

## WITH THE ARMY.

LONDON, Eng., Oct. 20.—The general annual returns of the British army, which have just been issued, show that the average effective strength during the year was 220,309. This is the highest average during the last 20 years. Only in five branches of the regular army were men required to complete establishments. The number of recruits that enlisted last year was 29,583. A very gratifying feature, and which shows the conditions of the soldier are being improved upon, is the fact that there have been a much larger number who rejoin at the expiration of the period for which they originally enlisted. Crime has taken a sudden drop; but there is still room for improvement in the matter of drunkenness. There were only 9,189 court martials—the smallest number since 1876. The number of men securing good conduct badges has gone up by leaps and bounds. The physique of the army has shown a marked improvement.

THE return of the Army Reserve was not quite so strong as on the corresponding date of the preceding two years. On paper the militia still maintains its numbers. This, however, cannot be relied upon, for it is often the case that the men have their names on several pay rolls, and many of the reserve men, it is claimed, fraudulently enlist in the militia corps. An inquiry into this state of affairs has often been asked for. To identify a man is no doubt a difficult matter, but things have been brought down to such a fine point as should make it dangerous for a man to attempt it. The united strength of the army last year, which included the army at home, the Army Reserve and the auxiliaries in the United Kingdom was 543,506 officers and men.

THE supply of rations to the British and Indian armies will come under the consideration of two committees in India at an early date.

THE parade of old soldiers the other day at Edinburgh was inspected by Gen. Chapman, commanding the forces in Scotland. The parade mustered 458, and the medals worn were an index to the wars of the last fifty years. There were several present who had enlisted 65 years ago. There were several thousand spectators who witnessed the march past, which was taken part in by the troops of the garrison. In addressing the veterans Gen. Chapman said that two days previous he had had the honor of dining with Her Majesty, who, when told that this meeting was to take place, wished him to convey a message from her. She had the most cordial sympathy with them, and she felt pleasure in the desire that they had expressed of meeting together as old servants of the Queen and country. Her Majesty wished him to convey all the good wishes it was possible for her to express.

THE volunteers cannot say but what attention has been paid them during the past year. Yet another allowance is made them, in that it is intended to extend the grant of the extra half capitation allowance made in March last beyond the limit originally laid down, and to give it in respect of every volunteer who qualifies as an efficient during the current volunteer year.

THE volunteer army order will bring about a great change in the physique of the volunteers. The minimum height standard has not been altered, but to those who are five feet six inches the chest measurement has been increased. Some inconvenience will be encountered in district corps some distance from the headquarters medical officer, but as the sergeant-instructors and adjutants are pretty well up in the examination there is not much fear of a recruit being accepted by one and rejected by the medical officer.

IT was feared that the new "Infantry Sword Exercise" would conflict with the scheme of instruction laid down in the last edition, but it is not materially affected. What should prove useful is the scheme of progressive exercise in lunging and cutting.

Directions are given to officers, when saluting, how to carry the sword, and it is laid down that non-commissioned officers and men on duty, with drawn swords, will "carry swords" to all officers.

THE distribution of the medals granted by the British South Africa Company to the Imperial officers who took part in the fighting in Matabeleland has been delayed pending the result of the recent operations and until it is proven that matters are in a state of quietude in that quarter.

LORD WOLSELEY commenced his tour of inspection of the military centres. Officers and men would have much preferred had he started a week earlier, as the furlough season is about on, and they will have to wait until the inspections are over. This will not, however, delay the route marching, which commences all over the country this month. A leading service paper says that the commanding officers will be careful not to let Lord Wolseley see the seamy side of the exercise. It is well known that men to avoid fatigue and blistered feet will wear old boots at the risk of their health. Lord Wolseley has but to see how it is done and the settlement of the military boot question will not be far distant.

A SERVICE paper asserts that the Admiralty and War Office will substitute the Royal Marine garrison for the military garrisons at Aden, Halifax, Hong-Kong and St. Helena. If this should be consummated it will affect the marines by increasing that branch of the service. The entire force at present is only 16,000 officers and men.

## VIRDEN'S CRACK TROOP.

VIRDEN, Nov. 8.—The third annual dinner of "A" Troop, Manitoba Dragoons, was held in the fire hall last Tuesday evening. Nearly all the leading merchants of the town responded to the invitation to be present. The occasion was taken advantage of to give a general idea of the work and progress of the troop, and there is no doubt that the information given will awaken the town to the fact that they have a really valuable asset in their midst in "A" Troop, Manitoba Dragoons. Sergt.-Major Joslin was in the chair, and opened the toast list by proposing "The Queen," which was received with all due loyalty and enthusiasm. Then followed "The Manitoba Dragoons," responded to by Capt. Hosmer and Lieut. Ramsay; and "The Non-commissioned Officers," responded to by Corp. Jolliffe.

In replying to these toasts the speakers gave a general review of the troop and its work. For three successive years they have gone into camp, and for the first two years they have succeeded in capturing the highest marks in the Dominion for general efficiency, thus earning a widespread celebrity. This year they were handicapped by the new drill, but although the marks have not been made known, they have every hope of still retaining the proud position of the premier cavalry of Canada. This efficiency was due to the interest taken in the work by the men, and especially to the series of winter drills held in the town hall, the use of which has been so kindly donated by the Town Hall Company. Considerable attention has been given to the shooting of the troop, several valuable trophies having fallen to their share. Among others, they won the silver salver given by the Dominion Rifle League for team shooting with the Winchester carbine, Pte. C. E. Ivens securing the Dominion Badge as best shot. They also sent a team to the Winnipeg meeting and secured the Cavalry Cup and second prize in the Skirmishing Cup. The finances of the troop were briefly referred to, and it was shown that they spent over \$1,000 per annum in the town.

The fourth annual ball under the auspices of "A" Troop Manitoba Dragoons was held on Thursday night in the Town Hall. This ball is now considered the opening event of the social season,