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## **FROM EX-SOLDIERS TO TRADERS AND TRANSPORTERS: THE CASE OF THE GOLD COAST HAUSA CONSTABULARY: 1874-1942**

**Samuel Aniegye Nteusu**

Institute of African Studies

University of Ghana

Legon, Accra

[ntewusu@gmail.com](mailto:ntewusu@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

*The article discusses the transformation of ex-soldiers in the Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary, later Gold Coast Regiment into traders and transporters in Accra. The argument of the paper is that the ex-soldiers were able to do such a quick transition because of their exposure to transport systems and certain products while in active service. Furthermore, they were successful as transporters and traders because of the expansion of Accra which was due to population growth mainly triggered by migrations into the city.*

**Key Words:** Britain, colonialism, ex-servicemen, Accra, trade, transport

## **Introduction**

Colonial powers in Africa included Africans in their military establishment in order to preserve order and extend their spheres of influence. In the Gold Coast now Ghana, since the 1870s, or even earlier Britain incorporated Africans in their army. The need to incorporate local soldiers was occasioned by an enlargement of the British sphere of influence following the purchase of properties of other Europeans in the Gold Coast and the exchange of the remaining Dutch possessions in 1872. The taking over of territory came along more responsibilities. For example Britain had to ensure free exit and entry of trade goods by quelling internal blockades and local rebellions. Such large scale military interventions resulted in the loss of European life and cost to the metropolitan tax payer. In addition, tropical diseases also had a toll on British soldiers in the Gold Coast. To address this, the colonial administration proposed the use of local forces which prompted the administration to recruit local soldiers from Nigeria, the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast as well as Togo and present day Burkina Faso.

This paper is concerned about the recruitment, deployment and demobilization of these soldiers that served under the British military establishment from the 1870s to 1942. In particular the paper is concerned about the transformation of the soldiers after their demobilization into traders and transporters.

I argue that their transformation into traders and transporters after demobilization was due to two factors. The first has to do with the policy of recruitment which emphasized the need for slaves, porters and traders. And the second, the rapid urban growth of Accra which opened up demand avenues for trade goods and transport.

The paper is divided into four sections namely recruitment and training, deployment, demobilization and transformation.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment in the Gold Coast was guided by particular policies. Conscious efforts were made by the British crown and local administrators to ensure that only members of designated ethnic groups and people with specialized skills were recruited into the colonial forces. Four categories of people were recruited for the military, namely: slaves, traders, porters and ordinary people. Ethnically, the preference was for Hausa, Yoruba, Mossi, Wangara or from any of the 'tribes' in Northern Ghana such as Grushi, Kanjarga (Bulsa), Dagomba, Gonja, Frafra and Mossi. It was when any of these specialized groups was not available that the colonial administration usually appealed to other local traditional leaders or chiefs to provide them with recruits (Roger 1975, p.60).

The colonial establishment recruited from northern slave markets such as Salaga, Attebubu and Navrongo. In addition to the slaves from the northern part of Gold Coast. They also recruited slaves from the south. Southern areas such as Accra, Kwahu, Cape Coast and so on, had slaves of northern origin who became the target for recruitment. In Accra slave owning families received five pounds for each slave that enlisted. Despite the recompense some families refused to hand over their slaves, while others such as King Taki Tawia locked up their slaves. In the case of such lock up the already enlisted Hausa troops broke down the prisons and freed slaves that were willing to enlist (Parker 2000, p.69).

It is important at the stage to indicate the reason for recruiting slaves. Recruitment of slaves satisfied both the British administrators and the slaves themselves. First enlistment of slaves ensured that the British laws on abolition of slavery were adhered to. Secondly slaves were loyal since they did not want to go back to their servile status. On the part of the slaves enlistment brought instant benefits to their families because their wives were compensated even

when they died in service. In case of death of slaves too their funeral was usually performed by the community where they came from. This practice had the capacity of transforming the identity of slaves since their funerals were not performed as slaves but as full members from the community which they came from (Roger 1975, p.67-68).

The next category of recruits was traders from other parts of the north and the Sahelian region. George Fergusson one of the local surveyors of the British establishment on his mission to the north of Ghana to sign treaties of friendship had occasion to report thus:

With regards to recruiting, I beg to state that the caravans from which recruits could be obtained come to Atabubu during the months of November, December, January and February each year. The bounty will be more acceptable in kola nuts, although cowries would be accepted to a certain extent. About four loads of kola nuts would be demanded a bounty for a recruit. A load consists of 2,000 kola nuts... About one hundred or one hundred and fifty recruits would be procured in a season (Arhin 1974, p.21).

The need for this group of people was their knowledge of the local geography and the political economy of the area. Trade in those days was not as swift as today. The introduction of modern transport technologies such as vehicles, trains and airplanes have all transformed the nature of trade. In the period under review the strategy of trade was that the traders usually carried goods and sold them as they went along, mostly, replacing the sold goods by buying new goods that will be in need at the next destination. Such a practice exposed the traders to the geography and security issues of such areas. It must be emphasized that in the nineteenth and twentieth century military officers collected intelligence material for use by political and civil authorities on such matters as roads, bridges, trade, water supply, population among others. This made the traders a good and important target for recruitment since they could provide military

intelligence as well as provide insights into the geography of the Gold Coast (S.Addae 2005, p.10).

A third category that was demanded were porters. Porters were part of everyday trade and agriculture in most systems in the Gold Coast and West Africa. Besides facilitating commercial activities, they also played an important role in the movement of armament. For example among the Dagombas porters were responsible for carrying and distribution of armament particularly long Dane guns to most areas of the northern territory and even beyond. There was evidence that some of them could even improve upon the guns by 'moding' them. They usually cut off a portion of the barrel and stock to adapt them for cavalry use (Arhin 1974, pp.77-78).

The demand for porters in colonial times was in line with the exigencies of the time. Britain had to fight wars of expansion with Ashanti in the interior and maintain security on the coast. With such a task the porters were considered a vital part of the logistics of operations. These porters could go where it was impossible for wheeled transport to go. Though movement was by foot and slow, in the end, they provided enhanced mobility which was necessary in jungle warfare. Once recruits were selected from the categories mentioned above they were sent to specific places particularly Kumasi and Accra for training and deployment.

### **Training and Deployment**

The language of instruction in the colonial military service in Ghana was Hausa. This probably explains the reason for recruitments from Nigeria and the Northern territories. Already trade, Islamic religion and other forms of activities in the northern part of the country were carried out using the Hausa language. In addition most of the northern migrant communities called the Zongos that were dotted on all the trade routes from the North to the South of the Gold

Coast made use of the Hausa Language. It was therefore easier for people of northern extraction to easily follow instructions and drills in the military.

Before the expiration of twelve months from the date of joining the Gold Coast Constabulary the recruit must pass a Lower Standard Examination in Hausa Language otherwise they cease to be probationers. Indeed even expatriate soldiers mostly from Britain and India were also required to pass a Higher Standard Examination before being appointed permanently to the Constabulary.

Instructions in the Hausa Language include a thorough knowledge of the elements of the Hausa language, ability to read and translate correctly portions of stories written in English, rendering into Hausa from English any portion or portions of the 'squad drill', ability to translate from English to Hausa sentences of subjects of everyday life; explaining in Hausa to a native so that they may thoroughly understand the soldier such orders written in English. Besides the Lower Standard Examination there was also a Higher Standard Examination in Hausa which even require a greater appreciation and applicability of the Hausa language. Report from the Foreign and Commonwealth Collection indicates that "An officer who passed the exams stipulated above was rewarded between ten pounds to fifty pounds" (1892, pp.11-12).

After training the soldiers performed numerous duties. The initial idea of recruitment was for purposes of stabilizing British colonialism. This they did by countering the encroachment of other Europeans and to stop internal fights among ethnic groups in Ghana. Also they were responsible for protecting British property and citizens in the country particularly the forts and castles along the coast.

The most significant war that was fought by the soldiers was the Anglo-Ashanti war of 1874. From 1872 the British had considered the need to move into Kumasi to attack Ashanti. The

purpose was to help abolish slavery since Ashantis were still involved even though slavery has been finally abolished. The war was to also free the trade routes that were frequently blocked by Ashanti and finally extend British influence into the interior of the Gold Coast (Buah 1998, p. 85).

Besides, the constabulary also operated in important trade and market centers such as Denu, Aflao, Salaga and Accra. In the markets they were to ensure free passage of goods and without blockade. In addition they were to ensure that all taxes were collected on behalf of the colonial administration. On the Volta river they were responsible for patrolling and seeing to it that goods either did not leave the Gold Coast to Togo or if they did such goods must be heavily taxed.

In both the first and second world wars members of the constabulary fought on behalf of Britain both in Burma, East Africa, Cameroon and Togo. Mostly groups were disbanded after service. The next component of the paper considers disbandment, settlement and Trade.

### **Demobilization and settlement**

The demobilization of soldiers was usually carried out fairly smoothly and cost little to the colonial authorities. Demobilization was not all of a sudden. Ex-soldiers most of who were northerners returned to their homes in north of the country and some beyond the frontiers of Ghana such as Togo and Burkina Faso. In principle the colonial authorities' policy was to prevent soldiers from remaining in towns, since they feared that in towns they might form an alienated group and possibly an unemployable group of potential trouble makers. Nonetheless, the British colonial authorities encouraged some soldiers upon discharge to settle in some coastal



towns. For those who were encouraged to settle on the coast, they preferred staying in the *Zongos* (Addae 2005, p.75).

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Taking up residence in *Zongos* was of benefit to both colonial administrators and also to the ex-soldiers. For the colonial administration the group could be called up in times of crises and shortage of personnel. Also, even though there was the fear of unemployment the soldiers could up jobs or other profession in the expanding city as drivers' porters, teamsters, photographers, mechanics, launders, newspapermen among others.

For the ex-soldiers, staying in the *Zongos* provided them with a psychological touch with the rural hinterland where they were recruited from. *Zongos*, even though were in the south maintained the northern flavor both in their physical environment and way of life. Again *Zongos* afforded them the opportunity to utilize the contacts they had made with indigenous traders, Europeans and the communities in Accra where they served while in the army to engage in economic activities. Money from savings and payment of gratuities enabled the ease of entry into trade and transportation. Some of them could save as much as fourteen pounds per year while in service. After disbandment they were also paid gratuity of one shilling a day.

### **Taking on the Job: Trade in Kola nuts and Shea butter**

As previously indicated the colonial administration recruited traders, porters, slaves among others. These categories of people have been involved in economic activities in one way

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<sup>1</sup> *Zongos* are migrant communities in the south of Ghana. They are mostly inhabited by ethnic groups from the Northern part of Ghana as well as those from Nigeria, Togo and the Sahel area. *Zongos* have a greater orientation to Islam and buildings there are do not usually conform to the building plans of the city. One could describe some of the *Zongos* as slums.

or the other. In addition, some of them after recruitment were responsible for freeing the roads to allow trade to go on smoothly or were even responsible for policing or collecting taxes on behalf of the colonial administration. Finally the colonial administration encouraged the ex-servicemen after demobilization to take up residence in the Zongo communities in the urban centres. Zongos from pre-colonial times to the present have been important communities where intense trade went on. This component discusses the kind of trade that some of the ex-soldiers engaged in. Here discussion is centered on their involvement in both the kola nut and shea butter trade.

Kola is the nut of a tree, *cola nitida* or *cola acuminata*, which grows in West Africa (Lovejoy 1980, p.6). It is round in shape and the size of a chestnut, and the nuts can be white or red in colour (Agyiri 77, p.1). Of the two major species of kola, *cola nitida* has been far more important historically in trade in West Africa; hence our discussion will centre on the *cola nitida*. Kola nuts are a forest product; nonetheless, its trade and consumption have been dominated by northerners. The north of Ghana is largely savannah grassland. In the north, kola is used for ritual and leisure purposes. In the south and Accra specifically, kola is used for its labour-enhancing properties. Historically, the supply and distribution of kola has been controlled by northern ethnic groups. The control of northerners over the kola trade, coupled with kola's function within rituals and as a leisure and work-enhancing drug, has facilitated the continued development of Accra.

In its purchase, sale and distribution ex-soldiers such as Native Officer Ali from Nigeria and his family as well as Abudu Karim from Salaga played an important role in Accra (Arhin 1974, p. 21). The ease at which ex-soldiers switch to its trade as indicated earlier was due to the recruitment policies of the British administration. For example kola nut was one of the important ingredients in the negotiation process any time soldiers were demanded. As much as four head

loads was demanded as 'bounty' before anyone could be recruited. In this case it is evident that the value of kola nuts was exposed to soldiers even at the very entry point of their carrier.

Even after recruitment kola nuts became an important part of the dietary needs and daily ration of the military in colonial times. The reasons for the incorporation of kola nuts were varied, but three will be discussed here. The first was the fact that the majority of the recruits were from the north and therefore very much accustomed to the chewing of kola nuts. The second was that the nut was used as a stimulant and the military used it to stay awake, especially during night duties (Public Records And Archive Administration Department. Hereafter, PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG,1/9/18, Supply of Goods to Regimental Officers, 1908). Kola nuts contain caffeine and theobromine, both alkaloids which stimulate the central nervous system. The third was the fact that kola nuts reduce fatigue and sometimes reduce hunger and thirst. From 1916, Accra gradually emerged as an important node for the colonial military establishment, beginning with the establishment in Tudu in 1916 of a barracks for the Gold Coast Regiment. The barracks was expanded in the 1920s to incorporate more members of the regiment, who were transferred from Kumasi and Tamale to Accra. In the later part of the 1930s and early 1940s, as a result of increased recruitments for the Second World War, an additional military depot, referred to as the 'Reception Depot', was built about five hundred meters east of the original barracks in Tudu. The expansion of this infrastructure, coupled with increased recruitment, led to an increase in kola-nut demand in the military barracks. Soldiers were therefore already aware of the trade opportunity that existed in the sale of kola nuts in Accra.

But the motivation for trade in it, is also a function of Accra's own history. Kola-nut demand within Accra is directly related to Accra's urbanisation and the city's expansion. Immigrations to Accra led to the founding of more *zongos* in addition to Cow Lane and Tudu.

Some of these include Sabon Zongo, Old Fadama, New Town, Nima, Madina, and so on. These *zongos* became important outlets for kola nuts in Accra. In all the *zongos*, kola nuts were an important ritual commodity among northern migrants. Kola nuts were required for all important occasions and ceremonies, such as marriage, naming, and mortuary rites. Kola nuts were used to seal all marriages among northern migrants. For example, as much as ‘one calabash of presentable kola nuts’ was required as part of the marriage articles. Furthermore, the leaders in the *zongos* in Accra, including Chief Braimah, used kola nuts to legitimise their authority.

Indeed, the presence of these headmen has led to the gradual incorporation of traditional festivals, such as *Adosa* of the Kotokoli, into Islamic festivals in Accra. During these festivals there is evidence of the use of kola nuts both as gifts and also in the performance of rituals associated with the Kotokoli machete/cutlass festival called *Adosa*. Among the Yoruba in Tudu, kola is generally used to welcome guests. Social protocol requires of the Yoruba to break kola nuts and share them amongst themselves when a guest is received or when an important meeting is held.

The introduction and utilization of motorized technology also led to demand for kola nuts. The frequent use of motor vehicles for the conveyance of passengers and goods led to the establishment of lorry parks in Ghana. Ex-soldiers were the first to introduce commercial driving into Accra and were also instrumental in the supply of kola nuts to the lorry parks. Since the establishment of the lorry parks, kola nuts became part of the operational process of the parks. Most lorry parks in Accra such as the one in Tudu and the Neoplan Station at the Kwame Nkrumah Roundabout (Circle) operate twenty-four hours a day. Because the lorry parks operate day and night, it is always full of passengers, traders and drivers. The presence of these people caused kola-nut traders to also operate twenty-four hours a day.

Besides kola nuts the disbanded members were also influential in the supply of Shea butter to the military as well as to Accra's population. Archival sources indicate an increase in Shea-butter transport to the south by road in the 1920s. For example, in the West Gonja district alone, 3,792 head-loads of Shea butter were transported by lorry to the south in 1927. The figure increased to 6,710 head-loads in 1928 (PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 3/15/30, Traffic in Goods South Bound. Figures from Bamboi Ferry, 1929)

Interestingly this period also coincided with the demobilization of the military and the expansion of Accra both of which affected the need for and supply of Shea butter.

A number of factors account for the demand for shea butter in Accra. Shea butter is used as pomade in Accra. It is a particularly effective moisturizer because it contains so many fatty acids which are needed to retain skin moisture and elasticity. Some economic activities in Accra are performed outdoors, such as hawking, touting, and portage, among others, thereby exposing the skin to sunburn, insect bites, and so on. In most cases, shea butter is used to improve such skin conditions, since shea contains Vitamin A. Shea butter is also thought to be useful for the treatment of skin diseases, especially chicken pox and ringworm. The first and second decade of the 1900s in Accra marked an era of widespread skin diseases such as these. Medical facilities were few, so inhabitants of Accra mixed shea butter with camphor to treat the diseases. In addition, the positive biochemical and physiological effect that shea butter has on skin injuries makes the butter ideal for wound healing. Furthermore, shea butter is used for treating abscesses (boils). It is also very good for treating coughs and for massaging babies and young children to keep their bones flexible.

Mechanics, carpenters, traditional caterers, and drivers in Accra who sustained wounds in the course of their occupations have reported in the course of my interviews that shea butter

promoted and accelerated the healing of wounds. In addition, shea butter was used for massage and in the treatment of broken limbs. Human portage was and still remains an important economic activity in Accra. It is also an occupation which engenders muscle fatigue and aches. Northern migrants, both old and new, who engage in human portage in Accra treat themselves with shea butter whenever they are injured. Porters in Accra use the shea butter on the heels of their feet to treat cracks and soften their feet. Attending to the feet is considered a basic requirement for the carriage of goods in Accra (Ntewusu 2012, p.168).

Finally, shea butter is used to treat sores on the hoofs of horses. It must be borne in mind that in Accra, horse transport remained an important economic activity until 1985. The intense use of horses for carriage led to cracks in the hoofs.

Besides the health-related uses enumerated above, shea butter is used in cooking at home. The demand for shea butter in Accra was also attributed to the growth of Accra in general and the presence of a new class of consumers, namely colonial officials. The Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary, constables and their dependants, regularly purchased shea butter among other commodities to use in food preparation.

Initially, it was Ada canoe men who were responsible for supplying Shea butter to Accra's growing market. However following the completion of the Great North road, Hamza Wangara an ex-serviceman facilitated the distribution of Shea butter by linking Gonja traders to his colleague ex-servicemen, some of whom took up residence in the Armed Forces' Reception Depot in Accra. Wangara was also instrumental in linking traders to his colleagues in the Gold Coast Legion premises, located further south of Central Business District. The Legion premises were used as a stable for the Gold Coast Constabulary Force. Just like other northerners, they used Shea butter in food preparation. Also, as mounted members of the constabulary, they used

Shea to treat cracks in the hoofs of the horses. During the period under review, much of the policing in Accra depended on horse patrols since there were few patrol vehicles. The few vehicles that there were could also not be used because of a general caution on the use of vehicles by government agencies owing to the economic depression at that time. Closely related to the above in terms of Shea-butter use among the service personnel is the butter's role in foot care. Up to this period the police and military non-official corps still walked barefooted, and just like the porters in Accra's commercial hubs, they took care of their feet by using shea butter. In the 1940s the Legion premises were enlarged to serve as the main dispersal, resettlement, and welfare centre for demobilised servicemen from the Second World War. These men also composed a very important consumer group for the shea butter (Report of chairman of Veterans Association of Ghana to the Ministry of Defence, in File VAG/ARC/37/A, General Administrations, closed 31/03/08).

By the 1940s more members ex-soldiers resident in Tudu, were attracted to the commercial opportunity offered by shea butter in Accra and became involved directly in buying Shea butter from the north and selling alongside the female Gonja Shea-butter traders in Accra. A case in point was Samoli Mossi. Perhaps a detailed history of Samoli is necessary for a proper appreciation of the gradual intrusion of male ex-servicemen into the Shea-butter trade.

Samoli had been in the service of different employers in Accra as a cook since 1925. His service contracts ranged from longer periods of six, three or two months to shorter periods of six days as cook. At the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted in the capacity of his profession as cook. While serving in East Africa during the War, he was found guilty of a charge of being in improper possession of an automatic pistol and of bringing local Abyssinian women into his

quarters at night. Consequently, he was discharged in 1942 by the Captain of his Battalion, R. B. Ross (Ntewusu 2012, p.176).

To make matters worse, the captain disfigured his cooking license by writing damaging comments on the licence, describing him as of a 'surly and bad-tempered disposition, dirty in his habits and a poor cook'. With this damaging report, Samoli could not re-enlist as his other colleagues did, neither could he gain any employment as cook in Accra since the report on his certificate was so damning. Fortunately, Samoli was paid his entitlement or bonus for sixteen months, amounting to seven pounds and six pence. With no other possibility of continuing as a soldier or a cook, he went into the buying and selling of Shea butter. Incidentally, the army also gradually came to depend on him and later his agents for Shea butter. The interesting thing about Samoli was that in order to be able to create a niche for himself in the Shea-butter trade, he decided in the 1950s to buy a house a hundred metres south of Tudu. His business strategy in selling Shea butter was also very different. Samoli decided to get in contact with all the Sarkin Zongos in the Central and Eastern Regions. From Tudu he supplied Shea butter wholesale to the *zongo* chiefs, who in turn distributed it on his behalf for a commission (Ntewusu 2012, p.177).

From the discussions so far it is evident that the exposure of the soldiers to the use of both kola nuts and shea butter coupled with Accra's expansion were important factors which enabled the ex-soldiers to switch to trade in those products.

### **Ex-soldiers and transportation in Accra**

Accra, like any other city in the world, depends for its survival and day-to-day functioning on the transport of goods, people, and services within, into, and out of the city. Prior to the introduction of the internal combustion engine, transport in the coastal forests of West



Africa was either by water or on the heads, backs, and shoulders of people. The urban centre of Accra, which lies within these forests, was and continues to be similarly dependent on the labour power of people for its transport needs. Without this labour power in the past and in the present, the city of Accra would have ceased to exist and not become the metropolis that it has become. From the early 1900s, and probably since before that, transport in Accra has been dominated by northerners, and one can only understand Accra by looking at the role of ex-servicemen in the city's transport and trade. Transport has proved to be the niche which ex-servicemen have been able to occupy and maintain throughout the past century.

The expansion of Accra compelled the government, through the Secretary for Native Affairs, to rely on individuals and agencies in Accra for the supply of carriers. An example is James Addo of Christiansborg, who was an agent for the colonial administration in Accra. A memorandum of understanding signed between Addo and the government of the Gold Coast showed that Addo was to 'supply the Governor with able-bodied male carriers from Accra to any place within forty-eight hours after been required in writing to do so'. The government agreed to pay the contractor (Addo) as bonus the amount of one shilling for each carrier of a load not exceeding 60 lbs (PRAAD, Accra, ADM 11/1, Difficulty in Obtaining Carriers for special Remittances, 1919) The government's scale of wages for carriers per diem for a head load not exceeding 60 lbs to any of the following destinations—Ada, Akuse, Kpong, Prampram, Kwitta (Keta), Saltpond, Akuapem Mampong, Winneba, and Cape Coast—was between two shillings, six pence and one shilling, three pence. The insecure nature of the roads at that time and the need to limit desertions and thefts compelled the colonial government to provide Hausa escorts for the head-load carriers to their destinations.

In addition to the carriers that were used by administrators and missionaries, some private traders also used the carriers in the course of their business. For instance, Chief Braimah, one of the migrants from Nigeria and a known kola nut trader, had a number of male carriers who were responsible for carrying his kola nuts from various parts of the present-day Eastern Region to Accra. There existed some difference between the carriers of the administrators and those of Chief Braimah. For example, unlike the one-shilling commission given by the colonial administration to Addo for recruiting carriers, Braimah's carriers paid six pence to the chief of carriers, who was responsible for supervising the rest of the porters.

In addition to the two individuals above, some ex-servicemen particularly Native Officer Ali and Native Officer Harri Zenua all from Nigeria also contributed to Accra's transport development. Ali was particularly responsible for appointing the leaders of carriers in Accra and also for providing protection for the carriers. Furthermore, as members who have already served in the forces they became influential and played an important role in ensuring that carriers were made available to the Gold Coast Constabulary for purposes of carrying goods from the interior to Accra and vice versa.

With reference to Native Officer Ali, sometimes his role conflicted with other operators such as Chief Braimah a factor which led to division among transporters and migrants in Accra. For example one of the notable leaders of porters in Accra was one Gurmanu who was dismissed by Braimah. The dismissal of Gurmanu, who had been appointed by Native Officer Ali, a Hausa, and the appointment of Oseni by Braimah a Yoruba was interpreted as one of the moves by Braimah to marginalise the Hausa politically and economically. Letters of protest were sent by the Hausa to the Secretary for Native Affairs. One example of such letters from Kadri English and Mamma Ali read as follows:

I have the honour most respectfully to report that Chief Braimah recently appointed a certain man as the chief of the Hausa Carriers and subsequently introduced him to the authorities. This action on chief Braimah's part is calculated to create friction and a great deal of unpleasantness as Abudu Gurmanu who is still alive, has been recognised for over ten years as the chief of these Hausa Carriers. He was appointed to the office by the late Native Officer Ali who served the state with distinction for several years. Abudu Gurmanu's social status is admitted by every Mohammedan here as higher than that of the person Chief Braimah has made chief of the carriers and it is against Mohammedan law if a person of an inferior rank be appointed to an office which is held by another with a superior social rank without any just cause (PRAAD, Accra, ADM 11/1502, Hausa Community, 1912).

The contestations between Chief Braimah on the one hand Ali's descendants' on the other over head-load porters in Accra was a reflection of the general problems and divisions that existed following the entry of the ex-soldiers particularly Officer Ali in the transport industry in Accra.

The constraints on motor transport in its early years of introduction and the labour crises of the time served as important triggers for the development and growth portage in Accra. A factor which even made the role of the ex-soldiers even more popular. To this day portage is still an important means of transport in Accra.

In spite of the popularity of portage, it still became necessary for motor vehicles to be used in Accra. In later years after its introduction, the motor vehicle, just like human-powered, became the means through which some of the ex-soldiers such as Ex-Sgt Amadu Suuka, Ex-Sgt Bukari Grumah, Pte. Kofi Buafo contributed to the development of Accra, first as drivers and second as vehicle owners. This was possible because of the role that they played in the Royal West African Frontier Force. While in active service in East Africa, these ex-servicemen acquired driving skills. After demobilisation in the 1920s, some of them took on the job as drivers in Accra, with some graduating to be vehicle owners. As earlier on mentioned with the establishment of the lorry park in Accra in the 1920s, motorised transport fell firmly under the

control of ex-soldiers. And by the establishment of the Motor Transport Union, a precursor to the Ghana Private Road Transport Union, much of the urban space within the Central Business District of Accra came to be controlled by them (Ntewusu 2012, p.128).

## **Conclusion**

This paper discussed the recruitment, training, as well as the deployment of soldiers in the Gold Coast. In particular the paper traced the transformation of disbanded members of the Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary as soldiers to traders and transporters. It was established that the ease at which the demobilized soldiers went into trade was due to their exposure to kola nuts and shea butter while they were in service. Their switch to transportation was because they provided transport services while they were in the military. But their ability to engage in trade and transport was because of their residence in the Zongos and the expansion of Accra, both of which facilitated the economic activities that they were engaged in.

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