<sup>125</sup> Men who had been rejected could try again at another unit and one man tried four times in Melbourne before finally enlisting in Sydney. Another man rode 460 miles to a railhead, then travelled to Adelaide to join the light horse. The light horse rejected him so he attempted to enlist in Hobart. Rejected again, he finally enlisted in Sydney. Some of the more affluent men took passage to Britain and enlisted there.<sup>126</sup>

## Post-enlistment discharges

Successful enlistment did not necessarily mean that the recruit would embark for service overseas. In 1914 the AIF discharged 4190 men prior to sailing.<sup>127</sup> This included 37 men put ashore from the convoy at Albany as medically unfit.<sup>128</sup> Some physical or medical conditions only became apparent following enlistment such as mental disorders or the symptoms of venereal disease, and re-examination after enlistment was common. Fearful that standards were being relaxed, the Surgeon-General ordered the re-examination of all recent recruits just 10 days into recruitment.<sup>129</sup> Refusing an inoculation was also grounds for immediate discharge.<sup>130</sup>

In some cases, medical discharge was not the end. The Australian official historian Charles Bean cites the example of Digges La Touche, a Church of England priest who joined as a private soldier. Discharged on medical grounds, he simply re-enlisted and was killed in action at Lone Pine with the 2nd Battalion in 1915.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 59.

<sup>125</sup> 'Adelong', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 August 1914, p. 10.

<sup>126</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 44.

<sup>127</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. III, *Special Problems and Services*, p. 889.

<sup>128</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, p. 38.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>130</sup> 5th Light Horse Regiment war diary, AWM4, 10/10.

<sup>131</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 44; see also <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/1DRL/0243/>

## Specialist recruiting

While the bulk of enlistment was for the infantry, artillery and light horse, there was also a need for specialists, including tradesmen, who provided the majority of the engineers.<sup>132</sup> Recruitment of medical personnel presented little problem, although the preference was to draw doctors and nurses from the Citizen Forces and then recruit from the wider population of qualified volunteers.<sup>133</sup>

The standardisation of proficiency across the states meant that recruitment of nurses from civilian life was straightforward. Indeed, the process was similar to its civilian equivalent, with nurses simply applying with references. The Australian Army Nursing Service Principal Matron in each state then reviewed the nurses' suitability. The requirements for nurses were clearly stated: each applicant must be between 21 and 40, single or a widow, and with three years' training and service in a 'duly recognised civil General Hospital'. This latter requirement soon proved unduly restrictive, excluding those in smaller general hospitals, private and unregistered hospitals. In 1915 the requirement changed to require a certificate in general nursing or accreditation from a nursing association.<sup>134</sup>

The British government suggested the appointment of a war correspondent. Accordingly, the Australian Journalists' Association held a ballot and recommended Charles Bean, who would later become the author and editor of Australia's official history of the war and the driving force behind the creation of the Australian War Memorial.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, p. 28.

<sup>134</sup> Kirsty Harris, *More than bombs and bandages, Australian Army nurses at work in World War I*, Big Sky Publishing, Newport, 2011, pp. 21, 41.

<sup>135</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 215.

## Digger profile

Bean described the early volunteers as 'adventurous' and 'reckless'.<sup>136</sup> The average digger in 1914 was a young, white, fit male around 24-years-old and overwhelmingly single. Over one third had no military experience (see table 4):

**Table 4: Previous military experience of 1st Australian Division enlistees in 1914**

Previous service	Number	%
No service	6098	41.50
Those who had previously served in the Citizen Forces	2460	16.74
Citizen Forces under compulsory training	2263	15.40
Citizen Forces	1555	10.58
Former British regulars	1308	8.90
Former British territorials	1009	6.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,693</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(Source: Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 60.)

The image of the digger as a bushman is far from true. As one observer noted as early as 1907, 'in the two qualities which stood so well to the Transvaal Boers in the late war – namely, the ability to ride and shoot – our young men are lamentably deficient.'<sup>137</sup> In fact, most infantrymen were urban blue collar workers.<sup>138</sup> Enlistees came from the towns and cities and included bank clerks, policemen (public servants were guaranteed their jobs on return), tradesmen, students and at least one member of the New South Wales Parliament (see table 5).<sup>139</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 43.

<sup>137</sup> Major T.B. Dibbs quoted in John Barrett, *Falling in: Australians and 'boy conscription' 1911-1915*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, p. 33.

<sup>138</sup> Stevenson, *To win the battle*, p. 20.

<sup>139</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 44.



**Table 5: Occupations of members of the AIF enlisted 1914-18**

Occupation	Number	%
Tradesmen	112,452	33.88
Labourers	99,252	29.90
Country callings	57,430	17.30
Clerical	24,346	7.33
Professional	15,719	4.74
Miscellaneous	14,122	4.25
Seafaring	6562	1.98
Nurses	2063	0.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>331,946</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(Source: Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 874.)

Light horse recruits came predominantly from rural backgrounds, although in some regiments the proportion of townsmen was higher than might have been expected. In contrast to the pre-war Citizen Forces, rural enlistments comprised fewer landowners and more rural labourers. It is likely that landowners were older, married and, as inheritors of the family property, under social pressure to remain on the land.<sup>140</sup>

Of the first contingent, 90 per cent of soldiers were single. Those who were married had to agree to the deduction of two-fifths of their pay for their wives and a further one fifth for each dependent child. Most recruits were nominally Christian, reflecting the population at large. The listing of religion as 'Church of England' was overrepresented with almost half of all enlistments, while followers of the Church of England made up only 38 per cent of the general population of Australia at that time.<sup>141</sup>

Aboriginal and other non-European ethnic minorities managed to enlist in 1914 despite prohibitions on non-European recruitment, albeit in very small numbers. William (Billy) Sing, with a Chinese father and Scottish mother, enlisted in the 5th Light Horse in October 1914. Like many others, he had no previous military experience. He may have benefitted from the fact that he was a British subject, single, an active rifle club member and without criminal convictions. His given

<sup>140</sup> John McQuilton, 'Enlistment for the First World War in rural Australia: the case of north-eastern Victoria, 1914-1918', *Wartime: Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 33, 2000.

<sup>141</sup> Beaumont, *Sources and Statistics*, p. 116; *Yearbook for the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1919, p. 134.

occupation — horse driver — undoubtedly made him attractive to the light horse.<sup>142</sup> At least two Aboriginal Australians successfully enlisted in 1914, although most recruiting officers turned away Aboriginal volunteers.<sup>143</sup> Their ambiguous legal status (constitutionally they were a state responsibility) and their lack of military training reinforced attitudes at the time that they would not make good soldiers. These attitudes would only change in 1916 and 1917 with the reduced strength of the AIF after costly battles, the failure of the conscription referendums, and the New Zealand success in recruiting Maoris.

In all, 52,561 men successfully enlisted in 1914. Many more attempted to do so. By the end of the war, 416,809 servicemen had enlisted with 331,781 embarking for overseas service.<sup>144</sup>

## NCO recruitment

The NCOs were the weakest element of the AIF units formed in 1914.<sup>145</sup> Each regiment and battalion had four NCOs from the Permanent Forces appointed to critical positions. These were the Regimental Sergeant Major, responsible for discipline, the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant, responsible for administration of stores and weapons, and the sergeants of the machine-gun and signals sections.<sup>146</sup> Apart from these four, most NCOs were recruited from men with previous military experience although, as noted in Hamilton's 1914 inspection, the militia's NCOs were very young. While former British soldiers were a valuable source, the selection of NCOs was often based on those identified as having potential. NCO selection became more difficult for units raised in September as these contained fewer Citizen Forces soldiers than those raised in August, owing to the initial rush of Citizen Forces men to enlist in the AIF. In September 1914, for example, 85 per cent of the 15th Battalion's enlistees had no military experience.<sup>147</sup> Instead, the battalion had to rely initially on Permanent Force instructors and then on officers to provide most of the training. To address this, from November NCO selection was by competitive practical examination.<sup>148</sup> As with officers, NCO appointments were provisional and they were easily replaced if found unsatisfactory.<sup>149</sup> How long that probationary period lasted was determined by their commanding officer, and in 1914 one commander planned to confirm the NCOs in

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<sup>142</sup> Service record, NAA: B2455, Sing, William Edward; John Hamilton, *Gallipoli Sniper: The Life of Billy Sing*, Pan Macmillan, Australia, Sydney, 2009, pp. 55–73. John Hamilton speculates that Sing's enlistment in Bowen, rather than Proserpine where he lived, may have been an attempt to conceal his ancestry and that the examining doctor may have colluded.

<sup>143</sup> Timothy Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 88.

<sup>144</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, pp. 871–74.

<sup>145</sup> Stevenson, *To win the battle*, p. 21.

<sup>146</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 82.

<sup>147</sup> 15th Battalion war diary, AWMM4, 23/32.

<sup>148</sup> 'The Forces, Expeditionary Unit Officers Appointed', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1914, p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> 5th Battalion war diary, AWMM4, 23/22.

his unit only when they reached 'England'.<sup>150</sup>

## Officer recruitment

Officers were crucial to the task of preparing the AIF for overseas service and were generally selected from a pool of available candidates from the Citizen Forces and Permanent Military Forces. Most — some 74 per cent — were from the Citizen Forces with others from the Permanent Forces, British officers seconded to Australia and former officers with a variety of experience (see table 6). Staff officers for the 1st Australian Division came from the Permanent Forces, including British officers then on exchange and secondment in Australia. They also provided the brigade major and staff captain (admin) positions for each of the brigades.

**Table 6: Recruitment of officers for the 1st Australian Division**

Origin	Number	%
Citizen Forces	402	64.32
Current or former officers of the Australia Permanent Forces	68	10.88
Citizen Forces under the compulsory service scheme	58	9.28
Retired Citizen Forces	33	5.28
Never served before	24	3.84
British officers	16	2.56
Former British officers	15	2.4
British Territorial officers or similar	9	1.44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 54.)

In order to have key appointments in place, General W.T. Bridges selected his brigadiers before recruiting commenced, and they in turn nominated unit commanding officers.<sup>151</sup> Brigadiers and commanding officers generally came from the Citizen Forces along with a few former or currently serving British officers.<sup>152</sup> An adjutant was appointed to assist each commanding officer.<sup>153</sup> The adjutant, essentially the commander's staff officer, was either from the Permanent Forces or the Citizen Forces, but it was vital that the position went to someone with prior military service. Other than the adjutant, commanding officers nominated their own officers. Most were Citizen Forces officers from within their recruiting area and

<sup>150</sup> 8th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/25.

<sup>151</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 42.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

known to the commander, lending a truly regional flavour to the initial composition of the battalions. In some cases objectivity in such appointments was attempted. In the 1st Brigade, applications were invited<sup>154</sup> while in one case in the 2nd Brigade, interviews were held.<sup>155</sup> However, it was the usual practice that, once the commanding officers had selected their company commanders, they in turn nominated their subordinate officers. Unsurprisingly, there was some criticism of this approach. Consequently, when the 4th Brigade was raised in September, selection boards independently chose suitable candidates.



*Major-General William Bridges was the Inspector-General (as a colonel) in 1914 and became the AIF's first commander. He chose the force's key staff officers and brigade commanders, who chose the unit commanders, who in turn chose their own officers. Apart from a sprinkling of Permanent Forces men and former or serving British officers, the majority came from the Citizen Forces (AWM 02867).*

For the first few weeks of the war, the administrative process was relatively informal. Appointment of commanding officers was by telegram, and in some cases, by telephone.<sup>156</sup> The appointment of officers was on an acting basis until formal appointments began on 19 August 1914, but this allowed the skeletal structure of the infant force to be established and recruiting to begin.<sup>157</sup> The delay in official appointments did have an unexpected benefit: commanders could easily replace officers when they proved unsatisfactory.<sup>158</sup>

In order to increase the number of professional officers, the Governor-General appointed the 27 senior cadets from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, as lieutenants. They sailed with first contingent, while the following class cadets were despatched with the second contingent.<sup>159</sup> General Sir Ian Hamilton later commented that each 'Duntroon educated officer was literally worth his weight in gold.'<sup>160</sup>

<sup>154</sup> 'NSW Expeditionary Force, Selection of Officers', *Evening News*, 12 August 1914, p. 6.

<sup>155</sup> 7th Battalion war diary, 16 August 1914, AWM4, 23/24.

<sup>156</sup> 10th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/27.

<sup>157</sup> Military Order 476/1914.

<sup>158</sup> 5th Battalion war diary, AWM4, 23/22.

<sup>159</sup> *Report on the Royal Military College of Australia 1913-1914*, William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer, Sydney, 1915, pp. 14-17.

<sup>160</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 199.

## Organisation of the AIF

Initially, Britain suggested that Australia should provide two infantry brigades, a light horse brigade and a field artillery brigade. Australia responded with an offer of a division and a separate light horse brigade.<sup>161</sup> There was concern that anything less than a division, with all its logistic elements, would result in Australian brigades being integrated into British divisions and losing their national identity. In addition, this structure of one division of three infantry brigades plus a separate light horse brigade neatly totalled the 20,000 men Australia was offering. From December 1914 state quotas were imposed for the recruiting of reinforcements (see table 7).

**Table 7: State monthly quotas for reinforcements from December 1914**

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	Total
Quota	1,021	970	406	330	357	153	3,237

(Source: Robson, *The First AIF*, p. 38.)

The structure of what became the 1st Australian Division was based on the paper-only structure that existed in the Australian War Establishments, which was nevertheless closely modelled on the British Army. The biggest difference was that the 1st Australian Division had half the artillery of its British counterpart of 1914. In part, this mirrored a local establishment for smaller four-gun batteries, but it also reflected the lack of modern 4.5-inch howitzers and 60-pounders in Australia. Consequently, the division set sail without a field howitzer brigade or a 60-pounder battery. In addition, there was no specialist artillery such as horse or mountain artillery, and the AIF would rely on British or Indian units for these niche capabilities throughout the war. However, the division did have a greater allocation of engineers and light horse than an equivalent British division.

Recruitment quickly reached the 20,000 required and, on 3 September 1914, Australia offered a fourth infantry brigade and an additional light horse brigade. This was followed by a third light horse brigade in October. The large number of mounted units reflected a desire not to waste country recruits by enlisting them as infantry.<sup>162</sup>

The British War Office suggested that line of communication troops, separate from the division and brigades, be recruited to support the AIF. As a result, recruitment for a clearing hospital (later called a casualty clearing station), two stationary hospitals, two general hospitals and four veterinary sections commenced in September.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>163</sup> Butler, *Official Medical History*, Vol. I, *Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, p. 27; Military Order 520/1914(?).

## Recruitment of units by states and regions (see tables 8 and 9)

**Table 8: First contingent AIF by state and region**

	Unit or sub-unit	State	Main regions
1st Infantry Brigade	1st Battalion	NSW	Inner western Sydney
	2nd Battalion	NSW	Maitland and Newcastle
	3rd Battalion	NSW	West and south coast
	4th Battalion	NSW	Eastern Sydney
2nd Infantry Brigade	5th Battalion	VIC	Melbourne
	6th Battalion	VIC	Melbourne
	7th Battalion	VIC	Bendigo
	8th Battalion	VIC	Ballarat
3rd Infantry Brigade	9th Battalion	QLD	State wide but included Northern Rivers of NSW
	10th Battalion	SA	State wide but included Broken Hill
	11th Battalion	WA	State wide
	12th Battalion	TAS, SA & WA	Across states with Tasmania providing half
Divisional troops			
Light Horse	4th Australian Light Horse Regiment	VIC	State wide
1st Field Artillery Brigade	1st Battery	Permanent Military Forces	No. 1 Permanent Battery
	2nd Battery	NSW	State wide
	3rd Battery	NSW	State wide
2nd Field Artillery Brigade	4th Battery	VIC	State wide
	5th Battery	VIC	State wide
	6th Battery	VIC	State wide
3rd Field Artillery Brigade	7th Battery	QLD	State wide
	8th Battery	WA	Largely from 37th Battery
	9th Battery	TAS	Largely from two militia batteries <sup>164</sup>

Engineers	1st Field Company	NSW	State wide
	2nd Field Company	VIC	State wide
	3rd Field Company	QLD, NSW, SA, WA and TAS	Across states
Medical	1st Field Ambulance	NSW	State wide
	2nd Field Ambulance	VIC	State wide
	3rd Field Ambulance	QLD, SA, WA and TAS	Across states
1st Light Horse Brigade	1st Australian Light Horse Regiment	NSW	
	2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment	QLD	
	3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment	SA and TAS	

(Source: Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 37–42, 58; Stevenson, *To win the battle*, pp. 23–24.)

<sup>164</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 58.



**Table 9 : Second contingent AIF by state**

	Unit or sub-unit	State
4th Infantry Brigade	13th Battalion	NSW
	14th Battalion	VIC
	15th Battalion	QLD and TAS
	16th Battalion	SA and WA
2nd Light Horse Brigade	5th Australian Light Horse Regiment	QLD
	6th Australian Light Horse Regiment	NSW
	7th Australian Light Horse Regiment	NSW
3rd Light Horse Brigade	8th Australian Light Horse Regiment	VIC
	9th Australian Light Horse Regiment	SA and VIC
	10th Australian Light Horse Regiment	WA

(Source: Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, pp. 37–39, 40, 41–42, 58.)

## Territorial alignment with Citizen Forces

Initially there were some attempts to align the AIF with existing Citizen Force units. These plans were generally short lived, although the artillery was more successful than most in retaining this alignment. In the 5th Infantry Battalion, enlistees were organised into companies based on the depot of enlistment. This preserved some local linkages in the battalions in the early part of the war. The 1st Infantry Battalion affiliated its companies with those militia battalions from which their officers were recruited. The militia battalions strengthened this link with the presentation of inscribed bugles to each company.<sup>165</sup> These affiliations broke down quickly once the AIF infantry battalions reorganised from eight to four infantry companies in January 1915, and with the arrival of fresh recruits from Australia during the course of 1915.

The 1st Artillery Brigade assigned each of its batteries a Citizen Forces artillery brigade for recruiting. This failed to generate sufficient recruits so, on 19 August 1914, they obtained permission to recruit married men and, subsequently, recruits other than trained gunners.<sup>166</sup> With the transfer of No. 1 Permanent Battery to the brigade, this neat arrangement ended. The brigade then assigned the recruits from the original 1st Battery to other batteries and the brigade ammunition column.<sup>167</sup> Ultimately, the AIF would create its own distinct identity, separate from the Citizen Forces.

<sup>165</sup> B.V. Stacy, F.J. Kindon & H.V. Chedghey, *The History of the First Battalion AIF 1914-1919*, Sydney, 1931.

<sup>166</sup> 1st Artillery Brigade war diary, AWM4, 13/29.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

## AN&MEF and British reservists

In August, at the request of the British government, Australia raised the AN&MEF, a second, much smaller expeditionary force. Enlistment began on 11 August for six months of unspecified service 'for [the] tropics'.<sup>168</sup> The Royal Australian Navy provided six companies of reservists and the army recruited a battalion from New South Wales. This small force would seize German New Guinea in September 1914.

There was also one final group of Australians to enlist in 1914. These were former British servicemen whose reserve period had not expired,<sup>169</sup> with around 1000 men affected.<sup>170</sup> These men could not join the AIF. Instead, they were employed as members of port garrisons until they joined the first convoy to Europe to return to the British Army.<sup>171</sup> Because of the difference between Australian and British rates of pay, there was significant temptation for British reservists to join the AIF. In 1915, the commander of the AIF Training Depot at Broadmeadows discovered that his best NCO was in fact a British reservist. He court-martialled the NCO for desertion and returned him to Britain.<sup>172</sup>

The Australian government was conscious of the disparity in pay. While in Australia and attached to Australian units, British reservists received Citizen Forces rates of pay and the government subsequently made provision to support their families.<sup>173</sup>



*Members of the AN&MEF being ferried across Sydney Harbour to embark for the conquest of German New Guinea in 1914. While the AIF has deservedly become the best known Australian military force of the First World War, the AN&MEF was the first force to leave the country and see (brief) action (AWM A03272).*

<sup>168</sup> Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 224.

<sup>169</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 August 1914.

<sup>170</sup> *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 13 August 1914, p. 3.

<sup>171</sup> Bean, *Official History*, Vol. I, *The Story of Anzac*, p. 94.

<sup>172</sup> Williams, *These are the facts*, p. 35.

<sup>173</sup> Chief of the General Staff war diary, AWM4 1/1/1, p. 118; Scott, *Official History*, Vol. XI, *Australia during the War*, p. 30.

## Conclusion

By 21 September 1914, the first contingent was complete and ready to sail. The second contingent was ready by October. That both contingents could be raised, trained and ready for service in such a brief period was testament to pre-war planning and the implementation of Kitchener's 1910 program of military reform. While not designed to provide an overseas expeditionary force, the pre-war army provided the officers, weapons, uniforms and equipment that the AIF would require from August 1914. As the commander of the 7th Battalion AIF, Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, remarked: 'the existing organisation of territorial battalions in my opinion immensely facilitated the assembly and selection of recruits and provided a wide field for the selection for officers.'<sup>174</sup> The Citizen Forces deserve the lion's share of credit as the initial trainers of the AIF.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> 7th Battalion war diary, 21 August 1914, AWM4, 23/24.

<sup>175</sup> Lex McAulay, *Anzac to Zentsuji: the military career of Colonel J.J. Scanlan, DSO MID*, Banner Books, Maryborough, 2012.







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