

= Haldane Reforms =

The Haldane Reforms were a series of far @-@ ranging reforms of the British Army made from 1906 to 1912 , and named after the Secretary of State for War , Richard Burdon Haldane . They were the first major reforms since the " Childers Reforms " of the early 1880s , and were made in the light of lessons newly learned in the Second Boer War .

The major element of the reforms was the creation of an expeditionary force , specifically prepared and trained for intervening in a major war . This had existed before , but it had not been well @-@ prepared for overseas service , and the newly organised force would have a permanent peacetime organisation and a full complement of supporting troops . At the same time , the reserve forces were restructured and expanded to ensure that the overseas forces could be efficiently reinforced and supplied with new recruits . To ensure that home defence would not suffer from sending the regular forces overseas , the Militia formed the Special Reserve and the Volunteer Force and the Yeomanry were reorganised into a new Territorial Force ; these latter two reforms were grouped together in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 . To encourage the development of military skills , an Officer Training Corps was established in public schools and universities . Military strategy was revitalised by a new Imperial General Staff , which would ensure a common doctrine and common strategic aims among the various military forces of the British Empire , including the Dominions as well as British India . Finally , the Regular Army itself would be reformed by the development of a new operational and training doctrine , laid down in Douglas Haig 's new Field Service Pocket Book .

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 saw the bulk of the changes put to the test ; the Expeditionary Force was quickly sent to the Continent , whilst the Territorial Force and Reserves were mobilised as planned to provide a second line .

= = Background = =

In the middle of the 19th century , the British Army had seen two major operations in close succession - the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny - and it had become apparent that the existing organisation of the forces was not sufficient for large @-@ scale modern warfare . The first wave of reforms was from 1858 to 1860 . This period saw the creation of the Staff College , which helped to turn officers in the upper reaches of the Army into professional soldiers ; the transformation of the old East India Company army into the Indian Army to better control the forces in India ; and the creation of the Volunteer Force to help with home defence whilst the Regular Army was overseas .

The second wave was from 1868 to 1872 , comprising a collection of administrative changes popularly known as the " Cardwell Reforms " after the then Secretary of State for War , Edward Cardwell . The purchase of commissions by officers was abolished , and recruits were now taken on for a short enlistment in a specified regiment or corps rather than the (unpopular) system of twenty @-@ one @-@ year general service enlistments . These measures at a stroke increased the quality of the manpower of the Army , and provided for a trained and efficient reserve of veterans which could be recalled to the colours in an emergency . A further part of the reforms was the reorganisation of the regimental system , linking " territorial " (line) regiments in paired regimental depots with a territory based recruiting area for simplified recruitment and training .

The third set of reforms was the " Childers Reforms " (again named after the Secretary of State who carried them out) of the early 1880s , which carried through the Cardwell regimental reorganisations to their logical end by completing the amalgamation of linked regiments into single two @-@ battalion regiments along with the local units of militia and volunteers .

The result of these reforms was to provide a sizable , well @-@ trained force in the British Isles , which could be sent overseas in time of crisis , with a system of reservists and home @-@ service volunteers to support it . However , with the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 , the system immediately began to show some strain ; by the end of the first year of fighting , the reserves had been entirely exhausted . Various novel measures , including the extensive use of auxiliary forces , were experimented with for the remainder of the war ; the Militia provided garrison units to

free up regulars , the Volunteers sent service companies to be attached to regular battalions , and the Imperial Yeomanry was created to supply much @-@ needed mounted infantry .

A number of half @-@ hearted attempts were made at reform during the war and in its immediate aftermath , but with little effect . Two important Royal Commissions were established in 1902 - the Esher Committee and the Norfolk Commission - and reported in 1904 . The Esher Report called for wide @-@ ranging reforms in the administration of the Army and the War Office , whilst the Norfolk Commission , which had studied the auxiliary forces , declared them " unfit for service " and recommended various practical reforms alongside the much more sensational suggestion of universal military service . Some of these reforms were instituted under the Conservative Secretary of State for War , Hugh Arnold @-@ Forster , in 1904 @-@ 5 , but the broad thrust of his reform plans were strongly opposed . Attempts to reorganise the home forces into six Army Corps had begun , but only one of these had actually been organised , and even that lacked many of its support units and staff .

= = Haldane 's reforms = =

In December 1905 , the Balfour government collapsed , and Sir Henry Campbell @-@ Bannerman became Prime Minister , leading a minority Liberal government . Richard Haldane was appointed Secretary of State for War , an almost accidental selection ? he himself had been aiming to be Lord Chancellor , whilst Campbell @-@ Bannerman offered him the post of Attorney @-@ General , then the Home Office , and had offered the War Office to two other men before Haldane offered to take it . Despite this inauspicious beginning , he would become , in the words of Douglas Haig , " the greatest Secretary of State for War England has ever had " . Haldane took the post with well hidden preconceived ideas as to the role of the Army having realised that the reform @-@ weary Generals in the War Office , after St John Brodrick , would not want another Secretary of State for War who was intent on changing things yet again . Haldane 's success was that he got the Generals on side having gained their trust and respect , then expunged the War Office of those officers who did not support his reforms and with the support of Lord Esher , Maj Gen Haig and Colonel Ellison , finally designed and implemented a set of reforms that would go some way to preparing the British Army for the opening salvos of the First World War .

= = = Creation of an Expeditionary Force = = =

After a brief hiatus during the 1906 general election , which the Liberals won by a landslide , obtaining a majority of 126 seats in the House of Commons , Haldane turned his attention to the Tangier Crisis , which had almost brought France and Germany to war in December . Sir Edward Grey , the Foreign Secretary , had privately agreed to commit the Army to the aid of France , if attacked , and Haldane began to consider how best to accomplish this . He quickly concluded that there was a need for a regular expeditionary force , specifically prepared and trained for use as a continental intervention force . The question now became how to provide this force , and after a short period Haldane settled on a strength of six infantry divisions and their supporting units . They would need to be organised in peacetime and prepared to mobilise in the United Kingdom , as they would be committed into action as soon as they reached the Continent .

As the Army was now geared to a specific purpose , it could be reorganised to fit this role ; any elements which did not fit could be discarded to help pay for the changes ; this was to include the disbandment of ten infantry battalions and a number of surplus artillery batteries , and the withdrawal of some overseas garrisons . The Army at home was reorganised into six divisions by a Special Army Order dated 1 January 1907 , with one " heavy " four @-@ brigade Cavalry Division and two mounted brigades for reconnaissance , along with some Army troops . In February 1907 , Haldane announced the coming year 's spending estimates ; despite the creation of the new force , the disbanded units and other minor efficiencies had managed to reduce overall spending by two to three million pounds .

== Creation of the Territorial Force ==

Once the Regular Army had been organised as a continental Expeditionary Force , it would be necessary to provide forces for home defence . Haldane 's proposal anticipated that the existing tripartite division of the Army - the Regular Army , the Volunteers / Yeomanry and the Militia - should be changed into a two @-@ part structure , with an Expeditionary Force and a home @-@ defence Territorial Force based on County Associations .

These changes were embodied in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 , which passed the Commons with little opposition save for a dispute over the future status of Militia regiments . It essentially abolished the existing Volunteers and Yeomanry , and used them to create a new Territorial Force of fourteen infantry divisions , fourteen cavalry brigades , and a large number of support units , all raised , organised and financed by local organisations but liable for service under War Office command . The Militia provided the Special Reserve , which would contain men who had not served in the regular Army but agreed to be liable for service with the regular forces in wartime .

== Training and doctrine ==

In November 1906 , Douglas Haig was appointed Director of Staff Duties at the War Office , and took up the task of providing a new training doctrine for the Army . The Esher Report had suggested a new scheme for two sets of training manuals , but these had not been fully implemented . In 1907 , the new provisional " Field Service Pocket Book " was produced , revised the following year , and finally standardised as " Field Service Regulations , Part I - Operations " in 1909 . This was to serve as the training manual for all branches of the service , and was the synthesis of the generally agreed tactical and strategic principles which had emerged from the South African War .

Part II , " Administration " , however , was more contentious . Haig was strongly in favour of an entirely new system , where the manual would cover the whole organisation of a field army , including base and lines @-@ of @-@ communication troops as well as field units . This was strongly opposed by the Adjutant @-@ General and Quartermaster @-@ General staff , who felt that it was unnecessary , and resented such an imposition on their ' territory ' by what they saw as an outsider . However , with Haldane 's support , Haig was able to push this through and ensure its adoption .

== Officer Training Corps ==

One issue that was foreseen as a potential problem was the supply of skilled officers to the Army in wartime , and a committee was established in 1906 under Sir Edward Ward to study the matter . It issued two reports , one focusing on university and school corps , and one on the Special Reserve . The main recommendation of the former was to reorganise the existing school Cadet Corps and university Rifle Corps , which had been formed on an ad @-@ hoc basis as part of the broader Volunteer movement , into a uniform force , administered and supported by the War Office .

Under Army Order 160 of 1908 , contingents of the " Senior Division " were established in universities , and contingents of the " Junior Division " in public schools . Army Order 178 , later the same year , provided a standard set of regulations , stating that the scheme was intended to provide " a standardized degree of elementary military training with a view to providing candidates for commissions " .

The scheme was popular ; by the end of 1910 , there were 19 contingents of the " Senior Division " and 152 of the " Junior Division " , and one year later , at the start of 1912 , this had risen to 55 and 155 respectively . A total of 23 @, @ 700 cadets were enrolled as of 1 January 1912 , with 630 officers , and 830 former cadets had already gone on to take commissions in the auxiliary forces .

== Imperial General Staff ==

In the later part of the nineteenth century , the emphasis of Imperial defence policy had shifted from

a single centralised Army and Navy to an approach whereby the self @-@ governing Dominions began to provide forces for their own defence , and to begin to take responsibility for strategic interests and bases in their own geographic areas . The culmination of this was the South African War , where contingents from the Dominion militaries had played a significant role .

However , whilst the forces were developing locally , the goals of a comprehensive Imperial defence policy remained constant . A proposal was made to a conference of Dominion leaders in 1907 , which recommended that all Imperial forces be organised along a standard model , similar to the recent divisional reorganisation of the British Army and the Army in India (the combined British Army units in India and the Indian Army units) . The conference approved this concept , but carried the idea further , and recommended the creation of a general staff drawn from the forces of the entire Empire . This Imperial General Staff would serve as a common link between the national forces , and could oversee the development of a single uniform defence scheme . It would also be able to help ensure greater consistency between the forces , though it was carefully laid down that the Imperial General Staff could only offer " guidance " to the local government and General Staff , and would not have any binding authority over the national forces .

The new system was approved by an Imperial conference in July 1909 , which confirmed the support for the new structure , and the principle of standardisation , as well as emphasising that it was not to limit " the autonomy of the self @-@ governing Dominions " .

= = World War I = =

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 saw the bulk of the changes put to the test ; the Expeditionary Force of six divisions was quickly sent to the Continent , whilst a Territorial Force of 14 divisions and Reserves were mobilised as planned to provide a second line . The mobilisation was carried out punctually and the divisions were armed .