

Introduction

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In all the emerging states that were released from colonial bondage, the most important structure of the government bureaucracy to be created was the armed forces. This is because the armed forces are seen not only as an instrument to address security concerns, but also as a concrete national symbol that represents and participates in ceremonies which confirm the status of the new nation. And yet, not since Hubert Moyses-Bartlett's seminal *The Kings' African Rifles (KAR): A study in the military history of East and Central Africa, 1890–1945*, has there been an attempt to put together a military history that critically examines the context, role and function of militaries in a specific region of the African continent.¹

The Kings' African Rifles treatise traced the history of British colonial army units deployed in East, Central and Southern Africa, stretching from the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, to Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi). This provided insight into the organisation, recruitment patterns and ethnic preferences, as well as the secondment of European and British officer corps to lead and exercise command-and-control at the exclusion of 'indigenous peoples'. It also provided insight into the articulate strategic purpose of this colonial instrument.

While the command element was based in Nairobi, units of the KAR were spread throughout the region in the following manner: 1 and 2 battalions based in Nyasaland; 3 and 5 based in Kenya; 4 Battalion was located in Uganda and the 6th Battalion in Tanganyika.²

The work also demonstrates the linkages of the KAR division in East Africa, made up of majority Askaris,³ and its relationship with the British army, navy and air force in a context that included deployment out-of-area on colonial duty in such places as Malaya, Burma, the Middle East and Mauritius.

The primary objective of the KAR was to support the colonial political edifice in the colonies under British rule. In each of the colonies, a resident governor, directly answerable to the Foreign and Colonial Office in Whitehall, London was in charge and nominally commander-in-chief of the local KAR units. At the tactical level, the purpose of the KAR and its Askaris was to suppress resistance against the colonial project in East, Central, Southern Africa and elsewhere, as some chapters in this work demonstrate.

The challenge and gap that this volume attempts to fill is that of taking the contribution made by Moyse-Bartlett further into the post-colonial period.

The question of threats and insecurity permeates the three dimensions of geographic/territorial integrity of a state, the security of the state and its institutions, and finally that of the people within a defined state.⁴

In the new era after decolonisation, three related questions stand out in relation to the defence and security question of each new state. First, what threats faced the new state—were these internal or external? Second, what institutions were required to respond in order to satisfy both abstract and practical considerations? And third, how were these institutions organised/mobilised, financed, manned, equipped and trained, and how were the lines of command-and-control established?

In this assessment, it is also important to acknowledge that the ultimate goal(s) of providing defence and security structures shifted, in some cases, away from local considerations, focusing on and driven by external factors. In such instances, an assessment of how the process made an impact on either the regional or international system also partly explains the *raison d'être* and purpose of establishing armed forces in the post-colonial era.⁵

By providing case studies of the 13 countries that make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe—this publication aims to deliver a template of how the new African states transformed in the area of their military institutions following independence.

Against the background of the above discussion, *Evolutions & Revolutions* has attempted to achieve three related objectives. The first is to provide a military history of the Southern African region since independence. This is important in a region where nationalists were forced to resort to armed struggle in order to secure independence, making the early politicians sensitive and acutely aware of the use of military means for political purposes. To this end, it is interesting to determine how the same political elite employed military power and influence once independence was achieved.

The second objective has been to overcome the traditional reluctance among African people, especially those engaged in sensitive military issues, to put pen to paper and record their experiences. This objective guided the selection of chapter writers, focusing on African military practitioners, either retired or still in service, and encouraging them to see the value of 'divulging' their experiences.

In putting together the research team, the net was cast far and wide, but also with the specific targeting of key characters who were likely to add value to the project. A call for papers was posted on the Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) website in November 2003, inviting applicants that fitted the bill to apply. Meanwhile, others who were known to possess intimate knowledge of the sensitive issues and who were willing to participate were approached. The result is that the final research team represents a rich mix of serving and retired military officers as well as respected academics.

Contributors to this volume include former Acting Minister of Defence Lt Gen (retired) Hanania Lungu, who at one time was in charge of both the Zambian Army and Air Force. Lungu worked closely with former Air Force colonel and now academic at the ISS, Dr Naison Ngoma. We were also able to have on board the serving commander of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), Lt Gen Louis Fisher, who worked with one of his colonels, Paul Sharp, to produce the chapter on the BDF. We, of course, managed to secure a contribution from Maj Gen (retired) Len le Roux, who was intimately involved in drawing up the post-apartheid South African Defence Review, White Paper and transformation process, and who now heads the ISS Defence Sector Programme. The project also secured the support of serving deputy commander of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force (USDF), Brig Gen Jeremy Tshabalala and his senior officer, Col Cyprian Nhlengethwa, who contributed the USDF chapter. Among the serving practitioners, the book also enjoyed the participation of Brig Gen Paulino Macaringue, a

former guerrilla/military commander with Frelimo and the FAM and later acting permanent secretary in the Mozambican Ministry of Defence. Macaringue worked on the Mozambique chapter together with Adriano Malache, a Ministry of Defence civilian official, and renowned academic Prof. Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho.

Some carefully chosen academics and researchers with a growing interest and distinguished publication record in the area of defence completed the special group. Among the latter were Prof. Nestor Luanda of the University of Dar es Salaam and Prof. Thierry N'Landu of the University of Kinshasa, DRC, as well as senior academics within academia and in the non-governmental organisation community, including those at the ISS. Wits University Military History PhD student Gwinyayi Dzinesa also became part of the specialised team. Knox Chitiyo, who has been lecturing for over a decade on the history of warfare and the rise of guerrilla movements in Southern Africa, also joined the initiative. Dr Khabele Matlosa's extensive research, teaching and publication on the Lesotho army goes back more than a decade. Similarly, ISS senior researcher Ana Leão is one of the finest field researchers and networked individuals on security and military issues in Angola, Mozambique and the DRC. Finally, the group benefited from the input of Jacques Ebenga—a medical doctor, retired colonel and current military advisor with the United Nations Development Programme—UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo (MONUC)—who contributed his wide and current military experience of the region.

The combination of contributions from past and present military officers, as well as the special category of academics, was a major success of our second objective. We hope these individuals will now prove us right in the third and final objective of developing a cadre of practitioners and policy makers who are able to engage in intellectual discourse on the way in which the military is evolving in the post-colonial era.

If part or all of our aims are achieved in the following chapters, then an important link would have been established with the challenges presented by *The Kings' African Rifles*. Importantly, we would have broken the traditional African tendency not to leave any recordings for posterity, as well as breaking the secrecy normally surrounding military issues in the region's history.

NOTES

- 1 H Moyse-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles: A study in the military history of East and Central Africa, 1890–1945*, Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1956.
- 2 M Mutonya & T H Parsons, KiKAR: A Swahili variety in Kenya's colonial army, *Journal of African and Afro-American Studies*, 25, Washington University, St Louis), 2004, p 113.
- 3 See also T Parsons, *The African rank-and-file: Social implications of colonial military service in the King's African Rifles, 1902–1964*, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1999.
- 4 See M Hall, *On the morphology of international systems: Political space as structure and process in early medieval Europe*, Working Paper Series, Centre for European Studies, Lund University, p 7 citing contributions by K Waltz, *Theory of international politics*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, 1979; B Buzan & R Little, *International systems in world history: Remaking the study of international relations*, Oxford Press, Oxford, 2000.
- 5 See the discussion in T Dunne, New thinking on international society, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 3(2), 2001, pp 223-244.



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