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### The Vol Löbell Reports on Military Matters in 1908

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# THE VON LÖBELL REPORTS ON MILITARY MATTERS IN 1908.

*Précis from the German by Lieut.-Colonel E. GUNTER, p.s.c.,  
late East Lancashire Regiment.*

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## PREFACE.

A GREATER number of non-European Armies than usual are reported on this year† owing to their increasing development or to the political situation at the time. It is not possible to epitomise these. Increased importance is again assigned to completing all reports by reference to technical and other literature. As the illustrations published last year found favour, some—specially selected as little likely to be known to our readers—are again issued with this volume.

In the sketch of the Military History of the year under review, the principle of only giving the narrative in the most succinct form is adhered to, as, owing to the occurrences being so recent, their complete investigation is impracticable.

The Reports occupy 520 pages, as against 477 in 1907.†† A short description of the Australian Defence Force and a full one of our Indian Army are given in Part I., with Tables (p. 68), and a very brief account of the short campaign on the N.W. Frontier of India in 1908 is added to Part III.

The Editor again offers his sincere thanks to his fellow-workers for the great care which they have devoted to the tasks, often of great difficulty, allotted to them, as well as to all those officials, both at home and in foreign countries, who have given this work their very valuable support.

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†i.e. in the original published in March, 1909.

††As usual in these Reports every detail of the British Army, especially in connection with our Territorial Force, is brought under review, so all German officers may closely study our organisations, etc.—E. G.

The Editorial Staff deplore the death of a colleague of many years' standing: His Excellency Lieut.-General Kühnze, of the Danish Army.

(Signed) VON PELET-NARBONNE,  
Lieut.-General, Active List (German Army).††

Berlin, 1909.

## PART I.

### ORGANISATION.

#### AUSTRIA-HUNGARY IN 1908.

The Report gives an exhaustive account of the Austria-Hungary military organisation,† with tabular statements and full details. Our very limited space here makes it quite impossible even to epitomise this. No change has been made in the distribution of organisation of the Army Corps and Districts in consequence of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One 1st Division only of 2 Brigades and 1 Squadron have been added to the strength of Infantry and Cavalry since 1907; but the Artillery has been increased by 8 H.A. Batteries, 31 Field, 11 Mountain Batteries, and 5 Fortress Artillery Brigades have been formed. It has been also reorganised. There are altogether 14 Brigades of Field Artillery. Each Field Artillery Brigade consists of 4-5 Regiments, each Regiment of 2-3 Divisions, each

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††Since editing the above the much honoured General has been removed from the scene of his strenuous labours. He died at Charlottenburg on the 11th October, 1909, in his 70th year, and the German army mourns the loss of a brilliant officer. He entered the army in 1857, passed through the Staff College (*Krieg's Akademie*) and was employed for some years at the War Office. After holding some cavalry commands he was selected for the command of the 1st Division. He retired in 1895, but continued to work at Military Literature, in which sphere his talents and industry were conspicuous. His works on Cavalry were especially widely read and esteemed. His careful editorship of the VON LÖBELL REPORTS since 1902 was of great service to military men of all nations. He also contributed many articles and essays to the *Militär Wochenblatt*, the *Jahrbücher*, and other periodicals as well as to the *Tag*. His political writings also bore testimony to his energy and to the activity of his patriotic spirit, always devoted to his country's welfare.—E. G.

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†This organization was tabulated in the JOURNAL for October, 1903, p. 1117, and there are few changes except in artillery as noticed above. For certain details see the JOURNAL for January, 1909, p. 126, February, 1909, p. 247, March, 1909, p. 397, April, 1909, p. 539, May, 1909, p. 659. In June, 1909, p. 807, "The Strategical Position as against Russia," in July and August, 1909, the Army Estimates, September, 1909, p. 1238, "Dirigibles," and November, 1909, "Cost of a War," p. 1515.—E. G.

Division of 2 Batteries, 1 Ammunition Park and 1 Reserve. Each H.A. Division and Heavy Howitzer Division of 3 Batteries and an Ammunition and Reserve Park for the service of both. There are 6 Regiments of Mountain Guns, each consisting of 4 Mountain Batteries, 1 Ammunition and 1 Reserve Park.

### THE BELGIAN ARMY, 1908.

The stations, organisation and strength of the Belgian Army given in the Reports are the same as tabulated in the JOURNAL for November, 1905, p. 1267. The new law recently passed for compulsory service was not reported, as it had not been decided on when the Reports were published.

### CHINA, 1908.

A full report of the old Army and of the new Chinese Army is given in the Reports, which there is not space for here, and much information has already been given in the JOURNALS for 1909.

### FRANCE, 1908.

In the December JOURNAL last year, p. 1688, a somewhat full *précis* of the v. Löbell Report on that country for 1907 was given. That for 1908 is not long, and there are but few changes. The average mean peace strength in 1908 is given as 555,000 men, without counting those troops of the Colonial Army who are in France, but inclusive of 32,000 half efficient men. This average mean strength will probably, it is said, be increased in 1909; and the Report shows in detail why it will probably amount to 558,000. It is a mistake, it says, to reckon upon this strength being henceforth considerably decreased. The number of *re-engaged men* has increased.

**Heavy Artillery.**—12 Batteries of Garrison Artillery were converted into Heavy Field Artillery and armed with 155-mm. (6·1-inch) Rimmilho guns; 3 Batteries had previously been converted, and the 39th Field Artillery Regiment in Nancy is to have two similar Batteries added to it.

**Machine Guns.**—The Infantry and Cavalry are being steadily supplied with machine gun sections. Each Infantry Regiment is apparently to receive 3 sections, and each Cavalry Regiment one. The organisation of these was detailed in the JOURNAL for January, 1909, p. 125.

## THE GERMAN ARMY, 1908.†

The increase of the German Army has steadily progressed in accordance with the Law of the 15th April, 1905, and will be completed by the 31st March, 1910. Of the 633 Infantry Battalions, only 2 (Prussian) Battalions, and of the 510 Squadrons of Cavalry, only 11 (5 Prussian, 5 Saxon, 1 Bavarian) have to be raised. An experimental 3rd Airship Company of 3 officers and 85 non-commissioned officers and men was formed at Berlin in 1908. The number of students in the *Kaiser-Wilhelms-Akademie* has been raised till 31st March, 1912, to 60.

Recruiting Statistics were given in the JOURNAL for March, 1909. The "*Recruiting Reserve*" is generally called "*Supplementary*"—that is, men in excess of the requirements of the year who are partly trained, and have to replace casualties or enter upon Army service in the 2nd Line in case of war.

## GREAT BRITAIN, 1908.

Very full Reports of the British Army at Home and in India, including Native Troops, are given. The loyalty and fine spirit of the latter are brought to notice, and the improvement in the conduct of the Home Army is mentioned, owing, it is said, to the greater care taken in enlistments.

The great want of officers in the British Army is again brought to notice. Sir Ian Hamilton's appointment to the Army Council is mentioned and praised, and the liability of the Territorial Force to Military Law while out for training, and, in fact, every detail regulating our Home Defence Force is noticed.

## GREECE, 1908.

A full Report of the Grecian Forces is given, which there is no space to reproduce.

## JAPAN, 1908.

A full account and a tabular statement showing the distribution of the Japanese Divisions are given. These are as given in the Table in the JOURNAL for October, 1907, p. 1257, with the addition of two new Divisions, the 17th at Okayama and the 18th at Kurumej (*sic*), of the same strength and composition as the others. The totals were in 1908: Infantry, 38 Brigades, 76 Regiments, 228 Battalions; Cavalry, 4 Brigades, 27 Regiments, 89 Squadrons; Field Artillery, 3 Brigades, 25 Regiments, 50 Brigade Divisions, †† 150 Batteries; Engineers, 19 Battalions,

†The Report on the German Army is unusually short this year, but officers will find recruiting statistics in the JOURNAL for March and June, 1909, pp. 405, 814, Mil. Notes. Information about Automobiles in that for May, 1909, pp. 666-7, Airships in June, 1909, p. 817, and September, 1909, p. 1240, and experimental firing at balloons in October, 1909, p. 1379, from the *Revue Militaire*. The Stations, Organisation, etc., of the German Army are as tabulated in the JOURNAL, October, 1906, p. 1258.—E. G.

††This term is retained for the reasons given in 1907 as above in the foot note.—E. G.

57 Companies; Train, 19 Battalions, 38 Companies. Some Infantry Regiments have Hotchkiss Machine Gun Batteries of 6 guns each attached.

As a result of their war experience, the Japanese have reduced the number of their Mountain Batteries from 36 to 9. The divisional Cavalry is reduced to 2 Squadrons, and the Squadrons thus set free are formed into new Cavalry Brigades. The Captains of Infantry are unmounted. The total peace strength of the 19 Divisions may be reckoned at 250,000 men. They are not to be grouped into Army Corps, but 4 or 5 Divisions, as a rule, will form an Army.

Great attention is being paid to the acquisition of foreign languages by officers. In 1908, 59 passed in English, 36 in German, 26 in Chinese, 14 in French, and 5 in Russian. Non-commissioned officers are thoroughly instructed now in Hygiene and First-Aids.

The Report praises the methods of training of the Japanese soldiers, and eulogises the untiring perseverance of the authorities in adapting what is best in foreign Armies to their own requirements. To this and to their discipline and intelligence, their high sense of honour and devotion to duty—above all, to their stern determination to do or die in battle—the Report attributes their unexampled success in their latest war.\*

**Field Kitchens** have been used for some time with great success. A new pattern large camp-kettle now cooks for 600 men. This is drawn in a 4-horsed wagon; details are given. These were used at the manoeuvres in 1908.

### THE ARMY OF SPAIN IN 1908.†

The peace strength in 1908 amounted to 80,000 men. This could be increased by calling up the Army Reserve to 100,000. The War Minister, Field-Marshal Primo de Rivera, intended to bring up this strength in 1909 to 120,000 and to ask the Cortes to approve of this and to reduce the colour service‡‡ from 3 to 2 years.§ Out of 128,723, about 50,000 were found fit for service in 1908, and were distributed among the Army, the Fleet, the Guardia Civil, and the Carbineeros (Gendarmerie).

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\*For a more complete Report of the Japanese Army in 1908 see the JOURNAL for September, October, November and December, 1909, pp. 1209, 1351, 1492, 1618.—E. G.

†The Spanish Army was partly reorganised in 1903 in accordance with General Linare's scheme.

‡‡Spain is one of the few countries which have still a system of enlistment by "conscription," the liability running from the 21st to the 36th year of age.

§It has practically been 2 years of late.

## THE ARMY OF SPAIN IN 1908.

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	Divisions.	Infantry.				Rifles.			Cavalry.			Artillery.			Engrs.		Remarks.
		Brigades.	Regts.	Batns.	Cos.	Brigades.	Batns.	Cos.	Brigades.	Regts.	Sqdns.	Regts.	Troops.	Batteries.	Regts.	Cos.	
Provinces <sup>a</sup> and Military Districts with Hd.-Qrs. of Divns.																	1. 5. The 3rd Batns. and 5 Sqdns. consisted of Cadres only. 2. Siege Field Art. Regts. have 4 Batts. Capital Madrid. A. Each Military District is commanded by a Lieut.-General.
I. New Castile	2 Inf.	4	8	24	96	1	6	30	3	3	15	5	14	87	1	8	
Madrid	1 Cav.																
II. Andalusia	2 Inf.	4	8	24	96	1	6	30	2	2	10	2	5	15	1	8	
Badajoz, Granada																	
III. Valencia	2 "	4	8	24	96				1	4	20	2	4	12	1	8	
Valencia, Alicante																	
IV. Catalonia	2 "	4	8	24	96	1	6	30	1	5	25	2	4	12	1	8	
Barcelona, Girona																	
V. Arragon	2 "	4	8	24	96												
Tarragona, Saragossa																	
VI. Burgos	2 "	4	8	24	96				1	4	20	2	4	12	1	8	
Valladolid																	
VII. Old Castile	1 "	2	4	12	48							1	2	12	1	8	
Vittoria, Pamplona																	
VIII. Galicia	1 "	3	6	18	72							1	2	12			
Leon, Corufia																	
In Balearic Isles	14 Inf.	29	58	174	696	3	18	90	8	28	140	17	39	124	7	56	
In the Canary Islands	1 Cav.																
Teneriffe (Santa Cruz)			4	10	64		1	4			2			4		4	
In Ceuta and Melilla			4	12	96		4	12			2			2		2	
N. African Coast			4	13	52						2			2		2	
Total	14 Inf. 1 Cav.	29	70	209	908	3	23	103	8	28	146	17	39	132	7	66	

† This tabular statement was composed before the present outbreak of war with the Moors.

Notes on the composition and organization of the Expeditionary Force to Melilla will be found on pages 1658-9 of the JOURNAL for December, 1909.

The strength of units was as under :—

Unit.	Peace.		War.		Remarks.
	Offrs.	Men.	Offrs.	Men.	
Infantry Regt.	60	675	69	3028	{ The Infantry Bn. has 4 Cos. each having 3 Züge, each Züge 2 platoons, each of 2 groups.
Rifle Regt.	29	466	29	1000	
Cavalry Regt.	51	474	43	701	30 Field Guns.
Field Art. Regt.	35	518	63	1314	

The military authorities have always encountered great difficulties in their repeated attempts to reform the Spanish Army. The representatives of the people have shown consistent indifference to Army matters, and have been steadily averse to carrying out strictly the rules of conscription.

A new Enlistment Act was projected in 1908, and a Commission, presided over by General de Madariaga, worked out details: colour service to be reduced to 2 years, Army Reserve extended to 4 years, in 2nd Reserve to 7 years; after this, the Landsturm (general levy) service to begin. Taking it all round, the total service is to be increased from 12 to 15 years. The peace strength is to be always 100,000, but capable of expansion on mobilisation to 300,000.

Though the loss of Cuba caused a diminished demand for officers, there are still many vacancies. Still, there are more than enough always for the normal strength of 100,000 men, though in certain grades there are many deficiencies.

*(To be continued.)*