

**The Victorian Volunteer Force
on the central Victorian Goldfields,
1858-1883**

**Bob Marmion
BA Hons Dip. Ed.
Latrobe University Bendigo**

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Arts
School of Arts and Education
Faculty of Regional Development
Latrobe University
Bundoora, Victoria 3086 Australia

September 2003

Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1	18
Imperial and Colonial defence – how best to safeguard the colony	
Imperial and colonial defence	19
Victorian colonial defence	21
The British Volunteer Force – an antecedent for Victoria	22
The concept of civilians serving as part time soldiers	26
Chapter 2	29
Forming the Line – the early Volunteers as part of Victoria’s defences	
Chapter 3	39
Riflemen Form! A history of the Victorian Volunteer Force 1859-1883	
Formation of the up country Volunteer Corps	58
Chapter 4	65
The changing of the guard on the goldfields	
Chapter 5	76
The Hidden Agenda - the British Army’s role in maintaining civil order	
No logic or valid reason for having inland Volunteers...	78
Calling out the Volunteers to aid the civil power	96
Chapter 6	107
Volunteering as part of the 19th century Victorian ethos	
Chapter 7	115
The Volunteer Corps – rushing to join the Colours	

Contents cont.

Chapter 8	142
The social structure of the Volunteer Corps	
Chapter 9	156
The demographics of the Volunteer Corps on the goldfields	
The photographic evidence	156
The Muster Rolls	158
Occupations of the Volunteers – changes over time	160
Occupations of the Volunteers – comparing the Corps with their communities	168
The ages and addresses of the Castlemaine Rifle Volunteers	171
Connections between members	173
Other issues relating to the demographics	176
Conclusion	179
Appendices (See list of appendices on page v)	184
Bibliography	205

List of Figures/Tables/Photographs

3.1	Volunteer Corps accepted for service in 1863	53
5.1	Examples of where the British Army was used to maintain civil order during the early-mid 19 th century	79
7.1	Cartoon of Captain J.E.N. Bull, Commanding Officer of the Castlemaine Vol. Rifle Corps, c 1861	122
7.2	Cartoon of Captain Bull	122
7.3	Cartoon of Captain Bull	122
7.4	Organization chart of the North West Volunteer Battalion c.1863	126
7.5	Rules governing the 1 st Castlemaine Volunteer Rifle Corps in 1860 and 1864	128
8.1	Ratio of Volunteers and the general population on the goldfields	142
8.2	Ratio of Volunteers and the general population in Melbourne and other parts of the colony	142
8.3	Bendigo Volunteers involved in local or colonial government	148
9.1	Photograph of the Bendigo Vol. Rifles 1861	158
9.2	Photograph of the Officers and Sergeants of the the Bendigo Vol. Rifles, 1861	158
9.3	Photograph of the Castlemaine Rifles 1861	158
9.4	Photograph of a company of the Castlemaine Rifles	158
9.5	Photograph of the Mount Alexander Rifles, c.1875	158
9.6	Sample of the Castlemaine Vol. Muster Roll	158
9.7	Breakdown of Volunteer numbers in central Victoria	159
9.8	List of the known occupations in the Bendigo Rifles	162
9.9	The known occupations as a % of the Bendigo Rifles membership 1860-1880	164
9.10	Graph of the above	164
9.11	Occupations of the Castlemaine Rifles 1860-1880	164
9.12	Graph of the above comparison	164
9.13	Comparing the occupations of the two Corps	164
9.14	Graph of the above comparison	164
9.15	Number of merchants/traders and gold miners, Bendigo and Castlemaine	166
9.16	Comparing the Volunteers and the general community	168
9.17	Graphing the above comparison	168
9.18	Population changes in Bendigo and Castlemaine municipalities	171
9.19	Ages of the Castlemaine Rifles on enrolment, 1860-1875	172
9.20	Graph of the above	172

List of Plates

Following Page 64

1.0	Sergeants of the Bendigo Vol. Rifle Corps, 1861	page viii
2.0	Volunteer Encampment at Sunbury, 1864	
3.0	Queen's Birthday Parade and Sham Fight, 1871	
4.0	Tournament of the Castlemaine Light Horse, 1868	
5.0	Tournament of the Light Horse at Castlemaine, 1870	
6.0	Hospital Sunday at Sandhurst, 1873	
7.0	The Governor's Visit to Sandhurst, 1866	

All plates are from the Latrobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

List of Appendices

Commencing page 184

A	Rules and Regulations for Volunteer Corps 1854
B	Rules and Regulations for individual Corps within the Volunteer Force 1859
C	Explanation of employment categories used in the 1861 Census
D	Occupations of the Castlemaine Rifles 1860
E	Occupations of the Castlemaine Rifles 1863
F	Occupations of the Castlemaine Rifles 1868-75
G	Addresses of the Castlemaine Rifles 1860-75
H	Chart of the addresses showing distances from town
I	Ages of the Castlemaine Rifles 1860 -63
J	Graph of the ages of the Castlemaine Rifles 1860-63
K	Connections between members of the Castlemaine Rifles, 1860-63
L.	Connections between members of the Castlemaine Rifles working in Government Departments, 1860-63

Summary of the MA Thesis

During the 19th century, defence was a major issue in Victoria as indeed it was in other British colonies and the United Kingdom. To help defend themselves, self governing colonies throughout the Empire enlisted local citizens to serve as part time soldiers on a voluntary basis.

The Victorian government in 1859 - 60 took a calculated risk in adopting a Volunteer Force to underpin the whole colonial defence scheme, particularly as the military effectiveness of the citizen soldiers was questionable due to the lack of any real discipline within the Force and the part time nature of the military service. Whilst the savings which resulted (from using Volunteers rather than expensive Imperial troops) were spent on building forts and purchasing ordnance to protect Port Phillip Bay, there were other advantages to be gained from the government decision. It harnessed the considerable groundswell of public patriotism and pride in the Empire to ensure the development of a colonial society with strong links to Britain.

The Government also linked Volunteering, stability and patriotism together as part of a less obvious agenda for the goldfields. In a period of lingering unrest only a few short years after Eureka, the Volunteers provided a clear indication of government power and yet another sign (along with the judicial system, education, language) of the importance and expanse of British society. Should there be any civil unrest on the goldfields, the local Corps were ideally suited to the role of civil control. On a number of occasions, the Volunteer Corps were called out to maintain law and order.

The thesis studies a major group of over 5,100 men on the goldfields over two decades, particularly with regard to their motives for joining the Volunteers and their demographics such as ages, occupations, addresses, activities and the networks between members. By addressing the Corps demographics it is possible to understand the role played by the Volunteers in the development of goldfields society.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of another degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Bob Marmion

Dated 29 / 9 / 2003