

FEDERATED MALAY STATES.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE MALAYAN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY FOR PERIOD APRIL, 1923, TO 31ST DECEMBER, 1923.

The improvement in the interest taken in the Malayan Volunteer Infantry which I recorded in my last report has I am pleased to say been maintained.

I am not satisfied however that there has been any marked improvement in efficiency and this I attribute to the fact that there have again been many changes in officers. Malayan Volunteer Infantry units are wholly dependent on their officers and as such officers are chiefly drawn from Government officials and frequently moved from one post to another it has been difficult to ensure any form of continuity of training, or even in some cases to carry out any training at all for considerable periods at a time.

I would therefore emphasise once more that provided the officers' prospects of civil advancement are not impaired thereby the good work done on behalf of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry should be taken into consideration when moves are contemplated and that such moves should not be made unless absolutely necessary.

Another drawback to the steady advancement of the efficiency standard in the Malayan Volunteer Infantry has been the absence of any permanent staff to assist with the training and administration, but now that approval has been given to the appointment of State Adjutants in Selangor, Perak, and Negri Sembilan, considerable improvement can be expected.

Officers will shortly arrive to fill these appointments and reorganization will be effected gradually.

This will include the amalgamation of the Malay States Volunteer Regiment and Malayan Volunteer Infantry in each State (except Pahang where no Malay States Volunteer Regiment exists) into Corps under Officers Commanding, States.

For administration and disciplinary purposes the Malayan Volunteer Infantry will continue to retain their individuality under their own Officers Commanding States, and the Regular Adjutant will be able to ensure uniformity and co-ordination in training.

The general direction of the whole of the work will be carried out by the present Commandant and Adjutant, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, and the Malayan Volunteer Infantry will thereby receive the benefit of the services of the whole of the permanent staff including non-commissioned officer instructors. This arrangement will to some extent counterbalance the drawback experienced by so many frequent changes in officers but it cannot be expected to completely remove it.

For purposes of convenience in administration and with a view to giving the Malayan Volunteer Infantry the assistance of the permanent staff, the Head-quarters of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry and Malay States Volunteer Regiment are being housed together where possible.

A new Volunteer Enactment has recently been gazetted in which provision is made for the reorganization referred to. I trust therefore that the Federal Council will accept it as being an earnest endeavour to put the volunteer movement on a sound footing and at the same time safeguard both the interests of Government and volunteers.

Another step to be taken which will I hope prove helpful in furthering the interests of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry and at the same time keep Government and the Commandant informed on all questions relative thereto, is the establishment of State Advisory Committees which will act for both the Malay States Volunteer Regiment and Malayan Volunteer Infantry.

Up to the present only one Advisory Committee has existed for the whole of the Federated Malay States and this committee has dealt exclusively with the Malay States Volunteer Regiment.

The Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Pahang, will not receive any direct advantage (other than having the opportunity of sending non-commissioned officers on special courses) by the creation of the State Adjutants appointments since no officer will be appointed to that State, but in this connection it should be remembered that a bonus

system exists in Pahang which acts as a direct incentive to regular attendance at parades and automatically maintains a good standard of efficiency. Furthermore the Malayan Volunteer Infantry in this State are fortunate in having excellent officers who have remained for some time in command of their respective units.

In my last report I referred to the lack of musketry knowledge displayed by the non-commissioned officers and I am glad to be able to report that all officers commanding have given this subject serious attention by concentrating on their training in it on every suitable occasion.

Furthermore, the Commandant, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, recently organised a special series of classes of instruction at Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh for their benefit. These were fairly well attended, thanks to the employers of the men concerned who gave them leave for the purpose, and I am informed that already a noticeable improvement is being effected in units from which non-commissioned officers have attended the courses.

REVISED REGULATIONS.

The regulations referred to in my last report have received the approval of the Chief Secretary together with revised dress regulations.

The system of gradually replacing unserviceable articles of uniform with new ones of the approved pattern is in operation, and will result in time in uniformity of clothing throughout the Malayan Volunteer Infantry.

For the purposes of comparison the strengths at the date of my last report and the present time are given. It will be noted that increases are shown in Perak and Selangor but the total remains the same.

STRENGTH.

	April, 1923.				31st December, 1923.			
	Officers.	O.	Ranks.		Officers.	O.	Ranks.	
Perak	6	...	336	...	8	...	364	
Selangor	8	...	490	...	7	...	510	
Pahang	5	...	250	...	4	...	220	
Negri Sembilan	9	...	235	...	4	...	217	
Total	28	...	1,311	...	23	...	1,311	

I am not satisfied that sufficient advantage is taken by Officers Commanding of the provision which enables members to be discharged on the grounds of inefficiency and I should therefore like to take this opportunity of suggesting that a thorough weeding out of all inefficient should take place. Mere members count for nothing since a small unit of efficient can outclass a large unit of inefficient, and by making membership with its attendant obligations a privilege to be sought after keenness will be developed and a good moral and *esprit de corps* established.

INSPECTIONS.

PAHANG—JULY 19TH AND 20TH.

The Staff Officer to Local Forces took advantage of His Highness the Sultan of Pahang's Birthday celebrations to attend Review of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry and reported as being very impressed with the display of military knowledge both during the review and a tactical exercise. Members were present from Kuala Lipis in addition to the Kuantan and Pekan Platoons. A rehearsal took place on the evening prior to the Review, and the Review comprised—the Reception of His Highness with a Royal Salute—inspection in line—trooping of the colour—march past in column—reformation in line—firing of the *Feu de joie*—and advance in review order.

The whole of this ceremonial was carried out in a manner befitting Regular Troops and was a performance meriting high praise.

The tactical exercise executed on the 20th July was also reported as having demonstrated sound training. This information points to the fact that the Malayan Volunteer Infantry will prove a good support in the maintenance of law and order in that State if ever their services are so required.

SELANGOR.

Two hundred and thirty-four officers and men of this Corps were in camp at Port Dickson under the Command of Captain C. J. Perkins from the 8th to the 16th September inclusive. The Staff Officer to Local Forces visited the camp and reported it as being admirably arranged, well officered, well administered, and

productive of good results. The officers were thoroughly keen in their work and attentive to the welfare of the men with the result that discipline was well maintained. The training of the non-commissioned officers was concentrated upon and endeavour was made to develop their powers of leadership with varying, but on the whole satisfactory results.

The organization of a camp of this description is an undertaking which can only be fully appreciated by those acquainted with the multitudinous details that have to receive attention and it is very creditable indeed to find volunteer officers capable and willing to see them through.

NEGRI SEMBILAN.

The Commandant, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, inspected the Corps in camp at Port Dickson and the Assistant Staff Officer to Local Forces attended the camp for three days.

The camp was reported as being well administered and well disciplined, and a useful programme of training was carried through.

The chief weakness was noticeable among non-commissioned officers who have little knowledge of their duties.

PERAK.

This Corps was inspected by their Officer Commanding during a camp held at Ipoh in December and the turn out, steadiness on parade and precision of movements were all reported on favourably. The Assistant Staff Officer to Local Forces also attended the camp and reported very favourably on the Corps with the exception of No. 1 Platoon.

ANNUAL REPORTS.

The following particulars are extracted from the annual reports submitted by Officers Commanding and afford information of general interest.

PERAK.

Command.—From 18th April to 6th September, Lieut.-Col. C. W. C. Parr, C.M.G., O.B.E., was on leave, and Captain Meadows Frost, M.C., commanded until June, when he proceeded on leave. Captain A. T. Newbould then took over until Lieut.-Col. Parr returned from leave.

Officers.—The following officers received commissions during the year :

Lieutenant C. B. H. Pasley, Medical Unit.

Second Lieutenant H. D. Kiddle.

„ „ Raja Abdul Aziz, Raja Muda of Perak.

Second Lieutenant H. C. Willan was transferred to Negri Sembilan in November.

Strength.—

	Total strength.	Establishment.
Officers	8	8
Other ranks	364	375

Enrolments during the year totalled 103 and discharges, etc., 64, making a nett increase of 39.

Parades.—The average total number of parades held per platoon was 71, the percentage of drills attended per man was 25.11.

The low percentage of attendances per man is due to a large extent to the unsatisfactory state of No. 1 Platoon (Chinese). This platoon has in the words of the Officer Commanding “almost faded out of existence” and it is for consideration in the near future as to what is the best to be done regarding it: the Officer Commanding thinks that it might either be transformed into a combined Malay and Chinese Platoon or into a Platoon consisting entirely of Malays. The result of the first period of training in 1924 will probably afford sufficient guide as to the action to be adopted.

Musketry.—The number of men who fired Parts I and II of the course (exclusive of recruits) was 94 and the number who fired Part I only was 53. A total of 57 passed the musketry standard. This return cannot be regarded as satisfactory and it is hoped that Officers Commanding platoons will pay much more attention to the subject in future.

The Taiping platoon were handicapped owing to difficulty being experienced in obtaining use of the Range when required, but arrangements have now been made for its allocation, which, it is hoped, will prove satisfactory. The Officer Commanding is also inaugurating inter-platoon competitions which will doubtless have the effect of encouraging and improving rifle shooting.

Efficiency.—The number of men who attended 40 parades and thereby qualified as “efficient” was 70 and the remaining 294 must therefore be classified as “inefficient.” If comparisons should be made with the Malay States Volunteer Regiment returns, it must be remembered that members of the latter Regiment are only required to attend 18 parades (exclusive of musketry) whereas the Malayan Volunteer Infantry are required to attend 40.

The Officer Commanding reports that there was an improvement in the efficiency of Nos. II, III, IV, and V Platoons though not all that could be desired.

Order of Merit of Platoons.—

No. V. Platoon, Tapah—was the best in musketry;

No. IV. Platoon, Taiping—was the best in drill and turn-out.

Camp.—The annual camp was held at Ipoh from 7th to 14th December.

The strength in camp was six officers and 201 other ranks.

The Assistant Staff Officer to Local Forces attended camp for the whole period and assisted with the instruction.

The training carried out included elementary drill, handling of arms, and small field operations.

A class of instruction for the non-commissioned officers was held during the camp, dealing with fire orders, formations, etc.

His Highness the Sultan visited the camp and displayed great interest in all he saw. Unfortunately inclement weather necessitated curtailment of the field operations on the last day during the visit of His Highness.

Ceremonial parades.—The Corps took part in the Armistice Day parades at all the Platoon centres.

General.—The old equipment in this Corps is gradually being replaced when and as funds permit by new equipment of the approved pattern.

At the present time the Corps is 125 short rifles below establishment, the deficiency being made up with the old pattern long rifles, which cannot be used for musketry. These old rifles should be replaced by short rifles and sword bayonets when circumstances permit.

A bugle band has been formed in Taiping and good progress made in the instruction of the buglers.

SELANGOR.

Command.—Major B. J. Eaton, o.B.E., continued in command throughout the year, except for the period July to October when absent on duty in Australia.

During Major Eaton's absence Captain C. J. Perkins, Acting Second-in-Command, commanded the Corps.

Officers.—Captain F. H. English relinquished his appointment of Second-in-Command in November, 1923, and has since resigned his commission.

Lieutenant D. H. Grist was Adjutant throughout the year.

The following officers were commissioned during the year:

Second Lieutenant A. B. S. Boswell,

“ “ J. S. Macpherson.

Change of officers occurred through the transfers of Second Lieutenant Boswell (No. VII Platoon), Second Lieutenant J. S. Macpherson (No. VIII Platoon), Second Lieutenant E. Jago.

No. V Platoon (Bandar) has had no officer since May, 1923.

Mr. Wood (Assistant District Officer, Kuala Selangor) has rendered valuable assistance by taking charge of No. VIII Platoon in the absence of a Platoon Commander.

Hon. Second Lieutenant The Raja Muda of Selangor has continued to act as Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the High Commissioner.

Sergeant-Major Instructor Ribsdale was seconded for duty as Sergeant-Major in October.

Organization.—The only alterations in organization have been the additions of Drums attached to No. VII Platoon (Klang) and the formation of a Medical Unit. Major E. N. Graham, Medical Officer, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, is training the latter unit.

Strength.—

No. 1 Platoon (Tamils), Kuala Lumpur	...	...	...	...	65
„ 2 „ (Chinese) „	...	...	...	...	39
„ 3 „ (Mixed) „	...	...	...	...	32
„ 4 „ (Malays) „	...	...	...	...	84
„ 5 „ („), Bandar	...	...	...	...	66
„ 6 „ („), Kajang	...	...	...	...	44
„ 7 „ („), Klang	...	...	...	...	66
„ 8 „ („), Jeram and Kuala Selangor	...	...	...	...	60
Drums, Kuala Lumpur	...	...	...	...	12
„ Klang	...	...	...	...	26
Medical Unit	...	...	...	...	16
					<hr/>
				Total	510

The strength by nationalities is—

Malays	...	...	...	...	...	365
Chinese	...	...	...	...	...	69
Tamils	...	...	...	...	...	68
Eurasians	...	...	...	...	...	8
						<hr/>
				Total	...	510

Parades.—Parades were held every Monday except Bulan Puasa and part of December; the total parades being 42. In addition there were two combined field days with the Malay States Volunteer Regiment.

The attendance of members of Nos. II and III Platoons (Chinese and Mixed) was very poor and steps are being taken to discharge all men who are inefficient.

There is no doubt that the Chinese Platoon can be resuscitated and made into an efficient unit. Certain Chinese gentlemen have promised their support and steps have already been taken to carry out a reorganization and enrol the right type of men. With regard to the mixed platoon I consider the best plan would be to replace it with an Eurasian unit especially since many of the latter community have expressed a desire to enrol.

Musketry.—More attention was given to Musketry throughout the year, but there is still much room for improvement.

The records which are not yet complete show :

Marksmen.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.
12	49	80	70

The remainder are unclassified and in many cases did not fire the course.

The team which took part in the Warren Shield Competition at Taiping made a very creditable performance being placed eighth out of a total of 18 teams competing and thus secured the highest number of points of any of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry teams which entered.

Efficiency.—Unfortunately no records have been received showing the numbers of parades attended by members. Such records should be kept otherwise the interest taken by members and progress made cannot be gauged. There have been several changes in officers. In one instance no officer has been available since May and in another instance there has been no officer but a gentleman not holding a commission has kindly taken charge. In four other cases the officers have been transferred to other centres shortly after being commissioned. Such changes cannot have anything other than an adverse effect on efficiency.

An ex-non-commissioned officer has been seconded from the Prisons Department for duty with this Corps and the effect of his whole time services on the efficiency of the Corps should be considerable.

Camp.—A successful camp was held at Port Dickson from the 8th September to 16th September.

Number attending camp was—

Officers	6
Other ranks	218
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				Total	...	234

The training of non-commissioned officers formed an important part of the training carried out.

All ranks in camp fired a short course with both miniature and service rifles.

In field schemes the non-commissioned officers were the leaders and commanders while the officers acted as umpires.

Ceremonial Parades.—The Corps took part in the King's Birthday parade on 3rd June and the Armistice Day parade on 11th November.

His Highness the Sultan of Selangor, K.C.M.G., reviewed the unit on the 14th December on the occasion of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of his Coronation.

A guard of honour was mounted on the occasion of His Excellency the High Commissioner's visit to the Istana at Klang.

PAHANG.

His Highness the Sultan of Pahang was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Pahang, in October. Captain F. J. Ayris continued in command throughout the year. No additional officers have been appointed or commissioned and no officer has resigned his commission since my last report.

Strength.—

	Officers.	Other ranks.
Platoon 1 (Malays), Pekan	1	55
.. 2 (..), Kuantan	1	69
.. 3 (..), Kuala Lipis	1	73
Staff	1	

Total four officers and 197 other ranks.

Parades.—The average total parades per platoon for the year was 86 (an increase of 16 over the previous year) and the average percentage of attendance per man was 54.2. This is extremely satisfactory.

Musketry.—There is a striking increase in the number who passed the musketry course. In 1923 ninety-four passed against the small number of twenty-seven shown in my last report.

One hundred and fifty-two men fired parts I and II of the musketry course as against 129 in the previous year. There were only 23 men who did not complete the course.

A team commanded by Second Lieutenant The Raja Muda drawn from Nos. I, II, and III Platoons competed in the Warren Shield Competition. Their turn-out, march discipline, and general smartness was excellent and had they been able to do more training prior to the competition they would probably have secured a higher place in the competition than they did. They were placed 18th.

Efficiency.—There has been a very satisfactory increase in efficiency during 1923 as shown by comparison of the figures below :

	1922.	1923.
Efficient	110	122
Non-efficient	65	31

The figures of non-efficient men does not include men on leave, recruits, etc.

Camps.—A week-end camp was held at Kuantan in April when field operations were carried out.

Two officers and 87 other ranks (including 6 buglers) attended the camp.

The annual camp was held at Kuantan from the 3rd to the 10th August.

Five officers and 119 other ranks attended of whom only seven men were unable to put in the full time.

The health of the camp was good, only one case of malaria (imported) occurring.

Lieutenant Gordon Hall gave up five days of his leave in order to act as Adjutant to the camp.

The British Resident was in Kuantan during the period of the camp and visited it on several occasions.

The training was intensive and the camp was in every way a success.

Ceremonial Parades.—Ceremonial parades were held on the King's Birthday, His Highness the Sultan's Birthday, and Armistice Day.

On the occasion of His Highness the Sultan's Birthday the Corps carried out Trooping of the Colour.

For this parade the Corps was concentrated at Pekan, Platoons from other areas being conveyed there by boat.

His Highness the Sultan, the Hon'ble The British Resident, and Staff Officer to Local Forces were present at this parade, which was carried out with smartness and precision in a very creditable manner.

The following day a short tactical exercise was carried out in the presence of the Hon'ble The British Resident and the Staff Officer to Local Forces.

Guard of Honour.—Guards of Honour were mounted on the arrival of His Highness the Sultan at Kuantan and Kuala Lipis during His Highness's tour in September.

Armouries.—I am glad to be able to report the erection and completion of armouries at each Platoon Head-quarters: these ensure the better safeguarding of arms and ammunition. Guards were mounted on these armouries at Kuantan and Kuala Lipis during Chinese New Year.

General.—It is gratifying to be able to record that the Malayan Volunteer Infantry in Pahang have not only maintained their previous record of smartness but have made considerable progress in all-round efficiency.

NEGRI SEMBILAN.

I regret having to record that this Corps must be considered as having fallen off in efficiency.

This is entirely due to the number of changes in officers which have taken place during the year. In the case of No. 1 Platoon (Seremban) no officer was in command from June to October, and the Platoon dwindled in numbers, and those remaining became so slack that it appeared at one time that disbandment was the only thing which could be recommended. No platoon in this Corps escaped change of officers during the year.

Such a state of affairs is disheartening in the extreme to the officers who have given much time to the training of their men. Money and time spent on the training of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry Platoons can only be regarded as utterly wasted in cases where officers are transferred and no one found to replace them.

Officers.—From January to April, Captain F. M. Corkill commanded the Corps, and upon his departure Lieutenant C. S. Downey assumed command until 20th December, when he relinquished his commission upon leaving the country.

No. 1 Platoon.—Second Lieutenant C. E. L. Roberts commanded until June, and was succeeded in October by Second Lieutenant J. M. Meade.

No. 2 Platoon.—Commanded by Lieutenant C. S. Downey from January to September, when Second Lieutenant R. W. Cruickshank took over.

No. 3 Platoon.—Up to September this platoon was commanded by Second Lieutenant W. G. Stewart, who was replaced by Lieutenant Downey.

No. 4 Platoon.—Second Lieutenant R. Irvine commanded from the formation of the platoon in March until May, when he was replaced by Second Lieutenant E. T. James.

Lieutenant C. S. Downey not only commanded the Corps for nine months of the year, but at different times commanded in addition Nos. 2 and 3 Platoons, and it is unfortunate that in spite of all this valuable work and so much voluntary effort in the interest of the Corps an unsatisfactory year has to be reported.

The following gentlemen were granted commissions as Second Lieutenants during the year:

Mr. R. Irvine;
Mr. E. T. James;
Mr. R. W. Cruickshank;
Mr. J. M. Meade.

Strength on 31st December, 1923.—

Officers (active list)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
„ (unattached)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Other ranks	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	217

Parades.—For Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Platoons 54 parades were held, and 21 parades for No. 4 platoon.

Training and Musketry.—For the first six months of the year the training was confined to platoon training and recruit training for the new No. 4 Platoon at Rembau.

The result of the Warren Shield Competition revealed so low a standard in musketry that the Officer Commanding altered the year's programme and concentrated during the latter months on musketry training.

Musketry courses were held in Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Platoons but owing to the shortage of officers it was only possible for the Classification Musketry Course to be fired by No. 2 Platoon, the other platoons carrying out instructional and recruits courses only.

Camps.—A camp for the non-commissioned officers was held at Kuala Pilah in June and was well attended.

The annual camp was held at Port Dickson from 22nd to 29th September. Six officers and 171 men attended, Lieutenant E. B. Williams and Second Lieutenant A. D. Dryburgh (both unattached list) also attended as Adjutant and Officer Commanding No. 1 Platoon respectively.

Useful training in outposts, attack and defence, etc., was carried out by platoons. The Commandant and Adjutant, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, saw the Corps carrying out a tactical exercise. The Assistant Staff Officer to Local Forces attended the camp for three days and assisted in the training. Both the Commandant, Malay States Volunteer Regiment, and the Assistant Staff Officer to Local Forces reported the tactical exercises carried out as too advanced for the Corps in its present state of efficiency. More attention must be paid in the present year to training the non-commissioned officers.

Ceremonial Parades.—The Corps took part in the King's Birthday parade at Seremban, and also formed a guard of honour at the Astana Sri Menanti on the occasion of the Mengadap Ceremony on 4th August. They also took part in the Armistice Day Parade at Seremban.

SINGAPORE,
13th February, 1924.

N. MALCOLM,
Major-General,
Commanding the Troops, Malaya.