

CONFIDENTIAL.

GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

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(A.)—BRIEF HISTORY.

Northern Border (East Africa Protectorate and Uganda).

AT the outbreak of war the only military forces in the East Africa Protectorate and Uganda consisted of King's African Rifles (native soldiers with European officers), but steps were at once taken locally to raise a body of mounted and unmounted European volunteers. It was also decided, in accordance with recommendations of a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, that troops from India should be brought to East Africa both for defensive and for offensive purposes.

Towards the end of August and during September the enemy were continually making attempts to raid British territory and to cut the Uganda Railway, but in every case these raiding parties were defeated and forced to retire. By the 3rd October the whole of the "defensive" force from India had arrived in the Protectorate.

On the 1st November the "offensive" force under Major-General Aitken arrived. It was arranged that he should sail to Tanga and attack that port, while the East Africa Protectorate forces were to deliver a simultaneous attack upon the German outpost of Longido in the Kihimanjaro region.

Neither of these attacks succeeded. The attack upon Tanga (3rd November) resulted in complete failure. After suffering very heavy losses, the force re-embarked and proceeded to Mombasa, where it became part of the forces engaged in the defence of the East Africa Protectorate.

The failure of the attack upon Tanga meant the abandonment of our offensive against German East Africa for the time being. Since that date our policy has been to maintain a defensive attitude, owing to the impracticability of sending out sufficient European reinforcements. The only reinforcements that it has been found practicable to send since the main "offensive" force was despatched from India are:—

- (1.) Additional Indian troops (130th Baluchis and 46th Punjabis).
- (2.) The second Rhodesian contingent (400 to 500 men).
- (3.) A body of about 1,000 "Frontiersmen" (25th Royal Fusiliers) sent from England. Some of these are over military age and their military value is a doubtful quantity.

2. Southern Border. Nyasaland.

In Nyasaland we have throughout maintained a defensive attitude, and the military situation has always been one of great anxiety in view of the inferiority of our forces to those of the enemy and the impracticability until quite recently of obtaining reinforcements for the Protectorate. By disabling the German armed steamer "Von Wissmann" we secured command of Lake Nyasa, and at Karonga (8th September) we repulsed the attacks of a superior invading force.

The situation, however, has recently again become very threatening, and in view of disquieting reports from the Governor we have arranged with the Government of the Union of South Africa to send 260 Union troops as a temporary garrison. These are now on their way, having left, it is believed, about the 11th August.

3. Southern Border. Rhodesia.

On the Northern Rhodesian frontier the Germans have from time to time taken the offensive, but their attacks on Abercorn, Fife, and just lately on Saisi, have fortunately all miscarried. Recently, movements of German troops have been reported in this region, and, especially since the attack on Saisi, the situation has become so threatening that arrangements have been made with the Union Government to send a force of 1,000 men to the Nyasaland-Rhodesian frontier in addition to the contingent of 260 men for Nyasaland already referred to. The men of this force will be paid at Union rates of pay, but by the Imperial Government. It is hoped that they will be ready to start about the end of September.

4. Belgian Co-operation.

Considerable help in the Northern Rhodesian region has been received from the Belgian forces stationed in Katanga. A Belgian detachment rendered valuable assistance at the commencement of the war in connection with the attack on Abercorn, and from that time until quite recently a Belgian force has been stationed in Northern Rhodesia, the British guarding the border Abercorn-Fife, while the Belgians based on Abercorn have guarded the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika. The Belgians have been anxious to undertake offensive operations in this quarter, in which we have been compelled to decline co-operation on account of our commitments in other quarters. In consequence of our refusal to co-operate with them they withdrew their forces a short time ago from Rhodesia, but have recently again sent a force of 600 men to our assistance in view of the attack on Saisi.

5. Lake Tanganyika.

The German steamer "Hedwige v. Wissmann" disabled the Belgian steamer on Lake Tanganyika in October, and since that time the Germans have had command of the Lake. A naval expedition with motor-boats is, however, now on its way, which it is hoped, will succeed in securing the command of the waters of the Lake. The expedition should shortly be able to commence operations.

(B.)—PRESENT POSITION.

1. Military.

(a.) Number of present Forces.

The present position is most unsatisfactory, both from (a) the military, (b) the native point of view.

Our forces (see table below) amount nominally to about a division.

(b.) Value of Men—Discouragement.

It will be seen, however, that a considerable number of these consist of Indian troops who have been found to be of little value from a military point of view. Of the white troops a large proportion have little military training; the number of really first-class troops is very small. The sickness among the troops generally has been considerable and has had a discouraging, if not demoralising effect. The prolonged inaction has also reacted unfavourably on the white volunteers, who are stated in some quarters to be losing interest.

(c.) German Forces.

It is believed that in the early days of the war the Germans would have been obliged to surrender if heavily attacked, but their victory at Tanga put heart into them. They have now gained time and are reported to have raised numerous fresh troops, bringing their numbers up to 20,000. Fresh arms and ammunition are reported to have been introduced into German East Africa by sea. The extent of these two reports cannot be exactly gauged, but in any case, the Germans appear to be very well equipped with guns and maxims, and experience has shown that they are always ready to assume the offensive whenever the chance presents itself.

(d.) Possible Invasion of British East Africa.

The General Officer Commanding has recently stated that an enemy invasion of the East Africa Protectorate and advances on Nairobi and Mombasa are quite possible. The Uganda Railway is a most vulnerable line of communication, and any serious interruption of that line would have the most grave consequences.

(e.) Approaches on Nyasaland Border.

In the south, on the Nyasaland-Rhodesian border, matters have assumed so threatening an attitude that, as already stated, it has been necessary to ask the Union Government to send considerable reinforcements.

2. Native Unrest.

(a.) Nyasaland Rebellion.

The question of native unrest has been most acute in Nyasaland. In January last a serious rising took place, and, though it was promptly suppressed, thanks to the energetic action of the local Government, there can be no doubt as to the existence of widespread disaffection among the natives, and recent reports from the Governor have given grounds for much uneasiness as to the safety of the white population. It has moreover, been definitely established that the Germans have been endeavouring to set up disaffection among the natives, and a German emissary conveying dynamite and incriminating literature has recently been arrested in Nyasaland.

In a despatch just received, the Governor of Nyasaland has referred in very serious terms to this danger and of the present state of unrest, which he attributes solely to the war, and which he is of opinion will continue so long as its issue remains uncertain. He concludes his despatch by observing that the reduction of German East Africa will relieve all the East African Governments of anxieties which have pressed very heavily upon them during the last year.

(b.) Rhodesia.

In Rhodesia native unrest has also been reported, and here also information as to German emissaries has been received.

(c.) British East Africa.

In the East Africa Protectorate, while the question of native disaffection (apart from the revolt of the Giriama tribe in August last) has not been so serious, there can be no doubt that the attitude of the tribes on both sides of the German East African frontier has been gravely affected by the course of the war. It is believed that at the beginning of the war the bulk of the native population on the German side of the frontier would gladly have come over to the British. However, the reverse at Tanga and our failure to make any appreciable progress during the course of a whole year have brought about a considerable change, and reports state that our prestige has

suffered considerably in the eyes of the natives. In Africa there can be no standing still, and every day that we remain on the defensive our prestige will continue to suffer further loss.

(C.)—ALTERNATIVES TO BE FACED.

1. *Reinforcements for an Offensive.*

All these considerations point to the need of reinforcements. It is generally agreed that the only possible time for offensive operations in East Africa is the half-year following August, and if reinforcements are to be sent they must be sent at once; otherwise it means waiting until August 1916.

2. *Such Reinforcements can go on to Europe.*

A small force, properly led, would have completed the business last year. Larger reinforcements are required now, but as soon as their task in East Africa is finished they will be able to proceed to Europe, together with a considerable proportion of the forces already in East Africa, which otherwise will continue to be locked up there.

3. *Possibility of Greater Trouble.*

But if we continue to wait and native trouble arises, or a military disaster happens, the question will both be bigger and we shall not be able to afford not to deal with it. In other words, we may be forced to send troops and have a much more difficult problem to face even than at present.

4. *Amount of Reinforcements required.*

As to the actual reinforcements necessary to bring about the reduction of German East Africa, no up-to-date estimate appears to be available, but it has generally been calculated that, for a successful offensive, at least two brigades of good troops with some heavy artillery would be necessary.

(D.)—CONTINGENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

1. *Question of diverting to East Africa.*

It is realised, of course, that in present circumstances it is impossible to obtain this number of troops from this country; but could not the South African contingent offered for Europe complete its training in the East Africa Protectorate and assist in the conquest of German East Africa before proceeding to the European seat of war?

2. *Will it Deplete Force for Europe?*

The Union Government had hoped, in the first instance, to send two, or possibly three, brigades to Europe, but, on being informed of the percentage of drafts required, they said that they must reduce their offer to one brigade and drafts. It is important to note that this reduction need not apply to service in East Africa, as the casualties are less and therefore the need for drafts less. If only, therefore, the European situation allows, we can, instead of one brigade for Europe (not perhaps best fitted for fighting there), get two or possibly three brigades for East Africa, well fitted for fighting in East African conditions, who can then go on to Europe when their work in East Africa is completed.

3. *Possible Objections.*

Two points require consideration:—

(a) *Fly with horses.* It is doubtful if this is really a bar. The question, it is understood, is being investigated by the War Office.

(b) *Willingness to serve in East Africa.* Doubtless the South Africans would prefer to serve in Europe, but probably they would consent to go to East Africa first, provided that it was understood that they would proceed to Europe afterwards, when their task in East Africa was completed. From a private letter recently received by the Director of Military Operations from the General Officer Commanding in South Africa, there is reason to believe that many Boers would jump at the chance of serving in East Africa. The Union Government in a telegram of the 7th August, stated that

"they trust that before long it may be possible for His Majesty's Government to utilise the Union's military resources in other (i.e., other than South Africa) directions in Africa." In a more recent telegram they have stated that they are not in a position at present to provide a contingent for East Africa; but this is obviously due to the fact that all available forces were to be sent to Europe.

There is no reason to suppose that the Union Government would not consent to the temporary diversion of these forces, if we explained to them that such diversion was in the best interests of the common cause.

(E.)—CONCLUSION.

To sum up: if we do not complete the reduction of German East Africa now, there is a risk of a military reverse, and greater risk of native trouble, which would necessitate our sending much stronger forces than those now required at a time, perhaps, when it would be even more difficult to spare them than it is at present.

If, on the other hand, we finish the business now, we shall release for service elsewhere, not only the reinforcements, but also the greater part of the forces already in East Africa.

APPENDIX

Return of present British Forces available against German East Africa.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE AND UGANDA.

Force Return, May 1915 (latest received).

	Officers (British).	Officers (Native).	Other Ranks (British).	Other Ranks (Native).	Total Personnel.	Machine Guns.	Guns.
Indian Cavalry ..	3	4	..	110	117	..	..
Indian Mountain Batteries ..	10	8	..	618	636	..	12
Sapper and Miner Units	16	16	58	862	952	..	..
Loyal North Lancs.	30	..	824 (including 97 M.I.)	..	854	4	3 3-pdr.
2nd Rhodesian Regiment ..	21	..	449	..	470	4	..
25th Battalion Royal Fusiliers	30	..	1,103	..	1,133	..	..
Indian and Imperial Service Infantry	98	232	..	8,766	9,096	7	..
Volunteer Units of Indian E. F.	12	..	198	..	210	10	7
Staff	28	..	14	6	48	..	..
East African Volunteer Corps	55	1	342	9	407	4	..
1st/3rd King's African Rifles and Staff	41	9	3	2,257	2,310	9	2
4th King's African Rifles	35	8	1	1,269	1,311	12	..
Total ..	377	278	2,992	13,897	17,544	50	23

NYASALAND.

(No exact Return available.)

	Officers (British).	Other Ranks (British).	Other Ranks (Native).	Machine Guns.	Guns.
1st King's African Rifles ..	9 and a certain number of tempo- rary officers	..	800 (about)	6	15 old field- guns of doubtful value, 8 naval guns.
Volunteers ..	3 Naval officers..	A few naval ratings 100 (about) Including officers	..	..	..

Total personnel about 1,000.

NORTHERN RHODESIA

(No exact Return available.)

	Officers (British).	Other Ranks (British).	Other Ranks (Native).	Machine Guns.	Guns.
Northern Rhodesia Police ..	23	..	875	13	1 obsolete 3-pdr.
Northern Rhodesia Rifles ..	..	114 Including officers	..	..	..

Total personnel about 1,000.

[N.B.—The above figures as to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia are only approximate, and are exclusive of the reinforcements now being sent, viz., 260 troops from the Union to Nyasaland, 1,000 troops from the Union to the Nyasaland-Northern Rhodesian frontier, and 300 Volunteers from Southern Rhodesia for the Northern Rhodesian border.]

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Sapper and Miner Units	18	16	58	862	952
Loyal North Lancers	30	..	824 (including 97 M.I.)	..	854	4	2 3-pr.
2nd Rhodesian Regiment	21	..	449	..	470	4	..
25th Battalion Royal Fusiliers	90	..	1,105	..	1,185
Indian and Imperial Service Infantry	98	232	..	8,766	9,096	7	..
Volunteer Units of Indian E. F.	12	..	198	..	210	10	7
Staff	28	..	14	6	48
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Volunteers	3 Naval officers	A few naval ratings 100 (about) including officers	8 naval guns

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NORTHERN RHODESIA.

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	Officers (British).	Other Ranks (British).	Other Ranks (Native).	Machine Guns.	Guns.
Northern Rhodesia Police	23	..	975	13	1 obsolete 3-pr.
Northern Rhodesia Rifles	..	114 Including officers

Total personnel about 1,000.

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Mr. Pittman by 21.8.18

Mr. J. J. J.

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Mr. J. J. J. 21.8.

Mr. J. J. J.

It is most quiet to our will. I have
been continually dwelling on the point
which the writer of this letter makes
and there is no need to elaborate them
again.

The aeroplane suggestion is worth
bearing in mind.

*Do not
be misled
by the
word
good*

Ask and grant and put this
into the papers

(S. on by P.S.)

Jan 21/18

I hope the writer's idea is something
we can use.

Oct. 21.8.18

~~Sodome~~

J. J. J.

21/18

Oct 21.8.

20/8/15

Sir,

In the belief that
official despatches are oc-
casionally usefully suppl-
mented by private letters,
uncensored, I venture

to send you some extracts
from a letter I have just
received from my son,
who holds a Commission
in the 2nd Rhodesian Regt.

has been fighting in
Brit. East Africa for some
months past.

551

I may add that he
is an experienced Campaigner
having fought through
the Boer war.

I have the honour, Sir,
to be

Your obedient servant

Francis Griffin Stokes

Boer War

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551

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Your obedient servant

Francis Griffin Stokes

Boer War

COPY.

Nairobi, Brit. East Africa, 26/7/15

"On three days' leave from the front"

[After describing two or three small actions, and commenting on the inconclusive result of the attack on Bukoba, which is still held by the Germans, the writer proceeds :-]

"I want you to realise how much we need reinforcements. The spirit of depression here is only due to the idea that no help is coming. This job could be successfully handled. The Germans are not invincible - as we are led to believe. I feel sure their native troops would leave them if they got one or two good lickings. Let us have 20,000 troops - real troops - and fighting leaders, for three months, and the show will be over.

Then, let us all come to Europe.

The loss of prestige among Central African natives that our present position and condition must lead to, can only do us harm for a long time to come. Of course I may not tell you all that I want to, though I believe it would be best for it to be known and honestly faced.

But all is not lost here, nor need any more ground be left to the enemy. It is true that the Germans are now further into E. E. A. than when we landed in March last - but that does not mean that they cannot be 'heaved out' again. Why are we deserted like this? Out of the million waiting for big shells in England cannot we be spared 20,000 to clear up this job? It could be soon done. Tanga needs attacking again. It is not impossible to take it could be done without great loss by 10,000 men and 100000 lbs.

Could we not be spared one aeroplane? Any old-fashioned thing would do. Many parts of this country appear to be ideal for flying, and the results would be of inestimable value to us.

I have no love for B. E. Africans. Nairobi here is full of able-bodied shirkers - or strong young men wearing khami but careful to get ^{military} ~~military~~ jobs away from the firing line. What right have people here to point their fingers at the poor Indians who main themselves to keep out of the fighting? No - the B. E. African as I have lately seen him is not a credit to his race. He is too much of an 'American'. He likes to talk, and he loves money - but he stops at talk.

However as long as it is believed out here, as it seems to be, that the War Office is indifferent [the phrase in the original is stronger] whether B. E. A. becomes C. E. A. or not, we cannot expect much enthusiasm!

I only wish I had come to Europe. One feels that a life lost there would at all events not be wasted. "

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Downing Street,

23rd August, 1915.

Dear Sir,

I am desired by Mr. Benar Law to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th of August in which you enclosed a copy of an extract from a letter which you have received from your son in the 2nd Rhodesian Regiment. Mr. Benar Law is very much obliged to you for having so kindly sent him the documents, which he has read with interest.

Yours very truly

Edw. Anderson

Francis Griffin Stokes, Esq.