

GET ON PARADE

Restructuring South Africa's Part-time military force for the 21st century

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PREFACE

Part-time forces have always formed the backbone of South Africa's defence force. If this role is to be continued into the 21st century, they will have to be a real citizen's army the defence force of all the people of South Africa.

Many of the views expressed publicly about the future of the men and women who form the military are not based on hard facts, address only a small part of the problem, or do not reflect public opinion. The latter is particularly evident from a wide-ranging opinion survey conducted jointly by the Institute for Defence Policy (IDP) and the Human Sciences Research Council in 1995. The Ministry of Defence and the South African National Defence Force are also under constant pressure to cut the defence budget, but to continue providing the same level of support to the police, in border security; to restructure the armed forces, but to do so without additional resources; to change dramatically, but to accept being marginal to public debate.

Finding the money for defence will always be a problem; finding the human resources in this period of transition may also be difficult. The SANDF has embarked on a new policy of volunteerism, equal opportunities, affirmative action, rationalisation and restructuring, all of which will affect the part-time force. Hopefully this monograph, the first in a new series by the IDP, will stimulate debate on the real details of restructuring, which must begin soon.

VOLUNTARY MILITARY SERVICE

Harry Schwarz, former South African ambassador to the United States

Since time immemorial, there have been individuals who have volunteered for military service, but there have also been many occasions when those in authority have compelled people to render military service rather than expecting them to volunteer.

Two interesting examples can be taken from the Bible. In the book of Exodus we are told that military service was compulsory but that there were grounds for exemption, not only if the male did not yet have an heir but also if he did not have a vineyard. And while, on one occasion, Saul did not enforce compulsory service, he sent parts of an ox around the land to illustrate what might happen to the cattle of those who did not volunteer.

In South Africa, it is noteworthy that despite the political divisions in the white community caused by participation in the two world wars, blacks having been given no say as to whether the country should be at war or not, the Smuts government sought to enlist only volunteers for the war against Germany, Italy and Japan, and they eventually included people of colour. The reasons for conscription of white youths in the pre-1994 period of government are sufficiently recent to acquire no analysis. So that my remarks may be seen in the correct context, I set out what I believe:

- At this stage of South Africa's history, a voluntary SANDF is the only logical and practical political, social and military option.
- Voluntary military service can be a unifying and beneficial factor, and can be a national asset.

Voluntary military service is, of course, divided into full-time and part-time service. Full-time service is either related to a complete career or to a fixed-time contract. Today, both of these are almost inevitably voluntary. Tsarist Russia sought to supplement its elitist voluntary army element with conscripts forced to serve, often for decades. Interestingly, some of South Africa's white immigrants from Russia at the turn of the century came here to escape this unacceptable form of conscription.

As World War 1 demonstrated, the Tsarist concept did not create a willing or effective military force. But there can be successful conscripted armies, particularly where the population as a whole supports the cause and conscription is regarded as a mechanism to ensure a fair sharing of the tasks that have to be performed. Israel is such an example.

The problem of a professional army with a monopoly of military power is that it has the potential to be used for political purposes, such as coups. The events of 27 April 1994 demonstrated a South African tradition of service by the military to the government of the day. Or, more correctly, service to the state and the integration of the SANDF is designed to make it more reflective of the population as a whole, which will further strengthen this tradition.

It is, however, a safeguard of democracy if professionals alone do not constitute the military

machinery of the state. Among the reasons why I, for one, believe that a *coup d'etat* is not practically possible in the United States is not only the vertical and horizontal division of political power, but the fact that the federally controlled military is supplemented by the National Guard, which is a part-time voluntary force spread right across the numerous states of that country.

The success of a voluntary force depends upon the spirit on which it is founded, the attitude of the country towards it, and the functions which it performs. There is an obvious difference between someone who wishes to serve and one who is unwilling and compelled to do so. The National Guard in the United States is based on the concept of the citizen soldier; this had its origin in the Minutemen, persons who were available at short notice (hence the word 'minute') to defend their land.

They were not soldiers by trade, but followed many vocations. Historically, their membership included 18 United States presidents, of which Captain Abraham Lincoln and Captain Harry S Truman were just two.

The concept behind the National Guard is the slogan, "*To Keep the Nation the Land of the Free*". There can be political debates about the United States constitution and its economic and social structure, and this is not the time or place to engage in them, but the concept of a part-time volunteer force in which public figures of today or tomorrow are active and which is perceived as an instrument of freedom, as opposed to one of oppression, is vital to morale, the success of such a force and an acceptable place for it in the community.

The relationship between a part-time voluntary force and people is vital for its success. Not only must people wish to join, sacrificing part of their leisure time (in the United States it means many weekends), with employers needing to feel that they benefit from the service of their employees; equally important, if not more so, is the relationship between the force and the people as a whole.

While there is a need for a conventional part of the part-time volunteer force, which arguably saves money (in the United States, for example, it is said that the cost is one fifth that of a full-time soldier) and so helps taxpayers, this is somewhat distant from the individual citizen. If a part-time volunteer soldier is perceived as being helpful to the more direct needs of the community, the perception of a part-time force as a national asset will be more readily created. The United States National Guard comprises 500 000 Americans serving 3 000 communities. In only one year it has dealt with more than 300 actual natural disasters, involving more than 30 000 members of the force.

In South Africa, territorially orientated units can help not only with national disasters (helicopters of 15 Squadron, in which I have a particular interest and which is a full-time unit, with pilots mainly on contract, have helped with floods and other natural disasters), but also with many other important functions that benefit people visibly and directly. These can cover a wide field. In the United States the National Guard is available to support conventional forces; for instance, they were active in the Gulf War. But they are also available when there are tornadoes and floods, and for other situations requiring humanitarian aid. They help with the education of underprivileged persons, build roads and bridges, and airlift the sick and injured as well as medicines.

In the words of the United States authorities: "*So whatever crises may erupt, America knows who to call call out the National Guard.*" In South Africa, we would be able to say: "*Call out our voluntary citizen soldiers.*"

At this time in our country's history, we are, of course, greatly preoccupied with violence from many sources, particularly criminal, whether this be against persons or property. It is clear that the voluntary citizen soldier can play an important role in this. Obviously, they need special training. They can supplement but cannot replace the police, even though in some countries the functions of the military and the police are combined. The citizen soldier has, in my view, many advantages:

- He/she will be perceived without any political baggage of the past;
- He/she will have knowledge of the area in which operations take place, as the unit will be stationed in the area in which the soldier lives and/or works;
- As a member of the community, the soldier knows the language, the problems and the people, and they will not regard the citizen soldier as an outsider;
- They can be supplementary to existing law and order functions, and release personnel for specialised duties;
- Qualified persons can render a variety of services to the community, whether they are professionals such as doctors and dentists (perhaps by means of mobile units), or artisans who can help build infrastructure. All these services are useful, and will make them more acceptable to the community. The RDP can benefit from forces that are efficiently used.

In my view, and it is my personal view only, the citizen soldier should not only be seen as a person carrying arms and learning to march in step, but as an individual who renders the community services that are so urgently needed. That law and order may be a priority does not mean that it is the only function to perform. There can be a completely new approach to what military service as a citizen soldier really means and what it can achieve, without jeopardising the fundamental functions prescribed by the constitution for the SANDF.

The question of who will want to join the new citizen army and who will be accepted is, of course, important. The full-time membership of the new SANDF is well above needs and affordability. If all eligible personnel are integrated, we are told, membership would be about 135 000, while planning provides for about 90 000. This means that, except for experts and particular shortages, little or no recruitment will take place for a number of years. There is, of course, a risk of the wrong type of individual seeking to join a citizen's army, whether this be the full-time or part-time component. The concept of the macho gun-slinging Rambo is one our country can do without in the SANDF. We have enough of these on our streets already.

The citizen forces need to be composed of people who are representative of the community and have a desire for service, not glory. There are many people in our country who received privileges in the past, and there are now those who are looking to the state to do much for them in the future. If one receives a benefit, in this case from the state, there is in my view an obligation to repay it in some way. There may be no better way than to render service to the community as a whole.

The world is not one big waiting-to-receive place; it is also a place in which there must be something given in return. The whole question of service and responsibility is one which our society needs to face fairly and squarely, without undue delay. Our society cannot survive if it does not have a fundamental sense of responsibility on the part of the individual. This means

the responsibility to respect persons and the property of others, as well as the responsibility to obey laws made by democratic legislatures and administered by people chosen for the purpose. This sense of responsibility can be induced by people with credibility who have themselves accepted these principles and who are rendering a service.

We know that military force cannot, in the long term, suppress a people against their will. Nor can security and police forces eliminate crime in a society of people without jobs and without the means to meet the basic needs of life. But a well-motivated, efficient citizen soldier, volunteering not only to help enforce the law but to render a service, to assist and improve the quality of life, can be of benefit in seeking to reduce levels of crime. There are benefits from part-time voluntary service which will accrue to those who participate. Training in skills, camaraderie, discipline and a supplementary income are among them. There are also benefits to the community in a contribution to stability and direct services rendered, and the state benefits from savings and cost-effectiveness.

Lastly, let me mention something which may be regarded by some as old-fashioned and unsophisticated: the word 'patriotism'. It is heart-warming to see enthusiasm about a new flag and to hear words of love for a country, and a new feeling by people for each other.

But patriotism also means making a contribution which is not enforced but which is voluntary, a contribution towards the welfare of the country and its people. We can echo the United States National Guard's motto that its function is "*To keep the land free*". We should be able to add that our citizen soldiers can also heal our country, and make it a better place for all its people to live.

BRINGING BLACK VOLUNTEERS INTO THE PART-TIME FORCES

Mathews Phosa, premier of Mpumalanga province

We, as South Africans, have been and still are experiencing and observing many changes around us in our country. These changes are dramatic and often traumatic, reflecting the new reality of the South African political landscape. The transformation in South Africa is far from over; day after day, week after week and month after month the fibre of our society will be touched and changed until the situation is finally normalised. This is a necessary and healthy process that will, in the end, lead to the creation of more and more opportunities for all people to show their talents, develop their skills, and become entrepreneurs in the true sense of the word.

In the SANDF, these changes are also reflected in the appointment of new officers to the senior ranks. I am aware of the fact that these changes have made many soldiers feel uncomfortable and worried about the safety of their jobs.

I would, however, like to express my sincere appreciation and admiration for the task you, as soldiers, are fulfilling in terms of creating a climate of peace and stability in South Africa. You are playing an absolutely pivotal role during this time of transformation to ensure that changes take place within a stable society, in a broader southern African political region that is also undergoing dramatic political changes after devastating military conflicts. This stability is a cornerstone of a phased movement towards a truly representative and democratic government in our country, and in that of our neighbours.

I have said previously that in South Africa we should exchange tanks, guns and bullets for houses, water and food for those who most need it. The weapons in our hands should be

reconciliation, the reconstruction of our society, and urgently addressing the needs of those who are suffering because their most basic needs are not being met. Our weapons of attack should be sound education, appropriate primary health care, and affordable housing.

There is another issue that is crucial when we discuss peace and stability, and that is the supportive role of the public in this whole process. The SANDF deserves the moral and also physical support of the community, by way of becoming involved in its activities. The SANDF and citizens at large should work together as a team to serve the community from which they come. We need an affordable, adequate defence force with a flexible manpower system that should have the interests of the community at heart. The people who serve in this defence force should be prepared to sacrifice some of their time and effort to protect their families and communities, as well as the borders of our beloved country. Training should then be provided to equip these people to become defenders and protectors of the community.

During 1994 we in Mpumalanga introduced a similar approach to solving problems in communities. This method, which I will elaborate on, proved to be very successful. During the civil war in Mozambique, thousands of Mozambicans crossed the borders illegally in search of a better life in South Africa. When in 1993 the war ended, the situation worsened because there were thousands of Mozambican soldiers without work. The illegal immigrants who returned to their farms had no livestock. This resulted in cattle theft across the borders and a situation of lawlessness, drugs and weapons smuggling and many other crimes.

In Mpumalanga, the SANDF needed, as a matter of urgency, to solve these problems in close co-operation with our other security forces. The volunteer system proved to be the perfect way in which the inhabitants of affected areas could protect themselves against these acts of lawlessness. Volunteers were recruited in the four traditional areas close to the Mozambican border. In collaboration with traditional leaders, the SANDF recruited black volunteers to serve as temporary or part-time soldiers. The SANDF, together with the community leaders, screened the applicants by testing their abilities and skills, and chose the ones best suited for the task at hand. The recruits were fully aware of the fact that they would not be permanently employed by the SANDF, but would, after completing their task, return to their communities and their normal occupations.

These recruits then had to undergo a short but intensive training course. The first 40 recruits were handed back to the leaders of their communities, to help solve the problems in their own areas. The recruits were divided into pairs and issued with radios, which enabled them to report to the military base. Since November 1994 these 40 members have been responsible for the arrest of more than 1 000 illegal immigrants, and the confiscation of large amounts of dagga, stolen cattle and firearms. The communities from which these soldiers were recruited are very proud to see their 'sons' defending them. They are, in many cases, the key factor for operational success by co-operating with them and giving them important information, they enable them to fulfil their task.

To my mind, the key to the success of this operation was the co-operation between the community, the traditional leaders, the SANDF and the government. In the process they were able to combat instability, but also, very importantly, to help create the basis for regional co-operation and stability. This proves that successful area protection depends upon good teamwork.

The principle that all communities must be self-sufficient in respect of their security needs was then extended, during August 1995, to the nature reserves. A short but intensive course is now

presented to the game rangers. The reserves benefit from this arrangement, for it will improve the conservation of endangered species. The volunteers will be trained in military subjects such as fieldcraft, advanced musketry, patrolling, drill and legal aspects. After completing this training, the volunteers will do part-time military duty in their own nature reserves.

I firmly believe in the concept of helping our communities to help themselves. The time has passed for South Africans to wait for government to provide in all their needs; instead, I believe in educating and helping the people of our country to become self-sufficient in every aspect of their lives. This concept of the SANDF can be implemented in all the communities in our country. They can become part of the process of creating peace and stability which will, in the end, result in much-needed foreign investment and economic growth.

I believe that volunteers who have been trained by the SANDF become confident, loyal and disciplined citizens who are motivated, can become future leaders, know how to work together as a team, can communicate and can function under pressure. These people can also be successfully absorbed into the business sector. I therefore support this project of the SANDF throughout our country. To my mind, the key to successful implementation lies in the recognition that the volunteer service must be focused on specific situations, on the creation of specific skills, and the knowledge that the reconstruction and development of our society will best be served by such a part-time but needs-driven approach.

In conclusion, a part-time volunteer corps that is well-trained and well-equipped can contribute enormously towards the reconstruction and development of our country. If the basis of this approach is to support the community and secure a skilled and motivated workforce, it deserves our support. After all, human reconstruction forms the very basis on which we will build the peaceful and prosperous new South Africa.

OPTIMISING THE FUTURE SOUTH AFRICAN PART-TIME FORCES ORGANISATION

Brig W P (Bill) Sass (Ret), deputy director, Institute for Defence Policy

INTRODUCTION

If history is to be a guide, then the SANDF is set for a lean period during the next decade or so. The popular perception in South Africa is that our world has become less dangerous, with no threats of war and little need for soldiers; that there will be no need for South Africa to conduct military operations, except to voluntarily send a few permanent force members to help with peace-keeping elsewhere; that we should concentrate resources on reconstruction and development; and that the new South African Police Service will be able to deal with problems relating to security and stability.

The people of South Africa, particularly whites, are eager to end the burden of conscription which they bore for decades, as national servicemen and as compulsory members of the Citizen Force (CF) and Commando Force (Comdo). The defence budget has been dramatically reduced over the past few years (already down by 47% in 1992/93, under a National Party government), and is likely to be cut further.

Integration and affirmative action create their own personnel demands. These and other factors have led to the Minister of Defence and the Chief of the SANDF announcing a rationalisation programme under which about 10 000 full-time members may be retrenched every year. This

programme may eventually affect more than 30 000 people.

Consequently, the SANDF's full-time strength is set to shrink to 90 000 full-time members, with the Army bearing the brunt of the cutbacks. Conscription has ended, and while the part-time forces restructure, they must still be ready to respond to any emergency.

The rewards of a service career in terms of prestige, promotion and opportunities for advancement will decline, and a vicious downward spiral will affect volunteers. The ability of the SANDF to react to emergencies as efficiently and professionally as before and of course there will be emergencies, there always are could well be in doubt when its composition is measured against the personnel system of the former SADF. It is against this scenario that the defence planners are preparing for the future.

One thing remains certain, though: the government and therefore the community, will get the defence force they are prepared to fund and staff. Society's present contribution will determine what a future defence force will be capable of. Defence forces, as all security agencies, are expensive in terms of manpower, material and money. Success is achieved when society views the security agencies as the responsibility of and challenge for all the citizens, and not as their burden.

The part-time forces of the SANDF are at a crossroads, and their future needs to be carefully planned and handled by well-informed leaders. The Government of National Unity has accepted a policy of volunteers, non-racialism, affirmative action, gender equality and non-discrimination for the SANDF. These principles still have to be applied to the organising, recruiting, training and structuring of the part-time forces.

Internationally, as countries reduce and professionalise their standing military forces, there has been a similar increase in interest in and dependence upon reserve or 'citizen force' units. Such forces provide a means of expansion in the event of a limited or general mobilisation. They prolong the availability of those with military skills who leave the armed forces (because of fulfilled contracts, retirement, retrenchment, resignation, etc). Furthermore, they represent a less expensive way for governments to gain access to specialised civilian skills that they might not be prepared to provide or fund as part of a standing force, but which remain essential to military operations, for example civil engineering, legal, logistics and medical skills.

Countries with multi-ethnic populations, such as Israel and Singapore, have seen the armed forces as a means of 'nation building' by imposing a common purpose and standard for all. Where standing forces decline, this is another area in which part-time forces will have an increasing contribution to make.

The dependence of regular forces on reserves has a further, less obvious dimension. Professional forces need a constituency in civilian society to help them state their case in respect of their purpose, relevance, retention and equipping. Through their association with both civil society and the military, part-time personnel effectively encourage all citizens to accept soldiers as their 'own' defence force, thereby fostering a positive attitude among voters and parliamentarians. In this regard, regular military personnel are usually not permitted to stand for party office, whereas part-timers can and do.2

Finally, while regular elements may *coups-d'etat* or help civilian groupings to seize power (as has been experienced in numerous African countries and, closer to home, in several South African 'homelands'), this is not the case with part-time forces, which invariably help to counter

such tendencies. Further, because they must be called up, mobilised, retrained and so on, part-time forces also seem less threatening to neighbouring countries than do full-time units, which are always ready for action.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

All the sophisticated weaponry in the world will not make up for a fighting force that is poorly trained, organised, motivated and deployed. In fact, the growing complexity of armaments and increasing sophistication of military strategies constantly require better trained and educated personnel. Until recently, South Africa depended on whites-only conscription and its part-time forces to provide the bulk of its fighting forces. The size of the Defence Force swelled dramatically during World Wars 1 and 2 as large numbers of volunteers flocked to join up, yet the traditional part-time CF and Comdo units formed the basis of the war-time organisation. This was also the case during the campaigns in Namibia and Angola. And during the 1994 elections, South Africa experienced the largest call-up of part-time forces since World War 2, which helped to provide the security and stability within which the elections would occur.

Conscription guaranteed approximately 120 000 CF members, 130 000 Comdos and a reserve of 180 000, while at the height of the war in Namibia at least 20 000 recruits reported each year for initial training. A defence force consisting of only volunteers is very different, and South Africa has not experienced anything like that since before World War 2. A crucial aspect which is often overlooked when the system of part-time forces is discussed is that it is a complete system, starting with the recruitment and induction of volunteers; progressing through their service in a CF or Comdo unit (which requires a separate operational organisation, a headquarters and administrative structure, trained leaders, buildings, equipment, uniforms etc), and their final allocation to the reserves. It is common international practice to keep trained personnel involved in the organisation, from their induction to a fairly advanced age. As any personnel manager knows, trained human resources are a valuable commodity, and once people are fully trained they should not easily be discarded.

PROVIDING THE PART-TIME FORCES WITH RECRUITS

Conscription systems differ among countries in terms of the level and length of initial continuous training provided before the soldier is allocated to the mobilisation forces in a part-time capacity, but they are all compulsory. Besides initial training, they also differ in respect of the period of service after such training. Most countries using conscription systems agree that several months of continuous training are needed to turn a raw recruit into a competent modern soldier, ready to participate in combined arms warfare. For the remainder of the conscription period, they may be employed on military operations or on other tasks. Under the previous two-year period of national service, for example, white South African conscripts were available for more than 15 months of operational use after being trained.

South Africa has had considerable experience with legally enforceable conscription-based systems for white males. After World War 2, South Africa first used a volunteer system and then a system of selected ballottees (from 1953 onwards) to staff its part-time forces, until compulsory national service was introduced.

- In line with the recommendations of the Groenewoud Committee, a compulsory national service system for medically fit white males aged 18 was introduced on 1 January 1968.
- The initial continuous period of training was increased to 12 months from the previous nine

months under the ballot system, and service in the CF was increased to 10 years.

- In January 1978, the initial period of national service was increased to a period not exceeding 24 months.
- From January 1983 onwards, the part-time service period after the initial period of continuous service was extended to 720 days over 12 years, followed by the possibility of further service in the Comdos for shorter periods.
- On 7 December 1989, the State President announced that the initial service period would be reduced from 24 to 12 months with effect from 1 January 1990.
- From January 1994, the new Voluntary Military System (VMS), of one year's initial training followed by eight camps of 30 days each was introduced, and with it, white conscription ended. Only matriculated volunteers are eligible, although the option of balloting has been retained in the amended **Defence Act**.

The primary purpose of a conscription system is to establish a pool of trained personnel for mobilisation, but it may also feed the full-time force. Doing away with conscription inevitably means reducing these numbers. The key question is: how large should South Africa's mobilisation force be? The abolition of conscription has reduced the strength of the present part-time forces ie, in the short term any conflict, crisis or task will have to be dealt with mainly by the existing full-time forces, while those forces available for mobilisation will be smaller. In 1994, replying to a question in parliament, the Minister of Defence stated that since the announcement of the moratorium on the prosecution of part-time members who failed to respond to their call-ups, those responding had in some instances dropped to 10 percent of the total called up for 21-day camps. This is in sharp contrast with the 1980s, when an 80 percent response to a 90-day call-up was the norm, or even with April 1994 (at the time of the election), where a response of more than 40 percent for a 30-day call-up was recorded.

During the era of white, male conscription the South African military tapped the white population for the manpower to carry out its operations. By the early 1990s, white conscription was providing an intake of roughly 20 000 conscripts a year. Despite the efforts of the small but vocal anti-conscription organisations, the level of reporting for initial service or for CF or Comdo call-ups remained good (80 percent-plus) during the 1980s. Even when conscription was nearing its end, those willing to refuse call-up and face prosecution or avoiding service by going overseas were few, and their actions had no real effect on what was an accepted, if not popular, form of service. The present moratorium on prosecuting members for failing to respond to call-ups, and the use of soldiers to police the townships, has changed this perception.

For several years, South Africa also had a selective draft system. Despite the fact that the **Defence Act** of 1912 rested on the principle that the defence of the Union was the responsibility of every (white) citizen, the act provided for a ballot system to compel certain white males to undergo periods of military training over a period of four years between their 17th and 25th years.

However, the ballot system was only properly activated in 1953, after World War 2. Prior to this the Active Citizen Force was composed essentially of volunteers. Volunteers who did not serve in the CF became members of Rifle Associations (the predecessors of the present Comdos). This ballot system was aimed at ensuring that the percentage of citizens selected from each magisterial district for three months of full-time training in the first year, and 21 days of training

in each of the remaining three years, would as far as possible be the same. The selective draft system remained in place until compulsory national service was introduced in 1968.

The ballot system developed as follows:

- From 1953 onwards the country used a selected ballot system, calling up a limited number of white ballotees for an initial three months' training followed by three camps of 21 days each.
- In the late 1950s this was reduced to an initial two months and the number of camps to three, spread over alternative years.
- Eventually, in the early 1960s the ballot system was for an initial nine months and five camps, and by then practically all ballotees were selected for training.

Thereafter, the country switched to a system of national service.

THE NEW SYSTEM (VMS)

Today, the replacement system for feeding new personnel into the part-time forces is the Voluntary Military System (VMS), which requires volunteers to sign on for 12 months' full-time service and annual 30-day training camps thereafter. The first 4 000 recruits for the Army and 200 for the Navy completed their training at the end of 1994.

Annual VMS intakes since then have not exceeded 6 000 (2 000 in 1995), and some members of each intake have switched to full-time service. This system will provide a considerably smaller number of personnel than the approximately 20 000 national servicemen who joined the part-time forces under the old system every year.

At first glance the VMS promises to be easy to administer and monitor, but this may be too simple a response to a complex problem. Only matriculants are eligible, thus already eliminating some potential volunteers. Military service as enshrined in the **Defence Act** of 1912 was designed to train or partly train people for the part-time force as quickly and painlessly as possible the initial period varying from two to three months before cycling them back into civilian life, after which they had a minor part-time obligation.

As presently structured, the VMS is a volunteer version of the former compulsory national service system, which was aimed at providing a low-cost, full-time force. This being the case, one must ask whether the VMS is the right foundation for the new all-volunteer part-time force. The following should be considered:

- The supply of new recruits for conventional operations (the CF) must now depend on a personnel system that has not yet proved itself capable of providing such personnel in adequate numbers. Not only should the number of new volunteers be increased; the existing force should also be rapidly restructured. There is a real possibility that when a new personnel system for feeding the part-time forces is fully in place, there will be little of the present CF leadership cadre (officers and NCOs) left to receive, administer and train the intakes.
- Experience with the system in the 1980s indicates that many conscripted national servicemen who volunteered for an extra 12 or 24 months' full-time service (mostly as junior leaders) did so not because of any great interest in military matters, but because

they were after the re-enlistment bounty, the better pay, and the prospects of a safe job at a time of high unemployment. Once they had completed their period of extended service, few showed any interest in the part-time unit. If volunteers were to regard the VMS as a 'finishing school', or source of short-term employment before starting university or technikon or starting a career instead of a system to feed the CF, the part-time force will once again be disadvantaged.

- The chances of trained people in the part-time pool re-volunteering for service are now significantly reduced, due to the moratorium on prosecutions as well as opposition from employers, who are always eager to reduce costs. As a result, the VMS may have to train large numbers of volunteers at short notice to restock the part-time force and keep it topped up, even given the stated objective of reducing the size of the part-time forces.
- International experience indicates that short enlistment systems, aimed at attracting suitable recruits of a high standard (VMS takes only matriculants), operates well in bad economic times, but falters as conditions improve.
- The VMS might effectively exclude university and technikon students who normally gain bursaries for the year after matriculating, and who might otherwise be expected to supply leaders for the part-time forces. On the other hand, experience in the old system indicated that part-time service beyond the age of about 25 when young people start thinking of marriage and making real progress in their civilian occupations often results in domestic and professional conflicts, except in the case of those keen enough to pursue a dual civilian/military career.
- Units in rural areas, especially those that have, in the past, been hard hit by the steady depopulation by whites from these areas (but previously fed with trained men by means of white conscription) would require special attention if they are to maintain sufficient personnel.

The SANDF is aware of these implications, but the Minister has little choice but to maintain the moratorium due to the incompatibility of the continued call-up of white-only part-timers with the interim constitution and fundamental rights. The government is committed to volunteerism for all members of the SANDF. The problem is that these changes may have deprived the Army, virtually overnight, of much of its mobilisable operational strength.

There is a belief that all soldiers require at least a year's training to become proficient in handling modern equipment. Many other countries, admittedly with different recruitment pools, train part-timers in much shorter periods, but give them longer refresher training before they are deployed. The crucial factor is not only the length of full-time training (conducted in a full-time unit, and not in the CF), but the way in which part-time training is structured and carried out, since the soldier is called up while in the CF and may then invariably require retraining, even if only to promote teamwork. In the mechanised infantry, for instance, only CF vehicle commanders, drivers and gunners may initially need extra technical training, which could be supplied through one-month training courses or a succession of shorter ones particularly if simple simulators were provided for non-continuous CF training. Then, when the unit is mobilised for war, the whole unit undergoes formal refresher training. Any military training system must fully cater for part-timers, and should not be an adjusted full-time system.

The SANDF has indicated that a variety of alternative methods for volunteer part-time service may be considered. Some suggested courses of action include the following:

- A 12-month VMS with fewer yearly camps, so that servicemen's part-time obligation will end in their mid-20s, with a further volunteer option thereafter.
- A three-month VMS, particularly for members intended to serve in the Rear Areas Protection Units (RAPU), followed by three or four training camps and weekend training in between.
- Non-continuous training (on weekends, during short camps and so on) for non-VMS veterans, particularly civilian specialists such as doctors, engineers and mechanics, and personnel who had previously served in the statutory or non-statutory forces. This would be aimed at instilling basic military knowledge, or to sharpen up and expand previously acquired military knowledge.
- The voluntary training of school cadets by the SANDF (using its CF element where possible) at selected schools, after agreement by the staff and parents, could also assist. This would provide early basic military knowledge, cultivate future recruits, serve the community by providing disciplined extra-mural youth activities among senior scholars, and could be an important source of part-time force volunteers.
- The transfer of trained part-timers between units and corps and the voluntary re-activation of reservists is to be encouraged.
- A system similar to the American ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) could be considered. This allows university students to obtain military qualifications during their vacations, thus making them suitable for direct commission as officers when they graduate. It provides a possible alternate career as well as well-paid employment during vacations.

Ideally, each part-time unit would have several layers of expertise, so that it would be of immediate albeit limited use for routine tasks and could soon be trained to adequate operational standards. Its main function would always be as a training nucleus, capable of being expanded into a war-time role.

These arguments are not raised in opposition to the VMS system. But the SANDF and therefore the country will benefit if a variety of problems are tackled as rapidly as possible in an attempt to salvage what is left of the old part-time forces. Not only must the system of initial training, of annual camps, of promotion courses largely composed of distance (correspondence) training and most importantly the facilities for local training be considered; due attention must be also given to the local recruiting and equipping of volunteers, pay for rank, traditional regimental paraphernalia from spurs and kilts to Balmorals, brandy casks and misspelled names, etc. What is needed is a system so attractive that volunteers will choose it above recreation associated with pap, beer and sunny skies during the typical South African weekend.

An important step in the right direction was taken recently when the Minister of Defence agreed to equal pay and other financial inducements for volunteers. Yet actual costs will vary according to the person's role, and the desired readiness level. As the military may also need the skills the part-timer uses in civilian life, training costs could be negligible, while salary will depend on the number of days the person must spend in service.

But most part-timers are employees, and if they are to fulfil their military duties, the ethos of 'citizenship' expressed by Churchill will also have to extend to their employees. Defence must

be recognised as a matter for all ages and conditions of people. There should be no free rides for the civil community even though there might be many among them who have been all too happy to leave such disruptive and dangerous activities entirely to the PF. Some companies may regard a reserve or part-time training and service commitment as reason enough not to hire a candidate employee; besides this, part-timers may find that they no longer have the same or indeed any job when they return. If the relationship between employers and the Defence Force is such that the former cannot be persuaded to remove obstacles to temporary military duties, then they will have to be removed by legislation or taxation; if the carrot does not work, the stick may be necessary.

Employers' profits might suffer, but they will at least have the comfort of knowing that "*they also serve ...*" If this protection of the livelihood of members of the part-time forces is not legally guaranteed, there will soon be fewer volunteers. The vexing question of part-timers having to use their annual leave for military service while other part-timers are granted special leave and have their military pay made up to their civilian standards, needs to be discussed by the SANDF, part-time members and employers.

Given the increased use of reserves in peacetime operations, members of Nato are beginning to consider the economic disruptions imposed on both reservists and their employers. This latter problem was the theme at a recent conference held in Ottawa, Canada. While the structures of the part-time forces and related legislation differed widely in the various countries represented (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States), all agreed that co-operation, not confrontation, must prevail. As the American Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Reserve Affairs, Maj-Gen Robert Goodbarry, said: "*We view legislation as a last resort, and want employer support groups to work [problems] out earlier, before legal action has to be taken.*"

According to Goodbarry, unresolved cases that go to court have been rare in the United States. Nonetheless, experiences in the 1990/1991 Gulf War have led the United Kingdom and United States to introduce laws to ease the way for peacetime call-outs. For example, the United States has two bills pending. The first will provide tax credits of up to US\$7 500 a year for employers with reservists on call-out. The second will see reservists paying premiums for involuntary mobilisation insurance, to provide an income coverage of up to US\$5 000 per month. Among the Nato countries, the United States probably has the strongest legislation supporting reserves; it is illegal in that country to discriminate against reservists applying for civilian jobs.³

THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE PART-TIME FORCES (PTF)

Defence Headquarters are studying ways of restructuring the part-time forces. Changes to this system will dramatically affect the structure of the Army, the largest user of part-time forces. Once a restructuring plan is implemented, the task of establishing and training the new PTF must be the Army's primary task. The future success of the SANDF depends on how well the Army rebuilds the PTF not on how it helps the police, delivers water or performs on parade. This will require adequate financial provision for call-ups, etc, and the structures necessary for training and administration.

Compared to international standards, or even to the SAAF and SAN, the PTF in the SA Army have been forced to carry an exceptional burden of service for many years; therefore, much of the administrative and personnel strengths expected from the PTF are suspect. The Army badly needs to re-establish its credentials with its PTF. The most obvious steps in this process would be to formally release those who will not or need no longer serve, and by instituting a dedicated

programme to rebuild a non-racial, all-volunteer CF. This must be treated as the most important operational element of the SA army, only to be committed when a state of national emergency or state of national defence is declared.

These PTF members are the essential war force, intended to counter a threat to South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is the force that must successfully fulfil the primary role of the SANDF. Given South Africa's economic power, its geographical position and its technological and scientific ability, a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity will be a major international one. It is currently accepted that such a threat will take at least five years to develop. This will provide ample time for a war force to be developed to the required level. Such preparations might include an increased defence budget, the conscription of large numbers of recruits, and the acquisition of sufficient equipment from local and overseas sources as well as from commandeering.

The main responsibilities of the present SANDF in respect of such a force is to have the trained and organised cadres and facilities available in order to call up, manage and prepare the force, as well as to stay abreast of modern military thinking through scientific and technical studies. The design of such a war force needs to be thoroughly investigated on its own. However, the essence of what we need in the part-time forces in the medium term is an ability to manage, train, prepare and command such a war force with the elements available (composed of the full-time force of the affordable force, the volunteer part-time forces, as well as former members of the full-time force). The plan required is therefore not to create a war force now, but to be ready to create it whenever necessary in the future.

Furthermore, it is accepted that volunteers can provide additional suitable members to bring the core force up to strength. This could provide the capacity to guarantee an expansion to a war force. This core force must be kept intact, even at the cost of further reducing SANDF participation in secondary tasks. It is therefore essential to establish a fixed VMS intake figure so as to adjust the rest of the organisation to form the core force. At the same time, the VMS must be supplemented so as to rebuild the CF. Perhaps all members who volunteer (VMS and CF) should be contractually bound so that they will have to give at least six months' notice if they wish to resign.

In the case of a state of emergency or state of national defence, the six months' notice should be suspended, and members should serve until the end of the emergency. They should then have to give fresh notice of resignation. While the PTF will probably have to assist the civil power, it should, if possible, not be used regularly for police support or border control until reorganisation and retraining have been completed. It should always be regarded as a training nucleus, capable of expansion into a war-time role. The purpose of the part-time force should thus be to provide an active force which will undertake two missions:

- **Training establishment:** to provide a force that will possess the administrative, command and training skills required for expansion into a war force.
- **Active force:** to provide an active force that will be prepared to undertake limited operations during emergencies (particularly national states of emergency) in accordance with the **Defence Act** and the provisions of the constitution.

Given the moratorium on compulsory service, steps should be taken to reduce the number of persons who are on record but are not serving, or are not subject to call-up. Members who indicate that they wish to end their service commitments should be discharged.

The following are priority groups for discharge; personnel in these categories should be offered the opportunity of leaving if they do not wish to extend their service, and if their period of compulsory service has already exceeded the terms of VMS:

- Remaining 'buttermilk' personnel (the older volunteers first called up in the early 1980s);
- Personnel who have been posted to the RAPU after completing the five-year holding period after cycle 6;
- Personnel who are in the holding period after cycle 6;
- Personnel in cycles 5 and 6;
- Personnel in cycles 14 who have already completed 240 days' service in these cycles; and
- Personnel in cycle 14 who do not wish to volunteer for further service.

All personnel should first be given the option of volunteering for further service. The aim would be to retain only those who volunteer, or have an agreed commitment such as the VMS commitment. It is essential to realistically assess the likely volunteer PTF strength. Only then can the force be properly reorganised and restructured. A committee should therefore be appointed in each territorial command, under the personal chairmanship of the GOC and working in conjunction with all formation, group and unit commanders of the part-time forces, to accurately and realistically assess the possible strength of trained volunteers, the number of part-time volunteer units which can be staffed, the number of volunteers only interested in RAPU duties in their own district, etc. The National Part-Time Forces Council must be involved, and employer bodies consulted. The number of part-time units may also need to be reduced. In anticipation of this, a CF unit with between 200 and 300 members should be entitled to continue to exist and be classified as an independent unit if it has at least:

- a unit headquarters;
- a support sub-unit at reasonable strength;
- one reinforced combat sub-unit; and
- a spare/additional leadership group.

Such units should be grouped together for exercise purposes in order to assemble full-strength regiments or battalions. All volunteers who are older than 30 and/or area-bound should be channeled into the RAPU or the command support units, particularly signals and workshops units, where civilian technical expertise will always be at a premium. Particularly urban volunteers under 30 years and not area-bound should be encouraged to join one of the conventional CF units, while the priority for rural volunteers would probably be the territorial forces or RAPU.

Defence headquarters, but particularly GOC Territorial Commands, will have to make a major effort if the part-time forces are to be rebuilt. This will not only imply recruiting volunteers and channeling them as suggested above to the CF, RAPU or command service units. The provision of adequate local facilities for advanced training is just as important. This local training must not only include intensive classification range work, but also the use of simulators and other

advanced training. CF formations may complete their training at Army Battle School or at Corps Schools during continuous service, but it is advanced local training that will prove the success of a volunteer system. Adequate training call-ups must be introduced to rebuild the part-time forces, and their training periods must not be allowed to degenerate into static guard duty as part of semi-police activities. Preparation for conventional war and/or use during a state of emergency must be their primary, and hopefully their only, purpose, unless special volunteers for some other specific task are called for.

There is a tendency for regular and PTF units to deride each other. This inherent sense of rivalry can be further heightened by a competition for funds. There may thus be a drift towards a 'first team' mentality, in which regular personnel profess to want to handle all tasks. Defence administrations have sought to overcome this through the promotion of a 'one army' or 'total force' concept, with close regular and reserve unit affiliations, shared training, and integrated operations. There are limits to the amount of training time available, but an expressed commitment of elements of both the regular and part-time military forces to assist the civil community during emergencies also makes political sense in peacetime. But long-term, regular, semi-permanent deployment as police personnel is best left to the full-time forces, which can afford to be retrained for this specialist role. What is needed is an integrated mix of full-time and part-time units, but they must form one force.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

After the integration of the various armed forces has been completed, the Defence Force should only recruit a limited number of trainees a year (probably about 5 000). The Defence Force must recruit this fixed number of volunteers of both sexes and all races for the full-time force and VMS each year, despite the requirement of democratisation and rationalisation. The continuous provision of young recruits, which should include graduates, is necessary for any organisation to maintain and refresh itself develop.

This fixed figure must include all Full-Time Force (FTF), short-service and VMS volunteers and should be fixed to allow the determination and organisation of units needed to receive and train these members. All recruits who volunteer and are selected should initially only be accepted as short-service FTF or VMS members. Once they have proven their value during the initial 12 months' training, and if there are posts for them, they can be admitted to further full-time service or continue with VMS camps.

There is no point in rationalising unless a carefully controlled recruitment programme is followed thereafter, which will allow development but remain affordable and within personnel limits. This will allow the existing training infrastructure to be centralised and reduced. Such a proposal leads to a redesign and reorganisation of the structures to administer, train, command and control the forces who volunteer for a year's training or who volunteer to start a career in the full-time force.

This will be considerably cheaper than the old system (SADF and TBVC recruit training) which was geared to handle up to 30 000 recruits a year. Some of the savings should be invested in local decentralised training facilities for the CF and RAPU. This should include shortened initial basic training periods. If we are serious about properly training volunteers for the part-time forces, good local training must take place, supervised by adequate training and safety officers and backed up by correspondence (distance) training. Given such a system, the Cape Town units, for instance, could:

- use weekends to recruit, document, equip, medically examine and administer their own single platoon of volunteers;
- start training them by correspondence and three, three-week training periods conducted at Wingsfield or Youngsfield (ideally over a period of two years);
- thereafter, the recruit could progress to a three-week camp at the School of Infantry, Oudtshoorn.

This may not sound like the basic and individual training that the SA Army is accustomed to, but it should attract recruits in Cape Town and provide single platoons for the RAPU and CF of partially trained recruits who live and train in the area. More importantly, when and if mobilised for war (not for police action), these soldiers might require some intensive retraining, but they would have retained their basic military skills and orientation. Their prior training would also have created an opportunity for leaders to be identified, for the volunteer to decide if the Defence Force is worth the sacrifice required, and for the unit to have shed the 'bad eggs'. While the proposed training periods, units selected for training and numbers to be recruited may be adjusted, it remains incontrovertible that, under such a system, the number of members requiring a full year of initial training can be drastically reduced, as can the number of units involved. The training system must be adjusted to really cater for volunteers joining the part-time forces.

A NEW APPROACH TO THE RESERVES

A new approach must be adopted for the use of reserves. For a defence force which is not only retrenching but making use of short- or medium-term contracts, greater use must be made of people on reserve after completing their contracts. As the Defence Force moves into a period of rationalisation, voluntary retrenchment and early retirement as well as short- and medium-term contracts, the services of those men and women with training and experience must be retained where possible.

A system in which all PF reserves, regardless of rank or experience, could be called up for a month every second or third year should be seriously considered. This would not only provide trained personnel to help relieve the fewer FTF members available, but help to retrain reservists and refresh their knowledge.

The present transitional period, which began in January 1994, has demonstrated the valuable contribution that can be made by selected PF pensioners who are recalled for service. Pensioners and short- and medium-term members who have left the force within the previous six to 12 months should be given a first option of volunteering for lengthy periods (three months or longer), as required. Such temporary employment would give special funding significantly expand the ability of the full-time force to deal with an emergency. Calling out the part-time force for overlapping training camps as a cheap method of providing an operational force could be avoided, by forming extended service units of volunteer reservists. These could be used to support the SAPS (at the latter's expense) or even for international peace-keeping operations, which should also not be financed out of the CF training budget.

THE NATURE OF RESERVES

For South African purposes, the reserve forces proposed above may be defined as any personnel who have completed military service (PF, VMS, PTF or NS) and are engaged in

civilian occupations but remain available through contractual agreement or provisions in the law for military service under certain circumstances, usually war or a national emergency; are used to fill vacancies in existing formations and units, or to embody forces that exist on the War Establishment Tables; or used to render specific service as required. However, they are not active in the part-time forces.

Reserves are different from the CF and the Comdos which are 'active' forces, organised into units and formations, partially equipped, sometimes armed, and always ready to be employed in a conventional role or during a declared emergency.

Reserves are not organised for immediate employment, but may volunteer or be called upon to perform protracted, full-time duty as individuals, organised groups or units. In contrast to active forces, reserves are a pool of trained servicemen who have returned to civilian life but who are fit for re-employment in their military roles, including active service, subject to equipping and a prescribed period of retraining.

The call-up of reserves should not be restricted to 30-day training camps; they should be able to volunteer for several months. At the very least, reservists (particularly pensioners or ex-short service personnel) should be allowed to volunteer for renewed full-time service, when trained personnel are required to fill particular posts for an indeterminate period. Such a reserve system may permit:

- the filling of vacancies in existing full-time formations and units, particularly by recalling those who have left less than 12 months earlier. This should be the main reserve group, recalled at once for any emergency or to support the SAP. They should then be financed out of the police budget or special funds, not the CF training budget;
- the creation of additional formations and units for which an organised cadre of PF and reserve officers and NCOs would provide staff and unit structures;
- occasional retraining of the cadre of reserve officers and NCOs, but the other ranks would not normally be recalled except when mobilised; and
- performing special tasks such as escorting visiting VIPs, special investigations, project management, local training of volunteer recruits, etc.

Although South Africa has had various forms of reserves, the concept has not been applied as described above. This has meant that, in various instances when an expansion of forces has been required, this has not been done by employing reserves, but rather by using the CF's training commitment. The result has been *ad hoc* arrangements and the haphazard establishment of temporary (composite) units and headquarters as in Namibia which then conducted operations.

If the task is a permanent or long-term one, then an expanded full-time force is required. Yet there has been little regulated and designed employment of ex-FTF manpower, who in many cases end successful permanent careers and are never heard of again. If the SANDF is to be reduced to an affordable size, as is presently being attempted, there is a need to provide for reserve organisations that will absorb trained and experienced personnel in a way that will permit their services to be called upon in times of need. The establishment of a system of reserves can thus provide for an expandable full-time force for future needs by means of a process of first recalling those people whose contract, of whatever sort, has just been completed

or who volunteer to be recalled.

To meet the requirements for increasing the size of the full-time SANDF, and also to provide a pool of reservists available for voluntary *ad hoc* duties, eg with UN forces, an SANDF-controlled reserve could be designated in the categories such as cadre reserves, specialist reserves, all other trained reserves, and retired reserves. These may be further divided into PF and PTF categories.

CONCLUSION

These suggestions are only a few among many possibilities that would allow the maximum utilisation of trained, partly trained and untrained manpower in a cheap and flexible way. The detailed consideration of the building of the part-time forces requires the rapid development of a coherent and specific military personnel recruitment and retention policy. South Africa has always been able to depend upon its part-time forces; now, those who volunteer to remain in them should also be deeply involved in planning their own future.

Finally, it is clear that there should be an ample supply of volunteers of all races to meet the reduced numbers required to staff the likely part-time element of the core force. Bearing in mind the need for specialist musterings and CF members to live fairly close to their headquarters, the fact that whites, the existing trained group, are generally unlikely or unwilling to volunteer in large numbers will mean that an extensive programme of training and reorganising of the part-time force will be necessary. In any case, the political necessity of creating non-racial units and of implementing gender equality and affirmative action means that for the part-time forces also, there is a lengthy period ahead of integration, reorganisation, bridging training, rebuilding of leader groups cadres, unit and formation training, etc.

Clearly, this is not a quick or easy task, and demands specific and direct attention. The reality requires people to actually come forward and sign on as volunteers and start training a direct and demanding commitment. A first step might be to formally release the existing members of the CF and Comdos, and actually determine how many of them then will volunteer. Whatever course is followed, South Africa's part-time forces are at a crossroads, and their future needs to be carefully planned and handled by well-informed leaders.

ENDNOTES

1. The late Winston Churchill first coined the accolade 'twice a citizen' as a measure of the value of military reservists who served the national interest in both civilian and military capacities. R Pengelley, 'Twice a Citizen', **International Defence Review**, Vol 28 no 8, 1995, p 1.
2. *Ibid*, p 10.
3. *Ibid*.

THE MULTI-BATTALION REGIMENT: AN OLD CONCEPT WITH A NEW RELEVANCE

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INTRODUCTION

At a time when the South African Defence Force is being cut back and reorganised, it is worth asking: has the time not come to consider the classic multi-battalion regiment as a means of constructing a viable, cost-effective and affordable new SA Infantry Corps (SAIC)? Innovative thought on this subject seems to be lacking, with most attention being paid to adapting the existing infantry force whether by plastic surgery or amputation to fit a new situation.

It could be argued that what the South African infantry actually needs is not cosmetic surgery but something rather more radical call it 'constructive iconoclasm' involving not just the shattering of certain pillars of conventional wisdom, but the simultaneous resurrection of others that have long been gathering dust on the back shelf of our military development process. If so, one of the icons that may well be worth resurrecting is the principle of the true multi-battalion infantry regiment (the reasons for the word 'true' will become apparent below).

There is nothing mysterious about the true multi-battalion regiment. In fact, the **Oxford Illustrated Dictionary's** succinct definition an "*army recruiting and training unit with permanent depot and often local name, consisting of a varying number of battalions ...*" provides as good a point of departure as any other. What makes it particularly relevant to the new South Africa is the fact that the concept has lived on up to the present day the most striking proof possible that its virtues are as valid in these days of mechanised warfare as they were when infantrymen wore pipe-clayed belts and carried their regimental colours on to the battlefield.

South Africa is one of the few militarily developed countries of the Commonwealth in which the concept has never taken root. As a result, few military men in this country realise that a true multi-battalion regiment is not just a regiment with more than one battalion. It is actually a philosophical concept that has been turned into an eminently practical mechanism, designed to foster a defence force's operational capability on both the micro and macro level. The success of this mechanism is evident from the fact that it survives in unaltered form elsewhere, despite more than a century of bewildering change in weaponry and equipment, the nature of warfare, and the internal organisation of fighting units. It remains the basis of the traditional British regimental system.

The phenomenon of regiments strongly linked by name and location to their local communities a basic requirement for a true multi-battalion regiment is nothing new in South Africa, at least in the Part-Time Force (PTF). Yet the true multi-battalion infantry regiment is all but unknown in the SANDF, and this fact has given rise to a basic misunderstanding of the concept in the South African Army. Ironically, the closest South African equivalent is the Commando Group, directly associated with the Dutch settlers and not the British colonies.

The SA Army, like all British-descended armed forces, customarily uses 'regiment' to denote battalion-equivalent units of the SA Artillery, the SA Armoured Corps and the SA Engineer Corps, but in the case of the infantry the term seems to be used quite differently in the full-time and part-time forces. There are no regiments as such in the Permanent Force (PF) infantry, only a variety of numbered independent battalions (the last named PF unit, the Cape Corps, was rechristened 9 SAI about three years ago), whereas in the PTF both the Citizen Force (CF) and Commando (Comdo) organisations are strongly orientated towards single-battalion regiments, with names linked to their communities or home areas.

These factors have led to the belief that the term 'regiment' is not necessarily applicable to a battalion-size infantry unit; that the habit of various PTF infantry units of referring to themselves as 'regiments' is based on rather uncertain grounds; and that the term is now inappropriate as regards the naming or creation of future units. However, there is a definite difference in meaning

between the two terms. In the infantry, a battalion is not a substitute for a regiment but complementary to it. This misconception has been abetted by American and Russian usage, in which an infantry regiment denotes a specific operational organisation that is more or less equivalent to a small brigade. In this usage, battalion is also an operational term indicating size a single unit. For better or worse, however, the SA Army is not organised along American or Russian lines and is locked into the Commonwealth, whose armies are modelled on the British pattern. This implies two things: first, that the British-style regimental system is entrenched in the SA Army, and second, if this is so, there is an obligation on the military to exploit the value and potential of this system to the maximum.

Given the far-reaching influence of the British Army the model for most of the Anglophone world the SA Army's historical failure to adopt a true multi-battalion regimental system is inexplicable. There are several reasons for this, but they all relate to past circumstances; this being the case, the appropriate question to ask is whether they are still applicable at a time when South Africa's infantry force is about to undergo radical reconstruction.

PART 1: EDWARD CARDWELL AND THE MULTI-BATTALION REGIMENT THE BIRTH OF THE BRITISH REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

The roots of the multi-battalion regimental system were planted by Edward (later Lord) Cardwell, British Secretary of State for War between 1868 and 1874. Cardwell's name is almost forgotten today, yet after 120 years the contribution he made to the development of the regimental system continues to be felt throughout the Commonwealth.

If one considers the implications of the reforms instituted by Cardwell and carried through by his successors, it would be fair to say that he deserves a place in the pantheon of great military reformers headed by Prince Maurits of Nassau, whose 17th-century 'Staatsleger' was the basic model for almost all the armies of the modern world.

Cardwell was the first man to make systematic use of multi-battalion regiments, and the link between such units and their communities, for the purpose of enhancing operational efficiency and producing a complete military system that was both affordable and flexible enough to satisfy very different requirements.

Cardwell's genius lay not only in his innovative thinking, but in his ability to identify the useful parts of the extremely flawed system he inherited and adapt them for his purposes, despite frenzied objections by reactionary elements in the military.

An essential ingredient of his success was his objectivity; belonging to neither a pro-army nor anti-army clique, he was not hobbled by prejudices and could give full rein to attaining his purpose, which was to forge an army that was capable of maintaining the nation's security. The multi-battalion regiment, as we know it today, and its concept of the regiment as the philosophical component of the infantry did not start emerging clearly until 1871, midway through Edward Cardwell's term as Britain's Secretary of State for War.

Cardwell was faced with a number of problems. Britain's imperial interests were expanding in various parts of the world, and required military muscle. At the same time, a new European military power was emerging: Prussia, with its formidable mix of superb regular soldiers and hundreds of thousands of well-trained and disciplined conscripts and its naked desire to play a larger role in world affairs, on the continent and further afield. To undertake the onerous task not only of garrisoning Britain's outposts and protecting her interests on a day-to-day basis, but also

of providing her with the means of defending her own soil, should the need arise, Cardwell had a large but chaotic and often illogically organised land force, which in structure and outlook had barely changed since the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The British Army was the product of two centuries of improvisation, resulting from regular cycles of hasty expansion when war threatened, and equally hasty cut-backs after hostilities had ended.

The Regular (professional, full-time) Army consisted of 91 regiments of one battalion each and 25 regiments of two battalions each, with each regiment independently organised and administered through the office of a commander-in-chief. Backing them up were a paid, part-time Militia and a further part-time element consisting of the organised units of Volunteers (infantry) and Yeomanry (light cavalry and mounted infantry). While formidable on paper, this army was in reality cost-inefficient, unwieldy and poorly suited to Britain's burgeoning external interests, and possessed almost no depth (thanks to a policy of lifetime enlistments, the trained reserve amounted to only 3 117 men nationwide).

To make it worse, the Militia was of doubtful utility controlled by the lords-lieutenant of the various counties, it was designed strictly for internal security and home defence while the Volunteers and Yeomanry more or less went their own way, and were anything but uniform as regards organisation or level of training. Cardwell was also aware that there was no question of emulating the Prussians and the French by using conscription and compulsory reserve service as a method of building a trained reserve. Unlike the Royal Navy, the British Army had not used 'pressed' (forcibly enlisted) men since feudal times but had always relied on volunteers, even in the worst days of the Napoleonic wars although many a convicted felon had decided to 'go for a soldier' upon being given the choice between enlisting or going to jail.

Yet another complicating factor was that its commander-in-chief, the deeply conservative Duke of Cambridge, and a large proportion of the regular British Army held that what had worked against Napoleon in 1815 was good enough for any present enemy. Cardwell knew that this was not so, and that while there was little doubt about the spirit and steadiness of the British fighting man, these could not be fully exploited because of the lack of rational, innovative thought in the command echelon of the land forces. Cardwell could not rid himself of the Duke of Cambridge, who was not only a cousin of the queen but enjoyed strong support within the army (his devotion to which could not be doubted, reactionary though his mindset was).

At that stage the chain of command between the army and parliament was a grey area, not to be clarified for many years to come. At the same time, there was no doubt about parliament's ultimate authority, and Cardwell therefore decided to reshape the army by means of legislation rather than converting the Duke of Cambridge to his way of thinking. A man of fortitude, he realised and accepted that changes such as he believed were necessary would bring on him the wrath not only of the duke but of legions of senior officers who shared their commander-in-chief's views.

Cardwell's point of departure was that every available asset and method had to be used in a systematic, calculated way to achieve certain aims some short-term, others long-term such as economies of scale, stimulation of recruiting, and the creation of an affordable defence machine which could be brought to life in a national emergency. To achieve these aims he prepared plans that, as the military writer David Ascoli has remarked, represented 'a revolution in the anatomy and structure of the army'. His main thrusts centred on three aspects, all closely related.

Personnel reforms: To do this, he identified the lifetime service enlistment for other ranks and

the purchase of commissions by officers as areas for special attention.

Localisation: Cardwell believed that recruitment could be systematised by linking regiments to specific communities. This was not a new idea the Duke of Cumberland had proposed such a system as far back as the mid-18th century, but had found no takers; in 1782 such a linking was ordered but did not fully succeed, since many regimental commanders paid only lip service to the order and 12 of the older and more distinguished regiments were exempted from it. Cardwell saw the value of the concept, and was determined to apply it in forceful fashion.

'Large' regiments: Cardwell was determined to systematise the existing regiments' old loose habit of creating and disbanding second and even third battalions as the occasion demanded. The first prominent appearance of this phenomenon had been in the mid-18th century, when no less than 15 infantry regiments had responded to immediate requirements by raising second battalions only to have them either disbanded or reformed as new single-battalion regiments when the need had lessened. The existing 25 second battalions Cardwell had inherited had all been raised in 1857 and 1858 by the most senior regiments, in the wake of the Indian Mutiny.

CARDWELL'S SYTEM

In 1870 Cardwell launched the first of his reform measures, the **Army Enlistment Act**, which abolished lifetime enlistments in the Regular Army and limited maximum full-time service by other ranks to 21 years, to be achieved by short-term enlistments consisting of a certain period on full-time duty, followed by another period on the active reserve (in its final form, each enlistment consisted of seven years with the colours and five on the active reserve). The aim of this act, apart from lowering the median age and eliminating the deadwood that results from long-term enlistments, was to create within a relatively short time an adequate reserve of about 80 000 ex-regulars who could be recalled to the colours in times of emergency.

This was followed in 1871 by the **Regulation of the Forces Act**, which not only abolished the notorious commission purchase system but transferred control of the Militia from the county governments to the War Office. While they were important developments, these two acts were merely the precursors of a drastic and controversial localisation scheme which was to have far-reaching consequences, up to this day.

The localisation scheme divided Britain into 66 Brigade Districts (later renamed to Regimental Districts), based on county boundaries and population density. Each district had a Regular regiment composed of two battalions of the former independent regiments either two of the old single-battalion regiments, or battalions of the few existing two-battalion units two local Militia battalions, and various Volunteer units. All these units were grouped around a permanent regimental depot, serving as an administrative headquarters and basic training centre.

Cardwell brooked no opposition, despite intense resistance by diehards in the military, and applied the scheme to the entire British Army (of all its regiments, only the Cameron Highlanders remained a single-battalion entity whether through 'pull' or more legitimate factors is not known until it too succumbed in 1897). His idea was to create a series of regimental entities that would provide adequate full-time manpower for service at home and abroad, while simultaneously building up a ready reserve and also nurturing a part-time component capable of providing a second-line force in a national emergency requiring a rapid expansion of the armed forces.

- Thus one of the Regular battalions of a given regiment would serve abroad somewhere in

the British Empire, with the home service Regular battalion replacing its losses through war, disease and the expiry of attestation contracts by feeding it with seasoned men or recruits trained at the regimental depot.

- Meanwhile, the Militia battalions and Volunteer units would provide the regiment's second-line force, which could be brought up to standard without delay if required (and, of course, also constituted a potential supply of motivated, evaluated recruits for the Regular units).

The scheme was adopted in spite of the diehards' protests, as none of them could table an alternative with the same sterling advantages. Firstly, it was economical of both men and money. Secondly, it stimulated recruiting. Thirdly, it provided desperately needed flexibility, because it was adequate for peacetime needs but also allowed rapid controlled expansion in time of war.

A change of government put Cardwell out of office in 1874, but his reforms stayed in place despite attempts from the Regular Army to abolish them and return to the comfortable and familiar old post-1815 situation. Within a few years Cardwell's party was back in power, and the diehards suffered a permanent defeat when the new Secretary of State for War, Hugh Childers, not only quelled all back-to-1815 initiatives but also decided that Cardwell had in fact not gone far enough. The result was **General Order** 41 of 1 May 1881 which created a network of four-battalion Regular regiments in England, Scotland and Wales, and five-battalion regiments in Ireland. Each of these regiments was linked by headquarters location and territorial name to its 'Regimental District', as Cardwell's 'Brigade Districts' had now become.

As in the case of Cardwell, Childers's reforms endured despite attacks and foot-dragging on the part of the military diehards, and in 1903 Lord Esher took the next evolutionary step, largely as a result of the bloody nose the British Army had received from the Boers during the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Esher was concerned mainly with home defence; his contribution was three recommendations, which were accepted. These called for the abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief, who would be replaced by a Chief of Staff; the formation of a Committee of Defence, chaired by the Prime Minister; and the formation of an Army Council, chaired by the Secretary of State for War and made up of four military and three knowledgeable civilian members.

Although unlike Cardwell Esher was not directly concerned with reforming the structure of the army itself, his recommendation that the post of Commander-in-Chief be abolished meant the elimination of a stumbling block that had hampered Cardwell's predecessors and successors, and for the first time clearly defined a principle which until then had lacked definition namely the total control of parliament over the armed forces. In essence, it meant that after more than two centuries the army's ability to prevent, retard or water down reforms proposed by parliament had ended.

From now on, the government of the day was in total and undisputed control of the British land forces. In 1906, after Esher's changes had had time to take effect, the structural reform process initiated by Cardwell more than 30 years earlier was completed by another civilian visionary, Richard Haldane.

At first glance Haldane was unfit for the post of Secretary of State for War. An academic and man of peace, he was given the task because the newly elected government, a strongly pacifist and anti-military one, had found that no one else was willing to take the job. Haldane approached the task of restructuring in a straightforward and academic fashion by asking one

fundamental question: What is the purpose and function of the British Army? It was a question no reformer not even Cardwell and Childers had bothered to ask or answer before, and it had certainly not been asked by the soldiers themselves.

Haldane's answer to his own question was that the British government had to have the military capacity to police the empire beyond the seas, and also to respond instantly and coherently to a threat to its own soil capacities it had never had in the past, resulting in wasteful, often ineffective crisis management. These requirements had not changed since Cardwell's time. What had changed were the priorities. Since Cardwell's time, the imperial colonies and territories had acquired substantial home-grown armed forces, and the empire itself had expanded more or less as far as it could; preparations for a possible war against a European enemy now took precedence. But all this had to be accomplished within the framework of two immutable limitations. Firstly, neither the nation nor his party would countenance conscription. Secondly, they would not be willing to pay for a standing army as large as those of Prussia and France.

Haldane's response implemented between 1906 and 1912 was a policy focused on five objectives, which derived from both the Cardwell-Childers reforms and those of Lord Esher. They were:

- the creation of a general staff with three staff divisions, namely operations, staff duties and training;
- confirmation of the Cardwell-Childers localisation of the full-time army and short-term service, although with some modification of service periods for members of logistics corps;
- the earmarking and preparation of units for a self-contained regular Expeditionary Force of six infantry divisions and one cavalry division, together with all support services, which could leave for foreign service within 12 days of being mobilised;
- the reorganisation of the Militia into a Special Reserve, tasked with supplying drafts of personnel to the expeditionary force in time of war.
- the reorganisation of the Volunteers and Yeomanry regiments into a Territorial Army (TA) of 14 infantry divisions and 14 light cavalry brigades, with three main wartime tasks: defending British soil; relieving Regular Army garrisons overseas; and providing a reserve of trained and organised manpower for rapid expansion of the standing army.

RESULTS

It was a masterly system, comparatively simple in structure and yet geared, even measured against today's standards, to achieve the maximum results with the minimum of expenditure.

- In Britain's shop-window was a well-trained first-line force, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), with a low median age and little deadwood (thanks to the continual infusion of trained new blood), and possessing considerable inherent depth, as a result of the regular feeder battalions. Connected to it was the Special Reserve, a source of trained ex-regular manpower which could be tapped literally within days of the BEF going on to a war footing.
- The TA component supplied the rest of the required depth by providing two part-time soldiers for every Regular infantryman, and four light cavalrymen for every Regular horseman. Costing almost nothing to maintain between hostilities, it could effectively triple

the field army within a matter of weeks.

- In time of peace, the Regular battalions served at home and abroad, as they had done since Cardwell's day, while the Special Reserve and TA were engaged in continuous and non-continuous training.
- In time of war, the Regular home-service battalion would go on to an immediate operational footing and be ready for service anywhere in the world. At the same time, the Special Reserve's ex-Regular reservists would start fleshing out structures where necessary, and the TA's infantry and yeomanry units would begin full-time refresher training in preparation for either home or foreign service.

It was a simple but efficient system. It would not be going too far to say that it was thanks to the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane system that Britain was able to mount a credible military effort against Germany when World War 1 broke out, within two years of the scheme's completion. The savage initial fighting proved how accurately Haldane's calculations had been: his only slip, as combat experience showed, was the unduly high proportion of cavalry, a hangover from Britain's experiences at the hands of the ultra-mobile Boer commandos during the 1899-1902 War. The BEF, a body of superb professionals, held its own for long enough against the Germans' larger forces, and within less than two months the Territorial Army had been trained up to scratch and was in action (the first of its units to smell powder was the London Scottish, then a Cardwell-style part-time component of the Gordon Highlanders).

Both the existing BEF and the TA, the core force, suffered terribly, but they helped prevent the Germans from winning the mobile phase of the war and thereby thwarted any chance of a quick, surgical strike to victory. In addition, hundreds of temporary 'service battalions' were raised with comparatively little effort by increasing the number of battalions in each regiment, their basic frameworks consisting of experienced personnel drawn from the existing Regular and part-time components of the regiments, as well as ex-Regular reservists. The scale on which these so-called 'Kitchener Armies' was raised can be seen from the fact that by 1918 the British Army's oldest Regular regiment, the Royal Scots (the First of Foot), had given birth to no less than 32 service battalions.

The structure Cardwell and his successors created, although often adapted and modified to suit changing circumstances, lasted long after their lifetimes. When the BEF landed in France in 1940, a portion of it was manned by part-time units of the TA that Richard Haldane had created for just such a purpose 30 years earlier. In fact the Cardwell-Childers-Esher-Haldane structure exists to this day, albeit in modified form.

- The chief of the general staff is still in command of the army, although Esher's Army Council has evolved into an Army Board which in turn is subordinate to a Defence Council representing all three arms of service. Line command of the total armed forces is now given to a Chief of Defence Staff, the appointment rotating between the various heads of service.
- The multi-battalion nature of the infantry has remained. Many ancient regiments have been amalgamated in the series of draw-downs that have taken place since the late 1950s as Britain's imperial role faded, but almost all of the regiments still existing amalgamated or otherwise have several battalions each.
- The Militia-descended Special Reserve that Haldane created has vanished, but the regular

army still relies on short service with a reserve obligation for much of its manpower requirement, and the TA (consisting of many specialist units as well as infantry, artillery and yeomanry regiments) lives on, as firmly linked to the Regular units as ever.

A careful process of amalgamation and consolidation has resulted in the formation of a relatively small number of multi-battalion regiments, each with its own cluster of part-time units, providing greater coherence of training effort and savings on maintenance and facilities. The process by which the present dispensation was reached is not within the scope of this discussion. However, it is worth mentioning that for the most part it was not conducted by sweeping edicts from on high. The army top command set the guidelines and steered the process, but to ensure that the unpleasant task was carried out in the most efficient and painless way, the regiments themselves were given wide scope to hammer out the finer details in the course of consultation and negotiation.

Often this was done with great delicacy, not unmixed with a healthy regard for possible future contingencies; when the famed Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) opted not to be amalgamated in 1968, it was reduced to a total strength of one TA company but allowed to retain its number on the active list. This meant that the Cameronians did not die but went into suspended animation, its continuity and identity intact and ready to be resurrected if ever there was a call for its services again. The respect for regimental history and continuity shown in the case of the Cameronians is worth remembering in the new SANDF, as many existing CF and Comdo units may face this fate.

The physical changes wrought by Cardwell and his successors have been spelt out in the preceding passages. What might not be quite as evident is the regimental philosophy that developed as part of those changes. Before Cardwell's reforms, there was little philosophical difference between a regiment and a battalion, since most regiments were of single-battalion size. Post Cardwell, however, the concept of 'regiment' changed forever. The regiment was now more a way of life than an expression of size, since the number of its battalions could and did vary in accordance with several factors. Without being fanciful, one could say that the regiment became the heart of the overall corpus, while the battalions were the regiment's fists. Besides being philosophically precise, the multi-battalion system was also a very practical one, since it allowed a relationship between the various components of a regiment which was both strong and flexible. All components of the regiment wore basically the same badges and uniforms and shared the same general traditions.

At the same time, however, each battalion also maintained a distinctive personal identity. It had its own colour, bearing only the battle honours that it had earned, and its uniform and usages usually varied slightly from those of the other components of the regiment. All were part of the same family, and inter-battalion transfers were common; this last was an important factor, given the British Army's heavy emphasis on the 'mother unit' concept, which to this day makes infantrymen reluctant to transfer to other regiments. Last but not least, the arrangement encouraged a healthy spirit of competitiveness that could but enhance overall operational efficiency.

Operational efficiency was also fostered by yet another factor which was built into the multilayered system devised by Cardwell and refined by his successors. The Regular components made an effort to look after their part-time equivalents, not only for reasons of regimental sentiment but also because it was obvious that by helping their Volunteers to achieve maximum efficiency, they were also helping themselves by laying a solid foundation for any future emergency. As a result the British part-time soldier has always received much more care

and attention than his South African counterpart. Every British part-time battalion receives top-of-the-line equipment, and has instructors and staff personnel permanently seconded from its Regular equivalent. Naturally, given the disparate nature of the British Army (both Regular and Territorial), there were variations in a number of cases. For example, some TA units (such as the London Scottish) maintained their own particular identities within a direct regular affiliation, but their strong sense of affiliation with their mother units served the same purpose.

PART 2: THE CARDWELL SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the main, the Cardwell system and its benefits passed South Africa by; this country has seen few real multi-battalion regiments, and those few did not come about as a result of long-term strategic planning of the type behind Cardwell's reforms. With hindsight it is possible to identify several reasons, rooted in the circumstances prevailing at the time, why this was the case.

In late 19th century South Africa there were almost no full-time combat regiments. Assured of the protection of the 'imperial umbrella' with its British garrisons, the crown colonies of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal required little full-time domestic muscle besides their paramilitary gendarmeries (the Cape Mounted Riflemen and the Natal Police), which fell under police legislation in peace time but passed into military control in wartime. If these proficient but thinly spread forces full-time police and British garrison units required reinforcement, the colonial governments called on their part-time Volunteer regiments and/or raised hostilities-only levies of all races, in pre-Cardwell fashion.

The situation was more or less the same in the two Boer republics. Their full-time forces each consisted of a small artillery regiment and a more or less paramilitary police force; in times of emergency the republics called up their commandos for compulsory service, or raised hostilities-only levies. Instead of the imperial umbrella, they relied on their commando riflemen's fearsome (and well-deserved) reputation as daring fighters who were not afraid to tackle numerically superior enemies usually beating them.

Other reasons for the lack of structural reform included government parsimony as regards spending on the full-time units; the nature of the volunteer regiments, which were run like exclusive men's clubs; and the lack of eligible manpower (ie white males), although some regiments were willing to ignore the colour bar, and the Boer republics did not hesitate to call up people of mixed race for commando service. The lack of manpower was aggravated by the fact that many employers were unsympathetic to their employees' part-time soldiering. As a result, the Cape and Natal persisted with the wasteful method of maintaining single-battalion regiments in peacetime and hastily raising hostilities-only levies of all races in time of need.

SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIMENTS

The few examples of South African multi-battalion units in what would be known today as the 'statutory forces' are generally to be found in the 20th century.

The largest was the South African Mounted Rifles/Zuid-Afrikaansche Bereden Skutters, a Permanent Force unit of the early post-Union era (1913-20). The SAMR consisted of five regiments (actually battalions) of mounted infantry some observers wrongly classify the SAMR as cavalry, whereas in fact its men were trained, organised and equipped to ride into battle but to fight mainly on foot. All members of the SAMR wore similar badges and uniforms, including the 1st Battalion, which traced its origins back to the famed 'colonial' Cape Mounted Riflemen and wore uniform distinctions to mark its descent. The SAMR's various battalions performed

yeoman service during World War 1, but all except the senior battalion were disbanded in 1920. The latter lasted until 1926, when it too disappeared from the scene, although 4 Artillery Regiment has direct continuity with it and is in fact the oldest unit in the PF (and SANDF), with seniority going back to 1853.

The line of continuity starts with the formation of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (FAMP) in 1853, which acquired an Artillery Troop in 1874. In 1878 the FAMP, Artillery Troop and all, became the Cape Mounted Riflemen. When the CMR was disbanded in 1926, the Artillery Troop was spared and located at Potchefstroom, where it underwent many changes before becoming 4 Artillery Regiment.

A small number of infantry units of the CF have had second battalions at various times during the past 85 years. South Africa's opportunity to embark upon multi-battalion regimental systems came from the 1950s onwards, when there was an unprecedented expansion of both the full-time and part-time force. It did not happen, however, and once again several reasons can be identified.

A primary reason was an initiative launched in 1948 by the new Minister of Defence, F C Erasmus. One of Erasmus's aims was to level the playing-fields to use a 1990s phrase in the Union Defence Force, which was strongly British-oriented in usages, structures, uniforms and nomenclature (for example, of all the CF regiments, the only Afrikaans-oriented ones were six battalions that had been raised in 1934). Unfortunately this developed from an attempt at affirmative action into a politically tinged purge of the UDF, soon to be renamed the South African Defence Force. The various Commando units, previously 'Skietverenigings', were later classified as Type A, B or C independent Commandos and continued as single-battalion or small independent units. At the same time, the Afrikaans-oriented single-battalion regiments founded in 1934 underwent at least one change of name and sometimes more. An early victim was the renowned Middellandse Regiment, which became Regiment Gideon Scheepers in 1954.

In 1960 there was another wave of name-changing; Regiment Gideon Scheepers became Regiment Groot Karoo, and three regiments named after famous Boer generals Regiment De La Rey (given its 13 World War 2 battle honours, the most celebrated of the 1934 battalions), Regiment Louw Wepener and Regiment De Wet were inexplicably renamed Regiment Wes-Transvaal, Regiment Oos-Vrystaat and Regiment Noord-Vrystaat. After strenuous efforts, Regiment Wes-Transvaal, Regiment Oos-Vrystaat and Regiment Noord-Vrystaat regained their honoured names, but Regiment Groot Karoo's original name, Die Middellandse Regiment, has remained in official limbo.

In addition, various new conventional infantry units (almost all single-battalion units) and large numbers of commando units were set up; in the early 1980s this initiative resulted in the birth of a substantial sub-class when various 1960s-vintage urban commando units were freed of their home areas protection role by being transferred to the CF. Since they shared the same general areas both with one another and with older units, they were ideally situated at the time of their transformation to become part of multi-battalion regiments, but this did not occur. Some of these battalions have opted for a traditional approach (such as the Cape Flats Commando, which turned itself into the Cape Light Infantry), but they have not been encouraged to do so and are subject to various rules as regards insignia and uniform distinctions which make it difficult for them to emulate their 'traditional' (ie pre-1940) predecessors.

CORRECT CONDITIONS

It must be clearly understood that multi-battalion regiments only work properly if the conditions are suitable. This can be seen from the cases of two of South Africa's scanty multi-battalion CF regiments, as opposed to the co-operation existing in Comdo groups.

Barring the now vanished SA Mounted Riflemen, the most successful example of a local multi-battalion regiment is the Transvaal Scottish (TS). The TS started off as a single-battalion regiment in 1902, formed a second battalion in 1914, disbanded it in 1920 and then reformed it in 1936, adding a third battalion in 1939. The structure endured for a considerable period after World War 2, although the 3rd Battalion was converted in 1948 into the only Scottish artillery unit in South Africa's military annals. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were amalgamated in 1954, but were separated again in 1970 and survive to this day, although the 3rd Battalion was disbanded in 1960. In a way the Transvaal Scottish is very much in the Cardwell spirit of the multi-layered regiment, since the 1st Battalion is trained for conventional warfare and the 2nd Battalion for light motorised/counter-insurgency duties.

The other side of the coin is represented by Regiment Westelike Provincie (RWP), one of the 1934-vintage Afrikaans-oriented units, which underwent considerable identity trauma between 1951 and the mid-1970s. RWP was renamed Regiment Onze Jan in 1951; in 1960 its name was changed to Regiment Boland, a situation which was to endure for 14 years. It acquired another battalion in 1972, the 1st Battalion being headquartered at Paarl and the 2nd Battalion at Worcester.

In the meantime the 1st Battalion had been fighting a dogged battle to regain the original name. This succeeded in 1974, and the two battalions became independent units. The 1st Battalion became Regiment Westelike Provincie, based in the Cape Town area, while the 2nd Battalion retained the designation Regiment Boland. To this day RWP and Regiment Boland wear similar cap-badges, thanks to their former association, but that is all. They are separate units in every sense of the word even to the extent that RWP is now classed as a 'traditional' regiment, while Regiment Boland is not.

The Regiment Westelike Provincie/Regiment Boland episode should be seen as a cautionary tale. The mere act of forming second or even third battalions is not enough to achieve the primary purpose that was so clearly understood by Cardwell and his successors; those battalions must be located in reasonable proximity, so that they can interact with and support one another. In a nutshell, they must share the same regimental area. The distance, in every sense, between Paarl and Worcester was simply too great for mutual support, and the battalions differed fundamentally in terms of corporate culture, since 1 Regiment Boland (later RWP) was an urban unit and 2 Regiment Boland was strongly rural in nature. Thus the split was a natural one that rectified an unnatural situation.

The concept worked in the case of the Transvaal Scottish because both battalions were and are located in the same area (Johannesburg and environs), and although they have separate battalion headquarters they share one regimental headquarters complete with a magnificent museum. The fact that a third battalion existed for 21 years and was then disbanded for extraneous reasons reinforces this view. The Transvaal Scottish has been a very good example of a Cardwell-style regiment on the South African pattern. Any of the Commando Groups, all organised on a geographical basis, all doing the same task and undergoing the same training, all working in their own area, are far more likely to co-operate well than CF units that might live cheek by jowl with each other, but operate and train separately.

RESULTS

Since the 1950s the trend has been one of fragmentation the complete antithesis of the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane philosophy. The small number of second battalions that appeared resulted from either regimental initiatives or by pure happenstance, in response to local requirements. As noted above, the multi-battalion regimental system is a dead letter in the PF infantry, which is based on independent numbered battalions; the CF and Comdos still have named units, but a second battalion is a rare exception rather than the rule. Therefore, what the SAIC has is an *ad hoc* mixture:

- On the one hand there is the PF, a 'post-modernist' force with a purged institutional memory which regards the institution of the infantry regiment as an administrative grouping rather than a dynamic instrument for enhancing long-term operational efficiency.
- On the other is the CF, composed almost entirely of single-battalion units and heavily oriented towards the regimental system including, the Afrikaans-language units from the Erasmus era.
- In between is the Commando (Comdo) Force, whose units are named and geographically grouped into Commando Groups, which are numbered. All battalions of a particular commando group have a certain affiliation to each other, and all Comdo members wear the same badge.

In part this schism is also the result of the fact that the PF has always tended to be largely an administrative and training force, whereas the part-time service has been a functional one, geared for one purpose only, namely operations.

The post-April 1994 government has thus far acted with commendable restraint. There have been no purges and no undeclared wars; the emphasis, as far as both the full-time and part-time forces are concerned, has been on maintaining the status quo. Dynamic lateral thinking is required to ensure that what is good from the past serves as the launching pad for building the new defence force. However, from whatever angle the situation is viewed, the multi-battalion regimental structure and its virtues are almost unknown in South Africa, except in the present Comdo system. A strong case could be made that it should be systematically introduced and expanded, as the new defence force reinvents itself.

A PRE-CARDWELL SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA?

These matters need to be addressed earnestly and thoroughly, as part of the recently announced defence review. Large-scale reform and rationalisation of both the full-time and part-time forces are not only overdue but inevitable. The question is how it should be carried out; army planners should not hesitate to take a hard look at the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane reforms and see if they are relevant to our present situation. While the reforms were designed for another time and another country, some of their basic principles are valid in the current evolution of the SAIC, particularly its large part-time component. The Cardwell solution is, after all, the foundation of the British regimental system and is internationally recognised as a basis for high standards of efficiency, loyalty and dedicated service.

CARDWELL-TYPE PROBLEM

Role confusion

There is confusion about the role and function of the SA Army in 1996. In 1870, Cardwell's problem was to place the British Army on an affordable peace-time footing, which would allow it to carry out its normal tasks of policing the empire while at the same time being capable of dealing with an undefined European aggressor. In 1996 the SA Army must also maintain its basic capability against an undefined future aggressor, while at the same time performing peace-time duties ranging from aiding the civil power to (potentially) serving outside its borders on United Nations-sponsored peace-keeping tasks all within the parameters of tight budget constraints.

Clarifying the modern SA Army's role and function is a matter outside the scope of this discussion. Only one observation deserves to be made in this regard. It is quite obvious that Haldane succeeded in formulating a successful conclusion to the Cardwell-Childers-Esher reform process because he, like his predecessors, was not part of any interest group, either military or political; this was despite the fact that, like them, he was a political appointee. As a result he was able to take a largely objective view of the past, present and future and marshal his thought processes accordingly. At this stage, planning of our future military structures tends to be tactical and short-term (integration, rationalisation) rather than strategic and long-term.

No conscription

One of Cardwell's basic guidelines in planning the new British Army was that there was no question of introducing conscription, as in the Prussian and French armies. The modern SA Army is in the same boat; the power to conscript might be carried over into the new Defence Act, but it is unlikely to be implemented except in extreme emergencies, and it certainly cannot be used as a basis for planning a new part-time force.

Lack of depth

Like Cardwell's 1870s British Army, the SA Army's full-time combat component in 1996 lacks depth, for somewhat similar reasons. Some members of the PF are lifetime appointees, performing staff or administrative tasks of one kind or another. Most of the 20 000 or so full-time junior soldiers in combat musters are on short-term enlistments, but the short-term service scheme appears to be focused mainly on the provision of manpower for immediate needs. As a result, the creation of an organised ready reserve of trained ex-regulars enjoys a low priority, and former short-term servicemen simply disappear into the Reserve a nebulous reservoir containing members in no specific organisation, whether they have actually undergone regular full-time military training/service or not.

The necessity for ensuring adequate depth in the Full-Time Force (FTF) has not received serious attention during the past 25 years, because during that time the national service system ensured an endless supply of well-trained and experienced white personnel who not only satisfied the defence force's lower-level manpower requirements but were subject to an extremely long part-time obligation. Now that national service has been abolished, this situation has changed completely, but no adequate substitute has yet been evolved. As a result the PF presently has the worst of both worlds life-time employment pulling in uneasy tandem with a short-service scheme which does not coherently provide for future emergencies. It is not enough to ensure that there is an adequate number of bodies on active duty; personnel policies must be designed to allow the build-up of an adequate and organised reservoir of inactive but available manpower, particularly reserve manpower for the FTF. This is something totally different to the part-time units.

This situation is aggravated by the PF's long-standing policy to segregate the full-time and part-time forces; unlike other defence forces, it is rare to see full-time and part-time personnel serving in the same unit, or even to have units of the two components serving in the same formation. As a result, the two components have virtually no experience of serving side by side in either a unit or individually. An added complication is that the priority given to integration of the PF has obscured the requirement of co-operation between part-time and full-time elements.

The situation as regards manning of the PTF (namely the CF and Comdos) is hardly better. At present there are few details about planning in this regard; PTF manning policy at present is the so-called Voluntary Military Service scheme (VMS), in terms of which volunteers are recruited for 12 months' full-time service, followed by a part-time training obligation extending over several years. This scheme has serious defects, including the following:

- No provision is made for shorter periods of training, except in the case of members who served in the previous system.
- The PTF has not been drawn into the VMS process. This has resulted in ex-FTF members being pumped into PTF units with which they have had no connection during their full-time service and about which they usually know nothing, while the PTF units themselves face the prospect of being landed with the same problems they encountered during the national service era of having to motivate and somehow employ reluctant reservists who cannot be thrown out if they prove to be useless.
- The system remains unproven, but no other system of providing new trained members for the part-time force has been proposed to the public, who must volunteer for service.

This is an extremely important matter. The recruiting and training methods adopted for new recruits will determine the future of the PTF. Given improved conditions of service, it is possible that the PTF will be able to coast for several years on men trained under the old system. But after that it will have to stand on its own feet.

There is another aspect to the question of depth. In the past the SA Army's command echelon has taken the view that part-time force strengths and structures should be based on the amount of equipment available for a particular task. Those opposed to this view take the position that trained, available manpower is more important than equipment and that to tailor trained manpower to the available equipment leaves no depth; also that while there is certainly not enough equipment to maintain a larger conventional force than at present, there is enough training equipment available to allow every existing infantry unit to be trained in a primary parachute or mechanised role. The point is made that doing so would allow maximum built-in flexibility, as a unit trained for modern mobile warfare could be temporarily converted for counter-insurgency, internal-security and peace-keeping tasks while the reverse is not true, and that the training of infantrymen for modern war should not be limited by the numbers of aircraft or Ratels expected to be available to carry them into battle.

Lack of coherence

Like Cardwell's army, the SA Army of 1996 thanks to 30 years of border war, internal unrest, the national service system, the integration of forces and a change of roles due to a changing international situation and SA's international re-entry is a mass of full-time and part-time single-battalion regiments (with the lone exceptions mentioned), embodying all the disadvantages of 1870.

Recruiting

Recruiting is a problem in the modern SA Army, although it differs slightly from that faced by Cardwell in 1871. The PF has too many recruits (thanks to the integration of forces), while the PTF is likely to have too few, unless it can offer attractive conditions of service. An alleged aggravating factor is that, generally speaking, there is no culture of part-time service among blacks. This factor is much spoken about, but there does not seem to have been any serious research into its validity or gravity, or ways of resolving such problems, if they actually exist.

Unique problems

Problems afflicting the modern SA Army that did not apply in the British Army in Cardwell's time can be defined as follows:

Overall size

It is common cause among all military-security planners and thinkers that the SA Army both full-time and part-time is far too large. Judging by likely financial constraints, the country will probably be able to afford a PF of about 75 000 uniformed members, plus a PTF, during the next decade. Given South Africa's geographical location, its far from settled internal situation and its likely role as virtually the only force for stability in Southern, Central and East Africa, this is a small force. At the very least, there should be two or preferably three part-time servicemen for every full-timer, which would not only provide the country with a substantial and instantly mobilizable citizen army but would also allow continuous 'trickle employment' in the PTF without subjecting it to the sort of stresses caused by its brutal over-use during the 1975-1995 period.

A 150 000-man PTF would be an economical proposition; few people realise just how cost-effective such a force is. At the apogee of the old SADF, 87 percent of its total personnel strength consisted of part-time service people of the CF and Comdos, almost all in combat or combat support units. This cost a mere 2,2 percent of the entire defence budget. The provision of an adequate and employable FTF Reserve organisation would also be most cost-effective, and would round off the numbers needed by providing a 'ready-to-use' complement to the FTF.

It is quite clear that considerable rationalisation will take place in the process of reforming the PTF. There are far too many units, they are too unrepresentative of the country's population, and they are not evenly distributed, being located mainly in former 'white' residential areas. The money previously spent on the PTF was too little, largely, of course, as a result of low pay and virtually no perks, and this will not be possible with an all-volunteer part-time force. However, about 6 percent of the defence budget will probably be adequate to maintain a PTF of adequate size.

Diffuseness of structure

There is a school of thought which believes that the present structure of the field army in terms of which the conventional land forces are organised into formations controlled directly by the Chief of the Army, while the territorial commands control only motorised and light infantry units, namely Comdos or Rear Areas Protection Units (RAPU), is the product of a situation that no longer applies; to coin a phrase, it is a war baby that eats too much in peacetime.

Those who oppose the present system argue that there is no logic in it any more, quoting four perceived disadvantages:

- It is not cost-effective, because it introduces an additional and unnecessary administrative layer, resulting in the duplication of systems and procedures and a waste of manpower and money.
- It allows for vertical but not horizontal cross-pollination in the sense that there is very little contact social or technical between units attached to conventional formations and those of commands covering the same area.
- It takes no account of the new provincial dispensation, or the integration of former tbvc forces and their infrastructure.
- There is no geographical adhesion. For example, the present 9 SA Division (headquartered outside Cape Town) has most of its constituent units in Western Cape, but the rest are scattered as far afield as Free State and Eastern Province. Inter alia, this makes divisional unit commanders' conferences difficult to organise at short notice, and transport costs are high.

If these objections are valid, it might make more sense certainly from the PTF point of view for the SA Army to look towards a variation of the German 'wehrkreis' system in which the equivalent of a territorial command or province maintained a conventional manoeuvre force which could be deployed when and where necessary, at the same time retaining a static administrative element and a home defence force.

Diffuseness of orientation

There are basically four types of infantry unit in the SA Army today: parachute, mechanised, motorised, and internal security/commando (now classified as light motorised infantry and renamed Rear Area Protection Units, or RAPU). This is a hangover from the past, and partly the result of experiences in the 1960s and 1970s which showed that when infantry were trained for both conventional and counter-insurgency roles, the doctrines tended to pollute one another; particularly in the case with the PTF, which had limited training time available.

Apart from this, there are disadvantages to this system. A principal one is that it limits PTF depth and all-round employability. The predicted reduced size of the future infantry force is another reason given for a proposal that all conventional infantry should in principle be mechanised or parachute, but deployed in whatever role is needed. This would leave the SAIC with two main branches: conventional (mechanised and parachute) infantry, deployed in mechanised, parachute or motorised roles as required, and the commando/rear areas protection light motorised force for home area defence and security.

Composite service units and sub-units

The question of devising a better way of raising composite units and sub-units than that used in the past does not seem to have been addressed as yet, although it is vitally important to the PTF. The composite unit has been appearing and disappearing from the South African military scene for generations. In its latest guise, it has been a feature of the SA Army's activities for the past 20 years, and is likely to continue. Typically, the composite unit has been employed in the past to carry out counter-insurgency and internal security tasks in support of the police, and it is unlikely that this role will die out, while in the not too distant future the composite unit may be required for deployment outside the country's borders in terms of a regional initiative or a United Nations programme.

Some members/components of the reconstituted PTF could take part in such deployments either as individuals or in company or battalion-sized contingents, but hopefully always as volunteers for a particular service period or task. It is not only likely but essential that at least a proportion of the new PTF's officers and men accumulate fresh operational experience, whether they have previous experience or not. Unblooded members would benefit by the sort of experience that cannot be simulated in even the most realistic training, and which is the final and most important ingredient needed to turn an enthusiastic 'book soldier' into a mature, self-confident fighting man.

For operationally experienced members, volunteer external deployments would provide hands-on knowledge of a type of operation that is new to the SANDF and has its own peculiar imperatives; all such inputs could be added to the experience of the past in order to synthesize a new operational mind-set. The PTF in particular and the SANDF as a whole would benefit from the dissemination of such operational experience. If so, however, it is essential that the rough and ready composite unit we have known in the past be refined and formalised, instead of being implemented for immediate gains while disregarding the longer-term implications. The SA Army's approach to PTF composite units over the past two decades whether for internal or border service can be described as haphazard and devoid of sensitivity towards regimental sentiment or any systematic long-term (or even medium-term) planning, and was never based on volunteerism.

Here, too, we find an echo of the Cardwell and pre-Cardwell situation: his reforms effectively ended a century of *ad hoc* raisings and disbandings of temporary units, with little thought of any cost-effective long-term planning. Generally speaking, components of the PTF have previously been deployed in one of three ways:

- **Individual call-ups**, ie the mobilisation of individual personnel, usually performing extra-regimental part-time duties, for service in a staff or specialist capacity at one or other headquarters. This system works well, needs no changes, and will benefit from volunteerism.
- **Unit call-ups**, ie the mobilisation of full units for service, either in their primary role or for other duties. This system also works well South African part-time units have been used like this for many decades the only *caveat* being that at times heavy demands were imposed on certain units. This will now be less easy, as there is no compulsory service.
- **Component service**, ie the mobilisation of elements of units for service. This system has been used very extensively, not only in the border war days but very recently, as during the April 1994 general election. Broadly speaking, there are two types of component service: modular companies, in which a specific unit is required to provide a self-contained 'modular company' for service either on its own or on attachment to an existing unit; and composite units, made up of elements of various other units, put together for strictly short-term purposes (one should mention a further 'refinement' combining the worst elements of both, namely a composite unit made up of companies that are themselves composites, with few if any volunteers for this particular service).

The modular company/composite unit not only leaves much to be desired in terms of coherence and efficiency, but is positively harmful to the units concerned. Experience has shown that modular companies bereft as they are of any 'guardian angel' to protect their interests tend to receive the sort of second-class treatment handed out to military orphans such as themselves;

often they are regarded as little more than cheap labour. Apart from this, the modular company system has severely damaged the cohesiveness of the units concerned an important matter, since the PTF is firmly based on the regimental system. Continued piecemeal deployment adversely affects a unit's regimental cohesion, because it never serves as a whole and there is no opportunity for it to be led by its commanding officer, who along with the regimental sergeant-major becomes little more than a visitor.

Such deployment does not have serious consequences for technical and support units, which are used to being split up for attachment to combat units, but it has an extremely deleterious effect on infantry and armoured units, which rely heavily on team spirit and unit cohesion. Several PTF units are presently suffering from the after-effects of this situation, which in a compulsory service system are serious enough but would be virtually fatal in an all-volunteer force. An aggravating factor is that such units usually do not have enough time for settling in (during the 1994 election call-up, for example, some hastily assembled composite units were deployed within days of being formed).

The result is a body of men one could scarcely call it a unit lacking the cohesion and corporate identity that is born of working together, or regimental spirit of the kind which is so essential to military operations but which cannot be created by means of a few days of refresher training. This sort of hand-to-mouth arrangement might be acceptable in the case of low-intensity operations, but could be extremely detrimental if such units were to be committed to serious action.

In this context it is interesting to note that Scandinavian servicemen most of them volunteer part-time citizen-soldiers with high standards of self-discipline, and at least some special training have traditionally proved to be excellent peacemakers/keepers in Cyprus and elsewhere, whereas elite assault troops have tended to be overly aggressive and at times insensitive. The truth is that composite units of the type assembled by the SA Army over the past 20 years worked because they were not subjected to great stress, and in the process they did great harm to the part-time component.

Yet another grave disadvantage of the *ad hoc* method is that upon completion of service there is no orderly, systematic trickle-down of lessons learnt, because few of the sub-units ever have the full picture. There is no systematic addition to the institutional memory of the units concerned, no accumulation of such experience, and therefore little corporate benefit to the units from the service performed. There is an urgent need for a systematic approach to the question of how, or even whether, composite infantry units and sub-units should be composed and employed.

Against all this stands the Cardwell system, which permits different battalions of the same regiment to work together, and at least provide some semblance of a cohesive unit when volunteers from the several battalions work together in a composite unit formed from a single multi-battalion regiment.

PART 3: APPLYING THE CARDWELL PRINCIPLES TO THE SA ARMY

If the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane structural philosophy is to be applied to the SA Army, some of the defects and problems raised earlier would have to be addressed. A number of these might be regarded as falling outside the scope of this discussion, but cannot be ignored because they would impinge on any reconstruction or reconstitution of the PTF.

THE SA ARMY'S ROLE AND FUNCTION

This falls outside this discussion, except in one respect. In the United States and Britain, which maintain volunteer-only part-time forces, maximum cost-effectiveness is achieved by a close correlation between full-time and part-time force strengths and roles; any reduction or expansion of the FTF is paralleled by a carbon copy process in the PTF. Therefore, any definition of the SA Army's role and functions would be followed by a closely correlated allocation of tasks between the full-time and part-time forces, part of which would be the establishment of a very specific ratio of strengths as regards both manpower and units of each force.

SIZE

Undoubtedly the PTF rationalisation process will involve amalgamations and/or disbandments of existing units and the creation of new ones to ensure a better geographic/ethnic spread; it might also have to incorporate a systematic culture creation programme, to introduce and popularise the concept of part-time military service to the black population at large. If this process is to succeed and for the sake of the common good, it must not only succeed but must do so in the shortest time possible the SANDF will have to learn from past errors. A deliberate and specific review by experts to plan and reconstruct the PTF system is not a simple task.

TYPE OF TRAINING

The training now given to SAIC members would certainly have to change considerably. The question should be viewed from two perspectives:

- Overall training policy, ie whether all infantry units should be trained (and thus structured) as mechanised battalions which would be optional, but not necessarily crucial.
- The nature and methods of such training, given the requirements of maximum localisation and the requirements of an all-volunteer force; such a rethink would be mandatory.

THE INTEGRATION OF FORMATIONS

Serious questions should be asked at this point about whether the present separation of formations and territorial commands still applies, or whether it would make more sense to re-unite them. One option foresees the following situation:

a) Each province would constitute a territorial command.

b) Each territorial command would include a volunteer PTF organisation comprising:

- a PTF headquarters;
- a part-time manoeuvre formation (a division, brigade or combat group, as per circumstances), trained and structured (although not necessarily equipped) for conventional warfare; and
- an equally substantial territorial defence formation (essentially the successor to the present Comdo/RAPU force).

c) Full-time conventional units would remain under the direct control of the chief of the SANDF, regardless of their location, but each battalion in a particular command should be directly

associated with the training and organisation of the particular PTF units of that command/province.

Such a development would certainly benefit PTF units in terms of localisation of effort, as discussed previously. Political factors would exert a strong influence on such changes. For example, restructuring the PTF along provincial or other territorial command lines would provide an important opportunity to pacify regional sentiments; on the other hand, such a restructuring could encourage secessionist sentiment.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INFANTRY FORCE

There are two options available in the event of a decision to reconstruct the infantry force on the Cardwell-Childers-Esher-Haldane principles. One option is to reconstruct the PTF only. The other is to reconstruct the entire infantry force, both full-time and part-time. Both these options appear to be viable, and are discussed below.

Option 1: Cardwell and the total infantry force

A CLASSIC CARDWELL STRUCTURE

In this scenario the existing PF battalions would be turned into localised and suitably named regiments, each consisting of one or more full-time battalions and three or even four part-time infantry regiments located in the command or provincial area. They would then operate along general Cardwell-Haldane principles. In peacetime, for example, such a regiment might function as follows:

- The 1st (PF) Battalion would perform border patrol and/or external/internal peace-keeping/peacemaking duties.
- The 2nd (PF) Battalion would train recruits, feed the 1st Battalion and conduct training for the PTF regiments.
- The PTF battalions would train under the aegis of their regimental depots, and supply organised manpower when and as necessary. Each would have its own regimental district within the command area.

An alternative arrangement could be to have only one PF battalion and a larger number of PTF battalions. Once again, questions of numbers and administrative arrangements between the full-time and part-time components would be determined according to the local circumstances. This concept is not necessarily easy to implement, but would certainly promote co-operation between full-time and part-time elements as well as part-time training. It would be affected by:

- The belief in the full-time army that a strong regimental system will work in the PTF but not the FTF. This is not based on known solid evidence, and flies in the face of experience in other countries; it is probably little more than another hangover (its origins now forgotten) from the era when anything smacking of British practice was frowned on in the PF. Nevertheless, it is a strong belief which would have to be considered.
- A reluctance by many PTF units to work in close conjunction with the PF the result of the long-standing and lamentable lack of identification between the full-time and part-time units therefore, marketing it to these units would have to enjoy a high priority.

Option 2: reorganising the PTF infantry only

Placing the CF and Comdo/RAPU force on a multi-battalion regimental system footing *à la* Cardwell should proceed with caution; as the experiences of Regiment Westelike Provincie/Regiment Boland and the Transvaal Scottish show, the multi-battalion regiment system in its classic form, for all its simplicity and proven efficiency, is not a magic formula that can be applied successfully without regard for circumstances. A flexible dispensation would have to be designed to cater for the widely varying conditions in various parts of the country, the long-established single-battalion usage, and the nature of the future PTF itself.

A Cardwell-style process, even when handled with delicacy and sympathy, could be extremely painful, leading inevitably to morale and organisational problems in established part-time units, which tend to be fiercely individualistic and much more protective of their particular usages than any PF regiment, and yet will in future have to depend only on volunteers. There might be cases where multi-battalion units are not practical, for one reason or another, such as low population density. The parameters within which reconstitution should take place will also have to be carefully considered. The reconstitution of the PTF has been discussed since the 1994 general election, but as yet there has not been much innovative thinking on how this should be done and the key word here is 'innovative'.

Reconstitution should not be merely an expansion of the existing part-time service system. This means that it cannot be accomplished by simply recruiting large numbers of people of colour into the existing PTF. The PTF system developed along certain lines because it was designed to cater for a category of people who were relatively homogeneous as far as culture and outlook were concerned, ie whites. Since 1912 it has not been significantly redesigned, partly because its basic functional form was not affected by the entry of substantial numbers of people of colour who have not shared the cultural and linguistic background of whites. Very few blacks were absorbed into the PTF, except in some Transvaal Comdo units, as a result of which the existing part-time service culture is thought not to be an established part of black community life.

In addition, the new PTF will be made up of many different military-cultural strands. Its members could be drawn from the old PTF; Umkhonto weSizwe; Apla; elements of the TBVC forces; forces of the former autonomous homelands; and former members of 'Self-Defence Units' and 'Self-Protection Units'. People who traditionally were outside the 'statutory' part-time service culture may not wish to be drawn into existing units; this could apply particularly to former members of the liberation movements, whose military wings have a developmental history as long, or longer, than some 'statutory' units.

In addition, no research has yet been done into whether the traditional attractions of part-time service are the same in the black as in the white community. Handled correctly, all this can be an advantage, and a phenomenon that fits into revising long-standing South African military practice. Traditionally, South African CF, but not Comdo, units have been allowed a fairly free hand as regards such things as uniforms, badges and customs reflecting their diverse backgrounds the rationale being that anything contributing to a strong unit identity and team spirit was an aid to operational efficiency. This diversity should also be the rule in the future PTF.

The new PTF will have to serve several purposes besides its primary military and military support tasks. The essence of an all-volunteer PTF is that each unit must be located within the community it serves, and from which it will draw its recruits. The future PTF will find itself drawn into community upliftment work of various types. At the same time, the future PTF will have to

be structured to bring units and individuals of different cultural backgrounds together in a common cause. The unsegregated units of the United States Army that fought in Korea laid the foundation for the later general desegregation of American society; similarly, the steady desegregation of the SA Army from the mid-1970s onwards a process that was often ahead of what was happening in other government organisations played a role in the relative ease of general desegregation in later years. This implies that the system itself must be wholly or partly redesigned to answer to new conditions and urgent social imperatives which were not crucial to the previous dispensation.

Allied to these new requirements is the unavoidable need for speed. Experience has shown that PTF regiments usually take years or even decades to develop fully, learning lessons about themselves, their corporate identity and their internal management by empirical or 'bash-your-head' methods which cannot be taught in formal training courses, because each unit is unique. Unfortunately the new PTF will not have decades or even years to spend on an empirical learning process. The initial 'shake-down' period including the introduction and popularisation of the part-time service concept in black communities will have to be short, so that the more serious restructuring problems can be addressed. The requirement is to institute a system in which the empirical experience accumulated in the past 150 years can be systematically applied to pre-empting problems before they occur. Total success is unlikely to be achieved in this regard, but it is realistic to expect that the initial processes can be substantially smoothed out and shortened. In the long term, the benefit will be that solid relationships will have been forged during the initial stages which can then serve as a foundation for greater enterprises.

For this reason, two alternatives are discussed below, each based on the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane concept but incorporating certain modifications in line with South African conditions. Both these alternatives resemble the brigade system previously used to group the conventional element of the part-time forces or the existing Comdo groups, but in both cases with the adoption of a single regimental identity. The first is the classic multi-battalion regiment, closely modelled on the Cardwell-Childers-Haldane system but adapted to South African conditions and the nature of the local infantry force. The second is what might be called the administrative regiment, similar to the multi-battalion regiment in structure and internal functioning but composed of a number of single-battalion regiments that retain their specific identities.

Multi-battalion regiments

In this scenario, a multi-battalion regiment is created out of existing CF and Comdo units as well as newly established ones, where circumstances favour this option instead of an administrative regiment dispensation. The battalions would all adopt a new identity based on the regiment. All units would be non-racial, and the best possible mix of available key personnel and new volunteers. It would be organised as follows:

REGIMENTAL DISTRICT

The regiment would be assigned a specific regimental district or recruiting area within the command/provincial area determined according to factors such as population density, historical/traditional boundaries, etc from which it would recruit its members.

THE REGIMENTAL DEPOT

The regimental depot would be located at some suitable point in the regimental district, either separate from the regiment's components at one of the battalion headquarters, or at an

available SANDF training base, depending on the premises available. It would consist of two parts:

Regimental headquarters, consisting of the honorary colonel or 'colonel of the regiment' (see below), the regimental archives and museum, and the officers' and sergeants' messes.

The regimental depot itself, commanded full-time by a suitable officer, either FTF or PTF, supported by some permanent staff (similar to the small PF organisation of the previous Brigade Headquarters), who would be tasked to:

- a) handle all regimental administration except matters of concern to the individual battalions only;
- b) assist with training; and
- c) help to man not only of the operational battalions, but also of any composite unit/sub-unit that might be raised.

OPERATIONAL BATTALIONS

There would be two, three or even four operational battalions headquartered separately or together, according to the premises available which would concentrate on being operationally available. Each such battalion could consist of:

- a battalion headquarters;
- a support company;
- three rifle companies;
- a reserve company, consisting of time-expired members who still maintain a connection with the battalion although they are not fully active; and
- a 'junior soldier' company, whose members either belong to local school cadet detachments or are recruited from all parts of the regimental district.

SERVICE BATTALION

This would consist of nothing more than the skeleton of a battalion literally no more than a name, a regimental colour, dress regulations and basic standing orders, all of it lodged in a filing cabinet at the regimental depot which would be held in suspended animation in case the need for a further battalion should arise, for example as a composite battalion of the regiment.

Administrative regiments

This scenario strongly resembles that of the classic multi-battalion, with the exception that the constituent units would all be existing single-battalion CF battalions, Comdos or new units formed in former black areas, for example, which would maintain their own identities but form part of an 'administrative regiment' with a distinctive, all-inclusive name for example, the '1st Western Cape Volunteers' for a grouping located in one Western Cape area. Such a regiment would be organised into a regimental district, depot and operation battalions similar to that for the multi-battalion regiment.

The service battalion would be a skeleton unit, as for the multi-battalion regiment, the only difference being that it would bear the name of the administrative regiment. Thus, if an administrative regiment named '1st Western Cape Volunteers' fielded a composite service battalion made up of elements of its constituent units, the battalion would be termed '1st Battalion, 1st Western Cape Volunteers'.

An alliance of this kind would provide a flexible system, allowing participating units to maintain their own identity and customs while still permitting cross-pollination and all the other benefits of the classic multi-battalion regiment. It is almost identical to the concept underlying the present Comdo group. The potential benefits to a new-era PTF of establishing a series of such administrative regiments, with one or two well-established units playing the mentor or 'elder brother' to two or three younger or newly established units, is obvious.

It would answer the requirement of flexibility. The alliance could be of any suitable length, ie it could be short-term, lasting until the younger or new regiments decided to hive off on their own, or it could become a permanent one if all the participants wished it to do so.

It could even result in a hybrid arrangement, with participating regiments having more than one battalion, so that it would combine the virtues of the multi-battalion regiment with those of the administrative battalion system. This system could be taken to lower levels as well, to cater for rural situations where time, distance and sparse populations are significant factors. In this scenario there would be a widely scattered network of companies, each with its own 'company district' and small, independent units, but under the 'ownership' of a single-battalion regiment located at a central point.

Advantages

The advantages of such an arrangement would include the following:

- **Financial benefits:** Money would be saved in a multi-battalion regiment situation in which two or three battalions wore the same cap badge and other distinctive uniform items, but enjoyed a combined general administration system.
- **Enhancement of activities:** Lessening the burden of common administration (by means of the regimental depot) would enable the participant units in both scenarios to make maximum use of their non-continuous service time for training and related activities.
- **Healthy competition:** Healthy competition would be engendered between the participating units, which would result in enhanced operational efficiency.
- **Sharing of facilities/resources:** Headquarters and/or training facilities would be more intensively and evenly utilised (see also the section on 'switch units' below).
- **Sharing of expertise:** Such a system would result in the sharing not only of technical knowledge but also empirical knowledge about running an effective part-time unit, with new or young units picking up the tricks of the trade from the more established units.
- **Nation-building:** It would encourage nation-building, because it would bring battalions and individuals from different backgrounds together while maintaining the unitcommunity link that is so vital in an all-volunteer force.

- **Simplified training:** It would simplify training and in many cases shorten 'away time' by allowing intensive short courses (or some phases of courses) to be presented at the regimental depot, employing visiting instructors from the appropriate institutions, backed up by local based PTF instructors. The academic aspects of a given course could be taught at a regimental depot, followed by a practical phase at institutions such as the School for Infantry the Army Battle School. But the greatest advantage would be that volunteer recruits could be prepared for basic training. The regimental depot could also be used for providing non-continuous training for recruits, in the event of a system that allows for shorter training periods than the existing 12-month VMS system.
- **Coherent composite units:** It would enable the easy formation of coherent volunteer composite units.
- **Force reductions:** It would be easier to maintain inherent capacity, as participant battalions of a given regiment could be placed in suspended animation rather than being disbanded thus making it easier to re-expand in the event of emergencies or better times or a battalion could be reduced to, say, company strength and attached to the remaining full-strength battalion as a fourth company *pro tem*.

PART 4: UTILISING MULTI-BATTALION AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGIMENTS

The multi-battalion/administrative regiment concept would result in an extremely flexible yet cost-efficient structure for the PTF infantry; two possible examples are discussed below.

'Switch units'

Under the switch unit system, every slot in the landward defence machine would be occupied by at least two battalions drawn from the same regiment one on 'active status', and the other on 'inactive status' with the two battalions exchanging roles annually according to a laid-down schedule. The entire regiment could even be allocated the task of filling the one operational battalion slot. The system would operate as follows:

Regiment X, a typical multi-battalion regiment, would consist of, *inter alia*, a regimental depot and two operational battalions, the latter exchanging roles on 1 January every year. Thus in any given year one of Regiment X's operational battalions would be on active duty status, meaning that:

- it carries out scheduled non-continuous training on week-nights and at weekends;
- it stages an annual training camp; and
- it is on a 72-hour standby for operational service in case of a nationwide mobilisation.

In the meantime, Regiment X's other operational battalion or battalions is or are on inactive duty status, meaning that:

- it carries out scheduled non-continuous training;
- selected members attend advanced or conversion training, either at the regimental depot or elsewhere;
- selected officers and non-commissioned officers attend promotion courses;

- it is on stand-by to provide a limited number of sub-units manned by personnel other than the special or course trainees above, in case of sudden unrest or civil disasters;
- it carries out ceremonial duties, if required to do so; and
- it is on 144-hour stand-by in case the PTF is mobilised nationally.

Both employers and employees would benefit, since employees would only spend long periods away every second year no small consideration, in an all-volunteer PTF. If based on rotation between three battalions, ie one battalion on active duty and two battalions on inactive duty status in any one year, this would be even better for recruiting volunteers. In the case of an administrative regiment the same scenario would apply, except that the switch units would be allied single-battalion regiments instead of two (or three) battalions of the same regiment.

There is a third alternative that takes a leaf out of Cardwell's book as originally conceived, and that may be a preferable option in some circumstances. In this scenario, Regiment X's 1st Battalion is permanently on active status, while the 2nd Battalion is permanently inactive and acts as a feeder and training unit for new recruits.

COMPOSITE BATTALIONS

If suitably structured *à la* Cardwell, PTF units could provide an suitably institutionalised composite battalion system, instead of *ad hoc* arrangements.

- A certain number of members of the depot and each operational battalion (serving or battalion reserve) would be authorised to belong to a 'Ready Component', ie, they would sign 12-month contracts under which they receive a monthly tax-free bounty in return for being available at short notice for external service.
- Any of the battalions which contributes at least one company of volunteers to the composite battalion would be entitled to any campaign honours awarded to that service battalion. The campaign honours would also be borne on the battalion's own colour.

This regimental system could be used with flexibility to address almost any situation in an effective way. In one scenario, the entire regiment simply goes on to a war footing. The regimental depot mobilises its 'rats and mice' and begins to function at full capacity. The operational battalions are called up for continuous service and deployed as circumstances require, and the service battalion is activated if and as required to start preparing reserves and reliefs.

In a second scenario, one of two things could happen:

- Whichever of the two operational units is on active duty status is mobilised, any last-minute personnel shortages being plugged by means of drafts/transfers from either the inactive battalion or the regimental depot personnel, or both; or
- The service (composite) battalion is activated and manned with drafts from the two operational battalions and the regimental depot, allowing time (in the event of a long deployment) to further prepare 100 percent replacements for continued service.

In a third scenario, the composite battalion is activated as above, except that it is manned by

members of the 'Ready Component' serving in the various components, as well as by any inactive regimental reservists who decide to volunteer when the activation is announced.

Such an arrangement would not only be cost-effective, but profitable to the regiment and the SA Army alike:

- There would be no gaps in the army's conventional deployment, which could lead to under-strength units or ones with unqualified personnel in some posts.
- In the case of a composite-unit scenario, the 'shake-down' period would be shorter and more effective, because leader groups and many of the lower ranks would be familiar with one another, and would all share in a common regimental culture.
- With several manpower sources available to provide personnel, it would be comparatively easy to provide full manning.
- The volunteer service battalion could be activated annually, or even twice a year, for periods of several months without causing undue 'employer fatigue'.
- Welfare of next of kin would be easier to manage, because it could be done in an orderly and consolidated way.
- All the units would benefit from a consolidated infusion of fresh operational experience which they could absorb and re-work in an orderly fashion, to their advantage and ultimately that of the SANDF.
- The bonds between the component regiments/battalions would be strengthened as a result of their joint service.

PREREQUISITES FOR PROPER FUNCTIONING

The proper conditions must be created to allow such a system to function properly. The main ones appear to be the following:

Choice of system

The flexibility of the proposed system must be exploited to the full by allowing various units (and intended units) to pick the system, or variations thereof, that would suit their requirements best; the choice might vary from one regimental district to the next, depending on the circumstances. The most sensible way to handle this process would be to allow the choice to emerge from negotiations between existing units and designated Comdo groups or new units yet to be created, leading to voluntary alliances or regimental mergers.

Regimental districts/recruiting areas

The allocation of clearly defined regimental districts or recruiting areas would be crucial. This is not simply a reflection of Cardwell's thinking; the allocation of recruiting areas was a mainstay of the South African part-time regiments in the days before national service. In that era, each regiment had a specific recruiting area allocated to it, to which it was linked by virtue of its name and place in the community. This system was destroyed during the national service era by allocating ex-national servicemen to PTF units on a seemingly haphazard basis which often left, say, a regiment headquartered in Cape Town with half its members located anywhere from

Johannesburg and Durban to Windhoek and Upington. This approach might have worked during the era of compulsory service, but it would not be acceptable in an all-volunteer force.

Ease of inter-unit transfers

Transfers between the regiment's components would have to be made as easy as movements within a battalion, rather than requiring that they be routed through the local formation and Army HQ a cumbersome and necessarily time-consuming process. Regimental transfers should only require an administrative directive, and be accomplished by a system in terms of which all personnel were listed on the regimental depot's nominal roll instead of that of the participant units, making a transfer a simple, speedy paper transaction.

The way to protect this system from abuse would be to ensure that the participant units' commanders retained the right to approve transfers into and out of their units, ie the depot commander would work with their consent; or alternatively by a requirement that transfers would have to be cleared *ex post facto* by the local command or formation. The point behind this is that it would allow the unit to be composed of the best available volunteers for the task, chosen out of the full regimental complement.

The honorary colonel/' Colonel of the Regiment' system

The present honorary colonel system could play a dynamic and indeed vital role in making the system function at full efficiency, provided that incumbents were people of the right background and experience, were suitably empowered, and were then placed in a position to exert the weight of their experience and connections. At present many PTF honorary colonels are what their name applies, namely figureheads often with little or no military experience appointed for sentimental reasons or because they are thought to have influence which they can exert on behalf of the unit.

However, the honorary-colonel system could be turned into a dynamic instrument with the stroke of a pen. Although they may no longer be active as commanders, many former senior PF and PTF senior officers still have a great deal to contribute. In this connexion, it is worth examining the British approach to their multi-battalion system. Unlike the situation in South Africa, it is not the honorary colonel but the colonel-in-chief who is the influential figurehead; the 'colonel of the regiment' (the term 'honorary colonel' is not used) has specific powers and plays an extremely active role in the affairs of the regiment concerned.

Each battalion (but particularly units still to be established) could have an experienced honorary colonel, preferably a previous commander, to assist a newly appointed battalion commander the operational 'boss' with non-operational matters.

Facilities

Present practice in the United States and Great Britain, and experience in South Africa before national service, indicates that part-time regiments must have adequate permanent headquarters if they are to function properly. The provision of such facilities, or the re-allocation of existing facilities, would have to enjoy priority attention in the reconstruction of the PTF, which has experienced serious neglect in this regard in the past. As a result, many PTF units are housed in ways that are unsuited to their future activities, particularly the weekend training which plays such an important role in an all-volunteer force. An added problem is a lack of maintenance and a total lack of security of tenure, which vitiates any motivation to improve and

maintain the premises.

Yet another problem is that PTF headquarters are not always located in their recruiting areas, thereby making it very difficult for them to interact with local communities. The ideal would be to return to the system of providing a headquarters/training facility ('drill hall' in our parlance, 'armoury' in the United States Army), either a purpose-built one, or one that conforms to certain minimum requirements. Classically, a drill hall is a purpose-designed building, permanently assigned to a unit or units, consisting of a substantial hall with adjoining administrative offices, stores, messes, armouries and cooking facilities.

The drill hall generally has several important characteristics. Firstly, it is located in the community in which the regiment recruits its members. Secondly, it provides a facility in which after-hours/after-dark training could be carried out in all weathers; serves as a regimental headquarters; and acts as a mobilisation facility/operational base if needed.

Drill halls in South Africa like those in Great Britain and the United States not only provide a venue for purely military activities, but also invariably became community centres of a kind as well, because in normal times the occupying units would only need them on certain week-nights and at weekends. Typically the hall, grounds and kitchen of the average drill hall would be used (in return for a donation to the regimental fund) for wedding receptions, dances, community fairs, concerts, prize-givings, carnivals, exhibitions, lectures and mass meetings of various kinds; on more than one occasion they were also pressed into use for emergency services such as casualty stations in the event of a disaster (a drill hall might also be suitable for use as a Regimental Depot). If the complex is large enough, it can serve several units. The provision and use of drill halls could be a major factor linking the regiment to a community.

Similar duties

It would be essential, in a Cardwell-Haldane scenario, for battalions of a multi-battalion regiment to fall under the same local command and control structure, and to be of the same type ie, conventional infantry or RAPU infants. For example, the system would not work properly if, say, half of a multi-battalion regiment were 'owned' by the local brigade and the other half by the local territorial command; nor would it work if units of different corps were grouped into an administrative regiment. Flexibility of choice and application would be of cardinal importance in implementing any system.

Whatever the disadvantages, there can be little doubt that the overall application of the Cardwell-Haldane principles to the entire infantry force would be cost-effective, and could also succeed in reshaping a key element of the future SANDF along the lines of a system with a proven record of success.

SUMMARY

There appears to be a *prima facie* case for applying Cardwell-style reforms to the SA Infantry Corps, either to the PTF only or to the entire infantry force. There is no overwhelming reason why such a reconstruction could or should not take place. There certainly is no reason to doubt the value of the regimental system as developed in the British Army over the years. Such an application could be largely based on existing assets and institutions, either using them as is or adapting them to the changed circumstances.

It would be necessary to formulate a 'cocktail' of applications to allow flexibility in application.

Implementation would have to be handled with tact and diplomacy. Finally, the basic needs of the PTF as regards facilities, etc, would have to be satisfied.

A current saying in the SANDF is that one should not attempt to reinvent the wheel. It certainly applies in the above case, seeing that the wheel in question has been turning easily for 120 years and shows no signs of coming off the axle. The key to the entire exercise is flexible thinking and unselfish, intellectually honest implementation.

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