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**THE BRITISH ARMY AND THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY
CAMPAIGN IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE BLACK LINE**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Humanities, University of Tasmania, December 1995.

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Abstract of Thesis

The British Army of the 1820's was not trained for counter-insurgency duties to operate in small detached parties. Their role in the campaign against the Aborigines was to aid the civil power, and tensions and inefficiencies resulted when troops were directed and commanded by civilians. The colonial garrison was commanded by an experienced soldier and administrator, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur. He exercised a dual civil/military function ensuring all resources were integrated through an administrative system centred on his police districts. By 1830, Arthur sought a solution to the Aboriginal problem based on a dual strategy of conciliation in the tribal lands, and use of military force, to expel the natives from the settled areas.

The Aborigines developed formidable skills as guerilla fighters, and their tactics took advantage of their enemies' weapons limitations. With loss of traditional hunting grounds, the Aborigines were forced to rely on raiding settlers' huts for supplies. This generated stronger counter-measures, such as martial law in 1828 and the Black Line in 1830, which was the climax of the counter-insurgency campaign. This was a sweep and cordon operation, combining troops, and civilians who were called out under a *levy en masse*, under Army command. The troops, now under command of their own officers, were disciplined and efficient.

Opinions differ in contemporary and historical writings, concerning the

Black Line, as to whether it was a 'fiasco' or, in terms of Arthur's dual strategy, a success. As he did not achieve his military aim to confine the Aborigines in Tasman's Peninsula, the Line was a failure, but due to Walpole's contact, it was not a total failure, and as it was meticulously planned and executed, the term 'fiasco' is inappropriate. As the Line directly assisted the conciliatory arm of the dual strategy, it contributed to Arthur's long term goal.

Almost a mythology has developed over aspects of the Line. Arthur distorted fact in insisting that Walpole's contact, and the presence of convicts with the Aborigines, led to the failure of his military objective. Without recognising the temper of the times, and that the Line was Arthur's only remaining military option, the 'fiasco' school of writers has unfairly branded the Black Line as a foolish enterprise. Historians' statements of numbers deployed on the line vary considerably, a minor, but pertinent example of how an error can develop by uncritical acceptance of one primary source.

The counter-insurgency campaign in the police districts and on the Black Line, while being a minor footnote in the annals of the British Army, is a significant but often misunderstood or forgotten phase of Tasmanian history. It deserves more recognition by Tasmanian and Australian military historians.

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Abbreviations

A.D.C.	Aide-de-camp
A.J.C.P.	Australian Joint Copying Project
A.O.T.	Archives Office of Tasmania, Hobart
A.W.M.	Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Capt.	Captain
C.S.O.	Colonial Secretary's Office
Coy.	Company
Cpl.	Corporal
D.A.C.G.	Deputy Assistant Commissary General
G.O.	Government Office
H.R.A.	Historical Records of Australia
H.T.C.	Hobart Town Courier
Lt.	Lieutenant
Maj.	Major
M.L.	Mitchell Library, Sydney
N.A.M.	National Army Museum, London
N.L.A.	National Library of Australia, Canberra
N.C.O.	Non commissioned officer
Posn.	Position
U.T.A.	University of Tasmania Archives, Hobart
W.O.	War Office

Conversion Tables

Currency: 1 pound (Australian) = 2 dollars (Australian) in 1966
20 shillings = 1 pound

Length: 1 mile = 1.61 kilometres
1 yard = 0.914 metres

Area: 1 acre = 0.405 hectares

Weight: 1 pound = 454 grams

Introduction

During the 1820's, rapid pastoral expansion radiating outwards from Hobart Town and Launceston, aggravated an already unhappy relationship between whites and blacks. Tensions led to open warfare. Much has been written about the plight of the Tasmanian Aborigines in this period, but little about the history of the British Army and the counter-insurgency campaign in Van Diemen's Land, which is the subject of this thesis.

The character, role, organization and command of the British Army in Van Diemen's Land, and its relationship with the colonial inhabitants, provide a background to its tasks during the counter-insurgency campaign. As the Aboriginal threat developed, so too did the tempo of operations, with the troops increasingly aiding the civil power. Factors such as dual civil/military command, co-operation in police districts with magistrates, field police and roving patrols, also administrative matters such as discipline and re-supply are considered. A similar examination is made of their opponents. Unfortunately, the Aboriginal concept of operations, motivation to continue a desperate guerilla campaign, and concerns such as safe areas and logistical problems, can only be assessed from European primary source material.

A soldier, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel George Arthur was responsible for the government's responses to the increasing threat posed by the Aboriginal guerillas which included the declaration of martial law in 1828 and the Black Line in 1830. The Black Line was Arthur's major military effort which he both planned and commanded. Strong and conflicting views have been expressed about this operation, and in assessing its results, both short term military aims and longer term goals are examined through contemporary and historical writings.

This counter-insurgency campaign in the late 1820's and early 1830's deserves study as it was a war of survival for both Aborigines and colonists, and is a significant part of Tasmania's colonial history. For Australian military history, the Black Line deserves due recognition as the largest warlike operation on the continent prior to the defence of northern Australia in 1942.

CHAPTER 1

The British Army and Service in Van Diemen's Land

British infantry regiments, or their detachments, provided the internal-security elements of the colonial garrison in Van Diemen's Land, and are the focus of this study. In the late 1820's a regiment of foot consisted of one battalion only.¹ Regiments involved with the history of Tasmania at this time were:-

40th (or 2nd Somersetshire) Regiment of Foot² (1824 to 1829)³

57th (or the West Middlesex) Regiment of Foot (1825 to 1832)

63rd (or the West Suffolk) Regiment of Foot (1829 to 1833)

17th (or the Leicestershire) Regiment of Foot (1830 to 1836).

These were 'line regiments' as opposed to Guards Regiments and the

¹ As opposed to multi-battalion regimental organizations during the Napoleonic Wars, and in subsequent periods. For example, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, served in the 2nd Battalion, then 1st Battalion of 35th (Royal Sussex) Regiment of Foot.

² *A List of the Officers of the Army and Royal Marines on Full, Retired, and Half Pay; with Index, 1827*, [short title: *Army List, 1827*], (War Office, 1827), pp.205, 231, 239 and 176 respectively, for official regimental titles. The 40th and 63rd Regiments are more closely involved in Tasmanian military history. Both had their headquarters in the colony. The 40th being first regiment to do so.

³ G. Odgers, *Army: Australia, an Illustrated History*, (Frenchs Forest, 1988), p. 17. For dates, in brackets, that the regiment served in the Australian colonies, not specifically in Van Diemen's Land.

Rifle Brigade. The organization of a line regiment is shown as Figure 1.4

From 1825, six to eight of a regiment's companies were designated 'service companies' which accompanied it overseas, while the 'depot companies' remained in Great Britain training recruits. Additional designations were applied to the service companies, with the Grenadier and Light Companies known as 'flank companies'⁵ and the remainder as 'battalion companies'. Troops of the Light Company who were trained for skirmishing, may have been preferred for patrolling and bush work. Local inhabitants of Hobart Town were certainly aware of the distinctions between companies, with Reverend Robert Knopwood noting the departure of the 40th Regiment's Light Company, and later, the arrival of the 63rd Regiment's Grenadier Company.⁶ Only one contemporary

⁴ Figure 1 based on:

- *Army List, 1827, op.cit.*, passim.
- N. Leonard, *Wellington's Army; Recreated in Colour Photographs* (London, 1994), pp.10 and 13.
- C. Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509-1970* (London, 1970), p.306.
- *Regimental Standing Orders of the Seventeenth Regiment, March 182... (part obscured)*, (Sydney, 1831), (short title: *17th Regiment Standing Orders*), p.49. For detail: colour sergeant and 'squad' organization, but not for drummer, which appointment is presumed to make up a discrepancy of one soldier between this and the company organization given in the next reference. *17th Regiment Standing Orders* by courtesy of Newark House Museum, The Newark, Leicester.
- H. H. Woollight, *History of the Fifty-Seventh (West Middlesex) Regiment of Foot, 1755-1881*, (London, 1893), pp.224-225. By courtesy National Army Museum, London, (N.A.M.).

- P. Stanley, "OH! The sufferings of my men': The 80th Regiment in New South Wales in 1836", *The Push From The Bush*, No.11, (November, 1981), pp.2-3, and useful regimental organization diagram ('Regimental Society circa 1836'), p.4.

- *Hobart Town Courier*, (short title: *H.T.C.*), 5/9/1829, p.2, one of several reports on reductions to Army establishments.

- **General Note:** There are apparent discrepancies between H.T.C., C. Barnett and H.H. Woollight, regarding the date and degree to which battalion strengths were reduced during the 1820's, which creates uncertainties in Figure 1.

⁵ The Grenadier Company was usually made up of the battalion's taller and stronger men (the original concept was that they threw the grenades). The Light Company personnel were better shots and were trained to skirmish ahead of the line.

⁶ R. Knopwood, *The Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood 1803-1838*, M. Nicholls (ed.), (Hobart, 1977), p.524 for 40th Regiment's Light Company and p.540 for 63rd Regiment's band, and "part of the Grenadier[sic] Company."

reference has been noted in the colony to employment involving the Light Company and elements of the Grenadiers.⁷

The progression of a soldier through companies of a regiment is illustrated by the career of John Clarke, who enlisted into the 17th Regiment in Leicester, in July 1829. After eight weeks of drill at a depot in Chatham, he was sent to Hobart Town as a "trained soldier" to join a service company where his training would be broadened by experience.⁸ He was aged seventeen.⁹ The Army John Clarke joined was made up from two different strata of British society. The soldiers came from the disadvantaged lower classes, described by the Duke of Wellington in 1831, as "the very scum of the earth."¹⁰ Officers were drawn from the

⁷ Archives Office of Tasmania (A.O.T.), *Relative to The Campaign after the Natives in 1830*, Colonial Secretary's Office (C.S.O.), 1/324, File 7578, Vol.9, Section D, "Names etc. of different Parties out on the line", no page/folio number (short title: C.S.O. 1/324 D). "Field State of a Detachment 63rd Regiment Serving in Van Diemen's Land. Sorell Town. 26th November 1830" lists strengths on the Black Line including Grenadiers (1 Sergeant and 35 Privates) and "Capt. Mahon's Lt Coy [Light Company]" (2 Officers, 6 N.C.O.'s, 2 Drummers, 49 Privates).

Note: C.S.O. 1/324 also contains Sections A, B, C, and E. These are listed below and their short title shown. None have page or folio numbers.

Section A: "Proceedings of, and letters written by The Lt. Governor," (short title: C.S.O. 1/324 A).

Section B: "Major Douglas's Reports," (short title: C.S.O. 1/324 B).

Section C: "Reports etc of The Commissariat Officers," (short title: C.S.O. 1/324 C).

Section E: "Miscellaneous letters & Reports," (short title: C.S.O. 1/324 E).

⁸ J. Clarke, "Adventures of a Leicestershire Veteran", in T.H. Guffie (compiler), *Rank and File, The Common Soldier at Peace and War 1642-1914*, (London, 1964), p. 174. Also p. 418 for Clarke's brief biographical details. He served in the 17th Regiment from 1829 to 1852, being discharged as a Colour-Sergeant. Australian Joint Copying Project (A.J.C.P.), War Office (W.O.) 12 Reel 3749. Piece 3434 for Clarke's pay details on enlistment.

⁹ *Alphabetical List of Personnel 17th (Leicestershire) Regiment, 1830-1837 in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (short title: *17th Regiment, Alphabetical List*), seventeen page print-out, supplied by Newark House Museum, The Newark, Leicester, third page. Clarke's regimental number was 750. As there were two others of the same name in the 17th Regiment, he is shown in this record as 'John Clarke (3)'. His age on arrival in the colony is listed.

¹⁰ P. Henry, 5th Earl of Stanhope, *Notes of conversations with the Duke of Wellington 1831-1851*, (facsimile 1888: New York, 1973), p. 18.

upper-middle class,¹¹ where social status as a 'gentleman', patronage and money were prerequisites for promotion. Officers usually 'purchased' entry into the service and their subsequent promotions.¹² For line regiments in 1821, it cost 453 pounds to purchase a first appointment as ensign, and 4500 pounds for a promotion from major to lieutenant colonel.¹³ Where there was no vacancy on establishment in his own regiment, an officer seeking promotion would transfer to another. Major Joseph Logan, of the Rifle Brigade, who fought at Waterloo, bought his rank of lieutenant colonel, as Commanding Officer of the 63rd Regiment, effective from 17th December 1829.¹⁴ Logan finally joined his new command when the *Royal George* reached Hobart Town on the 18th October 1830.¹⁵

The chasm between the privileged officers and the lowly soldiers was filled by the backbone of the British Army - the non commissioned officers (N.C.O.'s). Feared and respected by their subordinates, Wellington commented that British N.C.O.'s did all that the commissioned officers in the Line were expected, but failed to do.¹⁶ Their unique position was noted in the *17th Regiment's Standing Orders* which stated that a bad example set by an N.C.O., "will have a more demoralizing effect than it

¹¹ D.C. Douglas (gen.ed.), *English Historical Documents, 1783-1832*, A. Aspinall and E.A. Smith (eds.), (London, 1971), p.853.

¹² There were exemptions to 'purchase', in particular, because of casualties in the Napoleonic Wars. Note: C. Barnett, (*op.cit.*, p.238) points out that for the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer officers, under the administration of the Board of Ordnance, there was no 'purchase'.

¹³ D.C. Douglas, *op.cit.*, p.863. Limitations applied in the 1820's as to the minimum age for first appointment and time in rank before promotion.

¹⁴ *Army List, 1839*, p.239. Note: front pages of copy missing, but presumably similar bibliography to *Army List, 1827*; and *H.T.C.*, 10/7/1830, p.2. "to be Lieut.Col. by purchase."

¹⁵ *H.T.C.*, Supplement of 18/10/1830, p.1.

¹⁶ P. Henry, *op.cit.*, p.17.

would from those of higher rank."¹⁷

Private soldiers had no privileges or status. Wellington wrote that because of the unpopularity of the Army with the British public, recruits were as hard to get in 1829, as they had been in periods of great national threat during the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁸ This was due to the inadequate pay, harsh conditions of service, and severe discipline imposed on soldiers.¹⁹ For example, in the peacetime Army, until 1847, the terms of enlistment were "for life",²⁰ with flogging a common form of punishment. In *17th Regiment Standing Orders*, Officers Commanding companies could order this punishment for "trifling offences according to a scale". It was the Drum Major's responsibility to provide the instruments of punishment.²¹ In peacetime, soldiers serving outside Great Britain on colonial service, were subject to a wartime disciplinary code, the *Articles of War*.²² In Corporal William Keevers's Account Book (soldier's record and paybook), issued by the 17th Regiment, there is a list of twelve offences under these Articles for which a guilty soldier could receive a capital sentence.²³ The conditions under which soldiers served were in many ways worse than those of the convicts, who, with good behaviour were encouraged to improve their situation, and ultimately be

¹⁷ *17th Regiment Standing Orders*, *op.cit.*, p.33.

¹⁸ D.C.Douglas, *op.cit.*, p.868. Memorandum by Wellington dated 22/4/1829.

¹⁹ C. Barnett, *op.cit.*, pp.278-282, provide the sad picture of the post Napoleonic War army.

²⁰ *Manual of Military Law*; (London, 1914), p.159.

²¹ *17th Regiment Standing Orders*, *op.cit.*, pp.58-59.

²² *Manual of Military Law*; *op.cit.*, pp.13-14, particularly p.14 (paragraphs 31 and 32).

²³ Australian War Memorial (A.W.M.), *Papers of Cpt. W. Keevers, 17th Regiment of Foot*, 3DRL. 6687. His regimental number was 840 (listed as regimental number 804, with spelling of 'Kievers' in 17th Regimental Alphabetical List, 10th page). Keevers, a Peninsula and Waterloo veteran, transferred as an experienced corporal to the 17th Regiment on 1st January 1831. For transfer details: D. Murphy, *Source material 17th Leicester Regiment*, A.W.M., MS 1169.

pardoned.²⁴ Because of arduous conditions, some soldiers deliberately committed offences in the hope of escaping the Army by being sentenced to transportation. This may have been the reason for a soldier of the 57th, in transit to Hobart Town, striking his sergeant. In commenting on this case, the *Hobart Town Courier* stated: "it was thought [he] would suffer death from a file of musqueteers."²⁵

In Great Britain, many officers and soldiers viewed service in the distant and harsh Australian colonies with disfavour, where guarding convicts was not considered a soldierly duty.²⁶ There were 22 desertions from the 17th Regiment during the three months in which the regiment was warned for duty in New South Wales, as opposed to four desertions in the previous quarter.²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel John Austin, exchanged into the regiment as Commanding Officer from half-pay on the 30th July 1829, his headquarters received official notification of the regiment's colonial tour on the 7th August, and he retired on 13th August 1829.²⁸ General officers also viewed the Australian colonies with disfavour, disliking losing good regiments to that station. General Sir Charles Napier, in an 1840 letter to the Commanding Officer of the 98th Regiment, wrote: "The 96th melt away by degrees to New South Wales,

²⁴ *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, Vol. V, (short title: *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V), (Sydney, 1922), pp.680-681, paragraph 6, for Arthur's view on convict incentives.

²⁵ *H.T.C.*, 17/10/1829, p.2. This was a capital offence under the Articles of War.

²⁶ M. Austin, *The Army in Australia 1840-50, Prelude to the Golden Years*, (Canberra, 1979), p.23.

²⁷ *Musters Book and Pay>Returns, 17th Regiment*, W.O. 12, Reel 3749, Piece 3434. For period 25th June - 24th September 1829 (22 desertions and 1 transported) and 25th May - 24th June 1829 (4 desertions).

²⁸ E.A.H. Webb, *A History of The Services of The 17th (The Leicestershire) Regiment, Containing an Account of the Formation of the Regiment in 1688, and of its Subsequent Services, Revised and Continued to 1910*, (London, 1911), p.129, [N.A.M.].

and they threaten to take the 20th."²⁹ This 'melting away' refers to battalions being sent out to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in small guard detachments on convict transports. It took the 57th Regiment from 1824 to 1826 to concentrate in Australia.³⁰ At a personal level, Private Clarke sailed from Woolwich on the *Manlius*,³¹ a member of a 17th Regiments' detachment of two sergeants and 27 soldiers under command of Lieutenant Ball, guarding 200 male convicts. The *Manlius* departed Plymouth on 6th April 1830, and after a passage of 112 days without major incident or convict deaths,³² arrived in the Derwent on 12th August 1830.³³ Clarke felt the isolation of Van Diemen's Land from his home as he noted that Hobart Town was "17000 miles" away. Under the circumstances of slow re-deployments, it was difficult for Commanding Officers to command their units effectively. This was further complicated where regiments had companies serving in different Australian colonies. Lieutenant General Darling, the Governor of New South Wales, noted in a letter to London that "much inconvenience is experienced by Regiments being divided in this manner."³⁴

Although Van Diemen's Land was politically separated from New

²⁹ Lieut.-General Shadwell, C.B., *The Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde, Illustrated By Extracts From His Diary and Correspondence*, Vol. I, [Edinburgh, MDCCCLXXXI [1881]], p.93.

³⁰ H.H.Woollright, *op.cit.*, p.224. The first contingent sailed in October 1824 and the last in November 1825. For regiments, the normal cycle of duty tours was the United Kingdom, to the Australian Colonies thence to India, before returning to England.

³¹ J. Clarke, *op.cit.*, p.174. Clarke mis-spelt the ship's name as *Menlas*. Details of the escort from *H.T.C.*, 14/8/1830, p.2.

³² C. Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868*, [Glasgow, 1959], pp.310-311 for sailing details and p.332 for no deaths. As the author makes no specific reference to this voyage, it was presumed to be free of any major incident.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp.310-311. This is confirmed by the shipping details in *H.T.C.*, 14/8/1830, p.2, and the *17th Regimental Alphabetical List*, third page.

³⁴ *Tasmanian Aborigines, Menace to Public Safety; Governor's Despatches, Vol. 19, January-April 1831*, Mitchell Library (M.L.), Location No. 1208, Reel CY541, p.121. Letter Darling to Hay, 17/1/1831.

South Wales in December 1825, the Governor of the latter colony retained the titles of Governor of Van Diemen's Land and Commander of the Troops in the Australian Colonies.³⁵ By appointment, Lieutenant General Darling was the superior military officer to Colonel George Arthur, the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land. The record shows that this command relationship was a grey area. Exercising his independent political right, Arthur often communicated on military matters directly to the Colonial Office in London (then combined with the War Department), requesting increases to his colonial garrison.³⁶ In another instance Arthur wrote to Darling, requesting, through him, approval from London to reinforce the 63rd Regiment by sending out its depot companies, and transferring its service company from Swan River to his command.³⁷ Apparently Arthur used, or abused, this chain of command in order to achieve the best result as presented by circumstance and personality. In a letter to Darling's successor, Major General Sir R. Bourke, Arthur wrote, "I never considered it necessary to convey any official information to Him [Darling] as Governor of Van Diemen's Land."³⁸ By not deferring to Darling, nor later Bourke, regarding his military plans or deployments except to request troop reinforcements, Arthur maintained virtual independence of command.

While Arthur's command relationship with Darling appears loose, there was no ambiguity in Colonel Arthur's command of all troops within

³⁵ *H.R.A.*, I, Vol. XV, p.446.

³⁶ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V, p.697 (paragraph 26). As a result, the 40th Regiment was progressively transferred to Van Diemen's Land.

³⁷ *H.R.A.*, I, Vol. XV, pp.275-276, Arthur to Darling of November 1829 (refer last paragraph).

³⁸ *Letters from Sir G. Arthur to Sir R. Bourke*, M.L., A1962, Reel CY980, p.14. Letter of 5/1/1832 in reply to Bourke's initial letter to Arthur requesting information on affairs in Van Diemen's Land.

Van Diemen's Land. The following 'Government and General Order' was issued in May 1824 by authority of the then Governor of New South Wales, and Commander of the Troops in Australia, Major General Sir T. Brisbane:-

His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, with the sanction of His Majesty, has been pleased to appoint Lieutenant Colonel George Arthur ... who has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land, to serve as Colonel upon the Staff in this territory. All reports of a military nature from troops serving in Van Diemen's Land, will hereafter be addressed to Colonel Arthur.³⁹

As an experienced and efficient officer, Arthur did not allow troops serving under his command to have any misapprehensions as to his status.

In making his first bid to London to increase the size of the colony's garrison, Arthur described the roles of the troops he commanded as protection in the Interior against the Aborigines and bushrangers; protection in the towns where convicts were mainly concentrated; and, "a few men to act upon an emergency for the common protection of the community."⁴⁰ The motivation, training and equipping of the garrison to meet the requirements of the first two key protective roles, is considered below.

³⁹ H. Melville, *The History of Van Diemen's Land, From the Year 1824 to 1835, inclusive, During the Administration of Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur*, G. Mackenness (ed.), (Sydney, 1965), p.28, footnote.

⁴⁰ *H.F.A.*, III, Vol. IV, p.162. Arthur to Bathurst, August 1824. The garrison then consisted of four infantry companies (p.164).

The British infantry was "kept in its ranks by the lash", as they had been during the Napoleonic Wars.⁴¹ Initiative was not encouraged, and soldiers were drilled into unquestioning obedience to orders.⁴² Accordingly, in barracks or on town duties, soldiers, under the close supervision of their officers and N.C.O.'s were motivated by discipline. But when on isolated duty in the Interior on operations against bushrangers or Aborigines, the requirement was for self discipline, self motivation and bushwise initiative - characteristics which, with the exception of light troops,⁴³ were not otherwise encouraged. Soldiers were well trained for protection of towns and control of convicts by routine duties on guards and picquets, together with their employment in Great Britain on internal-security duties in areas of civil unrest.⁴⁴ The training doctrine of the Army was preparedness to fight a European campaign of the type conducted under Wellington in 1815; company and battalion drill and volley firing, were the tactical manoeuvres practised.⁴⁵ Independent patrol and fieldcraft exercises were not conducted, therefore, neither by motivation nor training were British soldiers prepared to take part in low level counter-insurgency operations.⁴⁶ F. G. D. Browne, a local settler with experience of joint military/civilian patrols, wrote:

A Private Soldier without a leader, is like a man without a head. - His former rank in Life [lower class origins] and Later habits of discipline preclude the possibility of his acting for himself ... and altho he

⁴¹ C. Barnett, *op.cit.*, p.241.

⁴² *17th Regiment Standing Orders, op.cit.*, p.45, characteristics of a "good soldier".

⁴³ *Supra*, footnote 5, p.4.

⁴⁴ *The Times*, 9/11/1830, p.4: for example-the Army has been sent to disturbed districts in Kent, and Windsor was almost empty of troops.

⁴⁵ *17th Regiment Standing Orders, op.cit.*, p.6, (in instructions to officers).

⁴⁶ This is not an indictment against the British Army. With global commitments, it could not be trained to meet every contingency.

may be a brave fellow in line of Battle, he is out of his Element when Single or in a small party.⁴⁷

Officers in Van Diemen's Land were required to carry out non-military tasks for the civil administration, and these were extensive and varied. For instance, Lieutenant William Williams, 40th Regiment, was publicly thanked by 36 settlers from the Clyde Police District, for his "conduct as a magistrate, and military officer",⁴⁸ and Captain John Montagu of the 40th Regiment, a Waterloo veteran, who (with a family connection to Arthur), was appointed Arthur's Private Secretary and later Clerk of the [Executive] Council.⁴⁹ Officers also served as jurors in civil cases,⁵⁰ founded and commanded convict penitentiaries,⁵¹ and served as Members of the Land Board.⁵² Contemporary reports abound with such references. Arthur acknowledged their importance:

a few steady Military Officers are most beneficially employed as Magistrates, and, as they make by far the best Superintendents in charge of parties ... it is impossible that a more effectual aid could be afforded than by giving some

⁴⁷ *Jackson's reports on islands in the straits: suggestions re capture of natives; answers to questions circulated by Aboriginal Committee*, A.O.T., C.S.O. 1/323, File 7578, Vol.8, [short title: C.S.O. 1/323], p.143, Letter F.G.D.Browne, 25/2/1830, [short title: *Browne Letter*].

⁴⁸ *H.T.C.*, 19/12/1829, p.3. Williams was about to depart, with the last contingent of his regiment, for India.

⁴⁹ For details of Montagu refer:

Army List, 1827, p.205, for regiment and Waterloo.

H.R.A., III, Vol. V, p.146, for civil appointments.

A.G.L. Shaw, *Sir George Arthur, Bart 1784-1854*, [Carlton, 1980], p.160: for Arthur's family relationship to Montagu, who married the daughter of Arthur's sister, Mary.

⁵⁰ *H.T.C.*, 28/2/1829, p.2, records the names of a 'military jury' at a murder trial.

⁵¹ C. O'Hara Booth, *The Journal of Charles O'Hara Booth, Commandant of the Port Arthur Penal Settlement*, D. Heard (ed.), [Sandy Bay, 1981], p.156. Captain O'Hara Booth, 21st Regiment, on being appointed Commandant of Port Arthur, noted "the Settlement tastefully situated [founded by Dr Russel 63rd Reg.t]",

⁵² *H.T.C.*, 12/6/1830, p.2. "Major Fairtlough, commanding 63d regt." appointed instead of Major Douglas, sent on duty to the interior.

supernumerary officers to the Regiment serving in the Colony.⁵³

As opposed to the civic duties of officers, other ranks were employed on routine internal-security duties. These included guarding establishments such as Government House, and convicts under a wide variety of conditions, and policing movements of assigned and ticket-of-leave convicts at check-points, such as the punt on the South Esk (Perth) or at the ford, and later bridges, over the Macquarie River at Ross. On internal-security operations against bushrangers or Aborigines, prior to the declaration of martial law, the troops acted in aid of the civil power. Consequently they were subject to both civil and military law, as were troops ordered out to maintain law and order in the United Kingdom. This was an unenviable situation for a soldier, who could be charged with an offence if judged to have unjustifiably killed a fleeing Aborigine, or alternatively, of allowing a possible raider to flee without taking action. While the military and free settlers intermingled, similar relationships between soldiers and convicts were forbidden. As private soldiers were generally recruited from the same strata of British society as the convicts, it was feared that liaisons between the two could prejudice military and convict discipline. Therefore, Arthur ordered that detachments of troops be shifted regularly to prevent familiarity developing.⁵⁴

Like modern infantrymen, soldiers in the 1820's carried a load of about sixty pounds. While there were minor variations in uniform, soldiers' equipment was the same as that carried in the Peninsula campaign and at Waterloo. The captioned illustration, from *The*

⁵³ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V, p.698.

⁵⁴ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. VI, p.446.

Footsoldier,⁵⁵ (see Figure 2(a)) shows the make-up and distribution of a soldier's load in 1815. In comparison, (see Figure 2(b)),⁵⁶ the depiction of dress in 1817 could represent a soldier on later counter-insurgency duties, with a slung blanket roll replacing the detested 'Trotter' Knapsack, easing movement in the bush. With their 'Brown Bess' muskets, trained soldiers could only fire two to three rounds per minute.⁵⁷ Muskets were notoriously inaccurate, at 100 yards the side of a barn was a worthwhile target.⁵⁸ Of the estimated 75,000 'shots' fired at the 1800 British soldiers who marched from Boston to Concord and back in April 1775, only 273 casualties occurred.⁵⁹ While a musket was a suitable weapon in the close defence of a homestead, it had severe limitations in accurate snapshooting against fleeting targets in bush operations.

The scope of administrative problems faced by the military is exemplified by the 63rd Regiment, which, apart from a company in Swan River Colony, had its troops deployed in Van Diemen's Land as follows:

At headquarters, Hobart Town, there were on the 25th March 1830, 19 officers, 19 sergeants, 12 drummers, 16 corporals, and 267 privates, while the whole of the rest of the regiment [presumably some 200-240 all ranks⁶⁰] was distributed in parties varying in strength from 71 of all ranks to 2 privates only

⁵⁵ M. Windrow & R. Hook, *The Footsoldier*, (Oxford, probably 1980's - title page missing), p.48.

⁵⁶ P. Stanley, *The Remote Garrison, The British Army in Australia, 1788-1870*, (Kenthurst, 1986), p.31. Reproduction by courtesy P. Stanley and artist L.C.Cox.

⁵⁷ N. Leonard, *op.cit.*, p.13.

⁵⁸ D. Featherstone, *Colonial Small Wars 1837-1901*, (Melbourne, 1973), p.22.

⁵⁹ M. Matloff (gen.ed.), *Army Historical Series, American Military History*; (apparently: Washington, 1968 [title page removed]), p.43.

⁶⁰ Allowance being made for the company of the 63rd stationed in the Swan River colony.

amongst no fewer than 47 different posts all over the Colony!⁶¹

These regimental personnel represented only part of the total colonial force which included other regimental detachments and para-military forces such as field police. With this wide diversity of sub-units operating over settled and surrounding areas, re-supply of rations and equipment was an important function. It was the responsibility of the Major of Brigade, Arthur's senior staff officer, to advise deployments to the Commissariat and Engineer Departments, for the issue of "Forage, Provisions and Slops [government issue clothing]".⁶² The Commissariat was responsible to supply rations of meat, bread or flour and spirits, while tea, sugar and vegetables for the troops⁶³ were normally purchased under regimental arrangements.⁶⁴ The spirit ration was withheld in the Interior, but in 1830, extra tea and sugar was issued in lieu.⁶⁵ Arthur had the authority to increase the troops' ration scale when they were on arduous duties.⁶⁶ Fresh rations were supplied direct to military outposts

⁶¹ H.C. Wylie, *History of the Manchester Regiment (Later The 63rd and 96th Foot)*, Vol. I, 1758-1883, (London, 1923), pp. 194-195, (N.A.M.).

⁶² *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. VI, p. 449.

⁶³ The issue of these items for the para-military forces is uncertain.

⁶⁴ *17th Regiment Standing Orders*, *op.cit.*, p. 50, states: "The vegetables, coffee, tea, and sugar, or whatever other articles may be provided for the men's messing, in addition to their bread and meat, will be paid for" from the soldiers' pay. Presumably, these items were bought, paid for, and dispatched from Hobart Town and Launceston on behalf of the troops in the outposts.

⁶⁵ "Copies of all Correspondence between Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Subject of the Military Operations lately carried on against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of *Van Diemen's Land*," *British Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence And Papers Relating To The Government And Affairs Of The Australian Colonies 1830-36, Colonies Australia 4*, [Short title: *Military Operations*], (Shannon, 1970), p. 216. Arthur's comments on the 7th Recommendation of the Aborigines' Committee were: "some small allowance of tea and sugar to [be given to] the soldiers in lieu of their ration of rum, of which they are necessarily deprived whilst actually serving in the bush."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Arthur notes that a double ration of bread and meat was given to the troops engaged in suppressing the bushrangers when supplied by "poor settlers" as the troops ate more than their ration entitlement.

by contractors, who tendered quarterly to the Commissariat Officers in Hobart Town and Launceston.⁶⁷ The 'dry-rations', tea and sugar, were supplied by the Commissariat stores in Hobart Town and Launceston and were probably forwarded direct from store to outpost by contract carter,⁶⁸ with other stores indented by the outpost Detachment Commander. Troops on patrol carried biscuits and salt provisions⁶⁹ or fresh meat. Because of bulk, or 'life' of fresh meat, this was usually limited to three days supply, but military and civilian personnel on the Black Line operations were at times ordered to carry up to seven days rations.⁷⁰ These were normally carried in a haversack slung on the left hip (see Figure 2 (a) and (b)). For longer patrols away from their base, a system existed for troops to obtain fresh rations from isolated settlers, who in turn were reimbursed the "regulated ration of bread and meat"⁷¹

For administration, each company had a Pay Sergeant on strength,⁷² providing for soldiers' monthly pay at outstations. The disciplinary problems posed by wide troop dispersion are hard to establish. Where a company was operating from one base, with a percentage of troops out on patrol, normal discipline would hold, however, in mixed soldier/field police patrols with a civilian representing the civil power, discipline was threatened by a conflict of military and non-military views.⁷³ Other circumstances, such as a few men being based for protective-duties near

⁶⁷ *H.T.C.*, 31/5/1828, p.4, for example of call for tenders.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 29/11/1828, p.4, for example of call for tenders.

⁶⁹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.198 [Garrison Order No.4].

⁷⁰ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Major Douglas, 10/11/1830. Being part of preparatory orders for movement during the Black Line.

⁷¹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.216-217.

⁷² *17th Regiment Standing Orders, op.cit.*, pp.36-37. This N.C.O. was the second senior sergeant in the company, after the Colour Sergeant. "Much depends on the Pay Sergeant, regarding the peace and good order of the Company."

⁷³ *Infra.*, pp.25-26.

where spirits were obtainable, would be a potential disciplinary hazard. Arthur, as a witness at a British Parliamentary Select Committee in 1837, stated:

I have no reason to think the discipline of the regiment suffered at all with regard to the 63rd regiment; they were there at a time when the Government was very anxiously circumstanced with reference to the aborigines.⁷⁴

As a soldier, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur appreciated the importance of his command status in Van Diemen's Land with virtual autonomy from his immediate superior. His troops were well disciplined for conventional soldierly duties, but not trained for independent small scale counter-insurgency tasks, however, administrative arrangements were capable of supporting such operations. Arthur's employment of the military, integrated with para-military forces, in counter-insurgency operations, is considered in the next chapter.

⁷⁴ "Report From The Select Committee On Transportation Together With The Minutes Of Evidence Appendix And Index," *British Parliamentary Papers, Crime and Punishment, Transportation 2*, (Shannon, 1968), p.307, (Minutes of Evidence Taken).

CHAPTER 2

The Counter-Insurgency Forces of the Late 1820's

Arthur's counter-insurgency programme had its genesis in plans to overcome the serious bushranger menace. In 1825, he located small military stations through the Interior, acting with the Magistrates to suppress bushrangers.¹ He developed this concept, in April 1826, by dividing the settled areas into military districts in which troops and field police were stationed as a united force,² and co-operated with magistrates, who were local settlers. The military districts were placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Balfour, 40th Regiment, in his civil capacity as a Justice of the Peace.³ In this way, troops, while operating in isolation in the bush were still under the orders of a magistrate, observing the principle that: "The primary duty of preserving public order rests with the civil power."⁴

In early 1827, Arthur further refined the system by appointing five paid Police Magistrates, located at Oatlands, New Norfolk, Richmond, Norfolk

¹ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol.IV, p.365. Arthur to Bathurst, September 1825.

² *H.R.A.*, III, Vol.V, p.693. The field police were recruited from the convicts. Arthur was not concerned about "putting arms into the hands of [selected] prisoners" as it created distrust and disunion amongst the convicts.

³ *Ibid.*, p.141. Government Order as part of the drive against the bushrangers, 1st April 1826.

⁴ *Manual of Military Law; op.cit.*, p.224.

Plains and Campbell Town.⁵ These centres now became police districts, replacing the former military districts. Later, the Clyde and Oyster Bay areas were also declared police districts, (see map, Figure 3).⁶ Arthur was confident that by active surveillance the magistrates would prevent crime in their districts.⁷ Each was supported by an establishment of paid personnel including a surgeon, clerks, constables and a flagellator. A detachment of troops and field police under command of an Army officer, were detailed to each police district, and were available at the magistrate's request to act in aid of the civil power. Liaison between the Police Magistrate and Army detachment commander ensured quick reaction to any local threat. The integration of civil and military effort reached its logical conclusion when the Clyde and Oyster Bay areas were declared police districts. These regions were centres of Aboriginal threat, so Arthur appointed military officers, in charge of the troop detachments for these districts, as Police Magistrates.

The Police Magistrates were also supported by a number of former military officers, who, with official encouragement, were now settled in the Interior.⁸ For example, Captain William Clark, after 24 years commissioned service, emigrated to the colony with his family in 1824 and was granted 2000 acres in the Clyde District, and by 1827, was a Justice of the Peace.⁹ Such men were relied upon to support the administration, and often with active service experience from the

⁵ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V, p.609. A Magistrate's salary was 400 pounds per annum, (H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.65).

⁶ L. Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, (St. Lucia, 1981), p.91, Map 27.

⁷ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V, p.609.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.683. For the Horse Guards General Order of 8/6/1826 regarding the offer to 'Half Pay' officers refer *H.R.A.*, I Vol. XII, pp.595-596.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.651-653. He became known as 'Old Squaretoes' because he had the knack of treading on everyone's toes. G.Hawley Stanombe, *Highway in Van Diemen's Land*, (Western Junction, abridged ed., 1969), p.89.

Napoleonic or Colonial Wars, provided a steadying influence to other settlers. They represented the civil power when the Army operated against bushrangers or marauding Aborigines, and in the Black Line acted as leaders of armed civilian parties.

Arthur's administrative system enabled him to exercise government control throughout the white population, as the Police Magistrates linked the central government with dispersed inhabitants such as isolated settlers, assigned convicts and chain gangs. Orders and instructions could be expeditiously passed by Arthur and reports rapidly gathered. The troops being widely distributed throughout the settled areas, were ideally placed to discourage any organized convict resistance, from minor disturbances to mutiny. The insurrection in the Bathurst area of New South Wales, reported in the *Hobart Town Courier* in 1830,¹⁰ is an example of how this ever present threat could become a reality.

With the execution of Mathew Brady in May 1826, bushranging as a threat to society ended.¹¹ At the same time, the incidence of Aboriginal attacks on white persons and property increased. Plomley noted that from 1803 to 1823, there were about 35 documented Aboriginal-white clashes, while in 1824, 1825 and 1826, the numbers were respectively: 11, 14 and 29. By 1827 they had risen to 72.¹² (see Figure 4)¹³. In November 1826, Arthur reported that "as one evil [bushranging] is extinguished, another seems to kindle up ... the Aborigines ... have lately

¹⁰ *H.T.C.*, 27/11/1830, p.2.

¹¹ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.55. As a contemporary account, Melville stated that with Brady's capture, bushranging became 'extinct' - presumably as a threat to society.

¹² N.J.B. Plomley, *The Aboriginal Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1831*, (Launceston, 1992), p.14 (1803-1823), and Table 2, p.26 (1824-1827).

¹³ *Ibid.*, Table 2, p.26 and Graph 3, p.30.

been extremely troublesome."¹⁴ To counter this, he utilized the organization that already existed in his police districts. He was sufficiently concerned to issue a Government Notice which included six sets of circumstances, whereby various degrees of force could be applied by both the military and settlers.¹⁵ From a military viewpoint, these 'Rules of Engagement'¹⁶ gave some legitimacy to their actions in a difficult situation where they were theoretically acting in aid of the civil power but in fact were already engaged in the unpredictability of a developing guerilla war.¹⁷

During 1827, Arthur reported an increased Aboriginal "temper of hostility"¹⁸ and directed that as the Aborigines would not leave the settled areas by conciliation, they were to be driven out. The magistrates were to operate within existing laws and be allotted sufficient troops to achieve this aim.¹⁹ Arthur then reinforced the police districts with additional troops and police.²⁰ It is estimated from military deployments in the colony in December 1827 (see Figure 5),²¹ that out of 712 other ranks, some 220 were available for patrol duties against the Aborigines.²²

¹⁴ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. V, p.435. Report to London of November 1826.

¹⁵ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.192-193.

¹⁶ A useful modern term, applied to regulations, under which servicemen are allowed to open fire in conditions short of open warfare. Legal implications, for individuals, can be serious if these rules are breached - conditions paralleling those under which Arthur's troops operated at this time.

¹⁷ The word 'guerilla' is the Spanish diminutive of *guerra* WAR, refer: *The Macquarie Dictionary*; A. Delbridge (ed.-in-chief), (Dee Why, Revised ed. 1985), p.779. It came into English usage as a result of British Army's service in the Peninsula War. The word was in contemporary use in Van Diemen's Land, refer: H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.33.

¹⁸ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.175.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.193.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.175.

²¹ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol. VI, p.448.

²² This is a subjective judgement, to form some concept of the scale of the operations. An allowance has been made for troops guarding convicts and for administrative personnel.

Nothing was achieved as a result of the November 1827 directive, forcing Arthur in April 1828, to issue a long legalistic proclamation, which forbade, except under proscribed conditions, entry of Aborigines to settled areas.²³ This was apparently intended to reassure London rather than assist the soldiers, settlers, or uncomprehending Aborigines. The proclamation stated "special orders adapted to situations and circumstances" would be issued to the military, who would form a line of posts along the boundaries of the settled areas.²⁴ The "special orders" statement was a sham; copies of the proclamation sent to twelve military outpost stations, under a covering letter, from the Major of Brigade,²⁵ in April 1828, stated that:

The instructions conveyed to you by that proclamation are as clearly defined as circumstances and the nature of the country will permit, nor is the Colonel Commanding [Arthur] aware of the necessity for enlarging upon them at present.²⁶

By inference, the letter was sent to those military posts directly concerned with the implementation of Arthur's Aboriginal policy.²⁷ These posts had effective road/track communications (see Figure 6),²⁸ and were the main

²³ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.194-196. Except for a generalized statement in paragraph 1 of the rules and conditions of the proclamation, p.195, the 'settled areas' were not clearly defined.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.195.

²⁵ The Major of Brigade amongst other duties, conducted "Correspondence with the Commandant in charge of the Military Posts and Armed parties, Co-operating with the Civil Power," *H.R.A.*, III, Vol.VI, p.449.

²⁶ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.196.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.197 for list, plus letter sent George Town p.196.

²⁸ Macquarie Harbour is deleted as local tribes were not involved in the guerilla war. Ross is included instead of St Pauls Plains, as shortly after Ross was upgraded to a captain's command which incorporated the other outstation (*Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.197-198), Major roads/tracks based on M.L. Map, ZM 2/880/1830/1, prepared by T. Scott and printed by Dr. J. Ross, 1830, (*ibid.*, footnote 28, p.62).

bases from which patrols²⁹ operated during the counter-insurgency campaign. At Oyster Bay, in Swansea, the name 'Waterloo Point' is a reminder of this early military period. A Waterloo veteran, Captain George Hibbert, 40th Regiment,³⁰ selected an easily defensible headland as the site for the district post. To ensure no covered approaches were available to the Aborigines, Hibbert had all surrounding trees lopped, causing one of his soldiers to remark that the fallen trees reminded him of the dead bodies scattered over the battlefield of Waterloo.³¹ Where an encampment was away from a town, conditions were crude. Private John Clarke was part of a 17th Regiment detachment which took three days to march from Oatlands to Hobb's Bluff in the Blue Mountains, a distance through bushland of 21 miles (see map, Figure 7),³² on arrival, they "had to build huts for ourselves and the married people before we got any shelter."³³ From this remark it is noted that soldiers' wives, accompanied them - a rugged existence, but not uncommon, even in the Peninsula War where up to six wives were authorised to travel with each company.³⁴ By May 1829, the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury were "pleased to sanction the Allowance

²⁹ The more recent term 'patrols' in this thesis is interchangeable with the contemporary term 'parties'.

³⁰ *Army List, 1827, op.cit.*, p.205.

³¹ For details of establishment and naming, refer: L.Nyman, *The East Coastlers*, (Launceston, 1990), p.58. The high ground on the bluff of the present golf course at Swansea is well sited for defence. A groundsman stated that a smaller mound about twenty-five metres down from the crest was the actual position of the post, as soil was heaped up to cover bricks from an old building. In this writer's view, this was a later building such as the Commissariat Store, or an Officers Quarter. A limited area on the high point could make a rewarding site for an archaeological 'dig'.

³² "No. 9 Field Plan of Movements of the Military", *Military Operations, op.cit.*, between pp.230-231, (short title: *1831 Field Plan*). Clark presumably marched to 'Blue Hill Bluff', about 15 miles due south east of Oatlands. (Hobbs's dwelling is shown to the north of this feature). This bluff was utilized during the Black Line as a site for a navigational signal fire. It is possible that this was the reason the 17th Regiment's detachment, including Clarke, made this march.

³³ J. Clarke, *op.cit.*, p.174.

³⁴ A. Brett-James, *Life in Wellington's Army*; (London, reprinted 1994), p.271.

of Rations of Provisions for 12 Women per 100 men" in Van Diemen's Land.³⁵

Counter-insurgency patrols were conducted by both soldiers and field police or a mixture of both, often accompanied by a local guide.³⁶ In September 1828, Arthur restated that all military patrols would have a "police officer" attached who would represent the civil power.³⁷ It was a legal requirement that the civil power be represented when the Army was called to its aid, but this led to tension where civilians appointed by the Police Magistrate assumed power over military personnel on patrol. A particular source of friction to the troops was where an assigned convict, as field constable, was given such authority. That this practice continued even after the declaration of martial law in November 1828, was verified by F.G.D. Browne in February 1830:

In carrying on the "combined operations" against the Blacks, ... The Military are required, not only to act with, but under the direction of, the Field Police. That Body, composed entirely of Prisoners ... think of a Private soldier, as a Private soldier thinks of them, to wit - *Both think themselves superlatively above each other* ... [and] when a party goes out, headed by a Constable, a great part of that time ... is wasted in the idle discussion of the ... demerits of the Police and the Army.³⁸

³⁵ A.O.T., Wayne Collection, G.O. 17/1, Vol.41, p.82.

³⁶ *H.T.C.*, 13/12/1828. p.2, refers to parties made up of soldiers, constables, and volunteer guides.

³⁷ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.197. Directive issued through Major of Brigade.

³⁸ *Browne Letter, op.cit.*, p.144. Browne, a settler, was experienced in bushcraft, with Aborigines, and as a civilian commander of soldiers on patrol.

This system later drew criticism from the Aborigines' Committee.³⁹

The military and para-military forces conducted a sustained campaign involving long and arduous patrols. An order of December 1828 directed that patrols were to consist of eight to ten men rationed for fourteen or sixteen days at a time.⁴⁰ Despite biscuits and salt meat being available in all outstations,⁴¹ men could not have carried this amount of food, necessitating a pre-planned resupply. As an indicator of the operational commitment, in Bothwell's garrison of 77 other ranks, only twenty remained in barracks, with the rest on long patrols in rough country or located as outstation guards.⁴² A glimpse of this latter duty is given by Private Clarke, who with two other soldiers of the 17th Regiment:

was sent to Ben Lomond ... to guard a house occupied by a Mr Bateman [John Batman] in case the natives should attack it ... the husband being away in the bush in pursuit of bushrangers and natives.⁴³

The line of military posts established after Arthur's proclamation of April 1828, banning Aborigines from the settled areas, did not inhibit the increasing Aboriginal violence. Despite the British Government's policy of conciliation, Arthur felt impelled to declare martial law on 1st November 1828. This was a grave step, and, as noted in the *Manual of Military Law* it had long been recognised as illegal, but the Crown in time

³⁹ *Infra*, p.30-31.

⁴⁰ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.198. Garrison Order No.4, 12/12/1828. To meet the increased threat during the summer period.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² G. Webb, *Bothwell, The Gateway to the Highlands*, [Launceston, undated], p.57. No reference is quoted, but it apparently relates to the period between 1827 and late 1829 when Lieutenant Williams, 40th Regiment, was in command and was also the Clyde District Police Magistrate.

⁴³ J. Clarke, *op.cit.*, p.174.

of invasion or rebellion could assume exceptional powers, the term 'martial law' being applied to this common law right.⁴⁴ The grave implications had become evident when Lieutenant-Governor Davey, despite the Deputy Judge-Advocate's advice, declared martial law in 1815 against the bushrangers. This was annulled by Governor Macquarie who scorned Davey's action.⁴⁵ Arthur's declaration,⁴⁶ which was never legally challenged, defined specific areas of the colony in which martial law did not apply (see map, Figure 8).⁴⁷

Martial law was to be in force until the cessation of hostilities,⁴⁸ and while it recognized that a state of war existed within the colony, it did not herald any significant military restructuring. Arthur considered "the Civil power ... the the most prominent arm and the Military ... as an auxiliary force,"⁴⁹ so the civil power continued to be represented on Army patrols. Although the proclamation warned that common law still applied in martial law areas, except on military operations against the Natives,⁵⁰ it did protect whites from the rigours of common law when involved in any dubious killing of an Aborigine when on patrol.⁵¹

In 1828, Arthur authorized the introduction of roving parties and also

⁴⁴ *Manual of Military Law; op.cit.*, p.4.

⁴⁵ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol.IV, p.492 and pp.494-495.

⁴⁶ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.199-200. Proclamation, 1/11/1828.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.199, Paragraphs "1st" to "4th" are basis of map's preparation. *Ibid.*, p.41, for Jorgenson's view that these areas provided an operational sanctuary to the Aborigines at the whites' expense.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.199.

⁴⁹ *H.R.A.*, I, Vol.XV, p.447. Arthur to Sir G. Murray, 12/9/1829.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.199-200.

⁵¹ Such as the Goldie affair, when an Aboriginal woman was killed and Arthur was later subjected to questioning from London as to what action was taken under the law. For details: M.C.I. Levy, *Governor George Arthur, A Colonial Benevolent Despot*, (Melbourne, 1953), p.102.

initiated a conciliatory programme for Aborigines under George Augustus Robinson. The roving parties were foot patrols of armed civilians,⁵² each consisting of ten to twelve convicts often with an Aboriginal tracker. The leaders, in all cases excepting one, were experienced free men, including Gilbert Robertson, John Batman and also the well known convict Jorgen Jorgenson.⁵³ Essentially, these roving parties were bounty hunters, and while monetary rewards were offered in 1830 for capturing Aborigines,⁵⁴ the real prizes sought were land grants for the free leaders and remission of sentence for the convicts. Roving parties provided a valuable counter-insurgency force,⁵⁵ and rather than reacting to raids, they also maintained a harassing pressure on the Aborigines, driving them from place to place within their normally safe retreats.⁵⁶

Arthur's first effective step towards Aboriginal conciliation was taken in 1828 when he appointed George Augustus Robinson to be in charge of natives on Bruny Island. From January 1830, Robinson led an

⁵² J. Jorgenson, *Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*, N.J.B. Plomley (ed.), (Hobart, 1991), pp.81-82 for proposal by T. Anstey, Police Magistrate, Oatlands and p.82 for Arthur's reply.

⁵³ That Jorgenson was 'well known' in the colony is not a figure of speech. Without any research effort being directed towards Jorgenson's life or activities, over the short period 1828-1830 references to him in the *Hobart Town Courier* were noted on the following dates: 14/3/1829 (p.2), 4/4/1829 (p.1), 18/7/1829 (p.2), 5/9/1829 (p.2, which included an account of his background), 10/10/1829 (p.2), 17/10/1829 (p.2), 19/6/1830 (p.2, granted a conditional pardon) and 11/9/1830 (p.3), -an impressive coverage for a convict.

⁵⁴ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.207. Government Order No.2, February 1830, offered rewards of 5 pounds for adult and 2 pounds for child Aborigines captured and "delivered alive" to the police.

⁵⁵ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.102, states between November 1828 and November 1830 they captured "about" 20 and killed 60, however the parties were subjected to contemporary criticism for being ruthless.

⁵⁶ *Tasmanian Aborigines - Atrocities*, M.L., A 605 (Reel CY821), p.807, letter J. E. Calder to Dr Agnew, undated, (pp.793-808), mainly concerned with Jorgenson.

expedition which made contact with the west coast Aborigines.⁵⁷ Arthur appreciated the benefits to be gained from conciliation in the tribal lands combined with strong military measures in the settled areas, and in February 1830, he directed that:

no effort should be spared to expel those who will not be conciliated, from the settled areas where they still continue to practice the utmost perfidy and inhumanity.⁵⁸

This two pronged approach of conciliation and force, became central to Arthur's strategy to solve the Aboriginal problem.

In 1830, the colonists faced the greatest surge of Aboriginal raids yet experienced (see Figure 4). To assist in containing the situation, roving parties were strengthened and rewards offered for the capture of live Aborigines.⁵⁹ The Aborigines' Committee reconvened in February 1830 under the chairmanship of Archdeacon W.G. Broughton, on his first visit to Van Diemen's Land. In March, this politically important committee⁶⁰ recommended that Arthur take "Other and more active measures, such as the Government alone can institute or support."⁶¹ In his despatch to London of 15th April 1830, Arthur drew attention to this point and that "His Majesty's subjects must be protected, and the outrages of the black Natives must be repressed, and yet if it can be avoided these wretched

⁵⁷ G. A. Robinson, *Friendly Mission, The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834*, N.J.B. Plomley (ed.), (Hobart, 1966), p.62-63 for Robinson's increasing proficiency in Aboriginal languages and proposal to mount an expedition to Huon-Port Davey areas which departed on 27/1/1830, (p.111).

⁵⁸ *H.T.C.*, 20/2/1830, p.2, Government Order No.1 of 19/1/1830. Also published, *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.206.

⁵⁹ *H.T.C.*, 27/2/1830, p.2, and *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.207.

⁶⁰ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.207-227, in which the bulk of its proceedings were published by order of House of Commons.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.216. Preamble to Committee's 4th Recommendation.

people must not be destroyed."⁶² This theme justified, and influenced his Black Line operation.

In evidence given to the Aborigines' Committee and in their recommendations, deficiencies in the counter-insurgency forces were noted. Inspector of Roads and Bridges, Roderic O'Connor believed that soldiers in a neighbourhood deterred the Aborigines, but previously lacking rewards, there had been no incentive to pursue them.⁶³ Gilbert Robertson said that troops were useless in pursuit,⁶⁴ but a later witness complained of Robertson that he never exerted himself and was more interested in looking for land than Aborigines.⁶⁵ F. D. G. Browne's letter listed many problems confronting troops on counter-insurgency patrols,⁶⁶ the greatest being the want of unanimity between the military and field police.⁶⁷ On mixed patrols which in his letter he refers to as "roving parties", it was "out of the power of a constable" to impose field discipline, such as preventing noise and smoking.⁶⁸ Browne recommended that "Military parties be headed by a military officer or non commissioned officer, and not be mixed with police."⁶⁹ He was also critical that garrison ration scales were inadequate for the strenuous work carried out in the field by the troops, as supplements of food and 'slop' clothing

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.188. Arthur to Sir G. Murray, 15/4/1830.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.227. This evidence was given on 17/3/1830 after rewards for capturing Aborigines had been gazetted on 25/2/1830.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.220. Robertson was Chief Constable at Richmond as well as Leader of a roving party.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.223.

⁶⁶ *Browne Letter, op.cit.*, pp.143-150.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.143.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.147-148.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.149.

previously issued, had been withdrawn.⁷⁰ These adverse comments on organization, command and control of the Army were partly addressed by the Aborigines' Committee, whose recommendations included augmenting field allowances, and improving efficiency and discipline, by ensuring soldiers were under command of their own officers.⁷¹ Arthur prevaricated on these recommendations, conceding it "may perhaps be desirable" to issue tea and sugar in lieu of the troops spirits entitlement in barracks. On command and control, his comment was deliberately deceptive, when he wrote "With respect to the military, they are of course already under orders of their own officers."⁷² In theory, soldiers were still operating under their officers' orders when placed under command of a constable on patrol. This evasion was obviously written for consumption in London. Browne's comments on lack of field discipline in "roving parties" and that he had been forced to give up a "hot pursuit" for want of rations,⁷³ were also addressed by the Committee.⁷⁴ Finally, it appears to have been short sighted of Arthur that he did not take up the Committee's recommendation that mounted police should be attached to each Police Magistrate to warn settlers of marauding Aborigines,⁷⁵ particularly in light of Arthur's 1827 advice to London that a few well conducted soldiers would form "a very sufficient and inexpensive mounted police."⁷⁶ A patrol of mounted infantry would have been

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.145-147. Browne for example, advocated re-introducing for "Bush Duty ... fourteen pounds each of meat and flour per week ... [also] tea & Sugar, in lieu of Spirits." (p.145).

⁷¹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.216-217, 7th Recommendation.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.216.

⁷³ *Browne Letter, op.cit.*, p.150, for "hot pursuit".

⁷⁴ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.217, 8th and 9th Recommendations.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.216. 5th Recommendation. Surprisingly, Arthur now argued "The Mounted Police is a very expensive force."

⁷⁶ *H.R.A.*, III, Vol.V, pp.138-139. Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 11/4/1826, for use of mounted police and p.693 for quotation, Arthur to Bathurst, 24/3/1827.

effective in areas of peak Aboriginal activity.

Arthur, with his absolute power of command over both civil and military elements of the colony, and with a sound system of civil/military co-operation in the police districts, was ideally situated to organize a successful counter-insurgency campaign. His security forces, both military and para-military, with the exception of mixed patrols, were effectively organized and controlled and had adequate logistical support. The declaration of martial law clarified the legal standing of the combatants on operational duty. By 1830, Arthur's strategy was conciliation in the designated tribal regions and strong military defence in the settled areas. The Aborigines' Committee gave valuable political support to Arthur in his campaign which had been increasing in scale to meet the burgeoning Aboriginal threat, but while the forces available to Arthur had met the challenge of low level guerilla warfare, they were yet to be tested against attacks of higher intensity by the Aboriginal warriors.

CHAPTER 3

The Aborigines' War

For tribes from Oyster Bay to Pittwater, a word for war was "rennamoimenya".¹ Whether or not this is how Aborigines referred to the bloody conflict between blacks and whites in 1828-1830 is not known, but to the British it was a guerilla war. This chapter examines the Aborigines as fighters. While not describing the history of Aboriginal and British relations since 1803, underlying causes which motivated the Aborigines and forced them into an increased level of violence are considered.

Plomley argues that until 1823 attacks by Aborigines were in response to particular physical or social injuries inflicted on them.² Broader hostility developed from the early 1820's as expanding white settlement progressively forced the Aborigines out of their hunting

¹ H. Ling Roth, *The Aborigines of Tasmania*, (Halifax, second ed. 1899; facsimile Hobart, undated), p.XXXIX of Appendix C (by J. Milligan).

² N.J.B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, p.13.

grounds, and away from their sacred sites.³ Occasional acts of revenge developed into open guerilla warfare. West, writing with contemporary knowledge, agreed with Roderic O'Connor that: "The natives are tenacious of their hunting grounds, as the settlers are of their farms".⁴ There was no room for compromise by either side. In Melville's explanation, the Aborigines having lost their kangaroo grounds and customary food, were compelled to seek the food of their despoilers.⁵ George Augustus Robinson, wrote in November 1829 of the hatred of the Aborigines for the whites, and pictured them goading each other into "acts of bloodshed and revenge for injuries done to their ancestors and the persecutions offered to themselves through their white enemies."⁶ In his opinion, Aborigines, knowing they could not extirpate the white inhabitants were actuated solely by revenge.⁷ Survival, hatred, and revenge were the factors which motivated the Aborigines in their war with the British.

The North Midlands, Ben Lomond, Big River and Oyster Bay Tribes were those most affected as white settlement expanded. Ryan's comparison of tribal and settled areas (see Figure 9(a)),⁸ illustrates this. The same areas co-relate with sites where individual Aboriginal attacks

³ J.B. Walker, *Early Tasmania, Papers Read Before The Royal Society of Tasmania During the Years 1888 to 1899*, (Hobart, Fourth Impression, 1973) p.253. Walker quotes from the journal of G.W.Walker on a visit to Flinders Island (whether 1832 or 1834 visit not specified) where an Aboriginal woman was greatly disturbed because a tree she selected as her "inviolate property, at all times to be held sacred" was accidentally destroyed by Aboriginal men. This example of spiritual attachment would have been repeated innumerable times as the Aborigines were driven from their tribal areas.

⁴ J. West, *The History of Tasmania*, Vol. II, (Launceston, 1852; facsimile Adelaide, 1966), p.20, first footnote. Quotation also recorded in O'Connor's evidence to Aborigines' Committee, 1830 (*Military Operations*, *op.cit.*, p.227).

⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.31.

⁶ G.A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.88.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.553.

⁸ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.86, (Map 25).

were carried out (see Figure 9(b)), covering the period January-June 1830).⁹ These maps illustrate the geographic bounds of the conflict in the settled areas, but the area extended to surrounding rough bushy terrain, to which the Aborigines retired as places of refuge (guerilla base areas), these were penetrated by roving parties in pursuit of Aborigines.

Social deprivation, introduced diseases and killing by whites, had, by the late 1820's, reduced the tribes to the extent that "remnants of the central, southern and eastern tribes had joined together in loose conglomerates in order to survive".¹⁰ More deaths also resulted from an increasing level of inter-tribal fights between non-conglomerated groups over remaining hunting grounds.¹¹ This cycle of death is illustrated by the interrogation of a captured Aborigine who "belonged to the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes which are united ... [and] that five of the tribe had been shot by White Men, that they have fought the Stoney Creek tribe and killed a great number."¹² For Aborigines, this had become a war of desperation against ever worsening odds as indicated by a comparison of Aboriginal and British populations (see Figure 10).¹³ With increasing reliance on settlers' huts to provide food and blankets the scale of

⁹ N. J. B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, p.49, [Map 18].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹¹ H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, pp.72-73.

¹² C.S.O. 1/324 E, *op.cit.*, Walpole's contact report to Arthur, 29/10/1830.

¹³ N. J. B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, p.25, (part of Table 1). These figures are attributed to H. M. Hull 1866. Plomley points out that in his opinion, the Aboriginal population figures are "... a little too low" (p.10). Therefore, below is another set of figures extrapolated from Plomley's Aboriginal population graph (p.29, Graph 1).

1824	1500
1825	1400
1826	1300
1827	1000
1828	800
1829	650
1830	500
1831	350

warfare escalated.¹⁴ Plomley's statistical analysis of Aboriginal raids between 1824 and 1831 (see Figure 11),¹⁵ illustrates this, particularly when considering the notable increase in 1830 of the theft of flour, tea, sugar and general foodstuffs, together with blankets, clothing and knives.

The Aborigines had certain advantages in their struggle with the British. With the bush as their natural habitat, bushcraft enabled them to hunt or evade their enemy. Robinson wrote of the futility of the military in searching for them, which he compared to a battle with a shadow,¹⁶ and considered the Aborigines a formidable enemy.¹⁷ Jorgenson also supported this view, writing in February 1830 that the Aborigines "consider themselves our superior in the art of war."¹⁸ West suggested that the Aborigines became more aggressive as they grasped the limitations of firearms. He referred to sound Aboriginal tactics in attacking armed defenders,¹⁹ and how they would "rush on" as soon as the British had discharged their guns.²⁰ West, like Levy a century later,²¹ partially attributes the loss of fear of firearms and increased Aboriginal militancy to Musquito.²² Jorgenson's opinion that they learnt caution from experience²³ is supported by Plomley, who asserted that the natives

¹⁴ See Figure 4. Aboriginal/White Incidents, 1824-1831.

¹⁵ N. J. B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, pp.26-27, (Tables 3-5).

¹⁶ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.552, for detailed description of their use of ground and keen physical senses; also p.556, the inability of armed parties to surround and capture Aborigines.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.553.

¹⁸ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.24.

¹⁹ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.13-14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.37.

²¹ M.C.I. Levy, *op.cit.*, p.103.

²² A New South Wales black-tracker, who became disenchanted with white promises, as leader of a group of Tasmanians led them on raids. He was hanged in Hobart Town in February 1825.

²³ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.98.

developed skills in hit and run warfare.²⁴ In doing this, the Aborigines took advantage of the limitation of their enemies' weapons and mode of fighting. Aboriginal use of firearms in inter-tribal skirmishes is recorded by Robinson.²⁵ That this knowledge of firearms was widely disseminated is indicated by a report that of eleven Aborigines who stayed at John Batman's home, three or four were excellent shots.²⁶ Despite this, only one Aborigine, the woman, Walyer,²⁷ is known to have carried a firearm on raids. She carried a fowling piece (shotgun).²⁸

Firearms were not generally used against the whites because of the weapons' limitations. These were; a slow rate of fire, two to three rounds per minute²⁹ compared to that of spear throwing; a high incidence of misfires or hangfires in wet or even damp conditions compared to the spear's all weather capability; the possibility when stalking, of the cumbersome musket being made inoperative due to dirt or damage and the need also to carry the ammunition pouch, an obstruction to silent movement, compared to the ease of stalking or crawling carrying a spear; a slight delay between the trigger being pressed and the ball being fired allowing an alert opponent to dive for cover³⁰; the weapon was not silent in the first instant of a surprise attack and by night and day indicated the location of the firer; and finally, the musket's maximum effective range of about fifty yards, gave no advantage over a spear.³¹ To balance this,

²⁴ B. Plomley, *The Tasmanian Aborigines*, (Launceston, 1993), p.87.

²⁵ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.517 and pp.854-855 for example.

²⁶ *H. T. C.*, 6/11/1830, p.2.

²⁷ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, pp.182 and 296-297, for Walyer as an "amazon".

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.837. On p.552, reference is made to an Aborigine who shot a Mr. Parker with his own gun which he had crept up and stolen. Also L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.141, for Walyer teaching the Emu Bay band the use of firearms.

²⁹ *Supra*, p.15. This was the rate for trained soldiers.

³⁰ N. Leonard, *op.cit.*, p.13, for limitations of the musket in conventional warfare.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.38, for range and lethality of spears.

advantages of a musket ball over a spear were increased lethality,³² and velocity of the unseen ball precluding evasion during flight. Should Aborigines have preferred to use firearms, supplies of both guns and ammunition were obtainable by raiding settlers' huts, particularly in 1830, when their success rate rose from ten incidents in 1829 to twenty (see Figure 11). Plomley believed that the motive for this increased capturing of arms and ammunition was to deny their use to the enemy.³³ The technologically advanced musket was rejected by Aborigines, but they took advantage of its limitations in fighting the British.

Aboriginal weapons were made from ti-tree or melaleuca. Spears varied in length from five feet for stabbing, to fifteen feet for throwing,³⁴ with points not barbed or poisoned, but sharpened then hardened by fire.³⁵ Spears could be thrown accurately to about 50 yards,³⁶ and their ability to penetrate targets was respected by the whites. A man's neck was pierced from ear to ear,³⁷ and a spear was embedded to a depth of about six inches in a tree.³⁸ Spear wounds if not mortal, usually healed rapidly.³⁹ The waddy, up to 30 inches long, could be thrown with

³² J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, (London, reprinted 1976), pp.199-200, includes description of the low velocity ball wounds at Waterloo; pp.263-265 compares ball wounds to high velocity bullet wounds at the Somme, giving a better understanding of both types.

³³ B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, p.86.

³⁴ H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, pp.68-69, and B. Plomley, *op.cit.*, p.47 for use of short and long spears.

³⁵ H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, p.69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.71. The Tasmanians did not use throwing sticks as did mainland Aborigines.

³⁷ *H. T. C.*, 4/4/1829, p.1. Man speared at Break O'Day Plains, the spear point protruded beyond the further ear. He survived the wound.

³⁸ L. Nyman, *op.cit.*, p.71.

³⁹ J. Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians or, The Black War of Van Diemen's Land*, (London, 1870; facsimile Adelaide, 1964), p.126.

accuracy,⁴⁰ but was essentially used as a club in raids on huts, or against unsuspecting or wounded persons. A soldier, stationed at Boomer Creek, just north of Little Swanport River, was making a bird cage when struck down and killed.⁴¹

Robinson, in describing Aboriginal methods declared:

They lay in ambush for some time before they make their attack, a sudden and unperceived invasion, or by surprising. Their warfare is that of a predatory nature.⁴²

Several tactical characteristics are evident here. Good use of ground in moving unseen to their target or ambush site, and exhaustive reconnaissance and planning resulting in successful shock tactics, their objective being to resupply from their enemies' stores. Aborigines had the ability to move quickly over great distances; Bonwick described their capability to cover 50 miles in a day.⁴³ Because of this rapidity of movement, in Jorgenson's view, the numbers of Aborigines opposing the whites were overestimated.⁴⁴ In planning an attack, care was taken in selecting good withdrawal routes,⁴⁵ and coordination and deception in

⁴⁰ H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, pp.71-72.

⁴¹ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.119.

⁴² G.A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.553.

⁴³ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.106.

⁴⁴ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.69.

⁴⁵ J. Fenton, *A History of Tasmania, from its discovery in 1642 to the present time*, (Hobart, 1884), p.102, "extraordinary sagacity and agility usually enabled them to make a successful retreat into their native wilds."

both pre-planned and emergency situations was employed.⁴⁶ This was evident in attacks such as raiding one hut to draw off local settlers whilst the main assault was launched elsewhere.⁴⁷ In attacking, Aborigines often taunted their intended victims in English, to frighten them into discharging their firearms.⁴⁸ Fire was used to burn crops, outbuildings, and by throwing spears bound with burning grass onto thatched roofs, to drive defenders into the open.⁴⁹ Finally, if captured, Aborigines showed ingenuity in escaping. Pretending to be close to death, a man was carted by two constables in a wheel barrow to Bagdad bridge, only to escape that night by climbing the chimney of a hut in which he was secured.⁵⁰

In their sustained guerilla campaign, Aborigines required robust physical and mental stamina and comparatively safe base areas. Towards the end of the campaign, raids on settlers huts provided physical needs, while their mental resilience was presumably linked to a belief in their cause, and strong tribal cohesion. Aborigines always

⁴⁶ *H. T. C.*, 20/2/1830, p.2. Referring to a coordinated raid on Piper's hut and Clark's house; "Their cunning and skillfulness in managing their attacks are every day becoming more and more evident."

As an example of a quick reaction deception:

J. H. Wedge, *The Diaries of John Helder Wedge 1824-1835*, Justice Crawford. W. F. Ellis & G. H. Stancombe (eds.), (Hobart, 1962), p.48. Wedge, a surveyor, observed a party of hostile natives approaching his men, a shot was fired and "they observed one [Aborigine]... go down to the beach and take [to] the water - this was done I suppose to decoy my men ... if it had succeeded would have probably proved fatal."

⁴⁷ *H. T. C.*, 18/10/1828, p.1. The "movement on Mortimer's hut was merely a feint, contrived for ...[an] attack on Gough's family."

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21/3/1829, p.1. Referring to a seige on a house, with four whites inside; "As the poor fellow was wounded, the Blacks gave a great shout. Many of them spoke good English, but their words were extremely indecent."

⁴⁹ L. Nyman, *op.cit.*, pp.71-72. "The thatch was already alight and the attackers were so jubilant."

⁵⁰ *H. T. C.*, 7/8/1830, p.2.

removed their wounded,⁵¹ and endeavoured to recover their dead, even against a strong white presence.⁵² Rough country surrounding settlements provided base areas in which to rest, produce and store new weapons,⁵³ and where women and children could be left when the men departed on raids.⁵⁴ Jorgenson complained that Arthur's humane consideration in prohibiting security forces entry to areas declared as being outside martial law in November 1828 (see Figure 8), gave the warring Aborigines an unfair advantage over the whites.⁵⁵

By 1830, instances of killing white women and children had increased,⁵⁶ but there is no instance recorded of Aborigines raping or molesting captive white women.⁵⁷ The same cannot be said for the British. In January 1829 the *Hobart Town Courier* reported that the blacktracker, Brune Island Jack, who was accompanied on patrol by his wife, had been shot by Corporal Hares "not knowing he was tame". Jack made for the Clyde and dived in, but each time he raised his head Hares fired until killing him. However, no blame was attached to the soldiers.⁵⁸ Bonwick, quoting a letter, stated what actually happened:

⁵¹ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.508. Aboriginal shot in the thigh carried away by another.

⁵² *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.220. Gilbert Robertson at the Aborigines' Committee stated "the Natives watch to recover the dead bodies." Also J. Hobbs (p.222), referred to removal of dead and wounded Aborigines.

⁵³ As an example of Aboriginal use of base areas, H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, p.69, writes: "At their places of rendezvous, the natives keep a large stock of spears and waddies. The spears are carefully tied to straight trees with their points at some distance from the ground."

⁵⁴ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.226. Edward White at the Aborigines' Committee stated "The Natives leave their women and children behind them when they are going to war."

⁵⁵ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.96.

⁵⁶ *H.T.C.*, 19/6/1830, p.2, for example, a wife and baby twins killed in a hut.

⁵⁷ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.72, and J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.125, who is directly quoting Jorgenson (p.72).

⁵⁸ *H. T. C.*, 24/1/1829, p.2.

Jack, complained of the treatment his wife received from the soldiers ... "actuated by a strong feeling of jealousy"... Jack started off from the party, accompanied by his wife. She was retaken. He ... leaped into the Clyde. Corporal Hares fired ... each time his head reappeared.⁵⁹

Robinson's version of the incident, as related to him by Aborigines was that soldiers interfered with Jack's wife "cohabiting with her". After her husband's murder she escaped from the soldiers and returned to Bruny Island.⁶⁰

While they enjoyed some tactical advantages, the long term disadvantages to the Aborigines were overwhelming. Sheer weight of numbers were against them with total annihilation the inevitable result of continued warfare. The Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote in November 1830 it is "not unreasonable to apprehend that the whole race ... may, at no distant period, become extinct."⁶¹ This was a war of attrition with total firepower available to the British being the decisive factor.

Another advantage exploited by the whites was the Aborigines' spiritual fear of the dark, causing them to avoid night movement and sleep inside a circle of small fires.⁶² In the late afternoon, security forces would maintain a watch for fires,⁶³ approaching by night and attacking at dawn. George Anstey, the sixteen year old son of Oatlands' Magistrate

⁵⁹ J. Borwick, *op.cit.*, pp.114-115.

⁶⁰ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.506.

⁶¹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.228, (Sir G. Murray to Arthur).

⁶² J. Fenton, *op.cit.*, p.103, for "superstitious dread". Also H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.71, for evil spirit called "Debble".

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Thomas, led a party against raiding Aborigines, and captured four in an early morning attack on their campsite.⁶⁴ Despite comments to the contrary, the high incidence of successful night attacks by whites suggests that Aborigines did not have night sentries.⁶⁵ Also exploited by the British were the regular Aboriginal migratory patterns. Several successful ambushes⁶⁶ resulted when the Oyster Bay Tribe returned from the midlands to the east coast each June and congregated around food sources at Moulton Lagoon and Schouten Island from August to October,⁶⁷ there was also one unsuccessful British cordon against that tribe on Freycinet Peninsula in 1831.⁶⁸ Where migration routes went through settled areas, as stated by Jorgenson,⁶⁹ Aborigines were continually under threat of being intercepted.

Despite the significant decrease in Aboriginal population, there was a great increase in their raids; 44 in 1828, 148 in 1829 and 222 in 1830 (see Figure 4). West's explanation of this apparent contradiction is that the Aborigines made up for their diminished numbers by "improved method, cunning, and audacity".⁷⁰ An article on the Black War, published in 1851 suggested that hunger, disease, and death, compelled the

⁶⁴ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.98. In this particular case, the whites tracked the direction of the withdrawing Aborigines by footprints in the snow.

⁶⁵ Military Operations, *op.cit.*, p.220. Gilbert Robertson stated "they always keep regular sentries." Also, H. Ling Roth, *op.cit.*, p.73 noted their "vigilance".

⁶⁶ L. Nyman, *op.cit.*, pp.79-81. Settlers ambushed migrating Oyster Bay Tribe killing ten and capturing three.

⁶⁷ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, pp.19-20. This is one example of various tribal migrations.

⁶⁸ L. Nyman, *op.cit.*, p.113. Organised by Meredith (an early settler and local identity), involving 100 men for a fortnight. Forty Aborigines broke through the cordon on a dark night. An example of survival forcing them to move by night.

⁶⁹ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.24.

⁷⁰ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.45.

Aborigines, in spite of every danger, to harass their enemies.⁷¹ The imperative need for food and blankets was met by Aborigines breaking into smaller groups of five to six men and, following a raid, quickly traversing the country to strike again some distance away. That white casualties (see Figure 11) remained remarkably static, 78 in 1828 and 1829 and 76 in 1830,⁷² despite escalating attacks, indicates an increased targeting of supplies by the Aborigines. This stable casualty rate may also indicate that improved British security measures had blunted the escalating Aboriginal offensive. Nevertheless, fear and uncertainty were the dominant sentiments amongst the white inhabitants of the Interior. A petition from the settlers of Clyde River to Arthur, referred to the war "affecting not only the lives of the Colonists, but threatening the extinction of the Colony itself, by firing our crops and dwellings."⁷³ Arthur, in February 1830, admitted the Aborigines had become "more formidable from the success which had hitherto attended their unexpected and sudden attacks."⁷⁴ Contrary to their normal habits, the Aborigines, driven by need, continued their attacks through the winter months of 1830,⁷⁵ reaching an alltime high of 41 incidents in August. A prominent settler from Avoca, Major William Gray, late of the 94th Regiment, wrote to Arthur on the 29th August 1830:

the present state of continual terror which appears to have Seized upon the minds of almost every individual ... particularly those in the remote districts,

⁷¹ J. W. F. Blundell, "The Black War in Van Diemen's Land", *The Colonial Magazine and East-Asia Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 1 Y, (1851), National Library of Australia (N.L.A.), p. 289.

⁷² Totals of all categories of casualties on bottom table, Figure 11.

⁷³ *H. T. C.*, 27/3/1830, p. 3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 27/2/1830, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Refer: Table, Figure 4.

who are looking forward with fearful anxiety to the approaching fine weather which will no doubt be attended with bloodshed, if their [Aboriginal] progress be not speedily arrested.⁷⁶

Such representations forced Arthur to take sterner measures, which led to the proclamation of a *levy en masse* in September and the Black Line in October/November 1830.

⁷⁶ C.S.O. 1/323, *op.cit.*, p.214.

CHAPTER 4

Prelude to the Black Line

The Aborigines' Committee in making their recommendations¹ to improve security against the Aborigines stressed that "the main effort should be directed to capture the Natives alive and unhurt."² With the escalating scale of warfare, the Executive Council on the 27th August 1830 considered that as conciliation had failed, a more vigorous effort was necessary to expel the Aborigines from settled areas and prevent a war of extermination. The Council believed volunteers would join with the troops to form a force large enough to achieve this 'humanitarian' goal.³ The Council did not instruct Arthur in how to use this force, but as repeated efforts to expel the Aborigines had failed, Arthur's only option was his choice of method in capturing and removing the Aborigines from the settled areas. Later criticism that Arthur chose a foolish means to solve the Aboriginal problem, ignores two factors accepted in the colony at the time; that with the apparent failure of conciliation, a major military effort was required to meet a desperate situation; and, short of a campaign of extermination, only capture could guarantee future peace. The Colonial Auditor, George Boyes, confirmed that the Government was

¹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.215-217.

² *Ibid.*, p.217.

³ *Ibid.*, p.236. A measure "dictated no less by humanity than by necessity."

forced into capturing Aborigines as all other means had "been tried unsuccessfully."⁴ One of Arthur's sternest contemporary critics wrote "something was necessary ... there cannot be a question; and although the "*line*" proved a failure yet it was undertaken with the best intentions."⁵

How the Aborigines could be captured was canvassed by the Aborigines' Committee in 1830, a subject on which Arthur had previously invited settlers' suggestions. Most letters on file,⁶ offered minor criticisms or suggested improvements on current operations. Where a proposal appeared to have merit, such as offering rewards for capturing live Aborigines, Arthur acted quickly.⁷ Bonwick's opinion that Governor Macquarie's black drive of 1816 may have "suggested" the Black Line is not supported in this evidence.⁸ The *Hobart Town Courier*, in September 1830, pointed out that the current situation in Van Diemen's Land differed from that in New South Wales in Macquarie's time.⁹

There is a close similarity between a proposal by Major Gray of 29th August and Arthur's outline plan given in his proclamation for a *levy en masse*, Government Order No.9 of the 9th September 1830.¹⁰ Gray proposed a maximum co-ordinated effort involving civilian search parties aided by the military, simultaneously operating in all police districts,

⁴ G. T. W. B. Boyes, *The Diaries and Letters of G. T. W. B. Boyes, Volume 1 1820-1832*, P. Chapman (ed.), (Melbourne, 1985), p.378. Letter to his wife, 31/10/1830.

⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.90.

⁶ C.S.O.11323, *op.cit.*, *passim*. File continued from 1827 to 1831.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.102-114, letter by H. Rowcroft of 22/2/1830 presumably resulted in Government Order No.2 of 25/2/1830 offering rewards, (Military Operations, *op.cit.*, p.207 for G.O. No.2)

⁸ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.131. He stated that Macquarie "summoned the colonists, with all available military and constabulary, and drove the Blacks before him beyond the Blue Mountains, with great slaughter."

⁹ *H.T.C.*, 18/9/1830, p.4.

¹⁰ Military Operations, *op.cit.*, pp.236-238, Government Order No.9, of 9/9/1830.

which would convince the Aborigines "that their only safety consisted in their accepting ... offers of reconciliation ... or in eventually capturing" them.¹¹ On the 6th September, Arthur minuted the Colonial Secretary on the last page of this letter, instructing him to thank Gray and inform him his letter:

will receive mature consideration - add, however, that I shall have no confidence in any measures adopted by the Govt. until the Settlers in the Interior act themselves with more vigour & determination than has hitherto been the case - & their disposition in this way will be put to the test.¹²

Arthur adopted Gray's plan, but increased manpower by use of a *levy en masse*. As an indication of Arthur's identification with Gray's proposal, the latter's letter was read to the Executive Council on the 9th September, the same day the *levy en masse* was promulgated.¹³ At this meeting, a letter from James Simpson, Campbell Town's Police Magistrate, was also read.¹⁴ A section underlined, possibly by Arthur, gave added justification to the concept of a *levy en masse*. This was: "*unless numbers are brought into operation [in Simpson's proposed plan] all attempts to capture the Blacks in any quantity will be fruitless*".¹⁵

¹¹ C.S.O. 11323, *op.cit.*, pp.208-215. Quotation, p.213.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.215, note to file. Minor amendments were made by Arthur to the last line of the above quotation - these are indecipherable but appear to add strength to his last comment.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.208. Notation on front page of Gray's letter.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, letter by J. Simpson of 7/9/1830, pp.216-220.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.216. The underlining, was probably made by Arthur or his staff, rather than by Simpson.

Judging from press debate,¹⁶ there was great public interest and much discussion on how the outline plan in Government Order No.9 would be implemented. The *Hobart Town Courier* made a valid criticism that even if the Aborigines were driven out of the settled areas, sooner or later they must return.¹⁷ Bonwick's comment on this debate was that the "press and others had contended that it would be comparatively useless to have the war made at so many points, affording opportunities for the Natives ... to pass between the forces hither and thither."¹⁸ Between the publication of Order No.9 on 9th September and the issuing of Arthur's orders for the Black Line on 25th September 1830, there were several additional submissions on proposals for capturing Aborigines. Letters by Wedge¹⁹ and Gilbert Robertson²⁰ introduced new concepts which significantly contributed to the Black Line plan.

Wedge argued that instead of concurrent searches throughout the settled areas, these should be progressive, so that the Aborigines would be driven "into the Peninsula South of East Bay neck [the topographical key to Forestier's Peninsula], which if accomplished would afford a good chance of securing them."²¹ Robertson targeted the capture of the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes,²² the main opponents of the whites. His

¹⁶ For example: *H.T.C.*, 11/9/1830 (the same date that this paper published Government Order No.9 in full) on pp.2-3, almost two full columns and *H.T.C.*, 18/9/1830, p.4, three and half columns of comment. This press debate continued on 25/9/1830, but by then it had become academic as on that date Arthur's detailed orders were published.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18/9/1830, p.4.

¹⁸ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.136.

¹⁹ C.S.O. 1/323. *op.cit.*, letter by J.H. Wedge, 16/9/1830, pp.231-235.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Letter by G. Robertson, undated (but following immediately after Wedge's letter), pp.236-242.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.235.

²² *Ibid.*, p.236. Arthur adopted the same selective target as his objective in the Black Line.

concept was for a series of co-ordinated drives by roving parties whose task was "to Disturb the natives in every quarter excepting the country between Prosser's Bay and the Coal River."²³ Robertson made the point that "There would be no immediate occasion to form *a regular cordon* [underlining apparently by Arthur] to prevent them from returning to the west", as the direction in which the parties would drive the Aborigines corresponded with their annual migrations, "Their favourite Haunts at this Season being left open to them".²⁴ Finally, a strengthened cordon would be required "between the Orielson Rivulet, the White Marsh river, Prossers river and the Sea",²⁵ which closely approximated Line H (see Figure 7) on which Arthur's cordon later stood. Robertson then made an accurate prediction on Aboriginal reaction to such a cordon:

Finding themselves Hemmed in within these limits they will endeavour to break through [:] it will therefore be advisable not to press too close upon them until all the force be collected as to render escape impossible.²⁶

Apparently Robertson envisaged that Aborigines would be captured as they attempted to break out of the cordon as he made no reference to any final drive by the cordon down to East Bay Neck, or sending Roving Parties inside the enclosed area to drive the Aborigines back onto the standing cordon. Robertson's proposal concluded with suggested locations for logistic re-supply depots and the names of several competent guides. Robertson's proposals and Arthur's Black Line Plan

²³ *Ibid.*, p.238.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.241.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

in Government Order No. 10 were almost identical except that Arthur incorporated Wedge's concept of driving the Aborigines through East Neck Bay onto Forestier's Peninsula, *en route* to Arthur's goal of Tasman's Peninsula. From a study of file C.S.O. 1/323, it is almost certain that Arthur selected key features of Wedge's and Robertson's proposals to combine with his own concept of extended lines (rather than Robinson's roving parties) to formulate the Black Line plan. He also expanded Robertson's concept of logistic support to supply the additional numbers of men he planned to deploy and extended area to be covered.

Arthur made public his Black Line plan when a delegation of Hobart Town citizens called on him on Thursday 23rd September, offering to form a guard to free the town's garrison for the forthcoming operation.²⁷ The *Hobart Town Courier* published the plan, Government order No.10, as a five page supplement,²⁸ and from all accounts it met with almost unanimous approval throughout the colony. The paper, echoing developing public opinion, wrote that this "meets with our cordial approval, and under all the circumstances is in fact perhaps the only feasible method that could be taken."²⁹ Fenton noted the plan met with

²⁷ *H.T.C.*, 25/9/1830, p.2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Supplement, 25/9/1830, 5pp. There is a degree of haste apparent in the publication of this order as it is undated, the by-line reading:

GOVERNMENT ORDER NO.10
Colonial Secretary's Office
Sept [space], 1830.

Military Operations, op.cit., p.238, lists the same order as:

Government Order No.11
Colonial Secretary's Office, September 22, 1830.

Papers, which included this order, were forwarded to London as attachments to Arthur's despatch of 20th November 1830. The variation between detail published on the 25th September and the copy subsequently forwarded to London could represent 'tidying up' of minor details.

The original Order No. of '10' is used in this thesis.

²⁹ *H.T.C.*, 25/9/1830, p.2.

the hearty approval of the settlers.³⁰

Arthur must have just finalized the Black Line plan when the delegation called on him on the 23rd September. This is indicated by a letter he wrote to Magistrate Simpson on the 24th September at "12 o'clock p.m." (presumably midnight), calling on him to perform certain tasks in the forthcoming operations and stating he had ordered a map of military movements to be prepared which he hoped would be forwarded to him next day.³¹ Arthur sought and extensively used advice tendered to him, but the plan was his creation, as well as his responsibility in law. Ryan's statement that Arthur "authorised Major Douglas of the 63rd Regiment to draw up a spring offensive against the Big River and Oyster Bay Aborigines",³² which became the Black Line plan, is incorrect and unsupported by evidence. The allocation of officers to tasks in the cancelled plan in Government Order No. 9, which stated "the direction of the whole of the combined force thus employed is confided to the general charge of Major Douglas, 63d Regiment, who is stationed at Oatlands, as the most central point of communication,"³³ may have misled Ryan. Nevertheless, Douglas, by choice or direction, may have submitted information to Arthur.³⁴ It is not believable that Arthur, a meticulous

³⁰ J. Fenton, *op.cit.*, p.107.

³¹ G. Arthur, "The Pitt Collection [1828-1866]", *Reports on the Historical Manuscripts of Tasmania, Numbers 1-7*, (Hobart, Revised ed., 1964), p. 107. Letter Arthur to J. Simpson of 24/9/1830; "12 o'clock p.m." appearing after Arthur's signature.

³² L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.110.

³³ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.237.

³⁴ From investigations at the Commonwealth and State Archives, and particularly the Military Museum at Anglesea Barracks (Major J. Opie, curator), the greater bulk of British Army records for the colonial period, were returned to England by the time the last British garrison troops departed in 1870. Therefore only government, as opposed to military, files are available to search for any planning input by Douglas - a negative result.

man,³⁵ would allow a subordinate officer to prepare at Oatlands, in isolation from Arthur in Hobart Town, a plan which was of importance to the future security of the colony and to Arthur's professional reputation at the Colonial and War Offices in London.

Bonwick's comment that "Mr Surveyor-General Frankland has the credit of forming the general outline of the scheme [Black Line plan]",³⁶ is supported by several folios in the *Scott Papers*³⁷ Typical is a notation by Scott on a letter "About the Plan for Catching the Natives etc - Franklands plan."³⁸ It is a reasonable assumption that during the detailed planning for the Black Line Frankland³⁹ worked closely with Arthur, advising on topography which affected military movement and re-supply in those poorly mapped and comparatively little known operational areas.

Frankland, like Wedge and Robertson, significantly contributed to the Black Line plan promulgated in Government Order No. 10. This was developed at short notice from minimal remaining options. It replaced the outline plan of Government Order No. 9 which was discarded as being flawed. The implementation of the final plan, which for analysis is divided into three separate phases, is considered in the following chapters.

³⁵ A. G. L. Shaw, *op.cit.*, p. 222, the Governor-General of Canada stated Arthur was a "most fussy man" and pp. 268-269 the *Bombay Times* wrote that Arthur "allowed no paper to pass his desk without careful examination."

³⁶ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p. 141.

³⁷ "Papers connected with the campaign after the natives, Sept-Nov. 1830", Vol. II, *Scott, Thomas (Assistant Surveyor, Tas.) - Drawings and Documents Tas., 1820-1830, 3 vols.*, M.L., A 1550, (Reel CY970, frames 101-250), no page numbers. (short title, *Scott Papers*), *passim*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Private Letter Earnest (?) Robertson to Scott, 19/10/1830. Scott made a notation of its contents on the cover, which included the quotation. The writer was scathing of Frankland's advice to Arthur.

³⁹ Frankland in turn used the advice of surveyors in his department, such as Scott and Wedge to assist him. *Scott Papers, op.cit., passim*, and C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit., passim*. (example: Journal entry 10/11/1830 conference attended by 5 'Maps').

CHAPTER 5

**The Black Line : Organization and Operations to End
of Phase I**

Arthur's operational aim in the Black Line was to capture the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes by:

first, to surround the hostile natives tribes; secondly, to capture them in the country of Buckingham [southern Tasmania], progressively driving them upon Tasman's Peninsula; and, thirdly, to prevent their escape.¹

But in assessing the results achieved by the Line, this military aim must be considered, together with his longer term strategic goal, which was "to stop the murder of his countrymen, and to arrest the extinction of the natives."²

Arthur's plan was that a series of extended lines, over a wide front, would converge towards the south-east of the colony. As these lines advanced and linked up, the front would contract and the density of men

¹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.238, being paragraphs 2 and 3 of his detailed orders for the Black Line promulgated as Government Order No. 10 (shown as "Government Order No. 11").

² J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.55.

in the line increase. A programmed advance from Lines A to H (see Figure 7), allowed Arthur to maintain control over his commanders, such as issuing detailed orders to search the Brown Mountain complex during the advance from Line G to Line H. Provision was made for the eastern and southern flanks of the advance to be screened, while a force remained in the central highlands to prevent the Aborigines breaking back in that direction. Although Arthur's intention to drive the Aborigines into Tasman's Peninsula was stated in his aim, detailed orders for this final phase were to be issued later in the campaign.

Considerable organization and deployments were required before the forces took up their positions along Line A to commence the operation on 7th October. Martial law over the whole colony was declared on 1st October 1830,³ to eliminate areas declared outside martial law in November 1828.⁴ Surveyors, under Surveyor-General Frankland, prepared topographic information to assist Arthur in his planning, and briefed both military and civil officers who would lead the force. They also had to arrange signal fires on high features as an aid to navigation during the advance. Additionally, working with the Commissariat, surveyors organizing routes to logistic depots, widely distributed in the proposed area of operations, and from there forward to where the advancing troops would require re-supply. The Survey Department was also responsible to assist in provision and supervision of guides for leaders of corps while the surveyors themselves acted in

³ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.243.

⁴ *Supra.*, p.27 and Figure 8.

that capacity to the military divisional commanders.⁵ During the Black Line Frankland acted as Arthur's Chief-of-Staff.⁶ Meanwhile, the Police Magistrates were responsible for raising and organizing civilian forces,⁷ sometimes called 'volunteers'.⁸ Finally, civilians inside areas to be enclosed were directed not to impede Aboriginal movements prior to the Line reaching their location.⁹

In a memorandum of 20th November 1830, Arthur gave the strength, command and composition of the force engaged in the Black Line as follows:

The total force amounted to about 2,200 men, 550 of whom were troops of the 63rd, 57th and 17th regiments ... formed into three divisions under orders of Major Douglas of the 63rd Regiment [Northern line], Captain Wentworth of the 63rd Regiment [Western line], and Captain Donaldson of the 57th Regiment [North Western line]; these divisions were subdivided into corps, which were placed under the command of military officers, and which were again told off into parties of 10 men, each of which had its

⁵ The dependence of the total operation on the Survey Department is indicated by *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.238 (paragraph 9), p.242 (paragraph 25), and numerous correspondence and memos in the *Scott Papers (op.cit.)* in which earlier entries appear to be devoted to the detailed planning of opening phases of the whole operation; followed by directions from Arthur's A.D.C. (undated) for Scott to report to Arthur at Government House.

⁶ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, *passim*. As an example, Frankland maintained Arthur's Journal and letters in Frankland's handwriting are signed on Arthur's behalf.

⁷ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.239 (paragraph 6).

⁸ 'Volunteers' is a loose term as all ticket-of-leave convicts "capable of bearing arms" had to join the Line and land-holders with assigned convicts were directed to contribute servants for duty leaving only adequate numbers on their farm to protect persons and property. (*Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.237-238).

⁹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.242 (paragraph 26).

leader; the whole was commanded by the Lieutenant-Governor in person.¹⁰

The change to military command was fully implemented on 31st October when Arthur ordered Lieutenants Pedder and Grove, 63rd Regiment, to take command of, respectively, the Oatlands and Richmond volunteers from Franks and Gilbert Robertson.¹¹ Originally, Arthur's concept had been that the corps would remain under their own leaders, who would be responsible to the military divisional commanders.¹² But he changed this, prior to the drive from Line H to East Bay Neck,¹³ to give him a military chain of command down to sub-unit (party of ten) level, and ensure that throughout the force there was a uniformity of military operational and administrative procedures. This emphasis on military command is evident in the field, where official correspondence to Arthur was addressed to, and replies signed as 'Colonel Commanding' instead of 'Lieutenant-Governor'. For the Army, this command organization was an improvement to that in the police districts where troops acted in aid of the civil power. This was a military operation, under an Army command, and was of a distinctly different nature to previous counter-insurgency operations. The troops responded well.

During 1830, the average strength of the garrison in the colony was

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.244.

¹¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas of 31/10/30 and to Franks and Robertson of same date. Apparently by that date Dumaresq's New Norfolk contingent had already come under military command. An exception to this was that from 13/11/1830, all roving parties operating inside the cordon (line H) were placed under command of a former naval officer, Captain Moriarty (*Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Captain Vicary of 13/11/1830).

¹² *Ibid.*, Letter Arthur to Douglas of 8/10/1830.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas of 31/10/1830, which gives Arthur's reasoning for the change.

965 all ranks.¹⁴ Of this, only 550 were committed to the Black Line, almost half the garrison remained on routine duties, such as guarding convicts and protecting settlers from Aborigines who evaded the Line. The numbers of troops required for convict guard duties would have been higher if civilian volunteers had not assumed responsibility of 'Town Guard' in both Hobart Town and Launceston, keeping public order and guarding installations such as gaols, Mulgrave Battery and the Treasury.¹⁵ Several contemporary accounts report the military airs and graces adopted by this armed home guard.¹⁶ An administrative crisis took place in October when at the Sheriff's request, the Town Guard detachment at the Hobart Town gaol was replaced by troops recently arrived in the colony. The locals considered that their efficiency had been called into doubt.¹⁷ Arthur, from his encampment at Sorell calmed this flurry which had assumed large proportions in Hobart Town's small society.¹⁸

The Black Line as a military operation is considered in three phases. Phase I includes preliminary operations from 4th October, and the general advance by divisions from their start lines on 7th October (Lines A, see Figure 7), and concludes with a continuous cordon formed on

¹⁴ University of Tasmania Archives (U.T.A.), sources for basis of average: J. Ross (printer), *The Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1830*, p.241. Garrison strength at January 1830: 827 all ranks.

H. Melville (printer), *The Van Diemen's Land Almanack For The Year of Our Lord 1831*, [short title: *Melville's Almanack 1831*], p.219. Garrison strength January 1831: 1104 all ranks.

¹⁵ *H.T.C.*, 25/9/1830, p.2. Details meeting called to form Town Guard.

¹⁶ G.T.W.B. Boyes, *op.cit.*, pp.380-381. "Capt. Boyes as his men call him" doing an N.C.O.'s job, "I am sick of it." - letter to his wife of 31/10/1830; also fn 38, quoting: J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.49, for cynical old soldier's comment on military status assumed by leaders of Town Guard.

¹⁷ *H.T.C.*, 30/10/1830, p.2. Editorial comment, Town Adjutant's and the guards' Provisional Committee letters on the dismissal.

¹⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 A., Memorandum Arthur to Colonial Secretary of 30/10/1830.

Line G by 20th October. Phase II is the short movement to a tighter cordon on Line H, which was occupied on 22nd October, and where a static position was maintained until 16th November 1830. Finally, Phase III covers a series of advances by the main body, from 17th to 25th November, to East Bay Neck where Arthur concluded the operation.

Phase I

An estimate of the strengths of the three divisions at the start of the operation are based on the known strengths on 1st - 2nd November 1830,¹⁹ these are proportionally increased to an approximation of 2200 as quoted by Arthur.

Division	Strengths 1-2 Nov 1830			Estimate of totals 7 Oct 1830 (Plus 20%)
	Military	Civilian	Total	
Northern (Major Douglas) including Lieutenant Aubin's corps on eastern flank	291	591	882	1058
North Western (Captain Donaldson)	79	235	314	377
Western (Captain Wentworth)	171	462	633	760
Totals	541	1288	1829	2195

¹⁹ *Scott Papers, op.cit.*, "Novr 1830, Return of Strength Major Douglas's line". Factors which make this estimate only a rough guide are; civilian volunteers progressively joined during the advance in Phase I, and limited military reinforcements joined during Phase II. From C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum No.2 of 5/10/1830 (Arthur to Douglas) it is known that Arthur allocated 385 all ranks to Douglas's division, of which 14 had to be detached as depot guards.

Movement towards Line A start positions commenced on 4th October, and included preliminary sweeping operations such as that by a part of Wentworth's division. Lieutenant Croly's detachment, based at Bothwell, together with volunteers, was ordered to search the banks of the Shannon River and St. Patrick's Plains while moving up to their start line, which extended from Lake Echo to Lagoon of Islands.²⁰ These, and other movements not shown on the 1831 Field Map (see Figure 7), are incorporated on a modern map (see Figure 12) which also duplicates Lines A to M of Figure 7.²¹ The volunteers either moved out to their designated stations on the Line by the 7th October, or progressively joined as the Line advanced towards their local area as in the case of Dumaresq's corps. Police Magistrate Edward Dumaresq's New Norfolk parties were ordered to search the Mount Dromedary complex on the 9th October, moving to secure the line of the pass to the northwest²² by the afternoon of the 10th October, to prevent Aborigines ahead of Wentworth's Line escaping into the Dromedary area and southwards.²³

The task of the Northern Division under Douglas was to clear the areas to the south of Line A from the east coast to the western tiers east of a line Lake River/Lake Sorell (see Figure 12). The North Western and Western Divisions under Donaldson and Wentworth respectively, were to clear the central highlands to the west of Douglas's areas. Co-ordination of these separate movements was achieved by Arthur's precise orders and use of control lines (Lines C - D and E - F) for the Northern and Western divisions which were to continue the drive to the south east of

²⁰ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.240 (paragraph 9).

²¹ Map: Tasmania South East, 1:250,000, 1994. Photocopy of this map as marked.

²² Presumably this pass approximated the modern minor road Gretna/Allenvale, near the Derwent River, running north east into the Jordon River valley at Elderslie (Figure 12).

²³ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.240 (paragraph 14).

the colony. Donaldson's division after clearing the north-west was to patrol the central highlands in the general area of Line B to capture any Aborigines who may have slipped through Douglas's and Wentworth's Lines.²⁴ To protect the flanks of the main drive, Lieutenant Aubin's corps on the east coast guarded the passes down from the eastern tiers used by the Aborigines, extending from Moulton Lagoon/Freycinet Peninsula in the north, south to Spring Bay. Meanwhile, Dumaresq's corps screened the southern flank of Wentworth's advance.

Arthur closely supervised the whole operation by continual hard riding as shown by his itinerary for the period 4th - 20th October 1830 (see Figure 13).²⁵ An indicator of this supervision is Arthur's memorandum to Douglas of 6th October, in which he reprimanded Douglas for not visiting "the Country to the Eastward & from St. Paul's Plains Southward, [as it] is quite defective from the want of more force."²⁶ He went on to inform Douglas what immediate action he had taken to correct the omission. While West had a poor opinion of Arthur's overall plan, he complimented Arthur on the movement of the force (Phases I and III) stating that "arrangements were ably made, and the parties, though they encountered difficulties unusual, reached the appointed places with considerable precision."²⁷ This is high praise for an operation conducted with maps of limited value (inaccuracies of detail, scale and direction, no contour lines, unsuitable for compass use, with some unmapped areas such as Lake Leake and surrounding country).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.239-242, for detailed orders to divisions.

²⁵ *Copy of itinerary of Lieutenant-Governor Arthur during the campaign against the Aborigines*, A.O.T., C.S.O. 66/1, 1 p. The same detail with amendments, is in *Scott Papers op.cit.*, attached to letter Frankland to Scott, undated of October 1830. (Frankland, who travelled with Arthur was advising Scott of his movements).

²⁶ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas of 6/10/1830.

²⁷ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II., p.54.

Personal pocket compasses may have been privately owned and used by some officers, but essential tools of field navigation; maps, compasses and protractors were not issued by the Army. A map drawn by Thomas Scott and printed by James Ross,²⁸ which sold for ten shillings, was used on the Black Line (see Figure 14 for enlarged section).²⁹ It is not known whether individual leaders bought the map or whether some maps were purchased using Colonial Funds. In the advance in extended lines, Arthur directed that contact was to be maintained by firing muskets, blowing bugles, and parties calling out their number to adjoining parties, with Survey Department guides supervising the direction of march. In Phase I, when the line exceeded 120 miles in extent, the attention paid to orders "rendered the movements much better executed than would have been anticipated."³⁰ From a soldier's viewpoint, Private Clarke of the 17th Regiment, who took part in the Black Line, wrote that "If anyone got lost, we had to make fires in high mountains and to fire off guns for signals, and if the lost party heard them they were guided by direction of the sound until they could see the fire; however, we soon got used to it."³¹

Although he did not mention it in detailed instructions (Government Order No.10), Arthur was considering a subsidiary operation for Donaldson's division in the north east of the colony once the force was no longer required in the central highlands. Arthur wrote to Donaldson:

²⁸ Maps. The following were the same map with minor additions:- M.L., Z M2 880/1830 (Map of Settled Areas); Z M2 880/1830/1 (The Whales Head etc including roads, landowners and police districts); Z M2 880/1830/2, (MS additions "Map Showing the disposition of the Settlers & troops in Arthurs Celebrated "Black Line"). The House of Commons 1831 Field Plan, *op.cit.*, appears to be based on Scott's map, but not attributed to him.

²⁹ Part of Z M2 880/1830/2, above. In black and white, original maps were coloured.

³⁰ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, pp.244-245. Arthur's Memorandum, 20/11/1830, (paragraph 4).

³¹ J. Clarke, *op.cit.*, p.174.

I incline to think that it will be ... better to occupy the Country which I pointed out to you extending [northwards] from George Town to Ben Lomand & from thence to St. Patricks Head - but you will of course wait for more particular orders ... before your present position [line B area] be altered.³²

On the same day that he wrote to Donaldson, Arthur sent a stinging letter to a northern settler, James Cox, ordering him to immediately withdraw two parties which Cox had sent into the north-eastern region of the colony.³³ These should have been sent to the east then south, as directed by Arthur on the 6th October,³⁴ to make up the weakness in the Northern line over which he had reprimanded Douglas. In his second letter to Cox of 13th October, Arthur referring to conciliatory efforts in the north-east, stated:

it appears ... extremely important first to attempt conciliation with them ... the women ... sent out by Mr Bateman [sic] had undertaken to bring in their Tribes, Mr Robinson, who is certainly highly qualified for communicating with these Natives was directed to proceed along the coast.³⁵

In this same letter Arthur said he did not want to employ force in the north-east until a "great effort" had been made to capture the Oyster Bay and Big River Tribes. As events later unfolded, during Phase II, Donaldson's

³² C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Donaldson, 13/10/1830.

³³ *Ibid.*, Letter Arthur to Cox of 13/10/1830. Arthur's letter is confusing to read, as apparently the person who wrote and signed the letter on Arthur's behalf (probably Frankland), may not have fully understood his brief from Arthur. The final sense is clear that Arthur was concerned over Cox's men making an intrusion into the undisturbed north east of the colony.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter Arthur to Cox, 6/10/1830.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter Arthur to Cox, 13/10/1830.

force was required to re-inforce the cordon and so was never committed to the proposed north-eastern drive. This letter to Cox illustrates an important point in considering Arthur's strategic concept, that he saw Robinson's mission as an integral part of his overall plan, of using both force and conciliation as joint weapons to achieve his longer term goals.

The tough going experienced by the force during Phase I is indicated in a memorandum written on 12th October, only six days into the operation. Arthur directed, through the Colonial Secretary, that by the 20th October, the Commissariat deliver 500 pairs of shoes to both the Richmond and Prosser River depots.³⁶ On 17th October, Arthur ordered the Commissariat Storekeeper at Oatlands to immediately dispatch 200 pairs to Lake Sorell for Donaldson's division.³⁷ Later Captain Mahon wrote: "I have myself worn out two new pairs of strong Boots since I left Oatlands."³⁸ The effect of hard marching, or poor quality footwear, was reflected in a tender called by the Commissariat on the 15th October for 500 pairs of shoes "in addition to the above [tender], making together 2000 pairs. The whole will be required immediately."³⁹

A minor incident with major implications occurred on 15th October while Arthur was in the Jordan Valley. An assigned convict, Thomas Savage, stated that he had been abducted overnight by a group of about twenty Aborigines. Savage claimed that this group was controlled by an escaped convict named Brown. Arthur interviewed Savage late on the 16th October, and, concerned that a white man was directing them,

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 12/10/1830.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Commissariat Storekeeper, Oatlands, 17/10/1830.

³⁸ C.S.O. 11324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Mahon to Douglas, 12/11/1830.

³⁹ *H.T.C. Supplement*, 18/10/1830, p.2.

immediately instigated an unsuccessful follow up of these reported Aborigines. A detailed description of this incident was published by direction of Arthur, under Government Notice No. 203, with concluding comment that Aborigines "have been guided by men worse than savages."⁴⁰ This resulted in an immediate tightening of security, with Arthur warning Douglas that the Natives were headed by Europeans. Vigilance was to be increased at night bivouacs with groups of three men placed in extended line, with fires lit at each bivouac site and half way to the next. Each group was to maintain a sentry patrolling to the fires either side of his position. Once Douglas's division reached Line G, the sentries would keep a constant patrol by day and night.⁴¹ During Phase II, reports of escaped convicts accompanying the Aborigines inside the cordon area were published in the press,⁴² and subsequently Arthur inferred that their presence contributed to the failure of the Line.⁴³

Apart from a report by one of Captain Donaldson's parties that 42 Aborigines had escaped to the west,⁴⁴ the Northern and Western divisions reached Line G without further incident.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.1-2.

⁴¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 17/10/1830.

⁴² *H.T.C.*, 23/10/1830, p.2, and 20/11/1830, p.2, for example.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 27/11/1830, p.2. Government Order No.13 of 26/11/1830, paragraph 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 30/10/1830, p.2, quoting a letter from Launceston dated 25/10/1830 and referring to sighting on 18/10/1830. The party reportedly found 13 native huts and some white clothing. On 24/10/1830, the party retired from the highlands without authority, drew rations and returned to Launceston. Subsequently, three ticket-of-leave convicts in this party (under command of Thomas Faro) had their tickets suspended for desertion. Government Notice No.212 of 4/11/1830 (*H.T.C.*, 6/11/1830, p.2; also cross references in C.S.O. 1/324 A and E). This unimpressive record, may cast some doubt on the reported sighting, or follow-up, of the 42 Aborigines.

CHAPTER 6

The Black Line : Phases I I and I I I

By the 20th October, the Northern and Western divisions were established along Line G, and orders for the short advance from there to Line H were issued.¹ This was to commence at 10am next day, with the major concern being to search the extensive Brown Mountain feature, on which a signal fire was lit from 18th to 22nd October as a navigation aid. This advance was completed by the night of 21st October, with stragglers from Phase I continuing to come in to the line up to 24th October.² While the advance from Lines G to H was taking place, Arthur ordered that any Aborigines approaching East Bay Neck were to be observed, but not obstructed in any movement towards Forestier's Peninsula.³ He also directed that five roving parties were to operate inside Line H.

Because of reports of sightings of Aborigines inside the cordoned area around lower Pittwater and Carlton, Arthur's intention on 24th October, was that when:

¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, Wentworth and Dumaesq dated, in error, "30 Octr 30." Scott in his papers, made a copy of this order which he correctly dated as 20th October.

² C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 24/10/1830.

³ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Lieutenant Barrow(?), 63rd Regt of 19/10/1830 being one of several directives on this subject before and after this date.

all the parties [presumably stragglers] have joined their several divisions it will be desirable to advance the Lines [from Line H] as soon as the nature of the ground in front has been sufficiently examined.⁴

Arthur in a separate memorandum, ordered Douglas to a meeting at 8am on 25th October to receive orders to advance "unless it should happen to rain in wh [which] case the Line will not be advanced."⁵ At that time, due to considerable rain, difficulty was being experienced in re-supplying the force. Arthur did not want to compound this logistics problem by advancing into rough terrain under adverse conditions and cancelled the advance due to "incessant rain" on the 25th October.⁶ At this stage an event occurred which delayed the advance by a further three weeks, until 17th November 1830. The reason for this radical change of plan is explained by a contact involving a party commanded by a young settler, Edward Walpole.⁷

The *Hobart Town Courier* reported from Prosser's Plains on 26th October that four days earlier, five roving parties each of ten men, had been sent into the area enclosed by the cordon searching for Aborigines "to discover their fires and secure them if possible."⁸ If this is an accurate report of the task given, then they were authorised to attempt seizure of the Aborigines. The orders issued by Arthur for these parties were:

Major Douglas will ... cause five parties [including

⁴ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 24/10/1830.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 24/10/1830. This is NOT the same Memorandum as referenced in footnote 4.

⁶ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 26/10/1830, reported that with "incessant rain yesterday the river is now *higher* [Douglas's emphasis] than when your Excellency was here."

⁷ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p. 164 [Index], for name Edward Atkyns Walpole. H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p. 99 "a young man" and settler" p. 199 [Index].

⁸ *H. T. C.*, 30/10/1830, p. 2.

Walpole as a named leader] ... to advance early tomorrow ... to the Southward so as to thoroughly scour the Country bounded on the East by the Sea & on the West by the Bushy Plains road according to the arranged Plan parties are to be rationed for Seven days.⁹

While these orders do not specify whether the patrols were to reconnoitre and report back, or attempt capture, the parties' strengths suggest the latter. This is an important point, as Arthur subsequently attributed the failure of the Black Line to Walpole's mismanagement of a contact.¹⁰ The area allocated to Walpole's party was declared by Arthur to be "the most likely for the concealment of the Natives, and should be most thoroughly examined."¹¹ This was on the eastern flank, south of Line H, and included the mountainous timbered complex called 'Three Thumbs'.

After an unsuccessful search on the 23rd October,¹² on the afternoon of the 24th, Walpole heard Aborigines hunting on the southern side of Sandspit River, probably between Wielangta Hill (Prossers Sugar Loaf)

⁹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas 22/10/1830. Unfortunately there is no record of "the arranged Plan". Because of the size of the party, 10 men (in regard to the nature of the enemy) it was strong enough to fight to capture Aborigines (in modern terminology - a 'fighting patrol') as opposed to a few men who could move stealthily to reconnoitre (a 'reconnaissance patrol')

¹⁰ *Military Operations*, *op.cit.*, p.245. Memorandum of 20/11/1830, Arthur writes "It was most unfortunate that so good an opportunity ... [has] been missed," and *infra*, p.84, Order No.13.

¹¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 24/10/1830. Arthur was annoyed that Walpole's party did not depart at 7am on 23/10/1830 as ordered.

¹² C.S.O. 1/324 E, *op.cit.*, Report Walpole to Arthur of 29/10/1830. The narrative for Walpole's contact is taken from his after action report to Arthur. However, Walpole obviously got his dates wrong, for example "According to orders received ... I proceeded on the 24th Instant" in fact in accordance with orders, he departed (somewhat late) on the morning of 23/10/1830, see footnote 11. Therefore the reported sighting took place on afternoon of 24th (not 25th) and his attack took place at dawn on 25th (not 26th). Ryan in her history (Ryan *op.cit.*, p.112.) gives the date of Walpole's contact as "24 October". She would have been more correct to have written the "night 24/25 October".

and Jacobs Hill,¹³ and watched until about 5pm when the Aborigines had settled for the night (see Figure 12 for probable site). Walpole collected his party which he had earlier split, and by good navigation and fieldcraft, "placed them within 300 yards of the natives where we waited until dawn." While his attack of 25th October on a shelter containing five men resulted in two captured and two Aborigines being shot and killed, the main group of Aborigines, across a small creek, escaped, leaving 30 spears, 20 blankets, and other items. Returning towards Arthur's headquarters at Sorell, Walpole encountered another roving party with an Aboriginal guide who interrogated Walpole's captives. The captives revealed that they were part of a group of 26 men, 9 women and 6 children from the Oyster Bay and Big River Tribes making towards Prossers Plains and the Lakes. This intelligence would have reached Arthur by late afternoon on 25th October,¹⁴ by which time he would have received a report of an early morning attempt by an Aborigine to break through the Line, and who was forced to retreat back towards the Three Thumbs.¹⁵ Regarding Walpole's contact, Arthur stated:

This event, ... led to the determination to continue in the position taken up on the 24th October [first occupied by 22nd instant], and to send within the circle a sufficient force, in roving parties, to discover and capture the Natives who lurked in these haunts. To effect this without too much weakening the posts, it became

¹³ Based on Walpole's description of the country including 5 miles from Captain Glover's hut (see Figure 7, shown on the southern shore of the bay at Sandspit Point).

¹⁴ The distance from the likely attack site to Sorell direct, by map, is 26 kilometres, Walpole would have followed the best going, which on Figure 12 would approximate the Lines K-L, being the general line of the minor roads and tracks which today link Sandspit Point and Sorell. He certainly passed south of Middle Peak, as he met the other party with the Aboriginal guide at Bream Creek.

¹⁵ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 25/10/1830.

necessary to call Captain Donaldson's division down from the Lakes... During the interval the Natives made repeated efforts to burst through the line.¹⁶

Thus, Walpole's contact resulted in the advance from Line H being postponed until after Donaldson's division marched down from the central highlands. It also led to the cancellation of Arthur's projected sweep through the north-eastern areas of the colony. Robertson's proposal to hold a strengthened cordon in the Line H area in the expectation that the Aborigines would attempt a breakout was vindicated.¹⁷

Arthur blamed Walpole for failing to capture the whole Aboriginal group, reasoning that the attack site "was sufficiently near the lines to have admitted of a large force being that night marched upon the point where the natives lay encamped."¹⁸ This statement was an apparent deliberate distortion of truth¹⁹ to shift the blame for the poor results achieved during the Black Line onto another. The nearest troops to the contact site were about thirteen kilometres away to the north of the Three Thumbs (see Figure 12 for probable site). With the Aborigines not camping until 5pm, and darkness falling at about 7.30pm on 25th October,²⁰ a messenger from Walpole would not have returned to the cordon until after dark. Douglas then needed to hastily collect a force from across a wide section of the Line as he had no reserve, and

¹⁶ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.245. Arthur's memorandum, 20/11/1830.

¹⁷ *Supra.*, p.50.

¹⁸ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.245. Arthur's memorandum, 20/11/1830.

¹⁹ That Arthur was incapable of calculating this simple time and space problem is not believable.

²⁰ Eastern standard time used for darkness. There would have been little assistance from moonlight as it was in the first quarter, rising at 10p.m. (J. Ross, *op.cit.*, p.14, moon for Monday 25/10/1830). "Incessant" rain over this period would, especially by night, have reduced visibility and made the going more difficult. (*Supra.*, Footnote 6, p.67).

presumably could not afford to denude part of his line by ordering out a complete corps, less a few sentries. In the unlikely event that Douglas had a force on the move by 9.30pm, it would have been poorly briefed and not properly organised for a difficult night march in single file following one or two guides. On their approach over the timbered mountainous terrain, it is likely the force would have become disorganized, men injured and sections lost. Even as a coherent command, they could not have stealthily surrounded the site before dawn, and had they accidentally blundered towards it, the Aborigines would have fled. If the camp site been closer to the line than shown on Figure 12, the same general problems would have applied.

Arthur did not waste time once he decided to hold fast along Line H. On the evening of 25th October after inspecting the line, he had orders drafted and despatched to divisional commanders on means to improve security.²¹ Steps included creating a continuous line of obstructions made of fallen trees to create an "abattis" [abatis] with sharpened branches facing towards the cordoned area and placed behind the cordon, while forward of the line, palisades were to be erected (see Figure 15).²² Additionally, skirmish parties were to be readied to operate forward of the cordon, the "Alls well" call was to be punctually passed every half hour, and Douglas and Wentworth were ordered to submit incident reports to reach Arthur by 7am daily. Then at midnight on the 25th/26th October, he had orders, endorsed "Immediate", sent to Donaldson, directing that after leaving a protective guard for the Clyde

²¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 25/10/1830.

²² *Ibid.*, third page of orders in Frankland's writing showing diagrams as sent to divisional commanders.

District, he was to march his force to Richmond with maximum speed.²³ This force of 314 men²⁴ arrived at a bivouac site east of Richmond on 1st November 1830. On the 2nd November Arthur prefaced his orders by paying tribute to the rapid march made by Donaldson's men.²⁵

With reports continuing to circulate that white men were accompanying the Aborigines,²⁶ who were still attempting to escape through the cordon,²⁷ Arthur continued issuing orders to correct slackness, and improve security. In a typical order on 29th October, he instructed corps commanders to each have five men patrol a mile ahead of their section of the line, making maximum noise to deter the Aborigines and to leave a few fires by night to give the appearance that the ground was occupied.²⁸ With the unseasonal rains "very much adding to the fatigue and difficulty of the expedition",²⁹ it is not surprising that Lieutenant Aubin reported to Douglas that a few volunteers had deserted.³⁰ With the imminent arrival of Donaldson's division, Arthur ordered that vigilance be increased for the few days remaining "before the completion of the Undertaking."³¹

On Sunday, 31st October, Arthur issued orders that "the final

²³ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Donaldson, 25/10/1830, "12.p.m." [midnight]

²⁴ *Scott Papers, op.cit.*, strength 1-2/11/1830: 79 military and 235 civilians.

²⁵ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur, 2/11/1830, no distribution listed.

²⁶ *H.T.C.*, 30/10/1830, p.2. A "print of a shoe...as worn by Europeans distinctly seen" for example.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 29/10/1830.

²⁹ *H.T.C.*, 30/10/1830, p.2.

³⁰ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Report Douglas to Arthur, 26/10/1830.

³¹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas and Wentworth, 30/10/1830.

movement for the capture of the Tribes within the Lines,"³² would commence at 12 noon on 1st November. This was an optimistic order as Donaldson's force, which was integral to the plan, had not yet arrived, and other commanders who had much preliminary work, did not receive their orders until late on the 31st, in Douglas's case, not until 10.30pm.³³ The folly of such precipitate orders to mount a major operation became evident when Douglas, after an immediate assessment, advised Arthur that he could not comply with orders due to deficiencies in stores and rations.³⁴ As a commander, this indicates a weakness in Arthur's appreciation of time and space in deployment procedures. Consequently, the movement was delayed for over 24 hours, commencing after the stipulated time of noon on 2nd November. Otherwise it proceeded in accordance with Arthur's plan.³⁵ 37 parties each of seven men (22 from Douglas's and 15 from Wentworth's divisions) with each man armed and carrying five days rations, moved just ahead of the line. Gaps created in the Line, were filled by remaining personnel moving to their left, with the large gap created on the right of the line being filled by Donaldson's division. Once gaps were closed after noon, the 37 roving parties departed. Their task was to "advance towards the S.E. - driving the Natives in that direction or capturing them & on the 4th day will reach East Bay Neck, where they will receive further orders." The movements were in accordance "with a rough plan of the

32 *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur (to presumably divisional commanders), 31/10/1830.

33 C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 1/11/1830.

34 C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur (to presumably divisional commanders), 31/10/1830.

35 *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 4/11/1830. Arthur expressed concern at the late departure of the Oallands party and of parties from Captain Wentworth's division due to "want of Tea-Sugar, and Flour" which the Commissariat assured Arthur were forwarded in adequate quantities to the Prossers Plains depot.

Country" drawn by Scott (see Figure 16).³⁶

Arthur, in a memorandum sent to London summing up the result of the drive from 2nd to 6th November, blamed the adverse weather for the lack of success.³⁷ His journal entry better described the situation and morale:

Saturday 6th Rode to East Bay neck - and there found some of the Roving parties Already Arrived - In the Course of the day, about 25 parties came in - They had had to struggle with most unfavourable wet weather and they had seen no Natives Whatever - Many parties had followed the same track. All seemed very desponding, and discouraged by their want of success.³⁸

Previously, Arthur had planned that when the roving parties reached East Bay Neck (presumably after being re-supplied there), they would conduct a return push northwards, driving the remaining Aborigines back onto the cordon.³⁹ In the event, with the morale of the volunteers low, he ordered their direct return to Sorell.⁴⁰ Arthur's "final movement" had failed, and he had to reconsider future plans.

By the commencement of operations on 2nd November, civilian morale was becoming a problem, making any undue extension of the Black Line unacceptable. Arthur exhorted civilian leaders on 31st October:

³⁶ *Scott Papers, op.cit.*, rough sketch map without title. This could possibly have been a working sketch as 38 instead of 37 parties are represented ahead of the cordon line before movement commenced.

³⁷ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.245.

³⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Journal entry 6/11/1830.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur (to presumably Donaldson) 2/11/1830, second page.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Journal entry 7/11/1830. Parties to return on 8/11/1830.

His Excellency [is] fully aware of the great privations & inconvenience wh [which] the Leaders as well as those serving with them have been suffering by so protracted a separation from their families & homes.⁴¹

Reports of desertions were increasing. Thomas Grant, a free man, paid to substitute for a convict, was sentenced to ten weeks hard labour for deserting the Line and selling his issue musket.⁴² A letter in the press from Macquarie River stated, "I blush to the bone when I tell you that certain *Volunteers* from this neighbourhood have crawled home from the line within the last fortnight."⁴³ The *Hobart Town Courier* questioned:

It will never we trust be said of any of us, that while the military who have comparatively no stake in the ultimate success of the colony, do not dream, nor indeed would they dare to desert their ranks, which indeed they could not do without the charge of cowardice or the risk of being shot for desertion, we, who though we may have come forward in the first instance voluntarily, should lay down our honour and turn our backs upon our duty.⁴⁴

The strain of the continuing operation was also telling on Arthur's subordinates including Douglas, (a senior officer sometimes surprisingly ignorant or careless of conditions of the officers and men serving under his command) who demanded an official enquiry into his own actions

⁴¹ C.S.O. 11324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to 15 named Army Officers, 31/10/1830. These officers were responsible to inform the civilian leaders.

⁴² *H.T.C.*, 6/11/1830, p.2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13/11/1830, p.2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13/11/1830, p.3.

"before a competent tribunal"⁴⁵ because Arthur had pointed out the uneven distribution of troops and lack of vigilance within corps of Douglas's division.⁴⁶ Douglas and Captain Mahon also carried on a vitriolic correspondence,⁴⁷ while Deputy Assistant Commissary General Browne demanded an "open" Court of Enquiry into his own conduct during the Black Line.⁴⁸ It is also evident that tensions were building between military commanders and civilians. For example, Douglas reported "Mr Proctors scouring [sic] party have been at this station now 16 hours Doing Nothing, they refuse to furnish even a sentry at night for their own protection,"⁴⁹ and Lieutenant Ovens referred a case to Douglas where Constable Wallace "positively refused" to obey orders.⁵⁰ Throughout this period, the soldiers, sometimes with toes protruding from worn boots,⁵¹ and under wretched conditions, caused minimal administrative and disciplinary worries to their officers and N.C.O.'s.⁵²

⁴⁵ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Letter Douglas to Arthur of 5/11/1830. Also see footnote 51 for an example of Douglas's indifference to condition of troops under his command.

⁴⁶ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 4/11/1830.

⁴⁷ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Mahon to Douglas, 12/11/1830. As a classic example: "I am obliged to you for hints as to "style" - but really with a piece of Bark to support the paper one is writing on ... there is not much room for select Sentences - rounding of periods - balancing of expression."

⁴⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 E, *op.cit.*, Letter Browne to Charles Arthur (Colonial A.D.C.), 22/11/1830.

⁴⁹ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Report Douglas to Arthur, 3/11/1830. Douglas cut off Proctor's rations and referred the matter to Arthur. Proctor stated "he has no Doubt but your Excellency will listen to him as well as to ... [Douglas]".

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Report Ovens to Douglas, 11/11/1830.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Letter Mahon to Douglas, 11/11/1830. "Many days have elapsed since I first applied [to Douglas] for shoes - for want of which many men, I apprehend will not be able to march on Sunday next The Toes of some actually appear through their Boots". Douglas advised Arthur that according to Mahon his corps were "almost bootless" (*Ibid.*, Memo Douglas to Arthur, 11/11/1830). Mahon responded to caustic comments by Douglas (footnote 47 above) and demanded that this letter of 12/11/1830 be forwarded to Arthur, so that action could be taken on his men's lack of boots. Douglas forwarded this second letter under cover of a Memorandum to Arthur of 13/11/1830.

⁵² The only case of a lapse in discipline recorded in Line files reviewed for this thesis, was that of Private Haggan, 57th Regiment, who was absent from his place of night duty and then used threatening language to Constable Buxton, (C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Lt. Ovens to Douglas, 11/11/1830). This is a rare example of a soldier on the Line being under civil command, an old problem recurring.

Phase III

After failing to see any sign of Aborigines on the "final movement" of 2nd - 6th November, Arthur was probably relieved when several reports were received on 7th - 8th November of natives inside the cordon. One was of a large tribe in extensive scrub north of Iron Creek,⁵³ while two men and a boy were reported on the Carlton,⁵⁴ and six or seven Aborigines were seen by two men on their way to Pittwater.⁵⁵ Arthur quickly organized a vigorous search for the reported tribe using roving parties returning from East Bay Neck and 50 to 60 men each from Donaldson's and Wentworth's divisions.⁵⁶ This search was still continuing,⁵⁷ when on 10th November 1830, he issued a warning order to Douglas for what became the final drive of the Black Line:

the Roving parties have as far as is known at Head Qrts been unsuccessful up to the present period [search for the reported tribe], & many of the Leaders have been quite impatient for the last 3 days to return to their Homes - It appears therefore impossible to continue much longer to hold the present position, & the Col Comg [Colonel Commanding, Arthur] has determined upon making a forward movement on Sunday next [14th November] hoping before that day that the new Position upon wh [which] the Line will be halted [Line K] ... will be thoroughly examined & the trees marked. In the meantime the roving parties will be

⁵³ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 9/11/1830.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Journal entry, 8/11/1830.

⁵⁵ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 7/11/1830. A follow up was unsuccessful.

⁵⁶ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 9/11/1830.

⁵⁷ The search proved unsuccessful [C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Journal, 11/11/1830].

continually occupied in marching thro the Scrub & Tiers which extend from the right of the Line to the Three thumbs [between Lines H and K] ... to secure the movement.⁵⁸

Advising that further orders would follow, Arthur directed Douglas to prepare his division to move with seven days rations, and to attach a bugler to Wentworth's division.

By the 12th November, Arthur was waiting "impatiently" for the surveyors to report that the track and line marking was completed.⁵⁹ He advised Douglas⁶⁰ that he now planned to advance with Donaldson's and Wentworth's divisions first,⁶¹ therefore Douglas's division would remain in place for a few extra days.⁶² On Sunday 14th November, the day scheduled to commence the main advance, Arthur advised there would be another day's delay while still waiting for the surveyors to complete their tasks.⁶³ Meanwhile, he ordered a preliminary advance of part of the western side of the cordon from Lines H to Z (see Figure 12).⁶⁴ This was done during 15th November,⁶⁵ with the movement covered by the roving parties which the day before scouted ahead of the advance, and then on the 15th/16th November cleared southward to Iron Creek securing the southern boundary of Line K by the 17th.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 10/11/1830.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12/11/1830.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ From Line H to K.

⁶² Before moving from Line H to L on the east of Line K.

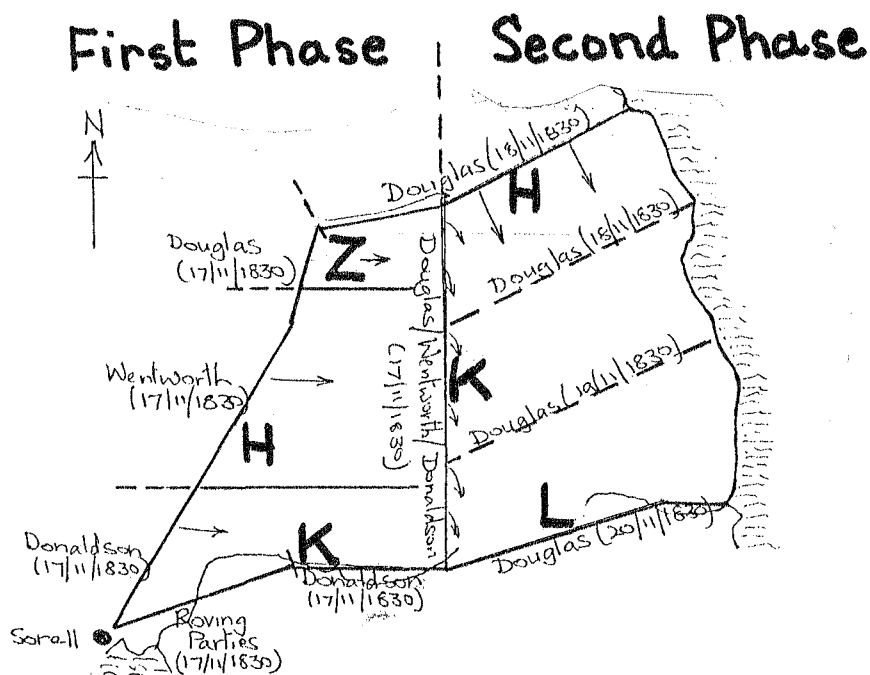
⁶³ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to Douglas, 14/11/1830.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Vicary, 13/11/1830.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Journal, 15/11/1830. Note: Frankland incorrectly dated the Journal from Monday, 15/11/1830 (which he dated 16th) through to the Thursday.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to Vicary, 13/11/1830 for orders. Additional detail for the advance to "a New Position" (Line Z) being issued on 14/11/1830, (*Ibid.*, Arthur to Douglas).

On the 15th November, while Line Z was being secured, Arthur issued written orders for searching inside the cordon southward to the Iron Creek/Sandpit River (Line K - L).⁶⁷ With the thick scrub and rugged terrain, especially in the Wielangta Hill (Prosser's Sugar Loaf) and Three Thumbs complex, Arthur planned to do this in two phases. These were: Firstly, on 17th November Wentworth's, Donaldson's and part of Douglas's divisions would advance in an easterly direction from Lines Z - H to K, with Douglas's elements and Wentworth's division securing the northern part of Line K, Donaldson was to secure the remainder of the eastward facing Line K and part of the southern boundary of the same line. The remainder of the southern part of Line K having already been secured by Captain Moriarty's roving parties. This movement was to be completed by the night of 17th November (see Rough Sketch below).



ROUGH SKETCH

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to (presumably) divisional commanders and Captain Moriarty, 15/11/1830.

Secondly: Douglas, concentrating the remainder of his division on Line H eastward of Line K, was to advance on the 18th November from Line H, generally in a south-easterly direction thoroughly searching the difficult terrain. As Douglas's line progressively drew level with eastward facing corps stationary on Line K, these corps were to peel-off and join Douglas's advancing line, adding density to the numbers scouting the frontage from Line K on the west to the sea on the east. With two night halts included in this slow advance, Douglas's augmented line was to reach Line L (the extension of the southern boundary, of Line K) by 20th November (see Rough Sketch). Detailed movements for all corps, in both of the above phases, are shown on Scott's sketch map (see Figure 17) which provided the basis of the above rough sketch.⁶⁸

The advance to Line K - L generally took place in accordance with Arthur's plan. By the 19th November, due to the heavy scrub preventing Douglas's line remaining intact, Arthur authorised the advance be continued in a "more independent manner". Parties were to be divided into groups of five men who were to keep near each other but not to move over the same ground. The instruction also gave details of re-supply along Line K - L and that the whole force would move due south on 22nd to reach East Bay Neck by the evening of 25th November, where rations would again be available.⁶⁹ Finally, due to a reported sighting of Aborigines near Pittwater on the 17th November,⁷⁰ Arthur stressed vigilance as the "Natives are still in front." In a separate

⁶⁸ *Scott Papers, op.cit.*, untitled sketch map, undated, with Scott's filing notation (on next page) reading "Novr. 1830 Plan of Movements."

⁶⁹ C.S.O. 1/324 A, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Arthur to divisional commanders and Moriarty, 19/11/1830.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Journal entries 17th and 18th November (incorrectly dated as 18th and 19th).

memorandum, he advised that in order to create as much noise as possible during the advance, on 19th November the following blank ammunition was to be distributed: 1500 rounds to Douglas, 1000 to Wentworth and 750 each to Donaldson and Moriarty.⁷¹

The final advance to East Bay Neck took place without further incident or reports of Aboriginal sightings. Meanwhile the Commissariat had been ordered to have 2000 rations for three days available for issue at that location on the morning of 26th November.⁷² On this date, Arthur issued a detailed order for the re-deployment of the military forces from the line to their normal stations.⁷³

Returning to their normal stations, the troops reverted to their role of supporting the civil power. For a period the Aborigines were comparatively inactive, and Robinson, who during the period of the Line had accepted thirteen surrenders, continued with his conciliatory mission taking into protection the last of the Big River Tribe in December 1831.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Memorandum Arthur to divisional commanders and Moriarty, 19/11/1830.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Memorandum Charles Arthur A.D.C. to D.A.C.G. Browne, 23/11/1830.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Memorandum, unsigned to Douglas, 26/11/1830. There is no directive on file for the disbanding of the civil volunteers.

CHAPTER 7

The Black Line in Retrospect

While the counter-insurgency campaign in the police districts has never been subjected to major criticism or controversy, the reverse applies to the Black Line. As the major operation of the guerilla war, it has been the centre of interest for contemporary writers and historians. Even the number of men engaged is subject to disputation. Arthur's figure of 2200¹ is taken as a maximum number, dropping to 1829 by 1st - 2nd November,² then, with re-inforcements from Hobart, rising to 2000 by 26th November 1830.³ Therefore an average strength of 2000 men quoted by Jorgenson, appears a reasonable figure.⁴ Melville,⁵ and the *Hobart Town Courier*,⁶ gave numbers "upwards" of 3000, while Knopwood quoted 4000,⁷ and Melville's Almanacks of 1831 and 1832 stated "a force of no less than four thousand civilians" assembled.⁸ West gave the highest figure of nearly 5000, with 1500 from Hobart Town and

¹ *Supra*, p. 56. Taken as a maximum number as Arthur tended to paint a 'best picture' in any reports going to London.

² *Supra*, p. 59, and footnote 19.

³ *Supra*, p. 81, for ration requirement, 26/11/1830.

⁴ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

⁶ *H.T.C.*, 16/10/1830, p. 2.

⁷ R. Knopwood, *op.cit.*, p. 566.

⁸ *Melville's Almanack, op.cit.*, 1831, p. 147 and 1832, p. 134.

500 from Launceston.⁹ But it is hardly feasible that up to 3000 men could have been raised elsewhere in the colony. As an example of how historians have failed to agree, Ryan quotes 2000,¹⁰ Reynolds 2200,¹¹ Bonwick¹² Fenton¹³ Chapman¹⁴ and Turnbull¹⁵ give a figure of about 3000, and Jackman about 5000.¹⁶ This diversity, in both contemporary and historical records, illustrates a major concern in the study of the Black Line, which is that a 'mythology' has grown up because a narrow range of primary sources has been used, re-used, and at times embellished. A classic case is Davies's work,¹⁷ based on Bonwick's but including his own particular errors.

Arthur, in his despatches, apparently did not hesitate to place a biased interpretation on events to improve his image in London. Reports of Walpole's contact show how a historical 'mythology' can develop from a study of contemporary sources if reported 'facts' are accepted at face value. Reference has already been made to unfair criticism in Arthur's memorandum of the 20th November that Walpole should have obtained re-inforcements before attacking.¹⁸ Arthur developed this theme in his

⁹ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.49.

¹⁰ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

¹¹ H. Reynolds, *Fate of a Free People*, (Ringwood, 1995), p.117.

¹² J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.151.

¹³ J. Fenton, *op.cit.*, p.108.

¹⁴ P. Chapman, (ed.), G.T.W.B. Boyes, *op.cit.*, footnote 37 to p.380.

¹⁵ C. Turnbull, *Black War, The Extirpation of the Tasmanian Aborigines*, (Melbourne, Reprinted 1965), p.118.

¹⁶ S. W. Jackman, *A Slave to Duty; A Portrait Sketch of Sir George Arthur Bart, PC, KCH*, (Melbourne, 1979), p.66.

¹⁷ D. Davies, *The Last of the Tasmanians*, [London, 1973], passim. For example; a footnote to p.93 stated Arthur was also the Governor of the Van Diemen's Land Company, on p.114, the Black Line commenced from a line drawn from Waterloo Point to Lake Echo and on p.117. "Mr Austen the very active magistrate of Oaklands."

¹⁸ *Supra*, pp.70-71.

despatch to London of the same date.¹⁹ He made a dubious claim that Walpole disregarded his orders not to attempt captures but to only "gain information". Arthur inferred that as a consequence, "Since this occurrence ... endeavours to surround or drive on the Natives towards East-bay Neck have been unavailing." From Arthur's statements and actions from 25th October, as described in this thesis, particularly the despatch of 37 capture parties of 7 men each, it is argued this latter statement is a fabrication - yet strictly it is factual as subsequently no other contacts took place. Arthur's definitive statement came in Government Order No.13 of 26th November which claimed that had it not been for Walpole's actions "the whole measure [Black Line] would probably have been crowned with success."²⁰

Arthur as a commander appears to have lacked two particular qualities. One was a failure to appreciate time and space between the issuing of an order and the time available for subordinates to comply. He failed to allow time to prepare and transmit orders, or for the necessary pre-operational preparation required prior to execution, as already exemplified by his "final movement" orders on 31st October.²¹ In Phase III a similar failure was shown in his orders dated 15th November, which were long and had to be copied at least five times before delivery.²² Their receipt caused Major Douglas to make the following retort to Arthur:

I have this Moment 10 o clock AM received your
Excellencys instructions for the intended Movements

¹⁹ *Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.231. Despatch Arthur to Sir G. Murray, 20/11/1830.

²⁰ *H.T.C.*, 27/11/1830, p.2.

²¹ *Supra*, pp.72-73.

²² Copies to three divisional commanders, Captain Moriarty and file.

beginning tomorrow and to continue up to Saturday 20th inst. - In the *Absence of everything Connected with an Orderly room* [presumably Douglas's emphasis] I shall endeavour to the utmost of my power to furnish in time Copies of instructions for the guidance of Lt. Pedder Capt. Mahon Capt. Macpherson Capt. Baylee Lt. Grove Lt. Ovens and Lt. Aubin.²³

The above quotation, illustrates a complementary lack in Arthur as a commander, namely his over insistence, and over reliance, on written, compared to verbal orders. Arthur may have been displaying a general weakness of his times, as the statement by Douglas illustrates that he too followed the same slavish routine of distributing written orders, when by despatch of runners, he could have quickly called together a meeting of his corps commanders to issue Arthur's and his own orders, and discuss problems raised in consequence. In retrospect, with the passage of orders from Arthur downwards, this failure to issue verbal orders, followed if necessary by written confirmation, is a major weakness in command and control. A practical disadvantage of written orders, was demonstrated in Jorgenson's advice to Douglas that a copy of an order sent down the line was "in so mutilated a state that the Leaders could not well make out its contents."²⁴

In assessing total casualties during the Black Line, there is little dispute amongst contemporary writers and historians that the Aborigines sustained two killed and one man and a boy captured, but details of British casualties vary. Melville stated that four or five troops were killed

²³ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Douglas to Arthur, 16/11/1830.

²⁴ C.S.O. 1/324 E, *op.cit.*, Memorandum Jorgenson to Douglas, 8/11/1830.

by accident, but then asserts only one prisoner was taken who later escaped.²⁵ Turnbull uncritically accepts this statement without acknowledging its source.²⁶ Douglas does not appear to have reported any troop casualties during the Black Line,²⁷ and nominal rolls of personnel on the line record only that a volunteer, Isaac Hall from Broad Marsh, died of "wounds in his Arm".²⁸ West noted that accidents were few though some fatal and that one soldier was wounded.²⁹ The press, in an article of 27th October, reported one sentry having received two spear wounds.³⁰

While troops were criticised for lack of determination³¹ efficiency and discipline³² in operations in the police districts, on the Black Line they carried out soldierly duties³³ appropriate to their training and discipline. Under command of their own company officers and N.C.O.'s and despite adverse conditions, they performed well. The day after the Black Line dispersed, Arthur published the following Garrison Order which summed up his views on the troops of the 17th, 57th and 63rd Regiments:

The Colonel Commanding has great pleasure in

²⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, pp.102-103. Melville's count may have included those killed by Aborigines operating in the rear of the Line during the period, as a figure given by Reynolds of 4 settlers killed and 11 wounded (H. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p.119), bears a close resemblance to those quoted by Melville for "troop" casualties. Melville appears to have painted a bleak picture to suit his motives of personal animosity against Arthur.

²⁶ C. Turnbull, *op.cit.*, p.119.

²⁷ C.S.O. 1/324 B, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

²⁸ C.S.O. 1/324 D, *op.cit.*, "Nominal Return of Civilians in the Division under the Command of Lieut. Murray 17th Regt 20th Novr. 1830."

²⁹ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.54.

³⁰ *H.T.C.*, 30/10/1830, p.2.

³¹ *Supra.*, p. 30.

³² *Supra.*, pp.25-26 and p.31.

³³ Guarding convicts (*Supra.* p.8) and being under command of civilians in the field, being unsoldierly, whereas advancing to contact in Phases I and III and holding a line of picquets in Phase II was the reverse.

announcing his entire satisfaction in the zeal and good conduct which has been displayed by the whole of the military force employed in the interior since the beginning of October for the capture of the aboriginal natives. That the enterprise ... has been unsuccessful cannot in any degree be imputable to the want of zeal or energy on the part of the officers and soldiers employed, who have exerted themselves to the very utmost.³⁴

As the individual performance of the troops was creditable compared to the volunteers, contemporary writers and historians (with the exception of a dubious statement by Levy³⁵), have had no interest in any controversial canvassing of their merit, and Australian military historians, with larger fields to explore, have virtually ignored both the campaign in the police districts and on the Black Line.³⁶ Descriptions in regimental histories of units involved vary from being sketchy to non-existent,³⁷ both the British and Australian Armies have long forgotten this minor campaign.

³⁴ H. C. Wyllie, *op.cit.*, p.195, Garrison Order, 27/11/1830.

³⁵ M. C. I. Levy, *op.cit.*, p.114. Levy stated that Arthur "fell disgraced by failure which, he believed had been brought about by unreliable personnel of his own [military] profession".

³⁶ G. Odgers, *op.cit.*, *passim*, Chapter I "The British Army in Australia" ignores the campaign even though he has references to Angelsea Barracks and "Fort Mulgrave", p.14.

I. Grant, *A Dictionary of Australian Military History* (Milsoms Point, 1992), *passim*. Despite articles on the "Castle Hill Rebellion [*Colonial homefront*]", pp.76-77 and "Maori Wars [*Colonial*]", pp.224-225, Grant also ignores the campaign.

³⁷ The 63rd Regiment's History gives the campaign one paragraph plus reproducing the quoted Garrison Order (H.C.Wyllie, *op.cit.*, p.195), the 17th Regiment devotes seven lines to service in Van Diemen's Land (E.A.H.Webb, *op.cit.*, p.130), and the 57th with nearly 200 men committed for a considerable period to campaign in the police districts as well as on the Black Line, records only that "Subsequently strong detachments were sent to Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land", (H.J.Woolright, *op.cit.*, p.229).

In December 1830, gauged from press³⁸ and other reports,³⁹ Arthur achieved public acclaim for sharing the hardships of his men, and being constantly active, but he became subject to increasing criticism by his contemporaries and later by many historians. Had Arthur's Line achieved even moderate success in capturing or driving some Aborigines into the Forestier's and Tasman's Peninsulas, he would have been hailed "as an eminent benefactor to mankind."⁴⁰ Instead, controversial statements abound concerning Arthur and the Line. An analysis of some contemporary sources and historical comments are given below.

Knopwood referred to the public meeting held in Hobart Town on 22nd December 1830 to express the settlers thanks for Arthur's efforts, and requesting he continue with his campaign.⁴¹ Support for Arthur, except for several individual critics,⁴² was the initial reaction of the colonists after the Black Line. Twelve months later, Melville, writing a continuing history for his 1832 Almanack, noted that the plan was not feasible due to the nature of the country, habits and character of the Aborigines,⁴³ and:

now that peoples' opinions are somewhat sobered,
the illusion has passed away; and the surprise is less

³⁸ *H.T.C.*, 11/12/1830, p.2; for example, where 33 prominent members of Hobart Town's society, publicly petitioned the Sheriff to arrange a public meeting of the colonists so that thanks could be expressed to Arthur.

³⁹ *Clyde Company Papers, Prologue 1821-1835*, P.L. Brown (ed.), (London, reprinted 1956), p. 108. In an undated letter of 1830, Mrs Reid of the Clyde district, wrote to her daughter in India "Colonel Arthur has made himself very popular by subjecting himself to all the fatigue of this bushranging war."

⁴⁰ *Melville's Almanack*, *op.cit.*, 1831, p. 148 (written before the Line was cancelled).

⁴¹ R. Knopwood, *op.cit.*, p.568.

⁴² T. G. Gregson's remarks, for example, at the public meeting of 22/12/1830, (H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.107).

⁴³ Melville's Almanack, *op.cit.*, 1832, p.134.

that failure was the result, than that anything else could have been ever contemplated.⁴⁴

A subsequent groundswell of adverse comment developed from this period, as indicated in Melville's history, written some five years later. He noted that at the height of the "*Guerilla*" war it was not easy to suggest suitable plans, but goes on to state that "within a few months the black war was only recollected as a subject of ridicule."⁴⁵

Somewhat self-importantly, George Augustus Robinson looking back on his removal of the Aborigines from the colony wrote:

In my evidence before the Council I went so far as to say that the whole British army could not have effected it [;] at any rate the military force in the colony could not. The military operations to which I have before alluded cost the Government ... 30,000 [pounds] the entire cost of the colony was ... 70,000 [pounds] - and the result was the capture of two blacks.⁴⁶

West does not follow Robinson's negative view but, apart from some error of fact and doubtful statements, gives a fair account of the Black Line.⁴⁷ His view on the unsuitability and failure of the plan is

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.135.

⁴⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.106, for "*Guerilla*" war; p.107 - subject of ridicule.

⁴⁶ "Cost of Military operations, 1830. Narrative by G. A. Robinson", *Tasmanian Aborigines - Wars*, M.L., A 612, Reel CY979, p.266. This is a carefully handwritten manuscript, apparently prepared with reflection and without haste as opposed to examples of his Journal entries.

⁴⁷ For example, with Walpole's contact, West incorrectly stated the time and date as 22nd October at twilight. West does not question Arthur's version that Walpole was ordered not to make captures, but with his own qualification added "unless a considerable number could be taken". Further, that Arthur was "reported" (by whom?) lost in the Paradise area for three days is unsubstantiated by the continuity of Arthur's correspondence and journal and lack of contemporary confirmation. He is wrong in his statement that the campaign lasted one month. (J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.50-51 and 53).

straightforward. West correctly treats Robinson's conciliation of the Aborigines as a personal crusade but is critical that Arthur implied the Line was related to Robinson's work.⁴⁸ His account of the return of the unkempt civilian volunteers, and their subsequent recounting of incidents,⁴⁹ appears factual rather than derogatory. Yet these particular remarks have often been used by historians to slight the Black Line,⁵⁰ in developing a 'fiasco' view of that operation.

Fenton was one of the earlier historians who savaged the Black Line, stating "Nothing could surpass the absurdity of this formidable undertaking."⁵¹ Forsyth,⁵² Levy,⁵³ and Jackson,⁵⁴ all use the word "fiasco" in describing the Line. Turnbull refers to the "stupidity" of the plan designed to "provide both rations and circuses for the people",⁵⁵ while Shaw and Plomley take a similar but more moderate line using terms such as a "fantastic"⁵⁶ and "ludicrous" operation.⁵⁷ Robson allows caustic humour to indicate his view that it was a catastrophic failure; "but a good time was had by all the hunters".⁵⁸ Against this uniformity of adverse opinion, there is a weight of contemporary and historical

⁴⁸ J. West, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.57.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.54.

⁵⁰ Examples of using West's description are: J. Fenton, *op.cit.*, p.111, (without directly quoting West); M. C. I. Levy, *op.cit.*, p.113; C. Turnbull, *op.cit.*, p.120; A. G. L. Shaw, *op.cit.*, p.131.

⁵¹ J. Fenton, *op.cit.*, p.108.

⁵² W.D. Forsyth, *Governor Arthur's Convict System, Van Diemen's Land 1824-36*, (Sydney, 2nd impression, 1970), p.26.

⁵³ M. C. I. Levy, *op.cit.*, p.112.

⁵⁴ S. W. Jackson, *op.cit.*, p.66.

⁵⁵ C. Turnbull, *op.cit.*, p.123.

⁵⁶ A. G. L. Shaw, "Historical Introduction", *Van Diemen's Land (Military Operations)*, (Hobart, 1971), 4th p.

⁵⁷ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.31, Plomley's Prelude to the journal.

⁵⁸ L. Robson, *A History of Tasmania, Volume I, Van Diemen's Land from the Earliest Times to 1855*, (Melbourne, 1983), p.220.

argument which favours an Arthurian view, that although the Black Line failed in its immediate military aim, it directly contributed to Arthur's long term goal,⁵⁹ as it aided Robinson in gaining the surrender of the Aborigines, and their removal from the settled areas.

Paragraph 5 of Government Order No. 13 of 26th November,⁶⁰ implied that the capture of the thirteen Aborigines during the Line was part of a co-ordinated strategy, which in fact it was,⁶¹ and marked the commencement of the succession of surrenders to Robinson. His journal indicates the inter-relationship between the Black Line and his mission, although Aborigines passed through the cordon, they were nevertheless conscious of its magnitude.⁶² On at least three occasions during the period of the Line, Robinson used the threat of soldiers to pressure Aborigines into obeying him.⁶³ Correspondence quoted by Plomley in an editorial footnote shows that Robinson was acting on Arthur's orders.⁶⁴ This evidence establishes a linkage of cause and effect between the Black Line and its assistance to Robinson in his duty, as ordered by Arthur, to achieve Arthur's aims.

Some contemporary writers supported the view that Robinson's

⁵⁹ *Supra.*, p.54 for aim and long term strategic goal.

⁶⁰ H.T.C., 27/11/1830, p.2.: Not published in *Military Operations*. However, Arthur's despatch to Sir G. Murray of 1/11/1831, (*Military Operations, op.cit.*, p.246), claims a direct linkage of the Black Line and Robinson's mission.

⁶¹ *Supra.*, p.29 and p.64.

⁶² G.A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.277. For example, Lug.ger.ne.mene.ner's description of herself and five males escaping from inside the cordon, and her comments on the strength and organization (fires) of the British forces. For Robinson's comment on the impossibility of the Black Line capturing Aborigines, p.281.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.261, (1/11/1830); p.263, (2/11/1830); p.280, (2/11/1830).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.435, footnote 6. Letters are: Frankland (acting as Arthur's chief-of-staff on the Line), to Robinson, 7/10/1830; Robinson's letter to his wife, 6/10/1830 and Robinson's report of February 1831.

success was attributable to the Black Line. Melville referred to the Aborigines being frightened by the operation.⁶⁵ Darwin was more specific, and using a hunting analogy wrote: "the natives, understanding this kind of warfare, were terribly alarmed ... Shortly afterwards thirteen came in ... Subsequently ... the whole [surrendered]".⁶⁶ Jorgenson is definite that "The success afterwards of Mr. G. A. Robinson was *safely* [Jorgenson's emphasis] attributable to the formation of the Line ... But for that demonstration Mr. Robinson could not have allured the Blacks to follow him."⁶⁷ Bonwick, writing with contemporary knowledge, stated that although the Line was a failure, "its indirect advantages were great; as the Natives were shown the formidable resources of Government."⁶⁸

Recent histories by Ryan and Reynolds, in which minor errors do not detract from their theme,⁶⁹ support Arthur's position. Ryan writes that the Line dislodged the Oyster Bay tribe making Walpole's contact possible. Further "Despite ridicule from the local press, the Line achieved its objective in clearing the settled districts of the Aborigines". In this statement, Ryan takes into account Robinson's captures in the following years.⁷⁰ Reynolds, on the other hand, stated that the Line failed,⁷¹ but the Aborigines did not understand that, because of the strain it imposed

⁶⁵ H. Melville, *op.cit.*, p.105.

⁶⁶ C. Darwin, *Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited During The Voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle" Round The World Under the Command of Capt. Fitz Roy, R.N.*, (London, 8th ed., 1890), p.326. Darwin saw a similarity between the Line and "the great hunting-matches in India". (p.325).

⁶⁷ J. Jorgenson, *op.cit.*, p.99.

⁶⁸ J. Bonwick, *op.cit.*, p.172.

⁶⁹ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.112. For example, wrong date for Walpole contact and incorrectly stated that colonists returned home on 31/10/1830, leaving troops and field police "to scout the isthmus ... until the end of November". Reynolds, wrongly states that Arthur fought in Spain (H. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p.66) and that the Big River Mob surrendered in "January 1831" [actually December 1831] p.206.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, (Ryan), p.112.

⁷¹ H. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p.118.

on the colony, it would not be repeated, and without this knowledge:

It almost certainly persuaded the survivors of the war to consider a negotiated settlement. The population had dwindled away to a few hundred.⁷²

Therefore, Ryan and Reynolds agree with the Arthurian view that the Black Line contributed to Robinson's success in convincing the Aborigines' to surrender. As they wrote only brief accounts of the Line,⁷³ neither introduced the question of the effect of Walpole's contact on the operation.

On the particular issue of whether Robinson's mission was a feature of Arthur's overall strategy, Ryan concedes that he acted under Arthur's orders, but in writing of Robinson's discussions with Arthur at Ross on 6th October 1830, she changes the emphasis by portraying Arthur as wanting Robinson to assist on the Black Line while Robinson counters by recommending he go to the north-east "to capture any Aborigines that might slip through the Line".⁷⁴ Unfortunately Ryan gives no reference to this record of conversation between Arthur and Robinson, which presumably was recorded in Robinson's letters to his wife. Plomley simply notes "No record by Arthur of this conference has been found".⁷⁵ Either way, the argument that Robinson was working in support of Arthur's strategic concept, is confirmed. Reynolds does not comment on Robinson in relation to Arthur's overall plans. One historian who unambiguously does is Townsley, who wrote:

In 1830 Arthur decided on a two-pronged attack on

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.51. See also p.133 "... the prolonged violence of the Black War provided ... the necessary condition for removal of the Tasmanians."

⁷³ L. Ryan, *op.cit.*, pp.110-112, and H. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, pp.117-119.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, [Ryan], p.145.

⁷⁵ G. A. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p.435, footnote 6.

the aborigines problem. He decided on an all out campaign involving both military and civilian forces to round-up the black natives... As a corollary he sought out a man who would communicate with the natives and persuade them [to surrender].⁷⁶

In assessing the two extreme historical theories on the Black Line, the short term 'fiasco' or longer term Arthurian view, it is conceded, that as Arthur's military aim was not achieved, it was a failure. But by definition of fiasco, it was not an ignominious failure, and while it might have been discreditable or humiliating to the civilian deserters, this did not apply to Arthur or the military.⁷⁷ From the scale of the failure, some argue the Line was a fiasco, but with Walpole's contact site (see Figure 12), being less than 25 kilometres from East Bay Neck, Arthur came reasonably close to achieving some success. Because of the meticulous planning and execution of all its phases, the term 'fiasco' is totally inappropriate. Under the circumstances, where Arthur had virtually no options remaining for the military arm of his two pronged strategy, the failure of his short term military aim is balanced by the Black Line contributing to his longer term goal.

⁷⁶ W. A. Townsley, *Tasmania From Colony to Statehood 1803-1945*, (Hobart, 1991), p.31.

⁷⁷ *The Macquarie Dictionary*, *op.cit.*, p.651, (fiasco) and p.868 (ignominous).

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The history of the British Army in the counter-insurgency campaign to 1830, while being a continuum, breaks down into two distinct phases. Initially the Army was employed as an auxiliary force, supporting the civil power in the police districts. This was followed by the military dominated Black Line. In both, George Arthur played the pivotal role, first as Lieutenant-Governor, and then as a colonel, commanding the force in the field. An understanding of factors contributing to history of the period is assisted by appreciating influences that affected Arthur's decisions. The British troops, with their strengths and weaknesses were supporting players in a drama dominated by Arthur.

Because of Arthur's virtual independence of military command and absolute control of the civil administration, he was able to direct a co-ordinated campaign against the Aborigines involving all available resources. The British troops under his command were not trained for small scale bush patrols, but he blended their efforts with the para-military forces under supervision of the magistrates in the police districts. Tensions developed as Army patrols came under civilian control and often command. Despite the soldiers' ability being questioned by

settlers, Arthur's campaign was not subjected to any great criticism.

The Aborigines involved in their desperate war of survival developed into successful guerilla fighters being forced to increase their raids on settlers' huts to obtain essential supplies. Unable to effect conciliation, Arthur reacted by increasing the scale of operations against the Aborigines. Garrisons in the Interior were strengthened, roving parties established, and in 1828, martial law declared. In the same year, Arthur appointed George Augustus Robinson to administer the Aborigines on Bruny Island. By 1830, Arthur was convinced that the long term solution to the Aboriginal problem lay in a dual strategy of conciliation in the tribal lands together with military pressure to expel them from the settled areas. The Aboriginal raids reached their height in August 1830, and short of a war of extermination, Arthur, with the settlers' support, took the only remaining option, to mount a major military offensive to capture the natives. The outcome was the Black Line, which was the climax of the counter-insurgency campaign.

The Black Line was a military operation with Army officers commanding field police and the civilian force, raised by *levy en masse*, a reversal of the situation where the Army aided the civil power. This sweep and cordon operation, involving some 2000 men, took place from the 7th October to 25th November 1830. It included about 550 troops from three regiments, who, now being under command of their own company officers and N.C.O.'s performed creditably as opposed to the civil forces' performance involving desertions and low morale.

Controversy amongst contemporary writers and historians has

developed over aspects of the Black Line, particularly that Arthur was foolish to have planned such an operation, sometimes called a 'fiasco'. Such comments ignore that action had to be taken, and the Black Line was the only acceptable plan in a narrow range of options. With its meticulous planning and execution, and four Aboriginal casualties, it was not a fiasco, but considering Arthur's military aim, it was a failure. As the Black Line directly contributed to the success of the conciliatory arm of the dual strategy, conducted by Robinson under Arthur's direction, it is argued that it played a decisive part in the overall strategy. Distortions of fact concerning the Line by Arthur, contemporary writers, and by historians, are noticeable.

To the British regiments involved, this campaign is restricted to passing references in some regimental histories, and for the British Army it has been long forgotten. The Black Line deserves remembering by Australian military historians as the largest warlike operation in the continent prior to the defence of northern Australia in 1942. For Tasmanians, a universal consciousness has developed concerning the treatment of the original Tasmanians, yet little is known of the long and bitter war which is a part of our colonial history.

Bibliography

General Note

This bibliography only lists material referred to in the thesis. Other works which indirectly contributed to the sum of the thesis are not listed, but nevertheless, provided valuable background. Examples are Colburn's *United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal* of 1843, 1860 and 1861 (N.L.A.), and many works by Tasmanian authors on local areas, K. R. von Stieglitz and J. S. Weeding being representative.

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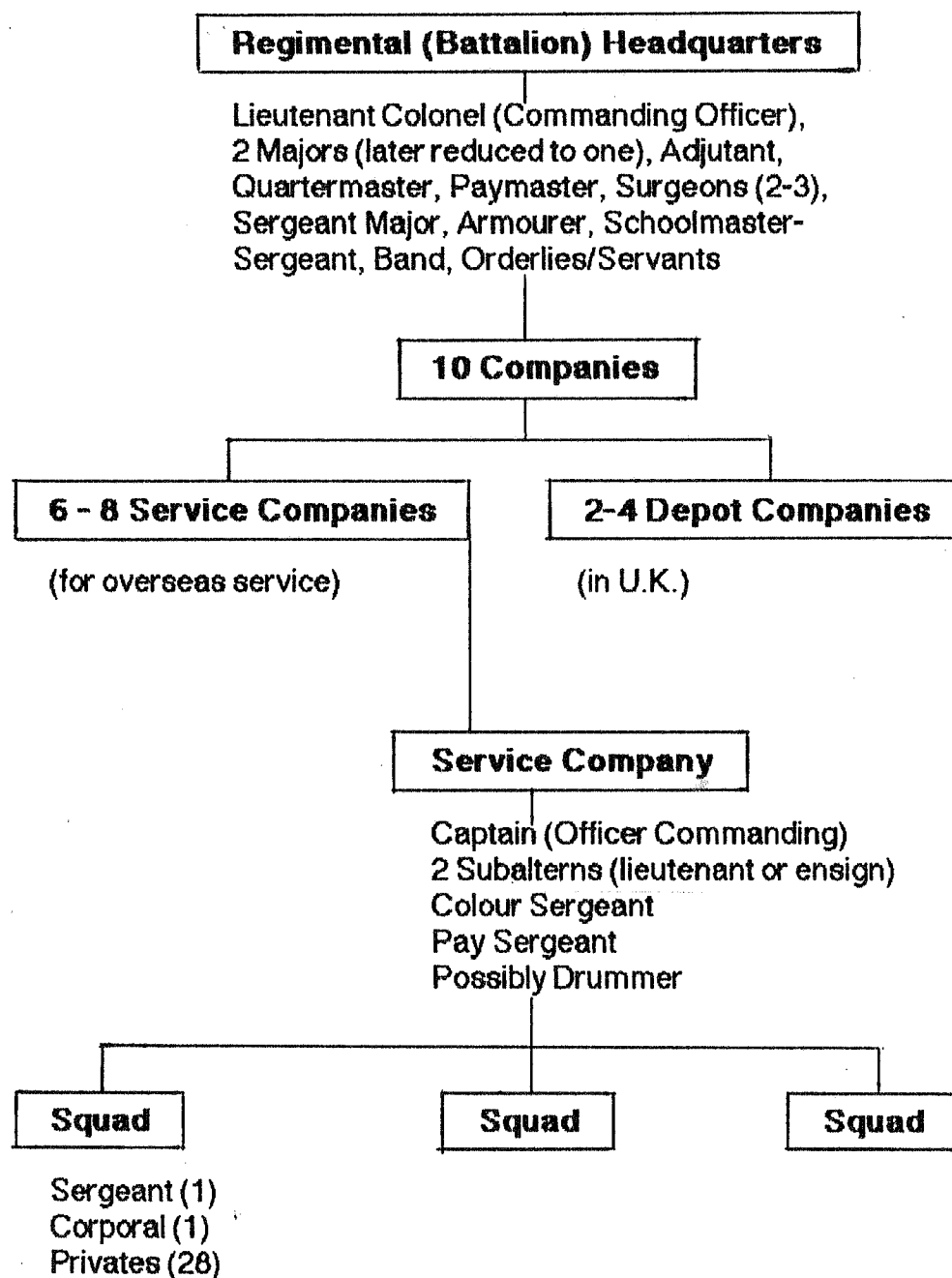


Figure 1: Outline Organization: Regiment of Foot.



(a)

Equipment weighed up to 60lbs; a normal minimum was:

1. Shako, with rain-flap.
2. Hair not pigtailed or powdered after 1808.
3. Rolled greatcoat and blanket - 8lbs.
4. 'Trotter' knapsack - tarred cloth and leather on wooden frame - chest-strap was uncomfortable. It held: 2 prs. shoes, 2 prs. stockings, 1 pr. gaiters, 2 shirts, 1 pr. trousers, 1 fatigue jacket and cap, 4 brushes, buttonstick, comb, pipeclay for cleaning, personal belongings - about 18lbs.
5. Mess dish.
6. Wooden water-bottle full, about 4lb.
7. Haversack - three days' bread, two days' beef - 5lbs.
8. Socket bayonet, 1ft 5ins long - 1lb.
9. Pouch, 60 ball cartridges - 6lbs.
10. Uniform now more practical, single-breasted with regimentally-coloured 'facings' and lace. Loose campaign trousers from local cloth.
11. Brown Bess, the strong, India Pattern smooth bore musket of 753 calibre, 4ft 11ins long without bayonet - 9lb 11oz.



(b)

Detachments of the 46th Regiment served in Van Diemen's Land against bushrangers. This depicts a corporal in 1817 after months of campaigning in the bush. His pack has been replaced by a blanket roll and haversack and civilian trousers substituted for the blue-grey overalls. The leather straps, usually pipeclayed, now reverted to dull leather. He has a feather in what remains of his felt 'Belgic' shako.

Figure 2: Illustrations of Equipment
 (a) During the Peninsula campaign and at Waterloo
 (b) Bush dress, Van Diemen's Land

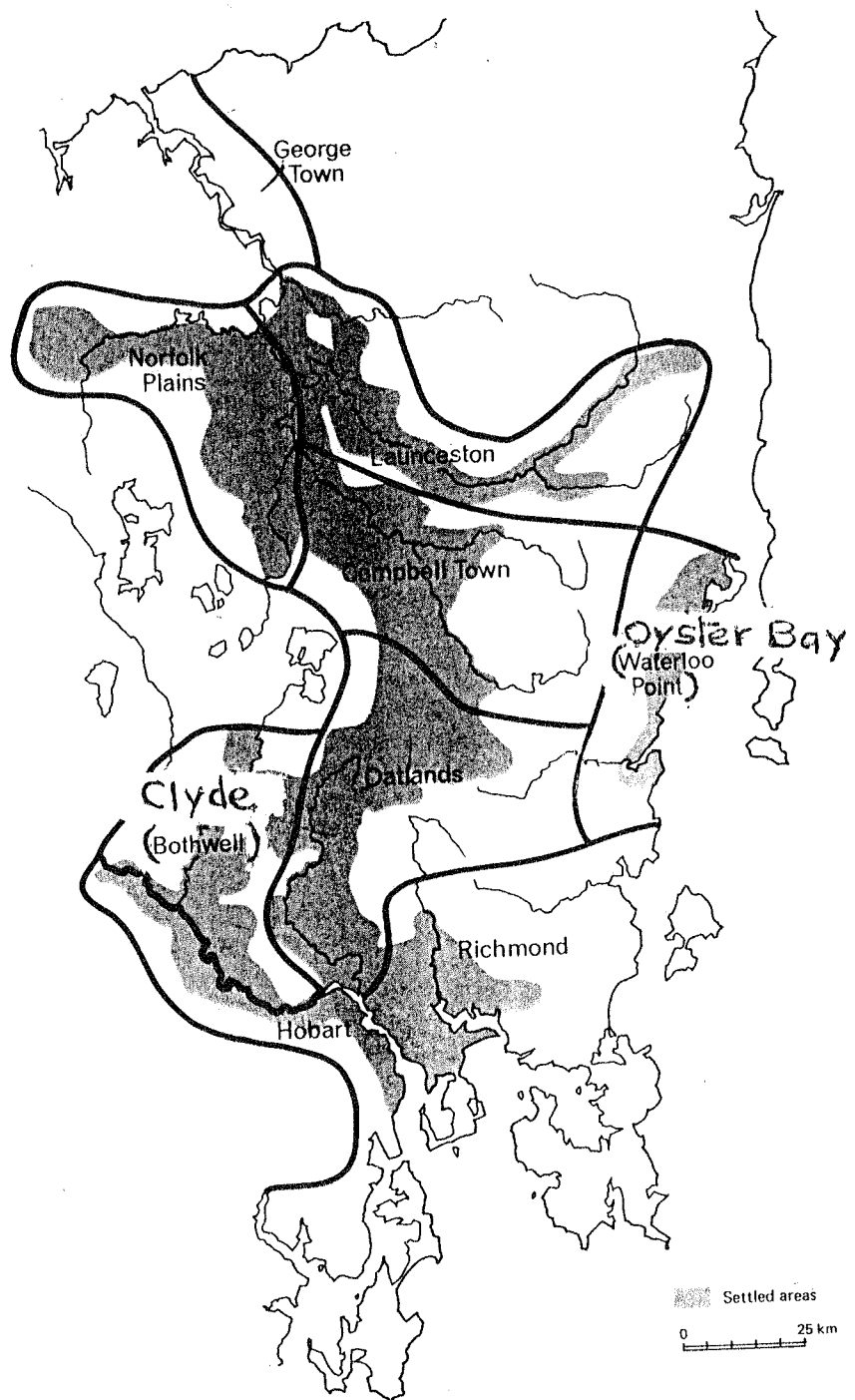
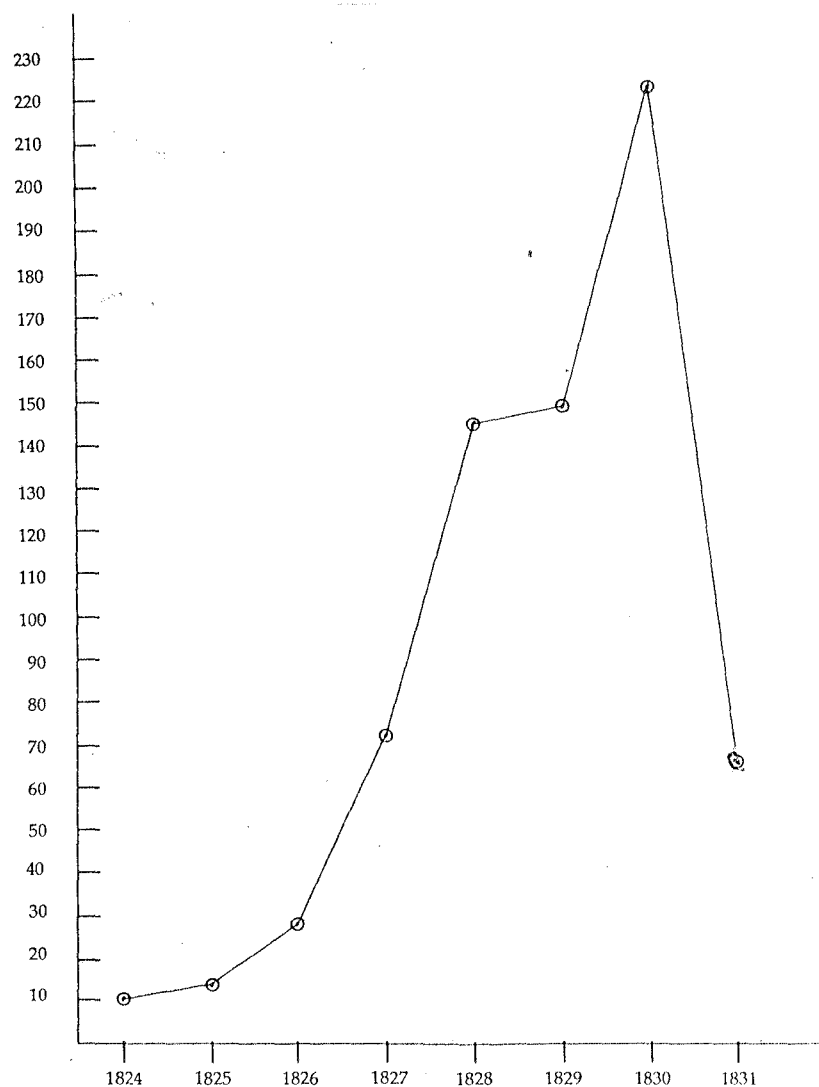


Figure 3: Map of the Police Districts.



Incidents 1824 - 1831

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total	N/D	Total
1824	-	-	1	1	-	4	1	1	-	1	-	1	10	1	11
1825	1	-	3	3	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	1	12	2	14
1826	3	-	1	2	3	2	-	-	2	2	10	4	29	-	29
1827	2	5	1	3	4	7	7	-	4	5	18	9	65	7	72
1828	7	12	18	11	2	1	4	9	16	21	14	21	136	8	144
1829	14	6	10	7	11	6	7	18	12	16	27	9	143	5	148
1830	9	30	20	13	10	9	12	41	19	26	20	5	214	8	222
1831	8	3	9	2	10	5	1	6	11	7	2	2	66	-	66

Total number of incidents involving Aborigines and Settlers in each year and month 1824 - 1831. [N/D - date not recorded.]

Figure 4: Graph and Table of Aboriginal-White Clashes, 1824-1831.

Distribution
of troops.

No. of Station.	Distribution.	Majors.	Captains.	Subalterns.	Staff.	Sergeants.	Drummers	Rank and File.	Available for Patrols
1	At Headquarters (Hobart Town)	2	5	10	5	32	16	299	100
3	" Port Dalrymple, George Town and Launceston.	—	2	2	—	3	2	87	30
4	" Macquarie Harbour.....	—	1	1	—	4	—	69	—
5	" Oyster Bay	—	1	—	—	2	—	30	20
6	" New Norfolk.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	—
7	" The Clyde	—	—	1	—	1	—	21	—
8	" Brighton.....	—	—	—	—	1	—	12	—
9	" Pitt Water.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
11	" St. Peter's Valley (Includ- ing Oatlands).	—	—	—	—	3	—	34	15
12	" Norfolk Plains (1st West- ern River).	—	—	1	—	3	—	33	20
13	" Sutherland Farm (River Isis).	—	—	1	—	1	—	20	10
14	" Ross Bridge	—	—	1	—	1	—	10	—
15	" Maria Island	—	—	—	—	1	—	17	—
		2	9	17	5	52	18	647	220

Figure 5: Estimate of troops available for counter-insurgency
duties December 1827.

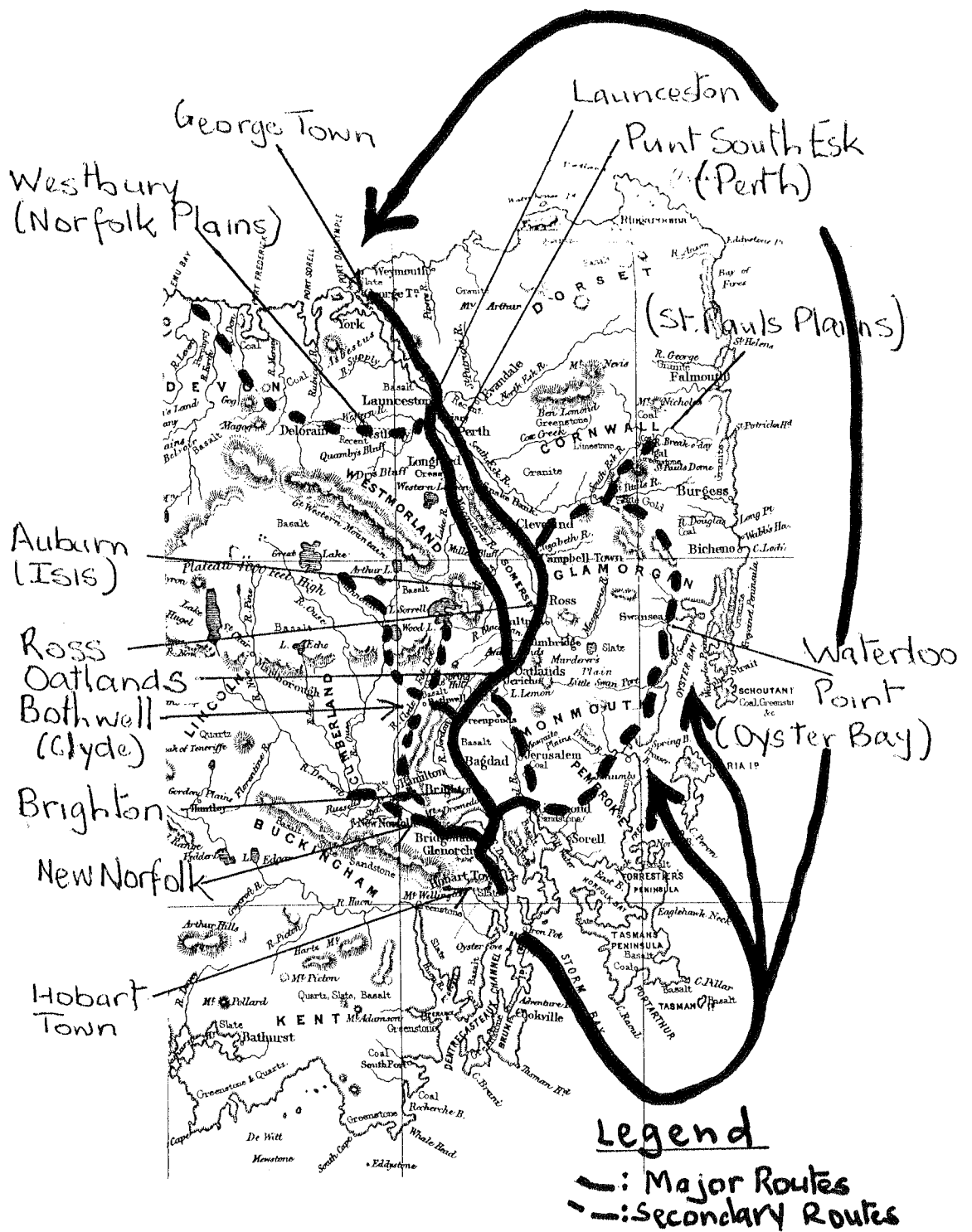


Figure 6: Locations of major military posts and communications routes.

Figure 7

Nº 9
FIELD PLAN OF
MOVEMENTS OF THE MILITARY.



REFERENCE.

- AAA Position from which the Detachments advanced on the 7th Oct.
- BBB Capt. Donaldson's position on the 12th Oct.
- CCC Capt. Wentworth's position on the 12th Oct.
- DDD Major Douglas's position on the 12th Oct.
- EEE Capt. Wentworth's position on the 16th Oct.
- FFF Major Douglas's position on the 16th Oct.
- GGG Position of the Forces on the 20th Oct.
- HHH Do on the 24th Oct.
- KKK Do on the 18th Nov.
- LLL Position to be taken up on the 22nd Nov.
- MM Do on the 25th Nov.
- NN Capt. Donaldson's Division arriving on the 1st Nov.

Scale of British Statute Miles 68-9½ to a Degree.



Year	Males	Females	Children	Total	Aborigines
1816	no census			1461**	
1817	no census			3114	
1818	2320	462	458	3240	*
1819	3495	*	*	4411	*
1820	3594	*	*	5400	*
1821	4162	*	*	7400	*
1822	6065	*	*	7684	*
1823	6850	*	*	10,009	*
1824	9514	2798	*	12,303	340
1825	10,979	3213	*	14,192	320
1826	11,501	3491	*	14,992	320
1827	12,786	4047	*	16,833	300
1828	14,047	4081	*	18,128	280
1829	15,143	4872	*	20,015	250
1830	18,108	6171	*	24,279	225
1831	19,815	6825	*	26,640	190

Figure 10: Comparison of Aboriginal and British populations.

Year	Huts/dwellings set on fire	Huts/dwellings plundered	Firearms/ ammunition taken FR/AM	Cattle speared killed, dispersed	Sheep speared killed, dispersed	Horses killed	Crops and stacks destroyed (does not include crops in barns destroyed - by burning)
1824	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
1825	1	7	1	1	1	0	0
1826	1	13	5	0	0	0	0
1827	2	21	4	0	1	0	0
1828	8	63	8	1	5	4	2
1829	5	74	10	2	2	0	1
1830	8	113	20	0	4	2	0
1831	2	26	14	1	0	0	0

Year	Flour (F)	Tea (T)	Sugar (S)	Potatoes (PT)	Blankets (BL)	Bedding (BD)	Clothing (CL)	Knives (KN)	Food (general) (FD)
1824 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
1825 (2)	1	1	1	-	2	-	2	1	-
1826 (5)	2	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
1827 (12)	5	3	3	-	2	5	1	2	4
1828 (27)	7	4	6	5	10	4	5	3	7
1829 (37)	14	11	14	2	19	17	7	7	6
1830 (55)	27	16	27	1	24	11	13	12	13
1831 (15)	5	3	5	-	1	3	2	1	4

Year	Landowner's killed/wounded	Servants killed/wounded	Others killed/wounded	Attacked - speared	Attacked - waddies	Attacked - stones	Persons harrassed
1824	2	8	-	3	3	-	3
1825	-	12	-	3	1	-	4
1826	3	27	-	5	6	1	13
1827	5	47	-	20	5	-	26
1828	13	58	7	42	8	-	63
1829	3	74	1	49	9	5	34
1830	12	62	2	46	14	4	57
1831	10	21	2	20	4	-	25

Figure 11: Statistical tables of results of Aboriginal raids, 1824-1831.



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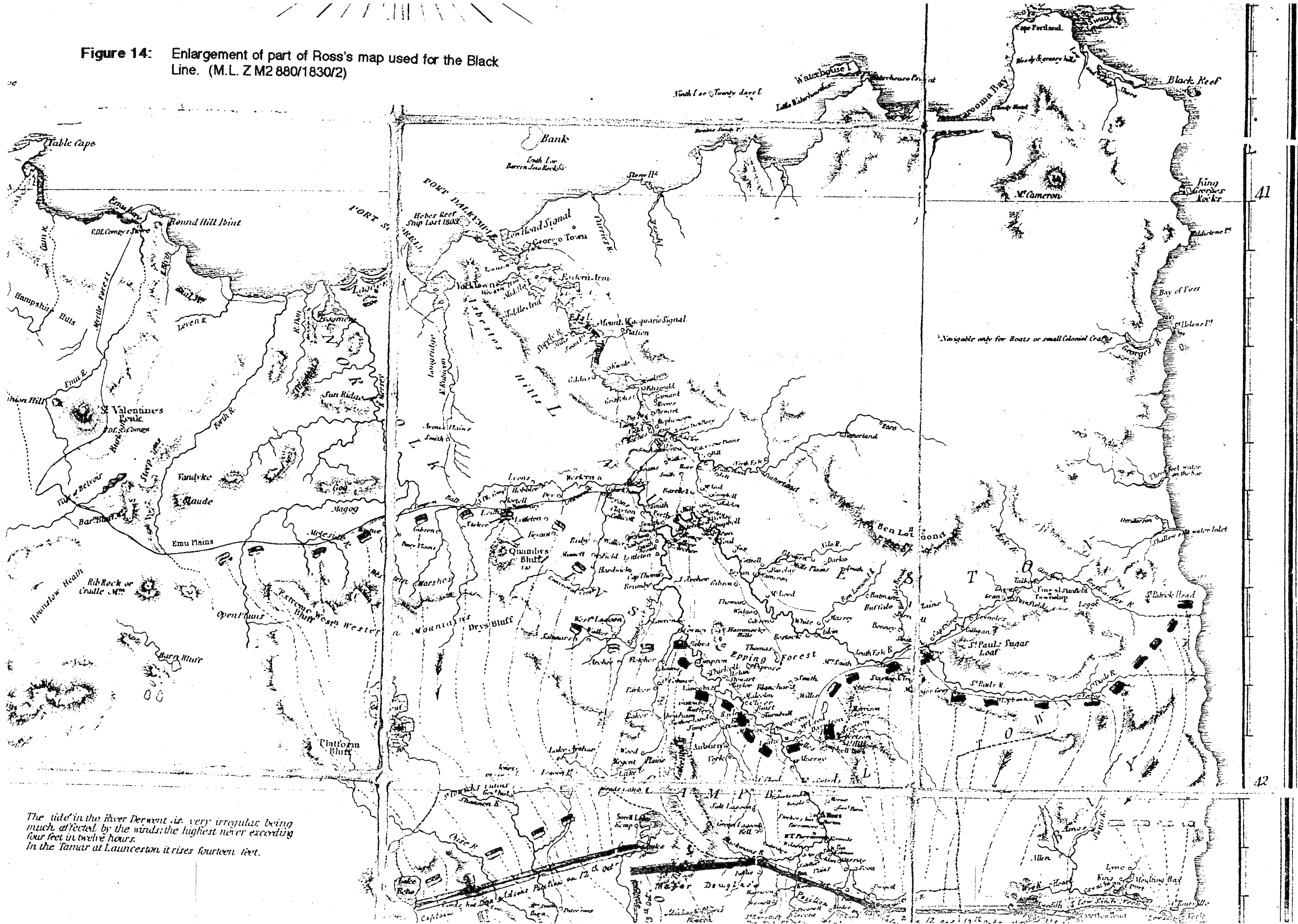
Commenced on the 7th October 1830

The Lieutenant Governor's Route.

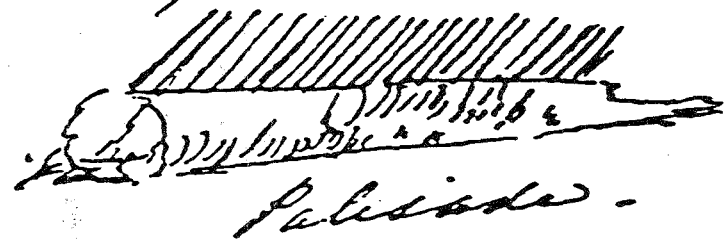
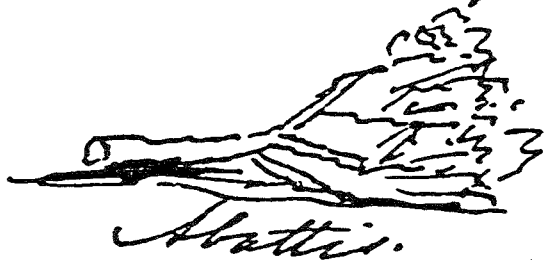
Monday — 4th — Torris
Tuesday — 5th — Rop
Wednesday — 6th — St Pauls Plains
Thursday — 7th — Lackey's Mill
Friday — 8th — Lakes
Saturday — 9th — Bothwell
Sunday — 10th — Blue Hills
Monday — 11th — Hamilton and Parson's Valley
Tuesday — 12th — Pass up the Clyde line
Wednesday — 13th — Bisdals
Thursday — 14th — Oaklands and Rop
Friday — 15th — Wabito Point
Saturday — 16th — Eastern Marshes
Sunday — 17th — Bisdals
Monday — 18th — Eastern Marshes & Ferry Bay
Tuesday — 19th — Prosser's River
Wednesday — 20th — Brown Mountain.

Figure 13: Lieutenant-Governor Arthur's itinerary 4th-20th October 1830.

Figure 14: Enlargement of part of Ross's map used for the Black Line. (M.L. Z M2 880/1830/2)



the view should be cut away & when it has been
 think the stump sh. be sharpened. These & any
 means w. may occur to the different Leaders, can
 be adopted very advantageously by each, after
 considering the capabilities of the ground he occupies



The points to be first strengthened are of
 course those w. are most remote from the huts.

Major Douglas & Capt. Macintosh will immediately
 make known the object to the respective Leaders & to

Figure 15: Extract from orders of 25th October 1830 showing
 diagrams of "Abattis" and "Palisade".

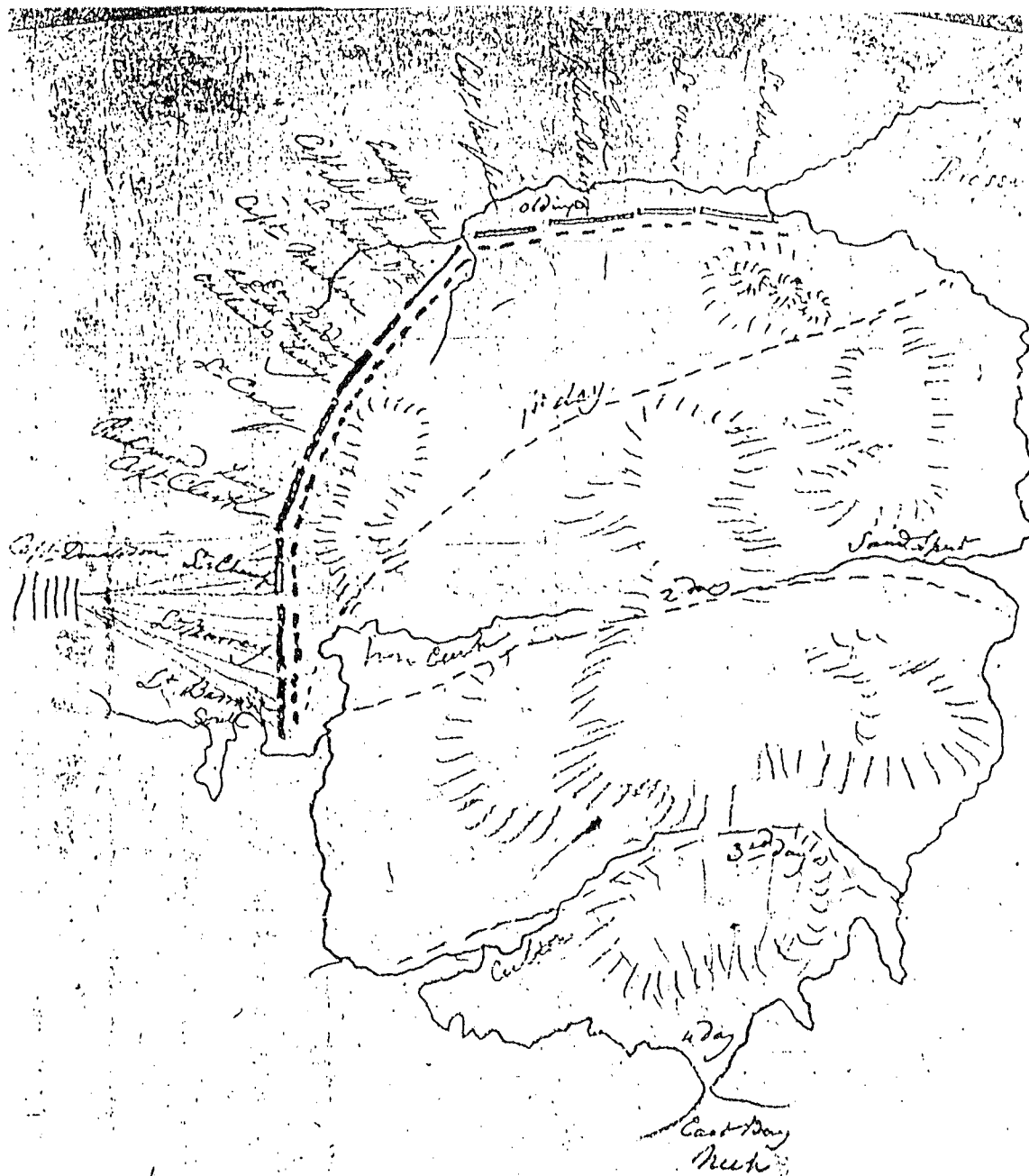


Figure 16: Scott's rough plan of movement for drive 2nd-6th November 1830.

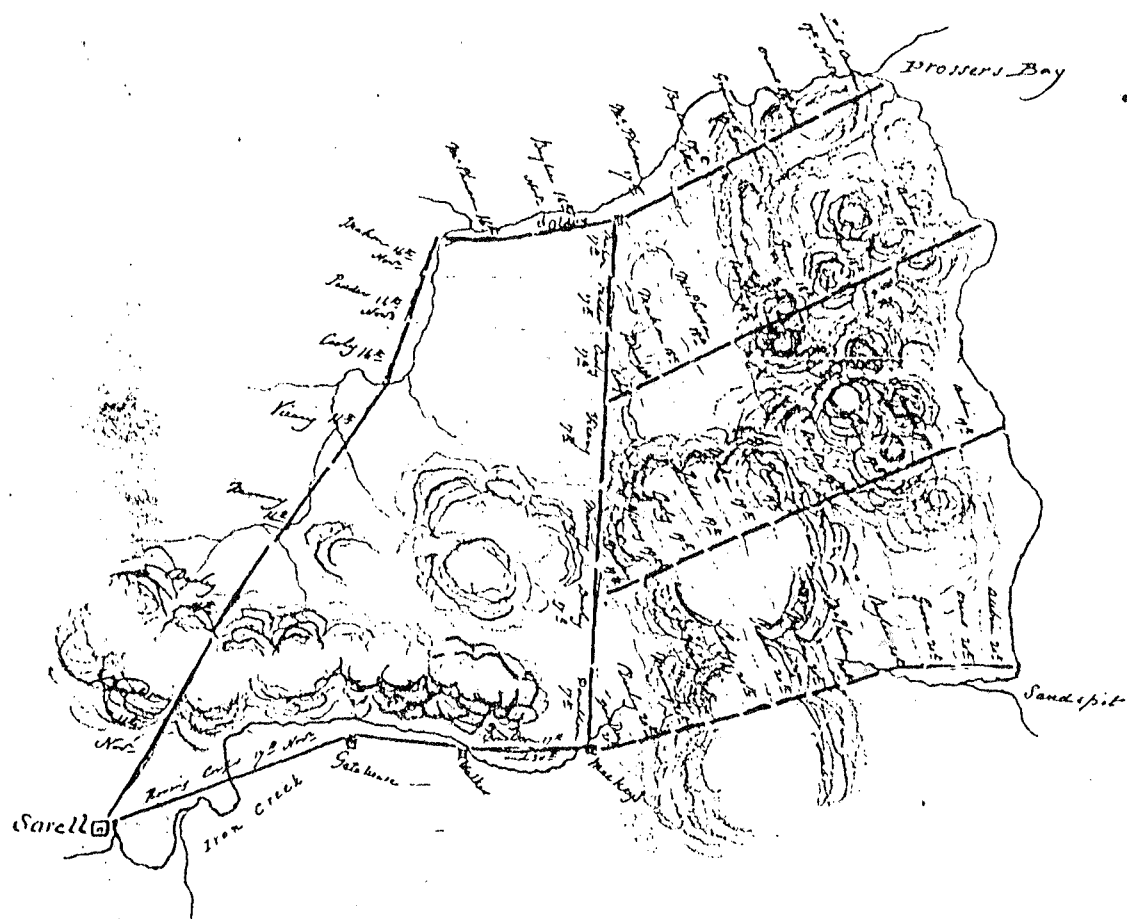


Figure 17: Scott's sketch map of advance to Lines K/L of 17th-20th November 1830.