

**PART I**

**INTRODUCTION**

(A) **DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES UP TO 1929**

(I) **PERIODS OF CHANGE IN THE ORGANISATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES PRIOR TO 1929**

In the years that elapsed after the departure of the last British Regiment from Australia in 1870 the Australian Citizen Army changed several times in organization, composition and methods of recruiting according to local public interest, government policy and financial considerations.

1. **Before Federation**

(a) **Early Development**

Prior to 1870, the main defence of Australia was entrusted to small garrisons of British troops quartered in the leading cities. Temporary volunteer forces had been raised at various times, mostly as a result of European wars or rumours of wars, but it was not until 1870, when the last Imperial regiment was withdrawn, that small detachments of permanent soldiery were established.

These acted as a nucleus on which a citizen force was shaped. The latter consisted of unpaid groups of volunteers, providing their own uniforms and serving on voluntary engagements.

(b) **The First Militia (1885-1811)**

In 1884, the need was seen for a more disciplined and better trained force, and a partially paid or militia organization was introduced by the Eastern colonies, which at the time were separately governed and under no central Federal authority, wherein citizens were enlisted for definite periods, instructors, pay and uniforms were provided, enforcement of attendance and discipline as authorized and discharge could only be obtained by approval on payment.

As the Militia was only raised in those populous areas where numbers sufficient to form drill squads could be maintained, a number of Volunteer units was allowed to continue in being in other places.

2. **The Effects of Federation (1900)**

(a) **The Assumption of Commonwealth Control of the Forces**

One of the powers vested in the Commonwealth by the constitution in 1901 was “the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and the several States, and the control of the forces to execute and maintain the laws of the Commonwealth”.

In March, 1901, the Commonwealth Ministry for Defence took over control of the whole of the forces of the States, having a total strength of 28,886.

By the Defence Acts of 1903 and 1904, the Defence Force was declared to consist of the naval and military forces of the Commonwealth, divided into “permanent” and “citizen forces”. The former consisted of persons bound to continuous service for a definite term. Until 1911, these were known as the “Militia” and were paid. The Citizen Forces were not normally paid and were known as “Volunteers”.

3. **Changes in the System of Administration (1905)**

Until 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1905, the administration of the Commonwealth Forces was by means of a G.O.C. Commanding and a headquarters staff. On that date, A Council of Defence as set up to deal with questions of policy and, following on the constitution of the Army Council at the War Office, a Military Board was constituted to supervise the administration of the forces. It was aimed to “maintain a continuous connection between Parliamentary responsibility and the control and development of the defence forces, the minister being in constant and effective touch with the department.

4. **Universal Training (1911)**

At the invitation of the Commonwealth, Lord Kitchener visited Australia in 1909 to advise upon the land defences. His report recommended, amongst other things, the compulsory training of citizens for national defence and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1911, the Defence Act 1909, embodying these provisions, came into operation by proclamation.

Training was prescribed as follows:-

- (a) From 12 to 14 years of age – Junior Cadets
- (b) From 14 to 18 Years of age – Senior Cadets
- (c) From 18 to 25 years of age – Citizen Forces
- (d) From 25 to 26 years of age – Citizen Forces

(Service under (d) was nominal except in time of imminent danger of war).

The length of training to be carried out was:-

- (a) Junior Cadets – 120 hours per annum.
- (b) Senior Cadets – 4 whole days, 12 half days and 24 night drills per annum.
- (c) Citizen Forces – 16 whole days per annum, of which not less than 8 were to be in camps of continuous training.

When the first quotas of senior cadets completed their compulsory training, the old Militia and Volunteer Battalions were split up into new units and their officers and N.C.C.'s used to form the nuclei of universal training battalions of males from eighteen to twenty-five years of age.

#### 5. **The War Years – 1914-1918**

By June, 1914, the twelve battalions of militia of 1912 and under Universal Military Training been increased to fifty-two battalions, of varying strength, each with a backbone of older soldiers serving voluntarily, and two quotas of universal trainees (ie, those in their 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> years.)

#### **NOTES:**

- (1) Commonwealth Year Book No. 4 page 1081
- (2) Commonwealth Year Book No 4 page 1076
- (3) Full details of Universal Training are obtainable from Year Book No 4 pages 1086-1096.

This was the situation when war broke out in August, 1914. When twelve battalions existing prior to 1912 were again raised from volunteers in their original States to form the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force, led by officers and N.C.O's of the old Militia Units.

#### 6. **Universal Training Post (1911-1918) War Period**

Ample funds were made available for the revival of the Citizen Force units in 1920, but the war weary soldiers and civilians, and the widespread feeling that war was a thing of the past, conduced a general lack of public interest which led (in 1922) to a retrenchment of the Permanent Forces and a reduction in the numbers of annual quotas of adults and senior cadets to be trained in the Citizen Forces. Training was carried out only in large cities and industrial centres, the annual requirements of attendance at home training and camps being very considerably reduced.

7. **The Voluntary Militia – 1929**

In November, 1929, the Government decided to entirely suspend the Universal Training Clauses of the Defence Act, and issued instructions to reconstitute the A.M.F. on a voluntary militia basis with a total establishment of 35,000 including senior cadets.

This Volunteer Militia system (inaugurated in one of the worst years of a financial depression) was developed slowly during the succeeding lean years; but so progressively that at the outbreak of war in 1929, the strength of the voluntarily enlisted Citizen Forces stood at 70,785.

8. **Comparative strength of the Australian Military Forces from Federation to 1929**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Significance of Date</b>	<b>Strength</b>
March 1901	Date Commonwealth assumed control of AMF	26,886
June 1911	Universal Training introduced on 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 1911	21,638
Jun 1913	One Year after training of adults under U.T. actually commenced (1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 1912)	34,537
June 1914	1 <sup>st</sup> World War began August 1914. (Universal Trainees only).	45,645
June 1918	Armistice Signed November 1918. (Universal Trainees only).	122,186
June 1922	The Year of retrenchment of the Forces (see paragraph 6 above).	37,156
June 1929	Universal Training was suspended in November 1929.	44,388
This was the peak strength under Universal Training		

(II) **AVAILABILITY RECORDS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHANGES OF ORGANISATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CITIZEN FORCES.**

In all of the foregoing changes there have been factors and difficulties in common, which have had to be considered and applied by the authorities, and by officers dealing with the individual citizen in his capacity as a soldier.

On the other hand, each period has had a vital factor peculiar to local circumstances, which had to be given special consideration and treatment, particularly where volunteer forces were involved, if units were to be recruited and maintained with a corporate spirit and esprit de corpe.

In a General Order for Victoria issued in January, 1884, the Governor remarked that –

“It is regretted this purely voluntary and honorary service has not received a more hearty recognition from the general public and that the wealthy mercantile, professional and leisured classes.....have ceased for many years to belong to or take any active interest in the force, but this only augments the honour of those who, notwithstanding, remained perseveringly at their post.”

On the subject of putting the defences on a sound basis, the order states that “this result will be all the more certainly achieved and rapidly attained from the fact that members of the present Volunteer Corps have freely offered their Services in the new Militia.”

2. **Sources of Information**

(a) **Universal Training 1911**

(i) **Reasons for Introduction**

The causes which led to the introduction of Universal Training in 1911 (ie.) the factors adversely affecting the continuance of the Militia Army) were fully discussed in the press and reported in Hansard for many years prior to 1911.

Lord Kitchener’s report on the military Forces 1910 is also pertinent.

(ii) **Results of Universal Training**

The results obtained under Universal Training during the years 1911-1914 are contained in the reports of the Inspector-General, Major-General G.M. Kirkpatrick for these years.

(b) **The Effect of the War Years (1914/1918)**

During these years the nation was mainly pre-occupied with raising, maintaining and equipping the Expeditionary Forces.

Information regarding Citizen Forces and Senior Cadets (during the years 1914-1917) may be obtained from:-

- (i) Report upon Department of Defence 1914-1917 Part I compiled by the Defence Department.
- (ii) Part II of the above report.

**NOTES:**

- (1) General Order for Victoria No. 13 of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1884.
- (2) Exists only as printer's proofs but is available in the Defence Library.

(c) **The Aftermath of War 1921-1930**

The Annual Reports of General Sir A. Chauvel, the last Inspector-General of the Australian Military Forces under Universal Training, are a indication that the interest and efficiency of the men in the ranks of any unit were only maintained by the Superior knowledge, interest and efficiently of their Officers and N.C.O's a fact which and been clearly demonstrated at training parades and in camps.

The efficiency of the officers and N.C.O.'s themselves could only be produced and maintained by the time spent in extra study and training at courses, camps, etc.

The difficulty of obtaining leave from civil employment to attend these activities, frequently forced many promising young officers and N.C.O's to leave the Citizen Forces, as they realized that without the extra instruction they could not gain the knowledge essential for the responsibility of advance in rank.

(B) **THE VOLUNTEER NUCLEUS OF OFFICERS AND N.C.O.'s – ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE CITIZEN ARMY**

(1) **General Blamey's Report**

In a report to the Commanding Officers' Conference in 1932, Major-General (later General) Sir T.A. Blamey commented:-

“The present Militia Forces exist solely by reason of the enthusiasm of Militia officers and N.C.O.'s whose enthusiasm has grown out of the A.I.F. and subsequent Universal Training organizations.

These personnel should receive every encouragement to continue until more prosperous times come and a really effective scheme can be considered.”

This volunteer nucleus of officers and N.C.O.'s is vital to any citizen force, whether the latter consists of volunteers or compulsory recruits.

(2) **Activities of this group in the Post (1914/1918) War Years**

(a) **1921-1930**

Although General Blamey's report was made in 1932 this enthusiastic group of officers and N.C.O.'s had carried on equally earnestly in 1921.

Ample funds were available but the public apathy and war weariness of the nation made it a very heartbreaking task for officers and instructors to enthuse the youthful rank and file compulsory trainees.

That they succeeded in sustaining interest and obtaining the required number of volunteers is indicated by the number of men of all ages who enlisted in the new Militia in 1930.

This was no small achievement because the public was generally apathetic and progressive training was made almost impossible, being limited to bare essentials for which minimum funds were provided.

(b) **1931-1939**

Their efforts from 1930 onwards (combined with the very gradual improvement in the financial conditions) brought such good results that prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, the then Inspector-General (Lieutenant-General Squires) and the Military Board recommended against a reversion to Universal Training.

Moreover, during the first years of the 1939/45 war, it was and officer the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Divisions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> A.I.F. and an Armoured Division from the Citizen Forces, and still retain the Division of the latter Forces for home defence.

(3) **Future importance of this Group**

If at any time after the 1939/45 war, public reaction and financial stringency should cause the public Defence Force to be relegated to the background of public interest, General Blamey's words should be kept in mind regarding the Citizen Forces.

If the enthusiasm and sacrifice of time and study of this group of keen officers and N.C.O.'s is allowed to die out, neither money nor the volunteering of large numbers of gallant, but untrained men will enable an effective Army to be suddenly created in a crisis.