

The Walrus and the Penguin: The Expansion of the British Army during the First World War

In the course of the First World War the British Army grew by a factor of five.¹ At first glance, this great expansion seems to have been the product a long series of *ad hoc* measures. Upon closer inspection, however, a different pattern emerges. Just below the surface of a great exercise in improvisation, one can see the interaction of two very different approaches to the problem of mass mobilization. One of these approaches belonged to Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the walrus-moustached professional soldier who was, among many other things, the poster child for the British war effort. The other was the brainchild of Richard Burdon Haldane, a lifelong civilian, who, notwithstanding mannerisms that led some contemporaries to compare him to a penguin, might safely be described as the architect of the military forces available the United Kingdom at the outbreak of the war.

In August of 1914, the United Kingdom possessed two distinct military forces. The first of this was the Regular Army, a force of long-term volunteers that provided garrisons to the port cities of the British Empire, the British contingent of the Indian Army, and, with the help of a large number of reservists, a home-based Expeditionary Force. The second was the Territorial Force, a body of part-time soldiers that was primarily concerned with the defence of the British Isles against sea-borne invasion. In the course of shaping the component units and formations of both forces, the responsible authorities had taken great pains to ensure a high degree of interoperability. Thus, war planners were able to contemplate situations where the infantry divisions and mounted brigades of the Territorial Force served side-by-side with the infantry divisions and cavalry brigades of the Regular Army. At the same time, the administration of each force was an entirely separate affair. Indeed, the work of recruiting, clothing, and training the members of the Regular Army was carried out by agencies that were not only separate from those that provided the same services to members of the Territorial Force, but organized along very different lines.

For most of its history, the Regular Army had been a highly decentralized organization in which most administrative functions were performed by individual units or corps.² However, in the decades leading up to 1914, the Regular Army had begun to centralize some of these functions. In the case of clothing, the displacement of brightly coloured ‘regimentals’ by general service khaki completed a long-term trend towards the centralized procurement of nearly all of the items worn by enlisted men. In the case of recruiting, the work was divided between individual corps,

¹ On 1 August 1914, the British Army was a force of some 733,000 officers and men. On 1 March 1918, when it was as big as it would ever be, its strength was somewhere in the vicinity of 3,910,000. Great Britain, War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War, 1914-1920* (hereafter War Office, *Statistics*) (London: HMSO, 1924), pp. 30 and 78.

² Not to be confused with the formations known as ‘army corps’, a ‘corps’ of the British Army was an administrative organization that might be as large as the Mounted Branch of the Royal Regiment of Artillery or as small as the Royal Veterinary Corps. On 1 October 1913, the former, which encompassed the Royal Field Artillery and the Royal Horse Artillery, had more than 28,134 officers and men on active service. On the same day, the latter had but 216. The most common form of corps, however, was an infantry regiment, the average strength of which was a little short of 2,000 officers and men. Great Britain, War Office, Army Council, *The General Annual Report of the British Army, 1913* (London: HMSO, 1914), p. 31.

many of which had traditional recruiting areas, and the recruiting stations established in the larger cities.³ In the case of entry-level training, the task of teaching the rudiments of the soldier's trade was the responsibility of individual corps. Thus, while recruits for the infantry, cavalry, and Royal Garrison Artillery were trained in home-based operational units, those for the Royal Field Artillery and Royal Engineers spent their first few months 'with the colours' in specialized training organizations.⁴

Where the administration of the Regular Army was divided between individual corps and common agencies, that of the Territorial Force was given entirely to the ninety-three County Associations, each of which was a board of local notables that was responsible for the recruiting, clothing, and training of all of the Territorial units originating in a particular county, borough, city, or riding. In addition to this, each County Association was charged many other functions that, in the Regular Army, were performed by central offices of one sort or another. These included the acquisition and maintenance of rifle ranges, drill halls, storage facilities, and manoeuvre grounds provision, as well as the provision of horses used in peacetime training.⁵ In short, there was much truth in the contemporary characterization of a County Association as a 'miniature War Office'.⁶

The County Associations, like the Territorial Force itself, were the creation of Richard Burdon Haldane. Indeed, the design and implementation of the system of County Associations may fairly be called one the two great achievements of Haldane's seventy-nine months as Secretary of State for War. The second of these was not, as is commonly supposed, the establishment of the Expeditionary Force. That, after all, was largely a matter of organizing existing units into divisions. Rather, the second great project on Haldane's agenda was the creation of the Special Reserve. This latter institution, the design and fostering of which required nearly as much effort as the care and feeding of the Territorial Force, ensured that the Expeditionary Force would be much more than a collection of understrength combatant units. More specifically, the Special Reserve provided the means to fill the many vacancies in the units of the peacetime Regular Army that were stationed in the United Kingdom. The Special Reserve also made possible the provision of a robust logistics infrastructure, the base and lines-of-communication organizations that enabled the Expeditionary Force begin active operations a few days after landing on a foreign shore.

The Special Reserve was composed of men with no prior military service who made themselves liable for service with the Regular Army in the event of mobilization. While the exact conditions

³ For descriptions of the recruiting infrastructure of the Regular Army, see William Howley Goodenough and James Cecil Dalton, *The Army Book for the British Empire*, (London: HMSO, 1893), pp. 322-325; 'A Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army', *The British Army*, (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1899), pp. 18-20; and Stephen Thomas Banning and Reginald Francis Legge, *Administration, Organization, and Equipment Made Easy*, (London: Gale and Polden, 1907), pp. 100-104.

⁴ For a great deal of information on the various training units of the peacetime Regular Army, see "Report of the Committee on War Establishments (Home), 1912", The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), WO 33/612.

⁵ The full text of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907 can be found in the *Public General Statutes Affecting Scotland*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1907), pp. 17-45.

⁶ For an example of the use of the phrase 'miniature War Office', see *Hansard*, House of Lords, 13 February 1908, Volume 184, columns 158-166. For a detailed description of the work of County Associations, see K.W. Mitchison, *England's Last Hope, the Territorial Force, 1908-1914*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 7-52.

of service varied from one corps to another, most Special Reservists underwent a several months of full-time training at the beginning of their enlistments. As this entry-level training was often identical to that received by recruits who had enlisted for several years of full-time duty, there was considerable overlap between the facilities where Special Reservists were trained and those that catered to the men destined to spend several years 'with the colours.' The Royal Field Artillery, for example, had 'reserve batteries' for the training of Special Reservists and 'depots' for the training of men who had engaged for three or more years of full-time duty. The six years between the establishment of the Special Reserve and the outbreak of war in 1914, however, saw many proposals for the eventual merger of the two sorts of training units and the building of barracks to accommodate the resulting organizations.⁷

From the point of view of mobilization, the great virtue of the Special Reserve was the fact that it was custom tailored to the needs of the Regular Army. Those corps, such as the Brigade of Guards and the Household Cavalry, that had a sufficient number of Regular Reservists (men who had already spent a term of service 'with the colours') to meet the needs of mobilization, had no Special Reservists at all.⁸ Likewise, those corps, such as the Cavalry of the Line and the Royal Garrison Artillery, that only required Special Reservists in order to mobilize a small number of specialized units, maintained but a small number of Special Reservists.⁹ However, those corps that had many vacancies to fill before their units were ready to take the field, particularly the Army Service Corps and the various regiments of the Infantry of the Line, were richly supplied with Special Reservists.¹⁰

⁷ John Headlam, *The History of the Royal Artillery, Volume II*, (Woolwich: Royal Artillery Association, 1937), pp. 144-146.

⁸ *The General Annual Report of the British Army, 1913*, p. 108.

⁹ The majority of Special Reservists of the Cavalry of the Line were members of the two 'regiments of Irish horse'. The remainder belonged to King Edward's Horse, a regiment that had been transferred from the Territorial Force. E.A. James, *British Regiments, 1914-1918*, (Dallington: Naval and Military Press, 1998), p. 15. The Special Reserve units of the Royal Garrison Artillery were coast artillery companies stationed in the port cities of Ireland. K.W. Maurice-Jones, *The History of Coast Defence Artillery in the British Army*, (Woolwich: Royal Artillery Institution, 1959), p. 188.

¹⁰ *Report of the Committee on War Establishments (Home), 1912*, TNA, WO 33/612.

Distribution of Men Within Each Arm¹¹
1 October 1913

| Arm | With the Colours | Reserve | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| | | Regular | Special |
| Infantry of the Line | 49% | 34% | 17% |
| Royal Field Artillery ¹² | 54% | 37% | 9% |
| Brigade of Guards | 45% | 55% | - |
| Cavalry of the Line | 61% | 35% | 4% |
| Household Cavalry | 84% | 16% | - |
| Army Service Corps | 69% | 15% | 16% |
| Royal Garrison Artillery | 70% | 26% | 4% |
| Royal Engineers | 56% | 34% | 10% |

On 5 August 1914, the Regular Army began to mobilize. Thanks to a combination of meticulous preparation and the trained manpower provided by the Special Reserve, this process was an extraordinarily smooth one. Within a week, the lion's share of this gargantuan exercise in administration and logistics had been completed, and many elements of the Expeditionary Force were already embarked on the ships that would take them to the Continent. Soon thereafter, the great task was complete, and the Special Reserve took up its principle wartime duty of training the men (and, in some corps, the horses) needed to keep the Expeditionary Force up to strength.

The mobilization of the Regular Army coincided with the 'embodiment' of the Territorial Force, a measure that called for all members of that body to report to their drill halls for continuous active service. In many respects, 'embodiment', which involved the drawing the stores, the preparation of equipment, and the requisition of horses, bore a close resemblance to mobilization. In one key respect, however, the two processes were different. Where the mobilization of the Regular Army provided the United Kingdom with a force that was immediately ready to take the field, the embodiment of the Territorial Force provided a body that was ready to begin a course of serious military training.

Neither the rules governing the mobilization of the Regular nor those that dealt with the embodiment of the Territorial Force made any explicit provision for expansion in time of war. Thus, the first measures taken to reinforce the original Expeditionary Force involved the redeployment of elements of the Regular Army located overseas. On 6 August 1914, an interagency 'council of war' resolved to recall all units of the Regular Army then serving in South Africa. Three days later, the senior leadership of the War Office decided to repatriate

¹¹ *Annual Report of the British Army*, pp. 31, 102, and 108.

¹² The figures for men of the Royal Field Artillery serving 'with the colours' and in the Army Reserve include both members of the both Royal Field Artillery and the Royal Horse Artillery. However, as the Royal Horse Artillery had no men in the Special Reserve, the figures for the Special Reserve refer exclusively to men of the Royal Field Artillery. *Annual Report of the British Army*, pp. 31, 102, and 108.

some of the Regular Army units then serving in Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt.¹³ These transfers provided a sufficient number of infantry battalions, but only half of the field artillery batteries and engineer companies needed to create a seventh infantry division for the Expeditionary Force. Even when some of the missing units were provided from among the small number of Regular Army units that had not been part of the original Expeditionary Force, the resulting formation was both short of field gun batteries and entirely bereft of divisional cavalry, field howitzers, and heavy field guns.¹⁴

The cause of the many lacunae in the order of battle of the 7th Division was the lopsided nature of the peacetime Regular Army. That is, rather than having a permanent place in a British formation (whether infantry division or cavalry brigade), a substantial proportion of the units of the British Army were assigned either directly to overseas garrisons or to one of the formations of the Indian Army. This, in turn, created a situation in which the Regular Army had enough infantry battalions for thirteen infantry divisions, enough field gun batteries for twelve infantry divisions, and sufficient howitzer batteries and engineer companies for seven infantry divisions, but only as many heavy batteries and divisional cavalry squadrons as were needed by the six infantry divisions of the original Expeditionary Force.

Distribution of Units in the Regular Army 5 August 1914

| Type of Unit | Assigned to Formations | Assigned Elsewhere | Total Available |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Infantry Battalion ¹⁵ | 72 | 85 | 157 |
| Field Gun Battery | 54 | 60 | 114 |
| Howitzer Battery | 18 | 3 | 21 |
| Heavy Battery ¹⁶ | 6 | - | 6 |
| Cavalry Squadron (Divisional) ¹⁷ | 6 | - | 6 |
| Engineer Field Company ¹⁸ | 12 | 3 | 15 |

In sharp contrast to the Regular Army, the Territorial Force had been designed, from the ground up, as a balanced force. With a few notable exceptions (most of which were connected with coast defence), each unit of the Territorial Force was part of an all-arms formation. (Half of these formations were infantry divisions formed on the same basic pattern as the infantry divisions of the Expeditionary Force. The other half were mounted brigades that had been

¹³ *Minutes of the Military Members of the Army Council*, TNA, WO 163/44, 9 August 1914.

¹⁴ A.F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part I: The Regular Army Divisions*, (London: HMSO, 1935), p. 84 and Christopher T. Atkinson, *The Seventh Division, 1914-1918*, (London: John Murray, 1927), pp. 1-3.

¹⁵ Bruce Gudmundsson, *The British Expeditionary Force, 1914-1915*, (Oxford: Osprey, 2005), p. 26

¹⁶ Figures for all three types of batteries are taken from Headlam, *The History of the Royal Artillery, Volume II*, Appendix E.

¹⁷ Gudmundsson, *The British Expeditionary Force*, p. 46

¹⁸ Charles M. Watson, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Volume III*, (Chatham: The Royal Engineers Institute, 1915), p. 50.

modelled on the cavalry brigades of the Expeditionary Force.) Thus, field artillery batteries were in proportion to infantry battalions, horse artillery batteries were in proportion to cavalry regiments, and the various service units (ammunition columns, transport companies, mobile medical units, and bridging trains) were in proportion to all.¹⁹

The well-balanced structure of the Territorial Force made it much easier to expand than the Regular Army. In particular, this organizational advantage greatly facilitated the widespread use of a technique that was widely used on the Continent, a form of military mitosis that the French and Belgian armies called ‘doubling’ (*dédoublement*).²⁰ This process began with the division of an existing unit into two parts, each of which received an equal proportion of officers, non-commissioned officers, specialists and experienced soldiers. Once this had been accomplished, each unit would be provided with a sufficient number of recruits to bring it up to establishment.

The great advantage of ‘doubling’ was the transmission of various forms of social capital from the old unit to the new organization. These included regimental tradition, the ‘vertical’ cohesion that bound peers within the unit to each other, and the ‘horizontal’ cohesion that connected superiors to subordinates. Moreover, the structure of the Territorial Force was such that it was not only possible to ‘double’ units, but also to ‘double’ complete formations. Thus, in addition to preserving the internal cohesion of units, ‘doubling’ made possible the preservation of many of the social and professional connections that bound units and staffs to each other.

While the technique of ‘doubling’ does not seem to have played any significant role in the debates leading up to the creation of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907, the possibility of using the Territorial Force as the chief means of expanding the British Army in time of war did. Towards the end of his first year at the War Office, Haldane had made a number of public pronouncements on the subject of the use of the (as yet unnamed) Territorial Force as the basis of a much larger ‘nation-in-arms’ of as many as 900,000 men. According to this idea, a long war would find a large number of recruits flocking to the Territorial Force, thereby enabling it to expand well beyond its original size of 300,000 or so.²¹ This growth, in turn, would make it possible for many, if not most, of the formations of the Territorial Force to be used to reinforce the Expeditionary Force.²² However, this idea was poorly received in many quarters, and, what was even worse, caused a great deal of confusion about the scale of

¹⁹ For an overview of the structure of the Territorial Force, see, among others, *The Annual Return of the Territorial Force for the Year 1912*, (London: HMSO, 1913).

²⁰ ‘Doubling’ was not unknown to the Regular Army. The plan for providing siege artillery to the Expeditionary Force called for the three siege companies of the peacetime Regular Army to be doubled upon mobilization, thereby creating six siege batteries. Gudmundsson, *The British Expeditionary Force*, p. 38.

²¹ In the course of 1906, Haldane reduced the size of the Territorial Force he was planning to create from fourteen army corps and fourteen mounted brigades (some 450,000 men) to fourteen infantry divisions and fourteen mounted brigades (about 300,000 men). For details of the early evolution of Haldane’s scheme for the Territorial Force, see *Memoranda Bearing on Army Organization Prepared by the Secretary of State for War Between 1st January, 1906 and 1st May, 1906*, British Library, British Library BP2/9 (4).

²² For a description of a speech that dealt with the possibility of a ‘nation-in-arms’ of ‘seven, eight, or even nine hundred thousand men’, see ‘Mr. Haldane and the Army’, *The Times*, 15 September 1906. For a broader view of Haldane’s views on the expansion of the Territorial Force after mobilisation, see Edward M. Spiers, *Haldane: an Army Reformer*, (Edinburgh: University Press, 1980), pp. 98-103.

Haldane's proposal.²³ It is thus not surprising that the idea is conspicuously absent from the text of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, the memoranda Haldane wrote in support of that bill, and, for that matter, all of the public speeches that Haldane made after the autumn of 1906.²⁴

Once the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act had passed, Haldane devoted much of his remaining time at the War Office to the execution of his scheme and, in particular, to the daunting task of inducing large numbers of his countrymen to support the new organization. In the course of doing this, he managed to convince some of the County Associations to make modest preparations for a possible expansion of the Territorial Force in the course of a general war. Nonetheless, Haldane proved unable to pass the sort of legislation that would have been needed to implement his vision for a locally rooted 'nation-in-arms'.²⁵ As a result, the use of the County Associations to form large numbers of new units in the months after the embodiment of the Territorial Force remained an inherent capability rather than a formal plan, an option available to a future Secretary of State for War rather than an integral part of the well-established plan for general mobilisation.²⁶

Another greatest obstacle to the implementation of Haldane's concept of a locally based 'nation-in-arms' was the rule that neither the officers nor the men of the Territorial Force could be sent beyond the borders of the United Kingdom without their explicit consent. During the latter years of his tenure at the War Office, Haldane launched several campaigns to convince individual members of the Territorial Force to waive this right. The results of these efforts, however, were invariably disappointing. In February of 1912, Haldane reported that a grand total of 20,629 officers and men, and thus a little more than eight per cent of the strength Territorial Force, had signed the papers that made them available for service in places other than the British Isles.²⁷

Haldane left the War Office in the summer of 1912. However, on 4 August 1914, the very day that the United Kingdom declared war on the German Empire, a series of unusual circumstances put him back at his old desk for two very busy days. During those days, he oversaw the embodiment of the Territorial Force, the mobilization of the Regular Army, and the decision to send the lion's share of the Expeditionary Force to France. He also attempted, without success, to convince Horatio Herbert Kitchener, who was about to become the new Secretary of State for

²³ More than two years after Haldane had ceased to mention his idea of a 'nation-in-arms', his friend and colleague Gilbert McMicking felt obliged to write a long letter to the Times to refute the widespread notion that Haldane wished to create a peacetime Territorial Force with a strength of 900,000 men. "Mr. Haldane and the 900,000 Men", *The Times*, 24 November 1908.

²⁴ The only references to a wartime force of nine hundred thousand wartime volunteers to be found in the records of the relevant Parliamentary debates took the form of hostile questions posed by members who were opposed to the creation of the Territorial Force. For details, see *Hansard*, House of Lords, 21 March 1907, Volume 171, columns 1212-1258 and House of Lords, 17 July 1907, Volume 178, columns 651-658.

²⁵ Edmonds, *Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1914*, vol. 1, p. 8.

²⁶ Haldane's idea to use the Territorial Force as the basis for a much larger 'nation-in-arms' finds no mention in either his memoir of his tenure at the War Office or those parts of his general autobiography that deal with that period in his life. R.B. Haldane, *Before the War*, (London: Cassell, 1920) and *Richard Burdon Haldane: An Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929).

²⁷ 'The Army Estimates: Memorandum of Lord Haldane', *The Times*, 28 February 1912. This article is a verbatim copy of a paper that Haldane submitted to Parliament.

War, to use the Territorial Force as the chief means of increasing the size of the wartime British Army.²⁸

On 6 August 1914, Kitchener took formal charge of the War Office. The next morning, he made public, in the form of announcements to the press, newspaper advertisements, and posters, his intention to expand the Regular Army by 100,000 men, each of whom was to be enlisted 'for a period of three years or until the war is concluded'.²⁹ Soon thereafter, Kitchener informed his senior subordinates at the War Office of his plan to use these recruits to create a 'New Army'. Also known as the 'New Expeditionary Force', 'Second Army', 'Second Expeditionary Force', and 'Kitchener's Army', this body was to consist of six complete infantry divisions and seven spare infantry battalions.

While the New Army was often described as a close copy of the original Expeditionary Force, the two bodies differed in a number of important respects. Where the original Expeditionary Force included five cavalry brigades and a robust logistics infrastructure, the 'New Army' had neither cavalry formations nor a mobile base nor a lines-of-communications organization. Where the original Expeditionary Force had no Territorial units whatsoever, the divisions of the New Army were to draw their engineer field companies, their divisional cavalry squadrons, and perhaps even their field artillery batteries from the Territorial Force.³⁰ (This would have represented 43% of the field companies and 47% of the field batteries of the Territorial Force, but less than 4% of the Yeomanry squadrons.)³¹

Notwithstanding the role that Territorial units played in his original New Army scheme, Kitchener made no provision for an expansion of the Territorial Force. Indeed, during the three weeks that it took the recruiting machinery of the Regular Army to induct the 100,000 men Kitchener had called for, the War Office refrained from authorizing any increase in the authorized strength of the Territorial Force. This meant that the Territorial Force continued to operate on pre-war rules that allowed units that were below establishment to recruit new members but required units without vacancies to turn away surplus applicants. During the years preceding the outbreak of war, when most Territorial units were short of men, this limitation had been of little concern.³² By the second week of the war, however, some Territorial units were so well supplied with would-be recruits that they resorted to the drawing up of waiting lists.³³

On 10 August 1914, the War Office began to look for Territorial units that would be willing to complete their training in Egypt, Malta, or Gibraltar, thereby making available additional units

²⁸ *Richard Burdon Haldane: An Autobiography*, pp. 296-298.

²⁹ See, among others, *The Times*, 7 August 1914.

³⁰ *Minutes of the Military Members of the Army Council*, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), WO 163/44, meetings held between 9 and 13 August 1914 and *Addendum to the Volume of Proceedings of the Army Council for 1914*, 11 August 1914, TNA, WO 163/21.

³¹ In August of 1914, the Territorial Force fielded 28 engineer field companies, 151 field batteries, and 165 Yeomanry (cavalry) squadrons. (This figure does not count the depot squadrons formed on embodiment.) The divisions of the New Army, which were to be formed on the same pattern as the divisions of the original Expeditionary Force needed 12 engineer field companies, 72 field batteries, and 6 cavalry squadrons.

³² On 1 October 1913, the authorised strength of the Territorial Force was 312,400 officers and men. As the actual strength on that day was 245,779, the organisation as a whole thus was 66,621 officers and men below establishment. *Annual Report of the British Army*, p. 122.

³³ 'Growth of the Army', *The Times*, 13 August 1914, p. 4.

from the Imperial garrisons there.³⁴ Soon thereafter, the War Office began to look for Territorial infantry battalions and field batteries to send to India, thereby making possible the repatriation, not only of most of the Regular Army infantry battalions serving with the Indian Army, but also a considerable amount of state-of-the-art field artillery.³⁵ This liberation of units of the peacetime Regular Army made it possible for Kitchener to plan the creation of additional divisions, which, somewhat ironically, would have to call upon the Territorial Force for engineer field companies, divisional cavalry squadrons, and, perhaps, even field artillery batteries.

The use of some Territorial units to serve in overseas garrisons, as well as the assignment of others to formations composed largely of men of the pre-war Regular Army, was made possible by another serendipitous development of the first few weeks of the war. Notwithstanding the longstanding reluctance of both officers and men of the pre-war Territorial Force to make themselves liable for Imperial service, the first few weeks of the war saw a substantial percentage of the individual members of the embodied Territorial Force volunteer to serve overseas. An important inducement for many of these volunteers was the rule, announced on 10 August 1914, that each man who belonged to a unit in which 80 per cent of the members had waived their right to remain at home would be sent overseas with that unit. (Ten days later, this threshold was reduced to 60 per cent.)³⁶

The increase in the number of Imperial service units raised a number of questions. The first was that of a mechanism to keep deployed Territorial Force units up to strength. The second was the disposition of those men who had declined to volunteer to go overseas. During the third week of August of 1914, Kitchener solved both problems by authorizing each unit of the Territorial Force that had volunteered for overseas service to create a 'reserve' ('second line') unit. With an establishment that mirrored that of the original ('first line') unit, the reserve unit served four functions. It trained recruits, provided an organizational home for 'home service' men, formed part of the forces charged with the immediate defence of the British Isles, and provided drafts of trained men to its first-line counterpart.³⁷ On 31 August 1914, Kitchener ordered all remaining mobile units of the Territorial Force to form second-line counterparts, thereby completing the 'doubling' all of the infantry divisions and mounted brigades of that body.³⁸

The authorization of reserve units raised the ceiling on recruiting for the Territorial Force, replacing the firm upward limit of the pre-war establishment with a maximum strength that increased by several hundred men each time an infantry battalion, Yeomanry regiment, or field

³⁴ For an account of how the officers of one Territorial Force battalion reacted to its impending deployment to India, see A.J. Smithers, *The Fighting Nation, Lord Kitchener and his Armies*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1994), p. 93. For an overview of the composition of the last three of the five divisions formed from pre-war Regular Army units drawn from Imperial garrisons and India (the 27th, 28th, and 29th Divisions), see A.F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part I: The Regular Army Divisions*, pp. 100, 109, and 120. For details, see R. M. Johnson, *29th Divisional Artillery, War Record and Honours Book, 1915-1918*, (Woolwich: Royal Artillery Institution, 1921).

³⁵ The field batteries of the Regular Army were armed with field pieces that were far more modern, and thus superior in range, rate-of-fire, and terminal effect, than those of the Territorial Force. For a cursory comparison of the two sets of weapons, see Gudmundsson, *The British Expeditionary Force*, pp. 74-78. For a list of the weapons sent out from India, see *Minutes of the Military Members of the Army Council*, TNA, WO 163/44, 5 October 1914.

³⁶ Mitchison, *England's Last Hope*, p. 210.

³⁷ K.W. Mitchison, *Defending Albion: Britain's Home Army, 1908-1919*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 163.

³⁸ Gudmundsson, *The British Expeditionary Force*, p. 28.

artillery brigade volunteered for Imperial service. As this radical change in policy coincided with a period in which an extraordinarily large number of men sought to enter uniformed service, it led directly to a great increase in the size of the Territorial Force. A census dated 26 September 1914 found 363,666 officers and men serving with the Territorial Force. As the number of officers and men serving on 1 August 1914 had been 268,777, this meant that the first eight weeks of the war had seen the membership of the Territorial Force grow by nearly 95,000. (The first eight weeks of the war also saw a substantial portion of the membership of the Territorial Force volunteer for Imperial service. Thus, by 26 September 1914, some 263,430 officers and men had signed the document that waived their right to serve exclusively at home.)³⁹

Paradoxically, Kitchener's authorization of an expanded Territorial Force coincided with his decision to relieve that body of the duty of providing field artillery batteries to the new divisions of the Regular Army. (The divisions assembled from repatriated units of the peacetime Regular Army would be provided with artillery units formed from elements of the Regular Army that had not been assigned to the original Expeditionary Force. The New Army divisions would form all of their artillery units 'from the ground up'. In both cases, the artillery establishments would be formed as understrength organizations, but would add officers, men, and weapons as they became available.)⁴⁰

The third week of August of 1914 also found Kitchener taking the decision to create a second New Army, one that, like the first New Army, was to consist of six new Regular Army infantry divisions. At the same time, Kitchener launched a campaign to recruit another 100,000 men for the Regular Army, one that, for the first time, permitted the enlistment of married men, widowers with children, and men over the age of thirty.⁴¹ One reason for this relaxation of standards seems to have been a desire to obtain the services of former non-commissioned officers, who, even if no longer fit for active service, would be able to train recruits, thereby relieving some of the strain on the hard-pressed instructional staff at the reserve units and depots of the Regular Army.⁴²

The raising of the second New Army pushed the ability of the Regular Army to accommodate new men well beyond the breaking point. At first, the authorities at depots and reserve units resorted to such expedients as the billeting of recruits in nearby towns and the sending of newly enlisted men back to their homes in order to await their uniforms, their places in barracks, and their turn on the drill field. When these measures proved insufficient, Kitchener began to encourage local authorities and civic groups to shoulder some of the burden of recruiting, clothing, and housing New Army units. In most cases, the units created in this way were relatively small: infantry battalions, artillery batteries, or engineer companies. In one instance, however, a paramilitary organization in Ireland committed to raising the infantry, engineer,

³⁹ War Office, *Statistics*, pp. 30 and 139.

⁴⁰ *Minutes of the Military Members of the Army Council*, TNA, WO 163/44, 12, 13, and 14 August 1914.

⁴¹ The advertisement that announced both the call for an additional 100,000 men and the relaxed standards of enlistment first appeared in the pages of the *Times* on 28 August 1914.

⁴² For a discussion of the problem of congestion in depots and reserve units, see *Hansard*, House of Commons, 10 September 1914, Volume 66, columns 663-76. For a detailed description of the situation at the Royal Engineers recruit depot at Chatham, see W. Baker Brown and others, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Volume V*, (Chatham: The Institution of Royal Engineers, 1952), pp. 133-137.

cavalry, and medical units of a complete infantry division.⁴³ In another, an *ad hoc* committee of Welshmen undertook the creation of two complete divisions.⁴⁴

With their close ties to particular communities and occupational groups, the locally raised units of the New Armies had much in common with units of the Territorial Force. Similarly, the local authorities and civic groups that supported these units had much in common, and, in some cases, considerable overlap with, County Associations. On 4 September 1914, Kitchener went so far as to formally invite the County Associations to participate in the raising of the New Armies. While the committee formed to coordinate this effort lasted for only a week, individual County Associations possessed the sort of influence, expertise, and business acumen that was needed to obtain resources that the War Office had been unable to locate, let alone acquire.⁴⁵ Kitchener's invitation was a clear sign that he had lost faith in his plan to use the administrative machinery of the pre-war Regular Army as the chief means of creating a much larger wartime army. Five days later, on 9 September 1914, Kitchener took the more radical step of adding seven complete Territorial Force infantry divisions to the list of formations earmarked for eventual service on the Continent.⁴⁶

The roster of infantry divisions approved by Kitchener on 9 September 1914 also included two additional New Armies (for a total of twenty-four divisions), the three 'Municipal' divisions (from Ireland and Wales), and the two divisions made up of units of the pre-war Regular Army withdrawn from Imperial garrisons. This list did a poor job of predicting the exact number of divisions of each type that were eventually formed, let alone deployed overseas. Nonetheless, it proved to be a microcosm of the great array of divisions that served, not only on the Western Front, but also in the Near East, the Balkans, and Italy. To put things another way, the compromises and improvisations of the first month of the war were a far better predictor of the methods used to provide infantry divisions for the British Army in the three years that followed than either Haldane's dream of an expanded Territorial Force or Kitchener's vision of a much larger Regular Army.

At the end of January of 1915, all of the British formations (eight cavalry brigades and ten infantry divisions) serving on the Continent were largely composed of elements of the pre-war Regular Army.⁴⁷ In many of these formations, however, a handful of Territorial Force infantry units served alongside their regular counterparts. In some cases, these were 'supplemental' infantry battalions that were temporarily assigned to infantry brigades to help them deal with the particular demands of trench warfare. In others, the Territorial Force units were permanently assigned to their parent formations. In both the 27th and 28th Divisions, for example, the

⁴³ For an overview, see Ray Westlake, *Kitchener's Army*, pp. 139-145. For an investigation into the role played by the Ulster Volunteer Force in the appointment of officers for the division it raised, see Timothy Bowman, 'Officering Kitchener's Armies: A Case Study of the 36th (Ulster) Division', *War in History*, April 2009.

⁴⁴ The project to create the 'Welsh Army Corps' failed to raise two complete infantry divisions. It did, however, raise one complete infantry division and a spare infantry brigade. For details, see *Welsh Army Corps, 1914-1919, Report of the Executive Committee*, (Cardiff: Western Mail Limited, 1921).

⁴⁵ For brief discussions of the involvement of County Associations in the raising of the New Armies, see Mitchison, *England's Last Hope*, pp. 228-229.

⁴⁶ *Minutes of the Military Members of the Army Council*, TNA, WO 163/44, 9 September 1914.

⁴⁷ Gudmundsson, *British Expeditionary Force*, p. 10.

divisional cavalry squadron, both field engineer companies, the divisional signals company, and all three of the field ambulances, were units of the Territorial Force.⁴⁸

In March of 1915, complete Territorial Force infantry divisions began to cross the English Channel. By the end of May of that year, six complete formations of that type were serving with the Expeditionary Force.⁴⁹ By the end of July, eight additional divisions had joined the Expeditionary Force. (Three of these were from the First New Army. Five were from the Second New Army.) The summer of 1915 also saw the despatch of four divisions to the Mediterranean to take part in the Gallipoli campaign.⁵⁰ (Three of these divisions were from the First New Army and one, the 29th Division, had been formed on the pattern of the 27th and 28th Divisions. That is, while most units belonged to the pre-war Regular Army, the engineer, medical, and cavalry units came from the Territorial Force.)⁵¹

In August of 1915, the Expeditionary Force formed an infantry division (the Guards Division) by combining units of the pre-war Regular Army with units of the Second New Army and other units of the Regular Army that had been raised since the start of the war. While this new formation contained no units of the Territorial Force, the shuffling of infantry battalions caused by its creation led to the permanent assignment of Territorial Force battalions to Regular Army infantry brigades.⁵² Later that year, the provision of first-class artillery pieces to Territorial Force infantry divisions greatly reduced the chief functional difference between those formations and the infantry divisions of the Regular Army.⁵³ (Early in 1916, the remaining differences were eliminated when New Army artillery batteries were used to fill gaps in divisional artillery establishments of Territorial Force infantry divisions.)⁵⁴

In the course of 1915, as Territorial Force units serving overseas became increasingly hard to distinguish from their counterparts in the Regular Army, those remaining in the United Kingdom evolved in a very different direction. At the end of the queue for weapons, and continually deprived of their best men, these home defence units were chronically understrength, badly equipped, and poorly trained.⁵⁵ In other words, by the end of 1915, the distinction between 'Regular' and 'Territorial' had become far less significant than the distinction between 'home service' and 'general service'. Nonetheless, the Territorial Force and the Regular Army retained much of the administrative autonomy that each had exercised in the years before the war. Indeed, for most of the first two years of the war the transfer of a man from a unit of the Territorial Force to an otherwise identical unit of the Regular Army required that he be formally discharged from the former and then enlisted into the latter.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part I: The Regular Army Divisions*, pp. 100 and 108.

⁴⁹ Gudmundsson, *British Expeditionary Force*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ A. F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part 3A: New Army Divisions (9-26)*, (London: HMSO, 1938), pp. 16, 24, 32, 42, 51, 59, 68, 76, 84, 92, and 100.

⁵¹ Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part I: The Regular Army Divisions*, p. 120.

⁵² Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part I: The Regular Army Divisions*, pp. 28, 36, and 34.

⁵³ A. F. Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part 2A: The Territorial Force Mounted Divisions and the First-Line Territorial Force Infantry Divisions (42-56)*, (London: HMSO, 1936), pp. 64, 72, 80, 88, 96, and 104.

⁵⁴ Bruce Gudmundsson, *The British Army on the Western Front, 1916*, (Oxford: Osprey, 2007), pp. 42-43.

⁵⁵ Mitchison, *Defending Albion*, pp. 98-120.

⁵⁶ For a short discussion of transfers between the Territorial Force and the Regular Army, see *Army Council, Minutes and Precip*, entry for 16 January 1915, TNA, WO 163/21.

The first Military Service Act of 1916, which came into force on 27 January 1916, simultaneously ended direct enlistment into the Territorial Force and, paradoxically, respected its status as a separate body. The act replaced voluntary enlistment of all types with the compulsory call up of all single men of military age. Thus, rather than joining either the Territorial Force or the Regular Army, a man subject to the act registered with the authorities and waited to be called. At the same time, the act called for the discharge and subsequent conscription into the Regular Army of unmarried members of the Territorial Force who declined to volunteer for Imperial Service.⁵⁷ The second Military Service Act of 1916, which was implemented on 25 May 1916, included married men in the list of those liable to conscription into the Regular Army. At the same time, it made all members of the Territorial Force both available for service outside of the borders of the United Kingdom and subject to involuntary transfer to a unit of the Regular Army.⁵⁸ This latter provision did much to facilitate the thoroughgoing reorganization of the field artillery of the Expeditionary Force that took place in the second half of 1916.⁵⁹ It also dealt a mortal blow to the administrative independence of the Territorial Force.

It took some time for the effects of conscription to erode the particular identities of those parts of the Territorial Force that were serving overseas. While field artillery units serving on the Western Front lost their traditional designations in the course of the great reorganization of 1916, those serving elsewhere, as well as all infantry battalions and Yeomanry regiments, held on to their old names until the end of the war.⁶⁰ Moreover, while overseas units were often obligated to accept drafts from sources other than their own reserve units, all concerned with the personnel replacement system seem to have placed a high value on the maintenance of the traditional relationship between units at the front and their affiliated reserve units.⁶¹

During the first week of May of 1916, the overall strength of the Territorial Force was 1,017,763. Of these million or so officers and men, about a quarter had been members of the Territorial Force at the start of the war. (On 4 August 1914, some 270,859 were serving with either drilling units of the Territorial Force or the Territorial Force Reserve.)⁶² Thus, in the first twenty-two months of the war, the Territorial Force had enjoyed a net increase of some three-quarters of a million men.⁶³ These figures compare favourably with the figure of 900,000 mentioned by Haldane in the early public discussions of the Territorial Force. Moreover, as more than nine-tenths of the officers and men of the Territorial Force had volunteered for overseas service before the onset of conscription made such declarations obsolete, Haldane's prediction in that

⁵⁷ *Hansard*, House of Commons, 8 March 1916, Volume 80, columns 516.

⁵⁸ *Hansard*, House of Commons, 11 May 1916, Volume 82, columns 985-999.

⁵⁹ Gudmundsson, *The British Army on the Western Front*, pp. 43-45.

⁶⁰ To get a sense of the change in the nomenclature of Territorial Force units, see the various organizational charts in Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions, Part 2A*.

⁶¹ For a brief overview of this system, see James, *British Regiments*, p. 130.

⁶² On 1 August 1914, 268,777 officers and men were serving with units of the Territorial Force and 2,082 were members of the Territorial Force Reserve. War Office, *Statistics*, pp. 30. The estimate of three-quarters of a million men recruited into (or appointed to commissions in) the Territorial Force between August 1914 and May 1916 is keeping with the official figure of 725,842 men enlisted into that body between August 1914 and December 1915. War Office, *Statistics*, p. 366.

⁶³ Between August 1914 and December 1915, some 725,842 men enlisted into the Territorial Force. This figure does not include officers. Neither does it include the substantial number of men who seem to have joined between December 1915 and May 1916. (In December of 1915, the

regard proved to be accurate as well.⁶⁴ The one area in which Haldane was less than prescient was the overall size of the land forces that the United Kingdom would put into the field. The one million members of the Territorial Force represented about a third of the nearly three million officers and men serving in the British Army in May of 1916 and a little more than a quarter of the almost four million soldiers of all ranks who were with the colours when, in March of 1918, the British Army was as large as it would ever be.⁶⁵

Viewed from the point of view of individual arms, the Territorial Force provided both the lion's share of the horse cavalry regiments (57 out of 91) and a substantial proportion of the front-line infantry battalions (486 out of 1,051).⁶⁶ It did not, however, contribute nearly as much to the new arms that played such a large role in the First World War. Thus, the while many men who had entered the British Army through the Territorial Force served with the units that employed siege artillery, tanks, aircraft, poison gas, and tunnelling techniques nearly all of those units belonged to the Regular Army. The exception that proves this general rule is provided by the many cyclist battalions and bicycle-mounted Yeomanry regiments of the Territorial Force, most of which spent the war on coast defence duties.

In the recent popular literature on the First World War, the Territorial Force gets much less attention than the New Armies and Haldane is all but eclipsed by the figure of Kitchener. However, there is much evidence that the contemporaries of both men realized that Kitchener's failure to make better use of the framework for expansion provided by the Territorial Force was a mistake. Chief among these was Winston Churchill. While serving as Secretary of State for War in the months after the Armistice, Churchill took the first steps towards the reconstitution of the Territorial Force, rechristened it the 'Territorial Army', and made it the chief means of expanding the British Army in the event of another major war.

⁶⁴ At the start of December of 1915, all but 101,359 of the 913,108 officers and men serving in the Territorial Force had volunteered for service overseas. War Office, *Statistics*, p. 139.

⁶⁵ In May of 1916, a total of 2,965,776 officers and men were serving in the British Army. In March of 1918, the figure was 3,889,990. These figures include both the Territorial Force and the Regular Army, but exclude the Indian Army, the contingents of the self-governing Dominions, and small colonial corps of various kinds. War Office, *Statistics*, pp. 229-231

⁶⁶ The total figure for cavalry regiments includes the three Special Reserve regiments and the composite regiments of Household Cavalry, but no second-line Yeomanry regiments. The figure for infantry regiments only includes units intended for service with armies in the field and thus excludes garrison and training units. James, *British Regiments*, pp. 15, 33, 24, and 126

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