

BELGIAN EXPANSION INTO EAST AFRICA 1916-1924

Purpose: Present the history of the Belgian invasion and occupation of German East Africa using letters, cards and telegrams sent by civilians and Belgian military officers to tell the story. The exhibit unfolds from the first offensive in 1916 until the start of the Ruanda-Urundi mandate in 1924, which legitimized the new Belgian territory.

The invasion. An expanded Belgian Congo colonial army (the Force Publique), led by General Tombeur, moved into German East Africa May 1916, joining British forces in driving the German forces into the remote south. By September 1916 Belgian forces occupied the entire western part of the colony. The Force Publique, consisting of Congolese troops led by Belgian officers, was an effective fighting force.



Belgian officers and Congolese troops in East Africa

The occupation. The initial military authority under General Tombeur was replaced by a civilian Occupation Government February 1917. The occupation ended when the League of Nations Ruanda-Urundi mandate began 20 October 1924.

Importance. The exhibit gives an in-depth treatment of a little-known area which is not often exhibited. The elusive commercial mail shown adds personal depth to the history of the campaigns and the occupation.

Structure.

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| 1. Tabora campaign 1916-17 | 3. Occupation of German East Africa 1916-24 |
| 2. Mahenge campaign ... 1916-17 | 4. Ruanda-Urundi mandate 1924 |

Blue borders highlight the most important items