

remarks I think fit, before submitting for your favourable consideration.

2. I think you will agree that Captain Merrick, and those under him, satisfactorily carried out the work entrusted to them, with every tact and necessary caution, and in, as he points out, exceptionally difficult circumstances. There are records in the Brigade Office showing that His Excellency the High Commissioner was thoroughly satisfied with the general conduct of the Mission by Captain Merrick, and with the results obtained. There are also documents commending the good work done by Lieutenant (local Captain) A. C. McLachlan, 18th Hussars and 1st Northern Nigeria Regiment, in connection with convoy duty and reconnaissance, and the gallantry displayed by Lieutenant A. E. Gallagher, 9th Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps and 1st Northern Nigeria Regiment, on the occasion when Captain Merrick found it necessary, as mentioned in his report, to inflict punishment on unfriendly natives.

3. In the circumstances, I would strongly recommend Captain Merrick's request to your favourable consideration, namely, that the troops under his command at Argungu, and on French Convoy duty, during the period 15th June to 30th November, 1902, be included as entitled to the medal (or clasp as the case may be) to be inscribed "N. Nigeria, 1902."

4. To save time and trouble, I am forwarding a copy of this correspondence to His Excellency the High Commissioner.

I have, &c.,
ARTHUR FESTING, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Brevet Major R.I. Rifles,
Local Lieutenant-Colonel W.A.F.F.

From Captain Merrick, R.A., Officer Commanding Argungu Expedition, to Commandant, Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Sir, 30th July, 1903.

I have the honour to forward herewith a short summary of the work of the Argungu Expedition from June to November, 1902, in the hope that you will favourably consider the claims of officers and men to the clasp "N. Nigeria, 1902," granted for the expedition to Bornu and various others.

Several reports were sent on different dates to Headquarters, but no general despatch.

As some letters went direct to the High Commissioner, it is possible that all may not have reached your office.

I have, &c.,
G. MERRICK, Captain R.A.,
Officer Commanding Argungu Expedition.
True copy.
(Signed) A. F., Lieutenant-Colonel.

Argungu Expedition.

15th June to 30th November, after which date orders relative to the advance on Sokoto began to be received.

No information was available as to the nature of the country north of Sokoto.

No supplies were available there.

Orders with reference to Sokoto restricted the area from which supplies could be drawn.

Supplies had to be sent to posts 150 miles distant.

The troops (with the exception of 50 men at Argungu) were almost continually on convoy

duty. Marches were hard owing to scarcity of water, and the tendency of local transport to run away; 30 to 40 miles without water had frequently to be done.

Meat was seldom obtainable, and the grain ration of 2 lbs. per man was often much less.

Great vigilance was necessary as the inhabitants, though not openly hostile, were dangerous to stragglers (one soldier and two or three followers were killed).

There was always a possibility of attack from Sokoto, which caused the escorts to be stronger than they need otherwise have been (employing all the men). The action at Giwazi, in which three men were wounded, was a fairly severe one; the attacking force being only 50 strong all told.

It was chiefly due to the tactful treatment of the various native chiefs encountered, that in only one case was active punishment found necessary. Captain McLachlan, who carried out a reconnaissance on our arrival at Argungu, marched 160 miles in six days.

The force was always short handed, and officers had frequently to travel long distances when they could have been on the sick list.

A large extent of new country was mapped.

The two chief objects of the expedition were carried out, viz., the French convoys were passed through, and all hostilities with Sokoto and Gando were avoided.

There is no doubt that, as regards hard marching and short commons, the troops were more severely tried than on most expeditions.

G. MERRICK, Captain R.A.,
Officer Commanding Argungu Expedition.

From Mr. L. Probyn, Acting High Commissioner, Southern Nigeria, to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

Government House,
Old Calabar,
21st August, 1903.

Despatch relating to Field Operations.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report upon the military operations which took place in this Protectorate between the 7th July, 1902, and June, 1903.

2. During the period mentioned troops, in forces varying from 100 to 400 combatants, had to be employed on twelve separate occasions, chiefly in preventing or punishing outbreaks connected with inter-tribal warfare. While evident that neither from a political or military point of view these operations can be compared in importance to the Aro Expedition of 1901-02, it is incontestable that the work done reflects great credit on the officers and men engaged. The strain on the troops was considerable, the regiment not being at full strength, owing to a contingent of 300 being transferred to Northern Nigeria, in connection with the Kano Expedition; the country operated in was either swamp, dense bush, or waterless. In most cases order could not be restored in the affected district without fighting, there having been 19 serious engagements, and 201 days during which fighting on a lesser scale took place, or the troops were exposed to sniping fire.

3. Detailed despatches reporting each of the operations above referred to have already been sent to you, and from these will have been learnt