



World War 1

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TOPIC: World War 1

THEME: World Wars

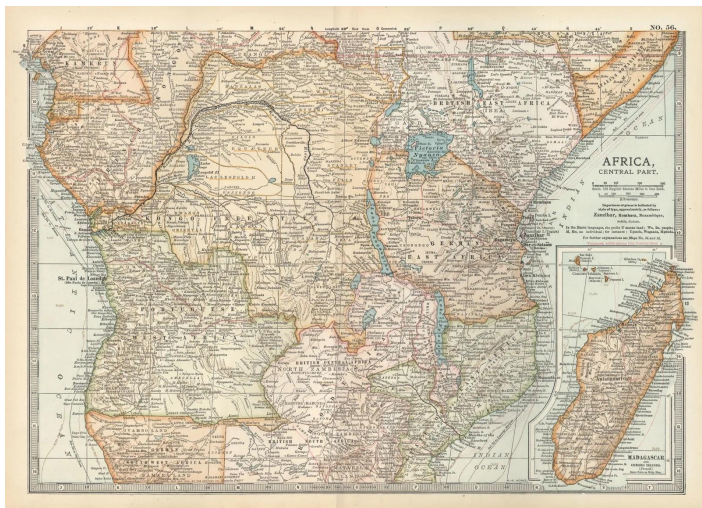
DEPARTMENT: Antiquities, Sites and Monuments

Lesson Objectives

- To highlight the events leading to and during World War I.
- To discuss the strategies employed by the various forces during World War I.
- To discuss the impact of World War I in Europe and Africa.

Learning resources

1. Text
2. Video
3. Photo



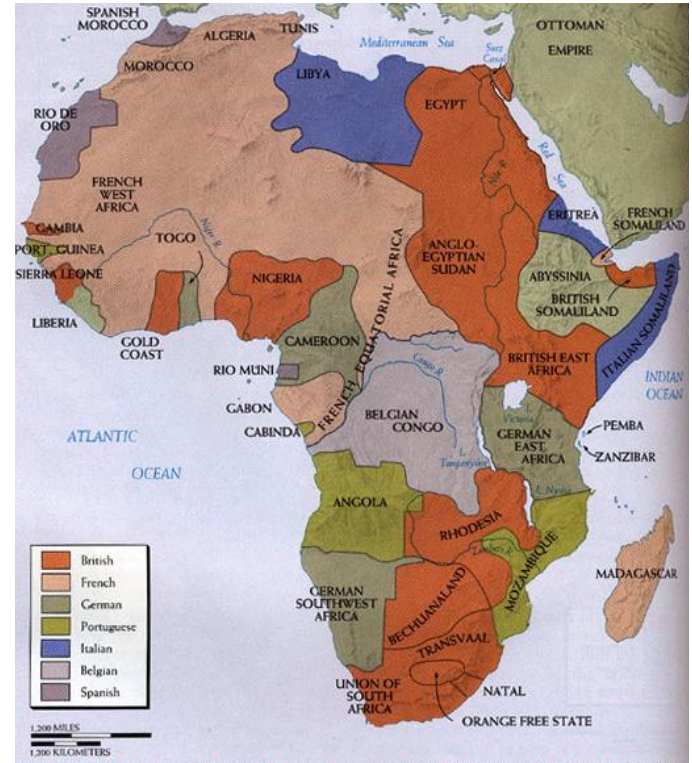
*Map of Central Africa from the 10th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, published in 1902.
Source: Encyclopædia Britannica*

World War 1: Overview

World War 1 (WW1) was a global European military war that involved many countries in the world including those in Africa. It started in July 1914 and ended in November 1918. The war pitted the Central Powers, mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey against the Allied powers, mainly France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and, from 1917, the United States. The military technology employed during the war was unmatched.

At the outbreak of hostilities, the greater part of Africa was ruled by the Europeans. This was the period of the scramble for Africa. In East Africa, Germany controlled German East Africa that included Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi while the British Controlled British East Africa that included modern-day Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar.

The choice to turn East Africa into a warzone was taken by the European colonisers but the burden of fighting was carried by the colonised. The majority of the soldiers involved in this campaign were either Africans from German East Africa, British East Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, or Indians. They were either persuaded or coerced into military service as soldiers or porters.



Partition of Africa 1880 – 1914.

Source: Mapping Globalization - Princeton University

Causes of the war in Africa

The war started in August 1914 between German East Africa and British East Africa. The root causes that led to the war included; Mutual Defense Alliances, imperialism, nationalism and militarism.

The Germans in Africa wanted to create an empire and connect their territories in East, Central and West Africa. They attacked Kenya to take control of the Uganda Railway to get raw materials from the hinterland supplying troops from the Indian Ocean. They also wanted to keep the British occupied in Africa so that they could win the war in Europe.

Start of the War

At the onset of World War 1, much of Africa was under European rule. The immediate consequence for Africa on the declaration of war in Europe was the invasion by the allies of Germany's colonies.

In August, 1914, Germans attacked Belgium in Lake Tanganyika. The war spread to Taveta and Lake Victoria in September, 1914 with the Germans attacking the British.



Eastern Africa as partitioned by the imperial powers, c. 1914.

Source: Encyclopædia Britannica

British East Africa had no standing army so the then Governor ordered for reinforcements from India. Later, reinforcements came from Nigeria, South Africa, mainly the Boers or Dutch, Rhodesia, currently Zambia and Zimbabwe and Nyasaland, currently Malawi.

Mobilisation, Recruitment, Conscription and Training

The outbreak of WWI made unprecedented demands on the human power resources of the British East Africa Protectorate.

Over a million troops were recruited during the war to supplement the generally small forces maintained by the colonial authorities. The British recruited Africans for the war through either voluntary or compulsory basis. On the volunteer basis Africans offered their services freely without pressure. While the revision of the Native Followers' Recruitment Ordinance of 1915 provided that all males aged between 18 and 45 were liable for military service either as carrier corps or soldiers; this was the compulsory basis. These soldiers were recruited from Western Kenya, Central Kenya, Rift Valley, Coastal Kenya, Eastern Kenya and as far as Uganda and Somalia.

The Carrier Corps were a group of porters who carried the supplies soldiers needed to survive during the war. Three carriers were necessary to keep each fighting soldier in the field. The carrier corps worked in three relays: From Voi to Mwatate, Mwatate to Bura and lastly Bura to Maktau. As a result, over 200,000 Africans from the British East Africa protectorate were recruited. A great deal of these recruitments was undertaken through chiefs who were expected to deliver up the numbers required of them by the political officers.



*Map showing distance covered by the three relays (Voi - Mwatate - Bura - Maktau) travelled by the Carrier Corps.
Source: Google Maps*

Towards the end of 1914, Maktau became a big British military garrison with over 20,000 soldiers.

Contrary to the British style of recruitment, the German settlers in Tanganyika had created a territorial defence unit and were recruiting askaris from the local populace, while putting them through a lot of training. These askaris later served as the foundation of the Schutztruppe, which was fighting in the East Africa Campaign at the beginning of the war. The Schutztruppe was a German colonial defence force. This security force was better organised than Britain's three battalions of the King's African Rifles' (KAR).

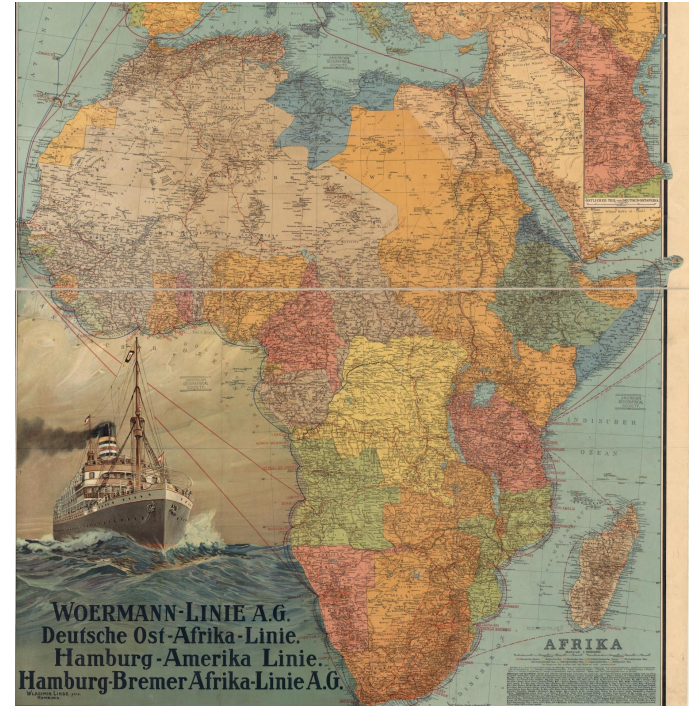
Did you know?

It is from the carrier corps that the current Kariokor market in Nairobi got its name; a corrupted version of carrier corps. Kariokor was a holding camp for the conscripted carrier corps.

Impact of the War

The First World War had significant implications including:

- Over 150,000 soldiers and carrier corps lost their lives during the war and many more were wounded and disabled. The war accounted for innumerable indirect deaths in Africa through the widespread influenza epidemic of 1918 – 1919 and attacks from the Man-Eaters of Tsavo. The spread was facilitated by the movement of troops and carriers returning home.
- Over 400,000 Africans, from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi, lost their lives due to famine. The civilians who remained in their villages often saw their property and livelihood destroyed, as passing soldiers demanded food from them or burnt their houses and fields. In the resulting severe famines, several hundred thousand civilians perished. These were largely unrecorded by the colonial authorities, and unnoticed by the world.



*Map of Africa published in Germany in 1914, shortly before the outbreak of World War I
Source: Library of Congress*

- WWI resulted in the rise of white settlers in Kenya. The British were compensated with large tracts of land in Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and Central Kenya.
- The experience gained by the over one million African soldiers helped build strong African nationalism. The African soldiers discovered the weaknesses and the strengths of the Europeans, who up to that time had been regarded by the majority of Africans as superhuman. It became evident that Europeans did not know much. The returning porters and soldiers spread the new views of the white man; and much of the self-confidence and assertiveness that the Africans in Kenya displayed in the 1920s had a lot to do with this new knowledge.
- There was a territorial change, where the Germans lost all their territories in Africa. For example, Rwanda and Burundi were given to Belgium, Cameroon was given to France and Tanganyika was given to Britain.

Climax and End of War

The East African Campaign began in late 1914, but the majority of the battles in 1914 took place in Kenya, a British colony. The German East Africa forces won in places such as Kasighau, Taveta, Mile 27, Salaita, using guerilla war tactics. The Germans were pushed from Taveta towards Central Tanzania.

The British pursued the Germans further down south to Mozambique. From here, the battle spread to Malawi and finally Zambia. The war ended on November 25, 1914 in Zambia.