

I have to draw attention to the fact that no provision is being made for filling up vacancies in the ranks of the officers in the Permanent Force. These vacancies must occur, and it is most necessary that trained officers should fill them.

These officers should belong to the colony, should receive their first instruction in the colony, and, if found capable, be sent to England for courses in gunnery and submarine mining. If found incapable they should be replaced.

Eighteen months' training in the colony and eighteen months' training in England should produce officers technically capable. A further training as district staff officers in the colony, in addition to their technical work, should make them capable of filling such vacancies as may occur. Such appointments should be open to public competition, a certain qualifying standard being requisite, especially in mathematics. Candidates should not be more than twenty years of age.

VOLUNTEERS.*

(1.) CAVALRY AND MOUNTED RIFLES.

There are three cavalry corps and ten mounted rifle corps in the colony. All the corps do the same drill, and are instructed as mounted rifles. They are generally well horsed; but, while in some there is uniformity in appointments, cleanliness, and smartness, in other corps there is nothing of the kind—consequently there is a wide difference in the value of the corps. The Otago Hussars is deserving of the highest praise. The Canterbury Yeomanry, Alexandra Cavalry, Hawera Mounted Rifles, and North Otago Mounted Rifles are very good corps. The Heretaunga Mounted Rifles has improved very considerably.

A manual of mounted infantry drill is now in the press. Its issue will be of very great benefit. Great credit is due to Captain Coleman for its compilation.

Distribution.

District and Corps.	Officers.	Men.	Qualified for Capitation.	Unqualified.	Remarks.
Auckland—					
Waiuku Mounted Rifles	3	57	41	19	Bad.
South Franklin Mounted Rifles	3	57	35	25	Indifferent.
Te Awamutu Mounted Rifles	3	43	...	46	Bad.
Total	9	157	76	90	
Wellington—					
Alexandra Cavalry	3	55	48	10	Very good.
Wairoa Mounted Rifles	2	49	43	8	Fair.
Heretaunga Mounted Rifles	2	40	31	11	Good.
Hawera Mounted Rifles	3	68	38	33	Very good.
Manawatu Mounted Rifles	2	49	35	16	Good.
Total	12	261	195	78	
Canterbury—					
Canterbury Yeomanry	4	69	61	12	Very good.
Canterbury Mounted Rifles	2	51	32	21	Good.
Total	6	120	93	33	
Otago—					
Otago Hussars	3	58	55	6	Excellent.
North Otago Mounted Rifles	3	60	52	11	Very good.
Total	6	118	107	17	
Nelson, &c.—					
Marlborough Mounted Rifles	3	48	...	51	Indifferent.
Grand total, 13 corps	36	704	471	269	

(2.) NAVAL ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.

This Force is divided into two distinct branches—

A. Affiliated to the works of defence.

B. Purely infantry companies.

The work done by the A branch in artillery and submarine-mining work is very considerable, being much more than that of any other branch of the Volunteer Force. The companies are, in general, worthy of much commendation, the Wellington Navals being most praiseworthy. I cannot speak too highly of the value of this company, possessing three excellent officers and 65 highly-trained men. The Dunedin, Petone, and Ponsonby Navals also do excellent work. Each man of

* The strength as shown in these tables is as at the end of the Volunteer year.