

Report

By

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FORCE

FOR THE PERIOD

AUGUST 4th 1914 to SEPTEMBER 15th, 1919

Working Transcript from photo copy of official report at Public Record Office at Kew

Introduction

This transcript is the main body of the official report on the East African Carrier Corps written by Oscar Ferris Watkins CMG CBE DSO (1877–1943) who, as director of the Military Labour Bureau, organised and ran the Corps, which at one point had over 120,000 men in active service. The Corps was a remarkable success and the report was written at the request of the Imperial War Office to record methods used to inform future British strategic planning.

Background

The Carrier Corps came into being to support a protracted war in the African interior where there were no roads or railways. On the outbreak of WW1 the German Military Forces in East Africa, under their commander General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, were cut off by British naval dominance of the Indian Ocean. Rather than surrender to the numerically superior British, the German forces fought a brilliant guerrilla campaign, moving rapidly and tying up large numbers of British, Indian and African troops for the duration of the war.

All food, equipment and ammunition had to be carried by humans and animals; vast numbers of porters were needed. Originally organised under an inflexible, classic British Regimental system, Watkins and his staff evolved more effective operational methods, using smaller units with specialist skills. Although this is a carefully worded official report, it reveals the M.L.B. had to fight hard to obtain medical care, adequate diet and compensation for the men under their charge, often in the face of stiff opposition. The report should also be read as a partisan defence of record of Oscar and his team at the M.L.B.

As Watkins notes in his summary, the long term impact of the Carrier Corps on African History and political struggle was considerable: over 400,000 men from East and West African colonies passed through the system, their experience altered their world view and sowed the seeds for African independence movements of the 20's and 30's.

Notes on the Text

This transcript was first made by Nicholas Knowles (Watkins' grandson) from photocopies of the of the original report held at the Public Record Office at Kew (CO 533/216). It was revised from a new set of photographs by Gilly Furse, researcher for Professor Michèle Barrett of Queen Mary University, London.

This document contains the main text of the report. There was an introduction and a number of appendices, not all have been transcribed as yet. Original pagination and spellings are retained. Lacunae and unintelligible words are highlighted in yellow and marked with ?.

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1. A report on the period 1914 to 1915 was furnished early in 1915. On the occasion of the transfer of control from the Indian Army to a General Staff Appointee in England. While this gives more detail on some points, it has been thought advisable to embody its main facts in a few paragraphs of the following report, thus giving one account of the whole. In the expanded statistics, however, the figures of the Carrier Corps of force B except where specially included, are omitted.
2. SECTION I – History

On the declaration of war on the 4th August, 1914, the mobilization of the regular troops, the K.A.R., was accompanied by the formation of a number of volunteer units, which either gave the regular troops a greater degree of mobility by acting as defence forces in the chief towns or were themselves available for [defence] or attack wherever required
3. Early in August approval was given to a plan of campaign which embraced a defensive line along the whole border from along which the available local troops, strengthened by Indian contingents were to be launched from Kajiado a point on the Magadi railway, in a direction which would threaten the head of the Tanga-Moschi railway, the base of which at Tanga was to be simultaneously attacked by a sea-borne force from India. This latter Force was known as Force B, while the composite local and Indian troops were known as Force C. (The lettering was done in India and presumably Force A went elsewhere.)
4. The transport of tropical Africa, with few roads fit for mechanical transport, and with fly belts impervious to animal transport has always been the native carrier. To obtain a large number of these was therefore an essential condition of mobility. The efforts of Provincial and District Commissioners, and of local residents, many of whom as owners or managers of large estates had wide influence with natives, coupled with a loyal support and appreciation of the influential native chiefs and of the natives themselves, resulted in an unprecedented flow of labour in a phenomenally short space of time.
5. Force C was destined to operate over plain country mostly free from fly, intersected at wide intervals by streams. It was thus able to use mounted troops and animal transport. In addition therefore to some carrier transport it required large numbers of drivers, herds, grooms, etc. All these were recruited and entered on a register at Nairobi.
6. Force B had to face a landing through mangrove swamps followed by the capture of a town standing surrounded by coconut groves, and a railway line running through plantations of rubber, sisal and other tropical products, over the swamps and creeks typical of the mouths of tropical streams. No transport other than carrier transport was possible, and on August 13th a D.C. and an A.D.C of the B.E.A. Civil Service

were instructed to place themselves at the disposal of the military to organise and control it

7. To these Officers were sent large numbers of men from the labour districts of B.E.A. and Uganda. Those from the former were sent down as they came in from the districts, with nominal rolls made out by the D.C. As however they had to break their journey at Nairobi many were able to desert, or to join themselves to friends serving with Force C, whose transport officers welcomed them, while others deserted from Force C to accompany friends going to Mombasa. The resultant confusion enabled many others to change their names with a view to ultimate desertion. Thus from the very commencement the nominal rolls sent out by District Commissioners differed

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materially from the military records of arrival, a fact which led ultimately to much friction and confusion.

8. The difficulties experienced by the Officers responsible were materially increased by the absence of a representative of Force B, and by the mystery enshrouding it. Its very existence was supposed to be unknown in the Protectorate, much more its date of arrival or destination. The responsible carrier Officers, with little military experience and no definite instructions, had to make the best provision they could. Scales of food and equipment and medical provision were made out, requirements bought, quarters arranged or improvised, and large numbers weeded out as medically unfit. All had to be ready by August 26th.
9. On August 27th the first contingent of 100 native carriers from Uganda under two Asst. D.C.'s arrived in Mombasa. Being organised in Uganda as a unit and sent down under the charge of European officers they were free from many of the initial troubles attending the B.E.A. contingents. They were amalgamated as one command with the E.A. Carriers.
10. By September 11th, Force B being still only a name, the Carrier Corps consisted of five units of 1000 men each, with two Administrative Officers, one Medical Officer and one Corps Headman, sub-divided into companies of 100 under two or three native headmen. This organisation was sanctioned by F.O. 42 dated 16/9/1914.
11. Up to this point the intention was to run Carrier Transport as a Civil Department under Civil Officers. It was however found impossible to obtain sufficient Civil Officers, and staff had to be recruited elsewhere. In order to maintain discipline and settle seniority, Military rank was given (F.O. 94 of October 5th, 1914).

12. Force B still did not arrive, and the intervening period was marked by native unrest and minor operations in the coast hinterland, for which Carrier Transport had to be supplied.
13. Recruiting continued, and the number of Corps swelled to nine. These were ordered to be ready by October 26th. An outbreak of cerebro-spinal-meningitis, and consequent quarantine, reduced the number of carriers available at that date to 7000 in sections of nine Corps.
14. From November 2nd-5th Force B arrived by sea from India and engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to effect a surprise landing at Tanga. A number of carriers were sent from Mombasa and others from Zanzibar. There were many casualties, and the survivors were eventually disembarked at Mombasa on November 8th after considerable sufferings in open lighters.
15. Defensive operations followed, and between November 9th-14th the various units of the Carrier Corps were distributed along the railway from Kajiado to Mombasa.
16. On November 14th Major-General Aitken assumed command of the forces in the B.E.A. and Uganda Protectorates, and the process of amalgamating the various services of Forces B and C commenced. On November 23rd instructions were received to reduce the Carrier Corps to five Corps.
17. On November 24th by F.O. 310, a Zanzibar Carrier Corps was formed, embodying a Zanzibar contingent which had accompanied Force B to Tanga. In December however, owing to the high rate of pay of island natives as compared with carriers from the interior, this force was disbanded.

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18. On December 18th by Command Order 48, the O.C. Carrier Corps Force B became D.A.D.T. Carrier Section, E.A.T.C. of the new composite force (C.O. 48) and was instructed to carry out a scheme for the establishment of recruiting depots along the Uganda railway. The Carrier Corps of Force B became amalgamated with the Carrier Transport and labour of Force C under the title Carrier Section E.A.T.C. (C.O. 111 of 15/1/15 as amended by C.O. 294 of 16/3/15.) Carrier depots were opened at Kisumu on December 22nd 1914, at Mombasa on January 14th 1915 and at Nairobi on February 25th, 1915.
19. Operations at this period consisted mainly of flying columns working from bases at Mombasa, Voi and Kajiado on the Railway, and Karungu on Lake Victoria, either to strengthen threatened points in our own line, or to attack weak points in the enemy defensive. The Railway Area Carrier transport came under the Carrier Section E.A.T.C. as from December 18th 1914, and the Lake area as from May 1st 1915. Operations in Uganda, west of the Lake, were independent. Also, from

February 4th to May 28th a police column operated against the Turkhana for which 3000 Carriers were provided.

20. Between January and May, 1915, the Uganda Carriers in B.E.A. were gradually repatriated, and in April an independent Carrier organisation was formed in Uganda for operations west of Lake Victoria under the title of the Uganda Transport Corps, Carrier Section (C.O. 338 dated 23/4/15)
21. During March and April the Voi area came into increasing prominence, as the enemy had established himself at Taveta, and a railway was being pushed out to meet him and threaten Moschi and the Moschi-Tanga railway.
22. With the construction of this railway, the character of the operations began to change. Natives recruited as Carrier Transport were employed on railway construction, and on the erection and maintenance of defensive posts and other labour, and a Carrier Corps might be a flying column one day and split into small gangs along a section of the railway line on the next. Control became very difficult, as an enemy attack on a post usually meant the dispersal into the bush of every unarmed African, who often seized this opportunity to desert, or more confusing still, to join friends at some other post or offer himself as a personal servant to some Officer or N.C.O. passing on column. During 1915 all operations were directed to the completion of this railway and a road alongside it, while large numbers of animal and mechanised transport vehicles were brought into the country.
23. By the end of 1915 it had become clear that the Carrier Section of the E.A.T.C. was far more a labour than a transport organisation. In February 1915, (C.O. 1359 of 15/2/1915) this was recognised by its separation from all Transport control and the creation of a new Department, the Military Labour Bureau which took over the whole of the staff, responsibilities, assets and liabilities of the Carrier Section. The former head of the Carrier Section was now graded as a Director of Military Labour, on the Administrative Staff of the C. in C. In July, 1916, a Further change was made by the transfer of all native pay arrangements, other than those of native troops, to the Department.
24. With the arrival of General Smuts and his staff early in 1916 an active offensive commenced. The Tanga-Moschi line was cut at Kahe, the line from Voi carried through to that point, and a quadruple advance began. The 1st Division under General Hoskins, with whom went the C. in C., followed the Tanga-Moschi line westwards to Korogwe, and then struck south

at Morogoro, which was occupied on August 26th, 1916. The 2nd Division pushed straight south from Moschi to cut the German Central Railway at Dodoma, occupied July 28th, 1916. A Coastal Column, co-operating with the Navy, took Tanga, established communications with Korogwe and then struck south along the coast to Dar-Es-Salaam, (occupied September 4th 1916) On the Lake a successful attack on Muanza opened the road to active co-operation with the Belgian Forces in the thrust for Tabora, which however fell to our Allies, and was only occupied by our Forces as a later diplomatic measure.

25. With the 1st and 2nd Division went M.L.B. Officers to obtain and organise labour which, while primarily intended to build up the roads and bridges for animal and mechanical transport, repeatedly saved the situation in the heavy rains. by bringing up military supplies. The troops comprising the coastal column depended entirely on Carrier transport from Bagamoyo, the Bishop of Zanzibar bringing over a Corps from Zanzibar which was of material assistance in the march on Dar-Es-Salaam. The Muanza force depended mainly on Carrier transport supplemented by a few motor vehicles which were placed under the control of the D.A.D.T Carrier Transport Uganda . Even the Belgians depended largely on a Corps of Carriers raised in Uganda and staffed by British Officers, known as the Belgian Congo Carrier Corps (G.R.O. 391 of 19/5/1918).
26. [????????] following the capture of the Central Dar-Es-Salaam-Ujiji railway, a [?desperate?] effort was now made to bring the enemy to bay before he could make good his retreat southwards. Roads were constructed or repaired from Mikesse a few miles east of Morogoro to Kisaki, (occupied September 15th, 1916) and the Rufiji River, and from Dodoma to Iringa, where a junction was made with General Northey's columns operating from the north-western border. Simultaneously with this, the Navy and Coastal troops occupied Mikindani on September 15th Lindi on September 16th and Kilwa on September 17th, 1916.
27. The lines of communication back to the Tanga-Moschi railway were now of unprecedented length, and the first step was to convert the Central Railway, which had been much damaged by the enemy, into the base line of the Forces. This was done as rapidly as possible, the situation being much ameliorated if not saved from absolute disaster, by the fitting of trolley wheels to transport vehicles of various kinds and running them as motor tractors or trawlers loaded with supplies. The first however only got to Dodoma on October 6th so it was some days before they were placing a full lift into Dodoma. The interval was one of short-rations and considerable suffering, particularly to the Forces at Dodoma, and, where the troops suffer the condition of the followers is apt to be pitiable.
28. With this the demand for labour to maintain the old lines of communication, to re-build the railway, and construct

defensive works and posts along it, to carry forward military stores with the advancing troops, and to construct roads and bridges and L. of C. posts behind them, so as to facilitate

[L. of C. = "Lines of Communication"]

motor transport, all work requiring to be done simultaneously, constituted an enormous strain on available resources.

Moreover the food situation at the front was such that it was impossible to divert motor-tractor transport for the forwarding of more labour even if it had been advi[s]able to add to the number of mouths forward before the daily supply lift was adequate to demands. In addition, the practice of relieving Carriers every six or nine months by fresh men, which had obtained throughout 1915, had proved impossible during the advance. By September, 1916, when they were suddenly called upon for a supreme effort on short-rations, the men were already debilitated and overworked. As a final torture the rains broke

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early, and converted large areas into swamp, throwing still more work onto the Carrier, who in one stretch on the Dodoma-Iringa road had to carry nine miles mostly waist-deep in water, much of it on raised duck-walks made of undressed poles laid side by side, while the Mikesse line was little better. The European staff also had a very high degree of morbidity, with a corresponding effect on the natives in their charge. The sufferings and casualties of this period from September 1916 to March 1917 will never be fully known.

29. That under these conditions desertion should be rampant is only to be expected, particularly among those natives, recruited in the occupied territory, who were near their homes or near some harbour of refuge. Many of those who attempted it must however have lost their lives, from wild animals or from unfriendly tribes en route, or from starvation and exposure to the rains. Of these no figures can be given.
30. To replace the casualties, every effort was made to tap local sources, but the natives of the newly occupied territory were not easily obtainable. Many of their able-bodied men had been taken, by force or otherwise, into the service of the enemy. The remainder had a well-developed system of avoiding conscription by abandoning their homes and fields, and living in the bush by the side of some isolated water-hole where game was plentiful.
31. On our first arrival many of these had hailed it as the end of hostilities, and had returned to their homes only to find that our need of Carrier transport and labour was no less urgent than that of the enemy, while wandering patrols of black mercenaries were equally violent and unscrupulous whether they fought for Englishmen or German. Thus shortly after leaving the Tanga-Moschi Railway an increasing scarcity of labour made itself felt.

32. This shortage was particularly acute at the ports, where all possible piers, jettys, and mechanised facilities for the handling of freight had been destroyed by the enemy, so that everything had to be man-handled. It became necessary to look outside East Africa for assistance. The first appeal was made in October 1916 to the Administrator, Seychelles, in response to which he recruited some 790 men, the first of them arrived on December 20th. These men were expert stevedores and harbour men but ultimately proved most unsuited to the climate, and after considerable mortality their repatriation commenced in April 1917. On Christmas Day 1916 an appeal was also sent to the War Office for a Carrier Corps from the West Coast. A total of 8992 men were sent, 3987 from Nigeria and 5005 from Sierra Leone. The first batch arrived in June 1917, but were at first quarantined for C-S-M.
33. The latter months of 1916 saw the withdrawal of the Lake Forces. The Belgian Carrier Corps and the Uganda Transport Corps were disbanded, and many of their personnel transferred to the M.L.C. which from January 1st 1917, controlled from its Headquarters at Dar-Es-Salaam every skilled and unskilled labourer, carrier and personal servant with the Forces. except those under General Norther [Northey] who was operating from the South and West.
34. It was anticipated that with the fall of the coast towns and the Central Railway no military advantage would accrue to the enemy by a continuation of hostilities, and on January 20th 1917, General Smuts relinquished the Command. It soon however became clear that the enemy was prepared to make every sacrifice to divert supplies, men and ships from the service of the European fronts.

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35. The plan of operations issued by General Staff on February 26th contemplated a very large increase of Carriers. The new campaign was in a country without roads or railways or large European settlements, which had been denuded by the enemy of supplies and of all able-bodied men who might be called upon by us to serve as Carriers. The enemy had the additional advantage of having no fixed base or centre, waging guerrilla warfare always on interior lines. It was necessary to surround them with a ring so strong at every point that they could nowhere breakthrough, and gradually to contract it round them. For such a campaign it was estimated that 160,000 natives would be required, which meant 16,000 per month replacement, and in March a special appeal was made by deputation to the Governments of B.E.A. and Uganda. In response to this the B.E.A. Government which had already for several months been supplying large numbers, provided 67,799 and the Uganda Government 10,934

before July 31st, 1917, at which date there were approximately 120,000 registered natives in the field, besides personal servants and casual labour. Owing to the difficulties of shipping such large numbers this number was the nearest approach ever made to the estimated requirements.

36. For these large numbers produced at such short notice the available staff, particularly pay and medical staff, was wholly inadequate. The former were procured from S. Africa, and men already obtained for back work were diverted to current accounts. The latter had to come mostly from England, and before their arrival the medical situation became acute.
37. As regards replacements the future was looking gloomy, since the Civil Administration of B.E.A., G.E.A. and Uganda was unanimous in declaring that further demands on native tribes would probably end in a rising and additional operations. In this quandary an appeal was made to the Portuguese Government to allow recruiting north of latitude 22, in the area hitherto closed to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the labour agency of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines. Arrangements were made in April with the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association to lend its experienced recruiting officers for operations in this area and a number of recruiting posts were established in Portuguese East Africa with promise of good results. The actual numbers supplied by this organisation amounted however to only 1612 since considerable obstruction was encountered from Portuguese Officials, which had by no means been overcome by the end of November, when the base of operations shifted to P.E.A.
38. By June 30th, 1917, the enemy was in an area bounded on the north by the Rovuma River (the Portuguese border) with a line of Portuguese posts along it, and on the east by the sea. The two enemy centres of resistance, so far as they had any, appeared to be Mahenge and Massassi. There was a British Force to the west from Songea along a northerly line towards Mahenge on which place our troops based on Iringa were advancing. This advance was later replaced by a Belgian advance from Kilossa with [which?] entered Mahenge on October 9th, and for which the Carrier organisation was also undertaken by the Military Labour Bureau under an agreement entered into on August 28th with the Belgian C. in C.
39. The British main attack was thrust in from the coast. One column advanced from Lindi on Massassi while the main attack which the Commander in Chief accompanied, was based on Kilwa, and after clearing up enemy troops who were endeavouring to hold the line of the Rufiji River, thrust in between Mahenge and Massassi. From this position any concentration of the enemy forces could be impeded and material assistances given to

the direct attacks on Massassi and Mahenge by a threat to outflank the defenders. By November 1917, the German position became untenable, and on November 25th Von Lettow, at the head of his remnant crossed the Rovuma River and attacked and captured the Portuguese post of Ngomano, thus effecting his escape from our encircling cordons.

40. At the end of July 1917, a small force under Naumann broke to the north of the railway line, which was not rounded up till October 1st. The operations against this force were mainly dependant on Carrier transport, while the country in which they were being carried on was for the time practically closed to recruiting.
41. During this period the part played by labour began to assume the character it subsequently retained. At each base after the landing had been effected landing-stages had to be built, godowns and shelters erected for stores, walls dug and pipes laid, and all the usual work carried out which is connected with the creation of a base. Then as the covering troops using Carrier transport moved forward roads, and at Kilwa a light line, were rapidly constructed behind them. During the process of construction they were fed by a chain of carriers. As soon as the road would bear the Carrier transport handed over the road to the mechanical and animal transport, and rushed ahead to begin another section. Where swamps intervened a carrier chain was frequently interposed between two sections of mechanical transport, till a causeway could be built or an alternative route found. Everywhere during any burst of tropical rain, other transport foundered, and the Carrier took its place, while his brother the labourer fought the depredations of the rain on the causeways and bridges of the roads.
42. Throughout 1917 shipping difficulties were most acute. While rear depots were crowded with men, those at the front were overstrained. In June 1917 a special transport was set at the disposal of the Department, but the condition of its engines materially reduced its usefulness, and it was subsequently replaced by another which proved to be in little better condition. A hospital ship was also retained entirely for Carriers.
43. On December 14th a base was opened at Port Amelia from which a column operated, while General Northey's Forces in the west moved eastward. Towards the end of May these Forces joined hands, and the enemy retreated with unprecedented rapidity of movement south of the Lurie river, and of the line opened by us with a base at Lumbo on the mainland opposite the island of Mozambique.

44. Main operations now shifted to this line, and the enemy's retreat was further threatened by the opening of a Base at Quelimane on June 26th. Till the end of August the enemy waged a guerrilla campaign, in which a very high developed system of obtaining intelligence enabled them to make a series of successful attacks on numerically inferior British posts. After the last of these, Numarroo on August 24th, they moved rapidly north-east and again crossed the Rovuma river on September 27th and 28th. From that point they moved rapidly westward into Northern Rhodesia, and were repulsed in an attack on Fife on November 1st. News of the Armistice of November 11th did not reach the opposing forces in time to prevent an engagement at Marama on November 12th, and the campaign was not finally closed till the surrender of Von Lettow, on November 25th, in accordance with the terms of the Armistice in Europe.

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45. Meanwhile the comparatively restricted area of these operations had rendered it advisable to concentrate under one control the Administrative arrangements for all the British Forces engaged, and on August 30th instructions were received to embody in the M.L.C. the Carrier labour arrangements for Norforce, as the Force was called which since the beginning of the campaign had under General Northey been operating from a base in Zomba. Officers were accordingly sent to Headquarters at Zomba, and to pen a recruiting base at New Langenburg. The difficulties were however enormous, the transport alternatives being to go round by Beira and up the main line of Norforce communication, or round by Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa, or across a country infested by enemy patrols in which touch had to be gained with constantly moving units. Consequently the process of absorption and registration of all Norforce-carriers was not completed by the Armistice.
46. During this period the actual Carrier and Labour work has already been described, and is given in more detail under "Organisation". A line of communication through tropical Africa varies only in the permutations of forest, river, desert, swamp and scrub.
47. TOTALS
- During the campaign a total of 394, 880 natives were registered with the M.L.C. This figure does not include about 8624 in the B.E.A. and Uganda Carrier Corps of 1914, nor any of General Northey's Carriers. In addition to them, large numbers of Casual Labour were used in the later stages of the campaign. The U.T.C. Carrier Section and the Belgian Congo Carrier Corps were separate organisations, and their figures also are not included.

48. CASUALTIES

Throughout the campaign the native showed a high degree of susceptibility to stomach-trouble, and succumbed easily to the tropical fevers such as malaria, cerebro-spinal-meningitis and to these most of the casualties were due. Owing to the large numbers of casual labour and personal servants with the Forces, of whose recruitment no record is available without an expensive and elaborate analysis of pay cards while their deaths are apt to be included in hospital records, it is not very easy to get an exact percentage. The balance, is however weighed down on the other side by the proportion of desertions and missing who are unrecorded deaths. All that can be said is that ten per cent of all recruitments is approximately right.

49. In March 1918 the name Military Labour Bureau, which had been found to give rise in England to a misconception of the very diverse duties of the Unit, was altered to Military Labour Corps, as being more expressive of its executive functions and field activities. These however were more widely extended than the name implied. During the campaign in Portuguese East Africa its Officers, in addition to duties of Labour supervision and organisation of transport, had to undertake many of the duties performed in G.E.A. by Political Officers. Recruiting Officers were appointed who going outside the area occupied by our Forces, established relations with native chiefs, often in face of determined opposition from local magnates whose interests were threatened, and in constant danger from enemy patrols, and obtained labour in sufficient quantities to maintain the Forces. They bought locally large quantities of food and poured it into supply depots along the line. Both these functions materially reduced shipping requirements.

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They also frequently sent in intelligence of value. The Pay Officers of the Corps, in addition to the large disbursements of small amounts necessary for these purposes, acted as financial and Field Disbursing Officers for the whole Force, doing excellent work among the difficulties of English, Indian, Portuguese Royalist and Portuguese Republican coinage, with a fluctuating rate of exchange and a depreciated paper currency, and different regulations in the areas respectively controlled by the Portuguese Government or by Trading Companies. From July 1st 1916 to the end of August 1919 they handled £2,400,512. 4.4, (of which £441,777,18.1 was recoverable from other Paymasters, and the rest was staff and native pay), with a very small percentage of loss.

The Carrier Officers constantly acted as the Senior Transport Officers of the numerous columns operating against the enemy, or used their local knowledge to cut new and shorter

routes to their objectives, or to take convoys of food right across the area infested by the enemy to our troops the other side. Towards the end of the campaign there was no operation in which some Officer of the Unit did not play an essential part.

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SECTION II - ORGANISATION

50. The outbreak of hostilities in British East Africa caught the country entirely unprepared for offensive hostilities. Army Field Manuals were at first unobtainable, and when finally obtained were practically silent on that speciality of African warfare, Carrier Transport on a large scale. Local defensive arrangements had apparently never envisaged the possibility of a long line of communications by Carriers, or of operations on any scale larger than a few companies.
51. Thus when the order was first given to organise Carrier Transport on a large scale, the problem confronting the Officers concerned was one the formidable aspect of which was only intensified by study of the question. To feed 20 porters on the country is, in many places, a strain on village resources. To feed and water thousands, or to send food for thousands along a line extending even from the Uganda Railway to the German border was a problem of appalling magnitude especially when such food must itself be borne by Carriers whose load is only 50 pounds of which each man himself eats 2 pounds per day, thus giving him, even unburdened by other stores, an outward radius of 13 days only
52. However, the order given, the first step was plainly to get the men. Measures taken to this end have been described in Section 1, paras 6, 7 and 8.
53. The next step was organisation. Some idea of the purpose for which the organisation was required was manifestly advisable in the interests of efficiency, and for Force C this was obtainable, but the mistake was made of creating no central organisation to deal with native matters. Names were indeed entered on a register, but no provision was made to notify the registrar of deaths, discharges or desertions. Thus the register was of little value except as a record of recruitment. The subsequent history of the native was bound up with that of the Unit to which he was subsequently attached, and the accuracy of the record depended entirely on the attention given to it by the individual initiative of some officer of the Unit.
54. THE CARRIER CORPS
For Force B a Carrier organisation had perforce to be created because there was no other organisation. Only one

Representative of the Force was in the country, and he was unprepared to take the responsibility of giving information or advice. Complete mystery, as far as the Carrier Corps Officers were concerned, enshrouded the date of arrival, the destination and the subsequent objective of the Force. They had to work completely in the dark.

55. Under these circumstances it would be natural that they should adopt a regimental organisation. The natives were formed into Corps of 1000 each under 2 European Officers. These again were subdivided into companies of 100 each under 3 Native Headmen. A Corps Headman who combined the functions of a native Adjutant and Sergeant Major, completed the regimental analogy. The first establishment was five of these Corps known individually and collectively as the Carrier Corps.
56. With the delay in the arrival of the Force originally scheduled for the end of August, but actually arriving two months later, increasing difficulties were encountered, some of which are described in later paragraphs. Demands were made for Carrier transport for minor operations, which separated the men from their units. It became evident that for any action on a small scale, the Corps organisation was impossibly cumbersome.
57. For any lesser Unit, however, staff was wholly unobtainable; two Officers, of whom in a fever area only one might be expected to be fit for duty, were already far too little, but till the intentions of the Force were revealed it was no use asking for more.

58. THE CARRIER SECTION, E.A.T.C.

After the defeat at Tanga the two Forces were amalgamated into one command. All local transport was formed into the East African Transport Corps, which had animal, mechanical and Carrier transport sections. The Carrier Corps of Force B, combined with the Carriers and labour Force C, became the Carrier Section E.A.T.C.

59. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SYSTEM

The change brought into conflict two opposite systems of control of Carrier transport and labour, the unit control of Force C and the central control of Force B. The first had the advantage, from the point of view of the unit, of independence from outside authority. It had the disadvantage that the units competed with each other in the labour market, often writing on each other's deserters, with no central recruiting agency to

trace deserters and replace casualties. From the point of view of the Carrier it had every disadvantage, except that of facility of desertion. No special Officer was detailed to look After Carriers or labour. The Officer-in-Charge of a piece of work engaged his own men, and followed his own methods of looking after them. Officers were changed frequently and the care with which records and accounts were kept varied enormously with the Officer, as did the attention paid to the feeding, shipping and housing of the men. The way the pay was handled is detailed elsewhere.

60. The new system set itself to remedy these defects. A Headquarters was established which issued instructions standardising the treatment of native followers and sent out Officers to enforce those instructions. Under this there were practically two separate departments, one consisting of the old officer [Carrier?] Corps of Force B, strengthened by the addition of 2 N.C.O.'s per 1000, and the other of three Carrier Depots, which obtained recruits from the Civil Administration, registered

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them, and issued them to all Units, including the Carrier Corps. Kisumu Depot was opened on 22/12/1914 in anticipation of sanction Mombasa on January 14th, 1915 and Nairobi on February 25th 1915.

61. FINAL ABANDONMENT OF CORPS SYSTEM

This organisation continued throughout 1915. The change in circumstances however which was outlined in Section 1, para 22 brought a progressive change in internal arrangements, chief of which was the gradual abolition of the Carrier Corps.

Throughout this year, the Carrier Corps Commandant constantly found himself with too few or too many companies, issuing men in numbers less than a unit to columns, men who never returned but were finally reported as having arrived at some remote post where they were practically absorbed into another Corps. The successful enemy attack on Kasigau on December 6th, 1915, by the sudden dispersal of men away from the Unit Commanders to threatened points on the Uganda Railway and the confusion in Corps records that followed may be said to have been the death blow to the system. It became evident that we had to devise some simpler and more elastic method of record than the old company rolls, and some more adaptable Unit than the Corps.

62. THE "GANG" SYSTEM

At this time however, all re-organisation was awaiting the advent of a new Commander-in-Chief and Staff from England. All that could be done for the moment was a temporary allocation of responsibilities. Natives throughout the scattered Corps were put under the control of the Carrier Officer at the post

where they happened to be, and divided into gangs of 25 under a headman. These gangs now became the Unit. Fresh gang rolls were made out and the old company rolls called in. This system with the great advantage that the small unit was not so likely to be split up as a larger one, proved to be by no means free from disadvantages. The small unit did get split up. It was far more difficult to trace it[s] whereabouts, and it was equally difficult, and far more essential than it had been in the larger unit, to replace casualties by men of the same tribe> To keep records of promotion and transfer correctly was also very difficult.

63. With the passing of the Carrier Transport Unit the character of the work as labour rather than transport became still more marked. Men regarded in terms of "lift" are merely an expensive form of transport. They have the one advantage that replacement costs little. They have the disadvantages that they require food carried, and expect clothing and pay, medical treatment and some compensation for disablement. They have moreover a human intellect mainly used for shirking their work, or avoiding sanitary and other regulations which contravene their habits and customs.

For their proper control a staff of specialists was essential, men whose activities were primary directed to the comprehension and care of the native, while they were able if required to make the transport calculations for a column or line of communication, to supervise the output of unskilled work employed on construction and maintenance, or to advise on labour requirements, and indicate unnecessary waste. For specialists such as these the establishment of an ordinary transport unit made no provision, while to Senior Transport Officers the most ordinary proposals for the welfare of the native translated into terms of cost per pound of lift meant an expenditure from which they blenched.

64. In January, 1916, as the result of representations from all quarters that the European personnel was inadequate, the number

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of N.C.O's was increased to 4 per thousand on lines of Communications.

65. MILITARY LABOUR BUREAU

On the arrival of General Smuts and his Staff, reorganisation resulted in the separation of the old Carrier Transport Section from the East African Transport Corps, and its formation into a separate Military Labour Bureau under a Director of Military Labour (Command Order 1359 of 15/2/16). This Command Order put within the scope of the Department "all matters relating to

natives of B.E.A. and G.E.A. already in Military employ or who may be taken into Military employ during the continuance of local operations with the exception of the K.A.R. and of the native companies of the East Africa Pioneers, and such other exceptions as may be notified in Command Orders from time to time”.

66. The first establishment approved for this Bureau allowed to divisions in the field the 2 Officers and 4 N.C.O.'s per thousand already allowed to Lines of Communications. This establishment of 2 Officers and 4 N.C.O.'s per thousand continued throughout the campaign as the basis for staff in the field.
67. From July 1st, 1916, a further change was effected by the transfer of the Native Pay Section of the E.A.P. Corps to the Military Labour Bureau. The evils attendant on separation are more fully detailed in the sections dealing with pay, and it is sufficient to say here that centralisation was at once attended by considerable economies. Units no longer able to draw money for unregistered labour, were forced to register, and their establishments were inspected and queried. They were compelled to get D.A. & Q.M.G.'s authority for their requirements and a systematic division of available labour among units was substituted for the competitive scramble of earlier days.
68. With the advance into German East Africa a material addition was made to the duties of the M.L.B. Officers. Not only had labour to be recruited for road and railway work at high speed with the assistance of Political Officers who were themselves equally ignorant of the conditions and unknown to people of the country, but as each column came in accompanied by hordes of local followers who had replaced casualties among its carriers, these replacements had to be scrutinized, registered, equipped and rationed.
69. This preliminary work was done by the Divisional Labour Officer, the Senior of whom with each division was graded as Deputy Assistant Director of Military Labour. The advancing columns recruited labour as required. As soon as possible the Labour Officer got hold of it, and referred it to the General Officer commanding of the division who authorised the past expenditure, and gave instructions as to future disposal. If it was surplus it was paid off out of Divisional Imprest. If it was only temporarily required it was retained until it would be paid off. If it was permanently on establishment it was registered on the books of the Military Labour Bureau at the first opportunity. As the Division advanced the Lines of Communication took over. The first duty of these Officers was to scrutinize the labour left behind at various posts, obtaining authority for requirements from the I.G.O. and discharging all surplus hangers-on. Close behind the Division at a point near the head of the Lines of Communications, came

the advanced Depot Officer. It was his business to get the labour records in final order for analysis and audit, and to leave behind him as he advanced sub-depots at points in recruiting areas conveniently situated to serve as repatriation depots. These were kept open or closed down as the trend of hostilities required.

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70. The seizure of the Dar-Es-Salaam-Ujiji Railway in July August and September to which all departments had looked forward as promising a pause for reconstruction and re-organisation, proved instead as has already been stated in section 1, paras 26 and 27 an occasion for additional effort.
71. The breaking of the rains early in 1917 as related in Section 1, para 28, threw an enormous burden onto the Department. For this first time, except on a small scale between Mbuyuni and Tsava in 1915, Lines of Communication had to be maintained entirely by Carrier Transport. A staging system was adopted. At each of a series of posts established along Lines of Communication, about 12 miles apart, sufficient Carriers were maintained to carry the daily lift half-way to the next post in each direction, where Carriers from that post met them. All returned to the same huts every night. Their load was thus reduced by the weight of their personal effects, which could be left behind, and they found a dry and sanitary camp and ready cooked food. It is of course obvious that the forward lifts decreased as the wayside posts were rationed so that the nearer the base the larger the post.

72. INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM

The significance of the change involved must not be lost sight of. The first organisation was the large unit, the Corps of 1000 men and the company of 100. The next was the small Unit the gang of 25 under a headman, supervised by the Officer of the Post. The third and final stage was that even this was unnecessary. The gang was retained indeed as a convenient working unit for 1 headman and 1 cook to handle in camp, but the gang rolls were dropped, men were posted or went out to work in the exact numbers required, and were transferred and evacuated and paid as individuals not as members of any unit.

73. CASUAL LABOUR.

With the retreat of the enemy and the pacification of the country a great economy was effected in the more populated areas by the use of local labour. Neighbouring Chiefs or Headmen undertook contracts for the delivery from point to point of a definite daily lift. The food for such of these Carriers as lived near was brought from their homes by their women and children thus effecting a marked decrease in the lift, which was also lightened and confidence increased by the purchase of local supplies. On the Mikasse line this system so far developed that the local

native at last undertook almost the whole burden of communication, supplying his own requirements besides a surplus of food for transport to other areas.

74. At the head of these lines, with each Force or Column, went Military Labour Corps Officers and N.C.O.'s in numbers proportional to the labour or carrier transport employed, on the system used when we were advancing in Divisional formation.
75. This threefold organisation Depot, Line of Communication and Column transport was retained in its general outlines to the end. As above explained its outstanding feature was fluidity of unskilled labour and Carrier transport. A man never belonged to a unit. His association with each column or post was purely temporary. Wherever he went he found a camp where he was looked after, and an Officer who at once assumed complete responsibility for and control over him. He had always a home and a job.
76. This elasticity was not attained without a high development of methods of pay and record, which are described later.
77. It is necessary however first to touch on various organisation of skilled labour, Chief among these was the Gun Carrier formation

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78. GUN CARRIERS

By February 1915 the need for specially trained men of exceptional physique for carrying machine guns and ammunition into the firing line had made itself felt, and a beginning was made by the recruitment of 150 men who were put into a Depot at Nairobi styled the Gun Carrier Depot, and given a course of physical drill and training in the work required of them. Under the Officer selected this experiment proved so successful that recruiting was continued. By November 1918 12129 men had passed through the various Gun Carrier Depots, being issued in the first instance in teams of 10, afterwards increased to 15, under a headman, and subsequently as replacements in the same manner as other issues of labour.

79. STRETCHER BEARERS AND WARD ORDERLIES

Under C.O. 111 and 249 of 1915 it was provided that Bearer companies were to be formed independent of the Carrier Section E.A.T.C. No machinery for the training of these was provided, till the success of the Gun carriers led to a suggestion that a similar formation of stretcher bearers should be created. This was done, and men who were not quite up to the physical standard of gun-carriers were retained and drilled as stretcher bearers in the Gun Carrier Depot. The experiment was completely successful. By November 1918, 9617 stretcher bearers had passed through the books of the Depot. Under this name

were included Ward Orderlies, Dressers, etc. who passed on from one Depot to one of the Carrier Hospitals for training.

80. CARRIER POLICE

In the early days of the Mikasse Rufiji line the severity of the conditions led to wholesale desertion on a scale that considerably hampered operations. This led to the formation of a force of armed Police, known as Carrier Police, whose original duties of preventing desertion were soon augmented by their relieving fighting troops of various guards over Government property and by the more usual duties of Military Police wherever large quantities of labour were employed. The final establishment was 1500 men.

81. These were the three large skilled labour formations maintained by the Unit. Its activities however included the recruitment suitable for every form of work, Motor Drivers, Sweepers, Cattle Herds, Grooms, Officers' Servants, Blacksmiths Strikers, Tailors, Saddlers, Telegraph men, Winchmen, Watchmen, Stevedores and so on.

At all times, among these many branches, the K.A.R. the A.N.M.C. and the E.A.M.T.C. had a free hand to persuade recruits to join their ranks, and many of the most promising men of the M.L.C. became soldiers of these formations.

82. WHARF LABOUR

Separate organisations too were required for wharf work. In the course of the campaign the Force had sea bases at Kilindini, Tanga, Bagamoyo, Dar-Es-Salaam, Kilwa, Lindi, Port Amelia, Mozambique and Quelimane. At Kilindini and Dar-Es-Salaam in particular work continued in night and day shifts for many months. The proportion of Officers and N.C.O.'s depended on the number of shifts and the distribution of the pairs. [*piers?*].

83. BUILDING SECTION

A very high degree of skill was also attained by a section which was formed to deal with the housing of the force in temporary shelters or "bandas" of poles and grass or coconut thatch, and which in Dar-Es-Salaam and other large centres was able entirely to relieve the R.E. of this work. [*Royal Engineers?*]

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84. CASUAL LABOUR

Casual labour was used largely for such work as town sanitation in Dar-Es-Salaam and elsewhere, and for emergencies in which it was necessary to augment the authorised nucleus of regular labour. It was worked on a Card System each labourer having a Card with thirty spaces. When the man had worked thirty days, or an earlier period if required he surrendered his Card and received his pay.

Where necessary equipment was issued to this labour which equipment was recovered on discharge. Whether it was rationed or not was a matter of the terms on which it agreed to work, which varied with local conditions.

85. WEST AFRICANS

Mention has been made of the West African contingents. These, when they arrived, were organised in companies of 500. All the Nigerians formed one Corps, while the men of Sierra Leone and Gambia formed another. As they were primarily intended to provide Carrier Transport for the Nigerian brigade the experiment was tried of keeping them in these units. The difficulties of 1914 at once reproduced themselves. Even with the additional advantage of an experienced Headquarters and a chain of established posts and depots, it was found impossible to prevent men from getting separated from their companies, or to forward those who were so separated. After a few months trial it became necessary to institute throughout these contingents the system already in use for East African carriers.

86. NON-EUROPEAN CLERKS

Mention too must be made of the work involved in the registration and control of non-European Clerks for the Force, other than those on the strength of regular Indian units. Engaged at first by the Unit which required them, these clerks, of Indian Goanese, Seychellois and African extraction, soon found that the demand exceeded the supply, and competitive bidding between Units ensued. Clerks discharged from one Unit for misconduct were taken on by another next day at a higher rate of pay, and there was no central authority till in 1915 the Paymaster Natives stepped into the breach and formed a central registry and graded the Clerks. With the transfer of native pay to the M.L.B. this registry was further developed, and regulations were gradually evolved. In 1917 the increasing demand led to the importation of clerks from India, with the responsibilities involved in their repatriation.

87. ROAD CORPS

An organisation which, while not under the control of the M.L.C., drew one officer and all its labour from that Unit, was the Road Corps. There were two of these, each consisting of 1000 natives, and forming the nucleus of skilled labour required to leaven the mass.

88. RECRUITING

Throughout the campaign the recruiting in the British Protectorate was done on one system. The Military authorities applied to the Civil authorities for the Labour they required. The Civil authorities decided the areas of recruitment and the quota to be furnished by each. The burden imposed on District

Staffs was very severe, and was in most cases uncomplainingly borne.

89. In 1915 it became necessary to introduce in B.E.A. powers of conscription, which was done by the Native Followers Recruitment Ordinance, No.29 of 1915. A material economy followed in the reduction of the rates of pay, which in the effort to induce men to join showed a marked upward tendency.

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90. Early in 1917 to facilitate recruiting the services of Mr J. Ainsworth, C.M.G., now Chief Native Commissioner, were placed at the disposal of the Military. To him are due many improvements in the long lines of road in B.E.A. along which recruits came and returned, and in the care of the convalescent sick. The recruiting of March to July 1917, was, as will be seen from the figures, a tribute to his organisation.
91. In Uganda recruiting continued throughout to be done administratively by the chiefs wielding customary powers, under the instruction of the Civil Administration.
92. In G.E.A. the method with the first advance has been described - para 69. As the country came under the Administrator endeavours were made to obtain men through the District Political Officers, but the employment of selected recruiting officers was throughout a more successful method.
93. In P.E.A. the organisation has also been described. The work there had to be done with the outward support of the higher Portuguese authorities, but with no sympathy from the lower Officials, and often in the face of their open or surreptitious opposition.
94. PAY
- The accounting for so great a horde comprised mainly of illiterate barbarians was no small matter. Not one in a thousand could write. Few could calculate with any exactitude what was due to them. Many had no appreciation of the importance of preserving their recorded identity, and adopted any name that struck their fancy or was applied to them by the Indians or Europeans with whom they came into contact, or was taken by them on their adoption of the Mohammedan or Christian religion forgetting the name which they had originally given when they registered.
95. During 1914, so far as force B was concerned, little difficulty was experienced. Owing to the lack of information as to the requirements of Force B, and the general impression that the campaign in German East Africa would only be of 3 to 6 months duration, arrangements were of a somewhat makeshift nature. Each Corps Commandant was given a pay roll which was the record. As a safeguard against misappropriation of cash or loss of rolls

he was instructed to notify all alterations in the rate of pay and all payments to Corps Headquarters where entries were made on a duplicate roll. Cash was drawn from the Civil Treasury. It is obvious that this system, while it worked perfectly well so long as the men were kept in their units, broke down as soon as labour in broken quantities had to be supplied.

96. With the establishment of Carrier Depots the responsibility for keeping a pay roll was taken off the Corps Commandant who drew money as before from the Treasury, and notified payments to the Depot from which the man came. This Depot kept a ledger in which payments were debited. For discharge a man was returned to his Depot of origin where he received his balance.
97. On March 18th 1915, the East African Pay Corps came into being, which under Command Order 275 of 30/3/15 took over the accounting staff of the Carrier Section, East African Labour Corps, and all responsibility for accounting. The original ledger system remained unaltered, but a copy of the payments was rendered monthly to the Paymaster, East African Corps Nairobi, who was himself an officer of the E..... reporting direct to the Chief Paymaster. (Command Order No of 20/6/1915).

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98. While in theory this system appeared admirable, in practice it left much to be desired. The method of control of labour by units referred to in Section II, para 59, which had been employed previous to this G.R.O was hard to eradicate. As regards pay the main defects had been that cash was drawn from a variety of sources, and some of the drafts only came in months later through the Civil Treasury, while vouchers for payments were not always sent in, and when sent in were not always clear and by the time queries could be sent out the Officer in charge had been changed or the unit had moved on or the man in question had died or deserted, and endless delays ensued. The new system however was not established without a struggle. Units other than Transport which had managed their own labour resented interference and saw no reason why they should follow the instructions of a Transport Officer, such as the Paymaster E.A.T.C. [G?] as regards accounts, or of the D.A.D.T. (Carrier Section) as regards method. Moreover divided control had its usual attendant evils. Pay questions were closely bound up with recruiting and discharge, with the number of natives employed etc., but it was possible for Units to have on their pay numbers of natives who were not on any Carrier Depot books and of whom the D.A.D.T. Carrier Section had no knowledge.
99. The increasing proportion of labour to carriers proper detailed in paras 22, 23 and 63, accentuated these evils, and the formation of the Military Labour Bureau in February, 1915,

was followed by the formation of a special branch of the E.A.P.C to deal with natives in March, 1916, which branch was finally transferred to the new Department as from July 1st 1916.

100. From an accounting point of view the importance of the change thus effected lay in the fact that the central office was now able to issue instructions that all cash used for the payment of natives was to be drawn from one of its branches, or at any rate notified to them at once. It thus became possible to call for an account of any imprest that appeared to be too long outstanding, instead of as formerly being dependent upon such accounts as Officers chose to send in of monies they had originally drawn from other and entirely disconnected sources. Imprests and disbursements could therefore be reconciled, and errors detected.
101. From an administrative aspect it now became impossible for Units to employ for long labour for which authority had not been obtained, since the Paymaster of the M.L.B. refused to issue cash for, or enter payments against, a native who was not on the books of a Carrier Depot, or otherwise specially authorised.
102. Increase of efficiency resulted in added responsibility and gradually the Pay department sub-divided into specialising sections. By degrees the accounting for all units employing Africans, except the King's African Rifles, was taken over by the Native Pay Section who dealt with such varied Units as the East Africa Mechanical Transport Corps, the African Native Medical Corps, the East African Veterinary Corps, and the Scouts and native intelligence agents throughout the Forces. The system adopted, as staff became available, was the distribution of Paymasters at the various base Carrier Depots, and by degrees these came to be used for making payments for Indian and European Units till the Department were finally asked to take over the duties of Field Disbursing Officers for the whole Force. This meant that they did the whole of the Field financial work. The Carrier Depot Pay Office at each post became the recognised Treasury of the whole Force, of which every payment voucher went through the Head Office at Dar-Es-Salaam. This led to an Accounts Adjustment Branch, a clearing house which used the vouchers going through its hands to check and reconcile monthly with interest all payments made during the month, and to recover from the various Paymasters of the Imperial, Indian,

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South African and Nigerian Contingents. The gradually increasing staff demanded by the multifarious activities of the Corps also necessitated a special branch to deal with Staff Pay of all non-natives. These three branches dealt with current work while a fourth section was specially formed to straighten

out the tangle in which the 1914-15 accounts had got before the situation had been appreciated.

103. FINGER IMPRESSION SECTION

Reference has been made in para 7 to the difficulties of identification. The original method was a numbered disc to which, for Gun Carriers, was added a pay book. The facility with which these were lost or exchanged by their illiterate bearers was the cause of much confusion and loss in the accounts and shortly after the formation of the M.L.B. staff was sanctioned for a finger impression section which fully justified its existence by the resultant saving to the State. Desertions were prevented and fraud constantly detected, while many unfortunates whose death or lunacy occurred under circumstances which left their identity obscure were identified and credited with their dues. If a man lost his identity disc he was at once re-numbered at the first Depot at which he applied for pay, and given a small advance. His finger prints were sent to the central office which identified his previous number and caused his previous credits to be transferred to his new number. On February 7th 1919 the number of lost discs traced and re-registrations detected by this system alone reached 10,000.

104. Under the perfected system it thus became possible for a native, wherever he might be, to draw pay. This was at once notified on a voucher to the Paymaster who supplied the cash, who was responsible for notifying the Depots concerned. At those Depots a Pay Card was kept for each man, on which the debit was entered. On the man's arrival at his Depot for discharge he was paid the balance to his credit, or if there was reason to believe that, owing to his evacuation by Hospital Ship or other causes he had outrun a post which might contain a debit against him, a telegraphic enquiry was sent. The proportion of loss on this system was very small.

105. STATISTICAL SECTION

The reorganisation of Forces B and C into one command at the end of 1914 already described, caused the disbandment or reduction of some local units and a re-distribution of duties. Native followers attached to these units were handed over to other units, without any record of transfer at any central office. (Section II, para 53) Nor did this process end here, as it was many months before indiscriminate exchange of followers between units could be checked and it was at no time absolutely prevented. The difficulty became apparent shortly after the opening of Nairobi Depot in February 1915, when the records of Force C were taken over by the Carrier Section, East Africa Transport Corps. The publication of Command Order 322 made some system of "Unit" record still more necessary, and in May 1915 a Non-Commissioned Officer was put onto the task of compiling and keeping to date a "Unit Ledger". This was the commencement of the Statistical Section. Its functions at

first were to keep records of sanctioned establishments and draw attention to over-strength, to check, compile and summarize deaths, with cause and locality, to summarise total enlistments, discharges and desertions. By slow degrees it widened its scope, as its importance and value began to be appreciated, till by the middle of 1916 it was doing, with a very small staff, most of the work of 3rd Echelon so far as the native follower was concerned.

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106. DEATHS

As has been said part of the duty of the Statistical Section was to compile a list of Deaths. These Lists gave all possible information about a man, and were then sent to the Paymaster to fill in the amount due to him. The completed List was printed and sent to the District Commissioners who were authorised to pay credit to the next-of-kin on application.

107. CREDIT LISTS

Similar action could not be taken with regard to deserters and missing men because of the difficulty of getting confirmation of desertion. A native weary of one job, or meeting friends employed with another unit or column, would leave his own unit to follow his fancy, or would give himself a few days leave in some neighbouring village and then in another unit, perhaps as servant to some N.C.O. To Europeans newly arrived all Africans look alike, and he might escape discovery for weeks. Even when discovered an additional hand was always welcome, and it might be many days before the unit to which he had attached himself saw fit to report him, (*) or he might leave them and repeat the process elsewhere. It is therefore only at the close of the campaign that reliable lists of missing men, with the credits due to them, can be compiled.

108. PRE-AUDIT SECTION

In 1918 the Director of Military Audit drew attention to the value of these records as a check on the Paymaster's books ...

[THREE LINES OBSCURED BY CORRECTION SLIP]

...to overpayment, and in expediting the final closing of all accounts, the PreAudit and Statistical Section has rendered invaluable service.

109. EQUIPMENT

The equipping of so many natives over so wide an area in itself required careful organisation. In 1914, before any system of Ordinances was evolved, the Carrier Corps called for its own tenders and placed its own orders. The work was later taken over by a Supply Officer of the East African Forces, who in turn handed over to an Ordnance Officer. On the amalgamation of

the forces the Indian Supply and Transport Corps at first dealt with equipment, being relieved of it in turn by the Army Ordnance Corps. During all this period units and depots drew as they required on the nearest source of supply. In April, 1916, the Department obtained its own Quartermaster who ultimately became to all intents and purposes the Native Equipment Branch of the Army Ordnance Corps. He drew in bulk from the Ordnance. Under him each Carrier Depot Officer ran an Equipment Store from which he equipped his recruits or made replacements to the columns passing through his depot, while every unit throughout the country indented for its native equipment on the nearest Carrier Depot. The only central organisation specialised for equipment was 2 Officers and 3 British Other Ranks, who were at one time equipping over 120,000 men.

110. FOOD

One of the first problems with which the responsible Officers had to deal with was that of food. The Carrier in Africa being of immemorial antiquity, the scale of feeding him was laid down by tradition. This tradition, however, gradually evolved through ages during which caravans were limited in number by water conditions to a maximum of 200 or 300 men, soon proved itself unsuited to war conditions. Not only had the advent of the

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railway practically done away with the old professional Carrier used to roughing it, but trade competition with its attendant evils of adulteration and cheap wholesale production had put into the market a class of maize flour (the staple diet) far inferior to that ground by native women for home use.

Among the raw back-country natives diarrhoea and dysentery which were to prove themselves far more deadly enemies than any German Force, soon made their appearance, and spread with a rapidity due largely to the unsanitary habits of an undisciplined horde cooped for the first time in their lives in a limited perimeter. The attention of the Officers of the Carrier Corps was at once directed to the food. The ration at first issued based on the practice of the country, was wholly inadequate, and far below that allowed to African Troops, nor was public opinion, which, in the absence of an expert native affairs department, largely guided the newly-arrived Military Officers, sufficiently educated to consider the extension of the troop ration to the carrier. The chief mouthpiece of this public opinion was the central Committee of Suppliers composed entirely of leading business men, which sat at Nairobi armed with advisory and executive functions as regards the purchase of supplies. With this Committee the officers of the Carrier Corps found themselves sharply at issue as early as November, 1914, on the subject of the

quality of the maize flour, each party claiming to have behind it the weight of expert opinion. The Carrier Corps lost the battle, but by December its Officers were able to get sanction for a better balanced diet, and to add to the equipment a finely-meshed sieve which did much to protect the native stomach from the deleterious particles of course-ground maize, though unfortunately they lost in quantity.

111. The difficulty of obtaining maize up to a reasonable standard increased with the increase of African followers. Local mills were not as a rule fitted with the winnowing machinery which South African experience had shown to be necessary to produce a flour which the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce would accept for their labour. Local interests however strongly opposed any importation of flour or alteration of grade, and it was not till 1916, after the complete change of Staff that followed on the arrival of General Smuts, that the continued representations of Carrier Officers had any effect, and orders were given to import all flour for human consumption from South Africa. It is only fair to say however that in 1914 the opinions of Carrier Officers were worth no more than those of other residents. By 1916 their experience constituted a body of considered expert opinion which with new arrivals was bound to have weight.

112. This experience, too, was corroborated by medical advisers from South Africa to whose efforts were mainly due an addition of sugar and fat or oil which in October 1916 were added to the ration. Moreover, when this was submitted to the War Office instructions were received on July 16th, 1917, to increase it by a further issue of rice and vegetables, and additional fat and sugar where meat was unobtainable.

113. With this addition the followers ration was now equal if not superior to the African Troop ration, and in October, 1917, the Carrier at last obtained his full recognition as a unit of equal importance to his brother the fighting man by the authorisation of one ration for issue to all African Troops and followers.

114. COOKING

In 1916 in the creation of the M.L.B. as a special department to deal with native followers enabled experiments to be made as regards cooking. The custom of Africa has always

been to issue food materials to native labour. This is cooked towards sundown by the men themselves, who sit round their fires and talk over the events of the day. Any residue is eaten cold the next day, and the cooking pots are frequently left uncleaned from week to week. Experience has shown that

the ordinary native did not cook his food sufficiently, but at the same time viewed with suspicion any attempt to do it for him. In the days of the company unit, men of the company formed their own messes and cooked as they pleased. With the formation of gangs each gang was given its own cook, who being freed from other duties was supposed to devote sufficient time to the cooking of the food and the cleanliness of the utensils. This experiment however also failed to have any appreciable effect on the percentage of diarrhoea and dysentery, and in August, 1917, an elaborate system was instituted of training cooks at the central depots, and issuing them to all posts. They alone handled the raw material and issued cooked food to the follower, who after one or two strikes, accepted and eventually preferred the innovation which furnished them with 3 hot meals per diem instead of one full gorge every evening and a possible cold snack during the day. This system, working in with the staging system of transport which enabled men to return to the same hut every evening, was shown by medical experts to have a markedly beneficial effect, and was continued to the finish of the campaign.

115. MEDICAL

All pioneer countries in the process of being opened to trade and agriculture suffer from the same difficulty as regards medical attendance, namely that an area sufficiently populated to support a medical man is usually too wide for him to cover without the good roads and rapid transport which naturally do not exist. East Africa was no exception and practically every medical man in the country on the outbreak of war was in Government Civil employ.

116. Moreover it may fairly be said that in medical matters the native areas were untouched. With the exception of a few medical missions, and three Government native hospitals, nothing was done medically for the native in British East Africa.

117. Thus the standard of medical comfort and attention recognised as the right of the native was inevitably a very low one, and adequate provision was not to be immediately forthcoming, but was the result, like the alteration in the standard of feeding, of a gradual education of public opinion.

118. In 1914 a medical Officer was detailed for every Carrier Corps of 1000 men with a modification allowing for the substitution of an Assistant Surgeon for a Medical Officer. This continued as the nominal arrangement throughout 1915. As the number of followers grew, however, increasing difficulty was experienced in providing Medical Officers, and with the wide dispersal of the Carrier units mentioned in para 18 natives became separated from their Medical Officers.

119. In the detailed scheme for the organisation of the Carrier Section in December 1914 it was proposed that a Carrier Hospital

should be maintained at each base, and that native labour with each unit or post should share in the medical attention provided for that unit or post. As regards Hospitals a beginning had already been made by the establishment of a Carrier Hospital at Mombasa on the initiative of the Medical Officers of the Carrier Corps. This was followed, as each Depot opened, by a Carrier Hospital attached to it, till in process of time a hospital came to be recognized as necessary adjunct to a Depot.

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120. More difficulty was experienced in getting Medical Officers of Regiments or posts to recognise that the African follower attached to those Regiments or posts was entitled to an equal share of their attention with white men or troops. Difficulties of etiquette, of charge pay, etc. were urged and throughout 1915 the standard of attention given to the African follower depended on the humanity of the Medical Officer of the post rather than on his recognition of such attention as his duty.
121. Even where duty in this particular was explicitly defined, while the theory might be regarded as unexceptionable, in practice there proved to be ground for grave criticism. Where a Medical Officer had to deal with white and black patients, in time of stress the latter suffered. Where he had to deal with black troops and black followers equally the former took precedence. Where tentage or blankets or transport or food or medicines were scarce, the white patient who was practically convalescent was apt to be given preference before a black man in a critical condition, because a Medical Officer would not risk subsequent statements such as that a black man slept under cover while a white man slept outside, or on lines where mechanical transport was not available the N.C.O.-in-Charge of a convoy of returning unfits would not have it said that a white man was made to walk while a black man was carried in a hammock. In a word the condition of the patient was apt to be a consideration subordinate to his colour or status.
122. While incidents of this nature can be regarded only as manifestations of a part of the great unsolved problem of Africa, the relation of Black and White, it was none the less the obvious duty of the Department charged with the care of the African Follower to struggle against his disabilities, and the method promising the best results was the creation of an independent staff, which by being concerned with the African Follower alone would not be required to make difficult decisions as to priority of claim between Black and White or Soldier and Follower.

123. In the early establishment of the Carrier Corps one of the five Medical Officers was regarded as Senior Medical Officer. Under the reorganisation as a Carrier Section of the East Africa Transport Corps, this post fell into practical desuetude being omitted from Command Orders 111, 249 and 758 of 1915. With the formation of the M.L.B. in 1916 the medical side of the unit became itself a separate organisation under a Senior Medical Officer, who took entire responsibility for all Carrier Hospitals.
124. With the bad weather at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, an enormous increase of African Followers became necessary. While these were procurable locally, Medical Officers were not so procurable and the shortage of these was a contributory factor to the heavy mortality in the early part of 1917 to which reference has already been made.
125. In November, 1917, the grading of the S.M.O. of the unit as A[?].D.M.S., M.L.C. was another step towards the recognition of the

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Carrier as entitled to equality of treatment with the fighting man. With this appointment many of the old difficulties were removed, medical staff attached to Carrier Hospitals were no longer so liable to sudden transfer to other work, medical equipment collected for Carrier Hospitals was less apt to be taken for other units, and a section which has contributed some valuable data to medical science was employed on research work at Dar-Es-Salaam.

126. BREWERIES

An important factor in the successful care of the convalescent was the establishment in October, 1917, of breweries of native beer, a beverage of which most tribes are accustomed, and the provision of which did much to restore tone, and combat the depression and nostalgia to which the sick native so readily yields, dying without a struggle because he can summon up no interest in a life in which he feels he will never be well enough to get home.

127. NURSES

In the same year a new departure was made by the provision of European women as nurses for African sick. These were at first professed sisters of the various Roman Catholic religious Orders engaged on Mission work in the country, but in 1918 a successful appeal was made to English ladies resident in East Africa.

128. CONVALESCENT CAMPS

Of a similar nature was the voluntary staff provided from the early months of 1917 by English and American Missions for the care of the native who while convalescent, was yet too debili-

tated to undertake the long walk to his home. Such convalescents were put into camps attached to the hospitals, where they could receive medical attention if necessary.

129. DEMOBILIZATION

It is not possible to close an account of this nature without some reference to the problems of Demobilization. November 11th found the unit with 64,622 natives on its books. They had been slowly collected, but they had to be rapidly repatriated. There was no special machinery. The Officers they were serving under had to take them back, as the Lines of Communication rolled up, to the sea-base. The depots there that had sent them forward in dribbles had to receive, feed and re-clothe them en masse and hold them till shipping could be found. The Depots that recruited them had to pay them off and see them to their homes. During the six months following the Armistice 55175 natives were repatriated, of whom 30527 went through Dar-Es-Salaam depot. No severer test could have been devised of the efficiency of Pay and Depot organisation.

130. The pensioning of cripples, the provision of artificial limbs the repatriation of natives still engaged with Salvage Units, and the final wind-up of accounts is in progress.

131. Many criticisms have been levelled against the handling of labour in this campaign. In a country where coloured labour is the rule, every employer considers himself an expert in its treatment, and is ready with his criticisms of situations which he imagines paralleled on his own plantations, while the heartlessness and brutality of the colonist is always a favourite theme of the agitator at home. That there have been initial errors both of omission and commission is a commonplace not only of every temporary department called into being by the War but of every successful undertaking in the world's history. The test of its honesty is its ability to profit by its errors, and to adapt its organisation to its changing needs. Judged by this standard it may surely be contended that the Military Labour Corps has no need to hide its head. From small beginnings, learning its lessons as it went, it has entered on its registers nearly half a million men. From Somaliland in the north, from Portuguese East Africa in the south, from Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone in the west, from the Seychelles Island, Zanzibar and Comoro in the East, from the central kingdom of Uganda, from the great lakes and the headwaters of the Congo and the Nile, from the great snow-clad peaks of Kilimanjaro and Kenya, came contingents to the Corps. Men who a few years ago

had never seen a white man, to whom the mechanism of a tap or a door-handle is still an inscrutable mystery, have been trained

to carry into action on their heads the field wireless or the latest quick-firing gun. Men of tribes which had never advanced so far in civilisation as to use wheeled transport, who a few years ago would have run shrieking from the sight of a train, have been steadied till they learned to pull great-motor lorries out of the mud, to plod patiently along hardly stepping to one side while convoy after convoy of ox-carts, mule carts and motor vehicles grazed by them, till they hardly turned their heads at the whirr of passing air-craft. Men of the cannibal tribes of the interior, sons of the Arabs who filled Africa with the agonies of villages raided for slaves. Hausa and Mendi, Somali and Galla, Kavirondo and Kikuyu Wanyamwezi and Wanyika and Wakua, and countless other tribes besides, have learned that they had a bond of union in the "Carrier Corps" as they always called it, and fearless champions in its Officers and N.C.O.'s. Surely the Officers of a unit which has been able to collect, feed, pay, equip, and give medical treatment to so heterogeneous a host, a unit which had its depots and its hospitals in six colonies, and its own transport and hospital ships connecting them, a unit whose Pay Officers have handled millions of public money with a percentage of loss which will challenge comparison with any other unit in any campaign, may claim that the work done is not less worthy of examination than the work undone, that if there is blame to be borne, it should be borne not by those who have been working night and day to relieve casualties and avert disaster but by those who on one excuse or other stayed on their plantations, or took their experience of native labour away from where it was needed to more attractive service in other fields.

132. In a record of an organisation such as this, I desire to include the names of a few Officers to whom I consider that organisation to be mainly due. The work of Lieut-Colonel Hill, M.C., ably carried on by his successor Lieut-Colonel Bligh Wall, O.B.E., in organising the medical work for African followers, would, if he had his deserts, make his name long remember among them. To Major E.L. Scott, O.B.E., M.C. in addition to the Carrier organisation in Uganda must be specially attributed the long battle for better food, and the detail work of kitchens, depots and breweries. To Major F.M.S. Stokes, O.B.E., is due the first re-organisation of the native pay section, the establishment of the finger-print section and the initiation of many valuable measures dictated by his long experience of labour. The high degree of efficiency reached by the pay section, and subsequently by the pre-audit and statistical sections is owed mainly to the initiative and energy of Major Leonard, O.B.E. The extraordinarily small staff which handled vast quantities of equipment with a very small percentage of loss is a testimony to the zeal and efficiency of Capt. Turner, O.B.E. As organisers of a high order among a body of the most loyal and

zealous assistants with whom any man could wish to work, these officers must take a leading place.

133. Appendices are given showing the detail work of various special sections, and some statistics. That these are not more complete is due to the cost involved in the analysis of so large a mass of figures, which was not sanctioned by the War Office. The Depot Standing Orders, and two editions of the M.L.B. Handbook are also appended. A 3rd edition, prepared in 1918 was similarly not published owing to the cost.

30/9/1919

[Signed *O.F. Watkins*]

Lieut-Colonel.

Director of Military Labour.