

# The West African Frontier Force (WAFF): A History of Origin and Development

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## Abstract

The West African Frontier Force was formed in 1897 as the major military agency in British West Africa. The formation of this force has been commonly associated with the Anglo-French Crisis of 1897-8 over territorial acquisition in West Africa or traced to the War Office initiative in 1897 to raise a West African force through amalgamation of existing colonial forces. A further investigation, based mainly on archival material, locates the genesis of the force in a deeper and more comprehensive historical background. Indeed, outside the Anglo-French Crisis and the War Office initiative, the force also came as a reaction of British imperial and colonial magnates to the proliferation of colonial military forces in British West Africa in the 1880s and 1890s. The need for a strong military agency to enforce the partition, colonisation, and pacification of West Africa; the successful experiment in military cooperation and interchange of military personnel between the constabularies of Lagos and the Gold Coast since 1872; the adoption in 1896 of a common seniority rating, uniform, rank system, pay, and allowances by the Lagos and Gold Coast constabularies; and the effective combination and use of colonial, protectorate, and imperial forces during the Bida and Benin expeditions of 1897 also inspired the move for the formation of a pan-regional force with the name, West African Frontier Force.

**Keywords:** Military, Colonialism and British West Africa.

## Introduction

The West African Frontier Force (WAFF) remains one of the most cultivated subjects in the military historiography of colonial West Africa. In spite of this, the background to its genesis has not been sufficiently investigated suggesting a deficiency of knowledge in that respect. It is not enough, as found in extant literature,<sup>1</sup> either to link the formation of the force with the Anglo-French Crisis of 1897-8 over territorial acquisition in the Niger region, the Gold Coast, and Lagos hinterland or present it as

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the product of the War Office initiative in 1897 to raise a West African force.

The inadequacy of knowledge of the historical circumstances surrounding the formation of the WAFF was suggested, but without solution, in 1979 by Edoho Ekoko. He wrote: "There is the strong temptation to associate the formation of the W.A.F.F. with the Niger Crisis of 1897-8.... In a sense that was true but it does not appear to be the whole historical truth. It would seem that the War Office had taken the initiative before the Crisis."<sup>2</sup> Since then, the state of knowledge of the historical foundation of the WAFF has remained at the level of adumbration.

This paper is a humble endeavour to move the state of knowledge on genesis of the WAFF beyond that level. It locates the formation of the force within a more comprehensive and intelligible historical background. The paper further explains why and how the decision to form the WAFF was taken, drawing attention to the primordial military ideas and practices that gave birth to it and how the name, West African Frontier Force, actually came to be.

### **Origins of West African Force**

British military forces in West Africa date back to 1800.<sup>3</sup> From that date to the closing years of the nineteenth century, various British forces, representing mercantile, imperial, and colonial interests, had operated in the region. By 1898 the British military and armed police forces in West Africa included the Gambia Civil Police, Sierra Leone Garrison Artillery, and Sierra Leone West African Regiment. Other forces were the Gold Coast Constabulary, the Gold Coast Volunteers, the Lagos Constabulary, the Royal Niger Constabulary, and the Niger Coast Constabulary.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these land forces, there were detachments of the Royal Navy, stationed on the West African coast. Before 1898 all the forces generally operated independently from each other and had exclusive areas of jurisdiction and responsibility. The proliferation of these forces in the 1880s and 1890s and their generally disconcerted and disorderly approach to the partition, conquest, and pacification of Africa represented a most ugly feature of British imperialism in the continent. British military presence in West Africa was characterised by this trend in the 1880s and 1890s, although there were circumstances in which interchange of troops and consolidation of efforts were carried out between some of the forces.

From the mid-1890s the deployment of the forces came under the attention of the War Office, where Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, expressed the need for the formation of a West African force to replace at once the existing military forces in British West African colonies and protectorates. Lansdowne thought that such a force should eventually come under the control of the Colonial Office and should be used for both colonial and imperial purposes. He mooted the idea to Joseph Chamberlain,

the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for consideration.<sup>5</sup>

The idea to form a West African force was informed by various considerations. The British colonial military forces in West Africa operated independently from each other. Whenever there was war or crisis in any particular colony, for which its colonial force alone could not be used, a requisition for military assistance was made to the War Office. In such a situation, the War Office usually sent special service officers from the British Army, Militia, or Royal Navy, or dispatched detachments of imperial troops, depending on the nature and circumstances of the operation for which assistance was sought. It was considered that such a cumbersome approach to the military requirements of the colonies and protectorates could be circumvented with the establishment of a West African force, which would be equipped to cater for the military needs of all the British colonies and protectorates in West Africa and, consequently, reduce or stop altogether the expensive tradition of dependency on British regular forces and imperial personnel.

The 1890s witnessed a spiraling resistance from indigenous Africans against British presence in West Africa. Britain, therefore, resorted to the use of force in not only stemming down the tide of African resistance within her territories but also in the conquest and annexation of more territories. By the late 1890s, she had gone deep in a grand scheme of imperialism and colonisation, which required a stronger military machine than any of the existing military forces to execute. Such a military machine was conceived in the formation of a West African force.

It was further argued that under a West African force, there would be homogeneity in the training and equipping of all the military personnel, who were now rendering services from various backgrounds of training. It would be possible, in such a homogenous army, to set up common standards and criteria for the promotion of personnel and subject them to similar conditions of service. It was only then that the full value of the excellent fighting qualities of the Africans and the efficiency of the officers and men, in general, could be realised.<sup>6</sup>

Lansdowne conceived the idea of a West African force after perusing military reports on the Benin and Bida expeditions of 1897.<sup>7</sup> It is not certain what specifically in the reports influenced his thought. It is probable, however, that Lansdowne was impressed by the successful combination of various forces - colonial, protectorate, and imperial forces - during the operations. He could also have been fascinated by the motley of African troops, recruited for the expeditions from different areas of West Africa. Whatever influenced his thought, Lansdowne, as earlier pointed out, presented the idea for the formation of a West African force to Chamberlain on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1897, proposing further, that such a force could be formed by amalgamation of the constabularies of Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Lagos, Niger Coast

Protectorate, and Royal Niger Company.<sup>8</sup> He argued that the amalgamation of these constabularies “would give the West Coast of Africa a homogenous imperial force available for any emergency”<sup>9</sup>

### The Precedent

It is important to note, however, that the concept of amalgamating British West African constabularies into a regional force did not originate with Lansdowne’s suggestion in 1897. Its antecedents can be traced to early military cooperation between some of the colonial military forces in British West Africa. In 1872 a detachment of the Lagos Constabulary was sent to the Gold Coast to assist its Constabulary in quelling a riot in Elmina.<sup>10</sup> The Lagos Constabulary also sent a contingent of 100 soldiers to reinforce the Gold Coast Constabulary troops, who were engaged against the Asante in a battle near Quadooah.<sup>11</sup> In 1896 a contingent of the Lagos Constabulary, along with the Gold Coast Constabulary and imperial troops, formed part of the Kumasi Expedition that humbled King Prempeh I of the Asante Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> In 1900 a total of 348 soldiers of the Lagos Constabulary were dispatched to the Gold Coast to fight in the Anglo-Asante War, along with the Gold Coast Constabulary and other colonial forces from West and Central Africa.<sup>13</sup> Another colonial force, the Niger Coast Constabulary was raised through military cooperation with the Gold Coast Constabulary. It was first formed with ten trained soldiers, obtained from the Gold Coast Constabulary. These soldiers formed the nucleus of the Niger Coast Constabulary in 1891 as well as trained new recruits for the constabulary for one year before they were returned to the Gold Coast.<sup>14</sup>

Anticipating the strategic importance of the military cooperation between the constabularies of Lagos and the Gold Coast in the success of future military operations in British West Africa, Major General Wolseley mooted, as early as 1873, the idea of what was akin to the amalgamation of the two colonial forces. In a report to the War Office, he wrote:

The armed police Force [as the Lagos Constabulary was then referred to] under Captain Thompson, Queen’s Bays, are of great service here [Gold Coast]. While employed in the field or occupying outposts, I have desired that they may be considered as a portion of the military force [the Gold Coast Constabulary].<sup>15</sup>

The idea of integrating the two forces became a reality in 1879, when the Lagos Constabulary was formally amalgamated with the Gold Coast Constabulary until they were separated in 1886.<sup>16</sup>

Outside these joint military initiatives, Britain’s policy of using combined military

forces to respond to her frontier dispute with France in West Africa was not going to be completely new to the WAFF. By October, 1897 about two months before the WAFF actually commenced as a force,<sup>17</sup> a contingent of 3 officers and 110 rank and file of the Lagos Constabulary, together with an imperial force of 11 officers and 280 rank and file, had been positioned to garrison and scout the western frontiers of the Niger territory against perceived French incursion.<sup>18</sup> Although the amalgamation of the two constabularies was short-lived, it actuated the introduction of a general service regulation into the constabularies of the Gold Coast and Lagos. The general service regulation made it mandatory for any soldier, if so required, to render military service in any part of the colonies of the Gold Coast and Lagos. It further provided for the interchange of military personnel between the two constabularies, and this was actually carried out until the formation of the WAFF.<sup>19</sup> The practice of military co-operation and interchange of military personnel propelled further thoughts on a possible unification of all the British colonial forces in West Africa. On 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1895 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, anxious to improve the performance of the constabularies of Lagos and Gold Coast, sent memos to the governors of these colonies, advocating and proposing uniformity in weapons and in the dress, rank, and pay of the officers.<sup>20</sup>

The proposal was supported by the two governors, who thought that it was time for the colonial forces to be treated as one body with regard to their conditions of service. The Governor of Lagos particularly expressed the opinion, that "Forces which may be called upon at any time to work together should be armed with a weapon requiring the same ammunition."<sup>21</sup> Also proposed was the appointment of an independent inspecting officer to oversee the affairs

of all the constabulary forces in West Africa. The proposal was similarly approved by the

Governor of Lagos, whose opinion was:

I believe that the appointment of an independent Inspecting Officer would do more to improve the condition of the constabulary Forces on the West Coast than anything else I can think of.... An Inspecting Officer would have the enormous advantage of being able to compare the different Forces and thus excite a healthy spirit of emulation. Any expenditure, on this head, within reasonable limits, would in my opinion be justified by the results which would be obtained.<sup>22</sup>

The governors of Lagos and the Gold Coast set out to work together to implement the proposals. By April, 1896, as Acting Governor Hodgson of the Gold Coast reported,

“the uniform of each force [had] already been assimilated,”<sup>23</sup> and in May, 1896 efforts were made towards “the assimilation of the rank, pay and allowances of the several grades of officers in each force.”<sup>24</sup>

While simulation of rank, pay, and allowances were taking place in May, the Colonial Office issued another memo to the colonial governors in West Africa, proposing that for purposes of “seniority”, all the West African constabularies should be regarded and treated “as one body.”<sup>25</sup> This proposal was warmly accepted by the colonial governors, who saw it as another major “step towards making the several forces homogeneous.”<sup>26</sup> Governor Carter of Lagos in particular thought of the proposal as “a very salutary and desirable one”, and wrote to the Colonial Office, concurring in “the desirability of one Force in West Africa for seniority purposes.”<sup>27</sup> It can be seen at this point that Lansdowne’s idea of forming a West African army by amalgamating existing colonial forces was not a complete departure from the past. The conceptual disposition and attitude of both the Colonial Office and the colonial authorities in West Africa from 1895-6 foreshadowed Lansdowne’s proposal in the following year. Joseph Chamberlain, who was appointed the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895, was part and parcel of the thoughts and actions of 1895 and 1896, which sought, in certain respects, to homogenise the West African constabularies. His quick and enthusiastic acceptance of Lansdowne’s proposal derived from his familiarity and involvement with the proto-amalgamation initiatives of 1895-6. This background also contributed positively to the enormous interest demonstrated in Lansdowne’s proposal by the colonial governors in West Africa, who, in due course, spared no efforts to make their contributions towards the formulation and implementation of the amalgamation policy.

On 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1897, having accepted the proposal to amalgamate the constabularies into a West African force, Chamberlain appointed Lord Selborne, the Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office, to represent the Colonial Office in a joint committee of the Colonial and War offices set up to discuss the issue. He notified Lansdowne of the move, requiring him to reciprocate by appointing a War Office representative into the committee. Overwhelmed by other official issues, which competed more favourably for his attention, Lansdowne procrastinated in appointing a War Office representative into the joint committee. He responded in October, 1897 by appointing Mr. F.T. Marzials, Assistant Accountant-General, and Colonel A.C. Raper, Assistant Quartermaster-General, to represent the War Office, and Captain F.S. Robb, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, to serve as secretary to the committee.<sup>28</sup> He communicated the appointment to the Colonial Office, advising that the committee should meet at the earliest opportunity.

However, it was not possible for the committee to meet over the amalgamation issue. Apart from the belated selection of the War Office representation, which encumbered

the meeting of the committee, further discussion and action on the proposal to form a West African force through amalgamation of the existing forces were interrupted by the Anglo-French conflict over territorial acquisition in 1897. The amalgamation would have to delay till 1901 to be effectually carried out.

### The Push

Although Chamberlain accepted the formation of a West African army through amalgamation of existing military forces as suggested by Lansdowne, the immediate consideration which spun him to action was the rivalry for territorial acquisition in West Africa between Britain and France and the tension it generated between the two countries in 1897. For example, the forceful occupation of Bussa, a British territory on the upper Niger, by France in 1897 urgently called for a reappraisal of British colonial defence in West Africa. Up to the 1890s British colonial attitude towards external aggression was defensive. The French threat and incursion into territories to which Britain had laid claims raised dust in British official circles, where it was argued, that a purely defensive approach was insufficient to contain French aggression and threat. Convinced that "a purely defensive strategy is a policy which in war rarely leads to success,"<sup>29</sup> the War Office was now poised to move further to a policy of aggression, if it was to secure victory in any military encounter with the French. However, before her application of the new policy of aggression towards France, Britain took a precursory step to negotiate with her to withdraw her forces from Bussa and other territories on the Niger, Lagos hinterland, and the Gold Coast, considered to be under British sphere of influence, The posture of intransigence adopted by France in the course of the negotiation and her refusal to withdraw from the British territories signaled the failure of diplomacy and evoked anti-French sentiment in Britain. By 1897 it had become obvious, that the disagreement between the two countries over the territories in question would require a military, rather than a diplomatic, solution.

The Anglo-French conflict played into British jingoism, and Joseph Chamberlain, the one man personifying such jingoism, assumed an inexorably bellicose disposition. *Ab initio*, he formulated a "chess board" policy of seizure for seizure and fire for fire, which he proffered as a counterpoise to the French and, ultimately, a solution to the conflict. In order to effect this policy against the French and to defend British interest in West Africa, Chamberlain came up with a definite proposal on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1897 to raise "what would be in effect a small West African army" of "2,500 men in all", with the necessary complement of officers and noncommissioned officers, to be funded "from the Imperial Exchequer."<sup>30</sup>

The "army" was to be commanded by Major Frederick John Dealtry Lugard of the East Norfolk Regiment. In order to have a document to guide him in the formation

of the West African army, Chamberlain directed Lord Selborne to work out a scheme for a small West African army. By September, 1897 Selborne, in consultation with General Sir Redvers Buller, had prepared a memorandum in which a "scheme for the organization of a small West African army..." was outlined"<sup>31</sup>

At the time of Chamberlain's proposal for a small West African army, opinion in the War Office in particular and in the British government in general was hostile to a further proliferation of military forces in West Africa. In view of this, Chamberlain had to reconcile his proposal with that of Lansdowne, which sought to amalgamate the existing military forces into one body. He did not indicate that the force which he proposed would be an independent force as other existing constabularies. While, therefore, the immediate task of his proposed "small West African army" would be to counter the French in the Niger territories, the same army was to be raised and organised as an integral unit of the combined homogeneous West African force to be formed through amalgamation. He did not, therefore, propose to raise a force different from the amalgamated West African Force of Lansdowne's conception. Indeed, the small West African army was to provide the basic and model organisation to be adopted in the amalgamation and re-organisation of the constabularies.

### **Naming the Proposed West African Force**

When it became obvious, that his proposal and that of Lansdowne were united in the formation of a West African force, Chamberlain suggested that the "small West African army" and the combined West African force to be formed through amalgamation and re-organisation of the constabularies should bear the same name and have the same identity, since the former was proposed as a part of the latter. For this reason his Colonial Office and Lansdowne's War Office jointly sought a name under which the small West African army and, eventually, the combined West African force should be organised and known.

The first attempt to give a name to the small West African army was made by Chamberlain himself, who on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1897 suggested, "that the name of the 'West African Guides' should be given to the new force which is being raised for service under Major Lugard, and that eventually, if the various West African forces are amalgamated, this name should be applied to the combined force." In response to this suggestion, Lansdowne wrote on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1897 to argue, as advised by the commander-in-chief, "that the title 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> West African Regiment is preferable to that of Guides"<sup>33</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1897 Chamberlain wrote to Lansdowne, accepting his opinion, but argued further, that the force should have a name which would convey to the public, both at home and abroad, the idea of a small army; and that the term, "regiment



“, being usually used in the sense of “battalion”, would not convey this idea. For this reason he preferred the title, “brigade”, to that of “regiment” and suggested, therefore, that the force should be called West African Brigade.”<sup>34</sup> The debate continued when on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1898 Lansdowne sent a memo to Chamberlain to express the opinion, that the title, “West African Brigade”, would not be an accurate description of the force, as the term, “brigade”, and was applicable to infantry only. He, therefore, suggested “for Mr. Chamberlain’s consideration, that these combined troops should be called ‘West African Frontier Force’, which would appear to meet all the requirements of the case...”<sup>35</sup> The debate ended as the name, “West African Frontier Force”, was adopted on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1898, when Chamberlain wrote to the Secretary of State for War to concur in it without further argument.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

The formation of the WAFF has been interpreted simply as Britain’s response to her 1897-8 conflict with France over territorial claims in West Africa. The other interpretation is, that the WAFF was a product of the War Office initiative in 1897 to raise a West African force through amalgamation of existing colonial forces. This study, while not disputing or jettisoning these interpretations, locates the formation of the WAFF in a broader and more distant historical background than as suggested by them.

Traditionally, British amalgamation policies were adopted to enable the weaker units under amalgamation to get the support of the stronger ones. The policies were also usually informed and inspired by previous workable cooperation between the separate units to be amalgamated.

In this sense the War Office initiative to raise the WAFF through amalgamation was not a clean break from the past. It was inspired by such early military cooperation as the support given to the Gold Coast by the Lagos Constabulary during the Elmina Riot of 1872; the deployment of the Lagos Constabulary for the Kumasi Expedition of 1896 in the Gold Coast; the interchange of military personnel between the Gold Coast and Lagos constabularies since 1879; and the military support given to the former by the latter during the Anglo-Asante War of 1900. The independent and staccato manner in which British colonial and imperial forces operated in the nineteenth century further impelled moves towards their amalgamation into a pan- West African force.

In the light of this study, the genesis of the WAFF can no longer be seen mainly from the immediate perspective of the Anglo-French Crisis of 1897-8 and the War Office initiative in 1897 to raise a West African force. The formation of the WAFF should be further interpreted as the crystallisation of the historical continuities that made the military history of colonial West Africa.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, S.C Ukpabi, "The Origins of the West African Frontier Force", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol. 3, No. 3 (December, 1966): 485-501.

Ukpabi, *The Origins of the Nigerian Army: A History of the West African Frontier Force 1897-*

*1914* (Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya, 1987.) Edoho Ekoko, "The West African frontier Force

Revisited", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. Vol 10, (December, 1979):47-63.

<sup>2</sup> Ekoko, *West African Frontier Force*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> P. M. Mbaeyi, *British Military and Naval Forces in West African History 1807-1874* (Lagos, Nigeria: Nok, 1978), 40.

<sup>4</sup> CO African (West) No. 565, Cardew to Chamberlain, 17 September, 1898. CO 879/54, African (West)

No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces, Colonial Office to War Office, 23 November, 1897. B. I. Obichere, *West African States and European Expansion* (New Haven: Conn., 1971), 216.

<sup>5</sup> CO African (West) No.565, War Office to Colonial Office, 20 July, 1897.

<sup>6</sup> CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces, War Office to Colonial Office, 20 July, 1897.

<sup>7</sup> CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces..

<sup>8</sup> CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces.

<sup>9</sup> CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces.

<sup>10</sup> CO 147/28, Statement of Amount due Hausas Detached for Service at Elmina, 4 October, 1873.

<sup>11</sup> Mbaeyi , *British Military and Naval Forces*, 192.

<sup>12</sup> CO 147/106, Report on Hausa Force, 30 June, 1896. J.K. Fynn, "Ghana – Asante", in *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation*. New Edition, ed. Michael Crowder (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 19-49.

<sup>13</sup> A. H. W. Haywood and F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale, 1964), 53. S. C. Ukpabi, "The British Colonial Approach to the Asante War of 1900", *Geneva-Africa*. Vol 1, No. I (1972): 1-18.

<sup>14</sup> CSO 2/1/1, Oil Rivers Protectorate Dispatch No. 4 to Foreign Office, 10 September, 1891.

<sup>15</sup> CO 96/107, Major General Wolseley to War Office, 7 October, 1873.

<sup>16</sup> I. O. Ewa, "A History of the Nigerian Army 1863-1966", PhD Thesis, Department of History

and International Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria, 2010:36, 46.

<sup>17</sup>Ukpabi, *Origins of Nigerian Army*, 62-63.

<sup>18</sup>CO 147/119, McCallum to Chamberlain, 7 October, 1897.

<sup>19</sup>CO 147/67, Report on Lagos Constabulary 31 December, 1887. Ewa, *History of Nigerian Army* 63.

<sup>20</sup>CO 147/99, Governor of Lagos to Secretary of State, 13 May, 1895.

<sup>21</sup>CO 147/99, Governor of Lagos to Secretary of State.

<sup>22</sup>CO 147/99, Governor of Lagos to Secretary of State.

<sup>23</sup>CO 147/105, Governor of Gold Coast to Governor of Lagos, 11 May, 1896.

<sup>24</sup>CO 147/105, Governor of Gold Coast to Governor.

<sup>25</sup>CO 147/105, Governor of Gold Coast to Governor.

<sup>26</sup>CO 147/105, Governor of Gold Coast to Governor.

<sup>27</sup>CO 147/105, Governor of Lagos to Governor of Gold Coast, 25 May, 1896.

<sup>28</sup>CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, War Office to Colonial Office, 15 October, 1897.

<sup>29</sup>CO 879/58, African (West) No. 581, Military Responsibilities of West Africa, 1 March, 1899.

<sup>30</sup>CO 879/51, Papers Relating to West African Frontier Force: Chamberlain to McCallum, 23 July, 1897 and Colonial Office to War Office, 6 October, 1897.

<sup>31</sup>CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces: Colonial Office to war Office, 23 November, 1897.

<sup>32</sup>CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Amalgamation of Military Forces.

<sup>33</sup>CO 879/54. African (West) No. 565: War Office to Colonial Office, 10 December, 1897.

<sup>34</sup>CO 147/123, New West African Force Title, 13 December, 1897. CO 147/123, War Office to Colonial Office, 10 December, 1897. CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, Colonial Office to War Office, 21 December, 1897.

<sup>35</sup>CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, War Office to Colonial Office, 28 January, 1898.

<sup>36</sup>CO 879/54, African (West) No. 565, War Office to Colonial Office, 11 February, 1898.