COLOMBIA

Area .......... 1,162,000 sq. km.
Population (VI. 1935) ........ 8,487,000
Density per sq. km........... 7.3
Length of land frontiers:
- With Panama ........ 235 km.
- With Venezuela .. .. .. .. 2,280 km.
- With Brazil ..... .. .. .. 1,490 km.
- With Peru ........ 1,722 km.
- With Ecuador .. .. .. .. 400 km.
Coast-line .......... 6,127 km.
Length of railway system (1934) (in use) ........ 3,205 km.

I. Army.

ORGANS OF MILITARY COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATION.

In time of peace, the supreme command of the army is vested in the President of the Republic; in time of war, he may delegate his powers to a general.

MINISTRY OF WAR.

The Ministry of War comprises the following branches, which are directly under the Minister:

Minister's Secretariat.

General Department, with 2 sections (Army Section and Territorial Army and Recruiting Section).

No. 1 Department: Secretariat, with five sections (Correspondence, Registry and Distribution, Pensions, Legal Questions, Chaplains).

No. 2 Department: Personnel, with three sections (personnel and statistics, service forms, army records).
No. 3 Department: **Wireless Communications**, with two sections (technical and equipment, traffic and control).

No. 4 Department: **Military Administration**, which includes four sections.

No. 5 Department: **Audit and Accounts**.

No. 6 Department: **Navy**.

There are also: a general directorate of war material which controls the ammunition factory, the army workshop and arsenal; a general directorate of aviation, comprising a military aviation department and a civil aviation department; a general medical directorate and a remount and veterinary section.

**General Staff.**

The General Staff, an autonomous organisation directly responsible to the Minister of War, consists of 4 departments and 1 autonomous section:

- No. 1 Department: 3 sections (operations, mobilisation, communications and maps).
- No. 2 Department: 2 sections (organisation and statistics, geography).
- No. 3 Department: 3 sections (astronomy and geodesy, topography, aerophotogrammetry and cartography).
- No. 4 Department: 3 sections (land transport, river and sea transport, intendance and lines of communication service).
- Autonomous Section: History, personnel, and publications.

**Inspectorate-General of the Army.**

The Inspectorate-General of the army is an autonomous organisation directly under the Minister of War.

The Inspector-General of the army is the senior divisional general. He supervises the execution of military measures emanating from the Government and the Ministry of War. He must inspect every command, military institution and army unit at least once a year.

**Higher Command.**

The brigade commands are responsible for the direction and training of officers and men. They direct the administrative services and are also charged with the maintenance of barracks, arms, etc. These commands constitute the recruiting centres of the corresponding military areas.

**Territorial Military Districts.**

The country is divided into 14 zones (one for each department). Each departmental zone is divided into military districts, the number of which is fixed by the Ministry of War. The total number of military districts may not exceed 26.
The military districts are divided into territorial areas, the number of which is fixed by the Ministry of War. The total number of territorial areas may not exceed 150.

For purposes of territorial military service, each departmental zone is under the orders of the Governor, who comes under the Ministry of War.

Each departmental zone supplies the contingent required for the replacement of the army effectives.

**COMPOSITION OF THE ARMY.**

The reorganisation of the Colombian army provided for under the Decree of August 28th, 1934, is not yet entirely complete.

Under this decree, the Colombian army is to consist of:

- 5 brigades;
- 1 Amazonas detachment;
- 1 battalion forming the Guard of Honour;
- 1 signals battalion.

The garrison of Buenaventura, provided for in the decree, has been abolished.

Each brigade consists of:

- 3 infantry battalions;
- 1 cavalry group;
- 1 artillery group;
- 1 engineer battalion;
- 1 transport battalion;
- 1 training battalion (5 companies, including 1 machine-gun company and 1 mixed company with close-support guns, trench mortars and anti-aircraft artillery).

The reorganisation of the army began in 1935, at the end of which year the army was composed as follows:

**First brigade:**

- 3 infantry battalions (3 rifle companies and 1 machine-gun company);
- 1 cavalry group (2 squadrons of riflemen);
- 1 artillery group (2 batteries);
- 1 engineer battalion (2 companies).

**Second brigade:**

- 3 infantry battalions;
- 1 cavalry squadron with 1 machine-gun section;
- 1 artillery group;
- 1 engineer battalion;
- 1 transport company.
Third brigade: 3 infantry battalions; 1 cavalry group; 1 engineer battalion; 1 transport company.

Fourth brigade: 3 infantry battalions; 1 cavalry squadron; 1 artillery group; 1 engineer battalion; 1 transport battalion.

Fifth brigade: 3 infantry battalions; 1 cavalry group; 1 artillery group; 1 engineer battalion; 1 transport company.

Each infantry battalion consists of 4 companies, including 1 machine-gun company.

Each artillery group comprises 2 batteries.

Each engineer battalion consists of 3 companies, including 1 railway company.

On December 6th, 1935, there were in existence 4 cavalry groups, 3 of which consist of 2 squadrons of riflemen and 1 platoon of heavy machine-guns, and the fourth group includes 3 squadrons of riflemen and 1 heavy machine-gun squadron.

The Amazonas detachment, which, in practice, is formed of a reinforced infantry battalion, includes:

2 rifle companies; 1 machine-gun company; 1 transport company; 1 coast battery; 3 anti-aircraft artillery sections; 1 mountain artillery section.

The Amazonas detachment is intended for frontier defence. Its forces are posted in four garrisons (Caucayá, Florencia, Tarapacá, Leticia).

The Guards battalion has the same composition as an infantry battalion. It comes under the War Ministry as regards organisation, training and discipline and under the President of the Republic as regards utilisation.

Aviation.

Aviation comes under the War Ministry, and is controlled by the General Directorate of Aviation, which is attached to the War Ministry, and the Advisory Council for Aviation.
The Advisory Council for Aviation consists of the War Minister (President), the Chief of the Army General Staff, and the Director-General of Aviation.

The air force comprises 1 training squadron (6 machines), 3 fighting aeroplanes, and 6 scouting aeroplanes.

**RECRUITING SYSTEM AND PERIOD OF SERVICE.**

Military service in the first-line army is compulsory for all citizens between 21 and 30 years of age. The enlistment of volunteers is prohibited. The period of service with the colours is one year. Every six months, contingents of 3,000 conscripts are called up.

Men who are not exempted or excluded from service by the law serve in the *First-Line Army* from the age of 21 to the age of 30; in the *National Guard* from 31 to 40; in the *Territorial Guard* from 41 to 45, after which age they are no longer subject to any military obligations.

The men comprising the First-Line Army, the National Guard or the Territorial Guard, who are not performing active service, constitute the reserve of each of the above groups. Reservists are placed in the first class if they have undergone full military training; otherwise in the second class.

The Government may call up reservists in time of peace for periods of training, exercises and manoeuvres.

There is a *Territorial Service*, consisting of military personnel, which deals with the mobilisation and supply service of the army.

It comprises the following personnel:

- Majors or captains (commanding zones) ... ... 5
- Captains (commanding districts) ... ... ... 16
- Lieutenants and second-lieutenants ... ... 9

Total ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 30

- N.C.O.s ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 30
- Orderlies ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 5

General total ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 65

**Military Tax.**

Persons liable to military service but who have not been drawn by lot to serve with the colours pay a single tax (national defence tax) of from 5 to 100 pesos in lieu of military service.

There is also another single military tax, known as the "exemption charge" (50 to 300 pesos), which may be levied on all citizens liable to military service who have been selected by lot but do not wish to perform active service.

**Exemptions.**

The following persons are exempt from military service in all circumstances: Catholic clergy and seminarists, members of religious educational communities, disabled persons, and persons unfit for service as a result of disease or infirmity.
Persons engaged in certain duties, and young men who are studying for a professional career (up to the end of their studies) and have not failed in their university examinations, are temporarily exempted from military service.

**MILITARY SCHOOLS.**

Military School (250 students in 1935);
Staff College (temporarily closed since 1932, when there were 14 students);
3 Artillery Training Courses for officers between the ranks of second-lieutenant and major (84 students);
Special twelve-month course for officers between the ranks of second-lieutenant and captain (11 students);
Reserve Officers' Course at the Military School (25 students);
Training Corps for N.C.O.s;
Wireless Telegraphy School;
Military Aviation School.

**EFFECTIVES.**

*Army.*

**ESTABLISHMENT.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Other ranks</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brigade commands</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>5,035</td>
<td>5,925</td>
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<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1,350</td>
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<td>Artillery</td>
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<td>2,080</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,474</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>720</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>634</td>
<td>11,125</td>
<td>11,759</td>
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</table>

The prescribed establishment of the guard is 18 officers and 368 other ranks.

*Police.*

Military Police\(^1\) (1935) 550
National Police (1936) 3,760
Customs Guard (1935)\(^2\) 436
Gendarmerie (1935)\(^2\) 248

\(^1\) The Military Police includes 5 companies which come under the Ministry of War.
\(^2\) Attached to the National Police since January 1st, 1936.

**II. Navy.**

**LIST OF UNITS.**

*(1935 -)*

**Destroyers:**

*Antiquois*  
Standard Displacement : 1,282 tons. Dimensions :  
322 × 31 × 11 ft. H.P. 33,000 = 36 kts.  
*Guns* : IV 4.7" ; VIII tubes (21).

*Caldas*
Gunboats:

**Presidente Mosquera**
- Displacement: 200 tons.

**Santa Marta**

**Cartagena**
- (1930)

**Barranquilla**

River gunboats. Displacement: 142 tons.
- Dimensions: 137' 9" x 23' 6" x 2' 7".
- Speed: 15.5 kts.

Miscellaneous: 12 units (patrol vessels, transports, etc.).

### EFFECTIVES (1935).

Maximum permanent effectives: ¹

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>134</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.C.O.s</td>
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<td>Other ratings</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### III. Budget Expenditure on National Defence.

The budget year coincides with the calendar year.

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<th></th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pesos (000,000's)</strong></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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**Closed accounts**

**Revised estimates**

**Estimates**

Notes.—1. The above expenditure of the Ministry of War includes that on coastguard vessels and river gunboats and war expenditure for 1933 and 1934.

2. The above figures include pensions estimated at 0.3 million pesos for each of the years 1931 to 1933.

3. The figure for 1933 includes expenditure on national defence due to the armed conflict with Peru.

¹ Including the administrative services but excluding the marine infantry (79 officers, N.C.O.s and men).