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WEDNESDAY, 18 APRIL, 1917.

War Office,
18th April, 1917.

The following Despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Lieutenant-General the Honourable J. C. Smuts, K.C., Commander-in-Chief, East African Force:—

General Headquarters,
East Africa.
28th February, 1917.

Sir,—I have the honour to forward the following despatch describing the operations of the forces under my command from the 28th October, 1916, to the 20th January, 1917, when I relinquished control of the forces in the field in German East Africa:—

Reorganisation.

(1) In my last despatch I described the reorganisation effected in our transport and supply services consequent on the capture of Dar-es-Salam and the restoration of the Central Railway. It remains to add a few words in reference to the reorganisation of the fighting units under my command effected at the same time. Our advance to the areas of the Rufiji and Great Ruaha rivers through numerous tsetse-haunted belts had resulted in the loss of

most of the animals of the mounted troops, and the very rapid rise of the sick rate among all the troops. It was clear that white troops who had had repeated attacks of malaria or dysentery would in the further prosecution of the campaign in those extremely unhealthy areas be more of an encumbrance than a help. I therefore decided to abolish the Third Division, under Major-General C. J. Brits, including the Second Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier-General Enslin, and to return these officers with their staffs to South Africa; to incorporate into the First Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier-General Nussey, all fit men belonging to the Second Mounted Brigade, and finally to evacuate from East Africa all white troops declared to be medically unfit by special medical boards. My forces, therefore, again became organised into two divisions, under Major-Generals Hoskins and van Deventer respectively, while Brigadier-General Beves' infantry brigade again became a force reserve under my immediate control. As a result of these steps close on 12,000 white troops were evacuated from East Africa between the middle of October and the end of December, 1916, and their places were to some extent taken by the new King's African Rifles battalions, which I was forming and training with the sanction of the War Office, as well as by the Nigerian