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# Guyana

June 1973

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Armed Forces

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

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# guyana

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### A. Defense establishment

Guyana in its publicity, systematically minimizes its military potential (Figure 1). Within the limits of its modest national budget, however, it has developed a small but fairly well-trained, professional force that can provide substantial external defense and effective internal security and may come to play a key role in the maintenance of national political control by the African minority (43% African and African mixed) against the East Indian opposition (51% of the population). (C)

This military establishment—the Guyana Defense Force (GDF)—has a total strength of 2,000 personnel plus an organized reserve of 600 and an unorganized reserve of perhaps 1,000 to 1,500.<sup>1</sup> It is primarily a

<sup>1</sup>For current information on strength and composition see *Military Intelligence Summary*, published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

lightly armed infantry force of two battalions, but also includes a small air element—the Air Wing—that has 20 personnel and three small utility aircraft, and a small naval element—the Marine Wing—with 40 personnel and seven patrol boats. The heaviest weapons in the defense force are 19 small mortars, 35 light machineguns, and four armored Land Rovers suitable for riot control but not for military combat. The force is dependent on the government-owned Guyana Airways Corporation for aerial transport and supply. (S)

The Guyana Defense Force has the missions of national defense, internal security, and civic action, particularly training youths for frontier development. It is equipped primarily for internal security. If confronted with an external attack, it could provide effective defense against the Surinamese but only

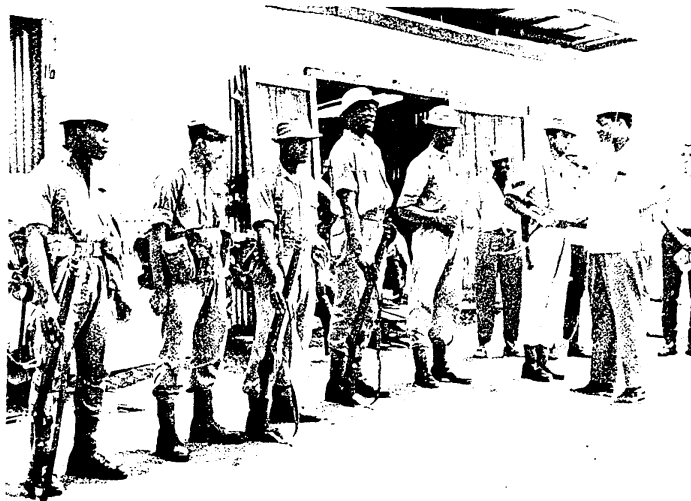


FIGURE 1. Official publicity release titled: Members of the Guyana Defense Force line up for inspection (U/OU)

delaying action against an overland invasion by the Dutch force in Surinam or by the military forces of Venezuela or Brazil. The Guyana Defense Force is a new organization, formed in 1966 from personnel with almost no significant prior military experience, and it is still so short of officers and NCO's that any rapid expansion is difficult. It is an all-volunteer body and has relatively high entry standards and strong competition among applicants. Rigid security screening has ensured a loyal and reliable force. The British Army provided the initial instruction and guidance for the force, leaving a legacy of discipline, realistic training, dedication to duty, and avoidance of political involvement, as evidenced by effective action in crises. The national political leadership is very alert to security threats and quick to use force whenever judged necessary for national security, neutralizing problems before they grow to unmanageable proportions. Because of its small size, the force is easily overextended when dispersed for defense against external threats, and it is deficient in cross-country mobility, long-range mobile communications, logistical support, and heavy weapons. Guyana's only strategic problems have involved the border disputes with Surinam and Venezuela and the need to counter Venezuelan incitement of the border population to revolt. The Guyanese feel that they had to face these problems alone. Guyana has no military agreements with other countries. Despite Guyana's membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations and close relations between the Guyanese and British military, the British clearly did not want to become involved in the border crises. The United Kingdom and the United States provided very little in answer to pleas by Guyanese for military equipment to expand its force. In mid-1970, however, both Surinam and Venezuela essentially agreed to accept a prolonged status quo, thus eliminating any immediate external threat. (S)

Internally, the Guyana Defense Force, in cooperation with the police, is capable of maintaining order in any likely contingency. Intelligence efforts are directed primarily against the possibility of violence developing in Guyana's East Indian community, and the probability of having advanced knowledge of any significant plotting is very high. The government is quick and heavyhanded in taking action against any developing disorders. The Communist People's Progressive Party (PPP)—composed mainly of East Indians—has 30 to 50 members who have received guerrilla warfare training in Cuba (statements of several hundred members trained in Cuba and Guyana for that party's Guyana Liberation Army up to the end of 1963 are probably extremely unrealistic),

it has held classes in military tactics for its youths, and other East Indian groups have considered preparation for eventual guerrilla warfare. But the government is aware of the individuals who have received insurgency training and would quickly put them under arrest if a threat were developing. Although Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the PPP, has said that guerrilla warfare is "historically inevitable" for Guyana, he admits privately that the East Indian community probably would be beaten in such a conflict. He personally lacks the background and temperament to lead that type of struggle, the mass of the East Indians oppose general violence, and the geography is partially unfavorable for guerrillas. The jungle would provide only basic sustenance, the adjacent areas exposed to raids are East Indian, and the African areas are solidly African and would provide no hideouts for East Indian guerrillas. (S)

In civic action, the Guyana Defense Force provides support for the Guyana Youth Corps, which gives youths the civilian skills needed for the development of Guyana's interior. The defense force establishes remote military posts, where the military support and security encourage new settlements, and clears new roads through the jungle. Its major project has been the clearing of a road over the difficult terrain from the Brazilian frontier toward Mahdia, meeting civilian volunteers working over easier terrain outward from Mahdia. (U/OU)

Strong British tradition has kept the Guyana Defense Force strictly nonpolitical and under firm civilian control. The force is not an independent power center and gives no promise of becoming a major political force. Prime Minister Burnham, however, has been expanding his influence over the force and eventually may make it a personal political instrument. He is beginning to change it in line with his concept of a cooperative state. The use of "sir" in the Guyana Defense Force was abolished in mid-1971. Lt. Col. Ulric Pilgrim was appointed Commander of the Guyana Defense Force in 1972 over several senior officers apparently because of his open endorsement of Prime Minister Burnham's political views. Lt. Col. Pilgrim, in an article in the force's magazine in late 1971, applied Burnham's political cliches to the force, calling for it to become a true "people's army" under the "socialist concept" of self-help that would make the army and nation one entity. The force is predominantly African by design and would be expected to remain loyal to Burnham even if he should take drastic shortcuts in constitutional processes, particularly if they were to prevent East Indians from gaining control of the government. Should Jagan gain



power legally, the force might remain strictly nonpolitical but would perhaps be more likely to cooperate in a move to oust him. And if a power struggle were to emerge within Burnham's ruling party, the loyalties of the Guyana Defense Force could be decisive. (S)

#### **I. Military history (S)**

The Guyana Defense Force has inherited strong British tradition in its doctrine and training. British forces provided for the defense of British Guiana after 1803 and furnished military training for local part-time security and army reserve forces that existed in the colony after 1878. The present military force is the direct successor of almost a century of these local British Army reserves. But these reserves were never involved in military combat, and the present force probably has no personnel who have had substantial combat experience and few who held significant positions when the force, as a reserve, was under close British supervision.

The Guyana Defense Force traces its history to the British Guiana Militia, formed in 1878. During World War II, in October 1942, the militia units were incorporated into the British Guiana Battalion of the South Caribbean Force as an element of the active British Army providing for the security of the colony. Only the band remained as a part of the local reserve force. The local force was reconstituted in 1945, largely from the wartime personnel, as the British Guiana Volunteer Corps, and in 1948 was renamed the British Guiana Volunteer Force. Thereafter, recruits came almost exclusively from civilian life. This force was a territorial infantry battalion of 600 personnel and received 1 hour of training each week and one 2-week training period each year. Elements of the force were called up at various times during the serious racial disorders beginning in 1962, and the entire force was on full-time active duty from the declaration of an emergency on 23 April 1964 until late 1965, supplementing the police and British troops primarily with guard duties.

In anticipation of independence, Cheddi Jagan, while Premier, seriously considered the formation of a local military force. He had two Israeli officers spend several months in British Guiana in 1962 developing a plan for a Nahal-type agricultural-military force of 500 men, presumably to be composed largely of East Indians, who constitute most of the farming population. He obtained an appropriation from the parliament for this army, but the Governor General refused to sign the bill.

The Guyana Defense Force was formed in January 1966 in preparation for national independence the following May. Its initial personnel were recruited from the British Guiana Volunteer Force, from a separate military-type police force known as the Special Services Unit, and from the civil service and the general public.

The Special Services Unit was a separate security force recruited in February 1964 as a potential nucleus for the coming defense force. It was a racially balanced organization directly under the Governor General for use in case of disorders during the preindependence election period. This force was armed with rifles and was organized into two companies. Personnel received police training, including riot control, followed by basic infantry training and 3 weeks of advanced training with local British troops. Officer cadets attended the 6-month Mons Officer Cadet School and then served for a time with British forces in Europe. The unit, however, provided less support than anticipated for the defense force. Some of its key personnel were detailed from the police, and when given the choice of service, in about October 1965, only 30 of the 117 members of the Special Services Unit opted for the defense force.

The new defense force was smaller and less well equipped than the original planners considered necessary, because the Guyanese Government provided only two-thirds of the planned funds. Nevertheless, with the United Kingdom donating its local military materiel and providing intensive training, the force got off to an auspicious start. Local British forces provided initial training, and six British officers and nine warrant officers and enlisted men were loaned to Guyana to hold all key command and technical positions. They were replaced by Guyanese on a staggered basis beginning in June 1968. The last Britisher, Col. Ronald J. Pope, who had commanded the force with the title of Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defense Force, turned over the command on 1 October 1968 to a Guyanese, then Col. Arthur Leslie Price, who was given the new title of Commander of the Guyana Defense Force. Col. Pope continued to play a major role in force operations for another half year, however, retaining his title of Chief of Staff but formally serving in an advisory and staff position until his departure on 27 March 1969 (Col. Price later was given the title of Chief of Staff).

The British effort initially was directed toward making the Guyana Defense Force primarily a conventional military force. The government, however, apparently pressured the force to concentrate

on internal security, and about mid-1968 the emphasis changed to devote much greater attention to that mission.

In 1969, events caused a sudden reorientation toward the military mission. Cattle ranchers in the Rupununi area of southern Guyana, secretly encouraged by Venezuela, rose in revolt and killed local police. In response, 10 soldiers were immediately flown by the government airline on 2 January 1969 to the local airfield at Lethem, disembarking under gunfire, and holding the airfield for several hours until the equivalent of two companies of troops were flown in. The leading rebels fled, and the troops, by good discipline, apparently avoided any armed clashes and quickly established excellent rapport with the population, including the Amerindians. The civilian officials, demoralized by the rebellion, were evacuated, and the military for a time conducted all local government activity.

The Venezuelan border situation remained uneasy, however, because of further attempts from Venezuela to instigate border revolts and the concentration of Rupununi refugees in Venezuela in possible training camps near the Guyana border. Later, tension developed around Ankoko Island in the northwest, and there were some firing incidents from local Venezuelan forces, including Venezuelan mortar fire on a nearby Guyanese airstrip as late as February 1970. A threat also developed from Surinam during this period. On 9 August 1969, there was a news story of a Surinamese military base being established at the confluence of the New River and the Courantyne River, in a disputed area in southeastern Guyana. Alarmed, the Guyana Government ordered seizure of the base. The defense force selected about 100 personnel, rehearsed rapid airlandings, and at dawn on 19 August landed 40 men from two aircraft, surprised the Surinamese force of 15 to 20 police, exchanged some fire, and forced the Surinamese to abandon their defenses and flee without any casualties on either side. The post, which the Surinamese called Tjgrie, was renamed Camp Jaguar.

Because of the tensions, Guyana decided to expand its two-battalion defense force to three battalions. By dropping virtually all unit training and concentrating on recruit training, the force succeeded in increasing from 1,000 in 1968 to 2,000 in 1970 but, because of its shortage of officers and NCO's, had to abandon the idea of a third battalion and use the additional strength to augment existing units. Later that year, however, Guyana entered into an agreement with Venezuela at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, for both sides to accept the status quo for 12 years, and the leaders of

Guyana and Surinam agreed to demilitarization of the disputed southeastern area, which Guyana also viewed as an acceptance of the status quo. This relaxation of tensions has permitted Guyana to redeploy its military force primarily for internal security. Continuing attention is being paid to an eventual military role, however, and an intensive effort is being made to provide protection for the interior, by the establishment of interior military posts, construction of roads, and the training of youths for frontier settlement.

## 2. Command structure (S)

The President of Guyana is the formal Commander in Chief of the Guyana Defense Force, but his position is an empty formality. The real governmental control rests with the Prime Minister, who theoretically directs the military establishment through the Minister of Defense (Figure 2). Prime Minister Burnham, however, considers that ministry so important that he also holds the portfolio of Minister of Defense and takes an active role in directing military affairs, particularly personnel assignments and security clearances. He has delegated much of his day-to-day control over the military forces to the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Ministry of Defense, Oscar Henry, who frequently has issued directives that the military leaders consider poorly thought out and not properly within his authority. Henry still appears to dominate the activities of the Guyana Defense Board, although some of his military responsibilities, reportedly have been transferred to a new administrative position in the Prime Minister's office—the Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defense Force—created in 1972 for Brigadier Price when he was replaced as head of the Guyana Defense Force. The position has the title that he had held as head of the force but is believed to have no direct control over the defense force staff; no further details are available concerning this new position.

The Prime Minister is advised on security problems and their political and economic implications by the National Defense Committee. It also prepares national emergency contingency plans. The committee consists of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, Commander of the Guyana Defense Force, Police Commissioner, and Attorney General and has had the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office as its secretary. It probably also includes the newly created Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defense Force and presumably would include the Minister of Defense if that position were held by a person other than the Prime Minister. Under it is an intelligence committee that meets irregularly.

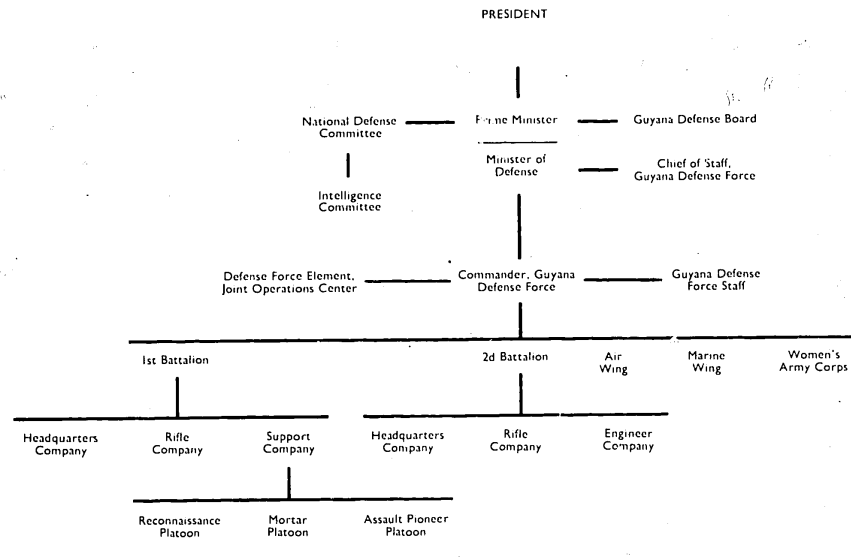


FIGURE 2. Guyana defense establishment (C)

The Guyana Defense Board is a corporate body directly under the Prime Minister, concerned with the command and administration of the Guyana Defense Force. It probably is within the Ministry of Defense, serving primarily for top-level coordination and control of defense force activities, and it may be the authority under which administrative directives are issued. When not engaged in military and other security operations, the Guyana Defense Board is occupied with internal force matters, such as promotions and conditions of service. It apparently meets regularly, and consists of the Minister of Defense (position held by the Prime Minister), Minister of Home Affairs, Attorney General, the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Ministry of Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defense Force, and presumably the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force.

Under the Minister of Defense, command over the military forces is exercised by the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force, whose headquarters are in Georgetown (Figure 3). The commander is assisted by a staff with each of its major elements directly subordinate to him. The staff includes the GSO-2 (Planning and Administration), GSO-3 (assistant to GSO-2 and also responsible for intelligence), Signals Officer, Ordnance and Stores Officer (equivalent to quartermaster), Engineer Officer, and Paymaster. Also directly under the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force is the defense force element of the Joint Operations Center. The Joint Operations Center is a communications and control installation combining a defense force and a police force element, located in adjacent rooms to facilitate close coordination of intelligence and control during crises. The two elements are completely separate, but coordination

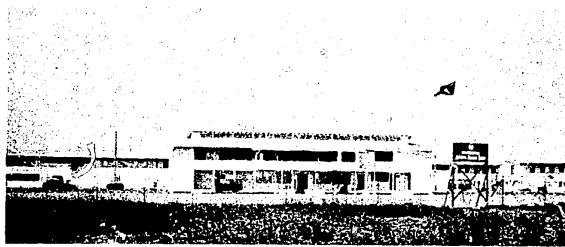


FIGURE 3. Headquarters of the Guyana Defense Force in Georgetown (U/OU)

would be assured in a major crisis because the defense force would assume control over the police in the Joint Operations Center as well as in the field. Also directly subordinate to the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force are the separate ground, naval, and air elements. Coordination between elements of the Guyana Defense Force and between defense force and police elements is not very effective. Intelligence support is provided to both forces by the Special Branch of the police, but the information often does not reach the defense force units concerned, and lateral dissemination of information is also reported as minimal. Coordination exercises have achieved some improvement, but, in view of the small size of the military establishment and the tendency to make decisions at the top level and to utilize task forces for specific operations, the lack of close coordination probably is not a serious weakness.

**B. Joint activities**

**I. Military manpower (S)**

The military manpower potential is estimated to total 175,000 males, of whom about 69% are physically fit for military service. About 9,000 men annually will reach age 18 during 1972-76. The distribution of manpower by 5-year age groups is as follows:

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	45,000	35,000
20-24	38,000	29,000
25-29	27,000	19,000
30-34	20,000	13,000
35-39	17,000	10,000
40-44	15,000	8,000
45-49	13,000	6,000
Total, 15-49	175,000	120,000

All personnel are volunteers. Applicants for commissions must have the equivalent of a high school education and must pass a rigid physical examination. Those who qualify are then required to pass a written examination similar to that taken by officer candidates in the United Kingdom. Recommendations are made by a board of ranking officers, and the final selection is made by the Prime Minister. After the candidate completes the training requirements, commissioning is presumably by the President acting in accordance with the direction of the Prime Minister. Commissions are for an indefinite period. Officers come from the upper and middle classes; nearly all have completed secondary school, and some are graduates of technical schools or have attended college.

Enlisted applicants must have a primary school education and pass a written examination prepared and graded by the Ministry of Education. They also must pass a strict physical examination. There are sufficient volunteers to permit the application of rigid standards. During the first 2 years of recruitment, 1966 and 1967, only 15 of every 500 volunteers were accepted for regular service, and this ratio probably still holds true. Although numbers present no difficulty, the fact that enlisted men come from the lower classes presents the continuing problem of finding men with sufficient mechanical training to serve as technical specialists. Enlistment is for 3 years of active duty followed by a 9-year reserve commitment, but individuals may elect to remain on active duty.

Service in the military has always been popular, and morale has been high, although it suffered a temporary slump in 1967 over suspicions of disloyalty following a weapons theft and in 1968 over increased deployment to remote posts and curtailment of leave time as border tensions increased. Morale quickly recovered, however, during the successful military

actions of 1969. Personnel are well disciplined and like soldiering. Personnel turnover, however, has been high—reportedly 40% of the original soldiers left active service upon completion of the required 3 years in 1968-69, and a number of officers also have left the service. Better qualified men, in particular, leave the service to seek higher paying civilian employment. Social status reflects British values and is high for officers and low for enlisted men.

The Guyana Defense Force also includes a Women's Army Corps element of 60 personnel, including officers and enlistees. Part are in the regular force, perhaps formally organized as an administrative support company, but, in practice, integrated into various other units, and part in the reserve. They are stationed only in Georgetown and at Tinjari International Airfield, assigned to clerical, administrative, communications, vehicle-driving, and cooking activities, but members of the corps also receive weapons training.

Having an absolutely reliable force has been a major consideration to Prime Minister Burnham from the first. The principal security threat has been viewed as coming from the East Indians, particularly the People's Progressive Party, although attention also has been directed to the threat from black radicals who might seek to overturn the government. With the exception of personnel obtained from the Special Services Unit (an independent security service, discussed under Military History), who were accepted without question, all applicants have been subjected to a background investigation by the police Special Branch. The background investigation is completed before officer candidates are accepted. For enlisted men a name check alone is required before enlistment, and the complete investigation is carried out thereafter. Any suspicion that may develop excludes an applicant and results in the dismissal of a member of the force, although the government is somewhat more lenient toward personnel with nonaggressive black radical associations. The security investigation eliminated about one-fourth of the original officer candidates.

Racially, Africans comprised initially about 65% but now perhaps nearly 90% of the force as a whole, an even higher proportion of the NCO's, and probably over 90% of the officers. Most of the remaining personnel are East Indian, and there are a small number of Amerindians, persons of Portuguese descent, and others. When the force originally was constituted, the British Government obtained agreement that it would be generally balanced racially between Africans and East Indians. But despite lip

service to this goal, it seems likely that Prime Minister Burnham has always desired an African force. He initially accepted the goal of racial balance only on condition that it would be kept secret, and early in 1966, following coups in Nigeria and Ghana, he became seriously concerned about the reliability of the force. The apparent implication of East Indian military personnel in the theft of a Bren gun, 14 submachineguns, and five other weapons from the force arsenal on 25 November 1967 made Burnham more uneasy over the reliability of force personnel. Venezuelan involvement in the Rupununi uprising in January 1969 and the ensuing threat of an armed clash with Venezuela caused him to abandon any pretense of attempting a racial balance, in favor of a completely reliable force. It would have been very difficult to achieve a racial balance in any case. The main original manpower pool, the British Guiana Volunteer Force, was largely African because its units were located in the urban areas, which are predominantly African. Africans tend to be better educated, in better physical condition, and more aggressive. East Indians in Guyana do not meet the same standards. The Guyana Police Force found that, in trying to recruit 75% East Indians in order to redress its racial imbalance, it could not obtain enough recruits without lowering the entrance examination grade by some 25%. Moreover, it was agreed from the beginning that there must be no question of reliability, and membership in the largely East Indian People's Progressive Party meant automatic disqualification in the security investigation. Thus, the initial African predominance was accepted as unavoidable. The East Indians have not adjusted as well as the Africans to military life, and a much larger proportion of them is eliminated during the initial training period. Moreover, East Indians have been promoted so slowly that some have quit before completing their contracted 3-year active-duty term. But those who remain in service, especially those who become officers, are very able individuals.

Although racial divisions within the Guyana Defense Force are not as sharp as in civilian life, friction does exist, particularly over suspected discrimination. Some of the East Indians reportedly have admitted that, in racial clashes in the civilian community, they would not take up arms against fellow East Indians.

The reserve is divided into two groups: the first-class reserve, of 600 personnel, which may be called up by the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force under authority conferred by the Guyana Defense Board, and the second-class reserve, possibly 1,000 to 1,500

personnel, which can be called up only if a national emergency is proclaimed. The first-class reserves are organized in tactical units and receive regular training. They originally comprised the entire 2d Battalion of the Guyana Defense Force. By 1967 the battalion headquarters and two companies had become part of the regular force, with the reserve comprising additional separate companies. As a result of subsequent security crises, the 2d Battalion has become a completely active element, but it is assumed that the first-class reserve still is organized into companies attached to the active battalions. Although the first-class reserve is available for rapid mobilization, it has been the practice, with few, if any, exceptions, to attempt to have sufficient active troops to handle emergencies. Reserve personnel who have been mobilized usually have been retained on active duty and eventually incorporated into the active force.

The second-class reserves are average or dropout members of the Guyana Defense Force who have some reserve commitment. They are not organized into tactical units and probably do not receive any additional military training. They probably include present and former members of the Guyana Youth Corps. The government is believed to view the development of this reserve pool as an important military asset, in view of the military aspect of the youth program. The government has stated that its continuing authority in demilitarized southeastern Guyana is dependent not only on the local police detachment but also on local individuals with military training who, presumably, are members of the second-class reserve.

The Guyana Youth Corps is, in effect, part of the reserve training program. In public statements the government has emphasized that the Guyana Youth Corps is strictly civilian and is under the Minister Without Portfolio. However, the original plan was for its trainees to be inducted into the Guyana Defense Force reserve, and the fact that the government refuses to reveal the strength of the Guyana Youth Corps or the number of youths that have been trained gives good reason to believe that the corps is an element of the defense force. The corps consists of volunteers aged 16 to 25 who are inducted for a 2-year term. After an initial 3 months of military basic training at Madewini Camp, near Timehri International Airfield, inductees move to Tumatumari Camp, on the Potaro River, where they remain under military discipline and participate in some military drills and occasional field exercises but otherwise are under completely civilian direction, learning a civilian trade and acquiring agricultural and other skills useful for the development

of interior Guyana. They also engage in roadbuilding and interior land-development projects. The government uses the program to encourage youths to settle in the undeveloped interior of Guyana, but it is not known how successful the program is. It was inaugurated for young men in January 1968 and for young women in 1969. Tumatumari Camp has accommodations for 500 trainees, and the 1970 goal for the corps was 500 men and 50 women. The corps apparently totaled about 1,000 youths by March 1971. Prime Minister Burnham on 21 May 1972 announced that compulsory national service for youths would be established before the end of 1972, with the objective of development of the hinterland and inculcation of a sense of national identity. It is assumed that this expansion of the youth program, when implemented, also will contribute toward expansion of the military reserve.

## 2. Strength trends (C)

The Guyana Defense Force increased gradually in strength from its creation in 1966, as new personnel were trained, until it reached about the level of the British garrison (1,300) in 1968-69. The border threat from Venezuela in late 1969 caused a sudden jump in strength to its present 2,000. Strength trends are shown in Figure 4.

## 3. Training (C)

Guyana has no military schools, and almost all formal training has been in British Army schools. Officer cadets attend the 5-month course in Mons Cadet School at Aldershot. A very few officers have attended courses in British Army specialist and branch schools, and two to four annually attended the British Jungle Warfare School in Malaysia during at least 1967-69. Guyana has sought to recruit trained pilots for the Air Wing and presumably has not provided pilot training. A majority of the NCO's also have attended military courses in the United Kingdom. As

FIGURE 4. Strength trends (C)

YEAR	GROUND FORCE	MARINE WING	AIR WING	TOTAL
1966 .....	560	0	0	560
1967 .....	655	0	20	675
1968 .....	950	30	20	1,000
1969 .....	1,240	40	20	1,300
1970 .....	1,940	40	20	2,000
1971 .....	1,940	40	20	2,000
1972 .....	1,940	40	20	2,000

an exception to this British schooling, one officer attended an intelligence course at the U.S. Army Intelligence School in Fort Holabird, and three officer cadets are attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in the classes that began in 1969 and 1970.

The Guyana Defense Force received excellent initial training from British Army personnel in Guyana. It trained with the local British forces—a battalion of the 1st Middlesex Regiment and a helicopter flight of the Royal Air Force—until their departure in October 1966. The Guyanese held a number of field exercises during 1967-68, some involving the entire ground element, some including the Air Wing, some with visiting British troops and emphasizing jungle warfare and counter guerrilla operations, and some with the police and directed toward internal security. Even with the security tensions in 1969, a 5-day jungle combat maneuver with British troops was held in mid-1969, and a 6-day jungle exercise was carried out in December 1969 with about 80 personnel of the British Special Air Service. Another was scheduled for April 1970 but is believed to have been cancelled because of tensions with Venezuela, and the combined exercises apparently have not been renewed.

Because of the British legacy, the Guyana Defense Force has continued to maintain satisfactory standards. Training and discipline are intensive, and considerable stress is placed on physical fitness. Many hours are devoted to close order drill, calisthenics, running of obstacle courses (Figure 5), marksmanship, and field maneuvers. Recruits receive an initial 14 weeks of basic military training in the Training Wing, at Takama, on the left bank of the Berbice River—an excellent training area for all phases of training, including jungle combat; rifle, machinegun, and mortar firing; and field exercises of up to battalion level. After basic training, recruits join the regular units but continue to receive training, with emphasis on jungle warfare, counterinsurgency operations, crowd control, and physical security exercises.

Training for reserve personnel is conducted in the reserve units. After an initial 5 weeks of basic training, the men attend 12 weekend training periods each year, culminating in a 10-day exercise usually held in conjunction with the regular forces. They presumably would not be very effective in military operations as separate units, but the training is fairly satisfactory and has permitted rapid incorporation of the men into regular units during crises.

Members of the Women's Army Corps are given 5 weeks of training which qualifies them as clerks, typists, storekeepers, radio and switchboard operators, cooks, and vehicle drivers. In addition to such

specialized skills, they receive training in close order drill (Figure 6), marksmanship (Figure 7), and military discipline.

The Marine Wing also may well have been trained by the British. The 30 men originally comprising the Marine Wing received their initial training in small-boat operations in Trinidad in 1968, presumably from personnel of the Royal Navy sent specifically for that purpose.

#### 4. Military budget (U/OU)

Annual military budgets are prepared by the Commander of the Guyana Defense Force under the guidance of the Minister of Finance and Trade. The defense budget is reviewed and approved by the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers prior to legislative action. Although the National Assembly has the constitutional authority to amend all budgets, in practice it has always approved the military budget as submitted. Annual military budgets for the period 1969-71 and their relationship to total central government budgets and the GNP are shown in Figure 8.

#### 5. Logistics (S)

Guyana's underdeveloped economy lacks the industrial base to supply the armed forces with military materiel. Industrial activity is limited to the processing of agricultural and mineral raw materials and the production of a few basic consumer goods. Since national independence in May 1966, the Guyana Defense Force has obtained almost all of its arms, ammunition, vehicles, and other materiel from the United Kingdom, primarily as grant aid. Occasionally, small arms ammunition has been purchased from Belgium, and a small quantity of mortars was purchased from Israel in 1969.

Overall logistics planning and administration is under the Ordnance and Stores Officer on the Guyana Defense Force Staff. The supply system is rudimentary. The battalions and the naval and air elements have been delegated responsibility for most of their own supply functions, purchasing needed equipment and supplies from budget funds made available for the purpose. The distribution of supplies normally is made by the supply point system utilizing unit transport. The supply problem has been eased somewhat by the establishment of farms at probably all permanent posts. The distribution of supplies often is hampered by poor roads and bad weather conditions, particularly during the rainy season. Many dispersed detachments can be supplied only by amphibious air.



FIGURE 5. Members of the Guyana Defense Force in physical fitness training (U/OU)



FIGURE 6. Guyana Defense Force soldier explains the working of a firearm to a female counterpart (U/OU)



FIGURE 7. Members of the first contingent of the Women's Army Corps on parade (U/OU)



**FIGURE 8. Annual military budget (U/OU)  
(US dollars\*)**

	1969	1970	1971
Military budget .....	2,300,000	3,250,000	2,650,000
Percentage of central government budget .....	3.2	3.8	2.7
Percentage of GNP .....	0.97	1.3	**0.98

\*Converted at the exchange rate of 2 Guyana dollars equal US\$1.00.

\*\*Preliminary estimate.

and in 1968 their stores often dwindled to only 4 days' supply. Deliveries were dependent on the government's one amphibious Grumman, so that a single mechanical failure could easily have disrupted the system. Barely sufficient ammunition and supplies were provided for the task force that seized Surinam's Tigrie airfield in 1969, and a prolongation of the operation would have overtaxed the supply system. Thus, the supply system is barely adequate to meet even the service's modest peacetime needs. It would be entirely inadequate to cope with the requirements of nationwide civil disorders or a wartime situation.

The Guyana Defense Force has maintained its motor transport in good condition, and its weapons are assumed also to be well maintained. Considerable quantities of new clothing and boots, tenting, mess gear, dry goods, and field supplies of all types had been added to the logistical base by 1969.

The weapons are primarily light infantry weapons, useful for jungle warfare or internal security. The four armored cars are Land Rovers with a steel superstructure and turret arrangement that limits visibility to vision slits; they are equipped with two-way radios. Designed to be used primarily for psychological purposes in quelling disorders, these vehicles could not be used in combat because the wheel size is such that they cannot be equipped with puncture-proof tires.

**C. Ground force (S)**

The Guyana Defense Force is organized into 2 battalions, an Air Wing, a Marine Wing, and a WAC element organized as an administrative support company but with its personnel integrated into other units. Each battalion has a strength of about 700 men, and each has two rifle companies. In addition, the 1st Battalion has the Support Company consisting of the Reconnaissance Platoon, the 81-mm Mortar Platoon, and the Assault Pioneer Platoon; and the 2d Battalion has the Engineer Company. The 1st Battalion has its headquarters at Georgetown, and the 2d Battalion at

Timehri International Airfield. It has been the practice to retain the Support Company at Georgetown and to keep the Engineer Company engaged in opening roads in the interior. The rifle companies formerly were stationed at Georgetown, Timehri International Airfield, and at various interior locations, including the area of Ankoko Island and Bartica, or in training, and were rotated regularly. The development of inland security threats from uprisings and border disorders caused wide deployment of the force beginning in 1968, and some detachments were as small as about 10 men. This dispersal made the units relatively ineffective for military combat. This dispersion problem has greatly improved since mid-1970. The Protocol of Port-of-Spain, signed in June 1970, which shelved the Venezuela-Guyana border dispute for 12 years, seems to have relaxed tensions along that entire border area. By agreement with Surinam to demilitarize the disputed southeastern area, the last 27-man military contingent was withdrawn from that district in October 1970, leaving its security to the police. Accordingly, it is assumed that many of the small detachments have been relocated to their parent units, and that the force is again relatively effectively organized.

Materiel held by the Guyana Defense Force is listed below (date of acquisition and country of origin are 1966 and the United Kingdom, respectively, unless otherwise indicated in parenthesis):

ITEM	NO. OF ITEMS
<b>Mortars:</b>	
81-mm (1969; Israel) .....	8
2-inch light .....	11
<b>Machineguns:</b>	
.303-cal. light, Bren .....	38
(1 other stolen in 1967)	
<b>Submachineguns:</b>	
9-mm Stirling .....	104
(14 others stolen in 1967)	
<b>Rifles:</b>	
.303-cal. Rifle No. 4 (Lee-Enfield)	
Mk. 1 .....	926
7.62-mm SLR (1969) .....	1,000
<b>Pistols:</b>	
.38-cal. ....	29
<b>Armor:</b>	
Land Rover armored cars (1967) .....	4
<b>Transport:</b>	
3-ton trucks .....	19
¼-ton trucks, Land Rover .....	4
¼-ton trucks .....	36
Staff car .....	1
Water truck .....	1
Trailers .....	31
<b>Radios:</b>	
HF 156 .....	53
VHF .....	14

SECRET

**D. Naval element (C)**

The naval element, called the Marine Wing, is a force of 40 men stationed at Georgetown. It has three 40-foot Vosper-Thornycroft fast patrol craft (PBF), acquired by purchase from the U.K. in 1971, and four 45-foot steel river patrol boats (PBR), received in 1968. The river patrol boats have a maximum speed of about 13 knots. Each is armed with a machinegun and has a crew of two and a load capacity of 15 soldiers, or 30 at much slower speed, or one Land Rover. These older boats were locally built for economic reasons at the Sproston's Shipyard and have not been very satisfactory. They are named after dangerous snakes—*Camouidie*, *Labaria*, and *Rattler*.

**E. Air element (C)**

The Air Wing of 20 personnel is stationed at Timehri International Airfield. It has three STOL utility aircraft—two Britten-Norman Flander 10-

passenger twin-engined aircraft purchased from the U.K. in 1971 and one 6-passenger Helio Courier given by the United States to the Guyana Police Force on 31 March 1967 and transferred on permanent loan to the Air Wing in 1970 after two similar aircraft purchased by the Guyana Defense Force in 1967 were wrecked in 1969 and 1970. The Helio Courier is equipped for air-to-ground communication with units in the field. All aircraft are housed in a hangar a short distance from the civilian terminal building at Timehri International Airfield. These aircraft are of value primarily for liaison and observation. The government-owned Guyana Airways Corporation provides maintenance for the Air Wing aircraft and, with six heavy transports (four DC-3 Dakotas and two DHC-4 Caribous) and four light transports (two DHC-6 Twin Otters, one Cessna 310G, and one amphibious Grumman Goose), also provides air transport and supply. Three of its aircraft—one temporarily fitted with a machinegun for ground support—effected the 1969 aerial seizure of the Surinamese installation at Tigrie airfield.

Places and features referred to in this chapter (u/ou)

	COORDINATES	
	° 'N.	° 'W.
Ankoko Island ( <i>island</i> ).....	6 43	61 08
Bartica.....	6 24	58 37
Berbee River ( <i>stream</i> ).....	6 17	57 32
Courantyne River ( <i>stream</i> ).....	5 57	57 06
Georgetown.....	6 48	58 10
Mahdia.....	5 13	59 09
New River ( <i>stream</i> ).....	3 23	57 36
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.....	10 39	61 31
Potaro River ( <i>stream</i> ).....	5 22	58 52
Rupununi District.....	3 00	59 00
Takama.....	5 34	57 55
Tumatumari.....	5 20	59 00