



Establishment of the West African Frontier Force: A Historical Overview of the Recruitment, Training and Organization of the Force (1897-1900)

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Abstract. This paper examines the establishment of the West African Frontier Force, an imperial force, in 1897 with particular focus on military recruitment exercises, training and organization of the force. The amalgamation processes of all West African Forces of British colonies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Sierra-Leone and the Gambia Frontier Police are well discussed in this paper. Essentially, these forces were brought together as formidable force to checkmate French and German incursion on the territories already occupied by the British. Another reason was to subjugate local opposition to British occupation and rule by carrying out punitive expeditions and campaigns as contribution to British imperial defence. Primary sources in form of archival materials, documents, hand written and official letters, and secondary sources in form of books and journals were used in the course of this research. This paper contributes to studies on Military History and serves as a research material for students and researchers of Military History around the globe.

Keywords: Recruitment, Training, Organization, West African Frontier Force, Imperial forces, Amalgamation.

1. Introduction

In 1897, Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State of this period, decided that a military force be formed in order to have adequate number of soldiers to particularly defend British territories as well as fight wars against the French during the critical period of the Anglo-French rivalry on the Niger. In fact, the political situation in West Africa at this period as asserted by Shaibu (2023) had called for more military exertions on the part of the colonial office and the war office since the Royal Niger Company Constabularies were quite inefficient in the performance of their military duties they were confronted with the inability to check the imperialistic devices of the French incursion on the Niger, in Borgu and in Sokoto areas. The colonial office was therefore; concerned about the

inadequacy of the Royal Niger Company Constabularies in protecting the British sphere of influence on the Niger

Consequently, Joseph Chamberlain the then Secretary of State for colonies, decided to negotiate with the French from a position of strength and as such decided that a military force capable of dealing with the situation be created. Thus, the West African Frontier Force was established in 1897, though it was still referred to vaguely at its period of inception as West African Force, it was later conferred with the title Royal in 1928 by King George V. The West African Frontier Force was a regular Military Force, recruited from a nucleus of officers and men of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary Supplemented by Regular Army Officers and newly enlisted Hausa, Nupe, and Yoruba. They were organized, trained and disciplined as military army officers.

In essence, the West African Frontiers, Force embraced all the forces in British colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia Frontier Police which were subsequently amalgamated. In line with this, the colonial office paper of June 1899, puts it thus: "The question of the responsibility of the Imperial Government in connection with Niger Territory and the necessity for the relinquishment by the Royal Niger Company of the administration of those territories became apparent and necessary to form the nucleus of a new military force for imperialistic purposes on the Niger. According to Haywood and Clark (1964) this was chosen as a convenient moment to consider as a whole the position of the military forces of the crown under the control of the colonial office throughout West Africa. In order to make their forces mutually self-supporting, it was considered necessary that the various constabularies and newly raised West African Frontiers Force should be amalgamated into one organization and bear a military name. Ekoko (1979) points out that, though, not in direct control of the colonial armies of the British Empire, the War Office had an implicit duty to

advise the Colonial Office on how to ensure that these scattered armies achieved a certain level of efficiency in organization and performance. The War Office was also keen on the attainment of standardization of equipment, arms, and ammunitions among the various colonial forces.

To implement the principles laid down in the above colonial office paper a committee was set up, the Inter-Departmental Committee on amalgamation of forces in West Africa, under the chairmanship of Lord Selborne, the then Under Secretary of State for colonies. Officers and British Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were seconded from their British regiments for short periods. The first Commandant of the West African Frontier Force was Colonel Frederick Lugard. Lugard, was admirably suited for the task of commanding the new force because of the training he had at the popular Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, (RMAS), Great Britain and also his wealth of experience as a distinguished soldier, explorer and colonial administrator. He was born in India in 1858 and commissioned as an officer in the East Norfolk Regiment in 1878 at the age of 20. There followed some ten years of campaigning in Burma, Sudan and East Africa, after which he led a memorable expedition force stalling the French occupation of Borgu in 1894-5. In 1897 he was appointed Commissioner for the Nigerian and Lagos Hinterland as well as the first Commandant of the West African Frontier Force which he raised. He carried out the difficult and delicate task of deploying this force so as to check the French advances in the Niger Valley. From 1900-06 he was High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, Governor of Hong Kong, 1907-12, Governor of both Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1913, Governor General of Nigeria, 1914-19. His work in pacifying, developing and consolidating the Niger territories was remarkably outstanding.

Lugard's work was primarily concerned with the organization of the forces but the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers were selected, organized and sent ahead of Lugard to recruit and train the African soldiers. There was no provision for training of Africans as officers and this policy persisted till few years to the end of colonial rule.

At the establishment of the regiment, each regiment had its Commandant. The Governor of Northern Nigeria, Lord Lugard ensured that recruitment was carried out effectively, not only for the battalions and batteries of the amalgamated WAFF quartered within his government, but also for the other battalions quartered elsewhere. Fifty percent (50%) of each battalion should, if possible be composed of Hausa

speaking people and the rest of the battalion be composed according to the locality of men of other war like tribes.

The Hausa were considered the best material for military service in West Africa as stated in the Colonial Office Paper No. C.0588 (June, 1899) and already, before the end of the nineteenth century the word "*Hausa*" had come to mean soldier just like "Sepoy" in India rather "*Hausa Militia*". Prefixed by the name of the government it served, for example the Gold Coast Hausa, the Lagos constabulary Hausa or the Royal Niger Company Constabulary Hausa etc. This was because Hausa language was commonly spoken by the recruits, it was actually made the Lingua Franca in order to enhance easy interpretation when communicating with the recruits.

The most successful, however in recruiting Hausa was the opportunity of recruiting directly from the Hausa country in which it had established trading posts. But even among the Royal Niger Company Constabulary and its subsequent conversion to the West African Frontier Force, the Hausa were less than a half of the total number of men, some of the men who had enlisted claimed to be Hausa. They were actually known to have originated from the Middle belt; these comprised the Tiv, Jukun, Igala, Nupe, Berom among others who were great warriors. The Middle Belt at this period, were under the control of Northern protectorate Vandeleur (1898). After the recruitment processes, the Hausa did good service at Lagos and later some of them served in the Gold Coast during the Ashante war of 1873-4. At the end of this war part of the Lagos force were left behind to form the nucleus of the Gold Coast Constabulary. The military charisma of the Hausa soldier is quite evident during this period.

Ukpabi (1964) was of the view that the Colonial Office raised two infantry battalions, the 1 and 2 battalions, Special Service Corps Battalions, and three Batteries West African Frontier Force. Each battalion had twenty-nine Commissioned officers and forty-four Non-Commissioned British Officers while two thousand and four hundred Africans were recruited locally as Non-Commissioned Officers. Lt. Col. James Willcocks was appointed as Assistant Commandant of the forces on 27th September, 1897 and granted local rank 1898 of Colonel on first September. Lt. Col. T.O. Pilcher had already been appointed the Commanding officer of the first Battalion and Lt. Col. H.S. Fitzgerald as Commander of the second battalion. The first Battalion was formed under Lt. Col. T.O. Pilcher, who was then Deputy Adjutant-General, he commanded the first Battalion which was situated at

Lokoja. Pilcher was assigned the duty of recruiting and training of Africans. In his report on WAFF, Pilcher gave an account of the activities of the first Battalion and of how it took over in Lagos with one hundred and fifty Hausa recruits who were enlisted for the Lagos Constabulary. He further reported that three hundred and fifty Yoruba, Hausa and Nupe enlisted for the WAFF by the Royal Niger Constabulary officers at Lokoja were also observed. In early February, 1890, the officers and four hundred and fifty men that were enlisted in Ibadan for the battalion left for Lokoja via Lagos and the Niger.

The second battalion was formed in March, 1898, with Lt. Col. Fitzgerald as its Commander. On 10th March, 1898, ten officers and eleven Non-Commissioned Officers proceeded from Lagos up to Epe through Ijebu Ode and finally arrived Ibadan on 16th March. They took over Yoruba recruits that numbered four hundred and twenty-eight from the detachment First Battalion WAFF which were formed into three companies as follows:

- 'A' or Capt. Hon. R. Somersets company.
- 'B' or Capt. Guy Fremantel's company.
- 'C' or Capt. P.G. Rigby's company.

Ukpabi (1987) asserts that in the home front Chamberlain's plans for raising a new force in West Africa did not pass without ripples in the Parliament. In February, 1898, he was assailed in the House of Commons for adopting an aggressive policy towards the French and for trying to create a public opinion favourable to his policy in the Niger hinterland especially with regard to the creation of the W.A.F.F. In his defence Chamberlain explained why it was necessary to raise this new force: We have thought it necessary to raise what has been called a Frontier Force. The present forces on the Gold Coast and Lagos are almost entirely required for the mere policing of the coast districts, and if we are to occupy, as evidently it is necessary that we should occupy, these territories over which we have assumed a protectorate, we must have a force capable of that duty. Accordingly, it has been decided to create and establish such a force, which on the Lagos side, will be under the command of Colonel Lugard... The creation of that force was necessary and will be necessary whether the differences with the French arranged satisfactorily or not, because our obligations are reciprocal. When we make a treaty with a native state we accord it our protection. At the same time, we are bound as a civilized power to accompany that with certain conditions. We expect, for instance, that the practice of slave raiding, and the observance of these fetish superstitions, which has caused so much bloodshed in

Africa, and which, slave raiding especially, has desolated the country, and has destroyed for centuries the possibilities of trade, we expect that these practices will be given up.

Chamberlain in Ukpabi (1987) stresses further that "In return we have to guarantee the security and the order and peace of these districts if they are threatened from outside. We are bound to preserve peace and order as between the different tribes... I believe that this force besides being, as I have said, a necessity and an advantage to the district, will also prove in the long run to be a most economical force. It is impossible in dealing with these native territories that we can always avoid difficulties and expeditions, from time to time, will have to take place... Now if this force of which I have been speaking is established, and if it answers the expectations, we have formed with regard to it, we believe we shall be able to carry out whatever expeditions.

Frederick Lugard, while he was the Commissioner of Northern Protectorate between 1900 and 1906 (NAK, Colonial Annual Report for Lagos 1980, No.32(6563) also asserts that the military was established basically for humanitarian role. He argued that the military was the instrument through which the British Government would end slavery, bribery, oppression extortion, and bloodshed in Nigeria, and would ensure peace and good order throughout the country.

This aspect of the role of the military has been given added dimension by the fact that on numerous occasions many British Officers in Nigeria whose policies and treaties were resisted by the African Chiefs were of the defence that they were compelled to go to war in order to eliminate those aspects of the people's ways of life which they considered uncivilized or abhorrent by the British government. Meanwhile, the African natives were not devoid of military qualities, they actually resisted the presence of the colonialists. But the superiority of the weapons of warfare and ammunitions on the part of the colonial forces superseded the weapons of the African traditional soldiers such as bows and arrows, spears and slings. As such they were eventually defeated by the colonial forces.

2. Organization of the West African Frontier Force

The West African Frontier Force at its period of inception, 1897, was not only faced with the problem of recruitment and enlistment of men into the military, but it had numerous problems in connection with organizing the force. The selection of officers and

N.C.O.s. for the WAFF caused dissatisfaction between the war office and the colonial office. The war officer, with the approval of the colonial office, was responsible for the selection of men to serve in West Africa, but Lugard objected such enlistment of men and opted on choosing the men to ensure that suitable men were enlisted into the force in order to avoid the initial incidence of unselected form of enlistment of men into the Niger Coast Constabulary which had a devastating effect on the organization of the force.

Eventually, Lugard was permitted to have his way, and apart from the officers and N.C.O.s of the 1st Battalion already appointed by the war office, he was authorized to select his men from a list of volunteers submitted by the war office CO 445/1. Report of the Commission of Inquiry convened at Lokoja, (1898.) Other problems that confronted the WAFF at its initial stage were that of providing suitable arms and ammunition, clothing (both for the African troops and British servicemen), camp equipment, provisions, stationery, Engineers, workshops, hospitals and medical supplies, veterinary medicine, emergency rations and materials for putting up temporary huts for British personnel. The choice of suitable artillery was governed by the nature of the area of operation and the available mode of transport. British officers believed that horses could not be used in tsetse fly infested forest of the Niger basin. Therefore, the guns had to be carried from place to place by porters. Such guns must not be too heavy and must be easily assemble. With the aid of a Royal Artillery office from the War office and a representative of the maxim gun maker, Lugard chose 7- pounder of the light pattern, and proposed to have two affiliated batteries of four 7- pounder each and a reserve battery of six 12 pounder.

The Royal Artillery unit was placed under the command of Major Robinson, R.A (who personally commanded the reserve battery). No.1 Battery was commanded by Captain Armitage and No.2 by Lt. Robertson. Major Robinson as the C.R.A was responsible for all artillery and ordinance stores and the training of the artillery corps. The guns ordered by Lugard did not arrive until the later half of 1898; and even when they did arrive, it was discovered that some parts were losing, due to faulty packing while others were rendered in-operative as a result of missing or ill-fitting screws, consequently, the guns used for training the men were borrowed from the Royal Niger Company.

Furthermore, Lugard organized the medical department. He set up two field hospitals (manned by one senior and junior medical officers, one hospital sergeant, one clerk and three female nurses). The war

office offered a salary of £400 to each medical officer excluding allowances. Lugard rejected this offer and later persuaded both the Colonial office and the war office to approve an award of £680 a year to senior medical officers and £450 a year to junior medical officers. On the issue of provisions Lugard proposed that all Europeans should have true rations, which amounted to three shillings a day, as against the colonial office offer for one shilling and six pence a day per person. Lugard's rate was later approved, and the total cost of establishing the new force came to a little over of £100,000. See Lugard's Diary, 96 (1898).

On 13 November, 1897, the first batch of British personnel for the first battalion (comprising six officers and nine N.C.O.s) left Liverpool for the west coast; and on 27 November the remaining officers and (consisting of seventeen officers and twenty three N.C.O.s and Drs. Ensor and Rock), all under the command of Lt, Col. Pilcher, left Liverpool for Lagos in December 1893.

Their arrival meant that a group of British military personnel forming the nucleus of the 1st Battalion was then on the spot to organize the Africa recruits into companies and to begin their training for the proposed action in Borgu. With the arrival of the first batch of the British personnel, the headquarters of the 1st Battalion was set up at Lokoja which was the first Northern Nigeria capital, while that of the 2nd Battalion was established at Ibadan in March 1898 and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H.S Fitzgerald. Very little could be done in the form of training and recruitment of enough men to bring the strength of each battalion to the projected 1200 men until the end Borgu crisis in June 1898. After this time, efforts were made to reorganize the battalions. Several detachments were quartered in parts of Borgu which had recently come under British control while other units were used to garrison frontier districts. The Headquarters of the WAFF was moved from Lokoja to Jebba then to Zungeru and finally to Kaduna during the subsequent years. In December 1898, the strength of the force was at the range of 907 other ranks for the 1 Battalion while 800 other ranks for the 2 Battalion (Shaibu, 2023)

Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, therefore, proposed to reorganize these local forces into two corps, one infantry and the other artillery. British officers were supplied, under the same terms as with the Egyptian army, to re organize and officer these corps. Provisions were made for African N.C.O. to be sent to England annually for training. Proposals were made concerning the need for the amalgamation

of the military forces in West Africa. The war office therefore asked Chamberlain to consider the proposals and if its approved then both the war office and the colonial office would set up a joint committee to discuss the matter.

On 20th June 1898, Selborne, the colonial under-Secretary, proposed a memorandum on the military force in West Africa and the proposed amalgamation copies were sent, for their comments to the governments of Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold coast, to Salisbury (the Prime Minister as well as the Foreign Minister Sir George Goldie, Lugard, Landsdowne through the Foreign office to Sir R. Moor, the administrator of the Niger Coast Protectorate.

Selborne proposed that the separate Military force on the west coast should be abolished and amalgamated as the WAFF: that there should be four divisions of this force, one division each to be stationed in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Lagos and the Niger territories, that each unit should have its own headquarters depot, and commanding officer, that an inspecting officer (of a General Officer rank) should be sent out annually to inspect these units that all the officers should have military titles, and that any officer of the regular army who had served for more than 7 years should join the force on permanent bases, that uniform, armament, pay and conditions of service both for officers and men, should be the same in all the units, that in the case of any expedition being undertaken in any colony the other colonies could be invited to contribute contingents.

Finally, in his memorandum, Selborne made some distinction between Lugard's force and the older constabularies, and pointed out that even after the amalgamation it might be necessary to maintain Lugard's force at a higher establishment and in a more fully equipped condition than the other units. Selborne also proposed that the pay of African NCO's and men should be the same as that which was obtained in the Gold Coast and Lagos constabularies, and that the pay of the officers should be based on that of the officers that served in the constabularies at that particular period and that their allowances should be different.

In the case of British NCOs, the payment of allowances was similar to that of the British NCOs serving in the Egyptian army. Selborne's memorandum became an issue of deliberation between the military men and the Governors of West African Colonies, on the one hand and the Colonial Office on the other.

McCallum, the Governor of Lagos, in approving the proposals in principle though that the suggestion to extend the period of seconding officers to 7 years was excessive. He considered that each officer should be free to decide after his third tour (that is, after 3 years' service) whether he wished to join the WAFF permanently or to return to his own regiment. He also recommended that, for Lagos, if the officer after a stay of 2 years could not pass the lower standard in the Yoruba language, then he should at once return to his regiment. He also proposed that the proportion of British officers and NCOs in the WAFF should be increased to cater for the number that might be absent on leave at any one time.

Sir. F. Cardew, the Governor of Sierra Leone, wondered whether there would not arise great difficulty when it came to amalgamating purely military forces such as the two battalions of the WAFF with police forces such as the Sierra Leone Frontier Police, trained to carry out police as well as military duties. He suggested further that some form of independent force, for purely police duties, should be maintained on the West Coast. He also suggested that there should be a resident General Officer Commanding in West Africa with his headquarters at free town, rather than sending a General Officer for inspection annually. With regard to the enlistment of African recruits, he suggested that the first period of enlistment should be for 6 years, as it was obtained in the Sierra Leone Frontier Police.

Governor Denton of Lagos, on the other hand, approved the scheme of amalgamation and supported the idea of annual reliefs. But he was very concerned with the authority of the governors of each colony over the troops. On 12 November 1898, R. Moor, the British Consul-General and the administrator, of the Niger Coast Protectorate, in his memorandum, argued that only the best officers should be seconded to the force. He believed that the opportunities offered for promotion would out-weigh all other considerations and would make the force popular with officers. The period of service for such officers joining the force should be arbitrarily fixed at 5 years at least, in order to render the native of Africa an efficient disciplined soldier.

F.M. Hodgson, the Governor of the Gold Coast was of a different view, though he did not object to the idea of amalgamation, but was doubtful on how effective its achievements would be. He recommended the uniformity of pay, uniform, armament, equipment and conditions of service, but he particularly objected to a more closely knitted and centralized amalgamation. A

military body working entirely on military lines, for purely military purposes, could not according to Hodgson, work in the Gold Coast. His greatest objection to the scheme was that it would withdraw from the hands of the Governor (as the Commander-in-Chief powers which he had acquired with regards to the movement and disposition of the forces quartered in the colony which he administered. He argued that it was unwise to curtail the powers of the governor over the constabulary or his position towards them. Only the governor, he stressed, could tell whether a force was required in a particular district or whether the garrison in any station should be strengthened. If therefore the governor had to act in consultation with an officer placed in supreme command, the delay would at times not be conducive to quick action as the occasion might demand. The Gold Coast Constabulary, he maintained, did both police and military duties and, except when they were needed for expeditions, they were under normal circumstances a police establishment.

Economically, Hodgson argued that the Gold Coast colony could not afford to maintain a separate force employed purely on military service that having an officer in supreme command would only involve the colonies in extra expense, whereas the local commanding officer in each colony could very easily deal with all the problems for which a supreme commander was derived. He was not in support of the system of relief proposed by Lugard. Hodgson believed that this system would be too expensive and out of all proposition to the benefits to be derived therefore.

Lugard believed that the scheme of amalgamation would be both practicable and beneficial. It would considerably increase the efficiency of the force and would make possible, for the first time, a concerted action against a foreign power. Lugard's idea of amalgamation was the creation on the West Coast of a centralized and homogeneous force, run on the lines of the Indian Army, of which he had some experience. He encouraged hard work and dedication to duty amongst the officers he insisted that in order to make the WAFF a 'crack corps' every effort should be made to attract only the best officers (preferably those with Indian experience or Egyptian experience). The colonial secretary used these comments as a guide in preparing the brief for the representatives of the colonial office in the interdepartmental committee which were charged with the duty of working with the details about amalgamation (C O Niger (WAFF) File No.260, 1899, National Archives Kaduna, Nigeria) .

Although the idea of having a unified command in British West Africa was broached at the end of 1897, yet it was not taken up in earnest until February 1899 when the war office appointed Major General the Hon. Neville. C. Littleton, as assistant military secretary at the war office; Major E. Altham, of the military intelligence division, and. Higgins, as Assistant accountant general to represent the war Department. The colonial office appointed the Earl of Selborne (as chairman of the committee) and R.L. Antrobus, Assistant under secretary, Lord Ampthill and A.J. Reade to represent the colonial office. In order to assist the committee in its deliberations, the intelligence Division of the war Department was called upon to prepare a paper on the military responsibilities of the West African Colonies. (C.O African (West), 1899 No. 577, War Office to Colonial Office) This was necessary in order that the committee might have a clearer idea of the strength of the force to be established in each colony. This intelligence survey therefore covered both external and internal security problems.

Maj. Altham of the military intelligence division recommended that the following forces should be stationed in different colonies: Sierra Leone - one battalion; the Gold Coast- one and a half battalion, Lagos one-half battalion; Northern Nigeria three battalions of infantry and three batteries of artillery; Niger Delta-one-half battalion Presumably this would give the West Coast a colonial force of about 6,700 men, as against 6,161 which was then the aggregate of the existing troops.

The inter-Departmental committee made some recommendations in order to enhance an effective organization of the force:

- The establishment in each colony, and the names by which the portions of the forces in the different colonies should be distinguished;
- The best method of appointing officers, the qualifications to be insisted upon, the manner in which a list of officers for the whole force would be kept, the question of the relative seniority of officers of the regular army and militia serving in the force, the numbers and pay of each rank, and, in particular, whether more pay should be given to regular officers than to militia officers;
- The employment of European N.C.Os. Whether this was necessary and, if so, what their terms of service would be with regard to pay, allowances, leave, uniform, and horses;
- With regards to African N.CO.s and recruits, from what ethnic groups should they be

enlisted, and to what extent should, for instance, the Yoruba and Hausa be combined in the same division or company. It also considered the question of training accoutrements, pay and allowances for African troop

- The composition of the force- the proportion of each arm (infantry, artillery, engineers, transport and supply, medical).
- Discipline: the question of a General ordinance for the enforcement of military law, and the formulation of General Regulations for the force, standing orders, dress regulations etc.
- Inspection the appointment of an inspecting officer, the location of his office and his relationship to the governors and the local commanding officers; and
- The question of financial control and supply. In this respect the committee was asked to consider if each colony should be treated as a single unit or how best such control or supply should be carried out.

The inter-Departmental committee completed its work and submitted its findings in June, 1899. A great deal of its work was done by sub- committees, and the military establishment which it recommended for the West Coast was governed by the amount of money that the colonial office was prepared to spend on these forces. Thus, one finds that by the old arrangement it cost the colonies £251,966.17s.6p. to maintain the various units but the committee recommended a total

establishment of 282 Europeans and 6,179.8s.4p. (excluding the cost of maintaining an additional inspecting officer at a cost of £1,400 a year) (CO African (West) No.588,(1899) Amalgamation of Military Forces. Report of the Interdepartmental Committee).

The recommendations of the committee were then sent to the war office, the Foreign office, the governors and administrators on the West coast and their commanding officers, for their comments. Lugard deprecated the failure of the committee to approve the proposed increase in the number of European personnel. After stressing that the proposition of British officers and N.C.O.'s in each company should be increased in order to cater for the number that might be absent on leave at any given time.

Lugard verged that in order to attract the best regular officers, other inducements in addition to high pay should be given such inducements should include:

- Prospects of active service with a liberal distribution of honours and medals to compensate for the dangers in the field be readily dispatched... to meet sudden emergencies.

In 1901, the amalgamation of the colonial forces in British West Africa took place and before the end of the year much progress was made in the recruitment of Africans into the force whose strength stood at 6,208 other ranks made up as follows:

Table 1: The Amalgamation of the Colonial Forces

REGIMENT	BN	NO OF CY.	BATTERIES/ GUNS	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
Northern Nigerian Regiment	No 1 Bn	8	2 75mm	27	1200
	No 2 Bn	8	-	27	1200
Southern Nigerian Regiment	1 Bn	8	2 75mm	38	1250
Gold Coast-Regiment	1½ 1Bn	12	2 75mm	35	1657
Sierra-Leone	1 Bn	6	-	17	498
Lagos Bn	1 Bn	3	-	15	503
Gambia	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Ukpabi, S.C.; *The Origin of the Nigerian Army* (Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1987., 85).

Thus, a unified command was established after the amalgamation of the British West African Frontier Forces. The table below indicates the division and allocation of arms by 1902 among the various forces and the heavy death toll due to "harsh" climate

Table 2: The Division and Allocation of Arms by 1902

FORMATION	ARTILLERY BATTALION	INFANTRY BN	MOUNTED INFANTRY
Gold Coast Regiment	(1)2.guns 2.95inches	1 bn of 8 coys	-
Sierra Leone Regiment	-	1 bn of 6 coys	-
Gambia	-	1 coy	-
TOTAL	12 GUNS	6 Bn of 45 coys	1 Bn of 3 coys

Source: Colonel A Haywood and Brigadier F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (London, Gale and Polden,1964), 89.

- granting of local, as opposed to temporary, ranks to officers, with occasional substantive promotion to those who, after two years' service, wished to continue to serve on the West Coast and were accepted as valuable officers.
- granting of liberal terms of leave of absence and adequate medical facilities in each battalion headquarters and good publicity for the work in which the force was engaged

There also ensued series of letters between the governors and the colonial office over Lugard objections to various articles in the recommendations and his suggestions were eventually accepted and embodied in the Regulation of the WAFF. The normal establishment for a company was fixed at one captain (commanding), three lieutenants, one colour sergeant, one pay clerk, four servants, eight corporals, and 150 privates.

A battalion, consisting of the former Gold Coast constabulary was to be established in the Gold Coast. In Sierra Leone, a three-company battalion, consisting men of the Sierra Leone Frontier police was to be established. Two battalions were to be established in Northern Nigeria (these were the 1 and 2 battalion which were made up of the units already raised by Lugard alongside with the elements of the Royal Niger Constabulary). The 3 and 4 battalion to be established in Southern Nigeria, would consist men of the Niger Coast Protectorate Constabulary and those of the Royal Niger Constabulary already serving in the Southern territories, while a three company battalion was established in Lagos.

The Constabulary of the Royal Niger Company quartered in Northern Nigeria was on 1 January 1900, transferred to the WAFF after the revocation of the Royal Niger Company charter leaving about three hundred in Southern Nigeria. The total number transferred was six hundred, fifty of which were found unfit while another fifty enlisted into the civil police. The balance of five hundred was incorporated into WAFF bringing its total strength to two thousand, seven, hundred and forty-six. The one, two and three

Battalions became Northern Nigeria Regiment which also included the Mounted Infantry battalion. Lugard had received an approval from the colonial office in 1898 for the creation of the third Niger Battalion WAFF with its headquarters in Calabar. This Battalion incorporated the Niger Coast Protectorate force and a portion of the Royal Niger became the Third Battalion of WAFF and then the Southern Nigeria Regiment. The Lagos Constabulary became the Lagos battalion. according to Brigadier General G.V. Kemball the Inspector-General of the WAFF: Nigeria cannot be safeguarded against its internal and external foes with a force distributed in garrisons hundreds of miles apart, mostly unconnected by telegraphs, unless very substantial reserves are kept in hand at one or two centres from which columns can be obtained, in essence the amalgamation of all forces in West Africa into one formidable force as West African Frontier Force could collectively defend British occupied territories and checkmate any form of incursion by the French and Germans during the crucial period of Anglo-French and Anglo-German rivalry.

3. Conclusion

The establishment of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) in 1897, essentially brought together all forces of British West African countries of Nigeria, Sierra-Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana) and the Gambia Police. These forces were amalgamated in 1900 as a formidable force in order to checkmate against French and German incursion on the territories already occupied by the British during the crucial period of Anglo-French rivalry along the Niger and Borgu shortly after the scramble and partitioning of Africa. The WAFF was also established in order to subjugate local opposition to colonial occupation and rule. The amalgamation of the military formations in Nigeria and other parts of British West African countries became the final re-organization of the WAFF prior to World War I, in 1914. The West African Frontier Force therefore, comprised all the forces in British colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. They all had their various headquarters, depot and commanding officer in their various locations. With regards to Nigerian

perspective of the West African Frontier Force, the headquarters of the WAFF was first located at Lokoja, but was later transferred to Jebba, then Zungeru and subsequently to Kaduna, Northern Protectorate which became the Headquarters of the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF. All the Battalions (1 and 2 Battalion in the North and 3 and 4 in the South) were amalgamated and designated the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). The Nigeria Regiment thus came under a unified command under Col Lord Frederick Lugard, who later became the Governor-General of Nigeria in 1914 after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates as one entity Nigeria. This then set the precedence for the maintenance of a well-organized military system. Kaduna which became the capital of Northern Nigeria also became the headquarters of the Nigeria Regiment (WAFF). This regiment at this period consisted 4,977 African Soldiers and 440 non-carriers). The cost of maintaining the regiment came to about £280,000 a year. The conditions of Service in either part of the country were harmonized. In essence, the amalgamation of the WAFF was not only to provide a strong and formidable force against the French as well as the German rivals but was West African contribution to British Imperial Defence during this period.

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