

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

1929 – 1939

BY

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PREFACE

The report which follows traces in detail the changes in organization and constitution of the Citizen Military Forces during the years 1929 – 1939.

Besides being a reference work for archivists, it is intended to provide the beginning of a cumulative background of experiences upon which future administrators, at both Formation and Army Headquarters, can draw for guidance.

Whilst actual methods of warfare may change it can be assumed that the future of the Australian peace-time Army (following the Second World War) will include similar cycles of trials and tribulations as in the past, so that a record of this nature should provide ready solutions to many problems which other-wise could only be solved by again reverting to trial and error.

The period covered may be divided into three main parts:-

January 1940 – December 1932 - These were the lean years of unemployment and financial stringency and the first three years after the suspension of Universal Training, when the creation of an entirely new Citizen Army was in progress.

January 1933 – December 1935 – These were the dull years when the novelty of the new uniforms and activities had worn off. Funds were greatly restricted the depression and the dole were still in existence and, to the public, prospects of war seemed almost non-existent.

January 1936 – December 1939 – This period saw some momentous events in Europe, culminating in the declaration of war against Germany in September 1939. Hitler occupied the Ruhr, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia and Italy invaded Abyssinia. With the changing European scene, a gradual increase in funds led to progressive improvements in training, equipment and conditions of service. The feeling of insecurity after Munich caused a revival of public interest in military affairs, additional funds were provided and in 1939, an organized force of 70,000 volunteers was in existence