



Be different: buy direct
from gweaa.com or
tslbooks.uk

The idea of forming a Volunteer Reserve in Nyasaland was first promulgated in the Government Gazette. The CAT later reported that meetings would be held in the Zomba Library on 17 October 1901 and the Blantyre Court House on 2 November to form the "British Central African Volunteer Reserve" (6). The CAT editorial of the same date states that permission had been sought from the Home Government to form such a body after a meeting on 3 November 1900. Commissioner Sharpe presided at the Zomba meeting, Judge Nunan at Blantyre. In due course the names of 20 Zomba residents were put forward, Chiromo adding a further 15 and Blantyre, 29. The CAT of 26 October 1901, stated that Sharpe said the organisation was to be a Volunteer Reserve rather than a Corps and in times of peace there would be no drill or officers. The CAT editorial of the 12th reported that "should hostilities ever arise, it will be a case of 'White versus Black'!". Zomba held their first annual shooting competition on 23 December when Mr E.A. Hooker won the shield and tea spoon.



Blantyre NVR at Mandala Range (Klahey fourth from right, rear rank)

The first sections were sworn in as follows:

1. Chiromo (later called Lower River and finally, Port Herald Section), 28 October 1901.
2. Blantyre, 6 November 1901.
3. Fort Johnston, 21 November 1901.
4. Zomba, 30 November 1901.

Zomba makes claim to have been the first section (7) but, though this is logical, the Gazettes do not show it as being the first sworn in. Unfortunately, no further mention of the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve (NVR) seems to be made in the Gazettes until 14 November 1905.

The *Handbook of Nyasaland* for 1908 states that:

Rules were drawn up and sent out by the Colonial Defence Committee and duly published in the *British Central Africa Gazette*: An Organising Secretary was appointed, local rules made, and, by the beginning of 1902, the Corps was organised, and armed with Martini Enfield [0.303] rifles issued by the Government (8).

The *Handbook* goes on to say that there were presently four sections of the Reserve, located at Fort Johnston, Zomba, Blantyre and Chiromo respectively, (the Ordinance of 1908 mentioned