

## Canadian Soldiers in West African Conflicts 1885-1905

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*“The Scouts were under Lieutenant [A.H.] Macdonnell, D.S.O., an excellent officer of the permanent forces of Canada.”*

Lt. Col. William Heneker’s narrative of the Ibeku-Olokoro Expedition  
Southern Nigeria, 1902<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Canadian Army at the beginning of the twentieth century is most often defined by its operational participation in the war in South Africa. Between 1899 and 1902 Canada dispatched a few thousand soldiers to fight for British interests against Boer settlers, supporting a war that had a considerable impact on both the evolution of Canada’s fledgling army as well as Canadian politics in general. The sheer magnitude of this event in fact overshadowed just about every other British and Canadian army activity at the time, but it was by no means the only conflict in which Canadian soldiers were then engaged. In addition to helping secure the veldt of the Transvaal for Great Britain, Canada’s soldiers were also active participants in a number of other campaigns across equatorial Africa. Though much smaller in total number and often serving as part of a general frontier force instead of being organized into specific Canadian units, their presence was still both influential and at times critical for operational success in these other theatres of conflict.

This article specifically examines the role played by Canadians at the turn of the century in West Africa.<sup>2</sup> Though not intended to draw sweeping conclusions about the influence of such operations on the Canadian Army as a whole – such analysis must follow at a later time when much more contextual evidence is available – it does rediscover a largely forgotten chapter in the origins and evolution of that army, as well as raise a number of questions that obviously deserve greater attention. Most important, perhaps, this article demonstrates overall that a new approach to the analysis of the pre Great War Canadian Army is required, one that focuses as much on the influence of those who left Canada for military service as those who remained within the ranks of the institution at home.

There is little question that the development of a better understanding of the pre-Great War Canadian Army is long overdue. Existing literature too often focuses solely on political or operational summaries, and then usually only in terms of how the British Army controlled and influenced a much more nascent Canadian militia.<sup>3</sup> As this article reveals, not only are such

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Colonel W.C.G. Heneker, D.S.O. *Bush Warfare*. (London: Hugh Rees Limited, 1907), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian involvement in Central and East African conflicts during this period will be the subject of a separate article.

<sup>3</sup> For examples see Desmond Morton. *Ministers and Generals: Politics and the Canadian Militia, 1868-1904*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); Stephen Harris. *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

operational narratives and analyses incomplete but they also do not reverse the lens and examine how Canada and Canadians influenced the British Army and its operations abroad during the same period.<sup>4</sup> A more complete picture of Canadian Army evolution can only exist through such an examination, and this article touches on but one topic that brings new evidence for that reassessment.

### The British Empire in West Africa<sup>5</sup>

During the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, the relationship of the European to the African was in the midst of a great transition. For centuries Africa had been the 'Dark Continent', a vast and impenetrable unknown to the European adventurer, and often perceived as a place of witch doctors, juju cults, cannibalism, and savagery into which he or she dare not venture. Since the late fifteenth century, the valuable trading commodities of West Africa were brought down to the coast by native groups for exchange with the Europeans, few of whom ever ventured inland from the trading forts they built along the coast. As British historian R.B. Magor later noted, "The main products traded were slaves, palm oil, and gold, in that order of importance."<sup>6</sup>

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the British repented their participation in the slave trade, and set themselves to blocking everyone else then engaged in the activity as well. Both the Europeans and Arabs who shipped the slaves and the native kings from whom they had bought them, were soundly reprovved by British sailors and soldiers, who imposed their anti-slavery views with more often than not with religion followed closely by artillery maxim machine guns, and rifles. The broader implication of this was that the British were developing an interest in the internal governance of West Africa by the mid-nineteenth century. Having begun that century without ambitions beyond holding their collection of trading enterprises along the coast, they closed it by endeavouring to extend their involvement to full-fledged imperial rule as deep inland as possible.

The British, however, were not the only Europeans with designs on ruling the region. The Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish had all been there, but were no longer serious contenders against the rising British military and commercial power. Instead it was the French and Germans with whom the British had to vie. While the British were seizing the hinterlands of the Gold Coast [now Ghana] and the Niger coast, the Germans seized Togoland and Cameroon on the east sides of these British claims. There was some friction and disputes among traders and officials on the scene, but agreements were soon reached with this colonial rival in a more or less gentlemanly fashion. The manner in which Europeans resolved their African boundaries is neatly described in the comments of Britain's Foreign Minister Salisbury upon a subsequent boundary treaty with the French: "We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's foot has ever trod... We have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were."<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to popular misconception, the delegates at the Berlin Conference of 1885 did not lay out all the borders of modern Africa.<sup>8</sup> While they did resolve a few disputes about jurisdiction on certain rivers and a few boundary disputes in the Congo basin, the main

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<sup>4</sup> A notable exception is Norman Penlington. *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965). See also Guy R. MacLean, "The Canadian Offer of Troops for Hong Kong, 1894", *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.38:4 (December 1957), 275-283.

<sup>5</sup> The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Lawren Guldmond in researching and writing an earlier draft of this section for a separate publication.

<sup>6</sup> R.B. Magor, *African General Service Medals*, (London: The Naval & Military Press, 1993), 25.

<sup>7</sup> Sam C. Ukpabi, *The Origins of the Nigerian Army: A History of the West African Frontier Force 1897-1914*, (Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd, 1987), 8.

<sup>8</sup> J.D. Hargreaves, "The Work of the Berlin Conference," in *The Partition of Africa: Illusion or Necessity*, ed. Robert O. Collins (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969), 106.

achievement of the conference was the establishment of some rules for mitigating disputes among themselves in the years to come as they laid their claims to the rest. Over the next three decades, seven European nations extended their dominions inland from the coast, and as they ran up against each other's claims, they resolved their boundary disputes in a series of bilateral treaties.

While the British had stayed on good terms with the Germans as they had worked out their disputes, they nearly went to war with the French over territorial claims in West Africa. The French were energetically advancing their territories in the region, while Britain vacillated about whether to expend the effort to move inland. Under Salisbury, British policy was to secure east Africa, flanking as it does the vital corridor to India, and let the French have most of West Africa without much contest.<sup>9</sup> But when Joseph Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary in 1895, he launched a vigorous drive to prevent any more inland and western territory from falling into French hands by default. As things stood when Chamberlain took office, the French already had much more territory and troops in West Africa than the British. If Britain were to stake out and defend anything significant, the forces on hand would have to be shored up.

In July 1897, as contentions grew sharp between British and French rivals over the regions north of Lagos, Chamberlain instigated the amalgamation of the miscellaneous British military units then in West Africa into a unified regional army, known as the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). Frederick Dealtry Lugard was gazetted to be its first commandant on 26 August 1897.<sup>10</sup> Though only listed as a Captain back at his regiment, within the army he was distinguished as a Brevet-Major, and in his new assignment as Commanding Officer of the WAFF he was granted the local rank of Colonel.

As an organization the WAFF was evolved over several years between 1897 and 1901. Initially comprised of two battalions of the Northern Nigeria Regiment, by 1902 it also included one battalion of the Southern Nigeria Regiment, the Lagos Battalion, the Sierra Leone Battalion, a battalion and a half of the Gold Coast Regiment, and the Gambia Company.<sup>11</sup> The ranks of these infantry units were comprised of African natives, while the officer corps was made up of white men from both Britain and its colonies. As they had long been doing in India, the British developed strong prejudices in favor of recruiting certain races for their purported martial qualities. In West Africa, the Hausa was the most favoured tribe, and in English usage "Hausas" was sometimes used as a generic term for African soldiers. A detailed treatment of the tribal constituents of the W.A.F.F. can be found in Haywood & Clarke's, *History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, therefore this article will not repeat that information here, but suffice to say that the British even when local recruiting sources were scarce, strove to create as professional and capable a force as possible, even if only a small one. Securing officers to lead these units was another matter, however, as only 'proper white gentlemen' would suffice for such a role. Without such resources readily available locally, the War Office had to look elsewhere for the solution.

While the WAFF was still taking shape in late 1897 and into 1898, it did its best to show the flag and thereby validate British claims in the disputed areas (Borgu, Bussa, Say, Sokoto, Katsina) north of Lagos, in the midst of numerically superior French forces who were there doing the same. Thus before the WAFF was fully born it was being used by Colonial Secretary Chamberlain as a sabre to rattle in front of the French. Had there been a war, the WAFF's

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<sup>9</sup> Ukpabi, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick John Dealtry Lugard, 1st Baron Lugard, GCMG, CB, DSO, PC (January 22, 1858–11 April 1945) was a British soldier, explorer of Africa, and colonial administrator. He served in the Second Afghan War (1878-1880), the Sudan (1884-1885) and Burma (1886-1887). He was severely wounded in Nyasaland in May 1888 while leading a British expedition against Arab slave traders near Lake Nyasa. He raised the WAFF in 1897 and served as its first commander until 1899. Lugard was later Governor of Hong Kong (1907–1912) and Governor-General of Nigeria (1914–1919).

<sup>11</sup> Ukpabi, 85. The strength of the force at the end of 1901 is here given as (not including officers) 6208 other ranks.

prospects against the vastly larger French forces in the area were uncertain no matter what its quality, although British naval preponderance held the promise of eventual success if Britain could commit large resources to reversing possible initial defeats. In the end, no war came, and France and England reached a diplomatic agreement on many West African boundaries in a convention signed on 14 June 1898. With the main threat removed for the moment, the British turned their attention on securing the local population's governance for the eventual introduction of British commerce and trade. Several Canadians would ultimately take part in shaping these events.

### **British Recruiting Policy and Practices in Canada**

As the British Empire continued to expand its influence across the African continent, its forces and in particular its officer corps was seriously overstretched. Constantly increasing demands for new subalterns since the end of the Second Afghan War (1870-1880), especially technically trained ones such as artillery officers and engineers, pushed the War Office in London to begin scouting for new officers among its colonies to fill the widening gap. Canada offered a tempting and easy source. With a nascent army of its own and a recently created Royal Military College that showed great promise and focused on technical education and training, the country soon became the preferred audience for targeted recruiting for British operational needs overseas.

Not surprisingly, Canadians seeking military careers were content to be the preferred client. Despite the fact that Canada's colonies had entered into a confederation in 1867, the new dominion remained very much a loyal subject of the British Empire and Canadian families continued to encourage their sons to join the ranks of the British Army just as much as Canada's military. There were plenty of reasons for making such a choice ranging from the romantic to the practical, but it is perhaps most important to note that at the time service in one army was not perceived as making a sleight towards the other.

From a practical perspective, in the latter half of the nineteenth century those desiring the military life as a professional soldier in Canada were often left wanting if they stayed at home. Just prior to the official departure of the British Army from Canada in 1871, the War Office in London offered to transfer to Canada the Royal Canadian Rifles, a British regular army battalion that had been raised in Canada primarily from British veterans. Ottawa politely rejected the offer, suggesting that the government was not yet ready to finance a permanent standing force of regular soldiers. The government did authorize the formation of two regular force artillery batteries, however, to man the critical fortresses at Quebec City and Kingston once the British left. This was done just in case the United States saw the British withdrawal as an opportunity for another invasion of Canada. These two batteries formed the entirety of regular Canadian Army in 1871; the remainder of the confederation's military being composed of part-time and partially trained militia. It was not very much to choose from for one seeking a life in the profession of arms.<sup>12</sup>

Canada's army had also not yet embarked on its future legacy as an expeditionary force, with the first governments often unable or unwilling to fill requests from London for the dispatch of large formations in support of British operations overseas while it was still struggling to create law, order, good government, and security at home.<sup>13</sup> Still, with the exception of the 1885 Northwest Rebellion and the endless requests for aid from the various civilian authorities to

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<sup>12</sup> E.K. Senior. *Roots of the Canadian Army: Montreal District 1846-1870*. (Montreal, The Society of the Montreal Military and Maritime Museum 1981), 14. See also G.W.L. Nicholson. *The Gunners of Canada: The History of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, Vol. 1*. (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967).

<sup>13</sup> Such a political stance was not entirely unreasonable. During the mid nineteenth century Canada was repeatedly invaded by special interest groups from the United States, and the large territory to the west of Kingston and Ottawa had yet to be brought under the government's influence and control.

restore public order, officers could expect little excitement beyond garrison life, social events, and daily drill.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, there was little opportunity for real soldiering of the kind witnessed in British army actions across the outposts of the empire, and British officers posted to Canada during this period often described their assignment as safe, healthy, expensive, and dull.<sup>15</sup>

From a romantic perspective, those seeking glory and the Victoria Cross, fame, or other personal fortunes, Canada provided few real opportunities. Though certainly there were troublesome spots in Canada requiring a military presence, on the whole it experienced much less of the hostilities often witnessed in America's settlement of its western and southern territories during this period, and despite internal ethnic and religious tensions Canada did not suffer anything in comparison to the English or American civil wars. Thus for those who saw the military as a calling or an escape, the British Army presented the best opportunities to bring honour to one self and one's family in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

Though Canada's permanent force remained relatively small for the time being, the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) at Kingston, Ontario, was opened in 1876 to educate and train young gentlemen for a career as an officer in Canada's army or professional civil service. The curriculum was based upon the American West Point model, with mathematics forming the base of all degrees and certificates.<sup>17</sup> The first graduates passed out of the college in 1880, all of whom were technically trained and most with competent military qualifications as artillery or engineering officers.<sup>18</sup>

Taking considerable interest in Canada's early move to establish a professional college of arms, the War Office in London sent notice to Ottawa offering immediate commissions in the British Army for the top four gentleman cadets graduating out of the first RMC class of eighteen officers.<sup>19</sup> Selby Smyth, the Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence at the time, commented in his annual report to the government in 1878 that fulfilling this offer would be "another link in the chain that binds us altogether."<sup>20</sup> It was hoped by some that such displays of interoperability between British and Canadian soldiers would change government attitudes about eventually deploying Canadian troops overseas, and act as a preliminary move towards the establishment of Canadian Permanent Force units that could be easily interchanged with British units then on active service.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Between 1867 and 1890 the military was called out on no less than 37 occasions to restore public order. These crises included electoral rioting, religious disputes, railway strikes, Crown land disputes, and the guarding of public hangings. See Andrew B. Godefroy, "Accustomed to Relying on Soldiers: Aid to the Civil Power and the Canadian Militia, 1867-1890", unpublished paper presented at Concordia University history symposium, May 1995.

<sup>15</sup> S.J. Harris, "The Permanent Force and Real Soldiering, 1883-1914", in Marc Milner ed. *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*. (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 35-54. Both Harris and British historian Richard Holmes comment on how British officers preferred postings to Africa or India over Canada where the cost of living was less expensive and there was more opportunity to gain both fame and fortune. See also Richard Holmes, *Sahib: The British Soldier in India*, (London: Harper Perennial, 2005) for comments on cost of living in this theatre.

<sup>16</sup> The high number of RMC officer candidates seeking imperial commissions vice a place in Canada's Permanent Force between 1880s and early 1900s is but one example of this trend. For statistics on the numbers of RMC graduates serving abroad at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century see RMC. *The Proceedings of the Royal Military College Club of Canada, 1901 No.18*. (Montreal: Chronicle Printing Co., 1902), 26. Each of the Proceedings for years 1894 through 1913 offer detailed statistics and biographical notes on college graduates serving in other forces including the British and Indian Armies.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Canada. Parliamentary Papers, 1870, XXV, 635-637, Colonel P. MacDougall. *Account of the System of Education at the United States Military Academy at West Point*. Precip in Militia Report 1873, appendix No.9, 221-223.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Preston. *Canada's RMC: A History of the Royal Military College* (Toronto, 1969), 74-76.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 66-68.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 65-66.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 66.

The first Canadians commissioned into the British Army from RMC showed tremendous ability and promise, and soon increasing numbers of Canadian officer graduates were deliberately recruited throughout the 1880s in an effort to respond to gaps in the British Army's own order of battle. In some instances successful recruitment even seemed critical to survival. A Russian victory over Afghan forces at Penjdeh in Transcaspia in March 1885 caused great concern in the War Office in London about the state of operational readiness of the British army. It was felt that if Britain had to engage the Russians again at that time the army would suffer large shortages of qualified officers.

In response to this potential threat, in April 1885 the War Office offered to Canada an additional twenty-six commissions in the British army over and above the usual four commissions normally offered every year. In particular it sought six artillery officers, ten engineer officers, and ten officers of either infantry or cavalry.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore if RMC and its recent graduates could not fill the positions, London was prepared to offer the commissions to officers of the Canadian Permanent Force and even the active militia if suitable candidates might be found. Britain eventually received twenty-eight officers from RMC alone in that year. Such generosity may seem out of place, but during this same year the government was also seriously considering the raising and dispatch of Canadian soldiers to assist in the on-going British campaign in the Sudan.<sup>23</sup>

In 1888 another similar offer was made and again RMC responded to the request. In addition to the usual four commissions, the War Office granted an additional six commissions in the Royal Engineers and two in the Royal Artillery. The Canadian gentlemen cadets soon filled them all.<sup>24</sup> Such moves were indicative of Britain's confidence in Canada's ability to produce professionally competent officers for service in either colonial or British forces. Additionally, it also demonstrated that Canada's decision to base its military officer education in mathematics was paying off. Britain needed technically trained officers and RMC was capable of supplying those gentlemen. Others might argue that London simply had no choice, but it did. There was a plethora of British militia officers to choose from not counting its own engineer and artillery officer graduates. However, those Canadian officers who had entered into British service thus far had performed admirably, and the War Office could see no reason not to continue its exploitation of Canada's RMC or permanent force as a resource for officers. By 1889, for example, Britain had taken seventy-five RMC cadets into the British army, just over a quarter of all cadets that had graduated from Kingston thus far.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to recruiting directly from RMC, the War Office regularly accepted applications for both imperial commissions as well as secondments from the Canadian permanent force and militia. This policy allowed other Canadians such as Lieutenant A.H. Macdonnell of the permanent force or Lieutenant Henry Read of the Canadian militia to offer their own services and obtain local commissions in the WAFF.<sup>26</sup>

### **Canadian Officers in West Africa**

Canadians who left the relatively benign environment of Canada for service on the dangerous and deadly West African coast were well aware of the challenges that awaited them. Since the mid-1860s, both British and American newspapers carried regular dispatches from 'the

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<sup>22</sup> United Kingdom [UK], Public Records Office [PRO], Colonial Office [CO] papers. CO 42/783, 69-75. See also Richard Preston, *Canada and "Imperial Defence": A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth's Defence Organization, 1867-1919*. (North Carolina: Duke University Commonwealth Studies Centre, 1967), 162-163.

<sup>23</sup> C.P. Stacey, "John A. Macdonald on Raising Troops in Canada for Imperial Service, 1885", *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.38:1 (March 1957), 37-40.

<sup>24</sup> UK PRO CO papers. Ibid, CO 42/783, 69-75.

<sup>25</sup> By 1889 a total of 302 cadets had been allotted numbers at the college of which 292 entered for studies.

<sup>26</sup> See later in this article for details of their African service.

dark continent', written by notable and intrepid explorers and missionaries. Tales from future legends such as Dr. David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley had often appeared on the front pages of the London *Times* and *The New York Herald*.<sup>27</sup> They presented precarious yet alluring characterizations of life and service in Africa, yet the fame and fortune often accorded to such intrepid travelers certainly seemed worth the potential risks involved.

An examination of the existing evidence indicates that Canadians served in three of the four major theatres of conflict in western Africa. While no Canadians serving in the Gambia have yet been identified, the theatre during the period in discussion will be briefly examined. However, Canadian officers both in British and Canadian service were present in operations in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Northern and Southern Nigeria, and an examination of their activities forms the remainder of this article.

## The Gambia

Of all the West African theatres during the period, the Gambia saw the least amount of conflict. A series of punitive expeditions were carried out against the local ruler, Chief Fodeh Cabbah, who was resisting incursions of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission through his country during 1891 and 1892. The following year another expedition was launched, this time against Chief Fodeh Silah, a cunning slave raider and skillful tactician who for some time was launching forays against the district west of Cape St. Mary and generally threatening the fledgling British colony of Gambia.<sup>28</sup> British attempts to capture Silah and put an end to his activities met with considerable difficulties, and it was only after a couple of failed attempts were the British finally able to launch a successful expedition and force Silah to flee in March 1894. No other serious conflicts occurred in the region, save for a single punitive expedition in early 1900 to chase down a band of men who had murdered two British traveling commissioners and their escort.

The nature of the inland water operations in the Gambia precluded the large-scale involvement of land forces, with the majority of forces being made up of Royal Navy sailors, Royal Marines, or members of the West India Regiment. The War Office records do not reveal any direct Canadian participation in these expeditions and all related searches have yet to identify anyone directly associated the campaign.<sup>29</sup>

## Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone was witness to a number of local conflicts between 1887 and 1905. Comprising a region of approximately 77,700 square kilometers and a population of approximately two million inhabitants, the borders of Sierra Leone stretched from the Great Scaries River in the north to the Great Bum River in the south and as far inland as the Niger River tributary. Very little of the region stood far above sea level, consisting mostly of swampy mangrove bush and thick rain forest until replaced by grasslands and orchard bush approximately 160 kilometers (km) inland from the coast. In this area Canadians played a modest yet central

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<sup>27</sup> For more on H.M. Stanley's journalism and life of exploration see Tim Jeal. *Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2007. RMC cadet No.52 Lieutenant William Grant Stairs served under Stanley during the infamous Emin Pasha relief expedition 1887-1890, and is commemorated on the college's memorial arch. Stair's own exploits are analyzed in Roy MacLaren. *African Exploits: The Diaries of William Stairs, 1887-1892*. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

<sup>28</sup> Magor, *African General Service Medals*, 38.

<sup>29</sup> UK. PRO. War Office [WO] 100/76 and 100/91 Gambia Service; see also UKPRO ADM 171/45, 171/46, and 171/356 Gambia service entitlements. An examination of the RMC graduate list service also did not reveal any participants in the campaign in British service.

role in some of its main conflicts during the period in question, including one action by an RMC graduate that earned considerable attention both in London and Ottawa.

Born in Kingston, Ontario in March 1858, Captain Huntley Brodie Mackay graduated from RMC with a commission into the Royal Engineers and first served in Africa as a Special Service Officer under Sir Charles Warren in the Bechuanaland Expedition in 1884-1885.<sup>30</sup> He was appointed Commanding Royal Engineer (CRE) in West Africa in 1887, and later served in Sierra Leone where he assisted Colonel Sir Francis Walker de Winton in the 1887-1888 punitive expeditions against the Yonnie tribe. It was arduous and dangerous campaign against a skillful adversary, and Captain Mackay came close to being killed on a number of occasions as the expedition was repeatedly ambushed on its way to destroy the Yonnie stronghold at Robari. For his consistently outstanding efforts and personal courage Mackay was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his actions in the Suly-Mah district, but it was a short-lived reward for him.<sup>31</sup> While serving as acting administrator to the Imperial British East Africa Company he contracted fever and died at Mombassa on 10 April 1891. It was an all-too typical death for a man serving in West Africa at that time.

Perhaps the most notable Canadian to serve in Sierra Leone during this period was William Henry Robinson. Born in St. John, New Brunswick, in July 1863 he entered the Royal Military College at Kingston in 1879. Upon graduation he was offered and accepted a commission in the Royal Engineers, completing his training at Woolich, England. Soon after he received orders for service in West Africa.

In 1889 Captain Robinson replaced Captain Mackay as the CRE in West Africa. He was serving in Sierra Leone in 1891 when a local warrior leader named Karimu attacked a patrol of the Sierra Leone Frontier Police. Karimu had already made a name for himself in the region as a freebooter, leading war bands of fighters belonging to Chief Bari Bureh against local tribes under British protection near the Limba Susu border. Karimu operated out of a stockade stronghold at Tambi on the River Scaries, and the Sierra Leone Frontier Police determined him a serious enough threat to mount an operation to kill or capture him. In March 1892 Captain Robinson was assigned the task of leading a small force to Tambi to get Karimu and kill or disperse his men. When Robinson and his party of Sierra Leone Frontier Police attacked his stockade on 14 March, however, Karimu was ready to receive them and repulsed their initial assault. The momentum lost, Captain Robinson tried to rally the attack by personally setting explosive charges at the gates, hoping to blow them open and allow for his men to rush through. Despite incredible and overwhelming enemy fire he succeeded at getting to the gates and blowing them open, but was shot dead soon after in the assault. Their leader killed, the frontier police were repulsed and soon abandoned the fight. Captain William H. Robinson became the first graduate of the Royal Military College to be killed in action.<sup>32</sup>

The untimely death of Captain Robinson caused a tremendous outrage in London. New officers were immediately sent out from England to organize a response, and soon assembled 550 men of the West India Regiment, 125 Sierra Leone Frontier Police, 400 local African militia, as well as a naval landing party of 175 men equipped with 7 pound artillery pieces, rockets, and maxim machine guns. Within a month, Tambi was breached and destroyed, with the remnants of

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<sup>30</sup> RMC Archives. (No.39) Gentleman Cadet H.B. Mackay. Mackay was the first RMC graduate to be awarded the DSO. A memorial plaque with brief biographical data on Mackay was presented to RMC by the Corps of Royal Engineers and currently hangs in the front entrance of the Mackenzie Building at the college. See also RMC Club of Canada. *Directory of Ex-Cadets of the Royal Military College of Canada*. (Kingston, RMC Club, December 1935), n.d.

<sup>31</sup> London Gazette [LG]. Citation for being made a companion of the Distinguished Service Order, 12 April 1889. "Huntly Brodie Mackay, Lieutenant, Royal Engineers, having local rank of Captain while commanding Royal Engineers on the West Coast of Africa. For services during the operations in the Suly-mah District."

<sup>32</sup> See reprint from the *Yukon Sun and Klondike Pioneer*, 19 December 1899 in RMC. *Proceedings of the Royal Military College Club of Canada*. (Quebec: The Chronicle Printing Company, 1899), 86.

Karimu's force fleeing to another stronghold named Toniataba. The British-led expedition assaulted it on 28 April, effectively putting an end to Karimu and his allies for good.

In December 1899 an editorial in a Canadian newspaper suggested that Robinson would have been awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Tambi had he not been killed in action. At the time of his death, the standing policy was that VCs were not awarded posthumously. This changed in 1902 to allow such awards, but the additional clause of making it retroactive for previous actions was not added until 1907. By that time, unfortunately, Robinson's valiant actions against an unknown warlord in an obscure part of West Africa 15 years earlier were all but forgotten to the public and his service, and there is no record of his petition being pursued after the policy had changed.

Active service in Sierra Leone was often deadly and Canadians officers knew it. Gentleman Cadet Bertie Harold Oliver Armstrong was lucky to survive his own experience. Having graduated from RMC in 1893 and received a commission into the Royal Engineers, he was also assigned to West Africa. Captain Armstrong served as an intelligence officer in Sierra Leone in 1898-1899 during the uprising later known as the 'Hut Tax War', where he was largely responsible for assessing enemy strengths and fortifications and assisting with the development of operational plans to defeat the insurgency. Following the end of the conflict in March 1899, Armstrong was made CRE for West Africa, making him the fourth Canadian to hold this post since 1887.

## The Gold Coast

The Asante (or Ashanti) Empire, with whom the British fought a series of wars between 1820 and 1900, occupied a large region of the Gold Coast between the River Komoe and the Volta Rivers. The Ashanti were perhaps the most difficult adversaries ever faced in West Africa and their eventual subjugation was difficult, lengthy, and very costly in lives on both sides.<sup>33</sup>

Early British attempts to colonize the area along the Gold Coast foreshadowed the difficulties to come. When the Ashanti began raiding British settlements in the 1820s, the colony's Governor Sir Charles MacCarthy organized the Royal African Colonial Corps (RACC) of Light Infantry to protect his citizens. In 1824 the Ashanti King annihilated the RACC at Isamankow where the Governor was also killed. Triumphant, the Ashanti King Osei Bonsu added MacCarthy's skull to his royal regalia as a drinking cup while he continued to dominate British encroachments into his territory.

British footholds along the Gold Coast were not solidified until after the Ashanti War of 1873-1874. Canadians began entering this theatre sometime after, with many seeing action against the Ashanti at one point or another. RMC's Gentleman Cadet No.79 John Irvine Lang-Hyde was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1883, but a decade later he was assigned to West Africa to conduct an extensive survey of the Gold Coast while serving as the second-in-command of the Attabalu Expeditionary Force. He went on to be employed in the Anglo-French boundary commission in Nigeria during 1900-1901, completing a survey of both the railway as well as the most western boundary of the Gold Coast colony. He was later made a Companion of the Order of the Military Garter (CMG) for his efforts, and eventually served with the Royal Engineers during the First World War.

Captain Casimir VanStraubanzee, another RMC graduate who had obtained a commission with the Royal Artillery, served in the 1895-1896 Ashanti War as a special service

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<sup>33</sup> Primary studies of the Britain-Asante Wars remain Alan Lloyd. *The Drums of Kumasi: The Story of the Ashanti Wars*. (London: Longmans Green and Co. Ltd. 1964), and Robert B. Edgerton. *The Fall of the Asante Empire: The Hundred-Year War for Africa's Gold Coast*. (New York: Free Press, 1995).

officer. Yet another, Captain D.S. MacInnes, also served in the Gold Coast during 1897-1898.<sup>34</sup> During this time a vast number of expeditions were launched from Accra in all directions as the British attempted to occupy some of the hinterland that was then being rapidly parceled out to French and German expeditions. As a Royal Engineer officer supporting these expeditions, MacInnes was responsible for communications and logistics, as well as a number of engineering duties such as route maintenance, geographical survey, bridges, and general construction. Both VanStraubanzee and MacInnes were fortunate to survive their tours of duty in West Africa to go onto lengthy military careers.

### Northern and Southern Nigeria

Of all the areas of conflict on the West African coast, Nigeria presented perhaps the largest challenge for British forces. A vast theatre divided into a northern and southern region, the WAFF was embroiled in continuous conflict in Nigeria between 1892 and the end of the First World War.

The size and scope of Nigerian operations demanded huge expeditions and many white officers to lead them. Canadians were present and often in large numbers. Existing evidence suggests in fact that the largest concentration of Canadians in West Africa was here, including a huge contingent of alma mater from the Royal Military College, one of whom often served as an expedition commander. As well, a number of the Canadians serving were not in the British Army, but rather remained officers in the Canadian permanent force or militia and simply seconded for duty in the WAFF. This is particularly interesting, as it is not well known that Canadian officers served in combat operations abroad during this period.

Kenneth J. R. Campbell was one of the first Canadians to serve in this theatre. Having graduated from RMC in 1881 he was unable to secure a commission in either the British or Canadian forces and ended up enlisting as private soldier in the Gloucester Regiment. It was not long before his superiors became aware of his RMC service provided a commission in the 6<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards, but wanting an infantry command he soon after transferred to the Suffolk Regiment. In 1894, he served in operations in the Niger Coast Protectorate against Chief Nanna on the Benin River. Captain Campbell fought at the capture of Brohemie with distinction and was both mentioned in dispatches as well as awarded the Distinguished Service Order.<sup>35</sup> At the time of this action, Campbell was also already serving as deputy consul general and acting commissioner of the Oil River Protectorate, eventually becoming the consul-general.<sup>36</sup> Campbell later commanded the Naval Brigade at the Relief of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. He also served in both the navy and the army during the First World War, retiring after its conclusion.

Other Canadians followed. Captain H.C. Carey served with the Royal Engineers in the Niger Coast Protectorate between 1895 and 1896. Captain Robert Cockburn, a militia officer serving in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Dragoons, transferred first to the Suffolk Regiment and then later the West African Field Force. Records show that he served in theatre between 1899 and 1902.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Gentleman Cadet D.S. MacInnes graduated from RMC in 1891, and obtained a commission in the Royal Engineers. He was mentioned in dispatches for his services in the Gold Coast between 1897-1898.

<sup>35</sup> Mention in Dispatches recorded in the London Gazette [LG] 21 December 1894. Created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, announced in the London Gazette 10 April 1896 - "Kenneth Jeffrey Rankin Campbell, Capt, The Suffolk Regiment. In recognition of services during the recent operations on the Benin River". Campbell was the first RMC graduate to be Mentioned in Dispatches. He was later also awarded Royal Humane Society bronze medal for rescuing a local African man from crocodile infested river.

<sup>36</sup> For his personal account of the battle see Lieutenant J.R. Campbell. "The Capture of Brohemie, Niger Coast Protectorate, West Africa", paper read before the Royal Military College Club of Canada, 1 March 1895, reprinted in, *Royal Military College Club of Canada Review*, 1896. Kingston: ...

<sup>37</sup> LG 18 June 1901. P.4098. Captain Cockburn served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Dragoons. He was transferred/Seconded to the Suffolk Regiment and subsequently to the WAFF effective 30 December 1899.

Captain L.C.A. de B. Doucet was one of the few francophone Canadians to serve in West Africa. After graduating from the Royal Military College with a commission in the Royal Engineers, he was eventually assigned to West Africa in 1903. Doucet was an expert geographer, having shown considerable skill in his early career. In theatre, he was tasked to a special duty under the colonial office in connection with the Yola-Chad Boundary Commission, a difficult mission that he performed admirably and much to the credit of himself and his service.

### The Anglo-Aro War in Southern Nigeria

Canadian participation in the pacification of West Africa appeared to climax in late 1901 when the British launched a substantial civil-military operation against the Aro group of the Ibo tribe whose influence extended between the Niger and Cross Rivers. The total area of the operation was 193 kms east-west to 144 kms north-south, and operations lasted over four months.<sup>38</sup> The British had a number of objectives that required a series of expeditions against various factions of the Aro tribe. First and foremost, they wanted to open the Ibo country to peaceful trading and British directed commerce and prevent further massacres and subjugations of the local populations by slave hunters and raiders. Second, they were keen to suppress the native Long Juju practices once and for all.<sup>39</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel A.F. Montanaro, then commanding the West African Field Force, deployed just over 2000 soldiers and 2300 carriers for this massive operation. The white European officer ranks included at least a dozen Canadian officers at all levels and functions across the force. Major William Heneker was perhaps the most senior Canadian present in this campaign, being second in authority only to Lieutenant Colonel Montanaro, his force commander. Heneker was born and raised in Sherbrooke, Quebec, attending Bishop's College before completing his education at RMC. After graduation in 1888 he accepted a commission into the Cannought Rangers, and was later seconded for duty in West Africa in June 1897. He would eventually become one of the most successful and noted commanders in the entire theatre.

In November 1901 Lieutenant Colonel Montanaro dispatched four converging columns towards Aro-Chuku (*sic*) (modern spelling Arochuku), the capital of the Aro families. It was also considered to be the primary centre for Juju worship and was therefore Montanaro's primary target. Major Heneker commanded No.4 Column of this expedition, his force consisting of 19 European officers as well as 1 local officer, 479 local rank and file, 1 Maxim gun and crew, 13 gun carriers, and 225 general carriers.<sup>40</sup> Concentrated at Itu, his orders were to make a feint advance towards Aro-Chuku to fix the Aro forces at or near their capital. This allowed the other columns to conduct other operations across the country and move towards the Aro capital without being ambushed too often along the way.

Major Heneker conducted a series of reconnaissance in force along the Enyong River until he eventually reached the village of Esu-Itu on 29 November. There he made a fortified camp and then continued on 8 December with a smaller force in the direction of Aro-Chuku. His

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<sup>38</sup> Histories of the details of this conflict are few in number. Notable works include J.U.J. Asiegbu. *Nigeria and Its Invaders, 1851-1920*. (Lagos: Nok Publishers International, 1984), and R.B. Magor. *African General Service Medals*. (London: Bourne Press Limited, 1993). The best British histories remain the contemporary writings of the commanders. See Colonel A.F. Montanaro. *Hints for a Bush Campaign*. (London: Sands Publishers, 1901; and Lieutenant Colonel W.C.G. Heneker. *Bush Warfare*. (London: Hugh Rees Limited, 1907).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Campaigning in West Africa during the late nineteenth century was a logistical nightmare. The broken ground, marshes, rivers, deep forest and jungle, as well as the ever present tsetse fly ensured that no pack animal would survive for more than a few days. As a result, almost everything needed for operations from ammunition to food had to be carried by hand. Locals were contracted and paid to act as porters for these operations.

force was joined by No.2 Column under the command of Major A.M.N. Mackenzie on 20 December, which was incorporated into Heneker's own column. A sizeable enemy force attacked him on the night of 24 December, and British force spent Christmas day and most of the next day following in constant contact with their adversary.

Under Heneker's command during the fighting was a young Canadian named James Wayling. Commissioned as a major in the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Militia (now the Royal York Rangers), Wayling had volunteered for West Africa and was subsequently seconded to Southern Nigeria Regiment in 1901. Though he still retained his senior commission in the Canadian Army, locally he was gazetted as a Lieutenant. Wayling survived the Christmas day battle and several subsequent engagements, including the capture and destruction of the Long Juju at Aro-Chuku.<sup>41</sup> His luck nearly ran out, however, a few weeks later when he was nearly killed in an ambush at Ikotobo on 26 January 1902 while defending a water party.<sup>42</sup> Wayling was only saved from certain death at the last minute by the timely arrival of three fellow officers who were able to force the ambushers to retire. Lieutenant Wayling ultimately survived the Aro expedition, being mentioned in dispatches three times for his service.<sup>43</sup>

Sporadic fighting continued across the region well into the spring of 1902. A large engagement was fought at Edimma on 18 January, where a small force led by Captain J.C. Graham of the Highland Light Infantry was attacked by a much larger enemy contingent. During the fight, "Lieutenant A.E. Rastrick, Canadian Militia ... who was in command of the Maxim, used it with great effect, and so good was the fire control and discipline that the enemy was forced to retreat..."<sup>44</sup> The young Canadian officer not only brought the Aro attack to a dead stop, he forced them back into a desperate route that resulted in the subsequent capture of Edimma and Rastrick being mentioned in dispatches.<sup>45</sup>

The Aro expedition came to a climax when the British columns converged at Bende on 2 March 1902 to face the last concentrated resistance. Major Heneker led the assault against the town, capturing it within a day as well as two senior Aro chiefs. Though the pacification and subjugation of the entire region was far from complete, the capture of Aro-Chuku and Bende meant that for the time being the main adversary was defeated. Lieutenant Colonel Montanaro's main force returned to the coast where he prepared his official dispatches for London.

Despite this massive operation small local conflicts persisted, and British punitive and pacification expeditions in Southern Nigeria continued until 1910. Toronto born Archibald Hayes Macdonell served first as a scout, and then later as a platoon and company level commander in several of these operations.<sup>46</sup> He had joined the Canadian Army in February 1886 and was a company commander with the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry during the South African

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<sup>41</sup> After the capture of Aro-Chuku the British forces claimed they had destroyed the temple of the 'Long Juju' as part of their information operations campaign against the Aro and their slave trading partners. Recent archaeological research, however, has contested this claim and suggests that the British destroyed a decoy site and not the actual 'Long Juju' temple or oracle, which remained hidden from Montanaro's force. See Johnston A.K. Njoku's Nigerian Slave Routes Project (Western Kentucky University) accessed in August 2007 on the WWW at URL <http://www.wku.edu/~johnston.njoku/intro/aro-chuku/>

<sup>42</sup> LG 12 September 1902, p.5882. Dispatches from Lt. Col. A. F. Montanaro, Commanding Aro Field Force, dated 5 April 1902.

<sup>43</sup> MiD LG 12 Sep 1902; see also MiD LG 23 Feb 1906, p.1338 for services at Obukpa. Source LG 23 Feb 1906; and again in LG 18 Sep 1906 p.6312 for services in minor operations. Captain Wayling also has the distinction of being the figure who brought this entire subject to the author's attention. In 2005 I was made aware of this officer's medals in a private collection, which included an African General Service Medal. Victorian campaign medals named to Canadians, other than the Queen's South Africa Medal (1899-1902), are rare. It also led to the obvious question, "What was the Canadian Militia doing fighting in West Africa?"

<sup>44</sup> LG 12 September 1902, p.5885. Disptach from Lt. Col. A.F. Montanaro, Commanding Aro Field Force, dated 5 April 1902.

<sup>45</sup> LG 12 Sep 1902 p.5885. MiD for actions at Edimma, 18 January 1902.

<sup>46</sup> LG 21 Jan 1902 p.455. Lieutenant in Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry (Major Canadian Militia), granted local rank Lieutenant in Army whilst employed with WAFF, dated 28 Dec 1901.

War. Macdonell was present at the Battle of Paardeberg and was later awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his actions there. In 1901 Macdonell was seconded to the WAFF, and first saw action when he was attacked outside the town of Onor during the Ibeku-Olokoro expedition in Southern Nigeria in late 1902. His commander, Major Heneker, later wrote of the engagement, "Half a mile out of the friendly town of Onor the road ran along a narrow causeway about 100 yards in length, and with a deep swamp on either side; there was a small stream at the enemy's end of it which had to be waded. Fire was opened on [Macdonell's] scouts ... the scouts kept the enemy employed while the 75-milimetre and maxim were got into position. A heavy fire was then poured in ...".<sup>47</sup> Such actions were a regular occurrence in Southern Nigeria, and it was not before long that Lieutenant Macdonell became one of Major Heneker's best reconnaissance officers and combat leaders.

Lieutenant Macdonell went on to serve in seven separate expeditions between 1901 and 1904.<sup>48</sup> By the time of his return to the Canadian Army he was one of its most experienced small wars veterans. Reverting to his rank of Major, Macdonell later passed the Army's staff college and was subsequently appointed to command the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR). Lieutenant Colonel Macdonell took that unit overseas in 1914, led it in action on the western front, then took command the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade in 1916 upon his promotion to Brigadier General.

Still, Major William Heneker remains the most intriguing Canadian who served in this theatre. Between 1897 and 1906 he fought in no less than a dozen separate campaigns ranging from peacetime military engagement to major combat operations, earning the DSO for his efforts. More importantly perhaps, he employed his tremendous experience to write and publish in 1907 a 196-page book titled, *Bush Warfare*<sup>49</sup>, an astute, articulate, and detailed study of small wars that was perhaps intended to advance if not supercede the ideas initiated by Charles Callwell's well-known 1896 publication, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*.<sup>50</sup> Almost completely forgotten to both British and Canadian military historians today, this book served as one of the trilogy<sup>51</sup> of small war bibles for the British Army until well after the First World War. In 1934 the War Office institutionalized the lessons of men like Callwell and Heneker, when it finally released its own internally produced manual titled, *Notes on Imperial Policing*.<sup>52</sup>

Heneker went on to serve in India and the northwest frontier before returning to Europe as a brigade commander and later division commander on the western front during the First World War. In 1920 he was appointed the first commander of the British Army on the Rhine, and then served as commander of the Inter-Allied Commission of Management in Upper Silesia, stabilizing the tenuous borders between Germany and Poland. He retired in 1932 at the rank of full General after serving as Commander-in-Chief of Southern Command, India. Yet despite this amazing career Heneker is completely unknown in the Canadian military lexicon, and like many of his colleagues has yet to be recognized by Canadian military historians either for his innovative approach to operations in complex terrain that influenced later British and Canadian doctrines, or even his general writings on the relationships between conflict and diplomacy.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to those men detailed here there was several other serving Canadian militia officers who were seconded for duty in Nigeria. Lieutenant J.L.R. Parry, Canadian Militia, was mentioned in dispatches for his services during the Aro Expedition along with Wayling.<sup>54</sup> Two

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<sup>47</sup> LCol. W.C.G. Heneker. *Bush Warfare*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> These expeditions, their dates, plus the campaign clasps to his Africa General Service Medal he received for them is listed in his entry in the Distinguished Service Order Encyclopedia, 226.

<sup>49</sup> Lieutenant Colonel W.C.G. Heneker, DSO. *Bush Warfare*. London: Hugh Rees Press, 1907.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Callwell. *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*. .

<sup>51</sup> Heneker's commander, interestingly, wrote the third book. See Colonel A.F. Montanaro. *Hints for a Bush Campaign*. (London: Sands Publishers, 1901).

<sup>52</sup> *Notes on Imperial Policing*. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office [HMSO], 1934).

<sup>53</sup> The author is currently editing this book along with a biography of Heneker for publication in 2007.

<sup>54</sup> LG 12 September 1902. P.5886.

brothers, Captain B.M. Read and Lieutenant Henry Read, as well as Second Lieutenant F. Homer-Dixon, all Canadian Militia officers, all served in this theatre beginning in 1902.<sup>55</sup> Wayling would eventually be promoted to Major and mentioned several further times in dispatches to the London Gazette until 1906. It is very likely that there were many others who served in this theatre as well but whose names have slipped through the cracks of history. Further investigation of the subject is certainly needed.

## Conclusion

There are many points one must draw from the examination of this subject. Perhaps most important is the obvious fact that the history of Canada's Victorian and Edwardian Army remains largely untold and little understood. With few seminal works on the subject and the main focus on either politics<sup>56</sup> or operations in Saskatchewan and the South Africa, little attention has been paid to other minor operations or the army's intellectual and institutional evolution. As this article demonstrates, there is considerably more to the history of the pre-Great War Canadian Army than just Batoche and the Veldt, and a more thorough examination of such events will undoubtedly revise existing views and conclusions about what the Canadian Army was and was not as well as how it evolved.

This article reaffirms the fact that Canadian army biography is notoriously underdeveloped, and that many important personalities such as Lieutenant Colonel William Heneker and the young Lieutenant Archibald H. Macdonell remain forgotten. This is especially true regarding those officers and men who served abroad prior to 1939, many of whom are lost in the folds of national ambiguity between Canadian and British military service. Yet regardless of the uniform they wore at the time, their knowledge and experiences was often shared equally between the two forces, and one cannot consider and assess the pre-Great War evolution of the Canadian army at home without giving some consideration to those Canadians who served outside its army during the same period. As well, it is important to appreciate that on many occasions Canadians influenced the British Army just as much as the British influenced the Canadian Army. That three successive Canadians held the post of Commanding Royal Engineers for all of West Africa between 1887 and 1894 with a fourth Canadian following soon after, for example, is a point of leadership that must be recognized.<sup>57</sup>

Evidence suggests that the Canadian Army officer corps was a lot more engaged in international affairs, military operations, and strategic studies than it has previously been given credit for. As well, there is not a good understanding of how these external relationships affected the evolution of the Canadian Army at home and how or why these influences did or did not do more to create a certain type of field force. Current debates concerning Canadian Army conceptual and doctrinal design, for example, regularly criticize its networked approach to force development as paying too little consideration to Canadian culture and military traditions. Yet as more and more of the army's history is examined, it becomes clearer that its evolution has always been one of blending influences and the best practices from a wide range of experiences. Canadians serving in West Africa between 1885 and 1905 very likely cared little whether or not they were uniquely identified as 'British' or 'Canadian' than the historians who examine them today. Though always proud of their origins, the transparency of their national allegiance and

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<sup>55</sup> LG 3 April 1903 p.2233, Capt B.M. Read granted local rank of Capt in Army whilst employed with WAFF, dated 31 Jan 1903. LG 5 May 1903 p.2843, Lt. H. Read Canadian Militia, granted local rank of Lt in Army whilst employed with WAFF, dated 04 April 1903. LG 20 Feb 1903 p.1133. 2Lt. F. Homer-Dixon, Canadian Militia, granted local rank Lt in Army whilst employed with WAFF, dated 31 Jan 1903.

<sup>56</sup> The most notable work remains Desmond Morton. *Ministers and Generals: Politics and the Canadian Militia, 1868-1904*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

<sup>57</sup> For more on the subject of Canadian influence on the evolution of the pre-Great War British Army see Andrew B. Godefroy, "For Queen, King, and Empire: Canadians Recruited into the British Army, 1858-1944", *Journal of the Society for British Army Historical Research*. (accepted for publication 2008).

service was to the benefit of both Canadian and British armies, both of whom defended the interests of the same empire.

This study also reinforces the argument that the Canadian Army was shaped by individual as well as collective experiences prior to 1914. Many of the officers detailed in this article returned to Canada at some point after their deployments to provide briefings, lectures, articles, and papers on what would be identified today as 'lessons learned'. Narratives and analyses of their experiences appeared in professional Canadian military journals and magazines, and transcripts of their presentations were often reprinted in media such as, *The Proceedings of the Royal Military College Club of Canada*, or those magazines published by the Royal Canadian Military Institute in Toronto or the Montreal Hunt Club. As well, in keeping with British Army traditions of the day, professional development and operational corporate knowledge in Canada's Army was more often than not passed along verbally or through the publication of private analyses such as Lieutenant Colonel Heneker's, *Bush Warfare*, rather than via official doctrine manuals as they existed.<sup>58</sup> Heneker notes this informal approach to sharing knowledge and teaching lessons in the introduction to his book when he wrote, "Should any officer ... happen to peruse these notes, and should he, perchance, come across anything which may be of use to him, the following pages will have served the purpose for which they were written."<sup>59</sup>

Finally, it is very likely that better knowledge of the evolution of Canada's institutional and operational army prior to the Great War will force a reassessment of the nature of relationships in the Canadian Expeditionary Force as well as the nature of its British influences, particularly within the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division. First, many active service field grade officers (Majors and above) in the Canadian Army in 1914 had spent the majority of their careers up to that point seconded to the British Army and fighting small wars and counterinsurgencies in places like Africa, northwestern India, and southeast Asia. This previous experience obviously influenced and shaped their early ideas about what they thought combat would be like on the western front. It also revealed where their limitations as commanders would be. Campaigning in West Africa seldom involved more than a brigade's worth of troops, and though the logistics were complicated the staff work was not. The massive expansion of forces and the corps and army level scale of operations proved a tremendous challenge for officers who spent the majority of their careers fighting small wars and counterinsurgencies.

Second, in the past too much has been made of the fact that a large portion of the early volunteers for the first Canadian contingent were British expatriates. As this and other research is demonstrating, substantial commitments were made to imperial defence not just during the flashpoint that was the South African War, but rather constantly during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>60</sup> Between 1885 and 1905 British law and order in West Africa was ending the large-scale enslavement of Africans and bringing them into the British sphere of influence. Canadians serving both in the Canadian and British armies played a substantial role there. It mattered little to them whether one was born in London or Ottawa.

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<sup>58</sup> See *Thomas R. Mockaitis*, "The Origins of British Counter-Insurgency," in *Small Wars and Counter-Insurgencies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1990), 223. Mockaitis noted that the traditional custom of the British army of the period was to rely on its senior officers and NCOs to pass along their knowledge to newcomers, an approach that, "worked reasonably well so long as there was an unbroken string of similar conflicts, for in each ensuing campaign there would always be a core of soldiers who could remember how things used to be done."

<sup>59</sup> Lieutenant Colonel W.G.C. Heneker DSO. *Bush Warfare*. (London: Hugh Rees Limited, 1907), preface.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, Andrew B. Godefroy, "For Queen, King, and Empire: Canadians Recruited into the British Army, 1858-1944", *Journal of the Society for British Army Historical Research*.