

Chapter 1

NEW SOUTH WALES

In The Beginning

Since the foundation of the first settlement in Sydney Cove in 1788, there had been a strong British military presence in Australia, which lasted until the year 1870, when the Imperial Garrisons were withdrawn.

Their presence was the staunch bulwark of every one of our Colonies in those early formative years. A succession of Regiments of British regular troops, were to become the defenders of our social structure and, had it not been for them, the founding and rapid growth of the Colonies would not have been possible.

Apart from maintaining civil law and order, they were expected and required to provide guards, oversee the work of the convict population, as well as defend the settlements from any hostile native (Aborigine) attack. This was a task unprecedented in British military history.

The Colony of New South Wales was barely twelve years old when in 1800 rumours that Irish convicts were planning an uprising reached Governor Hunter, who took immediate action to reinforce and strengthen the New South Wales Corps.

He raised two Volunteer Corps of free men, with a strength of fifty men each, one to be stationed in Sydney, the other in Parramatta: 'to protect public and private property and to assist the military in the preservation of order.'

The Sydney Corps came under the command of Captain Thomas Rowley, and the Parramatta Corps under the command of Mr James Thompson, the officer commanding both bodies being Captain William Balmain. The Corps was designated 'The Loyal and Associated Corps'.

However, in July 1801 the newly arrived Governor King saw fit to disband them because of the difficulty of finding officers to supervise the training.

The news of a fresh outbreak of war between England and France prompted the Governor to reinstate the Volunteers as the 'Loyal Associations'. The citizen soldiers were to be armed, clothed and equipped at Government expense, and the following year they rendered excellent service by assisting the New South Wales Corps to put down the convict rebellion at Castle Hill. The Corps remained in service until the arrival of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, with his 73rd Regiment of Foot, in 1809.

The Governor disbanded the Loyal Associations and despatched the New South Wales Corps back to England.

Veterans Corps

The following year Governor Macquarie, aware of the many old soldiers and marines residing in the Colony, who were no longer fit for active service, established an Invalid and Veteran Company, which he incorporated into his own Regiment for light duties. The Veteran Corps secured approval to remain in the Colony, when the 73rd was recalled to England, and attached itself to the relieving British Regiments sent to garrison the Colony. However, time took its toll and by 1823 there were only a mere handful of Veterans in service. Governor Brisbane, seeing they had outlived their usefulness, disbanded the Corps.

1st New South Wales Rifle Volunteers



Front view of an officer of the 1st N.S.W. Rifle Volunteers of 1854, showing shoulder-belt and waist-belt detail

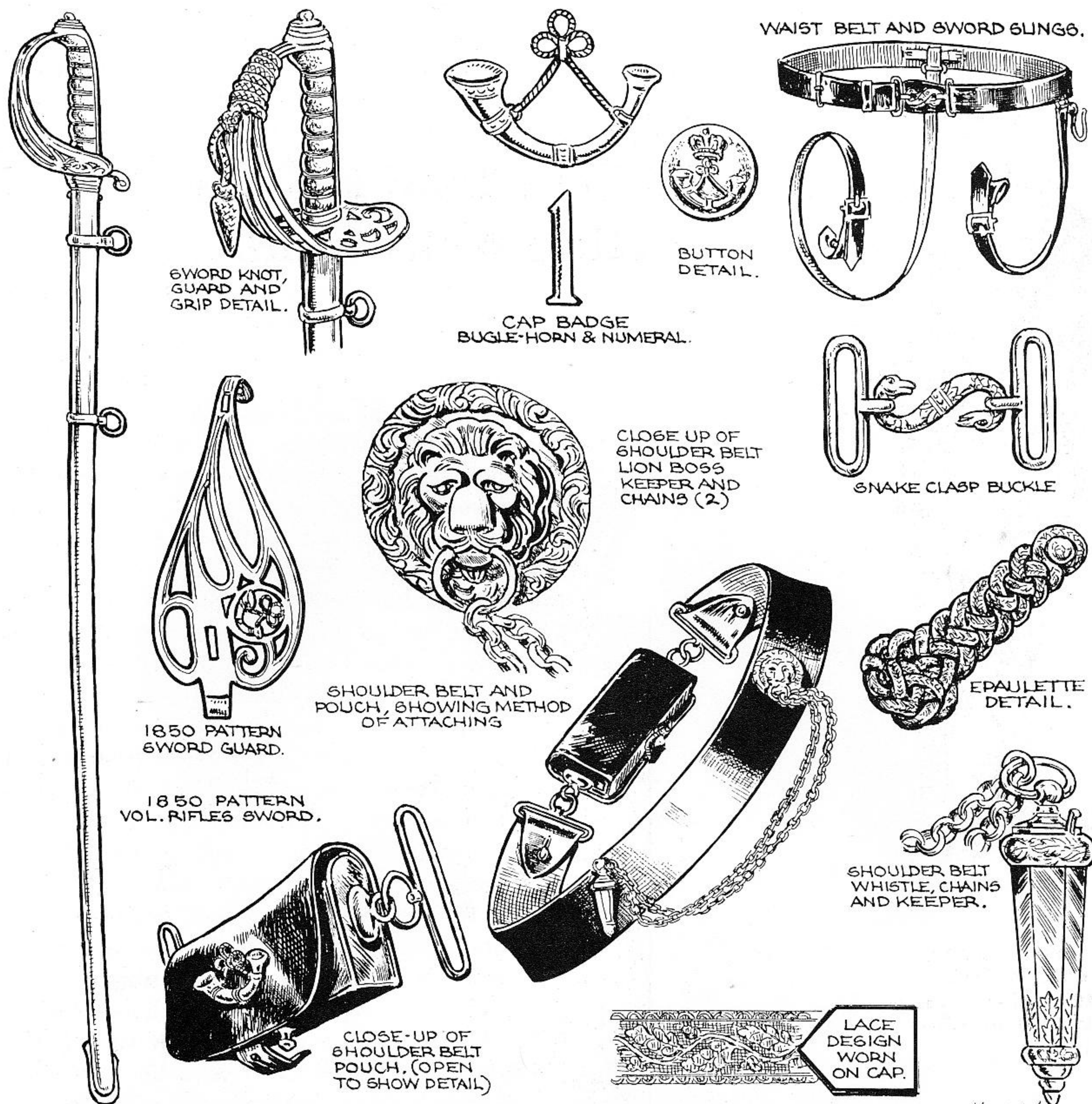
Back view showing shoulder belt pouch and positioning of rear skirt buttons



Front view—note length and fullness of tunic skirt, cap badge and button detail



Since the disbanding of the Loyal Associations in 1810, the defence of the Colony of New South Wales, which then occupied the Eastern half of Australia, had been left entirely to the British Garrisons, and little consideration was given to raising another local force until 1851, when the Imperial Government gave its sanction for such a move.



Sword, badge, button and accoutrements as worn by officers of 1st N.S.W. Rifle Volunteers

Downing Street
12 December 1851

Sir

I have laid before the Queen your Despatch No.144 Military, of the 4th August last, in which you state the particulars of an application which has been made by Mr. Pittingale, on behalf of the Sydney Rifle Club, to form a Volunteer Rifle Company. This association undertaking to render their services to the Government, when required to serve, without pay, and to provide their own uniforms, if the Government will supply the Corps with arms and accoutrements.

I am commanded by Her Majesty to signify to you Her gracious approval of the formation of this Volunteer Rifle Corps.

A despatch from the Right Honourable Earl Grey to Governor Sir Charles A. Fitzroy
Military No. 60

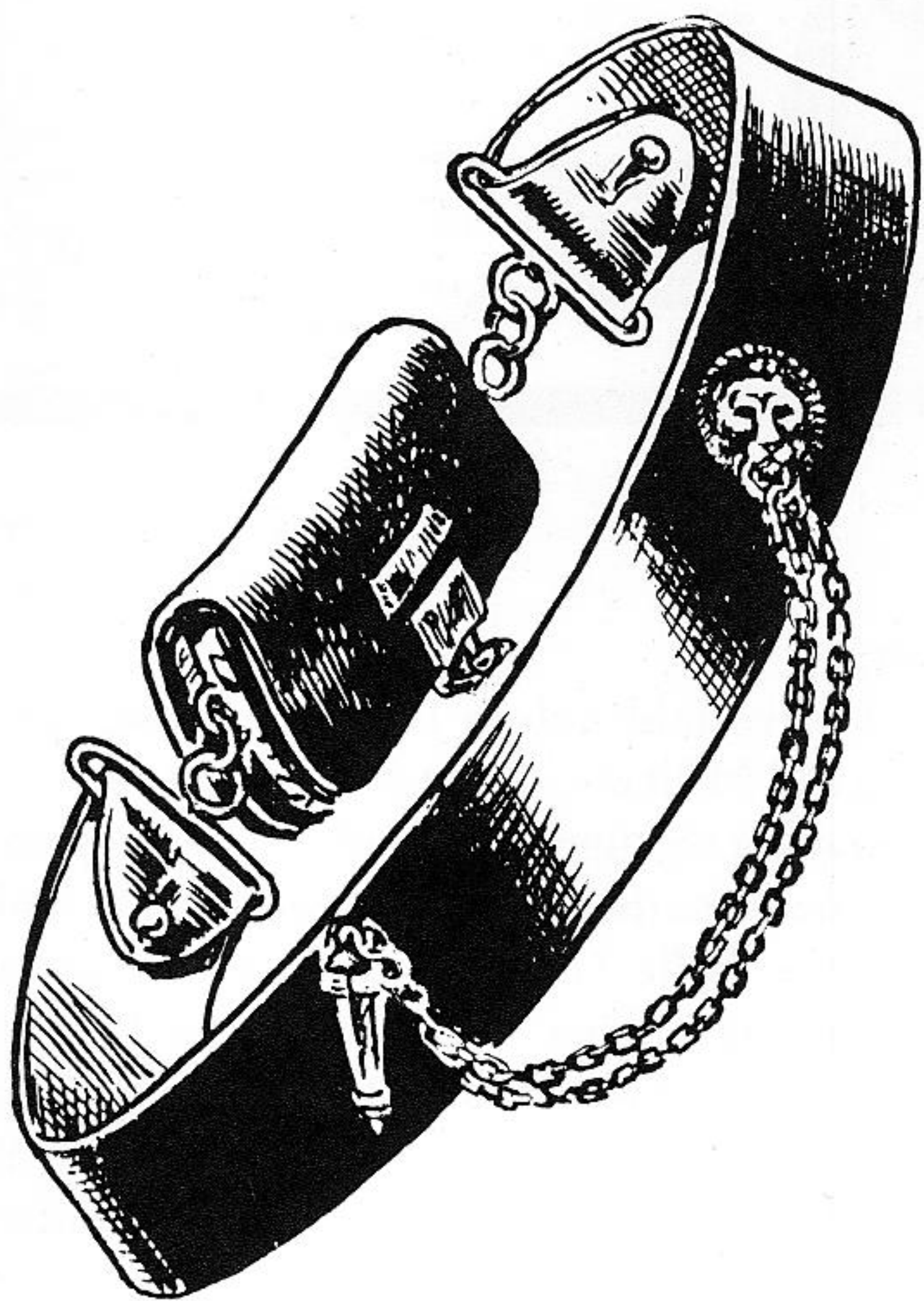
No practical measures were taken however until 1854, when the news of the outbreak of the Crimean War swept the Colony, and the possibility of a Russian invasion seemed imminent. The Government approved of the raising of a Rifle Regiment, a Troop of Cavalry and a Battery of Artillery, to supplement the British Regiments, to be under the command of Colonel Bloomfield, Commanding Officer of the 11th Regiment (North Devon) of Foot.

The Rifle Regiment raised was to be approximately 330 men, divided into six Companies, Her Majesty Queen Victoria donating to the Volunteers, five hundred two groove .704" calibre improved model Brunswick muzzle-loading rifles, with sword bayonets. All those who enlisted were to provide their own uniforms but, because of the cost involved, only the most influential citizens were able to volunteer, as the average working man's weekly wage was seven to fourteen shillings, according to skills, and the uniforms ranged in cost from eight pounds to ten pounds. It was beyond the means of the ordinary citizen.

The Regimental uniform comprised of 'a short single-breasted frock coat of dark rifle green cloth, a stand-up collar, black velvet facings, black silk braid threequarters of an inch along the top, the bottom of the collar and up the front of it and also on the cap. Eight buttons in front and four behind, black cord shoulder straps'. The trousers were to be of the same dark green cloth, with stripes of black braid one and a half inches wide along the entire seam. White trousers could be worn in summer, as undress, except for special dress parades. The headdress was a peaked forage cap of rifle green cloth with black band, and light infantry bugle badge in front, with the figure '1' below. Black belts were to be worn with Wellington or ankle boots—not shoes. See colour plate, page 17.

The Regiment, regardless of its patriotic motives, unwittingly became an elite club, democratic in every way, electing officers and non-commissioned officers by the voting of members of all ranks. The Honorary Colonel of this Corps, was the Governor himself, His Excellency Sir Charles Fitzroy, and the Commanding Officer, Major Thomas Wingate. Sergeant-Major Baynes, a soldier noted for his efficiency, became the Regiment's first instructor.

The grim international situation in Europe in 1860, together with the departure of a contingent of the British Garrison, the 12th (Suffolk) Regiment of Foot and the Royal Artillery for the Maori Wars in New Zealand, revived interest in the Volunteer Movement, and many new recruits were enlisted



Officer's shoulder-belt and pouch



*Private, (Summer Dress) Officer, (Full Dress)
1st. New South Wales Rifle Volunteers, 1854.*

and drilling began anew. The old Regiment was disbanded on 12 October 1860, and a new Regiment, a much enlarged force of some 2 000 Rifles, was raised in its place. The Unit was re-titled The 1st Regiment New South Wales Rifle Volunteers, to become known as the Sydney Battalion.

Initially there were six Companies raised in Sydney, but South Sydney and Paddington/Surry Hills were added to make No.7 and No.8 Companies respectively. Newtown, Balmain, Glebe, St Leonards, Waterloo, Ash County and Parramatta were designated the Suburban Companies, while those at Hawkesbury, Penrith, Newcastle, West Maitland, East Maitland and Morpeth were the Country Companies.

The uniform adopted for the Regiment was Melton Stone Grey Cloth, with black facings, and featured an Infantry Shako, as in colour plate on page 20. However, there were slight variations in the colour of facings, cuff design and Shako, to distinguish the different Companies.

Uniforms were supplied at Government expense, but no issue was made to a Volunteer until he had completed three months service and given full indication that he intended to continue in the Force.

The Regiment performed sterling service in 1861 when it took over Garrison duties in Sydney, relieving the 12th Foot to enable the British Regiment to quell the riots in Lambing Flat (Young).

18 May 1861 was a proud day for the Regiment when Lady Young, wife of the newly appointed Governor, presented the Battalion with its colours.

To encourage enlistment in the Volunteer Movement, the Volunteer Land Act was passed in 1867 providing each Volunteer who had completed five years of continuous and efficient service with fifty acres of land. The numbers swelled rapidly in the Colonial Army, and new Regiments were formed, but continual abuse of the Act led to it being repealed in 1878.

The withdrawal of the British Garrisons in 1870 left the Colony to tend to its own defences. Patriotism swelled the Regiment to 2 382 members, all being honorary and receiving no pay for their service.

Red tunics were adopted in the Sydney Battalion replacing the grey; although not as serviceable, they proved smarter and more soldierly in appear-

ance, being more appealing for recruitment. In 1878 the partial payment system was introduced, and the Regiment was reorganized and redesignated the First Regiment New South Wales Infantry, with four Companies. It adopted as its regimental motto '*Primus agat primas*'.

Emotions ran high in New South Wales in 1885, when the tragic news was received of the death of the British hero, General Gordon, at Khartoum. Fired with enthusiasm, the Colonists urged the Government to take action and a contingent of 734 men was raised and sent to the Sudan (then spelt Soudan) to serve the Queen and Empire, the 1st Regiment of Infantry contributing 76 of its members to the Expeditionary Force. This was the New South Wales Soudan (*sic*) Contingent, then Australia's first fighting force to serve in an overseas campaign.

Upon arrival at Suakin Harbour, their British counterparts, the Brigade of Guards, affectionately nicknamed them the 'Walers', and for the first time Australian servicemen were issued with battle dress. Red tunics were discarded for khaki uniforms, trousers, shin length canvas gaiters and goggles to combat the glare were issued. Tobacco juice and tea were used to stain their ever clean pipeclay white helmets, belts and equipment, much to the amusement of the other ranks.

They distinguished themselves well in several skirmishes with the fierce fuzzy-wuzzy warriors before returning home.

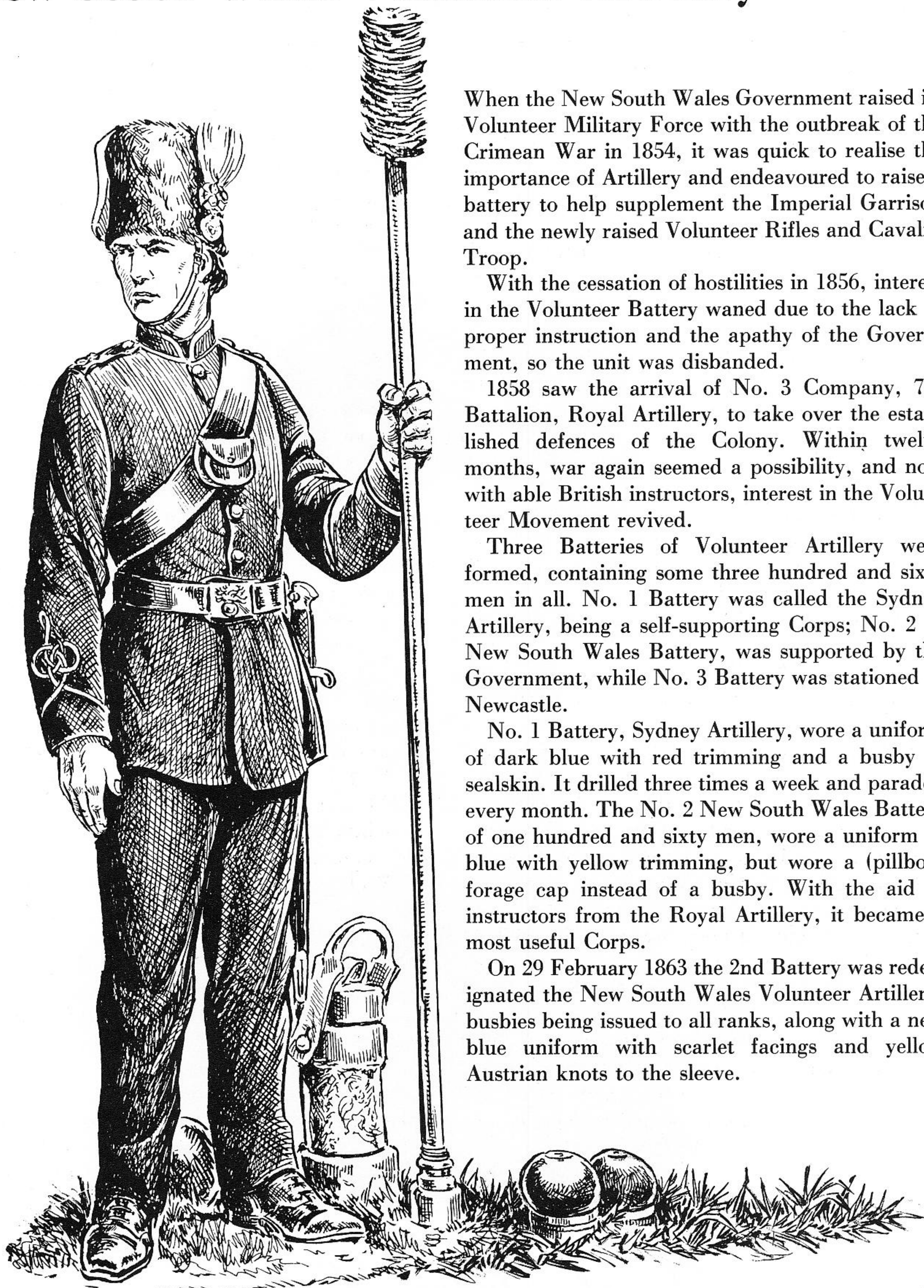
With the outbreak of the South African War in 1899 patriotism ran high and the Regiment sent one hundred and three of its rank and file to assist in the campaign.

Private Dufrayer, later 2nd Lieutenant, received the rare 'Queen's Scarf' award for gallantry, the Scarf being knitted personally by Queen Victoria. Only four were ever presented.

With the Federation of Australian States on 1 January 1901 the Regiment became part of the Commonwealth Military Forces and was redesignated the 1st Australian Infantry Regiment.

It contributed greatly in both World Wars, receiving many battle honours for its campaigns. Today the Regiment has the freedom of the City of Sydney, and is known as 1st Infantry Battalion (Commando) Royal New South Wales Regiment, The City of Sydney's Own.

New South Wales Volunteer Artillery



When the New South Wales Government raised its Volunteer Military Force with the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, it was quick to realise the importance of Artillery and endeavoured to raise a battery to help supplement the Imperial Garrison and the newly raised Volunteer Rifles and Cavalry Troop.

With the cessation of hostilities in 1856, interest in the Volunteer Battery waned due to the lack of proper instruction and the apathy of the Government, so the unit was disbanded.

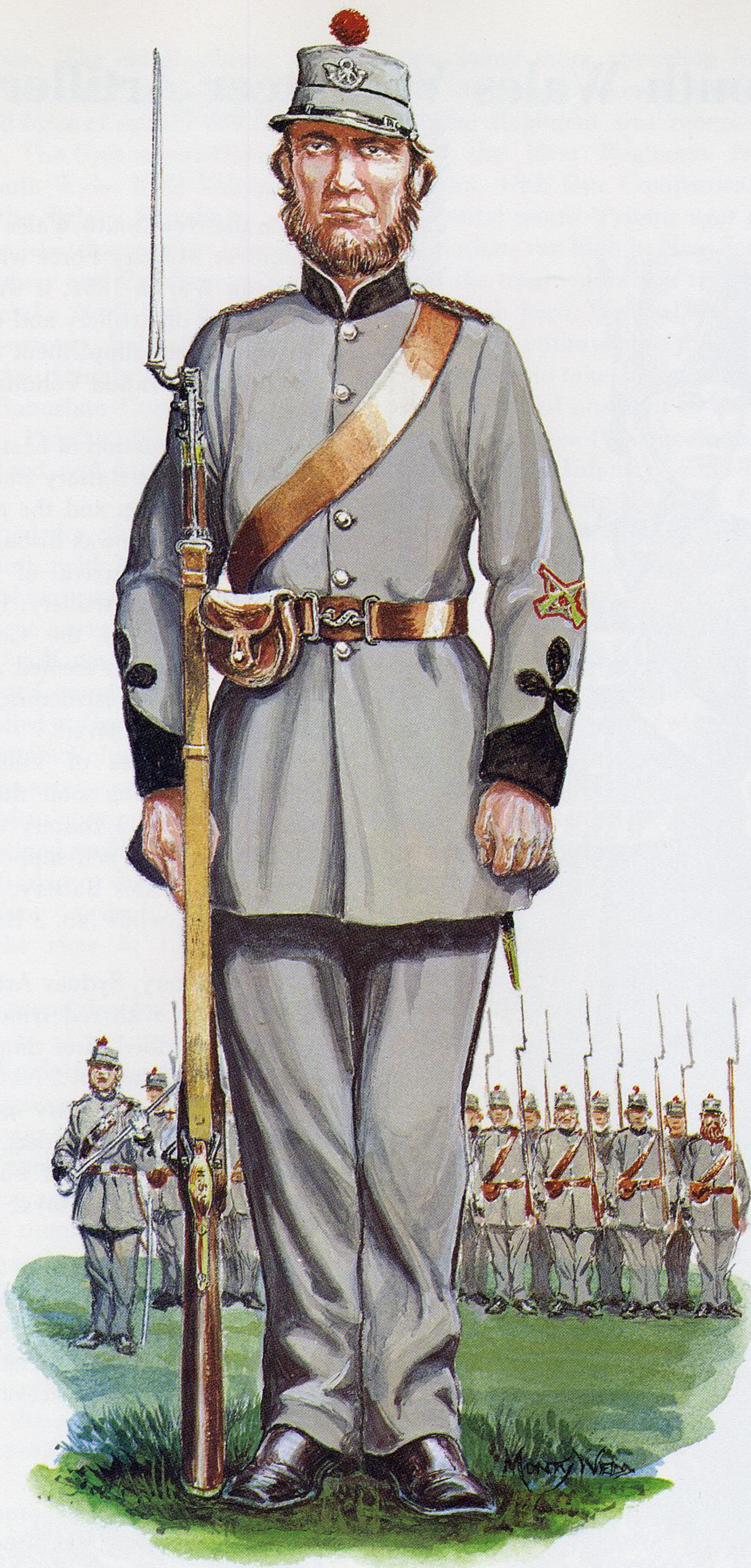
1858 saw the arrival of No. 3 Company, 7th Battalion, Royal Artillery, to take over the established defences of the Colony. Within twelve months, war again seemed a possibility, and now with able British instructors, interest in the Volunteer Movement revived.

Three Batteries of Volunteer Artillery were formed, containing some three hundred and sixty men in all. No. 1 Battery was called the Sydney Artillery, being a self-supporting Corps; No. 2 or New South Wales Battery, was supported by the Government, while No. 3 Battery was stationed at Newcastle.

No. 1 Battery, Sydney Artillery, wore a uniform of dark blue with red trimming and a busby of sealskin. It drilled three times a week and paraded every month. The No. 2 New South Wales Battery of one hundred and sixty men, wore a uniform of blue with yellow trimming, but wore a (pillbox) forage cap instead of a busby. With the aid of instructors from the Royal Artillery, it became a most useful Corps.

On 29 February 1863 the 2nd Battery was redesignated the New South Wales Volunteer Artillery, busbies being issued to all ranks, along with a new blue uniform with scarlet facings and yellow Austrian knots to the sleeve.

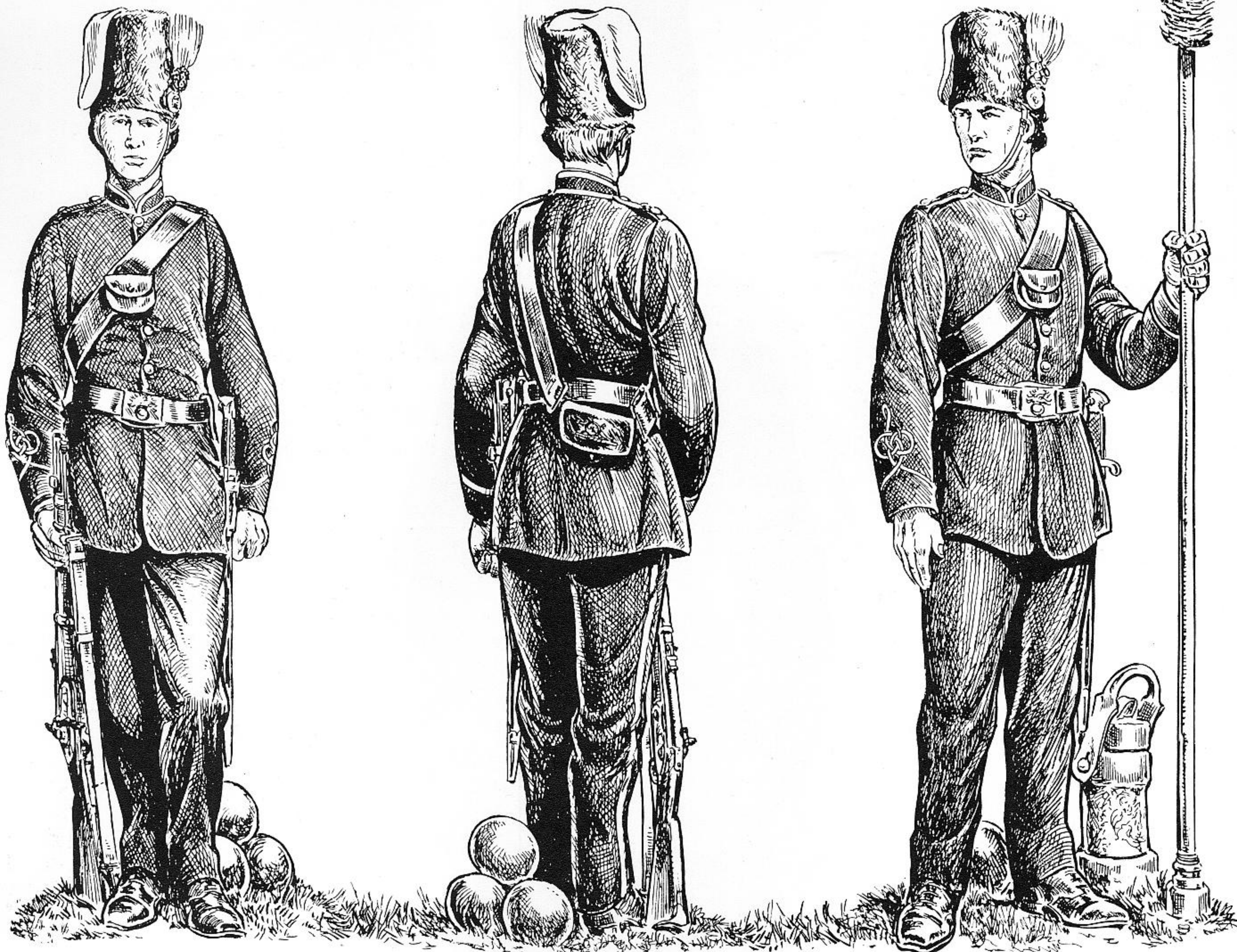
Gunner, N.S.W. Volunteer Artillery holding sponge and rammer



*Private, Sydney Battalion,
1st. New South Wales Rifle Volunteers, 1861.*



*Gunner, New South Wales Volunteer Artillery
1873*



Front view of a Gunner of N.S.W. Volunteer Artillery 1873, note percussion cap pouch on the front of the shoulder belt, and length of Enfield Carbine's Yataghan Bayonet.

A rear view showing detail of the busby bag, shoulder belt and muniton pouch.

Another view showing Artilleryman's plume and plume holder.

As the international situation eased in 1867 Sir John Robertson, with the help of Henry Parkes (later Sir) introduced the Volunteer Land Act to stimulate recruiting.

In 1871 one battery of Permanent Artillery was raised and by 1873 there were nine batteries in existence, eight still on a Volunteer basis. No. 8 Battery was designated 'Prince Alfred's Own'. Parades and drills were held regularly in Hyde and Moore Parks and, when rumours arose that American privateers were to raid Sydney, the fortifications at Dawes Point, Kirribilli, Mrs Macquarie's Chair and Fort Denison were manned by the Volunteers and Permanent Artillery, and maintained at the ready to repel the would-be invaders.

Right: details of N.S.W. Volunteer Artilleryman's arms, busby and badge, button and accoutrements.

The colour plate on page 21 is based on a photograph of Gunner John Hodges, No. 6 Battery, New South Wales Volunteer Artillery, circa 1873. Like the Volunteers of the day the authorities followed British uniform pattern and styling. Note the tall sealskin busby and .577 Enfield percussion muzzle-loading artillery carbine, and now, the white braid and silver buttons for Volunteers. Permanent Artillery wore gold braid with gilt or brass buttons.

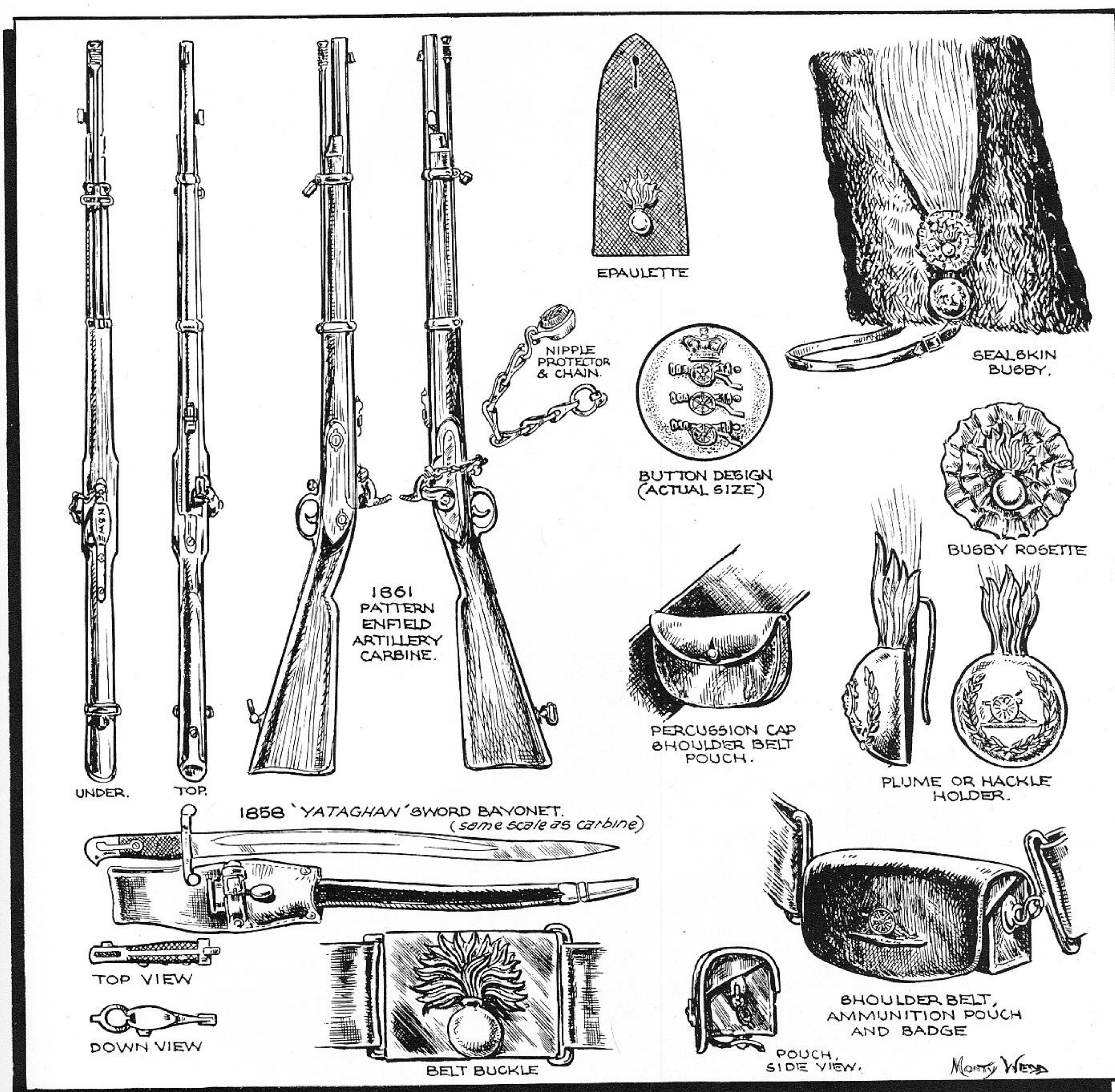
The Volunteer Batteries were reorganised at the introduction of the partially paid system of 1878, forming 11 batteries in all.

In 1885 205 Artillerymen under the command of Major-Brevet-Colonel W.W. Spalding, embarked with six cannon and necessary horses, as part of the

New South Wales Soudan Contingent. See page 25. However, through no fault of their own they had little opportunity to use their guns in action.

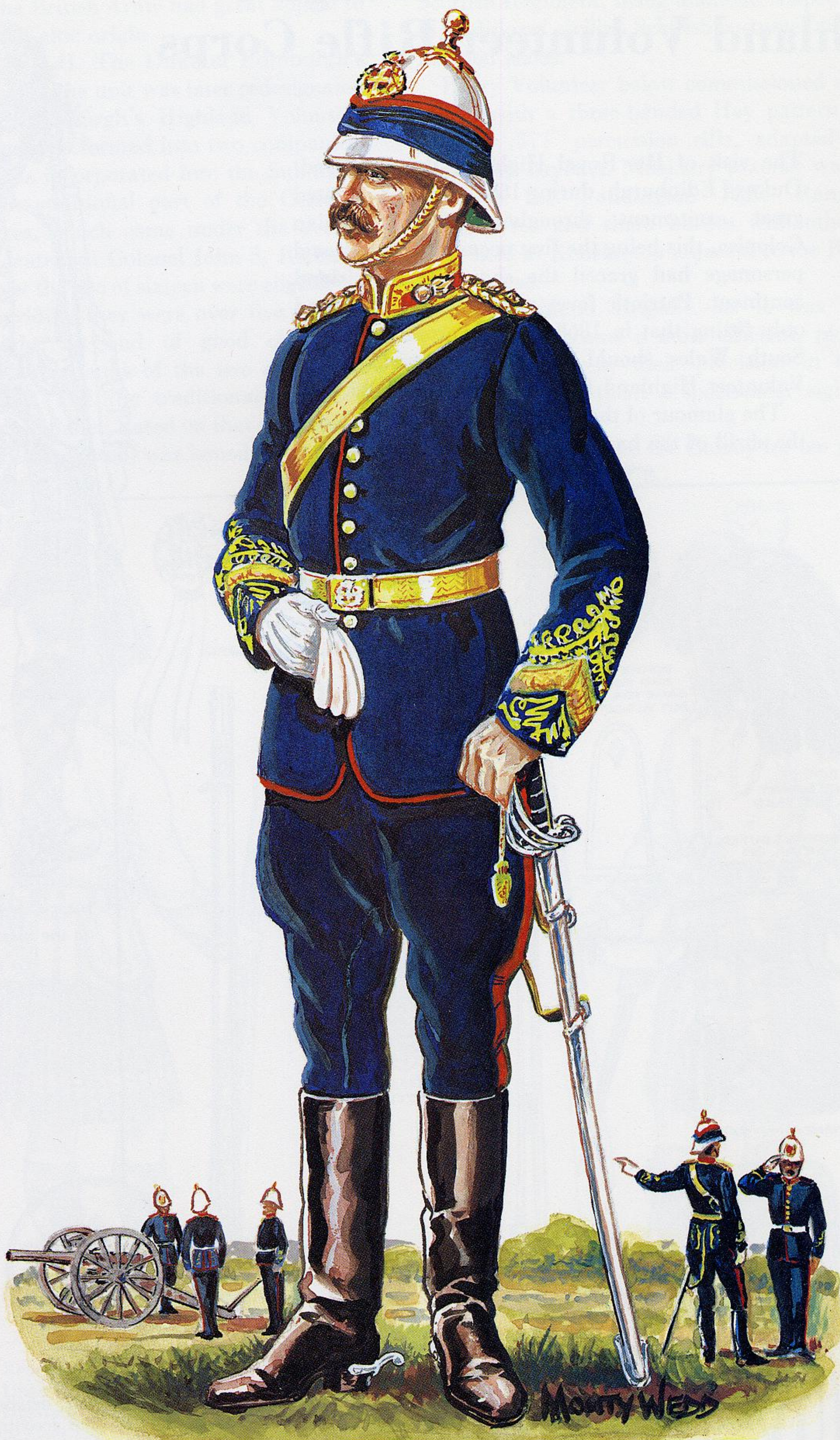
In 1889 seventy members of the Permanent Artillery were designated as 'A' Battery, New South Wales Artillery, becoming a permanent field battery, the remainder being garrison batteries.

The title 'Royal' was conferred on the batteries of the Regiment in 1899, it becoming the New South Wales Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. 'A' Battery was to serve with distinction in the South African (Boer) War, and since Federation the Royal Australian Artillery Regiment has served in every conflict involving this Nation's troops.





OFFICER, NEW SOUTH WALES INFANTRY 1885



LIEUT. COLONEL, NEW SOUTH WALES FIELD ARTILLERY 1886