

ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES (RSLAF)

1.1 Brief History of the RSLAF

The origin of the RSLAF could be traced as far back as the late 19th century when in 1897, the British colonial masters nurtured the idea of raising a fighting force to contain French colonial expansion in territories bordering on Northern Nigeria and to garrison the entire West African colonies of Nigeria, Ghana (then The Gold Coast), Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The whole force was raised in 1899 and amalgamated under a unified command designated as West African Field Force, which was later re-named West Africa Frontier Force (WAFF) in 1900. This force first saw real action during World War One (WW 1) from 1914-1918, when it fought with extreme bravery alongside British troops in the Cameroons and East Africa against German occupation; where they won several battle honors.¹ In recognition of their great effort, the force received royal patronage in 1928 and it was further re-named Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF).

The experience gained during WW 1 in difficult terrain against stubborn resistance, made the RWAFF a valuable reinforcement to the British Empire forces in WW 2 from 1939-1945; as the force served as cadre for the 81st and 82nd (West African) Division, with their administration upgraded from colonial office to war office. By the end of WW 2, the strength of Sierra Leonean troops in the RWAFF was a Regiment (battalion plus), with a company of Gambian troops attached to it. In 1957, the British colony of 'The Gold Coast' obtained independence as Ghana and the Gold Coast Regiment was withdrawn from the RWAFF to form the 'Ghana Regiment of Infantry' in the newly independent nation. The RWAFF was finally disbanded in 1960 as the British colonies of Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia moved towards independence. The former RWAFF units formed the basis of the new national armies of their respective states.²

¹ Georges EH (1930), *The Great War in West Africa*, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., London, Naval & Military Press, Uckfield, 2004.

² Haywood A & Clarke FAS (1964), *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, Aldershot: Gale & Palden.

At independence in 1961, the Sierra Leone Regiment was named Royal Sierra Leone Military Force and later re-named Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF) in 1971 when the country became a Republic State. However, a lot of significant events took place within this decade-long post-independence period involving the new Army. Post-independence politics polarized the country between two divides: the dominant ethnic group in the north (Temne) rallied around all other northern tribes and formed the All People's Congress Party (APC) which strongly challenged the then incumbent south-eastern party; the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) spear-headed by their own dominant tribe (Mende), in general elections in 1967 and won. The Head of the Army (Brigadier David Lansana) who hailed from the Mende Tribe staged a coup d'état on 21 March 1967, the very day the Prime Minister (PM) Siaka Stevens was sworn into office; to prevent the north from assuming power. He named his group the National Interim Council (NIC). Two days later, another group of senior officers comprising westerners and northerners headed by Colonel AT Juxon-Smith, who named themselves the National Reformation Council (NRC), staged a counter-coup and suspended the constitution. They ruled the country for a whole year whilst the beleaguered PM and his government sought refuge in neighboring Republic of Guinea and were training dissidents for a come-back.³

The military junta started indulging themselves in corrupt practices aimed at enriching themselves and cared less about the Army. This triggered resentment among the lower ranks in the Army who organized a mutiny en-masse and arrested all senior officers both serving and in government; thus overthrowing the junta in April 1968. They called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM) and were led by a retired senior officer Brigadier John Bangura, who at independence was the most senior northerner in the Army; but had been retired and offered a diplomatic job by the then south-eastern government, as he was regarded as a potential threat. The ACRM restored the democratic constitution and invited the PM from exile to assume his rightful office. The PM reinstated Brigadier Bangura, leader of the ACRM, into the Army and appointed him Commander. He (the PM) then made a lot of effort to develop the country and reunite the people, but was swayed into dictatorship by few other coup scares until he lost popularity. The reinstated Army Commander, who was a stunt democrat, lost confidence in

³ Wikipedia: History of Sierra Leone (updated 2013).

the PM and started opposing some of his undemocratic decisions. Mindful of the entire Army's devotion to this commander and the potential danger he posed, a conspiracy scam was set-up against him leading to his arrest, trial and execution in March 1970. Exactly one year after this, a group of soldiers loyal to the executed commander conducted a failed mutiny leading to the arrest and detention of several of them including Corporal Foday Sankoh, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group in the 10 year gruesome insurgency in Sierra Leone.⁴

On attaining a republican status in April 1971, Sierra Leone adopted a new republican constitution and Premier Stevens was sworn in as the first President. During the years that followed, Stevens did everything humanly possible to perpetuate himself in power: he invited Guinean troops for personal protection, transformed the country into one party rule, created a para-military force⁵ as presidential guards and heavily stuffed the Army with his party loyalists. As a result, the Army became heavily politicized and poorly equipped for fear of subversion; the presidential guards were even more equipped than the Army. The RSLMF remained a single-arm organization until 1979 when a small Navy was established. Upon retiring from presidency in November 1985, Stevens handed over power to the then Army Commander Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh whose loyalty to him had been clearly unquestionable; side-stepping his Vice President (Sorie Ibrahim Koroma) in the guise of ill-health. The newly transformed President however later proved politically weak as he basically upheld his predecessor's autocratic leadership style. The country's economy continued to dwindle whilst less attention was paid to improving the Army until the rebel war struck in 1991.⁶

Amidst poor logistics supply and maintenance of troops at the warfront, great losses were suffered in the hands of the well determined rebel forces. This brought about disgruntlement amongst junior officers and lower ranks that were mainly facing the bullets whilst senior officers remain at the rear purporting to be battle planners. This situation gave rise to a coup d'état by these junior ranks in April 1992 headed by Captain Valentine

⁴ Gberie Lansana (2005), *A Dirty War in West Africa: RUF & the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (Publishers: C Hurst & Co).pp.26-27.

⁵ Para-military Force was named Internal Security Unit (ISU) and later Special Security Division (SSD).

⁶ Ibid.

Strasser; sending President Momoh and his government into exile in neighboring Guinea. The junta which was named the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) took power with the promise of saving the sinking economy and executing the war to a speedy conclusion; but however also ended up failing the nation woefully. During their 4 years tenure of office from 1992 to 1996, they had a change of leadership in a palace coup, which brought in Brigadier Julius Maada Bio as Head of State, and they perpetrated the worst corrupt practices aimed at self-aggrandizement. They transformed the Army into a tri-service institution with a Defense Headquarters and re-named it Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone (AFRSL). However, like their predecessors, they also left the Army with series of challenges.

In 1996, the new democratically elected SLPP government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabba on assuming office saw no dichotomy between the NPRC junta and the AFRSL. The AFRSL suddenly became a punch-bag to unleash all grievances borne against the NPRC: resources were drastically cut down, mass retirements were made without due consideration to the pittance given as benefits, soldiers were removed from presidential guards for no reason, and a Civil Defense Force (CDF) was raised parallel and hostile to the AFRSL and competing for the same defense resources. The then Deputy Defense Minister Chief Sam Hinga-Norman, whose legitimate job was to look after the military became head of the CDF and served as devil's advocate for the AFRSL; as he shifted focus on the CDF who started attacking and killing soldiers in cold blood. This status quo continued for a whole year unabated until the suffering lower ranks of the military took the law into their own hands and organized a mutiny in May 1997 which eventually sent the government into exile in Guinea once again. The mutineers named themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), comprising mainly of soldiers from the rank of sergeant and below. They however broke into the country's maximum security prison and released all prisoners including Major Johnny Paul Koroma who was detained by the government for an initial alleged coup plot and who they eventually appointed as their leader. Convincing themselves that this might easily end the war, the junta invited the RUF rebels for a power-sharing arrangement which could not materialize.

Despite series of negotiations with the international community, the AFRC junta was vehemently refused recognition and they were never allowed to consolidate power

until they were finally ousted by an ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention force in February 1998. Consequently, the government of Tejan Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998. Several arrests of allegedly culpable military personnel and civilians were made, and trials were conducted both at the civil courts and military courts martial. Unlike the civil courts which took very long time and could not conclude trials, the courts martial concluded its trials culminating into the execution by firing squad of 24 military personnel comprising 22 officers (including the Chief of Defense Staff Brigadier Hassan Conteh and the Chief of Army Staff Colonel Max Kanga) and only 2 members of the coup plotters (Staff Sergeant Zagalo Sankoh and Corporal Tamba Gborie). The reinstated government also strongly considered an option to disband the Army and transform the CDF into a Territorial Defense Force (TDF) as an alternative.⁷ Whilst this issue provoked debate amongst scholars and elites of society, the AFRC/RUF elements that fled the capital Freetown in the face of the ECOMOG intervention made a come-back in January 1999 and advanced as far as the maximum security prisons freeing all military and civilian inmates who were awaiting trials. This incident became a saving grace for the country, as the government lost total confidence in the ECOMOG troops. Realizing how vulnerable the city and the populace might continue to be despite the presence of these ECOMOG troops, the government saw the need to adopt a more reconciliatory stance instead of their initial high-handed stream of reprisals against suspected junta collaborators. They declared general amnesty for everyone, discontinued all trials and eventually abandoned the unwieldy idea of disbanding the Army.

In the same vein, an official request was made to the British Government to help with re-training and reconstituting a New Army. A British Short Term Training Team (BSTTT) was put together as part of an International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) sent to Sierra Leone and re-training commenced in 2000. By 2002, 13 battalions had been re-coup and deployed nation-wide. The re-training program also included ex-combatants from the RUF and CDF who were qualified and interested to join the military through the Military Reintegration Program (MRP). The Ministry of Defense and the military HQs were also re-organized, and the AFRSL was re-named the Republic of Sierra

⁷ Pham John-Peter (2005), *Child Soldiers, Adult Interests: The Global Dimensions of the Sierra Leonean Tragedy* (Publishers: Nova), pp.33-35.

Leone Armed Force (RSLAF).⁸ The re-training program could not have come at a better time, as the recruiting and training process throughout the conflict period were extremely hasty and abysmally flawed. Criminals, school drop-outs and drug-addicts infiltrated the ranks of the RSLAF. Before the war in 1991, the strength of the RSLAF was only 3,500 with 2 poorly equipped battalions. By 1992, the number had swollen up to 6,500 and during the 4-year NPRC regime, it rose to 14,000. Subsequently, as a result of the MRP, the strength further increased to 17,000 by the end of the war in 2002. This was absolutely a huge figure that the government, just coming out of war, obviously could not afford to sustain. The British Government again intervened with a redundancy program to down-size or right-size the RSLAF. The strength was initially reduced to 10,500 by 2006 and finally to 8,500 by 2010 which was adopted as the final ceiling.

1.2 Structure and Organization of the RSLAF

The current structure of the RSLAF (Figure 1) is modeled on the British Army, like all other militaries of former British colonies. It has broadly evolved from post-independence period, undergoing series of reviews on to its present form. It was initially just an Army organization comprising 2 battalions; a small Navy was only established in 1979 as a maritime wing of the Army.⁹ The status quo remained like this until 1995 when the NPRC junta, though an unconstitutional government, paid homage to the constitution by establishing a tri-service organization. They created a Defense Headquarter (DHQ) with all its staffing; establishing the Army, Navy and a new Air Wing as separate services, though lacking the requisite strength and equipment.

This structure was maintained until 2003 when IMATT introduced a totally new organization (unique in the continent and modeled on the UK system) as part of the country's post-war security sector reform (SSR) program.¹⁰ They created a joint military/civilian Ministry of Defense (MoD), subsuming the DHQ and adopted an Army organization which was split into 2 separate and parallel commands namely: Joint Force Command (JFC) and Joint Support Command (JSC). They were both subordinated to the

⁸ Albrecht Peter & Jackson Paul, Security Sector Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007, (First Published: February 2009), p.44.

⁹ Partners: Sierra Leone Armed Force.

¹⁰ Armed Force (Sierra Leone): Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, June 2008.

MoD and commanded by British senior officers to steer initial development and help build capacity.¹¹ The JFC was responsible for operations and plans, and had all combat and combat support arms under command; whilst the JSC was in charge of personnel, training and logistics, and had all related units under command. This new structure saw the demise of the tri-service arrangement as the Navy and Air Wing were placed under the JFC. Eventhough this was contrary to Section 165(1)¹² of the national constitution of Sierra Leone, it received parliamentary approval. The design of this twin-force structure was aimed at reducing the chances of military coups by introducing a division of command responsibility based on the premise that it would be much more difficult for a single commander to exert control over operational troops and support elements (ammunition and fuel). This structure could not stand the test of time as it was considered unworkable and difficult to understand.

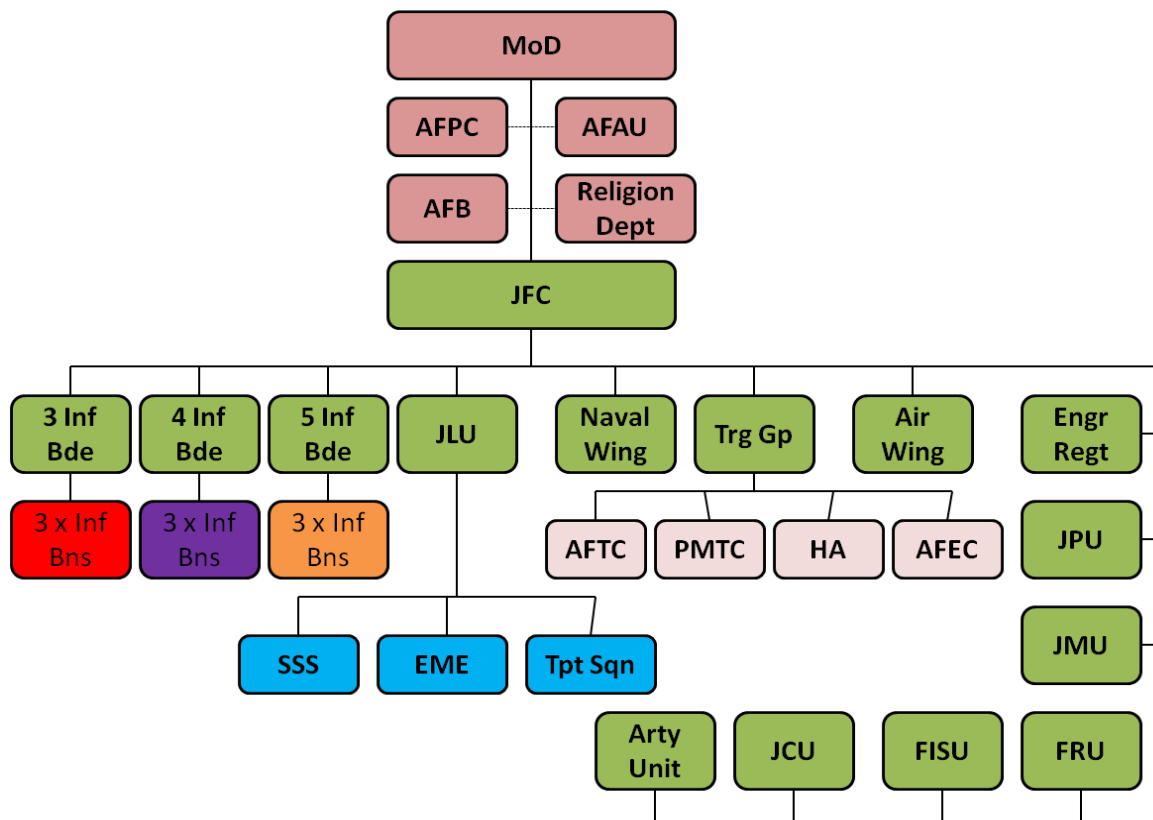


Figure 1: Current Organizational Structure of the RSLAF.

¹¹ Albrecht Peter & Jackson Paul, Op. Cit, p.97.

¹² Section 165(1) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone states: “There shall be the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone which shall consist of the Army, Navy & Air Force and such other branches for which provision is made by Parliament.”

Therefore, a Command Structure Review Committee was constituted in 2004 which suggested this new structure (Figure 1) disbanding the JSC and subsuming it into the JFC. The structure is hierarchical and comprises the MoD at the top (strategic level), which consequently also serves as DHQ. Under the direct supervision of MoD staff are 4 minor units: the Armed Force Personnel Centre (AFPC) which is responsible for pay and records, the Armed Force Agricultural Unit (AFAU), the Armed Force Band (AFB) and the Religion Department which handles all religious affairs. Next on the command chain and representing the operational level is the JFC, which HQ virtually represents both Army and Divisional HQs. It has 3 infantry brigades under command, together with all training institutions, support units and force troops. A small Maritime and Air Wings are also under direct command of the JFC HQ. The brigades have three (3) infantry battalions each under command, and they are organized for battle (ORBAT) based on the motorized infantry concept; as the mechanized concept yet remains unaffordable. The training institutions (Armed Force Training Centre – AFTC, Peace Mission Training Centre – PMTC, Horton Academy – HA and Armed Force Education Centre – AFEC) are grouped under a Training Group Command. The logistics units (Supply Services Squadron – SSS, Electrical & Mechanical Engineering – EME and Transport Squadron – Tpt Sqn) are also grouped under the Joint Logistics Unit (JLU) command. The Engineer Regiment (Engr Regt), Joint Provost Unit (JPU), Joint Medical Unit (JMU) and combat support units known as ‘Force Troops’ (Force Reconnaissance Unit – FRU, Force Intelligence & Security Unit – FISU, Joint Communications Unit – JCU and Artillery Unit – Arty Unit) are all under direct command relationship to HQ JFC.

The weapons which have been in use in the RSLAF include: the British 7.62mm general purpose machine gun (GPMG), 81mm mortars and 7.62mm self-loading rifles (SLR); the Chinese 14.5mm and 12.7mm double and single barrel anti-aircraft (AA) guns, 7.62mm heavy machine gun (HMG), 7.62 light machine gun (LMG), rocket propelled grenade (RPG) 7 launcher, 9mm browning pistol, 7.62mm AK 47 and AK 58 rifles; and the Romanian 82mm mortars. Other heavy caliber weapons include: the Chinese anti-tank wire-guided (ATWG) rocket launcher, man-portable multiple rocket launcher (MRL), self-propelled grenade (SPG) anti-tank weapon and 120mm mortars. The new Arty Unit is equipped with the Chinese 105mm howitzer. Furthermore, the Maritime Wing is currently

equipped with one Fast Patrol Boat (FPB) and 10 Inshore Patrol Crafts (IPC) from China; 3 Cutters from the US; and 2 Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIB) from the UK. For the Air Wing, the MI 8 and MI 24 helicopter gunships were in use but have been eventually disposed of due to high maintenance cost.

1.3 Administration in the RSLAF

General administration in the RSLAF is also hierarchical and naturally follows the chain of command as in Figure 1 above. The MoD is the major government body responsible for coordinating the activities of the RSLAF. Its responsibility is to formulate, disseminate, monitor and evaluate strategic defense policies for the RSLAF within a democratic framework. It is also responsible for long-term operational planning and deployment of troops. As shown in Figure 2 below, the MoD is headed by a Minister of Defense (MD), as the civilian political head accountable to the President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the RSLAF. He is assisted by a civilian Director General (DG) and the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS). The DG is the defense vote controller and head of the civilian wing of the ministry. He is accountable to the executive and Parliament. He is also the principal civilian adviser on defense and is responsible for policy formulation, finance, procurement and administration. The CDS is the professional head at the MoD and the principal military adviser to the executive. He is responsible for the command and control of the entire RSLAF.

The DG and CDS have a hierarchy of staff working for them. The military MoD staff have their equivalent ranking on the civilian staff. For instance, the DG (a civilian) is equivalent in status to the CDS who is a Major General (the highest rank in the RSLAF). Under the CDS, there is a Deputy CDS (DCDS) who is a Brigadier General (Brig Gen). The military section of the MoD has 3 large staff branches headed by Assistant Chiefs of Defense Staff (ACDS) who are also Brig Gen. The senior-most branch is the Operations & Plans (Ops/Plans) branch, followed by Personnel & Training (Pers/Trg) and then Support & Logistics (Sp/Log). Each ACDS supervises a number of directorates headed by Directors in the rank of Colonel (Col). The ACDS Ops/Plans supervises the Director of Military Operations (DMO), Director of Defense Intelligence & Security (D Def Int/Sy), Director of Defense Communication & Information Systems (D Def CIS), Director of

Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Director of Defense Public Relations & Information (D Def PR/Info). Under the ACDS Pers/Trg, there are 3 directors: Director of Defense Training, Education & Recruiting (DDTER), Director of Defense Personnel (D Def Pers) and the Director of Defense Legal (D Def Legal). Lastly, the ACDS Sp/Log supervises the Director of Defense Logistics & Equipment Support (D Def Log/ES), Director of Defense Medical (D Def Med) and the Director of Defense Estates (D Def Estates). However, there has been a very recent establishment of a Gender and Equal Opportunity Branch (not included in the figure), which is also headed by an Assistant Chief of Defence Staff with only one Directorate under supervision.

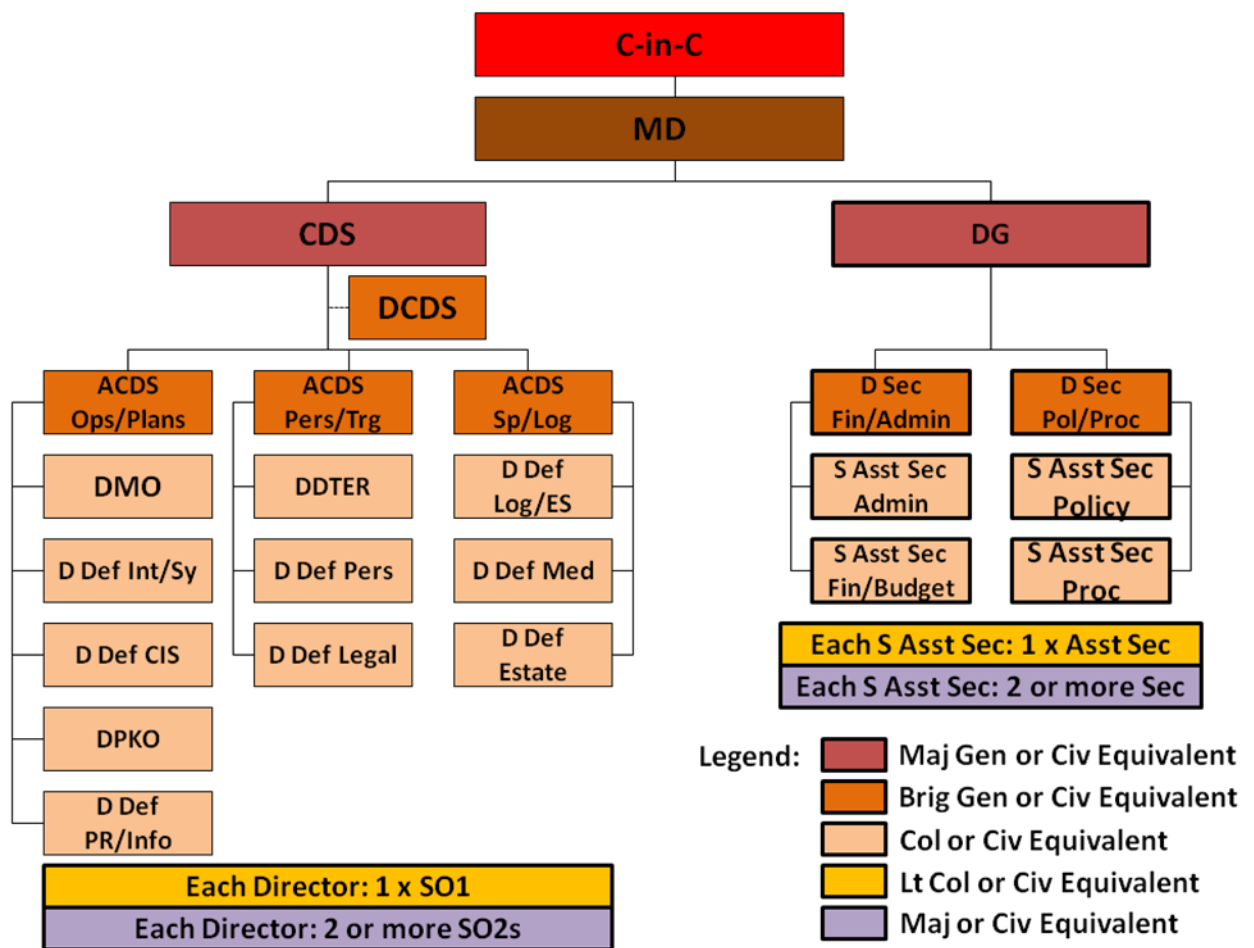


Figure 2: Administrative Organizational Structure of MoD.

Furthermore, each director is entitled to one Staff Officer Grade 1 (SO1) and a number of Staff Officers Grade 2 (SO2) as necessary. There is however no Staff Officer Grade 3 (SO3) appointments at the MoD except Aide-de-Camp (ADC). On the civilian

section, there are only 2 branches, Finance & Administration (Fin/Admin) and Policy & Procurement (Pol/Proc), which are headed by Deputy Secretaries (D Sec). They in turn supervise 2 Senior Assistant Secretaries (S Asst Sec) each; who also have Assistant Secretaries (Asst Sec) and Secretaries (Sec) working under them as shown in Figure 2.

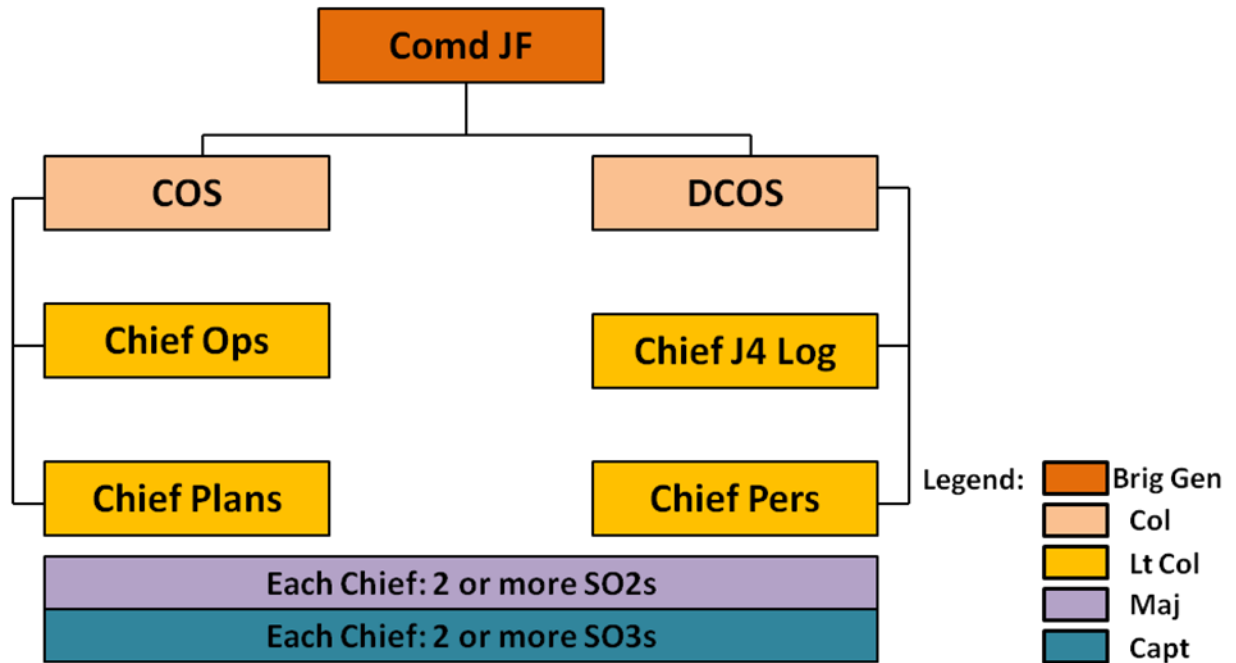


Figure 3: Administrative Organizational Structure of HQ JFC.

At the JFC HQ, the Commander Joint Force (CJF or Comd JF) is a Brig Gen and he is third in the RSLAF command hierarchy, after the DCDS. He commands the rest of the RSLAF troops (operational and support) and he is responsible for carrying out the RSLAF's defense missions and tasks as required by the national constitution and as specified in the Defense Whitepaper.¹³ The organization of the JFC HQ is as shown in Figure 3 above. The Chief of Staff (COS) and Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS), in the rank of Col, are the principal staff officers to the CJF. The COS heads the operations and plans branch whilst the DCOS heads the personnel and logistics branch. The COS supervises the Chief of Operations (Chief Ops) and the Chief of Plans (Chief Plans) whilst the DCOS supervises the Chief of Logistics (Chief J4 Log) and the Chief of Personnel (Chief Pers). All Chiefs have a number of Staff Officers Grades 2 and 3 (SO2 & SO3) working under

¹³ Defense Whitepaper of Sierra Leone (2003).

them. Each Chief coordinates with the relevant MoD directorate through the COS or DCOS.

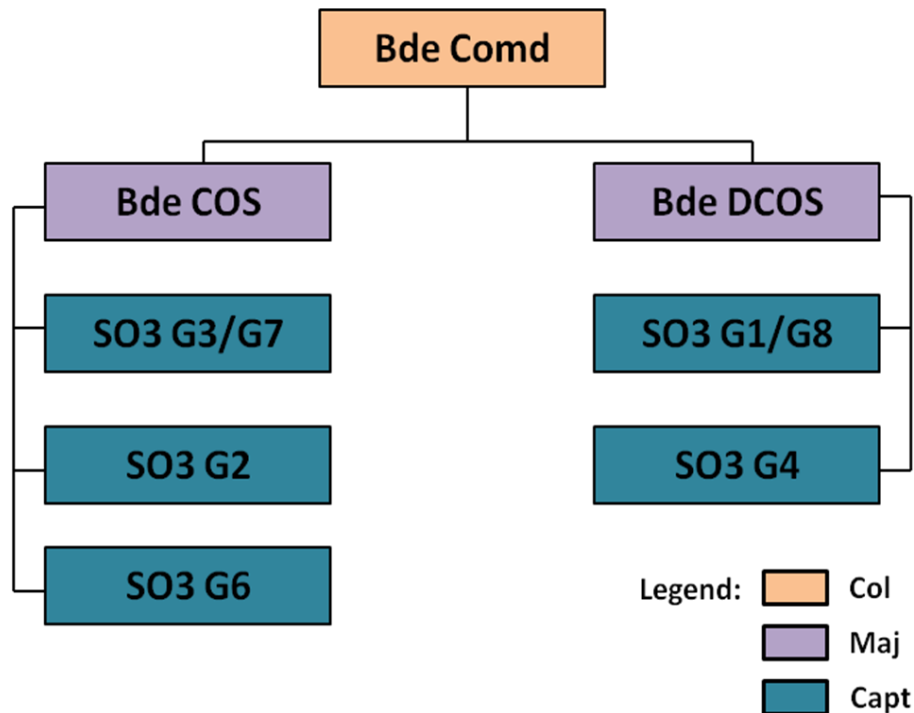


Figure 4: Administrative Organizational Structure of a Bde HQ.

At brigade (Bde) level, the Bde Comd is a Col and has 3 x infantry battalions under his command. The battalions are commanded by Lieutenant Colonels (Lt Col). The Bde HQ organization is as shown in Figure 4 above. The Bde COS and DCOS are both Majors with their line of duty similar to that of their senior counterparts at HQ JFC. They have a number of Grade 3 staff officers working under them.

1.4 Institution of Regulations in the RSLAF

As members of a disciplined force, RSLAF soldiers of all ranks live under rules and regulations. Formal published rules are released in our daily experience, and we are expected to comply with and obey them. For example, at battalion level, Daily Routine Orders are published which give details of ‘reveille’ (time to wake up), where soldiers are to be, when, what they are to wear, and the timing for meals, amongst other things. At an intermediate level there are rules that cover soldierly duties and procedures, and set limits to options for what soldiers may do. Examples of such rules are Formation Standing Orders, Standing Instructions, and Standing Operating Procedures, all of which apply at

unit level and above, depending on what level they are published. Generally, within the institution of the RSLAF there are orders and instructions from JFC and MoD level, and at the highest level of all there is the RSLAF Act 1961 (as amended), an Act of Parliament. This and associated domestic and international laws are published or referenced in the Manual of Military Law (MML)¹⁴ with further explanations and guidance to avoid ambiguities. Soldiers are required to know and obey all these orders and instructions and can be subject to sanction if they do not. The law also requires soldiers to obey all lawful orders given to them by a superior officer. An order is only unlawful if it would cause the soldier to violate either national or international law. It follows that the giving and taking of orders is a regular and constant feature of life in the Army.

All officers and soldiers in the RSLAF have a duty to maintain a high standard of self-discipline and behavior. As a member of the Armed Force, you are constantly in the public eye; therefore, it is important that you ensure your personal conduct does not fall below the accepted level. Officers and soldiers alike can achieve this by ensuring they adhere to prescribed values or ethics, which the RSLAF refer to as ‘Code of Conduct’ (Dos and Don’ts). Thus, an officer’s or soldier’s knowledge of the under-mentioned ‘Dos’ and ‘Don’ts’ will improve their personal conduct, thereby improving the public image of the RSLAF. The ‘Dos’ are:

- ❖ Remain loyal to the nation, the Head of State and Commander-In-Chief, and the chain of command.
- ❖ Remember your obligations to fully support your unit, the Armed Force and the Government.
- ❖ Be always disciplined, punctual, properly dressed and conduct yourself in a polite and courteous manner.
- ❖ Strive to constantly improve your professional ability, work diligently and efficiently.
- ❖ Display leadership by remaining calm in times of pressure and accept responsibility for your mistakes.
- ❖ Be fair, frank and honest at all times, and display integrity.
- ❖ Manage your finances well and honor your financial obligations.

¹⁴ Manual of Military Law – October 2001 (Unpublished).

- ❖ Always care for your subordinates and treat their problems with confidentiality and seriousness.
- ❖ Strive to develop yours and the fitness of your subordinates, and participate with them in sports activities.

The 'Don'ts' are:

- ❖ Never blame others, especially your subordinates for your mistakes.
- ❖ Never betray a confidence unless keeping it compromises your integrity.
- ❖ Do not speak ill of your superiors, peers or subordinates to others.
- ❖ Do not address other members of the RSLAF without prior approval of your Appropriate Superior Authority (ASA).
- ❖ Do not discuss official matters with friends or close relatives. Disclosure of military business to individuals outside the Armed Forces is in direct contravention of the Official Secrets Act.
- ❖ Do not visit the houses of married members of the Armed Forces without their knowledge and/or approval. Avoid meddling in the domestic affairs of other members of the Armed Forces.
- ❖ Do not over indulge yourself in alcohol or gamble to excess.
- ❖ Do not give your subordinates more responsibility than they can shoulder.
- ❖ Do not be apologetic when giving orders.
- ❖ Do not be vain, pompous or big-headed. Remember you will never know everything.
- ❖ Do not be afraid to discuss your problem with others before taking a decision. A second opinion is always useful.
- ❖ Do not form small cliques. They destroy the family spirit of your unit and the Armed Forces.
- ❖ Do not put yours or another's interests ahead of the Armed Forces.
- ❖ Do not visit the messes or canteens belonging to those of a different rank to you unless you are officially invited. Fraternalization between officers and other ranks, especially out of working hours should be discouraged.
- ❖ Do not encourage idle gossip or rumor mongering. This will inevitably affect the morale of your unit and Armed Forces.

- ❖ Do not allow your personal feelings to affect your treatment of other officers or soldiers.¹⁵

The RSLAF has its own military justice system, although soldiers can be tried in civilian courts depending on the type of crime committed. The decision on which system to use was sometimes made on an adhoc basis and was prone to pressure from the RSLAF leadership. If a case remains in military channels, military police conduct an investigation and forward their findings to the D Def Legal at the MoD who then assesses whether to handle the offense through a "summary dealing" process or a court martial. Summary dealing cases are limited to low-level military offenses, such as misappropriation of military property, unlawful possession of a firearm, and being absent without leave (AWOL).¹⁶ The commanding officer determines the punishment, the most severe of which is a 28-day custodial sentence. The court martial handles all serious military and civil offenses committed by military personnel, as well as cases involving senior officers. The case is tried before a judge and board; the latter determines guilt or innocence, and the former the sentencing recommendation. The military justice system has an appeals process. For summary dealing, the defendant can appeal for the redress of complaint, which goes to the next senior ranking officer, while appeals in a court martial are heard by the civilian Supreme Court.

1.5 Training and Education in the RSLAF

In the RSLAF, training and education are considered the cornerstone of operational readiness. Training is guided by policy derived from the British Doctrine and it describes specific requirements known as Statement of Training Requirement (SOTR).¹⁷ The training policy is divided into two: individual training directive (ITD) and collective training directive (CTD).¹⁸ These directives are issued by the MoD to the JFC for dissemination force-wide and they form the basis of all training as they give the broad objectives and standards to be achieved. The implementation of ITD and CTD starts at the individual units where officers and soldiers go through Levels 1 and 2 (physical fitness

¹⁵ RSLAF Code of Conduct - May 2002 (Unpublished).

¹⁶ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor, 2010 Human Rights Report: Sierra Leone (8 April 2011).

¹⁷ RSLAF Statement of Training Requirement (SOTR) - Outline of All Mandatory Training for All Ranks.

¹⁸ RSLAF Training Directives (Unpublished).

tests, first aid training, annual personal weapon tests, etc). Troops then proceed in turns to the Brigade Battle Schools (BBS) for Level 3 training (minor platoon and company level tactics). Levels 1, 2 and 3 training forms the basic foundation for all subsequent training of officers and soldiers in the RSLAF. The BBS also conducts training for the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) Company in readiness for ECOWAS deployment. Thus, all other training in the RSLAF is conducted at 4 main units/institutions under a unified command known as Training Group Command (Figure 1 above).

The first and most serviceable training unit is the AFTC whose role is to deliver basic training to officer cadets/soldiers and quality leadership training at officer, JNCO and SNCO levels in order to maintain individual and collective skills across the RSLAF. To achieve this, the AFTC conducts the following courses:

- ❖ Direct Entry Commissioning Course (DECC) for officer cadets for 24 weeks.
- ❖ Direct Entry Recruit Course (DERC) for basic soldier recruits running concurrently with DECC for 24 weeks and culminating into the same passing-out parade.
- ❖ Direct Entry Specialist Commissioning Course (DESCC) for qualified medical doctors, nurses, engineers, religious priests/clerics and runs for 4 weeks to train them in basic soldiering skills.
- ❖ Platoon Commanders Battle Course (PCBC) running for 8 weeks for young officers after spending 1 year in their battalions to train them in basic infantry platoon-leadership roles.
- ❖ Combat Team Commanders Course (CTCC) running for 12 weeks for senior Captains to prepare them for company level command.
- ❖ Section Commanders Battle Course (SCBC) for senior Lance Corporals (JNCOs) and Corporals (NCOs) and runs for 9 weeks to train them in basic infantry section leadership roles.
- ❖ Platoon Sergeants Battle Course (PSBC) for Sergeants/Staff Sergeants (SNCOs) and runs for 8 weeks to train them on basic infantry platoon second-in-command leadership roles.
- ❖ Combat Coaching Marksmanship Course (CCMC) for all ranks of Captain/Staff Sergeant and below and runs for 2 weeks to identify best shots within battalions.

- ❖ Advanced Infantry Skills Training running for 6 weeks for all ranks of Captain/Staff Sergeant and below to harmonize reconnaissance skills across the RSLAF.
- ❖ Unit Training Officers (UTO) Course runs for 4 weeks for Captains and Majors in training appointments to train them on the conduct of effective unit training.

The second training institution is the Horton Academy (HA) which is responsible for delivering officer and warrant officer (WO) education. The HA conducts the under-mentioned courses:

- ❖ Junior Staff Course (JSC) for senior Lieutenants and runs for 16 weeks.
- ❖ Intermediate Staff Course (ISC) for senior Captains and to which civilians from MoD and Office of National Security (ONS) are invited to participate. It runs for 16 weeks as well and aims at introducing officers to wider national security issues.
- ❖ Command and Staff Training (CAST) for senior Majors and Lieutenant Colonels and runs for 4 weeks to prepare and select suitable candidates for Senior Command and Staff Course (SCSC) abroad. Those unable to pass the course do not proceed on SCSC.
- ❖ Warrant Officers Course (WOC) for warrant officers and runs for 4 weeks to help them develop the leadership skills cultivated throughout their long service and experience.

The third training unit is the Armed Force Education Centre (AFEC) whose main focus is soldier education programs. The following courses are run by AFEC:

- ❖ Adult Literacy and Numeracy Course running all year round for illiterate soldiers to raise their literacy to at least basic level. This is decentralized and also going on at all Bde HQs.
- ❖ Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) Classes running all year round for soldiers graduating from the literacy classes to prepare them for the national basic education certificate exams.
- ❖ West Africa School Certificate Examination (WASCE) Classes also running all year round for soldiers graduating from the BECE class to prepare them for the national senior secondary school certificate exams.

- ❖ AFEC is also solely responsible for the conduct of entrance exams for recruit and officer cadet candidates during annual recruiting exercise. The basic educational requirement for recruit candidates is a pass at BECE and for officer cadet candidates 5 credits at WASCE including English Language.¹⁹

The last but not the least training institution is the Peace Mission Training Centre (PMTTC) which is responsible for delivering peace support operations training to troops selected for deployment on UN Peacekeeping. This training is run under the assistance and guidance of the African Contingency Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Group from US African Command (AFRICOM).

The above-mentioned activities are certainly not exhaustive of training in the RSLAF, but only represent the major in-country training. The force also thrives on several training and education offers from development partners like USA, UK, Canada, China, Nigeria and Ghana. However, the highest number of offers currently comes from China (at least 20 per year) and they include slots for College of Defense Studies, Command and Staff College, and several others for junior officers and soldiers. China is also the only partner that currently provides offers for RSLAF soldier-overseas training.

¹⁹ RSLAF Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS).