



FOURTH SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 30th of MAY, 1916.

Published by Authority.

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WEDNESDAY, 31 MAY, 1916.

War Office,  
31st May, 1916.

The following Despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Major-General Sir Charles M. Dobell, K.C.B., Commanding the Allied Forces in the Cameroons:—

General Headquarters, Cameroons,  
1st March, 1916.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward herewith a summary of the operations carried out by the Allied force under my command, covering the period between the capitulation of Duala, 27th September, 1914, and the termination of active operations.

I have, in this despatch, endeavoured to maintain a correct perspective, remembering that our operations in this theatre of war are incomparable in magnitude to those taking place elsewhere. For purposes of comparison I may, however, add that the number of troops of both nations at my immediate disposal at the commencement of the campaign amounted to 4,300 West African native soldiers; on the 21st November, 1915, this number had been increased to 9,700, including Indian troops. In these numbers the British and French forces were approximately equal.

As Your Lordship is aware, I have kept the proper authorities informed in some detail as to the proceedings and progress of the troops under my command. These despatches I have endeavoured to forward at intervals of about a fortnight; I do not, therefore, propose to enlarge on such questions as the organization and preparation of the force placed at my disposal, nor the naval measures that were taken in a campaign to which the adjective "amphibious" may be applied in its widest sense. It is perhaps sufficient to state I fully realized, that the conquest of a country which is some 306,000 square miles in area, or roughly one and a half times the size of the German Empire, defended by a well-led and well-trained native force, plentifully supplied with machine guns, was no light task.

2. On my passage from the United Kingdom early in September, 1914, I learnt at various ports of call that the operations which had taken place on the Nigerian frontier had not been as successful as had been anticipated, thus confirming my opinion that Duala, the capital and chief port of the Cameroons, must be made my immediate objective. I entertained no doubts as to the ability of the Royal Navy to overcome the difficulties and make a landing at Duala feasible, and my best hopes were realised when I was informed that H.M.S. "Challenger" could force a passage