

**AN EXTREMELY FINE WEST AFRICA CAMPAIGNS GROUP TO A MAJOR, 3RD ESSEX REGIMENT (MILITIA), WHO AFTER TAKING PART IN THE ASHANTI CAMPAIGN OF 1896 AND THE LAGOS HINTERLAND AND IN BIRGU CAMPAIGNS OF 1897-8, WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED BY "A POISONED ARROW IN CHEST WHILE MOST GALLANTLY LEADING THE FRONT FACE OF THE SQUARE" AGAINST THE FRA FRAS IN 1899. FURTHER STAKING PART IN THE ASHANTI WAR OF 1900, HE WAS AGAIN WOUNDED IN ACTION AT THE BATTLE OF OBASSA, 30 SEPTEMBER 1900. THIS THE LAST MAJOR ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ASHANTI AND BRITISH IN THEIR LONG HISTORY OF CONFLICT. ADDITIONALLY MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES FOR BOTH LATTER CAMPAIGNS**



ASHANTI STAR 1896, UNNAMED AS ISSUED; EAST AND WEST AFRICA 1887-1900, 1 CLASP, 1897-98 'CAPT. & INSPTR. T. P. GREEN, LAGOS HAUSA FORCE'; ASHANTI 1900, NO CLASP, HIGH RELIEF BUST 'CAPTAIN T. A. PAMPLIN GREEN. A.F.F.' IMPRESSED NAMING.

Thomas Alfred Pamplin-Green was born 'at sea' in 1862 and entered the Army as 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion, Essex Regiment (Militia) on 2 April 1887. Promoted Lieutenant, 10 November 1888 and Captain, 23 May 1892, he was seconded to the Gold Coast Constabulary as Assistant Inspector on 7 September 1895 (LG 17 Sept 1895). He served in the Ashanti Expedition 1895-96, in the operations against King Premphah, from December 1895 to January 1896 (Ashanti Star):

*"The Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War, also known as the "Second Ashanti Expedition", was brief, lasting only from 26 December 1895 to 4 February 1896. The Ashanti turned down an unofficial offer to*

become a British protectorate in 1891, extending to 1894. The British also wanted to establish a British resident in Kumasi. The Ashanti King Prempeh I refused to surrender his sovereignty. Wanting to keep French and German forces out of Ashanti territory (and its gold), the British were anxious to conquer the Ashanti once and for all. The Ashanti sent a delegation to London offering concessions on its gold, cocoa and rubber trade as well as submission to the crown. The British however had already made their minds up on a military solution, they were on their way, the delegation only returning to Kumasi a few days before the troops marched in.

Colonel Sir Francis Scott left Cape Coast with the main expeditionary force of British and West Indian troops, Maxim guns and 75mm artillery in December 1895, and travelling along the remnants of the 1874 road arrived in Kumasi in January 1896. Major Robert Baden-Powell led a native levy of several local tribes in the campaign. The Asantehene directed the Ashanti not to resist, but casualties from sickness among the British troops were high. Soon, Governor William Maxwell arrived in Kumasi as well. Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh was unable or unwilling to pay the 50,000 ounces of gold so was arrested and deposed. He was forced to sign a Seychelles."

Pamplin-Green would next service in West Africa was with the Lagos Hausa Force, in the operations in the Lagos Hinterland and in Birgu, from September 1897 to June 1898 (Medal and clasp)

### **SEVERELY WOUNDED IN OPERATIONS AGAINST THE FRA FRAS**

In June 1899, Pamplin Green took part in Captain Stewart's operations against the Fra Fras in the White Volta District, Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. This expedition, consisting of 6 European, 2 Native Officers and 202, marched from Gambaga on 26 June, their aim, to punish the tribes involved in the killing of a corporal and five Hausas in March that year. During the final attack of the expedition, Pamplin Green was severely wounded by "a poisoned arrow in chest, fired at him from a cave not more than twenty yards from him, while most gallantly leading the front face of the square."

This would have been fatal had not the Colonial Surgeon, Doctor Garland, removed the arrow, and at the risk of his own life, sucked the poison from the wound. A detailed description of how Doctor Garland treated this dreadful injury, was published in The Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps (copy with research). Pamplin Green was mentioned in despatches for his part in the expedition; London Gazette 24 April 1903. This gazette (copy with research) details the expedition in full. a short excerpt of which is as follows ;

"...The afternoon was spent in looking for a practicable place to advance over. Nearly everywhere the hills are too precipitous for the troops, though possible for naked savages without any encumbrances beyond their bows and arrows. The place I ultimately chose was very steep, between two hills, but I thought, notwithstanding being in a defile, it was the only practicable route.

On the 19th July, after sending away all our cattle and sheep with a native officer and twenty five men as escort, to Wale Wale, I proceeded to attack the hills, where from native information five to seven thousand men were. I think, however, these were completely surprised, as they never believed that we would try to go over the hills, especially as neither the French nor ourselves had attempted it in other expeditions, and so they considered themselves quite safe. To this reason I attribute our small loss. I don't think there were more than 2,000 men actually engaged against us. Arrows were fired at us from both sides very shortly after we began to climb the hills, but the range was too great, and no casualties occurred till we had reached what seemed the top; I then found we had two or three narrow defiles to pass through, which I was quite unaware of until we were in them. Here the rocks rise perpendicularly on either side, full of caves, holes, and scrub trees. Behind these the enemy found perfect cover and kept up an incessant shower of arrows, but did not do much harm, as the steady firing of the Hausas gave them no chance of taking aim, as to do that they had to expose themselves, and I am confident that the very steady firing prevented us having a very large number of casualties,

as the ground we were going over would be impossible to storm if the defiles had been properly held. It was in one of these defiles that Captain Pamplin Green was severely wounded with a poisoned arrow in chest, fired at him from a cave not more than twenty yards from him while most gallantly leading the front face of the square.

On carrying these defiles the ground descended into a kind of crater. Here were villages and some fields of corn. The enemy had collected on the hills on the other side of the crater. These men were most successfully shelled with a 7-pounder gun, under Captain Irvine, of the Hausas, and were quickly driven off, losing a good many. After a halt to rest the men, I turned half left from the line of our advance and kept down the centre of a rough valley piled up with loose stones, and scrub bush growing everywhere. There was no path anywhere to be found, so the men had to get over the boulders the best way they could. Here, again, we met with a good deal of resistance, as everywhere the enemy were lying concealed, and fired hundreds of arrows into us, luckily with little result. They could not face the fire of the Uausas, who throughout a most trying time behaved magnificently, and never at any moment showed any signs of demoralization, all bugle calls being obeyed at once; in fact, I can't speak too highly of their behaviour, and I sincerely hope that His Excellency the Governor will bring it to the notice of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies. On reaching the plain again we found that we had then marched from one end to the other of the Sapiri Hills, coming out at the village of Toag.



FRA FRA POISON ARROW

I have great pleasure in reporting the excellent behaviour and gallantry displayed by the Hausas, often in trying positions. There was no hesitation in obeying the commands, and they showed the greatest coolness and steadiness when under fire; in fact, I don't think any troops could have behaved better. I sincerely hope that His Excellency the Governor may be able to propose something to show the Government's appreciation of their gallantry.

I beg to propose that all men and officers who were present and took part in the late Fra Fra expedition, who are not entitled to the West African medal just granted, should be included in that roll, and a clasp be given, if possible, for Sapiri. I am sure such an action would create the very best impression on the men, especially as we want to keep our best men if possible, and I am afraid many of them are taking their discharge and very few good men recruiting.

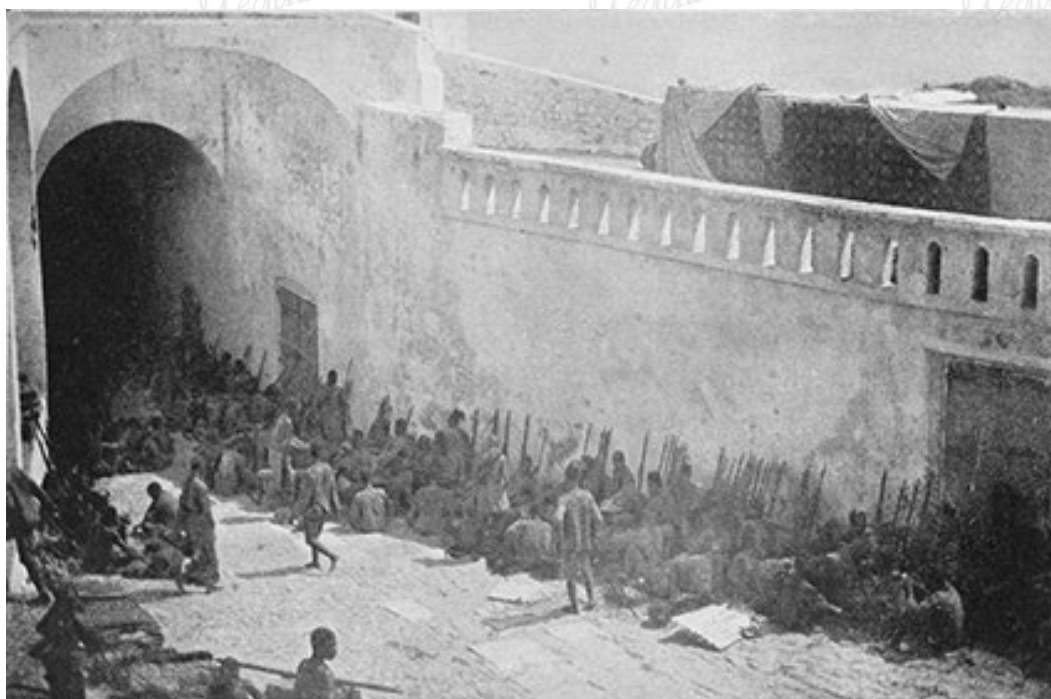
It is also with great pleasure I have to bring to the notice of His Excellency the- Governor the excellent work and soldierlike way in which all the Officers did their work on this expedition.... Captain Pamplin Green, G.C.C.... I must also bring to the notice of His Excellency the Governor an act of the greatest gallantry. On Captain Pamplin Green being struck in the chest by a poisoned arrow (one with a red tip, which are the most virulent) Assistant Colonial Surgeon Garland, without the slightest hesitation, at once proceeded to suck the wound, of course at the greatest risk to himself, and continued to do so for seven or eight minutes, until he had extracted all the poison that he could. This action of him I have little hesitation in saying was probably the saving of Captain Green's life, who, even as it was, had a very narrow escape from death, the result being in doubt for two hours..."

In the event and rather surprisingly, no medal/clasp was awarded for this campaign, despite the recommendation from Captain Stewart. However, the despatches were not published in the London Gazette until three years after the expedition, so this may have had something to do with this.

## THE FIFTH ANGLO-ASHANTI WAR AND WOUNDED AT THE BATTLE OF OBASSA

Recovered from his wounds, Pamplin Green was back on active service in West Africa in 1900, during the Fifth Anglo-Ashanti War (War of the Golden Stool), serving as Staff Officer in the force commanded by Colonel James Willcocks (later General K.C.M.G.), commandant of the Frontier Force. Taking part in the operations in Ashanti, Pamplin-Green was wounded in action whilst carry orders to the firing line at the battle of Obassa, 30 September 1900. This would be the last major engagement between Ashanti and British in their long history of conflict:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_of\\_the\\_Golden\\_Stool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_Golden_Stool)



ASHANTI FIELD FORCE AT CAPE COAST EN ROUTE FOR KUMASI

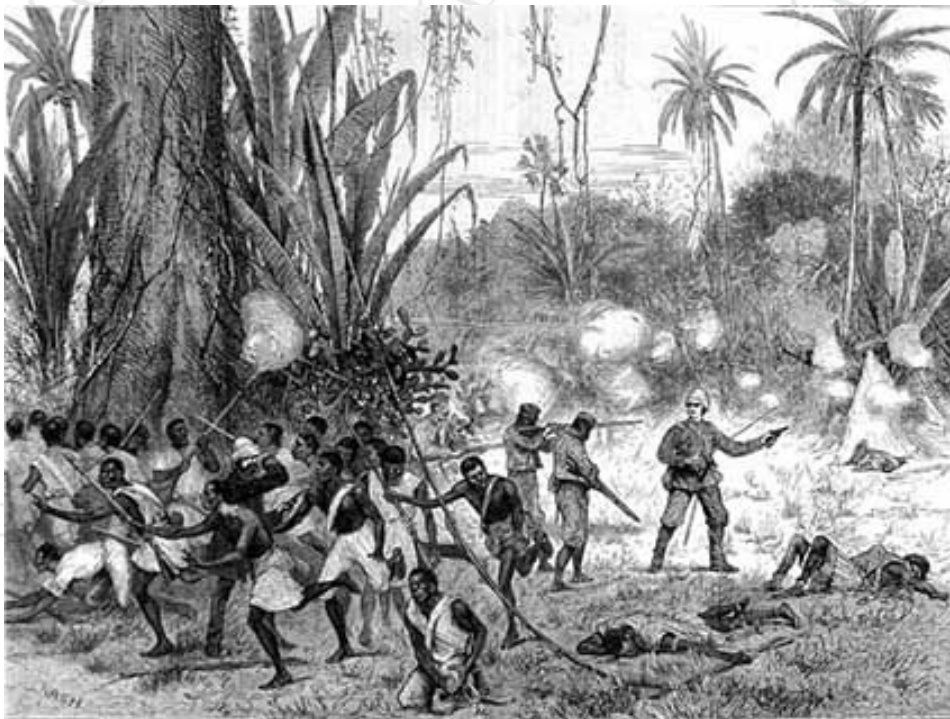
From the South Wales Daily Post 5 October 1900:

*"ASHANTI CAMPAIGN. SUPERB CHARGE OF SIKHS. ASHANTIS BAYONETTED IN NUMBERS. DESPERATE FIGHTING.*

*A despatch from Colonel Sir J. Willcocks to Mr. Chamberlain, dated Inan Sue, 1st October, says:—"Column of 1,200 and five; guns under the command of myself left Kuznosi 29th September; 500 fought in line, 700 on guard. Transport department arrived at Adada in the evening. Village found burnt to the ground by the enemy. Officers and men had to lie without shelter in the excessive rain all night. Advanced at dawn yesterday morning. Found enemy in great number at Obassa, chiefly consisting of tribe of Achumas. Enemy's force opened fierce fire, which they kept up 40 minutes, when the troops were fully deployed. The charge was sounded, but the enemy only retired a short distance to a new commanding position. Firing recommenced, and a second charge drove them to the crest of a long ridge. I then ordered the very small Indian contingent of Sikhs, Central African Regiment, to the front. They led the final charge most gallantly. The enemy fought desperately, being bayoneted in great numbers. Our own fought in line, then swept all in front of them. Sixty of the enemy's dead were counted. No time for search. Chief KoSa commanded. I hurried on, but found that this and other villages had been evacuated in haste. Troops behaved well, Sikhs more especially. Very many hand to hand encounters took place. The following casualties reported: -Maj or Meliiss, Indian Staff Corps, West African Frontier Force, severely wounded in the foot; Lieutenant Luard, 1st Battalion Norfolk*

Regiment, Central African Regiment! severely wounded in the face—both of them doing very well; and also the following slightly wounded—Captain Chanier, Captain Pamplin Greene, Captain Williams. Total official list of casualties, 31. I am recommending Major Mellis for conspicuous gallantry. This is his fourth wound since the expedition started, all being received while leading a charge.

The following British officers are deserving of special mention: Lieutenant-colonel Henstock, A.A.G.. Major Montanaro, R.A., Captain Williams (West-African Frontier Force), Captains Charrien and Luard (Central African Regiment), Captain St. Hill (West African Regiment), Captain Godfrey (Indian Staff Corps), Captain Pamplin Green (Gold Coast Constabulary), Captain Bryan (West African Frontier Force). Captain Leland (Gold Coast Constabulary), aide-de-camp Sergeant Major, Grenadier Guards, West African Frontier Force. Captain Stewart, resident in Coomassie, accompanied expedition, and gave me all possible information, which considerably helped me in my movements. To-day Major Cobb a, Indian Staff Corps, with 800 men and two guns, has gone to pursue enemy across Offin River. — Willcocks."



In Lt Colonel Willcocks Ashanti despatch, London Gazette, 8 March 1901 it would be reported:

"...The 30th September, 1900, was the last day on which (in the light of events as we now know them) the Ashantis should ever be able to say 'they fought the white man in any numbers. The fighting line consisted of 600 men, while 600 men were told off to guard the long string of carriers. At 9 A.M. the advanced scouts were fired on from the front, and left flank, and almost before any deployment could take place the enemy, who occupied a low crescent-shaped ridge, poured in a heavy fire, freely using our own '303 carbines of which they had a great number, captured near Kumassi.

As soon as sufficient troops were deployed a general advance of three companies took place 'with two in support and Sikhs in reserve, one company of the West African Regiment on our right under Captain St. Hill, with Lieutenant Aspinall, doing particularly good work and driving the enemy back on the village of Obassa. Major Montanaro, who commanded the advanced guard, ordered the cease fire and charge, but the Achuma tribesmen were dogged, and refused to do more than retire a few yards, where they had a second position, and reopened a fusillade all along their line, although exposed to the close fire of a Maxim excellently worked, which was doing much execution.

*A second charge forced them back on the flanks, but their centre would not give way, and so, after five minutes of rapid firing, I ordered up the company of Sikhs, under Captain Godfrey, Indian Staff Corps. The Ashanti does not like the combined sound of bugles and drums sounding the charge, but the brave fellows faced it this day right well, and as the Sikhs, with their warlike Khalsa cry, dashed into them, led by Captain Godfrey, they stood their ground and fired killing some and wounding several, including the brave Major Melliss, severely, and amongst the killed a fine soldier who had earned the Order of Merit (the Indian V.C.) on the frontiers of the Punjab.*

*With the Sikhs went all the rest of the fighting line, a company or more from each of the corps composing the Field Force—fitting end to all their labours. The Ashantis had made their last fight in the campaign, they had been heavily beaten, and they now ran as they had never done before. Their flight was a panic, they left guns, ammunition, and everything they owned, including several thousand rounds of \*303 ammunition and many barrels of powder on the field; no attempt was made to remove their belongings nor even their dead—62 bodies lay in our direct front as we moved on, and I afterwards found we had killed 150, including six chiefs, and the wounded must have numbered many more. Our casualties were Major Mellis\*, Indian Staff Corp and Lieutenant Luard, Norfolk Regiment, severely wounded and Major Willans, Army Service Corps; Captain Charrier, Munster Fusiliers, Captain Pamplin-Green, 3rd Essex Regiment and Sergeant-Major Shanley, Army Service Corps, slightly wounded; three men killed and 28 wounded.*

*Next day Major Cobbe with 800 men and two guns followed up the enemy for ten miles, across the Otfin River; some wounded and much baggage was found strewn the roads, but no signs of the Ashantis. This was a most arduous march through bogs and swamps, and the troops had about as much to do as they could manage...*

Lieutenant-Colonel Henstock, the chief staff officer, would report that; *“Captain Pamplin Green and Major Willans, while gallantly carrying my orders to and from the firing line”*

Pamplin Green is further noted as being on Lieutenant-Colonel Montanaro's Staff during the expedition that left Kumassi in November:

*“Lieutenant-Colonel Montanaro, with one 124-pounder gun and seven hundred men, left Kumassi on the 1st November for Berekum, one hundred miles to the north-west. Besides detachments from every corps, he had with him the Sikhs, under Major Cobbe, and amongst his other officers was Captain Lyon, R.A., lately arrived from Ladysmith, who was about to add to his experience of a besieged town the sensation of a march through a very different sort of country. Captains Carleton, Thorne, and Pamplin Green were attached to his Staff. He was followed next day by a second Column of five hundred men, commanded by Major Brown, Leinster Regiment, with Captain Stallard and our “Pioneer” Captain, Neal, as Staff officers. Marching in this order the two Columns united at Insuta on the 5th November, No. 2 having made a forced march on this last day. As the Commander reported in his despatch, it would be only repeating the story of the past seven months to endeavour to explain the toils and labours of the troops in an “impossible country,” over “still more impossible roads”; but all were unanimous in stating that the march, taken all round, was just about as much as flesh and blood could endure.”*

Army List entry:

*“Pamplin -Green, T. A. (Capt. 3 Bn. Essex. B.)-Ashanti Expedition, 1895-6.- Star. W. Africa, 1897-8.- Lagos Hinterland and Borgu, Medal with clasp. W. Africa (N. Territories Gold Coast), 1899.- Expedition against the Fra Fras. Severely wounded. Despatches, Lond. Gaz., 24 Apr. 03. W Africa, 1900. - Operations in Ashanti Slightly wounded. Medal.”*

Promoted Honorary Captain in the Army, 21 October 1900, Pamplin Green stayed on in Ashanti as Acting Cantonment Magistrate of Kumasi and in 1902 was confirmed to that position and appointed a

District Commissioner of Ashanti “*and to be a District Commissioner of the Central District and Cantonment Magistrate of Kumasi*”. Promoted Honorary Major, 12 May 1906, Pamplin-Green appears to have held his post in Ashanti until retiring in October 1909. He relinquished his commission on 26 January 1910, being granted permission to retain his rank and wear uniform. Volunteering for service during the Great War, he served as a Recruiting Officer from 28 August 1914 until resigning due to ill health on 22 June 1917. (War Badge but no medal entitlement). He died in Hammersmith, London in October 1943.



Condition, light contact marks, otherwise GVF. Sold with a file of copy research, including medal rolls, gazettes etc. Also digital copies of ‘The Ashanti Campaign 1900’, ‘Correspondence Relating to the Ashanti War, 1900’ and other research can be emailed to buyer.

A fine and most interesting group to an officer who saw a great deal of action in West Africa. Plenty of further research potential