

THE 'NEW MODEL' ARMIES OF AFRICA?: THE BRITISH MILITARY  
ADVISORY AND TRAINING TEAM AND THE CREATION OF THE ZIMBABWE  
NATIONAL ARMY

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

The British Army provided military assistance missions for friendly nations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority deployed to Africa during the decolonization process. By 1980 London had thirty-five years of institutional knowledge on how to train armies in newly independent nations. Most notably in Kenya and Zambia, where the transition to independence was fraught with racial and economic difficulties. In 1979, after the conclusion of the Lancaster House Conference the British government was called upon to provide newly independent Zimbabwe with military training assistance. The British Military Advisory and Training Team helped combine three former belligerent armies into the Zimbabwe National Army.

London intended to create a military force that reflected Britain's own army and maintained a distance from domestic politics while serving as a bastion for Western military values and interests. While the British had both Kenya and Zambia to draw from as models, policymakers in London overestimated the cache of British power in a changing world. Rather than facilitating an effective transition to representative government in Zimbabwe, the British enabled the creation of a one-party state under Robert Mugabe. The fundamental misunderstanding on the part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence as to the expectations of developing nations and military assistance handicapped British policy goals in Southern Africa for the next two decades.

## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to those who provided so much support throughout the process; my family and friends, but mostly my beautiful wife Danielle.

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Finally, thanks to my mother, Terry Humphrey and my father, the late Neal Whitaker, for their encouragement and love.

## NOMENCLATURE

2IC	Second In Command
AFZ	Air Force of Zimbabwe
ANC	African National Congress
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CAF	Central African Federation
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CMF	Commonwealth Monitoring Force
FRELIMO	<i>(Frente de Libertação de Moçambique)</i> Liberation Front of Mozambique
EAC	East Africa Command
GOC	General Officer Commanding
KAR	King's African Rifles
NRR	Northern Rhodesia Regiment
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OC	Officer Commanding
PATU	Police Anti-Terrorist Unit
PSU	Police Support Unit
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAR	Rhodesian African Rifles

RENAMO	<i>(Resistência Nacional Moçambicana)</i> Mozambican National Resistance
RhAF	Rhodesian Air Force
RLI	Rhodesian Light Infantry
RNR	Rhodesia Native Regiment
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RR	Rhodesia Regiment
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SAS	Special Air Service
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

An independent Zimbabwe first appeared on the world's stage fifteen long years after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Rhodesian Front in 1965. Robert Gabriel Mugabe's new government held great promise for the future. After all, Mugabe was a highly educated man, holding no fewer than four Bachelors and two Masters degrees. The Commonwealth Monitoring Force (OP AGILA) supervised the elections and deemed them free and fair. After the conclusion of Operation AGILA, a British military training team tasked with creating the new Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) deployed to Zimbabwe.

By February of 1981, elements of the newly created army mutinied against the government and were defeated at the Battle of Bulawayo by what had formerly been the Rhodesian Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles.<sup>1</sup> Only a few months later Mugabe's regime began training a new brigade of the Zimbabwean military. Unlike other units of the ZNA, it operated outside of the normal chain of command and reported directly to Mugabe. The unit, trained by the North Korean Army, had the express purpose of suppressing political opposition to the Shona-dominated Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government. This notorious unit, simply called the Fifth Brigade, was deployed to the ethnic minority homeland of Mataberland in

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<sup>1</sup> Luise White, "Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?: The Battle of Bulawayo Revisited," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33 (September 2007), 619-631.

January of 1983 to stamp out political opposition.<sup>2</sup> What followed, Robert Mugabe called the *Gukurahundi*, “the early rain that washes away the chaff before the spring rain.” The Fifth Brigade and other elements of the ZNA killed, raped, and burned their way through Mataberland until 1988. In the process, they killed at least 10,000 civilians and secured a one-party state for Robert Mugabe and ZANU.<sup>3</sup>

The use of military power in an African state to secure control is not, in itself, unusual. In this case not only was the British government actively involved in training the ZNA, but they were attempting to create a professional, Western-style army that remained aloof from domestic politics. The reliance of the Mugabe regime on the military to maintain power demonstrates that this mission ended in failure. The British government’s involvement in Africa after the end of colonialism has often been defined by the presence of military training teams or military advisors. Additionally, it was often teams of military trainers that were sent to assist newly independent nations during their first few years of self-government.

The military involvement of British forces in Africa since 1945 has taken a number of forms. In some places it was rather innocuous, as in the 1960 Defense Agreement with Nigeria which allowed Britain over-flights as well as the staging of port rights in the country.<sup>4</sup> In other areas it was a much more pronounced presence, such as

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 24-25. Up to this point in Zimbabwe, the Shona composed roughly 80% of the African population while the Ndebele speakers composed about 20%.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair: A History of 50 Years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs , 2005), 622-624.

<sup>4</sup> Ashley Jackson, “British-African Defence and Security Concerns,” *Defence Studies* 6 (September 2006), 351-376.

the 1964 army mutinies in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania in which British forces were called in to restore order. Compared to the involvement of the French in post-colonial Africa, this all seems rather small in scale.<sup>5</sup> However, British military training teams, while not glamorous and seldom in the public eye, played an extremely important role in creating the military culture of the newly independent African states.

By 1980, the British had trained soldiers in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and many other African nations. They had accrued over twenty years of institutional knowledge, and yet the last British colony to achieve independence was one of their biggest failures. Not only did the British fail to create a force that removed itself from politics, the British model of military organization and training had fallen out of use by the 1990s. Additionally, only a few short years after independence the Zimbabwean government had drifted almost completely away from Britain and the West to embrace China, North Korea, and the Non-Aligned powers as their closest allies.

The foundation upon which a military force is built often defines how it will interact with the government and people that it is intended to serve. During the English Civil War of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Parliament raised an army and filled its ranks with disciplined, professional soldiers who advanced based on merit. The commanders of this “New Model Army” intended that its officers and men would understand what they were fighting for and commit to those ideas. In the modern era, the tenets upon which the New Model Army was founded are the same tenets that democratic states hope to

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<sup>5</sup> The French Army still maintains bases in several African nations, including two large bases in Gabon and Djibouti, and a 300-man force in Senegal at the Center for Military Cooperation.

instill in their soldiers. Additionally, these same tenets of professionalism, separation from politics, and dedication to the principles of the state guide British military training. This is not simply limited to the training given to British soldiers when they enter Her Majesty's Forces, but the training that British military advisors have attempted to perpetuate around the world, particularly in former British colonies.

Armies in anglophone Africa were often formed from the respective colonial regiments of the territory, sometimes even retaining the same battle honors and regimental days. These colonial regiments each maintained a unique culture and history that is the foundation of the British regimental system. This was reinforced by the fact that many African colonial soldiers served out their entire careers in the same regiment, if not the same battalion. So the development, wartime experiences, and purpose of these colonial military units were extremely influential in the type, size, and character of the newly formed African armies. The nature of the colonial forces and the level of development that they had already undergone also influenced the level of involvement of a British training team.

## Historiography

Military training in missions in Southern Africa lies at the intersection of colonial and post-colonial history. The African liberation wars of the 1950s and 1960s were over long before Zimbabwe became independent, and by 1979 the only remaining colonial relics were Rhodesia and South Africa. In many ways, the situation in Rhodesia has been seen as another battlefield of the global Cold War between communism and the

West. It is also very much one of the last bastions of the colonial system that refused to accept the fact that the days of empire had passed. In his memoirs Ian Smith wrote, “it was not surprising that the sons of these pioneers were more British than the British. That is how we were all brought up and taught to live.”<sup>6</sup> It was this very attachment to Britishness and the idea of Rhodesian exceptionalism that fed the delusion that the settlers’ bid for independence could survive.

The colonial arrangement that existed in Rhodesia was dependent upon the coercive force that the authorities were able to bring to bear on the indigenous population. At the outset of the colonial period, settlers used their technological advantages to overpower African rulers. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century they needed to establish regular military units to perform internal security functions and, secondarily, frontier defence functions. This was not a situation unique to Rhodesia; settlers across the African continent found that while in most cases paramilitary police forces were sufficient, they were not prepared to deal with mass unrest or the threat of military force from other colonial powers. Anthony Clayton and David Killinggray examined the development of colonial police and military forces.<sup>7</sup> The study was based on the Oxford Colonial Records Project, a collection of interviews, surveys, and miscellaneous documents of British officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) who served with these units. While an excellent introduction to the basic forms and philosophies of

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<sup>6</sup> Ian Smith, *The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith* (London: Blake Publishing, 1997), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Clayton and David Killinggray, *Khaki and Blue: Military and Police in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1989).

colonial soldiering, the work is limited to a survey of the forces of Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ghana, and Zambia.

The scholarship on colonial soldiering and military assistance has grown, but often still focuses on some of the more famous colonial units, namely the King's African Rifles and the *Tirailleurs Senegalais*. Examinations of the French use of African soldiers are numerous; the interest in French colonial troops could be attributed to the peculiarities of the French system. The French used conscription of Africans. The early French use of African soldiers for imperial service to help conquer other territories was markedly different from the strategies employed by other imperial powers. Anthony Clayton's book on the organization and employment of the French military system in Africa helped to establish a baseline for this type of research.<sup>8</sup> Both Myron Echenberg and Nancy Lawler looked further into the French use of African troops through the end of the colonial period. Rather than focusing on the use of these soldiers as imperial service troops, both Lawler and Echenberg focused on the recruitment and conditions of service of Africans in French West Africa.<sup>9</sup> While both of these works did an excellent job of examining the organization of the conscription system and the ways in which Africans saw service in the French Army, they lacked a significant African voice.

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony Clayton, *France, Soldiers and Africa* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988). Not only does this work cover the use of African soldiers by France in the Sub-Saharan region, it also examines the formation of units in North Africa, the development of the French Foreign Legion, and the Naval Infantry, all of which played an extremely important role in the French conquest of her African colonies.

<sup>9</sup> Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1990); Nancy Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1992); Charles J. Balesi, *From Adversaries to Comrades-in-Arms: West Africans and the French Military, 1885-1918* (Waltham, Mass.: Crossroads Press, 1979). This last work, while one of the first post-colonial era monographs on the subject, focused more on the attitudes of whites regarding African soldiers. In addition to these works, there are numerous French-language works on the subject that I have chosen not to mention here.

The examination of the experiences of African soldiers in anglophone Africa has generally focused on East and West Africa. Additionally, these studies seldom devote any significant time to the transitional period between colonialism and independence. As is the case with most colonial regiments, white officers of some of these formations commissioned regimental histories, which tend to focus much more on the combat narrative of the regiments' performances in conventional conflicts than on the nature of service in the colonies.<sup>10</sup> Generally, rank and file Africans of the regiment receive little attention in these works beyond their being characterized as simple minded, loyal, and courageous servants of the Crown. For example, the only published work on the Northern Rhodesia Regiment was written in 1954 by a former officer, and Brelsford's book is detailed in its coverage of the European members of the regiment from subaltern to colonel, yet seldom mentions by name the Africans who made up the majority of the unit.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the latest works dealing with the King's African Rifles have done an excellent job of exploring the role of the regiment in the colonial world, but also explored the reasons that many African men had for serving in the military. Timothy Parsons's work has looked at the ways in which the African soldier was able to assert some agency within the confines of colonial military service; he also identified the types of communities that were specifically targeted by colonial officials as having inhabitants suitable for service. While the concept of martial races migrated to Africa from the

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<sup>10</sup> Hubert Moyse Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles: A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa 1890-1945* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1956).

<sup>11</sup> W.V. Brelsford, ed., *The Story of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment* (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 1954).

British Indian Army, it became widely accepted throughout British Africa that only some ethnic groups in a given colony were “warrior peoples.”<sup>12</sup> The conditions of colonial military service were always rife with inequality, though for many years African soldiers were unaware of their unequal status because they seldom served in areas where they were exposed to the conditions of service of European rank-and-file soldiers.

Parsons points out that the experiences of African soldiers during World War II exposed them to the fact that European troops were also required to do fatigue work and were not invincible in combat. These experiences led to a change in the view of service by Africans and were a contributing factor to the 1964 East African Mutiny that rocked several newly independent nations.<sup>13</sup>

There are significantly fewer scholarly works on African soldiers in Southern Africa. In South Africa this is something that became almost a non-issue after the First World War. The Cape Corps was the only armed non-white regiment to serve in the conflict, and after it was mustered out of service there would be no other armed African forces in the South African security establishment until 1973. The few pieces of research that dealt with African soldiers in South Africa were generally produced as anti-*apartheid* pieces by social scientists rather than historians.<sup>14</sup> Most of these works focus

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<sup>12</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Timothy Parsons, ““Wakamba Warriors are Soldiers of the Queen”: The Evolution of the Kamba as a Martial Race, 1890-1970,” *Ethnohistory* 46 (1999), 671-701; Timothy Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King’s African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999); Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Grundy, *Soldiers Without Politics: Blacks in the South African Armed Forces* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Gavin Cawthra, *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*

on how these forces were formed and the political battles that came with arming African soldiers in a South Africa governed by the National Party. Nonetheless, scholars like Kenneth Grundy have demonstrated some significant reasons for oppressed minorities to seek out employment in the military force of the oppressor. He suggests that “economic conscription” was the National Party policy of keeping Africans in such a dire economic position that the idea of oppressing one’s fellow Africans could be overcome by granting some measure of economic advantage not otherwise available.<sup>15</sup>

There are a large number of published sources on the Zimbabwean War of Independence. In the 1980s and early 1990s, books on the subject were very much dominated by the nationalist rhetoric of the time. The view of Africans who served the Rhodesian regime was that they were either traitors or collaborators. Peter McLaughlin was one of the first scholars to challenge this in some of his articles on the Rhodesia use of African manpower.<sup>16</sup> In doing so he also challenged the self-celebratory Rhodesian view of itself as a multi-racial country with blacks and whites fighting side by side, free of discrimination. Despite the growing number of scholarly pieces on the war in Zimbabwe, there is also a very vibrant genre of celebratory literature by former Rhodesian soldiers that deals most commonly with the special units of the Rhodesian military and is mostly concerned with explicitly military details of the campaigns; as a

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(London: International Defence & Aid Fund For Southern Africa, 1986); Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980).

<sup>15</sup> Grundy, *Soldiers Without Politics*, 14.

<sup>16</sup> P. McLaughlin, “Collaborators, Mercenaries or Patriots? The ‘problem’ of African Troops in Southern Rhodesia During the First and Second World Wars,” *Zimbabwean History* 10 (1979), 21-50; P. McLaughlin, “Victims as Defenders: African Troops in the Rhodesian Defence System 1890–1980,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 2 (1991), 240-75; Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2008).

result, books of this type often neglect to discuss the causes for the conflicts or mention the African role in the military effort.<sup>17</sup>

While there are a growing number of works regarding the involvement of foreign powers in the crisis in Rhodesia, many specifically look at the role these powers played in the period of UDI rather than at the transition to majority rule in Zimbabwe. Gerald Horne's work has outlined the role of the United States government in formulating the perception and ideas of whiteness in Rhodesia and how many in the United States were quite willing quietly to support the Rhodesian war effort.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars, such as Elaine Windrich, examined the Rhodesian problem as a political issue in the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> The historical works that have examined the end of the conflict constitute a much smaller portion of the whole. There are a number of works that have looked at the

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<sup>17</sup> Ron Ried-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago Publishing, 1982); C.J. Cocks, *Fireforce: One Man's War in the Rhodesian Light Infantry* (Roodepoort, South Africa: Covos Books, 1997); Barbara Cole, *The Elite: The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service* (Amanzimtoti, South Africa: Three Knights, 1984); Alexandre Binda, *Masodja: The history of the Rhodesian African Rifles and its forerunner the Rhodesian Native Regiment* (Johannesburg: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2007). This is just a small sample of the large number of celebratory works on the Rhodesian Army and military forces.

<sup>18</sup> Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War Against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001). While Horne does address the issue, he also levels a large number of slightly conspiratorial accusations against the US government such as accusing it of large-scale material support of the Rhodesian regime. These accusations are often based on propaganda publications of both ZAPU and ZANU. While these sources do have some merit, many of their facts have to be looked upon with some doubt. According to casualty reports in the *Zimbabwe Review*, the liberation forces managed to shoot down most of the Rhodesian Air Force every month, as well as kill hundreds of Rhodesian soldiers in many ground engagements.

<sup>19</sup> Elaine Windrich, *Britain and the Politics of Rhodesian Independence* (London: Croom Helm, 1978); Elaine Windrich, *The Rhodesian Problem: A Documentary History 1923-1973* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975). Other authors have looked at the role that the CAF and Rhodesia played in dismantling of the British Empire in Africa; L.J. Butler, "The Central African Federation and Britain's Post-War Nuclear Programme: Reconsidering the Connections," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36 (September 2008), 509-525; Philip E. Hemming, "Macmillan and the End of the British Empire in Africa," Chapter to *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 97-122. Carl Watts examined the reasons the British government ruled out military intervention shortly after UDI; Carl Watts, "Killing Kith and Kin: The Viability of British Military Intervention in Rhodesia, 1964-5," *Twentieth Century British History* 16 (2005), 382-415.

process that led to the Lancaster House Agreements and the deployment of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force. Both Stephen Stedman and Jeffrey Davidow have produced detailed studies of the negotiations and the agreement itself.<sup>20</sup> Others have examined the transition to majority rule; Ronald Weitzer did a comparative analysis of the Rhodesian conflict with the British experience in Northern Ireland. In this work Weitzer also examines the way in which the Rhodesian security forces dealt with internal security with Zimbabwean practices in the 1980s, and concludes that in fact there were very few differences in the ways that they viewed and interacted with the African population.<sup>21</sup>

After independence, scholars lost interest in the military establishment of Zimbabwe, except in reference to their deployments to the Congo in the 1990s and their involvement in the atrocities in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. Terrence Ranger's work examined the experiences of African soldiers in the guerilla armies during the conflict, and devotes some space to the experiences of these soldiers in post-conflict Zimbabwe.<sup>22</sup> Norma Kriger published a book on the fates of soldiers in the liberation armies in the post-independence world. As a portion of this study, she looked at the process of integration of the ZNA. Her examination was based almost exclusively on newspaper publications from the period and certain interviews with British personnel who were part

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<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Davidow, *Peace in Southern Africa: The Lancaster House Conference on Rhodesia, 1979* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); Stephen Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> Ronald Weitzer, *Transforming Settler States: Communal Conflict and Internal Security in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> Terrence Ranger and Ngwabi Bhebe, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995).

of the BMATT. At the time she wrote, the relevant official British government documents had not yet been declassified.<sup>23</sup> Other studies of the ZNA and its foundation are often parts of studies on the current structure or doctrine of the ZNA, published by security policy researchers, with the national security community as their audience.<sup>24</sup> Many of these publications focus exclusively on the integration of the two liberation armies into the ZNA and seldom mention the African Rhodesian Army soldiers who continued to serve after independence. This is a serious gap in the research, because it was these former Rhodesian soldiers who secured Mugabe's government after the events in Bulawayo in February of 1981.<sup>25</sup>

All of these studies focused on the aftermath of the creation of the ZNA and its role in securing the Mugabe regime throughout the 1980s and 1990s, or they scrutinized the atrocities that the regime perpetrated against the Ndebele between 1982 and 1989.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). With this said, many of the documents on the BMATT after 1983 have yet to be declassified.

<sup>24</sup> Greg Mills, "BMATT and Military Integration in Southern Africa," *South African Defence Review* (1992); Ashley Jackson, "British-African Defence and Security Connections," *Defence Studies* 6 (September 2006); Martin Rupiah, "Demobilisation and Integration: 'Operation Merger' and the Zimbabwe National Defence Forces, 1980-1987," *African Security Review* 4 (1994); Martin Rupiah, "The 'Expanding Torrent': British Military Assistance to the Southern African Region," *African Security Review* 5 (1996); Eric Young, "Chefs and Worried Soldiers: Authority and Power in the Zimbabwe National Army," *Armed Forces and Society* 24 (1997).

<sup>25</sup> Luise White, "'Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?': The Battle of Bulawayo Revisited," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33 (September 2007), 619-631. The soldiers of the former Rhodesian African Rifles put down a mutiny in the newly formed ZNA in February of 1981. Many scholars have concluded that if the RAR soldiers had not remained loyal to the elected government, the country might have descended into yet another civil war.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2011). This work focuses on the role of the ZNA in Zimbabwe today and how Zimbabwean Generals have become integrated into the daily management of the country. Michael Evans, "Making an African Army: the Case of Zimbabwe, 1980-87," *Peace, Politics and Violence in the new South Africa* (1992), 231-253. Evans's view of the ZNA is based largely on the information gathered from interviews with ZNA officers and the ZNA public relations directorate. While it is still a useful examination of the

What they have failed to consider is how the army that was formed between 1980 and 1983 out of three separate and very different organizations ended up becoming the main pillar supporting continued one-party rule in Zimbabwe. This study will examine how the British experience forming and training armies in both Kenya and Zambia influenced London's action in the formation of the Zimbabwe National Army. Additionally, it will consider how the ZNA ended up an entirely politicized and unprofessional force, the opposite of what the British intended as a tool to stabilize the region in the middle of the Cold War that was raging in Africa.

## Kenya

While the colonial forces of all African colonies went through some sort of training period and transition with British forces, the colonies that had significant European settler communities most closely reflect the situation in Zimbabwe. The bloody Mau Mau Insurrection defined the Kenyan independence struggle that ended in 1963. While the post-1945 era of the British Empire was punctuated by the independence of India in 1947, and the unrest in Palestine and the independence of Israel in 1948, Clement Attlee had other plans for the British colonies in Africa. While very much the anti-imperialist with regards to the Asian empire, Attlee and some in his cabinet regarded the Sub-Saharan African colonies as India's replacement in the Empire. Additionally, Kenya itself was envisioned as a basing area to forward deploy both troops

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ZNA in a short space, it fails to incorporate some the information available on the role of the ZNA in the atrocities in Matabeleland.

and resources.<sup>27</sup> However, after significant discussion in the cabinet and the Ministry of Defence, it was decided that Kenya was just too far away from the Middle East to be a suitable location for a Middle-East Command Headquarters or prepositioning location.<sup>28</sup>

The War Office was concerned about the post-war cost of imperial defence and did not want to shoulder the burden of garrisoning regular forces all over the empire, particularly in the wake of the massive war debt that Britain faced. Local African troops were to be utilized for territorial defence, as well as internal security operations. European territorial units could be called up in the event of an emergency. Additionally, the Kenya Police had acquired a significant amount of experience in internal security operations and were, up to a certain point, equipped to handle outbreaks of violence and protest. The Kenya Colony defence establishment was put to the test during the Mau Mau Insurrection. The State of Emergency and the massive amount of resources that were required to undertake a counterinsurgency operation in Kenya made leaders in Britain question the wisdom of retaining it as a colony. The uprising, which began mid-1952, required the deployment of regular army units, a call up of territorial forces, the creation of reserve police forces, and significant Royal Air Force contributions for the

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Hennessy and Anthony Seldon, "The Attlee Government, 1945-1951," Chapter to *Ruling Performance: British Governments from Attlee to Thatcher* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 28-62.

<sup>28</sup> David Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security and Decolonisation* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), 22. This course of action was also taken on the assumption that British forces would remain at the Suez Canal. After the events that took place during Mau Mau and the loss of Suez in 1956, even if the British government had wanted to keep forces in the region the Kenyan internal security situation was far too dangerous to utilize it as a major long term military installation.

next four years. The State of Emergency lasted until 1960, yet the stage had been set for independence; by 1963, independence had come to Kenya.<sup>29</sup>

The Africanization program in the East African Land Forces began in earnest in 1960. Well past independence, these forces continued to have white officers seconded from the British Army or on short term contracts with the host governments until local national officers could be trained to take their places. The major force in Kenya, the King's African Rifles, had been created in 1902; it distinguished itself in both world wars, as well as in the Mau Mau emergency. The Kenyan battalions of this regiment served as the foundation for the Kenyan Defence Force. The training mission in Kenya was somewhat easier than in other colonies. East African Land Forces had a significant presence in Kenya for many years. There were a large number of training areas available and a large number of British personnel already available to train, mentor, and lead the new African force through the transition to independence.

Even so, there were a significant number of lessons that the British learned from this experience, about selecting trainees, recruitment, officer production, and the importance of organic supporting arms. This was particularly true after the 1964 East African army mutinies. This experience had a significant impact on the way that the training mission in Zambia proceeded after the country achieved independence in 1964.

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<sup>29</sup> For an examination of the military campaign in Kenya, see Anthony Clayton, *Counter-Insurgency in Kenya: A Study of Military Operations Against Mau Mau* (London: Frank Cass, 1976). David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005). One of the most recent works on Mau Mau is Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War and Decolonization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Branch focuses his work on the Kikuyu loyalists and examines the conflict through the lens of a civil war.

## Zambia

While Northern Rhodesia became Zambia only a short time after Kenya gained independence, the establishment of the military in the former colony took many of its cues from the situation in Kenya. This was due to the fact that the majority of the training and Africanization of the forces in Zambia took place after independence. Its large European settler community and participation in the Central African Federation delayed the course of independence in Zambia.

The early 1950s brought significant political change to the colony. The Northern Rhodesia African National Congress was founded in 1948. At the same time, Roy Welensky, future Prime Minister of the Central African Federation (along with other settlers) campaigned to secure a federation with the more conservative Southern Rhodesia. The victory of the Conservative Party in Britain in 1951 and the return of Winston Churchill to the Prime Minister's office reduced the chance that African opinion would be taken into consideration when deciding the future of the colony.<sup>30</sup> The creation of a federation in central Africa would serve a variety of British political interests. Since 1948, the prospect of Afrikaner domination in southern and central Africa had concerned the British government, especially since the National Party in South Africa had drifted closer and closer to republicanism. The Conservative

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<sup>30</sup> Jan Pettman, *Zambia: Security and Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 12.

government felt that a Central African Federation with a very British identity would be an excellent counterbalance to the growing power of Pretoria.<sup>31</sup>

The British government was very clear that they would never allow the colony of Northern Rhodesia to merge with the self-governing Southern Rhodesia. The idea of a federation of the two with the addition of Nyasaland, however, was thought to be an acceptable compromise.<sup>32</sup> The three territories joined together as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953, commonly known as the Central African Federation (CAF). All of the territorial governments remained intact, with the duties of defence and foreign affairs falling to the Federal Government in Salisbury. The federal army was made up of forces that had previously composed the Southern Rhodesia Army and those British colonial forces that had been stationed in North Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The CAF was fraught with problems of jurisdiction and financial responsibility. There were three territorial governments, a federal government, and the British government involved in this endeavor; at the simplest of times the lines of communication and authority were confusing. The Federal Government supported British actions in Suez, and had always

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<sup>31</sup> L.J. Butler, "The Central African Federation and Britain's Post-War Nuclear Programme: Reconsidering the Connections," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36 (September 2008), 509-525. This article also considers another factor in securing a federation, that of the British nuclear program. The fear in the early 1950s was that the United States and the USSR were going to dominate the world's uranium resources and leave no way for the UK to develop their own nuclear capability without assistance. The article asserts that the secondary motive of creating the CAF was to secure the uranium resources of Northern Rhodesia for the exclusive use of the UK in the development of their nuclear program. Additionally, the concern that the Macmillan government had regarding the spread of South African influence seems to have been misplaced. By this time the South African Prime Minister, H.F. Voerwoerd, had made it clear that he did not want Rhodesia. The fact that Rhodesia was predominantly made up of settlers of British stock did not endear it to the Afrikaner elite.

<sup>32</sup> Donal Lowry, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography - Welensky, Sir Ronald [Roy] (1907-1991), Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, November 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/50688>.

offered up units of the Federal Army and Air Force to be liable for worldwide service in support of British interests.

The willingness of the Federal Government to be involved in British expeditions around the world encouraged British defence assistance to the CAF military. The Air Force was modernized and received Canberra bombers, C-47 Transports, Vampire fighters, and Hawker Hunter fighter-bombers. The influx of technologically advanced aircraft made the Air Force one of the most advanced in Africa. At the same time, the Federation Army was enlarged. Previously, the force had primarily been composed of African regulars led by white officers; in 1961, an all-white regular infantry regiment was formed to compliment the all-white territorial force.

The independence of Ghana in 1957 and the attitude of Harold Macmillan's government brought change to Africa. During the 1960s, seventeen African colonies achieved independence and a number of others were in the closing stages of independence negotiations. When he was selected as Prime Minister in January of 1957, he presided over a bruised and bloodied Conservative Party. Decolonization in West Africa was relatively straightforward. Ghana was already set to achieve independence later that year, and the lack of European settlers in the region made the issue fairly simple. East and Central Africa, with their large settler populations, posed more of a challenge.

While Macmillan was of the opinion that dispensing with the Empire did not equate to Britain sacrificing its position as a world power, he was also not in any hurry to give African colonies independence. He had witnessed the difficulties that the French

had in both Indo-China and Algeria, and reasoned that fighting insurgencies to maintain colonial possessions cost far too many lives and far too much money. The Prime Minister decided to slowly prepare the colonies for independence and attempt to channel the African nationalist movements into the political process, rather than suppress them. What complicated the matter even more was the divided nature of the Conservative Party, with the right wing of the party led by the 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Salisbury who staunchly supported the settler communities in Africa.<sup>33</sup>

This division led Macmillan to delay action on decolonization until after the general election in 1959 secured his government's position. In 1960, with the election out of the way, Macmillan was able to undertake his grand tour of Africa. The trip took him through both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and of course ended with his famous "Winds of Change" speech to the South African Parliament in Cape Town.<sup>34</sup> Just before Macmillan's trip to Africa, he formed the Royal Commission now known as the Monckton Commission (headed by the lawyer and politician Walter Monckton) to investigate the future of the CAF. When the Commission released its findings on 18 October 1960, it was clear that the Central African Federation was finished. The commission recommended that Africans be given equal representation in the Federal Assembly, as well as the Northern Rhodesia House of Assembly.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Philip E. Hemming, "Macmillan and the End of the British Empire in Africa," Chapter to *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 98.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Lamb, *The Macmillan Years 1957-1963, The Emerging Truth* (London: John Murray, 1995), 246.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

Macmillan's plan for both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was to see a quickened pace towards independence; the hope was that the nations would be able to rule themselves.<sup>36</sup> Of course, all of this was predicated on the assumption that these newly created nations would join and be active members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Macmillan envisioned the Commonwealth as a sort of informal empire in which the British government would still be able to exert significant political and economic influence over their former colonial possessions. He also had intended to speed up the process of decolonization in 1960, so as not to be upstaged by the French. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle offered the French territories in Africa autonomy within the French community, or full independence. Macmillan did not want to risk falling behind the French in world opinion over decolonization.<sup>37</sup>

Elections were held in 1961 to form majority rule governments in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. On 31 December 1963, the Federation was officially dissolved; Zambia and Malawi became independent nations in 1964. The third member of the Federation, Southern Rhodesia (simply called Rhodesia after the collapse of the Federation), reverted back to its status as a self-governing Crown colony dominated by the European population. The dissolution of the Federation had significant implications for the future of Zambia. Even before independence was declared, the division of the resources of the Federal Army and Air Force gutted the Zambian defence establishment.

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<sup>36</sup> Hemming, "Macmillan and the End of the British Empire in Africa," 100.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 111. This offer was quite disingenuous on de Gaulle's part. Under the leadership of Ahmed Sekou Toure, Guinea was the only territory that chose independence over the new French community. This withdrawal came with severe consequences. The French withdrew all technical and military support from the country. In an extremely childish move, the outbound French authorities took all of the light bulbs from the public buildings and broke the State china.

The Victoria Falls Conference in December of 1963 was convened to plan the breakup of the Federation. The major parties represented were the Conservative-led British government and the Southern Rhodesia government. The African leadership of Northern Rhodesia were barred from the process.

It became clear to the Labour party and the United Nations that the British intention was to transfer the majority of the Federation's Army and Air Force into the hands of the Southern Rhodesian government. While both Labour and the independent African nations protested, the British government planned to move forward with the division. The issue became so pervasive that it was discussed by the Security Council of the United Nations. A resolution was proposed demanding that Britain not transfer to Southern Rhodesia the aircraft and ground forces as outlined in the Victoria Falls conference. In the Security Council, the British government felt as though they had no other option. As a result, they used their veto power for the first time since the Suez Crisis in 1956.<sup>38</sup>

Upon independence, Zambia was left with a force of only 2,200 soldiers and three transport aircraft in the air wing. European officers led the entire military; at the time of independence there was only one African officer in the force.<sup>39</sup> The Europeans were either local settlers who had taken commissions in the federal forces who had

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<sup>38</sup> Elaine Windrich, *Britain and the Politics of Rhodesian Independence* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 16. This is part of a long-standing antagonistic relationship between the UN and the British government over the issue of decolonization. Harold Macmillan's government constantly fought with the UN to stay out of what the Conservatives thought of as issues that were internal business only, and not matters for diplomatic discussion. This behavior would continue for years with regards to the Rhodesia problem. While it embarrassed the British, they did not want the interference of other nations making it worse.

<sup>39</sup> Jan Pettman, *Zambia: Security and Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 107.

agreed to stay on after independence, or British officers who were seconded to the Zambians until African officers could be trained. This arrangement, while similar to the plan used in Kenya, had not even begun until after Zambia had achieved independence. A British officer remained the Commander of the Zambia Defence Force until the appointment of Colonel Kingsley Chinkuli in 1970. There were significant issues with the employment of the Kenyan training system in Zambia.

Upon Kenyan independence in 1963, the process of Africanization had been going on for several years and had been relatively effective. In the post-1945 years, the regiments of the King's African Rifles had employed a system of promoting Africans to the rank of *effendi*, which gave the East African forces a base of trained and experienced African leaders to promote to commissioned rank.<sup>40</sup> There was no such system in place in Zambia, where the highest rank that an African soldier in the Northern Rhodesia Regiment could attain was Warrant Officer I. The Zambian government had almost no choice but to rely on European officers until sufficient Africans could be trained.

The reliance on Europeans proved problematic only a year after independence. In 1965, Southern Rhodesia came to an impasse with the British government over the implementation of majority rule in the colony. The ultra-right wing Rhodesian Front Party had come to power in Salisbury in the election of 1962, on the wave of discontent generated by European population over the transition to majority rule by the northern members of the Federation. By November of 1965, the Rhodesian Front decided they

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<sup>40</sup> *Effendi* was officially a Governor's Commissioned Officer; this was a position similar to the Viceroy's Commissioned Officer in the British Indian Army. While these men were not considered officers in the same sense as someone holding a Queen's Commission, they wore officers' uniforms and had a separate mess. The one major restriction was that their authority was limited to African troops.

could no longer negotiate with the British over the issue of independence. On November 11, 1965, the Rhodesian government unilaterally declared independence (UDI) from Britain.<sup>41</sup>

The events of UDI had serious security implications for Zambia. As a landlocked country, they depended on Rhodesia as a trading partner and for access to the sea. Additionally, the possibility of hostilities between the two nations was not out of the question, and British officers seconded to the Zambian Army were not permitted to lead Zambian soldiers into battle in the event of war against the rebel colony. British defence assistance to Zambia put severe restraints on the freedom of action of the Zambian government during this period of crisis. Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party were bound by British policy on Rhodesia for as long as they continued to accept British security aid.

The drawbacks of the system of training in Zambia became evident during this time. The country as a whole was far too reliant on Europeans, even five years after independence, not only in the area of defence but also with regard to the country's largest industry, copper. In 1969 there were still 43,390 European residents of Zambia, and five years later there were still 4,000 Europeans occupying technical and managerial positions in Zambia's mining industry.<sup>42</sup> After the termination of their training agreement by the UNIP government, the British Joint Services Training Team left

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<sup>41</sup> Armistice Day was chosen to remind the British government of the sacrifices that Rhodesia had made for the Empire in both World War I and II. Interestingly, after UDI they behaved as if they were a dominion of the commonwealth, with the Queen as Head of State. It was not until 1970 that Rhodesia declared itself a republic.

<sup>42</sup> Jan Pettman, *Zambia: Security and Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 102.

Zambia in December of 1969. The Zambians were not satisfied with the rate of training by the British team (12 personnel a year) and contracted with the Italian government to provide training for the Zambian Air Force, as well as seconded officers. By this point, the Army contingent of the training team had already left, leaving behind only European officers until Zambians could be trained. These officers remained in the Zambian Defence Force until 7 January 1971, when the last 17 remaining officers were summarily dismissed from Zambian service in reaction to British arms sales to the South African government and an increasing need for the UNIP to gain control over all aspects of the government.<sup>43</sup>

#### Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

In many ways, Rhodesia was different from any other British colony in Africa. When many historians of British Africa write about the colonies, they generally do not include Rhodesia with countries such as Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, or Nigeria.<sup>44</sup> By the 1880s, Cecil Rhodes had made his first fortune in diamonds, been elected to the Cape Parliament, and launched the De Beers Mining Company. While a student at Oriel College, Oxford, Rhodes had been greatly influenced by the inaugural lecture of English art critic John Ruskin. The speech had painted a romantic image of the British imperial mission around the world, and it inspired Rhodes to make his life's goal "the extension

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>44</sup> Clayton and Killingray, *Khaki and Blue*; Philip E. Hemming, "Macmillan and the End of the British Empire in Africa," Chapter to *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 97-122; Robert B Edgerton, *Africa's Armies From Honor to Infamy: A History from 1791 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2002).

of British rule throughout the world.”<sup>45</sup> Rhodes’s part in all of this was focused on the British role in Africa and his dream of extending the Realm from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo.<sup>46</sup>

Rhodes was able to secure the mineral rights to what became Rhodesia for 25 years.<sup>47</sup> In 1889, the British South Africa Company (BSAC), controlled by Rhodes, was granted a Royal Charter upon the amalgamation of the Central Search Association and the Exploring Company, Ltd. The BSAC was given control of Rhodesia and used it as the basis for the settlement of Matabeleland. The Pioneer Corps of the BSAC was formed for the settlement of what would become Rhodesia. In July of 1890, a mixed force of about 100 pioneers and 100 troopers from the newly formed British South Africa Company Police crossed the Shashi River on their way north. In a series of wars with the Ndebele and the Shona, the BSAC consolidated their control over the territory that unofficially was known as Rhodesia by 1895. Company rule continued in the colony until 1923, when the Colony of Southern Rhodesia was granted responsible government.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Brian Roberts, *Cecil Rhodes: Flawed Colossus* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 39.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 39.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. Responsible government was granted after the 1922 Referendum in which European citizens were given a choice to vote between self-government or joining the Union of South Africa. According to Lord Blake, twelve out of thirteen provinces in the colony voted for responsible government. The major concern in joining the Union of South Africa was being politically dominated by the Afrikaners, and losing control over what many viewed as a bastion of British culture in Africa. For a more in-depth look at the early history of Rhodesia and the Chartered Company, see D.C. De Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1974); John S. Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The Early Years of the British South Africa Company* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) and Arthur Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia: The White Conquest of Zimbabwe 1884-1902* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983). Keppel-Jones’s volume on the conquest of Rhodesia is by far the most

Since its establishment under the Chartered Company, Rhodesia maintained its own security apparatus, largely without the assistance of soldiers from the British Army. From the time the Pioneer Corps left South Africa until 1954, the British South Africa Police were trained as paramilitary police in the style of the Royal Irish Constabulary and charged with the territorial defence of the colony.<sup>49</sup>

During the First World War, both European and African regiments were raised from the colony. The all-European Rhodesia Regiment was formed in 1914 as an infantry unit. During the course of the war, it saw action in the southern part of West Africa and British East Africa. The regiment was disbanded in 1917, after severe casualties seriously impacted the colony's ability to function without resorting to placing Africans in exclusively European military roles. In order to continue to contribute to the war effort and to prevent German forces under the command of Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck from invading the colony, the BSAC raised the Rhodesian Native Regiment. While the officers and most of the non-commissioned officers of this unit were European, the rank-and-file were African. This was the first employment of armed Africans in military service since the use of African auxiliaries during the First Chimurenga War in 1896-1897.<sup>50</sup> The combat record of the unit was held in high

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complete single volume study of the subject, yet in many ways it does not deliver any new historical interpretation of the subject.

<sup>49</sup> The British South Africa Company Police dropped the 'Company' from the title after the granting of responsible government in 1923. Even though the BSAP renounced its role in territorial defence in 1954, it would play a major role in military operations between 1965-1980, even fielding a battalion-sized light infantry unit, the BSAP Support Unit.

<sup>50</sup> The First Chimurenga War was a combined uprising by both the Ndebele and Shona peoples of Zimbabwe against the European settler community. During the conflict, the BSAC recruited disaffected members of both communities to fight against the African forces. The use of Africans to fight the uprising was one of the reasons that settler forces were able to put down the rebels.

esteem by colonial authorities. Even so, it was disbanded with haste in the opening months of 1919.<sup>51</sup>

During the interwar period, the Rhodesian defence establishment reverted to the previous model, with the BSAP responsible for territorial defence. During this time, African constables were, for the most part, not given weapons training. The exception was the Askari Platoon. This unit mounted the ceremonial guard at Government House and maintained the military nature of the force. They were also responsible for training African constables at the Native Police Training School (NPTS). The troopers in this unit were the only Africans allowed regularly to carry firearms on duty throughout the interwar period.<sup>52</sup>

After responsible government was granted in 1923, the colony maintained a small staff corps of officers to resurrect the armed forces, were it to be required. When World War II began in 1939, the government again announced its intention that Europeans serve as soldiers and Africans only as laborers. Colonial leaders such as Sir Robert Tredgold thought the Rhodesian contribution to the war would be to allow men from the European community to serve as officers in HM Forces. By 1940, however, the colonial administration had decided to resurrect an African regiment.<sup>53</sup> The unit was

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<sup>51</sup> Timothy Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesian Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 135. A similar course of events took place in Kenya. After the war was over, settlers in Kenya wanted to disband the KAR and replace it with an all-European Kenya Defence Force. However, the small European population in Kenya made this impossible.

<sup>52</sup> Timothy Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1923-80* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 7-8. The name was later changed to the African Police Platoon in the 1940s. In the 1970s, this unit was expanded and became the BSAP Support Unit.

<sup>53</sup> P. McLaughlin, "Collaborators, Mercenaries or Patriots? The 'problem' of African Troops in Southern Rhodesia During the First and Second World Wars," *Zimbabwean History* 10 (1979), 37.

renamed the Rhodesian African Rifles, and as in WWI white officers led the African rank-and-file. In 1944, the unit saw action in Burma against the Japanese and was applauded for its effectiveness in action. The RAR was demobilized in 1946, and very quickly was resurrected in 1949 as a regular unit of the Rhodesian Army. Between 1949 and UDI in 1965, the regiment served in Suez, Malaya, the Congo Border, and in Nyasaland. By November of 1965, the RAR made up half of the Rhodesian Army's regular infantry establishment.<sup>54</sup>

While UDI gave the Rhodesians *de facto* independence, UN sanctions and British insistence that it was an internal matter prevented any nation from ever officially recognizing its statehood.<sup>55</sup> Shortly after UDI, African liberation movements began to consider how best to combat the Rhodesian Front government. From 1965 until 1980, both the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) sent liberation fighters into Rhodesia in an attempt to overthrow the regime.<sup>56</sup> The most intense phase of the war occurred from 1973 to 1979. During this period the RAR made up a large portion of the military forces of Rhodesia, and was

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<sup>54</sup> The Rhodesian Light Infantry was an all-European regular infantry regiment that was formed in 1962 under the Central African Federation, and was retained by Rhodesia after the breakup of the CAF in 1963. Part-time European Territorial Units fulfilled most of the other services in the Rhodesian Army.

<sup>55</sup> Elaine Windrich, *Britain and the Politics of Rhodesian Independence* (London: Croom Helm, 1978) does an excellent job of covering the political situation leading up to UDI, and how the British government dealt with the situation. Additionally, it should be noted that while South Africa and Portugal gave vast material and military assistance to the Rhodesian government, to the end they were never confident enough in the survival of the rebel colony to openly recognize them on an international stage.

<sup>56</sup> These forces also had small contingents of African National Congress fighters from South Africa that fought along side the Zimbabwean units in the hopes that they would be able to infiltrate South Africa from Rhodesia or Botswana. See *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa) Report*, Vol 2 (1998), 86-88.

deployed constantly to operational areas. By 1979, four RAR battalions had been authorized by the government, totaling 3,500 soldiers.<sup>57</sup>

By 1979, the Rhodesian Front had held out for as long as it could; the events of the 1970s had increasingly handicapped the Rhodesian Security Force's ability to maintain control over the territory. The security situation in the late 1970s was tense, and put increasing amounts of strain upon the white community simply to supply enough soldiers to keep the war going. By the end of 1976 the National Service period had been extended from a year to eighteen months, and by 1978 those who had completed their National Service and were serving in the Territorial Army were mobilized for active service for 190 days a year.<sup>58</sup> The Rhodesian economy could not survive the strain of war for much longer, and Prime Minister Ian Smith and his Rhodesian Front were forced to seek out a political solution to the conflict.

The British general elections of May 1979 brought Conservative Margret Thatcher to the Prime Minister's office. Prior to taking office, Thatcher and the Tories laid plans to recognize the Internal Settlement government of Ian Smith and Bishop Able Muzorewa.<sup>59</sup> However, she was convinced of the folly of this policy by her experienced Foreign Secretary, Peter Lord Carrington. He knew that the recognition of the Muzorewa

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<sup>57</sup> Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2008), 51. While there were four authorized battalions, only three of them ever actually functioned. 4RAR was authorized in 1978, and had only begun to recruit and form itself under the move to African conscription by the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe government.

<sup>58</sup> Luise White, "Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia, 1974-1980," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37 (2004), 105.

<sup>59</sup> Jeffrey Davidow, *Peace in Southern Africa: The Lancaster House Conference on Rhodesia, 1979* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 14. Mrs. Thatcher despised the Marxist nature of the liberation organizations and was not eager to consider them legitimate.

would isolate the British government further from the United States and most African nations. After the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka in August of 1979, the British attempted to mediate a solution to the Rhodesian problem. By December of 1979, an agreement had been made for Rhodesia to return to British control for long enough to hold supervised elections to determine how the majority rule government would take shape. The liberation movements conceded that the settler community would retain twenty seats in the Rhodesian Parliament until 1986, and there would be no forcible redistribution of land.<sup>60</sup> A draft constitution was worked out during the conference which called for the liberation forces and the Rhodesians to disband their military forces and merge them together to create the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA).

In December of 1979, the rebel colony returned to British control, and the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) arrived to supervise the elections and the orderly assembly of the guerilla forces at designated assembly points. After the elections were held in February of 1980, it was a surprise to the European population that Robert Mugabe was the winner. The CMF departed by March of 1980, and the mission of the remaining British forces in the country became the creation of the ZNA. The mission was complex and vast; in addition to demobilizing the large guerilla armies, they had to be retrained for conventional warfare and then integrated into a new force to serve with the men of the former Rhodesian Security Forces. The British goal for the project was

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<sup>60</sup> Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds., *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver, 2009), 164. The lack of a land deal in the agreement was a huge blow to the Liberation movements. The only reason they even conceded to this demand was the pressure put on them by the war-weary frontline states to resolve the conflict and the agreement that there would be British money available to work out some sort of sales scheme.

the same it had been in Kenya and Zambia: to create a professional military force that would help protect the democratic process in Zimbabwe. Sadly, by January of 1983 this mission had already failed with the beginning of the deployment of the notorious Fifth Brigade.

The first chapter of this research examines the development of the colonial army in Kenya and its transformation and Africanisation after independence. It will also examine the Kenya Army directly after independence and the lessons learned by the British during the 1964 East African mutinies. Chapter two discusses the Zambian separation from the Central African Federation and how this process complicated the transition to independence and military self-reliance. The third Chapter looks at the establishment and organization of the Rhodesian Security Forces and the liberation armies during the war for independence. Chapter four deals with the end of the conflict and the British planning for peace and reconstruction in Zimbabwe. This Chapter examines the way the British saw post-conflict Zimbabwe developing and the direction and nature that they felt the new military should take. The formation of the British Military Advisory and Training Team, as well as its performance and challenges, are covered in Chapter five. This Chapter also looks at the end result of the efforts of the BMATT, the rise of the dominance of ZANU-PF, and the beginning of the atrocities in Mataberland in 1983.

Since 1999, the Movement for Democratic Change, the major opposition party in Zimbabwe, has asserted that the Mugabe regime relied upon the military to use increasingly coercive force to maintain power. In order to ensure their loyalty, the ZNA

was given large salary increases and a significant stake in major national corporations, very much ensuring that the future of most soldiers, particularly those in command, would be securely tied to the Mugabe regime. The process of winning the loyalty of the Army began with its formation and the way that the BMATT executed its duty to create a new army of former enemies

CHAPTER II  
FROM ASKARIS TO GENERALS: TRANSFORMING THE KING'S AFRICAN  
RIFLES INTO THE KENYA ARMY

The King's African Rifles (KAR) holds an iconic place in the imagery of the British Empire. Images of African soldiers in British uniform adorned imperial propaganda from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the Second World War. While this regiment is undoubtedly famous for its exploits in battle, its role in the formation of independent Africa is less often acknowledged.<sup>1</sup>

#### Origins of the Kenyan Military Establishment

The regiment contained battalions from five different colonies, and upon independence, these units formed the basis of the national armies in their respective territories. Military culture within these units defined the formation of independent armies. In some cases the uniforms and insignia of the KAR only changed slightly upon independence. In the case of Tanganyika, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion KAR's (6KAR) name was simply changed to The Tanganyika Rifles (The 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion the King's African Rifles); the former Colonel Commandant, Major General W.A. Dimoline, was also retained.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). In the text MacKenzie demonstrates how colonial images were used not only to market products to the British people, but also how these products helped market the empire to people in Britain. The image of the Askari was often displayed on products or as a brand symbol so it became a common sight in Britain even if these soldiers rarely set foot in Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 67.

creation of the King's African Rifles was the result of the combination of a number of irregular forces raised by various entities in East Africa. The Foreign Office was in charge of British activities in East Africa and gave the various chartered companies and other semi-official entities a free hand in levying troops and keeping order. In 1888, Frederick Lugard recruited African irregular troops to combat Muslim slave traders in what would become Nyasaland. When the Central African Protectorate was formed in 1891, an African militia that had been used extensively was formalized and became the Central African Rifles (CAR). This unit, like many in early Anglophone Africa, was strengthened by the use of troops from the British Indian Army - in the case of the CAR, this was the 175-man "Sikh Contingent."<sup>3</sup>

In most cases, African soldiers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century played almost an exclusively internal security role in the colonies and protectorates in which they were formed. However, early on, the CAR was used in an imperial service capacity. They were engaged not only in combating the slave trade, but also in the conquest of Somaliland, and other African territories.<sup>4</sup> The two other units that were combined in 1902 to form the KAR were the Uganda Rifles and the East Africa Rifles. Lugard recruited the Uganda Rifles when he was in the service of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in 1890. The troops were initially mostly Sudanese, Zanzibarian, and Indian, however; as campaigning in the region became more intense, replacement recruits had to be found among local Africans. The regiment was thrown

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<sup>3</sup> Timothy Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999), 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

into disarray in October 1897 when three companies mutinied complaining of poor and infrequent pay during long campaigns.<sup>5</sup> The loyal Sudanese soldiers, who had continued to fight for the IBEAC throughout the mutiny, reformed the regiment. Until the amalgamation of the three regiments, the Uganda Rifles never served outside of the territory in which they were raised. This was due to the fact that their commitments to their internal security mission kept them on operations constantly until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>

The IBEAC was formed primarily as a trading venture, however, when it arrived in Africa and was forced to take on both a political and a military mission it proved to be ill prepared. One British diplomat is quoted as having called the IBEAC, “European Administration...with no visible force at its back.”<sup>7</sup> Due to its lack of preparedness for the mission, IBEAC ended up with a military arrangement that was anything but uniform. By 1895, the IBEAC had 866 troops stationed in various locations around its coastal African territory. When the company was dissolved and the East African Protectorate declared, these soldiers became the East African Rifles. Again the Indian influence is apparent in the East African forces, as it was composed of “two British officers, 300 Punjabis, 100 Sudanese (raised later to 250), 300 Swahili and a ‘mixed force’ of 200 men.”<sup>8</sup> The government of India was also asked to second both gunners and medical orderlies to this new force. During the short lifespan of the East African Rifles, they were engaged in a number of internal security campaigns. The organization

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<sup>5</sup> Hubert Moyses Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles: A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa 1890-1945* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1956), 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> Sir A. Hardinge, *A Diplomat in the East*, p. 164.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

of both the administration and the military arrangements in the protectorate were a confusing web of command relationships that made ordering even the simplest supplies extremely difficult. By 1902 it was clear that a major reorganization was in order.

The forces in early British East Africa were mostly foreign-born Muslims. The British authorities assumed that it was best to use troops who were not related in any way to the territory they were policing. This was one of the major reasons that there was such extensive use of Indian soldiers in East and Central Africa. However the mutiny of the Uganda Rifles in 1897 was evidence that even foreign-born troops could be prone to mutiny if not treated well by the imperial authorities. The British government learned from this experience, and throughout the colonial era in Africa, made sure that their African soldiers were always better paid than most African civilians.

In 1901, the British forces in West Africa were centralized under the banner of the West African Frontier Force. The War Office pointed out that it would doubtlessly be beneficial to do the same thing in East and Central Africa. The use of Indian troops to bolster the strength of forces in Africa was becoming increasingly expensive due to their particular dietary restrictions. The creation of a centralized organization would allow one territory to call upon the resources of another in times of crisis.<sup>9</sup> At this time, none of the East African territories were considered completely capable of taking charge of their own security without outside assistance, so this arrangement proved advantageous for all of the colonies involved. On January 1, 1902 the Kings African Rifles (KAR) was

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 123.

officially formed with six battalions: two in Central Africa, one in East Africa, two in Uganda, and one in Somaliland.<sup>10</sup>

In 1905, the Colonial Office was given full responsibility for the KAR. Under this arrangement, the individual colonies were responsible for funding and administering each battalion. By 1912, all of the Indian contingents of the KAR had been withdrawn. These soldiers had been paid more than their African counterparts and required a special diet that was more expensive to maintain than the young colonies could afford. During the early years many civil officials attempted to disband the KAR due the expenses required in supporting the unit. Although the War Office prevented the disbanding of the KAR battalions, to ensure there were military forces available in Africa in the event of a large war, they were severely downsized in 1913.

World War I saw a huge expansion of the KAR. While British authorities did not feel that African soldiers were suitable for the European theater of operations, they did find them very useful in countering the German threat in Africa. By 1916, specialist units of the KAR were formed; for the first time African soldiers served as gunners, sappers, signalers, and many other specialists. This was the first time that African soldiers had the opportunity to leave their service in the British Army with more skills and education than when they enlisted.<sup>11</sup> These African soldiers saw service throughout the campaign against German forces under the command of General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Overall, the African troops performed better than many officers in the British

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>11</sup> Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File*, 19.

high command had expected. Their performance during the war had confronted many of the racist views that British officers had of African troops, particularly the claim that they were unsuitable as frontline troops.

During the years that followed, the establishment of the KAR was significantly reduced and control was returned to the Colonial Office. However, there was some concern among the European settler community regarding African troops being the only military organization in the colony. Therefore, in 1937, a part time Territorial Army unit, the Kenya Regiment, was formed. The Kenya Regiment was an all-European unit that was intended to provide both officers and NCOs to the KAR, in case of another large-scale mobilization in wartime. The regiment was also the holding unit for all 18-25 year old European males who underwent compulsory national service in Kenya.<sup>12</sup> This territorial unit was enough assurance to calm the concerns of many in the settler community. They felt safer knowing that there was a white military force available, should the African force prove ineffective or disloyal. At the time of independence these two units made up the majority of the military establishment of Kenya Colony.<sup>13</sup>

World War II was a period of expansion for the Kenyan military establishment. The War Office took control of the KAR in 1939 as Britain was rearming to prepare for

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<sup>12</sup> Guy Campbell, *The Charging Buffalo: A History of the Kenya Regiment, 1937-1963* (London: Leo Cooper, 1986). This volume was written by the regiments former OC during the Mau Mau Crisis. At times it is as much a memoir of the regiment as it is a history, nonetheless it has interesting information about the nature of the unit not found elsewhere. Leonard Gill, *Remembering the Regiment* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), this is one of the only other printed sources available on the regiment, it is a memoir of the former officer on his time with the regiment. While it is mostly a series of stories it speaks to the egalitarian nature of the unit and the very relaxed nature of discipline within the unit.

<sup>13</sup> There was a Royal East African Navy as well. It was established in 1952 to replace the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve – Zanzibar. It only ever operated a small number of ships and like the KAR responsibility was spread across several colonies. It was disbanded in 1962.

the possibility of war. In 1939, the regiment grew from seven infantry battalions to forty-three, roughly 13,000 men. In addition to these infantry units, there were a number of specialist and support units formed to support the newly created East Africa Command (EAC). They included but were not limited to: the East Africa Engineers, East Africa Artillery, East Africa Armoured Car Regiment, East Africa Army Service Corps, and the East Africa Army Medical Corps. The EAC's first engagements were not fought until 1941 when the British launched the Ethiopian Offensive against the Italians. The campaign was a great success; Ethiopia was taken in only two months. KAR units were also instrumental in taking Madagascar from Vichy-French forces in 1942.<sup>14</sup>

In 1942, the War Office asked the EAC to send 1,000 soldiers to assist South East Asia Command (SEAC) in Burma. EAC eventually sent 5,500 men to fight in Burma. Units of the KAR did not arrive in Kenya until 1944 and from that time until the end of the war, these East African units fought a hardened enemy in brutal conditions. The KAR performed on level with many of the other British and Indian units that were in theater, they too, suffered from morale problems that many of these units experienced. During this harsh campaign, the African soldiers were exposed to the regular British military establishment as well as the British Indian Army (BIA). This is significant because the BIA had begun a process of Indianization, the commissioning of Indian officers and putting them in command of Indian troops. After seeing other people of the Empire placed in positions of leadership, many Africans began to wonder when their time would come. Additionally, African soldiers saw that European privates in the

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<sup>14</sup> Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File*, 27-29.

British Army were required to perform the same labor duties expected of African troops. The exposure to the British class system was an eye opening experience for many African men, because for the first time, there existed a population of white men who were expected to fulfill the same duties.<sup>15</sup>

African servicemen performed well during the war in theaters across the world. While the colonial government of Kenya was often eager to downsize and, if possible, do away with the KAR regiments, there were additional concerns after 1945 that had not been present prior to the war. Africans had been exposed to liberties and freedoms they never experienced in the colonial environment. There was a certain level of prestige and status that was achieved by Africans in military service. Their pay was more than competitive with their civilian counterparts and the living conditions were often better than working on a farm or in a mine. These soldiers also had the opportunity to advance their education while in garrison by taking advantage of classes in English, reading, and mathematics offered by the East African Educational Corps. When these men were demobilized at the end of the war, many of them wanted to maintain the social advantages that they had achieved. They sought to achieve middle class employment and lifestyles when they left military service.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34. Byron Farwell, *Armies of the Raj: From the Great Indian Mutiny to Independence: 1858-1947* (New York: Norton, 1989), 299-301. The first Indian commissioned from Sandhurst Graduated in 1920. Sandhurst was the only institution authorized to produce King's Commissioned Officers (KCO). When the Indian Military Academy was established in 1932. The distinction was that men who graduated from there were known as Indian Commissioned Officers (ICO) and were not given the same pay and privileges as a KCO. Nonetheless when African troops interacted with Indian troops they would often have Indian officers commanding their company level units.

<sup>16</sup> Hal Brands, "Wartime Recruiting Practices, Martial Identity and Post-World War II Demobilization in Colonial Kenya," *Journal of African History* 46 (2005), 103-25.

It was not an option for many of these African veterans to return to the pre-war social arrangement in Kenya. These men intended to redefine the colonial relationships that were in place; interestingly, many of them felt that they could do it from within the construct of the colonial system. It was not only the African soldiers who were cognizant of the changes that would occur at home in the post-war colonial world—the colonial administrations were concerned as well. The Kenyan government was concerned that African veterans would not want to return to their traditional homelands and the labor market that existed prior to the conflict. Additionally, authorities were concerned about war veteran involvement in African labor unions which they thought would further destabilize the colony.<sup>17</sup> While many military commanders who had served with African soldiers thought that the soldiers sacrifice should have won them an equal position in society, others in colonial society did not agree. In addition to the colonial government's opposition to the reintegration of African soldiers, the settler community was strongly opposed to any changes affecting the labor market. The war years had been immensely profitable for white Kenyan farmers, and as a result they enjoyed a heightened level of power in the colony than previously. During the war, the British government had been unable to devote the same amount of attention to the colonial administration as they had in the past, and the result was that the settler community filled the void bolstered by their new economic power.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>18</sup> Ian Spencer, "Settler Dominance, Agricultural Production and the Second World War in Kenya," *Journal of African History* 21 (1980), 497-514.

The rising power of the settler community influenced the government's beliefs that the African veterans were destined for the farm labor market. Accordingly, the Kenya colonial government made very few arrangements to help demobilized African soldiers reintegrate into society.<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly African veterans were eager to raise themselves up from their pre-war status. They set up investing groups and attempted to translate their military skills into skilled laborer positions. While they resisted being thrown back into the position that the colonial government had selected for them they did not do it in the way that many settlers had feared. Rather than getting involved in African political movements African veterans often sought to gain the maximum amount of benefits from the colonial government. They would often wear their decorations in public and were granted permission by colonial authorities to carry spears in public as a sign of their martial status, a privilege of having served that had long been dormant.<sup>20</sup> They attempted to change from within the relationship between Africans and the colonial system; unfortunately this method of advocacy did not produce results.

#### Post-1945 Colonial Military and the rise of Mau Mau

Even though the end of the World War II brought a great deal of change to the British Empire the conditions in Kenya Colony did not change as dramatically as many Africans had hoped. While the end of the war had brought independence to the largest

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 107. This is in stark contrast to the demobilization scheme for European soldiers who were offered the opportunity to settle in places like Southern Rhodesia and Kenya Colony. There were a few technical colleges that opened at the end of the war that would allow African veterans admission, "Technical College on Non-Racial Lines," *Kenya Daily Mail*, 1 March 1946.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 119.

colony in the empire, India, African independence was not even on the minds of the Clement Attlee's Labour government in 1945. Additionally the units of the KAR that had served in the war had truly been used as imperial service troops around the world, from the fighting in Africa, to the Middle East and Asia. This changed the way that British military planners saw African forces in the scheme of imperial defense. The collapse of the Anglo-Egyptian relationship beginning in 1946 led defense planners to look for other areas in which to base their Middle Eastern forces.<sup>21</sup> Both Kenya and Southern Rhodesia were seen as excellent candidates to be forward bases for British Forces. This reconsideration of the position of Kenya in the British defense plan also led to a reconsideration of the KAR simply reverting to an internal security force.

While the military prospects for Kenya were looking up the economic situation for Africans was much different. Between 1947 and 1954 the Kenyan economy was growing at thirteen percent a year. At the same time the technological advances made many African workers redundant. Unemployed farm workers were increasingly moving into shantytowns in cities like Mombasa and Nairobi while European ex-servicemen were immigrating to Kenya to take advantage of very generous settlement terms. The African population of Kenya Colony had anticipated that the end of the war and the rise of the Labour party in Britain would bring change, yet all they saw was an increase in the power of the European community, both politically and economically.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> David Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security and Decolonisation* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), 20. It was not simply the difficulties in the negotiations with the Egyptians, the British felt that they could no longer trust the Egyptians particularly after the resistance the British had seen from them during the war.

<sup>22</sup> Keith Kyle, *The Politics of the Independence of Kenya* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 43.

Kenya Colony was in an odd position among British holdings in Africa it was not like any of the West African colonies, which were very much black African colonies. Kenya did not have a large enough settler population to be a dominion like South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. It also never had the level of self-government that either Rhodesia or South Africa had, and was in a state of constant negotiation with British authorities in London. Additionally Kenya Colony was very much a product of Britain's Empire in India. Until 1921 the Indian Rupee was the official currency of the colony, Indian troops brought order to the colony in its early years and its infrastructure was built by Indian labor and engineers. The colony was initially an African province of India and because of this it had a substantial Indian population, in 1963 there were 180,000 Indian residents in Kenya. Indians were often merchants and served as low-level government clerks in the Kenya administration. The large Indian population of Kenya and the strategic relationship between Britain and India even after 1947 put the British government in an awkward position. While the settler community continued to demand a privileged status, similar to the position of whites in Southern Rhodesia, London was not able to approve any proposition that dramatically favored whites over Indians for fear of damaging the relationship between Britain and India.<sup>23</sup>

After the loss of British bases in India in 1947 the British government decided that it was necessary to build a large military complex in Kenya to support the forward

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<sup>23</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, ed., "Britannia's Mau Mau," Chapter to *Penultimate Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain*, edited by Wm. Roger Louis (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 259-274. Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Metcalf's book is a general look at the impact of India in the Indian Ocean area and it devotes a significant portion of the text to the impact of Indians in the conquest of Africa and the settlement of Indian communities in East Africa.

staging of military stores and troops. The depot was to be located at MacKinnon Road on the rail line to Mombasa. Skilled labor was an immediate problem it was early 1950 before any brick and mortar facilities were constructed to house the families of British personnel assigned to the base. However by the end of 1950 the British government had decided to stay on in Egypt.<sup>24</sup> Since British forces were going to remain at the extensive base area already present near the Suez Canal there was no need spend the funds to duplicate the effort in Kenya. This turn of events would put the burden of security arrangements back on the colony. Even in case of a large war Kenyan forces would not be called upon to play as large a role as imperial troops. Rather, these forces were to be charged with the internal and border security of the colony itself.

At the time the KAR was organized to conduct conventional operations in the event of another war. While many of the wartime service support units that had been created were now gone, and the main mission of the KAR in 1950 was to be available for operations outside of Kenya, as they had performed in World War II. Yet the British government was searching for ways to economize in the realm of colonial defence. In the past this had been done simply by shifting the cost of these units to the individual colonies the increasingly complex nature of warfare made colonial units much more costly to maintain. The colonial governments of East Africa could not possibly shoulder

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<sup>24</sup> Wm. Roger Louis and Roger Owens, eds., *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks , 1989). The Egyptian Army was crushed by the 1948 Israeli War for Independence, and largely thrown in to disarray and plagued by low morale. The British government was convinced by these events and others in the Arab world that it was vital to maintain a military and defence presence in the Canal Zone to preserve the security of the canal and to protect British interests in the Middle East. After the fall of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952 to the Free Officers Movement and the renegotiation of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement in 1954 the British moved to secure their defence arrangement in the region in the Baghdad Pact of 1955.

the burden. Even so the British government knew that African troops were far less expensive to maintain than British Army units, so the decision was made to at least put the burden of colonial defence completely on colonial forces with support functions coming from a small collocated cadre of British officers and NCOs.<sup>25</sup>

Even with this reduction in forces in East Africa the British government felt that the colonial forces themselves were too expensive. The decision was made by the East Africa High Commission Defence committee to reduce the size of the KAR battalions rather than reduce them in number.<sup>26</sup> The result was that each KAR Battalion of four companies was reduced from 728 African soldiers to 656 African soldiers. In addition to the question of size the members debated who should fund these local forces. The Colonial governors wanted the War Office to take complete control while the WO continued to insist that the Colonies needed to shoulder the burden of their own defence. The compromise was the Colonies would raise an all white Territorial Army (TA) unit along the lines of those in the UK. The Kenya Regiment, which had existed in war time from 1939-1945, was reborn out of this decision.<sup>27</sup>

The revival of an all European TA unit in Kenya had a detrimental effect on the forward progress of African soldiers in the colonies. When the Kenya Regiment (KR) had first been conceived prior to the Second World War it was envisioned that it would

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<sup>25</sup> David Percox., "Mau Mau and the Arming of the State ," Chapter to *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, edited by E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 121-155

<sup>26</sup> The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO) WO 276/76 f. 2, 'Third meeting of the East Africa High Commission held in Nairobi on Tuesday and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1949.'

<sup>27</sup> Percox, 125. Guy Campbell, *The Charging Buffalo: A History of the Kenya Regiment, 1937-1963* (London: Leo Cooper, 1986), 1.

train white officers and NCOs to lead KAR units when a wartime expansion occurred.<sup>28</sup> During World War II they fulfilled this role and it served mainly as a leadership-training unit. When it was revived, it adopted a more of a standard TA infantry unit identity however the goal of forming leaders out of every man was still there.

Shortly after the return of the KR the Kenya Colony Legislative Assembly passed the Compulsory National Service Ordinance of 1951 and the Compulsory Military Training Ordinance of 1951. These laws required all resident European British Subjects between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three to undergo five and a half months of basic military training followed by four years of service in the Kenya Regiment as a territorial soldier.<sup>29</sup> Young settlers were liable for service not only in the colony but also anywhere in the world. In order to bring the KR up to full fighting strength during the Emergency the basic training period was briefly reduced to ten weeks, and then increased to sixteen weeks in 1956. Annually the regiment would train an average of 190 new soldiers. This drastically increased the role of European settlers in the defence of the colony. Prior to the revival of the KR, Europeans had been completely reliant on African soldier for their defence in peacetime.

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<sup>28</sup> Campbell, *The Charging Buffalo*, 2. Leonard Gill, *Remembering the Regiment* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), Gill was a white National Service Officer in the Kenya Regiment during the Mau Mau Emergency. In his book he details his antics as a patrol leader of KAR troops during the emergency as well as how KR soldiers were utilized during the conflict.

<sup>29</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1951* (London: HMSO, 1952), 76-89. Several authors including David Percox have claimed that the Kenyan and British government ruled out a national service scheme in Kenya however the records of both the Colonial Office and the annual reports of the Kenya Regiment itself both confirm that there was a very active program in Kenya. What they may be referring to, but did not specify, was that there was no requirement for these soldiers to take up duty outside of the Kenya Regiment during the course of the service. Even so Kenyan national servicemen were often times put on active service for several years at a time during the Emergency.

With the return of the KR there really was little need to examine the idea of producing African officers for the KAR due to the fact that there was a leadership reserve available in the KR. In 1948 the British government codified peacetime national service in the National Service Act of 1948. National Service officers were often given the option of spending their two years term in a colonial unit such as the KAR. With primary, secondary and emergency sources of white officers available to the KAR in the early 1950s there was no reason for colonial authorities to examine the idea of commissioning African officers into colonial service. At the time both military and civilian leaders were under the impression that African colonies would not reach independence for many years. The Attlee government had plans to develop Africa and raise the standard of living rather than grant the colonies immediate independence.

The development of the Mau Mau movement was the result largely of the accumulation of long-term grievances over land ownership among the Kikuyu community within Kenya Colony. The mechanization of post-1945 Kenyan agriculture led to the disposition of large numbers of Kikuyu squatters who had relied on employment in the White Highlands. Additionally the end of the war brought more European immigration into the colony. Former British servicemen were encouraged to come to the colony and set up their own farming and business operations, oftentimes with the assistance both the British government as well as the colonial authorities.<sup>30</sup> This new wave of settlement exacerbated the scarcity of available land for African

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War and Decolonization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

agriculture. Additionally the colonial government helped make sure that land was clear for European development. Between 1946 and 1952 roughly 100,000 Kikuyu squatters were removed from their homes and ‘repatriated’ to the Native Reserves.<sup>31</sup> The Kikuyu farmers were limited to the opportunities that were available in the Native Reserves.

The resistance movement had begun several years before the mass exodus of Kikuyu from their former homes. As early as 1943 some Kikuyu had brought back an old tradition of taking oaths in a time of conflict. However unlike the oaths of the past this oath was administered to not only to men but to women as well. The oath was used as a rite of acceptance into a loose anti-colonial resistance organization. By 1945 the practice of oathing had spread throughout Kikuyuland and by 1948 it had morphed into what became known as the Mau Mau movement.<sup>32</sup>

The Mau Mau uprising dramatically divided Africans in the colony, the Kikuyu community itself was divided between those who supported Mau Mau and those who simply valued the security and stability in their communities and were often simply pigeonholed as regime loyalists. Daniel Branch has asserted that the Mau Mau episode was less a conflict between the state and the Mau Mau rebels and more of a civil war

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<sup>31</sup> David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Grob Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain's Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), 214. Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 28. In her book Elkins points out that the meaning of the oath itself was different for every oath taker. The general meaning was that it was for land and freedom, but what that meant was often vague, to some it meant throwing off the British yoke, to others it represented simply returning to the homes they had been expelled from by the British. Regardless the oath carried a great deal of cultural significance for the Kikuyu that the settler community often failed to understand.

between members of the Kikuyu ethnic group.<sup>33</sup> ‘Loyalists’ were seldom simply Kikuyu who were supporters of the colonial regime, but more often Kikuyu that opposed Mau Mau or just wanted to make it through the conflict.

Due to all of these issues the soldiers of the KAR made it through the Mau Mau period rather well. The British government did not consider the Kikuyu to be a martial race and therefore seldom recruited from that population. In 1959 the East Africa Land Forces(EALF) reported that Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru men made up only 3.4 per cent of the Kenyan KAR Battalions even though they made up 26.9 per cent of the Kenyan male population.<sup>34</sup> As a whole the men of the KAR fought well against the insurgents there were only a handful of cases in which the loyalty of African soldiers was called into question. Major H.N. Clemas of the 23<sup>rd</sup> KAR gave one example of an African NCO whom he suspected had questionable loyalties, the NCO had lost his pistol on a patrol, later in the campaign the same pistol was found on a captured Mau Mau insurgent.<sup>35</sup> Clemas also made the point that what Kikuyu soldiers there were in the KAR were never held in high regard before the conflict, so there was no reason to believe that military authorities had any confidence in them to begin with.<sup>36</sup> During the emergency the EALF reestablished a unit that had been disbanded at the end of World War II, 277 Field

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<sup>33</sup> Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War and Decolonization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8. Branch looks at the conflict and points out that Mau Mau casualties were more often than not caused by ‘loyalist’s’ and that political, economic and social issues within this community drove the involvement of loyalists not some ambiguous loyalty to the Crown.

<sup>34</sup> Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File*, 95.

<sup>35</sup> Anthony Clayton and David Killinggray, *Khaki and Blue: Military and Police in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1989), 244.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Security Squadron (FSS) was made up of African soldiers and led by a British intelligence officer. The unit was designed to plant African counter-intelligence agents in KAR units to monitor them for subversive activity. In 1957 these duties were transferred to Special Branch of the Kenya Police and 277 FSS was disbanded. Even so these security operations continued until Kenya achieved independence in 1963.<sup>37</sup>

While British officers had a certain measure of trust in their soldiers they were not able to complete the task of defeating Mau Mau on their own. Units of the British Army were flown in to assist in Anti-Mau Mau operations, as were RAF ground attack aircraft. The increased militarization of Kenya colony during the period that a state of emergency was declared actually expanded the role of the settler community in defense of the colony. As previously mentioned the Kenya Regiment stymied the prospect of Africans being able to achieve commissioned rank in the near future. The KR continued to expand during the emergency and was increasingly relied upon to provide leadership to small detachments of African soldiers tasked with long range patrolling in areas of suspected Mau Mau activity. On many occasions men from the KR would simply be given rank based on the assignment that they were posted in outside the regiment. The former commander of the regiment LtCol. Guy Campbell pointed out that one occasion he had made a private an acting sergeant to take up a liaison officer posting with a British battalion that had been sent to Kenya. When the officer commanding (OC) the British battalion realized he had been sent a sergeant instead of an officer the British commander sent the man right back to the KR. Campbell simply promoted the man to

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<sup>37</sup> Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File*, 192-193.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and sent him back out on assignment.<sup>38</sup> The also occurred when men were sent out to lead African troops, European soldiers were not subject to the orders of African NCOs or Warrant Officers (WO). Therefore to avoid any uncomfortable situations European soldiers of the KR were always appointed to officer rank to lead African soldiers.

By the end of the emergency in 1960 the KR had units on active service throughout the crisis. The regiment itself had been expanded not only for operations but to run a tracking school for the British Battalions operating in Kenya. Even those settlers who did not themselves join the army were often pressured to join the Kenya Police Reserve, where they were automatically appointed to the rank of inspector. These experiences renewed interest in military service among Europeans and continued to impede African opportunities to advance in the Army into the post-colonial period.

#### Africanization and the foundation of the Kenyan Army

During the course of the Mau Mau Emergency the British government was considering ways in which to ease the cost of maintain its empire. The rising cost of military operations in Kenya took their toll. At the height of the conflict, 1954-55, the military costs were £14 Million per annum.<sup>39</sup> London was looking to grant a greater measure of self-government on Kenya to hopefully reduce the amount of money that the

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<sup>38</sup> Campbell, *The Charging Buffalo*, 100.

<sup>39</sup> Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War*, 61. Additionally the British government was funding civil action programs that were designed to attack the root of the insurgency but not in a serious way. In 1953 there was a one-time payment to Kenya for £5 Million for agricultural reform. In 1954 the Kenya government was loaned £2 Million to develop African housing in urban areas. These payments did add up but were only a fraction of the cost of military operations, which were the focus of British strategy.

metropole had to spend. The example had been set in 1954 when the Central African Federation was created out of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. Even though a greater degree of independence for the colony was being considered many in the Kenyan government and the EALF did not think that the colonies of East Africa would be granted full independence for at least another twenty or thirty years.

The EALF had only taken token measures of Africanization by 1956. That year the command revived the rank of *Effendi* it had last been used prior to World War One. An *Effendi* outranked all African warrant officers and was junior to all commissioned officers. The intent on the part of the British was to create a rank similar to the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers in the British Indian Army without actually giving them significant officer responsibilities.<sup>40</sup> The original idea was that Africans appointed to this rank would slowly replace the European NCOs that were loaned to the KAR for specialist assignments as well as reduce the number of European junior officers required to lead small tactical units.<sup>41</sup> The African *Effendi*'s were required to undergo a six-month course before appointment, and would be entirely responsible for the administration and training of their units. Trusting African personnel with administrative duties was a new development in the EALF and can be seen as significant progress. Even after African officers were introduced into the EALF they were not immediately trusted with the same set of administrative tasks a European junior officer would have been. While it seems as though this measure was taken to increase opportunities for Africans it was more likely

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<sup>40</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1956* (London: MHSO, 1957), 114.

<sup>41</sup> Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa*, 60.

done simply to decrease the operating costs of the regiment: an African *effendi* simply was less costly than a European NCO.

Interestingly the other arm of the security apparatus in East Africa, the Police Services, were encouraged to promote Africans into higher-ranking positions. A 1955 cabinet report on security in the colonies recommended: “Where practicable, and in carefully selected cases, there should be no hesitation on grounds of principle in operating a colour bar in reverse, to favour rapid promotion of Africans.”<sup>42</sup> In 1955 the civil authorities had recognized the need for Africans to have the proper experience to manage their own security forces. This same report also addresses the need to fill colonial officer billets with locally recruited officers. There was no hesitation on the part of the British government to extend commissions to Africans or other non-Europeans in areas where there was not a significant settler community. In the West African colonies there were thirty-five Africans officers serving, additionally there were nineteen West Africans that were in training at Sandhurst. Even though the report encouraged and recommended that more West Africans be commissioned every year, it also points out that the situation in East Africa was far more complicated and did not recommend any commissioning program or training program to prepare Africans for commissions.<sup>43</sup>

The introduction of the *Effendi* rank is often compared to the establishment of the KAR Junior Leader Company (JLC). This unit was established in 1957 and was the combination of several East African territorial training schemes that existed at the time.

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<sup>42</sup> TNA:PRO CAB 126/76, 30. ‘Security in the Colonies.’

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 47.

The idea was to consolidate all junior leader training in Kenya for all three East African territories. African boys, generally sons of KAR soldiers, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen were accepted into the program and were to undergo a training period of four and a half years at the JLC. The objective was to “develop the intelligence, education and powers of leadership of suitable African boys with a view to their becoming N.C.O.’s and eventually qualifying for warrant rank.”<sup>44</sup> Again similarly to the *Effendi* program the JLC initiative was designed to produce an educated batch of African NCOs better able to take the place of more costly European personnel. Interestingly rather than have these trainees serve in the ranks and then go to a course to become NCOs, as had been the practice, the EALF thought it better to have a dedicated training program for NCO development.

The Kenya Colony report for 1957 does say: “It is hoped that one or two suitable candidates for Sandhurst might be found from time to time from the output of the Junior Leaders Company but it is not the aim of the training to produce Sandhurst Candidates.”<sup>45</sup> Legally there was nothing preventing an African from becoming an officer however officer cadets had to meet the educational requirements and pass a selection board in order even to be considered. The educational requirements alone ensured that only a very small pool of Africans who could even qualify to go before the commissioning board.

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<sup>44</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1957* (London: HMSO, 1958), 124.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

Starting in 1958 Kenya colony began sending cadets to the Royal Military Academy – Sandhurst (RMA). However there were no Africans in the first three years of groups sent to RMA for training. In 1957 the EALF reported that none of the candidates that applied to attend RMA were able to pass the selection board. The following year one European and two Asians were sent to RMA. Of these three cadets the Asians were required to attend Mons Officer Cadet School prior to being admitted to RMA.<sup>46</sup> Kenya colony only sent Europeans and Asians to RMA until 1963. What stands out about this is that other colonies in East Africa began sending Africans to RMA in 1958.<sup>47</sup> Between 1957 and 1960 nine cadets were sent to Sandhurst from Kenya of those nine, six were European and three were Asian. During the initial years of localization of the leadership of the forces Europeans continued to dominate the officer class of the Kenyan forces and showed few signs of diversifying beyond the Asian community.

While the Asian community in Kenya made some advances in equality this should not be seen as a move towards making the forces completely multiracial. In 1958 the Kenya government was only beginning to break the dependence on British Army personnel seconded to the KAR. The goal was to train local Asians as technicians and specialists instead of Africans, and to commission members of the European and Asian community to take over from more expensive British officers. Also in 1958 the KAR

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<sup>46</sup> Mons Officer Cadets School was the training institution for National Service officers and Short Service Commissions. After the elimination of National Service in 1960 the school trained both SSC as well as potential officers who joined the Army as university graduates. The course of study at Mons was only six months compared to the two-year course at RMA. Mons was closed in 1972 when the course of study at RMA was transitioned into a one-year course for all regular officers.

<sup>47</sup> TNA:PRO WO 968/791, f. 1, 'Africanization of the East African Land Forces, Chart of Cadets sent to RMA from East Africa since 1957.'

started its first Administration course for African *Effendi's*, WOs and NCOs. The Administration course was launched in 1958, and was deemed to be both successful and necessary.<sup>48</sup> The following year the Kenya Government reported that the program was going well and that they projected that by 1962 African NCOs would be able to replace European OR seconded to the KAR.<sup>49</sup>

At that time the Colonial Secretary, Iain Macleod, recognized that there would be some form of constitutional change in East Africa however he was unsure what form it would take. Since taking power back in 1951 Conservative governments had slowed the rate of decolonization in the Empire. In a memorandum he submitted to the Macmillan Cabinet in December 1959, Macleod identified four possible scenarios for East Africa in the 1960s: one, the United Kingdom would maintain ultimate power in Kenya and allow the other territories to become self governing; two, HMG would retain control of coastal, and port territories in East Africa and allow the rest to become self governing; three, to allow all of the territories to become self governing but under the auspices of a federal system controlled by the United Kingdom; four, to simply allow all the territories to move towards self government.<sup>50</sup>

While the option of allowing complete independence was considered, the Macleod's various scenarios emphasized Britain retaining some sort of legal and territorial control over most of East Africa and of Kenya Colony in particular. He also

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<sup>48</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1958* (London: HMSO, 1959), 91.

<sup>49</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1959* (London: HMSO, 1960), 91.

<sup>50</sup> TNA:PRO CAB 129/100, 2, 'The Future of the East Africa Land Forces.'

advocated making the forces of East Africa more mutually supporting; if Kenya faced internal unrest local forces from Uganda rather than regular British forces could reinforce Kenyan authorities. Additionally the Macleod was extremely concerned about local politicians gaining influence over colonial forces in East Africa. This concern coincided with increasing participation of Africans in governing the East African colonies. The problem that Macleod saw with this was that local politicians would in some way politicize the EALF, and would make it problematic for the Governor to use colonial forces to secure British interests.<sup>51</sup> HMG needed to make sure that EALF were insulated from both constitutional change and the influence of local politicians. Even before British officials were willing to accept that all East African territories were bound for independence within five years they understood that East African military forces ought to remain divorced from domestic politics. The British government sought to establish an enduring military to military relationship with colonies that would soon become independent in order to ensure British influence in the region.

In late 1959 neither the Kenyan colonial government nor the East Africa Commission (EAC) were making serious preparations for independence. The defence establishment in East Africa thought that self-government in the region was decades away. The Royal East African Navy (REAN), which had been established in 1952, was composed of slightly over 200 men. In 1959 the REAN did not have any African officers,

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 2.

or petty officers, all African members of the force served as ratings.<sup>52</sup> There were also no plans to train or promote Africans to any leadership positions whatsoever in the small navy. All of the changes being made in the defence forces in Kenya were focused on reducing costs for both London and the Colonial government and ensuring lasting British influence in the region. No one in the colonial defence administration made any plans for how the British government would set up national military forces if East African colonies became independent.

“National consciousness is a political fact”<sup>53</sup>

The change in the thinking of the EALF came in 1960 when British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan spoke famously in Cape Town about the “winds of change” in Africa. This speech came as a shock to many in Kenya and East Africa, particularly those in the settler community. Many settlers had hoped for some sort of arrangement akin to the federation in central Africa but were confronted by the specter of African majority rule in the near future. The EALF and East Africa Command (EAC) had made no arrangements for the military forces in Africa to transition into African-independent armies. By August of 1960 EAC was scrambling to figure out how to create an independent military force out of these colonial units. One of the major factors in the transition was leadership. Administrative and Leadership training among Africans had been kept to a minimum. African *effendis* were never trained to become the leaders of

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<sup>52</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Annual Report on the East Africa High Commission, 1959* (London: HMSO, 1960), 81.

<sup>53</sup> Harold Macmillan, “Winds of Change,” Cape Town: 1960.

the new army. While they had the necessary military experience—many of them were veterans of Malaya or Mau Mau and sometimes the Second World War—unit administration above the platoon level, and quartermaster duties had been kept firmly in the hands of European officers.

The plan for training Africans for service as commissioned officers in the Kenya Army took shape slowly. The EAC was unsure how to proceed; they knew that African soldiers would not be able to pass the rigorous screening process to be sent to RMA since most lacked the educational qualifications. Initially the Colonial Office looked to newly independent African nations like Ghana as a model to build a national army from. They requested information on recently established Ghana Military Academy and were very curious about the prospect of training Kenyan officers in some sort of Kenyan military academy. The advantage of such a plan was that it would be significantly cheaper than making sure that there was space available at Sandhurst for African officers from all over the continent.<sup>54</sup> Even so the program in Ghana was in its infancy and most of the serving officers in the Ghanaian Army had been sent abroad for training.<sup>55</sup> The 1960 mutiny of the *Force Publique* in the former Belgian Congo only five days after independence changed the way Kenyan authorities viewed the creation of a national army.

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<sup>54</sup> TNA:PRO WO 968/791, f. 1, 'Africanization of the East African Land Forces, Request for information about the Ghana Military Academy.'

<sup>55</sup> Jon Kraus, "The Men in Charge," *Africa Report* 11 (April 1966), 17. Even in 1966 the best candidates for commissions were sent to RMA. Additionally the officers that were most senior in the Ghanaian Army were commissioned directly from the ranks and did not attend courses in Britain.

The *Force Publique* was considered by European observers to be a professional African military force. While political disputes were taking place among the civilian leadership the last white commander of the force, General E. Janssens, had refused to promote any Africans to senior rank and was intent on making sure that independence changed nothing about the force. African NCOs and soldiers in the force felt that they were being left out of the independence process since it appeared nothing would change for them. This discontent led to a violent mutiny in which soldiers murdered their European officers. The mutineers threw the professionalism of the force aside and, the force became a threat not only to the civilian population but the government as well.<sup>56</sup> Order was restored after Belgian troops and UN Peacekeepers from Canada arrived in the Congo. Shortly thereafter the force was Africanized and renamed the Congolese National Army. The conclusion was that the *Force Publique* never made the transition from colonial army to national army. Observers noted that an Africanization of the officer corps and a complete subordination to civilian control were the necessary steps in order to ensure that African militaries would support their civilian governments not destabilize them.<sup>57</sup>

The events in the Congo struck fear into the settler communities in Kenya and the Central African Federation. The settlers in Kenya started to insist upon the creation of a European Defence Force in addition to the Kenya Regiment as well as the creation of ‘strongpoints’ stockpiled with weapons and other provisions in case a similar event

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<sup>56</sup> Kisangani Emizet, “Explaining the Rise and Fall of Military Regimes: Civil-Military Relations in the Congo,” *Armed Forces and Society* 26 (Winter 2000), 207.

<sup>57</sup> Claude Welch, “Praetorianism in Commonwealth West Africa,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 10 (July 1972), 207.

occurred.<sup>58</sup> The British government helped to calm the nerves of Europeans by reinforcing British forces in Kenya with an additional infantry battalion as well as 600 Royal Marine Commandos. This yet again highlighted the how much more complicated decolonization was made in Kenya by the presence of a large and powerful European settler community.

At the end of 1960 there were still no African officers in the Kenyan Battalions of the KAR. In 1960 Kenya colony sent 4 cadets to RMA and three of those were European and one was Asian. It was not until 1961 that the Kenyan Government and EAC would settle on a plan of action for creating a Kenyan Army led by black Kenyans. Unlike later experiences the British government did not deem it necessary to send a dedicated training team to Kenya to help establish the Army. The establishment would be created using the resources that were locally available and by sending men for training in the United Kingdom. One of the issues that the military authorities saw was that there would simply not be enough spaces at RMA for cadets from African nations to man the new armies in time for independence. The Colonial Office in partnership with EAC developed a two-part plan to produce enough officers for the Kenyan Army. Part one was a simple mass solution to the problem at hand: the Kenyan government granted short service commissions to selected African *Effendis* who had demonstrated sufficient potential to serve as officers in a post independence army.<sup>59</sup> During this period the EALF

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<sup>58</sup> Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War*, 160.

<sup>59</sup> The reason for granting short service commissions (SSC) was that these soldiers were not given permanent Queens Commissions which would have accorded them specific privileges in the British Army that would have made it more difficult to transfer them over to the Kenyan Army upon independence. At

would begin searching for suitable Africans to send to Mons Officer Cadet School and RMA. Part two would see these officers begin to return to the KAR and would be accompanied by an influx of commissioned *Effendis* to fill in vacancies where they existed.<sup>60</sup>

The plan moved very slowly in 1961, by July only six of the roughly seventy *Effendis* had been granted commissions. However by this time two Europeans and two Asians who had previously graduated from RMA were granted commissions.<sup>61</sup> Even though constitutional reform in Kenya was moving forward the rate of Africanization in the military and civil service was extremely slow. In October 1961 the East Africa Defence Committee (EADC) met to discuss the pace of Africanization in all of the East African colonies. While Uganda and Tanganyika had both sent African Cadets to RMA in the year previous these men would not be prepared to take up duties in their respective regiments for at least two years while they finished their training. Additionally, Kenya colony had only commissioned a handful of *Effendis*, the rest of the men in the officer-training pipeline were Europeans and Asians (at the time of their meeting five Europeans and one Kenyan Asian were training at RMA). With this slow pace of training and the fast pace of African nations toward independence, the EADC endorsed a proposal from MajGen. Richard Goodwin, GOC of EAC, to grant Short Service Commissions to seventy Africans by the middle of 1962. Such a move was planned to provide ten

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the time a SSC was good for three years and would allow these officers to simply be transferred over to the Kenyan Army without any significant administrative obstacles.

<sup>60</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791 , 14A, 'Africanisation of the East African Land Forces.'

<sup>61</sup> TNA:PRO WO 32/20382, 8A, 'Establishing a Viable Force in East Africa.'

officers to each of the six infantry battalions in EAC and leave the remaining ten to take up postings in service support units.<sup>62</sup>

In November 1961, Patrick Renison, the head of the EADC and the Governor of Kenya at the time, sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary Reginald Maulding who had replaced McLeod. The letter set out the goals and costs of the military training program in East Africa with the hope of winning the support of the Colonial Office. Renison was held in low regard by Kenyan Africans since many of his public statements did little to reassure them of the progress of decolonization. Nonetheless his November letter clearly indicated the desires of the EADC: “If when independence comes,” he wrote, “a strong officer corps with high professional standards is already firmly established, the East African forces will be that much more resistant to political interference, and that much less vulnerable to any ill-conceived programs of rapid Africanization which could only result in a serious lowering of standards.”<sup>63</sup> These tenets would define the way the British executed the training program in Kenya, rather than speedily pushing officer cadets through sub-par commissioning programs, their goal was to forge a professional officer corps.

While this ambitious program was slowly getting started, the British military took no steps to reduce its presence in East Africa. Since the Suez Crisis and the loss of

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 8A.

<sup>63</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, 16, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962,’ Letter dated 8 November 1961. “Renison, Sir Patrick Muir (1911–1965),” D. W. Throup in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , <http://www.oxforddnb.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/view/article/38476> (accessed April 3, 2012). Shortly after this letter was sent to the Colonial Office Renison was summoned to London and dismissed from his post by Colonial Secretary Duncan Sandys for growing too close to the settler community in Kenya.

British influence in Egypt, Kenya was considered by London as an important strategic reserve location for both forces and material. Additionally rather than send a training team to Kenya to take charge of the transition to the formation of a national army, EAC decided simply to leave British officers in their billets in the KAR. In the entire KAR establishment in East Africa there were 180 officer billets. It was projected that by the middle of 1962 there would be eighty-four local officers (including Europeans and Asians). Even so, Secretary of State for War John Profumo said in his November 1961 report, "It is the intention that during the period of rapid Africanisation, British seconded officers will remain at their present strength to train the newly commissioned Africans...By the beginning of 1963, the requirement for British seconded officers, which now stands at 150 for the three East African Territories, should be reduced by half."<sup>64</sup> The reduction of British forces in East Africa was planned to take place extremely slowly, as both Harold Watkinson, the Minister of Defence and Profumo were concerned about the implications of retaining seconded officers after independence.<sup>65</sup>

Their concern was not based on the perception that the retention of Europeans in independent armies would cause problems. It clearly can be seen that the British government was trying to force a multi-racial army on independent Kenya. Europeans and Asians cadets were the only officers that were sent on course from civilian life. Even though the government was attempting to Africanize quickly, they felt that the only

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 8A. John Profumo did not remain in office due to the resulting scandal of an affair. At the time the Profumo was seeing her she was also sleeping with a drug dealer and the Soviet Naval Attaché. The resulting scandal forced Profumo to resign and was a factor in the loss of the 1964 General Election to the Labour Party.

<sup>65</sup> Harold Watkinson also did not last until the 1964 General Election; he was ousted from the government in July 1962 on the 'Night of the Long Knives.'

African recruiting pool that they could choose from were Africans who were then serving in the army. Profumo pointed out in his report to Watkinson in January 1962 that “Although the G.O.C. East Africa anticipated that suitable material existed in the KAR [for commissioned officers], this hope has not, unfortunately, been realized.”<sup>66</sup> This problem had become public in December 13, 1961 when an article entitled “Kenya Becomes Aware of Need to Train African Officers.” The article highlighted the example of an attempt to recruit African secondary school graduates. The selection board had identified eleven Africans with the requisite educational credentials; of these eleven only three actually showed up for the first interview; and not one of them passed the interview process.<sup>67</sup> The article not only pointed out the problems that the Kenya government had in finding Africans to commission, but it also made the connection between the lack of promotion in the Congo and the mutiny that had occurred there in 1960. The fear was not simply of the prospect of a mutiny but of the potential financial cost of a mutiny.

The British government was concerned on many levels throughout this period over the economic burden posed by decolonization. While the Colonial Office was willing to support decolonization with limited funds and the Ministry of Defence willing to provide the personnel, independent nations were required to pay for their own armies, and this would include the cost of any British officers seconded to them. This cost was substantial as British officers salaries and allowances were significantly larger than those

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<sup>66</sup> TNA:PRO WO 32/20382, 8A, pg. 3, ‘Establishing a Viable Force in East Africa.’

<sup>67</sup>“Kenya Becomes Aware of Need to Train African Officers,” *The Times*, 13 December 1961, 10. This article was followed up by a Letter to the Editor on December 29<sup>th</sup> by MajGen. William Dimoline, the former GOC East Africa Command who asked that the events in Congo serve as a reminder of the importance of the training mission in Africa.

of any African officer. The major concern of British policy makers, such as Profumo, was what this cost would lead new nations to do. He wrote: “We are apprehensive that because of this they may be tempted to turn elsewhere for their military assistance in this field [officer training]. I am sure that, if necessary, it is worth spending a certain amount of money in preventing this.”<sup>68</sup> The prospect of former British colonies leaving the British sphere of influence to receive assistance from non-aligned nations, or worse the Soviet Union, was unthinkable. If the independent Kenyan government decided to look elsewhere for military training and material it would put the British strategic position in East Africa and the Middle East in jeopardy.

It was not simply the policy makers in London who were concerned about who would become involved in East Africa. As the East African colonies neared independence the concern over British influence filtered down to the local level. In December 1961 Tanganyika gained independence and was followed by Uganda in October 1962. However, in January 1962 the Governor of Uganda, HE Sir Walter Coutts, voiced his concerns to the GOC of EAC over the pace of officer production, “our aim would be to assist the KAR for as long as possible because other countries would be anxious to do so if we were not.”<sup>69</sup> While the USSR is not mentioned by name in this passage, colonial officials were constantly suspicious of communist subversion in East Africa. Most events, from the Mau Mau Emergency, the revolution in Zanzibar and later the East African mutinies, were initially thought to be caused by communist infiltration.

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<sup>68</sup> TNA:PRO WO 32/20382, 8A, pg. 2, ‘Establishing a Viable Force in East Africa.’

<sup>69</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, 16, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.’

Even though Coutts highlighted the need to get this task done, he was not willing to compromise the mission of British training in East Africa: securing forces that were friendly to Britain, and divorced from domestic politics.

A 1962 report by the KAR Course Wing highlighted some of the difficulties British trainers were having in hastening the output of officers and officer cadets. In 1962 the KAR Course Wing held seven different programs, five of which were specifically designed to develop African leadership skills: the Administration Course, Platoon Command, Advanced Platoon Command, Pre-Officer Cadet Training Unit and Pre-Sandhurst Cadet Course. The Pre-OCTU course was the first of its kind and began with eleven students, all drawn from the KAR from non-infantry specialties. Of the eleven students, seven passed out of the course. In the 1962 KAR Course Wing Report students were considered to be woefully unprepared for the undertaking, “The standard of students was not high. All being non-inf personnel, their basic training varied from 6 months down to NIL. In no case did this standard approach the standard expected from and inf recruit at the end of 6 months training.”<sup>70</sup> The students were seen as being unprepared not only educationally but also militarily. This report certainly was not a ringing endorsement for the commissioning of African officers and creating an independent military force.

Nonetheless, the rate of commissioning had to improve if African officers were even to get the most basic orientation in staff duties in preparation for mid and high level command and staff duty. The Colonial Office decided to grant some *Effendis* SSC in

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<sup>70</sup> TNA:PRO WO 305/1653, Anx. C, ‘KAR Course Wing 1961-1963.’

October 1961, this program was then expanded and all *Effendis* serving in the EALF would be granted commissions by the end of 1962. As of July 1962 there were sixteen *Effendis* still serving in the Kenya battalions of the KAR. By December all sixteen were granted SSC without any additional training. African officers who had been commissioned were not immediately given command positions beyond the platoon level. Those that were not serving as platoon commanders were placed in posts at brigade headquarters to familiarize them with staff duties. Others were placed in a specially created position, company assistant adjutant, to give them experience in the administrative tasks required to run a company.<sup>71</sup>

However the major issue for the Colonial Office and the War Office was not simply a lack of funds, there were not enough billets available for both African officers and British officers to be present in the same regiment. The funding of the KAR was based on a table of organization that allocated a specific number of officer posts to each regiment. The British plan for training African officers was focused on the experience of shadowing a British officer in a position that the African officer was designated to fill. Since the British Army had no additional billets available in the table of organization, the Colonial Office said that they could only fund the positions that were allowed by statute.<sup>72</sup> The choice had to be made between halting the commissioning of African officers, reducing the number of British officers in the KAR, or finding a way to change the law. Both EAC and the Colonial Office realized that it was not in any way feasible to

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<sup>71</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, 60, 'Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.'

<sup>72</sup> Other regiments avoided this problem with the addition of Emergency Reserve Establishment (ERE) positions on their table of organization that allowed the regiment to possess a surplus of officers. Unlike other regiments the KAR was not allocated any ERE positions when it was established.

slow the pace of commissioning Africans or reduce the number of British officers at that time. They ended up agreeing to have the War Office fund the additional positions for the remainder of the fiscal year and the provisions for the next fiscal year (1963/1964) were amended to allow the additional officers.<sup>73</sup>

The bureaucratic battle for funds and supply allocations revealed a weakness in the British plan for training the Kenyan Army. While a one-on-one trainer to trainee relationship was ideal for developing and molding new officers, it was extremely costly for the Colonial Office and took manpower away from the British Army at home. Previously the Colonial regiments had not been as much of a burden. By using National Servicemen in the colonies the Regular Army did not have to commit significant resources. Yet the last intakes of National Servicemen entered the British Army in November 1960 and left the Army in 1962 and 1963. The trainer-to-trainee ratio would have to be reduced in the future to make training missions that were both affordable and flexible.

#### The Kenyan Army from the KAR

The Kenyan and the Ugandan colonial governments were intent on expanding the size of their forces on the eve of independence. While Kenya had three KAR battalions, Uganda possessed only one, and neither force was of acceptable size for an army of an independent nation. At the same meeting in January 1962 that Sir Walter Couitt insisted that the training mission had to be successful to maintain British influence, he said: “the

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<sup>73</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, 14A, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.’

present strength of 4KAR is not sufficient to enable Uganda to face the possible threats from Rwanda, Burundi, the Congo and the Sudan with any degree of confidence.”<sup>74</sup> A similar belief was held in the Kenya administration that a nation the size of Kenya required a much larger military force to guarantee its independence. While the local authorities insisted upon an expansion of both the Kenyan and Ugandan armies, the Colonial Office fundamentally disagreed. Lieutenant Colonel W.M.L Alder of the Colonial Office Defence Department, pointed out that “We know that they are going to have a very difficult task in meeting all their [Kenya and Uganda] financial commitments and it is therefore clearly in their interests, as well as those of Her Majesty’s Government, to keep the cost of the K.A.R. as low as possible.”<sup>75</sup> If the KAR was expanded it was likely that the units that were passed on to the new states would be a ruinous financial responsibility. The expansion of the local forces would have to wait until the onset of independence when the new nations could make their own missteps.

As Africanization programs moved through 1962, African officers had been posted to the majority of the KAR battalions. Yet it was at this point that EAC noticed a serious problem in their scheme. Almost all of the Africans who had been commissioned ended up serving as infantry officers; there were almost no African officers trained in the service or support branches.<sup>76</sup> Additionally it proved difficult to find suitable candidates for these specialty branches. Previously, British trainers had looked to the

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<sup>74</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, E16, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.’

<sup>75</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, 60, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.’

<sup>76</sup> According to the British Army model Combat Support branches include: artillery, engineers, intelligence, and signals. The Combat Services are: logistics, medical, adjutant general, military police and the electrical and mechanical engineers. All of these units require significant periods of specialized training beyond the battle tasks of an infantry officer.

African senior NCOs first, but in these fields seconded British personnel occupied all of the senior NCO positions. In his July 1962 memo to the War Office, Sir Richard Goodwin, GOC EAC, made it clear that this needed to be a new priority for the War Office because of the long periods of training and apprenticeship that were required for these positions.<sup>77</sup> Again, the issue that confronted the EAC was the cost of additional officers. East Africa Command wanted to create eleven new officer positions that would all be devoted to service and technical branches.

Even though these positions were eventually approved, it was not until the 1963/1964 fiscal year, which stunted the growth of the service and support component of the Kenya Army. This was not simply a problem in Kenya, for both Uganda and Tanganyika relied on British Army personnel for medical and quartermaster services well into 1964.<sup>78</sup> The War Office was frustrated with the lack of progress on the issue and wanted to revisit the idea of an East African Federation. While the War Office and EAC had no delusions that they would be able to create a single nation out of the former East African territories, they did want to investigate the possibility of pooling defence resources for the region. The War Office and the Colonial Office would continue to suggest this option to East African governments well into 1965.

Once Uganda achieved independence in October 1962, the only remaining KAR units in EAC were the three Kenya Battalions. By the end of 1962, all of the *Effendis* in the KAR had had their appointments converted to commissions. In addition to these new

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<sup>77</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/723, E59, 'Africanisation of the East African Land Forces 1960-1962.' Dated 19 July 1962.

<sup>78</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791, 1, 'Africanisation of the East African Land Forces.'

African officers, forty-nine other African soldiers had received commissions either through Mons or RMA.<sup>79</sup> By December 1962, Compulsory Military Training for Europeans had ended in the colony and the Kenya Regiment was opened up to men of all races for voluntary territorial service.<sup>80</sup> Progress was clearly being made in turning the army over to African officers; however, the process was not complete. MajGen. W.A. Dimoline had been GOC EAC from 1946-1948, and in his retirement continued to be an advocate for African soldiers. He had published letters to the editor in *The Times* and been outspoken on the need for more African officers since 1955. Despite his enthusiasm he confessed to Brigadier M.F. Fitzalan-Howard, that: "I hope that you are right in your estimate that Kenya will retain its European officers for at least ten years otherwise, I am afraid of the future of the KAR does not look too good to me. However I may be wrong."<sup>81</sup>

MajGen. Dimoline's concerns regarding the removal of European officers were not misplaced. As the complement of African officers grew during 1962 and 1963 the prospect of expanding the three KAR battalions into an actual army was revisited. However, this discussion was put on hold in July of 1963 when EAC identified another stumbling block in the Africanization program. During World War II EAC developed its own organic support units to include an ordnance company. In 1956 this ordnance company was disbanded, and British Army units provided these services. In 1963 305<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1962* (London: HMSO, 1964), 105.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>81</sup> William Dimoline to M.F. Fitzalan-Howard, May 30, 1963, William Dimoline Papers, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, UK.

Ammunition Depot and 541<sup>st</sup> Ordnance Depot supplied ammunition and explosives not only KAR units but also British units stationed in Kenya. The issue was not simply that there were no African NCOs to promote to officer ranks but that no Africans at all had been trained at any rank to perform or supervise ordnance duties.

MajGen. Goodwin asked the MOD for approval of the recruitment of fifty African soldiers to be trained locally at the ordnance depot. The timing of the request would mean that even if these men had been recruited immediately they would not be trained and available until at least mid-1964. However, at the time recruiting safaris were only made once a year, so if the requisite men were not found that year the entire program would be pushed back. In addition to the fifty other ranks required, the depot also needed four commissioned officers assigned for ordnance training. In order for ordnance services to be completely Africanized it would require sixteen officers including a lieutenant colonel as the Chief of Ordnance. This move further strained the already taxed African officer corps. MajGen Goodwin had by now accepted the large scale commitment that British forces had made a post-independence Kenya when he pointed out that “it can be seen that the Kenya Army Ordnance Units will require seconded officers and NCOs for several years to come.”<sup>82</sup>

Once the proposal reached the ministerial level the perceived needs of the Kenya Army changed. LtCol. Adler of the Colonial Office felt that it was premature to submit the request to the treasury for only the costs to create one support unit for the Kenya Army. He suggested that the proposal for the entire expansion program be submitted to

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<sup>82</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791, 4, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces,’ letter dated 29 July 1963.

the Treasury at one time to have a clear understanding of what the final cost would be.<sup>83</sup> It was at this point in the discussion that officials at the Colonial Office and the War Office admitted that they had been too ambitious in their Africanization scheme. LtCol. Adler made it clear in his letter to the War Office that the creation of supporting units and the expansion of the Kenya Army to a Brigade Group would be complete by the independence deadline in December 1963. This is yet another reason why Colonial Office officials such as Adler were hoping for a Federal Defence arrangement where supporting services such as the ordnance depot could be shared by the three countries.

Major C.D.B. Troughton of the War Office raised the point to Adler that “Experience in Tanganyika and Uganda has shown that trained African ordnance personnel are an essential part of a newly formed independent army when War Department sources of supply and guidance are removed.”<sup>84</sup> This warning came with the assertion that the longer the decision was put off, the longer seconded personnel would have to remain in Kenya. The cost difference was significant: British personnel cost 3.5 times that of African personnel in the same positions. One of the important things that Maj. Troughton underscored was that all of their issues aside, it was extremely important for Africans to be in charge of their own affairs sooner rather than later. By October 17 the War Office received an answer, the Colonial Office decided there would be no new supporting services until a plan had been made and approved for the expansion of the entire Kenya Army.

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<sup>83</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791, 5/7, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces,’ letter dated 4 September 1963.

<sup>84</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791, 8, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces,’ letter dated 17 October 1963.

The expansion of the Kenya Army to a Brigade Group required the creation of a variety of new units in order to function on the modern battlefield. The new army needed to be able to confront armor threats, and be able to operate during conventional conflicts. Each infantry battalion needed an additional rifle company as well as an anti-tank (AT) platoon and a reconnaissance platoon. Like the ordnance depot, EAC had disbanded its organic artillery units shortly after the Second World War. The new Kenya Army therefore required the establishment of an artillery regiment, as well as an armored reconnaissance squadron and a field engineer squadron. All of these combat units also required a robust support organization to include a motor transport company, postal unit, provost unit, stores section and infantry weapons workshop.<sup>85</sup> Before the Kenya Army would be able to operate without the direct support of British units, all of these new units would have to be established from nothing. This required a multi-year commitment on the part of the British to provide support, trainers and equipment. While on the surface it seemed as though Kenya was the only beneficiary in the arrangement, as long as British forces were required to support the basic functioning of the Kenya Army they would have to maintain basing rights in Kenya.

Even though the Army was only composed of three infantry battalions still partially staffed by British officers, the outlook was not as poor as it seemed. Just prior to independence MajGen. Goodwin commented, “the crash programme of training African officers, which had been essential, was proving generally successful. There had been some weak spots but on the whole the programme had gone off rather

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 8.

encouragingly.”<sup>86</sup> By the time of the independence celebrations of December 12, 1963, the Kenya Army was made up of three infantry battalions with no supporting services and was partially staffed by British officers.<sup>87</sup> The total size of the force was 2,500 soldiers, with 165 serving officers, of which eighty were African.<sup>88</sup> Seconded British officers would have to remain in Kenya for the foreseeable future, it was assumed, before the Army would be able to function on its own.

The army is tested: The East African Mutinies

As noted previously, by the time Kenya reached independence, Tanganyika and Uganda had been independent since December 1961 and October 1962 respectively. At the time these two nations reached independence, the Africanization program was just getting started. In Uganda only fourteen of the sixty-four officers in the army were African. In Tanganyika Africans filled but six of sixty-four officer billets. In both cases the percentages were far below the 48.5% rate that Kenya achieved upon independence. By January 1964, the situation in several East African armies was tense. Police and civil servants were given priority in government funding for pay rate increases, and many rank and file soldiers felt that they were losing the privileged position they had enjoyed.

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<sup>86</sup> TNA:PRO CO 968/791, 3, ‘Africanisation of the East African Land Forces,’ The MajGen. Goodwin’s only complain about African officers was that they were generally weak in the field of administration. Yet he did note the continued training in the area had been encouraging.

<sup>87</sup> The Kenya Regiment was disbanded just prior to independence. It was deemed that the history of the regiment and the close relationship it had with the settler community made it ill suited to remain a part of the Kenya Army.

<sup>88</sup> John Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 44.

In addition to complaints regarding pay, many soldiers, particularly in Tanganyika, felt that little had changed for them since independence. The army seemed exactly the same to them: the officers were mostly British, the uniforms were the same, and one regiment even retained part of its British name 1<sup>st</sup> Tanganyika Rifles (6<sup>th</sup> King's African Rifles). In addition to these issues African other ranks were frustrated by the lack of promotions that they had assumed would come with independence. Many junior NCOs, lance corporals and corporals, felt that the officer ranks should have been thrown open to Africans upon independence. As in the other colonies, one of the major issues was that Tanganyika was still sending all of its officer cadets to Britain for training, and many of the soldiers who were serving in the Tanganyika Rifles (TR) at the time did not have the requisite educational qualifications for officer training.

Tanganyika was the least prepared of the three African colonies for independence. The new leaders of the nation led by Julius Nyerere deeply distrusted the army and had debated the merits of simply disbanding it and replacing it with a paramilitary police force.<sup>89</sup> Even though it was not disbanded the army was severely limited upon independence. The military establishment in Tanganyika was extremely expensive for the small nation. Nyerere allowed the British to keep so much influence after independence was so they would continue to provide funds to offset the costs of the Army. Due to the distrust between the government and the army and the shortage of available funds, Africanization of the army proceeded at a much slower pace in

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<sup>89</sup> Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 65.

Tanganyika. In the early 1960s, the nation sent only two cadets a year to Sandhurst. In January 1964 there were still only twenty-two African officers in the Tanganyika Rifles (TR).<sup>90</sup>

Britain however was not the only source of assistance for Nyerers's government. Oscar Kambona, the Minister for External Affairs, had recommended numerous candidates to the officer selection board for commissioning in the TR. However the board, half of which was composed of British officers, continued to refuse his candidates on the ground that they were not qualified. Kambona therefore sent sixty men to Israel to undergo officer training. When these men returned to Tanganyika Kamabona insisted that they be commissioned into the army. Some of the Israeli trained officers were accepted into the army, but not all were. A divide was created between those officers trained in Israel and those trained in Britain. The Israeli trained men had been through a shorter training course, were ignorant of British military traditions and hence, were viewed as unprofessional. The rank-and-file were also hostile to the Israeli trained officers, insisting that long serving NCO deserved commissioned more than these 'new men.'<sup>91</sup> Dissatisfaction with pay, promotions and the continued presence of British officers were the foundation of discontent the led to the breakdown of military discipline in the Tanganyika Rifles.

The mutiny itself did not actually start because of any event inside Tanganyika. Violence flared up in nearby Zanzibar on New Years Day 1964. Zanzibar had achieved

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 104.

independence separately from Tanganyika as a monarchy under the Sultan. Within weeks of achieving independence, Arab political parties and the Sultan passed legislation banning opposition political parties, censored the press and politicized the police. A group of 600 lightly armed Africans rose up on January 12, 1964 and took control of the government by force. Nyerere decided to send 100 members of the paramilitary Police Field Force to assist containing the rioting that had followed the successful revolution.

The disenchanted soldiers of the TR saw how this small lightly armed force was able to take over the Zanzibar government relatively easily and used it as a model for action in Tanganyika. This realization combined with the absence of the Police Field Force meant there would be little opposition to a potential mutiny. This combination of factors proved far too tempting for the soldiers of the TR, and on January 19<sup>th</sup> they mutinied.<sup>92</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> TR at Colito Barracks outside Dar es Salaam seized the weapons in the armory and turned on their officers, both British and African. The British officers along with their families were taken to the Dar es Salaam airport and put on a plane to Nairobi. The soldiers seized key locations in the capital including the State House. Nyerere was not in Dar es Salaam at the time and remained in hiding so as not to be captured by the mutineers. The curious part of this mutiny is that it was not actually a coup, it was a military version of a strike. A dispatch from the British High Commission noted: "It is

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<sup>92</sup> TNA:PRO DO 213/54, 6A, 'Causes of the East African Mutinies during January 1964,' dispatch No.1 dated 31 January 1964.

conceivable that the mutinous troops took a simple syndicalist view of their position in the army, believing that, as regards to the right to strike for higher pay and accelerated Africanisation of higher positions, they were in much the same position as civil employees (except that the troops had no trade union of their own).<sup>93</sup>

Once the troops were guaranteed a pay raise by the government many of them went back to their barracks. Even so some of the hardcore mutineers, mainly clerks and education instructors, maintained the mutiny. Out of a desire to restore control of his army and the government Nyerere asked the British for military assistance to put down the mutiny on January 24. The British Government dispatched the aircraft carrier HMS *Centaur* and the Royal Marines 45 Commando. On the morning of 25 January the marines used the helicopters aboard the ship to conduct an air assault mission on Colito Barracks. They attempted to use a loudspeaker system to call the troops to surrender, however the Africans refused. The marines fired a rocket into the guardhouse and after a short firefight and the death of two African soldiers the mutinous soldiers surrendered to the marines. After the main force was arrested at the barracks 45 Royal Marine Commando Squadron (45RM) seized control of the airport and government buildings in Dar es Salaam.<sup>94</sup> By the late afternoon the mutiny had been put down, order was restored and the men of 45RM patrolled the streets of Dar es Salaam.

Before the mutiny had been contained, news of the soldiers' strike made it to troops in the Ugandan and Kenyan armies, themselves also dissatisfied with their pay

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<sup>93</sup> TNA:PRO DO 213/54, 6A, 2, 'Causes of the East African Mutinies during January 1964,' dispatch No.1 dated 31 January 1964.

<sup>94</sup> TNA:PRO ADM 202/509, 1, '45 Commando Operational Notes East Africa.'

situation. Prior to the mutiny, government ministers in Uganda had assured the soldiers they would receive a pay raise, yet only enough funds were set aside to give senior NCOs raises. The men of the Uganda Rifles were inspired by the realization that the soldiers simply had to strike to bring about a pay raise. On 23 January, 150 men of the Uganda Rifles stationed at Jinja simply sat down and refused to obey the orders of their officers. Jinja Barracks was the Depot for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Uganda Rifles (UR) making it the largest concentration of armed strength in Uganda at the time.

The British officers in-charge of the battalion had feared such a move and made sure that the armory was secured. This meant that aside from the camp sentries most of the mutinous soldiers were unarmed. The Minister of Home Affairs, Felix Onama, arrived at the camp intending to negotiate with the soldiers, only to be imprisoned by them. While held in the guardhouse, Onama was forced to agree to a pay raise from sh105 to sh265 a month. Only then was the minister allowed to leave the camp. Executive Prime Minister of Uganda Milton Obote, had no intention of allowing the mutiny of his army to reach the level of chaos in Tanganyika. To prevent further disorder and to reassert control of the situation, on January 23 he requested assistance from the British government to put down the mutiny.<sup>95</sup> Two companies of the Staffordshire Regiment (1STAFF) and a company of the Scots Guards (SCOTS) were dispatched by plane from Kenya and arrived at 10:45 PM that same night. While these troops secured the airport and other government buildings in Kampala, Obote's

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<sup>95</sup> TNA:PRO DO 213/54, 11, 2, 'Causes of the East African Mutinies during January 1964,' Dispatch dated 1 February 1964.

government was forced to certify the pay raises that the soldiers were promised to avoid making the crisis worse.

Even though the situation had not returned to normal, Obote announced to the nation that calm had been restored. However, by January 27<sup>th</sup> the men of 1UR still refused to obey the orders of their officers. Prime Minister Obote asked 1STAFF to take control of Jinja Barracks. Under cover of darkness the British soldiers infiltrated the barracks and took control without firing a shot.<sup>96</sup> In an attempt to prevent future discontent in the army, Obote promoted a promising young officer, Maj. Idi Amin, to lieutenant colonel and appointed him Deputy Commander of the Army. After the barracks was taken back, the ringleaders of the mutiny were imprisoned and dismissed from the army.

While the events in Uganda were far less violent than those in Tanganyika, they were not necessarily more easily contained. The East African armies still utilized the same radio network that they had during the colonial period so throughout the uprisings soldiers in each territory received news of the initial success of each strike. The authorities in Kenya were also closely monitoring the events in both Uganda and Tanganyika. President Jomo Kenyatta took the loyalty of the army extremely seriously and was determined not to allow the same thing to happen in Kenya as had happened elsewhere in East Africa. By 1964 EAC had changed its name to British Land Forces – Kenya (BLF-K) and had a new GOC, Major General Ian Freeland, who concurrently

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 6.

was commander of the Kenya Army. President Kenyatta empowered Freeland to do what was necessary to ensure the stability and loyalty of the army.

For his part Kenyatta made a number of public statements to try to pacify the soldiers before anything happened. Kenyatta publicly expressed his confidence in the Kenya Army and released a statement on his plans to accelerate the rate of Africanization in the army. Additionally he promised that a committee would be formed to look into the conditions of service in the army.<sup>97</sup> Despite these well-laid plans to keep the army happy Kenyatta was still concerned the army would revolt.

The Kenya Police Special Branch had for some time been collecting intelligence on the state of political feelings in the army. They provided Freeland with information that there was a significant amount of discontent in the 11<sup>th</sup> Kenya Rifles (11KR). The discontent paired with the comparative success in both the other EA territories in achieving pay raises was expected to lead to trouble. Freeland warned the British battalion commander of 11KR, Lieutenant Colonel G.W. Stead, that there was a good possibility of unrest from within his unit and that he should remove the weapons and ammunition from camp. However Stead was handicapped by the fact that his battalion was on alert for possible deployment to Tanganyika and would in that case require its weapons.

In an attempt to address the concerns of the soldiers Stead met with his men and announced that they would receive a fifteen percent pay increase backdated to December

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<sup>97</sup> *Daily Nation*, 23 January 1964. ; Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa*, 118.

1963. Unfortunately, this did little to calm them since there had also been a recent increase in taxes that offset this raise in pay. By the end of the evening of January 24<sup>th</sup>, the men of 11KR broke into their own armory and took up arms against their officers, British and African alike. Almost all of the conspirators were corporals and below. As a precautionary measure Freeland had dispatched a troop from 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Horse Artillery (3RHA) to a position just outside of Lanet Barracks where 11KR was stationed. The British officers of 11KR called for support from 3RHA. The British were able to seize control of the armory while under fire from the mutineers. Rather than put down the revolt using overpowering fire superiority, the African officers of 11KR were sent into the barracks to attempt to reason with the mutinying soldiers. The move was unsuccessful, and 3RHA called back to their higher headquarters for guidance.

Kenyatta refused to allow the soldiers' revolt to go on for any longer and instructed Freeland to take the camp by force. A battalion of Gordon Highlanders was trucked into Lanet equipped with armored cars. At 10:00AM on the 25<sup>th</sup>, after the mutineers refused to surrender, the British troops went in behind the armored cars. The African soldiers knew that they would not be able to put up any sort of defence against armored vehicles and gave up rather than be killed. In his report posted right after the mutiny was put down, Freeland noted that the political influence of ministers in the other armies had contributed to the outbreak of the mutiny, "In Tanganyika and Uganda it became commonplace for politicians to enter the barracks and talk unofficially to the

Askaris, often without the knowledge of their officers, this must not be allowed to happen in Kenya.”<sup>98</sup>

The aftermath of the mutiny varied in each nation. Both Uganda and Tanganyika turned away from British defence assistance after the events of January 1964. They saw continued British involvement in their military forces as the impetus for the mutinies in the first place. Tanganyika merged with Zanzibar to form Tanzania and disbanded the entire army, replacing it with a new Tanzanian Peoples Defence Force. The new army was completely political, recruited almost exclusively from the Tanganyika African National Union youth wing.<sup>99</sup> Nyerere decided that loyalty to the TANU and loyalty to the government were the same thing, eventually it was required for members of the army to be members of the TANU. By tying together party loyalty and national loyalty Nyerere cemented his place in power for the next two decades. Clearly, in Tanzania the military did not live up to the British hope for an force that would help exert British influence.

Uganda did not entirely disband its army, but Obote did see to it that the ringleaders of the mutiny were prosecuted. British assistance in Uganda was minimized, while the Obote government conspired with Idi Amin to look elsewhere for military assistance. Obote also gave great power to the army and Amin after the mutinies. In 1966 Obote used Amin and the Army to consolidate his power by destroying the internal kingdoms in Uganda. Amin himself led the assault on the Kabaka of Buganda’s palace.

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<sup>98</sup> TNA:PRO DO 213/54, 11, 2, ‘Causes of the East African Mutinies during January 1964,’ dispatch dated 1 April 1964.

<sup>99</sup> Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order*, 123, 149.

The seizure of power in 1966 led Uganda down a road of increasing political involvement by the military. In 1968 the British Defence attaché in Uganda made a trip to the Uganda Army HQ where he saw a sign that said “No Politicians Beyond this Point.”<sup>100</sup> In 1971 Idi Amin used his power as the commander of the Army to seize power in Uganda and embark on his eight-year reign of terror in the country.

Kenya was remarkably different in its reaction to the mutinies. The Kenyatta government embraced British defence assistance in after 1964. While they did intend to increase the number of African officers, they were also grateful for the opportunity to build relationships with the British Army. In 1965 Kenyatta sent a company of soldiers to Britain to undergo parachute training, something much envied among African forces.<sup>101</sup> The training of African officers in Britain continued at an increased pace, in 1964 alone sixty-two Kenyan officers were commissioned out of Mons or RMA. Another seventy-six were trained in Britain between 1965 and 1967. In 1966 Brigadier Joseph Ndolo, a former colonial soldier became the first Kenyan appointed commander of the Army. At the same time the position of Deputy Army Commander was filled by Col. Jackson Mulinge.<sup>102</sup> By 1967 there were no longer any seconded British officers serving in line units in the Kenya Army.<sup>103</sup> In 1969, Brig. Ndolo took over from Major

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<sup>100</sup> Clayton and Killingray, *Khaki and Blue*, 265.

<sup>101</sup> Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order*, 79.

<sup>102</sup> *Kenya National Assembly Official Record*, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. X, cols. 2897-2898. While this can be seen as a significant improvement over the course of some of the other EA colonies Kenyatta got significant blowback from not appointing a Kenyan sooner.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

General R.B. Penfold as the Chief of the Defence Staff in Kenya, the last major post in the Kenyan Army to be occupied by a British officer.<sup>104</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite all of the problems that faced British planners and Kenyan authorities during the Africanization process, on the whole the program was successful. The delay in Kenyan independence provided the government with the necessary buffer to utilize British resources to Africanize the army as much as possible. Kenya had the highest rate of Africanization of any army in British Africa up to that point. At independence 48.5% of the officer corps was African, the next highest rate was Uganda with 21.9%.<sup>105</sup> This is remarkable considering the size of the Kenya Army; at 2,500 soldiers it was much larger than the other East African forces.

The British Army, in concert with African officers, was able to identify the problem areas of establishing a new army. Support services and technical training plagued the British throughout the training process. It took almost a decade for British training technicians to leave Kenya and for the army to be able to provide its own logistical support and medical services. Additionally the navy and air force had to be established from nothing and were both extremely technical services. The former Royal East African Navy had been so small, only 200 sailors, that it was almost

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<sup>104</sup> TNA:PRO FCO 16/152, E1B, 'Armed Forces Personnel Training Teams Senior Appointments Kenya.' It must be said that even after the CDS was a Kenyan he did retain a British Chief of Staff until 1971. The Kenyan Navy and Kenyan Air Force retained British commanders well into the 1970s, however these services were started from scratch after independence.

<sup>105</sup> Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order*, 44.

inconsequential after it was divided among its former colonies. They also learned that the cost of maintaining influence in new nations was extremely high. Parliamentary debates in Kenya frequently revolved around looking elsewhere for military assistance.<sup>106</sup> It was only the relationships built by British forces with important power brokers such as Kenyatta that kept Britain as the sole suppliers of military training.

Training through mentorship was an extremely costly and time intensive process. Yet it seemed to help maintain a continuum of culture and standards impressed upon officer cadets at RMA and Mons. This is not to say that all British officers assigned to the KAR were consummate professionals, but they were able to identify with their new Kenyan officers because of a common training experience in Britain. The British officers charged with helping African soldiers learn how to be young officers knew the standard that they had been held to at Sandhurst and the Infantry Battle Course that followed. This common military culture helped British and Kenyan soldiers establish important personal and professional relationships. These relationships served as informal conduits to reinforce British influence in Kenya.

The curriculum at Sandhurst and Mons both challenged and indoctrinated the officer cadets. At minimum, cadets who went to Mons spent a year training to become an officer, at maximum those who went to Sandhurst trained for two and a half years. During this time they were exposed to the camaraderie, pride and uniformity of the British professional officer corps. Additionally British trainers were often able to weed out those African officer cadets who did not meet the standard or were overly political.

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<sup>106</sup> *Kenya National Assembly Official Record*, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. X, cols. 2897-2898.

When Kenyan officers returned home they often emulated the officer culture that they had experienced in training in Britain. This professionalism was showcased in 1964 during the containment of the mutinies when Kenyan officers attempted to quell the discontent among their soldiers. Additionally the military did not become politicized like the other forces in East Africa; mainly due to the efforts of Kenyan and British officer to keep politicians and political activists out of military cantonments. The two major military coup efforts that have occurred in Kenya since independence were unlike those in other parts of Africa. In many places the higher echelons of the officer corps conspired to replace the civilian government with a military one. In Kenya the uprising in 1964 and the attempted coup in 1982 were both led by low ranking enlisted men.<sup>107</sup> On both occasions Army officers leading forces loyal to the government put down the rebellion.

While democracy in Kenya was far from perfect, the goal of the British training establishment was to create a military force that did not interfere in politics. The British have also used the military connection between the two countries to maintain a level of influence in Kenya. After the 1964 mutinies the Kenyan government eagerly increased the amount of military assistance they requested from Britain. The Defence Agreement of 1964 provided for a continued British military presence in Kenya for the rest of the decade. There were of course the provisions for continued officer training schemes in Britain as well as provisions for the British government to supply equipment to the

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<sup>107</sup> Hezekiah Ochuka, a senior private in the Kenyan Air Force, led the 1982 attempted coup. The coup was crushed and the air force disbanded by then president Daniel Arap Moi.

Kenyans. However the most striking part of the agreement was the assurance that until 1971 Britain would assist Kenya in maintaining both internal and external security. Kenyatta wanted to make sure that the British would help prevent a coup in Kenya, and the British wanted to ensure someone did not replace him who favored the Warsaw Pact.<sup>108</sup> In exchange, the British were granted “over flight” rights, use of naval facilities, the use of Kenyan training areas and a secure signals intelligence facility. Even though the internal defence agreement lapsed in 1971, the Kenya Army remained close to the British military. It was not until the late 1970s that the Kenyans started buying some equipment from other sources, namely the United States. Even so the British presence remains: British Army Training Unit –Kenya is a permanent unit outside Nairobi that helps run a training center in Kenya for British troops that cycles through three infantry battalions and an engineer squadron every year.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 99.

<sup>109</sup> British Army United Kingdom, “The British Army in Africa,” *British Army*, 2012, <http://www.army.mod.uk/operations-deployments/22724.aspx>

### CHAPTER III

#### NORTHERN RHODESIA BECOMES ZAMBIA: CREATING A DEFENCE FORCE

#### OUT OF SCRAPS

The colony of Northern Rhodesia emerged from the same exploratory zeal that established Southern Rhodesia. Originally divided into two separate territories, North-East Rhodesia and North-West Rhodesia, it was unified as Northern Rhodesia in 1911 under the auspices of the British South Africa Company. Company rule in N. Rhodesia lasted only until 1923, when it passed to the administration of the Colonial Office as a protectorate. Large mineral deposits were discovered in N. Rhodesia early in its settlement. It was particularly known for its rich copper mines in what became known as the Copperbelt. Northern Rhodesia was not initially settled as a “white man’s” colony, but as the copper industry grew a small and influential group of migrants settled in the area. This European community constantly advocated the union of the two Rhodesias, finally realized their dream as the Central African Federation. The union of these two colonies had long lasting effects on the security establishment in what became Zambia.<sup>1</sup>

The origins of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, from which the Zambia Army would be drawn, lay in the Indian soldiers hired as a constabulary in the 1890s. This small, irregular force gave way with the enlistment of local Africans to what became

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<sup>1</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, “War Propaganda during the Second World War in Northern Rhodesia,” *African Affairs* 83 (July 1984), 345. Even though the colony was administered by the Colonial Office the settler community had an advisory role in the process in the form of a small legislative council. In 1954 shortly after the formation of the CAF the settler community was 60,000 compared to the African population of 2,000,000.

known as the Northern Rhodesia Police (NRP) in 1911. The force did not have a centralized system of training or standardization, and had a small unit of European policemen who patrolled the settler areas.<sup>2</sup>

During World War I, the entire Military Branch was put on active service, with the Civil Branch acting as a reserve. In 1933 the two branches of the NRP were permanently split when the Military Branch became the Northern Rhodesia Regiment (NRR). From 1933 until 1937, officers of the NRR were drawn from the local settler community, something remarkably different from most other colonial forces. In 1937, the choice was made to model the NRR on the Kings African Rifles (KAR), and from that point until the Federation period officers were seconded to the force from the British Army. The regiment's enlistedmen were primarily recruited from the Ngoni people of the northeast of the colony. Like the KAR, the NRR was expanded during World War II, growing in size and adding support units. It used the newly-formed NRR European Reserve for its officers. Four of its eight battalions saw active service in East Africa, Madagascar and Burma.<sup>3</sup>

After the end of the war the NRR European Reserve was disbanded and the NRR reverted to a one-battalion regiment. It was not long though before the NRR saw active service again, this time in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> After the return from Palestine in 1946, the regiment reverted to its previous internal security duties. However, like other colonies

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<sup>2</sup> W.V. Brelsford, ed., *The Story of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment* (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 1954). Chapters One and Two cover the early days of the NRP through the course of the First World War.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VI

<sup>4</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 100/548, 1, 'General Service Medal with clasp Palestine, 1945-1948.'

the NRP had learned from the experiences of colonial police in Palestine and in West Africa. John Patrick Fforde took up the post of Commissioner of Police in N. Rhodesia in 1951. Fforde served in the Palestine Police from 1931 until 1948, and commanded the Criminal Investigation Division of the police. Upon his arrival in Northern Rhodesia he restored some of the former military nature to the NRP by modernizing the small Police Mobile Unit. Established in 1949, this unit was designed to be deployed anywhere in the colony to put down riots and other internal unrest for which they were specially trained. Fforde expanded the Mobile Unit from one platoon to four, which were airmobile.<sup>5</sup>

The most dramatic change for the military forces of the NRR in the 1950s was the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, into the Central African Federation (CAF) in October 1953. The settler populations of both of the Rhodesias had advocated a merging of the two colonies since 1923, when they were set on separate courses. The CAF was not a straightforward merger of these territories, as each of the member states retained control of almost all of its own governance, ceding only defence and foreign affairs to the federal government.<sup>6</sup> This system was complicated by the fact that neither Northern Rhodesia nor Nyasaland gave up their status as protectorates, and therefore were still required to report to the Colonial Office in London.

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Clayton and David Killinggray, *Khaki and Blue: Military and Police in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1989), 54-55. These policemen were able to be transported by aircraft anywhere in the colony should the need arise.

<sup>6</sup> Colonial Office Great Britain, *Colonial Reports: Northern Rhodesia, 1957* (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 1958), 121. The Federal government did take on other duties that have little bearing on this topic: Postal services, higher education, border enforcement, import and export regulation, inter-territory transportation.

The creation of the CAF brought about the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Army. The greater contributor to the organization was Southern Rhodesia. Since it was granted responsible government in 1923 the colony retained a small military staff corps that was expanded in World War II into a small army. After World War II the Rhodesian African Rifles and the Royal Rhodesian Regiment (territorial) were retained along with the support branches. Two battalions of the KAR stationed in what became federal territories, the 1<sup>st</sup> in Nyasaland, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northern Rhodesia, both became part of the new army.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Federal Period

The Federal government was always extremely supportive of imperial ventures and endeavored to offer up units for commonwealth missions and defence whenever possible. Elements of the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) and the NRR both saw active service in Malaya during the 1954 emergency. This deployment was the only active service that the Federal Army saw outside of internal security operations. During the Malayan deployment, soldiers of the NRR distinguished themselves against the communist insurgents: one African soldier was awarded the Military Medal and another the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The actual amalgamation of the forces of the three territories took place when the Federal Assembly passed the 1954 Defence Act forming the Ministry of Defence and

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<sup>7</sup> Rhodesia and Nyasaland Army, *Ceremonial Parade: Farewell to the Federal Prime Minister the Right Honorable Sir Roy Welensky, KCMG, MP* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1963), 15-16.

establishing the statutory authority to govern the defence forces. Prior to this reorganization, the military forces in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had fallen under the authority of the British Army East Africa Command.<sup>8</sup>

The first step in creating a centralized command structure under the new Federation was the establishment of a defence Headquarters for the territories. The very location of the Federation capital in Southern Rhodesia confirmed the suspicions of many Africans that the CAF was a move closer to complete settler power. The Defence HQ was established in Salisbury in 1954 as Central Africa Command. The actual Ministry of Defence was not formed until 1956, the same year that the Southern Rhodesian Air Force was established separately as, the Royal Rhodesian Air Force.

Even as the Federal defence apparatus was established, some policy makers in London questioned the validity of the CAF. Lord Home, Prime Minister Anthony Eden's Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, expressed the Cabinet's concerns arguing that with all of CAF's restrictions, particularly the two colonial territories, it did not qualify for full dominion status. However, he also conceded that the Newfoundland was granted Dominion status even though the UK was to control all external affairs.<sup>9</sup> Home felt that this precedent could be used to force the British government to grant the CAF even greater freedoms. Eden worried that if the CAF did not get independent status, it would drift even closer to the Union of South Africa and further erode British influence in the

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<sup>8</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 2, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.'

<sup>9</sup> Even so this only lasted from 1907 until 1934. In 1934 Newfoundland became one of the only territories in the British Empire to give up responsible government for direct control from London. The Great Depression hit the dominion extremely hard and the government felt that it required the direct financial support of the British government in London to be able to serve its citizens.

region. Perhaps, even, if the CAF did not feel accepted as a full member of the British community, “they might go their own way – cf. American Colonies.”<sup>10</sup> While the comment was certainly made in jest at the time, it would be less than a decade before the Federation was dead, and Southern Rhodesia declared its independence.

In the midst of such confused politics, the small Federal Army struggled to establish itself and create a balanced and capable force. The influence of Southern Rhodesia on the military establishment was clear. When the forces were finally combined, Southern Rhodesia’s Compulsory Military Training (CMT) program was extended throughout the CAF to whites, Asians and so-called coloured males between the ages of eighteen and forty. These young men were liable to undergo four and a half months of basic training, followed by four years of service in the Territorial Force (TF). The TF was often called upon to serve along side the regular forces in an internal security role.<sup>11</sup>

While CMT service in Kenya had been confined to the Kenya Regiment, territorial soldiers in the CAF formed a large part of the supporting services of the Rhodesia & Nyasaland Army. The basic training period was divided into three phases: Basic soldiering (including weapons training, field craft and small unit tactics), Internal security, and finally, field problems. All CMT servicemen went through the first phase of training, .<sup>12</sup> African infantry training had a syllabus similar to that of the CMT but was extended to six months in length to also accommodate additional education courses

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, PRO, CAB 195/15, 54, ‘Cabinet Secretary’s Notebook, 5 July 1956.’

<sup>11</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 6, ‘Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.’

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 25.

in English. All soldiers in the R&N Army, both black and white, were required to undergo internal security training, as well as classical war training. One of the problems that often plagued this small force was that their training cycles were interrupted by call ups to support civilian authorities in internal security matters. While this was often excellent real world experience in internal security operations, the ability of the R&N Army to conduct conventional operations suffered.<sup>13</sup>

The R&N Army was given three particular missions: aid to civil authorities, internal security, and limited or classical warfare. As in other colonial examples two thirds of the duties of the military centered on maintaining control of the population. The major units of the army remained the same until 1960: 1NRR, 1KAR, 2KAR, 1RAR, and the Territorial Force, which consisted predominantly of the Royal Rhodesia Regiment (RRR). The major changes to the military did not come until 1960. When the CAF was formed in 1953 there was a statutory requirement that the constitutional arrangement be reviewed by the end of the decade. The Monckton Commission, which reviewed the constitution of the CAF, recommended that progress be made in a transition to majority African rule in Northern Rhodesia. The commission claimed that the federation could only survive if all of the territories consented to participation, which left the door open for any of the territories to secede.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> To make the distinction clear classical warfare is centered on the offence and defense between two conventional forces in an effort to gain control of the center of gravity; which in classical warfare is territory and the opposing military forces.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Whiting, "The Empire in British Politics," Chapter to *Britain's Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 189.

The release of the report in 1959 and mutiny of the *Force Publique* in the Congo, which shared a border with the Federation, sent shockwaves through the European community. A member of the Federal Assembly, Winston Field of Mwera, Southern Rhodesia, quickly brought up the matter of defence policy. Initially Field made the point that the N&R Army was woefully underfunded and underequipped, citing the report on defence from 1959, which said “whilst our existing weapons are satisfactory for internal purposes, they are obsolescent in the international sense.”<sup>15</sup> Field worried that foreign intervention in Africa, particularly from communist forces, would easily out-gun and out-equip the N&R Army. He went on to call for an expansion of the federal army to deal with growing communist threats. He advocated the establishment of a new all-European infantry regiment, which the Federal Assembly authorized. James Graham, the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Montrose, expressed settler fears: “We no longer find when we read of chaos in the newspaper that it is in Korea or Cuba or even Kenya. It is right here at our frontiers.”<sup>16</sup> In addition to a new infantry battalion, the federation created an armored car unit and its own special forces unit. All of these formations were composed solely of European soldiers.

The new European units were established over the course of 1961. The new infantry battalion was known as the Rhodesian Light Infantry and was the first regular European infantry force in the history of any of the three territories. The new armored car unit, the Rhodesian Armored Car Regiment (also known as the Selous Scouts),

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<sup>15</sup> Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *Debates of the Federal Assembly, Second Session, Second Parliament, 28th March to 19th July 1960* (Salisbury: The Parliamentary Printer, 1961), 1445.

<sup>16</sup> Nyasaland, *Debates of the Federal Assembly, Second Session, Second Parliament, 28th March to 19th July 1960*, 1460.

carried on the regimental heritage of a Southern Rhodesian unit raised during World War II.<sup>17</sup> Finally the special operations capability of the federation came in the form of ‘C’ Squadron, Rhodesian SAS Regiment (RhSAS). The RhSAS was initially raised during the Malaya Emergency and was recruited exclusively from Southern Rhodesia.<sup>18</sup> In addition to these regular units, new TF units were added to the order of battle, including artillery batteries.<sup>19</sup>

The government launched a recruiting campaign in 1960; a significant portion of this effort was actually made outside of the Federation in the United Kingdom and South Africa. In 1960, only 752 of the 4,433 Regular Force’s “other ranks,” were European, most of these soldiers in support and specialist roles. By the end of 1962, there was a 78% increase in numbers of Europeans in the regular force.<sup>20</sup> With this expansion of forces the total number of TF soldiers and regular Europeans outnumbered African soldiers for the first time. Not only did the total number of European-trained soldiers outnumber trained Africans, but Europeans also occupied all of the integral specialty services and supporting arms. Even though the Central African Federation was looking a bit broken after the Mockton Commission Report, European personnel had been made

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<sup>17</sup> Rhodesia and Nyasaland Army, *Ceremonial Parade: Farewell to the Federal Prime Minister the Right Honorable Sir Roy Welensky, KCMG, MP* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1963), 12.

<sup>18</sup> Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 145. Mike Calvert recruited the formation specifically from Rhodesia, as a large number of Rhodesians had been a part of the Long Range Desert Group during the Second World War.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. There were other additional TF units created during the 1960 expansion to include 5, 6, and 7RRR as well as the Local Defence Volunteers in the Copperbelt, NR. In the Federal Assembly Debates surrounding the expansion of the army it was noted that one of the weaknesses for Europeans in the Congo mutiny was that Africans were relied upon for communications. This would be another reason that Africans were not involved in the Rhodesia & Nyasaland Corps of Signal.

<sup>20</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/25, 4, ‘Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports 1961.’ The total number of Europeans in the RF in 1960 was 1054, which includes officers. The total of Europeans in the RF by the end of 1961 was 1878.

instrumental to the functioning of the force. While African soldiers in other colonies saw more leadership opportunities open up for them, those who served in the CAF were still limited to the same colonial arrangement.

Interestingly, the same year that the R&N Army began its large scale European recruiting campaign, the Federal Assembly removed the statutory bar to commissioning Africans.<sup>21</sup> Mr. M.M Hove of Gwai, Southern Rhodesia made it clear that in the wake of the *Force Publique* mutiny that the Federation would look both illegitimate and racist if there continued to be only white officers in the army.<sup>22</sup> During that session of the assembly the legal barrier against commissioning Africans was removed. However this did not mean that any African men were invited to serve as officers in the Army.

The expansion of the army had ripple effects, as did its participation in internal security operations during this period. In 1961 the R&N Army reported a shortfall of fifty-two regular officers, despite a large influx of new officers. While the recruiting of Europeans proceeded quite well, the recruiting of Africans suffered for the first time in years. Up to this point, the Army had always met African recruiting goals for the Regular Force. In 1961 100 African soldiers left the army, while only five African men volunteer for service.<sup>23</sup> Even though recruiting improved Army-wide in 1962, it was not

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<sup>21</sup> Nyasaland, *Annual Report of the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of General Staff and of the Chief of Air Staff for the year ended 31st December, 1960*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Nyasaland, *Debates of the Federal Assembly, Second Session, Second Parliament, 28th March to 19th July 1960*, 1486. The issue was broached as early as July 31, 1956 when an African member of the Federal Assembly, Clement Kumbikano from Nyasaland, asked the Sir Roy Welensky, the Minister of Defence, what the qualifications for promotion to commissioned rank were. After an explanation of the educational and leadership skill necessary for appointment, Kumbikano then inquired why an African had not yet been appointed. Welensky's response was simply, "Because there are none qualified."<sup>22</sup> The issue was not raised again in the Federal Assembly until 1960.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/25, 4, 'Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports 1961.'

enough to make up the shortfall in African enlistments; there was wastage of 448 while 660 new soldiers were attested, leaving a shortfall of 148.<sup>24</sup> This was in part due to the few opportunities for advancement for African soldiers in the R&N Army. Even in 1960, prior to large scale European recruitment, out of the 3,681 African OR, only thirteen held the rank of Warrant Officer I (WOI); of the only 752 European OR, there were thirty-five WOI.<sup>25</sup>

The only development in these last years of the Federation that was a positive step for African servicemen was the establishment of a Junior Leaders Unit in Salisbury in 1962. The unit was established for the sons of African soldiers who would join the Army as junior soldiers and were educated up to the General Certificate of Education level (GCE). The stated goal of the unit was to identify possible African candidates for admission to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst though none, in the end were afforded that opportunity. The unit was based near Salisbury, the most restrictive part of the Federation for Africans. Those Junior Soldiers who were not given the chance to go on to RMA were simply sent into the army as privates.<sup>26</sup> The JLU was a short-lived experiment and by the end of 1962 there were large fissures forming in the CAF. By the end of 1963 the Federation would only be a memory.

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<sup>24</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/27, 3, 'Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports 1962.'

<sup>25</sup> Nyasaland, *Annual Report of the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of General Staff and of the Chief of Air Staff for the year ended 31st December, 1960*, 9. WO are a cadre of senior NCOs technically separate from the NCO corps and the officer corps. WOs have a separate mess and are addressed by subordinates as sir.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/27, 4, 'Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports 1962.'

## The end of the Federation

The reevaluation of the constitution in 1959 and the results of the Mockton Commission from that same year made it clear that the Federation could not continue on its stated course. While many in the British government saw the CAF as a way to counter the rising power of the Afrikaners in South Africa, most Africans saw it as way for Southern Rhodesian settlers to dominate the region. Macmillan's policy to accelerate decolonization had a dramatic impact on the CAF. The 1961 CAF Constitution removed many of the oversight functions that London had previously exercised over the Federation. In return, the franchise was to be extended to a wider portion of the African population in alignment with the recommendations of the Mockton Commission.

These policy changes were paired with increasing pro-independence activities by Zambian nationalists. African political parties grew in both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland during the Federation era and by the 1960s were serious players in Federation politics. Prior to the formation of the CAF, the African nationalist movements overall had not been able to achieve mass appeal to the African public. The first six years of the Federation experiment and the strict enforcement of the color bar led to increased enthusiasm for the movements among the African public.<sup>27</sup> The Northern Rhodesia African National Congress (NRANC), formed in 1948, attacked the Federation political system. The NRANC attempted to work within the system during the early years of the Federation with the hope that Africans could achieve parity in the political system.

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<sup>27</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1946* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 258.

In 1957, however, a new wave of militancy took over within the NRANC, in part as a reaction to the British failure in Suez. In exchange for the support the Federation offered to the British in the Suez operation, the British government gave Federal authorities a free hand in dealing with African aspirations. That same year Alan Lennox-Boyd, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, told Africans that the Federation “is good for you...and you must accept it.”<sup>28</sup> The NRANC concluded that they could no longer look to Britain as an honest broker in their struggle with the Federal government and felt that there was no chance of achieving independence by working from within the political system to achieve independence. Divisions also grew within NRANC as Kenneth Kaunda, a rising star in the NRANC in the late 1950s, had come to disagree with one of the other major party leaders, Harry Nkumbula, over the best strategy to reach independence. As a result Kaunda broke away from the NRANC and formed the Zambian African National Congress (ZANC) in 1958.

Kaunda and the ZANC stepped up their protests and opposition to the Federal government. In his speeches he became increasingly militant, encouraging Africans to “begin to hate everything white which had two legs.”<sup>29</sup> However, Kaunda himself never advocated violence and intended to stop short of any sort of violent revolution. By February 1959 the settler government was fed up with ZANC agitation: Kaunda was arrested, and ZANC banned. At the same time Dr. Hastings Banda, the leader of the Nyasaland African Congress, was arrested and his organization was banned, too. For

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 293.

these nationalist leaders imprisonment was a rite of passage that they hoped would lead to political legitimacy in independence. In response to the ban on activities of the ZANC, its members formed the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in August 1959. When Kaunda was released from prison in January 1960 he was quickly made president of the UNIP.

The 1959 General Election in the Britain gave the Conservative Party a 100-seat majority in the Commons. The victory was accompanied by a ministerial shake up that brought Iain Macleod to the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies. Macleod was slightly more sympathetic to the ambitions of Africans within the CAF than his predecessors had been. After a series of failed review conferences on the state of the Federation, Macleod announced a change in the constitution of Northern Rhodesia, which would divide the territorial assembly into fifteen seats each for Africans, Europeans, and members mutually agreed upon by both communities. . The UNIP and the main settler group, the United Federal Party (UFP), were unsure of the arrangement. Yet, in June of 1960 Macleod released details of the franchise qualifications that limited the possibility of an African majority government. This news was greeted by widespread disorder in Northern Rhodesia. In the Copperbelt twenty-seven Africans were killed and 3,000 were arrested in the riots that followed. The British government recognized that the only way that African ambitions could be contained was through large-scale force. Rather than take the CAF down this path the franchise details were

revised for the 1962 elections. These elections provided the basis of the transfer of power to the African majority.<sup>30</sup>

By 1962 it was clear that the territories of the CAF were moving in separate directions. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were on the fast track to independence while Southern Rhodesia was even more entrenched in the idea of independence on its own terms. The UFP fell apart, and another more radical party took its place. In early 1962 a young Rhodesian Farmer and former RAF pilot named Ian Smith formed a small new party called the Rhodesia Reform Party. Smith and a wealthy rancher from Southern Rhodesia, D.C. “Boss” Lilford began negotiations with Winston Field and what remained of his small Dominion Party. They all three agreed to join forces to form a new political party, The Rhodesian Front (RF).<sup>31</sup> The RF was founded on the principles of preserving settler power in the territories, both financially and politically. The RF did not contest the last Federal elections since they acknowledged that the CAF was coming to an end. Instead, they concentrated all of their efforts on the 1962 elections for the Southern Rhodesia Assembly. In a dramatic and unexpected turn of events the RF won thirty-five of the sixty-four seats in the assembly, placing the RF firmly in power in Southern Rhodesia.

By May 1962 it was clear that Nyasaland would secede from the Federation. In March 1963 delegations from all of the territories traveled to London to discuss the future of the region. The British cabinet decided on March 28<sup>th</sup> that Northern Rhodesia

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<sup>30</sup> Jan Pettman, *Zambia: Security and Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 16-18.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 342.

would be allowed to secede, and the Federation would be dissolved. In June all of the governments concerned were scheduled to meet at the Victoria Falls Hotel to divide up the assets of the soon to be defunct Federation.<sup>32</sup> The division of assets shaped the security situation in the region for decades. At the time of the dissolution of the Federation, it possessed one of the largest and most advanced air forces in Africa. In the post-1960 military build up the RRAF had acquired an impressive fleet of around sixty combat aircraft, including modern jets and helicopters.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the robust air power capability the Army had built itself up to a two-brigade organization, with armored forces and airborne capability. The only larger military force in the region was the South Africa Defence Force.

#### Dividing the assets

The earlier expansion of the R&N Army and the RRAF made the division of the forces the territories more difficult. In addition to all of the forces that had not existed in 1953, the British were left with the task of ensuring that each territory received enough of the Federation's forces to form complete defence forces of their own. For African units, this was relatively simple. They remained in the territories they had been recruited. However 1KAR and 2KAR posed a bit of a problem. Both of the KAR battalions were raised and stationed in Nyasaland, yet the British government did not wish to encourage

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 29, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.'

the small Nyasa government to retain a two-battalion army that it could not afford.<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Defence proposed that 2KAR go to NR and form the second battalion of the NRR.

Prior to the Victoria Falls Conference, Sir Roy Welensky communicated to the British government in a top-secret cable the defence implications of the end of the Federation. Welensky and the settler community saw Angola, Mozambique, and the Federation as a line of defence against Communist influence in Southern Africa. Welensky and the Federal authorities made it clear that if the northern territories became independent they would become a base of operations for dissident elements to infiltrate Southern Rhodesia.<sup>35</sup> He also communicated to the British government that if the Federation fell apart, Southern Rhodesia would require the same military and air services that the Federation had utilized. Additionally this would require a closer relationship between the Rhodesians and South Africa, both politically and militarily.<sup>36</sup>

The MOD in London thought that Southern Rhodesia would attempt to retain as much of the force as possible. The Southern Rhodesians were keen on retaining the entirety of the RRAF with all of its modern equipment. In addition to the forces, the MOD suspected that the Rhodesians would simply try and take over the Federation MOD and Forces HQ that were already in Salisbury.”<sup>37</sup> The British government was concerned about how the distribution of forces and talent would end up. Of particular concern was the prospect of white flight from the northern territories if and when the

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<sup>34</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/153, 16, ‘Defence Aspects of Nyasaland’s withdraw from the Federation.’

<sup>35</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/252, 5, ‘Certain Defence Considerations.’

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>37</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/153, 13, ‘Defence Aspects of Nyasaland’s withdraw from the Federation.’

Federation was dissolved. There were no African officers in the R&N Army, so if European officers and NCOs in the North chose instead to serve in Southern Rhodesia there would be serious manpower problems. Yet the most important goal that the British set for themselves in NR was the same goal they set in Kenya; “We should like to cast the armed forces of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in as British a mold as possible in the short period left before independence.”<sup>38</sup>

While the main concern of the British government was the distribution of the European personnel in the new defence arrangement, they also had questions about African soldiers. The unit that they felt was the cause for trepidation was 2KAR. In April 1963 the unit was stationed in NR, however it was recruited exclusively from Nyasaland. Under the Federal arrangement this was not an issue, but once Nyasaland withdrew from the Federation, the British government was not confident that 2KAR would be able to recruit enough new soldiers. Additionally, Dr. Banda had made it clear that he did want to retain the two battalions to form the basis of the new Malawian Army. He even offered the British the use of 2KAR as part of the commonwealth defence scheme.<sup>39</sup> The British government had no intention of accepting the offer; the likelihood of the troops remaining reliably trained and ready for deployment outside the country after independence was quite slim.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>39</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/153, 16, ‘Defence Aspects of Nyasaland’s withdraw from the Federation.’ Annex to COS.116/63, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Dudley Cowderoy and Roy Nesbit, *War in the Air: Rhodesian Air Force, 1935-1980* (Alberton, SA: Galago Books, 1987), 31. These men were actually transferred over to the RRAF from the Army. So they were simply repurposed and given different uniforms.

The Federal government wanted to punish Nyasaland for leaving. Initially the Federal government claimed that Nyasaland had no claim on any of the R&N Army since the forces belonged to the Federal government. They even wanted to go so far as to disband both KAR<sup>41</sup> The British government was able to convince the Federal government that since the War Office had handed over fully manned and equipped units to them in 1954 that they were obligated to do the same with regard to the KAR Battalions. The Nyasaland government was eventually dissuaded from retaining 2KAR in their order of battle due to the cost of the additional battalion. The British government helped this along by refusing additional financial and personnel assistance to support a second battalion in the Nyasaland Army.

The main squabble over forces ended up being between the two Rhodesias. While the disposition of the units of the Army was settled with relative ease, the partition of the RRAF was particularly contentious. The Victoria Falls Conference ended up having very little African input. An all-European committee outside of the conference itself decided the actual disposition of the forces. The Central Africa Office simply reported that after the dismantling of the Federation the situation would revert to the pre-1953 arrangement, Southern Rhodesia would control her own forces, and until independence the British government would retain operational control of the forces in the North.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/153, 2, 'Defence Aspects of Nyasaland's withdraw from the Federation.' Annex to COS. 1446/8/3/63.

<sup>42</sup> Elaine Windrich, *Britain and the Politics of Rhodesian Independence* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 14-15.

There were objections to this both in Britain and in Northern Rhodesia. The Labour Party insisted that it was a mistake to allow Southern Rhodesia to be so well armed considering their opposition to racial equality.<sup>43</sup> J. Z. Savanhu, the member from Angwa/Sabi, attempted to pass a motion condemning the actions of the Defence Working Committee. He claimed that the Committee was “either misled or hoodwinked by the clever manipulations of the settler elements . . . which now seem to have agreed to the permanency of a European-dominated Government in Southern Rhodesia.”<sup>44</sup> His assertion was pretty accurate: the working committee consisted of officials from the Southern Rhodesia government, the British government and a select group of officials from the Northern territories invited by the British.<sup>45</sup> The European members of the Federal Assembly put forth a variety of reasons for the form the division of resources took, most if not all of them weak. However, the objections of Labour, local Africans and the UN fell on deaf ears, and the partition of the forces occurred along the lines set up by the Settler dominated working committee.

In his speech on the division of the defence forces the Honorable Mr. Savanhu argued that most of the Europeans in the Northern territories intended to flee south after the dissolution of the Federation. While this seemed like an ideal arrangement for African nationalists, it was a nightmare scenario for the British government. The entire civil and military administrative organization in the northern territories was composed of Europeans of the settler communities, many of whom were experienced civil servants. If

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>44</sup> Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *Debates of the Federal Assembly, Second Session, Third Parliament* (Salisbury: The Parliamentary Printer, 1963), 1490.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 1494.

they left without training African replacements, the colony would likely descend rapidly into administrative chaos.

The British government had neither the available manpower nor the resources to replace all of the officers in the Northern regiments with seconded British officers. The MOD hoped that they would be able to entice enough officers from the Federal Army to stay on in Northern Rhodesia after the disillusionment to train and create an independent force. Officers and European OR in the Federal Forces were given six possible options for the future of their military careers: sign on to serve in the proposed Southern Rhodesia Army; retire or be discharged; apply to serve on a Short Service Commission (SSC) in the Northern Rhodesia Army (NRA); apply to serve in the NRA on a two-year (extendable) British Army SSC; apply to serve in the Nyasaland Army on a two-year (extendable) British Army SSC; or join the British Army with a Permanent Regular Army Commission, on the condition that the first two-years after transferring be spent on secondment to the forces of either of the Northern Territories.<sup>46</sup>

While the British government knew that it could not absorb all of the officers of the R&N Army, they strove to keep as many Federal officers as possible in the Northern territories after independence. Members of the Southern Rhodesia Army who opted to serve on secondment in the northern territories were offered additional pay.<sup>47</sup> Even though the British offered the chance for some to take up a Regular Army Commission in the British Army, the prospects of acceptance were slim. The average age of officers

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<sup>46</sup> Rhodesia and Nyasaland Army, *Dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Options Available to Officers and European Members* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1963), 1-2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

in the R&N Army was somewhat older than in the British Army, and there were very few opportunities for older men.<sup>48</sup>

Even though settlers had limited career prospects in the British Army, both the British government and the African members of the Northern Rhodesia government wanted to make it clear that there was a future for Europeans in the country. In fact the British government made sure to highlight the opportunities available in the NR Army. The MOD and the Federal authorities made it clear in their advice to Federal offices that the NR Army was going to expand to brigade strength with the requisite support units.<sup>49</sup> The MOD knew that there were simply not enough available junior officers in the British Army to fill the slots. Additionally there was no prospect of quickly promoting WO and NCOs as had been done in Kenya. In July 1963 the R&N Army had only identified three Africans who had the potential and the requisite educational requirements for commissioning in the forces.<sup>50</sup> European officers would be needed for the foreseeable future in Northern Rhodesia not only to train the army but also to hold it together.

Since the sympathies of the majority of the senior offices in the R&N Army were with Southern Rhodesia, the MOD decided that a British officer would be placed in command of the Northern Rhodesia Army. As early as July 1963 it was understood that a British officer would retain the command until at least 1970. Major General George

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 40. Most officers in the Federal Army were infantry officers and there were only 21 openings in the British Army for infantry officers over the age of 25. Interesting almost all of the openings were in Welsh regiments and the Royal Green Jackets.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 16, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.'; Army, *Dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*, 47.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 16, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.'

Lea was the first officer selected for the assignment. Lea's long service, and vast experience in both conventional and special operations, including commanding a battalion of paratroopers during World War II, made him an excellent choice to train a new army from the remnants of the R&N Army. Above all else the British authorities wanted to keep a lasting defence relationship between Northern Rhodesia and Britain. The MOD recognized that it would be very tempting for the new African government of Northern Rhodesia to look elsewhere for assistance; it was Lea's job to prevent this.<sup>51</sup>

#### Independence

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved on 31 December 1963, bringing an end to settler domination in the two northern territories. Nyasaland was granted self-governing status, and achieved independence in July 1964 as Malawi, under the leadership of Dr. Banda. Similarly, in January 1964 Northern Rhodesia was slated to hold new elections and was scheduled to become independent in October 1964. The elections were preceded by a period of violence between the youth wings of the major African parties. Both sides claimed they were targeting Africans who they believed had supported the Europeans.<sup>52</sup> The elections themselves went relatively smoothly, aside from settler claims that they were being marginalized. The UNIP swept to power, and on 23 January an all African UNIP cabinet was announced under Kenneth Kuanda as Prime Minister. The UNIP party and Kaunda agreed that the military needed to represent the racial makeup of the country. In the end Kaunda said he wanted a multi-racial officer

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>52</sup> Bizeck Jube Phiri, *A Political History of Zambia: From Colonial Rule to the Third Republic, 1890-2001* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006), 116.

corps that included Europeans, Africans and Asians and insisted that the military be insulated from political interference.<sup>53</sup>

As elections were being held in what from this point became Zambia, mutinies broke out in the armies of East Africa. When the mutinies began MajGen Lea reported to the Central Africa Office that they would only have an “unsettling effect” in Zambia if they were handled in such a way that showed “that mutiny pays we may, repeat, may be in trouble here in the future.”<sup>54</sup> While the virus spread throughout East Africa the mood was calm in Northern Rhodesia. Special Branch reported some feelings of sympathy for the mutineers in the lower ranks, particularly with regard to the continued presence of British officers, but the NCOs were reportedly disgusted with the behavior of the East African troops.<sup>55</sup>

There was no evidence that there was any drop in loyalty or reliability of the Northern Rhodesia forces after the East African incidents. A planned pay raise that took effect in June 1964 prevented the short-term problems that might have occurred in the Army. However the Central African Office (CAO) did make it clear that the possibility of unrest in the future could not be ruled out. The CAO pointed out three scenarios that might have an impact on the loyalty and stability of the military: first, if Kuanda were overthrown by a more extremist leader; second, if Kuanda were forced to reward UNIP officials with positions in the Army; and thirdly, if the UNIP was successful in

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<sup>53</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 371/176575, 2, ‘Africanisation of the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland Armies.’

<sup>54</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 183/155, 2, ‘The Effects of the Tanganyika and Uganda Mutinies on the Situation and the Troops in N. Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, 1964.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

disbanding the Police Mobile Unit.<sup>56</sup> Any one of these situations had the potential to throw off the balance of power in the country. For example, the Police Mobile Unit handled most of the internal security duties in Northern Rhodesia. If it were disbanded the military would have a monopoly on the use of force in the country.

On January 31st the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Sir Evelyn Hone, discussed the situation in East Africa with Kuanda, who understood that British action in the region only occurred at the request of the local governments, not out of a desire to reestablish control. Kuanda also assured Hone that he wanted the military to be an apolitical force, and only subscribed to the idea of promotion by virtue of merit. Along these same lines Hone wanted to make sure that Kuanda understood that due to financial constraints the British military was only able to produce a limited number of African officers every year. Any attempt to speed up the rate of production would almost assuredly dilute the quality of training and preparation that the officer cadets received.<sup>57</sup>

While there were soldiers in Northern Rhodesia who sympathized with their comrades in East Africa the fact that they had been disconnected from the culture of the KAR since 1953 created ideological distance between the units. The regiments in Northern Rhodesia did not experience the period of increased African responsibility that those in the KAR had. When the East African regiments revived the *effendi* rank and gave some Africans responsibility for the command of platoons, soldiers in Northern Rhodesia saw an increase in the number of officers from the settler community. The

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 13. Due to the small number of places allocated at RMA for international students it was difficult for any one country to be give more than two or three places.

incidents in East Africa reinforced the belief among British officers and policy makers that the future Zambia Army needed to be aloof from domestic politics and British in nature if it was going to succeed.

The War Office asked the Governor of Northern Rhodesia and Major General Lea to consider the possibility of an accelerated rate of Africanization, whether mass commissioning of warrant officers was feasible, and if a crash cadet program there or even in Britain was necessary. Looking back at their experience in Kenya, the British government thought that commissioning a large batch of the most senior African warrant officers might work; African WO and NCOs in NR had never been groomed for advancement. Lea warned that mass-promoting warrant officers would give commissions to many illiterate soldiers.<sup>58</sup> There was simply not a suitable group available as there had been in Kenya within the Army to begin a large-scale direct commissioning program.

Major General Lea's intention was to commission thirty-five Northern Rhodesian officers by 1966. These new officers were supposed to be representative of the demographic makeup of the nation at a ratio of five Africans to one non-African. However, when Kaunda's government reevaluated their position after the mutinies they abandoned the idea of a multi-racial officer corps until after rapid Africanization had occurred. Under pressure from the UNIP government Lea was forced to double the officer production goal to seventy by 1966. While there were a large number of

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<sup>58</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland,' pg 3 of 'Annex to COS 178/64.'

vacancies for African cadets at both Mons and Sandhurst, Lea was doubtful that the government would be able to attract enough qualified applicants. Educated Africans were more likely to take private sector jobs, and the British government was not forthcoming with places at either academy for Africans.<sup>59</sup>

All of these recommendations came with a warning in light of the events in East Africa. The Governors and Major General Lea made it clear that Pan-Africanism was becoming a potent force in influencing the ideas and behaviors of African leaders in emerging nations. Concurrently both Ghana and the Soviet Bloc were putting pressure on Britain and the West to end white rule in Southern Africa. The British government could only count on Kaunda to resist this pressure for so long before he would be forced to take an active role in challenging white rule elsewhere in Africa. The most pressing concern of the British government was maintaining military influence, “Failure to move fast enough even at the risk of substantial loss of military efficiency, may therefore cause extremist pressures to grow so fast that all control over ordered progress and the retention of the British alignment in the military sphere will be lost.”<sup>60</sup> The experience in Kenya and in East Africa had demonstrated to British policy makers that African soldiers and politicians were no longer willing to follow the British down a slow more hesitant road toward decolonization.

Major General Lea and the British military staff in Northern Rhodesia were left with a less than ideal situation prior to independence. The effort to retain as many

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 4.

Federation personnel as possible did not fare as well as the British government had hoped. The Northern Rhodesia Army had billets for forty-five European officers and twenty-three European OR in the two battalions of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment. However they only filled seventeen officers billets and eight OR.<sup>61</sup> Similarly the Northern Rhodesia Air Force had a full compliment of sixteen European officers but only nineteen of the eighty required enlisted personnel.

The MOD felt it was in British interests to remain engaged in the country for three reasons: to help maintain a British presence, to reduce the likelihood of assistance being sought from nations unfriendly to Britain, and to facilitate the ability of British forces to re-enter Northern Rhodesia if necessary.<sup>62</sup> In the consideration of British interests in Northern Rhodesia the MOD felt that it would be best if the training mission were to attempt to create a multi-racial officer corps rather than a solely African one.<sup>63</sup> The British intention to retain some European officers in the army indefinitely would eventually put them at odds with the Kaunda government and the UNIP.

The actual independence ceremonies occurred on 24 October 1964. When the Union Jack was lowered in Lusaka, the Republic of Zambia was born. While many in the new nation had united under the banner of the UNIP to fight against settler power they were far from a united group. After independence was achieved the UNIP had to work out what its new political objectives and interests were. Kaunda and the UNIP

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 7. Upon the dissolution of the Federation 2KAR became the second battalion of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland,' pg 2 of 'Annex 'A' to DP.56/64(Final).'

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2.

were attracted to Tom Mboya's ideas on East African unity and federation.<sup>64</sup> The problem was that the UNIP did not grasp the finer points of Mboya's proposals. He made it clear that simply being black was not enough to get Africans to cooperate politically and economically. The traditional relationships inside Zambia came to the surface, and the simple unity in opposition to colonialism began to fade away. British policy makers had to consider the declining level of goodwill for direct involvement in the affairs of these newly independent states in future assistance programs.

The first batch of officers in the Zambia Army began training prior to independence. In February 1964 twenty-three officer cadets were in training at Mons, RMA or the School of Military Training, Ndola. The eight warrant officers selected for training were sent to Ndola to go through a special commissioning course.<sup>65</sup> Due to the lack of qualified personnel in the Army, the Zambian government shifted its focus to recruiting African school leavers to train as officers. . The Zambians mirrored the process of accessions in Britain; an Officer Selection Board (OSB) put applicants through a series of written and physical exams to determine their leadership potential. After passing through the OSB the potential officers were sent to a preparatory course at Kalewa Barracks in Ndola. During the 1965, OSB fourteen applicants were selected to attend the prep course at Kalewa. The three-month course consisted of basic military

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<sup>64</sup> Phiri, *A Political History of Zambia*, 131. Mboya was a Kenyan politician and member of the KANU. In Kenyetta's first government he was the Minister of Economic Planning and Development. Mboya was assassinated in 1969, there were suspicions that elites around Kenyetta saw Mboya as a threat to his hold on power.

<sup>65</sup> Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Review the Salaries and Conditions of Service of the Northern Rhodesia Public and Teaching Services and of the Northern Rhodesia Army and Air Force* (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 1964), 4

instruction, drill and ceremonies, and a period of training at the Outward Bound School in Mbala. This school included courses in rock climbing, sailing, backpacking, and free-fall parachuting, and was designed to challenge the officer cadets both mentally and physically in rough terrain.<sup>66</sup>

After officer cadets returned to Kalewa from their time at the Outward Bound School they were informed of their overseas training assignments. By 1965 these were not limited to simply RMA and Mons. Other Commonwealth countries, including Canada, India, and Pakistan, offered military training assistance to the Zambian government. These institutions were acceptable to the British government because they followed the British military tradition.

The course of instruction at RMA involved significant university-level academic study. The subject areas included: Math, Current Affairs, Military History, and the Sciences. It took two years to complete the course. It was not until the reorganization of the officer training programs in 1972 that the course was reduced to one year and focused more on practical military training. In addition to academic subjects, the officer cadets learned basic infantry rifle platoon tactics, skill at arms training and field craft in the training areas around the academy. Overseas field training exercises augmented the on-campus training. Francis Sibamba was one of three officer cadets from the 1965 OSB selected to attend RMA. During his time at RMA he went on training missions to Cyprus, Germany and France. Participation in exercises with NATO forces while

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<sup>66</sup> Francis Gershom Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I: Autobiography of a former Army Commander* (Ndola, Zambia: Mission Press, 2010), 34.

attached to the British Army exposed Zambian officer cadets to the professionalism of Western armies. Those Zambian cadets who attended RMA returned to Zambia with certain expectations about levels of training and professionalism.<sup>67</sup>

From 1964 until the establishment of the Zambian Military Academy in 1971, three Zambian cadets were sent on to every Sandhurst intake. Even though Zambian cadets were in every RMA intake, the amount of time required for the course was just too much to shoulder the burden for the new army. After selection at the OSB, it took almost two and a half years to produce a lieutenant ready for service in a line infantry battalion. Due to the long period of training required by RMA, the majority of Zambian officers received their training and commissions through Mons Officer Cadet School. The six-month course at Mons reduced the time required to nine months.<sup>68</sup>

Even while the military was making a significant effort to become a completely Africanized force, it was far from a respected institution in Zambia. Sibamba commented that the Army had a poor reputation among Zambians because of the ‘colonial hang-over.’ The Zambian people still saw the military as a reflection of colonialism and thought that soldiers were uneducated and ill-disciplined. The new Zambian government hoped to change this impression through the Africanization of the officer corps and promotion of Africans to high-level command.<sup>69</sup>

UDI

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 42. One of the additional advantages of going through RMA was that Officer Cadets were given credit for the long commissioning program and were commissioned as full lieutenants. Cadets who attended Mons were always commissioned as Second Lieutenants.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 44.

The events of 1965 complicated Zambia's security situation. Prior to November of that year the greatest security concerns that the country faced were conflicts in Angola or Mozambique spilling across their borders. In November 1965 the disagreement between Rhodesia and the British government over the prospect of independence came to an impasse. In October talks between Harold Wilson's government and the Rhodesian Front cabinet broke down over the principle of equal voting rights for African citizens.<sup>70</sup> On November 11, 1965 the Rhodesian government led by Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence (UDI) announcing:

We Rhodesians have rejected the doctrinaire philosophy of appeasement and surrender. The decision which we have taken today is a refusal by Rhodesians to sell their birthright. And, even if we were to surrender, does anyone believe that Rhodesia would be the last target of the Communists in the Afro-Asian block? We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity; and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence. God bless you all.<sup>71</sup>

While Smith also assured Rhodesia's African neighbors that they had nothing to fear, he also warned them not to meddle in Rhodesian affairs. Both Zambia and Britain were put in an awkward position. The British government had ruled out the possibility of using force to bring the Rhodesian government back in line, and the Zambia government depended on rail lines from Victoria Falls to Beria to export copper and import petrol.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> "Rhodesia Discussions Break Down," *The Times*, 09 October 1965, 10.

<sup>71</sup> "Announcement of Unilateral Declaration of Independence," *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 18 November 1965, 204-205.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, PRO, CAB 128/46, 'Cabinet Conclusion, 31 October 1966,' 'using force to bring an end to the rebellion in Rhodesia.'; Carl Watts, "Killing Kith and Kin: The Viability of British Military Intervention in Rhodesia, 1964-5," *Twentieth Century British History* 16 (2005), 382-415.

Initially the Zambian government encouraged Britain to use force to end the rebellion in Rhodesia, as Britain had done in British Guyana.<sup>73</sup> Kaunda insisted that if the British government did not dispatch troops to Zambia to deal with the Rhodesian problem, then he would appeal to other nations to do so.<sup>74</sup> The OAU put enormous pressure on Kaunda to host an all-African force to invade Rhodesia. Even though Kaunda was sympathetic to the goals of the OAU, he was a pragmatic leader and knew that an invasion of Rhodesia by African forces could end in disaster for him and Zambia's small army.

Harold Wilson was concerned about what the reaction of the British public might be to using military force in Rhodesia, fighting 'kith and kin.' Even so plans were underway to deploy a battalion to Zambia. A warning order was published for Operation Amberley, as it was titled, with Royal Marines earmarked to spearhead the effort.<sup>75</sup> However, the Wilson government concluded that dispatching a battalion would be too much provocation and scrapped the plan. To pacify the Zambian insistence on British military forces, Wilson agreed to send a squadron of RAF fighter aircraft to protect Zambian airspace.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Andrew DeRoche, "'You can't fight guns with knives': National Security and Zambian responses to UDI, 1965-1973," Chapter 10 *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 80. The use of force in British Guyana refers to the military occupation of British Guyana in the wake of the 1953 elections that brought the People's Progressive Party to power in the House of Assembly. Not only was the British military used to control the colony the Governor of British Guyana assumed direct rule over the colony.

<sup>74</sup> "Cabinet Faces Crisis on Zambia Troops," *The Times*, 27 November 1965, 8.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 70/320, 19, 'Staff Requirements for Rhodesia and Zambia,' 'OP Amberley, 22 December 1965.'

<sup>76</sup> DeRoche, "'You can't fight guns with knives'," 81. The stationing of the RAF jets in Zambia was completely for show they actually were of no tactical value whatsoever. By 1964 the Javelin was an outdated aircraft, it's first variant came into service in 1947, the Hawker Hunter fighters of the Rhodesian

With the British unwilling to reinforce Zambia with ground forces, Kaunda decided that the military needed to be built up at a swifter pace than had previously been planned. When the expansion was announced on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1965 it came as a complete surprise to British officers in the Zambian defence establishment.<sup>77</sup> When UDI was announced, the Zambian Army included only 2,200 regular soldiers. The major concern of Zambian policy makers was that the Rhodesian government would interfere with common services in Zambia River, specifically electricity from the Kariba Dam on the Zambezi.<sup>78</sup> The establishment of the third battalion of the Zambia Regiment accelerated; it was activated in 1966. Lieutenant Francis Sibamba was posted to the newly established 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion, Zambia Regiment (3ZR) after he passed out from RMA. He made it clear that the possibility of facing the Rhodesian Army also posed moral problems for African officers in the Zambia Army. In his own case, he had befriended a Rhodesian cadet during his Sandhurst days, Andrew Blaine. When 3ZR was deployed to the Zambezi to guard the border, he was faced with a vexing moral problem, “facing Rhodesian soldiers, you can imagine my conscience playing havoc at the thought of shooting Andrew, taking him captive, or vice versa!”<sup>79</sup>

European officers serving in the Zambia Army were also faced with the prospect of fighting their Rhodesian counterparts. In some cases these were men with whom they had served in the Federal Army. While this certainly caused sleepless nights for some of

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Air Force were certainly capable of defeating the Javelins in air combat. By the end of 1966 the Javelins were retired from RAF service.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 70/320, 15A, ‘Staff Requirements for Rhodesia and Zambia,’ ‘Second Report on Zambia, December 1965.’

<sup>78</sup> “Mr. Kaunda to Build up Forces Swiftly,” *The Times*, 10 December 1965, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I*, 71.

these officers, the British government was concerned about the prospect of seconded officers being caught in an engagement with Rhodesian troops. While in 1966 this only seemed like an unfortunate possibility, the seriousness of such an incident mounted as the Rhodesian situation worsened. Harold Wilson and Ian Smith met for negotiations on board HMS *Tiger* in December 1966. The negotiations revolved around the British position of no independence before majority rule (NIBMR). Smith refused the British proposal of independence based on the 1961 constitution, with amendments made to give Africans more seats in the assembly immediately.<sup>80</sup>

The failure of the *Tiger* talks and the ineffective economic sanctions made the situation worse. In 1967 the British government was to the point that they were planning a coup of the Rhodesian Front government. However such a scheme was simply too politically risky, and the Wilson government dropped the idea. In 1967 and 1968 the Zambian government became increasingly concerned by the activities of liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola and Rhodesia. Some of the liberation fighters had infiltrated their respective target countries through Zambian territory. In August 1967 a group of ninety guerilla fighters from the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the South African ANC slipped into Rhodesia in the vicinity of Victoria Falls from Zambia. The ZAPU fighters had hoped to start a Maoist insurgent movement in the TjoloTjo Tribal Trust Land (TTL), while the ANC fighters planned on infiltrating South Africa through Botswana. Rhodesian intelligence soon had information on the size and

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<sup>80</sup> Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 396.

whereabouts of the group and destroyed them.<sup>81</sup> This incident upped the ante for Zambia: not only had these men come from their territory, the participation of the ANC in the operation brought South Africa into the stewing conflict. Concerned by the possible infiltration of guerilla fighters from Zambia into South Africa the Pretoria government deployed a force of 3,000 militarized South African Police officers to patrol the Zambezi in cooperation with Rhodesian forces.<sup>82</sup>

In this episode, the Zambian government faced off with two unfriendly forces across the Zambezi whose combined military power dwarfed the small Zambia Army. In response to these emerging threats on their border Kaunda's government pleaded with the Britain for more modern heavy equipment. Kaunda also sent representatives to the United States to try and secure American arms for Zambia. These efforts failed, and the Zambian government simply had to make due with the arms and training the British were willing to provide; fortunately, this did include the sale of British surface-to-air missile systems. The Zambian defence staff resolved that it was necessary to form a fourth battalion of the Zambia Regiment to meet all of the nations security demands. In addition to the new infantry battalion the Zambian government intended to expand the

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<sup>81</sup> Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military history* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball , 2008), 32. For a first hand account of this mission from the perspective of an ANC fighter see Thula Bopela and Daluxolo Luthuli, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: Fighting for a Divided People* (Alberton, SA: Galago Books, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> These police officers were put through a counter-insurgency course prior to deployment and were more soldiers than policemen. The South African government also sent aviation support with their forces adding to the formidable helicopter fleet the Rhodesian Air Forces already possessed.

ground based air defence system by creating an anti-aircraft (AA) missile battery and an AA battery armed with 20mm AA guns.<sup>83</sup>

The rapid expansion of the Zambian defence forces and the deteriorating situation on almost all of Zambia's borders led the British government to request a renegotiation of the defence assistance scheme. On February 21, 1968 the Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs signed a new status of forces agreement (SOFA) for the British training mission. The occasion was marked with appropriate ceremony, but with warm champagne, according to Colonel J.S. Bade, the Defence Advisor to the British High Commission.<sup>84</sup> The most notable aspect of the agreement was the series of limitations put on British officers serving in the Zambia Army. The British government had been working throughout 1967 to prevent the possibility of its officers ending up in a combat situation. When Zambia became independent, Major General Lea had noted that a Training Team arrangement was not useful in Zambia. However allowing troops to remain part of the indigenous command structure reduced the control that senior British officers had over their actions and movements. This same issue had become a problem in Kenya in 1967. The British government hoped to avoid being put in a similar situation in Zambia.<sup>85</sup>

In order to prevent the possibility of a British officer ending up commanding troops against Rhodesian, Portuguese or South African forces, the SOFA prohibited British officers from commanding Zambian units that were on operational service on the

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<sup>83</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, 'Central Africa,' 'Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 1 August 1968.'

<sup>84</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, 'Central Africa,' 'Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 3 May 1968.'

<sup>85</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E29, 'Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967.'

Rhodesian border.<sup>86</sup> By the end of 1967, all officers who occupied combat positions in the Zambia Army were transferred into advising and training positions. Also, starting in 1967, those British officers whose terms of service in Zambia expired were not replaced.

Even though British the training mission grew smaller each year the Zambian government admitted in 1967 that immediate “Zambianization” was impossible and that there was a need to continue recruiting expatriate contracted officers from both the UK and Ireland. In a letter to Harold Wilson, Kenneth Kaunda wrote “In spite of various communications which have passed between our two governments regarding the Defence Force, I am alive to the necessity of maintaining a loyal and efficient Defence Force, and to this end I intend to continue to recruit a certain category of expatriate officers from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.”<sup>87</sup>

While this scheme did contain certain advantages for the British government, it was eventually disapproved by the FCO. The British did recognize that if they did approve the scheme to subsidize this recruitment that they would commit the Zambia Army to continuing to seek services from British and Commonwealth sources. However, the focus of the British government at the time was simply to get the Zambian government to agree to signing the SOFA that would remove British troops from combat roles and provide legal protections for them and their families.<sup>88</sup> Even before the

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<sup>86</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, ‘Central Africa,’ ‘Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 3 May 1968,’ 9.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E48, ‘Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967.’

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., letter dated 15 August 1967 from Harold Davies of the MOD to R.C. Shaw from the Commonwealth Office. By the time the British had received the letter from Kaunda they had already decided to disapprove the scheme the Zambian’s had proposed and were simply attempting to craft a soft refusal so as not to jeopardize the signing of the SOFA.

agreement was signed there was a Memorandum of Discussion signed in the summer of 1967 that agree to most of the provisions of the draft until the final agreement was signed.

These tenets were tested in November 1967 when trouble on the Congo border with members of the Lumpa Church required the deployment of two companies of 1ZR, both commanded by British officers. Even though this was the type of thing that the British were trying to avoid, they approved the deployment of these two officers. Since the operation did not involve a situation where the enemy might be Rhodesian or South African that this type of use of British personnel was acceptable.<sup>89</sup> This demonstrated publicly that the British were willing to use force against Africans, but not against settler communities.

In actuality, the British were growing impatient with their own training mission. Not only were the constant costs of the mission a source of irritation, but the personnel requirements were becoming a burden to the British Army. In London the MOD hoped to run down the Army component of training mission sooner rather than later.<sup>90</sup> In the same memo the Defence Staff made it clear that the other major concern was that British forces would be engaged in operations against the South Africans, Rhodesians or Portuguese inside Zambia's borders.

Part of the issue facing the Zambia Army was an over-reliance on British and contracted expatriate officers. Colonel Bade, the defence advisor, noted that the Zambia

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Cable from Lusaka to the Commonwealth Office dated 2 November 1967.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Draft letter from DS 6a to DS 11 dated 20 November 1967.

Army was also having a difficult time retaining and recruiting these contracted expatriate officers due to poor rates of pay and terms of service. In 1966 the Zambian government had gone to great effort to reduce the cost of expatriate personnel by normalizing their pay scales with other local Zambian officers.<sup>91</sup> He made clear in the end of a letter to the Special Projects Office of the MOD: “Whatever happens in the end will be a mess, and no doubt the blame will be laid at our doorstep.”<sup>92</sup> From the British perspective the training mission in Zambia was winding down, by December 1968 there were only expected to be twenty British officers in country, whose tours were scheduled to end by July 1969, completing the Army component of the mission.<sup>93</sup>

The Zambia Army, like the Kenya Army, was quickly filling its officer ranks with qualified African infantry officers. However the greatest need for officers was in the supporting arms and specialized combat arms units. One British captain detailed from the Royal Artillery to command the Zambian Light Battery was filling multiple positions in 1967. Not only was he serving as the commander of the battery but also Director of Signals for the entire army simply because the Zambians could not find

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<sup>91</sup> Zambia, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Review the Grading Structure of the Civil Service, the Salary Scales of the Civil Service, the Teaching Service, the Zambian Police and the Prison Service. The Salary Scales and Wages of Non-Civil Service (Industrial) Employees of the government and the pay scales and conditions of service of the Zambia Defence Forces.* (Lusaka, Zambia: The Government Printer, 1966).; TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E57, ‘Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967.’

<sup>92</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E48, ‘Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967.’

<sup>93</sup> The RAF portion of the training mission was scheduled to go on for much longer. The first two Zambia Air Force pilots had only been awarded their wings in December 1966. These two men were only rated to fly small single engine utility aircraft. There were still no Zambian’s qualified to fly the multi-engine Dakotas. Zambia Information Service, “Wings awarded to first Zambian Pilots,” *Zambia*, December 1966, 21.

anyone to replace him.<sup>94</sup> The problem seemed to be two fold: the Zambian government refused to offer terms that were attractive to European expatriate officers, and Zambia seemed to be having enormous administrative issues bogging down their government. Even though the SOFA had been agreed and was ready for execution in early December 1967, it was not actually signed until several months latter. The British High Commission in Lusaka learned that the Zambian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in a state of administrative disarray, often losing paperwork and correspondence.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, the Zambian government finally signed the agreement, and the British Army hoped that the end of their training mission was in sight.

As the British training team officers left Zambia, there was still a need for expatriates to fill the gaps in capabilities. In 1967 Kaunda had visited India and explored the possibility of establishing a military-to-military relationship. The Indian government insisted that if the Zambians were to accept military assistance, they would have to agree to India being the sole provider or receive no assistance at all. The British government first got word of the Zambian overtures when a recruiting mission was planned to depart for both India and Pakistan in 1968. The Zambian government intended to send two British training team officers to attempt to recruit Indian and Pakistani officers to serve on a contract basis in the Zambia Army.<sup>96</sup> Initially the proposed recruiting mission

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<sup>94</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E58, 'Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967.'

<sup>95</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E60, 'Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967,' Cable from Lusaka to the Commonwealth Office dated 6 December 1967.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E73, 'Service Personnel on Loan to Zambian Armed Forces 1967,' Letter from the High Commission, Lusaka to the Zambia Department of the Commonwealth Office dated 2 February 1968.

caught the British government off guard, particularly since the entire trip had been planned with the intent of sending British personnel without informing the High Commission. However, once both the Commonwealth Office and the MOD had a chance to weigh in on the matter they agreed that any measures that the *Zambian* government took to improve the state of their forces within certain boundaries should be encouraged.<sup>97</sup>

In February 1968 the Zambia Army was still struggling to build up its officer corps. Of the 228 officers in the Army thirty-two were on loan from the British Army; ninety-four were expatriates serving on contracts; and the remaining 102 were *Zambian*. Of the *Zambian* officers two had attained the rank of major, with six more expected to do so by April 1968. Additionally, from February 1968 on no more Europeans were to be appointed to command infantry companies. The NCO corps was actually further behind in the *Zambianization* process than the officer corps. Of the 474 senior NCOs in the army; only 168 were *Zambian*—the rest were British, European expatriates, or *Malawian*.<sup>98</sup> There were problems emerging in the army by this point. On orders from President Kaunda the Army commander started an investigation into political activity within the Army. The investigation did uncover an active United Party cell in Arakan Barracks. While this was a point of concern for the government, particularly because it was an opposition party, it signaled the need to ensure that the army remained apolitical. Factionalism within the military was also beginning to be a concern for both British

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<sup>97</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E78, 'Service Personnel on Loan to *Zambian* Armed Forces 1967,' Letter from DS 6 to DS15 dated 27 March 1968.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, PRO, WO 32/21128, E81, 'Service Personnel on Loan to *Zambian* Armed Forces 1967,' 'Anglo-*Zambian* Joint Services Training Team Agreement,' p. 4.

officers and Zambian policy makers. As the number of Zambian officers and NCOs increased, so did concerns about their ethnic background. Initially the Zambia Army had instituted a quota policy for officer selection. This was followed in 1968 by an order that required that the allocation of overseas training courses be representative of the ethnic diversity of the country.<sup>99</sup>

The training of officers in counter-insurgency operations took main stage during the early part of 1968. Expatriate and African officers were required to attend three officer study periods on the subject between January and March. Colonel Bade attended one of the sessions and noted: “I was surprised to see how very bad were the expatriate officers at tactical appreciations and orders. The African officers made little contribution and did not take criticism easily.”<sup>100</sup> This made it very clear to the MOD that even though the training mission was rapidly coming to a close the Zambia Army was far from being capable of operating on its own, even with the help of expatriates. The problem was not only the capabilities of the officers in the Zambia Army, but was also related to the lack of specialty officers. As of May 1968 the Brigade Workshop and Army Workshops were critically short of qualified technicians. The Zambian government counted on the upcoming recruiting mission to India and Pakistan to help alleviate these shortfalls.<sup>101</sup> The shortfalls were compounded by the fact that in December 1968 fifty expatriate officers and NCOs left the army.

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<sup>99</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, ‘Central Africa,’ ‘Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 3 May 1968,’ para 16-17.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., para. 24.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., para. 27.

The British and the Zambians were growing impatient with the progress of the training mission. In March 1968 a second ‘Wings’ parade was held for another batch of Zambian Air Force officers who had qualified as pilots. Colonel Bade was in attendance and commented: “In his address the President, who was the reviewing officer, characteristically omitted the passage which the drafter had included praising the RAF for it’s part in building the ZAF. Gratitude it seems is not a Zambian trait.”<sup>102</sup> Even though patience was running thin on both sides building up the army into a self-sustaining organization was a long process. In order to help alleviate the lack of technical personnel several Zambians were sent that year to specialty courses in Britain: two to an automobile engineering course, one for training in nursing, and one to train in ordnance. It would be the early 1970s before very many Zambian officers had undergone specialist training to take up these positions within their own army.

As the activities of guerillas increased on Zambian borders so did the tensions with their neighbors. In April 1968 Portuguese aircraft bombed three Zambian villages where guerillas had allegedly been based prior to infiltrating into Angola. The Zambian Air Force did not have any sort of attack or fighter capability at the time and was essentially useless. The Zambian government did actively try to prevent guerillas from using their country as a base. Zambia Army units that found armed guerillas inside the country would arrest them, but unless they actually carried weapons, Zambian law prevented authorities from taking any action. At the same time, the army developed a friendly relationship with a battalion of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., para. 31.

- *Partido do Trabalho* (MPLA) that occupied a camp directly across the Zambian border. The MPLA Battalion commander even invited an expatriate officer to come and tour his facilities and observe his battalion training.<sup>103</sup>

The political chatter and ethnic divisions in the army also continued to be a problem. One of the major political divisions among troops was based on ethnic identity. As the December 1968 elections grew closer, discussion of politics in the officers mess became more common. The political division between UNIP and UP supporters largely occurred along ethnic lines; the Bemba officers tended to support the UNIP and the Lozi officers supported the UP. This type of vocal support of an opposition party did not last long in Zambia. The UNIP was attempting to create a one-party state and was making policies to help facilitate the process. In April 1968 Kaunda announced economic reforms that made it advantageous to be a member of the UNIP.<sup>104</sup> That same month some Zambian officers even went as far to discuss the possibility of a military coup in the mess. While they all agreed that a coup was not in the interests of Zambia, one Zambian company commander boasted that he was in a position to organize one. Unbeknownst to these officers the Zambian Intelligence Service kept a close watch for this type of activity and cataloged all such discussion no matter how inconsequential.<sup>105</sup> It seems that even though these officers discussed politics and joked about coup attempts, for the most part they limited their political activity to the officer's mess.

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<sup>103</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, 'Central Africa,' 'Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 1 August 1968,' para. 6. Apparently the officer was actually very impressed by the state of the MPLA camp saying it was well laid out and that they had a very efficient operations room.

<sup>104</sup> Phiri, *A Political History of Zambia*, 141.

<sup>105</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/619, 'Central Africa,' 'Defence Advisor Zambia, Quarterly Report 1 August 1968,' para. 8-9.

The Zambianization process was moving along at a quick pace. In February 1968 five Zambian officers passed the examination for promotion from captain to major, and it was expected that an additional thirty-eight would be eligible to take the exam in December 1968. The most senior Zambian officer in the Army, Maj. Patrick Kafumukache, took up the post of military secretary to the President of Zambia in May 1968. This was the first of a number of high-level advisor positions to be awarded to Zambian officers.<sup>106</sup> Part of the difficulty in placing Zambians in these positions was that it was necessary for the men in these posts to have Staff College training. Since Zambia did not have the capacity at the time to support a Staff College, as in almost all other cases men had to be sent overseas. There were plans in place to send five men to staff colleges in 1969, in Britain, Canada, and Pakistan.<sup>107</sup> The difficulty in sending men on these courses lay in making sure that by the time they were sent they had accrued enough field and operational experience to be able to learn and understand staff level functions.

The June 1968 recruiting mission to India turned out to be a resounding success. They were able to recruit ten officers and sixty NCOs for service in the Army and another fifty-two for the Air Force. While the mission was successful in recruiting trained personnel, the British advisors were unsure how African troops would react to the influx of Asian officers and NCOs. As it turns out these fears proved unfounded, particularly as the Zambian government built up its defence relationship with both India

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., para. 18-19.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., para. 17.

and Pakistan. This partnership proved to be increasingly important to the Zambia Army. Even though the SOFA was only signed in February 1968, by December the Zambian government had given its required twelve-month notice to terminate the agreement early.<sup>108</sup> This initially came as a shock to both the military and diplomatic planners in the British government. The Zambianization of the army was incomplete, as was the training of the technical arms, and the Zambia Air Force was in no way ready to operate on its own, it did not even have a full compliment of Zambian pilots.<sup>109</sup>

It came to light that the lack of Zambian pilots and the delayed delivery of jet aircraft to the Zambia Air Force was a major reason the agreement was terminated. The continued violations of Zambian airspace by both Portuguese and Rhodesian aircraft had become the most pressing defence concern for Kaunda and his cabinet. British instructors in the RAF component of the training team insisted on thorough and lengthy training courses for Zambian pilots by 1968 had produced only 12 fully qualified pilots.<sup>110</sup> The training team had also participated in running the ZAF. The government of Zambia had secretly entered into negotiations with the Italian government to provide jet aircraft and a training team to the ZAF. The Zambian Vice-President Simon Kapwepwe, boasted in an article in the *Zambia Mail* that where the British were only able to train

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<sup>108</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/582, CS1, 'Effects on Zambia of the Withdrawal of British Joint Services Training Team,' 'Despatch, Zambian Defence Forces on the Departure of the British Joint Services Training Team,' pg. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 4.

twelve personnel a year, the Italian training team would train 400 a year. Interestingly, the ZAF numbered only 500 personnel at the time.<sup>111</sup>

The Zambian government was under pressure from all sides to reduce Britain's role in their defence forces. The planning had already begun for the Non-Aligned Conference to take place in Lusaka in 1970, that same year Kenneth Kaunda was elected chair of the Organization of African Unity. All of these organizations were staunchly opposed to the British relationship with the Republic of South Africa and the lack of action on the Rhodesian issue. The Italian defence industry did well in this deal. In addition to training the ZAF, they were also secretly supplying aircraft to the Rhodesian Air Force.<sup>112</sup>

Until 1969, British influence in shaping the Zambian Defence Forces had been almost total. However the Zambian decision to terminate the SOFA led to the departure of the remaining Army training team components in 1969. However there was not even an agreement in place regarding the end of the RAF portion of the training team until September 1969.<sup>113</sup> RAF personnel finally departed Zambia in December 1969. The impact on the Army was blunted by the fact that expatriate officers serving on contracts remained in Zambian service and far outnumbered the seconded British officers. Command of the Zambia Army remained in the hands of a contracted expatriate Briton,

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<sup>111</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/582, CS1, 'Effects on Zambia of the Withdrawal of British Joint Services Training Team,' letter from M.B. Mbozi, Permanent Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affairs dated 14 February 1970.

<sup>112</sup> Winston Brent, *Rhodesian Air Force: A Brief History 1947-1980* (Kwambonambi, SA: Freeworld Publications, 1987), 5.

<sup>113</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/582, CS1, 'Effects on Zambia of the Withdrawal of British Joint Services Training Team,' 'Despatch, Zambian Defence Forces on the Departure of the British Joint Services Training Team,' pg. 2.

Major General Tom Reid, yet his contract was due to expire in 1970, and a renewal was uncertain. However, the departure of British officers was not without its consequences. During the course of the year in 1969 the number of expatriate officers continued to fall and Zambians filled many of the posts vacated. According to the number of Zambian officers trained, the army was prepared for the departure of the British and expatriates, but in actuality it could not afford to lose the assistance that the training team provided. By the beginning of 1970 the number of expatriate officers and NCOs dwindled to sixty. Of the expatriates who remained in Zambian service many were of mediocre quality, disillusioned and/or simply waiting for their contracts to end.<sup>114</sup>

Once British officers departed, many in the Zambia Army realized that they were not prepared to stand on their own. The most senior Zambian officers in the Army had only five years of service. The British High Commissioner to Zambia, Sir John Laurence Pumphrey, thought that the outlook for the Army was grim: “there is little doubt that Zambianization is moving too fast. The Zambian officers and NCOs are young and largely inexperienced in military matters. Above all, with a very few exceptions, they lack the power of leadership.”<sup>115</sup> This lack of leadership combined with a playboy culture popular in the officer corps, made the focus for many Zambian officers social obligations rather than the more serious task of soldiering. A lack of discipline among officers, of course led to a discipline problem among the other ranks. Even though

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 7-8. Sir Pumphrey spoke from a position of experience regarding military matters. During World War Two he served in the Northumberland Hussars and fought in North Africa, Greece and Crete before he was captured. For his service in Greece and valor in combat he was awarded the Greek War Cross. Patrick Shovelton, “Sir Laurence Pumphrey: Diplomat decorated for wartime bravery who later served as Ambassador to Pakistan,” *The Independent*, 4 February 2010,

British officers had not been serving as operational commanders for at least six months prior to their departure, their presence as training officers and staff officers within units allowed them to exercise a measure of oversight over such issues among the officers.

The discipline and training problems in the Army did not improve in 1970 and 1971. When Major General Reid's contract expired in December 1970 a Zambian officer was appointed to command the Army. Colonel Kingsley Chinkuli was promoted to the rank of Major General and became the first Zambian general officer.<sup>116</sup> LtCol. Patrick Kafumukache, who had served as the Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to President Kaunda, was seen as a frontrunner for the position until he got drunk at a state dinner during a visit to the Caribbean.<sup>117</sup> Chinkuli was one of the first three Zambian graduates of Sandhurst in 1965 and had rotated through company, battalion, and brigade commander billets prior to becoming army commander.

It was at this same point in time that Kaunda summarily dismissed most of the European expatriate officers still serving in the Army. His decision to immediately Zambianize the entire army was a response to the return of a Conservative government to Britain and the possibility of British arms sales to South Africa. It seems, however, that the army was not completely Zambian---Indian officers were allowed to remain, as were technical specialists and medical officers.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I*, 87. Incidentally there was one other Zambian appointed to general rank prior to Chinkuli. In November 1966 the National Assembly had awarded President Kaunda the rank of Marshal of Zambia. In the early years of his reign he was often seen in elaborate uniforms with field marshal rank at military events. Zambia Information Service, "Marshal of Zambia," *Zambia*, November 1966, 21.

<sup>117</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I*, 199.

<sup>118</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I*, 200.; Pettman, *Zambia*, 108.

The Zambians also moved away from British equipment and weapons. The Yugoslavian government had grown quite interested in Zambia as a market for both construction materials and military hardware. Kaunda also was an admirer of Marshal Josip Tito. President Kaunda had expressly stated that Zambia could no longer buy arms from nations that supported racist regimes. This combined with the pressures of having been elected chairman of both the OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement led the Zambians to look east for arms suppliers.<sup>119</sup> While the Zambian government was successful in changing arms suppliers to non-aligned nations, training assistance was a much more difficult task.

When the Italian Air Force training team replaced the RAF, the language barrier immediately arose. Only three of the Italian trainers spoke English. This problem was only compounded when Yugoslav Air Force officers came to Zambia to assist in the training effort.<sup>120</sup> The quality of these trainers was questionable; in the first month that the Italian team was there an Italian instructor crashed one of the Beaver trainer aircraft. When the Zambian government figured out that the language issue was a significant barrier to progress they turned again to English speaking nations for assistance.

The Zambian government did not intend to turn to communism; in fact they had a frosty relationship with both the Soviet Union and East Germany. Since the Zambians were not moving wholesale into the Eastern Bloc, Christopher Diggines, the Deputy

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<sup>119</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, 'Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,' letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home from Christopher E. Diggines, Deputy High Commissioner of Zambia, dated 28 May 1971, pg. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 4.; TNA, PRO, FCO 45/582, CS1, 'Effects on Zambia of the Withdrawal of British Joint Services Training Team,' 'Despatch, Zambian Defence Forces on the Departure of the British Joint Services Training Team,' pg. 2.

High Commissioner in Zambia, still thought HMG had an opportunity to preserve some level of influence in the military through training assistance in the United Kingdom. Zambian authorities, while eager for the British to leave Zambia, were not eager to give up the courses the British allowed them to attend in Britain. Diggines proposed that allowing Zambians to continue attending courses in Britain with few obligations attached to their attendance would help expose the strings that were attached to military aid from the Eastern Bloc. In doing so Diggines thought that the British might even be able to recover some orders for military hardware that they had lost to Yugoslavia.<sup>121</sup>

Colonel Alexander R. Kettles, now Defence Advisor to the High Commissioner, noted that continued aid to Zambia would not be wasted “What is important to us,” he said, was that Zambia remain closely tied to the UK in terms of equipment and training, and that Zambia be “predisposed” to look to the UK for “support in all fields.”<sup>122</sup> The Zambia Army had been allocated three spots at RMA and nine spots at Mons in 1971. In addition to these they had been granted forty-two spots for officers in both staff- and line officers’ courses. Other ranks were also allocated fifty-one spots. The Zambian government on one hand wanted to pull away from Britain but from a practical standpoint could not seem to find any other provider of such quality and diverse training taught in English.

Zambia confirmed this dependence in their bids for course allocations for 1972.

They asked for 66 slots at various British schools. The British were keenly aware that

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<sup>121</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, ‘Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,’ letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home from Christopher E. Diggines, Deputy High Commissioner of Zambia, dated 28 May 1971, pg. 10.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, 1, ‘Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,’ Letter from A.R. Kettles to ACDS(POLS) dated 7 May 1971.

the Zambia Army was well under establishment. The situation had been worsened by the Zambian desire to form a new Anti-Aircraft battery and a fourth infantry battalion. In 1971 the Army had also been designated to take over the administration of the Zambian Youth Service and a new National Service scheme.<sup>123</sup> The push in the creation of officers was not simply to equip the expanding army but also to commission a large batch of officers before Zambia was forced to train officers on her own. By 1971 the Zambians had established an officer cadet school and began training the first intake. British analysis of the school, and the Zambian Army generally, led them to conclude these officers would probably be poor.<sup>124</sup>

With these factors to consider the MOD was still only able to offer Zambia a fraction of the 1972 training allocations that she had requested. Zambia was offered eight for 1972, one less than had been allocated in 1971. While this seemed about like a diplomatic slap in the face from the British government based on the twenty-four the Zambians had requested, there were only three nations that received more spaces at Mons that year (Uganda, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia). There were only fifteen Sandhurst slots available for cadets from Sub-Saharan Africa, and of those Zambia was given three for 1972.<sup>125</sup>

William Wilson of the Central and Southern Africa Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) made the case that training Zambian officers in

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<sup>123</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, 'Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,' letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home from Christopher E. Diggins, Deputy High Commissioner of Zambia, dated 28 May 1971, pg. 6.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>125</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, 'Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,' letter from C.M. Rose to Mr. Fingland dated 17 June 1971.

British institutions could counter communist influence, should the British be completely supplanted in Africa. Britain had important economic interests in both black and white governed countries in southern Africa and wanted to encourage détente between them. If the level of communist influence in the military of a frontline state became too great, the British felt that the region would become more polarized and violent. The suspicion was that the involvement of Cuban and Soviet forces in the area could escalate from financial and logistical support to the introduction of forces into the region.<sup>126</sup>

The turn to the East for military assistance was beginning to cause a great deal of damage to the efficiency of the Zambia Army. Up until 1969 the Zambia Army had exclusively British military hardware; what they were trained on in Britain was what they were to use when they returned to Zambia. However, with the introduction of Eastern Bloc equipment, very few soldiers were properly trained to employ and maintain all of the various types of hardware that a Zambian unit possessed. The Zambia government was attempting to turn away from the British so quickly that they were not exercising any future logistical planning at all. They collected various pieces of equipment from a multitude of suppliers with little thought given to the ease of ordering replacement parts or integrating the hardware into their current order of battle.<sup>127</sup>

By 1971, the Zambia Army was also much occupied dealing with security threats on every part of the border. The majority of the infantry companies in the Army were

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<sup>126</sup> For a complete accounting of Soviet plans and actions in Southern Africa from the 1950s until the fall of the Soviet Union see: Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot "Cold War": the USSR in Southern Africa* (Scottsville, RSA: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

<sup>127</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 45/906, 'Military Training for Zambians in the UK 1971,' letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home from Christopher E. Diggins, Deputy High Commissioner of Zambia, dated 28 May 1971, pg. 5.

deployed to border areas either to prevent incursions from the Rhodesians or the Portuguese. These rotations did not end on the border with Mozambique until 1975, Rhodesia in 1980, and Angola in 1990. With such a large percentage of the army actively engaged in operations, it made it nearly impossible to train or undertake a large brigade exercise.

In addition to the lack of opportunities to train as large units, the Zambia Army was not impressed by the training teams brought in after the British. For example, in 1971 a Chinese military training team secretly arrived in country and also sold the Zambians weapons such as the Chinese made version of the AKM assault rifle and other light infantry weapons. According to the 2IC of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Zambia Regiment, Francis Sibamba, the training was not very beneficial as the Chinese approached the issue as if the soldiers were untrained and could be molded from scratch. Their training syllabus was not prepared to deal with soldiers who had already been trained along western lines. According to Sibamba, “I am convinced that these foreign instructors also learnt a thing or two from their students on the conventional tactics of modern warfare in which the Zambia Army was well vested.”<sup>128</sup>

## Conclusion

In spite of British military assistance, the turn by Zambia to the Non-aligned Powers was complete by 1972. Soviet style military hardware quickly replaced British supplied equipment, as the AKM became the standard issue rifle of the army. They

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<sup>128</sup> Sibamba, *The Zambia Army and I*, 100.

purchased BRDM Armored Reconnaissance Vehicles, and T-34 tanks from the Yugoslavia and China and the USSR sold Zambia the BM 122mm Rocket System.<sup>129</sup> While military suppliers from 1972 on were almost exclusively Eastern-Bloc nations, the Zambia government did not allow the military to become politicized. They continued to count on the Pakistani and Indian governments for training assistance. Indian officers that had been recruited in 1968 were not dismissed when the European expatriate officers were in 1970 and served out their contracts. A large number of Zambian officers attended higher-level courses in one of the two countries, and this type of English language instruction continued to be preferred to other training institutions.

The Zambia Military Academy was officially established in 1972 as the primary commissioning sources for Zambian officers. The initial academy cadre had been posted to military schools around the world, including India, in preparation for the assignment. It was not until 1996 that Zambia was able to establish its own staff college. Eastern-bloc training teams sent to Zambia from time to time trained special units of the army, for example a North Korean team trained the Zambian Commandos.<sup>130</sup>

The British training mission in Zambia left the country in a poor set of circumstances. The dissatisfaction with the military assistance program was not the result of a poor relationship with the Zambian government but due to British policies on South Africa and Rhodesia. The army component of the British Joint Services Training Team acquitted themselves well according to both the British and Zambian

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 178.

governments. Training in Zambia had begun after the independence of the East African nations, and at the very moment that weaknesses in those missions were identified. The British government had initially anticipated a long-term training mission in Zambia that would require a British presence in the country well into the 1970s. The East African mutinies of 1964 changed the way the British looked at their training plan. Prior to 1964 they had emphasized quality training that was extremely time intensive. This type of arrangement kept white British officers serving in colonial armies for years after independence was achieved. The mutinies in East Africa made them reconsider this approach. They decided that timeliness had to be traded for quality military training. The military mission in Zambia was given a shorter time frame than others in East Africa, with the hope that the Zambia Army would be more loyal to the government if they felt they benefited from independence.

The British mission in Zambia was not completely successful, was it a complete failure? While the new army was not nearly as professional as the British had hoped it would be, it was able to defend Zambia. There were numerous cases throughout the 1970s where Rhodesian and South African forces inserted special operations units into Zambia, but at no point were they bold enough to send conventional troops against the Zambian forces. The Zambian military also remained relatively aloof from domestic politics, in comparison to some of its neighbors. Military officials in Zambia often are involved in politics after their retirement. While in service, however, such behavior was frowned upon by the majority of the officer corps. In 1973 the UNIP declared Zambia to be a one-party state, and even after this point military officers discouraged political

participation among their fellow officers. In Africa, an indicator of military involvement in politics is generally the number and frequency of coups and coup attempts that occur. In Zambia, military coup attempts were made in 1980, 1989, 1990 and 1997. However all of these attempts were made by small factions in the military and put down by the Army at large before they were able to come close to taking power.<sup>131</sup> By comparison to the role of the military in places like Uganda, this is an excellent record of civilian control of the army in a young nation.

The British were not able to retain Zambia within their sphere of influence. The politics of the era in Southern Africa and the economic interests that were at stake made South Africa a divisive issue between the UK and Zambia. Yet it is also important to note that the British left such a professional impression on the military that the Zambian officer corps saw itself as a part of the Western military tradition. This went further than simply a style of marching or uniform design but manifested itself in their approach to training and professionalism and how the Army saw itself in society. Technical knowledge from Communist and Non-aligned powers was happily accepted but Anglophone military norms and culture had been embraced and ingrained in the Zambia Army

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<sup>131</sup> Lungu and Ngoma, “The Zambian Military - Trials, Tribulations and Hope,” 322.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY: THE RHODESIAN ARMY AND THE LIBERATION FORCES

Westerners have an idealized perception of the Rhodesian Army. Throughout the late 1970s, *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* published several sensational articles about the Rhodesian Army's special units, highlighting their elite nature and their supposed victories against “communism.” The magazine implied that the Rhodesian Army was made up of a small number of very professional white soldiers who nearly single-handedly were able to hold back the threat of communism and protect Western values in Africa. This portrayal in such sensationalistic American publications seems to have mirrored how the Rhodesian settlers saw themselves. However, the reality of their army differed greatly from this popular perception.

Since its establishment as a permanent force, the Rhodesian Army relied on a combination of European National Servicemen and professional African soldiers to fill its ranks. While the Rhodesian government mandated that some young Europeans serve in the army, the government had to rely on volunteers from the African population to meet its recruiting goals. In 1973, a time when the Zimbabwe War for Independence was escalating in intensity, the Rhodesian Army had already established itself as a Western-trained force with experience in both conventional and counter-insurgency operations. At the same time, the forces of the liberation movements were attempting to create their own cohesive military units. Portions of the liberation movement were

training to fight a conventional war with the Rhodesians, whereas others were attempting to instigate a Maoist revolutionary spirit among the peasants. In order to understand the dynamic that was created in 1980 when all of these forces were combined, each of the contributing armies' war experiences must be taken into account. While there were other minor contributors to the military conflict in Rhodesia (such as the South African ANC and *FRELIMO* in Mozambique, the South African Defence Force, and the Portuguese Army), this chapter will focus only on the experiences of those organizations that eventually became a parts of the Zimbabwe National Army.

#### Rhodesian Security Forces

The Rhodesian military was a direct consequence of the spirit of conquest in Southern Africa that created the colony of Rhodesia. The British South Africa Company formed the British South Africa Company Police in 1893, shortly after they crushed the Ndebele regime, the main power in that region. This paramilitary organization took part in the ill-fated Jameson raid in 1895, and was the primary force used to put down the 1896-97 Ndebele Rebellion. This rebellion, now known as the First Chimurenga (or liberation struggle) shaped the perception of the security policy in that colony. The European population became extremely concerned about the possibility and related expense of another uprising among the native African population. They ensured that the settler state had a monopoly on military training and organized violence in an attempt to avoid any similar incidents.

At this time, there were only a small number of Africans who were in the service of the colony, and these men were employed in a separate, segregated division of the British South Africa Native Police (the BSANP). When the First World War came to Africa, the Rhodesians were eager to serve. The Rhodesian government formed the all-European Rhodesia Regiment as its contribution to the war effort; however, the small European population in the colony was not able to provide replacements for the losses sustained by the regiment. It was in response to this need that the Rhodesian authorities established the first large unit of armed Africans in Rhodesian history: the Rhodesian Native Regiment (the RNR).<sup>1</sup> From 1916 until 1918 the RNR served the British Empire well in the East African campaign. However, upon the war's end, the regiment was quickly demobilized. From 1918 until 1940 the only armed African force in Rhodesia was the BSAP's Askari Platoon. This small unit guarded Government House in Salisbury and provided instructors to the African Constable Training Depot of the BSAP.

World War II brought with it a revival of the regular African infantry regiment in Rhodesia. The Rhodesia African Rifles unit was formed in 1940, and was a direct ideological descendent of the RNR. This all-African regiment saw active service in North Africa, Madagascar, and later in Burma. At the end of the war the regiment was demobilized, but it was reestablished once again in 1947.<sup>2</sup> It went on to serve as the Rhodesian contribution to the Malayan Emergency, as well as in other Imperial defence

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesian Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 28.

missions. When Southern Rhodesia entered the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the RAR was the only regular infantry regiment in the small Southern Rhodesia Army. In the 1950s the European community continued to be compelled by the nation's Defence Acts to perform peacetime National Service in the Royal Rhodesia Regiment. This created a balancing act within the defence apparatus in Rhodesia; armed power was given to a small number of African military professionals, but steps were taken to ensure that every male member of the European community in Rhodesia was trained and ready for military service, should the need arise. The RAR was a one-battalion regiment, and would continue to be so until after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and the beginning of the liberation war.

The Federation period ushered in a great deal of military expansion in Southern Rhodesia. As has been mentioned above, the RRAF both expanded and modernized its equipment during this period. The R&N Army followed suit, establishing the Armored Car Squadron and adopting the modern FN FAL rifle as the standard issue battle rifle. In 1950, many of the Southern Rhodesian special territorial units (such as engineers, artillery, and signals) suffered from a lack of supplies and qualified staff.<sup>3</sup> The creation of the R&N Army allowed these units to be expanded into joint regular/territorial units in which regular officers staffed a portion of the unit and the unit was supplemented by the territorial component. This increased the level of technical skill of the army and gave it the opportunity to use weapons that had not previously been available.

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<sup>3</sup> Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commander Military Forces for the year ended 31st December, 1950* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1951), 5. The Rhodesian Artillery was completely shut down at the time of this report because there was no one serving who was qualified to operate the guns.

The 1960s brought changes for both Africa and the army. The mutiny in the Congo of the *Force Publique* led to the establishment of the first all-European regular infantry regiment in the R&N Army, the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). In addition to the RLI, the R&N Army also reestablished the “C” Squadron, the Rhodesian SAS, a unit that previously had been recruited from Rhodesia for service in Malaya. The RhSAS replaced the RAR as the Federation's contribution to imperial defence. In 1962, the “C” Squadron participated in military exercises in Aden with the 22<sup>nd</sup> SAS (the Artist Rifles). While the Rhodesians were enthusiastic about the training operation, their British counterparts were not impressed with their performance and declined to include them in the Middle East Command order of battle. The British Army required that the RhSAS undergo an additional year of training before they could be considered an operational unit by British standards.<sup>4</sup>

The operational experience of the Rhodesian Army during the Federal period generally was limited to internal security operations. Due to the demands of internal security operations (and the fact that the small R&N Army was spread out across the Federation), it was extremely difficult for these forces to conduct anything larger than battalion training exercises. The focus of both the training exercises and official operations at the time was internal security and the provision of support to the civil authorities; however, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff made it clear that the

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<sup>4</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/126, 4, ‘Rhodesian SAS Training,’ Cable from MIDEAST HQ to MOD London, dated 3 August 1962.

Army's lack of preparedness for limited war conflicts had to change.<sup>5</sup> In 1962 the R&N Army reorganized itself from a regional command structure to a brigade structure. The two brigades were located in Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, with the forces in Nyasaland falling under the North Rhodesian brigade's HQ. The plan was that this would make it easier for units in the Brigade areas to conduct joint training; however, it actually made it much easier for the R&N Army to be divided up because operational control of the units in each territory was granted to their respective brigade HQs.

The Federal era gave the army access to a level of funding not previously available to them. The prosperous copper industry in North Rhodesia provided tax revenue that allowed for the expansion and modernization of the army. It also allowed for a renewed emphasis on the Territorial Force. While the concept of a Territorial Force is similar to that of the British Territorial Army or the U.S. Army National Guard, British defence advisors made sure to note that the Territorial Force in Rhodesia was very different. "It is misleading to make too close a comparison between the TF and the British TA. Although the system of drill halls and training are very similar the RN Army is kept to a much higher state of readiness for internal security operations. It is possible to call up units of the TF at very short notice by proclamation of the Governor General."<sup>6</sup> Participation in the Rhodesian Federation TF was not limited to Europeans. Mandatory service was also required from the Asian and native African populations. The Rhodesian

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<sup>5</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/25, 'Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports,' 'Annual Reports of The Secretary for Defence, Chief of General Staff and the Chief of Air Staff, for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1961.' p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/127, 'Notes on the Armed Forces of Rhodesia and Nyasaland,' p. 6.

government continued this practice of mandatory service even after the Federation was dissolved.

The Federation government was able generously to fund the Army Cadet program in Rhodesian schools catering to European students. Participation in these schools was mandatory for all boys ages fourteen to eighteen. Generally, Cadet companies would meet one day a week for four hours of training. The training consisted of weapons training, rifle range shooting, some field craft, battle drills using blank ammunition, and tactics up to the platoon level.<sup>7</sup> In addition to their normal training on campus, students were expected to attend a seven-day battalion camp each year in the summer. Prior to the creation of the Federation Cadet program, summer camps often were abandoned due to lack of funds; however, between 1953 and 1963 a Cadet Camp was held every summer. When these boys left secondary school, they generally went directly into their National Service training. In 1962, for example roughly 1,800 Europeans were presented for service. Of these, 540 were granted deferments, 237 were rejected on medical grounds, and 1,083 became effective soldiers.<sup>8</sup> From the time these European boys were twelve years old they were prepared by the Rhodesian government to enter the Army either as a territorial or as a professional. All Rhodesian men who were fit for service were required to undergo some sort of military training. The time for this training was when the boys were aged twelve to twenty; their obligation was

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<sup>7</sup> LtCol(Retd.). Ronald Marillier, BCR, e-mail message to author, 17 January 2011. LtCol. Marillier was a Rhodesian officer, and in addition to attending the cadet school oversaw training at the School of Infantry later in his career.

<sup>8</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 123/27, 'Rhodesia and Nyasaland Administrative Reports,' 'Annual Reports of The Secretary for Defence, Chief of General Staff and the Chief of Air Staff, for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1962.' p. 3.

satisfied when they finished their four years service with the RRR. After UDI and as the Liberation War escalated, this obligation to the Rhodesian government was repeatedly extended.

When the Federation was dissolved, the armed forces divided up the territory. Southern Rhodesia (now simply referred to Rhodesia) received the largest share. The RLI and RAR formed the core of the Rhodesian Army and were backed up by support provided by the old R&N Army. Since the TF was composed primarily of Europeans, it also was transferred to Rhodesia. Even though the equipment allocated to the armored car squadron of the R&N Army was divided equally between Rhodesia and Zambia, most of the soldiers from the unit transferred into the Rhodesian Army. From this group of transferees, the Rhodesian Army formed a new Rhodesian Armored Car Regiment. In the early part of 1963, the Chiefs of Staff Committee suggested that the RAR be abandoned in favor of the establishment of two long-service (twelve month National Service periods) TFs. The thought was that the “Askari must therefore be regarded as an unacceptable security risk in the [combat arms] units, which can only be replaced by Europeans. We recognize however, that Africans will continue to be employed in administrative units.”<sup>9</sup> With the reestablishment of the Rhodesian Army, however, nothing was prohibited.

The British were concerned that, upon the dissolution of the Federation, European members of the Federal Army would flock south leaving the Northern

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<sup>9</sup> Timothy Stapleton, “Bad Boys’: Infiltration and Sedition in the African Military Units of the Central African Federation (Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe) 1953-63,” *The Journal of Military History* 73 (October 2009), 1190.

territories undefended. Even though the Rhodesian Army did attract more former Federal officers than the Northern territories, it still had trouble recruiting enough European personnel to meet operational requirements. According to the first post-Federation defence report, the Chief of the General Staff, MajGen. R.R.J. Putterill, noted, “Filling the establishment of the new Army has presented many problems. Due to the attractive terminal benefits offered, many members elected to be released from the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Army, and the Southern Rhodesia Army started well below its authorized establishment in both European and African personnel.”<sup>10</sup> Due to this apparent lack of enthusiasm for service in Rhodesia, the Defence Staff believed that they would not be able to man the RLI properly until 1966. This recruiting challenge was compounded by the RLI’s transition from a regular infantry battalion to a commando unit with airborne capabilities. This expansion required higher physical standards and soldiers willing to volunteer for airborne duty.<sup>11</sup>

The RhSAS Squadron also suffered from personnel shortages between 1963 and 1965. The squadron had only become operational in 1963, and by 1964 the number of soldiers serving in the unit had dropped to twenty.<sup>12</sup> The difficulties with finding European manpower made the disbandment of the RAR impossible. Rhodesian authorities had no problem recruiting African soldiers; the manpower pool seemed

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, PRO, DO 64/94, ‘Southern Rhodesia Administration Reports, 1964v.3,’ ‘Ministry of Defence, Southern Rhodesia Army, Royal Rhodesia Air Force, Annual Reports for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964,’ p. 6. The previous Chief of the General Staff, MajGen. J. Anderson was forcibly retired in 1964 because he was considered too loyal to the crown, and he was opposed to the agenda of the Rhodesian Front.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2008), 52.

limitless and was significantly cheaper. The Rhodesian Ministry of Defence went so far as to suggest that the Army form another battalion of the RAR. Even though the suggestion was being made as early as 1963, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the RAR was not formed until 1975, specifically due to a lack of funds.<sup>13</sup>

The Rhodesian Army did not rely as heavily upon commissioning sources in Britain as some other British colonies did. The larger settler community in Rhodesia, as compared to Kenya, allowed for the establishment of an officer cadet school at the School of Infantry in Gwelo. This school produced the majority of the officers needed by Rhodesian Army; even so, the Rhodesians did send a handful of cadets to Sandhurst each year. Once Rhodesia separated from the Federation, the government made no effort whatsoever to recruit Africans into the officer corps. As was the case in other Commonwealth countries, European men 18 years of age and with a GSE were eligible to apply for officer training.

The regular officer course at Gwelo was one year in length, and mirrored the curriculum at Mons and RMA. There were three phases in the course, each putting an increasing amount of leadership responsibility on the individual officer cadet. Phase One was roughly two months long and consisted of the normal basic training given to all soldiers in the Army. In addition to the field craft and weapons training in Phase One, officer cadets were required to take classes in current events, leadership, and military history. These included visits to RRAF bases, the BSAP HQ in Salisbury, and factories

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<sup>13</sup> Stapleton, "Bad Boys," 1190.; TNA, PRO, DO 64/94, 'Southern Rhodesia Administration Reports, 1964 v.3,' 'Ministry of Defence, Southern Rhodesia Army, Royal Rhodesia Air Force, Annual Reports for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964,' p. 6.

in Gwelo. This phase ended with a series of written exams, followed by a weeklong escape and evasion (E&E) exercise.<sup>14</sup>

The second phase of the officer course was four months long and addressed duties more specific to the role of officer. This military training included platoon-level battle drills, the use of crew-served weapons, and riot control procedures. At this point in the course cadets were rotated in and out of platoon and company commander positions and had their performances evaluated. The focus of the classroom and field training during this phase was classic conventional warfare. Leadership training included courses on administration, military law, and additional instruction on military history. At the end of the phase, written examinations were held on all of these subjects; there also was an oral exam on classical war tactics. The final exam for this phase was a major classical war exercise in which each student was graded on his performance as a platoon leader, company commander, or company second in command.<sup>15</sup>

The first two phases were very similar to the officer training offered in most Western armies, with a focus on classical military operations. The third phase was centered on training officers to perform in counter-insurgency operations (COIN). This third phase lasted four months and covered subjects such as joint operations, civil-action programs, combat tracking, and the use of close support aircraft. The field training during this phase required cadets to plan company-level COIN operations leading regular troops. The students also continued to receive courses on military law, staff

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<sup>14</sup> LtCol(Retd.). Ronald Marillier, BCR, e-mail message to author, 17 January 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

duties, and military history. The cadets were given a weeklong bush survival course where they were required to live off the land without shooting any game. The cumulative field exercise was a ten day COIN exercise where African soldiers posed as enemy guerilla fighters. All of the branches of the Rhodesian security forces participated in this exercise, and efforts were made to impress upon the cadets the joint nature of this type of warfare. After the final field training exercise the cadets were sent on a ten day visit to South Africa to become familiar with the South African Defence Force (SADF). It was explained to cadets that the Rhodesian Army did not have the capacity to fight a large scale conventional conflict on its own, and they would need the support of South Africa if they were to do so. During the visit the cadets toured the Army, Navy, and Air Force facilities and became familiar with the organizational structure and deployment system of the SADF.

Once the cadets graduated from the School of Infantry, they were commissioned as second lieutenants and posted to their respective units. Those graduates who went to infantry units were considered fully trained (except for those officers who were posted to the RLI and thus required parachute training). The new officers posted to engineering, artillery, or other support units were required to undergo further training at other Army installations; if the training was extremely specialized they were sent on to courses in the UK prior to 1965, and to South Africa thereafter.<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1965 there were two junior officers who attended technical courses in the UK: one at the Ammunition

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Technical Officers course, and the other at the Signal Officers Qualifying course.<sup>17</sup>

Officer training in Rhodesia was comparable to most military courses of instruction in the Western armies, and held officer cadets to a high standard of professionalism. As a point of comparison, in the 1960s Officer Candidate School in the US Army was only five and a half months long.

The events of 1965 ended up taxing the resources of the Rhodesian military. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence severed all military and political ties with the UK. Officers and cadets who were training in Britain were forced to declare their allegiance, either to the crown or to the Rhodesian cause. Commanders of training institutions were instructed to withdraw all personnel in training who were members of the Rhodesian forces or who held Rhodesian citizenship. They were allowed to choose between repatriation to Rhodesia, or to file an application to transition into the British Army. There were five Rhodesian individuals training in UK military institutions at the time of UDI. Of these five, only two asked to transfer to the British Army. There also were two men from the RRAF in the UK at the time; only one opted to remain in the UK and transfer to the RAF.<sup>18</sup>

British personnel who were filling training or technical positions in Rhodesia were withdrawn from the now renegade colony. Interestingly, a small defence relationship remained between Britain and Rhodesia. Since the foundation of the British

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<sup>17</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/126, 62, 'Rhodesian SAS Training, Etc.' This number does not include the eight officer cadets who were attending the RMA at the time. Nor does it include the senior officers attending courses such as the Aviation Medical Course or the All Arms Battle Group Course.

<sup>18</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 25/126, A106/02, 'Rhodesian SAS Training, Etc.' All of the Rhodesians who asked to be returned to the colony were flown back before the end of November 1965.

Land Forces Kenya (BLFK), some men from that command were sent to take courses in Rhodesia. This procedure was perceived as more convenient than sending men back to the UK. For a short time after UDI the BLFK continued to send British soldiers to attend schools in Rhodesia.<sup>19</sup> With the end of the defence relationship between Rhodesia and the UK, the Rhodesian government was forced to search for new suppliers of weapons and training. The sanctions placed on Rhodesia by the UK and the UN made this somewhat difficult. During the course of the rebellion against the United Kingdom, no nation officially recognized Rhodesia. However, both the Portuguese and South African governments were sympathetic to Rhodesia's position and were willing to assist them. The Portuguese hoped to prop up the Rhodesian government so that territory would not become another potential safe haven for guerillas. The South Africans hoped to maintain the buffer zone to the north against the infiltration of nationalist forces.

The South African government became Rhodesia's main supplier of defence materials, as well as other products banned by the sanctions. The British government sent warships to the coast of Mozambique to enforce the sanctions and prevent petroleum products from being offloaded in Beria. The Beria Patrol, as it was known, was successful in preventing some tankers from docking in Beria, yet it was not effective in blocking the supply of petroleum products to landlocked Rhodesia. Rather than receiving their supply from Beria, the Rhodesians began importing oil (and almost everything else) from South Africa. Pretoria was not alone in ignoring the sanctions. The United States continued to buy chromium from Rhodesia until the late 1970s, and

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., A106/02.

governments throughout Europe were willing to set up "back door" deals with the Rhodesians.<sup>20</sup>

In the first several years after UDI, the insurgency was limited and the Rhodesian authorities considered it a police problem. The BSAP viewed the issue as one of small-scale terrorism; they took the lead and the military provided assistance on a case by case basis. At this point in the war, operations were small enough that the regular Army was able to handle almost all of the operational duties, with limited help from specialist units in the TF. The first incident of the liberation war actually occurred prior to UDI. In July of 1964, a group of five ZANU members crossed into Rhodesia from Zambia and killed a Rhodesian of Afrikaner descent, Pieter Oberholzer. The group that claimed responsibility called themselves the Crocodile Gang. The killing was part of a series of acts of sabotage and arson directed against the Rhodesian government. While the event did not achieve iconic status in the story of Zimbabwean independence, it was extremely important to the European community.<sup>21</sup> Author and former member of the Rhodesian Security Forces, Peter Godwin, witnessed the aftermath of the event and remarked that seeing the body lying with the knife still in it brought an end to his childhood sense of security.<sup>22</sup> Again, this matter was treated as an isolated incident and as a matter for the police.

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 34-35.

<sup>21</sup> Terence Ranger, "Violence Variously Remembered: The Killing of Pieter Oberholzer in July 1964," *History in Africa* 24 (1997), 273-286.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Godwin, *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 3.

A significant percentage of the Rhodesian military were dedicated Rhodesian Front supporters. In 1967 LtCol. R. Wilson, head of the School of Infantry, resigned from the Rhodesian Army and fled to London. He claimed he no longer sympathized with the Rhodesian cause and decided to take advantage of the generous terms offered by HMG to Rhodesian Army officers and civil servants who were fired or felt compelled to resign on political grounds.<sup>23</sup> He was debriefed by both the FCO and the MOD when he arrived in London and gave the British government a detailed description of the politics at work inside the Rhodesian Army.

He identified three groups of officers within the Rhodesian Army: those who were fiercely loyal to the regime, a middle group who generally tried only to ensure continued employment and eventual retirement for themselves, and an anti-regime group. Most of the officers who commanded major units were also thought to be loyal to the RF regime. The short list of officers who were against the regime included the GOC at the time, MajGen. Sam Putterill, as well as the commander of the First Brigade, Brigadier Robert Prentice. These were the only two notable opponents to the regime on the list; the rest of the men were minor staff officers. Even MajGen. Putterill was quiet about his opposition to the regime, because he knew that the Army, as a whole, would not support him against the government.<sup>24</sup> Putterill rebuffed the attempts of the British representative stationed in Rhodesia to contact him. He made it clear that unless the British government had something specific to say to him he did not wish to meet,

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<sup>23</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 8, 'Rhodesian Army and Air Force,' Letter dated 12 April 1967 from Col. PH Moir to KJ Neale.

<sup>24</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 'Rhodesian Army and Air Force,' 'The Anti-Regime Group.'

regardless of how well concealed the meeting might be. During his time in service, Putterill confined his acts of resistance to the regime to butting heads with Clifford DuPont, the Officer Administrating the Government.<sup>25</sup>

The British considered the junior officers and other ranks in the Army to be avid supporters of the Rhodesian Front government. This is particularly true of those individuals who joined the regular forces after UDI; few doubted that their loyalties were to Rhodesia first and the British crown second, if at all. In 1967 the operational demands on the military increased to a point where the large-scale involvement of the TF was required. The peacetime National Service scheme, set in place by the Federal Defence Act of 1955, had continued under the federal model. However, the way in which training and territorial service were carried out had changed dramatically over the years.

The Depot of the Royal Rhodesia Regiment handled all initial entry training for National Servicemen entering the Army. By 1967, the Depot averaged eight intakes of 150 trainees per year. The training period was four and a half months long; however, at the beginning of each intake twelve trainees were selected for special training. Of this group three were selected to attend officer training and three NCO training. The other six were placed in engineer, artillery, medical, or signals training. Those trainees selected to become officers and NCOs were put through their respective training courses concurrently with their intake work. At the end of the four and a half month cycle, the

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<sup>25</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/24, 3, 'Rhodesian Armed Forces Loyalty.' Since the Governor of Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, refused to leave his post and remained loyal to the crown, Ian Smith created a position to supplant him. Deputy Prime Minister Clifford DuPont was appointed Officer Administrating the Government and performed and served as *de facto* Governor until 1970 when Rhodesia declared itself a republic. At this point DuPont was appointed to the post of President of Rhodesia.

newly minted 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants and sergeants returned to the intake groups with which they started, in order to serve as those groups' leadership cadre. The other change from the previous system was that these men were sent directly to their operational duties. At the end of their training period the intake group, now reformed as a company, was sent either to Wankie or Kariba where they served in the field for fourteen weeks before being released to their respective TF battalions.<sup>26</sup>

Admittedly, during this period of the war of liberation there were few confrontations between Rhodesian forces and the guerilla fighters. Most of the time that these young men spent out in the field was filled with hours of uneventful patrolling through the bush. One former National Serviceman commented that his first period of operational service was defined by long days and night of endless walking, followed by several days of rugby matches and drinking at the local pub.<sup>27</sup> Even though many soldiers grew bored with their duties, there was enough guerilla infiltration on the border to cause the government some concern. There was another unexpected turn in 1967. Instead of holding their annual battle camps, active TF units were ordered to perform operational service in Tribal Trust lands and on the Rhodesian border.

The increasing dependence on the TF for operational duties meant that there was a continuous shortage of regular instructors for the training courses. The South Africans agreed to send the Rhodesians two Warrant Officers to serve as instructors at the School of Infantry: one at the School of Engineering and one at the School of Signals. They also

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<sup>26</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 'Rhodesian Army and Air Force,' 'The Rhodesian Army: Views of LtCol. R Wilson,' p. 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Faan Martin, *James and the Duck: Tales of the Rhodesian Bush War (1964-1980)* (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2007), 47.

allowed an increasing number of Rhodesian officers to attend the South African Defence College, since Camberly was no longer an option.<sup>28</sup> In exchange for their services, South African special operations soldiers were allowed to utilize Rhodesian parachute training facilities and drop zones.<sup>29</sup> In 1967, the dependence on the SADF was not all-encompassing, but it was rapidly growing. This was the same year that ANC guerillas were caught infiltrating Rhodesia in an attempt to reach South Africa. The response from Pretoria was to send 2,000 paramilitary South Africa Police to patrol the northern border of Rhodesia. While the Rhodesian government readily accepted this assistance for both the security and political benefits, Rhodesian soldiers were less than enthusiastic about their presence.

At the time some groups like the Anti-Apartheid Movement claimed that the South African Police committed to Rhodesia were simply soldiers who had been given police uniforms. In some cases, this was true. For instance, the South African pilots who flew the “police” helicopters sent to Rhodesia were almost always South African Air Force pilots.<sup>30</sup> However, these units were of questionable quality. LtCol. Ron Marillier noted:

These men had been given basic training in drill and weapons via their own training programmes, but had had no training in tactics, and certainly not in counter insurgency. So we had to give them crash courses in additional weapons training, field craft, section and platoon battle drills, counter insurgency patrols techniques, air to ground

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<sup>28</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 35, ‘Rhodesian Army and Air Force,’ Letter from Wg Cmd. Theo Kearton to Maj. G.L. Olley dated 16 December 1967.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 30, ‘Rhodesian Army and Air Force,’ Telegram from Interests Section Salisbury to Commonwealth Office dated 12 September 1967.

<sup>30</sup> Martin, *James and the Duck*, 137.

cooperation etc. We had a very short period in which to train these men to take their place in the field, under Rhodesian Army command.<sup>31</sup>

Early on, these units were sent to quiet areas to patrol. However, as the intensity of the war picked up they were required to patrol active combat zones. While some of these SAP companies did do their jobs well, many were considered poor quality units and given little responsibility.

Throughout 1967 and 1968, the liberation movements had some success in sending large infiltration units into Rhodesia. Even though some units were able to make it into the country undetected, they did not perform well fighting against the Rhodesian Army in terms of platoon or company strength. By the end of 1968, 160 liberation fighters and twelve members of the security forces had been killed. Sending large military units into Rhodesia was not producing the kind of results that the liberation movements desired. Furthermore, they could not continue to sacrifice so many trained men. The military arm of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), turned to the Chinese for both aid and inspiration. ZANLA decided that rather than using a Che Guevara style “Foco” approach to the liberation war, a Maoist insurgency might be better suited to liberate their country.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, ZANLA would transition into a period where they repeatedly tried to insert small armed groups into the country to mobilize the peasantry. In 1969 and 1970, when the liberation armies

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<sup>31</sup> LtCol(Retd.). Ronald Marillier, BCR, e-mail message to author, 21 February 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War*, 33.

began changing their approach to the war, guerilla activity slackened, giving the Rhodesian government the sense that they were winning the war.

The Rhodesian Army continued to train despite the operational constraints under which it operated. Overseas recruiting continued to be an important source of manpower for the regular Army. Young men with no prior military experience were recruited from countries as close as Botswana, where two eighteen year olds from the European community there volunteered for officer training.<sup>33</sup> Recruits came from all over the world, but with widely varying amounts of military training. Peter McAleese was a British subject who had previously served with the Parachute Regiment in Cyprus, the SAS in Aden and Indonesia, and later as a mercenary in Angola. He applied to join the Rhodesian Army in 1976. Even though he had an extensive military record and was extremely qualified, he was almost turned away because he had been a mercenary. He was allowed to join the Army, but was required to undergo the Rhodesian SAS selection process as a private in spite of his having been an NCO in the British SAS.

The group with whom he went through selection was quite multi-national: there were South Africans, Australians, and one of the instructors was an American. After he passed selection and became part of an operational team in the regiment, he noticed that many of the Rhodesian NCOs were immature and, at times, arbitrary with the use of their authority. He did not resent having to serve as a private, but recalled on one

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<sup>33</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/260, 40, 'Rhodesian Army and Air Force,' Letter from High Commission in Botswana to the Commonwealth Office dated 7 March 1968.

occasion that a Rhodesian sergeant had asked him to shoot a civilian. Deliberately, he missed.

According to McAleese the pay in the Rhodesian Army was quite poor. Even though he reached the rank of staff sergeant his lifestyle remained very modest. By 1978, the Rhodesian SAS had a large number of expatriates serving in the regiment. McAleese said that of the forty men in A Squadron, thirty-three were expatriates.<sup>34</sup>

McAleese's comments on the Rhodesian NCOs were not without merit. Those soldiers who were selected at the beginning of their National Service period for service as NCOs did not receive much more in the way of additional training. They were taught how to give battle orders for patrols, general leadership principles, and the duties of platoon and section leaders. Their initial training course ended with an evaluation of the NCO candidates which determined what rank they would be given, between lance corporal and sergeant. The regular Army system of promotion was much different. The RAR, RLI, and RhSAS selected men with extensive experience who they thought had leadership potential, and sent these men to attend regimental Junior NCO courses. These courses were two months long. Upon graduation, the graduating soldier was promoted to lance corporal. The regular courses were more in-depth than the National Service course and held the men to a higher standard (since they were already experienced soldiers). After reaching the rank of corporal, the Army required those interested in promotion to senior NCO ranks to take a promotion exam and attend further courses. These courses included the Junior and Senior NCO Drill, and the Junior and Senior NCO

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<sup>34</sup> Imperial War Museum, Interview with Peter McAleese, (1995), Catalogue No. 15433.

Weapons/Tactics Course. If a soldier was able to pass the promotion exam and attend the requisite courses, they were promoted (based on the needs of the Army).<sup>35</sup> Since soldiers were able to volunteer for service in the regular Army from the TF, the standard of training among NCOs varied from highly experienced to "wet behind the ears."

In 1970, Rhodesia completely severed her relationship with the crown when the unrecognized state declared itself a republic. The move was a reaction to the failure of another round of talks with the British government. Ken Flower, the head of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization, said that the "government propaganda sought to convince the electorate that if Rhodesia could afford to reject the best terms Britain could offer, then why not sever all links?"<sup>36</sup> The chiefs of both the Rhodesian Army and the RRAF opposed the move. Major General Putterill sent a letter to Prime Minister Ian Smith detailing his opposition: "There is a worthy tradition of keeping our Forces non-political. A Republic declared in existing circumstances would be a political act, and our acceptance of it would commit our forces politically."<sup>37</sup> The declaration of a republic was the breaking point for Putterill, and he retired from the Army to become a vocal opponent of the government until the end of the Smith regime.

Although this was a significant political development, it did not have a dramatic impact on the course of the military conflict. Only a handful of officers resigned or retired after the declaration of the republic, demonstrating that the Rhodesian Front had a

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<sup>35</sup> LtCol(Retd.). Ronald Marillier, BCR, e-mail message to author, 21 February 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record, Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964 to 1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), 94.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

much higher level of support in the armed forces in 1970 than it did in 1967.<sup>38</sup> There were still a number of attempts by the British government to bring a peaceful end to the Rhodesian standoff. In 1970, when Edward Heath's government was elected, the Rhodesians reached out to the British to see if some deal could be made. Since 1964, Smith had been trying to get the British to agree to grant Rhodesia independence on the basis of the 1961 Rhodesian Constitution. This document gave enormous power to the European population and set an extremely slow pace for the implementation of majority rule. The Smith government insisted that this was a fair and equitable way to solve the situation; he also claimed that the African population of Rhodesia would accept the 1961 Constitution. Heath's government agreed that if the African population truly did want independence on these terms, then it would acquiesce.

A royal commission headed by Lord Pearce was dispatched to Rhodesia in 1972 to take the pulse of the African and European population on this issue. The commission was able to poll about six percent of the population, and determined that an overwhelming majority of Africans would not accept independence under the 1961 Constitution.<sup>39</sup> While the Pearce Commission was touring Rhodesia, there was an increase in urban violence and unrest. African students, for example, expressed their discontent by stoning police vehicles or rioting. Ken Flower assured both the Rhodesian

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>39</sup> United Kingdom, *Rhodesia, Report of the Commission on Rhodesian Opinion under the Chairmanship of the Right Honorable Lord Pearce, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by Command of Her Majesty, May 1972* (London: HMSO, 1972), 59.

and British governments that the BSAP had things well in hand.<sup>40</sup> However, neither he nor Ian Smith anticipated that the war was about to escalate.

During 1970 and 1971, ZANLA began infiltrating Rhodesia from Mozambique and establishing a guerilla network in the eastern region of the country. It was not until November 1972, when the Army intercepted a large ZANLA column in Mzarabani Tribal Trust Land, that the government in Salisbury realized how much progress the guerillas had made.<sup>41</sup> After this point in the war, the military knew that additional manpower was required. The period of National Service was increased from nine to twelve months in 1972.<sup>42</sup> Call-ups of the TF units also increased after 1972. The military could not sustain itself through an expansion of National Service alone. In 1973, the RAR formed a second battalion to meet the dramatic increase in operational tempo. The added advantage for the government was that African troops were significantly cheaper to field than European soldiers. In May of 1973, the government established the first "no go" area in the country along the Mozambique border. This area was barred to civilians in an attempt to create a free-fire zone for the security forces. Anyone who was not part of the Rhodesian Security Forces found inside the "no go" area was considered a guerilla.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most successful aspects of the British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya was the separating of the populace from the guerilla forces. In 1973, the

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<sup>40</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/1035, 1, 'Security Situation in Rhodesia 1972.'

<sup>41</sup> Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Luise White, "Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia, 1974-1980," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37 (2004), 105.

<sup>43</sup> J.K. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 17.

Rhodesian government embarked on a similar effort to prevent a Maoist insurgency from receiving assistance from the peasant population. Wickus de Kock, the Minister for Security, announced the beginning of a pilot-protected villages scheme at the end of the year. Africans in newly established "no go" zones were forcibly removed from their homes and resettled in the new protected villages (PV). The PVs were fenced in and a strict curfew was in place. Administration and defence of the PVs was the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (IA). Prior to the escalation of the war in 1972, IA personnel did not receive military training because their primary duty was administration of the African TTLs. As the war spread throughout the country, however, the IA service became a paramilitary force.<sup>44</sup>

A training depot was established at Chikurubi Prison for both white and black IA personnel. Trainers from the RLI were seconded to the depot until a sufficient number of IA men were sent through the Army Infantry Training Officer course. In this course, training focused completely on counterinsurgency and was mostly defensive in nature. The course itself was only four weeks long, and the training was plagued by a severe lack of equipment and accommodations. During the first year the training staff had to share accommodations with the trainees because there were no available separate quarters on the prison grounds.<sup>45</sup> The responsibility for military operations was spread across the government, from the Air Force to the Internal Affairs department. This meant that once the conflict was over, the British government overlooked men who had

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<sup>44</sup> AKH Weinrich, "Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 3 (April 1977), 210.

<sup>45</sup> Dudley Wall, e-mail message to author, March 4, 2011. Dudley Wall served as a National Service IA Cadet from 1975 to 1979. In 1979 he moved to South Africa where he served in the SADF until 2005.

significant amounts of both military training and experience, but who were not recognized as being in the Army and potential training assets. Men with this kind of experience could have been utilized to train the new Zimbabwean Army, however paramilitary forces were demobilized before they could be made a part of the training mission.

By the end of 1973, 8,000 people had been moved from the "no go" areas. The transit camps and protected villages became well known for their poor conditions and inadequate security. Public health crises were common, and the guerilla element often infiltrated the lightly-defended villages. Over the course of the conflict, almost 250,000 Africans were resettled in either consolidated or protected villages.<sup>46</sup> The scheme cleared of citizens many parts of the country so that the security forces could operate freely, but this redistribution of the population did not prove to be the solution the government hoped it would be. This tactic gave security forces an advantage on a local level. However, it proved to be the beginning of larger strategic problems that began to confront the Rhodesians in the late 1970s.

Tactical success, strategic failure

The Rhodesian Army invested a great deal of effort into what they called Fire Force tactics. Developed in 1974, this was their major tactical innovation of the war. When ground units located a guerilla element, they would radio back to the regional headquarters for reinforcement. The Fire Force element, which was always on standby,

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<sup>46</sup> Weinrich, "Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia," 207.

was flown into the area via helicopters and deployed as a blocking force that allowed the ground-based units to push the guerillas out of the designated areas. While these elements maneuvered into place, a helicopter gunship would circle above and harass the guerillas, and a command helicopter would direct the movements of the ground forces. As the war progressed, the Rhodesians transitioned from using helicopter insertions of the blocking forces, to airborne insertions of the forces. This tactic allowed the Rhodesians to make the most of their resources because they did not have enough manpower to completely cover the terrain.<sup>47</sup>

The Rhodesians also experimented extensively with pseudo-operations. These tactics were pioneered in Kenya during the emergency. Former Mau Mau fighters were convinced to work with British forces. They were retrained and equipped and put back in the field with soldiers from the KAR and white officers. These units were known as "pseudo-gang;" they patrolled through the countryside posturing as Mau Mau gangs and attempted to gather intelligence. Rhodesian Special Branch experimented with using "turned" guerilla fighters as pseudo-gangs, to some success. In 1973 the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), in partnership with the security forces, formed a multi-racial Army unit specifically tasked with pseudo-operations: the Selous Scouts.<sup>48</sup> This unit was partially funded by South African Security Branch and occasionally had South

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<sup>47</sup> Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War*, 104.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Melson, "Top Secret War: Rhodesian Special Operations," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16 (March 2005), 63. For a complete examination of the history of this notorious unit, see Peter Stiff and Ron Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, SA: Galago Books, 1982).

African Police personnel attached to their operations.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, this was the first unit in which African and European men served in the ranks together. It was also the first unit in which African NCOs were given power over European soldiers.<sup>50</sup> Even though this unit seemed very progressive by Rhodesian standards, the officers were still all white until 1979.

The Rhodesian government did not eschew conducting what were called "external operations." These were missions that crossed over national borders and attacked guerilla bases inside other countries; Zambia, Botswana, and Mozambique were the most frequent targets. These operations generally were spearheaded by the special operations formations within the Rhodesian Army, with support provided by other elements. Between 1973 and 1976, these raids were conducted clandestinely. They were small in scale and generally targeted groups of a dozen or so guerillas. These small missions into bordering countries often could be denied by the Rhodesian government because little evidence was left behind. However, as the war escalated so did the need to make a larger impact on the guerilla forces. The RhSAS and the Selous Scouts led these operations, at times with assistance from the RLI. These units generally did not work together for these operations. In 1976, the Selous Scouts launched Operation Eland. This raid on a large ZANLA camp in Nyadzoya, Mozambique resulted in over 1,000

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<sup>49</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), 86. This was a part of the testimony of Col. Craig Williamson.

<sup>50</sup> Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation, *Selous Scouts*, (1978; Memories of Rhodesia, 2003).

killed by the Selous Scouts.<sup>51</sup> The RhSAS commanders were not informed about the operation and were irritated that they had not been asked to contribute.

The RhSAS launched an extensive operation in early 1977 against Chimoio, Mozambique, another large ZANLA base. This operation included dropping paratroopers from the RhSAS and the RLI while planes from the Rhodesian Air Force bombarded the camp. The Rhodesian planner estimated that there were as many as 9,000 guerillas and trainees in the area. After the operation ended, they estimated that over 1,200 were killed and countless others wounded.<sup>52</sup> By 1976, these highly publicized raids gave way to a policy of "hot pursuit" by regular forces. Rhodesian Army units followed guerillas beyond Rhodesian borders if they were actively engaged in a fight with the enemy. These policies worried both the frontline states and South Africa.<sup>53</sup>

The political situation grew worse as the war escalated. One of Rhodesia's few allies, Portugal, gave up the fight in 1975 to retain her own colonies. The Carnation Revolution, a military coup by junior Army officers, brought down the *Estado Novo* and returned Portugal to democracy.<sup>54</sup> The Portuguese people were tired of war; 11,000 metropolitan Portuguese soldiers had been killed and another 30,000 wounded. By June

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<sup>51</sup> Melson, "Top Secret War," 65. The Rhodesian Army claimed at the time that all of those killed were guerilla fighters, while ZANLA claimed that the target was a refugee camp. In Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging Neo-Colonialism & Settler & International Capital* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011). Sadomba admits that these camps were not refugee camps but rather guerilla fighter camps for those who were attending or hoped to attend training. There were, of course, non-combatants in the camps as well who also were killed in the fighting. However, former ZANLA fighters now admit that it was a legitimate military target.

<sup>52</sup> Peter McAleese, *No Mean Soldier: The Autobiography of a Professional Fighting Man* (London: Orion, 1993), 109.

<sup>53</sup> Frederick Cleary, "Rhodesia says raids on Mozambique bases are continuing," *The Times*, 22 September 1978, 6.

<sup>54</sup> John Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa: The Portuguese Way of War 1961-1974* (London: Greenwood Press, 1997), 56-59.

of 1975, the Portuguese had withdrawn from Mozambique and FRELIMO took control of the government. With the Portuguese gone, FRELIMO was able to assist actively the Zimbabwean liberation movements by providing a safe haven of operation and a port to receive equipment.

Around this same time, the commitment of South Africa to Rhodesia was starting to wane. B.J. Vorster's attempt at détente with the African frontline states had significant consequences for Rhodesia. The South African Police force that had been deployed along the Zambezi was withdrawn in 1975 as an act of good faith on South Africa's part. The South Africans left most of their equipment for the Rhodesians to use, and their helicopter pilots remained. This was, however, a significant blow to the Rhodesian defence system. Even though many of the South African companies were of marginal quality, they still provided a measure of protection simply by their presence.

With the majority of the South African forces gone, the Rhodesians had to find some way to meet their manpower shortfalls. One of the immediately apparent ways of doing that was to change the required National Service period. A new National Service Act was passed in 1976, and the initial service period was extended from twelve to eighteen months. The opportunities for service were expanded as well, from only the Army and the Air Force to include the BSAP and IA. The period of three years of service in the TF, following the initial service period, remained unchanged. However, it was not simply Rhodesian citizens who were liable for service now; it was all European, Asian, and Coloured residents between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. The Act defined "resident" as any male inhabitant who had lived in the country continuously for

six months or more.<sup>55</sup> There also were significant safeguards put in place to keep young men and families from fleeing Rhodesia. Limits were placed on the amount of money that could be taken out of the country, and European men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five who had not completed the first phase of service were not allowed to leave the country without government permission.

#### Volunteers From abroad

The extended period of National Service and the increasing use of the TF in an operational role began to take a significant toll on the country's economy. The effects of sanctions also were becoming more noticeable by the late 1970s, and continuous TF call-ups taxed the civilian workforce. After 1973, the Rhodesian government was able to tap into new sources of recruits for their regular forces. The attention brought to Rhodesia by the international press, as well as the US withdrawal from the Vietnam War, left a pool of trained soldiers with combat experience seeking victory against communism that they missed in Vietnam. Not only were some Americans attracted to the ongoing fight in Rhodesia, but former servicemen from Britain, Australia, and South Africa immigrated to Rhodesia to join the regular Army. Opponents of the Rhodesian effort often accused the government of recruiting and employing mercenaries who were unstable and who did not care about the safety of civilians. A ZANU publication published an interview with an anonymous Frenchman who claimed to have been in a

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<sup>55</sup> Director of Security Manpower, *National Service Information Sheet* (Salisbury: Director of Security Manpower, 1977), 2.

mercenary unit in the Rhodesian Army. The unnamed Frenchman claimed, “the officer corps was made up of former mercenaries. The majority of the staff, at least a dozen, had seen action in Angola.”<sup>56</sup>

While there were indeed foreigners in the Rhodesian Army, these foreigners certainly did not dominate the organization. The categorization of these men as mercenaries has also been a source of debate; foreigners who joined the Army were required to serve on the same terms as a Rhodesian-born man who joined the Army. These so-called mercenaries were not given any extra pay and were required to undergo Rhodesian Army training, and they had to abide by the Army’s rules and regulations. What can be said of these men is that their reasons for joining the settlers cause were as wide-ranging as the countries from which they came. Peter McAleese, a former member of the British SAS, joined the Rhodesian Army in 1977. Even though he had been through the British SAS training pipeline and was a combat veteran, he was required to attend basic training and, subsequently, the Rhodesian SAS selection course.<sup>57</sup> McAleese was one who could have been accused of being a mercenary; he had worked as a mercenary in the Congo prior to coming to Rhodesia. His motivation for serving in Rhodesia, however, was not based on monetary gain; he claims he was just a fighting man looking for another war in which he could serve.<sup>58</sup> McAleese was one adventurer of

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<sup>56</sup> Zimbabwe African National Union, “Smith’s Troops are Murderers,” *Zimbabwe News* 9 (July 1978), 36-37.

<sup>57</sup> McAleese, *No Mean Soldier*, 94-95.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. McAleese was a lifelong adventurer. After serving in the Parachute Regiment and the British SAS, he joined a mercenary outfit in the Congo. Following his time in the Rhodesian Army, he served in the South African Army until the late 1980s. After his time in South Africa, he worked for the Colombian government in a paramilitary capacity.

many that migrated from conflict to conflict in an attempt to satisfy his addiction to combat.

There were other men who came to Rhodesia because of their intense belief that Rhodesia was the next battleground against communism. Joseph Columbus Smith served in the US Army Special Forces in Vietnam. After he left the Army and returned to civilian life in the US, he was disappointed by the lack of concern expressed by the US government with regard to, what he felt was, the spread of communism in Africa. In 1977, he traveled to Rhodesia and joined the Army. He served for the next two years as an officer in the Rhodesian African Rifles.<sup>59</sup> Smith noted that he was one of about 150 Americans in the Rhodesian forces. They served in a variety of units from the RAR to the Rhodesian SAS, the RLI and Grey's Scouts. Americans were one of the smaller groups of foreign nationals in the Rhodesian Army; by far the largest group serving was from South Africa. The Rhodesian government openly praised the inclusion of South Africans in the Army. They even produced a publication called *The South African Rhodesian: A Special Breed*, to highlight the contribution of South Africans who came north.<sup>60</sup> Not only did the publication highlight the military contributions of the South Africans to the war effort in Rhodesia, but it also pointed out their contributions within the Rhodesian government. Rowan Cronje served as a member of parliament and as Minister of Manpower. He claimed, "We are fighting against the most insidious forces

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<sup>59</sup> Carey Winfrey, "Texan in the Rhodesian Army Says He Fights for Love, Not Money," *The New York Times*, 2 September 1979, 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Information Rhodesia, *The South African Rhodesian: A Special Breed* (Salisbury: Lin Mehmel Associates, 1977).

the greatest Imperial power of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, namely Marxist communism.”<sup>61</sup> This sentiment appealed to the white civilian populace in both Rhodesia and South Africa. The publication characterized the Eastern Bloc as the next imperial power in Africa.

The recruitment of British nationals continued throughout the course of the conflict. The British government did not encourage the practice; however, they did not go to great lengths to discourage it. The FCO was concerned about the impression of the public with regards to the problem. “The fact that some might go there to help go defend close relatives i.e. not for financial gain and therefore not strictly as ‘mercenaries’ would be regarded in this country, politically, as a distinguishing feature. But in black Africa, of course, kith and kin arguments only make matters.”<sup>62</sup> In the past the British government had rescinded the passport rights of any person who took up a mercenary engagement in places like the Congo, Angola, or Nigeria. However, there seemed to be a point where, for political reasons, they only criminalized recruiting activities in Britain as a violation of sanctions. Those who signed up to serve in the Rhodesian forces were not, then, breaking any laws.

The matter of mercenary service in Rhodesia became an obsession for those opposed to the settler regime. It was also something of an obsession for self-described anti-communist groups in the West. The American magazine *Soldier of Fortune (SOF)* began publication in 1975. Between 1975 and the end of the Rhodesian conflict in 1980, there was no single issue than did not mention Rhodesia or the service of foreigners in

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/1872, 3, ‘Mercenaries and Recruitment for Rhodesia 1976.’

the Rhodesian military. The magazine had unusual access to the Rhodesian security forces; in the fall of 1976, *SOF* published an interview with LtGen. Peter Walls, the commander of the Rhodesian Army. In the spring 1977 issue, *SOF* published an interview with the Rhodesian Army Recruiting Officer, Maj. Nick Lamprecht. The magazine acted as an unofficial recruiting hub for the Rhodesian forces. While the magazine staff did not handle inquiries, they did publish the contact information of the appropriate recruiting officers in Rhodesia. *Soldier of Fortune* did not simply publish positive pieces on the Rhodesian military; often they tried to highlight stories of Americans who were serving there.

Mike Williams was a former US Army officer who served in Vietnam and as a "gun for hire" in other parts of the world. He entered the Rhodesian Army in 1975 as a Captain, and went on to command a company of Coloured troops, as well as the mounted infantry unit called Grey's Scouts.<sup>63</sup> Mike Williams was later forced out of the Rhodesian Army after the Associated Press published pictures of his troops abusing prisoners. A three-part series on him and his combat exploits was published in *SOF* in 1978.<sup>64</sup> Like the propaganda pieces published by the Rhodesian government, articles published in *SOF* portrayed Rhodesia as a bastion of Western democracy, fighting against the savage forces of international communism. Highlighting the number of African civilians killed by guerilla fighters served to deflect questions regarding the

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<sup>63</sup> Robin Moore, *Major Mike: As Told to Robin Moore* (New York: Charter, 1978), 9.

<sup>64</sup> "Grey's Scouts Ride Again," *Soldier of Fortune*, March 1978, 15.

plight of Africans living under the Rhodesian regime. These were the very same themes found in Rhodesian propaganda products released in the US and UK at the time.<sup>65</sup>

The security situation only got worse as the 1970s continued. While the Rhodesian Army retained the tactical advantage in firefights with guerilla forces, the liberation armies had overall numbers on their side. The Rhodesian Army needed more soldiers; National Service and TF call-ups were so frequent that the economy suffered from a severe labor shortage. In 1977, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the RAR (3RAR) was established and the initial training period for regular Army African soldiers was cut from six months to three.<sup>66</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion never operated as cohesive a force as did the other two battalions. It mainly was used as a training unit to supply the independent companies with African troops. The independent companies were mixed units of both white National Servicemen and African regular soldiers. The presence of the African soldiers was supposed to make up for the inexperience of the National Service soldiers. Incidentally, young white soldiers posted to the independent companies were given authority over African troops even when they were brand new with the rank of private.

Coloured and Asian soldiers held curious positions in the Rhodesian Army. Ever since the onset of National Service during the Federal period, they were liable for conscription on the same terms as European men. However, even though they were

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<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Information Rhodesia, *Anatomy of Terror* (Salisbury: Rhodesian Ministry of Information, 1974). This piece is a shocking series of pictures of Africans who were tortured and later killed by guerilla fighters in Rhodesia. Ministry of Information Rhodesia, *Aggression: A Rhodesian Viewpoint* (Salisbury: Rhodesian Ministry of Information, 1977). This piece chronicles the attacks on religion and African civilians supposedly perpetrated by guerilla forces.

<sup>66</sup> Anti-Apartheid Movement, *Fire Force Exposed: the Rhodesian Security forces and their role in defending white supremacy* (London: Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1979), 13.

required to serve in the Army, they were not trained alongside European men. They also were required to serve in segregated units under white officers. They often were employed as clerks, drivers, or in other non-combat service positions. Unlike Africans and Europeans, Coloured and Asian soldiers were not permitted to serve in the regular Army. If they wanted to serve fulltime in the Army after their service term expired, they were kept on as “continuously embodied volunteers” who signed yearlong contracts and were paid significantly less than European soldiers.<sup>67</sup> The Rhodesian Army placed most of these men into Protection Companies and Reinforcement Holding Units. These formations generally were charged with guarding static locations or protecting road-building crews. In 1978, these units were combined into one unit: the Rhodesian Defence Regiment. These units often were considered to be sub-par by the rest of the Rhodesian Army, partially because these units were given only five weeks of infantry training.

H.A. Berriff was a young European National Serviceman in 1973 who was posted as the Mess NCO to a mostly Coloured. Even though he had just finished basic training, he was made a Corporal. As such, he was set apart from the Coloured soldiers. He recalled that these conscripts did not care about fighting and often left their weapons lying around the camp. They also were very jumpy soldiers and would start firing at the slightest provocation; this can be attributed to the poor quality of their short training. Overall, the Coloured soldiers earned their reputation as poor soldier because they did not want to be in the Army. One Indian soldier commented to Berriff, “What are we

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<sup>67</sup> Movement, *Fire Force Exposed*, 17.

fighting for? We can even buy houses in the European areas of town even though we are born here in Rhodesia.”<sup>68</sup>

Even though Coloured soldiers generally did not want to take part in this military conflict into which they had been forced, they still wanted to be treated equally. In 1974, Coloured and Asian soldiers went on strike in an attempt to force desegregation in the Army. They claimed, “a bullet knows no colour!”<sup>69</sup> They also were not afraid to protest their position within Rhodesian society. In 1977, 500 Coloured soldiers signed a petition expressing their objection to the racialized conscription system, and to their being forced to participate in the war. They wanted an end to the conscription of Coloured and Asian men. However, since both of these groups were allowed to vote on the same terms as European Rhodesians, the RF government insisted that they had to perform all of the same obligations as Europeans.<sup>70</sup> In protest, the highest-ranking Coloured soldier in the Army, a WOI, resigned.<sup>71</sup>

The end is near

The security situation in Rhodesia was spiraling downwards by 1978. The cost of the war had increased to £500,000 a day, and tax hikes on the white population were

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<sup>68</sup> Imperial War Museum, Interview with H.A. Berriff, 1973. Catalogue No. (98/16/1).

<sup>69</sup> JK Seirlis, “Undoing the United Front?: Coloured Soldiers in Rhodesia 1939-1980,” *African Studies* 63 (July 2004), 87.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>71</sup> Ibbo Day Joseph Mandaza, “White Settler Ideology, African Nationalism and the “Coloured” Question in Southern Africa: Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Northern Rhodesia/Zambia, and Nyasaland/Malawi, 1900-1976,” Dissertation, University of York, 1979, 1040.

required to accommodate the increases in the defence budget.<sup>72</sup> Even though the South African troops were gone, monetary assistance from South Africa continued. By this time, the South African government was funding up to fifty percent of the Rhodesian defence budget.<sup>73</sup> However, this still was not enough money to replace the losses in manpower, both in the field and due to emigration. In 1978, TF soldiers were serving around 190 days a year on operations: six weeks on operations, followed by six weeks at home. The strain on the white community was becoming unbearable. As a result, Ian Smith decided to negotiate with those whom he considered to be the moderate African nationalist leaders.

Smith portrayed the negotiations as a "Rhodesian solution" to the issue of majority rule. Smith approached the three African leaders who still remained in Rhodesia, and who were not in prison. Abel Muzorewa was a Bishop of the United Methodist Church, as well as the leader of the United African National Council. Senior Chief Chirau was the Chief of Mashonaland and the head of the Zimbabwe United People's Organization (ZUPO). Interestingly, Chirau was a paid servant of the government; the Rhodesian government secretly financed ZUPO. Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole previously had been the leader of ZANU but was forced out of power by Robert Mugabe in 1975. These three men together represented the political parties in Rhodesia that lacked an armed wing, and thus had sat out the liberation conflict. Smith believed

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<sup>72</sup> Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, eds., *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver, 2009), 162.

<sup>73</sup> South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, 86.

that if he entered into a power-sharing agreement with the parties led by these men, he might be able to win international recognition for Rhodesia.<sup>74</sup>

Ken Flower, the head of the CIO, made it clear to Ian Smith and the rest of the cabinet that guerilla forces were spreading throughout the country; it was imperative to secure African allies against the militant liberation movements.<sup>75</sup> Smith's government was encouraged via the cautious enthusiasm of Western nations over the possibility of a settlement. The three African leaders agreed to enter into a government with the Rhodesian Front in March of 1978. Even though the country's name was changed to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and Abel Muzorewa became the first African prime minister, power remained firmly in the hands of the settler community. Whites were assured a minimum of twenty-eight seats in the parliament; the remaining seventy-two were open to Africans. Whites also retained control of the Security Forces, Internal Affairs, the judiciary, and were guaranteed their privileged property rights.<sup>76</sup>

The Internal Settlement did not live up to the hopes of the Western powers, and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia remained unrecognized. The military conflict escalated as the guerilla forces began to make use of more sophisticated weapons. In September of 1978, ZIPRA guerillas used a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile to shoot down a civilian Air Rhodesia flight from Kariba. Eighteen of the fifty-six people on board survived the crash. However, fourteen of those eighteen were killed by guerillas who found the crash

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<sup>74</sup> Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die: The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia, 1970-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 212.

<sup>75</sup> Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 194.

<sup>76</sup> Raftopoulos and Mlambo, eds., *Becoming Zimbabwe*, 183.

site.<sup>77</sup> In retaliation, the Rhodesian government launched further raids on the frontline states. In October of 1978, the Rhodesian Air Force attacked ZIPRA's "Freedom Camp" at Westland Farms in Zambia. The large Rhodesian formation took over Zambian airspace and warned the airbase at Lusaka that if any Zambian aircraft attempted to intervene, they would be shot down. The strike was extremely successful in military terms; it also provided excellent victory propaganda for the settler community. A recording was made of a Rhodesian Air Force officer, so called "Green Leader," talking to Lusaka Tower. The recording was repeatedly replayed on the Rhodesian Broadcasting Network during the next several weeks.<sup>78</sup>

Even though the Rhodesians occasionally scored major tactical victories, the security situation was still grim. The culture of the Rhodesian Army was changing; in May of 1978, the first Asian officer was commissioned into the Rhodesian Army. Rev. Val Rajah was an Anglican priest who was commissioned into the Rhodesian Corps of Chaplains as a Captain. His duties were confined to ministering to the spiritual needs of Coloured trainees at Llewellyn Barracks in Bulawayo, but this was a dramatic jump forward for non-whites in the Rhodesian forces. After the Internal Settlement, conscription was extended to include young African men. The British government was caught completely off guard by this development. They concluded in October of 1978 that the Rhodesian Forces would not eventually choose to introduce the conscription of

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<sup>77</sup> Nicholas Ashford, "Missile Brought Down Rhodesian Airliner," *The Times*, 8 September 1978, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Godwin and Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*, 232.

Africans because of the potential drawbacks.<sup>79</sup> The official decision occurred on 8 January 1979; it was shortly thereafter followed by the first multi-racial National Service intake in February of 1979.<sup>80</sup> Intake 183 was also the first time that a multi-racial instructor cadre was used in the conventional Army.<sup>81</sup> The size of the Army would, after this point, continue to expand through the use of African troops. Although they were subject to National Service, they still were not paid the same rate as whites and still were required to serve in separate units. Africans who were conscripted were sent to the RAR, whereas whites were sent to the RR or the independent companies.

The first African officers were commissioned only a short time prior to the integration of National Service training. In 1977, the first group of African officer cadets passed out of officer training and into service in the Rhodesian Army. In July of 1977, three African officers were commissioned into the RAR: Lt. Tumbare, Lt. Mutero, and Lt. Choruma. All three were long-serving NCOs in the RAR. Tumbare had accrued twenty-nine years in the Army at the time he was commissioned.<sup>82</sup> General Peter Walls, the Commander of the Rhodesian Army, said with regard to this occasion: "The Army has always been prepared to accept black men on commissioning courses if they measured up, potentially, to the standards required of leaders."<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, this was

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<sup>79</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2279, 8, 'Rhodesian Armed Forces.'

<sup>80</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2580, 1, 'Rhodesian Armed Forces.'

<sup>81</sup> "Intake 183," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, 15 February 1979, 12-13. The Selous Scouts often used both African and European NCOs as instructors in their selection and training courses prior to this time. However, this was due to the special nature of their operations; the practice was unheard of outside of this special unit.

<sup>82</sup> Alexandre Binda, *Masodja: The History of the Rhodesian African Rifles and its forerunner the Rhodesian Native Regiment* (Johannesburg: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2007), 314.

<sup>83</sup> D. Gray, "Commissioning of African Officers at the School of Infantry, Gwelo," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, July 1977, 19-20.

the same line used by white members of the Federal Assembly when questioned about the lack of African officers in the Federal Army. Rhodesian authorities embarked upon a publicity campaign to highlight the "shoulder to shoulder" nature of the war, often showing African and white troops fighting together in the field.<sup>84</sup>

The cover of the September 1977 *Assegai* showed Lt. Tumbare, a member of one of the first groups of Africans to be commissioned, accepting an officer's sword from the widow of LtCol. Kim Rule. In his will, LtCol. Rule asked that his sword be presented to the first African officer commissioned into the Rhodesian Army.<sup>85</sup> The article and cover were used to further the impression that the Rhodesian Army truly was integrated.<sup>86</sup> The December of 1977, issue of that same publication had a white and an African soldier on the cover, loading up ammunition together. One of the features inside the magazine was a story on joint training between the RR and the RAR. Again, the magazine attempted to highlight the single week of joint training between the two units and marginalize the unequal pay, unequal accommodations, and unequal treatment of African soldiers.<sup>87</sup>

After the first class of African officers was commissioned in late 1977, the second group started training. The following year, seven more African officers were commissioned. None of the seven were commissioned into line units in the Army; four were commissioned into the "administrative stream" of the Army, one was

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<sup>84</sup> Rhodesian Army recruiting posters from the period demonstrate this idea. One popular poster showed a white soldier and an African soldier on patrol together with the caption "Terrorism Stops Here!".

<sup>85</sup> "Presentation of Kim Rule's Sword," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, September 1977, 19-20.

<sup>86</sup> *Assegai* was distributed throughout the world. It was read in both the US and the UK, and often reprinted articles from American and British military journals.

<sup>87</sup> "Integrated Training at Depot, Rhodesia Regiment," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, December 1977, 17-18.

commissioned into the Army Educational Corps, and the final two were commissioned into the Administrative Branch of the Rhodesian Air Force.<sup>88</sup> Even after African officers had officially been commissioned, there were members of the Rhodesian government who viewed the program with suspicion. During a parliamentary session in July of 1977, Mr. R. W. McGee, the member representing Matobo, questioned the legitimacy of the commissioning process when he asked the government how many African officers had been granted their commissions after failing their written exams. He also inquired as to why some officers were separated in their training if such training was supposed to be equal in standard. The government responded to these inquiries by saying that the commissioning standards remained high, and that no officers had failed their written exams; the only reason for the separation was to accommodate those for whom English was a second language.<sup>89</sup> The white community clearly was still extremely uncomfortable with the idea of African officers. By the end of 1978, there were ten African officers in the Rhodesian Army. While Africans soon were brought into the National Service scheme, they were not permitted to undergo NS officer training.

Strangely, when the first African chaplain was admitted into the Rhodesian Corps of Chaplains, he was not commissioned like his Asian counterpart. Gideon Dete Takaruza was a long-serving African soldier who had become an African Catechist in

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<sup>88</sup> "Officers Commissioned at Inkomo Garrison," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, March 1978, 17-20. The Rhodesian Army Education Corps (AEC) was the branch of the Rhodesian Army charged with the education of African soldiers and their children. The branch generally was limited to officers, except for those African teachers who were enlisted as senior NCOs. This was the first time that African members of the AEC were commissioned.

<sup>89</sup> House of Assembly Rhodesia, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly, Fourth Session, Thirteenth Parliament comprising period from 21st June, 1977 to 15th July 1977* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1977), 726.

1962, and who had subsequently been appointed a WO2. Even after his ordination and appointment in the Corps of Chaplains in 1979, he remained WO until he had completed a probationary period in the chaplaincy.<sup>90</sup> Although Africans were, at this time, being commissioned in the Army, the pace was extremely slow and their treatment clearly did not parallel that of Europeans.

#### The expansion and decline of the Security Forces

The expansion of the conflict in the latter 1970s necessitated a further expansion of Rhodesian forces beyond the inclusion of Africans in the officer corps and the conscription of Africans and, these were not the only measures taken by the government to expand the security forces. An altogether new organization was established by the followers of Bishop Muzorewa's party, called *Pfumo Revanhu* or "spear of the people." Often times they simply were called the Security Force Auxiliaries (SFA). This organization was formed not only from Muzorewa's followers, but also from the Sithole political party, as well as from the surrendered personnel of ZANLA and ZIPRA.<sup>91</sup> The extremely high unemployment rate among Africans in Rhodesia made recruiting very easy. These men were given short (six or eight week) training courses before being sent out on operations in a zone that the rest of the security forces were barred from. Often a single white officer, NCO, or Special Branch agent commanded these patrols.

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<sup>90</sup> "First African Padre," *Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army*, February 1979, 13.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2580, 3, 'Rhodesian Armed Forces,' 'Private Armies,' dated 23 January 1978, p.1.

The training scheme for the SFA was haphazard, at best. The BSAP, Special Branch, and the Army were all involved in training these units and, there was no uniform training program in place.<sup>92</sup> Capt. Joseph Smith, an officer in the RAR, remembered about eighty men being dropped off at his company's camp, with instructions for him to train them. He and his African Sergeant Major sat down at a picnic table and spent two hours putting together a training program for the next six weeks. They were able to cover drill and ceremonies, basic rifle marksmanship, basic patrolling, immediate action drills, and some unit morale-building activities.<sup>93</sup> The officers training the SFA were given no indication of what their duties might be, or even exactly to whom they were to report. As quickly and as unceremoniously as they arrived, upon the completion of their training they were ordered to another location.

The training was not limited to military skills; there also was a certain amount of political indoctrination that occurred in the SFA training. Each auxiliary was issued a booklet that outlined the beliefs and goals of the organization. The members were required to swear an oath written on the first page of the booklet, attesting to their belief in the tenets contained in the book. In part, the oath read: "Our goal is to get Majority Rule through free and fair one-man, one-vote elections. After that our goal will be to work and fight for peace."<sup>94</sup> The booklet laid out in detail how the African people of Rhodesia were ignorant and did not know the virtues of the voting process. According to

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<sup>92</sup> At this late stage of the war, the BSAP created its own light infantry battalion, the BSAP Support Unit. Like the RAR, it was composed of white officers and African OR. Special Branch employed a variety of men who were seconded from the Army.

<sup>93</sup> Capt. Joseph Columbus Smith, e-mail to author, 12 November 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Defence Rhodesia, *Pfumo Revanhu* (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1978), 2.

the pamphlet, the job of the SFA was to educate the African population on the value of participating in the democratic process. In a sense, the SFA were supposed to play the role of a well-armed civic organizer. As is often the case, nothing is able to better inspire people to vote out in a less than democratic state than armed encouragement. The booklet suggests that SFA members were to emphasize to the local communities that the SFA were the “Armed Bearers of Good News.”<sup>95</sup>

While the Rhodesian regime advertised the SFA as an illustration of the unified nature of the fight in Rhodesia, some international observers insisted that the organization was nothing more than a criminal organization. The Anti-Apartheid Movement insisted that while initially the force was recruited from a broad base of moderate African organizations, the regime eventually limited membership to those who were loyal to Bishop Muzorewa. At one point, Special Branch and the CIO arranged for guerillas who were being trained in Uganda to be returned to Rhodesia to be integrated into the SFA organization. However, once the men were returned they proved to be too unpredictable for Special Branch to handle, and were summarily executed by the Security Forces.<sup>96</sup> On two occasions the Rhodesian Army eliminated 500 SFA personnel who were supporters of another nationalist leader, Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, so that by July 1979 the SFA was composed entirely of UANC supporters.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>96</sup> Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record, Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964 to 1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), 204.

<sup>97</sup> Anti-Apartheid Movement, *Fire Force Exposed: the Rhodesian Security forces and their role in defending white supremacy* (London: Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1979), 34.

The SFA did not generally operate in the field with the regular Security Forces. The only connection between the defence establishment and the SFA were the Selous Scouts and the Special Branch liaison officers who served with the Auxiliaries. The Security Force Auxiliary units did not even operate in the same parts of the country as the regular forces. They were relegated to the “frozen zones” that by January of 1979 covered about fifteen percent of the country. It was not until June of 1979 that the SFA were integrated into the combined operations structure. These forces operated with little or no supervision and, at times, were guilty of stealing from and terrorizing the African population.<sup>98</sup>

The Auxiliaries, loyalty was never assured; there was a widespread problem with desertion after they received their training and weapons. The closer the country came to a settlement, the more discipline in the SFA weakened. By the end of the summer of 1979, only the most disciplined professional units in the Rhodesian Army were operating efficiently. As early as January of 1978, the British government had received intelligence that led them to believe that Africans in rural communities lived in genuine fear of the auxiliaries; over time, the problem simply got worse.<sup>99</sup> Organizations like the SFA became much more difficult to control, particularly as sympathies for the liberation organizations began to materialize. By the time the December 1979 Lancaster House

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 35; TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2580, 3, ‘Rhodesian Armed Forces,’ ‘Private Armies,’ dated 23 January 1978, p.3. This document also confirms the use of the SFA to convince people to vote.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2580, ‘Rhodesian Armed Forces,’ From Mirimba House Salisbury to the Rhodesia Department FCO, dated 23 January 1978.

agreement was reached, many SFA units had to be disbanded because they were no longer effective in the field.<sup>100</sup>

In January of 1977, the Rhodesian government attempted to use the maximum possible number of white personnel. Previously, the military service commitment for white men ended at age thirty-eight. However, changes to the security manpower regulations made white men between the ages of thirty-eight and fifty years old liable for continued service. Men in this age group were required to serve ten weeks a year and were supposed only to be used for static defence operations with the BSAP, Guard Force, or Internal Affairs. However, those who were in the top fitness category were posted automatically to the Army. After the 1977 changes to conscription, there were very few deferments available for National Service; deferments for university students were abolished in September of 1977. Even clergymen, judges, MPs, and civil servants were required at least to register themselves with the Ministry of Security Manpower.<sup>101</sup> Even with this expansion, the entire security establishment would only have been able to field roughly 60,000 men if all the reserve forces were called out for active service.<sup>102</sup>

Even with the addition of African conscription and the extension of call-up periods, the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government was stretched too thin and could not sustain itself indefinitely. The security forces were losing control of large swaths of land to the liberation armies, because they did not have the personnel necessary to provide adequate ground coverage. In rural areas, European farmers resorted to hiring private

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<sup>100</sup> McAleese, *No Mean Soldier*, 151.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2279, 2, 'Rhodesian Armed Forces.'

<sup>102</sup> John Keegan, *World Armies* (New York: Facts on File, 1979), 587.

security guards to protect their land and livestock from theft and damage.<sup>103</sup> While these hired men were simply called "security guards," in modern terms they would be labeled private military contractors. These security men worked in four or five man teams, lived in fortified compounds, and were heavily armed. While mercenary units were not allowed to work for the military, these farm security units were not bound by any such restrictions. In 1979, Rhodesia was swarmed by armed groups, both African and European. With the Army regularly engaging in operations against the liberation armies, the SFA moving about the country with little supervision, and private armies of farm security guards operating with impunity, mass chaos in the country was only a short step away.

In August of 1979, the Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Lusaka. The conference concluded with an invitation by the British government to host a constitutional conference. The idea was that both the liberation organizations and the Rhodesian government might come together to negotiate an end to the conflict and set up the basis for an independent Zimbabwe. The conference was held at Lancaster House in London and chaired by Peter Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary. Both ZANU and ZAPU attended the conference under the banner of a united Patriotic Front. The Patriotic Front (PF) initially was hesitant to attend the conference due to their increasingly successful campaign within the country. However, the governments of

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<sup>103</sup> Robert Barnes, "Vigilante!: Anti-Stock Theft Force On a Rhodesian Ranch," *Soldier of Fortune*, April 1979, 54-59.

Mozambique and Zambia were just as war-weary as the Rhodesians and insisted that the Patriotic Front attend the conference.<sup>104</sup>

The conference ended on December 21, 1979 with the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement. All sides declared an official cease-fire; they also agreed to hold free elections in 1980 to create a new Zimbabwean government. The armed groups in the country were supposed to disarm and the political parties engage in peaceful campaigning during the run-up to the election. Until the election results were finalized and the new government in place, the country was to return to British control. Only a few days after the agreement was signed, the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) began to arrive in Rhodesia. It was a peacekeeping force made up of soldiers from throughout the Commonwealth. The largest contributing nation was the United Kingdom. These soldiers and a force of British policemen flown in specifically to monitor the election in March were supposed to ensure the free and fair nature of the proceedings. However, all three sides in the conflict engaged in some form of intimidation; but in the end, Robert Mugabe and ZANU achieved electoral victory.

#### The liberation armies

At the end of the conflict in Zimbabwe, 37,000 liberation fighters reported to assembly points in accordance with the provisions of the cease-fire agreement. Of this number, 17,000 were members of ZANU's military wing, the Zimbabwe African

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<sup>104</sup> Rory Pilosoff, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver, 2012), 25.

National Liberation Army (ZANLA), and 20,000 were members of ZAPU's military wing, the Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). While these forces served different political parties, they had the same strategic goal of bringing majority rule to Zimbabwe. The soldiers in these armies ranged from highly trained infiltration specialists to young boys pressed into service with little or no training.

It is difficult to present an overview of the training pipeline of the liberation armies because of their *ad hoc* supply system and training structure. While training sometimes occurred inside Rhodesian borders, the threat from security forces was often too great to train any more than a handful of fighters in any one place. Both ZANLA and ZIPRA were forced to look outside Rhodesia for training bases. By 1979, both groups had bases in Tanzania, Botswana, Mozambique, and Zambia (to name only the major training areas). In 1965, ZANLA established a training base in Itumbi, Tanzania. Initially, only Tanzanian Army instructors staffed the base; ZANLA cadres only took part in the political indoctrination of recruits because they lacked the military skills to contribute in any other way.<sup>105</sup> In the 1960s, this training concentrated on commando tactics: infiltration, sabotage, demolitions, small unit tactics, and some marksmanship training.

However, in actuality, the training in Tanzania left much to be desired. The recruits were left to their own devices much of the time. They were expected to cook their own meals and lead their own physical training sessions without any supervision;

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<sup>105</sup> Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2008), 69.

the training cadres often did not show up to the camp until 9:00AM. Marksmanship training was almost nonexistent; the recruits were given extensive lectures on the use of firearms, but they had little hands-on experience with any weapon.<sup>106</sup> There were chronic shortages both of weapons and ammunition in these training camps. Even when supplies were available, training followed the Russian model which concentrates on promoting area fire rather than actual marksmanship.<sup>107</sup> After being given instruction on the way a weapon should operate, the trainees were allowed to fire five rounds with the weapon. Often, this would mark the last time a trainee handled a weapon until they arrived in Rhodesia to fight.<sup>108</sup> Some guerilla fighters were never even given the opportunity to train with a gun before they arrived to fight with the Rhodesian Army. ZIPRA alluded to this problem in 1977 in their official publication *The Zimbabwe Review*. Prior to the meeting of the Organization of African Unity's Liberation Committee, ZIPRA pointed out that most of their fighters had to train with wooden replicas rather than actual weapons.<sup>109</sup>

However, by the late 1960s ZANLA replaced their commando-style training with an increased emphasis on revolutionary warfare. Robert Mugabe commented on this change in strategy in a 1978 interview. "When we began the armed struggle in 1966 all we had were some small commando groups... There was no preparation work carried out among the people so when our groups arrived in the villages, the people were suspicious

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<sup>106</sup> Luise White, "Heading for the Gun': Skills and Sophistication in an African Guerilla War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009), 244.

<sup>107</sup> Area fire is the use of a unit's firepower directed at an area where an enemy is or is thought to be. The primary purpose of area fire is suppression, and it is not expected actually to hit the enemy.

<sup>108</sup> White, "Heading for the Gun," 244.

<sup>109</sup> "People's Army," *The Zimbabwe Review*, February 1977, 6-7.

of them.” He went on to say that “there was a complete revision of our manner of carrying out the armed struggle. We began to realize that the armed struggle must be based on the support of the people.”<sup>110</sup> The two liberation armies received support from different parts of the communist world. Their supporters influenced the development of the liberation armies’ military strategy through the types of training and equipment they provided. ZANLA's major supplier was China. Prior to 1969, cadres were sent to China to undergo military training. These “train the trainer” courses were designed to produce instructors who would be able to train the everyday ZANLA fighters. However, in 1969 the Chinese changed their model of support, and rather than bringing ZANLA members to China the Chinese sent instructors to ZANLA camps in Tanzania.<sup>111</sup> Chairman Mao’s three phases of revolutionary warfare appealed to the ZANLA cadres: (1) Phase One: organization, consolidation, and preservation of base areas; (2) Phase Two: progressive expansion by terror and attacks on isolated enemy units to obtain arms, supplies, and political support; and (3) Phase Three: destruction of the enemy in battle.<sup>112</sup> ZANLA never matured beyond the second phase of warfare before the actual conflict.

From the early 1960s to 1979, the recruiting patterns of both liberation armies went through three phases: voluntary recruitment, press-ganging, and finally back to voluntary recruitment. Initially, both forces targeted expatriate communities in Zambia. When it became clear that they were not achieving their recruiting goals, they resorted to

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<sup>110</sup> Liberation Support Movement, *Zimbabwe: The Final Advance, Documents on the Zimbabwe Liberation Movement* (Oakland: Liberation Support Movement Press, 1978), 26.

<sup>111</sup> At this time the Chinese were actually training both ZANLA and ZIPRA fighters in Tanzania. However, ZIPRA was under significant pressure from their major supplier, the USSR, to break ties with China, and by 1971 they refused Chinese help altogether.

<sup>112</sup> John Woodmansee, “Mao’s Protracted War: Theory vs. Practice,” *Parameters* III (1973), 30-45.

press gang tactics. They struggled with high desertion rates both during training and in the field. A large number of impressed fighters turned themselves over to the Rhodesians and some ended up as members of the Selous Scouts. From time to time, one of the liberation armies would attempt to steal recruits from the other. In 1967, ZANLA recruiting officers launched an armed assault on a ZIPRA training camp with the intention of scattering the ZIPRA recruits and then impressing them into ZANLA service. The Rhodesian authorities often cited guerilla abductions of students from mission schools for service in their armies.<sup>113</sup> After 1973, the large number of refugees that were flowing into both Zambia and Mozambique made impressments unnecessary.

After ZIPRA refused to participate in training under Chinese instructors they became more involved in the training abroad in both Russia and East Germany. The training in these countries focused less on the specific problems with regards to fighting as a guerilla among the Zimbabwean people, and more on how to conduct a conventional war against Rhodesian Forces. Unlike ZANLA, ZIPRA was provided with heavy weapons, tanks, and armored personnel carriers. ZIPRA ended up being divided into two separate organizations, the guerilla unit and the conventional brigade. The conventional brigade was task organized like a Red Army combat unit with armor, infantry, artillery, and even engineering and signal support. The guerilla unit continued to send fighters into Rhodesia in small groups throughout the conflict. However, after ZANLA relocated most of its forces to Mozambique in 1975, ZIPRA could not keep pace with the number

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<sup>113</sup> Terence Ranger and Ngwabi Bhebe, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995), 40-41.

of fighters sent into Rhodesia. In 1977, ZANLA had 3,000 guerilla fighters in Rhodesia, whereas ZIPRA had only 200.<sup>114</sup> At this point, ZIPRA was planning for Operation Zero Hour, the moment when their conventional forces would roll across the Rhodesian border and engage in a full-scale assault on the Rhodesian Army. In 1979, ZIPRA had fighter pilots in training in Russia in preparation for Operation Zero Hour. When the conflict ended, ZIPRA had 20,000 fighters in various stages of training around the world.<sup>115</sup>

The conventional brigade was the only part of the liberation movement that had any training in conventional warfare or experience in leading units larger than a handful of men. Yet once the war ended, a large number of liberation fighters marketed themselves as guerilla commanders. Since the rank structure of the liberation movement was less rigid than that of the Rhodesian Army, it is sometimes difficult to grasp where, exactly, specific men fell in the organization. The term "commander" was applied much more broadly in ZIPRA and ZANLA than it was in Rhodesia. A man who was charged with leading a group of four or five men was labeled a commander in the same way that Robert Mugabe was Commander in Chief of ZANLA. Some commanders were sent to command courses abroad. However, this was the exception to the rule. Preparation of new commanders was limited to on-the-job training. Some men were extremely successful and were both tactically and technically proficient. Others failed both

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<sup>114</sup> Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War*, 72.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

themselves and their men and terrorized their own people, using their status as freedom fighters to protect them from retaliation.

From 1975 until 1978, ZANLA and ZIPRA attempted to combine their efforts under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe Peoples' Army (ZIPA). The experiment demonstrated the weaknesses in the command structures of each organization. The spokesman for ZANU, Eddison Zvobgo, commented that one of the problems that both of the organizations suffered from was that they “had little experience coordinating military programs.”<sup>116</sup> The leaders of the liberation movements also made it clear that their weakest point was their logistical structure. Even though the ZIPA experiment lasted almost four years, the combined military council never managed to coordinate logistics or operations between the two forces. Some of the lack of cooperation was due to a genuine mistrust that existed between the parties. However, two organizations that already possessed severe limitations in their command and logistical capabilities could hardly have been expected to coordinate the efforts of a combined Army at a more proficient level.

The ZIPA experiment never really worked in practice, no matter how much the liberation parties pushed the idea in the public eye. Both armies continued to suffer from endemic command problems. One of the most problematic for both groups was a lack of discipline among the guerilla forces, once they were inserted into Rhodesia. One ZIPRA detachment in Rhodesia simply refused to work with their own High

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<sup>116</sup> Movement, *Zimbabwe*, 34.

Command from 1976 until the cease-fire at the end of the war.<sup>117</sup> ZIPRA leadership attributed this breakdown in the command structure to heavy casualties, as well as anger that the leaders in Zambia were leading a comfortable lifestyle while the guerillas suffered from a severe lack of supplies. However, the Rhodesian Selous Scouts believed that the actions of this rebel detachment (and others like it) were the result of tension between the guerillas and the ZIPRA Conventional Brigade, which remained outside of the country.<sup>118</sup> The relationship between the guerilla fighters and their leadership was fragile. When on operations, the guerillas had little supervision and at times operated in direct contravention of what their commanders envisioned.

ZANLA also experienced dramatic showdowns between their guerilla fighters and the chain of command. In 1974, a group of ZANLA fighters led by Thomas Nhari, a senior ZANLA commander, mutinied against the ZANU Supreme Military Council. Nhari and his followers claimed that ZANU had grown too close to the Chinese and that because of this relationship ZANLA was cut off from Russian weapons suppliers. The mutineers called for the replacement of the entire council and access to Russian weapons and training. ZANLA's commander, Josiah Tongogara, was able to marshal enough freshly trained troops to put down the mutiny.<sup>119</sup> Internal conflicts persisted in ZANU/ZANLA. In March of 1976, Robert Mugabe was able to centralize authority in his position on a new central committee. He abolished the political commissar training

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<sup>117</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Stiff and Ron Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, SA: Galago Books, 1982), 710-713.

<sup>119</sup> Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 27.

academy and focused all political training on ZANU history; with this move, he began building his cult of personality.<sup>120</sup> In January of 1978, another group of ZANLA cadres was accused of conspiring to engage in a coup from within the party. Mugabe personally oversaw a contrived courtroom drama that convicted the men of conspiring to engage in mutiny, after which they were thrown in pit cells for several months.<sup>121</sup>

Even though the guerilla forces were constantly plagued by internal political problems, they were able to insert enough fighters into Rhodesia to stretch the security forces to their limit. Direct confrontation with Rhodesian Security Forces often ended poorly for the guerillas. Even many low-quality Police Reserve units were able to repel guerilla attacks. The Rhodesians felt that their Fire Force tactics were the answer to winning the war. However after 1976, there were just too many fighters coming into the country for Fire Force units to be able to respond to all reports of insurgent activity.

Tactically, the Rhodesians were superior. When they met liberation forces in combat they often out performed them; the Rhodesian African Rifles was actually the most effective unit in the Army. However, the Rhodesians failed strategically. They could not match the liberation armies' mobilization of the masses. While Rhodesian Army units might only occasionally encounter guerilla fighters on patrol, there was an overwhelming landmine and ambush threat throughout the country. This limited the mobility of Rhodesian forces and hampered the Rhodesian economy. The consequences of economic sanctions, a limited white workforce, and security threats throughout the

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<sup>120</sup> Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging Neo-Colonialism & Settler & International Capital* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 36.

<sup>121</sup> Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 27.

country crippled Rhodesia. They were unable to overcome the strategic obstacles that the liberation armies put in their path. Even though the conflict never matured into Mao's Third Phase of warfare, the Rhodesian regime was weak enough by the late 1970s to be forced to admit defeat and accept an agreement implementing majority rule.

## Conclusion

The Lancaster House Agreement provided the basis for the creation of the Zimbabwe National Army out of the collected forces of the combatants (ZANLA, ZIPRA and the Rhodesian Army). These three organizations brought to the bargaining table completely different levels of military training. The Rhodesian Army had well established, but race based, systems for training their officers, NCOs, and enlisted men. Additionally, it maintained a competent administrative and logistical structure that the liberation armies both lacked. One of the major questions that remained unanswered at the time of the Lancaster House Agreement was whether European soldiers would remain in the Army and be available to help integrate the forces. Even though there were African officers in the Rhodesian Army with years of military experience, many had only been serving in officer roles since 1977 or later. As in the previous two examples of Kenya and Zambia, there were no African officers above the rank of Captain at the time of independence in 1980.

The British Army had dealt with this type of situation before, as discussed above. Yet they had not previously been called upon to integrate a guerilla force into a conventional Army. The guerilla fighters had years of experience operating in the bush

and mobilizing the population. This type of combat experience, while useful, was not applicable to serving in a peacetime conventional force. Even those members of the guerilla movements who had received formal training in China or the Soviet Union were taught how to fight as guerillas, but not how to command a platoon of thirty men assaulting a fortified objective. Even the ZIPRA conventional brigade was a problematic factor. All of those soldiers had been indoctrinated by Soviet Army doctrine focusing on the use of large mechanized formations. Even if the new Zimbabwe National Army could obtain a sufficient number of tanks and armored personnel carriers, that part of Africa was not ideally suited for large-scale armored combat.

The Rhodesian Army could not be allowed simply to become the new Zimbabwe National Army, but in 1979 it appeared that they were the only part of the equation that did not require complete retraining. In the past, British training teams would set up a program to prepare former guerillas to attend Sandhurst, and then work their way up through the officer ranks. However, it was difficult to see how they could convince guerilla commanders who had been fighting for well over a decade that they needed to start their military careers all over again. In agreeing to be the honest broker in Zimbabwean independence, the British government took on a military training task unlike any other they had encountered, at least since 1945. They would have to call on thirty-five years of experience in transitioning colonies to independent nations to figure out how to begin to turn Rhodesia into Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW DO YOU CREATE AN ARMY?: BRITISH PLANNING FOR THE END OF THE ZIMBABWE CONFLICT

Planning for the end of the Zimbabwean War for Independence began long before the conflict was actually over. While training armies in Africa for the three decades preceding Zimbabwean Independence, the British learned many important lessons. Kenya was the first time British military planners were forced to deal with the issue of Africanizing a predominantly white-led force in an area where a white settler population remained. In Zambia, British planners had to wrestle with the prospect of creating a multi-racial force that reflected Zambian society. In both cases there were setbacks that had a dramatic impact on the way the British approached military training. The 1964 East Africa Mutinies made Her Majesty's Government (HMG) question the value of training men to a high standard if it took so long those infant national armies felt that the British trainers had were part of a neocolonial agenda.

The British were fearful that the same type of sentiment created in East Africa would be replicated in Zambia. HMG decided that it was preferable to accelerate Africanization rather than focus on rigorous and professional training programs. As was noted in Chapter Two, this notion was accompanied by significant pressure from the Zambian government to quickly Africanize high level command positions. Defence and Foreign Office planners had to come up with training and transition schemes in mere months prior to the colonies becoming independent. In the late 1970s, as the Rhodesian

situation dragged on the war became increasingly unwinnable for Ian Smith's regime, the British began to make plans for an independent Zimbabwe.

Rather than be caught unprepared for the eventual transition from colonial rule to independence, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) began planning for the creation of a new Zimbabwean Army in 1976. These policy discussions took place at a difficult economic time for the British defence establishment. In 1975 inflation had reached a decade-high level of 24 percent. The economic crisis of 1976 forced HMG to accept spending restraints imposed by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for an economic rescue package.<sup>1</sup> The Defence White Paper of 1975 reevaluated what kind of military commitments the British government could afford. The Priority 1 commitments were the maintenance of NATO forces in Germany, the Atlantic submarine forces, and UK nuclear deterrent. Everything else was considered a Priority 2 Task.<sup>2</sup> The White Paper also called for a reduction in the overall manpower of the Regular Army by 15,000 soldiers, and a greater reliance on the Territorial Army (TA).<sup>3</sup> The Army suffered from a shortage of officers and senior NCOs, the most critical groups of personnel for overseas training missions.

The two primary factors that would shape British planning for the end of the conflict in Zimbabwe were money and manpower. British interests in the region were a secondary factor throughout the process. However, world events also influenced the way

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip Whitehead, "The Labour Governments, 1974-1979," Chapter to *Ruling Performance: British Governments from Attlee to Thatcher* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 248.

<sup>2</sup> TNA, PRO, CAB 129/181/21, "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1975." Priority 1 and 2 was the MoDs term for military commitments in the Defence Estimates.

<sup>3</sup> The size of the Army in 1974 was 338,000 soldiers.

the British approached their post-conflict planning. By 1975 the South African government had entered a period of attempted détente with the international community. South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster attempted to appease Western powers by scaling back support for Ian Smith's Rhodesian government. Vorster withdrew South African forces from Rhodesia and reduced the amount of South Africa's financial support for Rhodesia. These actions by the South Africans, as well as the continued infiltration of liberation forces into Rhodesia, made it clear to the British that the time was right to start thinking about the post-conflict era.

#### Planning for a new army

The first question that British officials raised regarding their post-conflict planning was the possible role of British forces during the pre-Independence stage. Both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the MOD assumed that the conflict would eventually come to a negotiated end. The liberation armies did not have the military power to overrun the Rhodesian Security Forces; conversely, the Rhodesians did not have the manpower to suppress the growing insurgency in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL). Since the British continued to insist that the Rhodesia problem was an internal matter (Rhodesia had been classified as a crown colony in rebellion since 1965), HMG assumed they would be responsible for some sort of interim governing arrangement between any negotiated agreement and formal independence. Along with this assumption came the problem of preserving law and order during the interim. There

would be a large number of armed men in the country beyond the constitutionally-legitimate RSF.

The FCO envisioned that the liberation organizations and the Front Line States might call for the introduction of British forces into Rhodesia. The major concern the FCO had about deploying British forces during the interim period was how these British forces would be perceived. Since constitutionally the Rhodesian Front government would still be in control until elections were held, HMG feared that the presence of British troops would be seen by Africans as a move to support the white regime.<sup>4</sup> There was also the problem of command and control. In Northern Rhodesia the colony simply remained under the control of the Colonial Office until elections were held and an independent government was prepared to rule. The situation was quite different in Rhodesia; it was never under the supervision of the Colonial Office, and when the British reestablished control it simply would mean that a British Governor would return to the country. Even so, the Governor would have little power in the day-to-day operations of the country and would not be in control of the security forces.<sup>5</sup> The British government refused to accept responsibility for the situation without accompanying authority.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Rhodesia: HMG's Attitude Following a Settlement, 10 NOV 1976," pg. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Since the only statutory force in the country was the Rhodesian Security Forces. Since Rhodesia had been granted responsible government in 1923 the Governor was only a ceremonial position like the Governor-General in most Dominions.

<sup>6</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Record of a Meeting Held in the Secretary of State's Office on 28 July 1976."

The defence planners looking at the military integration problem initially decided that the model they had used in Kenya and Zambia might also work in Zimbabwe. The Rhodesian Army was already a British-trained force that had African NCOs, an NCO academy, and established schools based on British models. The office in the MOD responsible for Overseas Military Assistance, DS11, felt that it would be best to have the Rhodesian Army infrastructure train the guerillas who were being selected for integration as enlisted men into the new Zimbabwe Army. The British government would focus on sending black officer cadets to Sandhurst. This model of training, based on its success in both Kenya and Zambia, was selected as the initial solution for Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup>

In December of 1976 the MOD formed a working group to examine what could be done in Rhodesia to ensure that law and order were preserved between the end of the conflict and independence. HMG had already established that it would be advantageous for Britain to maintain a long-term defence relationship with Zimbabwe after independence. This would be beneficial to the economically depressed British defence industry in the late 1970s, and it would allow the British government to moderate the types of technology Zimbabwe acquired. The British were worried about upsetting the balance of power in southern Africa by giving sophisticated military hardware to Zimbabwe; such acts would doubtlessly upset South Africa.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the British had

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<sup>7</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Brief for the Secretary of State for Defence, 22 NOV 1976, Rhodesia: The British Role During the Interim Period, Appendix C."

<sup>8</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Rhodesia: HMG's Attitude Following a Settlement, 10 NOV 1976," pg. 2.

to be extremely careful of what types of resources they made available to Zimbabwe. This harkens back to a similar situation they faced during the late 1960s, when they attempted to equip the Zambia Defence Force.

By the time the working group began discussions regarding the future of the Zimbabwean military, the MOD had already established for them some procedural guidelines. The 1975 Defence White Paper established that the UK could not support anything more than a brigade diverted from Priority 1 to Priority 2 tasks. In 1975 the British had already violated that provision by the number of soldiers deployed on operations in Northern Ireland. Any sort of British military mission sent to Zimbabwe would have to be capped at 200 personnel. The British were in no position to pay the complete cost of a training mission and had to assume that there would be a significant Commonwealth contribution. The MOD also hoped that they would be able to convince the new Zimbabwean government to shoulder the costs of the military mission. The working group was tasked with examining five different issues: (1) the future structure and control of the Zimbabwe Armed Forces; (2) the control, integration and deployment of guerilla forces; (3) portfolios of defence and law and order in the interim administration; (4) the form and nature of the commonwealth mission; and (5) the future of individual senior members of the armed forces after the establishment of the interim administration.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Rhodesia: Security and Integration of Armed Forces, 9 DEC 1976."

The findings of the working group were based on the assumption that the RSF would remain relatively intact and that the guerillas would be absorbed into it. This was a dramatic misreading of the political and military situation in southern Africa. The fall of the Portuguese empire and the rise of the FRELIMO government in Mozambique also led to an increase in capabilities and success rate of infiltration attempts of the ZANLA forces. While the Rhodesians continued to achieve tactical victories against the guerilla fighters, there were quickly becoming too many infiltrators for the RSF to stop. The momentum of the conflict had shifted in favor of the guerilla armies. British planners, however, continued to assume that the Rhodesian government would retain enough political capital to preserve the structure of the government and military in the country's post-colonial phase.

This does not mean that the British did not recognize the goals of the guerilla armies. The first draft of the working group's report pointed out that there were four major problems facing any integration of the security forces in Zimbabwe: (1) ideological differences over the system of government; (2) bitterness resulting from the fighting; (3) inequality of training; and (4) notions of discipline.<sup>10</sup> These four points also succinctly sum up how the situation in Zimbabwe was different from any previous training mission the British planners had faced. The working group understood that the aim of the guerilla armies would be to dispense with the British system and create a

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), "Rhodesia: Security and Integration of Armed Forces, first draft," pg. 4.

military force similar to that created by FRELIMO had in Mozambique.<sup>11</sup> They also pointed out that the Rhodesian personnel who remained in the army would have to be vetted for loyalty to a majority-ruled government. Additionally, all of the foreign nationals who joined the Rhodesian Army would have to be dismissed from service if the liberation parties were going to agree to be a part of the new army.<sup>12</sup> These were just a few of the hurdles that the working group knew they had to overcome to create a functioning force.

As noted, the MOD ruled out the deployment of British troops to maintain law and order. However, an unidentified Canadian army colonel on loan to the MOD authored a report suggesting the possibility of sending an observer force to Rhodesia to supervise the transition of power when the time came. He asserted that neither the Rhodesians nor the guerilla armies were prepared to maintain law and order and would have to be retrained. The key reason he cited for needing such an observer force was to safeguard the human rights of individuals on both sides. In order to maintain any semblance of impartiality, neither of the combatant forces could be left to sustain law and order unsupervised. He suggested that a British officer be appointed the commander of all the forces in the country and that a commonwealth observer force be empowered

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<sup>11</sup> Annette Seegers, "Revolutionary Armies of Africa: Mozambique and Zimbabwe," Chapter to *Military Power and Politics in Black Africa* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 129-165. The Armed Forces of Mozambique was a political extension of FRELIMO. They were considered a "revolutionary army" and were often pointed to as the forefront of the revolution.

<sup>12</sup> "Interview with Rhodesian Army Recruiting Officer," *Soldier of Fortune*, Spring 1977, 14-16. Foreign soldiers had been recruited into the Rhodesian Army since the UDI. They served on the same terms as any Rhodesian soldier, so they were not technically mercenaries; however, they were often seen as such by the international community and liberation movements.

to ensure that the transition process was peaceful.<sup>13</sup> At the time this report was published, it was ignored. The British government was more interested in exploring low cost options such as a UN observer mission rather than funding such missions on their own. However, as the end of the conflict approached HMG would be forced to reevaluate this option.

The final draft of the working group report was released on 20 December 1976. As the working group studied the problem, they became aware of two issues that would seriously endanger any possibility of success in Zimbabwe. If the guerilla armies were not satisfied with the agreement at the end of the conflict, they could simply leave some of their forces outside of the country rather than bring them in for integration. If this occurred, it would seriously threaten any security arrangement in Zimbabwe. There was also a real possibility that intertribal fighting could break out during the interim government period. There would have to be a balanced approach to preserving law and order so no particular tribal group would be favored (including the settlers).<sup>14</sup>

Even though the working group acknowledged that there had to be balanced representation in the new army, they were hesitant to get rid of the Rhodesian Army altogether. They felt that “the quality of training of the current Rhodesian forces [wa]s far superior to any African force...it [wa]s far better than any African force that might replace it.”<sup>15</sup> The working group felt that the RSF was the best choice to maintain law

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<sup>13</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), “Rhodesia: The Armed Forces and Public Service Interim Administration.”

<sup>14</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/295 Policy Including the Integration of the Armed Forces (Rhodesia), “Final Draft of the Working Groups Report, 20 December 1976,” 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4.

and order during the interim. In reference to the training of the new Army, the working group recommended three possible solutions: (1) training soldiers in the UK at British Army schools, (2) sending British officers and NCOs to serve on secondment to the Zimbabwean Army, or (3) sending specialists and technicians to Rhodesia to help train technical branches.<sup>16</sup> The notion of seconding officers was immediately ruled out. The difficulties with trying to manage British officers seconded to the Zambia Army during the UDI period were difficult enough to manage; the MOD did not want to repeat the experience with Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The most heavily favored option was a combination of sending specialists to Zimbabwe and bringing some trainees to the UK. The working group thought that if British Army specialists were sent to help train the new army, it would also open up the possibility of a renewal of defence sales to Zimbabwe. The British also thought that the cost of any specialists sent to train Zimbabwean soldiers could be paid for by the new Zimbabwean government. This, combined with the prospect of sales to the new country, made it theoretically possible for any training mission to Zimbabwe to be at best profitable, and at worst cost-neutral. The Zimbabwean Army that the working group envisioned was a slightly more Africanized version of the RSF. The group specifically noted that “the current forces [we]re too well trained to sacrifice them, they and the current structure should be maintained.”<sup>17</sup> The examples of Zambia and Kenya were particularly useful to the members of the working group. They looked at the process of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 17.

Africanization in Zimbabwe as a gradual process based on the training and fair treatment of both black and white soldiers and civil servants.

### Negotiating an army

The initial working group documents were produced with the authors having little to no idea of how the Rhodesians or the guerillas would react to a resolution of the conflict. By 1977, negotiations at Geneva between the warring factions had broken down. However, the British government had a better idea of what type of post-conflict settlement each side might accept. Additionally, the DS11 staff section had a unique perspective with regard to dealing with the RSF. Group Captain H. Davidson, a member of the working group, felt that once a ceasefire was arranged there should be a progressive disbanding of the forces on both sides. While this occurred, a Commonwealth force could be deployed to Zimbabwe to start rebuilding the military. GpCapt. Davidson felt that once the Commonwealth forces arrived, the only remaining units of any military force should be Engineering, Logistics, and Transportation units that could be used to form the foundation of the new Zimbabwean Army.<sup>18</sup> This method would facilitate a screening process that would allow for the commissioning of long-serving African SNCOs and WOs, the screening of former RSF members who might wish to reengage in the Zimbabwe Army, and a selective recruitment of guerillas. Like

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<sup>18</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 68/296 Rhodesia Policy, Memo from Gp Capt. H. Davidson Air Staff to Head of DS11, 2.

the previous plans that originated in the working group, this one assumed that the RSF, rather than the guerillas, would be used to form the majority of a new Zimbabwe Army.

However, the British would have had a difficult time convincing any of the warring parties to disband their forces. Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front refused to allow the disbandment of the RSF or the replacement of any officers with guerillas. Robert Mugabe was guarded in disclosing his views on the post-conflict military. However, he did indicate that he did not expect a complete disbandment of the RSF. Even so, Mugabe did expect the new Zimbabwe Army to be based on his own Patriotic Front forces. Abel Muzorewa also wanted guerillas to make up the majority of the new army, but wanted to retain some RSF units to counterbalance the possibility of a coup by PF elements. There was another important interest group in these negotiations: the presidents of the African states bordering Rhodesia. These Front Line Presidents wanted the entire RSF disbanded and an all-African force put in its place.<sup>19</sup>

The British were confronted with an unpleasant reality in 1977. They realized that they would not be able to control the military transition in Zimbabwe as they had in Kenya and Zambia. In Zimbabwe, the RSF did not hold a monopoly on the use of force (as the colonial military forces had in both of the previous examples). A number of planners in the FCO repeatedly asked the MOD how the establishment of the Army in Mozambique worked out, thinking that the British might use Mozambique as a model for Zimbabwe. Much to their disappointment, the MOD pointed out that no Portuguese

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 5. The Front Line States had suffered at the hands of the RSF. During the war the RSF sent forces into Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana to destroy guerilla bases and the local infrastructure.

troops remained in Mozambique after independence, so there was no need for any sort of integration process.<sup>20</sup>

After some initial posturing by both the Rhodesians and the guerillas, the British informed them that it was unreasonable for either side to expect the disbandment of the other's forces (particularly since neither side had been defeated in the field). After this point had been agreed upon, the British diplomatic focus turned to convincing guerilla leaders that during the interim administration the only force capable of maintaining law and order would be the RSF. Success on this point accomplished certain goals for the British: this would ensure that the basis for the new Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) would essentially be the RSF, and it placed the RSF in a position to be the primary training organization during the transition to independence.<sup>21</sup> The latter point, in particular, was important to the British government because it took the financial responsibility for training the ZNA off of the British.

The guerilla leaders were more willing to compromise on this issue than was Ian Smith. The British suggested that a British general take command of the ZNA during the transition and training period, as in Zambia. While Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe were at least open to discussing the idea, Smith firmly rejected it. Nkomo was a pragmatist; he had been a railway workers' union organizer before the war, and he was openly willing to accept an integrated ZNA. Mugabe kept his thoughts from the British. The only indication that the FCO had of his opinions was intelligence gathered from

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<sup>20</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2065 Military and Police Forces of Rhodesia (1977) "How did the transition work in Mozambique?"

<sup>21</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2065 Military and Police Forces of Rhodesia (1977) "Mr. Richards Trip to Africa," 1.

those around Mugabe.<sup>22</sup> By November 1977, the Rhodesian government seemed to be ready to compromise on certain security issues. The Commanders of the RSF, LtGen. John Hickman (Commander of the Rhodesian Army) and LtGen. Peter Walls (Commander of Combined Operations) were both open to the prospect of integrating the guerillas into the new ZNA. Naturally they wanted to maintain the overall integrity of the RSF, but the simple fact that they admitted the need for some integration was a major step.<sup>23</sup>

The MOD and the FCO were not used to having to negotiate the direction of a military integration. In Kenya the MOD and Colonial Office simply directed it. In Zambia the negotiations took place among the governments of the Central African Federation so that they could divide up the forces. The Colonial Office and the MOD controlled the actual training and integration of the Zambia Army. Up to this point, the British had not been faced with a situation where they were to be considered responsible while lacking real control. The British recognized to a certain degree how the experience in Zimbabwe was different from their past training missions, and as a result consulted other world powers. Field Marshal Lord Carver was appointed British Special Commissioner on Rhodesia in 1977, and he consulted the U.S. State Department on the creation of the ZNA. The Americans also felt that the guerilla armies were not up to the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 11/858 Talks about the Future of Rhodesia, Cable from Salisbury to FCO 3 NOV 1977.

task of maintaining law and order, nor did they think that they could even be considered real armies.<sup>24</sup>

The consultations were not limited to Western powers. The British Defence Advisor in Zambia consulted with the Zambian Defence Chief, General Kingsley Chinkuli. The Zambians were intimately familiar with the guerilla armies, having hosted them for a decade. Chinkuli thought that it was impossible for the new ZNA to be based on the structure used by the guerilla armies, agreeing that they had to adopt the British style of the RSF.<sup>25</sup> This view was clearly reflective of the Zambian experience. Chinkuli was a product of the British military system. As discussed in Chapter Two, Zambian military culture drew its traditions from the British military system. Regardless, this was exactly the type of advice that the British wanted to hear.

Based on the collective wisdom of the MOD, FCO, and consultations with other countries, Lord Carver put together a proposal for the formation of the ZNA. He asserted from the opening of the proposal that the British goal was “to produce an army that [wa]s truly national, impartial and efficient.”<sup>26</sup> Carver saw the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) battalions as the core of the new ZNA. He proposed that the force should be no more than 10,000 men. In addition to the technical units and supporting arms, there should be seven infantry battalions: four drawn from former guerillas, and three from the RAR battalions, and from new recruitment. Africans would be trained to fill open

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<sup>24</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2278 Zimbabwe National Army (1977), Letter from C.W. Squire, British Embassy Washington, D.C. to James Allan, Rhodesia Department FCO, 14 JAN 1978.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2278 Zimbabwe National Army (1977), Letter to Col. Reilly from W.E. Rous, 16 MAY 1978.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2278 Zimbabwe National Army (1977), Lord Carver’s proposal for the formation of the ZNA, 1.

positions in the technical and supporting armies, but these forces would remain largely unchanged. The Selous Scouts, Grey's Scouts, Rhodesian SAS, and Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) would all be disbanded. Additionally, all foreign members of the RSF would be discharged. Finally, National Service would be brought to an end and the existing TA replaced by a reserve element of the ZNA. The new reserve would consist of two parts: the Regular Army Reserve and the Zimbabwe National Guard. The Regular Army Reserve was to consist of 4,000 men to bring the regular element up to operational strength. The Zimbabwe National Guard was to be approximately 10,000 men distributed throughout the country, similar to the situation with the existing TA.<sup>27</sup>

Lord Carver saw the plan for the actual transition as unfolding in two distinct phases: first members of the guerilla armies would be assigned to units to be incorporated into the ZNA as either regular or reserve soldiers, and next eligible men in the RSF would terminate their engagements in the RSF and re-attest into the ZNA.<sup>28</sup> As had previously been the case, this plan kept the RSF mostly intact and absorbed some guerillas into its ranks. Lord Carver's proposal remained the basis for the British approach to the integration problem well into 1980. Even during the Lancaster House talks, the British plan changed very little from this 1978 proposal. However, Lord Carver was not there to see it through. He took up the position of Special Commissioner in January 1977, but in March 1978 he resigned. He had become increasingly frustrated by

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 5.

the lack of progress towards an independence agreement, and could no longer stand the stagnation.<sup>29</sup>

The FCO knew that the RSF could not retain all of the special operations units that it operated in 1978. The Selous Scouts and the Rhodesian SAS were feared by the guerilla forces for their ability to strike deep into Zambia or Mozambique, as well as for their ferocity in battle. The guerilla forces also felt that certain Rhodesian generals should not have a place in an independent Zimbabwe. LtGen. Peter Walls was chief among those commanders considered to be unacceptable. LtGen. Walls was a former SAS officer who had risen through the ranks of the Rhodesian Army commanded some of its crack units, and he was known as a hardcore Rhodesian Front supporter. The British hoped to make the transition process smoother by replacing Walls with a British commander. They first considered this possibility in July of 1977; yet again, they looked to their experience in Zambia. General Tommy Reid was the commander of the Zambia Army until his dismissal in 1970. With his experience in establishing a newly independent army, the FCO felt he was a prime candidate to command the ZNA.<sup>30</sup> Yet by the time the Lancaster House agreement was reached in December of 1979, LtGen. Walls was considered an appropriate choice for leader of the Zimbabwean forces, at least until a more permanent solution could be found. This demonstrated the paucity of choices available.

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<sup>29</sup> “Carver, (Richard) Michael Power, Baron Carver (1915–2001),” Hugh Beach in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, January 2005; online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/view/article/76553> (accessed July 24, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2278 Zimbabwe National Army (1977).

The British government's formal appraisal of the military integration process more or less ended with Lord Carver's report to the FCO, not because of any lack of interest but because Carver's plan seemed to be sound. Until a settlement in Rhodesia could actually be reached, there seemed to be no use in coming up with a more detailed plan. Between the release of Lord Carver's report and the Lancaster House talks, significant changes occurred in the Rhodesian situation. As discussed above in Chapter Three, the Rhodesian Army began commissioning African officers on an extremely limited basis in 1978 and 1979. Additionally, the Internal Settlement in 1979 with Bishop Abel Muzorewa stalled the international resolution of the problem for almost a year. As the parties finally came to the negotiation table at Lancaster House in 1979, the British prepared themselves to act as a small-scale peacekeeping force during the transition period between settlement and independent elections.<sup>31</sup>

#### Introducing the Commonwealth Monitoring Force

The warring parties came out of the Lancaster House conference with an agreement to return governing power to the British until free and fair elections could be held in Zimbabwe. The mission was given the name Operation AGILA. A warning

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<sup>31</sup> The Lancaster House Conference took place from 10 September to 15 December 1979, with the agreement being signed on 21 December 1979. The three warring parties, ZANU, ZAPU, and the Rhodesian Government, met to discuss the terms of a cease-fire and a pathway to independence. The conference was hosted by the FCO in London, and was presided over by Lord Carrington. One of the major issues that was addressed was Land Reform and the future of the settler community in independent Zimbabwe. A framework for the Zimbabwean constitution was written, and even though the guerilla movements were not in favor of the agreement as it was written the Presidents of the front line states (Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana) were tired of hosting the guerilla armies and pressured them to put an end to the conflict.

order was given to the British Army in November of 1979 indicating that they should be prepared to deploy a 300-man force to monitor the transition to majority rule in Zimbabwe. However, this number was based upon the assumption that the Rhodesians would provide all logistical and communications support for the British participation. However, when a four-man reconnaissance team left for Rhodesia in late November 1979, they discovered that the Rhodesians did not have the resources to support the British mission. Any support services that the British needed, they would have to bring with them. This lack of local support required the British to more than triple their force to 1,000 men.

The British did not have the capacity to fly all of the necessary vehicles and helicopters to Rhodesia, so they had to rely on U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy cargo planes that the U.S. government pledged to the operation. The monitoring effort would not have been possible without the contributions of troops from four Commonwealth nations, including: 159 Australians, 75 New Zealanders, 51 Kenyans and 24 Fijians. Due to the large Commonwealth contribution to the mission, the force was known as the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF), with MajGen. John Acland of the British Army in command. The CMF began to arrive in country on December 22, 1979, and soon thereafter were deployed to their respective assembly points. The mission at these assembly points was to allow guerilla forces to gather together during the interim period so the CMF could ensure they were not violating the ceasefire agreement or engaging in

election-related violence. During this period personnel from the CMF also monitored the RSF.<sup>32</sup>

The guerillas poured into the assembly points (or APs) by the thousands after the ceasefire began on December 28. The CMF personnel at the APs were given orders to welcome the guerillas and attempt to disarm them. In fact, anyone who was not armed was turned away. By January 9, 1980, there were 20,634 guerillas at APs around the country. By the time the CMF left the country there were roughly 22,000 men at the APs. When the CMF initially deployed, they assumed that each entity would be responsible for their own logistical support. The British brought enough logistics personnel to provide for the 1,300 men of the CMF. Yet they soon discovered that the guerillas at the APs had no logistical capability whatsoever. Additionally, the Rhodesians did not have the available personnel to support the APs. Therefore, the CMF and the British government became responsible for supplying, feeding, and administering the APs.<sup>33</sup>

The logistical needs at the APs became the overriding concern for the CMF for the remainder of its deployment. Food became one of the primary concerns of Op Agila. The guerillas who reported to the APs did so under the impression that they had won the war and were being housed there as the first step on their journey to becoming soldiers in the new Zimbabwean army. In part, this was because Robert Mugabe told the ZANLA fighters that anyone who wanted to be a soldier in the ZNA would have a place

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<sup>32</sup> J.H. Learmont, "Reflections from Rhodesia," *RUSI: Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Journal* 125 (December 1980), 50.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

there. Until there was some sort of constitutional change, however, the RSF was the only *de jure* military force in the country. Therefore, it was the force to which Lord Soames, the British Governor of Rhodesia, looked for the maintenance of law and order during the interim period. The guerillas challenged their status and asserted *de facto* equality with the RSF. As a part of this assertion they insisted upon better food and a role in maintaining law and order until the elections.<sup>34</sup>

This created a number of problems for the CMF and the future of the military integration process in Zimbabwe. According to the ceasefire accords agreed to at Lancaster House, the guerillas were supposed to turn in their weapons to centralized armories at the APs. Each of the guerilla armies, ZANLA and ZIPRA, sent liaison officers to work with the CMF both to bring the guerillas in and order them to disarm. Yet these liaison officers were often unsuccessful in convincing the guerillas to give up their arms. The guerillas were afraid that as soon as the CMF left the country, the RSF or one of the other guerilla armies would attack. Their fears were not unwarranted; violations of the ceasefire were common on both sides. However, the incidents were kept out of the press (for the most part) to maintain the fragile peace that had been achieved.<sup>35</sup>

The RSF attempted on numerous occasions to end the ceasefire. LtGen. Walls sent a cable to his commanders on January 19, 1980, the contents of which are still unknown, but some Rhodesian officers told the CMF that it would have brought an end to the ceasefire. Were it not for the intervention of the CMF officers at the various HQs,

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<sup>34</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 59.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Cable from MG Acland to MOD, SITREP for 24 JAN 1980.

the RSF commanders might have been tempted to implement LtGen. Walls's secret orders.<sup>36</sup> Even with the RSF provocations, the situation grew slightly less tense as the logistical conditions improved. However, the roughly 22,000 guerillas who reported to the APs during the ceasefire were only a fraction of the men that ZNALA and ZIPRA had under arms. Both parties kept portions of their forces outside the country in case hostilities resumed. There also were bands of guerillas who simply did not report to the APs. The RSF informed *The Times* about one such group that burnt a man to death in a village after the guerillas' demands for food were not heeded.<sup>37</sup> Such incidents were highlighted by the RSF but disavowed by the guerilla forces. The guerilla gangs were accustomed to operating in the bush with a great deal of autonomy; they seldom came into contact with a command element. However, the guerilla commanders were reluctant to admit that they only had limited control over their men.

Some elements of ZANLA and ZIPRA operated outside of the APs during the lead-up to the elections in February. There were accusations from all sides that electoral intimidation was occurring in the countryside. As a result, the CMF had to be very careful in the way it approached the situation. The fact that it was British led was evidence enough to some that the mission was biased and supportive of the white government. At various points when CMF observers made public statements about election tampering and intimidation by guerilla forces, both ZAPU and ZANU cried foul. The British Governor of Rhodesia, Lord Soames, made it clear that he had no

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>37</sup> *The Times*(London), January 4, 1980.

delusions about the way the elections would go, saying that “it would be impossible to hold an election in Southern Rhodesia, as in any other African country, which was completely free from intimidation.”<sup>38</sup>

Even so, the election went forward, and when all the votes were counted ZANU clearly won the parliamentary majority. Out of the 100 seats in the House of Assembly ZANU won fifty-seven, ZAPU twenty, the Rhodesian Front twenty, and Muzorewa’s party called the United African National Congress (UANC) three. While the British government had hoped that a more moderate government would be elected, they were eager to divest themselves of the entire situation. The CMF observers declared the election fair and a new government under the leadership of Robert Mugabe was formed. The official date of independence was set for April 18, 1980. The CMF was scheduled to leave the country before the end of March. At that time, there were still three armies present in Zimbabwe that had hardly begun to merge into one.

#### Training a new force

As we have seen, the British had intended to allow the RSF to take the lead in forming and training the new ZNA. The FCO and MOD had agreed that the UK was only capable of offering token financial support to the effort. Yet much of this planning was done in a vacuum, and prior to the British acquiring any real knowledge regarding the conditions on the ground in Zimbabwe. During the Lancaster House Conference, both ZANLA and ZIPRA portrayed themselves as experienced and efficient fighting

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<sup>38</sup> *The Times*(London), January 30, 1980.

forces. While ZIPRA did, in fact, have a well-trained and equipped conventional brigade, most of the guerilla fighters were ill-supplied and equipped. The CMF was faced with providing these men even the most basic supplies, such as shoes and clothing. Some of the guerilla fighters did not even know how to break down their weapons, let alone clean them.

The British had also planned on allowing the RSF to take the lead role in supervising the training and integration of the new ZNA, when the time came. After the elections in February, it was clear that integration plans needed to be put in place if Zimbabwe was to have one official armed force by the date of independence. The results of the elections frustrated the plans of the FCO and the MOD. Since ZANU won a resounding parliamentary victory, it was fair to assume that they would insist on playing a large role in the country's new defence arrangements. As Mugabe began forming his new government, he made it clear that he did not trust anyone else with the defence minister's portfolio. In addition to his role as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, he also acted as the Minister of Defence. Reporting directly to Mugabe was the Joint High Command (JHC). This temporary body was made up of the commander of ZIPRA, Lookout Masuka, the commander of ZANLA, Solomon Mutuswa, the commander of the Rhodesian Army, LtGen. Andrew Mclean, and the chair of the JHC and commander of the Combined Operations Headquarters, LtGen. Peter Walls.<sup>39</sup>

The intent of the JHC was to establish a framework for an integration program and a unified command structure. However, the JHC quickly turned into a forum for

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<sup>39</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A.

deception and stalling tactics. Even though Musuka and Mutuswa did not have formal ranks, they were granted lieutenant general status. This made getting anything accomplished in the meetings extremely difficult; even the chair of the JHC was the same rank as all of the members. If one person did make a decision, LtGen. Walls did not have any authority to force any of the other members to comply.<sup>40</sup> At first this was simply an irritating problem, but as time went on it developed into a debilitating issue.

In February the CMF and the RSF began training roughly 1,200 guerillas from both forces. The training was rudimentary; the RSF was put in the lead, with the CMF monitors supervising and assisting with planning. The goal of this initial training push was simply to have some trained Africans available other than those in the Rhodesian African Rifles. It was not coordinated with any larger training plan or with the FCO and MOD's preliminary plan. There was relatively little oversight or reporting on this initial effort because it was viewed as an RSF operation rather than a CMF one.<sup>41</sup> While this ill-led training program got underway, the British finally began sending officers to assess what kind of training the new Zimbabwean forces needed.

MajGen. Kenneth Perkins, the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff for Operations, visited Zimbabwe in March of 1980 to assess the needs of the UK military assistance program. He met with Robert Mugabe on March 14, 1980 to set the stage for his visit to the various defence establishments in the country. While Mugabe was a shrewd politician, he was not well versed in military matters; in many meetings he did

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<sup>40</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2801 Zimbabwe Military Policy General Walls Part B, 31 July 1980 from British High Commission Salisbury to FCO "Zimbabwe Military Assistance."

<sup>41</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 17 MAR 1980 Visit of ACDS(OPS) MG Perkins to Rhodesia.

more listening than speaking. One request he did make in his first meeting with MajGen. Perkins was that the ZNA be trained according to British standards. However, in this same discussion Mugabe pointed out that the two guerilla commanders would be inclined to seek assistance elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, both Mutuswa and Musuka had received their military training from courses in the Soviet Union and were aware that both the USSR and China were offering no-cost training and low-cost equipment. Mugabe had the power as both PM and Defence Minister to decide where Zimbabwe would turn for military assistance, and he used his position to play on British fears that Zimbabwe would turn into another African satellite of the communist bloc. Lord Soames himself pointed out that in order to counter both the communist threat and the specter of South African power, the British would “continue to need as many friends as we can muster in black Africa – and the Third World.”<sup>43</sup> While the British were not keen on paying for the retraining and restructuring of the ZNA, they were more concerned about losing even more influence in southern Africa.

MajGen. Perkins proposed a relatively limited aid package to Zimbabwe. The major element of this aid package was a training team of between fifty and seventy men. The training team would be responsible solely for training Zimbabwean instructors, who could then train the rank-and-file of the ZNA. This training team would also be prepared to give advice on the amalgamation process, as well as open up some courses in the UK

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<sup>42</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 14 MAR 1980 from Salisbury to FCO #1059 “Rhodesia Military Assistance.”

<sup>43</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 24 MAR 1980 from A. Godson to the FCO Defence Department.

to selected Zimbabwean students.<sup>44</sup> The white military leadership also offered numerous suggestions. The Zimbabwe Air Force commander Air Marshall Frank Mussell wanted to reestablish a relationship with the Royal Air Force so that he might begin sending personnel to the UK for training. However LtGen. Walls, ever the pessimist, felt that after the election whites would resign from the army in great numbers, and insisted that the British needed to do something to forestall this. He proposed the development of a personnel exchange program with the British Army to provide some incentive for white officers to stay in the ZNA.<sup>45</sup>

From past experience in Kenya and Zambia, the British knew that staff work was a weakness of the newly independent African armies. In order to prevent this problem also from occurring in Zimbabwe, Perkins proposed that the British run a three-week accelerated Staff College course for officers of the new ZNA. This course was intended to help integrate guerilla officers into the conventional military planning process, as well as to be a cost-saving measure for the British. If the Africans were Staff College—trained, a significant number of British officers would not need to be loaned to Zimbabwe to run the ZNA (which had been the case in Zambia).<sup>46</sup> When Perkins corresponded directly with the former guerilla commanders Masuku and Mujuru, he suggested that basic officer and staff training should occur in Zimbabwe and that only selected individuals should be allowed to attend Sandhurst. Additionally, the UK would

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 14 MAR 1980 from Salisbury to FCO #1059 “Rhodesia Military Assistance.”

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 17 MAR 1980 from MG Acland to Lord Soames.

provide the ZNA with significant guidance in establishing a military academy and staff college. This point in itself is a remarkable departure from the way the British had trained African armies over the previous two decades.

In all the previous examples mentioned in this study, the British insisted that new officers should either be long serving NCOs or commissioned through Sandhurst. Historically, this had been seen as the best way to maintain British influence over the independent armies. If officers were indoctrinated into British military culture as second lieutenants, they would be predisposed to accept British military assistance throughout their careers. Sandhurst civics training was another method used to ensure that an army remained apolitical after independence. While there were practical reasons for the decision to abandon this model, it was still contrary to the desired British goal in Zimbabwe. As was the case in the early 1960s when Zambia was sending officers to Sandhurst, there simply were not enough spots available to accommodate the country's need. Previously, both Zambia and Kenya had made up for the lack of Sandhurst spots by sending men to the Mons Officer Cadet School, a six-month long commissioning course. However, the Cadet School closed in 1972 when Sandhurst transitioned to a forty-four week curriculum from a two year training model. However, unlike Zambia and Kenya, the MOD made no effort to make additional spots available for the ZNA at Sandhurst.

MajGen. Perkins was not hopeful at the conclusion of his visit to Zimbabwe. He had travelled to Zimbabwe to observe the training that was already underway, and he was not impressed. He pointed out that the ZIPRA recruits were doing far better than

those from ZANLA, a common view among the British and Rhodesian officers. He also pointed out that morale in the RSF was extremely low; many of the men were concerned about their careers and pensions. This problem presented two immediate challenges: the possibility of an abrupt loss of technical knowledge, and entire units of the ZNA defecting to South Africa.<sup>47</sup> Perkins was also aware of the other critical challenge facing the UK mission to Zimbabwe: funding. Even the small mission that the MOD envisioned was projected to cost £2.5 million. However, the total budget allocated to UK military assistance around the world was only £5.189 million. Of that, only £200,000 had been allocated to Zimbabwe.<sup>48</sup> When the Overseas military assistance budget was planned, the presumption was that the Zimbabwean government would pay for the assistance package. As a result, the British government only allocated enough money to pay for the Zimbabweans to attend certain courses in the UK. This budgeting issue was a consistent problem for the MOD and the FCO. British policy interests necessitated a significant training package, yet the necessary funding was just not available in the age of austerity that the British found themselves in.

Even so, the MOD continued making plans for a British-funded training mission. The FCO and Lord Soames were left to petition the Exchequer and the Prime Minister's office for additional funds. MajGen. Acland, the CMF commander, projected that the

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<sup>47</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 17 MAR 1980 Visit of ACDS(OPS) MG Perkins, to Rhodesia. This was a legitimate fear on the part of the British and a situation that did occur on a number of occasions. The Pathfinder Company of the South African 44 Parachute Brigade was made up almost exclusively of former members of the Rhodesian SAS. The South African Army established the 3 Reconnaissance Commandos when most of the Selous Scouts defected. The Selous Scouts' colors were displayed in the 3 Reconnaissance Commandos officers' mess until 1994.

<sup>48</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 17 MAR 1980 memo from the Defence Department FCO on the "Military Assistance Programme 1980/81."

training mission in Zimbabwe would be at least two years. On March 2<sup>nd</sup> the CMF pulled back all of their forces to the Air Force base in Salisbury in preparation for their return home. The only remaining British soldiers in the field were forty men who had volunteered to remain behind as an *ad hoc* training team. The CMF mission ended on March 16<sup>th</sup> when the main body of the force left the country. However, by the end of the month it was clear that the monitoring force had left too soon. The training team left behind reported that the situation at the training camps was at best tense. The guerilla trainees felt they were being mistreated by white Rhodesian trainers, and on a number of occasions engaged in small-scale mutinies.<sup>49</sup> The British trainers often were required to serve as peacekeepers in addition to their duties as training officers.

While the FCO was concerned about the problems with military integration, they were more concerned with the wider security issues in the country. Even though whites in Zimbabwe had lost political control, they retained almost all commercial power. The FCO was concerned that if the whites began fleeing the country in large numbers, the economy would collapse and Zimbabwe would be an easy target for communist influence. As a result, the FCO wanted to ensure that whites in Zimbabwe felt that they had a future in the country. The primary conduits for ensuring this attitude were the security forces. The British felt that if white morale in the security forces was high, that confidence would translate to the white civilian community. Consequently, the FCO made it clear to the MOD and MajGen. Perkins that supporting the confidence of the

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<sup>49</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 31 MAR 1980 from MG Fusdon to MOD #13D/Z7A.

white community and the emergence of a viable amalgamated army were directly related.<sup>50</sup>

With this idea in mind, Lord Soames made it clear that the first six months of independence would be critical. He estimated that between April 30 and June 30, twenty-five percent of the white officers in the army would resign as would fifty percent of the white SNCOs. Most of those officers were in key technical fields that could not be replaced internally; their absence would put the very fabric of the army at risk. The MOD had proposed that a team of fifty-eight British trainers replace the *ad hoc* CMF team. Soames asserted that this number was too small to make any real difference considering the number of men that needed to be trained. His great fear, like that of many other British policy makers, was that the Zimbabweans would look to Eastern Europe to make up the difference.<sup>51</sup>

By Independence Day, April 18, 1980, there was still no singular army and even less agreement on how the amalgamation process should proceed. MajGen. Edward Fursdon, the military advisor to Lord Soames, painted a grim picture upon his departure from Zimbabwe. He pointed out that the *ad hoc* training team had a particularly difficult task and that the former Rhodesian Army personnel were at best not very helpful, but at worst were actively causing problems. However, the guerillas were also a source of constant worry for the trainers. Not only did they occasionally mutiny, but they also were terribly undisciplined. The JHC had achieved very little by this point in time. The

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<sup>50</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 11 APR 1980 Minutes of an MOD meeting on Military Assistance.

<sup>51</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 18 APR 1980 from Lord Soames to the FCO.

only issue they had managed to agree upon was that the army should be organized using a British framework. Largely, this was because the RSF was already structured in this way, and the guerilla commanders had no alternative structure to propose.<sup>52</sup>

### Crisis of command

The euphoria of the independence celebrations was short lived. Even though the country officially was independent, it was no closer to genuine stability. On May 9, 1980 Margaret Thatcher met with Robert Mugabe in London to discuss the future of British involvement in Zimbabwe. During the meeting Mugabe praised the efforts of the RSF and their senior commanders, pointing out that they had accepted the new government and were willing to stay on as long as the government needed them. He claimed that the real problem in the integration process was the former ZIPRA guerillas. He cited acts of sabotage within the country and insinuated that these ZAPU men were preparing to overthrow the government. Mugabe also complained that the integration effort was not going well. He asserted that the Rhodesian commanders had been too harsh in the beginning and had lost their credibility. He begged Mrs. Thatcher for more trainers to help build up the ZNA as quickly as possible. While Mrs. Thatcher said she was open to the possibility of sending a larger team, she made no promises; she did, however, ask the MOD to look into it.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2805 Military Assistance Programme 1980/81 Part A, 20 APR 1980 from MG Fursdon to FCO.

<sup>53</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, "Memo from Private Secretary PMs Office, 9 MAY 1980 On the meeting with Robert Mugabe."

Supporting the new government in Zimbabwe was a priority for the Thatcher government. Mrs. Thatcher knew that Mugabe could very easily look to the Chinese or the Soviet Union for military support. Naturally, HMG wanted to limit the amount of communist influence in the region. More importantly, though, the British wanted to prevent communist forces from staging on the border of South Africa. The involvement of Cuban, Russian, and East German forces in Angola compounded the paranoia of the South African defence establishment. If Zimbabwe became host to more communist forces, there was a possibility of an even larger regional conflict developing. This prospect was even more dire in light of the South African development of a working nuclear weapon in 1979.<sup>54</sup>

With this in mind, the MOD went to work to find officers and senior NCOs to support an enlarged training mission. The goal was to increase the size of the training mission from fifty-eight to 127 personnel as soon as possible. While this seemed like a relatively small number of soldiers, and certainly was far fewer than the number required by OP ANGLIA, the type of men they needed were in short supply. Battalion Advisor positions were the most critical to fill. The ideal candidates for these positions were majors who had finished a period of company command, served on a battalion staff and, if possible, had passed Staff College. Unfortunately, officers of this description were in short supply in the Army and any reassignment would result in an operational shortfall elsewhere. Even though the Army had expressed its manning concerns to the MOD,

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<sup>54</sup> David Albright, "South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program," *MIT Security Studies Program*, March 2001, [http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed\\_archives01spring/albright.htm](http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives01spring/albright.htm)

LtGen. John Stanier, Vice Chief of the General Staff (VCGS), made it clear that regardless of any manning concerns, the Zimbabwe BMATT was a national commitment of high priority. The British Army's goal became having all additional men in place by October 8, 1980.<sup>55</sup>

MajGen. Fursdon returned to Britain in early June. His time as Lord Soames's military advisor was his last military assignment prior to retirement. However, before he left the Army he met with the VCGS to advise him on a way to move forward in Zimbabwe. Fursdon reiterated the difficulties that the BMATT would continue to face in Zimbabwe, and focused particularly on the deadlock within the JHC. Without any decisions coming out of the JHC, it would be impossible for the men on the ground to set any sort of policy or blue print in place to provide for the future needs of the mission. The only issue the JHC had agreed upon was that the ZNA would be composed of four infantry brigades with support services, and four special units, including: a parachute regiment, commando regiment, horse mounted unit, and SAS unit. The JHC had not come up with an integration plan and had left it to the BMATT to propose a training scheme.

The urgency of Mugabe's requests for training assistance and the lack of funds available narrowed down the training options. Fursdon recommended that the BMATT run three four-week courses concurrently: one for senior leaders (majors and lieutenant colonels), one for junior officers (lieutenants and captains), and one for NCOs. At the

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<sup>55</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, "Loose Minute, 22 May 1980 written by the Vice Chief of the General Staff to BMATT(Zimbabwe)."

end of their respective courses the graduates could meet up to form the leadership element of a battalion. They would join the rank-and-file of the battalion and lead them through a four-week basic training period that would involve minimal British participation. This method of training became known as the “sausage machine.” Ideally, it would take roughly eight weeks to train a new battalion. While units were waiting to enter the “sausage machine,” they would participate in the Soldiers Engaged in Economic Development scheme and thus spend their time working on farms and in industry.<sup>56</sup> This eight-week training scheme only applied to infantry soldiers. Specialists such as cooks, clerks, signalers, and drivers would be trained concurrently but in separate courses. This concept was met with little resistance in the JHC, and with no other options available the scheme was put forward by Zimbabwean officials. Soon after, it was implemented as the BMATT's training scheme.

As these plans were being finalized, the BMATT and ZNA were faced with a fresh challenge. LtGen. Peter Walls had promised Mugabe that he would continue in his position through independence to provide some continuity, and encourage former RSF members to stay on in the ZNA. However, by July of 1980 Walls was hinting that his retirement was quickly approaching. The question arose, then, of who would command the Zimbabwean forces after Walls left? The British felt that the situation was so fragile between ZIPRA and ZANLA that the appointment of someone from either of those two groups would be disastrous. By the same token, the British were not sure how the

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<sup>56</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, “Loose Minute, 22 May 1980 written by the Vice Chief of the General Staff to BMATT(Zimbabwe).”

Zimbabweans would take the appointment of another Rhodesian officer to the position. That summer, Mugabe mentioned to the British High Commissioner that he might initially be interested in having a British general fill the position after Walls left.<sup>57</sup>

The placement of a British general at the head of a newly independent force was not a unique idea. The army had provided British commanders to African forces since the process of decolonization had begun. This was the case in Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and many other former colonial possessions. Lord Carrington and Mrs. Thatcher were both open to the prospect of placing a British general in command of the force. One of their main concerns with the plan, though, was the prospect of British responsibility for the actions of the Zimbabwean military. If a British general commanded the force and the Zimbabwean government decided to become involved in a war with the South Africans, the British government would be thrust into the middle of the conflict. They also would be saddled with unwanted responsibility if there were any breakdowns in order in Zimbabwe. While Lord Carrington did consider the possibility of the appointment of a general from a commonwealth nation, he concluded that the resulting drop in white morale would be even more damaging. Therefore, Carrington asked the MOD to look into the possibility of appointing a British general to take Walls's place. He hoped that the MOD would be able to find a retired officer who would be able to fill the

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<sup>57</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, From Lord Carrington to SoS for Defence, "Zimbabwe: Command of the Armed Forces." 18 July 1980.

position on a contract basis; this would officially distance HMG from the events in Zimbabwe.<sup>58</sup>

The MOD moved quickly in finding acceptable candidates for the job in Zimbabwe. They immediately agreed with Carrington's assessment of the situation and had identified at least three candidates for the position by August 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>59</sup> General Edmund Bramall, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) of the British Army, visited Zimbabwe in August; after touring the country he met with Mugabe, who expressed his frustration regarding the lack of progress in the amalgamation process: a problem he attributed to the former RSF officers. When Gen. Bramall mentioned that they had come up with some possible candidates to replace LtGen. Walls, Mugabe toned down his enthusiasm for British assistance. He said he needed more time to consider the matter, and also indicated that he was now thinking of asking other commonwealth nations to provide commander candidates. He claimed he needed another two weeks to think about what he needed to do.

Some in the British High Commission felt that Mugabe was having trouble pushing the idea of a British commander through the ZANU Central Committee. However, it is more likely that he was buying time with the British to figure out what alternatives he could find to a British officer while still drawing on British training resources. Mugabe alluded to the fact that he was delaying in a conversation with Gen. Bramall, when he said that he might not even nominate a successor to LtGen. Walls until

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, PRO, DEFE 13/1415 Defence Policy Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, From MOD to FCO 21 July 1980, "Zimbabwe: Command of the Armed Forces."

all of the force commanders had a better attitude towards the amalgamation process.<sup>60</sup> In late July and early August the FCO hoped to convince LtGen. Walls to stay on as long as possible, offering even to pay for his leave expenses. While overtures were made to Walls, the MOD continued to look for retired British officers to take the position, should Mugabe make up his mind to accept one. The MOD was able to narrow down the list to three potential candidates of the proper rank and experience. However, by the first week of August all three had declined the opportunity.<sup>61</sup>

On August 14<sup>th</sup> LtGen. Walls gave an interview on South African TV stating that he did not believe that majority rule in Zimbabwe would succeed, and that there was still a very high probability of civil war breaking out again in the country. This was the last straw for Mugabe; he had tolerated Walls's demands and obstructionist attitude because Zimbabwe lacked experienced generals. However, Mugabe would not tolerate public disloyalty from a military commander. Walls was immediately placed on the retired list, and the ZANU government used the Emergency Powers Act to bar Walls from returning to Zimbabwe. Walls's abrupt departure from the JHC left a significant power void. With this turn of events in mind, the MOD made it clear that they were willing to offer up a serving officer. However, Mugabe seemed deaf to this suggestion. Rather than immediately fill the position with a ZANLA officer, Mugabe insisted on leaving the

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<sup>60</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2801 Zimbabwe Military Policy General Walls Part B, 31 JUL 1980 From Salisbury to FCO "Zimbabwe Military Integration."

<sup>61</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2801 Zimbabwe Military Policy General Walls Part B, 12 AUG 1980 Memo to Sir L. Allison "Replacement of Gen. Walls."

position vacant.<sup>62</sup> The JHC meetings were now to be led by Alan Page, the Permanent Secretary for Defence, until the new ZNA commander could be appointed.

### Playing the game

The back and forth between Mugabe and the FCO regarding Walls's replacement became the standard Zimbabwean strategy: delaying the British while appearing to remain interested, in big part because of the British sphere of influence. All the while, Robert Mugabe shopped around for military assistance and neglected to mention it to the British, unless he could use it as leverage to obtain concessions. During the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting Mugabe had held with Mrs. Thatcher, he assured her that Zimbabwe was looking only to the British for military assistance. By that point he had already been approached by the Nigerians, who had offered a training team. In June of 1980, a Nigerian military delegation covertly visited Zimbabwe to assess the situation and write up a military assistance proposal. Through various intelligence channels, by the end of July the British managed to acquire a copy of the report. Not only had the delegation met with Mugabe but they also met with Gen. Solomon Mujuru, the ZANLA commander. Both the Nigerian visit and the meeting between the Nigerians, Mugabe, and Mujuru were kept secret from the rest of the JHC.

The Nigerians had come to evaluate the possibility of training ZNA and ZAF officers. However, when they arrived Mugabe asked if they could send a group of

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<sup>62</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2801 Zimbabwe Military Policy General Walls Part B, 19 AUG 1980 BMATT to MOD Cable #1355.

instructors to train around 12,000 soldiers by December of 1980. Since the Nigerians had not expected this request, they told Mugabe they would have to take the request back to the Nigerian government for consideration. It was not only with the British that Mugabe was being duplicitous. He told the Nigerian delegation that had had told the British he was asking for Nigerian assistance, even though he had done nothing of the sort.<sup>63</sup> In the short term, the Nigerian delegation could not promise much. Training pilots for the ZAF would take between two and three years. However, the Nigerians were able to accommodate the training requirements of some 100 ZANLA officer candidates at the Nigerian Defence Academy. The course was scheduled to begin the first week in July and run until the first week of December.<sup>64</sup>

The Nigerian Defence delegation recommended that the government support Mugabe's request for a military training team. However, since the British had agreed to increase the size of the BMATT Mugabe backed away from his efforts to find a Nigerian training team. Of course, this did not keep him from sending additional ZANLA troops to Nigeria for military training without informing the British or the JHC. The training program did not progress well, not simply because of a lack of instructors but also due to a lack of agreement on how the Army should be run. In June, over 500 former guerillas were imprisoned for mutinying against their trainers at Llewellyn Barracks. A battalion of the former Rhodesian African Rifles was used to put down the mutiny.<sup>65</sup> The former

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<sup>63</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2807 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part C, From British High Commissioner Lagos to FCO, 29 July 1980.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2807 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part C, "Report of Military Delegation to Zimbabwe, 5 June 1980," By Brig. IA Bako, Nigerian Army.

<sup>65</sup> Nicholas Ashford, "Creation of Zimbabwe Army Held Up," *The Times*, 6 June 1980.

guerillas found the official forms of training extremely taxing. Often they simply refused to wake up for morning physical training, or to perform any sort of labor detail. Even the potential officers did not want to do any additional work beyond what was required of the rank-and-file soldiers.<sup>66</sup> During the war these men had operated with a considerable degree of independence; now they were being asked to adhere to a strict system of discipline. Many also lacked the education necessary to perform as part of a modern military force. Roughly twenty-five percent of the former guerillas were completely illiterate; only forty percent spoke English (at a very basic level).<sup>67</sup> Of the 500 former guerillas who had mutinied, 400 were discharged; these men had been part of the total 1,200 soldiers who had been trained up to that point. Clearly this was the type of setback that Mugabe was referring to in his complaints about a slow integration process.

The escapade with the Nigerians was the first of many for the Mugabe regime. The Zimbabwean officer candidates left for Nigeria on July 6<sup>th</sup>; all were former ZANLA fighters. British intelligence and the FCO monitored the progress of the training course and discovered that in addition to the one hundred officer candidates, twenty ZANLA officers would be attending the next two Nigerian Staff College courses.<sup>68</sup> The Nigerian government was extremely secretive about the training of Zimbabweans at their Defence Academy; however, the British were not particularly concerned. The British Defence Advisor in Lagos said of the Nigerian Army, “[they] have an inflated idea of their own capabilities. Therefore apart from CSC[Command and Staff College] the level of

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<sup>66</sup> A British instructor quoted in Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 106.

<sup>67</sup> R.A. Boys, “BMATT Zimbabwe,” *Journal of the Royal Artillery* 109 (1982), 22.

<sup>68</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2807 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part C, From British Defence Advisor Salisbury to British Defence Advisor Lagos, “Training of ZNA Personnel in Nigeria.”

instructive expertise will not be high.”<sup>69</sup> The Zimbabweans later learned that they also should not expect too much from the Nigerian Army. By October, the Zimbabwean officer candidates had finished the basic course at the Nigerian Defence Academy and were commissioned second lieutenants in the ZNA. However, even the ex-ZANLA fighters were appalled by the conditions and training they received in Nigeria. These men stayed on in Nigeria for another three months for the Platoon Commanders Course at the Nigerian School of Infantry, but the damage had been done. After their experience, the Zimbabweans had little interest in an increased partnership with the Nigerians.<sup>70</sup>

Faced with competition for influence, the British upped the ante slightly by increasing the number of liaison visits by Zimbabwean officers to British Army schools in the UK. The British also agreed to attach nine Zimbabwean officers and NCOs to British regiments for one month each. The commandant of the ZNA School of Infantry was flown to Britain to visit Sandhurst to help him formulate a blueprint for the Zimbabwe Military Academy. Zimbabwean personnel were allotted spaces in a variety of courses in the UK. These courses included the Signal Officer Course, Officer Engineering Mechanical Course, Junior Regimental Officer Course, and Parachute

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<sup>69</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2807 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part C, From Lagos to BRITDEF ZIM, 1 Sept. 1980. The British still had instructors at the Nigerian Command and Staff College in 1980. The Defence Academy, however, had long since been completely taken over by Nigerian personnel and apparently the standards of performance had significantly dropped.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From BRITDEF Lagos to MOD, 27 Oct. 1980.

Jumping Instructor Course, to name a few.<sup>71</sup> The British government had to find ways to remain competitive, particularly because the security situation in Zimbabwe had not improved since independence.

#### A plan takes shape

Security incidents in Zimbabwe had actually increased since the April independence ceremonies. The withdrawal of the CMF, as well as the disbandment of the RSF Territorial Force and the BSAP Field Reserve, left many areas of the country with an extremely limited security presence. In some parts of the country guerillas who had not reported to the Assembly Point took responsibility for maintaining law and order. Their definition of law and order often ended up looking suspiciously like political terror, intimidation of opponents, and retribution for whites and ZAPU supporters. When the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) attempted to reassert control in many of these areas, they were attacked by ZANU forces.<sup>72</sup> By the end of August policemen in the Northeastern region of Zimbabwe were regularly being ambushed and sustaining casualties.<sup>73</sup>

By September 1<sup>st</sup> there were 3,000 former guerillas absorbed into the ZNA who had completed basic training. These men made up the first three battalions. An

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<sup>71</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, "Application for Permission to Release Classified Information to Another Country, 22 Oct. 1980."

<sup>72</sup> The ZRP was the new name for the BSAP. The force was renamed in July of 1980. There was no amalgamation of forces as there had been with the military. A great deal of the BSAP had been black prior to the conflict so it was far easier to Africanize the force. White officers were retained for the time being but asked to retire at their earliest opportunity.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2807 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part C, From BRITDEF Salisbury to MODUK 29 AUG 1980, SITREP No. 23 (23-30 AUG).

additional 1,900 remained in training but would eventually form the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions. By October 30<sup>th</sup> the BMATT expected to have an additional 3,250 men trained and formed into the four remaining battalions. The additional 650 men who would form the Parachute Regiment and 400 who would compose the Air Force Regiment would finish their training at the same time. While on the surface it seemed like the BMATT was making excellent progress, there were still 14,500 men taking part in Operation SEED, 7,047 ZIPRA men at APs, and 14,078 ZANLA men at APs.<sup>74</sup> What compounded the problem was that Robert Mugabe had promised a place in the Army to any guerilla fighter who wanted one. To compound the difficulties even more, there simply were no more tents or buildings available in the country to house the large number of men being brought into the ZNA.

The logistical problems in Zimbabwe continued to mount as both personnel and equipment were shipped into the country from old guerilla bases in both Zambia and Mozambique. In September of 1980 the ZNA received a large shipment of heavy equipment given to ZIPRA by the USSR. This shipment included T34 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and artillery pieces.<sup>75</sup> This presented a new set of challenges to the ZNA such as how to train on and maintain such a wide variety of equipment, especially since the technical manuals provided were written in several different languages. This was also a challenge for the BMATT. Major R.A. Boys, who was a member of the team that trained 1Field Regiment, Zimbabwe Artillery, pointed out:

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

This has proved a very interesting and demanding job. The regiment has 32 British 25-Pounders and 40 Soviet M76 guns. This combination, together with the different command and control philosophies, certainly has forced the instructors to return to basic principles. As an example one only has to consider the optics. The British dial sights (dated 1919) are in degrees, the compasses in 6,400 mils and the Soviet dial sights in 6,000 mils. The author can also testify personally to the problem of translating Rumanian and Czechoslovakian firing tables into a common format based on 25-pounder computation drills.<sup>76</sup>

This problem was not limited to the artillery; most of the British personnel had to learn about the Eastern Bloc equipment as they taught the ZNA soldiers how to use it.

In an effort to increase the capability of the ZNA to provide for itself and manage its own logistics, BMATT began a quartermaster course in September of 1980. The course was four weeks in length and intended to provide a basic understanding of supply management. However, the course would not succeed in turning the men into the logistics professionals the ZNA so desperately needed. At the same time, to accommodate the incredible excess of soldiers that the ZNA was taking in, the government announced that they would house at least 17,000 ex-guerillas in private homes in Salisbury. This decision came from outside the military chain of command. Most of the 17,000 men to be housed were former ZANLA fighters who would be allowed to keep their weapons with them.<sup>77</sup> This plan was of tremendous concern to both the white population and the ZAPU party members. Mugabe's order to position 17,000 armed men loyal to ZANU in the capital did not suggest an environment of reconciliation and unity. The move was meant only to secure the ZANU government in

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<sup>76</sup> Boys, "BMATT Zimbabwe," 23.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From BRITDEF Salisbury to MODUK SITREP No. 24 (31 AUG-12 SEP80).

its place of power. During the formation of the ZNA battalions, battalion commanders were selected based on merit and performance in the leaders course. The former ZIPRA members consistently out-performed the former ZANLA fighters and therefore were far more often selected to command the ZNA battalions.<sup>78</sup> Clearly, Mugabe wanted a ZANLA security force prepared to defend the government against any possible ZANU or RSF-concocted coup.

The logistical problems that the ZNA faced were only one component of their consistent growing pains. The JHC continued to stagnate, even without Walls's presence. LtGen. Sandy Mclean, the commander of what had been the Rhodesian Army, was tasked with temporarily chairing the committee. However, his negative and sometimes despondent attitude did not improve the situation. This attitude was contagious among the white officers; Brig. Palmer predicted that there would be a substantial exodus of white officers between October and December of 1980. This would create such a significant skill deficit in the army that the BMATT would not be able to resolve the situation for several years. There was a group of 'young Turks,' lieutenant colonels who were dedicated to making it work, but the old guard regularly brushed their good ideas and recommendations aside.<sup>79</sup>

The drain of white personnel combined with the stagnation of the JHC gave ZANLA the opening they needed to assert their influence in the defence forces. Mujuru increasingly asserted his authority and freely stated that he believed that before long

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<sup>78</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From Brig. Palmer to Gen. Bramall, "Report on the Future of BMATT, 5 SEP 1980," 2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1.

ZANLA would be in control of the armed forces. He continued to make side deals with the Nigerians and other parties outside of the knowledge of the JHC. He also regularly encouraged whites to leave the army over the course of the next six months. Apparently he did not understand that the skills of the white servicemen and officers in technical arms were one of a handful of things keeping the ZNA from collapsing in on itself.<sup>80</sup> Mujuru clearly relied on the contributions of other nations to give the ZNA the skills it needed to remain a functioning force. He was often very candid with Brig. Palmer about his plans and goals; he seemed to put great faith in the idea that Nigeria would eventually come in and take over the training of the entire army. It was a commonly-held belief among the ZANLA commanders that the British had clear neo-colonial ambitions, and were attempting to reassert control over Zimbabwe. These commanders clearly did not understand that the British reluctance to commit resources to Zimbabwe was a sign of shrinking British power in the region.

As Mujuru expanded his control, Lookout Masuko, the former ZIPRA commander, grew tired of Mujuru's backroom dealings. He even considered walking out of the JHC altogether. Palmer felt that during September of 1980, ZIRPA/ZANLA relations were at an all time low. However, he was unable to anticipate the events that would take place over the coming months. By September, seven of the nine battalions that would eventually be formed were either trained or in the training pipeline. Palmer commented that they were "making good progress, by African standards, and morale is

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 2.

good.”<sup>81</sup> While he did not explain exactly what he meant by this comment, a report by one of the battalion liaison officers offers some insight:

I recently spoke to a major who is our liaison officer with 21 Battalion: the first amalgamated ZIP-ZAN battalion. He told me that much of the work which he does in fixing things for the battalion, could be done by an NCO in the British Army but that an officer was necessary since everything required a good deal of negotiation and diplomacy. I asked him how he thought the battalion would get along if he and his sergeant were withdrawn. Without a moments hesitation he said that the whole thing would grind to a halt in a matter of days. I have no doubt that he is right and that our wheel-oiling will continue to be essential for some time to come.<sup>82</sup>

The not-so-subtle implication here is that even after a period of training. The former guerillas were only capable of performing functions at a junior NCO level. Granted there were exceptions to this rule, but it was clear that the ZNA was nowhere near capable of operating like a serious military force (especially considering the amount of negotiation that was required to run a single battalion). It was clear to Palmer that the BMATT would need to remain in Zimbabwe beyond the scheduled end date of April 1981 if the country were to have even a small chance of success. Palmer also encouraged the MOD to consider sending select African personnel to Sandhurst and Camberley, free of charge. He insisted that men sent to these courses could become “the seed corn of pro-British influence in the long term.”<sup>83</sup>

The goal of the overall mission, to combine all factions into a loyal and responsive military, was continuously in peril. Palmer ended his report on the future of

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From British High Commission Salisbury to Derick Day FCO, “Future of BMATT.”

<sup>83</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From Brig. Palmer to Gen. Bramall, “Report on the Future of BMATT, 5 SEP 1980,” 3.

BMATT by saying “BMATT struggles to produce order out of chaos and sometimes even succeeds! In my view our continued presence here in strength next year provides the one hope for the future, both militarily and politically.”<sup>84</sup> Brig. Palmer also included in an annex to his formal report, a tentative plan for the future of BMATT. Since the JHC was deadlocked, he unilaterally decided upon issues related to the ZNA and prioritized training needs. He said that the need for staff-qualified officers should be the first priority of the training mission; at least 300 staff officers were required in 1981. This was closely followed by officer cadet training, which included a focus on the training of infantry officers because that was the vast majority of the officer corps. Finally, he saw the training of quartermaster officers, administration officers, and Regimental Quartermaster Sergeants as key to the stability of the force.<sup>85</sup>

The security situation in Zimbabwe, however, was continuously eroding. In late September there were regular pay problems in the Army. They were even more severe at the APs where gun battles flared up between men who had been paid and men who had not. Mugabe created even more difficulties for the ZNA in a speech to the House of Assembly on September 18, 1980. While he pleaded for the violence to stop and asked all parties to come together, he also froze all promotions of ex-RSF personnel. This made it clear to many white officers that they would be marginalized in the ZNA if they attempted to remain in the force. Additionally, Mugabe announced that all of the members of the JHC would remain of an equal status and that a single commander

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From Brig. Palmer to Gen. Bramall, “Report on the Future of BMATT, 5 SEP 1980,” Annex A, 3.

would not be appointed until the forces were amalgamated.<sup>86</sup> The consequences of these policies can be seen in the disbandment of the Rhodesian Light Infantry. The 300-man battalion had forty-two officers; of those only seven decided to remain in the ZNA. Many of the rest either left military service completely or joined the South African Defence Force.<sup>87</sup>

Some of these men understood that the opportunity for whites to play a role in the new army had already passed. The stubbornness of the RSF officers and men at the initial stages of integration made them enemies of ZANLA and the new order that now occupied the government. As of October of 1980 none of the ex-RSF units had been integrated into the newly-formed battalions. The white officers thought it was best to maintain the integrity of units like the RAR in an attempt to preserve professional standards. However, it was clear to many RAR officers that they were being left behind. If they were to have any chance at playing a role in the new Army, they needed to be integrated. In late September, African officers of the RAR petitioned Mugabe directly for the integration of the their battalions into the new ZNA units.<sup>88</sup> However their request went unanswered and they remained a separate force. Interestingly, they were also considered to be the only disciplined force left in the ZNA. Mugabe seems to have understood the stabilizing influence that both the white officers and the RAR had on the

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<sup>86</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From BRITDEF Salisbury to MODUK SITREP No. (13-25SEP80).

<sup>87</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, From BRITDEF Salisbury to MODUK SITREP No. (13-25SEP80). Brian Streak, "Farewell to the RLI," *Cheetah: The Magazine of the RLI Association*, October 1980, 1-2.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, Report on the visit of Officer from GS MO2 to Zimbabwe from 27 SEP to 2 OCT80.

force, but did not seem to think that they warranted a place in the future ZNA. In October of 1980, there were 700 white officers left in the Army. At least 300 had resigned in April 1980. The MOD estimated that by April of 1981 there would only be 450 white officers left.<sup>89</sup>

By October of 1980 a plan embraced by the JHC began to take shape. It focused on keeping Mugabe's promise of allowing any man to serve who wanted to, while at the same time creating an army that better fit Zimbabwe's needs. The "Ten Year Austerity Plan," as it was known, was intended to form a 58,000-strong army supported by a 2,600-man air force. The ZNA would be divided into two parts. The primary component would be comprised of five equally balanced infantry brigades that would be the first line of defence for the country. The secondary component would consist of five or six infantry brigades and would serve as a secondary line of defence; this second component would focus primarily on agro-industrial work and secondarily on military training.<sup>90</sup> This closely reflected the lines upon which the Zambian military operated. The plan also recommended that Zimbabwe hold off on any large military hardware acquisitions for at least ten years. The designers of the plan hoped that after two or three years the army could begin reducing in size. Mugabe had given the JHC little feedback on the plan by

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, Minutes of a Meeting held in the MOD by all staff sections concerned with Zimbabwe, 13 OCT 80. "Whites quit police and Army in Zimbabwe," *The Times*, 30 April 1980.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, Report on the visit of Officer from GS MO2 to Zimbabwe from 27 SEP to 2 OCT80. This component of the ZNA was modeled on the Zambian National Service(ZNS). The ZNS went through initial military training but then spent most of its time focusing on public works projects with short periods of military training interspersed.

the end of October, and Brig. Palmer had been barred from seeing him since Gen.

Bramall's visit. One British staff officer concluded after visiting Zimbabwe:

My visit left me with the impression that Zimbabwe has a chance but for the next year it will be touch and go. Zimbabwe's chance is not a particularly good one but without BMATT it would be even less good. BMATT have achieved much, will continue to have an important role for the foreseeable future and in the final analysis it may be their efforts, which will have made all the difference.<sup>91</sup>

The members of the BMATT staff who observed the missteps of the ZNA on a daily basis did not, unfortunately, share the generally hopeful attitude of this staff officer.

Brigadier Palmer was finally able to meet with Prime Minister Mugabe on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Palmer made three very important points clear: (1) the ZNA needed to create a single and clear chain of command before a single commander could be appointed; (2) if Mugabe wanted a smaller and cheaper army than the one proposed under the Ten Year plan, the JHC needed to know soon; and (3) they needed to come up with a plan to merge any ZIPRA and ZANLA units that were to be on permanent agro-industrial work.<sup>92</sup> Mugabe indicated to Palmer that he had not read the JHC paper on the Ten Year Plan, and that he felt that all of the army units except the "crack troops" should rotate through agro-industrial work assignments. He also mentioned briefly that the army could be slimmed down in two to three years, but spoke no further on the matter. Rather than focus on plans for how to bring the army together, Mugabe wanted to discuss another matter: ZIPRA. He claimed that he was not concerned about the loyalty of

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, Record of Discussion with the Prime Minister, Mr. Mugabe on 15 October 1980.

whites, or ZANLA. However, he suspected that ZIPRA was completely disloyal to Zimbabwe because they had lost the election.<sup>93</sup> Mugabe insisted that ZIPRA should disarm, and put the matter to the JHC saying “if the government gave orders they were to be obeyed by those concerned.”<sup>94</sup>

Mugabe and Mujuru managed to marginalize or push out most of ex-RSF servicemen and officers. The only obstacle remaining to complete domination of the security forces were the ZIPRA elements. The prime minister’s lack of interest in the JHC proposals, his encouragement of Mujuru’s side dealings, and his double talk regarding marginalizing the ex-RSF element all indicate that Mugabe felt that the integration process was a charade. He had a completely separate agenda for the security forces that he refused to disclose to those outside of his inner circle. Whether or not Mugabe ever read the Ten Year Plan is unclear; by December it had been completely scrapped. Operation SEED was a complete failure and it was clear from that failure that the former guerillas would not be useful in agro-industrial work.<sup>95</sup>

In early December of 1980 Mugabe presented a new plan to the recently promoted MajGen. Palmer.<sup>96</sup> He wanted both to speed up and extend the amalgamation process, as well as to train an additional eighteen battalions (nine had already been trained). The result would be an army of roughly 60,000 trained personnel. Naturally he

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2809 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part E, From Palmer to Col. Guthrie, MOD 27 NOV 1980.

<sup>95</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2809 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part E, From British High Commissioner Zimbabwe to FCO 27 NOV 1980.

<sup>96</sup> The MOD decided that Brig. Palmer would be more effective as a general officer, so he was given the local rank of major general.

wanted HMG to lead the efforts to train this much larger ZNA. Palmer and the High Commissioner both expressed misgivings about the large size of the Army, which was in sharp contrast to what they felt Zimbabwe actually needed.<sup>97</sup> Mugabe argued that the persistent security problems that the country was facing necessitated such a large force. An interesting point that Mugabe left out of the conversation was that many of the violent clashes between the police and guerillas involved ZANLA men. Palmer and the High Commissioner agreed that HMG would do all they could to help and sent the recommendation back to the FCO.<sup>98</sup> The FCO and the MOD had been shaken by the brief flirtation between Nigeria and Zimbabwe and were extremely concerned that any hesitation on their part would lead to an introduction of communist aid to the country.

## Conclusion

The first year of the independent Zimbabwe ended much as it had begun: with the security situation in the country in disarray. The ZNA could not yet be considered a functioning element within the country. This was clearly demonstrated in mid-December of 1980 when a visit to Salisbury by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania was planned. MajGen. Palmer sent an urgent request to the MOD from the Zimbabwean government. The Zimbabwean Artillery did not have ammunition for their 25 Pounder guns, ammunition they'd need if they hoped to fire a 21-gun salute for President Nyerere; nor

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<sup>97</sup> To put this number in perspective, the SADF had 72,000 men serving on active duty in 1979 and were engaged in both Namibia and Angola. The Australian Army only had 31,000 men on active duty in 1979. The 60,000-strong army that Mugabe had in mind was much larger than Zimbabwe needed.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2809 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part E, From RT Jacking to Permanent Undersecretary for Defence 5 DEC 1980.

did the Zimbabwean government have the funds necessary to purchase it. Palmer requested a donation of ammunition be sent to Zimbabwe within the week.<sup>99</sup> The British were frustrated by the request but, nonetheless, they made sure the Zimbabwean government did not embarrass themselves.

By the end of 1980, the British still appeared to feel as if they could retain control of the situation in Zimbabwe. Even though Robert Mugabe had ignored British advice, demanded more money and assistance, and changed the rules of the game at every turn, British diplomats and military officers were confident in their assessment of Mugabe. The men making policy focused completely on what the communist powers would do in this situation:

In my view, the continuation of our military assistance to Zimbabwe for the year 1981/82 is one of the most important aspects of our African policy. The continued process of integration of the three armies in Zimbabwe is a critical element in preserving political stability in that country and, more widely, in Central and Southern Africa. Mugabe wants us to continue. There are others who would only be too ready to step into our shoes (e.g., the East Germans, Cubans, etc.). It would be disastrous if we left the field open for such influences.<sup>100</sup>

Mugabe's mentors were the dictators of the non-aligned movement. He was determined not to fall into either the Soviet or Western sphere of influence.<sup>101</sup>

The British Army, the MOD, and the FCO all wanted to accomplish the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe by December of 1980, and at a relatively low

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<sup>99</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2809 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part E, From BMATT to MODUK 10 DEC 1980.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 36/2808 Military Assistance to Zimbabwe Part D, Memo from DM Day dated 29 OCT 1980.

<sup>101</sup> Stephen Chan, *Robert Mugabe: A Life of Power and Violence* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 113.

cost. The British aversion to long and in-depth training missions grew out of their experiences in East Africa in 1964 and in Zambia in 1970. They seemed to believe that through a small training mission and an unobtrusive approach to the formation of the Army, they would be able to keep Zimbabwe in the British sphere of influence. Even so, the British Army knew that the key to creating an apolitical force was to put them through rigorous professional training and avoid the creation of a praetorian elite with a monopoly on the use of force. It was this difficult learned lesson that the British had ignored in their initial approach to the training mission in Zimbabwe.

As 1980 gave way to 1981, the BMATT began to face a whole new set of challenges that would test the bounds of British foreign policy. The British government was faced with the issues of how long would they remain in Zimbabwe and what kinds of challenges they would be willing to put up with. The introduction of communist forces in the country would be a particularly divisive issue, as well as would the creation of units outside of the control of the JHC chain of command. Unfortunately, the events of 1981 would come to signify the eventual failure of the British mission. Over the course of 1980, the most technically skilled members of the ZNA were pushed out through intimidation or fear of the future. Many of the recruits who showed the most potential would be frightened into leaving the military in 1981 through systematic political purges within the ZNA. By the end of the year, the ZNA would fully emerge as yet another tool of the ZANU-PF regime in Zimbabwe

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RISE OF ZANLA DOMINANCE IN THE ZNA AND THE BIRTH OF 5<sup>th</sup> BRIGADE

By the end of 1980, a framework for the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) had been raised on the foundation provided by the Rhodesian Security Force. In his first address of 1981, President Mugabe singled out the efforts of the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), praising their work in bringing the ZNA together as one.<sup>1</sup> The initial military assistance plan involved BMATT training only a portion of the former guerilla forces. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) projected that by April 1, 1981, the major units of the ZNA would have passed through the ‘sausage machine’ training scheme. However, as 1980 gave way to 1981, the mission expanded and the conditions changed. Operation SEED (Soldiers Engaged in Economic Development) was recognized as a failure, and Mugabe decided that all of the former guerillas needed to be brought into the ZNA. Mugabe had promised that any man who wanted a place in the new army could have it, and he could ill-afford to retract this promise considering the number of weapons freely moving about the country.

In 1981, the Mugabe government expected BMATT to train a 65,000-man army. As previously noted, most of these men had little military training, and even fewer had a formal education. The British government had already accepted the challenge; they intended to create an integrated, apolitical military force. This mission required

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Cable from BMATT to MOD, 12 JAN 1981.

significant personnel and resources in an era when fiscal constraints were paramount. Over the course of that year, the inability of the British to commit more trainers and funding to Zimbabwe diluted the effectiveness of the mission, as well as HMG influence in the region.

### Planning for 1981

Initially, BMATT had been scheduled to complete its mission in April of 1981. The FCO and MOD had agreed that once the last ZNA battalion had completed its initial training, BMATT would withdrawal from Zimbabwe. It was expected that after that point the Zimbabweans would need to send only a handful of men to courses in the UK to undergo extremely specialized training. The British government was willing to offer up these specialty courses to the Zimbabweans because the ZNA was responsible for covering the costs. It seems that the FCO felt that by the provision of specialist courses and the establishment of ongoing foreign military sales contracts with Zimbabwe, HMG would be able to maintain enough influence in southern Africa to keep communist powers out, and to prevent the frontline states from invading South Africa.

Only ten days after Mugabe praised the efforts of BMATT in his New Years Day speech, he changed the parameters of the integration process. He announced that all ex-guerillas would participate in the integration process and be inducted into the regular army. This announcement, in effect, tripled BMATT's workload; they would have to produce no fewer than three new ZNA battalions a month, every month, until August of 1981, if they were to meet this new quota. This also meant that the size of BMATT

would be increased from 134 to 161 men, and remain at that level until August. Major General Patrick Palmer asserted that this additional assistance would give both Mugabe and his government confidence in the integration process and reassure them that they had the full support of the UK.<sup>2</sup>

From the British perspective, the Zimbabwean government was in dire need of stability and support. Shortly after Mugabe announced that the integration program was changing, and he reshuffled his cabinet. Joshua Nkomo, the leader of ZAPU, was demoted from Minister of Home Affairs to Minister without portfolio. As Minister of Home Affairs, Nkomo had controlled the Zimbabwe Republic Police; his removal signaled ZAPU's complete removal from national security decision making.<sup>3</sup> Mugabe claimed that Nkomo would still have input regarding security issues as a member of the Cabinet Committee on Public Security, yet it is clear (based on Major General Palmer's reports) that Mugabe and Solomon Mujuru were quickly consolidating their power in the defence sector.<sup>4</sup> Years later, Nkomo confessed that he never saw any official papers on security.<sup>5</sup> Pushing Nkomo to the side was the first sign of a concerted campaign by Mugabe and ZANU to wrest complete control of the national security structure and the ZNA from the settlers and ZAPU supporters.

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<sup>2</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From BMATT to MOD, "Revised BMATT Manning Recommendation for 81/82," 10JAN81.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Nkomo men take stock of Mugabe snub," *The Times*, 12 January 1981, 4.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Salisbury to FCO, "North Korean Military Assistance" 22JAN81. Palmer failed to pick up on the trend that when Mujuru leaked a policy that he supported, it almost always was adopted by the Zimbabwean government.

<sup>5</sup> Joshua Nkomo, *Nkomo the Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984), 220.

While London considered Palmer's recommendation to increase the size of BMATT, the situation in Zimbabwe deteriorated even further. Up to this point, the British had successfully maintained exclusive control over military training in Zimbabwe. This position was finally challenged during the last part of January 1981. At a Joint High Command (JHC) Meeting, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the Zimbabwean Minister for State Security, mentioned to Palmer the possibility of North Korean military assistance. Mnangagwa said that Kim Il Sung offered Zimbabwe equipment for an entire armored brigade and trainers to accompany it, all without cost.<sup>6</sup>

The possibility of a Nigerian training team had been a frustrating notion for both BMATT and the FCO, largely because of the dubious quality of the Nigerian Army training program. The FCO and the MOD felt that they could overcome any challenges they might confront with a Nigerian training team, partially because the Nigerian Army was modeled off of the British Army and continued to receive British assistance. However, the introduction of the North Koreans into Zimbabwe had the potential to completely change the country's security dynamic. The North Korean military system was, by definition, political in nature. Military officers underwent an extensive political education prior to receiving any military training. Additionally, the North Korean military had an entirely different military style that focused on massed armored warfare and strict adherence to orders.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., This idea was proposed to the JHC without any details or timeline. Every member on the JHC was completely surprised by the announcement, except for Mujuru.

<sup>7</sup> James Minnich, *The North Korean People's Army: Origins and Current Tactics* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 30.

The British Army attempted to endow its men with the ability to exercise their own judgment and make the best decisions in light of any specific circumstances. The North Korean system and the British system were nothing alike; Palmer feared that Korean trainers would have a devastating effect on all the work BMATT had already done. The FCO was concerned about the damaging nature of a situation where British trainers would work alongside soldiers from a country with which Britain had no relations.<sup>8</sup> From Palmer to the Cabinet, everyone agreed that something had to be done to keep the North Koreans out of Zimbabwe.

Palmer met with Mwangagwa about the North Korean mission on January 30<sup>th</sup>. A North Korean delegation was already in Salisbury; they met with Mugabe and Solomon Mujuru, and made their offer. The Zimbabwean government felt that the package was too good to refuse, and also pointed out “beggars can’t be choosers.”<sup>9</sup> This comment seemed to slip past Palmer as unimportant, but it actually identifies the major complaint the Zimbabwean government had with the British military aid package. Despite the British commitment to helping Zimbabwe form its army, the Zimbabweans felt that the British should be more forthcoming with their resources. During the Liberation War, ZANU relied on no-cost military support and training from China, North Korea, East Germany, and Tanzania. After independence, the British arrived to help the new government with a small training team, a limited number of courses in Britain for Zimbabwean soldiers, and an offer to sell the Zimbabweans military

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<sup>8</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Salisbury to FCO, “North Korean Military Assistance” 22JAN81.

<sup>9</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Salisbury to FCO, “Meeting with Mwangagwa,” 30JAN81.

equipment at a discounted rate. In comparison to the other offers that Zimbabwe received, the British aid package seemed paltry. Palmer and the other members of his staff did not recognize their disadvantage, compared to the non-aligned nations. More importantly, the FCO and the British Prime Minister's office failed to recognize that Britain was not as competitive as they believed themselves to be.

Palmer did recognize that he was walking a thin line in his capacity as head of the training team. His access to the JHC and Mugabe was not something guaranteed to him by his position. On February 6<sup>th</sup> he finally had the opportunity to meet with Mugabe regarding the North Korean offer. On this occasion Mugabe was full of ideas regarding the military future of the country, many of which involved departing significantly from the plan the British recommended. The Prime Minister wanted Palmer and his men to help establish a ZANLA-only Presidential Guard to protect key points in Salisbury. Palmer did not refuse Mugabe's request, but did ask that he include some ex-RSF personnel in the unit to make it more inclusive; he did not, however, go as far as to suggest the inclusion of former ZIPRA personnel. Mugabe did not bring up the North Korean offer, so Palmer was forced to broach the subject himself. Apparently the North Koreans had offered military assistance when Mugabe visited North Korea the previous year. Specifically, Kim Il Sung offered to help equip and train a special field brigade for "counter coup and counter revolutionary" purposes.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From British High Commission Salisbury to JA Sankey, Central Africa Department.

Interestingly, the idea of a counter-revolutionary Brigade did not seem to concern Palmer. He pointed out to Mugabe that the inclusion of North Korean advisors could cause even further losses of white manpower, and could endanger the possibility of civil aid from Western nations. Finally, Palmer made it clear that the Army could not have two completely different military systems and functions. Mugabe countered that the Tanzanian Army had a mixture of military systems. Palmer responded, “Tanzania is not an example for Zimbabwe to follow.”<sup>11</sup> The remark about Tanzania angered Mugabe; he informed Palmer that North Korea had assisted ZANU during the liberation struggle and wanted to continue to help Zimbabwe. Additionally, the Prime Minister did not care if the Americans or anyone else objected to this friendly gesture.

This exchange was indicative of the fine line that Palmer had to walk. While he possessed a wealth of military knowledge that he offered to Mugabe, he was also an outsider, a British officer who represented the last vestiges of the imperial world. The High Commissioner and Palmer both felt that they had to react very carefully to the North Korean aid package. Any scaling down of the British mission or withdrawal of British troops might destroy what influence the British had left in the country.<sup>12</sup>

The British saw white manpower in the Army as a form of influence. While these men did not necessarily represent the views and goals of the British government, they were viewed as Western military professionals, something that was in increasingly short supply in Zimbabwe. On December 31, 1980, there were 686 white officers left in the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

ZNA; BMATT projected that by the end of April, 1981 there would only be 404 white officers remaining.<sup>13</sup> Western influence in Zimbabwe was becoming a scarce commodity in early 1981, and the events in February of that year brought even more complicated problems to the integration process.

### Chaos in Bulawayo

While there had been some interfactional disturbances in the military training program, they seemed to become less common as time passed. In November of 1980 there was a minor incident in Bulawayo; fighting erupted between ex-ZANLA and ex-ZIPRA soldiers from ZNA battalions stationed there. The fighting was brought to an end quickly when British officers and party officials from both ZANU and ZAPU intervened. The ringleaders of the incident were rounded up and imprisoned. This incident was seen as a setback, but since order and discipline remained intact for the Army as a whole, there was no general sense of alarm among the BMATT officers.

Between November 1980 and February 1981, the situation seemed to calm. However, both ZIPRA and ZANLA troops in the ZNA, as well as unintegrated fighters moving in and out of the remaining assembly points, were stockpiling heavy weapons in direct violation of the ceasefire accords and the Lancaster House Agreement.<sup>14</sup> The scholar Luise White has insisted that by late January it was clear that the ZNA was falling apart. While this may have been apparent at the lowest levels of the Army, it was

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<sup>13</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Report on Military Budget.

<sup>14</sup> Luise White, “‘Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?’: The Battle of Bulawayo Revisited,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33 (September 2007), 624.

not clear at the ministerial level, among individual ex-ZANLA and ZIPRA soldiers, or to the BMATT staff.<sup>15</sup> Palmer never indicated to the FCO or the MOD that there were any serious problems in the integrated battalions. In fact, just prior to the fighting in Bulawayo, the MOD was discussing the possibility of scheduling a media visit to Zimbabwe to publicize the good work that BMATT was doing there.<sup>16</sup>

The major questions occupying the minds of Major General Palmer and his superiors at the MOD and FCO were the possibility of North Korean intrusion and the funding situation for the upcoming year. When Joshua Nkomo was demoted in the cabinet there was some concern about the possibility of disturbances in the ZNA. Mugabe said publicly that Nkomo would remain involved in security policy, likely to prevent the Army and police from descending into anarchy.<sup>17</sup> It seems that the British were unaware of the undercurrent among rank-and-file soldiers who believed that conflict was inevitable in the ZNA.

On February 9, 1981, tense ex-ZIPRA combatants fired upon a Zimbabwe Air Force jet that flew over Chitungwiza Barracks while the soldiers there were on parade.<sup>18</sup> This incident is telling; these soldiers were so concerned about the possibility of attack that they carried loaded weapons on parade. Carrying loaded weapons during this type of training would never occur unless these men thought they might be attacked while they practiced in the drill square. The very next day, a beer hall disagreement between former

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>16</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Brigadier GH Watkins, DPR(A) to Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Army, 18FEB81.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Mr. Nkomo takes on new Cabinet tasks in Salisbury compromise," *The Times*, 28 January 1981.

<sup>18</sup> White, "'Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?'," 624.

guerillas quickly turned deadly as ex-ZIPRA and ZANLA fighters opened fire on each other. Interfactional fighting quickly spread throughout the Army.

The ZNA seemed to be falling apart; Mugabe called in political and military leaders from all sides to quell the violence. Since violence was spreading throughout the ZNA, none of the integrated battalions could be relied upon to put down the uprising. Some of the former RSF units remained unintegrated. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Rhodesian African Rifles (1RAR) was still led by white officers and had simply been renamed the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. These battalions, with the assistance of the unintegrated Armored Car Squadron (RACS), were dispatched to Bulawayo to quell the interfactional fighting. Joshua Nkomo was asked to help bring ex-ZIPRA troops under control.

The former RSF soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion secured Brady Barracks in Bulawayo and the nearby airfield. The RACS, along with elements of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, stumbled upon a ZIPRA column of armored vehicles. During the battle that ensued, at least sixty ZIPRA soldiers were killed. During this time, C Company of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion withstood an assault by a numerically superior ZIPRA force on the north side of the city.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the rest of the country, British advisors worked to put down disturbances at their respective bases. They worked extremely closely with

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<sup>19</sup> Alexandre Binda, *Masodja: The History of the Rhodesian African Rifles and its forerunner the Rhodesian Native Regiment* (Johannesburg: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2007), 300. The description of the battle in this text gives a much higher number for the ZIPRA soldiers killed in action. White, ““Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?”,” 626. White gives a much more conservative number of ZIPRA soldiers killed, which is probably more accurate considering the numbers of soldiers who were engaged. “Uneasy Calm Established in Bulawayo,” *The Herald*, 13 February 1981, 1.

the Zimbabwean government and former-RSF units to ensure that order was restored and mutinous elements were rounded up.<sup>20</sup>

The complete breakdown in discipline throughout the Army demonstrated the precarious point the ZNA had reached. While there were a growing number of ex-guerillas who quickly were becoming semi-trained soldiers, there was a complete lack of corporate identity in the force. In a way, soldiers were internally resisting any unity with their former opponents by planning against them. The events in Bulawayo were far from spontaneous, as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, Julius Neube, told the commission of inquiry. He remarked that once the fighting started, the mutinous soldiers removed their caps to differentiate friend from foe.<sup>21</sup> The ZNA existed on paper but not in spirit; beyond a small number of specialized units and former RSF battalions, there was no *esprit de corps*. When the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion deployed to Bulawayo, the white officers specifically instructed their subordinates to wear the berets and insignia of their former Rhodesian Army unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Rhodesian African Rifles.<sup>22</sup> While this seems like a simple adjustment on the part of white officers in the unit, it was actually a much more dramatic demonstration, specifically of the fact that the Zimbabwean government had limited their control of the ZNA. The soldiers who saved the regime were representing the old Rhodesian Army and showcasing their professionalism (as compared to the ex-guerillas).

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<sup>20</sup> However, the entirety of the British role in putting down the ZNA disturbances in 1981 is (as of yet) unknown. The standard Situation Reports from that period are not contained in the files that cover that time frame. One file relating to the BMATT mission in Zimbabwe has been retained by the FCO beyond the standard twenty-five year declassification period.

<sup>21</sup> "Camp Fighting Caught RSM by Surprise," *The Herald*, 6 March 1981, 3.

<sup>22</sup> White, "'Whoever Saw a Country with Four Armies?'," 631.

The lack of corporate identity among the soldiers of the ZNA was a clear illustration that the short training period many of the new soldiers had experienced was insufficient to create lasting ties to their new military units. The years of conflict in the Zimbabwean wilderness ensured that the ex-guerillas could not effectively separate their military from their political identity. BMATT, the MOD, and the FCO all realized that there was a serious and continued need for BMATT to remain in the country at the same level (161 men) beyond April, the previously agreed upon time for the mission to be scaled down.<sup>23</sup> The training mission instead waited until at least September to reduce the number of British soldiers in Zimbabwe.

After the events of February, Col. Henshaw, the British Defence Advisor to the High Commission, made a tour of a number of ZNA units to assess their status. His report showed the low level of readiness among Zimbabwean units and revealed some of the issues that hindered the progress of BMATT in their mission. His trip took him to three different units, the Infantry Training Depot, Grey's Scouts (the mounted infantry unit), and the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Battalion. Due to their specialized mission and skills, the Grey's Scouts had only just begun to integrate. Of the 500 men in the unit, only 105 were ex-guerillas, most of whom had just begun their equestrian training. A group of about ten Africans were shadowing the white instructors, hoping eventually to take over their role in training. Most of the leadership in the unit at that time, including both

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<sup>23</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From John Sankey, Central Africa Department, 3 March 1981.

officers and NCOs, were white. However, at the end of March five white officers and twenty NCOs resigned from the Army.<sup>24</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Battalion, similarly, had only just begun to integrate. There were 1,150 men in the battalion; a former RSF officer, LtCol. Lionel Dyke, had just recently taken command. LtCol. Dyke, formerly of 1 RAR, was extremely enthusiastic and not reluctant to make dramatic changes. Shortly after he took command he fired the Battalion Adjutant (a white officer), the Regimental Sergeant Major (a former ZANLA fighter), and a major in the battalion (a former ZANLA fighter).<sup>25</sup> Additionally, even though the men had been through a selection course, Dyke believed there were still undesirable men in the ranks. To remedy this, he decided to hold another selection course to further reduce the ranks of the battalion. Henshaw hoped that the PARA battalion and the Grey's would become two of the more effective units, largely because at least a third of the personnel in each were formerly of the RSF. Even so, neither was even close to being considered fully operational.

The regular units were not anywhere near to the standards of the specialist units. The unit that Henshaw visited at the Infantry Training Depot was in a sorry state. Many of the soldiers were there because they had failed either Parachute or Commando selection. The ZIPRA and ZANLA men segregated themselves and did not interact off duty. Worst of all, neither the battalion commander nor the second in command reported to the depot to attend training with the battalion; both men were former ZANLA

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<sup>24</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Col. CLG Henshaw, Defence Advisor, "Report on Visit to Inkomo Garrison," 3 April 1981.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

fighters.<sup>26</sup> All of these units required months of training before they would approach a point where they could operate without the assistance of the mentoring team from BMATT. The reports submitted to the FCO and MOD were very clear; even after a year of training, the ZNA was still an embryonic organization that could fall apart at the slightest interfactional provocation. It seemed clear to the British officers working in Zimbabwe that both the former RSF men and the ex-guerillas had the ability and potential to form an effective force. What they would require was long-term mentorship and training similar to what had been done in both Kenya and Zambia. Training guerillas to become conventional soldiers was a time-consuming task made exponentially more complicated by the need to integrate the force.

Despite these major training setbacks and the troublesome direction in which the ZNA was headed, the FCO and MOD were intent on establishing a long term relationship with the Zimbabwean military (but on a much more cost-effective scale). Rather than increase the size of the training mission or extend its lifespan, the MOD assigned an Army officer to the ZNA on a loan service agreement with the purpose of serving as an advisor to the newly established ZNA Staff College.<sup>27</sup> This arrangement, while far less comprehensive, was much more attractive to the British because it installed a British officer in the ZNA military education system for the long term, yet was comparatively inexpensive. However, the idea that the British would be able to exert any influence through a presence in ZNA staff education was short sighted. For years

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From P. Kemp, Defence Department FCO to Central Africa Department, 15 May 1981. Officers on Loan Service Agreements were meant to be in country on a long-term assignment. Generally, these were multiyear assignments that would rotate in a new officer on a yearly basis.

both the British and the Americans had utilized their culture to win favor and influence with foreign military officers. These Western forces invited officers at all stages of their careers to attend long duration courses in their military education systems in order to create long-lasting favorable relationships with military contacts. While a British officer in the ZNA Staff College would give Zimbabwean officers some idea what the British Army was like, it most likely would not convert anyone to change their view of the role of the military in the political process.

Were there no other factors distracting the soldiers from British influence, there may eventually have been some resonance among the ex-guerillas. Yet this was not the case. In late May, Mnangagwa announced in the middle of a JHC meeting that three North Korean officers had arrived in Zimbabwe a few days earlier to serve as the advanced party for the North Korean Training Team.<sup>28</sup> The issue had last been mentioned among the JHC in January; since then there had been silence from Mugabe's office regarding the possibility of North Korean assistance.

During the same time period, the Zimbabwean government concluded that all ex-guerillas who had been integrated, as well as those who had yet to be integrated, should be disarmed. Since the fighting in February, it had been determined that the country would be more stable if all military hardware was stored in government armories.<sup>29</sup> While the threat of large scale clashes between armed camps of unintegrated men had dissipated to a certain degree, the overall security situation in Zimbabwe was not much

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<sup>28</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Defence Advisor Salisbury to MOD, "North Korean Military Assistance," 20 May 1981.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas Ashford, "Zimbabwe to Disarm both Guerrilla Factions," *The Times*, 18 February 1981, 7.

improved. Heavy weapons and crew-served weapons were difficult to hide, and thus had to be turned over to the government. However, the guerilla armies had never cataloged small arms; there was no way of knowing how many weapons were in circulation. Men stored their rifles at home or hid them in the bush for later use. Some men who were still waiting to be integrated turned to banditry instead, or used their weapons of war to settle old scores. Violence increased in rural areas, and murders became more and more frequent. Former guerillas were not the only people with weapons; the civilian white population had become highly militarized and extremely well armed. Men who had been in the Territorials were allowed to keep their rifles at home. The Rhodesian government had actively encouraged whites to arm themselves and to defend their farms if attacked.

The country was awash with weapons, which posed a problem for Mugabe's government. One of the things that give governments legitimacy is a monopoly on any legal use of force. With so many weapons freely available in Zimbabwe, the government could hardly claim to have a monopoly. While not a military man himself, Mugabe understood Mao's ideology of a people's war. With weaponry widely available, any of his rivals retained the ability to wage an insurgent war against the new government. Mozambique was a living example for Mugabe of what could befall a newly independent government that faced rival armed groups at the outset of independence.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record, Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964 to 1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), 300-302. Colin Legum, *The Battlefronts of Southern Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1988), 216. The Rhodesian CIO was responsible for establishing the Mozambique National Resistance (RENEMO) to actively destabilize the infant Mozambique government. After the fall of the Rhodesian government, the South African government became RENEMO's primary sponsor.

Too many actors on the stage

As the North Koreans began to arrive in Zimbabwe, BMATT found itself in the odd position of trying to justify its existence. There seemed to be a breakdown in communication between Mrs. Thatcher's cabinet and HM Treasury. The Cabinet wholly agreed that the job that BMATT was doing was integral to the security of Zimbabwe, and concluded that "the maintenance of law and order in Zimbabwe depended on bringing the three armies which at present existed into a new integrated national army. The presence and assistance of British officers and other ranks was essential to this process."<sup>31</sup> While the cabinet applauded the efforts of BMATT, the Treasury insisted that the mission was far too expensive. The Zimbabwe military mission depleted over a third of the UK Military Training Scheme budget for 1981/1982.<sup>32</sup>

The Thatcher government was looking to make severe reductions in defence spending. While the 1981 Defence Review made it clear that deep cuts were needed, it focused mainly on reductions of the Navy's surface fleet. However, all branches of the armed forces had been hollowed out by two decades of defence cuts.<sup>33</sup> The priorities for the MOD were NATO, Home Defence, and the RAF, with everything else making up a distant fourth. The United States hoped that Britain would play a key role in the continued strength of the NATO alliance, as well as maintain a strong military presence

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<sup>31</sup> TNA, PRO, CAB 128/70/14 "Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, on 2 April 1981," 2.

<sup>32</sup> The total amount of military assistance was only £9 Million; the Zimbabwean mission was £3.1 million of this budget.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 249-250.

in Belize.<sup>34</sup> There was pressure from NATO for all member nations to increase spending by three percent each year until 1986.<sup>35</sup> This increase in spending was to focus on items personnel, and equipment that could be of use in Northern Europe, and not for military assistance missions in the Third World. These commitments and the British promise to support Zimbabwe's special needs in the post-conflict era did not necessarily align. The Thatcher government continued to make commitments to the Zimbabwean government. However, the amount of funding and military aid promised were nowhere near what the Zimbabweans wanted from Britain.

Britain organized a donor's conference for Zimbabwe in March of 1981, in an attempt to marshal the goodwill of Western nations interested in the future of Zimbabwe. The conference was focused on raising money for civil development in the war-ravaged nation. The British government had promised a total of £30 million to the newly independent nation for land resettlement alone.<sup>36</sup> HMG seemed to be convinced that the most effective way to wield power in Zimbabwe was through land reform monies, and not through the military assistance fund (which amounted to a comparatively trifling £3 million). In their correspondence, Thatcher impressed upon Mugabe that the civil

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 248. Even though Belize achieved independence in 1981, the British continued to maintain a military presence in the country until 2010 when the British Army Training Unit - Belize was closed. The force was there primarily to dissuade the Guatemalans from invading the small Caribbean nation.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, PRO, PREM 19/161 f126, "Pym minute to MT ("The Defence Budget and Cash Limit").

<sup>36</sup> Churchill Archive Centre, Thatcher MSS THCR 3/2/73 f133, Margaret Thatcher letter to Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe (aid for Zimbabwe) [*land resettlement, fees for students from Zimbabwe in the UK.*] The clear commitment of the UK to provide large amounts of money for land purchases from white farmers is an indication of the overall British goal in the country. Rather than attempt to maintain influence in the majority rule government HMG government wanted to ensure that it protected the white citizens of Zimbabwe. While this could be seen as a racial issue I believe it is far more economic and consular in nature. Many white Zimbabweans held dual citizenship in the UK, and in spite of the newly formed majority rule government HMG expected whites to retain economic control of the Zimbabwean economy.

commitments that Britain made to Zimbabwe “demonstrate[d] the importance we attach to helping Zimbabwe in the early years of independence.”<sup>37</sup>

While Prime Minister Thatcher outlined the special place that Zimbabwe held in the British sphere of influence, BMATT pointed out the dramatic impact they were making with the minimal resources available to them. The High Commissioner in Salisbury, Robin Byatt, as well as the FCO, were mindful of the fact that the critical issue in Zimbabwe was the security situation. If the country were not stabilized, any hope of economic recovery or renewed foreign investment would become a pipe dream. Byatt made it clear to the FCO that the end of the “sausage machine” training of the regular battalions was only the beginning of the creation of the ZNA. “Once the sausage machine project is done the papering over of the divisions will be done. But that is it. There is little point in producing an ‘amalgamated’ army only to watch it fall apart.”<sup>38</sup> At this point, the British plan was to reduce significantly the amount of military assistance after the initial training of the regular battalions of the ZNA. British military influence was intended to take the form of a single officer on loan service terms to the ZNA who was running the Staff College. This officer was scheduled to begin in January 1982, and was slated to teach a series of mid-level, three month staff courses.<sup>39</sup>

By the end of May, 1981, British diplomats and military officers in Zimbabwe had discovered that they had no control over Mugabe. Byatt pointed out that “any doubts about Mugabe being in charge are gone. He has craft fully [sic] shifted the decision

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Byatt to Central Africa Department, 28 MAY 1981.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

making power from his party's central committee to his cabinet of which he is the clear master."<sup>40</sup> In spite of the excellent job that BMATT was doing with the ZNA, the British found themselves more and more isolated from the military decision-making process. This became even clearer when discussions began regarding North Korean military assistance.

When the North Korean presence became a reality in May of 1981, the British were flabbergasted. They had vastly overestimated their ability to scare off military assistance from other nations. Mugabe and his ministers played the fool; they claimed that the North Koreans were overzealous in their desire to help Zimbabwe, and that the ZANU-PF government was in no position to refuse.<sup>41</sup> The British government was caught unaware of the significance of the North Korean offer of assistance. Initially, HMG thought that the North Koreans were only planning on training a small presidential guard force. However, when Byatt broached the subject during a meeting, Mugabe made it clear that the North Korean offer of a brigade's worth of equipment was just too good to refuse. However, Mugabe indicated that the unit that was to be trained would be utilized as a "special brigade," and in a "counter revolutionary role."<sup>42</sup> Strangely, the mention of a counter-revolutionary unit trained by the North Koreans did not raise any alarms in High Commission or the FCO.

Since the beginning of the military mission to Zimbabwe, one of the primary goals had been the establishment of an apolitical force loyal to the Zimbabwean

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<sup>40</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Report by the High Commissioner at Salisbury to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 14 May 1981.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From Salisbury to FCO, 29 MAY 1981.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., in NATO parlance a brigade usually numbers between 3,200 and 5,500 soldiers.

constitution. This North Korean issue was clearly a warning sign of what was to come. Mugabe's government was planning on training a brigade of soldiers in a counter-revolutionary role; terminology like this was politically charged. This was the first overt indication of the ZANU-PF intention of intertwining the military with the party system in Zimbabwe. If it was not clear to the public at large that Mugabe wanted to create a one-party state, the British, at least, were given fair warning of what the future held.

Rather than focus on the implications of the creation of this new brigade for the internal security and political situation in Zimbabwe, the British focused on what it meant in the diplomatic world. Mrs. Thatcher's "Iron Lady" persona was notably absent from the African continent. While she is popularly known as the consummate Cold Warrior in Europe, her toughness did not permeate into the Foreign Service. Byatt did not challenge Mugabe on the subject of North Korean aid, nor did he indicate that acceptance of it would have any implications for the British relationship with Zimbabwe. Rather, he indicated that the United States would be less inclined to maintain her commitment to the pledge of civil aid to Zimbabwe if North Korean aid was accepted.<sup>43</sup> British officers and diplomats continued under the impression that the arrangement was forced on the Zimbabweans because of their wartime relationship with North Korea. Alternatively, white members of the ZNA seemed to view the issue as yet another in a series of problems that would degrade the professionalism of the force.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From Salisbury to FCO, "Meeting Between High Commissioner (Byatt) and Mugabe," 1 June 1981.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From Salisbury to FCO, "North Korean Military Assistance," 1 June 1981.

The British government was content to believe that the Zimbabweans did not understand what was going on, despite the fact that Byatt had made it very clear that Mugabe knew his own mind and was firmly in control in the country. Rather than meet with the JHC first, the North Korean officers met with Mugabe privately. The British read this as a sign that the Zimbabweans were attempting to stall the North Koreans. All the while, Solomon Mujuru freely proclaimed that the North Koreans were ready to ship the equipment necessary for a 5,000 man heavy brigade that would not be a part of the ZNA chain of command. Instead, this unit would report directly to the Minister of Defence, one of the many positions that Mugabe held.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of the intelligence that the British were receiving from the JHC and Mujuru, they continued to believe that they maintained more influence in military matters than they actually did. However, Mrs. Thatcher was, in fact, more concerned about the issue than the FCO was. She voiced her concerns to the ministry in a memo, saying that the arrival of the North Koreans was a worrisome indication of the direction Zimbabwe was headed.<sup>46</sup> The concern on Thatcher's part did not translate into a policy shift regarding Zimbabwe. The FCO had been convinced of the importance of BMATT in the country, in part because of Byatt's assessment of their work. The mission in Zimbabwe would continue, but as soon as it was feasible the mission would be reduced in size.<sup>47</sup> The sausage machine would continue until the end of November, when the last

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<sup>45</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From BMATT to MOD, 1 June 1981. A heavy brigade is made of armored units, with mechanized infantry in support. The North Koreans were shipping T-59 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy artillery to Zimbabwe, all free of charge.

<sup>46</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, Memo from 10 Downing St. to FCO 10 June 1981.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Memo from Anthony Acland to Mr. Day, Central African Department.

of the untrained battalions would graduate from basic training. After that, the British military presence in the country would be dramatically reduced.

While the British were looking at ways to reduce their presence in Zimbabwe, the North Korean government was cementing relations with the Mugabe government. The Prime Minister of North Korea, Li Jong-ok, made an unofficial visit to Salisbury in late June of 1981. The visit concluded with a bilateral agreement between the two nations to provide £12 million worth of military equipment and 103 trainers.<sup>48</sup> The British government felt somewhat reassured by the fact that the North Korean advisors would only be used to train the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Army. This organization was intended to be entirely self-sustaining and not involved in any other part of the ZNA. Shortly, it became clear that the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was to be composed entirely of former ZANLA fighters who had yet to be trained or integrated into the new ZNA.<sup>49</sup> The personnel of the new brigade were to undergo no British military training whatsoever, and would not be assisted by any soldiers from the former RSF. Strangely, British officer diplomats in Zimbabwe did not view this as a loss of influence. In fact, they were comforted by the fact that the North Korean government had never provided quality military training to any country.<sup>50</sup>

At the ministerial level, the British also overestimated the effectiveness of their “sausage machine” training program. In July, the FCO boasted to the Australians that at

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<sup>48</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From Salisbury to FCO, “North Korean Military Assistance,” 26 June 1981.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From Salisbury to FCO, 17 July 1981.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, Memo to Mr. McLaren from Mr. B. England, “North Korean Military Assistance to Zimbabwe,” 4 June 1981. This was the same position that the South Africans took. They pointed out that training an army in two incompatible systems made Zimbabwe less of a threat.

that point, the BMATT had already trained thirty battalions and had thirteen more to train.<sup>51</sup> This did not explain the level of training that the ZNA actually received. In June of 1981, the British Defence Advisor in Zimbabwe visited three of the newly trained ZNA battalions to report on their progress. His first stop was 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion (14BN) stationed in a rural area 150 km north of Bulawayo. Even though 14BN completed their initial training in February, they could not be considered a functional military unit. The unit suffered from a lack of instructors, training aids, and basic military equipment. According to the report, they had only 150 rifles to service a battalion of 1,000 men. The British advisor to the unit, Major D.M. Chappel, concentrated all of his time on teaching the ex-guerillas who were now serving as officers the administrative skills necessary to keep the battalion paid and provisioned.<sup>52</sup> The unit was nowhere close to being able to function without a British advisor, or even move on to more advanced infantry training.

The two other battalions that Henshaw visited (the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Battalions) were not in any better shape than 14BN. Former ZIPRA fighters dominated the command team in both units. These units also suffered from a lack of equipment and training aids; they had not conducted any additional training since they finished their basic course. They were in better administrative shape than 14BN; however, it would be at least three months until a BMATT mobile training team was able to visit and conduct even rudimentary training.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, From FCO to Canberra, 20 July 1981.

<sup>52</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, Report by Col. CLG Henshaw, Defence Advisor, 5 June 1981.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

In the eyes of the British government, this still seemed to be considered progress. These units were counted as trained formations once they had passed through the sausage machine. The level of North Korean influence became more apparent in June 1981, as former ZANLA fighters returned to Zimbabwe from their overseas training. That month, 200 men who had undergone training in North Korea for the previous year were set to return to Zimbabwe. However, this left sixty former ZANLA men in North Korea finishing up their training. This number included Perence Shiri, who was selected to serve as the commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. He had been in North Korea for the previous three years in an unspecified training course.<sup>54</sup> The men who were trained in North Korea had clearly been identified to form the core of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade.<sup>55</sup>

North Korea was not the only non-Western state offering military training to Zimbabwe. In June of 1981, an Egyptian aircraft arrived in Salisbury to pick up forty-five personnel to attend training courses in Egypt. Most of the men sent to Egypt were from the Central Intelligence Organization. The Chinese had also offered a military aid package consisting of a number of F6 fighter jets and T59 tanks.<sup>56</sup> The non-aligned nations were clearly forming close military partnerships with the Zimbabwean government. Again, it seemed that only the highest levels of the British government were concerned with the way the tide was turning in Zimbabwe. Mrs. Thatcher indicated in her personal notes on the subject that the Zimbabwean move to accept aid from the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.; Paul Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 105.

<sup>55</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/461, From Col. Henshaw to MOD, "Military Situation Report as of 17 JUN," 17 June 1981.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., The Chinese offer of equipment was set to be fulfilled in 1983.

North Koreans was “very worrying. It indicates the underlying attitude [of Mugabe].”<sup>57</sup> Still, this concern did not filter down to the men who executed policy in the Central Africa Department. The FCO and Byatt continued to believe that they would gain more ground in Zimbabwe by registering a halfhearted protest with Mugabe and then ignoring the North Korean presence altogether.

Only the British applied a very low level of pressure on Mugabe; Byatt only brought up the matter in a private meeting with Mugabe, and Mugabe’s tepid response to Byatt’s protestations signaled a turning point in Anglo-Zimbabwean relations. London attempted to navigate around the North Koreans altogether. The FCO wanted to foster a tripartite relationship between Britain, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. Relations between HMG and Kenya were much more cordial; the British Army maintained a training presence in the Kenya Army Staff College, as well as at a training base 200 km north of Nairobi. Kenya was the model of success that the British hoped to emulate in Zimbabwe, so the MOD believed that any influence from Kenya would be perceived as similar to British Army influence.<sup>58</sup>

The general impression among diplomatic and military observers was that the security situation inside Zimbabwe was improving. Officially, they called it “reasonably stable.” Settler farmers were frequently targeted by the less disciplined elements of the ZNA, and were subject to frequent harassment.<sup>59</sup> There were also an increasing number of men deserting from the ZNA; while some took to banditry, others were simply afraid

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<sup>57</sup> TNA, PRO, PREM 19/606 f17, FCO Letter to No. 10, “North Korean Military Assistance to Zimbabwe,” 3 June 1981.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, Military SITREP 30 June 1981.

for their safety after the factional fighting in February. The country was considered stable enough for a visit from the Commander of the General Staff of the British Army, Field Marshal Sir Edwin Bramall, in mid-July, 1981. London was comfortable allowing the international press to believe that he was there to challenge the Zimbabwean decision to bring in North Korean trainers.<sup>60</sup> However, the British knew what the press did not: that it was too late to challenge Mugabe on the issue of North Korean involvement in military assistance.

The infant ZNA was also being forced to serve in an operational capacity long before it was ready or properly trained to do so. In 1981, RENEMO began engaging in cross-border raids into Zimbabwe with increasing frequency.<sup>61</sup> This was not the only border security issue that the Zimbabwean government faced. The South Africans had consistently tried to destabilize Zimbabwe since the Lancaster House Agreement was signed. The South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and its descendent, the National Intelligence Service (NIS), launched Operation DRAMA in late 1979. OP DRAMA involved recruiting Rhodesian intelligence and security personnel into South African service and then utilizing them to degrade and, at times, destroy Zimbabwean facilities.<sup>62</sup>

By August of 1981, BMATT had trained over thirty infantry battalions; the sausage machine was due to end in November. At that time, all of the regular units of the ZNA were scheduled to be formed. Once the units were formed and had been put

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<sup>60</sup> Stephen Taylor, "British hope to keep up the good work in Zimbabwe," *The Times*, 25 July 1981.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), 90.

through training, together they would form a single corporate identity. Bonds of loyalty would begin to form and charismatic commanders would be able to exert influence over their soldiers. In the first week in August, 1981, Mnangagwa announced to the JHC a variety of new appointments in the ZNA that were to take place immediately. At the same time, it was announced that the JHC would be disbanded on August 17<sup>th</sup> because the new ZNA appointments effectively created a single, unified chain of command for the armed forces.<sup>63</sup>

The appointments abruptly were made by the Prime Minister's office, which did not consult Palmer, the current ZNA commander Gen. Sandy Maclean, or any officials from ZIPRA. Sandy Maclean, formerly the ZNA commander, had been appointed the Defence Forces Commander. Solomon Mujuru, the former ZANLA commander, took over the role of Commander of the ZNA. Former ZANLA officers also occupied the other top positions in the Army Headquarters, the Chief of Staff for Operations and the Brigadier for Equipment. Additionally, ZANLA men took command of two of the Army's four brigades, as well as the Salisbury Military District.<sup>64</sup>

The reaction to the new appointments was further division among the factions within Zimbabwe. ZAPU/ZIPRA men were extremely unhappy about the appointments; it was clear to them that the appointments were political in nature, and had little to do with skill or merit.<sup>65</sup> Former RSF officers were also very disturbed by the turn of events; upon the appointment of Brigadier Freddie Matanga, a particularly bombastic former

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<sup>63</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, From BRITDEF Salisbury to MOD, ZNA Senior Appointments, 10 AUG 1981.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

ZANLA officer, to command of the Salisbury District, all of the white members of his staff walked out of the headquarters. The British Defence Advisor described Matanga as “a volatile character who symphonizes the white fear of Africanization.”<sup>66</sup> This comment is illustrative of the way that British observers viewed former ZNALA officers; others were described as “a disruptive influence,” and “politically motivated.”<sup>67</sup> This was true of the ZANLA men all the way up to the new ZNA commander.

London was particularly concerned about Mujuru; he was described as “uncouth but possessed of an innate animal cunning he is anti-British and would like to see BMATT removed.”<sup>68</sup> However, just as Palmer and Byatt had underestimated Mugabe, they also underestimated Mujuru. The British officials thought that once Mujuru “learned his job,” he would change his mind about the need for BMATT.<sup>69</sup> However, this assumption was made with no knowledge of the extent of the cooperation between the Zimbabwean government and other non-aligned powers. In the short term, Palmer and Byatt were comforted by the fact that Mujuru was scheduled to attend a year-long Staff College Course in Pakistan.

In the days and weeks following the announcement, London waited with anticipation to learn how these changes would impact the effectiveness of their mission in Zimbabwe. Interestingly, they felt that the new single chain of command would actually damage Palmer’s ability to influence. Under the JHC model, Palmer had a seat at the table where all of the commanders met; additionally, he had direct access to the

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<sup>66</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, New ZNA Senior Appointments, 28 August 1981, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 2.

Prime Minister on a biweekly basis. All of this came to an end with the disbandment of the JHC. MOD Planners were particularly concerned about the impact that the new appointments had on the white officers who remained in the ZNA. Initially, officials in London were reassured by the fact that Maclean was appointed Defence Forces Commander. This was the first time the position had been filled since General Walls had been retired from the Army. Even so, Palmer was not impressed with Maclean's record. Maclean was a very negative person who had done little to reassure the white officers of the Army since Zimbabwe's independence.<sup>70</sup> The British realized that they might find themselves frozen out of the Zimbabwean command structure, and therefore unable to influence policy.

On August 14, 1981, Col. Henshaw sent a report on the stability of the Zimbabwean military to the British Defence Advisor in Pretoria. At this point, BMATT had produced a total of thirty-six infantry battalions, all of which were fifty percent ZIPRA, fifty percent ZANLA. There were three additional infantry battalions that were composed of ZIPRA/ZANLA/RSF troops. The former RAR battalions all remained unintegrated. The last three units were scheduled to finish training in mid-November. Henshaw claimed that factionalism was at an all-time low, and that morale and overall enthusiasm in the units was high, though this was balanced out by the fact that the standard of training in the units was extremely low.<sup>71</sup> The officer corps seemed to be the foundation of the issue. The standards among the former guerilla officers were low;

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<sup>70</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, From Fuller, Central Africa Department, to Sir Allison, "Zimbabwe: Senior Military Appointments," 11 August 1981.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, From Col. Henshaw to Col. Jav De Candole, Pretoria, "Stability of Zimbabwe Military," 14 August 1981.

Henshaw specifically commented that they “lack[ed] a sense of responsibility to their men: a gulf therefore exists between officers and men which was borne out in the mutinies in February when the officers tended to be unaware of what was going on.”<sup>72</sup> As had been the case in Kenya and Zambia, the level of training and professionalism was considered to be the bedrock of an effective military organization.

Lack of knowledge on the part of former guerilla officers, as well as the exodus of white officers from the ZNA, began to take a dramatic toll on the ability of the ZNA to function. The Army had swelled to such a size that the Zimbabwe Army Service Corps was no longer able to provide effective, or even minimal, logistical support to the force. The significant body of equipment that the guerilla armies had brought into the country was suffering. The guerillas had not maintained the equipment well, and the Service Corps did not have the technical knowledge necessary to keep it running.<sup>73</sup>

The situation was further complicated by Zimbabwe’s difficult relationship with South Africa. South African agents were responsible for no less than four sabotage operations in 1980, from the theft of weapons to blowing up army vehicles. In August of 1981, South African agents set off an explosion at Inkomo Barracks near Bulawayo that destroyed \$50 million worth of weapons.<sup>74</sup> The man who orchestrated the operation was the white Commander of the Zimbabwe Army Corps of Engineers. This further

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), 155. The officer suspected of carrying out the attack was the commander of the Zimbabwe Corps of Engineers, Captain Patrick Gericke. He was arrested soon after the incident, but escaped from prison in December of 1981 and fled to South Africa where he joined the South African Army. His family was also smuggled out of Zimbabwe by South African intelligence agents.

damaged Mugabe and Mujuru's view of the 320 settlers who remained in the ZNA.

While the British were concerned about these incidents, they did not seem to have any impact on British plans in Zimbabwe.

Officials in London continued to be convinced that the authorities in Zimbabwe had no idea what to do with the North Korean military assistance. The North Korean training team, led by a Lieutenant General, arrived in Zimbabwe on August 13, 1981, and immediately began their work. It was at that point that Mugabe unveiled the details of the training plan to his senior military officers. Two thousand men were selected from the ZANLA-only battalions that had already been trained; an additional 1,000 men were selected from the unintegrated ZANLA camp, and a further 1,000 men were to be brought in from an unspecified source.<sup>75</sup> This last group ended up being fighters who had returned from training in North Korea and elsewhere. The FCO said that it was not a surprise that this brigade was entirely ZANLA. Even so, no one in the chain of command raised the alarm. By this point in 1981, Mugabe had already told Palmer on numerous occasions that the unit trained by North Korea would be a counter-coup force. The fact that it was entirely composed of ZANLA men, as well as the continued efforts by Mugabe's regime to marginalize both ZIPRA and ZAPU, were open indicators that the military was intended to be a political force and a full partner in a one-party state.

By the end of August, the full impact of the new appointments had begun to sink in to both BMATT and ZIPRA. Palmer and Henshaw both realized that there would

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<sup>75</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, Military SITREP for 31 JUL to 14 AUG 1981, "Military Assistance from Overseas."

soon be a mass exodus of those whites still remaining in the ZNA. Many of these men were commanders, at least until they had been replaced by the new political appointees. Palmer fully expected most of the remaining settlers to leave the Army by April of 1982.<sup>76</sup> This situation was paired with the sweeping Africanization of the Army staff, or more accurately, the ZANLAization. ZANLA men who had little experience or training in staff work were tapped to replace experienced staff officers, European and African alike.<sup>77</sup> While it was possible that this inexperience among staff officers could have led to further dependence on BMATT, Henshaw correctly predicted otherwise. It was the opinion of the British officers in the country that the appointment, combined with the creation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, would only increase tension between Mugabe and Nkomo and increase the possibility of a repeat of the events of February 1981, only on a larger scale.<sup>78</sup>

This was not an opinion solely held by the British. Joshua Nkomo frequently spoke out in parliament and in ministerial meetings against the establishment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Later, he even claimed that the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade reported directly to the ZANU Central Committee, rather than any part of the Zimbabwean government.<sup>79</sup> Even the *Times* reported that the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was being trained for an abnormal purpose that could threaten the balance of power in Zimbabwe.<sup>80</sup> As August gave way to September, the specter of a one-party state increased. Mugabe began to include the notion in public

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<sup>76</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, From Salisbury to FCO and MOD, "Zimbabwe Army Senior Appointments," 28 August 1981.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Joshua Nkomo, *Nkomo the Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984), 222-223.

<sup>80</sup> Stephen Taylor, "White Officer to Lead Zimbabwe Forces," *The Times*, 8 August 1981, 4.

speeches, and the Minister of Youth, Sport, and Recreation, Ernest Kadungure, organized large youth demonstrations advocating a one-party state led by ZANU.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, Mugabe began to make references to youth military training programs. His intention was for ZANU to establish military training centers across Zimbabwe, ostensibly to keep the youth occupied.<sup>82</sup>

This was a troublesome prospect for the British who felt the program was analogous to those found in Cuba, the USSR, and East Germany. However, the Zimbabweans very easily could have framed it as a revival of the Army Cadet Programs that had been present in Rhodesia prior to independence. The key difference for both Mugabe and London was that ZANU ran the program, rather than the Zimbabwean government. This is an excellent example of the fundamental misunderstanding by the British of what had occurred in Zimbabwe up to this point. By this point, Mugabe and ZANU had dispensed with the trappings of a unified government; the *de facto* condition for Zimbabwe at this point was that it had become a one-party state.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade takes shape

As personnel of the North Korean training team continued to arrive in Zimbabwe, the British persisted to try to understand what Pyongyang stood to gain. Col. Henshaw informally consulted with the Chinese diplomatic mission in an attempt to gain some sort of insight into the intentions of the North Koreans. Sun Guotung, the Deputy

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<sup>81</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Zimbabwe youth march to back one-party state," *The Times*, 22 September 1981, 2.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, From DL McMillian (Salisbury) to FCO, Military Training of Zimbabwe's Youth, 11 September 1981.

Chief of Mission, told Henshaw that the Chinese had no knowledge of Kim Il-Sung's plans in Zimbabwe. However, Guotung did say that if the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade made up entirely of ZANLA men (as was currently planned), it would have "sinister implication[s]."<sup>83</sup> In spite of the warning provided by this Chinese diplomat, Henshaw and the rest of the British mission failed to recognize the seriousness of the situation.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade began to absorb many of the highly trained ZANLA specialists who had previously been integrated into the ZNA service units. The brigade was 3,100 men strong by the end of September, 1981. At the same time, Mugabe began a demobilization program. The ZNA had grown far too large, and had absorbed almost a third of the government's budget.<sup>84</sup> By September of 1981, 9,000 former guerillas had volunteered to leave the Army as part of a demobilization scheme. Those who left the ZNA were given \$Z400 in severance pay and \$Z185 per month for two years.<sup>85</sup> A further 2,763 men were involuntarily demobilized; of this number, 2,432 were former ZIPRA fighters.<sup>86</sup> The new ZNA command structure actively encouraged ZIPRA men and RSF soldiers to leave the Army, claiming that "they had [already] served for so many years."<sup>87</sup> Only six months earlier, Mugabe had argued that Zimbabwe needed to maintain a large army to counter the possibility of a South African invasion. However, it seems that what he really meant was that Zimbabwe needed a large Army of soldiers

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<sup>83</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/464, Discussion between DA Salisbury and Mr. Sun Guotong, Chinese Embassy, September 1981.

<sup>84</sup> "South Africa invasion threat must be countered," *The Herald*, 29 January 1981.

<sup>85</sup> Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging Neo-Colonialism & Settler & International Capital* (Suffolk : James Currey, 2011), 68. This was a somewhat higher than average monthly income in Zimbabwe, which at the time was \$Z125.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP, 15 August to 24 September 1981.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

loyal to ZANU to consolidate power inside the country and then face off with South Africa. As the ZNA units passed through their training program and the integration exercise continued, the Army became more and more partisan.

Matters at the Defence Forces Headquarters did not improve with the rearrangement of the command structure. Even though Sandy Maclean was the titular Defence Force Commander, he had little real power. He had set up a small HQ staff inside the Zimbabwe Ministry of Defence; however, his duties and powers still were not defined by the Prime Minister's office.<sup>88</sup> While Maclean was slipping into irrelevance, Mujuru was quickly becoming more and more dominant inside the Zimbabwean security forces. Mugabe and ZANU were satisfied with the progress of the ZNA; however, the Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ) was far from satisfactory. Almost all of the African pilots who had been trained in the Eastern Bloc nations had failed all of the initial tests to serve as pilots in the AFZ. At that point the AFZ maintained the same standards as the old Rhodesian Air Force, and by virtue of this fact, of the Royal Air Force. All of the officers and pilots in the AFZ were white, except for a handful of administrative officers who had been trained in Nigeria.<sup>89</sup> The commander of the AFZ, Air Marshall Norman Walsh, who had served in the Rhodesian Air Force since 1949, had hoped to maintain their high educational standards. As had been the case in Zambia and Kenya before, the maintenance of educational standards had merely been the thinly veiled racism that was present throughout the colonial world.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Mujuru was behaving more like the Commander of Defence Forces than the Commander of the ZNA. He insisted that the AFZ make immediate changes. Particularly in terms of the chain of command, it would not do for the Air Force to remain a bastion of white control in an independent Zimbabwe. Particularly since the AFZ was the component of the security forces that the South Africans were most concerned about, it was considered to be the most modern force on the continent (second only to the South African Air Force). While Mujuru did not immediately insist that an African replace Walsh, he did request that an African be named Deputy Commander of the AFZ.<sup>90</sup> Palmer feared that Mujuru's insistence and the overall lowering of the educational standards in the AFZ would lead to more resignations by white officers from the service. Even members of the Non-Aligned Movement were concerned about the direction the Zimbabwean services were taking. The Egyptians approached Byatt to discuss his concerns about the AFZ. The Egyptian ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mohamed El-Farnawany, felt that the Air Force was the perfect place for the USSR to insert themselves into Zimbabwean affairs. Mugabe had already approached the Egyptians, Pakistanis, and Chinese with a request to train Zimbabwean pilots, but they had all declined, claiming that the cost was too high to provide these services for free. The USSR was the only country willing to offer pilot training at no cost. The British government had insisted that the Zimbabweans share the costs of the two flying instructors that were training the forty-two air cadets in Zimbabwe.<sup>91</sup> The British

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/465, "Zimbabwe Air Force Pilot Training and Egyptian Military Assistance," 1.

solution to this problem was to attempt to get other parties to pay for the training. As was the case with the ZNA, London was simply unable to fund a large technical training mission for the AFZ that would prevent them from seeking assistance elsewhere.

In October of 1981, the last three newly-created ZNA battalions began training, and BMATT was scheduled to start reducing its strength by the end of the month. Rather than solidifying the defence relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe, it seemed that Mugabe had opened up the country to any nation wanting to be involved in southern Africa. A team from Pakistan had arrived in Salisbury to determine how best to provide military assistance. The French were actively looking to sell arms to the newly independent nation, and Mugabe had sent a delegation to Bulgaria to solicit military assistance.<sup>92</sup> Affairs had come a long way from the point when Mugabe had sat in Mrs. Thatcher's office and insisted that he wanted Britain to be Zimbabwe's only military assistance provider.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was quickly growing into something much larger and more complex than had initially been anticipated. The ZNA only possessed one field artillery regiment in October of 1981. However, the British learned that the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was to have its own artillery regiment and had already absorbed a large number of other specialists.<sup>93</sup> Even so, Palmer and Byatt seemed to be comfortable with the apparent lack of progress the North Korean trainers were making. As of October, the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade's training had been confined to political indoctrination. With the stated British goal of

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<sup>92</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP 25 September to 8 October 1981.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

ensuring that the military was a force that stayed out of domestic politics, it was curious that a heavy regimen of political indoctrination did not concern them.<sup>94</sup>

The hastily planned demobilization scheme seemed to be unraveling before it even got started. As a test for the system, 500 men were scheduled for demobilization in November; however, the sparsely staffed Ministry of Social Services did not have the resources to manage the plan properly. The desire to discharge 2,000 men from the Army every month, with benefits, was simply unattainable at the time.<sup>95</sup> It seemed more and more likely that the former ZIPRA men were simply going to be discharged without ceremony and forced to fend for themselves.

It was also becoming more technically challenging for the British to train the ZNA. In October, the rest of the ZNA was brought into line with the new 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade when the decision was made to equip the Army with AK-47 assault rifles and Chinese Type 56 Light Machine Guns, as opposed to the FN FAL battle rifle and the FN General Purpose Machine Guns that had been used by the Rhodesian Army.<sup>96</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade had been equipped with these weapons, and the rest of the Army followed suit. This decision brought an end to any real possibility of a sale of British or Western-manufactured equipment to the Army. The Mugabe regime made a conscious decision to change suppliers. The FN and the AK-47 used completely incompatible ammunition, 7.62mm NATO and 7.62x39, respectively. This meant major supply chain changes for the Army and a complete reorientation of the acquisition system from the West to the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. The FN FAL was a Belgian designation for the rifle used by the British Army at the time, the L1A1.

East. BMATT had already had some difficulty with attempting to train ZNA personnel on Eastern Bloc equipment with which they were unfamiliar; now all of the standard issue equipment was to be Eastern Bloc in origin.<sup>97</sup>

Military assistance offers from other nations continued. The Pakistanis offered pilot training and places for Zimbabweans at their Staff College. The Bulgarians promised that they would provide some military equipment. As this occurred, fresh delegations were dispatched to Algeria and East Germany also seeking military aid.<sup>98</sup>

The Zimbabweans were clearly shopping around among the Communist and non-aligned nations. They were making no effort to seek aid from Western nations other than the UK. However, it is unlikely that this was because of any dramatic ideological differences between ZANU and the West. Military assistance from Western nations came at a much higher monetary price, and frankly Zimbabwe was not strategically important enough to countries like the United States, France, or Israel to warrant aid being granted on a cost-free basis. Additionally, all of the above-mentioned countries were far too invested in the maintenance of the status quo in southern Africa to give Zimbabwe any tools that could possibly lead to a larger regional confrontation with South Africa.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> The British had approached the Egyptians and requested their assistance in training the ZNA on this type of equipment because the Egyptian Army was trained along British lines but utilized Soviet-supplied equipment. The Egyptian government agreed to provide places in some training courses but not a mobile training team.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP 23 October to 13 November 1981.

<sup>99</sup> The United States provided covert aid to UNITA in Angola whose forces were openly operating with the SADF in their operations against the MPLA. The French had sold Mirage III fighter aircraft to the South Africans, along with other advanced military aircraft and weapons systems. The Israelis supplied arms to both sides in the African liberation wars; they provided Uzi submachine guns and UH-1 helicopters to the Rhodesians, as well as officer training to various African liberation forces and newly independent armies. However, all of this assistance came at a price; these were never free grants of arms

However the Zimbabweans were beginning to sense that the South Africans were behind the growing number of security incidents in the country. After the arrest of the white officer in charge of the Zimbabwe Engineer Corps, Mugabe's government suspected the SADF was responsible for almost every report of sabotage and violence. To a degree they were right; in November of 1981, RENEMO fighters destroyed a 100 m span of bridge inside Zimbabwe.<sup>100</sup> While RENEMO forces were certainly behind this action, after the fall of the Smith regime the CIO had passed off support and direction of RENEMO sabotage operations to the South Africans.<sup>101</sup> Operation DRAMA was also becoming much more active. As more and more disgruntled ZIPRA men left or were forced out of the ZNA, the South Africans recruited them for retention in their effort to destabilize Zimbabwe.<sup>102</sup>

BMATT moves into a new phase

Officially, the integration process ended on 11 November 1981, sixteen years after UDI. The ZNA's officer corps was under-strength by 205 officers; the Army was authorized 2,341 officer positions and only had 2,136 men in uniform. However, the force was drastically over strength in other ranks; 39,496 were authorized. However, as

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or training. The West generally sold weapons and training for money as well as favors, but not simply to expand their influence.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP 23 October to 13 November 1981.

<sup>101</sup> Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record, Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964 to 1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), 300-302.

<sup>102</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), 89.

of 11 November there were 55,449 men serving.<sup>103</sup> This number also did not include the 3,000 men who were now serving in the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. This excessively large number of troops made the ZNA one of the largest armies in Africa, far larger than a country of its size required or could afford.

The British government had come to terms with the necessity of continuing the military mission in Zimbabwe. Mrs. Thatcher and Mugabe spoke on 6 October 1981 about the internal situation in Zimbabwe. In their conversation, Mugabe appealed to Thatcher regarding Zimbabwe's need for continued training of the Army after the end of the integration exercise. However, he made it clear to her that the Army needed to develop "a single allegiance to the government in power."<sup>104</sup> He was very specific when he chose his terms; the implication was that the Army should be loyal to the ZANU government, not necessarily the Zimbabwean constitution. This was an important distinction about which Mugabe was, in fact, quite clear. At the end of October 1981, Mugabe presented the 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Battalion with their colors, making them the first unit in the ZNA to receive the Zimbabwean colors. In his remarks at the parade, he emphasized the duty the men had to remain loyal to the nation and the government.<sup>105</sup> In any other circumstances this speech would have sounded the same as any other given by an elected official at a military event, yet the implication was clear: loyalty to the government meant loyalty to ZNAU. The ministers in Mugabe's government had openly campaigned for and were in the process of creating a one-party state. In January 1981,

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<sup>103</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP 23 October to 13 November 1981.

<sup>104</sup> TNA, PRO, PREM19/606 f12, Zimbabwe: No.10 record of conversation (MT-Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe).

<sup>105</sup> "Loyalty is all, PM tells army," *The Herald*, 31 October 1981, 1.

the Zimbabwean government created the Mass Media Trust and purchased all of the major newspapers in the country including *The Herald*. Throughout the course of 1981, the paper and its Editorial Board were used to extol the virtues of a one-party state for the betterment of the future of the country.<sup>106</sup> ZANU was the government; the two were inseparable, and so by design the ZNA would also have to be loyal to ZANU.

The end of the integration exercise passed unceremoniously in November of 1981. The last of the ZNA battalions graduated from basic training during the first week of November. There was no mention of the graduation in *The Herald*; the first report of the end of the exercise was an article that announced that both the British and Korean military training teams would remain in Zimbabwe past integration.<sup>107</sup> However, the article was far from flattering; it exposed the financial commitment made by each country in the military training process:

Mr. Mugabe has several times praised the British for their help in training the four infantry brigades, and the Koreans for their willingness to equip and train the fifth brigade. About 160 British instructors had come to Zimbabwe and a little over 100 Koreans. The British were paid by the United Kingdom government while the Koreans were paid by Zimbabwe in return for having supplied several million dollars' worth of arms.<sup>108</sup>

This attempt to demonstrate the high level of commitment that North Korea had made to Zimbabwe was not the first time that the Zimbabwean government had called out the decline in British aid. In the October 6<sup>th</sup> "Army Review" series of articles in *The Herald*,

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<sup>106</sup> "Western democracy may not be the answer," *The Herald*, 7 April 1981, 1; "Unity of the party and the state our objective," *The Herald*, 2 November 1981, 1. These are examples of at least ten articles that appeared in this paper over the course of six months expounding upon the virtues of fusing the state with ZANU.

<sup>107</sup> "Military Teams from Britain and Korea here to stay," *The Herald*, 13 November 1981.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

the article on BMATT had been lukewarm in tone. It pointed out that while the British had sponsored a number of Zimbabwean soldiers in courses in Britain, this number had dramatically declined over the past year and would continue to do so.<sup>109</sup> The language of reconciliation that had been the order of the day only a year ago had simply fallen away. Mugabe and his ministers spoke plainly in public about their intentions for a one-party state, as well as the need of the Army to be loyal to that state. Concurrently, government ministers and the state-controlled media slowly began to expose the lack of support from Britain in the areas of military assistance and funds for land reform.

However, it seems that by November of 1981, Margaret Thatcher's government had decided that military aid was not the best way to gain influence in Zimbabwe. In a letter to Mugabe at the beginning of November, Thatcher outlined the level of commitment that the British government had displayed in support of the reconstruction in Zimbabwe. The focus of her comments was the £20 million the British had pledged to Zimbabwe to support of land resettlement.<sup>110</sup> She made it very clear to Mugabe that this was the largest British aid program in Africa, and that it demonstrated a very firm British commitment to the future of Zimbabwe. Mugabe, the consummate politician, made sure that he thanked Mrs. Thatcher for her support of Zimbabwe. Yet he did not muzzle his ministers or the newspapers in their criticism of the British, and by extension the whites

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<sup>109</sup> "No blueprint for success," *The Herald*, 6 October 1981.

<sup>110</sup> Churchill Archive Centre, Thatcher MSS THCR 3/2/73 f133, Margaret Thatcher letter to Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe (aid for Zimbabwe) [*land resettlement, fees for students from Zimbabwe in the UK.*]

who remained in Zimbabwe.<sup>111</sup> As Mugabe had played political games with Palmer, Byatt, and Walls when he denied being able to control the inflammatory partisan statements of his ministers, he played the same game with the Iron Lady.

Only a week after *The Times* reported that the military integration exercise had been completed, it was announced publicly that the ZNA would shrink by 20,000 soldiers over the course of the next year.<sup>112</sup> Interestingly enough, this move by the ZANU government passed unnoticed in the government-controlled press in Salisbury. While *The Times* reported that the men who would be demobilized were volunteers, the reality was far different. While some ZANLA men were forced out of the Army, for the most part it was former ZIPRA fighters who received involuntary discharges. Joshua Nkomo recounted one incident where he was asked to go and speak to a group of ZNA soldiers who had been selected for discharge but had refused to leave their posts.<sup>113</sup> Nkomo was able to convince the men to lay down their arms and accept that they were to be discharged. However, as he was driving away he saw that the men were being told to take off their Army uniforms and change into civilian clothes on the public road at the front gate. Not only were the men targeted because of their political affiliation during the war, they were also publicly humiliated. This intentionally emasculated these men by indicating publicly that they did not possess the same martial spirit that ZANLA men

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<sup>111</sup> "Unity of the party and the state our objective." Alongside the objective of unifying the state with ZANU was the issue of land reform. The creation of the one-party state and the ability of the state to redistribute land seemed to be intertwined issues to ZANU and the Zimbabwean public at large.

<sup>112</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Mugabe slashes his army," *The Times*, 27 November 1981.

<sup>113</sup> Nkomo, *Nkomo the Story of My Life*, 225.

did, and were not even allowed to wear their uniforms on their return trip home (which was common practice at the time).<sup>114</sup>

These incidents focused on undermining the position of ZANU supporters (mostly Ndebele's people) in Zimbabwe. Such practices became more and more common in 1983 when the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was committed to Matabeleland. Since there were British officers attached to most of the ZNA battalions, these events were reported to the BMATT HQ. After the end of the initial training phase of the integration exercise, the FCO and MOD needed to reevaluate what kind of role they were to play in Zimbabwe, particularly considering Mrs. Thatcher's decision to focus on civil aid. In doing so, they needed to consider the situation in Zimbabwe as it stood in December of 1981.

The fissures in the ZNA were becoming increasingly problematic. While fewer and fewer white officers remained in the Army, racial problems were still cause for concern. In mid-November Captain Frank Gericke, the man responsible for the destruction of the ZNA armory, escaped from prison with the assistance of a senior officer of the Zimbabwe Republic Police Criminal Investigation Division (CID).<sup>115</sup> This type of subversion from within one of the most elite organizations in the Zimbabwean Security Forces worried Mugabe and his government, and made them increasingly suspicious of whites. On December 5, 1981, an odd event occurred at the ZNA HQ officers' mess. Some settler officers attempted to hold two events; black officers were invited to both. However, none of the black officers who were invited decided to attend.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> "Detective helps SA spy escape," *The Herald*, 19 November 1981, 1.

Gen. Mujuru caught wind of these events and personally intervened, claiming that “relics of colonialism were on display.”<sup>116</sup> The European mess officer was arrested and the rest of the group was detained overnight on charges that they were involved in subversive activities.

As the racial tensions in the Army grew, the white officers who remained seemed simply to be waiting until they could qualify for their pensions.<sup>117</sup> Very few were committed to the task of training the ZNA to a high standard. However, a small number of European officers committed themselves to the future of the Zimbabwean regime. Colonel Lionel Dyck commanded a company of the RAR in 1980, and went on to command the Zimbabwe Parachute Battalion. He continued to serve in the Zimbabwe National Army well into the late 1980s and was implicated in the atrocities committed by the Mugabe regime in Matabeleland throughout the decade.<sup>118</sup> Some white personnel remained in the special units of the ZNA into the 1990s.<sup>119</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade had been relatively well concealed from the Zimbabwean public at large until December of 1981, when news of tourists being harassed by members of

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<sup>116</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP No. 59, 20 NOV to 16 DEC 81.

<sup>117</sup> Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 130. Norma Kriger did a number of interviews with former BMATT officers about the treatment of Guerillas after the integration process, and she quotes Colonel Roderick Arnold, BMATT Chief of Staff in 1982, as being extremely disappointed with the remaining RSF officers that he encountered. He indicated that many of them were, essentially, waiting for the day they could retire. Only a handful were still interested in making a contribution to the ZNA.

<sup>118</sup> “Zimbabwe: Operation Glossary - a guide to Zimbabwe’s internal campaigns,” *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis*, 1 May 2008, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/78003/zimbabwe-operation-glossary-a-guide-to-zimbabwe-s-internal-campaigns>.

<sup>119</sup> Curt Harig, interview, 5 August 2013. Chief Warrant Officer Harig, USA(ret.), was a Special Forces officer who participated in military training missions to Zimbabwe in 1993. As part of these missions he helped conduct refresher parachute training for the Zimbabwe Parachute Battalion and the Zimbabwe SAS Regiment. He mentioned that there were a handful of white servicemen in these units at the time.

the unit surfaced.<sup>120</sup> Four British tourists had accidentally driven into a restricted area, where they were accosted by a group of soldiers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The soldiers ransacked the car the tourists were traveling in, and then assaulted them. Only direct intervention by Colonel Prentice Shiri kept the situation from getting any more out of hand.<sup>121</sup> This was an early sign of the type of problems stemming from lack of discipline from which the Brigade suffered. However, it is not surprising considering the level and quality of training they received from the North Koreans. The Zimbabweans themselves complained about the unprofessional conduct of the Korean trainers, who continued to insist that the Zimbabwean government pay for their expensive liquor-fueled outings.<sup>122</sup> There also were continuous problems because of the language barrier between the Zimbabwean soldiers and the Korean trainers. However, these issues were not unusual; the Australians had come to the conclusion as early as July of 1981 that the North Korean foray into Zimbabwe would be militarily counterproductive. The Australian Office of National Assessments (ONA) concluded that the creation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade would only further destabilize the country. Additionally, the ONA asserted that the only real utility of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was as ZANU's "private army and a counter-weight to the British trained ZNA."<sup>123</sup> However, this assessment was not passed along to the British government because it was classified as being for "Australian Eyes Only."

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<sup>120</sup> "Soldiers harass tourists near Inyanga," *The Herald*, 12 December 1981.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> TNA, PRO, FCO 106/466, BMATT to MOD Military SITREP No. 59, 20 NOV to 16 DEC 81.

<sup>123</sup> National Archives of Australia (NAA): A13952, 13, ONA Weekly Summary 28/81 Zimbabwe Military Assistance.

The British government continued along the path it had set well over a year before with its military assistance plan. British officers remained as advisors with the ZNA battalions in an attempt to set them on the proper path in the areas of training and administration. As had been the case in June, BMATT officers posted to battalions quickly realized that most of the ZNA battalions were simply incapable of operating as military units.<sup>124</sup> Even though advanced training for these units was needed, there seemed to be no interest on the part of most of the ZANLA officers in following BMATT's recommendations.

The security situation in Zimbabwe became even more tense in the first months of 1982. While racial tensions had escalated in the Army in December of 1981 and continued into January, factional tensions in Zimbabwe as a whole became the leading cause for concern in February of 1982.<sup>125</sup> Early in the month, Mugabe's government announced that they had found no less than thirty-five caches on property either controlled by ZAPU or owned by party leaders.<sup>126</sup> Mugabe asserted that ZAPU's leadership was planning a military coup in concert with the remaining whites in the country.<sup>127</sup> Nkomo and other ZANU leaders denied any connection to the caches, and

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<sup>124</sup> Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 132.

<sup>125</sup> "Three white security men arrested in Zimbabwe," *The Times*, 8 January 1982, 4. At the time there were at least ten whites being held in Zimbabwe on charges that they were plotting against the government.

<sup>126</sup> Eliakim Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 249. The validity of the government's claims is a matter of fierce debate. While there were certainly some small arms caches, the number and size was more than likely overstated by the government. Additionally, it was well known that former fighters from both sides stashed a great deal of their weapons during the integration phase.

<sup>127</sup> *The Chronicle*, 8 February 1982.

pointed out that up until that point weapons stores had been discovered all over the country and no one had even bothered to find out to whom they belonged.<sup>128</sup>

Even though there was no concrete evidence linking ZAPU with a planned military coup, the die was cast, and ZANU used these arms caches as ammunition to destroy their rival party. In December of 1981, ZANU, and by extension the Zimbabwean government, made a very simple case to the public that the party was under attack. South African agents antagonized the situation when they planted a bomb at the ZANU party headquarters in Salisbury.<sup>129</sup>

Nkomo was dismissed from the Cabinet on February 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>130</sup> The deputy commander of the ZNA, LtGen. Lookout Masuku was arrested, along with other high-ranking ZAPU Army officers, for allegedly plotting against the government. However, this was simply the beginning; former ZIPRA men made up roughly thirty percent of the officer corps in the Army at the time. Many ZIPRA officers were battalion commanders, deputy brigade commanders, or chiefs of staff. While not at the highest levels of command, these positions held significant influence over the daily operations of the Army. The CIO and Special Branch targeted mid and low level officers for both arrest and harassment. Publicly, the government made statements that there would be no retribution against former ZIPRA men in the security forces; however, the reality was far

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<sup>128</sup> Catholic Commission For Justice and Peace inside Zimbabwe, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 66. There have been unsubstantiated claims that CIO was involved in engineering these discoveries. South African agents working inside CIO were attempting to cause political and military chaos inside the country and prevent Zimbabwe from becoming a base from which the ANC could operate.

<sup>129</sup> "Killer bomb at ZANU(PF) headquarters," *The Herald*, 19 December 1981, 1.

<sup>130</sup> "Zimbabwe fears backlash by Nkomo's men," *The Times*, 18 February 1982, 6.

different. In September of 1982, the Mechanized Battalion in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade was purged of all ZIPRA men. Over 250 soldiers were sent elsewhere in the ZNA; many ended up being discharged.<sup>131</sup>

This became common practice in the Army; even ZIPRA men who were not personally attacked or harassed saw what was happening around them and simply left the Army. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available that shed light on how many ZIPRA men left the Army. However, by the end of 1983 the ZNA reduced its size from almost 65,000 to 50,000 soldiers. Based on the accounts available from ZNA soldiers at the time, it seems that the vast majority of those who left were ZIPRA men.<sup>132</sup> This is not to say that there was a Soviet-style purge of the Army. The intimidation was often localized and kept out of the media; however, it was not hidden from BMATT. British officers were well aware of what was occurring, but they often felt that all they could do was attempt to keep the situation from getting worse. Major General Colin Shortis, who commanded BMATT from January of 1982 until June of 1983, commented that BMATT continued to encourage Mujuru and the ZNA to pursue their demobilization plan more vigorously. Mujuru's solution was to "parade all officers and demob all the ZIPRA officers. We can reduce the army and solve the ZIPRA problem."<sup>133</sup> Shortis was able to

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<sup>131</sup> Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 135. Kriger cites an unpublished BMATT report that is still confidential. The unit had been made up of equal thirds RSF/ZIPRA/ZANLA. While it had supposedly functioned well up until that point, its readiness dropped dramatically after the ZIPRA purge.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. After her extensive interviews with former-ZIPRA men, Kriger concludes that many were forced to resign from the Army or were frightened into deserting; Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: Challenging Neo-Colonialism & Settler & International Capital* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 80. While Sadomba is not as explicit in his discussion of the factional problems, he does indicate that the majority of those who left the ZNA in the first years after integration were ZIPRA men.

<sup>133</sup> Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, 137.

convince the Defence Minister that the Army would be far worse off than it already was if it lost that many officers. Yet this attitude towards ZIPRA had clearly become an institutional norm in the ZANLA-controlled ZNA. During this same period, Mugabe met with Mrs. Thatcher in London. At their meeting she restated the British commitment to Zimbabwe and promised that her government intended to continue supporting Mugabe's government with both military and civil aid.<sup>134</sup> By December of 1981, BMAT had been reduced to seventy-three soldiers; however, with the rising factionalism in the Army and the renewed commitment by Thatcher, thirty-four more advisors were dispatched from Britain in October of 1982.<sup>135</sup>

However, it was not only the ZANU supporters in the Army who were targeted by the Mugabe regime. Civilians also suffered for their political associations. On July 26, 1982 South African agents infiltrated Thornhill Airbase and blew up ten AFZ planes, including four newly-arrived BAE Hawk jet aircraft.<sup>136</sup> In July of 1982, the Mugabe government claimed that there was such a dramatic rise in sabotage, banditry, and other violent acts committed by ZAPU dissidents, the government was forced to reinstate the Emergency Powers Act.<sup>137</sup> This Act protected members of the security forces from any form of prosecution for acts committed combating dissident forces.<sup>138</sup> In

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<sup>134</sup> "Thatcher pledge on aid to Zimbabwe," *The Times*, 20 May 1982, 8.

<sup>135</sup> Stephen Taylor, "British team reinforced in Zimbabwe," *The Times*, 27 October 1982, 8.

<sup>136</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Zimbabwe jets destroyed," *The Times*, 26 July 1982, 1. The destruction of these aircraft and six Hawker Hunter fighters was a huge blow to the AFZ. This led to a loss in confidence in white officers in the AFZ. The commander Air Marshal Norman Walsh was arrested along with other senior white officers, and imprisoned and tortured for over a year before the Mugabe government released them.

<sup>137</sup> These were the same Emergency Powers that the Smith Regime had used to oppress Africans during the colonial period.

<sup>138</sup> Zimbabwe, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe*, 71.

a way, he was correct. There had been a rise in the activities of the South African-trained fighters, known at the time as Super ZIPRA.<sup>139</sup> However, for the most part ZIPRA men who had fled the Army or simply taken their demobilization settlement returned to their homes. Since ZAPU largely represented those who were either Ndebele's men or who had politically aligned themselves with the Ndebele group, the bastion of ZAPU supporters resided in the southern part of the country known as Matabeleland.

In order for Mugabe to secure power in the country and accomplish his goal of a one-party state, this region of opposition had to be broken. The dismissal of Nkomo from the cabinet and the arrest of high level ZAPU military leaders helped criminalize the leadership element of the party. Now, he had to deal with the rank and file. The true purpose of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade finally materialized in December of 1982, after the brigade graduated from its training program and was deployed directly to Matabeleland North the following month, along with a number of other ZNA units that were sent in a supporting role.<sup>140</sup> Counting South African trained Super ZIPRA, it has been estimated that there were never more than roughly 200 dissidents operating in the Matabeleland area.<sup>141</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade embarked on a campaign of rape, murder, pillaging, and a

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<sup>139</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), 90. Of course all of the operations involving Super ZIPRA were part of OP DRAMA. However, there were never more than about 120 men active in the Super ZIPRA program.

<sup>140</sup> Zimbabwe, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe*, 71.

<sup>141</sup> Zimbabwe, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe*, 76. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace has been gathering information on human rights violations in Zimbabwe since the Smith regime. All of its reports are based on sound research methodologies. They utilize extensive witness interviews, photographic evidence, medical reports, and other open source research. They conducted a significant number of interviews with former dissidents who confirmed the number of ex-ZIPRA operating in the area.

variety of other shameful acts over the course of the next year. During the first six weeks of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade's time in Matabeleland, they killed roughly 2,000 civilians.<sup>142</sup>

Publicly, the British played down these incidents. When a crew from the British TV show *Panorama* interviewed Col. Charles Ivey, he addressed the stories of the atrocities by casting doubt on the reports, saying "there are stories in Matabeleland and there are stories in Ireland and you want to believe who writes what story?"<sup>143</sup> The British commander was doing his best to turn a blind eye to the excesses that occurred in Matabeleland, in order to preserve a tenuous diplomatic and military relationship with the Mugabe government.

## Conclusion

The atrocities that occurred throughout Matabeleland over the course of the next decade have been extensively documented by a variety of organizations.<sup>144</sup> Mugabe's knowledge of what occurred in the area is also quite certain. Not only did the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade get their orders directly from the Prime Minister's office, but a former ZNA officer, LtCol. Esau Sibanda, confirmed that Mugabe received a daily briefing of the Brigade's activities through its deployment.<sup>145</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade deployment and the aftermath were the point at which it became clear that the British had failed in their military mission.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>143</sup> "The Price of Silence."

<sup>144</sup> Zimbabwe, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe*; "Survivors tell of slaughter by Zimbabwe Army," *The Times*, 26 February 1983, 24; This is just one in a series of articles in *The Times* that reported on atrocities in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. The International Documentation Centre for Evidence of Crimes Against Humanity in Zimbabwe is based in the Hague, Netherlands and is a clearing house for evidence of these crimes.

<sup>145</sup> "The Price of Silence."

The goal from the beginning had been to secure British influence in the Zimbabwean security apparatus, and create a military force divorced from political parties and domestic politics. In fact, what had occurred over the course of the first three years of independence was that a completely politicized military force had been created that acted as the military arm of the party in power.

The British government prioritized military assistance in their 1981 Defence Statement. The government considered assistance requests based on the following considerations: “the United Kingdom’s strategic interests, the nature of our defence relationship with the country concerned, and whether their armed forces operate similarly to our own and use British equipment.”<sup>146</sup> In mid-1983, it seemed as though only the first of the four criteria had been met. By this point, the defence relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe was growing tense. The Zimbabweans seemed to know they needed the British for their technical proficiency but wanted none of their policy advice. The ZNA was leaning closer and closer to operating like a Soviet-style force, with their introduction of political commissars into the force, the prevalence of party membership being connected to promotion prospects, and the rigidity of the command structure.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> TNA, PRO, CAB 129/211/11, “Statement on the Defence Estimates 1981,” 70.

<sup>147</sup> Roger Reese, *Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005). In his treatment of the Red Army officer corps, Reese points out that the intimate connection to the party prevented the officer corps from being a professional organization, in part because it lacked the autonomy to maintain its own standards; by this point, the same can be said of the ZNA. Since officers who were not members of ZANU could not rise beyond the rank of colonel, it was almost impossible for the Army to be professional.

The British had high hopes in 1979, during Operation AGILA, that Zimbabwe would be an African success story. They imagined that the existing infrastructure could be used to create a professional force that stayed out of domestic politics. The training that they conducted had given the Zimbabweans a framework for a military force, but had not made any significant impact on the culture of the Zimbabwean military. The Zimbabwean military bore more of a cultural resemblance to the guerilla forces that preceded it than to a modern military force. Promotion, posting, and other benefits were attached to political patronage and proximity to the ruling elite in ZANU, rather than to any sort of professional excellence.

In both Kenya and Zambia, the British recognized that the officers most willing to work with them were men whom they had brought to the United Kingdom and trained in British military institutions. The connections these men had to the traditions instilled in them at Sandhurst and Mons were not easily broken. Not only were these officers more likely to work with the British, they were better trained than those who underwent brief commissioning courses in their own country. Finally, many of the African officers in both Kenya and Zambia who had been trained at Sandhurst were firmly committed to remaining aloof from domestic politics. This was one of the many hard lessons the British Army, FCO, and MOD had learned since 1945 in training African armies. Yet in spite of this knowledge, BMATT, the FCO, and the MOD overestimated their ability to project training power in Zimbabwe, with only thin resources. Relying on influence that they did not have, the British government felt confident that they would be able to carry favor with the new Zimbabwean government through only minimal military assistance.

Britain's failure in Zimbabwe was clear to many observers by 1983. While the British had managed to place a British officer, on loan service terms, as the army commanders in both Kenya and Zambia, they were not able to do so in Zimbabwe. However, after the arrest of Air Marshal Walsh the Zimbabwean government replaced him with a Pakistani officer, Air Marshal Mohammed Azim Daudpota. The British government was no longer the primary resource for military training and resources for the Zimbabwean government. The North Koreans were the primary arms supplier; the Pakistanis provided a significant amount of professional education to Zimbabwean senior leaders.<sup>148</sup> Even though much of the world was protesting the actions of the Mugabe government in Matabeleland by February of 1983, the British refused to retract their military assistance program. In September of 1983, Margret Thatcher told the US Ambassador to London that even though they were not pleased with Mugabe, they would not cut off military aid unless the situation got much more out of hand.<sup>149</sup> That day did not come until 2001, when the Mugabe government seized land from white farmers and began cracking down on Western journalists.<sup>150</sup> The 1981 Statement on Defence made it very clear that the British government only provided military assistance to those nations where there were British strategic interests at stake. The displacement of much of the remaining white population seemed to be the last of any lingering strategic interests in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>148</sup> While the North Koreans were the primary arms suppliers in the early 1980s, they would soon lose their place to the Chinese when Beijing became more involved in the international arms trade. Currently, the ZNA and the AFZ almost exclusively use Chinese military equipment.

<sup>149</sup> Reagan Library: European & Soviet Directorate NSC (Thatcher Visit - Dec 84 [4] Box 90902).

<sup>150</sup> Tim Butcher, "Britain will pull military trainers out of Zimbabwe," *The Telegraph*, 20 February 2001.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION: MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS A DIPLOMATIC WEAPON

The process of transition from colony to independent nation is typically fraught with difficulty. Often, one of the biggest challenges is filling the void left by the colonial power in the military and representative democracy. This transition is made even more difficult when the colonial power leaves, but its progeny remain. Minority settler communities complicate the transition because they are seldom willing to give up their place of privilege in society or government. In Africa, race exacerbated the difficulties. White settlers in African nations maintained power even after the end of colonialism; often it was simply the type of power that changed. Political power gave way to economic power, and even though many settlers left their African homes after independence, it was the protection of those who remained that became a cornerstone of British strategy in these former colonies.

As the 1980s continued, British strategic interests in Zimbabwe quickly faded away. By 1990 China was Zimbabwe's largest arms supplier, and the largest supplier of weapons to the third world.<sup>1</sup> BMATT remained in Zimbabwe, but its role was dramatically changed by the late 1980s and early 1990s. The difference for the British came in April of 1982 when the Argentines invaded the Falkland Islands. The entire military focus of Margret Thatcher's government shifted from military assistance around the world to meeting a military challenge in the South Atlantic. This massive military

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Bitzinger, "Chinese Arms Production and Sales to the Third World" (Santa Monica: 1991), vi.

effort pulled resources from across the MOD to liberate the islands. While the Falklands War brought a military victory and was an example of the value of a well-established logistical system, it also exposed some weaknesses in British defence. The British government saw the shortcomings of their land, air, and sea systems on the battlefield. It also refocused the British government's objectives and priorities such as the NATO commitment, independent nuclear deterrents, and out-of-area operations. The defence budget did rise during the remainder of the 1980s; however, the additional funds were used to make up for war losses and to address communication, equipment, and training issues that were discovered during the conflict. The British Army refocused itself on the continental commitment, home defence, and contingency operations outside of the NATO area.<sup>2</sup>

All of this meant that Britain was even less focused on military assistance missions than it had been in 1980. After the departure of Major General Shortis as BMATT commander in June of 1983, the mission was downgraded. His replacement was a Brigadier whose primary focus was staff training.<sup>3</sup> The mission continued well into the 1990s, while the quality of the Zimbabwean forces continued to deteriorate. By the early 1990s, the once-skilled AFZ and Zimbabwean Parachute Battalion were a shadow of their former selves. They no longer had the skills and capacity to train their

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Grove, "The Falklands War and British Defence Policy," *Defense & Strategy Analysis*, 2010: 307-317; Secretary of State for Defence, *The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons* (London: HMSO, 1983), 35. The British government revived the home Guard of World War II during this period in the form of the Home Service Force. This was part of the British focus on their commitments in Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Skype Interview with Major General Colin Shortis, Oct. 11, 2013.

own Parachute Jump Instructors (PJI) or Pathfinders.<sup>4</sup> American Special Forces trainers were brought in to provide this training to the ZNA and AFZ. One American soldier recounted that the Zimbabwean SAS was quite skilled and professional; however, the parachute battalion was at a very low state of readiness. He also mentioned that while conducting a jump with the Parachute Battalion, both the pilot and the Zimbabwean Pathfinder on the ground miscalculated and the troopers were dropped on the Harare International Airport parking lot rather than the military drop zone.<sup>5</sup>

The ZNA were deployed on active service against RENAMO in Mozambique throughout the 1980s, which took a tremendous toll on the force itself and its feeble logistical system.<sup>6</sup> The ZNA was deployed on a number of UN missions throughout Africa, including Somalia, Southern Sudan, and Liberia. In 1998, Mugabe committed himself and his army to support Laurent Kabila, the president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Second Congo War was a tremendous drain on Zimbabwean resources. Government ministers made financial deals with the Kabila government for both land and diamond mining claims.<sup>7</sup> The five year conflict drained the resources of the cash poor nation at a time when Zimbabwe was in a difficult economic situation. Zimbabwean special operations forces and the AFZ were a

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4 PJIs are personnel responsible for the safe conduct of parachutists during airborne operations. They are also responsible for ensuring the safety of equipment in these operations. Pathfinders are soldiers responsible for parachuting in ahead of the main force and marking drop zones into which the follow-on forces will parachute.

<sup>5</sup> Curt Harig, interview, 5 August 2013.

<sup>6</sup> T.P Toyne-Sewell, "Zimbabwe and the British Military Advisory and Training Team," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 121 (January 1991), 53-60.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Moorcraft, *Mugabe's War Machine: Saving or Savaging Zimbabwe?* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 131.

tremendous asset in the conflict, but the Mugabe government could not sustain the \$15 Million a month expense.<sup>8</sup> The experience wore down the ZNA and had a dramatic impact on their readiness.

The position of the military in Africa has been the source of volumes of research over the course of the last fifty years. Claude Welch separated military involvement in Africa into three broad categories: the non-political army, resentment against neo-colonialism, and coups d'états.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, the ZNA does not fall precisely into any one of these categories. The ZNA was completely politicized by the mid-1980s, and never feared neo-colonialism because the former colonial masters did not exert real influence in Zimbabwe.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the political nature of the ZNA made sure that there was no attempted coup d'état against the government. One issue that feeds military involvement in the domestic political realm is a lack of professionalism. A high level of professionalism generally is one of the primary barriers for military involvement in democratic states. Herbert Howe points out that unprofessional forces have a far greater tendency to become involved in domestic politics, or be used as the enforcement arm of a repressive regime.<sup>11</sup> Zimbabwe, like many other African nations, was guilty of exhibiting many of the factors that Howe highlights as preventing professionalism in the

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<sup>8</sup> "Zimbabwe 'cannot afford' Congo War," *BBC News*, 31 August 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/904534.stm>.

<sup>9</sup> Claude Welch, *Soldier and State in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Military Intervention and Political Change* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 7; Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957). Huntington's research informs almost every work on civil-military relations and the development of states.

<sup>10</sup> Even though the settler community quickly lost its power in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, Mugabe and ZANU have used the issue of neo-colonialism to scare the electorate in the country since independence.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 35.

military: the ethnicization of the military, domestic deployments, a lack of foreign threats, and the advent of personal rule of the country.<sup>12</sup>

Mugabe's personal rule in Zimbabwe broke down one of the key components of military professionalism, the partition of civil and military affairs. From the beginning of the integration exercise, the military was involved in civilian affairs. Operation SEED put soldiers to work in the exclusively civilian world of economic development. The use of ZNA in fighting dissidents and putting down domestic political opposition in Matabeleland blurred the line forever for Zimbabwean soldiers. By the mid-1980s, the majority of the soldiers in the ZNA had received some form of political indoctrination designed by the ZANU leadership.<sup>13</sup> The ZNA lacked an external perspective; their focus was both on internal politics and internal threats to the regime. This outlook created further problems within the military system. As one British officer put it, Western commanders work through their staffs. They rely on their staff officers to keep them informed so they can make the best decisions possible. However, he noted that in Zimbabwe knowledge is power. Therefore, giving up knowledge is ceding power. Zimbabwean commanders hoarded knowledge and kept it from their staff officers and other commanders.<sup>14</sup> This created endemic problems within the military system that, at times, had the potential to bring the entire machine to a standstill.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>13</sup> The Fifth Brigade underwent significant political training, as was previously mentioned. Additionally, the men of the Zimbabwe People's Militia (the ZNA Reserve component) were required to go through political training. When these men are counted as a part of the total ZNA force, they far outnumber those members of the ZNA trained by the British Army.

<sup>14</sup> Skype Interview with Major General Colin Shortis, Oct. 21, 2013.

This was most apparent in the support services; the Zimbabweans were unable to provide sufficient logistical support for the ZNA. At the outset of independence, officers from the settler community kept the logistical system functioning. However, as the army swelled to a size that was well beyond what the ZNA logistical system was designed to support, the quality of support services dropped dramatically. This issue was further inflamed by the loss of knowledge possessed by European officers who left the army. By the early 1990s, the main priority for BMATT was to help fix the logistical system.<sup>15</sup> ZNA officers who were focused on advancing their careers through political appointments to higher command were not interested in professional development in support areas. These types of jobs required significant technical expertise and education, whereas command in line units did not. So even though the British were expending a great deal of time developing support officers, the investment did not come with much of a return. Officers in the support services were not likely to rise to positions of influence in the Zimbabwean security services. Therefore, those who spent the most time with British officers or on British courses were likely to be the least influential on a national scale.

This raises an important question regarding the use of military assistance programs overseas by countries like the UK and US. What is the real purpose and how comprehensive do these programs have to be in order to be effective? There are different sets of goals at each level of government. In each case examined in this study, ministries seemed to have the same basic goal: to buy British influence with military assistance.

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<sup>15</sup> T.P Toyne-Sewell, "Zimbabwe and the British Military Advisory and Training Team."

The MOD sought currency in the military-to-military sphere, and the FCO in the international relations realm. However, for those at the country level or the military training team level, the goal was to create a stable environment within which one might operate, while also achieving British influence. HMG intended to establish functioning democracies out of the former African colonies. In a democracy, military professionalism and non-involvement in the political process are key components in maintaining civilian control of security forces. So in the eyes of those British officers on the ground, it was imperative to attempt to ingrain professionalism into the officers of the African forces, as was demonstrated by the British teams in all three examples in this study.

Zimbabwean officers who exhibited the most professionalism in all of these cases were also the men who received the most substantive and professional training. What constituted professional training? Often times it was completely outside of the control of the beneficiary government, as was the case in Zimbabwe when BMATT wanted to implement a staff training program for all officers, including senior officers. However, the intervention of Zimbabwean political leaders kept the most senior guerilla officers (who were politically appointed) from any sort of training or evaluation program. Officer training in Zimbabwe was conducted under the supervision of the Mugabe government, and therefore officers were susceptible to the political pressures at play throughout the training. Yet in both Kenya and Zambia, the British removed officer candidates from the country and brought them to the UK for training at either Mons or Sandhurst. These courses were either six months or 24 months, and indoctrinated

students into the Western view of military professionalism which encouraged an aloofness from domestic politics and a focus on technical skill. Additionally, African officers in Kenya and Zambia were given progressively higher levels of responsibility at an accelerated rate, from the lowest officer rank up to higher levels of command. This phase of training and development was absent in Zimbabwe. Those who had achieved senior rank in guerilla armies through political maneuvering maintained that rank in the ZNA. The carryover and continuation of a politicized officer corps in Zimbabwe directly effected the ability of the British trainers to carry out their mission of professionalizing the force and establishing British influence.

Did policy makers in London recognize that they needed to instill professionalism in an officer corps in order for it to function as a subordinate element to the elected civilian government? The colonial office considered establishing a military academy to train officers in Kenya in 1960, as Ghana had done. However, they decided against it because they felt that an academy in Kenya would not meet the high standard of training that cadets received at either Mons or Sandhurst. Additionally, those in the MOD and Colonial Office, as it was then know, recognized that those African officers who trained at Sandhurst often attempted to replicate their experience in their home nation. So if the first several cohorts of Kenyan or Zambian officers were trained in the UK, they would return to their home countries and attempt to replicate their time at Sandhurst in their own officer training programs. As was discussed in Chapters one and two, the MOD and the Colonial Office preferred that African officers undergo extensive training rather than short training courses that accelerated Africanization.

However, in 1964 the British learned that longer training courses and slow Africanization had certain shortcomings. The 1964 East African mutinies were, in part, caused by the continued presence of British officers in command roles in the independent armies. If the soldiers did not see change after independence, they tended to believe that colonialism had simply continued. British intervention in East Africa had significant monetary and political costs. The MOD, Colonial Office, and Foreign Office did not want to repeat the events of 1964 in any other African country. The result was an increased focus on Africanization over professionalization. The desire to decrease the likelihood that British forces would need to intervene in Africa also ensured that the British were less committed to leaving their colonies with an officer corps that was able to separate military from civil affairs.

In many ways the training missions in both Kenya and Zambia were successful. The British were able to maintain a significant amount of influence, as well as supply both countries with a wide variety of military weapons.<sup>16</sup> In comparison to places like Uganda and Nigeria, the military has remained largely removed from domestic politics. In fact, on numerous occasions the Zambia Army has put down coup attempts that originated from within its own ranks.<sup>17</sup> As has been previously mentioned, the British

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<sup>16</sup> This is true in spite of the fact that the Chinese and the United State became the primary suppliers for both of these countries.

<sup>17</sup> Hanania Lungu and Naison Ngoma, "The Zambian Military - Trials, Tribulations and Hope," Chapter to *Evolutions & Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2005), 313-330.

continue to enjoy a fruitful military relationship with both countries, Kenya in particular.<sup>18</sup>

However, Zimbabwe took a wildly different course than either of the other two examples discussed here. The focus of policy makers at the time, and to a degree of scholars today, when looking at the establishment of the ZNA remains how to reconcile these former enemies into one army. While this was a concern, the primary goal of the military mission was to create a functional and professional army that gave the British a modicum of influence inside Zimbabwe. In the planning stages, the FCO and MOD looked at the examples of both Kenya and Zambia and discounted them because they lacked the integration of an opposing force. Yet in doing so the British government turned a blind eye to all of the lessons learned in these training missions. Interestingly, this is similar to the views of some scholars and security professionals. The fact that opposing forces were integrated in Zimbabwe overshadowed the many similarities to previous British training missions in Africa.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of professional training for African officers was subjugated to a need for the British to extricate themselves from Zimbabwe as quickly and cheaply as possible. Rather than relying on a comprehensive military mission with officers on loan service and extensive training programs in the UK, the British government attempted to execute a similar mission to those in Kenya and Zambia at a fraction of the cost and time

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<sup>18</sup> At time of writing, the British Army was in the process of an unprecedented expansion of the British Army Training Unit in Kenya.

<sup>19</sup> In my interviews with various military officers who have knowledge of the subject and of scholars of other portions of Zimbabwean history, they have insisted that the integration aspect of the Zimbabwean mission makes the experience without comparison. However, the similarities of the situations in the three examples given in this study have more than merited the comparison of these cases.

required. Instead of trying to buy influence with an extensive aid package, the British government relied on buying influence with prestige and the continued presence of the settler community. The offer of a small military training team and limited arms sales to Zimbabwe did not create the type of dependence that the British needed to create in order to wield the political influence they desired.

During her ministry, Margaret Thatcher intended for Britain to be a bastion of strength against communism. She valued three things above all others in foreign affairs: increased respect for Britain as a leading power, a close alliance with the United States, and skepticism about closer ties with Europe.<sup>20</sup> The partnership with the United States and the maintenance of an independent nuclear deterrent were important components of Mrs. Thatcher's policy to fight the influence of communism in the world. However, the United Kingdom was not a super-power like the United States or the Soviet Union. Military aid packages from one of these super powers created dependency that bought compliance, to a degree. US military aid to the Shah in Iran, the Saigon government until 1975, and Noriega in Panama all produced results for a time. Soviet military aid created an even higher degree of dependence. For example, in Ethiopia the government was unable to afford any other supplier because of the reasonable grant conditions and the variety of equipment available.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Eric Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 87.

<sup>21</sup> Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). The downfall was that there were no maintenance packages and the Soviets dictated what equipment the Ethiopians got, which was not necessarily what they needed. The Ethiopian army had far too many tanks and interceptor aircraft and not enough counterinsurgency equipment.

As was demonstrated in Kenya and Zambia, effective military assistance programs were expensive long term commitments. British officers serving on loan service to both armies were present almost a decade after independence. In Kenya, British officers continue to serve on loan service in the Kenya Army Staff College. As the Empire fell away, so did a great deal of Britain's ability to project power; as this waned, an exclusive military partnership with Britain carried little weight. The UK simply could not compete with the Chinese or the Soviets by 1980 as a purveyor of military hardware and training. HMG and Mrs. Thatcher did not recognize this reality, particularly with regard to Zimbabwe. The goals of the British government in Zimbabwe outmatched what was possible to achieve with the scant resources allocated. Even though London had significant policy goals when they sent BMATT to Zimbabwe, the officers on the ground treaded lightly with the party in power.

The British government never directly confronted Mugabe regarding the atrocities in Matabeleland. The High Commissioner at the time said that it would be counterproductive to push Mugabe on the issue of the activities of Fifth Brigade. "I think to have protested to Mugabe or to have gone on record as not liking what was going on there would not have been helpful. Mugabe would have resented it very acutely."<sup>22</sup> The guidance from the government was simply to look the other way. Even the US government was concerned about the atrocities that occurred in Matabeleland. However, when the US Ambassador to the UK broached the issue with Mrs. Thatcher, he

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<sup>22</sup> "The Price of Silence," *Panorama*, BBC1, 10 March 2002.

discovered that the British were not planning on leaving Zimbabwe unless things got much worse.<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly enough, the British government felt comfortable applying pressure at all levels when white AFZ officers were imprisoned after the sabotage of the Hawkes in 1983. Not only did Mrs. Thatcher write directly to Mugabe asking for the men to be released, but the British government also threatened to cut off military assistance if he did not comply. After divesting themselves of responsibility for Zimbabwe as a colonial relic, the British government's true interests in the region were extremely limited. On the surface it would seem that the British wanted to keep communism and other bad actors out of Southern Africa. However, as time went by the British were less and less committed to this goal. It is well known that the North Koreans trained the Fifth Brigade; however, it is less well known that their training mission expanded beyond this single unit. In June of 1982, the North Korean training team became involved with the establishment of the Zimbabwe People's Militia.<sup>24</sup> The stated goal of the organization was to "mobilize all Zimbabweans to be loyal to the ruling party and Government."<sup>25</sup> The Zimbabwe People's Militia formed the reserve component of the ZNA. By the end of 1983, the North Korean Military Training Mission was responsible for training a far higher percentage of the Zimbabwe National Army than was BMATT.

By the middle of the 1980s, communist nations in East Asia had overtaken Britain as the primary purveyors of military hardware and training. In spite of this

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<sup>23</sup> Reagan Library: European & Soviet Directorate NSC (Thatcher Visit - Dec 84 [4] Box 90902).

<sup>24</sup> ZNA Public Relations Directorate, "People's Militia a Strong Base for Defence," *Zimbabwe National Army Magazine*, January 1986, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

development, the British government remained committed to a continued presence in Zimbabwe in the security sector. Even though the Thatcher government threatened to withdraw military assistance in 1984, such a plan did not come to fruition. The threat of the withdrawal of aid did not deter Mugabe's actions in Matabeleland in 1984, nor did the final withdrawal of British trainers in 2001 stop the land occupations that displaced most of the remaining white farmers in Zimbabwe. Even though British military power was demonstrated in the Falklands in 1982, it was clear to many observers that the British government was not capable of that kind of unilateral intervention on a regular basis. The British government had been unable to support the movement of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force to Zimbabwe, and had been forced to ask the United States to provide airlift assets. Most British military operations since the Falklands War have been multinational efforts under the banner of the United Nations, European Union, or NATO.

Unilateral deployments of forces outside of the United Kingdom have been limited in both scale and scope; OP PALLISER in Sierra Leone involved one battalion from the Parachute Regiment and an SAS Squadron.<sup>26</sup> British politicians in the 1980s behaved as if they had the ability to replicate the Falklands operation at a moment's notice. However other nations, such as Zimbabwe, recognized that British power had long since faded. The embarrassment of Suez in 1957 continued to be a stain upon British legitimacy in the world. Nations like Zimbabwe were in a position to accept aid

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<sup>26</sup> OP PALLISER was launched to assist the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leon. The Parachute Regiment was deployed to cover the evacuation of civilians from the capital. They also conducted a number of operations against portions of the RUF rebel group while deployed.

from Britain and Non-Aligned powers as long as they kept clear of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Mugabe's decision to avoid the USSR and Cuba as sources of military training and aid was a shrewd political decision that kept him from attracting the ire of the United States. Additionally, his maintenance of the status quo with South Africa kept both Britain and the United States from being put in an awkward position in their very delicate dealings with Pretoria.

Mrs. Thatcher and the diplomats in the Foreign Service had grown up in an era when British forces were able to extinguish security threats that flared up across a vast empire. Operations in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Oman, Belize and many other places had been commonplace throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The 1970s and 1980s were an era of security stagnation for Britain; the Forces were focused on operations in Northern Ireland and commitments to NATO on the continent. The international prestige of British power decayed right alongside the declining British economy and defence budgets. The British desire to remain a prominent player on the world's stage outpaced the country's military capability in the late 1980s and 1990s. After the 1981 Defence Review, it was not until the end of the Cold War that the Commons reexamined UK security policy. The 1990 Options for Change report was launched at the insistence of the service chiefs who were looking for cost-saving measures.<sup>27</sup> The continental commitment and the overall size of the Army were targets for reduction. Even so, there were continued requests for British military trainers in Southern Africa. British teams

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<sup>27</sup> Claire Taylor, *A Brief Guide to Previous British Defence Reviews*, (London: House of Commons Library, 2010): 8.

were dispatched to both Namibia and South Africa, in 1990 and 1994 respectively. The teams in both of these instances were only a fraction of the size of what BMATT Zimbabwe had been.<sup>28</sup> However, in both cases British officers served in more of a supervisory role than an actual training role. The next time the British government undertook a training mission as ambitious as the one in Zimbabwe was in Afghanistan in 2002 in coordination with the United States; it required the deployment of as much as ten percent of the Army.

The tragedies that occurred in Zimbabwe from 1965 to 1987 were an early indication of the decline of British power in the world. Whereas London had previously been able to use military assistance as a weapon in the Cold War, economic decline and an unwillingness to spend limited defence funds on assistance programs sterilized the effectiveness of the programs. In a world where the coffers of rogue states were open to those willing to flout the designs of the West, trainers who did not bring money and equipment with them were simply an opportunity to exploit. The British endeavored to create a situation in Zimbabwe where the military remained uninvolved in domestic politics but supported a democratic system. However, what they enabled was the establishment of a politicized military force that supported the foundation of Mugabe's authoritarian state. The British idea of democratizing through military professionalism worked in a European context; it was far less effective when those who the British intended to influence were not overpowered by British culture. As in many cases, the

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<sup>28</sup> AW Dennis, "The Integration of Guerrilla Armies into Conventional Forces: Lessons Learnt from BMATT in Africa," *South African Defence Review* (1992). BMATT in Namibia was only fifty five men strong at the start of operations, and was in Namibia until 1994.

most effective tool that the British government could bring to bear in a military assistance scheme was the weight of hundreds of years of military history and culture, reaching all the way back to Oliver Cromwell's reforms of his army.

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