

British Intervention in War-torn Sierra Leone, 1997-2015

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Forces Postal History Society
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For details of the **West Africa Study Circle** see page 32, inside the back cover

Introduction

I was discussing with Michael Dobbs the use of modern Field Post Office numbers in West Africa. He showed me a detailed summary he had prepared on the recent troubles in Sierra Leone.

I showed this to the publications committee of the West Africa Study Circle who felt it should be issued as a monograph and published by the Circle on behalf of both Societies

Jeremy Martin, FRPSL

Foreword

This is an undated and previously unpublished manuscript entitled "British Intervention in War-torn Sierra Leone" written by Michael Dobbs, secretary of the Forces Postal History Society.

I suggested to Michael that such background information was important to aid our understanding of events in Sierra Leone. The West Africa Study Circle has therefore made this publication available on line via its website www.wasc.org.uk and has printed a small number for those interested in this subject.

Jeremy Martin, FRPSL

BRITISH INTERVENTION IN WAR-TORN SIERRA LEONE (1997-2015)

Geographical and Historical Background

Sierra Leone lies on the west coast of Africa - it is bordered on the north and east by Guinea, on the south by Liberia and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The national capital is Freetown.

The settlement at Freetown and the surrounding area owed its existence to freed slaves who settled there from America and the West Indies. Freetown was where the Royal Navy took slaves it freed from slave ships following the abolition of slavery in the UK. With the increase in British influence the area around Freetown became a Crown Colony on 1 January 1801, whilst the surrounding coastal settlements became a British Protectorate later in the 19th Century. In the post-colonialist era following the ending of the Second World War Sierra Leone eventually gained its freedom and became an independent state within the Commonwealth on 27 April 1961. In 1971 Sierra Leone became a Republic.

Political Background and Conflict: March 1991 - May 1999

The conflict in Sierra Leone can be traced back to March 1991 when rebels with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a civil war from the east of the country near to the Liberian border. The aim of the RUF was to overthrow the Government of Sierra Leone. The strength of the RUF grew as it conscripted villagers to its cause by the use of force and intimidation. The RUF was also infamous in its conscription of children, some as young as eight, to be their fighters. Many conscripts had the letters 'RUF' carved into their chests and some were also forced to mutilate or kill family members. In a short time they overwhelmed the small Sierra Leone Army (SLA). Surviving villagers were often then robbed and abused by local RUF commanders. In addition the RUF leadership proposed plundering the country's mineral wealth, especially diamonds. The **Economic Community of West African States** (ECOWAS) became embroiled in the conflict and through its **ECOWAS Military Observer Group** (ECOMOG) provided forces to assist the Sierra Leone army defend the Government against the RUF. However, the following year the army overthrew the government, but despite the change of power the RUF continued its attacks.

In November 1994 Sierra Leone formally requested UN assistance in resolving its conflict with the RUF. On 15 December the UN Secretary-General sent an exploratory mission to the country to report on the situation. The mission reported on the serious deterioration of the country as a result of the three-year conflict. About 10% of the population were refugees in neighbouring countries and some 30% were internally displaced. In February 1995 the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Envoy who worked with the **Organisation of African Unity** (OAU) and ECOWAS to try and negotiate a settlement to the conflict. Parliamentary and presidential elections were held in February 1996 and Dr Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah became President. The army relinquished power to the new President but the RUF, who had not participated in the elections, refused to recognise the results and the conflict continued. The UN assisted in negotiating a peace agreement between the Government and the RUF in November 1996, known as the Abidjan Accord. By this time the SLA had changed from a small force of trained regulars into an untrained rabble of some 15,000, mainly youths, poorly equipped, fed, led and paid.

However, on 25 May 1997 another military coup d'état took place and the army joined the RUF in a military junta in what became known as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). President Kabbah and his government fled into exile in neighbouring Guinea.

Following fruitless negotiations to bring about a return to democratic government the UN Security Council imposed an oil and arms embargo on 8 October 1997 and authorised ECOWAS to ensure its implementation. Later in the month the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone met a delegation of the junta at Conakry, Guinea and signed a peace plan. This called for a ceasefire to be monitored by ECOMOG assisted by UN military observers. President Kabbah accepted the agreement on 5 November and the junta publicly committed itself to implementing the agreement. However, the latter subsequently criticised key provisions and the agreement was never implemented.

The Times of 12 February 1998 reported that the previous day Nigerian-led West African forces of ECOMOG had bombed and captured the centre of Freetown, thus escalating the conflict in Sierra Leone as they attempted to evict the military junta that had seized power in the coup of May 1997. The coup leader was Major Johnny Paul Koroma. This move was in response to an attack on ECOMOG forces by joint rebel and junta forces and led to the collapse of the junta and its expulsion from Freetown. President Kabbah returned to office on 10 March 1998 and the UN terminated the oil and arms embargo. At the same time it strengthened the office of the Special Envoy to include military liaison officers and security advisory personnel. ECOMOG continued their operations in the north and around the capital Freetown against both the RUF and AFRC until the May 1999 ceasefire. There were some 11,000 Nigerian military personnel in the country and these were originally due for withdrawal by the end of 1999.

US Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation: May - June 1997

Operation NOBLE OBELISK

The military coup that took place on 25 May 1997 was the prelude for a US intervention in a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO). As **Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL** in the Congo finished the deteriorating security situation in Freetown required **USS Kearsarge** (LHD3) and the **22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)** (22nd MEU (SOC)) to relocate quickly to another crisis operating area.

The US European Command (USEUCOM) established **Joint Task Force Noble Obelisk** (JTFNO) on 27 May 1997. JTFNO comprised the main element of 22nd MEU (SOE) embarked aboard the USS Kearsarge and a US Special Forces unit in Freetown. This latter unit was an **Operational Detachment Alpha** (or 'A' Team) comprised of 13 Special Forces soldiers from **3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)** who had deployed to Freetown in April that year to provide leadership training and support to the elected government. During the early morning of 29 May members of the team conducted patrols through rebel-held areas to secure the landing zone for the Marines from the 22nd MEU.

The Operation resulted in the evacuation during the period 30 May until 3 June 1997 of 451 American citizens and 2,058 third-country nationals in three separate evacuations over four days to the *Kearsarge*. All evacuees were later transferred to Conakry in Guinea, for processing. JTFNO was eventually disestablished on 6 June 1997.

Humanitarian Assistance: February - March 1998^[7]

Operation RESILIENT

This was the name given to a relief operation undertaken by the Royal Navy ships **HMS Monmouth** (F-235) (Type 23 "Duke" Class Frigate) (**BFPO 338**) and **HMS Cornwall** (F-99) (Type 22 "Broadsword" Class Frigate) (**BFPO 256**) between 13 February and 20 March 1998. Their

mission was to provide humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone, following the violent overthrow of the military junta by the West African forces of ECOMOG.

HMS Monmouth was in the vicinity of Sierra Leone from 14-23 February 1998; it was berthed alongside Conakry, Guinea from 17-20 February.

HMS Cornwall was ordered to deploy to Sierra Leone on 19 February to replace **HMS Monmouth**. They rendezvoused with each other for the handover of duties on 23 February. Afterwards the *Cornwall* was replenished at sea by **RFA Orangeleaf** (Support Tanker) (**BFPO 449**).

HMS Cornwall was in port at Freetown providing humanitarian aid for three weeks from 1-20 March. *The Times* of Thursday 5 March 1998 reported that *Cornwall* had arrived off Freetown from Gibraltar at the end of the previous week. The Navy airlifted emergency food and medical supplies to inaccessible inland locations at Bo, Kenema and Makeni, using its Sea King helicopter from the ship's flight of **No 810 Naval Air Squadron**. The ship's company helped repair port facilities also provided assistance to hospitals and schools in the Freetown area. The Navy also gave assistance to the British High Commissioner to enable the British High Commission to re-open in Freetown ^[8]. The government agreed that *Cornwall's* humanitarian assistance operations would continue until 20 March. After which the ship resumed its planned programme of port visits outside Sierra Leone. *Cornwall's* programme of ports visits after it left the UK on 16 February was as follows:

18-19 February 1998	Routine port visit to Gibraltar to refuel
25 February 1998	Arrived at Conakry, Guinea
27 February 1998	Sailed from Conakry
1 March 1998	Arrived at Freetown, Sierra Leone

During the period 1-20 March 1998 **HMS Cornwall** left Freetown on a number of occasions as follows:

3-5 March	Moved further south along the coast to position closer to Bo and Kenema and to replenish fresh water.
7-9 March	Off the coast of Sierra Leone to make fresh water and for ship's company rest and recuperation.
11-12 March	Overnight off the coast of Sierra Leone to make fresh water.
13-14 March	Off the coast of Sierra Leone for ship's company rest and recuperation.
15-16 March	Off the coast of Sierra Leone to replenish water stocks.
20 March 1998	Sailed from Freetown
1-8 April 1998	Agadir
8-19 April 1998	Tenerife
20-22 April 1998	Nouadhibou, Mauritania
24-27 April 1998	Conakry, Guinea
1-5 May 1998	Douala, Cameroon
7-11 May 1998	Owendo, Gabon
14-18 May 1998	Luanda, Angola

The remainder of the programme included visits to Namibia, South Africa, Ascension Island and Ghana. The ship also played a return visit to Freetown. **HMS Cornwall** returned to the UK in August 1998.

Note:

According to the *House of Commons: Hansard Written Answers to Questions for Monday 5 March 2001*: HMS Monmouth was engaged on **Operation PALLISER** (sic) between 5 September 1997 and 1 March 1998.

According to the *House of Commons: Hansard Written Answers to Questions for Monday 14 January 2001*: HMS Cornwall was engaged on **Operation RESILIENT** between 16 February and 14 August 1998.

Humanitarian Assistance: January 1999

The MOD Annual Report for 1998/99 ^[5] stated that **HMS Norfolk** (F-230) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 344**) and **HMS Westminster** (F-237) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 426**) provided medicine and humanitarian support to Sierra Leone following atrocities committed by rebels seeking to overthrow the Government of President Kabbah.

In a report in *The Times* for Monday 18 January 1999 it was stated that **HMS Norfolk** had been despatched to support West African troops fighting rebels in the country and humanitarian efforts in the shattered capital Freetown. The frigate carried a ships flight of 1 x Lynx helicopter which was used in these efforts. In addition a British Military reconnaissance team (or mission) under Brigadier David Richards flew into the Freetown defence headquarters of ECOMOG for talks with Nigerian generals and President Kabbah. *The Times* of 19 January reported that Brigadier Richards was due to present his report to a Cabinet Committee in London the following day. The report made recommendations on how best to support ECOMOG against the rebels, with priority given to humanitarian aid.

United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone: July 1998 - October 1999

On 13 July 1998 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1181 which established the **United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone** (UNOMSIL) with an authorised strength of up to 70 military observers for an initial period of six months. UNOMSIL had its headquarters in Freetown and the first 40 observers were deployed in the first instance to areas secured by ECOMOG ^[2]. Special Envoy Francis G. Okelo (*Uganda*) became the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Chief of Mission and Brigadier-General Subhash C. Joshi (*India*) became Chief Military Observer (CMO). The Mission monitored the military and security situation, as well the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the former combatants, and advised on the efforts to restructure the Sierra Leone security forces. Unarmed UNOMSIL teams, protected by ECOMOG, documented reports of atrocities and human rights abuses committed against the civilian population.

The fighting continued and the rebel alliance gained control of more than half the country. In December 1998 the rebels began an offensive to re-take Freetown and on 6 January 1999 entered the city and overran most of it. As a consequence UNOMSIL was evacuated to Conakry, Guinea. The Special Representative and CMO continued their tasks and maintained close contact with all parties to the conflict. However, UNOMSIL itself was reduced in size. Several thousand people were killed during this period and up to 90% of the buildings in the eastern suburbs of Freetown were destroyed. Later that month ECOMOG forces re-took the city and re-installed the civilian government. However, it was reported that thousands of rebels were hiding out in the surrounding countryside.

In the aftermath of this attack the UN, in consultation with West African states, initiated a series of diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation. Negotiations between the Government and rebels began in May 1999 and a ceasefire agreement was signed on 18 May. Following which a Peace Agreement was signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF in Lomé, Togo on 7 July 1999 - Togo was at that time in the Chair of ECOWAS. Amongst other things the Peace Agreement provided for ceasefire monitoring; transformation of the RUF into a political

party; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; withdrawal of mercenaries; release of prisoners; delivery of humanitarian assistance; and four cabinet posts and four deputy ministers posts for the rebels. The parties also requested an expanded role for UNOMSIL.

The original mandate for UNOMSIL expired on 13 June 1999 but this was extended. The strength of UNOMSIL as at 30 July 1999 stood at 51 (49 military observers and 2 military personnel) supported by a two-person medical team. Its civilian component as at 4 June 1999 comprised 53 staff (29 international staff and 24 locally recruited staff). On 20 August the UN Security Council authorised an increase in the number of military observers to 210, along with necessary equipment and administrative and medical support.

The following nations provided personnel for UNOMSIL: People's Republic of China, Egypt, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Russia, United Kingdom and Zambia ^[6].

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: October 1999 - December 2005

UNOMSIL was terminated on 22 October 1999 when the UN Security Council, under Resolution 1270, authorised the establishment and deployment of a new and significantly larger peacekeeping operation - the **United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone** (UNAMSIL) - on the same date. UNAMSIL had an authorised maximum strength of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers, and an initial six month mandate ^[3]. To head the new mission the UN Secretary-General appointed Oluyemi Adeniji (*Nigeria*) as his Special Representative. UNAMSIL was established to co-operate with the Government and other parties in implementing the Lomé Agreement and to assist in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan.

On 7 February 2000 under Security Council Resolution 1289 the UN revised the mandate of UNAMSIL; it also expanded its size to a maximum of 11,100 military personnel. The UN also authorised increases in the civil affairs, civilian police, administrative and technical components of UNAMSIL. UN Security Council Resolution 1299 of 19 May again increased the authorised strength of UNAMSIL, this time to 13,000 military personnel.

In November 2001, an 800 strong Nepalese infantry battalion arrived in Sierra Leone, bringing UNAMSIL up to its mandated strength of 17,500 under its commander, Lieutenant General Daniel Opande (*Kenya*). The Nepali peacekeepers were due to be deployed to Moyamba District in southern Sierra Leone. At that time the main function of UNAMSIL was to oversee a disarmament programme and well as to provide security and logistical aid for the forthcoming May 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections.

On 1 November 2002 UNAMSIL announced that several hundred soldiers had concluded their tour of duty and were due to leave the West African country that weekend. At the same time UNAMSIL also confirmed that the departing troops were among 600 who would leave by the end of the year under a downsizing arrangement that had been agreed by the Security Council in September 2002. Up to 4,500 of the 17,000 UNAMSIL troops in Sierra Leone were expected to leave by 31 May 2003. UNAMSIL was in the process of drawing down as security forces from the Sierra Leone Government assumed a more prominent role in the security of the country. Under UN Security Council Resolution 1562 approved on 17 September 2004 the UN mandate was due to expire on 30 June 2005, but it was extended for a final period of six months until 31 December 2005 under UN Security Council Resolution 1610 approved on 30 June 2005. On 15 December some 290 Pakistani soldiers, representing the last contingent of UNAMSIL troops, left Freetown for their home country of Pakistan.

Operation REPTILE

The Canadian Forces provided UNAMSIL with up to six officers under **Operation REPTILE** who served as UN Military Observers.

Operation TURNER

Operation TURNER was the name given to the UK commitment and contribution to UNAMSIL and was distinct from any bi-lateral UK/Sierra Leone military arrangement (for example the IMATT) ^[13].

British Logistic Assistance to UNAMSIL

To assist with the deployment of the UNAMSIL peacekeeping force the UN requested an eight strong logistic team from the UK. For this **50 Movement Control Squadron RLC** (from **29 Regiment RLC**) provided a five strong Movement Controller detachment, who were joined at Warminster by the remaining three members (a Major, Grenadier Guards; WO2, **10 Transport Regiment RLC** and a Flight Sergeant, **United Kingdom Mobile Air Movements Squadron RAF (UKMAMS)**). The team deployed on 3 December 1999 also as **Operation TURNER** on what was expected to be a tour of duty lasting no more than two months. The outward route was by civil aircraft from Heathrow to Conakry, Guinea and thence by UN Beechcraft plane to Lungi International Airport.

Here they were met by Lieutenant Colonel Rod Tracey AAC, who also acted as **Commander British Contingent** (COMBRITCON). The team spent a few days learning the UN system before the airport detachment (comprising 6 out of the 8) moved to Lungi to assist with the arrival of the various UN contingents. The first arrivals were the advance party of the Indian contingent on 7 December. The routine usually consisted of 2-3 aircraft arrivals per day. Alongside these were the UN Mi-8 helicopters used for the re-supply of the UNAMSIL outstations scattered around Sierra Leone.

The team completed its tasks on 28 February 2000 and departed Sierra Leone on 3 March.

[See under the "29 Regiment" heading in The Royal Logistic Corps Journal (Volume 8, No 5) October 2000 for a detailed article about the detachment's deployment in Sierra Leone]

By February 2003 the British contribution to UNAMSIL comprised the Chief of Staff, six HQ personnel and 15 military observers. As at August 2004 the UK contribution stood at eight HQ staff and 15 UN Military Observers; by the end of December 2004 this was expected to have reduced to five HQ staff and eight military observers ^[13].

Training Assistance to the Sierra Leone Army: 1999-2000

Operation BASILICA

It would appear that **Op BASILICA** started around March 1999. A small team was deployed to Freetown to set up the first training camp and to instruct the first 24 potential instructors for the new Sierra Leone Army ^[20]. Since the Lomé Agreement of 7 July 1999 Britain had been the lead nation in training a new Sierra Leone army.

[Statement made by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, in the House of Commons on 6 June 2000]

"... Under **OP BASILICA** ..." "... over the past year or so ..." the British Government had provided training similar to that undertaken by the Short Term Training Teams *[see below]*, but on a smaller scale.

[Answer given under "Frequently Asked Questions" under the question "Is this 'mission creep'?" on the Ministry of Defence Army website, updated 4 August 2000]

Evacuation Mission for British and Other Foreign Nationals

On 1 May 2000 the RUF attacked disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration camps in the central and eastern part of the country. The RUF had effectively broken the terms of the Lomé Agreement and in a series of separate actions abducted some 500 peacekeepers from UNAMSIL (mainly Kenyan and Zambian soldiers). This was followed by a full scale resumption of fighting between the RUF and the Sierra Leone Army and its militia allies. The seizure of hostages began the day after ECOMOG had handed over its peacekeeping duties to UNAMSIL. The hostage taking commenced in a series of attacks on UN compounds on 1-2 May where the RUF succeeded in taking some 50 Kenyan soldiers as hostages. They subsequently captured 208 Zambian troops sent to relieve the Kenyans on 4 May and finally captured another contingent of 226 Zambian troops on 6 May^[4].

As well as the fighting a series of negotiations began between various interested parties and governments in the region which resulted in the last of the hostages being released on 28 May.

Operation PALLISER

In view of the deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone the British Government decided to deploy British Forces to the region. An announcement to this effect was made on 8 May 2000 that "*... in view of the confused and deteriorating security situation in Sierra Leone, the Defence Secretary has decided to deploy UK forces as a precautionary measure. The Royal Navy's Amphibious Ready Group has been despatched to the area to assist in any evacuation of UK nationals and other entitled personnel, should the security situation warrant and once other means of leaving Sierra Leone have been exhausted. ...*" .

Diplomatic clearance was given for British forces to deploy into theatre on the evening of 6 May 2000 and lead elements of the **Spearhead Battalion** had arrived in Dakar by noon on 7 May, with the main body of 1 Para arriving on 8 May.

The British intervention was to ensure the safety of all UK and other entitled nationals who had decided to leave Sierra Leone on the advice of the British High Commissioner. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) had activated its evacuation plan in view of the breakdown in law and order. The British High Commission maintained a small number of essential staff, including military advisers from the **Permanent Joint Headquarters** (PJHQ). To stabilise the deteriorating security situation and ensure the safe evacuation of civilians it was necessary for the British Forces to secure access to Lungi Airport, on the outskirts of Freetown; this included deploying guns from **8 (Alma) Commando Battery RA** (8 Cdo Bty). This move also assisted in ensuring the safe arrival of additional UN forces due to deploy to Sierra Leone as part of UNAMSIL. The PJHQ team also looked into the possibility of the British providing technical support to UNAMSIL.

The Operation saw the largest UK maritime force deployment and the biggest national operation since the 1982 Falklands campaign. Command and control of the Force was undertaken by a headquarters element from **Joint Force Headquarters** (JTFHQ) under the command Brigadier David Richards.

Spearhead Battalion

The **Joint Rapid Reaction Force** (JRRF) **Spearhead Battalion** - a duty battalion provided in rotation by the infantry arm - was provided by **1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment** (1 Para), based at Aldershot, Hampshire. This battalion, some 600 strong, formed the core component of a battle group. The battalion was initially deployed to a forward position at Dakar in Senegal. The lead elements arrived by noon on 7 May 2000, whilst the main body of 1 Para arrived in Senegal on 8 May. 1 Para was augmented by 200 troops from **2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment** (2 Para), based at Meeanee Barracks, Mersea Road, Colchester, Essex who arrived in Dakar on the night of 7 May. The 2 Para detachment also included up to 58 personnel from the Gurkha Reinforcement Company. Personnel and equipment arrived in Senegal by RAF Tristar and

civilian charter aircraft. Forward movement from Dakar to Freetown was by RAF Hercules aircraft. In addition to 1 Para there was the **Pathfinder Platoon**. Some 120 support personnel were also deployed to Senegal in support of 1 Para. They flew out from RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire on 8 May:

- Sixty medical staff from Colchester-based **16 Close Support Medical Regiment**. Upon deployment to Sierra Leone provided primary care from their base at Lungi airport.
- One Officer and thirty-seven drivers and mechanical engineers of **Airborne Task Force (ABTF) Troop, 63 Air Assault Brigade Support Squadron RLC** from Colchester-based **13 Air Assault Support Regiment**. ABTF Tp was also based at Lungi airport upon deployment to Sierra Leone; its main role was to provide logistic, REME FRT and helicopter handling support for 1 Para Battle Group. The Troop returned to Colchester on 27 May 2000.
- Ten military police from **156 Provost Company RMP** from Colchester, supported by two SIB SNCOs, who were based at the evacuee assembly areas at Lungi and the Aberdeen peninsula on the edge of Freetown.
- Eighteen signallers from **216 Signal Squadron** who provided communications for British forces in various locations in and around Freetown as well as to the operating base in Dakar.
- **'C' Troop** provided defence and life support to the signal squadron for JTFHQ. This was initially provided by **16 Troop** from **522 Squadron RLC**, part of **23 Pioneer Regiment RLC**. At the time the Troop was employed on **Exercise ARGON MERCURY** in Ghana on the refurbishment of the Ghanaian Military Academy and other tasks. On deployment from Ghana to Sierra Leone the Troop was first engaged in constructing the defences for JTFHQ and later on provided life support facilities. 13 Troop from the same Squadron also provided a detachment. They were replaced by an enhanced **5 Troop** from **206 Squadron RLC**, part of the same Regiment; the Squadron had only re-formed on 1 June 2000.

Note:

According to the *House of Commons: Hansard Written Answers to Questions for Monday 5 March 2001* 1 Para were engaged on **Operation PALLISER** between 7-26 May 2000.

Also deployed to Sierra Leone were elements of Special Forces in the guise of **22 Special Air Service** (22 SAS).

Royal Air Force

Deployment of the JRRF **Spearhead Battalion**, its equipment and support elements involved some 21 Hercules and 4 Tristar tasks supplemented by civil air charter. An RAF detachment of 8 x Hercules remained in Dakar, Senegal for on-going tasks. A daily re-supply schedule from the UK was implemented.

4 x Chinook HC.2 helicopters, together with 85 personnel (which included 20 or so aircrew), drawn from **Nos 7, 18 and 27 Squadrons RAF** from RAF Odiham, Wiltshire, part of the **Joint Helicopter Command (JHC)**, were despatched to the area to assist in the evacuation process. The four Chinooks were flown direct from the UK and took over four days to reach Lungi Airport. They remained in theatre ready for further evacuations should the need arise; they were also used to airlift 1 Para forward and in support of UNAMSIL.

RAF Hercules aircraft were involved in deploying 1 Para forward from Dakar to Freetown, and also undertook a number of other tasks. These included moving 1 Para forward as necessary and also taking evacuees from Lungi back to Dakar. The Chinooks were involved in taking evacuees from the assembly point at Aberdeen Peninsula to Lungi. They were also used to fly elements of 1 Para forward to head off the advance of RUF rebels and flew UN Jordanian Forces to the front line near the remote town of Waterloo, some 35 km from Freetown.

Supporting elements from the **United Kingdom Mobile Air Movements Squadron RAF (UKMAMS)**, **No 2 Field Communications Squadron RAF** (from the **Tactical Communications Wing**

RAF (TCW)) and the **Tactical Medical Wing RAF** (TMW) were also deployed, together with support elements for the air transport and JHC elements. For the RAF a Chinook helicopter detachment remained in the country. As well as supporting the STTT the Chinooks were engaged on re-supply tasks and support of UNAMSIL. The twice-daily Hercules re-supply schedule remained for the foreseeable future.

Naval Task Force

Amphibious Ready Group

The UK Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) was participating in **Exercise AURORA**, an amphibious exercise in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. Also involved were some 900 Royal Marine Commandos. With some irony the exercise included a non-combatant evacuation exercise in southern France. The ships which made up the ARG had departed Devonport on 27 March 2000 (except for **HMS Chatham** which left on 10 April) to participate in the pre-planned three month exercise in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean areas.

The day after the Government announcement on 8 May the ARG left Gibraltar for Sierra Leone. It is thought that the ARG arrived off Sierra Leone on 15 May. The ships that made up the ARG (*Ocean, Chatham, Sir Bedivere, Sir Tristram and Fort Austin*) left for the UK on 21 June. The ARG comprised:

Note:

Amphibious Ready Group			
HMS Ocean	(L-12)	Helicopter Carrier (265 crew + 180 aviation)	(BFPO 350)
		No 846 Naval Air Squadron (4 x Sea King HC.4)	
		No 847 Naval Air Squadron (2 x Lynx Mk.7 and 2 x Gazelle AH.1)	
		took onboard 2 x RAF Chinook helicopters	
		9 Assault Squadron RM (9 ASRM)	
		2 officers, 5 SNCOs, 7 JNCOs and 16 Marines)	
		(4 x Mk 5 Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVP))	
HMS Chatham	(F-87)	Type 22 (Broadsword Class) Frigate (250 crew)	(BFPO 253)
RFA Sir Bedivere	(L-3004)	Landing Ship Logistic (51 crew)	(BFPO 452)
RFA Sir Tristram	(L-3505)	Landing Ship Logistic (51 crew)	(BFPO 456)
RFA Fort Austin	(A-386)	Fleet Replenishment Ship (114 RFA, 36 RNSTS + 45 aviation)	(BFPO 439)

According to the *House of Commons: Hansard Written Answers to Questions for Monday 5 March 2001*: 846 NAS and 847 NAS were engaged on **Operation PALLISER** between 5 May and 4 June 2000.

Air Task Group

As the announcement was being made two naval vessels (the aircraft carrier **HMS Illustrious** and support vessel **RFA Fort George**) were withdrawn from NATO **Exercise LINKED SEAS 2000** off the coast of Spain and sent to join the ARG. The aircraft carrier and its support vessel originally left Portsmouth in January 2000 on a routine deployment to the Gulf. There its Sea Harriers took part in air patrols over the 'no fly' zone imposed in southern Iraq by the coalition forces as part of **Operation SOUTHERN WATCH** (the British element being called **Operation BOLTON**). In March its support vessel was sent to assist in flood relief efforts in Mozambique (taking with it its 5 x Sea King helicopters from **No 820 Naval Air Squadron** with necessary air and ground crews, maintenance engineers and medical personnel). The support vessel re-joined the carrier task group in the Mediterranean by the end of the month. In April the carrier was joined by 115 personnel and a number of Joint Force Harrier GR.7 aircraft of **No 3 (Fighter) Squadron RAF** for the NATO exercise.

HMS Illustrious, with its complement of RAF Harriers and Naval Sea Harriers, was the first UK maritime asset in the theatre having arrived on 11 May. For the next few weeks its aircraft and helicopters flew in support of operations ashore. The helicopters of No 849B NAS provided airborne command and control for the other UK air assets in the region. In mid-June 2000 it was announced that the carrier would return to Portsmouth where it arrived on 14 June.

HMS Illustrious	(R-06)	Aircraft Carrier	(685 crew + 366 aviation	(BFPO 305)
No 801 Naval Air Squadron			(7 x Sea Harrier FA.2)	
No 820 Naval Air Squadron			(Sea King HAS.6)	
No 3 Squadron RAF			(6 x Harrier GR.7)	
'B' Flight, No 849 Naval Air Squadron			(Sea King AEW.2)	
RFA Fort George	(A-388)	Fleet Replenishment Ship	(95 RFA, 9 RN,	(BFPO 440)

It has been stated that the Royal Navy task force - which comprised **HMS Illustrious**, **HMS Ocean**, **HMS Argyll**, **HMS Chatham**, **HMS Iron Duke** and the four RFA vessels was designated **Task Group 342.01**.

Atlantic Task Ship (South)

At the same time the RN **West Africa Guard Ship** which was on station in the region joined the Task Force. The frigate **HMS Argyll** (F-231) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 210**), together with its support vessel **RFA Sir Percivale** (L-3036) (Landing Ship Logistic) (**BFPO 455**) arrived off Freetown on 13 May 2000. *Argyll* provided protection of the seaward flank of the British forces ashore. She also provided support for the STTT and "show the flag" as part of the UK commitment to Sierra Leone. Following which the *Argyll* resumed her duties as **Atlantic Task Ship (South)**. However, **RFA Sir Percivale** remained off Sierra Leone to support the STTT [11].

HMS Argyll	(F-231)	Type 23 (Duke Class) Frigate	(181 crew)	(BFPO 210)
RFA Sir Percivale	(L-3036)	Landing Ship Logistic	(51 crew)	(BFPO 455)

On 25 May 2000 **42 Commando RM**, which had been waiting off-shore aboard **HMS Ocean**, relieved 1 Para in the security of Lungi Airport in the capital Freetown. This was to allow 1 Para (augmented by a detachment from 2 Para) to return to the UK. The continued security of Lungi Airport enabled the gradual build-up of UN forces in the region to take place. Most of the 120 support troops remained in support of the Commandos.

Operation PALLISER ended on 15 June 2000 and **Operation BASILICA** continued.

Indian Peacekeepers: under siege and operations to free them: July 2000

Operation KHUKRI [19]

By this time India had over 3,000 military personnel in Sierra Leone and formed the backbone of UNAMSIL. The Indian presence consisted of infantry, special forces, logistic and engineering units, force headquarters personnel as well as an aviation unit. The Indian **5/8th Gorkha Rifles Battalion** (5/8 GR), elements of **14th Mechanised Infantry** and elements of **23rd Mechanised Infantry** formed INDBATT-1 whilst **18th Grenadier Battalion** formed INDBATT -2. Two companies of 5/8GR were deployed to Kailahun.

Following the activities of the RUF in May 2000 as described above, the situation at Kailahun kept deteriorating, and the two companies of 5/8 GR (part of INDBATT-1) were besieged and surrounded. For 75 days the RUF rebels had kept around two companies (some 223 personnel) of 5/8 GR under siege at Kailahun. As the situation worsened the UN Force Commander (Major General Vijay Kumar Jetley [India] (December 1999 - September 2000)) decided to take military action. **Operation KHUKRI** was a multinational operation launched by the Indian-led UNAMSIL and which involved forces from India, Ghana, UK and Nigeria. The aim of the operation was to break the two month long siege laid by the RUF around two companies of 5/8 GR at Kailahun. The Operation took place on 15 and 16 July 2000 and an assortment of helicopters, both Indian Air Force and RAF, were used - the latter included two Chinook helicopters which dropped off the company from 2 Para two kilometres south of Kailahun. SAS spotters on the ground (from **'D' Squadron, 22 SAS**) helped guide the helicopters in rescuing the soldiers held hostage by RUF rebels. The operation was a complete success, with all besieged troops successfully evacuated and no UNAMSIL losses.

Short Term Training Team: June 2000 onwards

Operation BASILICA [continued]

Following the events of May and June 2000 the British Government announced that it was to accelerate the training of the Sierra Leone Army to achieve a rapid boost in troop capacity. As a result, following the withdrawal of the contingency force a **Short Term Training Team (STTT)** was provided under **Operation BASILICA** to train recruits for the Sierra Leone Army (SLA). Towards the end of **Operation PALLISER** 42 Commando constructed a 1,250 person tented training camp for the STTT at Benguema Camp (also known as Benguema Training Centre) at Waterloo, some 15 miles south east of Freetown, and processed some 250 personnel for **Operation BASILICA**. The first STTT was provided by around 180 personnel drawn from **2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment** from Beachley Barracks, Chepstow. All told the STTT comprised around 300 troops: there were some 200 STTT personnel together with a further 100 personnel for the administrative support and security elements. The Team were earmarked for a six week deployment in Sierra Leone. Their task was to take 1,000 Sierra Leonean troops through basic training and infantry skills.

The *Soldier* magazine for July 2000 stated that the 238-strong STTT supported by a company of security troops and a number of supporting arms and services. These comprised detachments from **30 Signal Regiment, 36 Engineer Regiment RE, 3 Close Support Medical Regiment RAMC, 3 Regiment RMP, 29 Regiment RLC** and **9 Supply Regiment RLC**.

This Team returned to the UK at the end of July having been replaced on 22 July by a Team from **1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment** (1 R IRISH) from Canterbury, Kent^[11]. A press announcement of 4 August 2000 stated that the second STTT (STTT2) drawn from 1 R IRISH had begun training a further 1,000 recruits for the Sierra Leone Army. In another press announcement dated 22 August the UK stated that it would provide a third Army STTT (STTT3) to replace the existing team in Sierra Leone; this was to consist of another team from 1 R IRISH which took over in September 2000. The 1 R IRISH deployment also included a number of personnel from the Gurkha Reinforcement Company.

A Team from **1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire** (1 PWO) deployed to Sierra Leone as STTT4 at the end of October 2000 to replace the 1R IRISH team.

A press announcement (356/00) of 15 December 2000 stated that a detachment from **2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles** (2 RGR) from Folkestone, Kent would deploy to Sierra Leone "... over the next few days ..." to form the next STTT. They were to replace a team from 1 PWO which had been in theatre since October 2000. The Gurkha deployment lasted until April 2001.

On 1 September 2001 the Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon announced that the British trainers, known as the British Army Short Term Training Team (STTT) would complete its task on 7 September, reducing the British military presence in Sierra Leone to some 360 personnel. The final STTT course was run by **2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry** (2 LI). The completion of the STTT programme allowed the number of British service personnel to be reduced from some 550-600 to 360.

Atlantic Patrol Task ^[17].

The **Atlantic Patrol Task** (APT) came into effect on 1 November 1998 following a decision to reduce the number of frigates and destroyers in the Royal Navy arising out of the Strategic Defence Review (SDR):

Atlantic Patrol Task (South) (APT(S)) provided a UK standing Naval commitment of one frigate or destroyer and RFA support vessel to the South Atlantic and West Africa regions.

Atlantic Patrol Task (North) (APT(N)) provided a UK maritime presence in the Caribbean and replaced the permanent Naval presence there (known as the **West Indies Guard Ship**). The duty APT(N) ship together with its RFA support vessel were also on standby to provide assistance in Sierra Leone as required.

Atlantic Patrol Task (South)

On 30 September 2000 **HMS Iron Duke** (F-234) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 309**) arrived off Sierra Leone to relieve **HMS Argyll**, which then steamed south as part of the APT(S). The frigate patrolled off Freetown, except for short trips to Dakar in Senegal to collect stores and refuel and a visit to Ghana. *Iron Duke* stayed in the region until 6 November when it, too, proceeded to the South Atlantic.

On 5 February 2001 **HMS Glasgow** (D-88) (Type 42 Destroyer) (**BFPO 287**) left Portsmouth for a six month deployment in the South Atlantic on APT(S). As part of its duties the ship was tasked to support UN involvement in Sierra Leone and the first half of its deployment was divided between Sierra Leone and other West African States. It visited Sierra Leone on four occasions:

19-23 February 2001	12-16 March 2001
12-15 April 2001	23-24 July 2001

The latter dates were on its return voyage to the UK and on 24 July the ship left Freetown and steamed northward towards Portsmouth where it arrived on 3 August 2001. It handed over its APT(S) role to **HMS Edinburgh** (D-97) (also a Type 42 Destroyer) (**BFPO 277**).

HMS Newcastle (D-87) (Type 42 Destroyer) (**BFPO 343**) began a six-month deployment on APT(S) in March 2002 that took it to the Falklands via West Africa. After taking over the duties of APT(S) from **HMS Montrose** at Las Palmas, Gran Canaria the *Newcastle* headed for Freetown. Here the ship's company took part in community projects before the vessel departed for Ghana and Nigeria in April.

HMS Lancaster (F-229) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 323**) deployed on APT(S) during July 2003 with its first stop being Freetown to carry out community projects before heading down the coast of West Africa on its way to the Falklands.

Atlantic Patrol Task (North)

On 24 February 2003 **HMS Iron Duke** (F-234) (Type 23 Frigate) (**BFPO 309**) on APT(N) sailed from St Lucia to take up a routine patrol off Sierra Leone during March as part of **Operation KEELING** (see further on for details). A detachment of Royal Marines of the **Fleet Standby Rifle Troop** (FSRT) were embarked off the Isla de Sal as part of the tasking. *Iron Duke* entered

the port of Freetown mid-morning on 6 March. The aim of the visit was a further demonstration of the UK commitment and aid to the peace process. Liaison took place with the Gurkha detachment (see under "*British Forces visits: 2003*" further on), Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), IMATT and UN peacekeepers.

The *Iron Duke* sailed from Freetown on 8 March to continue its patrol off the coast of Sierra Leone. Here it was joined by its Atlantic tanker support **RFA Black Rover** (A-273) (Small Fleet Tanker) (**BFPO 435**). Whilst carrying out the patrol the ship's company took part in exercises with the Gurkha's, IMATT and RSLAF Maritime Wing, as well as various civil and community projects. After four weeks on task in the region the *Iron Duke* departed Sierra Leone waters on 29 March to take up counter drug operations in the Caribbean.

British Troops Taken Hostage: August 2000

On Friday 25 August 2000 eleven members of the **1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment**, serving with the UK **Short Term Training Team**, together with a liaison officer from the Sierra Leone Army, were detained by a militia group known as the "West Side Boys" near Masiaka. This group had been described as a rag-tag bunch, of uncertain loyalties, often high on alcohol and drugs and thus very unstable. It is ironic that a few months previous the "West Side Boys" were fighting alongside the Sierra Leone Government and British forces against the rebel RUF. However, they fell out with the Government after a series of car jackings, robberies and rapes.

The UK sent out a specialist team of British negotiators (including experts from the Metropolitan Police) and Special Air Service (SAS) hostage rescue experts. The militia group released five of the most junior rank detainees on 30 August in return for food, medical supplies and a satellite telephone. Negotiations continued for the release of the remaining hostages. At one stage a portable generator was handed over, but still no release.

Operation BARRAS

Whilst negotiations were still taking place to release the remaining hostages, the British authorities began planning a rescue mission. Later, further demands were made that were of a political nature: the "West Side Boys" now demanded the setting up of an interim government in exchange for the release of the hostages. In addition, threats to kill their captives grew more convincing and mock executions became more common. There were also fears that the hostages could be moved further inland, making rescue more difficult.

As a consequence on Wednesday 6 September the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, called out of a UN summit meeting in New York, gave the go-ahead for the rescue mission of the remaining six British and one Sierra Leonean hostages codenamed **Operation BARRAS**. The authorities knew they were taking a very big risk, but had concluded that they had no choice. Britain had already despatched a contingency force to neighbouring Senegal.

The hostages had been tracked to a rebel base by a SAS reconnaissance team who had spent 10 days in the jungle looking for them. The rescue mission centred on the militia camp at Geri Bana in the Occra Hills, situated on both sides of the 300 metre-wide Rokel Creek and surrounded by mango swamps, some 30 miles east of Freetown. The mission began at first light on Sunday 10 September and involved Special Forces (**Special Air Service** and possibly personnel from the **Special Boat Unit**) together with a company detachment from **1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment**. At 6.40am 150 paratroopers were airlifted in three RAF Chinook helicopters to two positions on opposite sides of the Rokel Creek. The attack was spearheaded by two Army Lynx helicopters, each with a complement of about ten paratroopers,

Note:

According to the *House of Commons: Hansard Written Answers to Questions for Monday 5 March 2001 A Company*, 1 Para were engaged on **Operation BARRAS** between 2-20 September 2000.

The Lynx helicopters had been flown to Freetown hidden in RAF Hercules transport aircraft. The 1 Para detachment was also moved quietly into Freetown. The three Chinook helicopters, stationed in Senegal, were flown to Sierra Leone at the last possible moment.

The mission took just 90 minutes, with all the hostages being rescued within the first 20 minutes. The freed hostages were flown to the **RFA Sir Percivale**, anchored off Freetown. The fighting resulted in one of the rescuers being killed (a Corporal in the Royal Artillery, believed to be a member of the SAS), another seriously wounded and a further 11 wounded. 25 militia were killed (including three women) and a further 18 taken prisoner (including their leader, the self-styled 'Brigadier' Foday Kallay). All three Land Rovers in which the hostages were travelling were also recovered.

International Military Advisory and Training Team

The British Government had announced its intention to send a UK-led **International Military Advisory and Training Team** (IMATT) to help create a new and effective Sierra Leone Armed Forces. The IMATT would take over from the STTT. The UK was expected to provide around 90 personnel, whilst the Canadian Forces had already offered to supply up to 10 personnel. The deployment of the IMATT depended upon the establishment of a secure environment in Sierra Leone.

A **Military Advisory and Training Team** (MATT) deployed in April 2000. UK-led it had an international element from 26 November 2000 when the first Canadians arrived and it became IMATT. In January 2001 the British Government announced that it planned to increase the overall size of IMATT from 90 posts to 126. The same month saw the Australian Department of Defence announce that the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) would send two officers on an initial six month attachment on what would be a two year commitment. They departed Australia by the end of the month.

By February 2003 the actual strength of IMATT stood at some 114 personnel, of whom around 100 were British. Later that month an additional six British personnel joined IMATT to raise its strength to 120.

IMATT was supported by a small force protection element of about 110 UK personnel until such time as the situation in Sierra Leone was judged sufficiently benign to enable them to be withdrawn. A smaller Headquarters remained in Freetown to provide command and control for British forces in the country, and to assist the Commander British Forces in the role of providing operational advice to the Government of Sierra Leone. The international element of IMATT has been varied with, at various times, military personnel from Australia, Canada, France, USA, Ghana, Senegal, Bermuda and Nigeria. A variety of skills and trades were provided by especially selected personnel that included infantry instructors, marines, reconnaissance specialists, engineers, communications experts, logistical planners, medical practitioners and administrative staff.

Following initial training by the STTT the mission of IMATT was to assist SLA instructors at the Armed Forces Training Centre (AFTC) Benguema, with the training of a new intake under the Military Reintegration Programme. This programme was designed to integrate into the new SLA former RUF and CDF combatants who have been through the disarmament and demobilisation process. There was mix of IMATT and SLA instructors, with the latter presenting drill, musketry and first aid training.

Operation SCULPTURE

The Canadian contributed 10 persons to IMATT and these deployed in November 2000 under the name of **Operation SCULPTURE**. The first rotation (Roto 1) of Canadian Forces took place on 1 June 2001 and the new rotation was more widely dispersed around the country than the initial deployment; the Canadian contribution has remained at around 10 or 11 personnel.

Roto 1 took place from 1 June to 6 December 2001. The Canadian Forces address for IMATT in Sierra Leone (**CFPO 5051**) was as follows:

OP Sculpture (IMATT) PO Box 5051, Station Forces Belleville, Ont, Canada K8N 5W6

Continued British Presence - Government Statement: October 2000

Following the hostage episode the British Government reaffirmed its support for the Sierra Leone Government. On 10 October 2000 it announced further military assistance as follows:

- A series of three further training teams would be sent to Sierra Leone to train the Sierra Leone Army. The next team, the fourth to deploy, was to be drawn from **1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire** (1 PWO). It was due to deploy at the end of October 2000.
- A package of equipment support for the Sierra Leone Army.
- The offer to supply officers to fill staff appointments in UNAMSIL Headquarters.
- The readiness to deploy, if required, up to a brigade size strength (approximately 5,000 personnel) rapid reaction capability based in the UK and centred on the JRRF to support UN peacekeeping operations.
- The provision of an operational headquarters to command the UK contingent and provide high level operational advice to the Sierra Leone Army.

The above commitments contributed to an all embracing training and advisory package by the British Government to the Government of Sierra Leone - this commitment went under the overarching name of **Operation SILKMAN**.

Heightened Tensions and Commando Landing: November 2000

ECOWAS brokered a ceasefire agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the rebel RUF, which was signed in the Nigerian capital of Abuja on 11 November 2000. Under the terms of the agreement the RUF were to hand over all weapons and equipment that it had seized and begin an immediate disarmament and demobilisation programme under the control of UNAMSIL. However, there were doubts expressed over the effectiveness of the ceasefire agreement.

Operation SILKMAN

HMS Ocean left the UK in early September 2000 on its second deployment of the year - as part of a Task Group taking part in **Exercise ARGONAUT 00** under the command of **Commander Amphibious Task Group** (COMATG). The Amphibious Task Group (ATG), headed by the assault ship **HMS Fearless**, comprised the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) headed by **HMS Ocean** and a number of support vessels. The exercise consisted of a series of amphibious exercises and goodwill visits in the Eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean and Black Sea regions during September and October. The Embarked Landing Force was **42 Commando RM** with artillery and logistic support from **3 Commando Brigade RM**.

The Defence Secretary announced in Parliament on 30 October that the Task Group, comprising elements of the JRRF, was to be diverted to Sierra Leone for a limited period during November. This was a demonstration of the commitment made to the UN to deploy forces in support of UN peacekeeping operations. It was during a post-exercise visit to Istanbul that **HMS Ocean** received notice that it was to return to Sierra Leone on **Operation SILKMAN**^[12].

The helicopter carrier **HMS Ocean** arrived off Freetown on 12 November 2000. Next day an amphibious force from **42 Commando Group Royal Marines** came ashore on the Aberdeen peninsula, three kilometres west of Freetown, having been launched from the helicopter carrier

HMS Ocean. The landing was supported by Sea King helicopters, whilst Chinook heavy lift helicopters delivered underslung 105mm light artillery guns and other vehicles. Lynx attack helicopters provided air cover.

HMS Fearless	(L-10)	Assault Ship	(550 crew + 22 aviation + 88 RM)	(BFPO 283)
RFA Argus	(A-135)	Aviation Training Ship	(80 crew + 35 RN + 137 aviation)	(BFPO 433)
<u>Amphibious Ready Group</u>				
HMS Ocean	(L-12)	Helicopter Carrier	(265 crew + 180 aviation)	(BFPO 350)
		No 846 Naval Air Squadron	(4 x Sea King HC.4)	
		No 847 Naval Air Squadron	(2 x Lynx Mk.7 and 2 x Gazelle AH.1))	
RFA Brambleleaf	(A-81)	Support Tanker	(56 crew)	(BFPO 437)
RFA Fort Austin	(A-386)	Fleet Replenishment Ship	(114 crew + 36 RNSTS + 45 aviation)	(BFPO 439)
RFA Sir Geraint	(L-3027)	Landing Ship Logistic	(51 crew)	(BFPO 454)

42 Commando Battlegroup (aboard HMS Ocean)	
42 Commando RM	(from 3rd Commando Brigade RM) (550 RM Commando personnel)
79 Battery RA	(with 105mm Light Guns)
detachment Joint Helicopter Support Unit (JHSU)	(7 personnel; based at RAF Odiham, Hampshire)

The **RFA Argus** was re-deployed from helicopter training duties off the Iberian Peninsular to join the ATG. In a House of Commons written answer for 10 November 2000 it was stated that the decision to re-deploy the *Argus* was taken after the flagship *Fearless* experienced a fire in her aft engine room which resulted in its withdrawal from the deployment. The *Argus* had three Sea King helicopters embarked. COMATG continued to lead the deployment embarked on **HMS Ocean**.

With the show of force completed the ATG slipped away from Freetown during the night of 18 November and headed back to the UK.

Operational Force Headquarters: November 2000 - July 2002

Operation SILKMAN (continued)

On 23 November 2000 the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced the deployment of **Headquarters 1st Mechanised Brigade** from Tidworth, Wiltshire to Sierra Leone later that week. The Brigade HQ was due to replace **Joint Force Headquarters (JTFHQ)** as the operational Force headquarters in Sierra Leone in line with the Government announcement made on 10 October.

The Brigade HQ would deploy for a six month period and comprised some 100 staff and support personnel - in fact the deployment lasted until May 2001. It was to command the 550 British service personnel in Sierra Leone as well as providing military advice to the Sierra Leone Government - all under the all-embracing **Operation SILKMAN**. The unit providing the headquarters was **1 Mechanised Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron (215)**. The headquarters whilst in Sierra Leone was known as **HQ British Forces Sierra Leone**. The strength of British Forces in Sierra Leone at that time was as shown below ^[9]: It included the crew of the **RFA Sir Percivale** which was moored semi-permanently alongside at Freetown.

Army	370	(including STTT – 340)
Royal Navy	68	
IMATT	62	
Tri-Service HQ & support	160	
TOTAL	660	

The withdrawal of the STTT in September 2001 reduced the British commitment in Sierra Leone. The gradual reduction of British forces caused the Sierra Leoneans some concern mainly due to their scepticism about their British-trained army. However, the reduction corresponded with the end of the short-term training programme for the SLA, but training continued under the auspices of the longer-term IMATT. During 2001 the British Army assisted the Sierra Leone government in carrying out a review of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces to restructure them under a unified command. The results were approved by the President in January 2002 and led to the merger of the SLA with the small Sierra Leone Air Force and the moribund Sierra Leone Navy. The reconstituted force was known as the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and came into being in April 2002 ^[11].

In a report to the House of Commons on 11 February 2002 the British Government announced that it was to maintain a military presence in Sierra Leone of some 360 personnel over the period of the elections in May 2002. Thereafter the IMATT continued the task of developing the RSLAF. Developing a viable Sierra Leonean security force has been the main focus of the British intervention. Both the RSLAF and UNAMSIL had been greatly strengthened by British personnel and backup. The major British presence had been engaged in training the RSLAF (codenamed **Operation SILKMAN**) through the IMATT, but there were some eighteen British UN military observers and four senior staff with UNAMSIL (codenamed **Operation TURNER**).

Between January and July 2002 the **1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles** (1 RGR) had 147 personnel deployed in Sierra Leone. This detachment provided instructors for the military reintegration programme for the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) as well as a company group that was deployed throughout the country for the protection of Forces working there. July 2002 saw the ending of **Operation SILKMAN**.

Medical Team to Sierra Leone: 2001

In January 2001 a detachment of 33 personnel from **34 Field Hospital RAMC**, based at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, Yorkshire, deployed to Freetown. They were despatched to set up a ten-bed hospital to provide routine treatment for British military personnel stationed in Sierra Leone. The field hospital deployed to provide short-term medical cover whilst the Indian UN hospital departed and the next hospital set up. The 34 Fd Hosp detachment would then be withdrawn and British personnel would continue to make use of the UN hospital.

Naval Survey Mission: 2001

HMS Beagle set sail from Devonport during April 2001 at the start of a survey mission to Sierra Leone - again under the auspices of **Operation SILKMAN**. In addition to the 47 officers and ratings that made up the ship's company, the *Beagle* sailed with a detachment of Royal Marines to help protect the ship and crew. On passage to Sierra Leone the ship visited Tenerife, Banjul and Dakar. Upon arrival off Sierra Leone the *Beagle* used her state-of-the-art technology to survey the largely uncharted waters around Freetown.

HMS Beagle	(H-319)	Survey Ship (Bulldog Class)	(42 crew)	(BFPO 224)
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RAF Regiment in Sierra Leone: 2001

Operation MAIDENLY

On 10 June 2001 the Officer Commanding (OC) II Squadron, RAF Regiment was tasked to conduct an estimate of the defensive requirements in Sierra Leone for a Special Air Operations detachment, deployed at Lungbi airfield, as part of **Operation MAIDENLY**. Subsequently a Flight-sized group was deployed relieving in place an RM detachment. The Flight rapidly established itself, dominating the ground by carrying out both foot and vehicle patrols. This task was supplemented with realistic and timely training, incorporating elements of the Special Air Operations detachment. The deployment culminated in the Flights involvement in **Operation MAIDENLY**, where they secured and subsequently provided security for an Air Land Refuel Point (ALARP) on a dirt strip approximately 160km east of Freetown.

Taken from the RAF Regiment Association website (retrieved 12/9/2012) at:

<http://www.rafregt.org.uk/RAFRegimentToday/RegularRAFRegiment/2SquadronRAFRegt/tabid/80/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Ending of Operation SILKMAN: 2002

Operation SILKMAN

With the security situation in Sierra Leone judged to be stable **Operation SILKMAN** - the overarching operation British Government military assistance in Sierra Leone - ended on 31 July 2002. The Operation concluded following the presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2002, after which UK objectives in assisting in building a sustainable and accountable RSLAF passed to the self-sustaining UK-led IMATT ^[13]. At that time IMATT comprised some 114 personnel, of whom 100 were from the UK. In addition there was the UK contribution to UNAMSIL which at that time comprised the Chief of Staff, six HQ staff officers and 15 military observers. The UK gave a commitment to the Secretary-General of the UN to support the UN peacekeeping mission with an "Over-the-Horizon" (OTHR) force. This was a continuing commitment which was fulfilled with a series of high profile military exercises.

British Forces Visits: March 2003

Operation KEELING ^[13]

As part of the continuing commitment of the UK in supporting the resettlement process in Sierra Leone the UK undertook **Operation KEELING** in Sierra Leone between 21 February and 29 March 2003. The Operation involved the deployment of the UK **Joint Task Force HQ 2** (JTFHQ2) (at that time **Headquarters 19th Mechanised Brigade**) and the **Spearhead Lead Element** (SLE) from **2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles** (2 RGR) together with a maritime component. This consisted of **HMS Iron Duke** (F-234) (a Type 23 frigate on the **Atlantic Patrol Task (North)**) accompanied by **RFA Black Rover** and a troop of Royal Marines for force protection.

The deployment was part of an undertaking the UK gave to Sierra Leone that it would carry out periodic deployments, such as this. The SLE was a company group deployed to Freetown on 21 February 2003 and returned to the UK in mid-March. The deployment was undertaken at a time of unrest in neighbouring Liberia which threatened the stability of Sierra Leone. There had been reports of Liberian combatants crossing over the border into Sierra Leone. 2 RGR at that time was responsible for providing the SLE. Accompanying the Gurkha Company Group were logistic and medical elements as well as the headquarters element which contained a detachment from **30 Signal Regiment**. All told there were some 310 personnel involved in the deployment.

Continuing British Support to Sierra Leone: 2004-05

Operation VOSPER ^[13]

Operation VOSPER was activated on 1 August 2004 and was expected to run through to December 2005. During the lifespan of the Operation there were expected to be a number of convergent threats to the security of Sierra Leone: the activity of the Special Court for Sierra Leone; UNAMSIL draw down and withdrawal and instability in the neighbouring countries of Guinea, Liberia and Côte D'Ivoire. The long term contribution by the UK to the stability in Sierra Leone was through the leading role it played in the IMATT. But in addition there were periodic military deployments to the country to provide significant extra effect to the internal security of the country and the UK also conducted a number of routine deployments to the area, especially maritime. The aim of the Operation was to enhance the effect of these deployments through a more coherent command structure and to consider occasional additional deployments at times of greatest risk to the stability of the country.

Ongoing UN mission - United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone: 2005

As previously recorded UNAMSIL successfully completed its mandate in December 2005. Following which it was succeeded by a new mission: the **United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone** (UNIOSIL) which was established by UN Security Council Resolution 1620 approved on 31 August 2005 to help consolidate peace in the country. UNIOSIL took over from UNAMSIL for an initial period of twelve months from 1 January 2006.

British Forces Deployment: October-November 2006

Operation VELA ^[14, 15 & 16]

Operation VELA was the largest deployment of amphibious vehicles by the UK since 2001 and involved some 3,000 personnel, numerous RN and RFA ships, as well as RM Commandos and RN helicopters. The Operation was aimed at demonstrating the ability of the UK to conduct coastal and beach operations in the equatorial and jungle environments of West Africa. The deployment was also designed to demonstrate the UK's ability to conduct joint operations including over the horizon capability, its contribution to the global fight against terrorism as well as navy's maritime security operations activity.

The operation consisted of two phases. The first was **Exercise GREY CORMORANT 06** which began on 4 September 2006 off the South West coast of England. This exercise saw RM commandos conducting boat and air training, helicopter and boat raids as well as an amphibious commando assault on the Devon coast. This phase lasted until 22 September. The second phase of the Operation, called **Exercise GREEN EAGLE 06**, involved the Task Group deploying to Sierra Leone from 11 October to 5 November 2006. This phase involved jungle training, activity to support IMATT, civil activity and support to the RSLAF. The civil activity included a number of community reconstruction projects, aimed at improving the lives of people in and around Freetown. Some soldiers and marines arrived from Britain in early September but the bulk of the forces - including the main part of the naval task group - arrived in late September. **HMS Albion** arrived off Freetown on 13 October. After their arrival the marines and their equipment moved to areas such as Benguema Camp, Hastings Camp, Guma Dam and John Obey to begin training. The **Commander Amphibious Task Group** (COMATG) was Commodore Phil Jones ADC RN. The **Commander Land Forces** (CLF) was Colonel David Hook RM. The Task Group included:

Amphibious Task Group 333.01

HMS Albion	(L-14)	Assault Ship "Albion" Class	(BFPO 204)
HMS Ocean	(L-12)	Helicopter Carrier (265 crew + 180 aviation)	(BFPO 350)
HMS Southampton	(D-90)	Destroyer Type 41	(BFPO 389)
HMS Argyll	(F-231)	Frigate Type 23	(BFPO 210)
RFA Wave Knight	(A-389)	Large Fleet Tanker	(BFPO 432)
RFA Mounts Bay	(L-3008)	Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary)	(BFPO 448)
RFA Sir Bedivere	(L-3004)	Landing Ship Logistic	(BFPO 452)
RFA Fort Austin	(A-386)	Fleet Replenishment Ship	(BFPO 439)
HMS Enterprise	(H-88)	Survey Ship	(BFPO 276)
RFA Diligence	(A-132)	Forward Repair Ship	(BFPO 438)
RFA Oakleaf	(A-111)	Fleet Support Tanker	(BFPO 445)
Mine Counter Measure Squadron 1 (based at HMNB Clyde Faslane in Scotland) a Fleet submarine			

Land Force Component - 40 Commando Group RM

Fleet Lead Commando Group comprising:

40 Commando RM

Elements of 59 Independent Commando Squadron RE (based at Chivenor in North Devon)

8 Battery, 29 Commando Regiment RA

539 Assault Squadron RM

Also involved were elements of:

Fleet Diving Unit 2 (part of the **Fleet Diving Group** based in Portsmouth)

'B' Flight, 849 Naval Air Squadron (based at RNAS Culdrose, Cornwall)

two detachments, **17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC**

Postal support to Exercise GREEN EAGLE ^[18]

Two personnel (a Warrant Officer Class II and a Staff Sergeant) from 88 Postal & Courier Regiment RLC(V) were attached as mail support for the above exercise. They worked closely with the Naval Logistics Reserve who supported some twelve Royal Navy vessels which regularly came and went in harbour. Close co-ordination was essential to ensure that ships received their mail prior to departure, otherwise it was a major logistical task to ensure that the mail caught up with the ship - not to mention very upset sailors !

The Forces Post Office was to be set up close to the existing FPO in Freetown, however, that turned out to be 3-5 hours drive away by mud track. Mail came in through Lungi Airport and there had to be rapid sorting in the rear of a 4 x 4 truck, where it was bagged off and labelled or it would not make the scheduled daily helicopter lifts. The size of the helicopter was an issue in that only parts of the incoming despatch could be loaded. Alternatively, if the helicopter did not return to its own ship, this caused a bit of a nightmare. A main concern was handing mail to the helicopter pilots on signature. The confirmation of receipt could take a week to get back to the two postal staff, which lead to stress in completing records.

British Forces Post Offices:

- For **Operation BASILICA** a BFPO operated which used the address **BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE 622** (BFPO 622) with datestamps as follows:
FORCES POST OFFICE 142
- For **Operation PALLISER** a BFPO operated which used the address **BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE 619** (BFPO 619) with datestamps as follows:
FORCES POST OFFICE 142
- The address used by **RFA Sir Percivale** whilst berthed in Sierra Leone was its permanent BFPO address **BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE 455** (BFPO 455).
- The **Military Advisory and Training Team** (MATT) at Freetown used the address **BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE 747** (BFPO 747).

Sierra Leone Ebola crisis: 2014-15

Operation GRITROCK

Background Summary

The 2014 Ebola epidemic became the largest in history, affecting a number of countries in West Africa, namely Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone with a smaller outbreak in Nigeria. The outbreak started in Guinea in March 2014 and quickly spread to the other West African states to become the deadliest occurrence of the disease since its discovery in 1976. In August, the United Nations health agency - the World Health Organisation (WHO) - declared an "international public health emergency" and stated that a co-ordinated response was essential to halt the spread of the virus. Up to 4 November 2014 a total of 4,960 people had been reported as having died from the disease whilst the total number of reported cases was in excess of 13,000. The WHO declared the outbreaks in Nigeria and Senegal officially over, as there had been no new cases reported since 5 September 2014. The medical charity in the region, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), employed thousands of staff across West Africa battling the disease.

On 8 October 2014, following a meeting of COBRA, chaired by the Prime Minister, to discuss the Ebola outbreak and its plans to protect the UK against the virus and combat the disease in West Africa, the Government announced that, amongst other measures, the UK would send up to 750 military personnel to Sierra Leone to help tackle and contain the outbreak. This deployment went under the name of **Operation GRITROCK**. It was stated that these personnel would be deployed to help with the establishment of Ebola Treatment Centres and an Ebola Training Academy and that this would include:

- the deployment of **RFA Argus** to take and support 3 x Merlin helicopters, aircrew and engineers in the region to provide crucial transport support to medical teams and aid experts. This would involve around 250 personnel;
- over 200 military staff to be deployed to run and staff the WHO-led Ebola training facility that will assist in the training of healthcare workers, logisticians and hygiene specialists who are needed to staff treatment units;
- 300 military personnel making up the existing UK taskforce plans focussed on delivering support to the Sierra Leone government.

As a result the Ministry of Defence (MOD) worked in support of the Department for International Development (DfID) who led the UK response to the crisis in Sierra Leone through a **Joint Inter Agency Task Force**. In addition the United Nations set up the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) in Ghana.

Deployment of RFA Argus

The principal role of **RFA Argus** (A-135) (**BFPO 433**) was to serve as a Primary Casualty Receiving Ship (PCRS). The ship was fully equipped with a 100-bed medical complex on board. RFA Argus sailed from Falmouth on the morning of 17 October 2014 with Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel onboard, along with 3 x Merlin Mk2 helicopters, aircrew and engineers from **820 Naval Air Squadron**, based at RNAS Culdrose, in Cornwall. The vessel also had two landing craft vehicles and 3 rigid hull inflatable boats, from **539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines**, to be used for moving equipment and personnel inland along Sierra Leone's river network. The deployment was expected to last up to six months. On its way to Sierra Leone the ship arrived at Gibraltar on 21 October to load 33 UK-funded Toyota vehicles, supplied by Toyota Gibraltar Stockholdings. On 30 October the ship docked in Sierra Leone and began off-loading DfID supplies and the 32 off-road vehicles.

Deployment of other military personnel in Sierra Leone

As part of the Task Force deployment around 40 military personnel were sent to Sierra Leone, mostly engineers, logisticians and medical planners, to get things ready for the initial medical deployment. 91 medical personnel (including nurses, doctors and infectious disease consultants) from **22 Field Hospital RAMC** based at Normandy Barracks in Aldershot (part of 2

Medical Brigade) deployed to Sierra Leone on 16 October 2014 to run a treatment centre at Kerry Town near the capital Freetown to treat other medics who had caught the disease. The Kerry Town complex included an 80 bed treatment centre managed by Save the Children and a 12 bed centre staffed by British Army medics specifically for health care workers and international staff responding to the Ebola crisis and opened on 5 November 2014. The 12 bed facility was expected to expand to 20 beds in the New Year. Due to join 22 Field Hospital were medical personnel from the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. Around 150 additional Army personnel left RAF Brize Norton on the morning of 21 October 2014 and arrived in Freetown later that day. They were mostly RAMC medical staff from Catterick-based **35 Company, 5 Armoured Medical Regiment RAMC** who deployed to help train more than 800 local healthcare workers at the Ebola Training Academy. In addition elements from the **Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment** and **1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland** also deployed at the same time.

In addition RAF personnel from **No 1 Air Mobility Wing** (1 AMW) were based at Accra in Ghana to support the movement of equipment and personnel and in Sierra Leone as part of the joint command team which was supporting the international aid effort through UNMEER.

Head of the British Joint Inter Agency Task Force was a civil servant from DfID, whilst the Deputy Head was a military person, Brigadier Steven McMahon CBE.

BFPO Number

The British Forces Post Office Locations listing (updated 27 October 2014) showed that **BFPO 609** (Postcode BF1 6AN) had been allocated to **Operation GRITROCK** presumably at Kerry Town, Sierra Leone - the previous listing (updated 7 October 2014) still showed it as being allocated for **Operation NEWCOMBE** in Mali.

Addendum

During final proof-reading a further operation came to light which should be added at the bottom of page 4, below Operation NOBLE OBELISK

Operation TILLER ^[21]

British Naval presence during the period 2 June 1997 to 10 June 1997 was provided under **Operation TILLER** by **RFA Argus** (A-135) (Auxiliary Support Ship) (**BFPO 433**) as the possibility existed that British citizens would have to be evacuated due to ongoing fighting in the country.

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APPENDIX

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IN RESPECT OF SIERRA LEONE

Resolution	Date	Summary
1132 (1997)	8 Oct 1997	<p>Imposed travel restrictions on specific members of the military junta/ rebels and their families. Also imposed restrictions on the sale or supply to Sierra Leone of petroleum and petroleum products and arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts. Authorised ECOWAS, cooperating with the democratically-elected Government of Sierra Leone, to ensure strict implementation of the provisions of this resolution.</p> <p>All sanctions were reviewed and updated periodically by the Sierra Leone Sanctions Committee at the UN.</p>
1156 (1998)	16 Mar 1998	<p>Welcomed the return to Sierra Leone of its democratically elected President on 10 March 1998.</p> <p>Decided to terminate, with immediate effect, the prohibitions on the sale or supply to Sierra Leone of petroleum and petroleum products referred to in resolution 1132(1997).</p>
1162 (1998)	17 Apr 1998	<p>Authorised the deployment, with immediate effect, of up to ten UN military liaison and security advisory personnel to Sierra Leone for a period of up to 90 days, to work under the authority of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to co-ordinate closely with the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and ECOMOG, to report on the military situation in the country, to ascertain the state of and to assist in the finalization of planning by ECOMOG for future tasks, such as the identification of the former combatant elements to be disarmed and the design of a disarmament plan.</p>
1171 (1998)	5 Jun 1998	<p>Decided to terminate the restrictions imposed by Resolution 1132 (1997) and imposed restrictions on the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to Sierra Leone, other than to the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) through named points of entry and to the UN and ECOMOG.</p>

1181 (1998)	13 Jul 1998	<p>Established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for an initial period of six months until 13 January 1999, and further decided that it shall include up to 70 military observers as well as a small medical unit, with necessary equipment and civilian support staff. The mandate for UNOMSIL was:</p> <p>To monitor the military and security situation in the country as a whole, as security conditions permit, and to provide the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with regular information thereon in particular with a view to determining when conditions are sufficiently secure to allow subsequent deployments of military observers beyond the first phase;</p> <p>To monitor the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants concentrated in secure areas of the country, including monitoring of the role of ECOMOG in the provision of security and in the collection and destruction of arms in those secure areas;</p> <p>To assist in monitoring respect for international humanitarian law, including at disarmament and demobilization sites, where security conditions permit;</p> <p>To monitor the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), as security conditions permit.</p> <p>Further decided that elements of UNOMSIL shall be deployed with approximately 40 military observers deployed in the first phase to ECOMOG-secured areas, and that subsequent deployments should take place as soon as security conditions permit.</p> <p>Further decided that UNOMSIL would be led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, who was designated Special Representative for Sierra Leone and that UNOMSIL would subsume the office of the Special Envoy and its civilian staff.</p>
1220 (1999)	12 Jan 1999	Extended the mandate of UNOMSIL until 13 March 1999.
1231 (1999)	11 Mar 1999	Extended the mandate of UNOMSIL until 13 June 1999.
1245 (1999)	11 Jun 1999	Extended the mandate of UNOMSIL until 13 December 1999.
1260 (1999)	20 Aug 1999	Authorised the provisional expansion of UNOMSIL to 210 military observers along with necessary equipment and administrative and medical support. Decided that these additional military observers would be deployed as security conditions permit and that they should operate for the time being under security provided by ECOMOG.
1270 (1999)	22 Oct 1999	<p>Established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with immediate effect for an initial period of six months. The mandate for UNAMSIL was:</p> <p>To co-operate with the Government of Sierra Leone and the other parties to the Peace Agreement in the implementation of the Agreement;</p> <p>To assist the Government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan;</p> <p>To that end, to establish a presence at key locations throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, including at disarmament/reception centres and demobilization centres;</p>

1270 (1999) continued	22 Oct 1999	<p>To ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;</p> <p>To monitor adherence to the ceasefire in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of 18 May 1999 through the structures provided for therein;</p> <p>To encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and support their functioning;</p> <p>To facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance;</p> <p>To support the operations of United Nations civilian officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his staff, human rights officers and civil affairs officers;</p> <p>To provide support, as requested, to the elections, which are to be held in accordance with the present constitution of Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Decides that the military component of UNAMSIL would comprise a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers.</p> <p>Further decided that UNAMSIL would take over the substantive civilian and military components and functions of UNOMSIL as well as its assets, and to that end decided that the mandate of UNOMSIL shall terminate immediately on the establishment of UNAMSIL.</p>
1289 (2000)	7 Feb 2000	<p>Decided to expand the military component of UNAMSIL to a maximum of 11,100 military personnel, including the 260 military observers already deployed.</p> <p>Revised the mandate of UNAMSIL to include the following additional tasks:</p> <p>To provide security at key locations and Government buildings, in particular in Freetown, important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport;</p> <p>To facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares;</p> <p>To provide security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;</p> <p>To co-ordinate with and assist, in common areas of deployment, the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities;</p> <p>To guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction.</p> <p>Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL, as revised, for a period of six months from the date of adoption of this resolution.</p>
1299 (2000)	18 May 2000	<p>Decided to expand the military component of UNAMSIL to a maximum of 13,000 military personnel, including the 260 military observers already deployed.</p> <p>Allowed an exemption to the arms embargo for UN member states cooperating with UNAMSIL and the GOSL.</p>

1306 (2000)	5 Jul 2000	Prohibited member states from the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to their territory, except for rough diamonds controlled by the GOSL through the Certificate of Origin regime which were exempt from such measures. These measures were established for an initial period of 18 Months.
1313 (2000)	4 Aug 2000	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 8 September 2000. In addition to counter the threat to UNAMSIL and the security of Sierra Leone the structure, capability, resources and mandate of UNAMSIL required strengthening.
1315 (2000)	14 Aug 2000	Requested the Secretary-General to negotiate an agreement with the GOSL to create an independent Special Court. Recommended that the jurisdiction of the Special Court should include notably crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, as well as crimes under relevant Sierra Leonean law committed within the territory of Sierra Leone. On 16 January 2002 the GOSL and the UN concluded an Agreement to establish the Special Court. The Statute of the Court entered into force the same day. The state of war in Sierra Leone was formally declared at an end two days later. The first permanent officials of the Court arrived in Freetown in July 2002.
1317 (2000)	5 Sep 2000	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 20 September 2000.
1321 (2000)	20 Sep 2000	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 31 December 2000.
1334 (2000)	22 Dec 2000	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 31 March 2001.
1346 (2001)	30 Mar 2001	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months from the date of the adoption of this resolution. Further decided to increase the military component of UNAMSIL to a strength of 17,500 military personnel, including the 260 military observers already deployed.
1370 (2001)	18 Sep 2001	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months from 30 September 2001.
1385 (2001)	19 Dec 2001	Decided that the measures imposed by Resolution 1306 (2000) were to remain in force for a new period of 11 months from 5 January 2002 except for rough diamonds controlled by the GOSL under the Certificate of Origin regime continued to be exempt from these measures.
1389 (2002)	16 Jan 2002	In order to facilitate the smooth holding of elections decided that UNAMSIL shall undertake election-related tasks within its existing mandate, capabilities and areas of deployment and in the light of conditions on the ground. In addition authorised an increase in the UN civilian police to perform the following tasks: To advise and support the Sierra Leone Police in carrying out their election-related responsibilities; To assist the Sierra Leone Police to devise and implement an electoral training programme for their personnel, focused mainly on establishing security for public events, human rights and police conduct.

1400 (2002)	28 Mar 2002	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months from 30 March 2002.
1436 (2002)	24 Sep 2002	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months from 30 September 2002.
1446 (2002)	4 Dec 2002	<p>Welcomed the latest report of the GOSL entitled the Fourth Review of the Certificate of Origin Scheme of 25 July 2002, including its assessment that the Scheme is helping to curb the illicit trade in diamonds from Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Decided that the measures imposed by Resolution 1306 (2000) were to remain in force for a new period of six months from 5 December 2002 except for rough diamonds controlled by the GOSL under the Certificate of Origin regime continued to be exempt from these measures.</p>
1470 (2003)	28 Mar 2003	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months from 30 March 2003. Welcomed the launch of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and progress made in its activities.
1492 (2003)	18 Jul 2003	Approved the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the drawdown of UNAMSIL should proceed according to the "modified status quo" option towards withdrawal by December 2004 and to monitor the benchmarks for drawdown.
1503 (2003)	28 Aug 2003	Decided that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) could effectively meet their respective responsibilities if each had its own Prosecutor. Amended the Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda to reflect this and requested the Secretary-General to nominate a person to be the Prosecutor of the ICTR. At the same time welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to submit to the Security Council the name of Mrs Carla Del Ponte as nominee for Prosecutor for the ICTY.
1534 (2004)	26 Mar 2004	Emphasised the importance of fully implementing the Completion Strategies, as set out in resolution 1503 (2003), that called on the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to take all possible measures to complete investigations by the end of 2004, to complete all trial activities at first instance by the end of 2008 and to complete all work in 2010, and urges each Tribunal to plan and act accordingly. Called on the ICTY and ICTR Prosecutors to review their case loads with a view to determining which cases should be proceeded with and which should be transferred to competent national jurisdictions.
1537 (2004)	30 Mar 2004	<p>Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a period of six months until 30 September 2004.</p> <p>Noted the Secretary-General's analysis of the need for a significantly-reduced UN peacekeeping presence to remain in Sierra Leone into 2005.</p> <p>Decided that a residual UNAMSIL presence will remain in Sierra Leone for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, reduced from the December 2004 level of 5,000 troops by 28 February 2005 to a new ceiling of 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 UN civilian police personnel.</p>

1562 (2004)	17 Sep 2004	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL until 30 June 2005.
		Further decided that the tasks of the residual UNAMSIL presence, which shall remain in Sierra Leone for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, as set out in Resolution 1537 (2004), shall be the following:
		<i>Military and civilian police tasks</i>
		To monitor, in conjunction with district and provincial security committees, the overall security situation, to support the Sierra Leone armed forces and police in patrolling the border and diamond-mining areas, including through joint planning and joint operations where appropriate, and to monitor the growing capacity of the Sierra Leone security sector;
		To support the Sierra Leone Police in maintaining internal security, including security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone while UNAMSIL remains deployed in Sierra Leone;
		To assist the Sierra Leone Police with its programme of recruitment, training and mentoring designed to strengthen further the capacity and resources of the Police;
		To protect UN personnel, installations and equipment and ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel, within its capabilities and its areas of deployment;
		<i>Civilian tasks</i>
		To monitor the repatriation, reception, resettlement and reintegration of Sierra Leonean ex-combatants from abroad;
		To monitor, investigate, report and promote the observance of human rights;
		To disseminate information on the mission's mandate and purpose and publicize the Government's primary responsibility for national security, including through UN radio;
		To monitor progress towards consolidation of State authority throughout the country.
1610 (2005)	30 Jun 2005	Extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for a final period of six months until 31 December 2005.
1620 (2005)	31 Aug 2005	Requested the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) for an initial period of 12 months beginning on 1 January 2006.

West Africa Study Circle

A Specialised Philatelic Society

<http://www.wasc.org.uk>

The West Africa Study Circle, formed in 1950, is the international specialist society for the study of stamps, postal stationery and postal history of the geographical area formerly known as British West Africa. It originated from small specialist groups that already existed, and has undergone several expansions of scope.

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Cameroons
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St Helena
Sierra Leone
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British Postal Agencies on Madeira
Tenerife
St Vincent (Cape Verde Islands) and
Fernando Po.

Study dates from the earliest times of British influence to the present day and includes military campaigns, maritime and airmail services.

Study dates from the earliest times of British influence to the present day and includes military campaigns, maritime and airmail services.

Membership numbers around 250 and includes specialists living in the United Kingdom, North America, Africa, Europe, the Far East and Australia.

Members each year receive three issues of the journal, *Cameo*, which has been awarded gold medals in the literature class at UK and US International Exhibitions. Meetings are held twice a year in London, once a year in Salisbury, and elsewhere including occasional meetings in the USA. Postal auction and library services are offered.

The membership secretary is:

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e-mail;hoss-28@virginmedia.com

