

years. Also, I was informed that the battery had only been held together with great difficulty; but, even taking all these things into consideration, I do not consider that sufficient reason existed for the absolute want of knowledge displayed by the men as regards their ammunition. Naturally the recruits would know but little, but the older soldiers were quite as ignorant.

Those men who are shown as absent were unable to appear on parade, as their uniform was not made.

#### OAMARU NAVAL ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.—12th October, 1892.

Present: 1 lieutenant-commander, 1 sub-lieutenant, 4 petty officers, 45 seamen, &c., and 5 bandsmen. Absent: 1 petty officer and 9 seamen, &c.

*Uniform.*—Naval Artillery uniform. There was a considerable want of uniformity. Some men with lanyards, others without. Some with handkerchiefs, others without. The jumpers were not made uniformly alike. Cap-bands with different words and letters on them.

*Arms and Accoutrements.*—Snider artillery carbine; sword-bayonets; brown belts, not worn uniformly.

*Officers.*—Lieutenant-Commander Taylor; Sub-Lieutenant Mahon.

*Petty Officers.*—Not up to the standard which I have found elsewhere.

*Men.*—A considerable number of recruits. The men are not of the same physique as the men in the other Naval corps which I have inspected.

*Drill.*—Lieutenant-Commander Taylor drilled the corps as a company. The drill was not well done, and Lieutenant Taylor made no attempt to put the men right. No cautions were given by him, the drill being thus made the more difficult for the men. Lieutenant Mahon proved to be a good drill. The petty officers were not up to the mark. Quartermaster Symons, when called upon to drill the company, said that he had never done anything more than “prove” the company. Petty Officer Melldrum put the company through the sword-bayonet exercise, “ordering” badly, and the men doing very badly. I called upon Sergeant-Instructor McPherson to drill the company, and at once found a reason for the drill of this corps and of the battery being so much below par. He proved to be quite unable to drill the men either as a company or at sword-bayonet exercise. I was informed that he was not well; but that was no reason for the bad style of his drill and instruction. He appeared quite incapable of detecting faults perpetrated before his eyes, and I am perfectly satisfied that a great deal of the shortcomings which I found in this command are due to the inefficiency of this non-commissioned officer (*vide* general remarks Oamaru district).

I had the men told off for gun-drill, then fallen out. There appeared to be two squads, one drilling with the 64-pr. R.M.L. gun, the other with a 24-pr. S.B. gun. It is a waste of time for men to drill with this latter gun when there is a 64-pr. R.M.L. gun here for them to drill with. I found in this corps the same want of knowledge as regards their work that was apparent in the battery. Not a man knew what a “projectile” was.

I regret that I have to report that this corps has been in a very unsatisfactory state for some years. On going into a matter involving gross breaches of discipline that have occurred within the past few months, I found that Lieutenant-Commander Taylor does not possess that power of command or tact desirable in a commanding officer.

#### NASEBY RIFLES.—19th December, 1892.

Present: 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 3 sergeants, and 37 rank and file (5 band). Absent: 1 colour-sergeant, 1 sergeant, and 6 rank and file.

*Uniform.*—Scarlet; black helmets.

*Arms and Accoutrements.*—Snider rifle; buff belts.

*Officers.*—Captain Hosie. Lieutenant McLennon: Acting. Lieutenant Hilton: Acting.

*Non-commissioned Officers.*—Fair, on the whole.

*Men.*—Very good stamp.

*Drill.*—The drill was fairly good. Captain Hosie drilled the company fairly. He is not up to date in his words of command. Lieutenant McLennon was fair, and Lieutenant Hilton has plenty of confidence, but wants practice. Both these officers are acting. The marching of the men was excellent, but the details of drill were wanting. The manual was but moderately done. Considering the distance of this corps from its instructors, it is in fairly good condition.

#### PALMERSTON RIFLES.—20th December, 1892.

Present: 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 2 sergeants, and 26 rank and file. Absent: 1 lieutenant, 1 colour-sergeant, 1 sergeant, and 19 rank and file (3 sick).

*Uniform.*—Scarlet; black helmets.

*Arms and Accoutrements.*—Snider rifle; buff belts.

*Officers.*—Captain Grant: A good officer. Lieutenant Dreaver: A young officer. Lieutenant Muir: Absent on business.

*Non-commissioned Officers.*—The colour-sergeant was absent, and has not been on parade since April. The sergeants on parade were not up to the mark.

*Men.*—A fine body of men.

*Drill.*—Captain Grant was suffering from a severe cold, and unable to do much drill. What he did do was well done. Lieutenant Dreaver showed but little knowledge of his drill. The men on the whole did well, but had little support from him or their non-commissioned officers.

This corps is not in a satisfactory state as regards its numbers, many of the absentees being simply paper men, and four of those shown as effective having been recruited in December.