

EAST AFR PROT  
44152

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NOV 14

India  
Office

German East Africa

1914

Nov. 10

Forwards telegram from Government of India and two telegrams from General Aitken, giving a detailed account of the Tanga Engagement.

Last previous Paper.  
43997/Scout

Mr Bomanley

His intelligence reports would have been very inaccurate.

This is presumably under cover

Putley

Gen Aitken's account seems to me to be a crushing indictment of the enemy's equipment.

It is fortunate that we have a report for 1914 Capt Fisher's report on the visit to the German High Seas Fleet before any decision can be taken as to further action, as it will give time to

Putley

Next subsequent Paper.  
44302/Scout

express or through the hands of leaving  
things as they are.

I think we had better telegraph  
to Lord Stanley in reply -

"Private & Personal. Tanga expedition  
has suffered bad repulse <sup>and</sup> heavy  
loss and has returned to Mombasa.

Keep secret for the present."

I fear that we shall also have  
to warn Nyasaland. Block out for  
trade; but this can wait until we know  
what the Calcutta decision is.

(P.S.) 10.11.14

as far as I know. Some vague scouting appears  
to have been the cause of the mis-ter. It  
is a pity that on board a longship where  
it would be not up does not appear to  
very sensible arrangements. They appear  
to have slaved on the G. E. in secret.  
Months of the day, one would have  
thought that they would have done some  
improving after their first days' experience.

Ed. 10.11.14

10.11.14

substance was  
sent

with a view  
of opening  
the small  
dome  
in 7/14

Dr. J. F. Allen  
thinks it  
will be  
I have  
suggested  
Nyasaland  
and the  
first

SECRET.

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INDIA OFFICE.

LONDON, S.W.

10 Nov. 1914

The Military Secretary, India Office, presents his compliments and begs to forward a copy of the under-mentioned telegram for the information

of *M. Secretary Harcourt*

- no. S. 26, dated 9 Nov. 1914 from General Aitken.
- no. S. 29, dated 9 Nov. 1914 from General Aitken.
- no. H. 1930, dated 10 Nov. 1914 from Govt. of India.

The Under Secretary of State  
Colonial Office

COPY OF TELEGRAM.

FROM

DATED

RECEIVED AT LONDON OFFICE

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... telegram S-17-100 - S-20 and S-25 ...  
 ... at your ... detail ... report at ...  
 ... at ... to you ref. to ...  
 ... to what extent ...  
 ... what losses have occurred ...  
 ... how did they ...  
 ... and sick ...  
 ... and was attack supported by ...  
 ... but ...  
 ...

(Addressed to General ... reported to India)

COPY OF TELEGRAM.

Field General (167) ...

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RECEIVED AT LONDON OFFICE

I have sent telegraphic report of action at ... and of disposition ... I do not understand ... not attacking by ... and only rendered every ... help ... battery in action on transport ... this they could not see ... could not indicate target. ... could not see ... field ... Respective ... due to deplorable ... every ... entirely concurs in it ... almost certain disaster, as Germans were pouring troops and guns on from ... fifteen hours ... gone to ... but till situation has quietened down and immediate action of Germans indicated, strongly deprecate despatch of any troops from here until I can ("get") two reliable battalions to replace useless ones here. In a few days I could probably ... Battalion Kashmir Rifles who are reliable.

Sent to India ... of the Imperial General Staff and Chief of the ...

## COPY OF TELEGRAM.

FROM General Aitken

DATED 9<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

RECEIVED AT LONDON OFFICE.

S. 26. The following brief preliminary report of operations at Tanga, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> inst. Arrived off Tanga at dawn 2<sup>nd</sup> and H.M.S. "Fox" proceeded in at once leaving convoy some ten miles out at sea to demand surrender and discover if mines laid. Returned about 11.30; surrender refused. Took in 3 ships containing 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs, 61<sup>st</sup> and Loyal North Lancs. Reg<sup>t</sup>; anchored about 4.30 p.m. and prepared to land 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs and 61<sup>st</sup>. Considered them sufficient for the time as Intelligence Reports indicated no strong opposition. Got 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs and half 61<sup>st</sup> on land with slight opposition under Tighe. Navy reported only one landing place on eastern shore which proved very difficult and these units were not on shore until early morning although full moon. Tighe sent out patrol and scouts at once who located some of the enemy and at dawn moved towards Tanga, 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs leading and 61<sup>st</sup> in support. Just outside Tanga got engaged and enemy being in superior strength drove 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs back. 61<sup>st</sup> were sent in support but proved absolutely useless. About half 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs also broke but remainder fought well under Stewart. Force retired on landing place and luckily "Fox" having moved to safe harbour began bombarding. Enemy then retired and Tighe

assisted

assisted by all British officers available succeeded in rallying these units. North Lanes Regiment having landed helped in this but both units very demoralised especially 61<sup>st</sup>. Remainder 61<sup>st</sup> also got on shore early. Fights took up entrenched position covering place and enemy did not disturb us during day. During day (3<sup>rd</sup> Nov.) got more Infantry on shore. Owing to distance out and difficulty of piloting, 63<sup>rd</sup>, 101<sup>st</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> came in too late to be disembarked as I thought night attack possible. Enemy however did not disturb us at night and these units disembarking very early were on shore soon after nine on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> Nov. All units had a meal early and ready by 11 a.m.

At 10.30 I issued orders to march on Tanga. Front line: 1½ battalions Kashmir Rifles on right, flank resting on harbour, North Lanes Reg<sup>t</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> prolonging in that order to the left, all in line at two paces interval, 101<sup>st</sup> in echelon to left rear, the 63<sup>rd</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> straight behind North Lanes Reg<sup>t</sup> at about 200 paces. 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs and 61<sup>st</sup> being demoralised, I put former near Fights in rear and about 300 yards from the centre of Kashmir Rifles and 61<sup>st</sup> with me about the same behind 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs. I also got Mountain Battery in action on a troopship in inner harbour. Owing to nature of country line only moved on Tanga at noon. Advance unopposed until 800 yards from Tanga when we met heavy fire from enemy. 63<sup>rd</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup> and good portion of 13<sup>th</sup> Rajputs at once absolutely

demoralized and broken. 6<sup>th</sup> failing left big gap 159  
which 101<sup>st</sup> gallantly attempted to fill but in doing  
so got caught in a heavy cross fire of rifles and  
machine guns. They held on and successfully crossed  
bayonets with enemy but their heavy losses prevented  
them doing more. 9<sup>th</sup> were ordered to their support,  
but wavered and though not actually bolting, were so  
half hearted that they were quite useless. North Lances  
Regiment and Kashmir Rifles pushed on slowly under  
very heavy fire. They forced their way into Tanga but  
I found every house prepared for tiers of fire and  
machine guns. Owing to my total want of good men  
to reinforce and support them they were driven out  
again and at dusk when the fighting stopped we  
were still holding a line about 500 yards East of  
Tanga. I withdrew about another 500 yards,  
entrenching for the night with such troops as were  
available, remaining troops landing place. I then  
returned to Headquarters for the night. Tigue and  
I had seen the complete uselessness of two units with  
us, Wapshare reported two of his Hindoo [Battalions]  
as the same. I therefore considered it useless waste  
of life to attack again, with no reasonable hope  
of success and I decided to withdraw while I  
could and not sacrifice any more of my reliable  
troops especially as a withdrawal however difficult  
before superior forces seemed preferable to practically  
certain disaster if we attacked again. 9

accordingly



Accordingly drew in my advanced troops during  
the night and issued orders to withdraw next  
day.

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At dawn on 5th a strong line of entrenchments  
was prepared and occupied by North Lancashire Regt  
and Kashmir Rifles to cover our embarkation beaches  
which we did what we could to appear as if going  
to attack again and succeeded in withdrawing  
unmolested. Although some of the units were  
absolutely demoralised and when a short burst  
of fire from a German patrol broke out many  
threw away their rifles and attempted to swim.  
I attribute our rapid embarkation to the splendid work  
of the Naval authorities, by the white crews of the  
transports and by many officers and n.c.o.s. who  
had been left on board and volunteered to man  
row boats. When clear I sent in a flag of truce and  
asked for my wounded whom I was allowed to  
take the next day the 6th inst. Full report and  
exact casualties will follow as soon as possible.  
Deeply regret heavy loss of officers who behaved  
splendidly in leading under trying circumstances  
and attempting to rally men. Please inform  
Admiralty that I could not possibly have  
spared the "Fox" who did their best throughout  
and rendered very valuable assistance.

Sent to India Office, Chief of Imperial  
General Staff and Chief of General Staff, India.