RICE UNIVERSITY

“'For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today:' A History of Kenya African Soldiers in the Second World War.”

By

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During the Second World War, nearly ninety-eight thousand Kenya African soldiers were recruited by the colonial government and deployed to serve on the Allied side. This thesis is about these soldiers. It is about their experience in the Second World War, examined and told from their own perspective. Using original primary sources such as archival documents, newspapers, and oral materials, many of them collected from the askaris themselves, the thesis analyzes how askaris perceived the war, what motivated them to fight on the side of their colonial masters, how they experienced the war in various parts of the world, and what happened to them when the war ended, and they came back to the colony. The thesis demonstrates how, contrary to much that we have come to popularly associate with ordinary African soldiers who served in the Second World War, Kenya African soldiers actively tried to find their niche in the war by interpreting it in ways that made their service in it useful and meaningful. While serving in the war, Kenyan askaris were always trying to appropriate discourses about the war in ways that were relevant to their lives. Many of them understood that if they joined the war and fought with determination and commitment, they would not only survive the war, but also improve their social, economic, and political standing in their communities and the colony as a
whole.

The thesis demonstrates how askaris' interpretation of the war laid grounds for conflicts with the colonial regime in Kenya. Askaris served in the war with passion and commitment, believing that their service in the war would lead to a rise in their social, economic, and political welfare, but the colonial regime did not have such grand plans. While many askaris nursed high hopes for a quid pro quo from the government after the war, the government, on the other hand, was determined to maintain and safeguard the status quo. Conflict between askaris and the colonial government was virtually inevitable. Rebuffed by the colonial regime after the war, many bitter Kenyan askaris joined the growing ranks of Kenyan people who were disenchanted with colonialism. Many of them are still bitter with the colonial government even today. They feel betrayed and taken advantage of by a government they served diligently and unflaggingly during the war. Thus the experience of Kenyan askaris in the Second World War is one that begins with hope and expectation for a better future in the colony, but ends in disappointment and resentment against the colonial regime. The experience of African soldiers in the Second World War has increasingly become a topical subject among scholars. By examining the experience of Kenyan askaris in the Second World War, this thesis expands our knowledge and understanding of the experience of ordinary African soldiers in the Second World War, while contributing to scholarship on how African soldiers generally experienced war during the colonial period.
DEDICATION

To my wife Lilian Awuor Owino, our daughters Anne Akinyi Owino
and Michelle Ogalo Owino, and my parents Edward Owiti Odindo
and Anjeline Adhiambo Owiti.
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NOTES ON TERMINOLOGIES

The word "Askari" comes from Kiswahili language, though its root stretches back to the Arabic language. It was popularly used by colonial authorities to refer to ordinary African soldiers serving in colonial armies in East and Central Africa, and is still in vogue today. The meaning of such other words, terms, or phrases that are not understandable to English speakers are given within the body of the thesis or in the glossary page.
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PREFACE

The Second World War formally began on September 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, though the first instance of Axis aggression is arguably traceable to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia on October 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1935. In June 1940, the war spread to the very front-yard of the Kenya colony when Italy joined the Axis, and Kenya Colony deployed its soldiers – askaris – to fight against the Italians and the Axis. Nearly ninety-eight thousand askaris ultimately served in the war on the Allied side, witnessing action in Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, Madagascar, North Africa and the Middle East, and South East Asia. This thesis is about these soldiers and their experiences in the Second World War, presented from the point of view of the soldiers themselves. The experience of soldiers in wars is an increasingly fascinating area of discourse among military scholars, historians, military strategists, and even peace activists. John Keegan's book, \textit{Face of Battle}, is probably the best exemplification of this scholarship, an approach that reifies human experiences – what soldiers and their societies go through in the course of conflict – over strategy and tactics in war. Erich Maria Remarque' \textit{All Quiet on the Western Front} is another product of this genre, as it examines the First World War from the perspective of soldiers who served in it, a cohort who joined the war enthusiastically because of its ideals, but found the experience of battles violent and horrifying. This approach to the study of war has found its expression in studies of how African soldiers experienced the Second World War, and the best exponent of it is arguably Nancy Lawler's, \textit{Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivorian Tirailluers of World War II}.

Like Lawler's work, the \textit{For Your Tomorrow We Gave Our Today: A History of Kenya}
"African Soldiers in the Second World War" is an examination of the Second World War in Kenya from the perspective of *askaris* who fought in it. Combining social history and traditional military history methods, the thesis focuses on the soldiers’ own experiences in the war as they saw it while illuminating key moments, events, and aspects of the war that the *askaris* were involved in. Through it we learn why *askaris* joined the war, how they experienced it, what happened to them during the war, how they came back after the war, and tried to settle down. A major argument in the thesis is that *askaris* were not as “ignorant,” “uninformed,” or “unaware” of the main issues of the war, as they have often been depicted. Neither were they mere economic “destitutes,” as argued by some scholars. Contrary to popular images and presumptions, *askaris* were intelligent and smart. Most relevant sources of information that have been used in this work reveal that a significant number of *askaris* were either conversant with the discourses of the war, or were always trying to appropriate and interpret those discourses to fit their social values, economic needs, and political goals. *Askaris* thus enlisted for military service due to many, complicated motives, and these motives to a large extent influenced the way they served and experienced the war – how they enlisted, the choices they made in the army, the units they served [or sought to serve] in, how they dealt with the challenges of military service, the way they related to fellow compatriots in the army, how they perceived the Kenya Colony and civilians at large, and the plans they made for survival after the war. *Askaris*’ motives were indelibly intertwined with their experiences during and after the war. While some of these motives were actualized at various stages of the war, others were not. The lack of material and financial security after the war has evolved into a sweltering wound, a sore point that has continued to influence the way many
askaris remember and talk about the war to this day.

The thesis is organized thematically, corresponding to specific moments and unique interstices of Kenyan askaris’ military experiences. It begins logically with the outbreak of the war in Europe, and examines how it came to Kenya. Moving systematically from there, it deals with the mobilization of Kenyan resources and personnel, and analyzes the motives of askaris who served in the war; the beginnings of military training and transformation of recruits into askaris; the participation of askaris in campaigns and battles of Eastern Africa, Madagascar, North Africa and the Middle East, and South East Asia; the nature of askari life in the army; and ends with a detailed examination of demobilization, how askaris proceeded home, tried to settle down, and how their bitter experiences at home turned them against the government they had risked their lives defending during the war. A detailed analysis of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, and Maseno Military School, and of PANYAKO – Pioneer Corps is given as well, providing for the very first time the history of these military institutions that are indelibly linked with Kenya’s place in the Second World War, while adumbrating further how askaris experienced the war.

The narrative on askaris’ experiences during the war is largely from the perspectives of the askaris themselves. A deliberate effort has been made to quote askaris’ words, opinions, and views as extensively as possible because this is their story. It is the askaris’ chance to be heard after nearly sixty years in the background, where they have smarted quietly, living in abject poverty and neglect in spite of their contribution to Allied victory,
and to the emergence of the post-war world as we know it today. The thesis is thus anchored around materials given by the askaris themselves and by those who knew, and wrote about, them. Materials on askaris’ experiences in the war were collected over a two-year period. Fieldwork was done largely among Luo askaris who live in western part of Kenya, while other types of primary sources were mined for information on how other askaris, living in other parts of Kenya, experienced the war. While details on why and how the interview was conducted among the Luo are set out and explained in subsequent chapters, it can be revealed that one of the reason for this was that the Luo, according to archival materials, contributed the largest number of askaris from Kenya in the Second World War. A fairly large number of these askaris can still be found living within reach of one another, making it easier, cheaper, and more convenient to set up interviews – particularly group interviews – in this part of Kenya. Information on other askaris who served in the war was distilled from other equally important primary sources, which were collected during research, and were subsequently combined with materials from oral interviews. Askaris’ letters, notes and reports to local African chiefs, archival materials, commission reports, semi-official military literature, and secondary works were given as much weight as oral information in an effort to assemble and arrive at a holistic, representative template of how Kenyan askaris in general experienced the war.

From an analysis of askaris’ reminiscences about the war, one issue is inescapable. While askaris are generally proud of how they served in the Second World War, they are very bitter with both the colonial and post-colonial governments of Kenya, which, they claim, have abandoned them. They are bitter with the colonial government for betraying them,
and with the post-colonial governments of Jomo Kenyatta, and Daniel arap Moi for abetting that betrayal. After going through the horrors of fighting in the Second World War on behalf of the colony, serving to defend the colony and the British Empire from its Axis enemies, *askaris* claim that they were abandoned by the colonial government and left to fend for themselves under very difficult circumstances. Contrary to what they were made to believe when they enlisted for service, the *askaris* say, the colonial government left them without any rewards after the end of the war. They were not given land or money as they had expected. They were not given any gratuity or pension like their European counterparts who served with them in the King’s African Rifles. They continued to suffer from social, economic, and political discrimination after the end of the war, their status in the colony not any different from those who never went to the war. Betrayal is a theme that constantly permeates *askaris*’ recollections of their experiences in the war, even though those experiences are generally very complex and intricate. This thesis is the story of those experiences; it is the story of how *askaris* joined the Kenyan colonial army upon the outbreak of the Second World War, served with a lot of hope for a better social, economic, and political dispensation in the colony, and became very bitter with the government when those hopes were squelched.
CHAPTER ONE
HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT.

Introduction.
This work is about how Kenya African soldiers, the askaris, served in the Second World War, how they came back home upon demobilization, and what happened to them in the immediate aftermath of the war. It is, in a nutshell, the story of how Kenyan askaris experienced the Second World War, told largely from their own perspective. Although nearly one hundred thousand Kenya Africans served in various colonial military units during the war, scholars have not paid very much attention to the experiences of the Kenya African soldiers who participated in the war.¹ Kenya's historiographical terrain is devoid of studies that seriously and substantively expound on the service and experience of Kenyan servicemen in the war, though in recent years there have been some attempts at making amends; some works have tried to fill the void by examining certain important, but, largely isolated aspects of those experiences. Little has been done on how the Kenya Colony prepared for the war by enacting policy, how government preparations for the war virtually transformed Kenya into a military zone, and how laws, particularly the declaration of emergency laws, impacted on Kenya. With the exception of Fay Gardsen's article, "Wartime Propaganda in Kenya: the Kenya Information Office, 1939-45,"² and Kate Morris's book, British Techniques of Public Relations and Propaganda for Mobilizing East and Central Africa During the World War II,³ little analysis has been done on government propaganda in Kenya during the war, and how propaganda aided the

mobilization of manpower resources for the war. There is virtually nothing on how askaris were trained and transformed into professional soldiers at military depots and military schools, how they were deployed into the military units, and how they served in those units during the war. Apart from some chapters in Lt-Col. H. Moyse-Bartlett's semi-official history, *The Kings' African Rifles: A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa, 1890-1945*, little has been professionally and scholarly written on Kenya's campaigns in Eastern Africa, Madagascar, North Africa and Middle East, and South-East Asia. Scholars who have dealt with some aspects of the experiences of Kenyan soldiers in the Second World War have generally not been able to capture the multiplicity of voices of the men who participated in the Second World War; most times, their works have tended to be confined to examining already existing written accounts of the war, with some oral interviews with a few askaris thrown in, resulting in the legitimization of more or less official views of the war instead of producing accounts that truly reflect the views of askaris themselves. Even the most current professional studies that have been undertaken to give voice to the askaris who served in the war have generally ended up reproducing ideas about the askaris that were in vogue during and after the war, while giving few insights into how askaris experienced the war: what the askaris saw during the war, how they were living, why they went to war, what happened to them when they came back home, what they were thinking about – their worries, their concerns, their plans. Just as during and after the war, current works have tended to group askaris into standard, formulaic categories like “volunteers,” “loyalists,” and “conscripts,”*5*categories that leave little room for individual stories, idiosyncrasies, and

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personal reminiscences that would otherwise stand out and enrich the experiences being told. Some works are quite condescending to askaris, characterized by a penchant at describing the soldiers who participated in the war as “ignorant,” “innocent,” “unaware about why the world was at war,” and “uninformed about the war.” The image often left by these works is that Kenyan askaris were often dragged to the army screaming, especially when the works in question give inordinate attention to those who were supposed to have been “falsely told that they were being taken to places of work, only to find themselves landing at military training depots,” and those who were ordered by their employers “to get into the military lorry which was standing there waiting for them.” Many of the Africans who joined the King’s African Rifles were conscripted, argues Zeleza.

However, an analysis of several archival documents and oral interviews with one hundred and fifty-three ex-askaris demonstrate that a significant number of Kenyan soldiers voluntarily enlisted for service for social, economic and political reasons. There are numerous letters in archival documents, written by askaris themselves, applying to the colonial administration for recruitment into the army, and, therefore, suggesting that many existing studies on African soldiers in the Second World War have generally been

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6 This view evolved naturally out of the contention that African soldiers went into this war as “loyalists” and “conscripts” without really being able to conceptualize the issues at stake. Colonial commentators were especially notorious for propagating this view. Col. J. R. Carbonell claimed that “tens of thousands of African soldiers serving in this war came only with the haziest knowledge of the issues at stake and that, in all cases, they came as volunteers,” as quoted in Shiroya, *Kenya and World War II*, p.1. African scholars also claimed that African soldiers were forced to serve in a “war they scarcely understood.” According to Ali A. Mazrui and Michael Tidy, the Second World War was “a white man’s war,” see: Ali A. Mazrui and Michael Tidy, *Nationalism and New States in Africa*, pp.18-19.


based on popular assumptions that collapse upon further examination and systematic study of the motives and experiences of Kenyan soldiers. Where such existing studies have attempted an investigation of why the soldiers participated in the war, or have attempted to ferret through the objectives, motives, visions and perceptions that the soldiers carried with themselves into the war, one finds that the result of these investigations have quite often reflected the political and ideological convictions of the scholars themselves and those of their own times rather than the stark reality of choices available to the soldiers at the time of joining the army. Little, for instance, has been written on loyal askaris in the currently existing literature even though they are there in their villages, and their experiences are documented in archival works and semi-official accounts. Very little attention has been paid on the dilemmas facing those politically conscious askaris who found themselves navigating between their political consciousness, and the urgency of fighting in the defense of a colonial power, which denied them rights at home, because it has always been assumed that such men simply did not exist in the King's African Rifles, the nom de plume of the British colonial army in East and Central Africa.

The preponderant image of Kenya African soldiers as “ignorant,” or “innocent about the real issues of the war,” has limited application to fully understanding the service and experience of Kenya African soldiers in the Second World War. It has been repeated pervasively in literature dealing with the war to a point it has acquired a life of its own, where it apparently no longer needs any validation. It is also an image that is based on an assumption that Kenya African soldiers who fought in the war were innocent and gullible, uninformed. In reality, upon detailed scrutiny, it appears that this pervasive image only reflects the views, attitudes, and opinions of one – very minute at that – category of soldiers, leaving out other categories of soldiers who were in many ways quite informed about the main issues of the war. A majority of the Kenyan servicemen
were fully conscious of the fact that the army offered them opportunities of earning a livelihood that were not available in a race-based Kenyan colonial society whose economy was even under more pressure due to the war, causing a rise in the cost of living. To many *askaris*, the army was simply a job, a means of earning a living, as both Timothy Parsons and Tiymbe Zeleza have observed in their various works. But that was just one aspect of motivation. After reviewing extensive materials, it is quite clear that although there were those who saw the army as a source of employment, others saw in it an opportunity for adventure in far places, giving them exposure and experiences which would boost their social currency and social standing at the end of the war when they came back to their homes. There were *askari* loyalists who interpreted their service in the war as a duty to the Colony, much like some colonial chiefs and African government functionaries were doing at the time.

Other men went to war because they loved freedom. Not only had they heard that the Axis powers had deposed Emperor Haile Sellasie of Abyssinia, the only black King in Africa, but they had also heard that the Axis planned to enslave black people everywhere in the world. Freedom and liberty of black people was at stake, Kenyan soldiers were told. And since the colonial administration was the one articulating these issues and urging Kenyan men to join the army to defend freedom, it was only going to be a matter of time before some *askaris* began thinking about the relevance of these ideals at home. Informed by the colonial government about the salient issues of the war, some men decided to offer their service to the military simply because they were attracted to the

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ideals of the war; this cadre approached the war, not powerlessly as one would think of conscripts or those ignorant of issues around the war, but, to a large extent, very consciously and deliberately. Making careful choices prior to or after joining the war, they hoped that their decision to serve would help transform the colonial administration's attitude towards Africans, and make the colonial edifice more amenable to African interests. This group of soldiers was of course not necessarily motivated only by political agenda. Like most *askaris*, they went to war due to many reasons and not simply to use the war to win freedom at home; the question of earning a living in the army was also quite important to them when they joined the army during the war, and one would argue that these motives cast the *askaris* in ways that are far from the usual, standard depiction of Kenyan soldiers as "uninformed" and "ignorant" or as "conscripts." Many men were inspired by hard-nosed economic reasons, which were not necessarily contradictory to any altruistic calculations or any sacrifices they wanted to make during the war. Their views, service, and experience in the war are important for a comprehensive understanding of Africa and the war, but they have not been highlighted by scholars who have often mostly seen all Kenyan servicemen as a motley of loyalists, collaborators, and conscripts. An examination of the motives of *askaris* who served in the war in detail is important because it helps provide insights into what they expected would be their role and that of the colonial government in the post-World War Kenyan colony, how they expected to be treated by the colony, their status, and why, after the end of the war, their attitude to the government changed to the extent they have today become intractably bitter foes. The fallout between *askaris* and the colonial and post-colonial governments in Kenya cannot be adequately dealt with without interviewing the *askaris*, without comparing what they say about post-War rewards, about promises that were made and not kept, with what the colonial government itself says. This is one of the issues that this work deals with in great detail in the last chapter. The other one is whether or not *askaris* were loyalists or collaborators, volunteers or conscripts, a subject with the potential of
shining some light on askaris motives in the war, and thus, how they experienced it.

Loyalists or Collaborators, Volunteers or Conscripts.

The discourse on motives of African servicemen in the Second World War has a long pedigree. This discourse has long portrayed African soldiers variously as loyalists, collaborators, volunteers, conscripts, and even mercenaries in many works, but insights from some recent articles have complicated the image of African soldiers by attesting to a more complex, multi-faceted attitude among African soldiers during the war than traditional approaches have allowed. Jim Giblin’s “The Image of the Loyal African During World War II and its Postwar Use by the French communist Party,” one of several fairly recent works, reveals the existence of highly nuanced, complex ideological opinions among Africans in French territories; with some Africans even expressing admiration for Germans or the British out of “the belief that the Germans or British might

enter the French colonies as liberators.” Likewise, Mirjana Roth Ma shows that South African blacks did not simply acquiesce to the war situation and the wartime propaganda. They debated it, and their opinions were divided. While one group protested that, “the ‘native’ policy of South Africa was not, in African opinion, a cause worth fighting for,” another one grappled with the “implications of an Italian or German victory ... for the black population.” “Whatever little progress the Africans had achieved under the present government,” Selope Thema is quoted by Mirjana Roth Ma as saying, “would be taken away in the event of a German victory and it was for this reason that he felt that the blacks might involve themselves in the war effort.”

Studies of African nationalism and the eclectic nature of African responses to their subjugation provide numerous lessons that can be used to understand African military service during the war, and interpreted to mean that African soldiers did not always perform their functions without considering how to take advantage of colonial dictates to advance their aspirations. Colonial subjugation did not necessarily render African soldiers powerless. To be sure, African soldiers’ ability to articulate and broadcast their political consciousness was often limited. There was, for instance, the problem of paucity of educational opportunities; illiterate men were often unable to write down their thoughts and ideas, but that does not mean that they did not think about freedom or how to use the war for their own benefits. Researches from different parts of Africa show that quite often during the war, many soldiers demonstrated incredible ability to think about

14 Ibid. p.89.
15 Ibid. p.89.
the war in their own terms. Many men exercised considerable ingenuity in debates about their place and functions in the war, questioning and calculating the extent to which the war and their service in it would promote their own interests. Chief Monshiwa of the Baralong of British Bechwanaland articulated the political strategy of many African soldiers serving in the war this way:

> War service is the means by which we are requesting through the Head of Administration, to the members of the forthcoming peace conference, that we may be considered and declared as citizens of the British nation, and as such entitled to receive all rights of citizenship, politically, industrially and socially.\(^7\)

Even instances where colonial soldiers enlisted in the army as loyalists and “collaborators” do not necessarily mean that the loyalists and “collaborators” always operated within the confines of the colonial state, without debating how to manipulate their service in it to their advantage. There were always these kinds of debates. Soldiers who joined the war for economic reasons debated about pay. When *askaris* serving with the East African Pioneer Corps were not issued with rifles, they debated whether they were really soldiers – “real soldiers” were supposed to wield rifles. These kinds of debates by Africans on their place in the war did not go unnoticed by colonial functionaries, and they in turn worried and fretted about them because such debates by Africans about their place in the war raised serious implications for the future of the colonial state altogether.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Ashley Jackson, *Motivation and Mobilization for War*, p.403.

Within the colonial establishment, many settlers, government officials, traders, and ordinary beneficiaries of the colonial state raised question marks on whether colonial soldiers could make good, loyal, reliable soldiers, performing their duties as defined in various colonial ordinances without threatening the existence of the colonial state. The possibility of autonomy of African political interests and actions while serving, not just in this particular war, but also in the army generally was viewed by the colonial administration with a lot of suspicion and trepidation. Some colonial elites spoke to the loyalty, obedience and reliability of their colonial recruits, while others raised “doubts about the wisdom of enlisting ‘subject’ people,”19 fearful that a large body of well trained and armed colonial subjects could easily pose a serious threat to the colonial system itself. Such fears and questions about the loyalty and reliability of African soldiers during the war ought not to be surprising, given colonial experience and encounters elsewhere. For example, in Slaves in Red Coats: The British West Indies Regiment, 1795-1815, Roger Norman Buckley talks about fears and suspicions in the New World, when the colonial government decided to create the British West Indies Regiment.20 In the Asian sub-continent, the Dutch East India Company also faced “serious political problem and dilemma” when it tried to recruit Indonesian soldiers into the Dutch colonial army.21 During long-drawn conflicts, colonial governments often resorted to conscription to make

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up for any shortfall in recruitment.

With such a background, it is not strange that colonial armies like the one which were recruited to serve in the Second World War have sparked different, conflicting images among colonial observers and academics, who variously debate whether soldiers recruited to fight in the Second World War were loyalists, collaborators, conscripts or mercenaries. To a large extent, the trajectory of the debates on the motives of African soldiers, reflect personal assumptions, and ideological and political beliefs of the commentators themselves. This is why, while writing during the war, colonial functionaries who were intent on justifying the war and the African participation in it generally wrote about loyal soldiers and ignored those soldiers who did not fit the pre-conceived construct. In their works, colonial apologists tended to concentrate their attention on those soldiers they believed were wholeheartedly loyal, enthusiastic and patriotic to the colony.

Colonial commentators readily attributed African military service in the Second World War to such obvious factors as loyalty, while noting their courage and gallantry in the battle-field. Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Dowler’s observation is a case in point, typical of colonial views about Kenya African military service in the war. Writing a short forward to E. Marling Salmon’s book, aptly titled, Beyond the Call of Duty: African Deeds of Bravery in Wartime, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Dowler, who was the General Officer Commanding Headquarters, the East African Command, wrote as follows:

These few examples of bravery of askari of the East African Forces in war, simply told, and because of that all the more vivid, will not fail to inspire those who aspire to emulate them.22

22 Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Dowler, Forward to Beyond the Call of Duty: African Deeds of Bravery in Wartime, by E. Marling Salmon, p.VII.
In many articles, pamphlets, books, letters to editors of newspapers such as the *East African Standard*, which they wrote during or immediately after the war, many colonial administrators, military unit commanders, European settlers, missionaries, church leaders, and teachers adumbrated the view that African soldiers were loyal, brave and selfless. General Sir William Platt, at one time, the General Officer Commanding East African Forces, and who gave many speeches on *askaris* and wrote a lot about African servicemen in many articles about the East African military unit, often effusively saluted *askaris* for their service in the war, which he attributed to their loyalty and bravery.\(^{23}\) So did Lieutenant-Col. H. Moyse-Bartlett,\(^{24}\) Sir George Giffard,\(^{25}\) and Sir Arnold W. Hodson.\(^{26}\) Newspaper accounts like the ones in the *East African Standard* depicted *askaris* as "happy," "cheerful," always loyal.

Thus although some colonial elite expressed misgivings about the prudence of arming African troops, training them in the deadly science and techniques of modern warfare, and, especially about encouraging them to "hate one branch of the white race," fearing the "potential danger which returning soldiers represented,"\(^{27}\) in general, most other colonial writers saw African soldiers as loyal and obedient, and of use to the colony. The problem from the viewpoint of this work is that these accounts do not problematize why

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\(^{25}\) General Sir George Giffard, Forward to *King's African Rifles*, by Lieutenant-Colonel H. Moyse-Bartlett: V-VI.

African soldiers were loyal or obedient or even why African soldiers fought in the war with alacrity. Supporters and beneficiaries of the colonial state appreciated loyal African military service, often describing it with highly colorful adjectives, but they did little to connect African service to any economic reasons they might have had, or even to the ideals of freedom, liberty, equality, and self-determination that often pre-occupied the minds of African soldiers and subject peoples elsewhere in the continent and the world.

Years later, Africanist scholars—especially those from the African continent—would examine the service of Kenya African soldiers in the war, but again, mostly from a perspective that made it politically and ideologically comfortable. Writing during the apogee of anti-colonial struggle, under a heavy and powerful anti-colonial discourse pervasive at the time, their views were to a large extent under girded by political correctness of their time. Quite often Africanist scholars simply ignored those African soldiers who joined the war out of their own volition—out of their own loyalty, enthusiasm or patriotism—generally perceiving them as traitors, and instead chose to turn their gaze on African soldiers who were in the war either for economic reasons or as conscripts. Driven by strong anti-colonial, nationalist sentiments, most of these scholars were not able to reconcile themselves with the presumably unpalatable notion that some African soldiers voluntarily served in the war out of deeply felt conviction in the British government war aims.

28 The appellation “Africanist scholar” here refers to one who seeks to place African experience at the center of historical events. See how Ashley Jackson uses the term with respect to studies on African soldiers in the Second World War, in her article, Motivation and mobilization for War, p.400.
Because of their opposition to colonialism, the Africanists condemned soldiers who willingly served in colonial military establishments, calling them traitors, collaborators, and opportunists. Scholars writing in this vein viewed most African soldiers as victims of the vagaries of the colonial state. Oppressed and impoverished by the state, many colonial soldiers were said to have been left with no viable alternative for survival but to sign up for service in the army to survive. In many cases also, scholars viewed some of these soldiers as well-meaning, but misguided individuals, who were misled into serving in a war they scarcely understood by relentless colonial propaganda channeled through colonial agents in the villages, churches, schools, and offices, and through colonial mass media.\(^{29}\) In his thesis and books, O. J. E. Shiroya contends that Kenya African soldiers served in the Second World War either as “volunteers” or “conscripts.” According to Shiroya, these *askaris* had little but “the haziest knowledge of the issues at stake.” There were some *askaris* who served in the war as volunteers, Shiroya avers, but they were “a small minority.” These volunteers were not motivated to join the war by a higher purpose, according to Shiroya, but by “conditions [which] were so difficult in their home

areas that they were left with no other alternative but to volunteer." Material goods figured large in the minds of the soldiers as they were compelled by circumstances at home to join in the war. Continues Shiroya:

Interviews with ex-servicemen reveal various methods by which these young men were introduced into the army. Some of them recall that they were ‘captured’ by their chiefs – on the District Commissioner’s orders – and told to join the Army. Others recall that they were ordered to get into the lorry ‘so that they may be taken to the place of work’ only to find that they ended at a military training depot. Some state that their European employers, most of whom were farmers, selected them from the rest of the men and forced them ‘to get on to the military lorry which was standing there waiting for them! There are those who state that they were removed from schools, market places, villages, etc by force and ordered to join the Army.\(^{31}\)

In his article, "Kenya and the Second World War, 1939-1950," Tiymbe Zeleza has depicted Kenyan *askaris* as reluctant recruits who joined the war under duress. Obviously making extensive use of information from Shiroya's dissertation, Zeleza writes that:

Many of the Africans who joined the King's African Rifles in Kenya were conscripted. They were either captured by chiefs on DC's orders and sent to join the army, or they were ordered to get into lorries while at labor recruitment centers with the promise that they were being taken to places of work, only to find themselves landing at military training depots. Still others were forcibly removed from school and sent to the army, and some unlucky ones found themselves being disposed of by their employers by being told to get into the military lorry which was standing their waiting for them. Those who joined voluntarily did so either because the army was just 'another one of the European jobs' available, or they fell prey to false rumors that military service would exempt them from paying taxes. Rumor had it, too, that those who waited to be conscripted into the army and did not join voluntarily were always sent to the front lines where fighting was fiercest. Propaganda was indeed extensively used to persuade men to join the army.\(^{32}\)

All these assumptions about African servicemen are common. The trouble however is

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p.1-2.
that sometimes they are not correct; for example, Zeleza's contention that African soldiers "fell prey to false rumors that military service would exempt them from paying taxes." The chapters on "Mobilization" and "The Process of Recruitment" in this work demonstrates that the colonial government did in fact promise askaris exemption from paying Poll tax, and that during at least the first years of the war, the government actually went on to grant tax exemption to many askaris who volunteered for service. In many respects also, the arguments by Shiroya and Zeleza do not reflect the views and opinions of all soldiers; they reflect only the views and opinions of one category, but not all. Very little has been written by these scholars on askaris who joined the war out of loyalty or out of a desire to demonstrate their manliness. Most available professionally done historical work do not perceive Kenyan soldiers as savvy, active individuals in the making of their history, capable of fashioning their own perspective and vision of the war outside of the parameters of the colonial state. They admirably attempt to delineate material conditions that prompted some askaris to voluntarily enlist in the war, but they give short-shrift to the loyalists and to the segment of the African military cadre who voluntarily joined the war for higher, idealistic purposes. Yet these soldiers were in service. In fact, a careful analysis of some of the available works shows that some scholars alluded to them, though apparently without giving them the kind of attention they deserved. Shiroya's short, kaleidoscopic, but passing comment about them is a case in point. Shiroya writes as follows:

some volunteers admit that they joined the Army because 'Italians and Germans were preparing to invade and conquer our country ...[and] because the 'King of Abyssinia, the only African King in the whole of Africa needed more African soldiers from other parts of Africa in order to defeat Italian
This kind of observation is important because it shows that some soldiers from Kenya perceived their service in the war in terms of how it would benefit their compatriots and fellow Africans who were suffering under colonialism. They were worrying about how to defend African interests during the war. They were concerned about the fact that the only black king in Africa had been deposed by the Italians, and they wanted to restore him to his throne. Unfortunately, these short, cryptic comments never evoked any lasting interest among scholars. Beyond tantalizing allusions, most scholars have said little about these soldiers and reasons for these omissions can only be guessed at; it is possible that some scholars have generally tended to consider African soldiers as illiterates, and as such, as not being politically conscious and crafty enough to define the war, and their service in it in terms that made sense to them. Very little was thus done to connect these ideals to the fact that the Second World War came to Kenya when Kenyans were clamoring for rights in the colony, and some were increasingly agitating against the colonial system. In his dissertation, "The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964," and in a book of the same title, and other several articles culled from the dissertation, Timothy Parsons claims that "few askaris thought in terms of territorial nation, and debates over their status as mercenaries or collaborators are unproductive," thereby largely rendering a whole cohort of askaris – the loyalists, and all those who were conscious about the politics of the war – virtually invisible. As for the remaining askaris, Parsons refers to them as if they were ordinary employees who simply joined the war for economic reasons. There is very little attention

33 Ibid. p. 2.
to individual voices and to personal stories of the men who went to war, why they went to war, and to their experiences. Perhaps this is because Timothy Parsons' works are on a history of the King's African Rifles rather than on askaris in the Second World War.

Like O.J.E. Shiroya, who has written a thesis and few works on the impact of the Second World War on Kenya nationalism, Parsons believes that many servicemen primarily perceived the King’s African Rifles (KAR) as an “alternative to destitution.” He writes that:

The KAR was the most lucrative form of unskilled employment. The army encouraged these ethnic groups to take pride in their ‘martial abilities’ and rewarded African servicemen with privileges which set them apart from their civilian population. In turn, askaris exploited this situation to challenge the inferior status to colonial Africans in colonial society.35

Although these assumptions about what exactly prompted the soldiers to enlist in the war are well argued, they do not comprehensively reflect the motives and experience of all soldiers in the war. Yet reports from colonial officials, leaders of military units, oral testimonies and anecdotes from askaris themselves reveal more about these servicemen in the war than is usually suspected. These reports assert that Africans provided valiant, determined, heroic stand during battles and campaigns of the war. Many askaris were captured as Prisoners-of-War and were transported to Italy, France, and even Germany, while others were injured or killed. In many theaters of the war – Ethiopia, Somaliland, Egypt, Libya, the Middle East, Madagascar, and Burma – African soldiers fought almost fanatically, always ready to sacrifice their lives in confrontation with the enemy. Was this merely because of economic reasons, as Parsons argues? That indeed cannot necessarily be the case. Many Kenya African soldiers fought with almost blind fury against their enemies in the war, and this work argues that this was less to do with material or

pecuniary factors alone. Rather, many soldiers fought with ferocious determination because of social and political reasons. Courage and bravery were [and still are] highly idealized virtues in virtually all African communities; men were often elected as leaders of their communities due to their demonstrated qualities of manliness. Many men also fought with extreme courage and determination because they were determined to prove to the government that they loved freedom and were ready to die for it, hoping that the government would be obligated to create conditions which would enable askaris and their communities to enjoy ideals and rights that the war was about. By their fierce loyalty to the army and commitment to the ideals of the war, some Kenya African soldiers appeared to have wanted to use their service to improve their socio-economic fortunes and political status in the colony. Others wanted to be noticed as men of courage and bravery in the colony and at home.

It has been unfortunate and unfair to the memory, honor, and service of these Kenyan soldiers to ignore their service, while reducing the rest of the combatants to mere collaborators, loyalists, conscripts or mercenaries, as most scholars have done. Although some soldiers fought in the war in order to earn a living, and others served as conscripts, their motives and experience need to be re-examined in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the war. These men fought for diverse reasons and their experiences merit a study without any biases and presumptions. Many soldiers fought with courage, bravery, and determination because they were already in the army and anything else would have resulted in death. Others were loyal. Still others had their minds fixed on the ideals of the war, the quest for freedom, liberty, and equality. Specifically, there were those who aspired for the total liberation of Ethiopia from Italy’s fascist occupation, hoping ultimately to win access to ideals that the war was touted to be about. Instead of merely fighting to demonstrate their loyalty and patriotism or to gain access to material means of survival that would elevate their social status, though those were also
important factors to many of other men, there were some politically conscious soldiers who were compelled by a noble ideal, and which they were ready to die for. Some soldiers were ready to sacrifice their lives for the government, others for money, and others merely wanted to use the war to free themselves from the shackles of colonialism. There were those who enlisted in the war because of its higher, nobler, more perspicacious ideals – freedom, equality, and fraternity which were under threat from Hitler’s belligerence. Anybody listening to the rhetoric about the ideals of the war in the colony would not have failed to be moved. Presented as a mighty struggle between the British and her Allies on the one hand against the Germans and the axis powers on the other; a fight between good and evil, progress and backwardness, between those who loved and those who hated freedom, liberty, self-determination, colonial subjects would not have necessarily remained aloof, refusing to think about the relevance of these ideals to their lives. When a war is characterized as a conflict between those who believe in the equality of races, and those who believe in the inferiority of others, how can subject people possibly remain neutral in such a conflict?

Thus although colonial writers and their rivals in the Africanist camp have written about Kenyan African soldiers in the Second World War, their works have tended to be biased for or against soldiers whose motives and experiences are similar or different from their own. Without a comprehensive and a holistic analysis of the men who served in the war, these works have generally failed to shed much light about the motives and experiences of soldiers who joined the army during the Second World War. Where colonial administration have perceived unreservedly enthusiastic, loyal fealty among its African cadre, Africanist commentators have on the other hand perceived sell-outs, unhappy soldiers, and conscripts, forced most reluctantly into the war by the coercive socioeconomic and political policies of the colonial government. Colored by ideological tensions, and political sentiments prevailing during their times, the works of these
commentators have failed to comprehensively give voice to all soldiers who served in the war. Competing discourses about Kenya African soldiers in the Second World War have failed to capture the entire panoply of African opinions, service, and experiences in the war.

Navigating the historiography on African soldiers’ experiences in the Second World War. One of the most recent account of African soldiers in the Second World is Nancy Lawler’s *Soldiers of Misfortunes: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II,*

arguably the best work on the Second World that truly captures the voices, imaginations, fears, hopes, and plans of African soldiers in the Second World War and after. In short, the book is about the experiences of the Ivoirien soldiers in the war. Up until its publication in 1992, nothing substantive had been written about the recruitment, training, deployment, and participation of African soldiers in battles and campaigns, and their subsequent demobilization beyond intermittent anecdotes about them. Many full-length works tended to concentrate on the impact of the Second World War on African nationalism, arguing that it was a watershed, a turning point in the history of Africa, and trying to demonstrate how that was the case.

A few articles dealt with the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, and

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37 If there is any topic that has received more attention than others in scholarly and popular works dealing with the Second World War and Africa, that topic is the impact of the Second World War on African nationalism. In fact, David Killingray and Richard Rathbone rightly contend that many works often use “the beginning of the war [as] a terminal date, just as 1945 has been a convenient opening date for a similar number of influential works.” See: David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, “Introduction,” in *Africa and the Second World War,* ed., David Killingray and Richard Rathbone (London: MacMillan, 1986): 1-19, p.1. Chapters 5, 6, and 8 of David Killingray’s and Richard Rathbone’s volume also deal with this topic. Also see: special edition on “World War II and Africa” in *Journal of African History,* 26, 4 (1985). Richard Rathbone writes that after the Second World War “nothing was ever the same again” in Africa. See: Richard Rathbone, “World War I and Africa: Introduction” section of “World War I and Africa,” a special issue of *Journal of African History,* 19, 1 (1978): 1-9, p.1; Ali Mazrui and Michael Tidy also argue on p.10 of their *Nationalism and New States in Africa,* that the war “marked the beginning of the end of political colonialism in Asia and Africa, and thereby became the great turning point in the modern history of both.
how the Second World War catalyzed the subsequent Ethiopian war of
liberation, \(^{38}\) propaganda, recruitment, and mobilization of African soldiers, \(^{39}\) African


socio-economic, and political support for the war; the military campaign in North Africa; the role of South African contingent in the war; among other popular themes.


39 Refer to footnote: 26.

but only very few studies were devoted to fleshing out the experience of ordinary African servicemen in the war.\textsuperscript{43} David Killingray and Richard Rathbone reacted to this lack of

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scholarly interest on how African soldiers participated in this war by lamenting that "the [Second World War in Africa had] remained more of an assumption than a reality." In spite of various socio-economic and political ramifications that the war is presumed to have brought to the African continent, Killingray and Rathbone complained, most assertions about the war, howsoever truthful, were made tautologically without systematized analysis to support them, and those assumptions had, strangely enough, percolated from one generation of scholars to another over the years, virtually acquiring the status of folk-lore, to be accepted and rendered without question or research. Nancy Lawler’s book may not necessarily have been a direct response to Killingray and Rathbone’s indictment of the tautological nature of the few existing studies that deal with the war in Africa, but coming after David Killingray’s and Richard Rathborne’s clarion call for in-depth analysis of African experience in the war, it provides an excellent point of departure for works seeking to fill this gaping caveat in discourses about the war in Africa.


44 David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, _Africa and the Second World War_, p.1. See also: Wendell P. Holbrook, “Oral History and the Nascent historiography for West Africa and the World War II: A Focus on Ghana,” in _International Journal of Oral History_, 3, 2 (June, 1982); David E. Gardiner, “The Second World War In French West Africa and Togo: Recent Research and Writing,” in _Proceedings of the Tenth Meeting of the Colonial Historical Society, April 12-14, 1984_, ed., Philip P. Boucher (Lanham, New York, and London: University Press of America,***): 261-272; and, Ashley Jackson’s Motivation and Mobilization for war,” whose observations about what has been done, and still needs to be done on Africa and the Second World War, are similar to David Killingray and Richard Rathbone. Although Holbrook argues on page 148 of his work that “only minor attention has been given to the war experience as it unfolded in West Africa,” Ashley Jackson contends that the dearth of attention to soldiers’ experience does not just pertain to West Africa alone, but also that “there still exists in more general circles a tendency to assume that recruitment, military service, and repatriation had a major political and social impact at ground level, without adequately demonstrating how that was manifest,” Ashley Jackson, p.400.
Although Lawler herself betrays a common tendency among scholars, of questioning and second-guessing soldiers who professed their loyalty to the government, in general, it is clearly a departure from previously existing studies, profoundly and amazingly sympathetic, pro-active, and indispensable to understanding African participation in the Second World War. She fails to follow the role and experience of politically conscious soldiers in the war at great length, but she provides a thorough examination of the African enlistment, participation and experiences in the war, and demonstrates how this experience evolved, and ultimately became discernable in the form of political activism against the French in post-war Corte d’Ivoire.

Studies of Kenya African soldiers in the Second World War can benefit from Lawler’s intellectual and methodological rendition of the experience of Ivoirien soldiers. Very few, if any, studies have been done specifically on the experiences of Kenyan soldiers in the war. Those that have something to say about the service and experience of Kenya African soldiers are usually interested on much larger issues, with the soldiers’ service and experience in the Second World War providing a convenient, but brief and temporary backdrop. O.J. E. Shiroya has written extensively on Kenya African soldiers, but only from the perspective of how the war facilitated the decolonization process in Kenya. There is very little in Shiroya’s works on askaris’ experience in the war. ⁴⁵ Timothy Parsons has recently written a number of studies on African soldiers, but because they are based on East and Central Africa, they tend to be too large and too general, and touch on

Kenya African soldiers perfunctorily. None of his work deals specifically with the
Colonial Military Service in the King’s Africa Rifles, 1902-1964*, and doctoral
dissertation, “East African Soldiers in Britain’s Colonial Army: A Social History, 1902-
1964,” are on East and Central Africa, rather than on Kenya specifically. To be sure,
Parsons’ works on the Kings African Rifles provide important information on the
historical evolution of the askaris’ army, though it emphasizes more on the social aspect
of African military service during the colonial era, than on the experience of the askaris
in the course of the actual combat, battles, and campaigns of the Second World War.46
Some of Parsons’ sources are very questionable, particularly when he claims that some of
the informants he interviewed in 1994 served in the army between 1904-1921, 1905-20,
1913-18, and even 1901-03! Parsons’ most recent book is *The 1964 Army Mutinies and
the Making of Modern East Africa*,47 whose first four chapters is basically a reproduction

46 See for instance, the Melvin Page’s review of Timothy Parson’s book. In his review, Page argues in part
that “readers are deprived of any clearly identifiable record of African agency in the social change Parsons
suggests were taking place in the East African colonial military. This oversight is compounded by other
omissions, such as scant references to dance and song ..., which have a well-documented relationship to
African reflection on the social dimensions of military service in the region. … The … [work] … seems
nonetheless to have been extracted out of (and even away from) African realities rather than illuminating
them. Parsons is seldom able to move beyond what Jan Vansina has described as “a professional attitude
which leads scholars to write for each other, rather than for the African populations which should be their
Military Service in the King’s Africa Rifles, 1902-1964*, by Timothy Parsons, in *The International Journal
Jackson, review of *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of colonial Military Service in the
King’s Africa Rifles, 1902-1964*, by Timothy Parsons, in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth
History*, XXIX, 1 (January, 2001): 170-171. Other works by Timothy Parsons on the war are: Timothy
Parsons, “‘Kibra is our Blood:’ The Sudanese Military Legacy in Nairobi’s Kibera Location, 1902-1968,”
in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 30, 1 (1997): 87-122; “‘Wakamba Warriors are
Soldiers of the Queen:’ The Evolution of the Kamba as Martial Race,” which has already been cited;
Timothy Parsons, “Dangerous Education? The Army as School in Colonial East Africa,” in *The Journal of

47 Timothy H. Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport, Conn.:
of most of the materials in his book, *The Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1962*. The main gist of Parson's book on the 1964 East African mutinies can be found in Chapter Five, which deals specifically with the circumstances behind the mutinies, and how the soldiers carried out the mutinies. The book suggests rather grandiosely that the mutinies influenced in significant ways the future evolution and fortunes of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The remaining other works on the Second World War were written by colonial officials intent on justifying African participation in the war,\(^{48}\) while still others deal only with the non-combat contribution of Kenya to the government's war effort.\(^{49}\) Most of them were, in the words of Parsons, semi-official historical accounts. While these works have investigated the social, economic, and political transformations engendered by the war, important as

\(^{48}\) See: Various works by colonial officials which have already been cited on footnote 4, prominent among them being Lieutenant-Colonel H. Moyse-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles*. Although Moyse-Bartlett's work provides excellent examination of the course of the war, it belongs to the traditional genre of military history that often concentrate mechanical details of battles, combat, and campaigns, at the expense of actual combatants. It is virtually bereft of African experience in the battle-field. Other works have recently emerged dealing with the King's African Rifles. Examples include: Malcom Page, *A History of the King's African Rifles and East African Forces* (London: Leo Cooper, 1998); John Nunnaley, *Tales from the King's African Rifles: A Last Flourish of Empire* (Surrey, England: Askari Books, 1998); John Nunnaley, *Tales from the Burma Campaign, 1942-1945* (Surrey, England: Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, 1998); W. E. Crosskill, *The Two Thousand Mile War* (London: Robert Hale, 1980). Though these works do not deal with the Second World War specifically, they offer some useful insights on the participation of Kenya African soldiers in the war.

they are, they have shied away from illuminating the experience and service of the Kenya African soldiers who risked their lives fighting for the British and Allied forces in the Second World War.

In contrast, this work pays a great deal of attention to the experiences of askaris who served in the Second World War within the context of life in the colony. It deals with recruitment and mobilization of askaris, and examines in detail their motives, and the process by which they joined the war. It deals with the training of the men, with an extensive examination of military skills and lessons taught at Maseno Depot, and also in the Pioneer Corps, one of the most populous military units, which the government established during the Second World War. These chapters are followed by detailed accounts of the experiences of askaris in the campaigns of the war, their general experiences serving in the army, how the war ended and affected them, and how they were demobilized, and proceeded home. The chapter on the end of the war and demobilization also provides a detailed analysis of how askaris settled down, their problems back at home, how they tried to deal with them, and how those problems morphed into disenchantment with the government. After the end of the war, many of these disenchanted askaris went on to organize themselves and to form associations, which represented and articulated their grievances with the government. It is argued in this chapter that the emergence of these associations and the objectives they articulated demonstrate a very clear link between what the askaris expected to achieve when they enlisted, and why they came to resent the government after the war had ended.
Reading and Interpreting the Evidence.

Most of the materials for this work were collected over a one and a half year period running from Fall 1999 to Spring 2001. A small fraction of these materials are secondary works: books, articles, conference and seminar papers, held at the Fondren Library of Rice University. Other materials were acquired from other universities through the Inter-Library Loan Service of the Fondren Library, Rice University. More materials were collected at the Cecil H. Green Library and Hoover Institute Library and Archives of Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, in spring, 2003. Most of the available, relevant materials at these libraries were books, chapters in books, articles in journals, review articles and book reviews. These secondary materials provided suggestive ideas on areas that had not been explored in literature, important questions on Kenya and the war that had so far not been dealt with, and what kinds of materials were necessary to adequately deal with the kinds of questions that needed answers. Once the relevant issues had been identified, it was time to look for primary materials, and which were collected during fieldwork in Kenya. Most of the sources are based on oral interviews, archival documents and newspaper reports. Archival documents, which were collected during research at the Kenya National Archives in the last half of 2000 were fortuitously preserved by the colonial government itself. When the Second World War broke out and the Kenya Colony joined in the fighting, the government directed civil administrators to write regular reports entitled “History of the War,” as it appertained to their jurisdictions for posterity. Malcolm MacDonald, The Officer Administering the Government of Kenya, wrote a Secret Circular, on 18th October, 1939, informing government officers that:

it is considered desirable that steps should be taken forthwith to ensure that the essential material required for a history of the war is collected and preserved in a convenient form. Although this
question may well seem of academic interest only at the present time, it will be appreciated that unless appropriate arrangements are made now much inconvenience will be caused at a later date when the time comes for a history of the war to be prepared. Accordingly the general procedure is being adopted in this country whereby Departments concerned will keep a record of the principal events, decisions, etc., affecting the war, with references to the documents in which such events and decisions are recorded. This will enable departments to supply without difficulty materials at a later date to the compilers of the history of the war. In order that there may be available here a record of the more important happenings in the Colonial Dependencies, I should be obliged if you would be so good as to let me have a quarterly report summarizing the more important events, decisions, etc., taken in the territory with which you are concerned during the period under review.  

Indeed, after the war, in January, 1946, Olga Barton-Eckett, who was working at the MacMillan Library, wrote to The Secretariat, requesting for “a record of Kenya’s war effort … for … information of Kenya men and women who are serving, or have served,

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50 (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16). A similar copy of Malcolm MacDonald’s letter is in History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61; see also: The Chief Secretary’s, G.M. Rennie’s secret circular informing Government officers to “take steps to open immediately and maintain carefully a full record giving details of all the principal events, decisions, etc., affecting war which concern your departments and/or any special duties for which you are responsible under the Defence Scheme. You will observe that the records should contain references to the documents in which such events and decisions are recorded.” [The Chief Secretary, G.M. Rennie, secret circular dated 12th December, 1939, History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11; Copy of G.G. Rennie’s letter is also in History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61]. Although Force Headquarters, 2nd Echelon, Dar-es-Salam, issued instructions that a diary of relevant events could be kept in the form of a diary (Letter from Headquarters East Africa 2nd Echelon, dated 2nd February, 1940, History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61), the civilian administration on the other hand decreed the tendency of officers writing the “History of War” for their Departments as if it was a “diary of events.” R. Surridge informed the officers that “to steps [be taken] in future to ensure that the record summarizing important events should take the form of a brief report … first report [would be] sent to the Colonial Office … [while the rest to] reach the Secretariat not later than six weeks after the end of the quarter in question.” (R. Surridge, writing for Chief Secretary, on 4th November, 1940, History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16). The Officer Commanding, 1st Battalion Pioneers, Nairobi, on his part had problems writing the report for the beginning years of his unit, the Pioneers. In letters both to Force Headquarters, 2nd Echelon, and to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, he sought information on what to do. Writing to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, in a letter dated 19th February 1940, he asks him to “help me in this matter. At that time [that is, when the unit was formed], no dairy was kept by the Battalion, and it is difficult for me to remember dates, possibly you may have kept some records of the moves and activities of the Battalion from the period of its inception until the move to Nanyuki, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61). Nevertheless, when these instructions arrived, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, directed his District Commissioners to “provide all necessary data in the appropriate sections of their Annual Report, especially under the head ‘Military.’ I shall do the same in my Annual Report.” (Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, in a letter dated 17th February, 1940, History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
with H.M. Forces."51 These wartime archival documents are still there at the Kenya National Archive, and are fertile with a lot of information on the war.

During research, the Kenya National Archive lived up to its reputation as the premier center of primary, rare government documents on Kenya especially during this period. Although its collection of current books, journals, and other recent publications is not all that impressive, a consequence of economic constraints which have been facing Kenya in the recent past, its holding of colonial government records is excellent. Many documents on the Second World War in Kenya are available there, such as government reports, communiqués, memos, dispatches, and telegrams. There are letters that soldiers themselves wrote to their family members back at home, and those that families wrote to their sons who were then serving with the colonial forces in the war. The government often censored askaris' letters, but even so, these letters in many cases reveal a lot of information on the views and experiences of the askaris during the war. One sees in these letters what was upper-most in the soldiers' minds, what worried them most, what they often thought about. These letters show that the soldiers were to a large extent always thinking about home. The soldiers worried about the welfare of their families; they wanted them to lead a better life, and they wanted them to save money sent to them through the Family Remittance Fund, and/or use it in profitable investments. Writing through literate askaris who were employed for the purpose of writing letters on their behalf, soldiers often inquired about the health of family members – their parents, wives,

51 Olga Barton-Eckett, MacMillan Library, to The Secretariat. (Military: Kenya's War Record, 1946, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/182).
siblings, children, and other relatives within the extended kinship network that existed at home. Askaris often wanted to know about their homes, livestock, land, and in many cases castigated those they thought were errant. Askaris’ letters were not only directed at family members, but also at the government, especially at its representatives at the local level – the chiefs, District Officers, and occasionally, even the District Commissioners and the Provincial Commissioners. These letters also reveal that askaris were making plans about how they would live after the war ended; many were worrying about further education, about acquiring skills and training, about investing in business, building shops, opening butcheries, putting up good homes, and about farming.

Of interest as sources of information are archival documents containing information on government propaganda, and how the government used various avenues to reach out to the people during the war. Films, cinemas, radios, and newspapers were important in publicizing the government war objectives. Colonial officials, from the Assistant-Chief to the Provincial Commissioner criss-crossed the colony, instilling pro-government opinion about the war among the people. To a large extent, these propaganda efforts induced a great deal of support among the people; young men enlisted in the war to protect themselves, the black race, and the government, from heinous plans that Hitler and his cronies were said to harbor against them. Not every detail of the war was passed to the ordinary population, however; the government obviously and understandably hid “certain confidential” aspects of the war from the public eye, often preferring to use other means such as “confidential” or “secret” memos and dispatches to discuss policy about the war amongst themselves. These memos and dispatches are available at the archives, and have
proven extremely useful in providing information, for example, on recruitment, battles and campaigns, war casualties, problems in the colony, colonial officials’ views of their *askaris,* and of life in the colony generally. It is in these secret memos and dispatches that the government discusses strategies on how to publicize the war in the colony and sell it to Africans. Here one finds information on recruitment, conscription, training, equipping and clothing of troops. These documents talk about *askaris* who were discharged or given early release due to injuries, diseases, and other problems affecting them. We learn about soldiers who were tried and prosecuted for committing crimes, and others for participating in mutinies. There are records about soldiers who fled from the war, dissented the army, and there are records of the government debating “confidential reasons” why some soldiers were abandoning the army. Many government documents also provide details on terms of service, meals, accouterments, salaries, pensions, gratuities, and bonus payments. We learn in these documents that many soldiers complained about their salaries and pensions. Other documents reveal that some members of the establishment were worried about life in the colony at the end of the war. In particular, these colonial elites worried that at the end of war, *askaris* would not settle back to their villages. They feared that *askaris* would undergo life-changing personal experiences during their military service. Would they accept the *status quo,* complete with subservient positions assigned to Africans or would they clamor for change? Would they continue to obey and respect their chiefs and assistant chiefs? Looking ahead at the time the war would come to an end, these colonial elite engaged in brisk discussions about the soldier and the colony, about what has come to be popularly known in literature as “the demobilized soldier.” What do you do with them – the soldier, the *askari* after the
end of the war? Fearing that the these soldiers would be difficult to control once they returned back to the villages after their tour of duty abroad, colonial officials discussed how to “re-villagize” the African askari, how to make him respectful of colonial authority, and amenable to colonial rule once again. Paradoxically, but not unexpectedly, as the government discussed their fate, the soldiers did not remain ignorant or take a disinterested, nonchalant stance as these discussions swirled around them. Many askaris, we also learn from archival documents, thought about life after the war; about salaries, about pensions, about investments, about survival. They thought about whether things would remain the same, or whether the government would treat them better than it had done before the war.

In addition to colonial documents, this work also relied on newspapers and magazines. The East African Standard newspaper proved extremely informative, especially given the fact that its correspondent embedded with the colonial forces and traveled with them wherever they went to during the war. George Kinnear, the East African Standard newspaper’s special war correspondent with the East African Forces, used to file detailed war dispatches to his paper back in Nairobi, providing useful first-hand account of how askaris were serving in the war. Another useful magazine was the Askari, which was available both at the Kenya National Archive, and at the MacMillan Library of the City Council of Nairobi. Founded by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the colonial government in 1942, Askari was used to encourage enlistment into the colonial military force and to mobilize the general population to support the war. It kept askaris in touch with their families at home by facilitating flow of communication in both
directions, and thus sustained morale among the troops by letting them know that things were fine at home, that their communities had not forgotten about them. That the magazine was named Askari is significant in the sense that it is askaris’ own magazine, dedicated to solely to the affairs and interests of the soldiers, and their participation in the Second World War. Although Askari magazine was itself often censored by the government, it contains unquestionably useful information on life in the army. It provides information on key, significant events of the war. Besides Askari, newspapers and magazines like Kenya Weekly News (based in Nakuru), Credit Side, Kenya Daily Mail, Sunday Post (Nairobi), Mombasa Times (Mombasa), The Crown Colony, Baraza, and Kwetu Kenya also carried reports about the war, and were used as sources of information. Placed side by side with archival documents, newspaper accounts, and oral testimonies, they go a long way in facilitating the reconstruction of how askaris experienced the war.

The most important source of information for this work were, without question, oral materials. Oral materials were collected through interviews conducted with soldiers, particularly those who live in the western part of Kenya. Initially, the plan for collecting oral information was to identify informants in specific parts of the country selected through a carefully, modulated sampling method. But this proved difficult, and strategies for conducting interviews with askaris were changed. Eventually a number of factors were considered carefully, and which led to the confining of interview sessions to western Kenya. First, primary and secondary documents, which had already been collected, showed that the majority of soldiers who served in the Second World War came from the western part of Kenya. This place had the highest number of soldiers who
served in the war, particularly from 1941 onwards. It was thus felt that instead of spending huge sums of money, which was not available in the first place, conducting research in far-flung parts of Kenya, it was thought prudent to use the little available money in a smaller area, among the highest concentration of soldiers who went to this particular war. Language was another consideration. Most of the askaris who were interviewed speak Dholuo, like the interviewer. The interviews were thus conducted in Dholuo. Not only did this mean that the interviewer and the soldiers easily and quickly established a rapport with one another, but also that they would talk directly to one another, avoiding potentially misleading obscurantism that using a translator in other parts of Kenya would have entailed. Discussions were often easy and quick. An easy, trustful relationship was forged with the soldiers, who, during interviews were very warm and helpful. Many askaris were also fortunately eager to tell their story, especially how they feel betrayed by Kenya’s colonial and post-colonial governments.

During the fieldwork research in western Kenya, one hundred and fifty-three (153) veterans were interviewed. It was not too difficult to find these soldiers. Their status and age in their gerontocratic African society have ensured that they are respected and well known, always conspicuous on the social landscape. They are reverently known locally as soja, (corruption of the word “soldier”), jolweny (men of war), jo-Panyako (corruption of the “Pioneer Corp”), jolweny mar ariyo (literally, men of the second war, that is, the Second World War), jo-Abisinia (men of Abyssinia). Initial contacts were made through government officials because that is the official procedure in Kenya; ignoring official etiquette could easily put the interviewer and the soldiers in trouble with the law.
Informants also may not trust you or co-operate with you if you do not come to them through the official channels or through people they know and trust. A potential drawback to the method of identifying informants through government officials is that at times the informants could feel intimidated or obligated to co-operate and participate in the interview, but luckily this problem had already been anticipated and obviated through the deliberate strategy of assuring government officials that the interview would be strictly about the Second World War. Moreover, most interviews with informants were held away from the presence of chiefs and assistant chiefs, so that the informants could talk freely. Government officials only helped to identify the informants, and facilitate introduction formalities; but the actual interviews only begun after they left.

The interviews were conducted by following a sample of questions (see: Appendix A), which had been drawn up in advance. These questions were formulated in such a way that they dealt with every aspect of askaris’ experiences during the war, from the time they joined the army to the time they got demobilized and came back home. Using these questions, the informants were guided into areas and issues that were relevant to the research. The answers that the informants gave were probed further to achieve better clarity. In other words, although the interviews were conducted in line with the list of sample of questions, they were not restricted to the sample. The sample of questions only served as a guide. Other relevant questions that arose during interviews were posed back to the informants themselves, leading to more precise, detailed, and useful information. Answers given by the informants were taped and written down during every interview session. Photographs of the informants, and any other relevant documents were also
The informants were interviewed individually and in groups. Group interviews were useful for three reasons. First, group interviews brought several soldiers together at one sitting, where they would help each other during the interview, prompting each other and supplying details that any one particular individual would not remember. Second, through group interviews, it was easy to corroborate personal reminiscences of the war. Third, group interviews provided an opportunity to identify soldiers who were especially forthright, candid, and resourceful, whose accounts were detailed. Indeed, these informative ex-soldiers easily stood out during group interviews because the groups invariably chose them as their spokesmen. During group interviews, the more knowledgeable informants were identified, and a request made to them to be available for further interviews at a later time of their own convenience.

During individual interviews, these soldiers supplied extremely detailed accounts of their personal experiences and those of their units during the war. While group interviews were useful because information provided could be corroborated by the large gathering of askaris and their families, individual interviews on the other hand provided a unique opportunity to gather private, confidential information that the ex-soldiers did not want the rest to know. Indeed, there were some soldiers who were very self-conscious at group interviews, and only spoke up at private interview sessions. There were several occasions when informants were interviewed more than once; especially resourceful informants were consulted and talked to repeatedly because their personal accounts were incisive and
insightful. They were askaris who were chatty, and their accounts were often extremely vivid, riveting, and detailed. These soldiers remembered many battles and encounters with astonishing accuracy and detail. They knew a lot about the Kenya Colony and were able to connect their experiences in the war to life in the colony as a whole. These ex-soldiers also helped to evaluate information received during other interview sessions. If a piece of information was not correct they pointed it out, and volunteered what they thought was the correct one. Materials that these ex-soldiers said were incorrect were not discarded, however; they were instead collected and included in this analysis because it was felt that they reflected legitimate aspects of what some other informants experienced during the war which the others did not necessarily experience. The fact that some information appeared or was deemed inaccurate or incorrect by one soldier or a group of soldiers was not necessarily taken to mean that it was incorrect or inaccurate. Human experiences are never uniform; soldiers experience war differently and there are things that some soldiers go through that others do not. What soldiers choose to remember is often subjective, depending on what they consider important to them and worth remembering, and the decision on whether to include them in the story should not depend on what other soldiers say about them, but how they enrich and complicate the story being told. Ultimately askaris' personal memories of the war should be approached open-mindedly, each given weight as legitimate ingredients of what would constitute important aspects of their overall wartime experiences.

Something needs to be said about how materials pertaining to political aspirations of the combatants who served in the war were collected interpreted. This is because these
materials were the hardest to collect. Although during interviews there were askaris whose answers to questions generally implied that they believed that their service in the war could lead to greater freedom, liberty, and equality, there recollections were often difficult to analyze because it was not clear whether they were speaking retroactively or not. Many askaris often did not speak in such direct terms. Asked to state clearly what exactly they wanted to achieve politically, their answers were not always obvious and straightforward. And there are several reasons for this apparent obscurantism on the part of the askaris. During interviews, many askaris argued that they could not openly and explicitly attribute their service in the war to an attempt to win rights in the colony because they were afraid of possible retribution from the colonial administration.

Secondly, some askaris felt reluctant to voice their political opinions openly especially during the war because they felt that it would not “sound right,” that “they would not look good” by trying to take advantage of the government’s moment of crisis, when it “needed their help.” Nevertheless, many askaris expected the administration to voluntarily open the socio-economic and political space in the colony as a consequence of what they hoped would be a new sense of brotherhood forged, and consummated during the war for freedom, liberty, and equality. They expected something political in return for their service, though the evidence for this is not very direct. This aspect of their perspective of the war remains for the most part hidden in literature, it exists between the lines. Whenever there were direct, open and explicit assertions about politics, about the need to join the war to “win freedom,” to “fight for independence,” or to “enjoy the rights that the allies were defending against Hitler’s aggression,” we find that askaris who were making those claims were generally few, though their assertions generally resonated well
with the rest. While most of the available documentary and oral evidence show that most askaris joined the war for different reasons, including financial and material needs, coercion, adventure, other aspects of these pieces of evidence also reveal that some askaris' had political reasons for joining the war. There were those who enlisted in the war out of unquestioned loyalty to the government and there were those who hoped for a better tomorrow, a more progressive future in the colony. After all the analysis is done, one finds that soldiers hankered for freedom, equality, and fraternity, and hoped that their service in the war for freedom, equality, and fraternity would clinch them these rights in the colony.

The role and contribution of the ex-soldiers, the ex-askaris, to this work cannot be gainsaid. Their readiness to volunteer and selflessly tell their story was humbling. Yet these soldiers have a lot of problems. They have suffered bitterly at home since the end of the war. Many of them are old, poor, and sick. The British government, and the post-colonial governments have totally abandoned them, and yet in spite of all these problems these soldiers readily came forward to talk about their experience during the Second World War. During interviews, it was clear that all they want is the world to know how they contributed to the defense of freedom from the "evil machinations of Hitler" and what has happened to them since. They talked about how and why they joined the war. They nostalgically and proudly ruminate over their experiences in the desert landscapes of Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, Egypt, the Middle East, and Madagascar; about the "jungles" and rivers of South East Asia; about mosquitoes; about how the Japanese were virtually unstoppable, attacking them constantly and relentlessly in Burma, and may other
places. There are those whose eyes lit up in excitement when they talked about Jerusalem, which they fondly remember as the birth-place of Jesus Christ; about Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, one of the only two independent African states at the time, the other one being Liberia. Some askaris talked in awe about the first time they set their eyes on Emperor Haile Sellasie after the defeat of the Italians in Abyssinia.

While demonstrating their enthusiasm by readily and unhesitatingly sharing their wartime experiences, these soldiers expressed deep bewilderment over what they rightly perceive as betrayal by the British government. Demobilized without pension or gratuity, they have been languishing in extreme and abject poverty since the end of the war. While talking to them, there anguish is palpable and unmistakable. At the twilight of their lives, most of them are concerned less with the ideals of the war, and more with how they can make ends meet. They bitterly talk about outstanding payments they believe the British government owes them for services rendered during the war, and about promises, which the government made to them during the war, and never kept. The political ideals of the war, which they might have had during the war, have to a large extent been actualized in the form of independence, which Kenya won in 1963. Ideals of war are no longer as important as survival; the question of survival is more immediate to them. After talking to these soldiers and seeing how they are suffering, one cannot help but feel an extreme sense of outrage at the way the British government, and the post-colonial governments of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi have treated them. Although archival documents and oral testimonies indicate that the government promised to take care of the askaris in return for services rendered during the war, it is clear that the government has reneged on
this promise. In fact, immediately after the war, the government quickly demobilized the soldiers and sent them back to their villages with nothing but the little money they had saved during the war. This money quickly got finished as the *askaris* tried to settle down after the war had ended. Like ex-Second World War African soldiers from Cote D’Ivoire who were interviewed by Nancy Lawler, veterans of the war in Kenya are in need of help urgently. The *askaris* talk passionately about this. The British government needs to respond to their queries about the outstanding payment and the promises it made to these soldiers. Some of these soldiers are quite old and some are resigned to a fate of penury, of dying before they are compensated for all their effort in the war that was officially touted by the Allies as war for freedom, liberty, and fraternity. A number of them have given up hope, saying despondently that, “if the government did not give us anything immediately after the war, and it has not given us anything up to now – nearly sixty years after the war ended, what would make it do so now?” This story cannot hope to compensate the soldiers for what they have lost, but it is at least an attempt at providing an account for posterity of what the generation that came after owes them in terms of how they fought and gave up their lives for “freedom” and “liberty” for them, ideals that the war was about. This work is their story; it is about how the *askaris* went to war in the name of freedom, equality, and self-determination, and about how they were abandoned by the chief beneficiary of the war – the British government – once it had secured its own liberty and freedom from Hitler’s threats, and seemingly no longer considered the *askaris* useful in the defense of the interests of the British Empire.

Organizing the Chapters.
This work is divided into eleven chapters. The first chapter consists of a detailed analysis of literature on the Second World War and Africa. It identifies a historical niche within works that have already been done, and observes that Kenyan *askaris* who served in the Second World War have not been given due scholarly attention that they rightfully deserve. In fact much still remains to be done to document the motives, service, and experience of African soldiers in this war, and the story of Kenyan soldiers done here is just one among many things that need to be told to contribute hopefully to a more fulsome scholarly understanding of the experience African soldiers in the Second World War. This chapter also discusses the methods and techniques that have been used to collect and analyze evidence. Most of the materials are based on oral evidence, archival documents, newspapers such as the *East African Standard, Askari, Baraza, Kwetu Kenya,* and *Credit Side,* and secondary works such as books, articles, and conference papers, and which were collected during a one and a half year research period, stretching roughly from Fall, 1999 to Spring, 2001. This work’s main point of departure from those already in the market place of ideas, is not just that it will help fill a lacuna in scholarship, but also that it does so by presenting the war from *askaris’* perspectives, using different types of sources. This work excavates the experience and service of Kenya *askaris* in the war, a task which has been done by tracing *askaris’* war-time experiences systematically from the time they were recruited to the time they were demobilized.

The second chapter is on the outbreak of the war in Europe and its expansion to Kenya. The chapter contends that the participation of Kenya in the war was virtually unavoidable; first of all, Kenya was a colony of the British Empire and there was no way
it would avoid a war which involved the motherland. Secondly, Italy, one of the major protagonists of the war occupied Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, bringing the threat and the specter of war right onto the doorsteps of Kenya. The colonial administration started making preparations for the war quite early in 1938 and this chapter is about those early preparations. The chapter analyzes how the administration and ordinary people waited for the war and how the colonial administration in Kenya in particular prepared. Some of the issues discussed here include government preparations to recruit men, preparations for propaganda, the rationing of goods such as petrol, and the production of different types of goods to meet the war effort. There were preparations for the defense of the colony from attack. A list of Italians and Germans and their sympathizers living in Kenya was made and plans were made to intern them when the war broke out. The colony was divided into military zones.

The third and fourth chapters deal specifically with the motives of the *askaris* in the war, and how the *askaris* went about enlisting in the war. As demonstrated in chapter four, *askaris* were motivated to serve in the war for many reasons. *Askaris* joined the war for social, economic and political reasons, which often changed from one day to another, and from person to person. There were *askaris* who considered themselves loyal and patriotic to the government, and there were those who were attracted to the war because of its ideals. This latter group hoped that at the end of the war, the government would not forget about these ideals with respect to the colony. They hoped that the government would recognize and reward their service accordingly by opening socio-economic, and political space in the colony. Other factors that motivated soldiers into the war are looked
at. The voices of the *askaris* are heard through verbatim quotes from their oral testimonies, letters, and other documents they wrote during the war. The chapter on recruitment looks at the process of joining the war, at how, for instance, *askaris* were registered for military service, and what happened to them on the first days of enlistment. The terms under which *askaris* enlisted for service are examined, focusing, for instance, on salaries, and the kinds of things the government was promising them during enlistment.

The next two chapters deal with how *askaris* were recruited, registered, deployed and trained within the context of military depots and military schools, and military units. These chapters provide deeper understanding of military life within specific situations. Chapter six analyzes the history of Maseno Holding and Recruiting Depot. The story of Maseno Holding and Recruiting Depot provides a very close-up window for an understanding of how newly recruited civilians began undergoing military service, how life was changing before their eyes. Chapter seven further enhances our understanding of how *askaris* found military life by analyzing the history of *PANYAKO* – Pioneer Corps, and how *askaris* were transformed by military service in these units. This chapter also examines the historical origins of *PANYAKO*, and how it influenced *askaris*’ military experience. The story of *PANYAKO* tells us a lot about the motives of *askaris* in the war, and how they were deployed and trained. We learn easily that the King’s African Rifles was the most favorite unit among Kenyan *askaris*, and the East African Pioneers was arguably the least favorite, and we learn why. Besides the Pioneers, other units in which *askaris* served were the East African Army Medical Corps, East African Army Service
Corps, the East African Army Engineers, East African Army Education Corps, and East African Army Signals Corps, among others. A study of the East African Pioneer makes it possible to understand how *askaris* served and experienced the war.

Chapter seven deals with non-combat contributions to the war. It examines how civilians contributed to the war. Kenyans supported the war by providing fighting men and also by other ways that did not directly involve the actual wielding of weapons. As young Kenyan men enlisted for military service and got deployed to fight for the government, those Kenyans who remained at home also supported the war in other ways. Civilians back at home in Kenya supported the war by producing food. Most of them offered moral support to government war effort by refraining from politically disruptive activities. They contributed funds for different war-related government projects. Kenyans did not just support the war by joining the military in large numbers, but also by giving moral, material, and financial support to the government.

Chapter eight examines the participation of *askaris* in actual battles and campaigns of the war. There are four major military campaigns in which *askaris* participated during the war: Abyssinia, Madagascar, North Africa and the Middle East, and South East Asia. The chapter narrates the course of the campaigns by highlighting major battles, interspersing it with accounts of how *askaris* participated in battles. The chapter examines how *askaris* served in the battles and what happened to them afterwards. In all, this chapter is generally concerned with the evolution of the campaigns, and how *askaris* experienced them. Because most *askaris* have largely forgotten most relevant details of the
campaigns, the chapter has relied largely on newspaper reports to reconstruct askaris’
experience of the war.

Chapter nine is about life in the army during the war. Since soldiers did not fight all the
time, the chapter examines what the askaris did away from battle; what they were talking
about, what they ate, what they did to improve their lives, any unusual observations
concerning their spiritual beliefs. It examines how soldiers entertained themselves, “kept
their minds occupied.” It talks about music, songs, and dance, in-door and out-door
sports. It examines how askaris tried to maintain contacts with their families by writing
letters home, and demanding that their families write back. Many askaris took advantage
of facilities in the army to learn a trade, a vocational skill, to improve on their religious
knowledge, and to learn how to read and write. There is an examination of how the war
transformed askaris, specifically their attitude to war, death, and beliefs pertaining to
how they took care of their dead. The chapter discusses rituals relating to death and
burials of the dead far away from home. An examination is made of askaris as guards of
white Prisoners-of-War, and as prisoners of war themselves. Examining the relationship
between askaris and their communities, the chapter suggests that many askaris spent a lot
of time worrying about their families. This can be attested to by thousands of letters,
which askaris and their families wrote to one another. The chapter also contends that
many askaris tried to use their earnings to improve their social status. With earnings from
the war, askaris bought livestock and were thus able to pay bride price. Indeed, there are
many instances of askaris getting married when they visited home on leave.
Chapter ten examines the end of the war and the question of de-mobilization. It deals with the competing discourses about the role the askaris were expected to play in the colony after the war. It deals with the journey home – how askaris traveled back to their district headquarters, and how they were formally discharged from the army. The chapter discusses the contested issue of pay, whether the government promised Kenyan soldiers gratuities, pensions, and several other fringe benefits, as the soldiers have been claiming. It examines how askaris tried to settle down after the war, and how they ended up getting frustrated and disenchanted with the government. It shows how askaris begun forming welfare associations to articulate their grievances, which gradually acquired political overtones. The chapter concludes by observing that askaris are very bitter with the colonial government even today.

Chapter eleven is the conclusion to this work. It is a recapitulation of askaris experiences in the war, a synthesis of how and why askaris went to the Second World War, and experienced it. Presented as far as possible from askaris’ own perspective, it concludes with a simple question, which was often put to askaris during interviews: was their participation in the war worth it? Was it worth giving their today for the colony’s tomorrow? Would they do it again, if the British colonial administration asked them to?
CHAPTER TWO

THE SECOND WORLD WAR BEGINS AND THE GOVERNMENT PREPARES.

East Africa was not taken by surprise on the occasion of the Second World War. Instead of the swift and unexpected crisis that precipitated the declaration of war in 1914, the course of events throughout the early part of 1939 moved to a grim and inexorable climax.1

Introduction.

This chapter examines the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe and explains how Kenyan soldiers, the askaris, got involved in the war, sometimes ostensibly seen as a foreign war. As a colony of Britain, Kenya was expected to help the mother-country. The presence of Italy in Italian Somaliland and its most recent acquisition, Abyssinia, since 3rd October, 1935, also brought the ominous threat of the Axis on the door-step of Kenya. An important British colony was itself under direct threat from Italians standing next door. The chapter thus examines preparations made by the Kenya Colony as war tension increased in Europe and spread to East Africa, and notes that one of the most important decisions taken by the government dealt with the issue of personnel, the recruitment and mobilization of manpower. In simple terms, the war in Europe and the threat that the Italians posed in Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland inevitably led to the enlistment of the services of Kenyan askaris by the Kenya Colony. Throughout the chapter, one notices a sense of fear and uncertainty, of urgency, permeating the colony as the government prepared for the war.
Putting Kenya on a War Footing.

When the Second World War formally broke out between Britain and Germany on 3rd September, 1939, Johannes Ochanda Ameny, who would later that year join the East African Pioneers, was a standard six pupil at Ramba Karapul Primary School, Siaya District. The last born in a family of five – two girls and three boys – Johannes was not aware that Europe was moving towards war, or that the Kenya Colony was briskly getting itself ready for war. “We only came to know that war had broken out in Europe when we were being urged to join the war, but we did not know what kinds of preparations were being done to prepare the colony for war.”2 Johannes Ochanda Ameny’s experience with the war was not untypical of most of askaris who served in the war. Government preparations for war were often made away from public glare out of fear of causing panic and anxiety among the public. Thus, when on 31st March, 1939, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner summoned chiefs to a meeting where for the first time he would break the news of the possibility of war in Kenya, he organized the meeting surreptitiously. Local administrators were advised not to cause young eligible men to run away from the colony by talking about the possibility of a war. “Take the more reliable Chiefs into your confidence,” Sydney H. Fazan, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner instructed the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, “Please ask the chiefs of Gem, Alego, North Ugenya and Samia to meet us at Chief Jairo’s [that is Gem Location] on Tuesday morning. I do not want a baraza [meeting] but they may bring a couple of elders if they like. I have not included the Chief of South Ugenya but you may include him at your discretion. I will take out African Manpower List of Ex-K.A.R., Ex-Police,

Drivers and Dressers. I append a statement of the quota which I think might reasonably be assigned in each case but we can amend this as a result of the discussion. Please have slips showing each Chief’s quota separately typed and bring them with you. I have already seen the Chief of Kadimu whom you have sent to me and his quota is shown in the attachment. Please ask the chiefs of Kisumu, Kajulu, Kano and Sagam to meet us in Kisumu on Wednesday. You will bring them to this office and the same conditions apply as above. The quota in each case is attached. As a result of these meetings we shall be able to judge how far it is necessary to approach any other chiefs.”

Fazan’s instructions show how the government was making preparations for war, while seeking to keep the general population ignorant. Thus when the war finally broke out in August, 1939, many men who would become askaris were surprised, but the government was not; it had instead anticipated the war and had long prepared for it in advance.

Kenya’s colonial officials had begun putting the colony on a war-footing when events in Europe pointed to a possibility of war, as early as 1938. Hitler had annexed his native Austria and added it to Germany in March, 1938. Six months later, in September 1938, Hitler sought to annex Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, and the British and the French, desperately trying to appease him, allowed him to do so when he promised that Sudetenland would be his last territorial claim in Europe. The following month, Hitler captured Sudetenland and added it to Germany, and within just a few days of that, began making claims on Poland. As Mussolini increasingly identified himself with Hitler, the British and the French began to realize that war was likely to break out between them and

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the Germans and Italians not only in Europe itself but also in other parts of the world. It was feared that the Germans would try to reclaim their former overseas colonies in Africa, and Italians would ally with them in that task. Colonial officials in Kenya were aware of the fact that any war involving Britain would not exclude its colonies overseas, and it was thought prudent to organize and prepare, to ensure that the colony was not caught flat-footed, particularly in view of the common boundaries with Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. In its preparations, the government's major tactic was based on the need to contain Italy, its nearest and most immediate neighbor, and thus arguably most serious threat. Government officials began considering how to defend the colony if Italy launched an attack particularly from its bases in Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. Most of the government's strategic plans were based on the assumption that Italian East Africa, surrounded largely by British and French colonies, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, would easily be cut off from reinforcements and supplies, and incapacitated from waging a prolonged offensive. But this required that the colonial government would patrol the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, clearly a task that was beyond the means and ability of the colony; the only realistic way of maintaining feasible and effective patrol on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean was if it was done by the British government forces, perhaps in conjunction with Kenyan colonial forces. A defense of the colony against Italy, it was realized, could not be undertaken by sea, but by land. General D. P. Dickinson, the General-in-Command Officer, East African Forces, proposed to deal with Italy by means of land warfare. Three mobile columns were thus proposed in anticipation of war, in which "one would advance from Moyale and the others east and west of "Rudolf [that is

the present-day Lake Turkana]," and the purpose of these three columns would be to harass the Italians in southern Ethiopia while defending Kenya. Explaining his views to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner at a military parade in Kisumu on 22nd August, 1939, Major General Dickinson also suggested that Ethiopian refugees who would flee to Kenya during the war would be detained at Taveta, and trained as guerrillas to help in the war against Italy.

According to archival documents, preparations for war had by mid 1939 been proceeding briskly. There was the \"establishment of military units, together with provisions regarding rates of pay, terms of service, discipline, etc; control of imports and exports and of supplies of essential commodities within the colony; regulation of prices; control of finance; trading with the enemy and the custody of enemy property; control of aliens and of suspected persons; lighting control; declaration of protected areas; and mobilization of the colony’s man power.\" Preparations made were both of military and non-military nature. These included a set of regulations and emergency powers which \"would be brought into force if, and when, emergency arose.\" Facing the challenge of war, the government put emphasis on the need to meet the kinds of immediate challenges that Italy could pose to the security of the colony. As early as 24th December, 1938, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner wrote to his District Commissioners, informing them in a confidential letter, entitled \"Defence\" that government preparation \"has to do with the defence scheme which is being devised to meet the contingency of a European war in

\footnote{4 Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34)}
\footnote{5 (Raids and Border Incidents, 1930-38, KNA, DC/ISO/2/5/4)}
\footnote{6 Acting Solicitor General, in his History of War report, dated 22nd July, 1940, (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).}
which Italy is engaged as an enemy." Six months later, on 10th May, 1939, the government promulgated a law requiring all male British subjects and British protected persons of Indian race or origin to register for the purpose of the Compulsory Service Ordinance, 1939. The passage of the Military Units Ordinance of 10th May, 1939, provided for the discipline of native members and native followers of units. The following day, 11th May, 1939, the government made a declaration, which put the Kenya Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve "under the conditions of service." The Railway Workshops area, Nairobi, was declared a protected area for the purposes of the Defence Regulations. The Post Office Service was also declared a protected zone. A week later, 17th May, 1939, the government issued orders registering and prohibiting the emigration of aliens from the colony. An order calling for the registration of aliens was made on 16th of May, 1939. By 18th May, 1939, an order was issued which delegated some of the Governor’s powers, under the Military Units Ordinance, 1939, to the General Officer Commanding East African troops, Major General D. P. Dickinson. On 22nd May, 1939, there was a proclamation calling out and mobilizing the officers and members of Class II of the Kenya Defence Force between the ages of 30 and 35 inclusive, as another order declared the Royal Air Force Aerodrome at Eastleigh and the Nairobi Civil Aerodrome to be protected places for the purposes of the Defence Regulations. On 27th May, 1939, an ordinance promulgated provided that persons exempted from military service by the Tribunal under section 12 of the Kenya Defence Force Ordinance, 1937, and certain persons exempted under the First Schedule to that Ordinance "shall not volunteer to serve

7 (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
8 (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
[other than for part time duty in the K.D.F.] in any of the military forces of the crown."

As war appeared ominous, the Governors of various British colonial territories in East and Central Africa formed an organization comprising of Governors to coordinate the activities of each colony. The Governor of the Kenya Colony was “for the period of the war, as well as being the Governor of Kenya, the permanent Chairman of the East African Governors Conference.” The government moved further and formed a Manpower Committee with branches in all the provinces in Kenya, whose mandate was the mobilization of the colony's manpower and getting it ready for the war. In the meantime, as the outbreak of the war was being awaited, the provincial headquarters functioned as coordinating centers for all work in connection with defense, including those related to manpower. Provincial Commissioners were given great autonomy in making decisions, including the freedom to participate in Manpower Committees in their provinces, and in this way, they were also able to keep abreast of what was required of their provinces, and they in turn kept the headquarters informed of their provinces’ preparations to meet those requirements.

Through the aegis of the Manpower Committee, the government mobilized European officers and allocated them duties to perform “in the event of war.” Government documents, published later in the war are useful for understanding the nature of government manpower mobilization and allocation of responsibilities. The documents indicate that the government drafted and maintained a list of names of its officers and

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9 (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
10 (Speeches by H.E. The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
duties in "the event of an invasion of the colony." As early as 24th December, 1938, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner had already directed his officers to make a list of European, Asiatic, and "Native" personnel in the province.\(^\text{12}\) In order that the Man-Power Committee may be fully advised before making the various allocations, each District Commissioner was required to arrange for an officer (either himself or one of the District Officers) to visit every European in his district without delay, particularly those of military age. While visiting heads of firms or companies (for instance, the manager of a mine, sisal estate, or tea company) care was taken to explain the reason for the inquiry, which was officially presented as being the need to be prepared rather than because there was an immediate danger. Thus the District Commissioners and District Officers were required to contact firm managers and solicit for information as to who was eligible for recruitment for the war purpose and making note of their special qualifications. When one was listed for defense duties he was required, upon the outbreak of war, to report to his Defense Force Commandant, but when one was listed for civil duties he would report for duty to the appropriate civil authorities. A card was then made, listing the names and children of the officer, and a list was made on the card of the special qualifications of the wife and children, just in case they could be useful for duties such as nursing, transport or clerical work. The card noted the kind of arrangements the officer intended or suggested should be made regarding his family in the event of his being called up. The managers were also required to provide names of skilled Indians and "natives that his firm would require during war, and names of those he would dispense with."\(^\text{13}\) The Kenya Women's

\(^\text{11}\) (African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).
\(^\text{12}\) (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33; African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).
\(^\text{13}\) (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
Emergency Organization in Nyanza was, like the Manpower Committee, organized on a Provincial basis to help in case of war.\textsuperscript{14}

Besides the mobilization of Europeans in the colony, the government officers who were in charge of manpower, were also required to make a list of names of Asians who would volunteer for any type of service which could be useful in a military situation, and leading Asian leaders like Mr. Rahemtulla Kassim of Kisumu, were tasked by the local Provincial Commissioner for the purpose of convincing Asian men to enlist for possible military duty. As well, all those Africans who had ever worked in the KAR, police, tribal police, as telegraphic operators, signalers, hospital dressers or orderlies, or as lorry drivers were registered. Some of the names of the past and present professionally experienced “native” personnel were already available in government files.\textsuperscript{15} By 30\textsuperscript{th} January, 1939, “lists of ex-police askaris, ex-King’s African Rifles, Drivers, Tribal Police, etc” had already been submitted by the District Officer of South Kavirondo to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner,\textsuperscript{16} a list which was followed by a new, detailed amendment on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 1939.\textsuperscript{17} In his list dated 6\textsuperscript{th} March, 1939, the District Commissioner of Kericho submitted names of ex-KAR, ex-police, ex-tribal police, drivers, drivers who could do running repairs, drivers who were mechanics, ex-dressers, ex-signalers, motor-cyclists, butchers, inoculators, blacksmith-mechanics, stationery

\textsuperscript{14} In Nyanza, the Provincial Commissioner would observe later, “Mrs Riddoch, assisted by Mrs. Perreau, undertook the work of organizing women to help in case of war. The women’s register was kept in the Provincial Commissioner’s Office along with the men’s register, and particulars of wives and their qualifications, besides being separately shown, were also entered on the back of their husband’s cards ... [and] ... Mrs Riddoch and Mrs. Perreau did much very useful and unobtrusive work.” (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
\textsuperscript{15} (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129)
\textsuperscript{16} (District Officer, South Kavirondo to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 30th January, 1939, African Man Power, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56)
engine minders, blasters and stone-cutters.\textsuperscript{18} The names were marked as either “fit” or “unfit” or as “either involved in some equally serious government work or not, and thus making the job of military recruiters quite easy when the time for recruitment formally began. Skilled and semi-skilled Africans like lorry drivers were “sub-divided into those who had been trained as thoroughly efficient mechanics, those who could do running repairs, and those who could merely drive.”\textsuperscript{19} Provincial and District Commissioners held clandestine meetings with local chiefs, talking to them about government military preparations, and asking them to submit names of military age men in their locations.

Following these directives, government chiefs made lists of men who would be enlisted for war and dispatched their names to the Provincial headquarters. Thus on 20\textsuperscript{th} April, 1939, Chief Abisalom Okode, sent a letter to the Provincial Commissioner, forwarding the names and experience of the “natives” in his location, Asembo Location, Central Kavirondo District. The letter reads:

\begin{quote}
Asembo location,

20/4/1939.

Bwana,
Nieetuma haya majina ya watu ambao ulioagiza kuletwa
kwako:-
Wapishi, watumishi wa nyumbani za [sic] wazungu, makarani ya
stores, askari wa muzinga, lakani [sic] ingawa tumeandika hawa
baado tunazidi kwaandika wengine, kama chachi bera, watu wa
muzinga na wengineo watakaopatikana.

Basi bwana ni mtumishi
[rubber stamped]
Chief A. Okode, Asembo.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{17} (African Man Power, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33)
I have sent the names of the people you wanted sent to you:- cooks, house servants for Europeans, clerks, artillery men. Although we have written down these names, we are continuing with the task of looking for more if they can be found.

Your Servant, Chief A. Okode, Asembo Location.]  

Similar letters and with list of names would follow from different locations in the province and all over the colony. Upon receiving these letters in his area of administration, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner in turn forwarded the lists to the Manpower Committee, and the Chief Secretary’s Office. Once earmarked for military duty, “no native who is enrolled or who may be enrolled in any military unit shall leave his reserve without a permanent registration certificate.” Other arrangements followed, and the government contemplated the “grant of extended jurisdiction to certain individual Justices of the Peace … as an emergency measure, to assist the civil administration in the event of war” and required the local administrators to make suitable appointments and other necessary preparations.” Salaries of civil servants seconded for military service by the government were arranged such that the “military authorities [would be] directly responsible for the payment of the military portion of those salaries.”

Economic Measures.

Besides administrative arrangements aimed at the mobilization of men, the colony also put economic measures in place in readiness for war. While putting the economy of the

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20 (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129)
22 E.M. Hyde-Clarke, Acting Chief Secretary to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 14th July, 1939, (Justices of the Peace, 1939, KNA, PC/NZA/2/7/107)
23 Circular from Accountant General, The Treasury, 5th April, 1940, (Hollerith System of Accounting, 1931-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/21).
colony on a war footing, the government attached considerable emphasis “on the production of food and other crops useful for the conduct of the war.” As early as March 1st, 1939, W. A. W. Clark, Secretary of the Manpower Committee, The Secretariat, had written a letter to all Provincial Commissioners, Director of Agriculture, Commissioner of Mines, Officer-in-charge, Maasai District, and Chairmen of all Local Man Power Sub-Committee. Entitled “Production in the event of War,” the letter stated that:

the production of all commodities locally consumed must be maintained and in some cases may require to be increased in the event of war. Advice has been sought from the United Kingdom government regarding commodities which are exported. Meantime, His Excellency the Governor has given the following instructions as a guide:
1) All farms whatever nature to be maintained in good condition so that, even if production fails, the land does not go back.
2) Good production to be maintained so that the country is self-supporting in essential foodstuffs. This may mean an increase of production in certain cases because a good many able-bodied men will be taken from the Native Reserves – hence food production there may fall and the men taken will have to be given rations instead of feeding themselves off their own land.
3) Production of gold, pyrethrum, and flax to be increased.
4) Production of sisal, coffee, tea and butter to be maintained. As regards sisal, the availability of adequate shipping space may arise.”

A detailed analysis of economic measures taken by the government during the war is outside of the ambit of this work, but nevertheless, it is clear that the coming war forced the government to impose economic controls and rations, regulating “prices at which any item … may be sold … [including] maximum wholesale.” A memorandum appointing “persons to assist District Commissioners in inspecting prices charged for retail commodities” was made in view of the fact that some unscrupulous traders might cash in

24 (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
25 (W. A. W. Clark, Secretary, Manpower Committee, The Secretariat, Circular dated 1st March, 1939, Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
on the war by increasing prices of commodities. At the date on which these "duties will commence," the memorandum stated, "an order will have been issued by the Supply Board under the Defence Regulations, fixing the retail prices of a wide range of commodities, which can be taken for practical purposes to include all retail articles sold in the colony, at the price which prevailed in each place of trading on the date on which the order was made." Assistant Inspectors were appointed and mandated by this memorandum "to visit each trader and ascertain that he clearly understands that no increase in price may be made until further orders authorizing such increase have been issued by the Supply Board."

Adumbrating the memorandum further, C. R. Lockhart, the Chairman of Supply Board, stated that assistant inspectors of retail prices were to be stationed at Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret, Kitale, Nanyuki, Kericho, Nakuru, Nyeri and Naivasha. According to C. R. Lockhart, these controls were going to be done according to the Defence Regulations made under the Emergency Powers Order in Council, 1939, which in the event of a "state of emergency arising which necessitates the mobilization of the King’s African Rifles and local Forces, provided, inter alia, for the establishment of a Supply Board, which is given the power to prohibit the sale by wholesale of all articles, except perishables, and the sale by retail of certain articles. The Supply Board was also "authorized to control the prices at which any articles may be sold." These orders were then published in Gazette, Vol. XLI- No. 48, as "Regulation of Prices," The Defence (NO. 5) Regulations, 1939 Order, on 30th August, 1939. These orders fixed the price of food (including feeding stuffs for animals) and drink of any description, but excluded

26 (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
27 (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6; Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
28 (Foodstuffs, etc., 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
29 C. R. Lockhart, letter dated 22nd August, 1939, (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
others; the reasons for exclusion were not. Among goods whose prices were not fixed were “coffee, whether raw, hulled, in parchment or unhulled (cherry), all forms of tobacco; chemicals, drugs, and medical preparations; paper and cardboard; cement and other building materials, including builders’ woodwork; galvanized sheets; pipes, tubes and their fittings, rods, angles, shapes and sections of iron and steel; nails and bolts; camp beds and equipment; lamps and lanterns; cordage, ropes, twins, sacks and sacking manufactured of sisal or jute material.”

The government also made an order that individuals could only buy items like corrugated iron, motor tires and tubes if they had permits for that purpose.

In his report on wartime price control, the Attorney General revealed that, “the maximum prices fixed for certain imported commodities and for the wholesale or retail sale of foodstuffs were varied by the Supply Board from time to time as the necessity arose.”

The local purchase of military foodstuff requirements was carried out by the Kenya Farmers Association and, with the exception of certain locally manufactured articles which were ordered through the Supply Board, all other military requirements were bought through the Central Tender Board.” Among the goods whose prices were put under control of the government was charcoal. In Coast Province, the Veterinary Officer informed the Coast Province Commissioner that the Kenya Farmers Association had asked one of its officers (Lieut. Marsden) in the province to “buy as much charcoal as

30 (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
31 (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16; see also: History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
32 The following year, in October, [1940], the control of foodstuff prices became decentralized, and the government now gave the District Commissioners the power to fix for their districts the maximum prices for certain scheduled foodstuffs. A sub-committee of the Supply Boards of Kenya and Uganda would meet monthly with the "object of establishing the ex-factory price of certain basic locally-produced commodities
possible from the natives and ...if called upon to do so, to control the charcoal outlet from the reserve and attend to levy collection, etc." 33 The consumption and use of water was also controlled. 34 Boritis (mangrove poles) were placed under control. The Provincial Commissioner of Coast Province requisitioned binoculars and telescope inexplicably from the Fort Jesus Fortress Headquarters, the office charged with the task of protecting the area, but even so, it "distributed [them] for the use of the Coast Watching Stations. On the outbreak of hostilities, the Kenya Farmers' Association was "appointed the sole buying agents for all Government, civil and military requirements in foodstuffs and locally produced articles." 35 And it was not just the supply and price of goods that were to be controlled; their movements from one place to another were also controlled.

As the situation in Europe deteriorated, the government proposed to strictly ration petrol, though the amount issued for allocation or selling to the public often changed from time to time, depending on its availability and supply. Petroleum is one item that is usually control during war. In an undated report entitled, "Transport Licensing Board," the Attorney General's Office reports that, in June 1938, at a meeting of the Defence committee, it was decided that, in the event of a state of emergency arising, "action would be necessary for the control of the sale, except under permit, of 'petrol, power paraffin, diesel, fuel and lubricating oils and all forms of motor vehicles and spare parts

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33 This is according to the Veterinary Officer's letter dated, 23rd September, 1939, (Defence War Medals, PC/COAST/2/26/14).  
34 R.W. Baker-Beall, in his letter, dated 11th October, 1940, (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).  
35 (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
including tires and tubes." Ration cards for petroleum products were prepared, and the Central Registry of Motor Vehicles in the Inland Revenue Department was selected to be in charge of issuing those cards to consumers who would apply to the local District Commissioner of the district in which they resided.

To control the supply and consumption of petroleum products, the government required the main oil companies to provide the government with a statement at the end of each month "showing the number of permits that had been surrendered to them and destroyed, the stocks on hand of petrol at the date of the statement, and the total incoming[sic] and outgoing[sic] of petrol during the period covered by the statement." They helped the government to conserve oil. Writing from his office in Nairobi on October 3rd, 1939, a Manager with the Texas Company (South Africa) Limited, informed his customers that there were no petroleum supply problems, and confirmed the government’s statement that there was adequate petrol supply. The Acting Provincial Commissioner, Coast Province, also alluded to ample availability of petrol, in his letter to the Malindi District Officer, wondering about one dispute that had come to his attention in October, 1939. The Conference of Governors of British East African Territories of 1st-3rd November, 1939, also confirmed that there was adequate stock of petrol. Mr. Lockhart, Chairman of

36 Most of the materials pertaining to government preparations and implementation of regulations on transportation and petrol before and during the war are contained in a report by the Attorney-General’s Office. Some of the reports relating to the control of petrol go back to 1938. See: (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
37 Ibid.
38 Manager, Texas Company [South Africa], (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
39 This was the case of a Mr. Braiford, who "is only allowed one gallon of petrol a week which he complains makes him a prisoner at his house which is four miles from Malindi. ... In the circumstances I would ask you to give him a more liberal allowance." For more on this see: The Acting Coast Provincial Commissioner to Malindi District Officer, letter dated 27th October, 1939, (KNA, Defence War Medals, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
Supply Board, for instance, explained to the conference that a petrol saving scheme had been mooted by reducing petrol consumption in East Africa by 40%, on the assumption that petrol supplies would be short, that storage capacity might be reduced by enemy action, and that heavy military demands would have to be met ...these conditions had not materialized and there were, therefore, large stocks of petroleum in East Africa.\footnote{(Commissions, Committees, Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).}

Part of the reason for government’s success with control of petrol was that individual consumers, among them colonial elites, generally responded positively to the introduction of petrol rations, willingly cutting down their own use of petrol, hoping that their sacrifice would be emulated by others, and aid the government war effort. In Nyanza Province, for instance, the rationing of petrol begun on 2\textsuperscript{nd} September, 1939,\footnote{(Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).} on the eve of the day the colony officially joined the war. At the Coast Province, the Senior Medical Officer, European Hospital, Mombasa, reported to the Coast Provincial Commissioner that he had voluntarily given up his share of petrol: “I personally want no more petrol than will enable me to carry out my essential duties and I am prepared to walk or ride a bicycle for all other purposes.”\footnote{(Commissions, Committees, Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).} All this showed the general readiness by colonial functionaries to make sacrifices for the war by voluntarily giving up their petrol rations. Control of the consumption of petrol was a government strategy of maintaining sufficient availability and supply of petrol. This had succeeded to a large extent at least by the time war broke out. But this rosy picture would only obtain in 1939. Events from 1940 onwards would be different; petrol supply would not be adequate for long.
Besides taking measures to control consumption of petroleum products, the government also sought to control the transport industry in readiness for the war. The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner alluded to this in a circular in which he referred to the "immediate urgency and importance of ... reconstruction of the transport arrangements." Eventually transport arrangements came into force in accordance with Regulation 46 of the Defence Regulations, 1939, mostly aimed at monitoring the number of vehicles entering the colony, and hence petrol consumption. According to this regulation, further tightened by C. R. Lockhart, Chairman of Supply Board, on 17th June, 1941, the selling and buying of new vehicles – meaning, motor vehicle which was not licensed in East Africa prior to the coming into force of this order – were prohibited. These orders were further extended to cover motorcars, light units, trucks or motor cycles. Moreover, the government also moved to take charge of "civilian transport existing," which were "earmarked and detailed ... for the police and for the Kenya Defence Force." Private vehicles could be requisitioned by the government for military undertakings. Reiterating the existing orders on vehicles, the Major-General, Commander, HQ., Central Area, EA. Command, believed that "the District Commissioners already knew the number of vehicles in their locality, and members of the police Force and Kenya Force were supposed to familiarize themselves with the number of the vehicles, registration number, name of owner and type of vehicle ... [which would then be sent] ... to the Director of Road Transport ...[in turn he would] inform owners of

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42 Ibid.
43 (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
44 E. R. E. Surridge, Acting Chief Secretary, Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
vehicles whose vehicles have been earmarked for this scheme. "45 Such actions would have many consequences, for instance, denying drivers the use of their vehicles. In Nyanza Province, S. H. Fazan, the Provincial Commissioner ordered that when war broke out, administrators would commandeer vehicles, which had already been earmarked for that purpose.46 Drivers had already been picked for the purpose in Nyanza Province, including local men like Kipteget arap Bii and Ramadhan bin Sebi from Kenya Gold Mining Syndicate, Masar, and orders were given "to chiefs of Suna, Kanyamkago and Sakwa to call up remainder. Cyclist Tribal Policeman to call up Karachwonyo drivers. Foot Tribal Policeman to call up Nyanchoka (if available, his first duty is to run Local Native Council lorry while Adhiambo is sick."47

During the State of Impending War in Kenya (this was the period between the outbreak of the war in 1st September, 1939, and 10th June, 1940, when Italy officially joined the war) the colonial government continued formulating and implementing economic policies that would help the colony support and prosecute a war. One of those areas was with respect to the control of meat. When the government realized that the consumption of meat had increased "due to military and civilian demands," and could jeopardize the availability of meat for the army during the war, the Supply Board took over the control of, and responsibility for, the supply of slaughter cattle and grade slaughter sheep to the military and to certain markets in the settled area. By June, 1940, the Supply Board had further established "The Supply Board Meat Control," and placed it under the

45 Major General, Commander, HQ., Central Area, EA. Command, Circular dated 26th June, 1942, Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47.
46 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
47 Ibid.
management of Mr. H. B. Hamilton. While regulating price of meat, The Supply Board Meat Control would also try to secure more supplies by bringing “to the notice of Native Stockowners the great importance, as a part of the colony’s war effort, of maintaining adequate supplies of essential foodstuffs, of which meat is by no means the least important. Soldiers cannot be expected to fight on empty stomachs.” The Board went on to employ its own buyers, and after 1st July, 1940, “no person other than an authorized employee of the Supply Board will be permitted to sell slaughter stock to any wholesale or retail butcher in the scheduled areas.” District Commissioners were required to give all possible assistance to the board in its effort to secure meat supplies. The government made further orders to regulate the price of English potatoes, and under the new order, “no producer of potatoes, and no person handling potatoes on behalf of a producer, on or after 14th November, 1940, may sell potatoes except to the Supply Board or its Purchasing Agents, a list of whom is published in the Second Schedule to the Order.” The government also continued to maintain a strict ration on the supply of petrol, ensuring the availability of petrol on a relatively steady basis, as has already been noted. The government in various reports had observed that, “on the whole the scheme has worked quite satisfactorily.”

48 (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6; Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
49 (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
50 But on 7th February, 1942, the government continued to find difficulties meeting the supply of meat: “L. Tester, Financial Secretary, Chairman, Kenya Supply Board admitted that “the difficulty experienced by the Supply Board Meat Control in obtaining sufficient slaughter stock to meet the requirements of the military authorities is causing the Government increasing concern.” (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14). To meet this shortage, the government decided “after consultation with the Chief Native Commissioner, that resort must be made to the powers of requisition under Requisition 46 of the Defence Regulations in order to ensure that all requirements are fully and promptly met.” (Defence War Medals, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
51 (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14).
52 But the situation was to change, particularly from mid 1940. The petrol supply would not be adequate for long. On 24th April, 1940, W. Harragin, Chairman, Transport Licensing Board, wrote that the government had decided to cut down petrol consumption as well as petrol imports. This was in order to “conserve
In many parts of the colony, these plans were formulated and implemented generally with little problems. In Nyanza, the Nyanza administration was generally pleased with the amount of preparation it had made in readiness for the war in 1939. According to S. H. Fazan, “Nyanza Province had reason to feel contented with itself in that, when the emergency came, the arrangements made in advance worked according to plan. It must be remembered that the local plans were formulated, on instructions from headquarters, on the assumption that Italy would come in against us and when that contingency did not

tanker space and foreign exchange for the common war effort.” (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14). The petrol control scheme introduced as a precautionary measure in August, 1939, and since relaxed, were to be further developed and perfected with a view to reduce consumption without disorganizing the country’s production. As an immediate measure, the government conceived of a 25% reduction of the country’s present petrol consumption. While this cut was not intended to be equally distributed over the country, since government recognized that such a system would lead to an inequitable distribution, it hoped that the cut would secure an appreciable proportion of the required reduction by eliminating present wasteful use in various directions and obviate the necessity of seriously curtailing the supplies of those who need petrol most for productive or other essential purposes. Furthermore, on 15th June, 1940, C. T. Davenport, Chief Petrol Control Officer, the Secretariat, informed all administrators “not to grant a petrol ration to any alien without first consulting the local police officer. As the movement of aliens are restricted, I consider this to be a reasonable request and would be glad if this could be done.” (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14). These reductions in petrol rations had immediate effect on consumers. Kenya Sugar Limited complained to the Petrol Rationing Officer, Mombasa on 4th January, 1941, reporting that their supply had been reduced from 267 gallons to 160 gallons “when they applied to you for the usual ration of petrol for lorries and cars … We are surprised at this drastic cut in the allowance of petrol, which even as it was in the past was hardly sufficient; but with the greatest economy, we had to make two ends meet anyhow. With the present out of nearly 40%, we are at a loss to know how we should manage matters without cutting down the industrial activity to that extent.” (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14). Commander Lawford, the proprietor of Lawford’s Hotel, Malindi, wrote to the District Commissioner, Malindi, copy to the Provincial Commissioner, Coast Province, complaining that the District commissioner had threatened to cut down his petrol ration, upon the discovery that he had somehow secured more petrol permits than his normal would allow. (Commander Lawford to the Malindi District Commissioner, letter dated 3rd June, 1941, Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/14). Fears of petrol shortage inundated the colony, and E.G. ST. C. Tisdall, the Chief Petrol Control Officer, wrote to all Petrol Officers on 25th March, 1942, saying that as the possibility of shortage “is no longer remote, it is requested that you consult immediately with such persons or bodies as you usually consult in such matters, or think necessary to consult on this occasion … with a view to analyzing the problem in your area and planning the steps to be taken to meet it,” (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5) which usually meant “rationing petrol” and giving preference to “vital services and non-vital but highly desirable services.” (War Correspondence, 1940-44, DC/ISO/2/4/5). Permits were given for “emergency ration.” In the Northern Frontier District, authorities decided to meet the shortfall of petrol available by reverting “to camel transport.” (T.J. O’Shea, Deputy Controller of Petroleum Products, Secret and Confidential Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1). In spite of this sacrifice by some, others in the Northern Frontier District however sought to meet their petrol needs by engaging in underground trafficking. (T.J. O’Shea, Deputy Controller of Petroleum Products, Secret and Confidential
occur, we felt that, if our plans seemed to be over elaborate, the blame for that must rest with the opposing team for not entering an appearance."\(^{53}\)

**Medical Measures.**

Another department, which was inevitably involved in helping put the colony on a war footing, was the Medical Department. In addition to his usual civil duties and the need to ensure that "civil work of the department ... [was] ... carried on with the least possible dislocation," the Chief Medical Officer also sought to "ensure that all military medical emergencies could be met."\(^{54}\) Writing about the measures taken in his department in preparation for war, the Chief Medical Officer noted that he took charge of the Army Medical Services for a brief period as the colony awaited the arrival of Dr. Frost, who arrived in the colony on 1\(^{st}\) September, 1939, as Director of Army Medical Department.\(^{55}\) The services of the Medical Storekeeper were also placed at the disposal of the military authorities from the commencement of the war. Most of the preliminary arrangements included ensuring that there "were ... an extra six months supply of medical stores to the value of about [pounds] 12,000 ... before the outbreak of war; the scales of equipment for special establishment Field Ambulance Company, A Casualty Clearing station, A Motor Ambulance Convoy, a Hospital Train, and a General Hospital suitable to local conditions were worked out in detail months in advance and the necessary stores and equipment were obtained and were available for immediate issue; several hundreds of stretchers were manufactured locally and stored for military purposes and air raid precautions.

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\(^{53}\) [Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1].

\(^{54}\) [Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34].

\(^{55}\) Chief Medical Officer Health, (History of War, 1939, KNA, BY/49/28).

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
services; detailed plans for the conversion of rolling stock for hospital train purposes had been prepared; an ambulance vehicle was designed, constructed and subjected to field trials. Twelve ambulance vehicles were then constructed of this type. Medical officers, private practitioners and others were selected and warned for military or civil duties. In conjunction with the Kenya Women's Emergency Organization, lists of available nursing personnel were prepared and individual nurses were selected for duty should an emergency arise. A week's course of lectures and field observations was arranged for as many as possible of all these officers some months before the war. The Medical Officer also made nominal rolls of 25% of the African staff of all the larger hospitals who would be required for military medical units were prepared. He also ear-marked various buildings and surveyed them for hospitals, and detailed plans were prepared for their conversion and occupation.

Internal Security.

To ensure a secure system of communication between the government and the military, and between civil and army authorities in the event of war, the government divided the colony into security zones, and formulated new channels of communication between these zones. The old system of communication, E. M. Hyde-Clarke noted, "has not been working satisfactorily. This is particularly so in the case of arrangements for the accommodation of troops and other military works." The security zones, which were established in anticipation of the war, were strengthened through another circular, which the Secretariat issued 15th January, 1941, formulating channels of communication

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56 Ibid.
between local authorities and military authorities other than with the headquarters.

Although the rules for the establishment of the zones had been first discussed through a circular on 29th August, 1938, not much had been done. The coming of the war led to the need to synchronize the channels of communication between civilian and military authorities because “in war time, as in peace time, the responsibility for the maintenance of internal security is a civil one, and it is only transferred to the military authorities when the situation is, or is in imminent danger of becoming, beyond the control of the police and civil authorities who then decide that a state of emergency has arisen and request military assistance. When such assistance is given, the appropriate military officer takes command and assumes full control until order is restored.”

The channels of communication were synchronized with newly established security zones, which placed Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania into one military zone. These were then divided into six areas:

Area 1: Mombasa (Districts of Mombasa, Kilifi, Digo and Malindi (south of Sabaki river).
Area 2: Headquarters, Nairobi (with districts, Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos, Thika, fort Hall, Masai, part of Nyeri (old south Nyeri).
Area 3: Headquarters, Arusha (Northern province of Tanganyika. District of Taita.
Area 4: Nanyuki Headquarters (part of Nyeri, old Nyeri).
Area 5: Nakuru, Headquarters (all districts Rift Valley Province, less Samburu; all districts in Nyanza Province).
Area 6: Bombo Headquarters (All of Uganda)

These areas were placed under officers, whose names and duties were specified. Once the war broke out, a new circular was issued with respect to Kenya. According to this circular, Kenya was divided into sub-areas, and an entirely new sub-area was created

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57 E.M. Hyde-Clarke, writing for Chief Secretary, on 15th January, 1941, (Military Intelligence Report, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/4 or is it KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/14).
with headquarters in Kitale, bringing the sub-areas in Kenya to as follows:

No. 1: Sub-Area: HQ Mombasa (Taita-Digo, and that portion of Kilifi District south of the Galana river).
No. 3: Sub-Area: HQ Kitale (Districts of Trans Nzoia-west Turkana and the area east of Lodwar-Kacheliba).
No. 5: Sub-Area: HQ Nakuru (Nyanza Province, Rift Valley Province less district of Samburu and Trans Nzoia).

A new sub-area for Tanganyika, No. 7 Sub-Area: HQ Dar-es Salaam (all of Tanganyika) was named, and No.3: Arusha was abolished, and was added to military areas under the Kenya colony. These military areas would change from time to time. Sub-area No. 11, with HQ at Thika, would be created on 4th March, 1941, and would include Thika, Tana River, Athi River up to its tributary, the Ndaguru River and thence along the Ndaguru River, the boundary of the Kitui District extended northwards to Mwina on the Tana River, and the Nairobi-Fort Hall Road. Another circular dated 20th March, 1941, refers to sub-Area No. 4: HQ Nanyuki, which consisted of all the areas in Northern Frontier District, from the south end of Lake Rudolf to Marsabit to Arbo, the road South Horr to Marasabit to Arbo, then from Arbo to Garbatula via Habaswein thence in a line due south from Garbatula to the Tana River, among others. These sub-areas were headed by sub-area commanders. In all cases, the proper channel of communication during the war was through the Sub-Area commander, who would deal with the Provincial or District Commissioner within the areas concerned. Heads of Branches and Services at Force Headquarters would ensure that any of their officers visiting outlying districts observed correct channels of communication. Under this arrangement military personnel were, except in Nairobi, accredited through the Sub-Area commander concerned to the

58 General Wetherall, The Secretariat circular, dated 10th August, 1942, Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
59 (Miscellaneous, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/179).
Provincial or District Commissioners who would communicate with the Local Government authorities. In Nairobi such personnel would be accredited with the Local Government authorities through the Sub-Area Commander. Communications or instructions from military personnel not so accredited would be referred back to the Sub-Area Commander for confirmation. The Headquarter of all these areas of operations would of course be with Force Headquarters, Nairobi. Ultimately, there were nine sub-areas at the maximum during the war.

Along with the establishment of security zones, the government also issued strict guidelines on communication during war. Telegrams “containing ships or aircraft movements and similar information [which] were dealt with strictly in accordance with [censorship] regulations.” The public continued to be urged to be secretive with important military information, while cooperating with the government. The public was directed that the government was seriously concerned at the prevalence of gossip concerning movements of ships and troops, and Heads of Department and Provincial Commissioners “were requested to take steps to warn all officers serving under them that severe disciplinary action will be taken against any officer who is found to have been responsible for spreading rumors, whether false or true, regarding military movements or preparations.”

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61 (Miscellaneous, 1941, DC/KSM/1/22/179).
62 Confidential circular, Censorship Regulations, Office of the Chief Censor, Nairobi, 4th July, 1940. (Miscellaneous, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/179).
63 Chief Secretary, G. M. Rennie, Secret Memo, “Military Information,” 29th January, 1942, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47). Although the National and Provincial Manpower Committees had generally gone fallow when Italy initially failed to declare war, G. M. Rennie, the Chief Secretary, recalled on 13th April, 1942, that the government had prepared a secret letter entitled, War Work—
Security within Kenya was enforced with special attention given to the Northern Frontier District, starting on 23rd August, 1939. Regular patrols were conducted along the Kenya-Ethiopia border by the Kenya administration, not just in anticipation of Italian attacks, but also in order “to control clashes that were often common” between the Turkana and the Merille because these kinds of clashes could jeopardize government military operations along the border between the Kenyan colony, and the Italian colonies. Indeed, in anticipation of the war, the government had already declared Northern Frontier District “a protected area for the purposes of the Defence Regulations” on 9th April, 1939. As the military situation continued to deteriorate in Europe, government activities in N.F.D increasingly became frantic. On 24th August, 1939, the government ordered civil population at Moyale to be ready for evacuation. The following day, part of the civilian population was sent to Isiolo. Police outposts on the frontier brought back to Moyale all cash and important papers, and then onwards to Isiolo. On the 26th August, 1939, arrangements were made for the demolition of Garissa Pontoon. The police outposts in Marsabit were also withdrawn. The following day, on the 27th, a decision was made by

Government Servants, indicating that names of emergency personnel were being maintained and outlining their possible responsibilities. The letter is quite detailed, leaving nothing to the vagaries of chance. At the same time the government constantly reviewed internal security arrangements. Instructions were issued for dealing with internal security schemes in case of internal disturbances. In Nyanza Province, for instance, a Mr. Oates was given the task of dealing with “native” disturbance of a few days duration, after which it would either be over or the army would take control. 64 (History of War, 1939-43, AG/29/16). In August 1939, for instance, a KAR patrol under Captain Douglas was sent to “punish” the Merille and an engagement took place at Natodomeri in which 33 Merille were killed and 150 cattle, 400 sheep and goats and 12 donkeys were destroyed. (History of War, 1939-49, PC/NFD/4/1/1); On the 9th December 1939, the Merille fired on a KAR patrol at Kyavatha, north-east of Lokitoi. Two Merille were killed and one was wounded. 130 cattle were seized and handed over to the Italians. On the 2nd February 1940 the Donyiro raided and killed two Turkana at Mogila and this infuriated the Turkana, who were only restrained from taking reprisals with great difficulty. After a conference at Juba in 1940 the Sudan government agreed to take punitive action against the Donyiro residing in the unadministered part of their territory. An action was fought to the west of Mt. Tid in which 10 Donyiro
Commissioner of Police with the Officer Commanding Northern Brigade that the Officer Commanding 5th KAR should take over command of police withdrawn from the frontier. In the last week of August, there was evacuation of surplus personnel and government property from Wajir. All Indian and Arab women were sent away and some goods were removed from shops in Wajir to Isiolo. The District Commissioner of Garissa destroyed markings, and placed obstructions on landing grounds on the east bank of Tana River at Garissa, Bura, and Bulambala. All KAR and Police “women and children” were removed from Wajir, and sent to Isiolo in the main. Nevertheless, the District Commissioner of Moyale and the District Officer of Mandera were told not to leave their stations until told to do so, to take “no action … that could be considered provocative by Italy,” and to maintain a “precautionary stance” against Germany and Italy. 65

These kinds of security arrangements were made in addition to those other measures that had already been taken in anticipation of the war. In Nyanza, for instance, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner ordered for the recruitment of men who would be in charge of internal security. Arrangements were made to provide 116 additional African ranks as soon as the necessary personnel could be trained. 66 In “Settled Areas,” a “Local Defence Corps was formed to augment the Kenya Defence Force, consisting of exempted men of any age. Each Kenya Defence Force [K. D. F.] district has its own corps under the command of the District Commandant, and the district corps is divided into squads under

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65 (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
66 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
a squad leader.” The K. D. F. in Nyanza was kept disciplined and alert through constant drill. In his History of War report, for the period ending 1939, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner writes that, “perhaps the most heartening thing of all during the period of preparation was the work of the Kenya Defence Force. In Kisumu once a week, generally on Tuesdays, there was a compulsory parade and once a week, generally on Fridays, a voluntary parade. Lectures usually followed the parades. On Sundays, about twice a month, there was shooting on the range both with Lewis gun and rifles and these counted as whole day parades.” In “Native Reserves,” chiefs were given circulars on how to identify” the enemy and their planes. A typical circular read thus:

Italian aeroplanes have three black axes inside a circle painted on the bottom and top side of the wings. German aeroplanes have a black cross on each side of the aeroplane and a crooked cross painted under the wing. If an aeroplane lands anywhere in the reserve go as near as you can to it without being seen. If you see it is a British plane - you will know it at once by the colored circle - go up and help the men in it in any way you can. If the plane has not got these colored circles, it may be an enemy, so watch it without going too near, follow the men who get out and do not leave them. If also an aeroplane flies over-head and men drop out of it slowly, tied to what is like a big white umbrella, watch them, follow them, but do let yourself be seen. ...In any of these cases, whether you see any plane or seen men come down from a plane or find traces of their having come down SEND SOMEONE TO REPORT AT ONCE [emphasis in the text] to the nearest Government Officer and see that you can guide him when he arrives.”

Detailed government instructions on how to spot enemy aircrafts and how to respond to them had been issued even much earlier. These instructions were contained in a circular concerned with the Air Raid Warning System. According to a secret circular from the Secretariat, dated 24th March, 1939, whenever spotters saw an enemy aircraft, they were

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67 (Miscellaneous, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/179).
68 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, in a report for the period ending 1939, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61)
69 (Miscellaneous, 1941, KNA, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/179).
supposed to relay all relevant information with “speed and accuracy” by wireless telegraphy, telephone or telegraph.\textsuperscript{70} The system consisted of Aircraft Raid Posts in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, which in turn had Aircraft Report Observer Centers at Fort Hall, Gilgil, Isiolo Kijabe, Machakos, Makindu, Nanyuki, Meru, Naivasha, Nakuru, Makuyu, Nyeri, Rumuruti, and Thika, and which were connected to the main Air Control System Command in Nairobi. In western Kenya, the main Observer/Coordinating Base was at Kisumu, and which controlled Eldoret, Kakamega, Kericho, Kitale, Londiani, Lumbwa, Rumuruti and Gilgil. A system of receiving and sending messages was established at these posts, “ideal watch should be held “24 hours … with European observers,” who reported to Aircraft Report Posts Control Officer, and who in turn was responsible for notifying the Naval, Military, Royal Air Force and other Civil Authorities concerned. The observer on duty was often stationed alongside the signals center with an operator on duty to transmit messages on emergency priority direct to the A.R.P Center.”\textsuperscript{71} To help the signalers learn how the system operated, the administration in Nyanza Province even arranged two periods of practice, the first from the 1\textsuperscript{st} to the 11\textsuperscript{th} of July and the second during the week ending 12\textsuperscript{th} August. \textsuperscript{72}

Internal security was augmented with regulations on what to do in the event of “Native risings” and “in the event of escape of large numbers of Prisoners of War.”\textsuperscript{73} The Kenya Defence Force was charged with the responsibility of providing “security of the

\textsuperscript{70} (Air Raid Warning [War Scare], 1938, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/23/8).
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34; see also: History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61, which provides a full list of A.R.P staff in Nyanza Province, who included Commandant Mr. J. L. Riddoch, Personal Assistant, Capt. T. Anderson, Liaison Officer, Mr. G. Gamble, and 23 A.R.P. Wardens, and 6 special constables).
\textsuperscript{73} (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
community.” In Nyanza, the major danger zone was identified by the administration as
the Sotik area, because of “possible danger of native risings … [and presence] of
Prisoners of War Camp No. 365, Londiani.” Kericho was another trouble spot. It was
felt that, in the event of war, more police would be required in the province and
provisional arrangements were made to provide 116 additional African ranks as soon as
the necessary personnel could be trained, and the training was done at Maseno Police
Depot. Considerable proportion of them had been provided by the end of the year and the
end of April, 1940.” The police were also stationed in Kisumu, Lumbwa, Kakamega,
Bondo, Kisii, Songhor, Koru, Fort Ternan, Kericho and Chemagel. The riots which broke
out at Sondu early in 1940, were viewed by the government as a vindication of the kinds
of security arrangements it had prepared in readiness for the war.

Another action that the government undertook to ensure security was the preparation to
intern civilians from countries that were at war with Britain. Civilians from the colonies
of those countries were already being monitored. The administration in Nyanza province
kept the Somali under close scrutiny, listing their names, their occupation, properties they
owned, whether or not they were British or Italian subjects, with special, relevant remarks
on what their presence might mean to the government during the war. This list, according
to the District Commissioner, North Kavirondo, writing to the Provincial Commissioner,
on 30th August, 1939, included everything about the Somali as “far as I have been able to

74 Ibid.
75 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34). After the Sondu riot, the headquarter of
the Lumbwa [police] unit was moved to Kericho, “in order that closer touch might be maintained between
the District Commissioner and the Assist. Superintendent of Police. Lumbwa became a sub-unit and
another sub-unit was opened a Sondu.”) As a result of this riot, a levy was imposed on the Kipsigis and the
police force was strengthened with an addition of by 1 Assistant Inspector, 21 Kenya Police and 14 Tribal
Police.
determine. The only information that I have about them is that they only wish to be left in peace to farm cattle in the township and that so long as that is assured they have no grudge against the British government. My instinct with the Somalis is to trust none of them but to take no action beyond watching them until something against any individual or group of individuals transpires." Missionaries from Germany and Italy were not spared, as they were deemed a security risk. Defending government's action of interning "enemy civilians," the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza was to observe in a telegram to his officers in 1940 that before the outbreak of the war, civilians of these countries had received instructions from the Italian Consul to "commit sabotage on extensive scales should Italy enter war ... definite evidence available they have explosives on hand for this purpose... all precautions must be taken." As early as 1st April, 1939, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza had informed the District Commissioner, North Kavirondo, that if war broke out, two special constables from the district would be dispatched to intern enemy aliens. In South Kavirondo, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner determined that, "in the event of mobilization, the Assistant Inspector of Police at Kisii and with the assistance of two special constables ... would help with the internment of enemy aliens... According to my list the only Germans in South Kavirondo are Count Donhoff, Prince Joachim Liven and R. Miesel. I have also a note that D. and O. Christman may be at Alderson's mine. Do you know of any others?"

76 (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
78 (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
79 (Enemy Alien guard, 1939, KNA, PC/NZA/2/7/104; see also the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner detailed instructions to the effect that, "Mr. Law-Smith to proceed to Lorgorien and intern Orthheimer and [Muller] see his passport if possible, ask nationality don't intern unless German. Mr. White to have 2 Kenya police and intern lieven, Miesel and [sister Wallhoffer if Italians involved). On arrival at Kisii the internees to be accommodated at Government African School until they can be removed to Kisumu." (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
As the war loomed larger and larger, the government prepared secret lists of enemy aliens to enable it round them up if and when the war finally broke up. The government prepared a list of Somalis in Kenya, for example in places like Nyanza.\(^{80}\) The government also prepared names of special constables, who would be sent to intern the aliens.\(^{81}\) The list was secret and even the officers slated for such duties were not to be told the "nature of the duty ... but they would receive their orders on mobilization."\(^{82}\) Some of these officers were already drafted for duty in Kenya Defence Force, but this task of rounding up aliens would not interfere with such duties very much because it was expected to last no more than two days. After collecting the aliens, and acting as "guards until other arrangements can be made,"\(^{83}\) they were required to report to the Kenya Defence Force for duty. In choosing the special constables for this duty the officers in charge were to avoid "young men likely to be called up on mobilization."\(^{84}\) "While they should be told they will be required to assist the police for the first two days after mobilization," S. H. Fazan, the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, informed all the District Commissioners in his province that "they should not be told the precise nature of the duties; merely that they will report and be given their instructions"\(^{85}\) on the way to carrying out the task.

\(^{80}\) (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
\(^{81}\) (see, for instance: District Commissioner's (South Kavirondo) letter, dated 8\(^{th}\) April, 1939, to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, and the Nyanza Provincial commissioner's reply, (Enemy Alien guard, 1939, PC/NZA/2/7/104)).
\(^{82}\) (Enemy Alien guard, 1939, KNA, PC/NZA/2/7/104).
\(^{83}\) R.T. Lambert, District Commissioner, Kisumu-Londiani, in his letter dated 14\(^{th}\) April, 1939, to the Assistant Superintendent of Police, (Enemy Alien guard, 1939, PC/NZA/2/7/104).
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{85}\) S.H. Fazan, the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, to District Commissioners in his province, Secret Circular dated 12th April, 1939, (Enemy Alien guard, 1939, KNA, PC/NZA/2/7/104).
Civilians were encouraged to help the government maintain security by looking out for subversive behavior, sometimes with disastrous consequences as some civilians tended to use the emergency to put their personal enemies in trouble. Civilians were often helping in checking and monitoring the activities of those thought to pose potential trouble. Mr. E. K. Laws, writing on behalf of the Superintendent of Police, Office of the Superintendent, Nairobi, on 22nd August, 1940, reveals in a letter to the Asst. Superintendent, Naivasha, that:

A Mrs De Trafford called at this office to report the strange behavior of a Somali called ‘Sali’ who is employed by Lady Idena Soltau at Gilgil. She says this Somali has worked for Lady Idena for eight years and that he looks after the pyrethrum on a commission basis, which is worth as much as 250 [pounds] a year to him, yet for some reason he wants to throw up his comfortable job and go and live in the N.F.D. ... Should he leave for Isiolo it is suggested that his full particulars should be sent there, as he will probably not be permitted to reside there for any length of time.  

A person signing himself anonymously as “X X, yours faithfully” warned the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, in a letter dated 22nd September, 1939, that “I have the honor to pass the undergoing information which I trust you will put into immediate investigation so as to bring it to an end. There is one Sheikhtum, a Somali and an Italian subject who resides at Kericho, and who, since the outbreak of war is in the habit of going round to his country men, telling them not pay any more poll tax or to obey the orders of the British government because he is quite sure that Germans and Italians will shortly occupy this country. These unfounded information by this man are hurting those of use who are ruled by the British Government, and I hope you will make all possible efforts to stop such a thing.” The District commissioner, Kericho, alerted the Officer-in-Charge, CID,

86 (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5).
87 (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
Nairobi, in his letter of 6th February, 1939, that there were “allegations that certain
Somalis living at Kericho are acting as spies for the Italians. One Abdul Aziz bin Sheikh
now wants to go to Kismayu for private affairs. He has never been mentioned in the
allegations, but you may wish to keep him under observation. I have told him to report to
the Passport Central Officer Nairobi for instructions. He was born here and I believe his
late father was of great assistance to government in Kericho as expounder of
Muhammedan Law when disputes arose in the local community.”

A secret and an unsigned letter to the Kericho District Commissioner, dated August 21,
1939, reveals that “Sheikh Don, David Mohammed and Hussein Mohamed are every now
and then going to the Italian border and are suspisioned [sic] to be spies of Italians. [The
letter adds further] that Mahamed Agaweni who formerly was on telegraph exchange
department in Kenya was caught doing the spy work and deported from Kenya. The
aforesaid Daud Mohamed goes to this man thrice a year and gives him all information of
[sic] Kenya. Mahmed Agaweni is now working for Italian Government. Daud Mohamed
is a spy and takes all information from Kenya to Italian border.” Upon receiving these
anonymous tips, the Officer in-Charge at the Kericho Police Station suggested that more
investigation needed to be done “at Kakamega with a view to tracing the anonymous
informant ... [because] he may be engaged in espionage and is only too anxious to lay
anonymous information against a former police informer.” When the anonymous

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88 The District Commissioner, Kericho, to the Officer-in-Charge, CID, Nairobi, letter dated 6th February,
89 (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
90 Officer-in-Charge, Kericho Police Station to Assistant Superintendent, letter dated 26th August, 1939,
(Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105; the in-charge further revealed that Mahamed Agaweni
“mentioned in the [report] is probably identical with Mahamed Ahmed about whom a report was made
from this office in that he divulged information to the Italian Consul, which came to his knowledge in his
informant continued to send reports to the government, that “Shek Don and Daud Dan Muhamed ... are employed by Italian Government as spies ... [that] one of the above named is stationed at Kericho, and is engaged to collect military news from this country and the other as messenger conveying the news to Italian Somaliland. I feel it would not be royalty [sic] if I am aware of information of this nature and ignore to inform the government,”91 the administration tried to trace him without success.92 But further inquiries suspected that the writer of the anonymous letters was probably “Sheikh Duale Mohamed, Somali, Kericho, who has a house in Kaloleni, Kisumu, and is known to have a personal feud with Sheikh Don.”93

War Breaks Out in Europe, Aborts in Kenya.

Although Germany promised to desist from laying any more claims to land in Europe after annexing Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, it abrogated the Munich Treaty, and invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Under a treaty obligation to protect Poland in the event of invasion, Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. British and French colonies in Africa followed suit. When the war broke out in Europe, it found the Kenya Colony prepared. All the preparations in the previous months were put into action. The government appeared vindicated in all that it had been doing. Some of the recruits who had already joined the military were quickly dispatched to Nairobi by lorry and train. Civilians and civil administrators in northern Kenya were evacuated to

capacity as telephone operator at Government House ... Sheikh Don to my personal knowledge has not left Kericho during the past month or so.” (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).]
91 Secret anonymous letter to the Provincial Commissioner, dated 23rd January, 1940, (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105),
92 See, for instance: Provincial Commissioner’s letters dated 29th January, 1940, addressed to the Superintendent, Criminal Investigation Department, Nairobi, and the Superintendents of Police, Kisumu and Kericho, to help “trace the sender.” (Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
Isiolo. Guards were quickly moved to secure the tunnel and viaducts above Fort Ternan in Nyanza Province. "This, by previous arrangement, consisted of fifteen European and 72 native special constables, the latter to be provided from the blue-uniformed agricultural scouts sworn in as special constables, the whole being under the command of Commandant Dansie. All were at their posts before nightfall with the exception of six agricultural guards. They were late arrivals from North Kavirondo and were sent on the [3rd September, 1939]." In places like Nyanza, "action was at once taken according to plan for the internment of enemy aliens. The place selected for the internment camp, pending orders to transfer to Nairobi, was the Railway Institute Buildings at Kisumu. Barbed wire and all necessary fittings had been held in readiness in the P.W.D stores and the camp was ready by the evening. The first internees began to arrive about 8 p.m and all were in by next morning. Capt. Norris was in charge of the K.D.F. Mr. Hewitt, Health Inspector, acted as visiting officer to receive any complaints from internees and report them to the Provincial Commissioner." On the 7th September, 1939, the male internees, 32 in all, left for Nairobi by train under an escort of seven K.D.F. At the same time two German ladies were sent under the charge of one British lady.

But a few days later, the Kenya Colony was faced by a sort of anti-climax; Italy did not join the war as had widely been expected by the colony. War had broken out in Europe, but not in Eastern Africa, and there were no signs of immediate threat to the Kenya Colony. The expected attack from Italy on various British colonies in East and Central

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93 (Provincial Commissioner to Police, Enemy Aliens, 1939-40, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/15/105).
94 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
Africa did not materialize. Italy did not even show immediately on whose side it would
fight on in the war, and the conflicting signals emanating from Rome led to some signs of
indecision among the government officials in Kenya. On 9th September, 1939, the
Nyanza Provincial Commissioner informed his staff through a confidential circular that it
appeared that Italy would not go to war after all, effacing any danger that Italy was
expected to pose to the Kenya Colony if it had joined the war. "It will by this time have
become clear," the Provincial Commissioner wrote, "[that] many of the schedules of
requirements, both in regard to manpower and supplies, which were drawn up on the
assumption that war with Germany would also entail war with Italy, are being subjected
to revision now that it appears that Italy remains neutral."97 The Chief Secretary of the
Kenya Colony expressed similar sentiments, when Italy did not immediately join the war,
ordering that "no action should be taken that could be considered provocative by Italy."98
Gerald Reece, the Officer-in-Charge of the Northern Frontier District, reported that
"Italian Frontier Officials were invariably friendly and courteous," and that "they clearly
indicated that they did not want to go to war with us, for though they considered their
forces in Abyssinia [which they always said totaled 150,000] were more than adequate to
deal with our Kenya and South African troops, it was obvious that all progress in Italian
East Africa would suffer a severe reverse by war."99 The early fears of war involving the
Kenya colony were replaced by cautious optimism. Gerald Reece reported that some
Italian officers at Moyale had said, "that their country would make the decision [about

97 Provincial Commissioner's Circular, dated 9th September, 1939, (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49,
KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
98 (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
99 Gerald Reece, Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, in his History of the War Report for 1st
December to 28th 1939 to February, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
whether or not to fight] in May, 1940."\textsuperscript{100}

With the non-appearance of Italy as had been expected, various organizations, which had been constituted to oversee the conduct of the war were either re-organized or shelved. On 8\textsuperscript{th} September, 1939, the government issued a circular which released all "goods, except certain scheduled articles for which permits to sell were still required, for public sale, and the schedule was progressively reduced until, by the beginning of December, 1939, the only commodities requiring a permit for sale were corrugated iron, wireless batteries and motor car and lorry spare parts, petrol and fuel for ships. With the threat of war diminishing, the government decided to send its civil administrators and police forces, which had fled the northern part of Kenya, back to their stations. Government officials were ordered back to Moyale and Mandera as per telegrams of 5\textsuperscript{th}, 8\textsuperscript{th}, 9\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} September, 1939. On the 9\textsuperscript{th} September, 1939, Gerald Reece, the Officer-in-Charge of Northern Frontier District left Isiolo with one Company King’s African Rifles to re-occupy Moyale. On the 11\textsuperscript{th}, the District Officer, Mandera, also left Isiolo and went back to Mandera. Between the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} September, 1939, all Police Posts on the Frontier were re-occupied.

The Provincial Manpower Committees were also dissolved, and District level Manpower Committees took over most of the work that the Provincial Manpower Committees had been managing before the outbreak of the war because "local administration could effectively make decisions based on the prevailing, concrete factors." Averred the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, that this decision was taken, "not through lack of

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
appreciation of the good work done by the Provincial [Manpower] Committee [but because] with the breaking of the crisis the character of the problems had changed somewhat and applications now tended to be of an individual and personal kind. It was felt that any applications could more appropriately be investigated by a district committee." At Kenya's northern border, Mr. Gerald Reece, the Officer-in-Charge of the Northern Frontier District, aware that he was not supposed to do anything that might provoke the German and Italian government officials, was further directed to allow the German and Italian Consuls to pass through the area.

Nevertheless the government continued to be vigilant, and many young men became aware of the war at this point. In many cases, when the news of the war broke out, Kenya Africans became quite apprehensive mainly because of their experience with the First World War, but once the first moments of fear and uncertainty had passed, the colony settled down to cautious preparations. "Except for the ripple of uncertainty and excitement and the rush to join the colors at the end of August," observed Fazan, "there has been little disturbance of native tranquility. The Abagusii and Abakuria of South Kavirondo had had experience of a German invasion in the last war and were at first a little nervous, but they soon calmed down and by and large throughout the year, the natives have been more preoccupied with such things as the price of maize or the wrong doings of the next door neighbor than with the war." Local political affairs in places like Nyanza as in the rest of the country were overshadowed by the war situation.

101 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
102 History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
103 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
104 Ibid.
he advocated for the revision of military preparations, S. H. Fazan observed in his annual report for 1939, that he could not “assume otherwise than that, if war should break out, Italy would be among our enemies.” Thus the colony continued with systematic, but quiet preparations, which had been commenced early on in the year, just in case Italy declared war on British colonies in East Africa.

The period between the time the war broke out in Europe on 1st September, 1939, and 10th June, 1940, when it spread to East Africa was aptly described by Fazan as a “a state of impending war … when we were in a state of war, but with no active war in this country.” The war was going in Europe, but not in East Africa. The lull gave the government more time and opportunity to “strengthen the defences of Moyale, Marsabit and Wajir and to train and expand the forces. It continued to refine its preparations just in case, but by this time, the strain on a colony, which had been preparing for the war for well over one year was obvious. In the words of S. H. Fazan, the coming of war in Nyanza had led to:

- a great strain on the administration of this province. All the usual work had to be carried on as well as a great deal of extra work in organizing for the contingency of war. Whatever the probabilities of the case it was not safe to assume otherwise than that, if war should break out, Italy would be among our enemies. The allocation of man power, European, Asia and African; the listing of lorries which could be commandeered; A.R.P precautions; arrangements for various guard duties; plans for a police depot; the organization and training of a nucleus for a Pioneer Corps; the listing of Ex-KAR, drivers, dressers, cooks, batmen, etc; arrangements for group farm management; arrangements for filling in the gaps in civil life likely to occur through recruitment and requisitioning; reassuring the native population and keeping them reasonably informed without

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105 Ibid.
During this period of a State of Impending War, the government, as archival documents show, continued to maintain cautious vigilance. The colonial government did not relax its plans given its proximity to Italy’s colonies, though there was no “active war in this country.”\(^\text{108}\) The Secretariat, issued a secret circular which reiterated the “duties of government officials in the event of an invasion of the colony.” Non-emergency or non-essential tasks would be reduced in favor of emergency ones. All administrative officers were told that they were required to remain at their posts. "Administrative Officers," a circular for NFD officers read, "should not take part in any fighting and should, in the event of an enemy occupation of their districts, remain at their headquarters in order to assist the enemy in looking after the civil population if their services are required. In that event, such officers should wear mufti, not field Service Dress. The question whether other Government officers should do likewise is a matter for decision locally in the light of local considerations and I am to request your recommendations after full consultation with all authorities concerned.”\(^\text{109}\) There were regular patrols along the coast. When the dhow season begun, the government issued permits and used the navy to conduct patrols around the coast.\(^\text{110}\)

**Italy joins the War.**

On 10th June, 1940, the State of Impending War in Kenya came to an end. After several

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\(^{107}\) Ibid.
\(^{108}\) Ibid.
\(^{109}\) (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5).
\(^{110}\) (Coast Province annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53).
months of procrastination, Italy had thrown in her lot with the Axis, and had immediately launched an attack on Kenya, hoping to reap as much success as the Germans in Europe. Waging Lightening War [the Blitzkrieg], the Germans had done very well against her enemies in the first ten months of the war. It had captured Poland in October, 1939. It had forced the Belgian Army to surrender on May 28, 1940. By June 10th, 1940, the German army had surrounded the French 10th Army in Paris, and Italy decided to stake her fortunes with the Germans who were increasingly appearing to be the winning side. With Italy joining the Axis against Britain and its Allies in the war, the Kenya Colony followed its mother-country on the double. War had come to Kenya. Addressing the colony on 11th June, 1940, the new Kenya Colony Governor, Henry Monck-Mason Moore, declared that, “war has broken out between Great Britain and Italy.” Immediately, The Chief Secretary, G. M. Rennie, proclaimed a general black-out between the hours of 6:45pm and 6 am until further notice, according to Regulation 2 of the Defence (Lighting Control) Regulations, 1940. On the “entry of Italy into the war a total black-out was enforced and the Mombasa A. R. P. organization put into full operation under Mr. D. L. Morgan as commandant.

The decision by Italy to join the Axis in 1940 after initially staying out for nearly ten months when the war broke out in August, 1939, posed the Kenya colony with its most serious threat. Apart form the First World War arguably nothing as grievous and

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112 Government announcement on 11th June, 1940, (War: A Declaration, 1939-42, KNA, AG/16/406).  
113 (Coast Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53); This declaration of war against Germany and Italy would be followed further by two more declarations, one declaring war between Great Britain and Rumania, Hungary and Finland on 8th December, 1941, and between Great Britain and Japan on 8th December, 1941. (War: A Declaration, 1939-42, KNA, AG/16/406).
challenging had faced the government. The declaration of war between Britain and Italy brought the war that had until then been going on in Europe on the doorsteps of Kenya. A colonial official with the NFD observed that the "news [of the outbreak of the war] spread rapidly through the district and there was considerable speculation among 'tribesmen' as to the extent they would be affected."\textsuperscript{114} By this time, Kenyans had generally become quite familiar with most of the issues concerning the war; they were aware, for instance, of the countries involved in the fighting, that the colony was preparing for it, and that the Africans would be asked to contribute to the government's prosecution of the war. In fact, those living in northern and northeastern parts of Kenya were already feeling somewhat apprehensive of what would happen to them if the war broke out. Gerald Reece, the Officer-in-Charge of Northern Frontier District reveals in his report, "History of War," that by March and April, 1940, there was general fear and anxiety in the district. "The people of the townships," Gerald Reece observed, "were becoming more anxious ... Lately the traders refused to renew their stocks and went away. In May a state of panic at the Bura trading center necessitated the District Commissioner going there by air. During the last week of May a considerable number of people left Moyale in fear of war. Consequently trade was bad and there was little activity in the towns."\textsuperscript{115} At the coastal region, the government further increased its level of patrol of the ocean and the coastal towns, including Lamu and Kipini. The same air of apprehension and uncertainty was prevalent in Nyanza Province.

Many ordinary civilians were thus aware of the growing tension in the colony, and these

\textsuperscript{114} (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11).
included the *askaris* who would be involved in the ensuing conflict. "The news of the war," wrote an official in NFD, "did not come wholly as a surprise to 'tribesmen' who were well aware of Italian boats nor to the administration since it was well known that relations between the government of Great Britain and Italy had been rapidly deteriorating. Nevertheless the news over the wireless on the evening of June 10th, followed by a message from Moyale that Assistant Superintendent of Police, a Mr. Carter, had been taken prisoner by the Italians before a state of war existed was sufficiently sudden and there was considerable anxiety, for at that time we had only two Brigades at Garissa and Bura and the 22nd Brigade (KAR) at Isiolo, Wajir, and Moyale." As Italy invaded southern France, the colonial government in Kenya immediately evacuated the towns along the border with Italian colonies like Moyale and Mandera. When Italy conducted raids on Malindi and Kiunga, panic-stricken villagers "deserted their homes and took refuge in Kiwaiyu, Ndaa, Kizingitini, Faza and Lamu [and] a patrol of the KAR and Arab Company under Lieutenant Henfrey successfully evacuated practically all the food supplies left behind in the abandoned villages." In Nyanza, when war broke out, the "Sikh employees at Rostermans intended to leave in a body and return to India for fear of being conscripted for military service in Kenya. This would have dislocated matters considerably, but after a visit by the Provincial Commissioner at which the facts of the situation were explained, they decided to remain." Many "Indian and Arab families fearing air attack evacuated themselves to Digo District and there were similar excursions from Malindi and Lamu to nearby

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115 Gerald Reece, Officer-in-Charge, Northern Frontier District, in his History of the War Report for 1st March to 31st May, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
117 (Coast Province annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53).
plantations."

Even government officials were themselves shocked by the outbreak of the war, even though this was what they had been preparing for all the time. According to a document entitled, "Notes on Isiolo District as affected by the Northern Frontier Campaign June, 1940-February 1941," even though the government had somehow anticipated that war would break out between Britain and the Allies on the one hand, and its enemies on the other, there was a lot of consternation and incredulity in many government quarters when it did happen. Many officials had perhaps hoped that the war would not break out, or had assumed that the war would be a short one, and that it would end before Italy joined it. It appears that as the government prepared for the war, it had hoped at the same time that it would not break out in such a way that the colony would be directly threatened. But now the war was here, and the first action the military and civil authorities took was the evacuation of civilians from risky areas along the border. In the Northern Frontier, it was reported that the government had decided that as far as possible as regards "civil population ... they should be allowed to remain on their customary grazing unless military operations are imperiled thereby."\(^{119}\) Moyale and Wajir townships were evacuated. When Italy began conducting air raids in the Northern Frontier District, these areas were cleared of people. Residents of Wajir township were evacuated to Garba Tula. The government at the same time deployed various military units to the border with

\(^{118}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
\(^{119}\) (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5; But expectedly, though harshly, the government added that (as far as Northern Frontier was concerned) "in cases where the presence of troops prevents the tribesmen obtaining water, it is the duty of the administration or Police Officer so to inform the Military Commander. If no alternative can be found for them, the case should be reported to this Headquarters as it may be necessary to slaughter the stock and evacuate the tribesmen." (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5).
Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland to repel Italian troops and air-craft that were already attacking northern Kenyan border towns like Mandera and Moyale, and coastal towns like Malindi and Kiunga. Evacuation of civilians also went on at the coast, and even in Mombasa, the government asked civilians to voluntarily move out.

Thus the Second World War came to Kenya, and Kenyans, including their askaris like Johannes Ameny, would be directly involved in it. Albinus Ligare Ogango of K'Omolo Sub Location, North Alego location, Siaya District, who joined the KAR in 1939 at the age of eighteen, had already served in the army for a few months by the time Italy officially joined the war. Without question, the most important government preparation for war was the mobilization, recruitment and training of askaris; plans for these had been formulated along with other non-military aspects of the war which were also largely in place by then. After all had been done, it was obvious to the government, that askaris would determine to a large extent the outcome of the war that the country was engaged in. Various recruiting and holding depots had been started, such as the one at Maseno Police Depot, with Assistant Superintendent of Police, McGoun, arriving from Nairobi to take charge of the depot, and to transform the place into a training and recruitment of soldiers. The training of some of these askaris was already going on apace in the Masai Reserve.¹²⁰ Regulations were passed dealing with terms of service of the military units established under the military Units Ordinance, 1939. A regulation passed on 23rd June, 1940, dealt with pay and allowances of the members of the Defence Force whilst undergoing training.
At first, thinking that the war would be a short one, the government focused on recruiting European men, with Africans serving as auxiliaries. When the duration of the war continued to increase, and the number of countries fighting continued to expand, those askaris who had already been mobilized as auxiliaries inevitably became the nucleus of a military that the government increasingly came to rely on to defend the colony and with time, to help the motherland, Britain, win the war. When the government realized that the war would expand and go on longer than earlier expected, its preparations became more detailed and ultimately far-more reaching. In the words of the Acting Solicitor-General, already quoted, the government’s military preparations involved “the establishment of military units, together with provisions regarding rates of pay, terms of service, discipline, etc; control of imports and exports and of supplies of essential commodities within the colony; regulation of prices; control of finance; trading with the enemy and the custody of enemy property; control of aliens and of suspected persons; lighting control; declaration of protected areas; and mobilization of the colony’s man power.”¹²¹ It was at this point that many askaris were recruited, trained, and deployed into the war. Although askaris like Johannes Ochanda Ameny had not been aware of the fact that the colonial government had been preparing for a war, they ultimately came not only to know about it, but also to fight in it.

Conclusion.

¹²⁰ The Chief Secretary, E.M. Hyde-Clarke to the Secretary of Chief Political Liaison Officer, Force Headquarters, Nairobi, letter dated 10th November, 1939, (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33).
This chapter examined the coming of the war to Kenya. It identified critical areas in which most of these preparations were undertaken, focusing on security of the colony, the economy, medical and health services, and channels of communication. It has been argued that the war did not catch the colony by surprise like the First World War. In anticipation of hostilities, the government began putting the colony on a war footing by taking precautionary measures. There was a pervasive atmosphere of fear and uncertainty all over the colony. While all these preparations were crucial for government’s successful conduct of the war, the most relevant of these measures with respect to this work was its preparation for the mobilization and recruitment of manpower – *askaris* like Johannes Ochanda Ameny.

121 Acting Solicitor General, in his History of War report, dated 22nd July, 1940, (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
CHAPTER THREE

MOBILIZATION OF ASKARIS: MOTIVES.

Please call up all ex-Police askaris, ex-King’s Africans rifles, drivers, drivers who can do running repairs, drivers who are mechanics, motorcyclists, butchers and cooks, Tribal Police, dressers and inoculators, signalers, blasters and stone-cutters, carpenters, etc.¹

Go join the military; it is a man’s job.²

Introduction.

The recruitment of askaris was arguably one of the most critical ways in which the Kenya Colony supported the war. Immediately news arrived in the colony of the outbreak of the war, the Governor, through a proclamation of 3rd September, 1939, declared "the KAR, the Kenya Police, the KARRO [King’s African Rifles Reserve Force], and the KAR to be under the conditions of active service."³ Coming at a time when the colony was itself smarting from the effects of the depression, and Africans were increasingly involved in protesting against various local government policies, racist politics, and settler prejudices, the government’s effort at mobilizing young African men into the war met with different types of responses. Some men enlisted, others hid from recruiters, while others enlisted and deserted. From the time the proclamation was made up to the end of the war, nearly 98,000 men from Kenya would serve in the war. This chapter examines why and how askaris enlisted for the war.

¹ (African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).
² Wellington Owuor Ogwalo, being advised by his father to join the military. Interviewed on 27th November, 2000.
³ The Governor, Proclamation, dated 3rd September, 1939, (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
The Declaration of War and the Beginning of Mobilization and Recruitment.

Following the government's declaration of war, government circulars were dispatched to chiefs all over the Kenya Colony urging them to recruit men. Various circulars in different types of languages, like this one in Dholuo, urged chiefs to "vie uru mondo uor joma indiko etije duro machalo KAR, Police, Askari mag Pioneer, Derepe, Dressers, Stretcher-bearers, Batmen [?], Jo Stoche, Karande, jotedo koda boche mag udi mondo ochop kani piyo piyo kaka nyalore." Translated, it means: "please call up all ex-Police askaris, ex-King's Africans rifles, drivers, drivers who can do running repairs, drivers who are mechanics, motorcyclists, butchers and cooks, Tribal Police, dressers and inoculators, signalers, blasters and stone-cutters, carpenters, etc." Government officials went out into the reserves, urging calm and asking for support. S. H. Fazan, the indefatigable Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, held a baraza in Gem Location on 25th August, 1939, where he explained the purpose of recruitment drives as being the need to help the government defend itself against "evil people." Sixty old "Pioneers" were mobilized and divided into recruitment parties and dispatched out to "North and South Kavirondo and to Gem and Alego in Central Kavirondo," their assignment to look for recruits. Some askaris volunteered to serve but were found to be "elderly and inefficient [and] in the case of drivers, had taken employment in other parts of the colony."

Veterans of World War I were being recruited, in spite of their old age, whether or not they were fit "for active service, a point which could only be determined by medical

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4 District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo to Chiefs, (Dholuo Circular, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
6 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
examination.” What this means is that the government was trying to recruit every man it could find at the beginning of the war, in some cases accepting, sometimes rejecting, elderly men, but it was going to be inevitable that with time the government would concentrate its task of recruitment at focusing on fresh, young men.

In line with its desire not to be caught unprepared, the government had begun recruiting *askaris* before the war officially broke out. There appears to have been a discernable pattern to the whole process of recruitment. At the beginning of 1939, the government generally concentrated on laying down strategies for recruitment, identifying how and where recruitment would be done, recruiting a few men to form a nucleus of units like the Pioneers. When the British declared war against the Germans and its Axis flank on 3rd September, 1939, recruitment and deployment of *askaris* started in earnest, but when war aborted in East Africa a few days later, recruitment tapered off and most preparations for war in East Africa were put on hold. By September 6th, 1939, recruitment at least in Nyanza Province was suspended when the Italian threat to Kenya appeared to recede. When Italy finally joined the war on the side of the Axis on 10th June, 1940, ominously bringing the threat into the backyard of the Kenya Colony, the colonial government resumed recruitment of *askaris*, earnestly appealing to them to come forward. For the most part, Kenyans’ response to government appeals for enlistment was often quite positive. There were Africans who responded to the government call for help by providing monetary contributions “unanimously and with expressions of very loyal

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sentiments" to the government. And while some groups of Kenyans supported the war financially, materially, and morally, others expressed their “loyal sentiments” by unanimously and enthusiastically enlisting in His Majesty’s Forces. By the beginning of October 1940, the Chief Registrar of Natives observed that the colony had fingerprinted 11,000 soldiers into various military units, “admittedly a small proportion of those actually in service.” By the end of the war, 98,000 Kenyan men had served in the war as combatants. Throughout the war the number of askaris serving with various colonial military units at any given time was always around 75,000. The KAR alone consisted of seven battalions at the beginning of the war, but would increase to twenty-eight battalions in 1942, and to forty-three battalions at the end of the war.\(^{11}\) Askaris’ aid to the government military effort was not by contributing funds, but by enlisting, shedding tears and blood for the government and its Allies in the war. During the war, these askaris joined different military units: King’s African Rifles (KAR), East African Artillery (EAA), East African Engineers (EAE), East African Army Signals (EAAS), East African Military Labor Service (EAMLS), African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC), East African Army Armored Corps (EAAC), East African Army Service Corps (EAASC), (East African Army Medical Corps (EAAMC), East African Army Ordinance Corps (EAAOC), East African Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EAEME), East African Army Pay Corps (EAAPC), East African Army Educational Corps (EAAEC), East African Dental Corps, and the East African Pioneers Corps (E.A.P.C). But why did they

\(^9\) Letter by G. H. C. Boulderson, P.C., Coast Province, to the Information Officer, Nairobi, dated September 16, 1940, quoting Tana River LNC verbatim as providing, (Native Authority, 1939-45, KNA, PC/COAST/2/3/113)

\(^{10}\) Letter from Chief Registrar of Natives’ Office to Chief Secretary, dated 5th October, 1940, (Recruitment: Attestation, Identification, and Enlistment, 1940-43, KNA, AH/22/62).

join the army, and why did they serve in the war?

The motives of *Askaris*.

The motives of Kenya Africans who served in the colonial forces during the war have been a subject of many works, each determined to get to the heart of the subject, each bedeviled by various problems. From an analysis of oral evidence, archival documents, and other secondary works, particularly semi-official accounts and autobiographies of *askaris* like Robert S. Kakembo, and their commanders like Michael Blundell, it appears that a better approach to understanding the motives of Kenyan soldiers during the Second World War, with potentially more meaningful application to examining motives of colonial soldiers in general, should be predicated on trying to grapple with the manner in which Kenyans heard about the war instead of merely chronicling what the *askaris* themselves say their motives were. Such an approach involves examining, not just what *askaris* and their officers in the colonial army and administration claim about those motives, but also examining those claims against the backdrop of where the would-be recruits were, and what they were doing at the time the war broke out. This is something

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12 See Chapter One. Many of these works have sought to investigate why and how subject people would turn out in such a large numbers to fight for a colonial system that exploited and mistreated them in the colony. It has generally been argued in these works that many *askaris* joined the war either for economic reasons, or as conscripts, serving reluctantly, forced by various devious colonial devices to join the war. An underlying implication in most of these works has always been that African men were somehow reticent about service in the war; it was not their war, it is said, and they were not supposed to have anything to do with it. Other scholars have argued that those Africans who participated in the war only did so out of ignorance. Terms like “mercenaries,” “conscripts” – have quite often come to be closely associated with Africans in works dealing with motives and experience of African soldiers who fought in the war. Whenever mention is made of those who did not serve in the war as “mercenaries” and “Conscripts,” but as “volunteers,” the tenor and tone of discourse about them has tended to be deeply suspicious of how much latitude the volunteers had to understand the war and make their decisions freely and deliberately. Moreover, very little credence has been given to the fact that many *askaris* served in the war out of more than one reason, that, quite often *askaris* could think through the many discourses of the war, and participate in it on their own terms.
that existing studies have rarely done, in spite of its potential at unlocking hidden meanings of askaris' military service. By looking at what the recruits were doing at the time they heard about the war one is likely to get important clues at most of the issues that were at play, which prompted them to offer their services to the military. It is by examining the circumstances under which the men enlisted in the war that one can understand how they interpreted government appeals for help, whether or not they were conscious of their decisions, what they were thinking about, how they arrived at decisions to enlist or not to enlist, whether their decisions were based on only one, isolated factor, or several, inter-related factors.

In making an analysis of these motives, one notices another important factor that comes up from time to time in analyses of askaris motives: whether or not they were volunteers. Although a cursory look at primary and secondary works quickly leads to the conclusion that many askaris served in the war as volunteers, one must always try to be guarded and conscious of how the term "volunteer" was used and abused in the past, about its contested meanings and applications during the colonial period. During the war, the term "volunteer" enjoyed a wide currency in relation to Kenyan soldiers, and government functionaries and amateur historians often applied it arbitrarily and liberally in many different ways. Eager to show the world that the war was popular and that askaris wholeheartedly supported the war, government officials often used the term interchangeably with patriotism, to refer to recruits who enlisted in the army supposedly because they unquestioningly believed in the righteousness of the government's cause. Many askaris were thus labeled "volunteers" by the government, even when they were not in that true
sense of the word. That is why it is argued in this chapter that an analysis of the circumstances behind recruitment is important, as it helps clarify whether or not the recruits concerned can be classified as volunteers in the true sense of the word or not, while highlighting why the recruits were enlisting in the army. In its ordinary usage in relation to soldiers, the word “volunteer” simply means to do service in an army on one’s free will. That is to say, the term should refer to those who join military service and serve on their own volition: “those who are not conscripted.” The precise number of askaris who served in the war as volunteers is difficult to tell, but the number appears to have been quite large in popular military units, while the remainder served as conscripts in unpopular military units like the East African Pioneer and EAMLS.

From an analysis of archival documents and interview materials dealing with the background of askaris who served in the army during the war, it would appear that askaris who joined the army between September, 1939 and mid 1940's, did so largely voluntarily. The circumstances in the Colony around this time are significant; there was no war going on in Eastern Africa, and the colonial government was trying its best to avoid war while preparing for it just in case. It was thus a time when the government was doing very little to encourage enlistment. What this means for an understanding of most askaris who joined the military at this time is that they were generally volunteers whose motives included patriotism, loyalty to the colonial government, economic, and social reasons. No one single reason can adequately capture the motives of these askaris, whether or not they were volunteers, when one examines the background of the askaris and the circumstances under which they enlisted. Askaris' own testimonies, letters,
archival materials, semi-official documents, autobiographies of *askaris* themselves and their commanders show clearly that among the men who went to recruitment camps were jobless young men looking for work. There were *askaris* whose minds were captivated by the Allied objectives of the war as well as by a desire to earn some income in the process of realizing their ideals. Hopes of material and financial security were important to many Kenyans, including those for whom the over-riding ambition in serving in the war was political. Prospects of earning money attracted many soldiers into the army, as were prospects for fame. Many veterans admit that when they joined the army, they hoped to be as famous as some veterans of the First World War, and as some of the soldiers of the Second World War who were already coming back home on leave. Others wanted to accumulate money for the purposes of buying livestock for bride price, putting up a house, starting a business, or simply to buy clothes, blankets, and shoes. Among these soldiers, one finds a conclave of men who viewed their service in the army as an opportunity to gain fame and to tour the world, a thrilling time for many men who had never been out of their villages. Most of these issues, as will be demonstrated shortly, can be identified and dealt with independently for the sake of academic analysis, even though they may never have been distinct or separate from one another in the minds of most *askaris*; each factor may have played varying roles in *askaris*’ ambitions, motives, plans and hopes, which were complex, multifaceted, and often changing from time to time.

Looking at what *askaris* were doing when the war broke out, and what they were saying about it, one finds a complex and eclectic web of circumstances and debates about the war. When the war broke out, many veterans assert, they heard about it through various
colonial agencies. Concerted propaganda work of the government, local African agents, churches, schools, organizations, and European settlers exhorted askaris to offer their services in the Second World War. Amos Mukolo Madawo who was twenty-one years old when the war broke out, heard about the war from a local ex-askari, Sergeant Obare. “He came here [K’Obare Market in Siaya District] by lorry, and told us that the government wanted men to help it fight its enemies, and he told those who wanted to help to raise their hands, and I raised mine. That is how I joined the war,” recalls Madawo.13 Jonathan Odhiambo Oyengo heard about the war during church sermons by his padre Samuel Okoth Ogutu at Hono, so “one day I told him I wanted to join the war, and he wrote me a letter which I took to Maseno Depot, and was enlisted.”14 Long before he joined the military, Mklaus Ndiege was already conversant with military life because his own father, Joseph Mbithi, was a sergeant in the military. In 1944, Mklaus Ndiege went on to join the military when his father, Sergeant Joseph Mbithi, requested the military “for permission for his son Mklaus Ndiege to enlist in the East African Military as a trumpeter.”15 Wellington Owuor Ogwalo also enlisted for military service at the urging of his father, who told him that, “lweny en tiy yawuoyi [warfare is a man’s job].”16 Albinus Ligare Ogango heard about the war while living with his brother-in-law in Tabora, Tanganyika. As his brother-in-law went to work at the Prisons where he was a Corporal, Albinus Ligare Ogango remained at home, doing nothing. It is therefore not surprising that Albinus Ligare Ogango first heard about the war from his brother-in-law, a

13 Amos Mukolo Madawo, Interview, 4th December, 2000.
15 Assistant Adjutant (EA) Field Artillery Depot and Training Center, EAA, to District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo District, letter dated 11th May, 1944, General Correspondence and Confiscation of Some goods from soldiers, 1943-44, (KNA/DC/KSM/1/22/133).
functionary of the colonial state, and that, at his brother-in-law’s urging particularly at a
time he was himself doing nothing productive at home, he enlisted in the army. There
were many young men like Amos Mukolo Madawo, Jonathan Odhiambo Oyengo, and
Albinus Ligare Ogango, who heard about the war in this way, and who thus had
opportunities to hear, analyze, and interpret government appeals for help. Even those who
joined the war as conscripts did not always lose the ability to think about the war in a
meaningful and coherent manner just because they were conscripts.

Among the cohort of those who can be classified as volunteers in his Majesty’s Forces
were those who fought in the war as loyal soldiers of “His Majesty The King.” Very little
exists about these loyalists in most historical accounts of the war in Kenya. Although the
Nyanza Provincial Commissioner warned his colleagues of the danger “of overstraining
the loyalty theme and [urged them to be] careful not to give ground for the suggestion
that we only discover a common ‘patria’ with the natives when we want something out of
them,”¹⁷ there is no doubt from an examination of various archival records, newspaper
accounts, and oral tradition, that indeed there were Kenya Africans who “volunteered”
for the war, who truly saw their services in terms of the war’s intrinsic values and ideals.
Their temper, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed, “was good … they respond
very well to the advice of their officers.”¹⁸ When the war broke out, these men assured
the Governor during a baraza at Marenyo that “for this war you can have our crops, our
money and ourselves.”¹⁹ Throughout the colony, there were individuals who perceived

¹⁷ (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
¹⁸ Ibid.
¹⁹ “Memorandum on the War Effort by Natives of the Nyanza Province,” History of War, 1939-48, (KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/61).
themselves as loyal subjects of the government. When the prominent Kenyan politician Harry Thuku read a letter in the *East African Standard* newspaper, claiming that "the natives of Kenya would like Hitler and his Government to come here and rule in the place of the British," Harry Thuku asserted, "I was choked with anger because I knew it was a base lie, and had no truth in it whatever, for truly I know that no native of Africa could have any use for Herr Hitler and his Government."\(^20\) Expounding on his loyalty in a letter to the editor, Christopher Ogati Akanga referred to the Axis as "savages" and the British as defenders of the African people. "The harder the British officers thought of protecting their Empire from the savages, the more they have taken a part in the protection of Africans from being taken as slaves."\(^21\) Clearly, Christopher Ogati Akanga believed in the British war aims. Mohamud Juma also considered himself a loyal subject of the King. Wondering why educated Africans who had reached the age of 18 were not being recruited to help the British, Mohamud Jama asserted that all Isaakia Somalis like himself were "sincere and loyal subjects to our King and our Empire and we consider the British as our father, and we all believe also the British were sent by God to put the world right and give every man his due and I always pray God to keep the King and our Queen for a long time."\(^22\) Another reader prayed for victory for the British. "Every man and woman," wrote War-Age African, "must give whatever he or she can to beat these two evil creatures [Hitler and Mussoloni]."\(^23\) In his message of congratulation to the Allies after

\(^20\) *East African Standard*, March 25, 1940.
\(^23\) "War age African," Letter to the Editor, *East African Standard*, June 25, 1940. In the letter, War-Age African wrote further that, "Great Britain and her daughters must fight and fight until everlasting victory which will bring with it peace, liberty, and freedom. This victory shall not only be very good to the world and also the heavens must be thankful for it. Let us think not of color but put before us that Great Britain is our mother and we are her daughters and shall fight to the bitter end which will make them feel sorry perhaps ... The last word for ever European, Indian and African to ask in his mind is, should we lose the
defeating the Germans and while wishing the Allies victory against the remaining adversary, the Japanese, Senior-Chief Nabongo Mumia of Wanga hoped “with my whole heart to our Union Jack that when I will pass off from the surface of the earth … may it be prolonged in His Glory and should leave peace on earth.”\textsuperscript{24} There were many askaris who thought about the war in the same way.

At the same time, as some volunteers considered themselves as “His Majesty’s loyal soldiers,” they and others did not necessarily hesitate to give some thought about the ideals of freedom and independence, which the Allies claimed to be fighting for and which the Axis were said to be threatening. That some soldiers had political objectives should not be surprising, given the fact that the colony, and various local communities in it were already waking up to struggles and demands for these rights. When the Allies began touting their role in the Second World War as a struggle against injustice, oppression, and dictatorship, specifically warning blacks about Axis powers’ plans to enslave and even exterminate black people, many blacks decided not just to join the Allies in order to defend themselves, but more particularly in the hope that the new post-war order would bring to an end discrimination against black people in the colony. Documentary evidences that speak to this way of thinking among Africans are admittedly few and far between. It is also difficult to tell how strong these ideals were to the askaris who presently have been making these kinds of assertions. In other words, it is difficult to tell the extent to which present-day politics have influenced askaris’ claims of joining the

\textsuperscript{24} Nabongo Mumia to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 10\textsuperscript{th} May, 1945, (Commendation for Service in War, 1940-48, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/51).
war for idealistic reasons, yet there is little doubt that politically conscious askaris served in the army. Writing to the editor of the East African Standard, for instance, S. O. Oyamo, a civilian, argued that Africans expected to be granted freedom after the war. When a Mr. Champion of the East African Cinema argued that Africans should not make complaints against the government, S. O. Oyamo referred him to the "Atlantic Charter which enunciates 'Freedom of Speech' as one of the principles of democracy for which the United Nations are fighting." S. O. Oyamo went further to argue that "I have always admired Mr. Champion for his public spiritedness ... but his admonition that we (Africans) should muzzle ourselves, as a war contribution, has flabbergasted me." In his dispatches from Mogadishu in Somaliland, John Ogola Sana, a soldier-clerk from north Ugenya described the on-going war as a war for "good government." "Every country and everybody wants good government," implying that even Africans had a right to good government. In September, 1942, Joel Omino, later President of LNC, wrote an article entitled "A Memorandum on Post-War Employment of Africans," which demonstrates that Africans were thinking about how they would use the war to advance their socio-economic and political interests. In this particular memorandum to the government, Omino revealed that, "our people in this colony are having much discussion as to what should be done with the Africans now fighting and doing other work in connection with defeating the enemy." Written after the East African Campaign and after the Italian threat to Kenya and East Africa at large had been eliminated, Omino's memorandum talked about the fear that

26 Ibid.
27 "News From Somalia," (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
28 Joel Omino, A Memorandum on Post-War Employment of Africans, (Institutions and Associations,
although we have so loyally sacrificed much, the policy in Kenya of depressing Africans and up raising Europeans, Asians and Arabs will still be there regardless of what good work the Africans have done to bring about the complete defeat of the enemy.  

Omino’s views were certainly not the views of one isolated person, but were rather quite pervasive in an increasingly tumultuous period all over the colony. In fact, Omino warned the government that, “our opinion would be averse to any change which might lead to the loss of freedom for which we hope and have offered to sacrifice our lives and wealth.”  

It is a well-known slogan, Omino wrote, “that the British government is fighting for the freedom of mankind irrespective of their races, and it would be a pity if some people under the Empire’s flag were ruled and treated contrary to the slogan. Therefore it is a justifiable request that the Government should consider giving the Africans a right of franchise.”  

Omino went on to propose a number of issues the government should do for the Africans as reward: on land, legislature, racial equality, legislative representation, employment of Africans in the civil service. Omino decried the present education system, which involved merely “training Africans to be used as tools … a much deplorable fact.”

Although Omino fell short of demanding outright independence for Africans, this was not because he did not think about it or because he did not think Africans deserved to be independent. Rather, it was because “I think and it is my belief that it is too early to consider such responsibilities [of governing] before government could allow sending

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1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
many Africans abroad to be qualified and come back to hold such responsible posts under the Native Administration." As this was being done, Omino demanded "an immediate re-adjustment of our representation in the Legislative Council. The government should allow the Africans to select their own representatives and such representatives should be drawn from each province." In effect then, Omino believed that the government should reciprocate African support in the war by training and generally preparing an African cadre of professionals to take over the running of the country in future.

From archival documents, we learn that Father P. Coessen, of the Catholic Mission, Nangina, then under the Diocese of Tororo, convinced a large number of his parishioners to aid the struggle against evil by enlisting in the war voluntarily. As well, there were those who joined the forces after being made to see the war in terms of restoring Emperor Haile Sellassie back to his throne. These were the soldiers who saw it as their duty not only to fight against the Italians, who had conquered and overthrown the only "Black King," as they understood Emperor Haile Sellassie, but more importantly to pre-empt an Axis plan to conquer, enslave, and destroy the black race. Others volunteered after listening to lectures by The British Legion, an organization of European ex-soldiers formed in 1921. The British Legion's lectures on "the course of the war, stressing the point that it was primarily a defense against the aggressor nations; how such aggression, if successful, would have affected East Africa," would not have gone amiss. There were

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 P. Coessen, in a letter dated July 3rd, 1940, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174). Urging his parishioners to help, Father Coessen described the Axis Powers as "a horde of hooligans and gangsters, devil incarnate" who had brought about "slavery and atheism ... on the continent of Europe, my dear Holland."
36 (Secretarial Circulars, 1946, KNA, DC/1/1/239)
thus many African soldiers who served in the war because they perceived themselves as patriotic and loyal to the government and local European acquaintances.

During a group interview with fifteen ex-askaris, who included eighty-five year old ex-Sergeant Bernard Gombe Opondo, at Ratado [Sifuyo] market, West Ugenya, Siaya, askaris asserted that in "those days the British were the rulers and we were its subjects, so we had to fight when the war broke out." It was their duty as subjects of the King to aid him, they argued. Some recruits left school straight for the army in response to the urging of a local, kind European, perhaps a European teacher who was exhorting them to quit school and defend the Empire. R. H. Kakembo, a Ugandan veteran of the war observes in his manuscript, *An African Soldier Speaks Out*, that "men you see in the forces came to help a certain kindly lady missionary, or a good District Commissioner whose wife plays with their children. They came to help because their friend and lady told them that back home in Britain her or his mother was in trouble, a fierce bully was threatening to take them slaves, and that if they joined the Army they might help to avert that threat and danger to their beloved ones." Many recruits joined the war while as students.

Missionary teachers at mission schools used to compile lists of students whom they felt should enlist in the military and forwarded them to army recruiters, providing the names, education and aptitude of the would-be recruits. One missionary at Sega Catholic Mission informed the administration that his Mission School had "several boys here in Std III who are anxious to start training." Kalisto Oyugi joined the war after Bro. James, his teacher

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39 Catholic Mission to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 12th September, 1942, (General Instructions, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/157).
at St. Mary's Yala, urged him to do so because he was a good drummer.⁴⁰

Government records on volunteers are very important. During a period when Africans themselves either did not know how to read or write, or simply did not have the urge or time to do so, such records as exist are important as supplements to oral accounts, in the sense that they do help to corroborate askaris' claims and arguments about how they saw themselves, their colony, and their role in the war. Although most of these records were written by colonial officials, they are not necessarily unreliable. In fact, in some cases, government officials were quite candid, and secret documents show them honestly discussing the war, even admitting some of the difficulties they experienced in connection with the war, meaning that they were at times writing the truth as they observed them. One Captain R. N. Simpson, for instance, admitted that, "we have received a letter from the Officer Commanding Maseno Depot in which he states that four of the 125 recruits received from Machakos refused to sign their attestation papers stating that they were forced to join up by their chiefs. As the Officer Commanding Maseno Training Depot considered that they would only make a nuisance of themselves, at a future date, he returned them to the District Commissioner."⁴¹ Dawson Currey, the Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, also recounts that some recruits from Machakos refused to join the depot. Some of the recruits were sent back to their homes, but five others, Mutiso Mulwa, Kingi Kyunga, Kilita Kendu, Nzioki Wambua, and Nduva Wewa, changed their minds. Admitting that they had been misled

⁴¹ Captain R. N. Simpson to the Chief Native Commissioner, letter dated 2nd July, 1943, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
by others, they signed up for enlistment into the Army.⁴²

Africans in Nyanza expressed their loyalty to the government in many ways, “not only in their readiness to offer themselves for military service and to contribute to war funds, but also in a notable lessening of inter-clan and other political intrigue.”⁴³ As the war continued, communities from Nyanza Province enlisted in large numbers and the government thanked them for their “intense loyalty to the King, their eagerness to help fight his enemies, their ready trust in their officers and their quick response to advise.”⁴⁴ When the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed that, when recruitment began in Nyanza Province, there was “a ripple of uncertainty and excitement and a rush to join the colors at the end of August [1939],”⁴⁵ there is a possibility that he was in fact making a fair comment on the reaction of some Nyanza inhabitants to the war. One particularly interesting colonial document is revealing about how askaris joined the war, and why. It is in connection to Opiyo Ndeda, a volunteer who during the war rose through the ranks to become a Company Sergeant-Major. According to this document, Opiyo Ndeda was one soldier who was determined to serve in the war. When Company Sergeant-Major Opiyo Ndeda died sometime in 1943, his Commanding Officer eulogized him in the following words:

I shall always remember the day I went to Maseno Depot to recruit likely African NCO’s for the company. This old man came along in his old coat with several others. I talked to them all and told them what I was looking for. They were all mad keen to join. I looked at the old man and laughed, as I thought him far too old. But the way he looked at others and scoffed ‘too old, try

⁴³ (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
⁴⁴ (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
⁴⁵ (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
me and you will find that I have twice the guts of these' and his cherry smile persuaded me to give him a try. The old man was real value to me and this Company. Never tiring in hard work, even in the worst of a Libyan sandstorm. He always commanded great respect from all. The way C.S.M. Opiyo carried all his kit three miles to El Daba station in the last stages of our retreat out of the desert was proof enough of his guts. When young men were falling out, he marched proudly on, right at the head of the company never leaving a thing behind. He fought in the last war and held the KAR Long Service Medal and KAR Campaign Medal, besides others. He is a real loss to his company. The loss of CMS Opiyo is deeply felt by all those officers and men who were lucky enough to come into contact with him and their condolences go out to all his relatives and friends of whom there must be many in North and Central Kavirondo.  

Many Kenyans also hearkened to exhortations to support the war, enlisted in the army, and exhibited themselves with distinction. That is, just like Company Sergeant-Major Opiyo Ndeda. Within a short time of the war, the Director of Medial Services observed in his report for December 1939 to February 1940 that, "the army expanded with considerable rapidity." An appeal for volunteers in the Medical Department in connection with the war was also immediately "obtained within a very short period."  

While referring to these volunteers, many government documents discuss "how the administration could not keep up with the number of volunteers," how in places like Nyanza, "recruitment centers were being overrun by volunteers." When the South Kavirondo District Commissioner went to Karachuonyo Location to recruit about 30 men for the military, he found 120 volunteers, ninety more than his target. What was quite significant about these volunteers was that they had already started drilling on their own under the direction of ex-KAR or police Askaris, some had been drilling for three weeks,

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46 *East African Standard*, date unknown.
47 (Medical Department, History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).
48 Medical Department, Report for December 1940 to February 1941, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA,
others for two, and others for one week. "This effort was entirely voluntary,"\textsuperscript{50} observed the District Commissioner. "Everywhere," the Nyanza Provincial Administration averred, "the call for recruits received an enthusiastic response, and not only were all requirements met without difficulty but many volunteers had to be returned."\textsuperscript{51}

The members of the King's African Rifles were said to be so loyal and patriotic that the government "knew very well that if and when the time came [they] and the carefully chosen officers who lead them would do all that was asked from them and a bit more."\textsuperscript{52} Although "the effect of the war has become much more intense in the province during the year," the Nyanza Provincial Administration admitted in 1943, "the loyalty of the people has not wavered in any respect. They have strained to comply with our requirements in every instance and to a large extent have carried out our requirements exceptionally well."\textsuperscript{53} When the war began, the Kipsigis "offered themselves readily and were welcomed by the KAR and the police."\textsuperscript{54} One District Commissioner in Nyanza Province discovered during one recruitment drive that he had over-recruited men, but when he decided to release some and "to give them Kshs. 2/- each in cash and return lorry fares to their homes ... to these men who had promptly answered a call for recruits ... they were sadly disappointed."\textsuperscript{55} When Italy joined the war and "the call for recruits was renewed

\textsuperscript{BY/49/28).}
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} South Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} November, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
\textsuperscript{51} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, Secret Report, 18\textsuperscript{th} November, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
\textsuperscript{52} Kenya Information Office Pamphlet, An article entitled, "KAR", History of War Between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
\textsuperscript{53} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).
\textsuperscript{54} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
\textsuperscript{55} (District Commissioner's letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} April, 1940, Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
...there was a general desire to serve.”\textsuperscript{56} Appearing before the Commanding Officer of the South African Forces in Turkana, the Paramount Chief Abong’ of Turkana "offered all his young men for the King’s service ... in doing so he had expressed what is the desire of every Turkana warrior. They want to fight for the British Empire and though they may not have a clear conception of what the Empire means they do know that the British people are at war with Italy. They know also that the Italians have enlisted the help of the Merille, ‘tribal’ traditional enemies of every Turkana.”\textsuperscript{57}

The loyalty and response of communities in NFD on the other hand were unpredictable; it was largely dependent on those communities’ proximity to Italian occupied territories and contingent upon the performance of the protagonists in the East African Theater. Communities on the border with Ethiopia “were inclined to await developments before giving their full support to either side ... Further south the ‘tribesmen’ were helpful in supplying meat for the army.”\textsuperscript{58} It was after the government began to score significant victories against the Italians in battles in the NFD, that Isaak Somali response to the government became decidedly enthusiastic. With the tide turning in favor of the British, “the attitude of the Isaak Somalis bore a marked change and their agitation ceased almost completely.”\textsuperscript{59} Not surprisingly many men wanted to identify with the winning side and “recruiting ... continued on a large scale.”\textsuperscript{60} In his “Notes on the War Effort of Northern Frontier District Tribesmen “ J. K. R. Thorp, District Commissioner of Marsabit observed

\textsuperscript{56} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
\textsuperscript{57} East African Standard, 15th October, 1940.
\textsuperscript{58} History of the War, NFD, period 1\textsuperscript{st} September, 1940 to 30\textsuperscript{th} November, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
\textsuperscript{59} History of the War, NFD, period 1\textsuperscript{st} June, 1940 to 31\textsuperscript{st} August, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
\textsuperscript{60} History of the War, NFD, period 1\textsuperscript{st} June, 1940 to 31\textsuperscript{st} August, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA,
that Wajir produced many recruits without difficulty: "A complete camel transport unit was raised and equipped entirely from the district for frontline service."\(^{61}\) The capture of El Wak by the government in particular "produced a marked effect on the 'tribesmen,' especially those whose policy was to sit on the fence."\(^{62}\)

Procrastination and the habit of many communities in NFD of waiting to see which side was doing better before deciding whom to support shows that people were not simply following government propaganda blindly. They were instead supporting the government on the basis of well-informed choices which were in turn based on careful calculations of how those choices would further their interests during and after the war. Just as some people in these communities enlisted in the British military units and supported the government in many ways right from the time the war began without waiting to see how their choices would benefit them, others only began to support the government enthusiastically after the decisive battle of El Wak changed the course of the East African Campaign in favor of the British. When an Irregular company was formed to deal with livestock raids in Garissa, J. K. R. Thorpe noted, "there was no lack of recruits from either the Somali or 'Galla' [Oromo] 'tribes.'"\(^{63}\) Among the young men who volunteered for service out of loyalty to the government were recruits from the Sakuye and Boran communities, from the area around Moyale. Despondent at the beginning of the war when the British appeared to be losing to the Italians during the initial clashes, the Sakuye and Boran were nevertheless described as "strongly pro-British and they have

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\(^{61}\) (Political Records: War With Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
\(^{62}\) History of the War, NFD, period 1st December, 1940 to 28th February, 1941, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
been reassured by the increasing number of troops who have arrived in the District. The general opinion is that in good time the Italians will be driven from the frontier."\(^{64}\) A Boran prophet, Guyo Kiti, added to the mood of optimism and enthusiasm among those willing to support the government when he predicted that with time, the British would win the war. Bukicha Karonyo, another Boran prophet, also saw the British winning the war and his prediction encouraged and emboldened recruits to come forward.

The recruitment for the EAMLS in Taita and Mombasa Districts “produced volunteers far beyond their quotas.”\(^{65}\) The Pokomo turned out in large numbers in 1940.\(^{66}\) But recruitment in Kilifi, Malindi and Kwale on a voluntary basis “was not so spontaneous,”\(^{67}\) a problem worsened by desertions and the high number of medical rejects. By the end of 1942, Kitui District Commissioner advised C. Tomkinson, the Provincial Commissioner of Central Province, that the number of men “presenting themselves for enlistment were sufficient to reach a figure of 200” and only the inability of the Medical Officer to “stay overnight and the military officer [stating] that any number from 120 to 140 would suffice,”\(^{68}\) prevented them from enlisting more men. At many recruitment points, recruits turned up in large numbers – “applicants have numbered three to four hundred [against requirements of under 100 at each point].”\(^{69}\)

\(^{63}\) (Political Records: War With Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).

\(^{64}\) Notes on Isiolo District as affected by the Northern Frontier Campaign June 1940-February 1941, (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11).

\(^{65}\) (Coast Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53).

\(^{66}\) Ibid. The Coast Provincial Commissioner described the large number of recruits among the Pokomo as “particularly pleasing owing to political agitation earlier”

\(^{67}\) Ibid.

\(^{68}\) C. Tomkinson, Central Provincial commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 23\(^{rd}\) November, 1942, (African Recruitment for Military, 1943-45, KNA, AH/22/54).

\(^{69}\) (Lieut-Col., Officer Commanding Depot Battalion, KAR, Kenya and Uganda to the District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, letter dated 22\(^{nd}\) April, 1940, Military Recruitment, KNA,
During recruitment, young Banyore boys like Zablon Imbudira, Shem Mugado, Samson Maginga Lahunya, and Francis Kidula quit school and joined the Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, leading to a change in the policy of recruiting school-going boys. Without “a letter from their headmaster showing that they have come with his knowledge,” the Inspector of Schools, Nyanza, directed, “a recurrence of this sort” should be stopped.\(^7\)

Many men quit their jobs and joined the army as volunteers. The intentions of some of these men are not clear, as they were already employed. In leaving mostly secure, but probably under-paying, jobs for an uncertain future in the army, it is most likely that these volunteers were either very loyal to the government or had problems at their places of work, which they were determined to run away from at all cost even if that meant facing death in the war. Available government documents simply refer to these men as “volunteers,” without necessarily explaining whether or not they were enlisting out of patriotism or for other different reasons such as problems with their current employers.

While many *askaris* joined the Army and served in the war as volunteers for political reasons, others freely admitted during interviews that they volunteered for the war because they wanted to be like their peers and compatriots who were already serving and who were winning military awards and honors for gallantry and bravery. Okoth Omoto asserted at his home at Ulafu village that, “I joined the army because I loved 'soldiering'

\[\ldots\] I used to see *askaris* at home, and I admired them. So when recruitment started, I liked

\(^7\) The Inspector of Schools, Nyanza Province, to the Officer commanding Maseno Depot, letter dated 12\(^{th}\) October, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
the idea of joining the army.” Recruits like Okoth Omoto joined the army for social reasons, yearning for fame and respect. Stories about the war, told by soldiers on leave left a deep impression on many men who also wanted to be like those already serving. “Now that soldiers have been back on leave in fairly large numbers and given their impression,” North Kavirondo District Commissioner observed, “calls for recruits are always ‘over-subscribed,’ and one can discriminate in selection.” Many soldiers who had served in the war with distinction were respected and admired in their society, and young recruits wanted to enjoy the same status by enlisting and fighting for the military in the war. The *East African Standard*, reiterating this view, stated that, “as a result of the picture painted by soldiers returning to their homes on leave, there had been a increasing flow of volunteers for military service.”

The war, to some *askaris*, was an opportunity to increase their social currency. Village songs in praise of soldiers or in derision of runaways and deserters influenced the decision of many young men to enlist in the army. Many veterans said during interviews that they joined the army to avoid being embarrassed by “girls composing derisive songs.” “Some songs referred to those who remained at home as others went to war as cowards,” asserted Ex-Cpl. Thomas Alfred Oluoch Odawa. Service in the army assured many servicemen of a high status in society either because of the money they would save and goods they would buy, or simply because of their exploits which would bring them pride and admiration. This ambition to be "soldierly" led to a riot at Ahero, a town near

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71 Okoth Omoto, Interviewed, 5th December, 2000.
72 North Kavirondo District Commissioner, History of the War - North Kavirondo, Quarter Ending 30th September, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
73 The *East African Standard*, Tuesday, May 4, 1943.
Kisumu City, when upon recruitment into the EAMLS, the recruits discovered that they would not be issued with rifles. On hearing that “they were not to have rifles [some members of the Pioneer Corps insisted] they would not join.” 75 Out of some 180 recruits who joined the nucleus of the first Pioneer Corps, 110 quit and only 70 remained when they discovered that among other things “they were not to have rifles.” 76 Those who agreed to serve in the military labor unit after immense pressure from the government continued to demand to be issued with rifles, because rifles made them look “soldierly.” The Pioneers who “are otherwise keen and proud of themselves,” are afraid of serving without rifles because “their women mock them if they are not armed.” 77 E. M. Hyde-Clarke made an apt observation of this point when he wrote that, “the mentality of the native is such that when he becomes part of an Infantry unit, unless he carries a rifle he feels that he is not a real askari.” 78 Members of other units like L.M.G. and Mortar Sections who “do not carry rifles are still rather inclined to compare themselves with the ‘old Carrier’.” 79 There was always a lot of grumbling among servicemen when they got deployed in units other than the KAR, probably the most popular unit because members of the unit were allowed to wield rifles, symbols of "soldierliness" and manliness. KAR was the premier unit in the forces, and East Africa “has always been proud of the

74 Thomas Alfred Oluoch Odawa., Interview, 12th January, 2001 at Ratado [Sifiyo].
78 The Secretariat, Circular to all Provincial Commissioners, dated 18th March, 1942, (Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, letter dated 8th October, 1941).
79 Ibid.
The government tried to skirt around *askaris'* perceptions of rifles as symbols of manliness and soldierliness by using different guises, taking suggestions about how to deal with the issue while doing nothing practical to meet the soldiers’ desire to wield rifles. Attempts were made to try to impress upon the soldiers the fact that although they “are joining a non-fighting unit, their work is of great importance and is contributing equally to the war effort as that of other branches of the service.” But such government assurances were to no avail to the *askaris*, and the pressure by them was instrumental in the government decision to issue members of various military labor units with rifles, imbuing them with a feeling of courage, manliness and prestige in society. It was only then that they felt like “real soldiers” and satisfied of being in the army, at least to the extent that armaments were concerned.

It was probably the search for adventure and self-improvement that motivated William A Tsam to apply for training with an eye for future service in the Royal Air-force. Educated at Friends Primary School, Kaimosi, where he sat and passed his primary school examination in 1937, and at St. Mary’s college, Kisubi, Uganda, where he attained his Junior Secondary Certificate, Pass ‘A,’ William A. Tsam was only 19 when he applied to join the Royal Air-force. “I have read in the *Baraza* newspaper last two weeks,”

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80 Information Officer, article entitled, “The KAR: Article I,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41). Even in peacetime the KAR had been admired, and “on ceremonial occasions when they were on view, Trooping the Color on the King’s Birthday or swinging behind their band through the streets of Nairobi on a route march … their smartness was a by word … no battalions in the East Africa Force have a better record than the KAR.”

81 The Secretariat, Circular to all Provincial Commissioners, dated 18th March, 1942, (Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, letter dated 8th October, 1941).
William's letter read, "where it says that the Government has decided to begin a school at Nakuru for training the Africans of Kenya who would like to join the Royal Air-Force. I wish to offer myself as a candidate to join the school as a wireless operator learner."\(^{82}\) A reply from the Deputy Director of Manpower denied knowledge of a school which was training African men for service in the Royal Air-force.\(^{83}\) In some cases, young men's desire and hunger for adventure and glory were used by the colonial administration to trick them into military service. The Nyanza Provincial Administration owned up to using this ruse, when the Provincial Commissioner wrote that "a native might be persuaded at his home camp, through the eloquence of some officer or chief, to make a patriotic gesture and offer himself for service and at least get a free ride in a lorry to Kisumu." [italics mine].\(^{84}\) Government malfeasance did not end there, with lying and misleading young men into making uninformed decision to serve in the army; even force came into use in many cases.

Some men were captured and forced to join the army during the war, leading to complaints from their employers who were left without replacements. Barker and Partners of Mau Summit wrote to the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, complaining that, "boys on leave have been taken off by the military authorities without any reference to their employers. This happened to at least one boy who was in my employment at Londiani and to at least two who were in the employment of Messrs Barker and Partners

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\(^{83}\) Deputy Director of Manpower to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 23\(^{rd}\) February, 1940, (African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).

\(^{84}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
at Mau Summit.”

Other soldiers offered their services in response to various colonial incentives, especially in exchange for monetary rewards. This was especially the case where turnout for service was poor, and the government used material and financial incentives to encourage large numbers of young men to offer their services. Many men turned out for recruitment in Nyanza because the administration there had devised a system in which recruits were “paid as quickly and as near to the homes of the recipients as possible.” Wellington Odera’s enlistment is a good case that points to the multi-faceted nature of African military service. He was a young man who volunteered for service in an army he regarded as a source of employment. His letter to the District Commissioner reads like a job application letter because he, like many recruits, perceived service in the army as employment. “I am a Luo boy from Gem, eighteen years old,” Wellington Odera wrote. “I have been at the veterinary training for two years, 1939-1940. I left the school last month. Before I entered in the school, I was a pupil teacher at Uranga for a year. I have been in Standard VII. I was a senior prefect of our house and play football 1st XI. The subjects which I learned in the school were English, Mathematics and Anatomy. I should be glad to come and see you if you will tell me what time would be convenient to you. I am sure I would like working in your department, and I would try my best to your satisfaction.”

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85 Barker and Partner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 25th September, 1939, (African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56). In the letter, Baker and Partners went on to state that, “I agree that the military authorities have first claim on all fit men in the country, of whatever race, but in this case of boys on leave, who have not been discharged, I think it only reasonable that their employers should be informed for military purposes and that they are not being allowed to return to their work on farms.”
86 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
87 Wellington Odera to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 2nd August, 1940, (Military
dresser in the East African Army Medical Corps. In his letter to B. Otiato Oduda’s employer at Kericho, the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo reveals that B. Otiato Oduda had come to him, ready to join the dreaded EAMLS for “employment.” “He asked me,” the District Commissioner informed Otiato Oduda’s former employer, “to sign him from your company to allow him to do so, saying that he had been in the reserve unemployed for a period of 6 months. I did so hoping that you will have no objection.”

Wellington Odera’s and B. Otiato Oduda’s cases were typical of many men who joined the forces during the war. Many young men saw the military as a source of employment. Their action speaks volume about the fact that there was a high level of unemployment and economic desperation in the reserve that drove many men to offer their services to the military. Although workers at Burnt Forest Saw Mills Limited already had jobs, rumors that the military wanted “learners for weaving and boot-making” caused many to flock to the office of the manager for recommendation to join the army, hoping, perhaps, for training opportunities that would put them in a good position to prosper after the war. “We are constantly being approached by our native staff to assist them to enlist both in the KAR and Labor Corps,” observed the Manager of Burnt Forest Saw Mills. The Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot informed Shemu Bandi Tsindekero that he had received “your application for

Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
88 (Central Kavirondo District commissioner’s Office to Messars A.H.P. Company, dated 14th February, 1941, List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/161).
89 See also: Application for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, DC/KSM/17/100), which contains many letters from African servicemen applying for jobs after the war).
employment in this Corps” and ordered him to “present yourself with this letter to the District Commissioner, Kisumu.”

91 Damian J. Ondiko Mando also wrote to the Central Kavirondo Commissioner for work in the military as “a clerk,” adding that he was at that time working in Uganda as a “switchboard attendant with the East Africa Power and Lighting Company.” He had studied at Catholic Primary and at Kabaa Secondary School, in the “Ukamba Province.”

92 Jonah Oyomo, who had been working as a Wireless Operator at Mara Mines, in Tanganyika, came back home to Kano and promptly applied to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo for a job “either wireless operator or clerk or typist or telephone operator.” He too was asked to join the army. When Ndola Otieno’s services were dispensed with by the Chemelil Estates, he stayed in the reserve “unemployed for three months” after which he approached the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner for recruitment into the dreaded EAMLS.

93 James Dori Odongo was sixteen years old when he applied for a job as a signaler in the army. He was quite well educated, a graduate of Coast Secondary School, Shimo La Tewa, and a holder of a secondary school certificate, with a “good knowledge of English.” “Humbly and Respectfully,” James Dori Odongo wrote in his letter to the Director of Manpower, that “you may have the goodness and accept me as a signaler in the army for I have been given to understand that some of those soldiers are going to resign.”

94 But at the time he
was applying for recruitment into the army the threat of Italian invasion of Kenya had receded, and so, the Provincial Commissioner informed James Dori Odongo that, “if I hear of a vacancy I will let you know.”96 When Chemelil Estates Company dispensed with Ndola Otieno’s services, he stayed in the reserve “unemployed for three months” after which he approached the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner for recruitment into the EAMLS.97 Archival documents from the Office of the Central Kavirondo District show the circumstances under which Awuor Otieno joined the EAMLS. After staying “in the reserve unemployed for a period of ten months,” Awuor Otieno, hedged his fortunes with the military by joining the EAMLS.98 The same documents reveal that Opere Orege “asked the [government to recruit him into EAMLS] saying that he had been in the reserve unemployed for a period of nine months.”99 Airo Nyamora also joined the forces after his circumstances at home had driven him into economic desperation. After holding up in the reserve unemployed for “a period of four years,” Airo Nyamora finally approached the administration to recruit him into the EAMLS.100 There were many such askaris who only joined the military as a last recourse, for economic reasons. After his employment was discontinued by Chemelil Plantation, Okingo Abang’a remained unemployed at home for four years when he too decided to join the EAMLS. Oonga Asele also joined the EAMLS after languishing at home for two years without a job. On the other hand, Aol Ogola had stayed at home unemployed for only two and a half

97 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office to Chemelil Estates, dated 14th February, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno, 1941, DC/KSM/1/22/161).
98 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office to E.R. Pearce Esq., Asembo, dated 14th February, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno, 1941, DC/KSM/1/22/161).
99 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office to T.M. Banks Esq, Solai Valley, Nakuru, dated 14th February, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno, 1941, DC/KSM/1/22/161).
100 (Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office to Chemelil Estates, dated 14th February, 1941, (List
months when he decided to join the EAMLS as an askari. After enlisting, the District Commissioner’s office informed Aol Ogola’s employer, Kitito Lands Ltd, Thika, that “if you require him to return to your employ, will you please inform me within 14 days, during which time he will be in the Home Depot at Maseno, and I will arrange for his release, but I cannot guarantee that he will then report back to you for work.”\footnote{Central Kavirondo District commissioner’s Office to Kitito Lands Ltd, Thika, dated 14\textsuperscript{th} February, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno, 1941, DC/KSM/1/22/161).}

Some askaris like Omondi Odera joined the army while on leave from their regular employment, but if the complaint brought against him by his employer Mrs. Edith Porter is anything to go by, Omondi Odera joined the army to avoid paying his employer, Mrs Porter, her Kshs. 10/-, which she gave him as salary advance when he went home on leave. “It appears,” Edith Porter wrote, that “this boy is trying to run away with the Kshs.10/- I advanced him, and he should be dealt with for doing so.”\footnote{Mrs. Edith Porter to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 1\textsuperscript{st} October, 1941, and the District Commissioner’s letter to the Officer-in-Charge, Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} October, 1941, (Maseno Recruitment and Home Depot, 1941-43, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/28 ).} Mrs. Porter’s money was eventually recovered and Otieno Odera went on to serve in the army.\footnote{Office Commanding Maseno Depot’s letter to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated}

Conscription.

Many askaris joined the army as conscripts. When the war began, a special session of the Legislative Council was convened on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September, 1939, at which the Compulsory Service Ordinance (1939) was enacted specifically for the purpose of conscripting the White population of the Colony for military service. The Ordinance was “designed to provide for the conscription of manpower in the colony and empowered the Governor to
establish military units, and to order British subjects and British Protected Persons to render personal service or do any work in connection with the defence of the colony. Soon enough and predictably, the order, with minor alterations, came to apply to non-Europeans because the ordinance, although meant to help the government mobilize the British and British Protected Persons for military services, paradoxically exempted all of them from forced service in the local Kenyan military units because they were already serving in the Kenya Defence Force. Under this ordinance, members of the Kenya Defence Force were exempted from compulsory service, and since virtually all British males in Kenya were in this Unit, it meant that they could not be forced to provide compulsory service in military units.

Interpreted in such a way to mean that British males were exempted from conscription, regulations on conscription were expanded and applied to Africans. The government subsequently enacted the “Defence (Native Personnel) Regulations, 1940, and published it in a special issue of the Official Gazette on the 27th August, 1940. In the interest of the defense of the Colony, the new regulation stated, the principle service, which up to then had been applied only to Europeans “has now been extended to Africans.” The regulation on conscription was used not just to enlist men into military units, but also to provide labor for various government and private European undertakings. It mandated the Governor to order Provincial Commissioners, District Commissioners, Officers-in-Charge of any district to “provide a specified number of natives” if he felt that “natives

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23rd October, 1941, (Maseno Recruitment and Home Depot, 1941-43, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/28).
104 (History of War, 1939-43, KNA, AG/29/16).
105 Information Officer, Circular dated 3rd September, 1940, (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
should be employed either on specific duties in connection with work of a military character or as members of the East African military Labor Service.”

In using conscription, the government was to consider the “necessities of civil life and the individual circumstances of each case ... and any native who objects to his selection on the grounds that it will inflict undue hardships upon him or upon the members of his family will be able to appeal, within fourteen days of his selection, to one of the tribunals which will be established in each province for the purpose.”

When Adera Oyombera, Sewe Okomo and Okech Nduswa were enlisted into the East Africa Military Labor Force, their employer, Lomolo Limited, Kampi Ya Moto, objected because “we are so short of labor and have urgent work to do in order to fulfill contracts and every trained boy is of value to us.”

The plea by Lomolo Limited won Adera Oyombera and Sewe Okomo release from the army, but it did not save Okech Nduswa, who had already “been sent forward to Jinja Pioneer yesterday.”

Due to the persistently low number of askaris in certain military units, which were hated, and due to desertions that reduced the number of those already in service, conscription helped the government meet its short-fall in military units such as the East African Military Service, and PANYAKO, the Pioneers. “The basis of recruitment for the Military Labor Service,” the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner wrote, was “conscription.”

Conscription was sold to Africans as a “necessity.” Conscripts for civil work duties

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106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
110 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
especially in farms were urged to work hard and grow crops because “our armies in Egypt and Libya, in Mesopotamia and Palestine need food. Many of them are natives from Kenya now in the Pioneer Corp. This food can be grown in Kenya … Our armies also need aeroplanes and rope … So, we must grow as much food as much flax and as much sisal as we can.” One government propaganda material asked Africans to consider “what would happen if we lost” the war.

To make up for the low African turn-out of African recruits in units like the EAMLS, places like Nyanza at first experimented with a system that the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner described as “assisted recruitment,” before it fully resorted to the system of conscription. There was really not much difference between “assisted recruitment” and “conscription.” While the former involved the use of subtlety, the latter involved the application of crude, open threats and manipulation of men to provide labor to the government and to the military. The administration in Nyanza used the former system, the “assisted recruitment” method, at the beginning when labor shortage was not that acute, but it later ditched it and turned to “open” conscription method. “If labor shortage were graver than it is,” the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner advised his officers in a confidential circular of 5th October, 1941, “you may consider that open conscription would be preferable to ‘assisted’ recruitment.” Both forms of recruitment relied on the use of force as a means of accruing labor for various colonial projects during the war.

111 (Propaganda for Africans, CS/1/10/44).
112 (Propaganda for Africans, CS/1/10/44).
113 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, Confidential Circular dated 15th October, 1941, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
The exploitative nature of conscription moved one District Commissioner in Nyanza Province, who lashed out at it as a system of taking advantage of the “poor and weak people for the benefit of those who consider themselves to be ‘Herrenvolk’ or ‘master race.’”\(^{114}\) According to D. Storrs-Fox, District Commissioner of South Kavirondo, conscription was “one of the very things which we profess to be fighting the Huns for doing.”\(^{115}\) A village elder from Alego explained the growing resistance to over-recruiting and exploitation of labor by using a proverb. If an elephant is killed, he said, everyone sets to at the flesh with their knives, and the supply of meat seems inexhaustible. Nevertheless, there comes a time when the bones though not yet laid bare at last begin to appear.”\(^{116}\) Even the Provincial Administration in Nyanza itself was constrained to admit that conscription of civil labor was becoming more and more unpopular, both to the laborers and officers alike. Conscription was eventually suspended in Nyanza during the last five months of 1943, “mainly on account of food shortage.”\(^{117}\) But it was one of the methods, which the government used to meet any shortfall during recruitment. Whether volunteers or conscripts in the army, these were the *askaris* who played the critical role of fighting in the defence of the colonial government and the Empire.

Conclusion.

This chapter has examined in detail the motives of *askaris* who served in the King’s

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\(^{114}\) D. Storrs-Fox, District Commissioner, South Kavirondo to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Confidential Letter, letter dated 20th October, 1941, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, DC/KSM/1/36/47).

\(^{115}\) Ibid. In a rare departure from blindly implementing government policy on recruitment, and after finding it difficult to “carry out [government instructions on conscription] … with a clear conscience,” D. Storrs-Fox asked the government to “be so kind as to consider relieving me of my present appointment as District Commissioner, South Kavirondo” and should government “decide not to dispense with my services altogether, I would be willing and glad to continue to serve in any district or colony and in any capacity where I might be required.

\(^{116}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
African Rifles during the Second World War by focusing at the circumstances around the time they were enlisting for military service. Askaris served in the war either as volunteers or conscripts. These terms are by themselves revealing in terms of why askaris went to war, but a proper, comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the circumstances under which askaris joined military service cannot be attained without a closer examination of what the askaris were doing at the time they were joining the army. It is through this detailed exercise of examining how and why askaris enlisted, that it has been possible to appreciate the fact many askaris went to war as loyalists, a fact which many works have always tended to downplay. Other askaris took up arms for economic and social reasons, and others were forced to do so. Following this analysis, the next question then is how askaris went on to join the military.

117 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/39).
CHAPTER FOUR

MOBILIZATION OF ASKARIS: THE PROCESS OF RECRUITMENT.

Be careful to rule out those who are dull or too old.¹

Introduction.

This chapter examines how those who were slated for military service went on to join the military. It is concerned with the process of joining the military and becoming an askari.

When it comes to the subject of fighting in the army, many works have often tended to limit themselves to the exercise of examining motives of the soldiers, with mixed results, while saying little about how ordinary civilians like Johanness Ochanda Ameny, Jonathan Odhiambo Oyengo, and Amos Mukolo Madawo went to recruitment camps and enlisted. To deepen our understanding of how askaris joined the colonial forces and experienced the war, this chapter examines the actual process of recruitment, at how recruits left their homes, joined the military, and became askaris. Government guidelines for the recruitment, and how askaris responded to them are analyzed. The chapter also examines the terms under which askaris were employed in the army, and, in the process, hopes to illuminate if there is any truth at all to claims which askaris' have made for years to the effect that when they enlisted for service during the war, the government made them several promises which it refused to fulfill after the war.

The Recruitment Centers.

Whether an askari recruit enlisted as volunteer, conscript, or for any other reason, the process of joining the forces and becoming an askari was generally the same for all.

¹ The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner giving recruitment guidelines to District Commissioners in his province, letter dated 30th December, 1942, (Signalers, 1942, KNA/PC/NZA/2/3/100).
Turning up for recruitment was one thing, and becoming an *askari* was another. Traveling to recruitment camp was just one of the stages in a fairly short but complex process for an individual to shed off his civilian outlook and become a fully-fledged *askari*. A film entitled “Kenya at War,” speaks to the theme of recruitment by showing among other things how a “raw native in skins [was] transformed into a soldier.”\(^2\) The first hurdle for those willing to join the war was at home because one had to convince one’s family and relatives that one was doing the right thing by joining the army. Army life is a dangerous life and during war it is doubly more dangerous. Caught between a government decree for young men to turn up for war, and the demands by families looking up to them, sons needed to explain, convince, and assure their families that they would fight well, be safe, and come back to their families alive. If they succeeded in getting the blessings of their families, these young men were delivered to community elders and sages and in other cases to renowned medicine men for divination, prayers and the invoking of the names of ancestors, of spirits, and of God. Further security and protection from harm for the young men was assured with herbs, charms, and various traditional medicines.

With affairs at home completed, the *askaris* moved to the next step, reporting to recruitment centers where they were required to pass physical and medical check up. In the early days of the war many men were recruited “essentially to fill new units as quickly as possible and training had either to be hurried or dispensed with altogether.”\(^3\)


\(^3\) “Recruiting African Ranks - Memorandum no. 1,” (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18). Very little attention was paid to physical and medical fitness of recruits, leading to the “inclusion in the ranks of
A schedule of physical standards was provided to guide recruiters in checking and selecting successful applicants. This schedule was often subject to revisions and changes from time to time, depending on the needs and vacancies available in a given unit, and on the urgency and seriousness of the need for men. The physical and health standards, which the recruits were required to pass were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KAR</th>
<th>NRR</th>
<th>AFV</th>
<th>EAE</th>
<th>EAA</th>
<th>EAAMC</th>
<th>EA Signals</th>
<th>EAMLS</th>
<th>AAPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>18-40</td>
<td>18-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Height</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5'2&quot;</td>
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<td>Weight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest Measurement</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest Expansion</td>
<td>1½</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyesight-normal in one or both eyes:</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>both with glasses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>both.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing - normal in one or both ears:</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>one.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Normally V&amp;VI, 75% Kenya Std.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Kenya Std. IV, Normally intelligent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Normally intelligent</td>
<td>15% III&amp;IV, 15% III&amp;IV, 10%.4</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The schedule provided certain exemptions for exceptionally good and talented recruits to join the army, even if they did not meet all the requirements in the Schedule of Physical and Health Standards. According to the Assistant Adjutant-General, the weight standard could be reduced to a minimum of 112 where the examining medical officer was able to

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*many who are mentally or physically unfit ... also to heavy and unnecessary expenditure." “Large numbers [of recruits were] still being discharged” because recruiters were still not paying keen attention to the physical and medical conditions of the recruits. One recruitment schedule therefore advised Recruiting Officers to pay close attention to the medical and physical fitness of the recruits and to reject those “deficient in intelligence. A few questions will be put to the [men] to ascertain this.” During recruitment of signalers, recruiters were advised to “be careful to rule out those who are dull or too old.” (Letter from Assistant Adjutant-General to The Chief Secretary, dated July 24th, 1942, Physical and Educational Standards, 1942, PC/NZA/2/3/74).*
"certify that the recruit a) has exceptional physique for weight, b) is likely to gain the necessary weight, c) has special educational qualifications." Clerks, storekeepers and dispensers who applied to EAAMC, EAAOC, EAASC, and EAE could be recruited as along as they were between 18-40 in age, minimum of 5ft in height, minimum of 110 lbs in weight, and their eyesight was normal with glasses. Signalers probably had the most exemptions. Even those as young as 15 were accepted into the army, with no standard for height and weight laid down. Most signalers joined the army at between 15 and 18 years of age and Regimental Signalers at between 15 and 22 years of age. But the educational eligibility for signalers to join the army was high, sometimes as high as that of recruits for the Army Medical Corps. Minimum educational standard for signalers was Std III, and Std. IV for Regimental Signalers. Besides intelligence, signalers were supposed not to "be dull or too old." When Lieut-Col. P. G. Gooden-Docker found a number of old recruits in his Signals Corps he wrote that, "it is obvious that whoever selects these recruits for specialist training does not realize or understand that it is impossible to train an old African as a specialist.... May the people responsible for selecting specialists be ordered to give writing test and to personally interview potential signalers before they are posted for training. Can it be forcibly pointed out that OLD men [capitalization not mine] are useless, and that, although the recruit may state he has attained the correct standard of education, it is no good selecting him if he has left school several years ago." Recruits for EAAMC who had not reached standard V were required to be physically fit - like members of KAR. The loss of one eye was not to be "cause for rejection if the sight of

5 Ibid.
the remaining eye is good” for those wishing to join the EAAMC. Scabies and other treatable skin diseases, those that “appear likely to yield readily to treatment” were not causes of rejection in the EAAMC and AAC. Artillery recruits were expected to be as literate in English as possible. In all the given exceptions, the medical officer was to “clearly record the extent of relaxation of standards and note for what duties the men are enlisted.”

The government appeared to be more lenient on physical standards than on medical and health conditions, with virtually no exceptions given for those with medical problems wishing to join the army. Soldiers with eye problems like trachoma and severe conjunctivitis requiring prolonged treatment were rejected. A squint was a cause of rejection for fighting units and military transport drivers. Discharges from the middle ear and an inability to hear a forced whisper from ten feet in each ear separately led to rejection. Recruits with bad teeth, which would prevent proper mastication, large septic tonsils, heart problems, chronic lung disease like asthma, spleens greater than four fingers put together, and obvious enlargement of the liver were rejected. Venereal diseases such as “syphilis in all its stages … chancreoid, and acute gonorrhea unless clinical cure can be achieved prior to attestation” were causes for rejection, but “.... chronic gleet of long standing which is unlikely to cause incapacity may be passed provided there are no complications such as orchitis and epididymitis.”

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8 Letter for Assistant Adjutant General to The Chief Secretary, dated July 24th, 1942, (Physical and Educational Standards, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/74).
9 Ibid.
dracontiasis led to rejection, but scabies and other minor skin diseases, which could be
treated could not bar one from joining the army, especially the EAAMC and AAC.
Epilepsy, mental conditions, and other recognizable instances of “mental backwardness”
automatically led to rejection. All recruits were required to have normal joints. Mutilation
of extremities or deformities which could prevent efficient performance of labor or the
use of weapons or of marching, chronic synovitis, major degrees of flat foot, tertiary
yaws (crab yaws), severe cases of cracked feet which “may not clear up when boots are
worn” were to be rejected. Recruits “with hernias except small umbilical hernias should
be rejected. A small varicocele may be passed, but hydroceles, severe varicose veins and
elephantiasis must be rejected.”

Recruits who passed this preliminary examination were then required to provide urine
specimen for examination. “If trace of albumin is detected two further examinations
should be made. If no more trace is found and if there are no other signs of cardiac or
renal disease, the recruit may be passed. Microscopical examination of the urine should
be carried out to exclude schistosomiasis in recruits from areas where the disease is
endemic. Recruits with bilharzias will only be passed after a full course of treatment has
been given.” Recruitment for the EAMLS in Kilifi, Malindi and Kwale in 1940 was hit
by a high number of medical rejects. In 1942 in Kitui, out of 150 men examined, only
132 men passed medical examination. C. Tomkinson, the Central Provincial
commissioner, claimed that this was because “the Medical Officer was unable to stay
overnight and the Military Officer stated that any number from 120 to 140 would

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
suffice.”

The first stage of recruitment invariably took place near the homes or in the locations of the recruits. Some askaris say that they got recruited into the army in Uganda or Tanganyika. Damian J. Ondiko Mando, for instance, applied for enlistment in the army while working as switchboard attendant with the East African Power and Lighting Company in Uganda. Jonah Oyomo had been working in Tanganyika and when his work ended and he was discharged, he came back home to Kano, where he joined the army. When it came to recruitment at home, the chiefs and their aides and headmen (kidhedhe) were the ones invariably involved. Organizing and conducting recruitment at this preliminary stage, the chiefs, their aides, and headmen (kidhedhe) were the ones who gave the recruits their first medical and physical check up. The role of the chiefs in this war cannot be gainsaid. Chiefs have generally been perceived in various historical literatures as loyal, almost unthinking, government agents, whose role in the colonial establishment was simply to implement government decrees without considering the implications of those decrees on people or how people felt and thought about them.

During the Second World War, chiefs served as government mouthpieces and a number of chiefs emerged during this period as dependable cognates of the military recruitment machinery. In fact, even before the war broke out, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner had already held a meeting with the chiefs of Gem, Alego, North Ugenya and Samia “at

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12 C. Tomkinson, Central Provincial commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 23rd November, 1942, (African Recruitment for Military, 1943-45, KNA, AH/22/54).
Chief Jairo’s” and more meetings were held as the war continued with the aim of appraising chiefs of new developments and exhorting them to meet their quotas of recruits and generally to ensure people supported the war.15 Chiefs like Yona Orao, Paulo Mboya were lauded as reliable. The Nyanza Province Annual Report for 1940 singled out Chiefs Sudi of Kitosh, Muganda of Ugenya, and Yonah Orao of Sagam for their work in connection to recruitment, and Chief Paul Mboya in connection to the War Welfare Funds. “Chief Paulo Mboya of Karachuonyo [was] awarded the King’s Medal for African Chiefs [in silver] and Chief Muganda a Certificate of Honor.”16 In another report, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner lauded Chief Muganda and his son [his name is not mentioned] as “outstanding.” “Muganda” the Provincial Commissioner wrote in a report in 1941, “has done excellent work in recruiting; his son [most probably Odipo] has helped with the Family Remittance Organization, and the temper of his people is very fine.”17 As long as the chiefs did not abuse their positions and did not use them to settle personal scores, they helped the government quite well with recruitment drives.18 According to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, ‘the work of chiefs and headmen generally has been good. Out of the eighty three chiefs one could name a dozen who have made outstanding efforts to make their locations useful in war time and about an equal number who have made no real attempt to pull their weight.”19 In 1945, the government mentioned Chiefs Laurenti Ongoma and Paul Agoi of Samia, Jonathan Okwiri and Elija

15 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, letter dated 31st March, 1939, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
16 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
17 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, Report for 1st March to 31st May, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
18 (Confidential Circulars. 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47); See also, (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40, for the saga of agitation against the Chiefship of Amoth of Alego in 1945, which only ended when an election was held and one of the agitators stood against Chief Amoth and lost by getting only 35 votes to Amoth’s 600 votes).
Bonyo of Central Kavirondo, Paul Mboya and Nyambaro of South Kavirondo, and arap Kablalach and arap Kirui of Kipsigis as the most outstanding chiefs in the province.

Some of the chiefs did not please the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner in that year, but the fact that “conscription and cattle requisitioning worked so smoothly, must reflect credit on their general productivity, though some individuals have proved less effective.”

Linking the government and the people at grass-roots level, chiefs conveyed government policies to the people, tried to see them done, and also tried to ensure that people’s opinions were pro-government. Chiefs addressed barazas, made radio broadcasts, and traveled in their areas spreading government messages. Chief Absalom Okode aptly described the chiefs’ roles in the war as similar to that of soldiers, only that where soldiers used “guns and spears” chiefs used “jembes and herds boy’s clubs” at home to help win the war. During recruitment drives, chiefs located men of military age and recruited them for the government, and also maintained surveillance in their locations to ensure that the recruits did not desert and come back home to hide. Chiefs acted as a link between askaris and their communities during the war, touring military camps, visiting the askaris at their bases, and relaying messages between askaris and their families.

When chiefs took an active role in enlisting men and giving them their first physical and medical check up, they were simply carrying out duties the government expected of them as its agents. During conscription drives for men for the forces and civil duty in 1943, C.

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15 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
16 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, PC/NZA/1/1/40).
17 Nyanza Province broadcasts for January, 1943, (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17; see also: Monthly Newsletter, DC/KSM/1/28/57, for more on the role of chiefs in
H. Williams found that Chief Amoth had done "splendidly as he had personally seen every single person before the District Officer came to camp."\textsuperscript{22}

The kind of check-up given at recruitment camps near recruit's homes was generally a rough and haphazard affair. Most chiefs only checked the physical qualities of the candidates applying to join the army because that was what they could easily perform; they did not have the knowledge, training, and expertise to detect relevant but hidden health conditions of the recruits; the only qualities they could identify were the fitness and strength of those who came to join the army. Consequently a number of apparently healthy and fit young men were recruited and transported to major recruitment camps like Maseno, only to be rejected as unfit for military service and told to go back home. In the first eight months of 1941, 8,000 men were transported to Maseno Depot and "of these 14\% were rejected as unfit."\textsuperscript{23} In his report for 1942, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner reported that rejection rate for medically unfit ranged from 13\% for recruits to 20\% for conscript labor. Standards for medical examination improved a great deal with time, and in places like Kisii, the Medical Officer informed H. A. Carr, South Kavirondo District Commissioner that "this examination is so strict that he cannot deal with more than 25 men per day."\textsuperscript{24} By September, 1942, medical rejection rate of recruits in the whole of Nyanza Province had dropped to 8\%, an improvement attributable to stringent medical examination performed at various local recruiting and holding depots in

\textsuperscript{22} C. H. Williams, Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Information Officer, Nairobi, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} September, 1943, (Monthly Newsletter, KNA, DC/KSM/1/28/57).

\textsuperscript{23} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).

\textsuperscript{24} H. A. Carr, South Kavirondo District Commissioner to the Officer-in-Charge, Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
Nyanza Province and undoubtedly in the whole country as well. Sometimes the chiefs just recruited any young man who turned up for enlistment because of pressure from the government to fill certain quotas without the input and advice of the chiefs themselves. This was especially the case at the beginning of the war in 1939, and towards the middle of 1940, when Italy joined the Axis and brought the war onto the doorsteps of the Kenya colony. Chiefs were forced to use all the means and powers they had to get recruits, and their actions often led to conflicts with the people, and to interference with family life and economic production in their locations. But during a conscription drive in 1943 in Alego, many men were “left off on the grounds that they were required at home, because all their brothers were in the Army etc.”

With quotas to meet, the chiefs would announce the date and place where recruitment would be done. A rough and quick check up of those who responded to the call for enlistment by the chiefs and their aides assured many of a trip to a Civil Reception Center in the districts. The recruits were normally not held up at Civil Reception Center longer than was necessary for preliminary medical examination. Already, the recruits would have passed through the exemptions tribunal in their own locations. Any recruits who had personal and family complaints against joining the army would be re-examined by the district tribunal there; doubtful cases being held back for further inquiry. In fact this was one of the most important stages when people could fight for exemption from the war or, when, alternatively, people were exempted on various grounds. It was at this stage that many grounds for desertions were laid. Charles Akoth Apamo of Kochogo was rejected

25 C. H. Williams, Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Information Officer, Nairobi, letter dated 6th September, 1943, (Monthly Newsletter, KNA, DC/KSM/1/28/57).
at Maseno Depot as "medically unfit."  

26 Officer Commanding, Maseno Depot to Central Kavirono District Commissioner, notice dated 7th September, 1944, (Repatriation, 1944-45, DC/KSM/1/22/56). There were quite a number of desertions. Many of those deserting had not joined to keep a force in the first place and had been force to do so either by the administration or by social and economic problems at home. At the first sign of difficulty such recruits quickly lost hope or interest in service and looked for ways of evading service. Some people deserted the army out of fear of death or simply because they did not want to leave their families alone, especially if they were the main breadwinners. Recruits deseted certain military units, especially the EAMLS, because it was a labor-intensive unit, and service involved carrying heavy loads over long distance under extremely difficult conditions. There are many instances where a unit like the EAMLS would fill its quota only to be hit by desertions. Other recruits deserted simply because they did not like the British, and the idea of fighting for the government galled them. The government was often forced to keep individuals perceived to be anti-British under surveillance, detention or incarceration. S. H. Fazan, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, quotes Capt. Gethin, who was "a prominent and trustworthy labor recruiter," as writing that "one of the reasons why natives are reluctant to leave their homes for work outside is that 'they are expecting bird-men to drop out of the skies' and therefore they do not wish to leave their families." (S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 26th June, 1940, Miscellaneous, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/179). Working near home encouraged conscripts to desert their stations of employment. The Central Kavirono District Commissioner, for example, complained that during the first nine months of 1942, many employees of Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company simply "walked off without permission ... [because of an] unwise policy to allocate Central Kavirono conscripted natives to work for this concern as being near home encouraged them to run away from their work." (Central Kavirono District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 8th January, 1942, Labor Recruitment, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/19). The government provided for avenues through which those who did not want to serve could submit their appeals for hearing. The Defence Force Ordinance of 1937 led to the "establishment of a Tribunal to which applications for exemption could be made," (History of War, 1939-43, AG/29/16), but it was only effective as far as propaganda at mollifying people was concerned; in practise, very few fit and healthy men ever won exemption, even if they had good reasons to avoid enlistment. Man Power Committees also dealt with requests for exemption at personal level. A new Defence (Native Personnel) Regulations, on labor conscription, and which was enacted on 27th August, 1940, provided that "any native who objects to his selection on the grounds that it will inflict undue hardships upon him or upon the members of his family will be able to appeal, within fourteen days of his selection, to one of the tribunals which will be established in each province for the purpose." (Information Officer, Circular dated 3rd September, 1940, Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17). Failing all these attempts at winning release from the army, the would-be recruits ran away and hid. Upon deserting, most recruits did not return home, but "hang about in towns or on farms. Some proceed to neighboring territories and volunteer for military work." (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38). If they were caught, brought back, and forced to join the army they would in most cases wait for the first opportunity to desert. Recruitment at Kilifi was often hampered by the great deal by desertions. For a long time since the beginning of the war it appears that chiefs were violating the law by arresting deserters, which apparently they were not allowed to do. Chiefs apprehended deserters in response to instructions from the military and the provincial administration, but it was not until late 1940's and early 1941, that the provincial administration discovered that chiefs did not have powers to arrest deserters. By arresting deserters, chiefs like Absalom Okode were putting themselves on a collision course with deserters and more seriously with the law. Soldiers were governed by military law and it appears that this placed them above civilian administrators like chiefs. The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner admitted that, "a question has been asked me whether chiefs have the power of arresting a native whom they suspect of being a military deserter or of overstaying his leave. I do not think they have or can be given any such general authority." (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 3rd January, 1941, KAR and Pioneers Desertion, 1940-42, KNA, DC/1/22/23). To enable chiefs apprehend deserters without violating the law, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner made very interesting suggestions. According to him, the law restricting chiefs from arresting deserters could be circumvented if the chiefs, upon finding "anybody in their location whom they suspect of having deserted
At the beginning of the war, Kisumu Labor Camp served as the main Civil Reception Depot in Nyanza Province, and was used as a holding depot for recruits who were still awaiting medical examination, while a ginnery at Kibos was used as a forward depot for recruits “who had passed the doctor.”

District Headquarters served as Civil Reception Centers – places like Kisii, Kericho, Kilifi, Kwale, Nyeri. Although Coast Province by virtue of its size would have had a military depot of its own, and Mombasa would have made a perfect place for the establishment of a military holding depot, it did not. Instead Coast Province had only two main recruiting points, Kilifi and Kwale. Coast Province, according to A. N. Bailward, did not have a holding depot because the number of recruits from the province was too small, usually not exceeding 125 recruits monthly, and thus, it did “not justify the expense and possibly extra staff that would be required for a holding depot because of the lesser number of recruits.”

(Discharge Medals, 1944-45, KNA, DC/TAMB/1/9/9).

27 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, PC/NZY/1/1/34).
From these Civil Reception Centers, the recruits would proceed, still in a transitional stage between civilians to *askaris*, to conveniently situated Holding and Sorting Depots, like the ones at Maseno. At holding depots such as Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, recruits would undergo a further medical examination, be “sorted out,” and transported to specialized military training depots like Ruiru, Mbagathi, Jinja, and Bombo. The EAMT Depot, Mbagathi, was a large holding depot mainly for East African Army Service Corps (EAASC). The EA Base Transit Camp, Nairobi, was for the infantry and KAR. Jinja, a camp in Uganda, was also used mainly for the training of troops for KAR. Ruiru was for the East African Military Labor Service. Nanyuki served as training depot for members of AAPC, Signals, and Engineers. Dressers and stretcher-bearers bivouacked at EA Medical Depot, Nairobi, for their training.

The beginning of the formal transformation of civilians into *askaris* therefore began at the Civil Reception Centers or Civil Holding Centers, and continued at the Recruiting and Holding Depots. The Depot was where the recruits were given their most detailed medical check up, a thorough one this time administered by trained medical officers no less. According to H. A. Carr, the South Kavirondo District commissioner, medical examination of recruits at Kisii was so strict that “the Medical Officer “cannot deal with more than 25 men per day.” By September, 1942, the medical rejection rate of recruits in the whole of Nyanza Province had dropped from about 20% a year earlier to 8½%.

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Medical check up was done constantly in the army, and recruits who became seriously ill or were seriously injured after joining the army were obviously relieved of their military services. Here at the Recruiting and Holding Depot, the recruits received their anti-Typhoid and W.A.B. injections as well as a de-worming dose.

With medical tests and vaccination shots given, the recruits at the depot were then fingerprinted and issued with identification papers. The trouble was that the registration exercise was often inundated by organizational problems, which afflicted the military in the colony in general at this time. There were no trained fingerprint takers attached to the recruitment bases or depots and many times men joined the army without registration and without their fingerprints taken. Fingerprint experts from the civil administration could be loaned temporarily to the army, but they were unreliable. In one instance, an Asian and two Africans who were stationed at the East African Military Labor Service, Ruiru Camp, to fingerprint and take identities of in-coming recruits “ceased to work one Saturday at 1pm which meant that the recruits arriving that day were not dealt with until Monday. Had they been under Military Control this would not have happened. As it was, I only heard about it on the Monday and the most I could do was to issue a warning that it must not occur again.”

At EAASC, Mbagathi Camp, the Chief Registrar often had to send “a staff of three or four men to deal with a batch of recruits,” and wished that “were two men stationed there permanently it would be a distinct advantage.” By 1940, the Chief Registrar of Natives admitted that they had finger-printed 11,000 soldiers in

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29 Letter from Chief Registrar of Natives’s Office to Chief Secretary, dated 8th October, 1940, (Recruitment: Attestation, Identification, and Enlistment, 1940-43, KNA, AH/22/62).
30 (Letter from Chief Registrar of Natives’ Office to Chief Secretary, dated 8th October, 1940, Recruitment: Attestation, Identification, and Enlistment, 1940-43, AH/22/62).
various military units, "admittedly a small proportion of those actually in service, but it means that so many are now assured of their identity being provable should the necessity arise."\textsuperscript{31}

Although hundreds of Kenyan recruits had gone through KAR Base Camp at Jinja, "so far as this section is concerned all trace of them has been lost."\textsuperscript{30} But while some of these difficulties with registration and finger-printing came about due to teething problems at the beginning of the war, before various government and military departments had been properly set up and coordinated to work together in connection with the war, other problems persisted throughout. Even within the military and the civilian administration themselves, confusion persisted. Lack of coordination, conflict of interests, duplication of duties, dereliction of responsibility bedeviled the process of enlisting, registering, and assigning recruits their responsibilities. It appears that the military and the civilian administrations never succeeded in working out ways of doing things together. Even by late 1941, and long after the Italians had been defeated in East Africa, these problems persisted. There was "a certain amount of duplication going on," the Registrar of Natives complained. "I have before me," the Registrar informed Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, "some 20 Temporary Renewal Certificates issued at Kisii endorsed 'to be forwarded to EAMLS Depot, Ruiru.' At the same time I have received from the Home Depot, Maseno, fresh permanent S.K. [South Kavirondo] numbers issued to the same men who were given the Temporary Renewal Certificates."\textsuperscript{32} The Labor Department

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Registrar of Natives to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 26\textsuperscript{th} September, 1941, (Depot: Registration of Natives, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/28).
complained about "a certain amount of confusion in procedure ... leading to duplication of work and taxing the efforts of an already over-stretched finger-print staff."\textsuperscript{33}

Nevertheless, with their identities and fingerprints taken, and arrangements for Family Remittances made, the recruits were taken through a quick military training and routine, after which they were deployed to specialized military training depots where they trained in their areas of specialization. At the Military Recruiting and Holding Depots, askaris were weaned to the military rations and to the rudiments of camp discipline. One officer of the depot staff would deal with "any civil shauris" [matters] that might be troubling the minds of any recruits and arrange a letter for the District Commissioner for their settlement. Some of the more obvious cases would have received attention at the Civil Reception Depots, but others, requiring more time, would receive attention at the Military Recruiting and Holding Depot. Recruits also had a chance at the holding depots to volunteer for a different unit from the one they were recruited for. "By the time a recruit leaves the holding depot," the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner averred, "he has recovered from his inoculation, been relieved of any family cares as a far as possible, got used to his rations and camp life, had some of his rough edges knocked off and been rendered fit material for training. This process takes normally three weeks but in case of urgency can be made to take only a fortnight. He then proceeds to the military training depot of the unit for which he has been selected. Nothing need be written as to that except that the smooth running of the whole recruitment machine postulates that the monthly or weekly intake recruitments of these depots should be made known as long in advance as

\textsuperscript{33} Labor Department to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner and Administrative Officers, letter dated 24\textsuperscript{th} July, 1942, (Depot: Registration of Natives, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/28).
possible.”

Patterns of Recruitment

The recruitment of *askaris* in Kenya followed two discernable patterns. First, Kenyans consisted of the majority of *askaris* who served with the various military forces from East and Central Africa. And most of those Kenyan *askaris* were from Nyanza Province, mainly from Luoland. In general all military units were considered equal, and when the threat of war appeared to be growing, these units began to recruit men for service on equal basis all over East and Central Africa. But in the end, recruits from Kenya were the majority in various military units which were raised in East and Central Africa, in spite of difficulties that government administrators claimed to be having in meeting quotas assigned them by the military and the civil labor force. In a manuscript of a speech he delivered on an undated day, but most probably November, 1941, the Governor noted that there was a total of ninety thousand of *askaris* from East and Central Africa, and out of that, 39,000 men, nearly a half, were from Kenya.\(^{35}\) By the end of the war, there would be 320,000 *askaris* recruited from East and Central Africa, and of that number, Kenyan *askaris* contributed nearly 98,000 *askaris*, nearly a third of the force. It was common knowledge, one colonial official observed, that Kenya produced more recruits than other colonial territories in East and Central Africa. While recommending that the government should allow Kenyan recruits to look for work outside the Kenyan colony, the District Officer of Central Kavirondo observed that “Kenya has recruited far more men than any

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\( ^{35} \) (Speeches by H.E. The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
other East African territory.\textsuperscript{36} In one report, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner asserted in October, 1942, that there were “48,000 men ... and 6,000 in the Military Labor Service,” by March 1943, the number appears to have climbed to around 54,000.\textsuperscript{37} Significantly also, most of the members of the Kenyan military contingent as well as in civil employment were from Nyanza, a province that the government thought teemed with a high number of unemployed labor force.

The recruitment of men for the military in Nyanza Province actively started in August, 1939. At the beginning, most of its recruits were deployed in the East African Military Labor Service, while the remaining joined other units. When Mr. Tapson, a recruiter with KAR, set out to recruit men in Nyanza, observed S. H. Fazan, “volunteers had already begun to arrive in numbers [and it became] clear ... that the camp could not expand fast enough to take the recruits who passed the doctor.”\textsuperscript{38} Between December 1939 and February 1940, the province did not recruit any soldiers as the government monitored the situation in NFD, the border with Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. When recruitment resumed in Nyanza, the number of recruits from the province quickly climbed to 4,477 by September, 1940, and most of these recruits were deployed in the East African Military Labor Service and other such allied units. Early in January 1941, the government, at the request of the military authorities, “agreed to recruit in various parts of the colony a labor force of approximately 7,500 for work on military roads”\textsuperscript{39} and in turn the Department of

\textsuperscript{36} District Officer, Central Kavirondo to the District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, letter dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} August, 1942, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
\textsuperscript{38} (Nyanza Province annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
\textsuperscript{39} (Medical Department, History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).
Health felt the need to augment its own staff by recruiting more men to help with “medical examination, vaccination and inoculation of these laborers at a number of centers.”\(^{40}\) But before the recruitment for this force had been completed, the military sent further request for trained dressers, as none were available from military sources. An appeal for volunteers was immediately “obtained within a very short period.”\(^ {41}\) Many recruitment points registered a turnout of “three to four hundred [where less than 100] were required at each point.”\(^ {42}\)

By the end of 1940, 82,820 Nyanza inhabitants were working for the military, government, and private European concerns. The Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza even admitted in his report of 1940 that “the provision of men for the army has been the most marked of our war contributions.”\(^ {43}\) The number of men from Nyanza in the army and civil work climbed to 93,212 by the end of 1941. A further number in excess of 20,000 were in military units, mostly in the Pioneers, as the East African Military Labor Corps was inappropriately, but popularly, known. By the end of 1941, the number of men in the Army from Nyanza stood at “more than twenty thousand.”\(^ {44}\) This, according to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, was because “the temper of the native throughout the year … has been good and they have never failed to respond to appeals to their patriotism. They have been most willing recruits to the Army and most favorable reports.

\(^{40}\) Medical Department, Report for December 1940 to February 1941, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).

\(^{41}\) Medical Department, Report for December 1940 to February 1941, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).

\(^{42}\) Lieut-Col., Officer Commanding Depot Battalion, KAR, Kenya and Uganda to the District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, letter dated 22\(^{nd}\) April, 1940, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).

\(^{43}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
have received of their bearing and discipline. They have contributed freely to war funds
and have not refused to sell their cattle for military rations even though the price has been
below what they would have got in the open market.\textsuperscript{44,45}

By January 1942, one document shows that there were 19,620 men from Nyanza in the
army and 98,700 in various labor employment in the colony. This meant that 118,320
men from Nyanza were out working in the military and the government. This figure
excludes those working in private individual holdings, which at this time in 1942 was
232,889. In 1942, the number of Nyanza recruits in the army had climbed to “nearly
30,000 men … and further approximately 110,000 in civil employment outside of the
reserve.”\textsuperscript{46} Recruits from Nyanza continued to flow erratically but in large numbers into
the army and various civil undertakings, and it was going to be only a matter of time
before their effects were felt, leading to complaints by local administrators like D. Storr-
Fox, the District Commissioner of South Kavirondo.\textsuperscript{47} By this time it was clear that
recruits from Nyanza made up the majority of the numbers serving with the army. The
District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani even believed that the number of Nyanza
recruits “employed by the military is in excess of [Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s]
estimates,” and went to the extent of suggesting that an “expert statistician” should be
hired to help calculate the number of Nyanza recruits in the army.\textsuperscript{48} A District Officer in

Central Kavirondo District also observed that most of the recruits in the Army were from

\textsuperscript{44} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
\textsuperscript{47} See: Chapter Four: “Motives,” the section dealing with conscription.
\textsuperscript{48} J. D. McKeen, District Commissioner, Kisumu-Londiani to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner,
confidential Letter, letter dated 25\textsuperscript{th} February, 1942, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA,
DC/KSM/1/36/47).
Nyanza.  

In 1943, Nyanza conscripted 8,507: 3,065 from North Kavirondo: 2,577 from Central Kavirondo, and 2,965 from South Kavirondo. By 1943, the contribution of Nyanza to the war was beginning to have an effect on the province. The percentage of men away from home in Nyanza rose to fifty percent while in Kikuyuland it stood at fifty-five percent, leading to food shortages in those areas. The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner admitted that in spite of the loyalty of the people of the province, “the effect of the war has become much more intense in the province during the year … They have strained to comply with our requirements in every instance and to a large extent have carried out our requirements exceptionally well.” In fact, conscription of civil labor was becoming more and more unpopular, both to the laborers and officers alike. The District Commissioners of Central and North Kavirondo even petitioned the government for a respite in conscription in February, 1943, requesting that “in the interests of increased production … the government should] arrange a respite of one month during February so that there may be concerted effort on cultivation.” This would allow the “number of men who would be thus home during that month to help plant up.” Between July, 1942 and 2nd February, 1943, 214 deserters were reported from Savani Estate. As the administration continued to face opposition from the people over government conscription and found it difficult to

49 District Officer, Central Kavirondo, to the District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, letter dated 22nd August, 1942, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
51 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).
52 Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to The Chief Secretary, letter dated 9th January, 1943, (Labor Recruitment, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/19).
53 Ibid.
54 R. O. Henninge, for Chief Secretary, to Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner and Nandi District
meet its quotas toward the end of 1943, it decided to establish District Labor Camps early in 1944, which the government hoped would make the service more popular.

Conscription was quite unpopular, but due to the effort of the District Labor Camps established in 1944, the number of recruits for that year climbed to 12,844, but even so, "the quotas were [only] almost fulfilled."55 The administration in Nyanza remarked that year that, "conscription has upset all the connections which have been built over the years."56 In 1945, the number of conscripts from Nyanza Province for the army and various civil work went down to 10,215 conscripts, with North Kavirondo sending 3,605, Central Kavirondo 2,752, and South Kavirondo 3858 conscripts. Conscription was eventually withdrawn in December, 1945 "in respect of further recruitment."57

Compared to Nyanza, other provinces recruited a comparably small number of askaris. By the end of 1941 in Kwale District, for instance, there were only "170 boys enlisted in the EAMLS ... [and] ... an unknown number of WaDuruma worked sporadically at the R. E. Middle East Reserve store, Samburu, between January and March, 1941."58 The number of men turning up for recruitment in Kitui was about 200 by the end of 1942. Due to lack of enough medical examiners, only about three-quarters would be examined and recruited. C. Tomkinson, the Central Provincial commissioner, believed that more men could be recruited, but that "the Medical Officer was unable to stay overnight and

55 Commissioner, letter dated 2nd February, 1943, (Labor Recruitment, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/19).
56 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/39).
57 Ibid.
58 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40).
59 J. D. Stringer, Kwale District Commissioner to Coast Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 6th
the Military Officer stated that any number from 120 to 140 would suffice." More could be recruited, C. Tomkinson believed, if the military officers were instructed to “obtain full numbers of quotas, if suitable men are presented. If the quotas cannot be obtained from those volunteering owing to physical unfitness, we can make them next time. This short recruiting [exercise] makes it uncertain for District commissioners as to whether they should make up the number next time.”

Rift Valley on the other hand appears to have had difficulty meeting its quota. The turnout was generally too low. In December, 1942, the military issued instructions for a small number of only 33 men to be recruited from the Nandi and 40 from the Elgeyo for KAR. A further 5 men from the Nandi and 5 from the Elgeyo would join NATD. While issuing these instructions, H. Izard, the Provincial Commissioner of Rift Valley, proposed, significantly, that “as many known stock thieves as possible should be included in the above quotas.” In resorting to recruiting criminals to meet its quotas, Rift Valley Province demonstrates more than anything else how difficult it was sometimes to recruit men. In other parts of Kenya, the government turned to conscription to obviate critical shortfall. The large number of Nyanza *askaris* in the army belies the common assumption that the majority of recruits in the army during the war came from the Rift Valley, particularly the Nandi, Kipsigis, and the Maasai; they were in fact mainly from Nyanza Province, majority of them Luo. Thus the observation of K. L. Hunter, the Nyanza

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59 C. Tomkinson, Central Provincial commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 23rd November, 1942, (African Recruitment for Military, 1943-45, KNA, AH/22/54).
60 Ibid.
Provincial Commissioner, that the province “maintained a high figure of men serving in the forces and a steady flow of conscript labor to the colony’s industries.”\textsuperscript{62}

The second discernable pattern of recruitment was that emphasis was placed on ethnicity of the recruits. In most circumstances, the military monitored, recruited, and deployed its \textit{askaris} on the basis of their appearance, physique, behavior, character, and performance. The level of education also mattered especially in specialized cadres. This was the case with medical and signals units, even though “knowledge of English [was considered] a most valuable assets for recruits in all units and quite essential for the Army Medical Corps and Signals.”\textsuperscript{63} Signalers were required to have reached at least “Standard III [and] …writing must be fairly good.”\textsuperscript{64} Recruits for medical units were supposed to have reached at least Standard V, but “very good” recruits with Standard IV education could also be considered for medical units. Many veterans reported during interviews that they were recruited while in school, when army recruiters went to their schools and selected them because they were literate and physically fit. In 1942, the Chief Native Commissioner tried to stop the system of direct recruiting from primary schools because it was depleting “materials for secondary education, and even rendering necessary the closing of a Standard III class at one school at the Coast Province, the whole of which had been selected as Army recruits,” but since the army was in dire need of literate recruits for its specialized corps, arrangement were made to provide continuing education

\textsuperscript{62} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40).

\textsuperscript{63} “Proposed Scheme for a Preliminary Scheme for a Pre-military Center in Nyanza,” (Military Training, 1942-45, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
to those who were forced to quit school and join the army prematurely.\textsuperscript{65}

From then onwards recruits were required to report to recruitment centers with letters from their previous schools showing that they had been out of school for sometime and in some cases "a matter of years." "Boys" of sixteen years and above in primary schools "not regarded as likely to profit from further education" were absorbed in to various specialist branches of the army. "The Officer in Charge of training signalers advised recruiters "to give writing test and to personally interview potential signalers before they are posted for training. Can it be forcibly pointed out that OLD men are useless, and that, although the recruit may state he has attained the correct standard of education, it is no good selecting him if he has left school several years ago."\textsuperscript{66}

But probably the most important and controversial consideration for the deployment of soldiers into military units at least at the beginning of the war was based on a pervasive colonial assumption about African ethnic communities and their military abilities and prowess. Recruits were selected and distributed into military units on the basis of what was described as "their tribal particulars." The colonial archive is replete with discourses about martial and non-martial communities of Africa, those naturally born to fight, on the one hand, and those who were supposed to be only useful in other areas where combat was not required, on the other. Certain ethnic communities were thought to have an intrinsic ability to fight, and being born in those kinds of ethnic communities was

\textsuperscript{65} Notes of a meeting in the Secretariat on the 13\textsuperscript{th} November, 1942, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126; see also: Lt. Col. P. T. Knott, AAG, Headquarter East Africa Command to Chief Native Commissioner, letter dated November 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1942, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\textsuperscript{66} Lt. Col. P. G. Gooden-Docker, Commanding, Signals Training Corp and Depot, East African Signals,
assumed to be a sufficient condition for one to be conferred with martial qualities that recruits from other communities did not have. Members of the supposedly martial communities were invariably recruited and deployed into KAR, while recruits from non-martial groups were deployed in areas where direct fighting with the use of firearms was minimal. One memorandum on recruitment advised recruiting officers to satisfy themselves that recruits did “not belong to a tribe known from the past experience not to make good soldiers.”67 Another memorandum talked of how the old 2nd Brigade, King’s African Rifles was seasoned and experienced, well up to its strength, “its ranks filled by new recruits from the fighting tribes of East Africa.”68 A government order for recruits required “Kipsigis, Luos, and other suitable tribes normally recruited by KAR.” [italics mine].69 When recruitment began, the Kipsigis, who were considered a martial community, were “welcomed by the KAR and the police as very promising material.”70 Capt. Hurt of the KAR traveled specifically to Kericho to recruit men for the King’s African Rifles. The 2nd Brigade, King’s African Rifles was “filled by new recruits from the fighting tribes of East Africa.”71 The Governor of Kenya lauded members of 5th Battalion on the eve of their departure for Madagascar as “particularly our own … you come from the tribes which are known as courageous in war.”72 The recruitment for KAR most certainly did not include members of the Giriama, who, for one, were believed by

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67 (Kenya Information Office Pamphlet, an article entitled, “KAR”, History of War Between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, AH/4/41).
68 Ibid.
69 Secretary, Man-Power Committee to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 8th April, 1939, (African Manpower, 1939-44, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/56).
70 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
72 (Speeches by H.E. The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13). According to reports from the NFD, the Gurreh and Degodia of Wajir were also enlisted in the KAR,. See: “War Diary, NFD, 1st April, 1942 to June 30th,
the colonial powers to “have never been warlike race,” and for another, “to have been scared of KAR ever since” the government used KAR to severely punish the Giriama during their rebellion against the government.\textsuperscript{73}

In line with this colonial approach to African military ability, the Sakuye and Boran “were never invited to enlist in the KAR but a number were recruited in the EA Pack Animal Transport Corps and a few Sakuye 'tribesmen' were enlisted in Major Grant's Irregulars. Interpreters and personal servants were found among the local Isaak and Herti but no keenness was shown by the younger men to enlist except as drivers in the East Africa Army Service Corps. A few Isaak and Herti joined the East Africa Pack Animal Transport Corps.”\textsuperscript{74} Thus the Kipsigis were reportedly “more élan as an attacking force than other Nyanza tribes. Together with their kinsmen, the Nandi and Elgeyo, they might make a fine attacking unit but they would probably become restive during lull periods.”\textsuperscript{75}

Another report had it that the “Kipsigis are very anxious to be given an opportunity to enlist further recruits in the fighting forces.”\textsuperscript{76} A group of 60 “Bantu [Kitosh/Bukusu] recruits” were identified as extremely suitable for the KAR; ‘they are all of very fine physique and the average height is about 5'9”.\textsuperscript{77} The Officer Commanding Maseno

\textsuperscript{73} Kilifi District Commissioner to Coast Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 28\textsuperscript{th} October, 1942, (Arabic Bulletins in War, 1941-53, KNA, A/12/35).

\textsuperscript{74} Notes on Isiolo District as affected by the Northern Frontier Campaign June 1940-February 1941, (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11).

\textsuperscript{75} S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).

\textsuperscript{76} K. L. Hunter, Acting Nyanza Provincial commissioner to The Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, letter dated 13\textsuperscript{th} July, 1943, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).

\textsuperscript{77} Officer Commanding, Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot to Nyanza provincial Commissioner, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} August, 1941, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
Recruiting and holding Depot added further that he was "very keen to get them [Bantu Kitosh/Bukusu] into the KAR as I am sure that they are the type they [the military] wants."

The Luo and Abaluhya of Nyanza Province were on the other hand largely considered "good laborers" and the government conducted recruitment drives among the Luo and the Abaluhyaia most often to fill the demands of labor intensive military units. In his report on the "tribal composition of recruits at Maseno Depot," D. M. McGoun, the Assistant Superintendent of Police and who at that time was commanding Maseno Depot wrote that the "tribes" that "have proved most satisfactory have been Kipsigis, Nandi and Jaluo" while the most unsatisfactory were the "Kakamega [sic] and Kisii [sic]," that is the Abaluhya and the Abagusii, respectively. According to McGoun, "the former had little, if any, inherent sense of discipline and instructions and punishment had on the whole little effect. Of the latter a few deserted, others asked for their discharge on the grounds that the work was too much for them and a number of others had to be discharged as unlikely to become efficient." The Luos on the other hand were turning out for recruitment in large numbers and the only problem the administration had with them was indiscipline and "how to prevent them from overrunning recruitment places." "It took some time to accustom the Jaluo to discipline. [And] this was due, to a large extent, to their homes being in comparatively close proximity to the Depot and the temptation to visit their

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78 Ibid.
79 D. M. McGoun, the Assist. Superintendent of Police, Commanding Maseno Depot to The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 5th April, 1940, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
80 Ibid.
homes in some cases too great."\(^{81}\) S. H. Fazan, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, helped to establish the East African Military Labor Service with an eye on the Luo as the main source of men who would serve in it. When the C. H Williams, the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, received the recruitment returns for 1942 and saw that it showed that more Abagusii had been recruited than the Luo, he sent a telegram to the government in Nairobi, arguing that that was impossible. "Unable to understand how Kisii had turned out more conscripts than Luo and cannot help thinking you have included South Kavirondo Luo in Kisii figure," his telegram read.\(^{82}\) Given the government’s and the military’s stereotypical preference for the Luo to the Abagusii during recruitment, one understands C. H William’s incredulity that more Abagusii could possibly have been recruited than the Luo.

Figures released in May, 1943, in response to C. H. William’s telegram shows that the number of conscripts from Nyanza in civil employment that year was quite high.

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<th>Real Numbers</th>
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<th>Percentages</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Conscripts</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luo:</td>
<td>38,010</td>
<td>3,352</td>
<td>41,367</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kisii:</td>
<td>8,269</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>12,369</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bantu Kav.</td>
<td>43,956</td>
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As already observed, the exploitation of Nyanza for labor and for the military and other government and private individual undertakings was blatant and harsh, drawing outrage from some government officials like D. Storrs-Fox, the District Commissioner of South Kavirondo, who asked to be relieved of his duties in protest. Even S. H. Fazan, the ever-

\(^{81}\) Ibid.
\(^{82}\) C. H Williams’ Telegram, (Labor Recruitment, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/19).
\(^{83}\) Registrar of Natives, letter dated 3\(^{rd}\) June, 1943, (Labor Recruitment, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/19).
eager Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza was beginning to be worried by the number of recruits coming from Nyanza Province. The policy of “using the willing horse perhaps produces the best results. But when expansion on a really large scale is required, such a policy results in taking the cream off the best fighting tribes at the outset and a progressive deterioration in quality and morale. In respect of auxiliary services, the tribes which come forward most readily for the Military Labor Service and the Auxiliary Service Corps are also, in the main, the best source of civil labor, and if they are taken without limit, civil production, which may be equally vital to the war, suffers unduly. There must be an even distribution of the burden.”\textsuperscript{84}

Since the government believed that the Luo and Bantu communities from Nyanza were not martial, it deployed recruits from these areas for tasks that did not involve the use of firearms in direct fighting with the enemy. The 1\textsuperscript{st} Company EAMLS, the Pioneers, was composed almost entirely of the Luo. Commanded by Col. Michael Blundell, the Luo made up to 98\% of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Company EAMLS.\textsuperscript{85} Documents on government recruitment in Nyanza show the government specifically asking for men from this community who would be employed as drivers, mechanics and garage assistants, storemen, batmen, cooks, dressers, stretcher-bearers. Out of 865 recruits from Nyanza that the government ordered for upon the outbreak of the war, only 100 Luos were slated “for combatant service.”\textsuperscript{86} Another order came on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August, 1939, asking for 949 recruits, with only

\textsuperscript{84} Nyanza Provincial commissioner, “A Memorandum on Military Recruitment,” dated 5\textsuperscript{th} May, 1941, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
\textsuperscript{85} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
\textsuperscript{86} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
125 earmarked for combat duty, and out of that, only 50 would be from the Luo
community. One letter from the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner reveals that between
22nd August, 1940 and 6th September, 1940, the province managed to recruit “436 for the
KAR, 1,944 for Pioneers … 55 for the EAAMC, 78 drivers, 43 drivers’ mates, 25
storemen and 18 others for the EAASC, 350 Police for Maseno, 97 laborers sent to
Mombasa, totaling 3,036.”87 An order from the Military Transport Depot asked the
Central Kavirondo District Commissioner for “20 Africans of the Jaluo tribe [sic] in two
weeks time who are willing to enlist for the East African Service Corps as drivers.”88

Letters of job application by soldiers after the war show that Nyanza recruits were mostly
employed as porters in the East African Military Labor Service (The Pioneers), as
artillery men in the East African Artillery (EAA), as engineers and electricians in the East
African Engineers (EAE) and the East African Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
(EAEME), as signalers in East African Army Signals (EAAS), as drivers in the East
African Army Armored Corps (EAAC), as clerks in the East African Army Service Corps
(EAAC), East African Army Ordnance Corps (EAAOC), and East African Army Pay
Corps (EAAPC), as dressers and stretcher-bearers in the East African Army Medical
Corps (EAAMC), and as teachers in the East African Army Educational Corps (EAAEC).
Only with very few exceptions and under special circumstances, as when there was
resistance to labor intensive units or when KAR had an acute shortage of men, did the
government deploy Nyanza men into the KAR. Karitus Oyenga of North Ugenya, for

87 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 2nd September, 1940,
(Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
88 Major, Officer Commanding, Military Transport Depot to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner,
letter dated 22nd June, 1940, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
instance, served in the army as "a regular soldier."\textsuperscript{89} On the other hand, Robert Okumu reveals in his letter of April 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1946, applying for a job after the war that, "I have been a clerk in His Majesty's Forces ... I served in the Army for four years."\textsuperscript{90} There were many more like him. Gamaliel Oduyu Oda worked as a signaler. Wilson Gare Senge of Asembo Bay served in the army as a signaler. Absalom Ochieng Ogwang' of Umina Masat, Ugenya, served in the army as a mechanic and a driver. Leonardus Odhiambo of North Ugenya was a mechanic. Ong'ae of Ugolwe Village, South Ugenya, served as a Driver Class "A." N. Peter Osodoson served as "operator wireless and line." When in January, 1941, the military authorities asked the government for "a labor force of approximately 7,500 for work on military roads"\textsuperscript{91} it is highly likely that these recruits came, not from presumed martial communities like the Nandi, Kipsigis, and the Maasai, but from the supposedly non-martial groups, most probably the Luo, Abaluhya, and other communities of western Kenya. During subsequent recruitment drives, Nyanza men were ear-marked mainly for labor intensive duties both in the army and civilian works.

But this policy of ethnic-based recruitment would come under increasing scrutiny, with some colonial administrators proposing that it be changed. The demand for more recruits and the limited supply of the "good" and "war-like materials" from the "fighting communities" forced the government to re-examine the wisdom of relying on the "fighting communities" for recruits for the KAR. Another reason behind this apparent shift in military policy was the increasing belief within military circles that ethnic-based

\textsuperscript{89} Karilus Oyenga's letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} May, 1946, (Application for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, KNA, DC/KSM/17/100).
\textsuperscript{90} Robert Okumu's letter dated April 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1946, (Application for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, DC/KSM/17/100).
recruitment and deployment tended to foster ethnic loyalty, and thus obstructed discipline and camaraderie across various units; askaris generally tended to develop loyalty as members of ethnic communities instead of as members of military units. Thus, instead of reserving, say, KAR for the martial communities, the military increasingly began to favor what it called “tribal mixing.” By 1942, at least, Col. Knox was enunciating the advantages of the policy of “tribal mixing,” asserting that “a particular tribal failing is less likely to manifest itself in a mixed unit.”\textsuperscript{92} The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner turned down an attempt to constitute the Nandi into their own unit because “I regard them as too mercurial to be in a unit on their own.”\textsuperscript{93} There was an increasing fixation with “mixing ethnic communities” to achieve maximum output. “A battalion consisting entirely of Kipsigis and Nandi would not do well,” but “composed as to about 70% of Kipsigis and Nandi would probably do very well as a Assault Troops.”\textsuperscript{94} But Fazan doubted whether the battalion “would stand up well to a more prolonged strain, e.g., when the principled events are bombings and otherwise there is a lull. As garrison troops I should think they would be restive. On the whole I think that I should be inclined to recommend that all the Kenyan tribes can be mixed and are better mixed than undiluted but the proportions in the mixture should differ as between first line and other units. In first line units the Kipsigis and Nandi should get a somewhat higher percentage than their

\textsuperscript{91} Medical Department, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).
\textsuperscript{92} For Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} November, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
\textsuperscript{93} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} October, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
\textsuperscript{94} S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} October, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67; see also his letter to the Chief Secretary, dated 29\textsuperscript{th} December, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67, further adumbrating on the issue of ethnic mixing).
numerical strength in proportion to other tribes would warrant.”95 R. O. Henning observed that, when it came to “mixing tribes,” the “circumcised and uncircumcised” should not be in one unit since they “are not very friendly together.”96 By the end of 1942, because of the noted problem of ethnic-based system of recruiting men, and its potential danger of exhausting the manpower of war-like communities, the military continued as far as practicable to look to the “fighting tribes” for members of the KAR, but turned to the “non-fighting” communities for the KAR when it could not avoid it.

As far as it was possible, recruitment drives continued to be based on presumed martial qualities or lack thereof of various ethnic communities concerned, even as the government realized that the policy of relying on the “fighting tribes” for its supply of the KAR was not tenable and would often be circumvented where necessary in the future. The wisdom of recruiting members of the martial communities into the KAR became increasingly untenable because of the shortage of men from those communities, and the government tried to make up for the short-fall by looking for replacements from the non-martial communities without necessarily changing its opinion that only the fighting communities could produce the best soldiers. Old habits die hard. In the main the government continued to look up to the fighting communities for recruits for the KAR, and only looked to alternatives when “suitable” men from the “fighting tribes” were not available. As Nyanza Provincial Commissioner was recommending that the ethnic stereotypes in recruitment should be abandoned, Lt. Col. A. J. Knott on the other was

95 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 22nd October, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
96 R. O. Hennings, for Chief Secretary, Kenya, to Chief Secretary to the Governor’s Conference, letter dated 9th February, 1943, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
writing that while there were recommendations that “a larger proportion of the Luo or Bantu Kavirondo tribes [should be recruited], …the views of Cols. Hurt, Trimmer, and Channer with regard to these tribes are on record at this Headquarters and the general consensus of opinion is that as fighting soldiers they are not a great success.”

Thus towards the end of 1942, and in spite of the general belief that the number of men among martial communities who would be suitable for recruitment into the KAR was dwindling, the military was still recommending that “with regard to the Turkana, we are prepared to absorb almost any number within reason that can be provided.” When it came to the Meru, Lt. Col. A. J. Knott believed that, although they “have not been so far an unqualified success … it is understood that good fighting stock can be obtained from this tribe and possibly to date the wrong areas have been tapped. We are prepared to take further Meru for the KAR. If in the opinion of the P. C. Central Province more warlike members can be obtained.” And if the Maasai could be induced to volunteer in appreciable numbers, Lt. Col. Knott wrote, “they would go a long way towards solving certain difficulties.”

This rebuff from the military authorities prompted the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to point out that “that the military authorities who still insisted on recruitment from the fighting communities were not aware that “the Luo and the Bantu Kavirondo provide more than 40% of the whole Kenya force, and have more men in the Army than the whole of Maasai male population, not exceeding the children.”

Believing that “it is a pretty sweeping matter if the opinions of these three colonels can

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Native Commissioner, letter dated 22nd September, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
rule them [Luo and Bantu Kavirondo] out of the [fighting units],” the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner tried to produce evidence of the fighting ability of the Luo and the Bantu Kavirondo, which included an account of the Haggag bombing, when “they [were] commendably steady under bombing.”¹⁰² Moreover, while we cannot but accept any verdict which KAR officers may pass upon them in regard to their qualities as first line infantry troops, I understood that the Artillery recruits which we have sent both to Jinja and Gilgil depots were particularly well regarded and I hope that the A.A.G. will agree to reconsider his structure upon them in this respect.”¹⁰³

In a further sign of the significance of ethnicity in recruitment and composition of various military units, recruits were registered by ethnicity, and the ethnic composition of military units was analyzed and highlighted. By January 1942, one document shows the following figures for Nyanza Province:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Civil Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>11,270</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu Kavirondo</td>
<td>5,570</td>
<td>40,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisii</td>
<td>1,505</td>
<td>9,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipsigis</td>
<td>1,275</td>
<td>8,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>19,620</td>
<td>98,700¹⁰⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This meant that 118,320 men from Nyanza were out working in the military and the government. By 31st August, 1942, the number of men especially from Nyanza Province serving in the army and civil employment had climbed up as follows:

¹⁰² Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Luo</th>
<th>Bantu Kavirondo</th>
<th>Kisii</th>
<th>Kipsigis</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infantry:</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>2741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAASC:</td>
<td>3655</td>
<td>2417</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>7278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAMC:</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signals:</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Engineers &amp; Svys.:</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles:</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Pioneers:</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mil. Police:</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formations:</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Ordinance:</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery:</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscel.Units:</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPC:</td>
<td>2754</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAMLs</td>
<td>2861</td>
<td>2051</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details &amp; Training:</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14,752</td>
<td>8,649</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>1,841</td>
<td>26594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of 1942, the "non-martial" groups still dominated most military units, while the "martial groups" were still preferred for the fighting units, as the table below shows for western Kenya:

The ethnic composition and analysis of the armed forces using the figures for early 1942, were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>11,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu Kavirondo</td>
<td>5,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisii</td>
<td>1,505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103 Ibid.
104 (Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, letter dated 8th October, 1941).
105 (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Circular dated 31st October, 1941).
106 (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, Circular dated 17th October, 1942, Recruitment of Africans for the Military, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
Nandi 978
Lumbwa (Kipsigis) 1,275
Agikuyu 5,581
Akamba 11,024
Ameru 722
Embu 207
Maasai 70
Taita-Taveta 747
Digo-Duruma 418
Giriama 798
Swahili-Bajun 159
Turkana-Suk 47
Kamasi 111
Somali 145
NFD tribes 343
Miscellaneous 41

Total 41,351 (from Kenya) in the army.
Uganda 19,657
Tanganyika 21,205
Extra territorial 4,268.\(^{107}\)

Even though the Committee on African Post-War Employment rightly observed that the
“Kikuyu, Luo and Akamba dominate the numbers of Africans employed by the
military,”\(^{108}\) that domination tended only to be in those areas the military felt would not
involve too much direct fighting. Government and military recruitment orders usually
directed the recruiters to recruit a specific number of recruits from a specified list of
ethnic communities. By the end of 1942, the composition of an average fighting unit
“was 65% fighting tribes 35% non-fighting and it is felt undesirable to increase this
percentage to any appreciable extent.”\(^{109}\) Members of the martial communities were
preferred for units like KAR, Artillery, and Engineering Field Coys, while non-fighting
communities were preferred when it came to other units, particularly labor intensive ones.

\(^{107}\) E. B. Hosking, Chief Native Commissioner to all Government administrators, secret circular dated
February 18\(^{th}\), 1942, (Military Intelligence Report, DC/ISO/2/4/4).
\(^{108}\) T. C. Colchester, Secretary, Committee on African Post War Employment to Nyanza Provincial
Commissioner, letter dated 30\(^{th}\) July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/174).
\(^{109}\) Lt. Col. A. J. Knott, A.A.G., East African Headquarter Command to the Chief Native Commissioner,
After their recruitment the recruits would be transported to the nearest depot where they were given further medical and physical checkup. The recruits were spruced up and groomed for military work through regular drills during the two to four week period they lived at the depot. As already noted, this was also the time they were registered and allocated to their permanent military units. This done, the recruits would be transported either by lorry or by train, but usually by lorry, to the main base of the permanent unit they would serve in throughout the war.

Terms of Recruitment.

The terms of recruitment, like everything in the colony at the time of the war, were based on race. It is not clear to what extent this fact alone determined enlistment; many veterans report during interviews that they were often not aware at the time they joined the forces that terms of service would be done on the basis of races. Those who knew about these terms and their racial basis before hand and went on to enlist were often too desperate for gainful employment to turn away. At any rate, by the time *askaris* received their pay and knew about the racial basis of pay, it was too late to run away or resist enlistment, and the only recourse was to complain. The Secretariat noted in 1942, for instance, that *askaris* “in the various arms of the Force” complained that their terms of service [were] not made completely clear at the time they [were] recruited” and the government released a circular on these terms, especially those pertaining to leave, and recruiters were expected to inform recruits about them during recruitment drives.\(^{110}\) Whites had the best pay and other terms of service, Asians and Arabs better, and Africans earned the least salary and

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\(^{110}\) The Secretariat, Circular to all Provincial Commissioners, dated 18\(^{th}\) March, 1942, (Maseno Recruiting
their conditions of service were the worst. Even if an African had served in the army for many years and was more experienced than his counterparts from other races, he never would earn anywhere near what Whites and Asians and Arabs earned. An African for instance would never rise up to the same rank as a white. Newly recruited whites always started at a higher pay scale than Africans who had served in the army for a longer period with distinction. The pay for European officers were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majors (married)</td>
<td>[British pounds] 750 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majors (unmarried)</td>
<td>650 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captains (married)</td>
<td>550 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captains (single)</td>
<td>450 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Lieutenants</td>
<td>400 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Lieutenants</td>
<td>350 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officers</td>
<td>340 p.a.(^{111})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

European officers’ pay compared quite unfavorably with African pay, which was often quite low. Moreover, African military recruits were paid according to the unit they were serving in, meaning that *askaris* serving in less prestigious units earned even far less than their counterparts in the general military units. Differences in salaries among Africans came about once the recruits were deployed, and not because of their skin color, but because of the units they were serving in. Duration and experience among African soldiers also created differences in pay scales and other terms of service. Terms of service in the army especially during the war were designed to be attractive and to encourage enlistment. The pay, clothing, food, the opportunity to travel and visit new places, and the promise of a better life somehow overrode fears that some soldiers had about serving in the army. It appears that newly recruited men who had not as yet been

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\(^{111}\) S. H. Fazan to General Staff Officer, Force Headquarters, letter dated 7th November, 1939, (Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
deployed into their permanent the units were paid 40 cents a day.\textsuperscript{112} Usually on the day of registration, a recruit was provided with kits – a blanket, shirts, belt, a pair of shorts, vests, jersey/pullover, greatcoat, socks, sandals/boots, cups and mugs. When an army deserter Onguta Alela was apprehended, he was paraded before the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner with his army kit of “2 shirts, 2 pairs of shorts, 1 brown blanket and 1 cap.”\textsuperscript{113} At these depots the recruits were all paid the same amount of salary irrespective of the unit they would join after enlistment, medical check-up, and registration.

At the beginning of the war, members of the EAMLS were enlisted for a term of fifteen months and renewable. In 1942, the East Africa Command increased “terms of service for the African personnel in EAMLS” to between 24 and 27 months. The EAMLS had the lowest salary among members of other military units, but the extension of military service from fifteen months to two years came with a bonus in the form of increased pay; recruits in the EAMLS would earn Kshs 15/- a month, Privates Kshs. 17/-, 1\textsuperscript{st} Class Privates Kshs. 20/-, and L. Cpl. Kshs. 28/-. The new terms of service came into force in January, 1943. The starting salary of engineers and those who had finished a full course at the NITD (Native and were certified as artificers) was Kshs. 40/-. “If they had not done the full course they would start at Kshs. 28/- with a probable rise to 32/- as soon as they have finished their recruits’ drift.”\textsuperscript{114} When the government mooted plans to recruit “fitter

\textsuperscript{112} See for instance, Officer Commanding Maseno Depot’s letter to District Commissioners of Kericho, Kisumu, and Kakamega, letter dated 25\textsuperscript{th} October, 1940, (EAASC Recruits from Maseno Depot, 1940-41, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/41)
\textsuperscript{113} Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} December, 1939, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
\textsuperscript{114} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District commissioners, letter dated 14\textsuperscript{th} July, 1942, (General Instructions, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/157).
general, fitter aero engine, metal rigger, sheet metal worker and tinsmith, electrician, motor mechanic, fabric worker, painter and sign-writer,” for the Fleet Air Arm, it planned a starting salary of Kshs. 25/- to leaner artisans. The men would then be mustered as Class III tradesmen in Group B at Kshs. 40/- per month. There would be opportunities for trade tests and those who reached Class I would earn Kshs.55 per month. Drivers in the army were paid as follows: Recruit drivers Kshs. 15/-, Learners 30/-, 2nd Class Drivers 30/-, 1st Class Drivers 60/- monthly. Trained drivers, who were enlisted as NCO’s, were paid 80/- per month. Signalers started with 1st Class Signaler Kshs. 40/-, 2nd Class Signaler 36/-, and 3rd Class Signaler 32/-, 1st Class linesman started with Kshs. 36/- and 2nd Class Linesman Kshs. 36/-. In July 1942, the salaries of 3rd Class Signaler’s salary went up by Kshs. 4/-, 2nd Class Signaler by Kshs. 8/-, and 1st Class Signaler by Kshs.12/- while those of 1st Class Linesman went up by Kshs. 8/-, and 2nd Class Linesman by Kshs. 4/-. After becoming proficient and getting promoted, Regimental Signalers’ salaries were increased: Kshs. 3/- and Kshs. 6/- for 2nd Class Regimental Signaler and 1st Class Regimental Signaler, respectively. An Askari could earn an extra Kshs. 1/50 per month for good conduct, but this could only be granted after three continuous years of good conduct.

At the beginning, recruits were exempted from paying at least one form of tax – Poll Tax or Hut Tax, but it is not clear whether they were extended the same privilege after the war, when they were back at home. When Sgt. Okello Oyori enlisted, he was issued with a certificate entitled “Sgt. Okello Oyori Tax Exemption Certificate.”\textsuperscript{115} According to

\textsuperscript{115} The King’s African Rifles Office to the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 27th March, 1940, (Gratuity Applications, 1952-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/12/219).
Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, "we have more than twenty thousand men away in the Army who are excused one tax each." 116 In case one was killed in war, his widow was promised exemption from paying hut tax. A letter from the Chief Secretary's office shows that exemption from hut tax was to be applied only to widows of soldiers killed during military service. Dated 31st January, 1940, it was entitled "Exemption of War Widows from Native Hut Tax" and promised war widows exemption from hut tax until she bears "a child to another man." 117 G. Bereford Stooke, writing for Chief Secretary also confirmed this exemption. 118

On 5th July, 1943, the government noticed that its Africans ranks serving overseas were often susceptible to pneumonia. As a result, the government decided that any time its African soldiers were transferred, they would be issued with "the number of blankets" required or "with a great coat and one blanket" before proceeding on transfer. 119 Askaris were entitled to leave, which was usually granted for 14 days and during this time soldiers would visit their homes, especially if they were serving within the colony. Some veterans claimed that at certain times and during special circumstances, such as

116 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
117 G. M. Rennie, Chief Secretary to all Provincial Commissioners and Administrative Officers, (Native Hut and Poll Tax, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/15/7).
118 See: G. Bereford Stooke’s letter to Provincial Commissioners and other administrative officers, dated 20th February, 1940, (Native Hut and Poll Tax, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/15/7. In Tanganyika, the situation was different. The King’s African Rifles Ordinance of 1923 provided for the exemption of soldiers from at last one form of tax “for life,” but as “a result of discussions between the East African Governors and the Secretary of State in 1930-32, it was decided that this exemption from tax should be replaced by the payment of a further gratuity of Kshs. 150/- if the soldier had served for 9 years or Kshs. 200/- if he had served for 12 or more years. For soldiers who enlisted between 1st April, 1931, and the 9th October, 1931, a pension of Kshs. 15 a year was payable in lieu of exemption from tax or the second gratuity.” (J.E.S. Lamb, for Chief Secretary to the Government of Tanganyika, to the Chief Secretary of the Governors’ Conference, letter dated 20th October, 1945, KAR: Proposals for Pensions for long Service, 1945-54, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).
accumulated leave or where transport problems interfered with travel plans, *askaris* would be given more than 14 days of leave. Although ailing or injured *askaris* were given sick leave, they were often barred from going home because the “military authorities ... [felt] that they receive better attention, food, etc., in the Army than in their own homes.”

During recruitment, *askaris* were also promised that if they got injured during the war they would receive a disability allowance. An assessment and settlement of compensation were based on the nature and extent of injuries suffered. Measures to compensate and make financial reparations to soldiers killed in war were taken through a re-introduction of the “Non-European Officers’ Pensions Ordinance (1932) Regulation. Revamped and added to the Non-European Officers’ Pensions (Amendment) (No.2) Ordinance, 1941, it considered any officer killed by enemy action when traveling to and from the Colony as “killed on duty.” It stated that “if non-European officer proceeding by a route approved by the Governor to or from the Colony at the commencement or termination of his service therein, or for a period of leave therefrom, dies as the result of damage to the vessel, aircraft or vehicle in which he is traveling, or of any act of violence directed against such vessel, aircraft or vehicle, and the Governor is satisfied that such damage or act is attributable to circumstances arising out of any war in which his Majesty may be engaged, such officer shall be deemed, for the purposes of this section, to have died in the circumstances described” and his family was duly to be compensated.

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In one of the clearest terms of service for non-Europeans, including Africans, the
government in this case promised compensation for those killed in action. The same
terms also provided that if a non-European officer holding a pensionable office, who was
not serving on probation or agreement, died as the result of injuries in the actual
discharge of his duty, without his own default, and on account of circumstances
specifically attributable to the nature of his duties, while in the service of Kenya, a grant
in addition to the normal pension would be made to his family.\textsuperscript{122}

\textit{Askaris} were also entitled to gratuities and other fringe benefits, but the awards were
done on racial basis. Even after the end of the war, a government circular issued on 5\textsuperscript{th}
December, 1945, provided higher gratuities to European personnel, followed by Asians,
Mauritians and Sychellois, and then Africans at the bottom of the gratuity scale.

Accordingly, gratuities would be as follows:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Ranks} & \textbf{European} & \textbf{Asians} & \textbf{Africans (other units)} & \textbf{Africans (EAMLS)} \\
\hline
Pte. & 10 & 7/50 & 3/50 & 2 \\
Cpl. & 12 & same as above & 4 & 2/50 \\
Sgt. & 14 & s.a.a & 4/50 & 3 \\
S/Sgt. & 16 & s.a.a & 5 & 3/50 \\
WO II and WO Pl. Comd. & 18 & s.a.a & 5/50 & 4 \\
WOI & 20 & s.a.a & 6 & 4/50 \textsuperscript{123} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Biased terms of service among Whites, Asians, and Africans left Africans very bitter, and
many would take up this issue with the colonial administration during and after the war.

Recruits were not helpless in the face of these biases and poor terms of employment.

When some "Isaak Somali youths who had been enlisted on KAR terms of service [were

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} (Gratuity Applications, 1952-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/12/219).
told about the terms of employment] they returned from Nairobi having refused the KAR rates of pay. This was probably the work of Isaak Somali agitators."  

In his autobiography, Bildad Kaggia describes how his unit protested against poor pay while serving in the Middle East. As a result of askaris’ agitation for better terms of service, Sir William Platt, GOC-in-Charge of the East Africa Command, recommend that qualified askaris could be appointed as Warrant Officers, but the recommendation was not effected until the end of 1942. Africans could climb up to the rank of Warrant Officer, and African Warrant Officers could be permitted “to command Infantry Platoons the number in any one infantry Battalion being limited to four.” Thus askaris like George Amoth became one of the few African soldiers who became warrant officers, and in his case he was Warrant Officer II. From September 1944, the policy of appointing Africans Warrant Officers was extended to other arms. But even then, the government noted, the “selection of Africans for this Warrant Officer appointment [was] based on certain essential qualities which, though high are not in themselves sufficient to justify a commission. When at some future date, as a result of education and administration of men, the African soldier proves as he certainly will that he possesses the necessary ability, authority will be sought for the grant of commissions.”

By 1945, the question of lack of promotion and biased terms of pay had reached the floor of the Colonial Legislative Assembly, when Eliud Mathu, the first and at that time the

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123 Ibid.  
124 History of the War, NFD, period 1st December, 1940 to 28th February, 1941, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).  
125 Bildad Kaggia.  
126 J. A. Gardiner, District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to The Civil Dispersal Officer, letter dated 20th June, 1946, (Application for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, KNA, DC/KSM/17/100).  
127 Government response to Eliud Mathu’s question, African Recruitment for Military, 1943-45, KNA,
only African representative to the LEGCO, questioned the government why there were
no African commissioned officers even by the time the war had ended. "Will the
government please state," Eliud Mathu asked,

a) whether it is a fact that Africans were receiving commissions
in the last war of 1914-1918,
b) the reasons why the Africans serving with the armed forces in
the present war are not commissioned in spite of the great
abilities they have displayed,
c) the reasons why no Africans has received important
decorations save the usual medals and certificates."

Mathu's question elicited a not too baffling response from the government, given the
racist basis of colonialism itself. In its answer, the government provided a breakdown of
how Africans were commissioned in the First World War. There were 40 Sudanese, 4
Swahilis, 1 Arab, 1 Buganda, 1 Kavirondo (Abaluyia), and 1 Jaluo. The government
argued that commissions for African troops existed during the First World War because
"of a policy embodying its grant to Sudanese of the Imperial British East Africa Forces."
But when it came to the Second World War, the government admitted that, "the question
of the grant of commissions to Africans has been considered on more than one occasion
during this war. There is no doubt that in time commissions will be given to Africans, but
as a result of experience in the field, it has been decided, after very careful consideration
that the time has not yet come. While admitting at once the gallantry which the African
soldier has displayed in the Abyssinian and Madagascar Campaigns, and the war against
the Japanese, it will be readily understood that commissioned rank cannot be based on
gallantry alone. The final test must be one of ability which embraces not only personal
gallantry but also power of leadership combined with tactical, administration and

AH/22/54).
128 (D/LDG Co, 27/IV, REC 65, Question no. 85, African Recruitment for Military, 1943-45, KNA, AH/22/54).
technical aptitude." 129 By this time, Africans could climb up to the rank of Warrant Officer, but even then, opportunities were limited. "When at some future date, as a result of education and administration of men, the African soldier proves as he certainly will that he possesses the necessary ability," the government stated, "authority will be sought for the grant of commissions." 130

Conclusion.

This chapter was about the process of recruitment of askaris. It examined in detail the process of recruitment, and the terms of recruitment. Although the war had little to do with the interests of Africans, askaris tried to serve in it on their own terms by making it meaningful to their experiences and plans. When the government tried to base its policy of recruitment and deployment on certain “tribal” stereotypes, askaris agitated against it. When some askaris were deployed into units, which did not issue rifles as a standard weapon, they demanded to be issued with rifles. Askaris were never as powerless as they have often assumed to be. One other thing that is clear from this chapter is that the government made many promises to the askaris; the nature of some of those promises may be debatable, given the way some government recruiters sought to take advantage of some of the askaris. There is no doubt that askaris were unambiguously promised exemption from taxes, medical care, among other things.

Thus recruited and registered, it was time for training askaris for war. Having been

130 Ibid.
recruited, recruits like Johaness Ameny, Jonathan Odhiambo Oyengo, and Amos Mukolo Madawo were taken to the next stage of training for military service. Their ranks included those volunteers and conscripts – all there to fight for the colony and its Allies. Barring instances of injuries, death, and other reasons that could lead to discharge, these were the men the government would rely on to win the war against the Axis powers.
CHAPTER FIVE.

MILITARY DEPOTS, AND THE TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT OF
ASKARIS.

By the time a recruit was moving from a depot to a unit base, “he
had recovered from his inoculation, been relieved of any family
cares as far as possible, got used to his rations and camp life, had
some of his rough edges knocked off and been rendered fit
material for training.”

Introduction.

This chapter examines the process of transformation of newly recruited African men into
askaris, and one of the most obscure aspects of Kenya’s military during the war, the
function of military depots like the Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, and Maseno
Military School in preparing recruits for the military. After initially joining the army, the
foremost question was the transformation of recruits through a process of weaning and
change, turning them from civilians into askaris. Men were expected to be soldierly after
-going through a rigorous process of training and education at recruitment and holding
depots like Maseno, and its was largely after this that the recruits were considered ready
for deployment into permanent military units, and into the battle-field. Thus getting
selected during recruitment drives was not by itself a guarantee that one would be a
soldier as yet; the recruit still needed to meet certain conditions and qualifications –
physical, health, mental, educational. The war made the army desperate for men to fight
the war, to be sure, but still, the army realized that its success rested in recruiting fit men
and training them as adequately as the military situation allowed. It is thus argued in this
chapter that basic physical qualities were important for consideration during recruitment

1 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, “Some Notes on the Machinery of
Recruitment,” (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
and deployment, but the level of training and education were also given a lot of weight in
certain specialized units. It is demonstrated in this chapter that immediately after
enlistment during recruitment drives, the new recruits were more often taken to a local
Holding and Civil Depot where more detailed health and physical examination and basic
training was given. From the Holding and Recruitment Depot, the recruits proceeded to
permanent units where they received more training in line with their future duties and
responsibilities.

The Role of Maseno Holding and Recruitment Depot, and Maseno Military School.
Located some 30 kilometers from Kisumu City on Kisumu-Busia road, in Kisumu
District, Nyanza Province, Maseno was an extremely important depot during the Second
World War. Many *askaris* joined the army during the Second World War through
Maseno Recruitment and Holding Depot, and Maseno Military School. Since the
majority of Kenyan soldiers came from the western part of Kenya, especially from
Nyanza and the present day Western Province [as chapter 3 demonstrates], they were
most likely initiated into the army through Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot and
Military School. Maseno looms large in the reminiscences of veterans particularly from
the western part of Kenya, who say that it was the first station they stayed in on the day
or the day after they joined the army. After joining the military, “we were first taken by
lorry to Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot,” remembers a veteran. Maseno was the
Provincial Recruiting and Holding Depot. The recruitment of the “Kavirondo natives,”
observed K. L. Hunter, “was confined to boys passing through the Maseno School.”

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Selected to join the army, the new recruits were taken to the depots such as Maseno Civil and Holding Depot where they received the first taste of army life. During the Second World War, depots were often established at a district headquarter or at an appropriate site within a district – and they were established everywhere all over the country, for the purpose of exposing recruited men to their first serious brush with the military. Outstanding family issues that might affect an *askari* later were dealt with before he left the depots for service far away. Men from various parts of a province or the country met for the first time as recruits at recruiting and holding depots such as Maseno. Depots served as “shock absorbers,” to use S. H. Fazan’s colorful words. While at the Civil and holding Depots, the recruits got conditioned to physically demanding work through light training, which gradually became more intense and complicated with time, continuing the process of inuring and molding *askaris* into soldiers. Civil Recruiting and Holding depots also served as entry points into specialized military units; after a thorough medical examination, light training, and general assessment, the information collected on the *askaris* at the depots were used to determine which unit they would join. A little known, but just as critical, function of the depots was that depots were collection points, which provided local authorities with time and opportunity to study how mobilization was affecting civil production, labor availability, and life in the reserve generally, while getting the recruits ready for military service. If it was thought that the number of those recruited would affect civil work and affairs of a particular area, the military would ask the depots to discharge some of the recruits and let them go back to their homes. The

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depots, S. H. Fazan observed, was "the best way of achieving a smooth flow of men into
the military and giving respite to districts for some political reason, or an epidemic, or
because there is an exceptional call on them for civil labor such as flax harvesting, or
because communications are interrupted by bad roads or a river in flood, or for some
other reason."\(^4\)

Fazan argued further that depots enabled the government to "maintain an even flow of
men between the army and the reserves."\(^5\) Depots gave men who did not want to enlist
into the army, literally their last-ditch chance to escape service by petitioning the
recruiting authorities with any serious family issue they had. Thorough medical check-
ups were given to recruits at this point and recruits who suffered from any serious
medical condition, and did not want to join the forces, could count on the thoroughness of
the medical officer to get themselves discharged them from the army. Soldiers went
through their most detailed medical and physical check-ups at recruiting and holding
depots. Through observations and through medical and physical information, the military
qualities of the recruits were identified and assessed. During the war, the government
established many recruiting and holding depots, including Kwale, Kilifi, Ruiru,
Mbagathi, Nanyuki, and Maseno.

The Beginning of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot.

In the days before Maseno became the main military depot in western Kenya, there were
various temporary depots, which the government had established in preparation for the

\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid.
coming war, for holding and inuring the men for army life. Ahero served as a recruitment and holding depot for the Pioneers and other labor recruits. When Ahero was unable to cope with the high number of men coming to join the army, Kibos was temporarily transformed into a depot. Government documents show that after recruitment, some men were taken to Kibos, registered and given recreation and drill.\textsuperscript{6} The Kibos recruits were transferred to Maseno after the establishment of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, built in an area adjacent to the Maseno Police Station.

In a letter to the Manpower Sub-Committee over government preparations for war, S.H. Fazan advocated “the formation of a Police depot at Maseno … in peacetime for the training of ex-police and recruits who would be wanted to augment the police strength if war should occur.”\textsuperscript{7} “In order that necessary additional men might be trained, not only for Nyanza but also for other provinces … arrangements were made for the establishment of a police training depot at Maseno in the event of war.”\textsuperscript{8} The proposal received the support of the Defence Committee and of the Commissioner of the Police and was sanctioned by the government.

Accommodation was initially haphazard, consisting of \textit{bandas} [huts], which were “used to house the exhibits” during Provincial Agricultural shows.\textsuperscript{9} A small sum of money was spent in improving the water supply at Maseno by renovating and extending the pump and pipeline. A. W. Sedgewick, a settler in the area, loaned the government building

\textsuperscript{6} Report on History of the War, dated 9\textsuperscript{th} March, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
\textsuperscript{9} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner report dated 25\textsuperscript{th} January, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA,
materials for constructing the camp. Recruits were provisionally engaged on cards stating that they should come up when called upon. But, as Fazan notes, "nothing further was done about the recruits until a few days before the war."11

By the time events in Europe were deteriorating into war, constructions at the depot were progressing apace, creating some inconveniences for some government departments. But then Italy failed to join the war on the side of the Axis in September, 1939. One of the casualties of Maseno's development as a Depot was some land slated for Veterinary services. "The Senior Veterinary Officer at Maseno," writes S. H. Fazan, "carried through what must have been rather a heart-breaking job for him, the preparation of Maseno as a Police Depot, which meant disturbing his cattle from their sheds and handing over some of his paddocks to be parade grounds."12 The first rudiments of the depot were in place by the time the war began. On August 28, 1939, Assistant Superintendent McGoun arrived at Maseno Police Depot as the first commander of the recruiting and holding depot.

There followed orders for recruits whose names were already on cards to report for duty on the days specified in the orders. The days for reporting were spaced out in such a way

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as to allow a reasonable interval from one batch to settle before another arrived. From various sub-depots in Nyanza, such as Londiani, Kakamega, and Kericho, recruits would be taken to Maseno. Sometime between 1st September and December, 1940, Perreau was placed in charge of the depot, with Royston as his principal assistant. Maxwell and Keller gave temporary help, and Hine joined as third officer in October, 1940. By this time, Dr. Connolly had reported to the depot as the Medical Officer, in addition to his duties as the Central Kavirondo Native Reserve Medical Officer.13 And when Mr. Perreau left at the end of 1940, Major Dawson-Curie took his place as the in-charge of the Maseno Depot.

While the initial cost of constructing the depot was shouldered by Local Native Councils of the Province, recurrent expenditure of the depot was met by the government. Out of the initial cost [British pounds] 7,599 needed for the center to take off, Local Native Council was asked to pay “[British pounds] 1,000, and the military will pay the rest.”14 Individuals like A. W. Sedgewick also made personal contributions. The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner acknowledged the support of the communities to the construction of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot when he noted that, “at the beginning of the War all Local Native Councils of this Province contributed very liberally to the cost of establishing this depot, putting up numerous buildings and providing equipment, lorries, etc.”15

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14 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
15 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 15th October, 1946, (Section Ceremony, 1946-47, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/81).
An off-shoot of the Maseno Police Station, the depot played an important role in the process of recruiting, deciphering the qualities of the recruits, and their deployment into various military units. Care “was taken to see that the recruits should not leave their home provinces until they had spent some weeks in a Civil Depot where they were inoculated against disease and accustomed gradually to army ways and rations.”¹⁶ As a reception depot, Maseno was where the recruits got “accustomed to their rations and to camp life, their private affairs are put in order, arrangements for their family remittances are made, they are inoculated against typhoid and pneumonia and vaccinated against small pox.”¹⁷ The recruits who were judged as fit were given “a little physical training and they work at camp construction.”¹⁸ Most recruits spent on average “twenty days before proceeding to a military depot outside the province.”¹⁹ It was estimated that the cost of maintaining one recruit for the two-week period they spent at the depot, before moving on to other permanent military units was roughly around Kshs. 25/-²⁰ In the same report on Maseno, H. L. Hunter also estimated that the capita cost of maintaining one recruit ranged from [British pounds] 11-12 per head. By some estimates, the cost of running the depot was over [British pounds] 6,000 per year. Since the depot was opened in 1939 and up to 1941, S. H. Fazan calculated that the cost of running the depot stood at [British pounds] 15,377.03.98. It was further estimated that by the end of the year the government would

¹⁶ (Secretarial Circulars, 1946, KNA, DC/1/1/239).
¹⁸ “Memorandum on the War Effort by Natives of the Nyanza Province,” (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
¹⁹ Ibid.
have spent [British pounds] 20,585 in maintaining the depot. \(^{21}\)

Maseno depot ensured that no man would leave and join his unit “until they are fully fit.”\(^{22}\) There are many instances where the depot discharged recruits who did not pass fitness standard, but one must also realize that this process of sieving fit from unfit men was not always water-tight; there were many instances where Maseno was itself guilty of sending men forward to specialized units and who were later found to be unfit. In the words of Fazan, Maseno Depot had four functions. “Firstly, to give the natives some experience of camp life and get them used to their rations before they leave; secondly, to give them medical treatment (vaccination, inoculations against typhoid and pneumonia and a de-worming dose); thirdly, to examine the private circumstances of any native who has any trouble, e.g., that he is involved in a native tribunal case or that he has left a house half-thatched or a wife half-paid for [sic] and to make the appropriate arrangements; and fourthly, to arrange about family remittance before they leave. Registration and record form an important part of the routine work of the depot.”\(^{23}\)

The kind of training that recruits received during the brief time they stayed at the Maseno

\(^{21}\) S. H. Fazan to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 10\(^{th}\) November, 1941, Maseno Recruitment and Home Depot, 1941–43, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/28).

\(^{22}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner report dated 27\(^{th}\) December, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).

\(^{23}\) Ibid. K. L. Hunter, who was Fazan’s successor as the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s Office, also ruminated over the reasons behind the establishment of the Maseno Depot thus: The depot was designed to be a home depot where the recruits would be ‘run in to army food and discipline and thus ‘break’ the abrupt change from tribal life to army life. It was also designed to carry out the ‘weeding out’ process as close as possible to the recruits home and thus save unnecessary expense in transport etc. Equally important was the recording and maintenance of correct tribal particulars to avoid a situation which arose at the end of last war when a large sum of money had accumulated but the personnel to whom it was due could not be identified.” (K.L. Hunter, Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s report, dated 6\(^{th}\) April, 1943, History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
Recruiting and Home Depot generally emphasized drill and physical fitness. According to one document, the initial training given at places like Maseno was regarded as the foundation upon which military efficiency of the recruit could be based. It was designed to “develop the mental, moral, and physical qualities of each individual.”\textsuperscript{24} When war broke out, the normal period that the recruits spent training at the depots was shortened, and emphasis was instead given only to the most essential aspects of training. Instead of too much time being spent on squad drill, more time was spent on “physical training, weapon training and fitting the recruit to take his place in the section.”\textsuperscript{25} The Physical training given at the depots “was not to be too vigorous or rapid,” but to be such that it could bring “into light physical defects and infirmities.” It was further recommended that during their stay at the depots, the recruits should be subjected to frequent medical examination during training; the strenuous course, which they have to undergo will soon bring to notice those who are not perfectly fit.”\textsuperscript{26} The recruits were also to be weighed “every week under company arrangements and the results forwarded to the Medical Officer in charge of the Depot. If this record is kept in the form of a register, improvement or otherwise can be noted quickly, and any recruit who fails to gain weight or who loses weight can be re-examined.”\textsuperscript{27} A document on the nature of training at the Ahero Pioneers Camp also offers a glimpse at life and training at Maseno on a comparable basis. According to this document – a syllabus designed by J. E. M. Noad, the Officer-in-Charge of Training at Ahero Pioneers Camp, recruits generally woke up at 5:30 and continuously went through a well-laid out plan until 10:30 when they went to

\textsuperscript{24} Document entitled, “Recruiting African Ranks - Memorandum No. 1, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
sleep.

The training program was divided into two, individual and collective training, and emphasis was given to the “development of moral qualities, drill, saluting, guards and sentries, physical training, educational training, march training, field craft, recreational training, and instruction in barrack and camp duties.”\(^{28}\) These areas of training were defined further, the purpose being to lay out the objectives for determining the extent to which the recruits overall development could be judged. Recruits were expected to learn certain moral qualities during their stay at the camp, moral qualities defined as “discipline in peace and in the stress and danger, mutual trust and a spirit of comradeship between leader and led; the development of moral qualities which combine to form a soldierly spirit … the meaning of orders, the importance of orders, the importance of a clean and smart turn-out; regulations dealing with discipline, the names of their officers, why they are N.C.O’s, how to recognize the various ranks, and the details of pay and promotions and other similar matters immediately affecting the soldier” were made subjects of lectures and talks. Moral development went hand in hand with educational training, including adopting “mental and moral qualities so as to render him well educated, intelligent and resourceful soldier.” Recruits went through constant drill, which was aimed at inculcating discipline, orderliness and high morale, while care was taken to ensure that “individuality is not suppressed.”\(^{29}\)

The nature of physical training at Ahero Camp was defined further in terms of the

\(^{27}\) Ibid.

\(^{28}\) Syllabus of Recruit Course in Elementary Training, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
development of recruits’ strength, mental and physical agility and capacity for work. It was inculcated on the basis of the principle of progress from easy exercises of short duration to longer and more difficult exercises. There were games and sports as adjuncts to physical training. Members of each platoon were divided “into sections according to their mental attainments [with] extra instruction provided for the very backward men.” Marching and March discipline were offered “during recruit training and must be carried out with care.” Since it was realized that marching and march discipline could result in the reduction in physical strength, it was decided that “recruits should be taken out for short marching during their early training and practice falling out falling in quickly.”

At Ahero, and possibly at Maseno as well, field craft was offered. According to the Ahero syllabus, field craft involved bringing “home to the recruit [the idea] that as a soldier he must use his wits as an individual in order to help his unit defeat the enemy.”

The field craft syllabus also shows that recruits were offered instructions on “compass direction, where the sun rises and sets, names of common objects of the countryside in Kiswahili, nature of country, varieties of crops and growth, features of ground, telegraph, telephone and electric light wires, where found and how recognized, names of common trees, evergreens, observation of country, memorizing of features of a portion of ground, use of ground, elementary stalking, cover from view and fire, cover from air observation, moving without leaving tracks, observation and reports, and what to report.” Recreational training was also offered because “apart from helping to build up the recruit’s body and developing his self-control,” it also helped in “teach[ing] him [the recruit] while he uses

\[29\] Ibid.
\[30\] Ibid.
his skill and intelligence as an individual, that it is the team spirit in peace and war which achieves success.” Lessons were also offered on camp life. According to the Ahero syllabus, lessons taught emphasized “a high standard of cleanliness, orderliness and method in peace, in order that he may keep his health and self-respect and obtain the maximum comfort during the difficult environment of war.” The recruits were taken through the act of “laying down of kit, cleanliness, care of feet, smartness, orders, and such regulations as immediately affect the soldier.”

The overall objective of this training was the transformation of the soldier into battle readiness. The syllabus which was used for the training purposes defined a successfully transformed soldier as formidable fighting man, “like an expert hunter, always alert and seeking an opportunity of striking at his quarry or watching his movements with a view to future opportunities, confident and expert in the use of his weapon, skilled in the use of ground and able to stand fatigue without undue loss of efficiency. He must be determined, inquisitive and self-dependent, but must always remember that he is acting as one of a team. He must be highly proficient with the pick and the shovel.” He was supposed to be highly disciplined, “for by discipline alone can morale be maintained; it is the bedrock of all training. It is the ingrained habit of cheerful and unhesitating obedience that controls and directs the fighting spirit, and is the backbone of a unit in the moment of crisis.” A successfully transformed askari was expected to be extremely efficient: “to turn out correctly in every order of ‘dress’ and be fit to take his place in the ranks of an efficient platoon, in close order drill … have a thorough knowledge of barrack room

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
duties and interior economy ... be capable of performing the duties of a sentry on guard
... be able to carry out a short route march in marching order ... have received instruction
in the individual use of ground, night work and how to work as a scout ... understand
section and platoon organization movements of platoon drill and battle formation ... be
capable of using a pick and shovel with greater efficiency than an untrained man."34

As the recruits got acclimatized to life in the camp and the military in general, an officer
inquired about any personal problems they might have. The army paid due regard to
askaris while at the depot, examining "the necessities of civil life and the individual
circumstances of each case; and any native who [objected] to his selection on the ground
that it will inflict undue hardships upon him or upon the members of his family will be
able to appeal, within fourteen days of his selection, to one of the tribunals which will be
established in the Provinces for that purpose."35 The officers were required to "inquire
into any 'shauris [problems]; that might be troubling the minds of any of the recruits, and
arrange, by letter to the District Commissioner, for their settlement as far as possible.
Some of the more obvious cases would have been settled before they left the civil
reception center but others requiring more time, would receive attention here. All
registration and family remittance arrangement would also be completed before they
leave."36 Some recruits were held at the depots as the administration consulted with their
employers for their permission to recruit their employees into the military. When Ombidi

33 Ibid.
34 "Notes for British Officers," (The Pioneers, 1939-42, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
35 Information Officer, Kenya Information Office Official communiqué, dated 3rd September, 1940,
(Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
Obuo (Depot No. 9195) enlisted for military service at the Maseno Depot, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner asked his employer whether he had any objection. “I [recruited Ombidi Obuo] hoping that you will have no objection [but] if you require him to return to your employ, will you please inform me within 14 days, during which time he will be in the home Depot at Maseno.”

Ochang’ Okumu’s decision to join the military at Maseno Depot also prompted the administration to ask his employer Messrs Sheik Bros, that if they had any objection to Ochang’ Okumu leaving their employment and joining the army, they should send their objection within 14 days, as “during which he will be at Maseno Depot.” In most cases employers stated that they had no objection to their employees leaving their civilian jobs for the military, though some employers did object, as already seen in the previous chapters. For many employers, giving permission to employees to leave and join the army was a patriotic gesture, a sign of their willingness to sacrifice their interests for the sake of fighting the war. Thus by the time a recruit was moving from a depot to a unit base, “he had recovered from his inoculation, been relieved of any family cares as far as possible, got used to his rations and camp life, had some of his rough edges knocked off and been rendered fit material for training. This process takes normally three weeks but in case of urgency can be made to take only a fortnight.” The askaris were expected to have been issued with their registration documents and all information necessary for the deduction and transmission of family

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37 District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo to the Nyanza District Council, Koru, letter dated 14th February, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno Depot, 1941, KNA, DC.KSM/1/22/161).
38 District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo to Messrs Sheik Bros, Escarpment, letter dated 14th February, 1941, List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno Depot, 1941, KNA, DC.KSM/1/22/161).
39 See, for instance: Letter from Tunnel Co., Fort Ternan, to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, objecting to the enlistment of Mupal Oyuenu: “Perhaps you would explain to this native, who seems so keen to do his bit, that is it just as essential to grow food to feed the forces as it is to fight in those forces.” (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno Depot, 1941, KNA, DC.KSM/1/22/161)).
40 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, “Some Notes on the Machinery of Recruitment,”
remittance written down. From the Recruiting and Holding Depots, the men then proceeded to "the military training depot of the unit for which he has been selected."^41

Maseno depot was almost closed in mid 1941, when some colonial administrators began suggesting that recruitment should be considerably reduced. The reasons for this proposition are not clear, but it appears that the end of the East African Campaign created a feeling that the government would not need to recruit Kenyan soldiers any more. There are thus several references in government documents to the halting of recruitment at Maseno Recruitment and Holding Depot. By May 1941, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, for example, was informing the Chief Secretary that, "the last draft from Maseno leaves today."^42 Arrangements were being made to send "an officer to Ruiru to assist in the work of discharging Tanganyika personnel."^43 Tororo Depot in Uganda was also ear-marked for closure. A government telegram advised, "please take all necessary steps to close down completely recruiting for EAALS."^44 E. M. Hyde-Clarke, the Chief Secretary, informed the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner that, "no more recruits should be accepted at Maseno Depot."^45 In a letter quoting the Governor's directive, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner informed the Officer-in-Charge of Maseno Depot that, "present holdings should be evacuated according to existing arrangements but ensuring that next three fortnightly quotas of 140 each are forthcoming for EAASC. Minor requirements

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^41 Ibid.
^42 Ibid.
^43 H. L. G. Gurney, Chief Secretary to Governor's Conference to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya, letter dated 6th May, 1941, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
^45 E. M. Hyde-Clarke, the Chief Secretary to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 17th May, 1941, Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
artisans, medical and the like may still be met and reenlistment for EAMLS be accepted … unlikely that full quotas from Maseno will be required till early next year."\textsuperscript{46} Thus only pre-existing drafts for some specific military units were coming to Maseno and from there to military units. After a while, it appeared that the depot was not going to close down completely, but orders were issued to reduce the staff at the depot. Mr. Richardson’s appointment was cancelled and Mr. Mylchreest was told to take a month’s leave. Only Mr. Hine and the Officer Commanding remained at the depot. By September 1941, Dawson Currie, the Officer Commanding Maseno Depot, was presumably referring to men who were already living at the depot, rather than to new recruits, when he informed the Officer Commanding, East African Medical Corps that, “I have handed over to Lieut. Morris of EAMLS fifteen recruits for the EAAMC together with a bundle containing attestation forms, B-103, Registration Certificates and where required Family Remittance forms.”\textsuperscript{47} In another letter, Dawson Currie, the Officer Commanding Maseno Depot, informed the Officer Commanding, East African Army Labor Service that, “I have handed over to Lieut. Morris 330 recruits (250 EAMLS and 80 AAPC) for your Corps, together with a bundle containing attestation forms, B-103, Registration Certificates and where required Family Remittance forms.”\textsuperscript{48} Thus when the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza sent an order to the Officer Commanding, Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, for drafts, presumably these were recruits who were already at the Maseno Depot, old drafts waiting for deployment rather than new ones.

\textsuperscript{46} S. H. Fazan to Officer Commanding, Maseno Depot, (Drafts to and from Maseno, 1941-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/63).
\textsuperscript{47} Dawson Currie, the Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, to the Officer Commanding, EAAMC, Kabete, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} September, 1941, (Drafts to and from Maseno, 1941-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/63).
\textsuperscript{48} Dawson Currie, the Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Home Depot, to the Officer Commanding, EAMLS, Ruiri, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} September, 1941, (Drafts to and from Maseno, 1941-42,
Maseno’s role in the recruitment and holding of men for the military enjoyed some measure of revival the following year. Following the euphoria of the successful completion of the Abyssinia Campaign, the government apparently realized that Kenyans would continue to participate in the war by fighting in other campaigns far away from the East African scene. Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot reasserted its central role as before, procuring, sieving, and training men for the war. By April, 1942, a letter from S.H. Fazan intimated that there was always over-crowding at the depot whenever the depot failed to send forward drafts on schedule. At its zenith, Maseno churned forth, large drafts of men every week and there were even plans, December 1942, to “open a military school attached to the Recruiting depot at Maseno.”

Every week, Fazan commented, there were men leaving Maseno for Ruiru, Jinja, Nairobi, Nanyuki. Between the beginning of September, 1940 and the middle of March, 1941, Maseno “sent 200 recruits a week to the MLS [Military Labor Service] without any failure or delay and has also met all requirements of the KAR, Pioneers, and ASC, averaging 96 a week, without any failure and with only one instance of delay (in the matter of an urgent call for mulesyces.” S.H. Fazan estimated that during an eight-month period in 1941, Maseno dealt with “8,000 recruits.”

Volunteers and conscripts for the army in most cases passed through the Maseno Home and Recruitment Depot. According to Fazan, the depot was designed “to take conscripts for the EAMLS but a large number of volunteers have

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49 S. H. Fazan to the Director of Education, letter dated 10th April, 1942, (Drafts to and from Maseno, 1941-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/63).
entered as well."

In most cases, the conscripts who passed through Maseno were "enrolled [into the army] for one year with a proviso that they may work for fifteen months." Whenever there were requirements for the "voluntarily recruited units as the KAR, Pioneers, or ASC, the quota has always been filled from the depot by eager volunteers." Recruits like Awuor Onimo, Mumbo Merinyan, Wandala Aunje, Adongo Adiedo, Ofuwo Were, and Musumba Othiombo were described in various government documents as volunteers. Nicholas Osir himself reveals in a letter he wrote to Maseno Depot, that he joined the army as a volunteer. "I left by my own request and wished to join the Depot," wrote Osir. One famous recruit who joined the army through Maseno Depot was Company Sergeant Opiyo Ndeda. His enlistment has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. When he died, his officers remembered that it was at Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot that they came across RCS Opiyo Ndeda, a recruit who was later to become "one of the "best-known of all African N.C.O's," a man who "was of real value to me and this Company." After arriving at the depot, the volunteers would then be "sorted out, according to the required quota, into various military units, KAR, ASC, etc, and would then be enrolled. The fighting units would presumably be first pick in the selection," but

52 S. H. Fazan, (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 See: (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno Depot, 1941, KNA, DC.KSM/1/22/161).
57 Nicholas Osir, Chulaimbo Sector School, Sagam, Kisumu, to Kenya Defence Force, letter dated 14th April, 1941, (List of Names and Recruits sent to Maseno Depot, 1941, DC.KSM/1/22/161).
58 East African Standard, date unknown.
in reality, the EAMLS was usually the unit given first preference to select men. This was because men feared EAMLS, and often refused to volunteer, forcing the government to let the EAMLS choose its men first during recruitment. If this failed, the government resorted to conscription to meet the quotas for the EAMLS. Once these men had been sorted out, they would leave by train down country and then by steamer to Jinja. Recruits from other parts of Kenya and who were assigned training at Jinja also passed through Maseno.\(^{60}\)

After graduating from the recruitment and holding depot, the recruits moved to more specialized depots at Jinja, Bombo, Nanyuki, Nairobi, and other places where they trained for service in their units. The Infantry had temporary recruitment bases at the East African Transit Base, Nairobi, and Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, but the main one was at Jinja. The EAASC was at the EAMT Depot, Mbagathi, Nairobi. The Medical unit operated at the East Africa Medical Depot, Kabete, near EA Base Transit Camp; the Signals at the Signals Training Center, Nanyuki; Engineers at EA Engineers Depot, Nanyuki; EAMLS at the EAMLS Depot, Ruiri; the AAPC at the AAPC Depot, Nanyuki, and Artisans at the EAMT Depot, Mbagathi, Nairobi. The degree and level of training at these camps was to a large extent dependent on the unit and the demand of the units they staffed. Each unit had its time-table on how it went about training its recruits. Drill was standard for all recruits. From Maseno Depot and passing through Kisumu on their way to Nanyuki, Gilgil, Ruiri, Mbagathi, Kabete, and Nairobi from Maseno Depot, the recruits would eat “a hot meal.” From the last quarter of 1941, the government mulled

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\(^{60}\) Provincial commissioner, Nyanza Province to Nyanza District Commissioners and the Officer-in-Charge, Maseno Depot, letter dated 17\(^{th}\) December, 1942, (General Instructions, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/157,
over a suggestion by the Officer Commanding Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, to
do away with meals at Kisumu "in view of the fact that they [recruits] could probably get
one before leaving Maseno Depot."61 This suggestion was done away with in favor of
Capt. J.K. Matheson's recommendation that, "the easiest solution would appear to be to
issue to drafts 2 days train rations at Maseno ... hot water can be obtained at various
stations en route on application to the station master concerned."62

Maseno contributed many recruits to the army. By mid 1941, S. H. Fazan observed that
the number of recruits from Maseno Depot for the Military Labor Service at Ruiru Camp
alone was 6,375, about 22% of the whole Corps.63 In another letter, Fazan estimated that
by 10th November, 1941, 15,648 recruits had passed through Maseno Depot, of whom
13,073 have been enrolled and sent forward."64 By the beginning of 1943, Maseno had
churned nearly 30,000 recruits to the army. Writes the Provincial Commissioner of
Nyanza in his address:

We have passed through our Provincial Depot at Maseno nearly
30,000 men to date, and after allowing for medical rejects, etc,
we have sent forward to various units not less than 22,000. You
can add to this figure all those men of the Province who have
volunteered at places outside the Province, and you will realize
that our contribution in manpower has reached a substantial
figure. We have provided nearly as many men for conscript
labor.65

which refers to recruits from Central Province in general and Embu in particular).

61 H. R. Carver, Staff Captain, AAPC and EAMLS, letter dated 20th September, 1941, Drafts to and from
Maseno, 1941-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/63).
62 Capt. J. K. Matheson, C.S.O. 3, I. of C, sub area no. 5, to Details Officer, Kisumu, letter dated 22nd
September, 1941, (Drafts to and from Maseno, 1941-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/63).
63 (S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, to Chief Secretary, Kenya, letter dated 4th June, 1941,
Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
64 S. H. Fazan to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 10th November, 141, (Maseno Recruitment and Home
Depot, 1941-43, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/28).
65 (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner's Address, History of War, 1939-48,
Even top-level government officials believed that the depot was functioning well and meeting its objectives. The Director of Medical Department believed that the Medical Officer at the depot was “fully occupied on medical and sanitary work at the Reception Depot.”66 According to Fazan, the depot had met its quota “without any failure or delay … with only one instance of delay (in the matter of an urgent call for mule-syces.”67 “The depot has performed its functions so efficiently, and the army has become so popular that today every draft is ‘over-subscribed’ by volunteers, and large numbers report daily at the depot hoping that they will be accepted.”68 According to H. L. Hunter, “the Officers of the Signals and Medical Corps also expressed their complete satisfaction with the product, stating that months of preliminary training is saved to them.”69 It was believed that as long as the military informed the depots of their requirements “as well in advance as possible,” the depot as “recruiting machines … would run smoothly.”70

But while the function of Maseno Depot was mainly to recruit and hold men in readiness for military service, one important area of improvement within the general development of the Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot was the building of a military school in 1943. Due to the fact that Nyanza had contributed many men to the army, there was a realization that labor in the reserve had almost run dry. The Nyanza Provincial administration was admitting for the first time towards the end of 1942, that Nyanza

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66 Medical Department, “History of War,” September to November, 1940, (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, BY/49/28).
69 Ibid.
70 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, “Some Notes on the Machinery of Recruitment,”
Province could not afford to produce more men for the army. It had virtually exhausted local labor supply and was proposing the problem be resolved through an emphasis on recruiting quality men as opposed to emphasizing quantity during recruitment. “In the early days of the war,” observed Fazan, “it was necessary to expand rapidly the fighting units and then to provide men for second line and labor units … [without] … any training to speak of.” Most men were simply recruited and dispatched forward to the military because the army was desperate for men; there was wastage as poorly trained men fell in battle, forcing the government to look for their replacement. Without proper training, the “demand for men to replace wastage in such units would continue,” and Nyanza becoming critically bereft of labor, would not be able to cope up with supplying replacements. Nyanza Province already had 22,000 in the regular army and 5,000 in the Military Labor Service, besides tens of thousands in civil labor employment. “Nyanza recruitment,” S. H. Fazan wrote, “has now reached practically the limit of its qualitative expansion and, is proceeding on a replacement basis.” And even the recruitment of men on a replacement basis was increasingly becoming untenable. Fazan estimated that with thousands of men already in the regular army, the province would be required to replace them at the rate of 9% per annum, and those in the military service units at 100% after fifteen months, meaning a monthly replacement rate of 498 men per month. This was virtually impossible for a province, which only a few months earlier was boasting of an inexhaustible labor reserve.

Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
73 Ibid.
Although Fazan would later admit that the monthly military replacement estimate actually ranged from 350 to 380, and not the high figure he had given, still, going by the latest figure on recruitment, he contended that from his experience “500 [men] a month as a constant will not prove to be very wide off the mark when the time comes.” But whether 350 or 380 or 500, the number of recruits required from Nyanza was simply too high. Already, most recruits of 16 years and above and who were “not regarded as likely to profit from further education [had] been absorbed into various specialist branches of the Army,” and the remaining number was small. Out of 241 boys who sat for the Primary School Examination in 1941, 147 passed the examination. Over a third of those who passed the examination went on to Secondary schools and the remainder, whom the administration was keeping track of, went for “further training under Police, Meteorological, Veterinary, Agricultural, Medical and Sanitary, Railway, Posts and Telegrams, soil conservation Departments or Teacher Training. Of the 94 failures, to which may be added a few boys who have to drop out before completing the Primary Course owing to lack of fees, most were absorbed into the NATD or some branch of the Army. A certain number went in for teacher training.” The majority of boys in primary schools were considered “too young to enter the Army on the completion of their course.” Blind recruitment without thinking about the consequences was counter-productive. It was “deleterious to the welfare of the community, and the manning of

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76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
civilian and social services [if the government took] away any who should go on for further training in school or in departmental training centers.”

As a result, Fazan, who was often quite critical of the basic nature of training given to recruits at local depots, proposed the need for a shift from quantity to quality by having the government establish a military school where boys of 16 or 17 “should be admitted for four months training prior to enlistment in the army.” It was necessary for the province to “concentrate on quality” rather than quantity, argued Fazan. Supporting the scheme, Lt. Col. P. T. Knott of East Africa Headquarter Command also observed that the military was in “urgent need for increasing our intake of educated boys.” Being short of literate recruits, the military was even “ready to meet the cost involved in their production.” On another occasion Fazan argued that, “it was considered desirable to turn over higher quality of recruits as quantity could not be maintained.” “Without special pre-military training the type of men required cannot be found in large enough numbers and certainly not at a moment’s notice,” S. H. Fazan argued, adding that “A reservoir of supply had to be created.” There was to be a curriculum for this project, one which would produce high quality recruit by emphasizing basic English; Handwriting [a clear cursive hand and good printing]; Arithmetic and recruits to be able to work on the 4

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78 Ibid.
82 “Minutes of a Meeting held in the Secretariat on the 13th November, 1942, Regarding a Military School at Maseno,” Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
rules, time, mental study; First steps in first Aid or Morse Code; Physical training and games, with elements on military drill; and Talks on military life, and progress of the war.

While lobbying for the establishment of the military school, Fazan observed that there were no locally available institutions that could be relied upon to perform these functions. Although "English is most valuable asset for recruits in all units and quite essential for the A.M.C (African Medical Corps) and Signals," Fazan observed that the primary and secondary schools available were not sufficient to "supply the needs."85 Most of the "Europeans in educational work in Nyanza both in government and Missions had their hands full [and] any proposal to add a class of a pre-military trainees to the Boarding Primary Schools would be unlikely to be approved."86 A military school was thus the best alternative. In his memorandum setting out the advantages of the military school for the prosecution of the war, Fazan observed that Maseno was the most suitable location for building the school. It would be situated "alongside the present Recruiting Depot at Maseno ... where the staff of the center would benefit by proximity to a long established recruiting depot."87 The Maseno site would also make it easier for the government to overcome its lack of teachers to spare for the school.88 Built adjacent to the depot, the

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88 See: for example, the Director of Education complaining that he had no teachers to spare for the military school, in his letter to E. B. Hosking, Chief Native Commissioner, letter dated 20th October, 1942, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
military school would be at "one center where unified control can be exercised."\textsuperscript{89} Although many locally based "Europeans were [also] engaged in educational work … in Government and Missions" and whose hands were described as "full," it was possible to convince some to teach at the military school.\textsuperscript{90} Land and water were available. Buildings could "be erected economically." The staff of the school would consist of two Europeans. One would be the head of the school and would be called "Camp Chief." Apart from running the school, his duties would consist of "visiting schools and keeping a look out for likely boys at least half his time," and traveling an estimated average of 400 miles a month. His salary would be [British pounds] 30 per month, which was what Dawson Currey, the Officer-Commanding Maseno Depot was earning at the time.\textsuperscript{91}

The Camp Chief had a European assistant and a staff of Africans. Besides teaching, the European Assistant also supervised the African staff. Half of the African staff, according to documents on the staffing of the school, was sent to the Army Education Corps, Kabete, where they took a course of training for three months. Their pay and level of training was different from that of African NCO’s. While the administration believed that it was "essential that they should be properly trained," it also asserted that it was not "necessary for them to be through the full course with the Army Education Corps N.C.O.s."\textsuperscript{92} Their salaries were less than those of African N.C.O.s. They were expected to be on "the same footing as other teachers of the Province," and only different from

\textsuperscript{89} S. H. Fazan, "Proposed Scheme for a Pre-military Training Center in Nyanza," (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} S. H. Fazan, letter dated 19\textsuperscript{th} October, 1942, Military Training, 1942-45, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{92} (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
them in the sense that they “they were fed and given clothes of a suitable uniform type.”

The European staff was also expected to attend the Army Education corps, Kabete, and “study the methods in use there,” though it was not “necessary for them to say for the usual one month’s course.” In his proposal, Fazan estimated the cost of establishing the military school as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital:</th>
<th>10 Huts each for 40-50 boys, Kitchens, Latrines, Dining room, Houses for African Instructors, quarters for European staff. .......... [British pounds] 2,000.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent:</td>
<td>Camp Chief ........................................ 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant ........................................ 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Senior Teacher-Instructors @ 60/- ................................................................ 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Junior Teacher-Instructors @ 50/- ...... .................................................. 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L-T and T. and Allowance ...................... 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boarding Costs including issue of clothing (400) @15/- per month ........... 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Books, Stationery, Equipment ............... 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contingencies ..................................... 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                 | Cost per head [British pounds] 4.65 .... 5,584
d

The cost of running both the depot and the school would later rise to [British pounds] 18,605.00, according to estimates given by the Acting Provincial Commissioner.

The government ultimately agreed with Fazan’s proposal in November, 1942. The government recognized that it would take considerable time to bring such a school into being and expand it to suitable size, but while it was being planned and begun, the Officer Commanding Maseno Depot was authorized to be in charge, to begin

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
97 See: “Minutes of a Meeting held in the Secretariat on the 13th November, 1942, Regarding a Military School at Maseno,” (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
preparations for the establishment of such a school, and to “retain in your depot any literate recruits who, in your opinion, would profit by a short intensive course of English as well as further drill and discipline.” In his response, Dawson Currey, the Officer Commanding Maseno Depot reported that he already had “sufficient staff to start such a scheme, say of 200 students.” “I have clerks who could instruct them in English [some have already teacher’s experience.” D. K. Williams was offered the position of the Principal of the school, earning [British pounds] 45 for the first six months, and then [British pounds] 50 after his confirmation. A Mr. Richardson, who was with the Depot, would alternate between the depot and the school, as the deputy of the school. The army also sent one European instructor, 2nd Lt. C. A. Metcalfe to the military school. A military school was consequently organized within the existing framework of the depot, “where a four months course of concentrated English is imparted to recruits destined to the Signals and Medical Corps.” The boys for the military school were selected, not straight from Primary School, as per Fazan original scheme – a recommendation, which E.B. Hosking, the Chief Native Commissioner turned down, but from among those who had already been selected to join the depot. “From the depot, the boys would go straight to the school for intensive instruction, on completion of which they would pass into the Maseno Depot proper for the usual period for injections, etc” on the way to their to their specialized units. The objective of the school was to help meet the need for quality

100 Ibid.
103 (Lt. Col. P. T. Knott, AAG, EA Headquarters Command to Chief Native Secretary, letter dated 7th
manpower and reduce wastage in the army. Since “Nyanza recruitment of African Manpower for the army has now practically reached the limits of its quantitative expansion and will in future proceed on a replacement basis [there was need to] concentrate on quality … and Knowledge of English is a most valuable asset for recruits in all units, and to make it possible for a large number of recruits to acquire this knowledge, a military school has been started at Maseno.”

By early January, 1943, the school was in session and when the Acting Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza and Mr. Benson, the Provincial Inspector of Schools, visited the school, they found “131 pupils in session, being taught by two European depot officers and three African clerks,” which led them to ask that Mr. Metcalfe be sent to the school as soon as possible. By 19th January, 1943, the teaching staff at the school consisted of Richardson, Mylichrist, and an African teaching staff, including Nikanor Owano, James Apolo Olooo, Jackot Okonyoli, Nicholas Opar, and Ephraim Owando. On appointment with three months probation, an African instructor earned Kshs. 50/-; On promotion to Lance Corporal, the Instructor’s salary climbed to Kshs. 55/-; Corporal, Kshs. 60/-; Sergeant, Kshs. 65/-; and Sergeant-Major Kshs. 75/-. The staff was also entitled to free uniforms and food, consisting of 1¼ pounds of maize meal or mixture daily, 1 pound of vegetables daily, ½ pound of meat three times a week, ¼ oz tea weekly, 12 oz sugar weekly, fish and bananas when obtainable, and approximately 1 oz edible oil.

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105 Ibid.
or ghee used in cooking weekly.\textsuperscript{107}

The establishment of the school was not without several hitches. After the departure of Fazan from Nyanza Province, K. L. Hunter, his successor as Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, was not clear about the jurisdiction under which the school operated, the military or education, or provincial administration. Although the institution was a school that provided basic knowledge in English, Arithmetic, and the like, the Director of Education did not perceive the school as falling under his docket. His department did not even deal with the employment of teachers at the school. “I must point out,” the Director of Education informed the new Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, “that my department has nothing to do with the organization of the Depot but I promised Mr. Fazan that I would assist as far as I could with advice and suggestions.”\textsuperscript{108} When it came to employment of teachers, the Director of Education pointed out that, “the employment of teachers at the Depot does not rest with my Department but with you.”\textsuperscript{109} While the curriculum drawn up by Fazan for the school emphasized mainly the teaching of English, Arithmetic, physical training, Morse Code, and First Aid, the Director of Education asserted that there would be “no similarity whatever between Maseno Depot School and the Army School at Kabete.”\textsuperscript{110} There were often a lot of disagreements between the Army and the Civil Administration over the budget of the school and the depot, especially given a budget of [British pounds] 18,000, which was submitted for

\textsuperscript{107} Acting Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} July, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{108} Director of Education to Acting Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza Province, letter dated 14\textsuperscript{th} January, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
1943 and which was felt to be too high for the Army to meet "without detailed information."\textsuperscript{111}

Nevertheless, the school admitted students and who were later drafted into specialized units like the Medical Corps, Signals, and the Engineer Corps. While in training, the \textit{askaris} were paid a salary of Kshs. 6/- a month. By April, 1943, the school had a staff of 13 teachers, 2 Europeans and 11 African instructors, who taught subjects ranging from English to signaling.\textsuperscript{112} G. Metcalfe was the head of the Maseno military school. T.E. Mylchreest deputized. Efraim Owendho, formerly a teacher at CMS Malanga, taught English Diction; Nikanor Owano, who had trained in Soil Conservation up to 1942, and had briefly taught at CMS Ndiru, taught Writing; Jacob Okonyole, who was formerly a clerk was said to be in need of further training; Norbertus Odondo, who had been trained at Eregi and later at St. Teresa’s Yala, taught Arithmetic; Silvanus Odhiambó taught Oral English; Daniel Ogwa Kasuku, who trained at Nyangori, taught Arithmetic; Jafeth Ogutu, also of Nyangori, taught Arithmetic; Daniel Ong’ayi, of Maseno, taught English Reading; Elias Nyamodi, of Yala, taught English Diction and Spelling; James Apolo, formerly a clerk at the Depot, taught Signaling; and lastly, Leonardus Oselo, who was finishing his course at Education Corps, Kabete, and who was expected to report to the school at the end of that month. After the realization that "many recruits coming into these centers

\textsuperscript{111} See, for example: Major P. E. Williams letter to K. L. Hunter, Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 29\textsuperscript{th} January, 1943, and K.L. Hunter’s response to Major P. E. Williams, letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} February, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126). The budget for the school alone was [British pounds] 12,045, yet its work and training were probably not very different from those given at the more specialized units).

\textsuperscript{112} The Office of Inspector of Schools to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
from the Civil Depots do not know a single word of Swahili,“\textsuperscript{113} Kiswahili was
introduced as conversational language within the school, but not formally as a subject of
learning.\textsuperscript{114}

Within a short time of the establishment of the school, it appeared that the school was
doing well. The first batch of students passed out in April, 1943, and subsequent pass out
rate was estimated at 100 recruits per month.\textsuperscript{115} The level of graduates of Maseno
Military School since January, 1943, observed Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, are “of
higher grade.”\textsuperscript{116} The military school had a capacity of 800 boys in addition to the staff,
but in practice, it maintained a constant roll of 400 boys, passing out approximately 100
recruits a month. The first batch was passed out in April, 1943 and 100 every subsequent
month.\textsuperscript{117} When Lt. Col. P. G. Goodeve-Docker and Major J. J. Turner visited the school
for on a recruitment exercise, they found that “their [the recruits] knowledge of English,
spoken and written, is above average, their handwriting is good and well formed.”\textsuperscript{118} Out
of 88 students who were tested, 79 qualified for the Signals immediately, while the
remaining 9, who failed the examination, were recommended for “further training after
which it is considered that they may be fit for E.A. Signals.”\textsuperscript{119} In the past, the Signals
recruited men who had attained Standard IV education, but as time went by, the demand

\textsuperscript{113} Major P. E. Williams, letter dated 16\textsuperscript{th} March, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126)
\textsuperscript{114} See: K.L. Hunter’s letter to the Officer commanding Maseno Depot, in which he argued that since “the
majority of our recruits know Swahili, I do not think that you will need to take much action thereon, letter
dated 17\textsuperscript{th} April, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{115} Article “Maseno,” dated 1\textsuperscript{st} July, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{116} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, (Nyanza Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).
\textsuperscript{117} (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Report on Maseno, 1\textsuperscript{st} July, 1943, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
\textsuperscript{118} Lt. Col. P. G. Goodeve-Docker, Commanding, S.T.C. and Depot, E.A. Signals, Memorandum dated 14\textsuperscript{th}
April, 1943, Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
for recruits forced the military to accept those who had only reached Standard III, and sometimes only Standard II. Most of these recruits, as already seen in the previous chapter were young boys, who more often than not had school fees problems, and were at home most of the time. According to H. L. Hunter, “they would be of very little use to the society in the reserve, for they are too young to play much part in production, and are the type who would become the ‘loafers’ round markets, etc., until such time as they attain maturity.”

Paradoxically, while Hunter believed that these boys would not be of use in the reserve, he did not believe that even as young as they were, they would not be of some use to the military. By sending these boys to Maseno military school, Hunter argued, the school was paying an important function of “bridging the gulf between youth and manhood under conditions of discipline which cannot fail to reach to the general benefit of the individual and society generally.” After joining the Maseno military school, the boys were then subjected to an intensive course of four months, and after which “they were readily acceptable to the unit officers.”

The military school at Maseno offered training in line with that of the more specialized schools. The training of signalers at Maseno military School was virtually similar to that of Nanyuki Camp, where most signalers from the country went for further training. At Nanyuki, just as at Maseno, the course consisted of intensive teaching of English, Arithmetic, Intelligence, discipline and drill. Signalers also learned Map reading, Morse and flag signaling and bazzars [?] in their curriculum. The medical recruits learned first

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119 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
aid and stretcher drill, after which they moved to Nairobi for more training in the areas they would work in during the war. Due to the intensive nature of training given at the school, the Inspector of Schools “states that considerable progress has been made, and the Army have expressed satisfaction with the type of recruit now being turned out.”123 Lt. Col. P. G. Goodeve-Docker and Major J. J. Turner felt during their visit to the school in April, 1943, that the training given to the recruits was of “great benefit.” The “Morse Code,” they found “is known by all the selected men and they can receive at an average of 5 w.p.m [words per minute].”124 The visitors gave some recommendations to improve the training, though. They suggested that English phrases peculiar to the signals should be taught and explained to the men. They also noted that, “Flag drill is taught by an Ex EA Signals recruit who did 28 weeks training in the school here before being discharged as medically unfit.” They suggested that knots and joints should be taught and they were going to prepare specimens, and a quantity of old cable would be dispatched to the Civil Depot. In spite of some of the weaknesses noted at the Maseno military School, Lt. Col. Goodeve-Docker and Major J. J. Turner believed that the “recruits received from this depot will be passed through this unit quicker than normal recruits.”125 The work being done at the Military School left in one’s mind the impression that “it was a very good job,” observed Lt. Col. P.G. Goodeve-Docker and Major J.J. Turner.126

Even delegates from other territories, it was observed, were expressing “great interest …

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122 Ibid.
123 (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
in the working of the Maseno Depot School as explained by the Chief Native Commissioner."\textsuperscript{127} This was not by accident: there was a feeling within top government echelons that too many men were being recruited from Nyanza. Although institutions like Maseno Military School were established to reduce the number of men recruited from Nyanza by turning from quantity to quality, it was felt that the rate at which men were leaving Nyanza was too high. The rate from Maseno alone was 100 men per month, if not more. There was clearly a need to diversify recruitment to other parts of Kenya and other territories like Tanganyika. "I do not see why," the Chief Native Commissioner complained, "the 100 Kenya recruits should all come from the Nyanza Province."\textsuperscript{128} The Chief Native Commissioner pointed out that while it was "perfectly true that these youths at the moment do not affect the labor position, in another 2 or 3 years they will. Once in the Signals they are lost both to production and other skilled civil employment for the duration and thereafter. As a result of the Chief Native Commissioner’s suggestion, the military school at Maseno for the first time began to admit men from other parts of Kenya, the Kikuyu and Akamba, for instance. Men from Tanganyika were also now given admission into the school. For the first time, the school was going to lose its "provincial character," noted Hunter.\textsuperscript{129} Before the first batch of boys from outside of the province were recruited and admitted into the school, there were fears that Nyanza communities would not allow this to happen. The Governor himself believed that the opening up of Maseno for boys from other areas would not be received well within

\textsuperscript{127} Chief Secretary to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 21\textsuperscript{st} June, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\textsuperscript{128} The Chief Secretary, quoting the Chief Native Commissioner, in a letter to K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\textsuperscript{th} September, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\textsuperscript{129} The Chief Secretary to K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\textsuperscript{th} September, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
Nyanza and would not augur well for the future development of the school and the depot. “The Kavirondo regard it as a privilege to send their boys to Maseno to which they have contributed so much and that there would be considerable resentment at sharing this privilege with other Kenya tribes.”\(^{130}\) “There was an enormous waiting list for admission to the school from Nyanza itself and “it will take some organization to bring in Kikuyu and Kamba.”\(^{131}\) The Kikuyu and the Akamba and other Kenya tribes [sic], it was claimed, “are averse to mixing with the Kavirondo in Kavirondo schools.”\(^{132}\) As for the Nandi, “nothing would induce Nandi … to go to Maseno even though there were Kipsigis there.”\(^{133}\) But all these were moot points. Whether or not Nyanza people would allow the school to admit boys from outside of the province, the government had made its decision to open the school. “These lads,” the army noted, “have to mix with other tribes [sic].”\(^{134}\) The government’s determination to bring boys from other places to Maseno was boosted by K. L. Hunter’s observation that although, “the Kavirondo are very jealous of their institution at Maseno, and would resent the introduction of other Kenya tribes …, it is equally true to say that after they join the Army the Kavirondo lads mix freely with other tribes.”\(^{135}\) Hunter felt that the objection by Nyanza inhabitants to sharing Maseno was not really about mixing with other communities as such, but about “sharing with other tribes what they look upon as a benefit which they have earned, and badly need for their boys who cannot afford school fees though they desire to carry on their

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\(^{130}\) The Chief Secretary, quoting the Governor, in a letter to K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\(^{th}\) September, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\(^{131}\) Ibid.

\(^{132}\) Ibid.

\(^{133}\) Ibid.

\(^{134}\) The Chief Secretary to K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\(^{th}\) September, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).

\(^{135}\) K. L. Hunter to E. B. Hosking, the Chief Native Commissioner, letter dated 30\(^{th}\) September, 1943, Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
education.”

While it is not clear whether the government dealt with the real reason behind the protective jealousy over Maseno, it went ahead nevertheless with plans to admit men from elsewhere into the school. Tanganyika, it was reported, was anxious to begin sending its boys to Maseno Military School. "Tanganyika recruits for specialist corps, such as Medical and Signals, who require some training in Army classes, should, if possible, be accommodated at Maseno as no facilities exist in Tanganyika." The Governor's conference was in favor of the suggestion. Major Dwason-Currey of the Maseno Depot was ready to "take in 100 Tanganyika recruits monthly, and was prepared, subject to agreement on all sides, to take an initial batch of 200." Although the quota for Tanganyika for the school was 65 men per a month, it was reported that the school "should be only too glad" if Tanganyika wanted to increase the quota of the recruits to the school. When Major Dawson Currey traveled through Tanganyika he came to the conclusion that Tanganyika had "plenty of boys ... to fulfill the quota of 115 recruits a month and I am of the opinion they will be forthcoming" to the Maseno Military School. Students at the military school were coming from many parts of Kenya as well; beginning for many recruits, a process of unity as Kenyans.

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136 Ibid.
137 John Garvey, Headquarters, EA, to E. B. Hosking, the Chief Native Commissioner, quoting a conversation between Mr. Page, the Chairman of Tanganyika Manpower Committee and a Major Blaxland, who had visited Maseno Depot, letter dated 3rd September, 1943, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
141 Rift Valley Commissioner to Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 18th December, 1943, Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126; Dawson Currey also reports that recruits from
As the Allies increasingly got the upper hand in the war, the functions of the depot also changed. There were even discussions about introducing a course on commerce, given the fact that the “natives of this Province [have] realized that they cannot progress in commerce unless they know at least how to keep books.”

And when soldiers began to get discharged from the army on various grounds, including medical reasons, Maseno, like other depots, once again proved their value for the army. Since most recruits had joined the army through the depots into their permanent military units, they also passed through the depots upon discharge, where their military records were kept. It was at these depots that the welfare of discharged *askaris* was dealt with before they left the army for home. Information on registration, terms of employment, family remittances, and any outstanding benefits were kept at the depots and when the soldiers came back home for discharge, it was only natural that they would go through the depots where their affairs would finally be determined. The EAMLS and EAAPC recruits from Nyanza province almost always passed through the depot on their way home. The role and function of the depot, and how it was changing over time was aptly captured by K. L. Hunter as early as July, 1943, when he observed that, “today the functions of the depot comprise of the following: a) recruiting for units of the army on a replacement basis, b) repatriation and paying of all time expired and medically unfit EAMLS and EAAPC which at present average about 200 men per month, c) re-enlisting time expired men at present 75 per

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142 (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 19th August, 1944, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
month, and d) maintenance of all records, posting up the life cards from part 2 orders.”

K. L. Hunter also recommended that the depot should be maintained until the war ended to help with demobilization. The value of the depot and its records, Hunter believed, would become of paramount importance, “when we are demobilized and it is urged that the organization should be maintained.” The soldiers’ transition from army life to civilian life was “recorded through Maseno.” Its role “in the scheme of post-war planning and demobilization” was considered “paramount.” Although some teachers and the trainers were no doubt released from the depot as the war was coming to an end, Maseno Depot was considered important during the demobilization and for Post-War plans. In fact, when the Director of Education tried but failed to employ Mr. Metcalfe, who was teaching Basic English at the school precisely because Mr. Metcalfe’s duties were crucial for the training of soldiers who were leaving the army. Metcalfe was also required to open a Trade school at the depot. Nevertheless, by July, 1945, Metcalfe left and joined the Ministry of Education. Major Dawson Currey, who had headed the Depot and had overseen the recruitment and training of the men, became the Family Remittance and Welfare Officer, as Maseno Depot now helped with demobilization rather than with recruitment. The role of Maseno depot in the war had come full circle.

Conclusion.

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144 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
Through a detailed examination of the history of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, and Maseno Military School, this chapter has not only been able to contributed to our understanding of an hitherto obscure military institution, but also how they served as conduits through which newly recruited men were prepared for deployment into permanent military units. The story of military depots has for a long time not been examined, yet they played a critical role in the military process of transforming recruits into *askaris*. A history of the depots is truly a window to the beginning of *askaris'* military life; it is both a story of the depots themselves as well as how recruits were being transformed into *askaris* who the colony could depend on to fight the war.
CHAPTER SIX.

PANYAKO – THE PIONEER CORPS.

"You told us that we are just as much askaris as the KAR because the KAR cannot fight unless they have roads for lorries to take their supplies to them. Surely then, if we have to make the roads, we shall be in front of the troops and be slaughtered like women unless we are armed."1

Introduction.

From military depots, and before deployment into the battlefield, askaris were forwarded to military units. This chapter explores how askaris were deployed from their initial point of registration at recruitment and holding depots like Maseno to military units, and how those units further prepared askaris for their ultimate responsibility of fighting in the war.

A history of PANYAKO – the Pioneer Corps – is important in several ways. First, it provides the context within which to locate and analyze how askaris were prepared for war. After leaving a recruiting and holding depot, askaris were deployed into various military units such as the Pioneers, and with very few exceptions, askaris were expected to serve in their assigned units throughout the war. The way these units were run, the way they recruited and trained their men contributes further insights into the experiences of askaris in the war. Secondly, it contributes arguably for the first time to an understanding of an hitherto less known military unit in which thousands of askaris served during the Second World War. The origins and history of the Pioneers in the Second World War have not been told, with the exception of memoirs like that of Michael Blundell, a commander of a battalion of the 1st Pioneer Company’s A Place in the Sun: A Memoir of

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Seventy Years in Kenya. The memoir is nonetheless limited in scope in the sense that it is based only on Blundell’s own experiences as a European military officer whose level of interaction with the ordinary askaris was often limited. Geoffrey Hodge’s work, The Carrier Corps: Military Labor in the East African Campaigns, 1914-1918, is the closest one comes to comprehending African military experiences in military labor units, but as one can see from the title of this work, it deals with the First World War. An examination of the Pioneer Corps thus provides some glimpse of how askaris’ military labor experiences in the First World War influenced government military labor policy during the Second World War, how askaris were deployed into military units, how they were trained and transformed into soldiers, and how they served in the Second World War.

Establishing the Pioneers.

Quite simply, the Pioneer Corps was the brainchild of Sydney H. Fazan, the inexhaustibly resourceful Nyanza Provincial Commissioner. As Europe moved inexorably towards war, the Chairman of the Manpower Committee had circulated a communiqué soliciting for suggestions on the formation of a “Labor Corps” in which Nyanza Province would contribute 3,000 men. S. H. Fazan was later to recall that the crucial letter from the Chairman of Man Power Committee was meant for him only, in his capacity as a Provincial Commissioner of a province which had an abundant supply of labor. The

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2 Michael Blundell, A Place in the Sun: A Memoir of Seventy Years in Kenya (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 1994).
“personal request,” observed Fazan, was for "me to write a memorandum on the above subject;” and to which he responded by collecting suggestions from his District Commissioners on the issue, eventuating in the formation of the military labor unit. The labor unit which was consequently created was euphemistically known within Kenya as “The Pioneer Corps." As labor was an important factor in the war, particularly in the early years, Nyanza Province was expected to provide the bulk of laborers because it was generally deemed within colonial circles as a labor reserve. Fazan himself often noted that Nyanza teemed with a lot of labor – the establishment of a military labor corps would thus not be a major problem. Describing himself quite proudly as “a Provincial Commissioner of a Province with a million and a quarter natives which in the war of 1914-18 in East Africa bore the brunt of the military and civil labor requirements,” Fazan believed that Nyanza province would have little problem bearing the military need for men.

According to population statistics, the combined population of the Nyanza province by 1940, including, at that time, the Nandi and the Kipsigis, and some parts of the present day Western Kenya, was 1¼ million. This meant that Nyanza’s population was "almost exactly 40% that of Kenya." "In normal times,” Nyanza Province provided "about half of the colony’s native labor ... [and] ... they also provide a large proportion of the police force and a considerable proportion of the KAR. In their own reserves they are for the most part, industrious agriculturists and besides growing their own food, make a large a

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5 Ibid.
7 S. H. Fazan, “Supplementary Notes to Memorandum dated 11th May, 1941, on the Subject of Military
contribution to the export market."\(^8\) Indeed, when it was discovered in mid 1941 that in spite of the abundant labor in Nyanza, only half\(^9\) of the province’s population was away on military and civil duty, Fazan proposed that the labor supply from Nyanza Province be increased to 1½ % because "it would have no adverse effects on the supply of labor for essential industry."\(^9\) By the end of 1942 the existing intensive policy of recruitment of men had resulted in 30,000 men from Nyanza serving in the army and 110,000 men in civil employment. Only 262,000 adult males remained in the reserves, and of this, 60,274 "are totally ineffective by reason of ill-health and disablement, and the remainder are capable of agriculture."\(^10\) It was quite clear that the contribution of Nyanza Province to the military and particularly to the Pioneer Corps was quite high. To a large extent this was due to Fazan himself, often writing and explaining in numerous reports how labor in Nyanza and the colony as a whole could be mobilized and conveyed into military and civil duty.\(^11\)

While writing the report on the Pioneers, Fazan admitted he had "no real justification for advancing my views on military recruitment except the strength of my belief in them," but nevertheless, his views were always valued by the military and he was quite influential within military circles particularly after his suggestions successfully led to the establishment of the Pioneer Corps. "The subject of Manpower ... is constantly in [my]

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\(^8\) "Memorandum on the War Effort by Natives of the Nyanza Province," (History of War, 1939-48, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
\(^10\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
\(^11\) Archival documents show that Fazan was always commenting on virtually every subject of military nature in the colony during the war.
mind,\textsuperscript{12} he observed at one point. It is no wonder that Fazan would later relinquish his duty as Nyanza Provincial Commissioner and become the Military Liaison Officer during the war. The Governor of the Colony praised Fazan for his "zeal and enthusiasm." Fazan always claimed that he could not avoid commenting about the military because the views of civil administrators were also always crucial to the conduct of the war, justifying his regular forays into military policy. There had already been occasions in the war, "when the civil Administration has foreseen the needs of the Military before they were declared and consequently has been able to meet them, with more expedition and less disturbance than would otherwise have been the case."\textsuperscript{13} The fact that the provinces were required to conduct large scale recruitment "at short notice demands, in my submission, that we should overhaul our recruiting organization and have it ready in advance, at least on paper and also, to some extent in the field."\textsuperscript{14}

One of the ways that Fazan felt the administration could be ready for war on a short notice and the abundant labor supply could be properly utilized in the war effort was through the formation of a nucleus military unit such as the Pioneers during peacetime. The unit would be a labor-intensive one. During war, the unit could be expanded to become a large military labor unit, helping the military to prosecute the war within military labor units such as the "Pioneers Corps," and the "East African Military Labor Service."

\textsuperscript{12} S. H. Fazan, "Memorandum on Military Recruitment," dated 31\textsuperscript{st} May, 1941, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
The Challenges of Creating the Pioneer Corps.

There were several major difficulties with getting the unit off the ground. Although most Kenyan recruits have generally been characterized as willing and ready to serve in the army, they nevertheless did not like military labor corps, which reminded them of the ill-fated "Carrier Corps of the First World War and everything connected with it."\(^{15}\)

Military labor units were feared and loathed. In the words of Fazan, eligible men for military service had "not forgotten that in the last war there were many unrecorded casualties and many gratuities owing to the dependants of deceased carriers were not paid."\(^{16}\) The men knew "that the Carrier Corps was alternatively known as the Labor Corps and the head of it as Director of Military Labor. Any mention of a Labor Corps will undoubtedly be associated in their minds with the carrying of loads and all their hardships in the last war and they will not engage in it voluntarily." The word "labor" as in the "East African Labor Unit," or in the "Labor Corps," was thus a major handicap to any effort at recruitment because it induced images of suffering, fear and death.

These kinds of problems were complicated by the fact that men serving in these units were often not issued with rifles, an omission which often invited ridicule from civilians. "The great complaint among the men, who are otherwise keen and proud of themselves"

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Geoffrey Hodges has estimated in his book, Kariokor: The Carrier Corps; The Story of the Military Labor Forces in the Conquest of German East Africa, 1914-1918, that upwards of 100,000 men died during the First World War, nearly 10% of the total number of men serving in British military forces in East Africa. Service in the Carrier Corps – Kariokor [as it was known locally] – was almost synonymous with courting death.

Fazan revealed, “is that their women will mock them if they are not armed.”\(^\text{17}\) Without rifles, the Pioneers felt no more special than ordinary employees of the Public Works Department, the despised \textit{jo Apida}, employees of Public Works Department, or mere \textit{jo leba} [laborers] in the army, and were thus not respected like “real” soldiers serving in, say, KAR, and who did "serious military work." The word "labor" was going to be problem which was going to unnecessarily impede the formation of a successful military unit and the ever-resourceful Fazan proposed a number of ways of dealing with these problems. And thus Fazan proposed to remove the word "labor" from the name of the proposed military labor unit. Upon receiving the communiqué from the Chairman of the Manpower Committee proposing to establish a “Labor Corps,” Fazan and his committee immediately “headed him off the term ‘Labor Corps’ and chose ‘Pioneer Corps’ as likely to be more popular.”\(^\text{18}\)

But it is not clear why the name “Pioneer” was chosen. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term “Pioneers” was used in the eighteenth century to refer to “one of an advance party of soldiers,” whose task in eighteenth century western armies was “clearing and making roads.” The term accurately depicted the kinds of tasks that the proposed unit would perform in the war. Its choice was to do with the fact that the proposed unit was supposed to be a forerunner to a bigger unit, which would be formed during wartime\(^\text{19}\) to clear and make roads, yet, by adopting it while ditching more

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) S. H. Fazan, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} July, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).

\(^{19}\) The word “Pioneer” literally means “forerunner” or “precursor,” suggestive of the fact that the unit would be a nucleus of a bigger unit, which the administration intended to form during wartime. The name "Pioneer" would help reduce the stigma associated with military labor units, which frustrated government effort at enlisting men because it embarrassed and agitated those slated to serve or already serving in them.
accurate and better known labels like "labor," the administration was behaving in a less
than honest manner. There was something willfully misleading about the term. While the
change of name enabled the government to lure unsuspecting men into providing labor to
the army by making them believe that their unit was different from other labor-intensive
military units, it did not represent a qualitative change in the nature of service in the unit.
Like its eighteenth century precursor, its mission was simple: labor. There was very little
attempt at honestly and sincerely dealing with the nature of service in the labor corps, and
with the reasons why askaris hated labor-intensive units like the one the government was
forming. Coining the name "Pioneers" did not deal with the substance of the problem
with the Pioneers; rather, it shows how zealous and at times insidious colonial officials
could be when it came to implementing colonial edicts in Kenya.

One sees this invidiousness from another of Fazan's proposal, dealing with targeting
certain ethnic communities for recruitment into the "Pioneers." Suggesting the most
suitable "tribes" for the Pioneers, Fazan's focus fell on the "Kavirondo, the Kamba and
Meru, and some of the coast tribes [sic]."\textsuperscript{20} In terms of quality "for a Pioneer Corps ... the
Kavirondo are certainly among the best of the tribes."\textsuperscript{21} And among the Kavirondo, the
Luo should be targeted first because "the Luo, no doubt, would yield with a fairly good
grace to conscription; the Bantu would come in not readily and there would probably be

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20 S. H. Fazan, "East African Pioneer Corps: Memorandum on the cost of Training a nucleus in Peace
21 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Memorandum entitled "Labor Corps," (The Pioneers,
1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
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some degree of disaffection in some of the more political location."22 The communities were supposed to be enticed and convinced to join the proposed Pioneer Corp otherwise "they will not engage in it voluntarily."23 It was argued that if "it was made clear" to these communities that "the Pioneer Corps will not carry loads as part of their regular duties and that they will in fact be auxiliary troops who would receive some training and at least some proportion of whom would be armed, they would come forward for that readily enough." [italics mine]24 A pledge was also made to the men that joining the Pioneers would "not spoil their chances of getting into the KAR."25

But as the early history of the Pioneers shows, most of these promises were never kept; when it came to joining the KAR, the Pioneers were given first preference for sure, but there was always a caveat that almost always saw only the men from "martial communities" graduating from the Pioneers into the KAR while men from "non-martial" communities continued to serve in the Pioneers. What was happening was that deception was being used for the recruitment of unsuspecting askaris into the "Pioneer Corps," the nomenclature by which the labor unit popularly came to be known.

The many reports and recommendations on the establishment of the Pioneers, which were submitted by Fazan in March 1939 had mixed result. One report stated, inter alia, that:

On 20th March, [1939] the Nyanza Man Power Sub-committee sponsored a memorandum by the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, which was then forwarded to the Chairman of the Man

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
Power Committee and subsequently laid before the Defence Committee. The memorandum proposed that instead of a "Carrier Corps" there should be raised and trained in peacetime a nucleus of a Pioneer Corps (R.E.) and of an auxiliary non-mechanized transport corps (A.S.C.).

The Man Power Committee accepted the idea of establishing a Pioneer Corps, but took no action on the proposal to establish an Auxiliary Corps "until after war broke out ... but the principle to form a nucleus of "Pioneer Corps ... approved in principle by the Defence Committee early in April and it [was] asked that the matter should be debated at the impending Provincial Commissioners' meeting with a view of formulating proposals in detail." At that subsequent meeting, which was held on 14th/15th April, 1939, a resolution was made on the need to establish a rudimentary nucleus of the Pioneer Corps. According to Fazan:

> It was agreed that the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, after consultation with the Provincial Commissioner, Central, and the Director of Public Works, should furnish a draft scheme for the formation of a such [sic] nucleus to be expanded to 1,000 strong if money was obtained for strategic roads.

The meeting also came up with recommendations on specific steps, which should be taken to form the nucleus of a future Pioneer Corps. The first batch of the Pioneers was supposed to consist of a peacetime nucleus of 1,000 men and which in wartime would be expanded to a force of 5,000 men in Nyanza, and 10,000 in Kenya as a whole. Other provinces such as Central Province were also required to establish "peace time nuclei in similar proportion to the quota required from them in wartime." A list of names of

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
potential recruits was to be drawn up, but it was realized in time that “if we make a provisional list of names and warn the persons listed we shall simply start a pack of rumors and nervousness all over the reserve. Whatever we may say everybody will think he is down for the carrier corps and many of the persons listed would immediately seek the shelter of other work as far away from the reserve as possible.”

Thus instead of making a list of names, the government resorted once again to deception to entice askaris into the Pioneer Corps. It had been realized that some men might quit the Pioneers after finding that they were being misled, and so the government devised ways of recruiting and holding the men without letting them become aware that they would be serving with the military labor corps during the war. In other words, it was necessary to keep the men busy as the time for war neared. A grant was thus secured from the government for the construction of roads in Nyanza. It was also recommended that the number of men, who were thought “sufficient to form a nucleus, be recruited in peacetime and employed on a six months’ contract or longer and that all superior staff employed on the work [foremen, gangers, nyaparas, etc] be carefully selected with a view to their eventually becoming warrant officers and NCO’s.” It was also recommended that the "gangs should at first be treated as ordinary road gangs in all outward respects although more care would be given to the supervision and weeding out of undesirables, but as the time approached when precautionary measures need no longer be concealed they would begin to receive some degree of drill and special training, various skilled ranks such as carpenters could be added and a proper Pioneer Corps begin

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30 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, Memorandum entitled “Labor Corps,” (The Pioneers,
to take shape.” Given the need to keep the men ignorant of their future work, the Pioneers was to be "developed as part of the Public Works Department [Apida] and with officers, foremen, and gangers largely drawn it but that as development is advanced it should become independent of the Public Works Department and form a military auxiliary unit as a Pioneer Corps (R.E). Other provinces were to do the same thing with their own nuclei of the Pioneers in their home provinces, and train them “for a period which might extend to two months after which they should be moved as required for roads or other works of military importance.”

The budget submitted in Fazan's memorandum of 25th April, 1939 was for a corps of 2,000 men for two months in Nyanza, [and other provinces] including the cost of pay and rations, equipment, construction material, and consumable stores was [British pounds] 10,963 [it was later discovered that these estimates had omitted tentage]. Once the Pioneers left Nyanza and was employed by the military, the monthly cost of the company – the recurrent expenditure – was estimated at [British pounds] 1,889. At its highest strength of 10,000 men, the cost of establishing a colony-wide Pioneer Corps would be [British pounds] 53,800, excluding recurrent expenditure. The budget and recommendations were accepted by the Financial Secretary who recommended the

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32 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
expenditure of [British pounds] 2,000, pending "a grant from the imperial government."\(^{36}\)

The grant was further increased afterwards from [British pounds] 2,000 to 2,350, to cover working cost of maintaining the corps for two months. The initial grant available to Nyanza was estimated to be enough for the maintenance of a peacetime nucleus of "1 Assistant engineer, 2 European foremen, 1 Time keeper and clerk, 2 Asiatic Gangers, 3 Masons, 1 Carpenter, 1 Blacksmith, 2 African Sergeants, 10 Corporals, and 300 men."\(^{37}\)

With the budget available, recruitment for the unit began in the latter part of May, 1939.

Recruitment began in earnest when in June 1939, some 180 men presented themselves, but when they learned of the provisional terms of service, only about 70 elected to remain. The terms of service, which caused a lot of discomfort and provoked the departure of most of the first recruits, were as follows:

a) Duration: At first it was for fifteen months. From October, 1942, duration of service was increased to two years but terminable by government at any time and, if war should break out in the meantime, extendable for the duration.\(^{38}\)

b) Pay: As a civil unit, they would earn Kshs. 12/- for the first two months, after which one quarter would get Kshs. 13/-, one quarter Kshs. 14/-, the remainder 12/-. In addition, there was Kshs. 8/- for rations. No criterion was provided on how those eligible for a raise would be selected, but presumably it would be on the basis of performance. The rates for the NCO's were unspecified. Should they have to leave the province, they would earn an extra Kshs. 2/-. It was felt that in the event that the military takes over this unit during war, the military would decided how much to pay the members of the "Pioneer Corps." When members of military labor units began serving from two years onwards, their pay was increased as well. Privates earned from Kshs. 17/-\(^{39}\).


\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) See, for instance, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 29th October, 1942, Recruitment of Africans for the Military, PC/NZA/2/3/67).

Moreover, the Pioneers also learned that they were "compulsorily" required by the Nyanza administration to provide monetary remittance to their families out of their monthly pay. Those who did not like the terms of recruitment quit, but those who chose to remain were issued with safari shirts, including belt and buckle, shorts, macduff shirts, caps, belts webbing coil with buckle, water bottles (charguls), haversack, blankets, "messing utensils," kit bags and sandals, locally manufactured at Nakuru Tannery. Members of the EAMLS did not bear arms, but they were promised that whenever KAR recruiters came to the Province on recruitment exercise, they would give the "Pioneers' first preference, taking "likely men from the Pioneer Corps before proceeding to recruit elsewhere in the districts."

Thus besides serving as nucleus for a future unit, the Pioneer Corps served as a source of recruits for other military units.

The "Pioneer Corps" scheme had a number of advantages in terms of putting the colony on a war-footing. In the first place, it was argued, there would be men on the ready instead of having to recruit them in a hurry in case of an emergency. Secondly, "the men would have some degree of training in advance together with their N.C.O.'s and Warrant Officers," and third, they would construct roads while waiting for war, and "if there is no war we should at least have got our trunk roads improved. Considering all that the Italian government has done for Abyssinia in this respect, our Imperial Government might well afford this and public confidence would be increased, especially if the scheme were to be

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extended to Tanganyika."\textsuperscript{41} With respect to Nyanza, the Pioneers was going to be involved in the construction of "the Ahero-Muhoroni road," suitable work for training the Nyanza nucleus. Its work was "an extremely good way of getting our roads improved and training men at the same time."\textsuperscript{42}

As its official functions show, the Pioneer Corps was formed for the purpose of processing and channeling the supposedly abundant labor of Nyanza in particular and in Kenya in general into the military. Recruitment into the Corps was facilitated by older members of the Pioneers, who visited their rural homes looking for recruits. When the war broke out, for instance, a party of sixty Pioneers was sent out to various parts of Nyanza to recruit men for the army. The number of recruits increased at the camp steadily and by 31\textsuperscript{st} July, 1939 stood at 350. Until further orders were issued the numbers of recruits at the Pioneers Corps stood at that – 350. Earlier on during the formation of the Pioneers, Fazan had boasted that, "Nyanza Province is quite capable of raising and training 5 Pioneer Battalions and also of recruiting drafts for five Auxiliary Transport Battalions."\textsuperscript{43} Any difficulty meeting quotas earmarked for Nyanza was never anticipated. In fact, besides promising to recruit the first quota of three thousand men with ease, Fazan urged the government to authorize Nyanza Province "to recruit and train here 5,000 and also send drafts to Nairobi for training there beyond that figure."\textsuperscript{44} A mere day later, Fazan sent another telegram to the government, beseeching that, a "most

\textsuperscript{42} S. H. Fazan, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} July, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
essential decision be now given whether should go on to full war time quota or not if
decided go on anticipate 5,000 procurable on voluntary basis and many more if
compulsion applied."45 One battalion of the labor unit was thus formed which drew its
men almost exclusively from Nyanza, in line with the first memorandum of the Chairman
of Manpower Committee, which had stated that Nyanza should "provide as many as
3,000 men" to the unit.46 When the Pioneer Corps was divided into two battalions by the
orders of the War Office, majority of the recruits were from Nyanza. By November,
1939, two battalions were almost "exclusively recruited" from the Nyanza Province.47
Michael Blundell, an officer who commanded a battalion of the 1st Pioneers in the NFD
and in Abyssinia, and which was formed as a result of Fazan’s effort, observed that the
Pioneers was composed of "men … [who] had all been recruited in Nyanza Province by
the Provincial Commissioner."48 Lt. Col. Bishop in a letter to Fazan thanked him "for all
the trouble you have expended on these units from the outset."49 When Italian air-crafts
bombed the Pioneers at Abu Haggag in 1942, Capt. H.E. Humphrey-Moore, the
Commanding Officer of 1808 Company revealed that his company was made up of 280
men from Nyanza and 40 non-Nyanza inhabitants. "Bar 40, the rest [280] of the company
come from Nyanza Province."50

Among the Luo of Nyanza, where the Pioneer Corps conducted much of its activities and

45 Ibid.
46 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to The Chairman of Man Power Committee, letter dated
Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
48 Michael Blundell, A Love Affair with the Sun, p. 49).
49 Lt. Col. Bishop to Fazan, letter dated 12th December, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/21).
50 Capt. H.E. Humphrey-Moore, Officer-Commanding, 1808 Company, to Nyanza Provincial
where most recruits for the Pioneer Corps and other labor units came from, the Pioneer Corps was known simply as *Panyako* – a corruption of the name “Pioneer Corps.” The Pioneer Corps was envisaged as a better replacement for the unpopular military unit, the “Carrier Corps” – *Kariokor* which had operated during the First World War. But all that proved to be lies. The name “Pioneer Corps” and promises made to recruits during the formation of the unit were simply made to skirt around people’s reluctance to serve in labor units without dealing with their grievances. The unit was formed by seemingly dealing with the tragedies of African service in the *Kariokor* in East Africa during the First World War, enabling the government to take advantage of the supposedly abundant labor of Nyanza in particular and Kenya in general during the Second World War, but in reality these problems were not dealt with in a direct, sincere and honest manner. The *East African Standard* newspaper and the *Nakuru Weekly News*, for instance, noted in their editorial analyses that “the Pioneers were misled as to their terms of service.”

After its formation, the Pioneer Corps camped about 3½ miles beyond Ahero on the projected new route between Kisumu and Muhoroni. This camp had a double advantage. In the first place the new route, when completed, would shorten the road distance between Kisumu and Nairobi by some 18½ miles. Secondly, it provided a definite job, which would keep the Pioneers busy. Thirdly, the road, until completion, would be a dead-end and training could proceed in private where no unauthorized person would intrude.” The in-charge of the Camp was Mr. R. Southby, reportedly an ex-officer of

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51 S. H. Fazan, quoting the two papers in a confidential rejoinder he wrote to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 22nd January, 1940, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
52 “The Pioneer Corps: Historical Record - Preliminary Recruitment and Training,” by Nyanza Provincial
Ycomanry with extensive campaigning experience. Southby was in direct charge of all
drill and camp discipline. Mr. R. Kerr, of the Public Works Department, was in charge of
the supervision of works. He was under the general direction of J. E. M. Noad, the
Divisional Engineer. Due to their early work, these officers have “since received the
thanks of the battalions for the work which they did those early days.” By July, 1939,
Mr. T. E. Davies, ex-Petty Officer, joined the staff at the Pioneer Camp. The organization
of the Pioneer Corps was done in line with the recommendations of General Giffard and
Colonel Watkins.

Askaris who served with the Pioneers from the very beginning were involved in “road
and other construction work.” The Pioneers' main work involved manhandling “lorries
stuck in the mud along their own roads and carry[ing] loads along their own roads when
necessary.” Road building and other construction work were performed according to a
syllabus laid out by J. E. M. Noad, the Divisional Engineer, Officer-in-Charge of
Training the Pioneers. As has already been discussed with respect to life at the Maseno
Recruiting and Holding Camp, the recruits generally woke up at 5:30 and went through
moral, educational, physical, recreational, drilling, and other aspects of training until
10:30, when they went to sleep. The whole objective of training was the transformation
of the recruit into a formidable fighting man, to become “like an expert hunter, always
alert and seeking an opportunity of striking at his quarry or watching his movements with
a view to future opportunities, confident and expert in the use of his weapon, skilled in

Commissioner in his “History of War Report,” dated 6th March, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/61).
53 Ibid.
the use of ground and able to stand fatigue without undue loss of efficiency. He must be determined, inquisitive and self-dependent, but must always remember that he is acting as one of a team. He must be highly proficient with the pick and the shovel.\textsuperscript{55} As men recruited specifically to participate in construction work and in road building, the syllabus for their training also involved learning “excavation,” “fetching water and run off drains,” “wheeling by hand barrow,” “building culverts,” learning “ballasts,” “cut and fill,” “mixing concrete,” and “grass and bush clearing.”\textsuperscript{56}

Things generally seemed to be running well at the camp as planned by the government, but it did not mean that askaris were happy at the camp. When a telegram reached Nairobi from the camp, it was to the effect that: “60 recruits expected tomorrow and full strength will be reached very shortly. Recruiting now working smoothly. Work excavating and laying hand surfacing. Hand work first mile of road surfaced. Men responding excellently to drill and discipline and showing pride in corps.”\textsuperscript{57} And this was done without any problem. During their time with the Pioneers at the Ahero Camp, the recruits managed to construct 18½ miles of one road and 3 miles of another road shaped and hard-surfaced. By the time it was through with constructing the Ahero-Muhoron section of the main road to Nairobi from 54 miles to 37 miles, besides cutting out many awkward bends and drifts.\textsuperscript{58}

But on the side of the askaris, although Fazan had stated that the Pioneers “would not be required, except in emergency to carry loads across the country [and that] drill would be

\textsuperscript{55} “Notes for British Officers,” (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Divisional Engineer, Telegram dated 12\textsuperscript{th} June, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
\textsuperscript{58} S. H. Fazan, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} July, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
included in their work," the carrying of loads would become part of the Pioneers’ regular duties during the war.59 The recruits faced other problems as well even at this early stage in the life of the Pioneers. During recruitment drives, the recruits were promised rifles, but this turned out never to be the case. Most members of the Pioneers were not issued rifles during the war. And when the men heard that they would not be issued with rifles contrary to promises made to them during recruitment, they refused to enlist, and where they enlisted, they demanded to be armed with rifles. Some men even went on “strike” over lack of rifles and “a few malcontents were discharged.”60 According to Fazan, “the majority insisted that, if they were not to have rifles, they would not join. Some 110 went home and 70 remained.”61

But the government soldiered on with looking for men for the Pioneers. By the first week of June, 1939, training began and the number of recruits in the Pioneers increased to 80. But the question of arming the Pioneers and other labor units with rifles was one that would also continue to haunt the administration and military authorities, especially given the fact that some senior military authorities believed that labor units should not be armed with rifles. When a Manpower Committee meeting on 30th September, 1942, noted the danger of not arming the men on morale and discipline, as it has already been noted in chapter 4, some officers in the military agreed that labor units should not be given rifles.

60 Fazan to Chief Secretary, confidential Letter dated 22nd January, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
Thus after noting that "the partial withdrawal of arms from the AAPC was likely to have adverse effect on morale and discipline with possible repercussions on recruiting," the Manpower Committee only recommended that during recruitment, care should be taken to carefully explain to potential AAPC recruits "that they would not necessarily be 100% armed." In the opinion of the Manpower Committee, the solution to the present problem lay in "regular rotation of work." Col. Anderson and Major Knox who worked with the committee as representatives of the Army Headquarters were against arming the labor units. Although they claimed to be "alive to the dangers of withdrawing arms and its possible effects on the discipline and morale of the men themselves and the future of recruiting at home," Col. Anderson and Major Knox nevertheless argued that they were not ready to arm the men because "there was a shortage of rifles." Both Col. Anderson and Major Knox claimed that their decision did not mean that, "men would not be armed when necessary and all the AAPC would continue to be trained in the use of arms." It was only for the time being, they argued. Thus they recommended that askaris should rotate in such a way that each company could have an opportunity to handle rifles. "Instead of each man having his own rifle ... companies should alternate between Desert and Delta, i.e., between labor and garrison duties and this should afford an opportunity of using the available arms to the best advantage."

But in the main, although Col. Anderson and Major Knox were conscious of what they

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62 The Secretariat to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 27th October, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
termed the "danger of attaching undue importance to the provision of arms," they contended that it would be "unwise to encourage the men to believe that their primary function was fighting rather than labor duties."\textsuperscript{67} The obstinacy of Col. Anderson and Major Knox would only be overcome by askaris themselves, who would eventually compel the military to issue them with rifles, enabling them to realize their ambition of wielding rifles and enjoying the feel of being "real soldiers." But this would come later as the demand for men would force the government to accede to askari pressure and demand for rifles in return for serving in the Pioneers.

As the military situation in Europe deteriorated, an order was sent to the Pioneers on 24\textsuperscript{th} August, 1939 to re-organize and streamline the structures of the Pioneers. The European officers who had already been selected for military service and who had already been alerted by the Manpower Committee (see: Chapter Two) arrived at the camp for duty. Some of these officers were later released for urgent civil work, but others went on to lead newly formed battalions of the Pioneers. The 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion was led by Major C. C. Dawson Currie, Captain G. L. Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieuts. D. M. McLeod, W. P. Langridge, E. J. Courtney, B. V. H. Shaw, and Regimental Seargent Major T.E. Davis. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Battalion was under Major E. H. Tapson, Capt. G. Williams, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieuts. A. J. Cooper, C. F. Ferguson, D. F. Smith, J. D. Russell, and Quarter Master Service A. Cushney. The acting and founding officer of the Ahero Depot, Major R. Southby, retired before the end of the September 1939. His place was taken up by Capt. W. Truro Norris, who became the new officer in charge of the depot. The division of the Pioneer corps into two battalions was

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
approved by the government in a telegram dated 30th October, 1939. On 28th August, 1939, Capt. G. L. Smith also arrived for duty with the Pioneers. He took charge of the office depot in Kisumu, where his principle duty was to issue supplies, which had been ordered for them by the Divisional Engineer. Mr. G. V. Williams also joined the Pioneers as an officer. On 30th August, 1939, Capt. Porter, the Assistant Conservator, reported for duty with the Pioneers, “having accepted the allocation offered to him with the approval of the head of his department.” The officers of the battalions remained like this for quite some time, and only one officer, Sergeant W. Jenkins would join the 1st Battalion just before the battalions left Nyanza Province on 11th November, 1939. The Director of Public Works was appointed “Officer-in-Charge, Pioneer Corps,” a clear sign that the Pioneer’s chief duty was the provision of labor, contrary what the recruits had been made to believe during recruitment that they were going to be “real” soldiers of the Empire.

The order for the reorganization and restructuring of the Pioneers also saw the expansion of the Pioneer Corps, because it called for the recruitment of more men in preparation for the war. Most of these recruits were already in service and were “by this time becom[ing] used to the Corps and the conditions of service.” Two days later after the call for men, on 26th August, 1939, Major. E. H. Tapson of the 2nd Battalion, went out on a recruitment drive. Many Kenyans heeded the call for recruits and “join[ed] in large numbers.”

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70 Acting Chief Secretary to Director of Public Works, undated letter, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
According to S. H. Fazan, “volunteers had already begun to arrive in numbers.” 72 The Medical Officer was asked to make his examination strict and reject the unfit, but even so, the number of askaris seeking to join the Pioneers was quite high. In spite “of the heroic efforts of the P.W.D. to provide corrugated iron tents in sufficient numbers, the camp could not be expanded fast enough to take the recruits who passed the doctor. As a result it was decided that the ginnery at Kibos would be used as “forward depot for recruits who had passed the doctor, keeping the Kisumu Labor Camp as a depot for recruits still awaiting examination.” 73 Capt. Porter was put in charge of the forward depot at Kibos, “where some four hundred Pioneer recruits, who had passed the doctor, were waiting until they could be passed on to the camp.” 74 Here at Kibos, the recruits were registered and given recreation and drill. On one occasion in the second half of 1939, an officer of the KAR arrived in Nyanza. Capt. Hurt’s arrival was an opportunity for the government to demonstrate to askaris its pledge that the KAR and other military units would not conduct recruitment elsewhere in the province before giving the Pioneer Corps recruits a chance.

Many recruits in the Pioneers wanted to leave and join other military units, particularly KAR. Even though many of the men joined the Pioneer Corps for many reasons, they were never satisfied with the Pioneers; their hearts were elsewhere, they yearned to serve in other units where they would meet their needs while serving like “real soldiers.” Promising that he would not look elsewhere before trying the Pioneers, the KAR officer on this occasion “selected all the men he wanted, some 405, taking some from the

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Pioneers in training and the remaining from the Pioneer recruits who had come into the depot.”75 The recruiting officer spent three days recruiting and he would have “recruited many more but had reached his authorized total.”76 The exercise of selecting the 405 recruits obviously “delighted the men who were selected … [but] engendered some discontent among those who were not.”77 By the time recruitment was suspended on 6th September, 1939, the number in the Pioneer Corps stood at 1,900. Men had turned out in large numbers and Fazan remarked that, “the response of the natives [had] been truly amazing.”78 Many of the newly recruited men at the camp were “untrained,” but “full of keenness” and it was hoped that a planned training of six weeks would see them move off, “in a semi-trained condition … proceed[ing] to its work in a military area.”79

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
79 Ibid. Besides Ahero and Kibos, the Pioneers (73 Group AAPC) were also housed at temporary cap within Kisumu Township in April and May, 1942. Kisumu Township had several other camps: Conscript Labor Camp, RAF Camp, Military Details Camp, and even a Prisoners of War Camp.Originally the camp was designed for Asian refugees leaving Mombasa at the beginning of the war, and was built as near as possible to the Asian civilians. After the Asian refugees left, it was turned over to the Pioneers. Its location was apparently not conducive for the holding of men for the military. “The siting of this camp was not given adequate consideration before it was decided to post the group [the Pioneers]. Housing for Africans were extremely poor. “The African lines are of a very temporary nature, constructed with poles, grass roofs, and Kavirondo matting sides,” Flynn reveals. (With the prospects for the end of the war high, Flynn would recommend that the Camp be destroyed: “The poles could be reserved for use elsewhere, but the other materials and the whole camp should be destroyed.”) (see: J.H. Flynn, Acting Nyanza Provincial commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 9th February, 1944, The Pioneers, 1939-42, PC/NZA/2/3/21). It was difficult to control the African Personnel “by reason of their proximity to the native location and it is largely on this account that the group is to move.” (J.H. Flynn, Acting Nyanza Provincial commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 9th February, 1944, The Pioneers, 1939-42, PC/NZA/2/3/21). Flynn blamed the camp for the breakdown of law and order and for causing loose morals in the area around the camp. “It is no exaggeration,” Flynn wrote, to state that the morals and law and order of this native location have sunk to deplorable levels as a result of its proximity to the military camp.” (J.H. Flynn, Acting Nyanza Provincial commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 9th February, 1944, The Pioneers, 1939-42,
Recruitment for the Pioneer Corps and other units, as already seen in previous chapters, was conducted by the District Commissioner, District Officers, officers of the Corps, and also by a party of sixty of the Pioneers who were already in service.

Askaris generally believed that their discipline was up to standard, though they often complained about the lack of rifles. Some askaris also complained about an outbreak of typhoid fever, which afflicted the camp due to “bad water supply” and the rocky nature of the ground, which had led to the building of shallow trench latrines and allowed fly-breeding. Askaris also raised questions about pay. When 300 recruits who were going to join the Pioneers were rejected on medical ground and were turned over to the Public Works Department at a wage of Kshs. 16/- and Kshs. 4/- for posho, on terms that were better than that of the Pioneers earned, “the incident rankled” and there were complaints in the camp. Some recruits like Okumu Aulo and Oyaga Ogola fled the Pioneer Corps Camp and an order was issued to the effect that “mshike hawa watu wenye kutoroka katika Pioneer Corps, mlete hapa kwa mara moja [arrest these people who fled the Pioneer Corps, and bring them here at once].” The period when the unit was at the Ahero camp also showed that the level of training of the Pioneers was not up to the level required – apparently the recruits were spending much of their time on road construction instead of training. More training was undoubtedly required. An untrained detachment sent to Nairobi for urgent duty in the first few days of the war was “not very satisfactory

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80 S. H. Fazan to the General Staff Officer, letter dated 7th November, 1939, The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21)
81 District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo to Chief Elija Bonyo, Sakwa, letter dated 15th November, 1939, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).
and returned crestfallen for further training."82 In technical skills the corps was classified as unskilled but there were was a "fair sprinkling of technicians in its ranks and can look forward to becoming semi-skilled."83 In the latter half of October, 1939, 125 Pioneers were chosen and deployed into the Royal Engineers (R.E.). This was a loss to the Pioneers, but those who left were "replaced by new recruits ...[who] are equally good material."84 S. H. Fazan, also complained about the training of drivers, though it is not clear whether he was referring to the Ahero camp or another one. The recruits for the ASC, Fazan observed, were noted for their incompetence, they "have frequently been passed out as drivers after a very short course in depot and only a few hours actual experience of driving. The shortage of officers and BNCO's has been acute."85 Finding that "the training now given at the MLS and ASC depots is too short a course to fit a man for service outside of East Africa," the government decided to take action emphasizing on training and efficiency even though it would have the "the immediate effect of re-organization [which] will be to decrease the rate of output."86 Some of the changes also involved improving the terms of service of the Pioneers.

An important stage in the evolution of the Pioneer Corps was its official designation by the military as a combat unit, and its askaris as combatants towards the end of 1939.

Given the fact that to a large extent the Pioneers were formed due to the urgings of

83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
civilian authorities – the Chairman of Manpower Committee and through the effort of Fazan himself, the Pioneers was initially never given the kind of attention that other military units under the War Office enjoyed. By the time the war broke out, the Pioneers was operating under the Director of Public Works rather than under the military office. And following the initial non-appearance of Italy in the battle-field as had been feared, recruitment into the Pioneers subsided with adverse implications. The "State of Impending War" in the colony lowered the status of the Pioneers in the eyes of the military even further, and the military as well as the government even tried to employ the Pioneers in tasks it had not been intended to do. There were attempts to continue maintaining the Pioneers as ordinary labor work force, working in the Public Works Department in the construction of strategic roads. Thus when Fazan heard that the government, following the non-involvement of Italy in the war during the initial period it broke out, was trying to use the Pioneers as porters, he began to campaign for the adoption of the Pioneers as a fully-fledged military unit. Fazan took up the struggle to have the Pioneers recognized as a formal unit within the military. “There was no suggestion by me,” Fazan wrote when the military began using the Pioneers as porters, “that the labor would be used as carriers but I agreed that in the event of a road being bad, the labor would be required to push the lorries through or if necessary unload and carry the contents of the lorries for a short distance - this only in an emergency.” But at first these complaints were to no avail. Fazan tried to point out that “if the Corps is to be a success it seems to be very necessary that disabilities mentioned in the memorandum

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should be removed." 88 Steps needed to be taken to prevent the Pioneers from becoming just another Carrier Corps. "I saw the enormous casualties which lack of proper organization and training brought about in the Carrier Corps in the last war and I am alarmed to see several of the same feature reproduced in the present proposed organization." 89

And as time went by, the welfare and interests of askaris in the Pioneers became largely dependent on the agitation waged by askaris themselves, and more so, on the campaigns of Fazan, who had also, paradoxically, become extremely attached to the corps he had virtually created single-handedly. Although the formation of the Pioneers was to a large extent based on deceptive tactics employed by S. H. Fazan himself, its welfare and interest ironically grew largely because of Fazan’s influence within the government and the military. Fazan was never far behind when the welfare and interests of the unit were at stake, though he had himself been guilty of using ploys to entice men into the Pioneers. He campaigned incessantly with the Government, the War Office, and local Military Administration for the adoption of the Pioneers as a military unit in equal ranks with the others. “In the whole of my twenty-eight years service,” Fazan wrote in one letter, “I have never seen an organization which was more keenly taken up by the natives or promised better success. The men are as strictly examined by the medical officers before joining as if they were KAR and the same physical standard is required, and if left at their own work, will speedily become very useful as Pioneers, fit to serve in any field where

89 Fazan to Chief Secretary, letter dated 1st September, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
the KAR can go.” Through Fazan’s influence, other government officials also took up
the campaign to transform the Pioneers into a formal corps within the military, even
though at this time the Pioneers was not doing any recruitment given the fact that Italy
had failed to enter the war on the side of the Axis. A letter from the Secretariat let Fazan
aware that there were people in the administration who sympathized with his effort. “I
begged for the recognition of the Corps as a military unit,” stated the writer, “and I think
I have won as telegrams have at once been sent both by the G.O.C. and His
Excellency.” Another letter informed Fazan that the G.O.C., who “appreciates the
excellent work which you and the officers responsible for its formation have put in” was
“seeking recognition from the War Office of the formation of the Pioneers, and if this is
obtained, their standing should be assured.” Even the Governor of the Colony, no less,
“spoke warmly of your [Fazan’s] zeal and enthusiasm which has brought the corps into
being.” By 13th September, 1939, Fazan was informing a Mr. Oates that “I have strong
hopes that formal recognition as a military unit will be accorded them shortly.” Five
days later, on 18th September, 1939, Fazan sent a letter to the Officers Commanding, First
and Second Battalions, the Pioneer Corps, congratulating them “on the occasion of the
gazettement of the Pioneers corps as a military unit.” Fazan believed that the men
serving in the Pioneers looked forward to the “date when they can leave this province and

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90 S. H. Fazan in a confidential letter dated 11th September, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/21).
91 The Secretariat to S. H. Fazan, letter dated 5th September, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/21).
92 East African Force Headquarters to S. H. Fazan, letter date 12th September, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-
42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
93 Secretariat to S. H. Fazan, letter dated 5th September, 1939, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA,
PC/NZA/2/3/21).
95 Fazan to the Officer Commanding, first Battalion, the pioneer Corps, letter dated 18th September, 1939,
(The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
take up their duties on military roads." They would henceforth be classified as "combatants." They would be grouped into battalions of 250 combatants.

By 11th November, 1939, the newly classified combatants of the Pioneers left Nyanza for what S. H. Fazan described as "a more active field." Their departure, Fazan would later confess, made him "feel lonely without them." The officers of the two battalions held a meeting in the Officers Mess and many Europeans from the province were in attendance. Two days later, on 13th November, a company of the second battalion left. On 29th November, the remainder of the two battalions left and "are now 'somewhere in Kenya, taking with them the good wishes of the provinces." After the battalions had left for service elsewhere, there now remained the Depot Officer, Capt. Norris, and some 220 African rank and file who were "supernumerary to the establishment of the two battalions. These recruits, under the command of Capt. Truro Norris, left for Jinja on 7th December, 1939, where their training "will be continued either as Pioneers or as drafts.

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for some other branch of the service."\(^{100}\) From Jinja Capt. Truro returned to Kisumu and the "functions of the Home Depot have still to be decided in detail."

**Pattern of Recruitment of the Pioneers.**

During the first stages of recruitment in 1939 in Nyanza, it is noteworthy that most men were often compelled to join the Pioneers rather than other units. By the end of October, 1939, the pattern of recruitment into various units was as follows, with the majority joining the Pioneers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR:</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers:</td>
<td>1,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAMC:</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAASC:</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police (Maseno):</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers (to Mombasa):</td>
<td>97(^{101})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Little or no recruitment for the Pioneers was conducted in Nyanza between December 1939 to February 1940. This was due to the "non-entry of Italy into the war [and so] ... [it was] ... felt that the commitment of this colony should not be increased beyond those already undertaken, nor should extra expenditure be incurred."\(^{102}\) After an interlude, recruitment resumed the following year, 1940, and again it was based on the already existing pattern. The numbers recruited for the Pioneers as before was higher because of the fact that it was assumed that Nyanza had many men who could be recruited. Up to June, 1940, recruitment was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Kipsigis</th>
<th>Kavirondo Districts</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2071</td>
<td>2072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{100}\) Ibid.
\(^{101}\) (Report on History of the War, dated 9\(^{th}\) March, 1940, History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
EA Engineers - 134 134
EAASC 46 189 235
EAMC 7 90 97
Military Police 7 13 20
Kenya Police 251 243 494
Cooks and Batmen 9 - 9

(There were also 19 “alien” Kenyans recruited for the EAASC, making the total number of Kenyans sent forward from Nyanza 3,640){103}

From 1st July, 1940 to 30th September 1940, recruitment was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kipsigis</th>
<th>Kavirondo Districts</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAASC</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAMC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Police</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks and Batmen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweepers:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAMLS:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1718.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As already noted, most of government reports presented the Pioneers as volunteers.

During a brisk recruitment drive in Nyanza for the KAR and the Pioneers in June, 1940, "volunteers came forward readily."{105} Most recruits from Nyanza Province were deployed to serve in almost the same unit, contrary to military policy, which at least by 1942, and enunciated by Col. Knox, was against the maintaining of certain military units exclusively for men from one community, and was instead in favor of “tribal mixing.”{106}

It was believed that "a particular tribal failing is less likely to manifest itself in a mixed

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{103} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 14th October, 40, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
{104} Ibid.
{105} “Memorandum on the War Effort by Natives of the Nyanza Province,” (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
{106} For Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 2nd November, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
unit. This kind of policy appears not to have been in force at the time that the Pioneers were established. Col. Michael Blundell’s 1st EA Pioneer battalion, for example, was “98% Nyanza and predominantly made up of the Luo. The first "Rifles Engineers Company to be formed in Kenya and the two Pioneer Battalions were drawn wholly, in respect of their African ranks, from Nyanza natives.” By the end of August, 1940, the 2,527 labor recruits from Nyanza served in the Pioneers and Engineers. “All but one man were drawn from the three Kavirondo districts.” Compared to 680 men from Kavirondo who were serving in the KAR, one can see how emphasis was placed on deploying Nyanza men into the Pioneers and Engineers – in units where the soldiers did not necessarily use rifles in direct combat.

Thus more Kenyans especially from Nyanza served in the Pioneers and the East African Military Service than in any one military unit. Recruitment patterns show that many men from that part of Kenya were enlisted into the Pioneers and the EAMLS than in one single unit of the military during the war. By the end of December, 1940, the figures for Nyanza Province were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/Kavirondo</th>
<th>C/Kavirondo</th>
<th>S/Kavirondo</th>
<th>Kericho</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>1055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAMLS</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

107 Ibid.
108 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 29th December, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67; Michael Blundell himself observed in his autobiography, A Love Affair with the Sun: A Memoir of Seventy Years in Kenya, that the unit he commanded during the war was made up of the Luo of Nyanza, raised by the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza).
109 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to his District Commissioners, letter dated 27th December, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
110 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to his District Commissioners, letter dated 12th November, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
EAASC  384  355  328  369  1,636
EAAMC  70   67   57   7   201
Irregulars  90  115  41  24  270
Military Police  8  8  5  13  34

2,366  4,073  1,878  991  9,308

From April, 1941, the returns for the Pioneers and KAR were shown as one in the Nyanza Provincial reports. The reason for this is not clear, but it could perhaps have been to continue with the illusion that KAR and Pioneer recruits were one and the same, even though their duties were substantially different. In any case, once the administration began showing the Pioneers as members of the KAR, the figures for KAR increased significantly. By the end of March, 1941, the number of recruits from Nyanza were as follows, again demonstrating how the government was dependant on the region for men for the Pioneers and EAMLS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/Kavirondo</th>
<th>C/Kavirondo</th>
<th>S/Kavirondo</th>
<th>Kericho</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>2,354</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>4,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAMLS</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAASC</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>2,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAMC</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregulars</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mil. Police</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,677</td>
<td>5,447</td>
<td>2,988</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>13,331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By May, 1941, when recruitment was "shut down" by the order of the government, the number of men in the units were:

- KAR (including Pioneers): 4,328
- Engineers: 134
- EAMLS: 6,375
- EAAMC: 428
- EAASC: 2,870
- Irregulars: 270
- Military Police: 34
- Total: 14,439

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111 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 8th January, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48 PC/NZA/2/3/61).
112 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 7th April, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
Later in 1941, the administration reverted to the earlier system of showing the number of recruits for the Pioneers as distinct group from KAR. Even so, the pattern of recruitment remained the same and the number of recruits for the Pioneers and other labor intensive military units like the EAMLS, and EAASC always remained higher than the other more specialized units - the Engineers, EAAMC, EAASC, and the KAR. Even on the rare occasion when the number of soldiers in a unit like the KAR was higher than the number of soldiers in most other units, as it happened in October, 1941, its numbers were higher than the auxiliary Pioneers, but less than the EAMLS. The figures for October, 1941, were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/Kavirondo</th>
<th>C/Kavirondo</th>
<th>S/Kavirondo</th>
<th>Kericho</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>2,401</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>4,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMC</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>3,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux. Pioneers</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>2,613</td>
<td>2,688</td>
<td>2,463</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Police</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATD</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregulars</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,105</td>
<td>6,852</td>
<td>4,105</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>17,404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the personal initiative, determination, and connivance of colonial administrators like Fazan, the “Pioneers Corps” became one of the most important military units in which askaris served. Labor was critical to the conduct of the war and the Pioneers and East African Military Labor Service were closely associated with the mobilization of labor for the military. The “Pioneer Corps,” which began ostensibly as a nucleus of a military labor unit, expanded in size during the war and saw service outside of Kenya.

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113 Ibid.
114 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 6th November, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
during the war. The non-issue of rifles still bothered the askaris, and at one point they reportedly pointed out to their officers that “you told us that we are just as much askaris as the KAR because the KAR cannot fight unless they have roads for lorries to take their supplies to them. Surely then, if we have to make the roads, we shall be in front of the troops and be slaughtered like women unless we are armed.”¹¹⁵ Fazan urged the government to issue the Pioneers with rifles before they left for Abyssinia because of the “fact that the Pioneer Corps elsewhere are armed, as also the Italian ‘Legione Lavoratore’ in Abyssinia, [which] though not known to our Pioneers but they will probably find out.”¹¹⁶ But as already indicated, the issue of rifles continued to be a major source of contention among the Pioneers even after the end of the East African Campaign, and as late as October 1942, the military was still talking in terms of rotating a small number of rifles among the Pioneers as a way of dealing with this grievance. By the time the war came to an end, this grievance does not appear to have been fully resolved; the Pioneers were classified as “combatants” to be sure, and that was that.

The Pioneers at War.

The activities of the askaris in the Pioneers were followed quite keenly particularly in Nyanza where the bulk of them came from. On 16th February, 1940, Fazan, together with Chief Jairo Owino of Gem and Chief Muganda Okwako of North Ugenya, visited the Pioneers in Isiolo, NFD. A report that Fazan wrote on their visit is quite revealing of the close attachment that he personally and other colonial officials came to develop with the Pioneers, and also the problems the Pioneers were facing. Traveling with Chiefs Jairo

Owino of Gem and Muganda Okwako of Ugenya, the entourage met Majors Tapson and Blundell, Officers Commanding the 2nd and 1st Battalion Pioneers respectively. Immediately on arrival two companies of the 1st Battalion, which were in camp, were mustered in a lecture Banda, and the Chiefs were allowed half an hour to talk to them by themselves. The majority of askaris were concerned with issues to do with how their money were being remitted to their families in the form of Family Remittance and reasons behind any delays were explained. "As soon as they were happy on this point," Fazan recalled, "they clustered round me asking me to take various amounts home. In all I received Kshs. 715/- in cash, and numerous sealed envelopes said to contain money and the two chiefs took approximately 25 sealed packets each for persons of their locations. When I left them and said goodbye there was a spontaneous clapping of hands, and an expression of gratitude for the visit and a request that I should arrange another visit in three months."117 Apart from the issue of family remittance, Fazan also revealed that Pioneers were also concerned about "why their letters were opened in Nairobi" and for the first time many askaris began to learn about the work of government censor. There were also questions about footwear and "the pay of one man was referred to Major Blundell who promised to look into them."118 The askaris also heard that there were plans to buy them a football and to start a canteen. According to Fazan's secret memorandum, another issue that worried the askaris was "leave and free return passes [which] seemed to worry them most, [and I mentioned this to Col. Martin whom I saw at Force Headquarters]; rates of pay were also mentioned but not in a contentious

Pioneers, 1939-42, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
116 Ibid.
manner..."\(^{119}\)

After a short time of serving in the NFD repairing roads, the Pioneers were deployed in Italian Somaliland, Abyssinia, and Eritrea during the Eastern Africa Campaign, and thereafter outside of Eastern Africa proper. To a large extent this was due to Fazan’s campaign, who, again, was always persistently championing the deployment of the Pioneers in other theaters of the war. Fazan envisaged – almost in a self-fulfilling prophecy – that “Pioneers or Military Labor Service may be wanted to proceed to Egypt or elsewhere” during the war.\(^{120}\) This was at a time when even the Colonial Attorney-General was reticent about the wisdom and practicality of “using East African labor and troops in the Middle East” and was wondering how these men, used to a summer, tropical climate, “would remain fit, or even alive, during the winter.”\(^{121}\) Government officials like the Attorney General worried about the practicality of “moving large numbers of men for a few months only ... [it is] ... not an economic proposition, and, in any case, this year is already so far advanced that it us not likely that they could be used in the Middle East until, say, next May.”\(^{122}\) Making a suggestion that was clearly a throw-back to the early beginning of the Pioneers, the Attorney-General felt that if the military authorities decided not to use the Pioneers and the labor units abroad, then they should “possibly be used for public works.”\(^{123}\) But Fazan continued to demand that the Pioneers be deployed

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\(^{118}\) Ibid.

\(^{119}\) Ibid.


\(^{121}\) Attorney-General to S.H. Fazan, letter dated 9th May, 1941, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).

\(^{122}\) Ibid.

\(^{123}\) Ibid.
in other places during the war, particularly in Egypt and the Middle East. Where doubts were expressed about climatic change or whether the Pioneers could really adapt, Fazan argued that, "I do not see how this question can be settled otherwise than by sending samples and seeing how they do." Thus largely due to Fazan's persistence, the Pioneers traveled outside of East Africa, and saw war in places as far flung as Egypt, Libya, and the Middle East.

By the time the Pioneers went to serve outside Eastern Africa, after the end of Italian occupation of Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland, they had been regrouped under the general command of the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC), a newly formed Corps which also commanded the EAMLS, and companies from West Africa and the High Commission Territories of Swaziland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland. The Pioneers were organized into several groups, each group consisting of companies of 300 men each. According to Timothy Parsons, there were eight such groups from East Africa serving in the Middle East. Each of the companies in these groups were commanded by officers from Kenya, as had been suggested by Fazan. By 1944, the East African contingent in the AAPC consisted of fifty-six AAPC Companies, six EAASC general transport companies, plus 5 NRR and 23 KAR, the only African combat unit sent into the region during the war. The East African Pioneers served in the Middle East with other Pioneer Companies from British colonies like India, Mauritius, Palestine and Cyprus, though theoretically the government planned not to let them mix with soldiers from other parts of

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125 Timothy Parsons, The African Rank-and-File, p. 27
126 Ibid.
the world for fear of exposing them to "negative" ideas.

Besides visits with the Pioneers, the activities of the Pioneers and the EAMLS were often circulated to the provincial authorities where the askaris came from on a regular basis, and were therefore well known. In one report, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner was informed that, "the men sent from Nyanza have earned special commendation both in the Pioneers and in the EAMLS."\(^{127}\) In one letter, the GOC told Fazan that, "it will, I know, interest you to hear that the 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) Pioneer Battalions, KAR, both of which were raised in Nyanza Province, have been, and are, doing extremely good and useful work in the Northern Frontier District."\(^{128}\) The *East African Standard* correspondent’s report, and quoted by Fazan, mentioned the contribution of the Pioneers to the military success in the battle for El Wak. The "Divisional Commander" the report goes, did not believe that his appreciation of the work done at El Wak would be complete "without a tribute to the sappers and the Pioneers. Had it not been for them we could never have got through and back again. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that but for the enthusiasm of the engineers and Pioneers the Force would never have arrived at its destination nor achieved its object."\(^{129}\) These reports were "given … the widest possible publicity in barazas and Local Native Council meetings and otherwise."\(^{130}\) "Our Pioneers," Fazan wrote, "have shown themselves to be valuable troops and have earned commendation when properly supplied with officers and B.N.C.O.’s. It is a little disparagement of them to write that in

\(^{127}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s report for December 1\(^{st}\) to February, 1941, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).

\(^{128}\) Ibid.

\(^{129}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to his District Commissioners, letter dated 27\(^{th}\) December, 1940, (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).

\(^{130}\) Ibid.
early days before this requirement was met they were not so good." Major Michael Blundell, Commander of 1st Battalion, E.A. Pioneers, wrote to Fazan to inform him about the Pioneers' operations in Abyssinia, hoping “you will forgive me if I blow my trumpet a little.” We have had a very hard time more than any their unit” wrote Blundell, “… and I have just got a decent leave draft at last which is the first save for a small party immediately after the fall of Gondar in a whole year. The battalion laid the first causeway in Italian Somaliland where they were heavily bombed and ended up at Gondar so we have seen the whole show through. The men were a bit disappointed after Gondar not to come home but we are being used as an infantry and cannot be relieved at the moment. They have settled down again especially when I was able to get some off on leave as everyone else sends messages and letters and bits of news to their relatives they are naturally very cut off as we have been unable to get the Nairobi Luo broadcasts and sometimes have been 2000 miles from home. At Gondar we were used as infantry and attacked with a KAR battalion. You will be pleased that the men did extremely well … Corporal Henry securing an immediate award of the M.M. I have put so much work and trouble into this battalion but I was well repaid by their performance in the operations which our side were extremely arduous and I was amazed at the men’s morale and ability to stick it out. I must confess that I respected them and admired more and when I see the usual correspondence in the East African papers about the poorness of the African, I resent it when I think of the things our chaps did. Half of the East Africans’ trouble is that they do not feed their people enough and work against them instead of with. I cannot in a letter go in for a long rigmarole about the men but I think you can take it that the

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131 S. H. Fazan, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, “A Memorandum on Military Recruitment, 5th May,
battalion has earned a good name and deserves it. Even today after the disappointment of not getting home and after hearing that the 2nd battalion has got back, they keep up their keenness and morale. They have not from the time of going to Wajir in September, 1940 till the end of 1941 slept under a roof. After Gondar we relieved 5 KAR at Gimma and were responsible for the securing and evacuation of 3500 Italians there. We then relieved another first line battalion and are out in the bush again. I think that I have told you that we came up in advance right through Mogadishu, Jigjiga, Hara, Dire-Daua, Auase and then into the Lakes area and finally up to the Gojam. We have seen more of Ethiopia than any other unit. The men have done well in all their scraps from their Pioneer duties and Nyanza Province need not feel ashamed of them. Similar reports of the successful participation of the Pioneers in the war, Fazan wrote in a reply to Major Blundell, were coming from the Middle East.

The only downside to the news of successful service by the Pioneers in the war was the fateful news of the bombing of the Pioneers and other military labor units at Abu Hagag. Major Humphrey More's report best captures the incident. An Italian aircraft had swooped on the members of the Pioneers and other units, Major Humphrey Moore’s 1808 Coy, as they waited for their train at Abu Hagag in June 1942. With the exception of 40 men, the rest of the company, a total of 280 men, were from Nyanza. The “1808 Company has been under enemy aircraft fire by night and bombs by day,” Officer-

1941,” (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
134 For some more details, see: (War Casualties, KNA, DC/NZA/2/3/97).
Commanding, Capt. H. E. Humphrey-Moore, informed S. H. Fazan.\textsuperscript{135}"One heavy bomb burst about 60 yards from a lorry which was leaving for work and there the company suffered the only casualty, No.5370 Ongaro Ogolo [from Chief Amoth's Alego location] who was grazed on the left arm by a piece of shrapnel ... I would be glad if you would inform his brother Obuyu that after having his wound dressed, Ongaro is back at work with the company ... Our only other casualty is KML 6298 Onyango Mudenge [Chief D. Wanga – North Kavirondo] who, while cleaning out Italian debris from outside his dug out was hit by a bomb concealed in the muck. He has been evacuated to hospital. Wounded in the flesh of the right leg-arm – not at all seriously. Would you please tell his brother Murunga that, Onyango was very lucky."\textsuperscript{136} During the bombing, the "behavior of all was excellent during the action."\textsuperscript{137} Apart from the bombing, Capt. H. E. Humphrey-Moore assured Fazan that "there has been no serious illness despite the climate and those in hospital have gone there for 'Gippy' only. All ranks are in excellent spirits, and you would be surprised at the amount of 'souvenirs' they have collected."\textsuperscript{138}

Capt. Humphrey-Moore further informed Fazan that his company was the "best." "In handing us over to the 31st Road Construction SAEC for duty, the O.C. 55 Group [Col. Lowth] admitted that my 'army' was his best Company."\textsuperscript{139} Although the optimism and pride of the administration in the troops raised from Nyanza was severely jolted by the Abu Haggag incident, the administration and the police took solace from the deportation

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
and conduct of the troops. Quoting a letter from the Governor himself, C. H. Williams, then acting as Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, informed all District Commissioners in Nyanza that “his Excellency notes with satisfaction that the men behaved splendidly in most trying circumstances.” Another Officer of the 1862 Company, who was known as highly critical of the Pioneers in civil life, sent a report to the Nyanza administration, informing it that, “these lads of ours are doing a grand job up here and it amazes me what jobs they can be out to. My own are doing very highly skilled work, and doing it d__d well and maintaining high production figures.” But now they were performing quite well. Through these stories the public was kept abreast of the activities of the unit, and many men were enticed into serving in the army.

Another incident askaris remembered during interviews was a major mutiny involving the 1808 Company. Even though this was not the first time that the Pioneers were going on strike and complaining about poor treatment in the army, it still came as a shock to the Provincial Administration in Nyanza to learn that the pioneers had gone on strike. The strike, paradoxically, involved the 1808 Company, which had received effusive commentaries for its stoic stand during the bombing at Abu Haggag. It was a well-known company in the Middle East and S. H. Fazan, formerly the Provincial Commissioner, and now the Army Liaison Officer, had also lauded the company for it work. “Our reputation is known to KAR everywhere,” Fazan had commented. During the operations in the Western desert, it was reported, only 6 “Mention Dispatches” were awarded to the

140 C. H. Williams, Acting Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 27th October, 1942, (Recruitment of Africans for the Military, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/67).
141 K. L. Hunter to Chief Secretary, quoting the officer in a letter dated 25th April, 1944, (The Pioneers, 1939-42, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/21).
Pioneers, and “three of them were awarded to this Company for the deeds performed by
the Company.”

But this was the company that staged a major mutiny on the 5th January, 1944. According
to Humphrey-Moore, the mutiny occurred when a recruit who was learning to drive under
the instructions of one Company driver lost control and his truck ran into a tent “and
injured KML. 11778 Private Obuya Agwambo.” Afterwards, continued Humphrey-
Moore, “some men wished to see the Commanding Officer 59 Group [an old East
African] concerning the matter. The attitude of the men during the interview with the
Commanding Officer in the presence of the Company Commander [myself] was
indisciplined and of a nature to throw disgrace on the Company. I did not think this
attitude possible from men of the Nyanza Province, and would certainly not be suffered
by their chiefs, nor I think, their mlango [headman]. One askari actually hysterically
cried.” From Humphrey-Moore's report, the names of the mutineers are known: KML.
Olero, KML.13975 Pte. Otin Obadha, KML. 11763 Pte. Odingo Sire, KML. Pte. B.
Nyawalo J. Olik, KML. 12871 Pte. Magadi Ouro, KML. Pte. 11765 Akelo Olum, KML.
Malamba, and KML. 11770 Pte. A. Musau Ogutu. Among these men, Humphrey-Moore
stated, “are doubtless some sheep and some goats. There are 4 who are not original
members of this Company. There are 6 who are suffering from venereal disease and will

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142 H. E. Humphrey-Moore, Officer-Commanding, 1808 African Garrison Coy to J. H. Flynn, Acting
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
miss the Exchange Posting Scheme until cured. Of these 6, 3 have missed at least one
draft."\textsuperscript{145} Humphrey-Moore requested the Provincial Commissioner to inform the Nyanza
Province that, "any slur on the good name [of the Company] is due to the action of the
above and who must bear the consequences of their action."\textsuperscript{146} Very little else exists on
the mutineers and what happened to them.

Conclusion.

This chapter dealt with the origins of \textit{PANYAKO} – the Pioneers, how it enlisted recruits,
terms of recruitment, and how \textit{askaris} served in it. When the colonial government
established the Pioneer Corps to channel Kenyan labor into military service, it appears
that they underestimated the power and influence that \textit{askaris} would deploy to influence
the future course and development of the Pioneers. The Pioneers played a crucial role in
the war; most of \textit{askaris} who were enlisted into it provided much needed labor to the
military and witnessed military action in many theaters of the war. As the Pioneers
received recruits and prepared them for military service, these recruits had their own
ideas about how they would make the unit meet their own motives of serving in the war.
The story of the \textit{PANYAKO} is thus about the evolution of the military unit itself as well
as about the experience of ordinary \textit{askaris} who served in it, who were determined to
make the unit serve their own social, economic and even political aims. Once \textit{askaris}
joined the unit, they tried to serve in it on their own terms. They demanded to be issued
with rifles for example and were given rifles. They were always asking question – pay,
family remittance, why their letters were being opened in Nairobi. They often protested

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
against labor work. Where their interests were not catered for, they mutinied. The experience of the Pioneers shows that *askaris* were not powerless and indifferent during the war especially when it came to articulating their interests. Finally, in spite of their low status in relation to other units, the Pioneers served with distinction throughout the war in East Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, and other places. When necessary, they resorted to strikes and mutinies to force the administration comply with their interests.

146 Ibid.
CHAPTER SEVEN.

CIVILIANS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR.

An old man from Meru donated "Kshs. 5/- for King George to sharpen his spears with."

Introduction.

This chapter examines the ways in which civilians who remained at home supported the war, augmenting the efforts of their sons who were away serving with various military units. Kenyans supported the government in other ways during the war, besides joining the colonial army and participating in military operations. Precisely how much of non-combat support Kenyans gave to the government is difficult to quantify. Very few records on Kenya’s financial and material contributions exist. A librarian at the Imperial War Museum, MacMillan Memorial Library, while compiling a report on Kenya’s financial and material contributions to the war, complained that she was “finding it very difficult to assess the native contribution to the War Funds. There does not seem to have been any consistent reporting in the Press, neither has the Kenya Information Office any complete record.” What is clear is that due to intensive government propaganda about the war, Kenyans in general were aware about what the government wanted, and about the importance of supporting the war by all means at their disposal. For Kenyans who could afford to read newspapers, one newspaper, The Crown Colonist, spelt out some of the nature of support the government expected from them. “Colonies which produce raw materials of importance to the war effort, including those sold for hard currencies” the

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1 (Information and Propaganda: Use of Cinematography in War, KNA, CS/2/8/22)

2 Olga Barton-Eckett to C.H. Williams, District Commissioner, letter dated 22nd May, 1945, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
newspaper quoted the Secretary of State for Colonies as saying, "should aim at whatever level is required for the war effort."\(^3\) Secondly, that colonies can give substantial assistance by refraining from making demands for non-essential imports of every kind from sterling to non-sterling sources. Thirdly, the maximum development of production of foodstuffs to meet local demands of consumption should continue to be vigorously pursued."\(^4\) The Governor, Sir, Henry Moore more or less elucidated on this during his various radio addresses to the Kenya Colony, urging members of the Kenya Colony to donate materials and funds and support the war; to "share ... in the economic sacrifices that are being made by the people of the United Kingdom."\(^5\) The ""little less' money" you spend, the Governor said, the ""little more' may be placed at the disposal of Britain."\(^6\) Kenyans were thus aware of what they were required to do to support the government during the war, and they even went beyond economic production to support the war. How then did Kenyans support the government in the war? That is the subject of this chapter.

**Types of Support.**

A look at Kenyans role in the war demonstrates the fact that Kenyans in general responded quite enthusiastically to government plea for help and support. Kenyans did not just enlist in the military, risking bodily harm and death; they also aided the government morally, economically, and politically. Kenyans readily endured social, economic and political difficulties wrought by the war. By remaining for the most part loyal and peaceful during this period of war, Kenyans offered the government a breathing

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\(^3\) *The Crown Colonist*, December, 1940.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Governor Sir. Henry, radio address on 1\(^{st}\) August, 1941, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
space it needed to carry out activities relevant to a successful outcome of the war. In particular, Kenyans offered great material and financial support to the government during the war. Substantial contributions were made in the form of monetary donations to government committees formed to collect funds for the war: Kenya Central War Fund, Kenya War Welfare Fund, East African Army Benevolent Fund, The Red Cross, Ambulance Funds, East African Overseas Fund, Coronation Fund. The government created nation-wide war-related funds and Kenyans made their contributions to these funds. Some of these national war funds were de-centralized to province- and district-levels where Kenyans could easily reach them and make their donations. Those based in the rural areas and who could not contribute to nation-wide funds submitted their donations to Provincial and District Funds Committees, and which in turn submitted them to their national headquarters.

It is always assumed that the more visible and concrete the support one gives to the government, the more important it is to the achievement of government objectives. Some of the obvious ways of giving government support are often either by donating funds or by enlisting in the military. Joining the army and risking death is often given more emphasis in studies dealing with war because they are regarded as the ultimate form of sacrifice one can give to his country. It is heroic to lay down one’s life for one’s country – and it is dramatic as well. Visible acts of enlistment in armies or making donations during wars are also often given a lot of emphasis in studies dealing with war because they are often easier to identify, verify and study. But while making donations and fighting in war are highly visible ways of supporting a war, there are other less visible,

\footnote{Ibid.}
less conspicuous, and less evident activities that are just as important in aiding
government efforts at pursuing its objectives. Such acts include giving moral support and
desisting from activities that might divert government attention from its other more
urgent activities, which can be just as important in the conduct of war as the more
obvious activities like enlisting in the military and fighting in war. In various reports,
there is a lot of evidence of how Kenyans supported the government morally, for
instance, by avoiding activities that could be defined as anti-government. Even though
the war came at a time when the colony had a lot of economic problems, a large number
of Kenyans, for the most part, remained “loyal” and “patriotic” during the war, according
to various secret documents by colonial officials.

Remaining quiet and desisting from anti-government plans were ways by which people
felt they would lend the government moral support. The North Kavirondo Central
Association, for instance, promised in 1940 “to refrain from political activity during the
war.” Communities in NFD bore “the burden of the war nobly” [italics mine]. S. H.
Fazan, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, regarded the decline of inter-clan
conflicts and intrigue as a sign of moral support on the part of the population to the
government during the war. “The ‘natives,’” Fazan writes, expressed their loyalty in
many ways, “not only in their readiness to offer themselves for military service and to
contribute to war funds, but also in a notable lessening of inter-clan and other political
intrigue.” Various organizations such as the North Kavirondo Central Association went

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7 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
8 J.K.R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, “Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen,”
(Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
9 S.H. Fazan, Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
on "voluntary liquidation and everywhere organized agitation has ceased, although there are of course a few individual busybodies [sic] who need to be brought to heel occasionally."\textsuperscript{10} Some other associations may not have shared the sentiments about establishing a truce with the government and keeping the peace during the war. The Kavirondo Native Chamber of Commerce was said to have taken too long to adapt to the new mood in the colony. For a long time the Kavirondo Native Chamber of Commerce was said to have given the government trouble, and it was only in 1941 that it began to "confine itself more strictly to its natural sphere, looking after the interests of the native trader, and has given no political trouble during the year."\textsuperscript{11} The Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association on the other hand continued with a mentality that was "not wise," to quote the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner. The Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association allowed "themselves to be led into devious path by their secretary, a native trained in a lawyer's office, who makes money by political letter writing, generally on the Association’s notepaper."\textsuperscript{12} There was also trouble at the Mombasa port, where the African and Arab employees at the Railway threatened to go on strike over escalating cost of living and the management’s failure to adjust their pay and other benefits in tandem with the rising cost of living brought about by the war.\textsuperscript{13} David Anderson and David Throup, in their article, "Africans and Agricultural Production in Colonial Kenya: The Myth of the War as a Watershed," Tabitha Kanogo in her article, "Kenya and the Depression, 1929-1939," and Tiymbe Zeleza, in "Kenya and the Second World War,

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} The Secretariat, Confidential Circular, ""African Staff Employed at Mombasa and Nairobi, dated 28th October, 1942, (Increased Cost of Living due to the War, 1942-43, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/40).
1939-50," among others, have dealt with some aspects of Kenya African' agitation against economic difficulties, which came about during the war, but have paid little attention to aspects of support for the war in spite of these economic and political difficulties. Negative African experiences during the war have tended to receive more attention among scholars than African experiences which contributed to the government prosecution of the war. Yet, in spite of their economic problems, it is quite clear that many Kenya Africans were ready to make sacrifices for the war. Some Kenyan trade unionists and strike leaders in the colony sought to assure the government that their action was not motivated by disloyalty but by desperation. "It is not fair for us to make agitation or commotion at this time of war," African clerks who went on strike in Mombasa in 1942 in protest at the high cost of living during the war wrote in a letter, while justifying their action at the time of war, that "it is just that we are unable to maintain silence when the very means of existence is becoming unbearable."

In effect, these strikes were made in response to economic difficulties rather than against the war per se.

During the Second World War, Kenyans gave the government moral support in many ways. They bore with wartime difficulties when the government asked them to do so. In one radio address, for instance, the Governor Sir Henry Moore told them that, "the more

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15 African Clerks to the Coast Province Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 25th October, 1942, (Increased Cost of Living due to the War, 1942-43, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/40. Ultimately, Kenya African employees earned a relief via government circular, "Relief to African Staff," letter dated 16th November, 1942, (Increased Cost of Living due to the War, 1942-43, KNA, PC/COAST/2/26/40. As a result of their strike, housing allowance was increased from Kshs.4 to 5, Ration allowance from Kshs.4 to 6 per month,
you can do without unessential articles and invest the money so saved either in East
African War Loan or in the Post Office Savings Bank, the greater will be the contribution
you are making towards the war.”

Kenyans were told that their personal sacrifices and
perseverance during the war would translate into tangible contributions to the colony’s
war effort. “Restrained spending means the saving of shipping spaces at a time when
shipping space is vital to our cause. Restrained spending means less consumption of
manpower, less wastage of manpower in the manufacture of unnecessary goods, at a time
when manpower and the production of essential war materials are equally vital to our
cause. Restrained spending lessens and controls the risk of rising prices at a time, when it
is essential to all communities that prices shall be kept as near a normal level as possible.
Restrained spending coupled with wise saving means a conservation of the resources of
the people of the country, which may prove of inestimable value to the country and to the
individual during the period of post-war adjustment.”

The “little less’ money” you
spend, the Governor said in one impassioned plea, the “little more’ may be placed at the
disposal of Britain.” Responding to the Governor’s request to “share ... in the economic
sacrifices that are being made by the people of the United Kingdom,” Kenyans endured
hardships brought about by the war stoically and without complaining. Many families
persevered through forced separation, as men left their wives and parents to fight in the
war far away from home or to offer their labor in civil work. There was rationing of
essential goods such as petrol, sugar, and meat. Petrol rationing in Nyanza began on 2

and fuel allowance from Kshs.1 to 2. They would also be given clothes. In total, they won an increase of
Kshs.6/50).

16 Governor Sir. Henry Moore, radio address on 1st August, 1941, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA,
GH/2/5/13).
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
September, 1939, a day after German invasion of Poland. The Senior Medical Officer, Coast Province, demonstrated his loyalty to the government and support for the war effort by declaring that he was ready to forgo his petrol rations other "than will enable me to carry out my essential duties and I am prepared to walk or ride a bicycle for all other purposes."20 The Coast Province Senior Medical Officer criticized others for their lack of personal sacrifice. "Any little nonentity," he complained, "can get petrol to take the wife and family for a joy ride."21 Indeed, there were those within the province who were not ready to make sacrifices by going with less petrol and oil fuels than they were used to. Decrying the reckless extravagance in the use of oil fuels by others, the Coast Province Senior Medical Officer promised not just to make personal sacrifices for the war, but also to "endeavor to reduce the transport demands of my Department to a minimum and will exercise all reasonable economy in other direction."22 Traders were obliged to sell their goods within the official price guidelines, when price controls came into effect. Since the new guidelines by the Supply Board barred livestock owners from selling their livestock "to no person other than an authorized employee" of the Supply Board in "the schedule areas,"23 livestock owners were often left with no alternative but to make sacrifices by selling their livestock at prices determined by the buyer, whether the prices were adequate or not.

Newspapers contributed to the war effort by reporting about the war mainly from government perspective. They were engaged in propaganda. The East African Standard

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20 Senior Medical Officer to Nyanza Provincal Commissioner, letter dated 6th September, 1939, (Defence War Medals, KNA, PC/Coast/2/26/14).
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
in particular gave special attention to the war and kept the public informed through reports about the progress of the war in various parts of the world. Special pages were preserved for reports on the role of Kenyans in the war. George Kinnear was the newspaper’s special war correspondent. Embedded with the military, Kinnear traveled with the Kenyan contingent to Abyssinia, Somaliland, Madagascar, and South East Asia, dispatching stories about the activities of Kenyan soldiers. Regular reports, messages, and greetings from soldiers kept the public interested about the war and maintained their desire to support the government effort. One Kenyan, while applying for permission to publish a newspaper entitled *Mubarak,*\(^{24}\) promised to donate “50% of the net profit to the War Funds.”\(^{25}\) His effort at publishing was to prove futile though, because he had “taken very few steps so far in regard to the production of this ‘social review’”\(^{26}\) by the time he submitted his application. He had no “promise of advertisements nor articles, nor had he realized the cost of production till I gave him some rough ideas.”\(^{27}\) His proposal to give “50% of the net profit to the War Funds” may have been an attempt to curry favor and persuade the administration to give him permission to begin publishing his newspaper, but if it was genuine, it demonstrates the extent to which the public would go to support the government during the war. Newspapers also contributed to the war by reporting only what the government wanted the public to know without jeopardizing the conduct of the war. The publication of details such as movement of troops, the number and size of

\(^{23}\) G. Beresford Stooke, for Chief Secretary, to all Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 13\(^{th}\) June, 1940, (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6)

\(^{24}\) Unsigned letter to the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 24\(^{th}\) July, 1945, (*Mubarak*, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/90)

\(^{25}\) See: J. H. Reiss, for Information Officer, to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\(^{th}\) July, 1945, (*Mubarak*, 1945, PC/NZA/2/2/90).

\(^{26}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s Office to the Information Officer, Nairobi, letter dated 22\(^{nd}\) August, 1945, (*Mubarak*, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/90)

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
troops, types of weapons, military vehicles, tanks, and air-crafts, deployment of troops, the progress of battles were made in line with government recommendations and newspaper editors felt that that was one of the ways by which they could help the government win the war. Many newspaper editors did not wait for instructions from the Government officials to hide materials detrimental to the government effort; as a way of demonstrating their patriotism and support, they often went ahead and censored materials they felt sensitive to the conduct of the war.

Newspapers like the *East African Standard* published certain government reports and announcements without charge, though with time some newspapers began to feel that the government was taking advantage of this privilege. When the war began, many editors published government communiqués in their newspapers free of charge as a way of demonstrating their own patriotism and support for the government in the war, but when the government began forwarding reports that had nothing to do with the war to the newspapers for publication, the editors began asking for a fee before publishing those reports. That change of policy was not out of any sense of reluctance to support the war on the part of the newspapers, but rather out of the feeling that the government was abusing their generosity and support by asking them to publish materials that were not related to prosecuting the war. One government official writes in a report towards the end of 1940, that “all the editors were unanimously of the opinion that the time had come to check the growing tendency of Government to issue, in the form of official communiqués through this office, notices which in pre-war days were normally paid for at
advertisement rates."\textsuperscript{28} Mr. Kinnear, a leading \textit{East African Standard} newspaper reporter and who was embedded with the Kenyan military contingent in its campaigns during the war, was subsequently mandated to write a report on this dispute. Although the outcome of Kinnear’s report is not clear, it shows at the very least that the newspaper segment of the Kenyan population was also supporting the government in its own ways to win the war.

There are Kenyans who ensured that security prevailed within the colony by checking, monitoring and reporting on would-be government enemies. Communities living in the NFD patrolled the boundary between British and Italian territories because it was too long for the government to do so on its own. The government described the work of local communities in providing security as "considerable."\textsuperscript{29} The chiefs, headmen and ordinary people brought "strangers for interrogation, reporting the movements of persons coming in from Abyssinia and generally watching enemy attempts at espionage."\textsuperscript{30} On 2nd December, 1940, four Italian airmen were forced to land near Bura when their aircraft was shot, and were immediately "disarmed and arrested by the villagers, who brought them to Lamu."\textsuperscript{31} Kenyans readily gave a hearing to colonial administrators and listened to them explain the war at \textit{barazas}. When the war came, one report on Nyanza notes, "the natives ...[showed] a ready desire to help."\textsuperscript{32} "At no time previously," S. H. Fazan, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner further notes, "had I seen such very willing co-

\textsuperscript{28} Government Report, dated 5\textsuperscript{th} December, 1940, (Military Commissi\-qu\-s, 1940-41, KNA, CS/1/10/35).
\textsuperscript{29} J. K. R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, "Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen," (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} (Coast Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53).
\textsuperscript{32} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
operation among all responsible sections of the community."\textsuperscript{33} Although in general, communities in the NFD, on the border with Ethiopia, did not declare their support for the British immediately the war broke out, they stood their ground once they did so. Their reluctance to openly declare whom they supported right from the onset of the war, between the Italians and the British, was motivated by self-preservation: they did not want to declare which side they supported so early and so openly only to see it lose the war, and the victor coming back to revenge against them.\textsuperscript{34} J. K. R. Thorp, the District Commissioner of Marsabit, noted also that NFD communities decided to support the government because of "the discipline of our troops and their tolerant attitude towards the people [which] did much to allay tribal uneasiness."\textsuperscript{35} But once these communities decided to support the British, observes J.K.R. Thorp, they behaved like "gentlemen."\textsuperscript{36} "The tribesman of NFD," wrote J. K. R. Thorp, "listens politely when his District Commissioner tries to explain to him the heroic efforts of the people of London, or the successful actions of the allied natives. Local events he follows eagerly, and every successful encounter with the enemy pleases and heartens him."\textsuperscript{37}

Although the "tribesmen along the banks of the Tana River" did not have livestock to give, they "have shown themselves eager to help their more wealthy brothers."\textsuperscript{38} One "child [sic] of Boran tribe who was herding stock" saw two aircrafts of the South African Air Force make a forced landing in the desert country lying between Wajir and Marsabit

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} J.K.R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, "Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen," (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
in June, 1940. He sent "news to the nearest Government Headman, Katote Huka [of Isiolo District] who, though a very old man, walked nearly 30 miles to the scene of accident." \(^{39}\) They then provided the airmen with "water" and "some sheep to be slaughtered." When they realized that the airmen wanted to send word to the District Headquarters, "two young Boran carried this letter to Marsabit in 36 hours, some 90 miles over barren desert, and as a result the airmen were rescued next day by lorry."\(^{40}\) Two Boran children similarly saved a member of the SAAF, when his aircraft was forced to land in Marsabit in October, 1940. Finding him in a "semi-exhausted" state, the two Boran boys gave the SAAF crew water, and alerted their relatives "who stayed with the airman until he was picked up by lorry."\(^{41}\) Members of the Boran, Rendille, Gabbra, Sakuye, Adjuran, and Gurreh "moved to safe areas in order to remain under the British flag, though they might instead have come to terms with the enemy."\(^{42}\) The Boran of Moyale and Marsabit lost their livestock to drought due to their desire to "be under the British flag," even though they would have saved them by moving to areas under Italy, where the water and the grass was green and lush.

During the war, the "production of food and other crops useful for the conduct of the war" were emphasized.\(^{43}\) Food and livestock are important for the feeding of armies. "Large armies," J. K. R. Thorp noted, "consume vast quantities of meat."\(^{44}\) "Soldiers

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\(^{39}\) Ibid.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) Ibid.
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
\(^{43}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 9\(^{th}\) September, 1939, (Military: General Instructions, 1940-49, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/33)
\(^{44}\) J.K.R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, "Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen," (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
cannot be expected to fight on empty stomachs,” G. Beresford Stooke argued, while explaining to the “‘native’ stock owners the great importance, as part of the Colony’s war effort, of maintaining adequate supplies of essential foodstuffs, of which meat is by no means the least important.” The importance of Kenya as a source of food and other raw materials for the war was given more significance by the Japanese victories in the Pacific area. In the words of Governor Henry Moore, Japanese successes “gained for themselves and denied to us important sources of raw materials such as rubber, oil, and tin” and had “temporarily made the Allied supply position much more difficult … [and] enormously increased the importance of the role assigned to the East African territories as a source of supply to the Middle East and [other places].” Kenyans did their part in this regard and grew crops and gave supplies like livestock to the government.

Women of Nyanza were said to have “increased cultivation,” that as a result of government propaganda, “this important section of the community has genuinely begun to grasp the importance of their part in the general war effort.” The Turkana had by 1941 given the government “28,000 sheep and goats for meat … 65,000 head of cattle are provided for military purposes by natives over a period of five months.” The people living in Nyanza never “refused to sell their cattle for military rations even though the price has been below what they could have got in the open market.” The sale of 12,679 heads of cattle in Nyanza to the Supply Board in 1941, in spite of the two outbreaks of pneumonia in South Kavirondo, sporadic outbreaks of rinderpest, and “ungenerous price

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45 G. Beresford Stooke, for Chief Secretary to all Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 13th June, 1940, (Foodstuffs, etc, 1939-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/6).
46 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
47 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
compared with the general average price ruling in Kenya” were seen as a “considerable testimonial to the patriotism of the natives and their readiness to respond to an appeal.” 50

The number of livestock sold from Nyanza in 1942 stood at 14,400, while the number of eggs that the province exported during the same period increased from 1,000 dozen to 2,000 dozen per diem.51 In 1943, the number of livestock sold from Nyanza Province to the Supply Board increased tremendously to 26,769 head of cattle.52 Slightly after that, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed sardonically that, “the figure of cattle sold to the Supply Board is over 30,000 head … we have sold almost exactly the same number of cattle as we have supplied recruits to Maseno Depot. One beast for every man to eat.”53 Communities whose lives revolve around livestock made their most significant contribution to the war effort by giving part of their livestock, their most precious and cherished possessions, to the army. In the NFD, various communities there gave the government their livestock “promptly and adequately.”54 Although the demand for meat during the war was “great … so far, the supply has never failed.”55 In fact, according to J. K. R. Thorp, the communities in NFD “put their slaughter stock at the disposal of the military authorities.”56 Their sacrifice by giving away cattle was the greatest form of sacrifice one could give. According to Thorp, this was the “true sacrifice.” To appreciate this form of sacrifice, Thorp writes:

one must realize that to these nomadic peoples their cattle are

48 (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
49 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
50 Ibid.
51 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
52 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/138).
53 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s address [undated], (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
54 J.K.R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, “Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen,” (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
their lives, the be-all and end-all of their existence. They are, of course, paid in full for all meat supplied, but to them money has little value, and while they realize that it represents trade goods in lieu of their cattle, their needs are few. Their loss is real and that it is on the whole cheerfully borne shows the fine spirit of these desert peoples.\(^{57}\)

Field butcheries, which South African soldiers built at Garbatulla and Habaswein and elsewhere in NFD “were kept fully supplied with fat bullocks and sheep throughout the campaign. Other units were supplied with meat by tribesmen as and when required.”\(^{58}\) There was a constant supply of livestock for meat at field butcheries, and at one point, the South Africans purchased a hundred bullocks only to discover “it impossible to water them since the Uaso Nyiro River had receded many miles in the few days.”\(^{59}\) After this problem had been solved the “time came for slaughtering and the men could not catch the livestock, which were roaming in the wild. Repeated effort to catch ‘‘those wild animals’ tired members of the butchery staff, [and who] were to be seen hunting them with rifles.”\(^{60}\) This method was found to be too difficult and not very satisfactory and from that time on tribesmen were made responsible to produce the daily supply of bullocks tied up as, when and where required before delivery would be accepted.”\(^{61}\) In this report on the supply of meat to the military units, the colonial official asserts that, “no unit which asked for meat went short.”\(^{62}\) The *East African Standard* reported that after the Ameru donated 231 bulls to the war effort, the Maasai and Akamba of "Migwani Location, Kitui, are concentrating on cattle as the most convenient currency for their war gifts. Oxen given by the Chief, elders and people of Migwani Locaion have so far realized [British

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\(^{57}\) Ibid.

\(^{58}\) “Notes on Isiolo District as Affected by the northern Frontier Campaign June, 1940 to February, 1941,” (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11).

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) Ibid.
pounds] 120. Altogether the Maasai have brought in 462 head of cattle and besides promising to bring the number up to 895, they have undertaken to sell in addition 1,200 head monthly to the Supply Board Meat Control. They appreciate their responsibility for producing their share of the supplies for the troops who are here to provide, inter alia, their lands and their stock.”

Many Kenyans generally gave their labor to the government because they believed the government plea, that their labor was necessary to win the war. Labor was important for the development of agriculture and production of food within the colony. In one report, the Secretariat pointed out that “the importance which the government attaches to the maintenance of the agricultural industry during the war has been the subject of more than one official pronouncement, but it is perhaps desirable to reaffirm that this policy is based first, on the broad consideration that it is essential to the life of the community that existing agricultural industries should be maintained, and second on the fact that in the case of certain foodstuffs and other specific agricultural products we have entered into definite contracts with the military authorities or the appropriate government departments in the United Kingdom to provide supplies which are required in the prosecution of the common war effort.” Kenyans in general participated in various government activities and in growing food at times at very mealy salaries. They grew crops for the government for export – sisal, coffee, tea, pyrethrum, flax. They grew food crops in their own farms for feeding the army, and mined minerals such as gold. The “production of commodities

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62 Ibid.
63 East African Standard, August 15, 1940.
64 G.M. Rennie, Secret Circular, dated 21st October, 1941, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
directly or indirectly required for the war,” the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner reported in 1940, “has been well maintained in spite of depleted European man power and some uncertainty at times as to what commodities would be most required.” 65 One officer described the effort of Nyanza inhabitants at agricultural production as “astonishing” and estimated that by the end of 1940, the “province will have … 800,000 bags of maize surplus to requirements, enough to provide a daily ration to 200,000 men a year.” 66 The money “earned by the export of agricultural produce from the native reserve … stood at [British pounds] 462,500, by the end of 1941, 67 and the total earnings of “Nyanza native areas, actually paid in or brought in to the Province in 1941, [was] not far short of [British pounds] 900,000.” 68 The Agikuyu supplied 500 tons of vegetables a month for the dried vegetable factory at Kerugoya. 69 The whole of Central Province provided 2,000 tons of fresh vegetables as well as 1,000 tons of charcoals and vast numbers of eggs and poultry, Governor Sir Henry Moore observed in 1941. Although there were difficulties in procuring labor especially after many men had left for the army, those Kenyans who remained at home generally hearkened to government demand for labor. They responded to government decree that “in these circumstances it is essential that in the case of African, no less than in the case of European man power, steps should be taken to ensure that the work on the farm goes on.” 70 Much of the available African manpower had been enlisted for military service, and the government felt that steps should be taken to

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65 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
67 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
68 Ibid.
69 (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
70 G. M. Rennie, Secret Circular, dated 21st October, 1941, (Confidential Circulars, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/47).
“stimulate the flow of labor to farms and industries.”\textsuperscript{71} The government had already enacted “the necessary powers to conscript such labor by virtue of the Emergency Powers [Defence] Act, 1940, published in Government Notice No. 845 of September 12\textsuperscript{th}, 1940, but …. those powers [were not invoked] at any rate until it is shown that the necessary labor is not forthcoming as a result of administrative action and propaganda.”\textsuperscript{72} After the war in Abyssinian Campaign, the Governor, Sir Henry Moore, asserted, the role of the Kenya Colony was principally “that of production.”\textsuperscript{73} The colony was producing “wheat, maize, rye, flax, potatoes, beans and peas, rice, groundnuts, coffee, tea, sisal, cotton, and pyrethrum,” and had also been asked to collect wild rubber, “all this means that our hands are pretty full;”\textsuperscript{74} the Governor revealed. While the colony and the neighboring territories “had the first call on our resources,” the Governor believed that the colony should be able to “produce surplus to meet the urgent needs of the Middle East, the United Kingdom, or indeed any other area which needs our products and for which shipping is available.”\textsuperscript{75} A Civil Defence and Supply Council was formed to co-ordinate and manage labor and resource supply.

The ex-appropriation of labor from Nyanza and shortage of rains nevertheless dogged food production, even though people apparently continued with their level best to produce enough crops for themselves and their soldiers, and the colony. Figures for the period 1941 to 1943 show a considerable depreciation in the amount of food crops from

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Governor Sir Henry Moore, Broadcast on 25\textsuperscript{th} March, 1942, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
\textsuperscript{74} (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13)
\textsuperscript{75} Governor Sir Henry Moore, Broadcast on 25\textsuperscript{th} March, 1942, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
Nyanza Province because of lack of labor and water. Only rice and potatoes recorded significant increases. In those periods, the figures were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>553,797</td>
<td>553,771</td>
<td>333,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maatia</td>
<td></td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>82,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbi</td>
<td>28,656</td>
<td>27,126</td>
<td>9,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground nuts</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>14,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simsim</td>
<td>21,166</td>
<td>18,972</td>
<td>2,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,870</td>
<td>18,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>12,090</td>
<td>11,122</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choroko</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,558</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the government realized that agricultural production was going down in Nyanza, for instance, it responded by introducing what was called “Agricultural Betterment Funds.” Contributions were expected from the inhabitants of the province to enhance agricultural production. It was quite ironical that as the war affected people, the government only responded by asking the affected people to provide more funds to ameliorate the effects of the war on them. The Agricultural Betterment Funds appeared to have worked nonetheless because the crops from the province showed a dramatic increase in 1944 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>4,958,189 bags</td>
<td>6,306,652 bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>333,847</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choroko</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>7,221</td>
<td>18,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simsim</td>
<td>2,154</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>14,026</td>
<td>9,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice [paddy]:</td>
<td>18,545</td>
<td>26,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maatia</td>
<td>82,226</td>
<td>72,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimbi</td>
<td>9,507</td>
<td>8,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>297 cwt</td>
<td>337 cwt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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76 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/138).
77 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/1/139).
Women were lauded for contributing to the war effort by performing tasks that were in the past done by men. "Owing to the absence of so many men from this reserve," L. O. Owen wrote, women carried out most of the work, including "field work and the upkeep of the kraals, and even the care of cattle, increasingly devolves upon the women." Women also produced all the millet in "this reserve ... not to speak of other food such as eggs and chickens etc ... could never have attained the bulk it has without the hard work of thousands of women and girls."

Kenyans’ material contributions were not limited to the provision of food, livestock, and labor. Many people apparently felt that it would not be sound to default on their taxes at a time when the country was at war. A considerable "number of natives who [were] shown on Nyanza books as liable to poll tax actually discharged this liability by paying outside and eventually succeed in getting their names ticked in our books as having paid." In 1943, hut tax was abolished in lieu of one, the poll tax, which was subsequently increased in rate. In 1944, the "the collection of native poll tax show[ed] an improvement of more than [British pounds] 8,000 on the previous year’s collection." The Kenya Tea Growers Association, "a body with its interests in Nyanza, provided two ... ambulances" to the

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78 Ibid.
79 L.O. Owen to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 13th October, 1942, (Military Funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147)
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
83 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/138).
Nyanza Ambulance Funds in 1940. Apart from making contribution to various funds, a group of forty girls boarding at Ng’iya Girls School continuously sewed pullovers, bags, and socks for the Red Cross, Nairobi Depot. "As soon as one parcel of finished work goes to the Depot, they send another parcel of work. There is always a little gap between as it is a rule of Red Cross not to send out more work until the former parcel of finished work is sent in." In one instance Ng’iya Girls sewed "at least 108 pairs of socks, 14 pullovers, 104 stretcher bags, about 2 dozens bed pan covers, a large number of knitted dish clothes and face cloth for hospitals." The European staff of two ladies at the school also sent in "8 pairs of socks and 1 dozen stretcher bags." Describing himself as "a loyal subject to His Majesty the King," Amar Singh Inder Singh contributed the following:

Kshs 51 as war fund, 25 bags of maize flour, 2 bags of yellow flour, 2 bags of urd (dengu misi), and 1 bag of crushed jogree which we Indians and soldiers like very much.

An old man from Meru donated "Kshs. 5/- for 'King George to sharpen his spears with" and a film was in fact made, to illustrate the extent to which people were supporting the war, and urging them to do more. V. H. Jabaputra, a commercial entrepreneur in Nyanza demonstrated his support for the war when his company, Nyanza Printing Works, printed "free of charge 600 notices entitled ‘Nyanza Province Central War Fund.’" The Digo provided the military with "a large amount of makuti … [collected] chiefly from the Tiwi

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84 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
85 Report on Ng’iya Girls Contributions, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
86 F. A. Moller, Principal, in a report on Ng’iya Girls Contributions, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
87 Ibid.
89 (Information and Propaganda: Use of Cinematography in War, KNA, CS/2/8/22)
area."\textsuperscript{91} J. Usher-Jones donated "my Albion lorry to the Government for any purpose during the war ... [and] may I state that this is a British make in perfect running order, as new."\textsuperscript{92} Nyanza Local Native Councils purchased a lorry for the Provincial Family Remittance Officer to use within the province, "carrying the remittances of our soldiers to their wives and families wherever they may live."\textsuperscript{93}

The establishment of a Civil Reception Center at Maseno in 1940 was done with the support of the local communities. Out of the cost [British pounds] 7,599 needed for the center to take off, the Local Native Council was expected to pay "[British pounds] 1,000, and the military will pay the rest."\textsuperscript{94} The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner acknowledged the support of the communities to the construction of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot when he wrote that the "at the beginning for the War all local Native Councils of this Province contributed very liberally to the cost of establishing this depot putting up numerous buildings and providing equipment, lorries, etc."\textsuperscript{95} A. W. Sedgewick was one of those who provided building materials when the Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot was constructed in 1939. He loaned the government building materials for constructing the camp. In a letter requesting for the materials to be returned back to him after the war, A.W. Sedgewick reveals that he gave out his materials to the government as

\textsuperscript{91} J. D. Stringer, for Kwale District Commissioner to Coast Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} November, 1941, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
\textsuperscript{92} J. Usher-Jones to District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani, letter dated 30\textsuperscript{th} April, 1940, Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
\textsuperscript{93} Provincial commissioner's address, [undated], (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
\textsuperscript{94} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
\textsuperscript{95} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} October, 1946, (Section Ceremony, 1946-47, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/81).
a "loan." Dismantled from "wood and iron buildings and water tanks," which were at his establishment, the materials consisted mainly of corrugated iron. When the government could not trace these Sedgewick's materials and suggested that the Local Native Council should bear the cost of refunding Sedgewick for his materials, estimated at [British pounds] 100 or Kshs. 2,000, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner turned the suggestion down. "I feel that to ask them to provide [British pounds] 100 [Kshs. 2,000] at this stage to acquire this iron would be interpreted as niggardly, especially as they have received very little in return for their contributions made during the early years of the war." A. W. Sedgewick was ultimately compensated for his materials and was paid directly from government funds rather than from the local people who had already borne enough financial burden in relation to funding the war.

Many Kenyan communities made donations for the purchase of military air-crafts for the Royal Air Force. On 19th September, 1940, the Local Native Councils in Central Province made donations to the tune of [British pounds] 10,095 for the purchase of an aircraft. The Digo Local Native Council in Coast Province contributed Kshs. 15,320 in October, 1940, and expressly requested that their donation be "credited to the Mombasa Fund for the purchase of a 'Spitfire' ...[and that] the name of the council should be

101 East African Standard, September 19, 1940.
painted on the completed aircraft to show that the Africans of Digo District had subscribed towards its cost.\textsuperscript{102} When the government did not appear to take the Digo seriously over their intention to purchase a fighter for the military, the Digo demanded during a meeting "why it was that the amount of [British pounds] 776 which the Digo L.N.C. voted months ago had not yet been used. They had been led to believe that the matter was urgent and that the more quickly the money for the prosecution of the war was forthcoming the better. … they were told months ago that their contribution was gratefully accepted. Only the other day they were told the money was still with the president. It was rather like getting a blow in the face from a hungry man to whom one had offered food."\textsuperscript{103} It was going to be a public relations disaster and the Coast Provincial Commissioner, G. H. C. Boulordson, had to act, and had to remind the government that, "it is the definite desire of the Digo Local Native Council that their money [British pounds] 776 should go towards the purchase of a fighter plane.\textsuperscript{104} But the government would not budge on its refusal to manufacture an aeroplane with a special inscription bearing the name of the Digo. All that it did was to assure the Digo that their fund for a spitfire would be forwarded to the Minister of Aircraft Production,\textsuperscript{105} hardly the kind of news the Digo wanted to hear. When the news of government’s reluctance to produce the plane reached the offices of the Kwale District Commissioner, a disappointed Kwale District Commissioner suggested a ruse to placate the Digo. Instead of a plane, he proposed "a photograph suitable for exhibition in Local Native Council Hall, Liwali’s

\textsuperscript{102} J. H. P. Murphy, District Commissioner of Digo to Honorary Treasurer, Kenya Central (War Fund, letter dated 14th October, 1940, Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).

\textsuperscript{103} Digo Local Native Council, Minute 121/40, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).

\textsuperscript{104} See G.H.C. Boulderson’s letter to Treasurer, the Kenya Central War Fund, letter dated 1st November, 1940, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).

\textsuperscript{105} C. M. Johnston, for Chief Secretary to the Coast Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 20th January, 1941, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8),
Office, etc of the Spitfire or Hurricane should be sent to me for disposal.  

“A suitable inscription on the plane herself [or] a notice board,” Kwale District Commissioner wrote, “with appropriate wording be placed close by when the photograph is taken.” The Coast Provincial Commissioner bluntly supported the Kwale District Commissioner, writing on his part that, “a photograph be obtained of a plane suitably inscribed, or with a notice board as suggested by the District Commissioner, ‘Subscribed for by Africans of Digo District.” Around this time, more Kenyan districts were contributing funds for the purchase of war planes. Kiambu Native Council contributed [British pounds] 1,603, and North Kavirondo [British pounds] 1,000 by December, 1940, but it is not clear whether they were more successful than the Digo in convincing the government to manufacture aircrafts bearing their names. A more successful outcome of a campaign to contribute funds and purchase a fighter was made by the Akamba and the Ameru, emulating the Digo three years later.

After contributing funds, the Akamba and Ameru demanded that it should be used in the purchase of a spitfire for the Royal Air Force. This was in 1943. The aircraft was duly emblazoned with the name “Akamba-Ameru,” as the contributors instructed, and was deployed into battle. In a report on the activities of the aircraft, A. C. Leigh, the pilot, acknowledged that the” people of Machakos and Meru can feel justifiably proud of their

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106 Kwale District Commissioner to Coast Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 4th February, 1941, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
107 Ibid.
108 G. H. C. Boulderson, Coast Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 5th February, 1941, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
109 The Crown Colonist, December, 1940.
contribution to the war effort." By buying the aircraft, Leigh informed the Akamba and the Ameru, they "have answered the call of our Prime Minister when he asked for 'tools to finish the job' and I, a fighter pilot, chosen to fly the 'Kamba-Meru,' am only one of the many thousands of the sons of our Empire who will endeavor to use these 'tools' to the best advantage and make that dream a reality for all of us." 

The Akamba and the Ameru followed the activities of "their" aircraft with "keen interest." At a meeting of the Machakos Local Native Council, "a report of the activities and operational flights of the 'Kamba-Meru' Aircraft was read and listened to with much interest by African councilors." The Akamba and the Ameru ensured that the pilot of the spitfire received their "good wishes." Notified of the fact that the donors of the aircraft were interested in its performance in battle, A. C. Leigh, the pilot, informing the Akamba and the Ameru of his gratitude for their "best wishes," of his "honor" and "pride" in the aircraft. The spitfire, Leigh told them, had already "had its baptism of fire." It had "made many sorties over enemy occupied territory, chiefly attacking his fighters and escorting our bombers to destroy important targets, and so damage the enemy's ability to make war. During one sortie last week, I was able to get close grips with a FW. 190 but had to break off combat as there was another Hun

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11 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
attacking me from astern, and I was unable to see the result.”"\textsuperscript{116} Leigh further informed them that he had “the utmost confidence in the aircraft for the future, and feel sure it will play its part in the final overthrow of the enemy, and help bring freedom to the suffering people of Europe.”"\textsuperscript{117} It was a “most excellent spitfire [and which would] continue to achieve a record of service befitting the high traditions of my squadron.”\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{War Related Funds.}

Many war-related funds were inaugurated to finance the war. Desperate for funds, the government proposed a plethora of funds for different projects for the war. To avoid accusations of exploiting the Kenyan people and project them as loyal subjects, willing to support the war, the government would often claim that it was the people who proposed these funds. “For some months now,” the North Kavirondo District Commissioner claimed, “individuals have asked how they can help the Government and leading natives began to feel that it would be better to have a concerted plan for raising contributions.”\textsuperscript{119} It was claimed that although NFD was not required to provide monetary donations to the government during the war due to the fact that they lived in the frontline and bore the realities of the war more directly than other Kenyan population, they still went ahead to make financial contributions to the government because they were eager to help with funds to fight the war. Attempts were made to let the public know that the “contributions were entirely voluntary.”\textsuperscript{120} In many departments, the government asserted, “native employees have been offering subscriptions freely and this should obviously be

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
encouraged by the employing officer being willing to receive and remit such
subscriptions at the end of every month."\textsuperscript{121} Many strategies were developed to stimulate
contributions, even as the government claimed that donations would be voluntary.
Salaries of employees, for instance, were deducted at "the source." "Certain mines" made
contributions to various funds by "means of a fixed percentage of their employees’ salary
varying from 2½ to 3%."\textsuperscript{122} The government deducted salaries of its officers "at the
source of a stated percentage of his substantive salary, such deductions being paid over
by the Accountant General to the Kenya Central War Fund,"\textsuperscript{123} even as they painted these
contributors as volunteers. To avoid embarrassing non-contributors and creating
"insidious distinctions" among people working at the same place, contributors were urged
to "notify the Accountant General directly instead of informing their immediate officers
about whether or not they were going to make a contribution."\textsuperscript{124}

A spirit of competition was created, engineered, and stoked; contributors were made to vie with one another over who would contribute more, boosting the collection kitty.
Districts competed with other districts, provinces with provinces, and individuals with other individuals, each eager to have his or her name in the newspapers or mentioned at barazas as the one who gave the most. When the "natives of Mill Hill Mission" made their contribution of Kshs.122/- to the Nyanza Province Central War Fund, they were reported to be "very anxious that their contributions should be acknowledged through the

\textsuperscript{119} North Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial commissioner, letter dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} June, 1940, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} H.M. Gardner, Conservator of Forests to all his officers, letter 11\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
\textsuperscript{122} North Kavirondo District Commissioner, "Minutes of Meeting held on 10\textsuperscript{th} February, 1941, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
\textsuperscript{123} G. Beresford, for Chief Secretary, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).
press.”\textsuperscript{125} The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s letter to the Chairman of the Kenya War Welfare Fund, informed him that “natives on Kaabirir Farm” who contributed Kshs.143 “as a Xmas gift to natives in the KAR” were anxious “if the individual subscriptions could be acknowledged through the Press.\textsuperscript{126} The Kericho District Commissioner was very furious when he discovered that the name of Kericho was not among the names of contributors to the purchase of six ambulances published in the newspapers. Charging that “the effort of this district to put up one or two Kericho ambulances …had been entirely ignored …,” he demanded “an assurance from the Chairman of the Fund that the identity of the Ambulance [s] subscribed for by Kericho is not lost, will not be lost and that whenever the ambulances are turned out ready to be handed over to the military, they will bear the name Kericho and there will be some simple ceremony at which people from Kericho can be present if they wish.”\textsuperscript{127} The Chiefs of Karachuonyo and Kasipul wanted the name “Rachuonyo” inscribed on an ambulance bought with their funds.\textsuperscript{128}

Due to a lot of encouragement and propaganda by the government, individuals made efforts at saving their money with the Post Office Savings Bank. Funds from this bank were in turn loaned to the government for the financing of various war-related tasks. S. H. Fazan articulated the usefulness of funds from the Post Office Savings Bank to the

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} North Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940, (Kenya War, 1940-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/83).
\textsuperscript{126} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chairman, Kenya War Welfare Fund, letter dated 24\textsuperscript{th} December, 1940, (Kenya War, 1940-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/83).
\textsuperscript{127} Kericho District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, September, 1940, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
\textsuperscript{128} See: South Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 19\textsuperscript{th} June, 1941, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
war, when he observed that, “as you know, it is the government’s wish to encourage the deposit of money in the Post Office Savings Bank, to be re-lent to Great Britain for war purposes.” 129 Yet the idea of saving money with the bank was not always popular and took a long time to develop among the people. When the Post Office Savings Banks were started, the government embarked on a campaign to popularize the idea of saving in the bank so that the government could have funds for the war, but largely without much success. 130 Soldiers were encouraged to keep their savings at the bank until after the war or whenever they were ready to use their savings. One cartoon depicted those with savings at the bank as foresighted and intelligent, as always happy. “Huyu askari wa polisi, alifundishwa namna ya kuweka fedha bankin ya posta. Sasa hana hofu za umaskini, pia mapesa yake huzaa bankini [this policeman was taught the importance of saving money with the Post Office Savings Bank. Now he has no worries about poverty, moreover, his money ‘gives birth at the bank,’ that is, doubles or yields interest at the bank].” 131 On the other hand, non-savers were depicted as sad, morose, and susceptible to economic problems. “Na mwenzi wake? Hajasikia habari zile. Basi ikitokiea maradhi ya ng’ombe hana lo lote. Kweli anasikitika [what about his colleague? He has no idea about this issue. When his livestock fall sick, he has nothing. Truly, he is suffering].” 132 The pamphlet concluded by with the message: “Bora Post Office Fetha za Amana [sic]. [Better Post Office, Money you can trust].” 133

But there does not appear to have been much headway made. To enhance savings, the

129 S.H. Fazan to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 30th December, 1940, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
131 Pamphlet, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
government thought about opening branches of the bank at various small towns, including Luanda, Yala, Asembo, Kibos, Boro, Sio, Ahero, but District Commissioners opposed it as ill-advised, since there were not much savings going on anyway. The colonial administrators believed that the savings bank was not doing well. "The Post Office Savings Bank is unpopular with the illiterate natives because, as the Postmaster General has been repeatedly told, withdrawal presents certain difficulties and may take longer to effect than suits them ... so far as this district is concerned posters for Kisumu and pamphlets for the farms, Kiswahili, would be best, but I doubt if there would be much response."134 Oral propaganda on savings, the District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani concluded, "has failed."135 While proposing that the Post Office Savings Bank should open offices at Kendu Bay, Marindi and Homa Bay if the government was determined to open branch offices of the bank in Nyanza Province, the District commissioner of South Kavirondo nevertheless pointed out that he was "not prepared to say that good results would ensue."136 At the Kisii Post Office Savings Bank, the account for 1940 read negative, with Kshs. 13,857/- as deposits, and Kshs. 17,015/13 as withdrawals.

Negative reports on the Post Office Savings Bank forced the government to review its propaganda strategy. By the end of 1940, propaganda on savings was transmitted in local languages and more agents were appointed to go round the country, advising people to

132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
save their funds at the bank. Literature on savings, E. A. Vasey, the Secretary to the War Savings Campaign Committee, wrote, would not just be “issued in English, Urdu, Gujarati and Swahili,” but also “other vernacular languages were called for.” Handbills and pamphlets on the value of making savings in the bank were circulated widely. The government also listened began paying family remittances and gratuities to widows “into this banking arrangement” to inculcate “a fair appreciation of the attitudes of the natives of this district to Post Office Savings Bank Accounts.” While withdrawing their family remittances at the Post Office Savings Bank, the recipients of these funds were encouraged to open accounts with the bank and save some money there for the future. Soldiers who did not save money at the bank and families that withdrew all their savings without saving some in the Post Office Savings Bank were ridiculed in cartoons in newspapers, radio programs, cinemas, and at public barazas. Although the Post Office Savings Bank had not done well at the beginning of the war, new propaganda approach and payment methods familiarized people with the operations of the bank. “Money did not disappear and the government did not steal it from the bank,” as some people had feared; anytime they went to the bank they found their balance as it was when they left it. From 1941, there is evidence that deposits in this bank were always higher than withdrawals, giving the government extra source of funds to finance the war. The number of people using the Post Office Savings Bank all over the colony increased from 29,974

137 E. A. Vasey, Secretary, War Savings Campaign Committee to Financial Secretary, 28th December, 1940, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
138 This was one of the recommendation of the District Commissioner of North Kavirondo; see his letter to the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, letter dated 7th January, 1941, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
on 31st December, 1940 to 32,031 by 30th June, 1941. Savings during the same period increased by [British pounds] 11,000. From 1941 to 1943, the deposits and withdrawals in Nyanza Province alone were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deposits:</td>
<td>254,615.00</td>
<td>357,891.00</td>
<td>509,639.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawals:</td>
<td>126,169.87</td>
<td>128,952.16</td>
<td>138,222.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance:</td>
<td>128,445.13</td>
<td>228,938.84</td>
<td>371,416.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar trend of savings at the Post Office Savings Bank obtained in 1944, when there were deposits of Kshs 893,896 as against withdrawals of 261,457.13, leaving 632,438.87, which the government could borrow for various activities during the war. The only time when more withdrawals than deposits at the Post Savings Bank were made was in 1945, and the reason for that was that soldiers were coming back from the war, and were withdrawing money for use at home, for investments, and for various projects. Many soldiers would withdraw all their savings and closed their accounts after the war. Askaris from South Kavirondo, it was reported, were “cashing their Post Office Savings Accounts as fast as they can get to a Post Office.” While disputing a report that askaris were closing their accounts with the Post Office Savings Bank, the South Kavirondo District Commissioner nevertheless also conceded that “the majority of ex-soldiers are withdrawing large sums from their accounts even if they do not close them.”

140 Governor Sir. Henry, radio address on 1st August, 1941, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
141 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, PC/NZA/1/138).
142 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, PC/NZA/1/139).
143 G. Cormack, for Postmaster General to the Information Officer, 8th December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
144 South Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27th December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
The Giriama LNC minute of 13th August, 1940 records that the Giriama made “voluntary contribution to Empire’s War Effort.” The report continues that, “Rev. Wilson Kajoro, and Chiefs Paul Mwazuma, Chome and Mwidani described how natives were contributing. Chief Shadrack Harrison proposed that the L.N.C should assist the government and suggested a loan of shs. 5,000 for the duration of the war.”145 The President of the council noted that the idea of making a loan to the government, instead of giving a direct gift, probably originated with him “when the question of donating a substantial proportion of Council’s Surplus Balance, as the Digo L.N.C [another contributing council] had done, was under discussion, and he did not think that this loan procedure was really suitable for sums like [British pound] 150.146 When Chief Chai found that the LNC had a surplus of [pounds] 5,740 or Ksh.s 114,800, he stated that he had no idea it was so large and proposed that the council ought to give [pounds] 1,000 outright. “This suggestion met with unanimous approval and it was agreed that this sum should be included in the Supplementary Estimates as a gift [emphasis mine] to the Kenya Central War Fund.”147 Rather than make a loan, the Giriama LNC made a huge gift of [pounds] 1,000, a gift which P. C. G. H. C. Boulderson noted in his September 6, 1940 letter, wondering, as already noted, why “I have as yet seen no reference to this contribution in the press.”148 And in letter to the Information Officer, Nairobi, G. H. C. Boulderson, who was the Coast Provincial Commissioner, reveals that Tana River LNC had similarly made hefty contribution to the government. In the letter, dated September 16, 1940, the PC stated that a Tana River LNC resolved through a proposal by Abdalla

145 (Native Authority, 1939-45, KNA, PC/COAST/2/3/113).
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
Bashora and seconded by Maalim Athman, “that from the surplus funds of the council the sum of shs. 1,000/- be set aside as set out in the schedule No.2 attached, to be paid as soon as possible, shs. 900/- to the Kenya Central War Fund and shs. 100 to the Kenya War Welfare Fund.”  This was a good amount donated by the council, given the fact that the Tana River LNC “is a very poor council which has only been functioning for a few years so its Reserve funds are comparatively small,” PC G. H. C. Boulderson wrote in his letter.

A memorandum from the Executive Council, circulated to all members in 1941 shows that many Local Native Councils made contributions to the government war effort. Central Kavirondo LNC and South Kavirondo LNC each also sent in [pounds] 800 as their “war contribution.” In his letter to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, K. L. Hunter, then the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, revealed that the Local Native Council of his district wanted to donate [British pounds] 500 to the war. This was a balance of money collected to offset a famine in the district in 1940, and the Local Native Council was now proposing that since “they consider the present war emergency is such as a nature as to comply with the original objects of the fund, and they will be pleased to contribute the amount if Government will authorize the proposal.” By 1943, Local Native Councils in Nyanza Province had contributed more than Kshs.119,760/- to various war-related projects.

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149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 K. L. Hunter, District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 20th June, 1940, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).
152 Ibid.
153 Nyanza Provincial commissioner’s address [undated], (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
After the establishment of the Pioneer Corps, the Nyanza Provincial Administration appealed for funds to equip the unit. A "Band Fund" was set up and its objects were to "provide a drum and a bugle band for each of the two battalions" and "any balance to go towards battalion sports funds." \(^{154}\) The Provincial commissioner directed in his letter that subscriptions to the fund be sent to the Depot Officer, Pioneer Corps, Kisumu.

Contributions to Regimental Funds seem to have also been going on at the same time. In one letter S. H. Fazan thanked the districts for their contributions and directed that "sums be made available from the money voted by Local Native Councils to Regimental Funds." \(^{155}\) Like the "Band Fund," the intention of S. H. Fazan was to have the Regimental Funds distributed to units "with more than 100 Nyanza natives serving in them." \(^{156}\)

Contributions were also made to "Sailors Week." In a letter to all chiefs in Central Kavirondo, the District Commissioner reveals that "Sailors' Week" was a time when the people honored sailors for their work in the war by contributing funds and generally promoting sailors' welfare. \(^{157}\) The Native Female Staff and Girls at Ng’iya Girls School contributed Kshs. 29 to "the Sailors’ Week Fund," besides other funds. \(^{158}\) A typical sailors’ week involved entertainment, showing films on sailors, and collecting funds.


\(^{155}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 17\(^{th}\) November, 1940, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).

\(^{156}\) Ibid.

\(^{157}\) C. K. Perry, for Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to all Chiefs, letter dated 14\(^{th}\) May, 1942, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).

\(^{158}\) F. A. Moller, Principal, in a report on Ng’iya Girls Contributions, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
During one such week, films like *Rising Sailors*, *H. M. Minesweepers*, and *British Navy* were shown. An entrance fee of 15 cents and 25 cents were levied during the showing of films and all “profits [were] devoted to the Sailors’ funds.” In May, 1942, Chief Muganda Okwako of North Ugenya and Chief Ibrahim Aluko of South Ugenya respectively gave Kshs. 870.70 and Kshs. 161.40 as contributions from their locations to the “Sailors Week.” Chief Jairo Owino handed in Kshs. 907.81 from his Gem Location and Chief Opiyo sent in 315.50 from Nyakach Location. The exercise of collecting funds for “Sailors Week” was quite elaborate in Uyoma Location, Central Kavirondo District.

In response to a call by Chief J. G. Okwiri at a baraza on 18th May, 1942, the Uyoma Location LNC formed a committee consisting of Odindo Ng’omo, A. Obara Ouko, and Gideon Ogude, a member of the local LNC. Gideon Ogude shows in his account of how funds were collected that, “*watu walipokea shauri hii kwa niya nzuri nikapewa Kshs. 21.00 pale pale* [people received this request for funds well, and Kshs. 21.00 was given there and then].” In total, Uyoma Location contributed Kshs. 572.24 to Sailors’ Funds. In just two months, May to June, 1942, Central Kavirondo District contributed Kshs. 5,968.15 to the “Sailors’ Week.”

The spirit of giving was often evident around Christmas time. In anticipation of Christmas celebrations in 1940, “natives on Kaabirir Farm” contributed Kshs. 143 “as a

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159 Hutchinson, for Information Officer to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 13th May, 1942, (Military funds, 1942-44, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
160 C.K. Perry, for District Commissioner to Rev. R.T. Leahy, Kibuyc R.C. mission, and Rev. Mathayo Owino, C.M.S., Kisumu, letter dated 18th May, 1942, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147), urging Leahy and Owino to “give these performances a wide publicity and will ask your pupils to tell their friends and relations in the Reserve about them.”
161 Gideon Ogude, Treasurer, “*Chango kwa Wanamaji* [Sailors Fund],” to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 19th June, 1942, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
162 Honorary Treasurer, Sailors’ Fund, to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 12th
Xmas gift to natives in the KAR.”163 In 1941, Nyanza bought presents of [British pounds] 100 each, and sent them to “the two Pioneer Battalions, which were raised and received their early training in Nyanza.”164 Much of the money was spent buying things like sugar, musical instruments and “we are learning from troops on leave how much the gift was appreciated.”165 These gifts were important because they, according to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, went a long way in “establishing a real bond of union between the home province and our troops in the field.”166 The Nyanza Province War Welfare Fund went on to donate a “gift of [British pounds] 500 for the purchase of Christmas comforts for Nyanza natives in the fighting services.”167 Even after the war ended, Kenyans continued to supply funds for the buying of gifts for colonial troops. Funds like the “East African Overseas Troops Christmas Fund” supported the needs of the troops during the festive season.168 The wives of Europeans in the colony – the teachers, missionaries, doctors, colonial officials – were the ones largely involved in organizing and collecting funds for the “East African Overseas Troops.” They led various appeals for money, for instance, asking the African District Councils to “give something to show that they haven’t forgotten their brothers overseas.”169 In anticipation of the Christmas festivities in 1942, the administration in Nyanza circulated funds collection books to chiefs, informing them that, “kufanya bidii kusanya pesa hizi na twaweza kununua zawadi kama ya sikukuu kwa askari wetu walioko katika vita. Pesa hizi zitatumika kwa

August, 1942, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
164 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
168 (War Gratuities: East African Overseas Troops Christmas Fund, 1952, KNA, CA/12/5).
kununua ngoma na ‘ajua’ na vitu vingine [to try your best to collect funds, which will be used to buy gifts for soldiers during Christmas. The funds will be used to buy drums, ‘ajua,’ and other things].”

In 1942, the Women’s Union of the African Anglican Church in Kavirondo donated Kshs. 1,206.00 “as a token of sympathy with women of other races whose homes have been destroyed … sent to the E.A.W.L of which Kshs. 600.00 is for Bombed Babies, London, … the remainder for bombed women in Malta.” Since many soldiers traveled through Kenya and injured men were brought to Kenya to get treatment, the administration inevitably turned to local communities for support. The K.W.E.O Comforts Depot was established for traveling soldiers, and injured and convalescing soldiers, with funds provided by local people. Ng’iya Girls, for example, sewed pullovers, socks, and bags as “Xmas gifts to the fighting forces, under auspices of K.W.E.O.” Without the “help and assistance” of the local people, the chairman of K.W.E.O agreed, “we could not have carried on our work so successfully.” In letters to various government functionaries after the war, the Chairman of K.W.E.O Depots acknowledged with deep appreciation the support that his K.W.E.O. Comforts Depot had received from various groups in Kenya. “We would like to express to you our very great appreciation of the help which you and your district officers have given to the Depot.

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170 (District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, to Chiefs, letter dated 9th September, 1942, Military Funds, 1942-44, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
171 Report by L.O. Owen, C. M. S. Ng’iya, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
172 F. A. Moller, Principal, in a report on Ng’iya Girls Contributions, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
throughout the war,” the Chairman of K.W.E.O. comforts Depot informed the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner. The people were recognized for having “contributed so generously to the appeals which we have made upon you and assisted so enthusiastically the work of the Comforts Depot.” After receiving this letter of gratitude from the chairman of the K.W.E.O. Comforts Depot, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner in turn acknowledged his districts for their efforts, “especially those of chiefs, and direct members to inform their constituents” because funds from them went a long way in facilitating the establishment of a place where soldiers could rest and recuperate.

Similarly, the government inaugurated the “Mobile Canteens for the Troops” Fund. Targeting mainly the European and Asian civil servants during funds collection, the object of the fund was to “purchase one or more Mobile Canteens for the use of the East African Forces in the field.” The provision of Mobile Canteens was of “a most pressing need for the East African Forces” and many people were asked to donate funds. C. Sequeira, President of the Kenya Asian Civil Service Association also asked members of his association to donate money, the “worthiness of the object of the fund perfectly evident.”

Some of the national war funds were decentralized to districts and provinces. Men from districts submitted their contributions to their district headquarters and those near the

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174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 11th February, 1946, (Section Ceremony, 1946-47, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/81)
177 C. E. Mortimer, President, European Civil Servants Association of Kenya, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
178 Ibid.
179 C. Sequeira, President of the Kenya Asian Civil Service Association, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
provincial headquarters submitted their contributions at the provincial level. Special books for collecting funds were printed. "Changu La Vita Books" were given to District commissioners, District Officers, and Chiefs, and who in turn solicited for contributions. When it came to voluntary contributions, each district, and sometimes each location, was given the freedom to contribute either money or materials. In 1940, the administration established the "Nyanza Province London Relief Fund." An account for the Nyanza Province London Relief Fund was opened at National Bank of India Ltd., Kisumu. Operated by S. H. Fazan and C. O. Oates, funds from the Nyanza Province London Relief Fund were then submitted to the London Relief Fund. In just three days of raising funds in Kisumu-Londiani, various businesses and companies donated Kshs. 3,165 to the Nyanza Province London Relief Fund. The Manager of the Standard Bank of South Africa Limited forwarded Kshs. 193/- as contribution from various people to the relief fund. The manager of this bank further informed the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner that an anonymous contributor going by the name "Fishing rod" donated Kshs. 30 to the funds. Dr. Enzer donated Kshs. 100.00, as did other contributors. Asembo Trading Mines also donated Kshs. 20/- to the Relief Fund.

The Kenya Ambulance Fund was founded in 1940 and branches of the Fund were opened at provincial level. The Nyanza branch of the Kenya Ambulance Fund was proposed during a meeting of the Kisumu Township Committee on 29th May, 1940, and was

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181 The District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 18th September, 1940, (Relief Fund, 1940-44, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/84).
officially inaugurated in June, 1940. Plans were made to use the collected funds to
purchase an ambulance, which at the time cost “approximately Kshs. 10,000/- for use in
Europe through British Red Cross.”\(^{184}\) When the Central Kavirondo Local Native Council
heard that the fund would be used to purchase an ambulance for use only by troops in
Europe, they insisted that “donations from natives should be applied to the same purpose
except that, if there is a local war in this country, then part of the fund might be devoted
to the purchase of an ambulance for use by the East African Forces.”\(^{185}\) If the people did
not have cash, they were encouraged to “practice contributing in kind when they take
anything to sell at a market [e.g. cotton].”\(^{186}\) An account for the Nyanza Ambulance Fund
was opened at the National Bank of India Ltd. Collection of funds was officially started
by the Nyanza Club, with a donation of Kshs.2,000 to the Nyanza ambulance Fund.
Contributions to the Nyanza Ambulance Fund came from the Native Female Staff and
Girls at Ng’iya Girls School.\(^{187}\) Individual contributors like Chief Saulo Outa donated
Kshs.12/-, Rev. Simeon Nyende, and Ezekiel Kasuku Kshs.10/- each to the fund. East
Kano donated Kshs.1,020/- through Chief Owili.\(^{188}\) The Kenya Tea Growers Association,
“a body with its interests in Nyanza, provided two other ambulances.”\(^{189}\) On 27\(^{th}\) June,
1940, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner forwarded Kshs. 1,524.68, collected
from individuals in Central Kavirondo District, to the Nyanza Ambulance Fund. Gem

\(^{183}\) Manager, Standard Bank of South Africa Limited, to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 17\(^{th}\)
\(^{184}\) Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, Circular entitled, “Kenya War Welfare Fund, dated 10\(^{th}\) June,
1940, 1940, (Military Defence Force, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/74; see also: Nyanza Provincial Commissioner
to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 30\(^{th}\) May, 1940, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82).
\(^{185}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 6\(^{th}\) June, 1940, (Military
Defence Force, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/74).
\(^{186}\) Ibid.
\(^{187}\) F. A. Moller, Principal, in a report on Ng’iya Girls Contributions, (Military funds, 1942-44, KNA,
DC/KSM/1/22/147).
\(^{188}\) Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 13\(^{th}\) June,
1940, (Ambulance Fund, 1946, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/82)
Mines Ltd. contributed Kshs. 200/-. Kericho residents contributed Kshs.10,000, according to a letter from Gladys Howland. By the end of 1940, “the Nyanza Ambulance Fund had reached [British pounds] 4,243,” even after a bit of that money – Kshs.40,272/61 of the Nyanza Ambulance Fund – had been donated to the Kenya Welfare Fund on 30th August, 1940. Acknowledging Nyanza Province’ hefty financial contribution to the Ambulance Fund, Dickinson approvingly remarked “on behalf of the Forces in East Africa … [of] our great appreciation of the patriotism and generosity of the population of Nyanza as evinced by their donation of the sum of Kshs.40,272/61 for the purpose of providing motor ambulances for the use of the army in the Field.”

With these funds, Nyanza Province bought six ambulances, inscribed each with a name of a district in the province, and donated them to the army at a special ceremony outside the Law Courts, Nairobi, on 21st December, 1940, at 10:00 am. The ambulances – six from Nyanza, two from the Kenya Tea Growers Association, and one from Embu were handed over to the government and the military amidst a lot of fan-fare. Representing the government was G. M. Rennie, the Chief Secretary and Chairman of the Welfare Fund, Brigadier Sherman representing the military, and supported by Brigadier Orenstein and Colonel Barnsley. The Province was represented by the S.H. Fazan, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, Lady Sidney Farrar, the Hon Rahmetallah Kassim, Mr.

189 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
Pedraza, the Senior District Commissioner in Nyanza, Chief Sudi of Kitosh, Chief Paul Aogi of Maragoli, Chief Jairo Owino of Gem, Chief Paulo Mboya of Karachuonyo, Chief Musa Nyandusi of Nyaribari, and Ezekiel Kasuku, President of the Central Kavirondo Appeal Tribunal, while a chief from Embu represented Embu. During the ceremony, the military and the government expressed appreciation for the gift and for the “spirit of cooperation which all in the province were displaying towards the forces.”\(^{194}\) Out of the remaining balance from the Nyanza Ambulance Fund, a check for “[British pounds] 880 as it then stood was also presented on the 21\(^{st}\) December as a first installment towards the purchase of a Mobile Surgical Unit calculated to cost in all [British pounds] 2,000. The Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza related in another instance how the proceeds of “the Ambulance fund was spent in Kenya and [would provide for] one Mobile Surgical Unit and six ambulances.”\(^{195}\)

As contributions to the Nyanza Ambulance Fund continued, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza noted on 4\(^{th}\) February, 1941, that he collected [British pounds] 441 from North Kavirondo, [British pounds] 1,212 from Central Kavirondo, [British pounds] 1,888 from South Kavirondo, [British pounds] 708 from Kericho, and [British pounds] 767 from Kisumu-Londiani, making a total of [British pounds] 5,016, planned to purchase a Mobile Surgical Unit.\(^{196}\) A surgical unit and two mobile cinemas were purchased in 1941 thanks to funds from the Nyanza Ambulance Fund, which were collected in 1940 and 1941. During the same time, the Nyanza District Council “voted [British] pounds 2,000

\(^{194}\) Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 2\(^{nd}\) January, 1941, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).

\(^{195}\) Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
for investment in war funds."\textsuperscript{197} The following year, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner praised the spirit of giving in Nyanza, noting that, "they have contributed freely to war funds and have not refused to sell their cattle for military rations even though the price has been below what they could have got in the open market."\textsuperscript{198} Indeed, once enough funds had been collected for a Mobile Surgical Unit, the Provincial Commissioner planned "to open a new fund to be called the Nyanza Province Welfare Fund, the proceeds of which will be paid over to the Welfare Officer, Colonel Hoey, for any purpose connected with the welfare of the East African Forces."\textsuperscript{199} The funds were to be divided in such a way that funds donated by Europeans "unless otherwise indicated by the donor would go to European welfare, and the native donations to native welfare in the same way."\textsuperscript{200} During one address in 1943, the Nyanza Provincial commissioner observed that Kshs.29,853 had been donated to the Nyanza War Welfare Fund. Funds collected under the Nyanza Province War Welfare Fund went into financing "various welfare activities ... culminating in the gift of [British pounds] 500 for the purchase of Christmas comforts for Nyanza natives in the fighting services."\textsuperscript{201}

Contributions were also solicited for the Kenya Central War Fund. By October 1940, the Digo had contributed Kshs.21,600 to the War Funds. The Nyanza branch of the Kenya Central War Fund came into being at the same time with the Nyanza Ambulance Fund because there were people who wanted to devote their contribution to buying

\textsuperscript{196} Nyanza Provincial commissioner to District Commissioners in Nyanza, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} February, 1941, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).
\textsuperscript{197} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
\textsuperscript{198} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/36).
\textsuperscript{199} (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} January, 1941, (Military Defence Force, 1940, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/174).
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
ammunitions for the army rather than to buying ambulances. Since “there are many persons who, while desiring their contributions to be made through a Provincial fund, would prefer them to be devoted to munitions or some other war purpose, not necessarily to an Ambulance Fund,” S.H. Fazan writes, “for this reason it has been decided to open an account entitled ‘The Nyanza Province Central War Fund.’”202 The procedure for collecting funds in Nyanza Province for the Central War Fund shows that the administration in Nyanza stimulated contributions by publishing names of contributors to the funds in the newspapers and recognizing them at barazas, creating competition between various contributors. Immediately the Nyanza Province Central War Fund began, V.H. Jabahputra expressed his support when his company, Nyanza Printing Works, printed “free of charge 600 notices entitled ‘Nyanza Province Central War Fund.’”203 The people of North Kavirondo, through their District Commissioner, donated Kshs.20,000/-, equivalent to [British pounds] 1,000, to the Nyanza Central War Fund. Samia Location, according to P. Coessen, of the Nangina Catholic Mission, “have already paid 10 cents each for this purpose [Central War Fund] on the initiative of our chiefs, some of whom have given Kshs.10 and others less and this amount is in the hands of the local chiefs themselves.”204 Volunteering to help collect funds for the Central War Funds, P. Coessen reported that he had advised Samia Chiefs, including “Saduku Budedu … to hand over this collection made already … to inform his people who did not as yet contribute their mite to bring it to me in the future, however little it may be and that by

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201 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
forwarding it to you periodically, giving you the names of the donors individually and the amount remitted by them, you would be so kind as to issue receipts to the individual contributors." Government officers were urged to "to accept a voluntary deduction at source of a stated percentage of his substantive salary, such deductions being paid over by the Accountant General to the Kenya Central War Fund." It was recognized that some officers might not be able to make contributions due to their special financial circumstances and the government, "to avoid insidious distinctions," suggested that contributors should notify the Accountant General directly instead of informing their immediate officers. Homa Line Company Ltd. contributed Kshs.121/35 to the fund in June, 1940. The "natives" of Mill Hill Mission donated Kshs.107, and Joseph Shikanga Kshs.10/-, and Petro Ashiano Kshs.5/-, and were "very anxious that their contributions should be acknowledged through the press." By the second half of 1940, S.H. Fazan was able to in fact write a check for Kshs.6.004/45 as Nyanza contribution to the Kenya Central War Fund. In a letter to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, the Managing Director of John L. Riddoch reported that "all members of our staff – embracing Europeans, Asians and Africans – have agreed to make monthly contributions from their salaries to the Nyanza Province Central War Fund," and a check for Kshs.274/89 was enclosed "representing the first of these contributions." Kenya Consolidated Goldfields Limited donated Kshs.2000/- to the fund. During a dance competition held at the

205 Ibid.
206 G. Beresford, for Chief Secretary, (Military Defence Force, 1940, DC/KSM/1/22/174).
208 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chairman, Kenya War Fund, letter dated 29th August, 1940, (Kenya War, 1940-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/83, informing the Chairman of the Kenya War Fund about the check).
Kakamega Golf Club and at Rosterman Club, Kshs.4,000/ was collected for the Nyanza Province Central War Fund. According to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner’s report, contributions to the Nyanza Central War Fund, a unit of the larger Kenya Central War Fund, stood at “[British pounds] 1,970” by the end of 1940. Isiolo district alone contributed Kshs. 9,914/45 to the Kenya Central War Fund by November, 1940.\(^{210}\) The proceeds of the Nyanza Central War Fund were then “sent to England through the Kenya Central War Fund” while “the Ambulance fund was spent in Kenya and has provided one Mobile Surgical Unit and six ambulances.”\(^{211}\)

There was a national War Welfare Fund, with branches in the provinces. A steady stream of donations came from various groups, various companies, individuals, big and small. Donating 50 cents each, “gangs” laborers at Kenya Sugar Cane Limited managed to send Kshs.500/- to the War Welfare Fund. Some months earlier, the Kenya Sugar Limited itself contributed Kshs.1051/- to the Kenya War Welfare Fund. During the same time, the Kwale District commissioner acknowledged a check for 1,643/- from various companies in Kwale District. African Employees of Kerenga Estate who sent in Kshs.130. African Employees of Chebown donated Kshs.100/-. There were individual donors like Muchui wa Kibugi, Kshs.10/-, Wainard wa Kinuthia, Kshs.10/-, Mugambi wa Kobia, Kshs.5/-. On 12\(^{th}\) July, 1940, the Kenya War Welfare fund stood at [British pounds] 17,146.\(^{212}\) One individual, who listed his name as Psalm 102, contributed Kshs.102/-. The following month, 30\(^{th}\) August, 1940, the Secretary of Kenya War Welfare Fund Committee

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\(^{210}\) J. K. R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, “Notes on the War Effort of the NFD Tribesmen,” (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December, 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).

\(^{211}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
acknowledged a check for Kshs.40,272.61, as contribution from the Nyanza Ambulance Fund to the Kenya Welfare Fund. As a result of these contributions, the Governor was able to inform the British Secretary of State for the Colonies that Kenya would make "another installment of [British pounds] 10,000 from the Kenya Central War Fund for the purpose of assisting in the prosecution of the war."\textsuperscript{213} Since the inception of the Fund, the amount of money the colony had donated to Britain through the Kenya Central War Fund was [British pounds] 40,000.\textsuperscript{214} By the end of 1943, voluntary contributions to the Nyanza War Welfare Fund stood at Kshs.16,272.21. Contributions from various districts to the Nyanza War Welfare Fund were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Native Contributions:</th>
<th>Ksh. 1,000.15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kavirondo Native Contributions:</td>
<td>1,970.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Kavirondo</td>
<td>6,530.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kavirondo</td>
<td>2,228.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kericho</td>
<td>1,426.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisumu-Londiani</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>13,183.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of the year, the funds had increased to Kshs. 16,272.21.\textsuperscript{215} Funds from this program helped in meeting various, urgent government projects, such as the "salaries of scribes" employed to write letters on behalf of illiterate relatives of soldiers at the war front and "those stationed at district headquarters who are dealing with soldiers' inquiries addressed to the District Commissioners."\textsuperscript{216} Nyanza Province War Welfare Fund, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza observed, went into financing "various welfare activities ... culminating in the gift of [British pounds] 500 for the purchase of Christmas

\textsuperscript{212} The East African Standard, Saturday, 12\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940.
\textsuperscript{213} Information Officer, "Kenya Information Office Official Bulletin Communiqué No.517," dated 18\textsuperscript{th} October, 1940, (Funds, KNA, CC/4/8).
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{215} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/138).
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
comforts for Nyanza natives in the fighting services." Funds from the Nyanza War Welfare Fund also went to the purchase of drums for "any unit having a high percentage of Nyanza personnel," though from 1943 onwards the service was discontinued because "most units now have their requirements." List of unused and used books for collecting "War Welfare Funds" for the period May and June, 1946, showed that various localities from Central Kavirondo contributed funds even after the war had ended. Receipts for the period are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alego:</td>
<td>82.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadimu:</td>
<td>133.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asembo:</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gem:</td>
<td>88.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisumu:</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakwa:</td>
<td>215.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyakach:</td>
<td>210.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ugenya:</td>
<td>458.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kano:</td>
<td>99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kano:</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani submitted his "Changu La Vita Books" at the end of the war, he informed the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner his receipts for September and October, 1943, showed that he had collected Kshs.1,200 during the two months period. North Kavirondo contributed Kshs. 13,292.58 to the War Funds during the period 20th October, 1945 to 13th September, 1946. The District Commissioner of Kericho sent the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner his collections of Kshs. 5,275, and unused tickets amounting to Kshs. 1,425. List of unused and used books for collecting "War Welfare Funds" for the period May and June, 1946 showed that various localities had contributed funds.

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217 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
218 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, PC/NZA/1/138).
The "East African War Bonds" was also established during the war. The bonds under issue were often quite expensive and to a large extent very few Kenya Africans could afford to buy them. In fact available documents suggest that only colonial officials and rich Kenyans subscribed to the "East African War Bonds." Introduced towards the end of 1940, the purpose of the War bonds was defined in terms of financing the war rather than enriching "those whose sole pre-occupation still is to obtain a maximum return on their money." \(^{220}\) "The proceeds from the War Bonds," a Circular of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya stated, "will be re-lent to His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom to finance the war expenditure, [and] His Excellency is confident that members of the Service, of all races, will contribute as far as their means permit to the success of these loans, which represent a major contribution by the Colony to the Empire’s war effort." \(^{221}\) Only those "who are genuinely anxious to help on the war" were asked to buy the bonds, which were given on "reasonable terms with reasonable security." \(^{222}\) Two types of bonds were issued: the first one was known as "Series A, consists of bonds of [British pounds] 100 each, which are repayable between the 1\textsuperscript{st} of July, 1945, and the 1\textsuperscript{st} of July, 1947. The second issue, Series B, consists of bonds of [British pounds] 5 each, repayable between the same dates as in the case of Series A, but they may be repaid as par, plus accrued interest to date of application, less a deduction equal to six month’s

\(^{220}\) Governor Sir. Henry, radio address on 1\textsuperscript{st} August, 1941, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).


\(^{222}\) Governor Sir. Henry, radio address on 1\textsuperscript{st} August, 1941, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
interest.” By July, 1941, the amount invested in “East African Bonds” stood at [British pounds] 1,131,340, surpassing government expectation of collecting [British pounds] 1,000,000. “On to the next half million,” the government enthusiastically coined a new slogan. When the issue of the “East African War Bonds” was closed, a new one was issued on 26th February, 1942. The terms were substantially the same, “except that the redemption date is the 1st April, 1951, subject to the proviso that Government has the right to redeem the bonds, in whole or in part, at any time after the 1st April, 1949, on giving three months notice in the Kenya Official Gazette.” Another new condition was that no one was to hold Series B of “this issue which, together with any Series B bonds of the previous issue, exceed [British pounds] 1,500 unless the bonds which give rise to the excess are inherited from a deceased holder.” The subscribers to the funds were mostly colonial officials and rich men because they were the ones who could afford them, while the rest of the population could not. M. N. Evans, the District Commissioner of Kericho bought the [British pounds] 5 bond, which he paid for in installments of [British pounds] 2 in October, another [British pounds] 2 in November, and [British pounds] 1 in December.

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225 Accountant General, Circular No. 4, Ref. No. 5135/246, dated 16th February, 1942, (War Loans, 1941-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/67).
226 Ibid.
227 M. N. Evans, District Commissioner to Accountant General, Nairobi, letter dated 6th November, 1944, War Loans, 1941-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/67).
The other fund was the “War Bonus” and which received considerable amount of contributions from people. While not much is known about this fund, it was one of many types of funds established by the government to finance the war. Another fact about the fund is that it attracted a lot of contribution. At times contributions were so high that in 1943, the administration in Nyanza complained that interest paid on War Bonus “caused a heavy drain on council’s expenditure.”\textsuperscript{228} The figures for War Bonus for 1943, for instance, were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Contribution (British pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kavirondo:</td>
<td>3,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central “”</td>
<td>2,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South “”</td>
<td>2,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kericho</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>8,451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1944, the War Bonus figures were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Contribution (British pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kavirondo:</td>
<td>3,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central “”</td>
<td>3,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South “”</td>
<td>3,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kericho</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>10,300.\textsuperscript{229}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly, the increase in War Bonus prompted the government to remark that, “war bonus continues to be the biggest drain on local Native Council finances.”\textsuperscript{230}

Some times financial contributors preferred to submit their funds directly to the national level. These included those who lived at the national headquarters and those who for some other reason preferred to have their funds received at the national offices of the War Funds. As S. H. Fazan asserts with respect to contributions from Nyanza, “these contributions, though large, do not by any means represent all the contributions from

\textsuperscript{228} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/138).
\textsuperscript{229} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, PC/NZA/1/139).
\textsuperscript{230} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, PC/NZA/1/138).
Nyanza. Many of them were made direct to the central funds in Nairobi before the Nyanza Province Fund was started.”^231 In one speech in 1941, Governor Sir Henry Moore stated that personal contributions by Kenyans to the War Welfare Fund and the Kenya Central War Fund amounted to [British pounds] 15,300. These included contributions of 8 Mobile Ambulances from Nyanza Province. Kenyans in Embu donated [British pounds] 630 towards the Ambulance Fund. Local Native Councils subscribed over [British pounds] 12,000 towards fighter planes and had invested [British pounds] 25,000 of their balances in war funds.”^232

By the end of 1941, Kenya had made substantially monetary and material contributions to the war. Between September 1, 1940 and August 31, 1941, “Kenya had supplied foodstuffs to the military including certain purchases for the Middle East, the Sudan and Occupied Enemy Territory to a total of something over [British pounds] 1,500,000 in addition, timber to the value of [British pounds] 283,397 has been supplied either direct to the military or to military contractors. Besides this some three quarters of a million poles and a quarter of a million bamboos have been supplied to the military authorities by the Forest Department from thinnings (?) in the plantations.”^233 During the same period, Kenya supplied “11,430 pigs for bacon and pork purposes, 7,075,800 pounds of tinned butter, 750,500 pounds of fresh butter, 288,000 pounds of cheese, 262,000 gallons of fresh milk, 12,700 cattle from European and 47,900 from native suppliers, 41,140 sheep and lambs from European suppliers, 18,400 sheep and goats from native suppliers,

^231 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, PC/NZA/1/1/35).
^232 (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
10,596,000 pounds of wheat floor, 1,270,000 pounds of *atta*, 12,500 tons of maize, 1,900,000 pounds of tea, 5,175 tons of potatoes since November, 1940, and 2,800 tons of vegetables since January, 1941.”234 Those figures, the Governor clarified, “are by no means exhaustive and do not include many of the purchases of native produce in Kenya.”235

The Governor Sir Henry Moore thus recognized the role that various provinces played to the successful outcome of the war. The Turkana had provided livestock and the Agikuyu in Kerugoya and Karatina had supplied vegetables. Nyanza Province, the Governor said, had “supplied food when food was called for and I have heard of your generosity towards War Funds and War Welfare Funds. I know too that when Government called on you to assist in the production of food and other essential works throughout the country your young men came forward. All this has showed me that though the war has never come to your own country you are nonetheless eager to fight for King George. In this, then, you have done well and I praise you for it.”236 Lauding the colony for its support to the war, Governor Sir Henry Moore observed in another radio address that, “a spirit of high endeavor is abroad and all races, European, Indian and African are united in the determination to see that East Africa plays its full part, however humble, in the present conflict.”237 There is no “complacency or sitting back” in spite of the fact that “our man-power resources … have already been seriously depleted.”238 After the successful conclusion of the Abyssinian campaign, Lieut. Gen. A. G. Cunningham, the G-O-C East

234 Ibid.
235 Ibid.
236 Governor Sir Henry Moore, Broadcast in February, 1942, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
African Forces paid his homage to the people of Kenya. "The campaign in Abyssinia has now to all intents and purposes ended," Lieut-General A. G. Cunningham's letter to Governor Henry Moore read, "and I wish to take this opportunity of tendering to Your Excellency my sincere thanks for the invaluable assistance which you and your officers have always so readily given me. The loyal co-operation, given under Your Excellency's guidance, wholeheartedly and opened-handedly by the residents of Kenya, irrespective of creed, reflects the greatest credit on all concerned. You will be doing me a great favor if you will convey to the Officers of your government, and the non-official community, my very real thanks for all they have done. May the Indian, Arab and African Authorities who have so ably and willingly collaborated be included, since without their generous assistance the present successful conclusion could not have been reached." When some Europeans started criticizing African war effort due to lack of labor in their farms, the Governor pointed out that out of the 480,000 able bodied male natives in the colony, over 206,000 were employed by "non-natives" outside the reserves and about 12,000 more were in daily casual employment. There were 39,000 men in the forces by 1941. All the able-bodied men were involved in the production of the "food necessary to support about three million Africans, [besides] carrying out all the normal activities of life in the reserves - the preservation of law and order, the upkeep of roads, the ordinary functioning of schools, hospitals, markets, and the like – the native reserves have produced large quantities of foodstuffs."

237 (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
238 Ibid.
240 (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
While the end of the war brought an end to the recruitment of Kenyans into the military, it did not mean the end of financial obligations. Various funds were formed to help undertake various war-related activities, while some old ones continued soliciting for funds even after the war. As already mentioned, a Christmas Fund for overseas troops continued to operate and receive donations from well-wishers. The African District Councils were asked to "give something to show that they haven’t forgotten their brothers overseas." The "War Memorials" was another fund, which solicited for contributions from the public. Formed just around the time the war ended, the aim of "War Memorial Funds" was to collect funds and build a monument to memorialize the contributions of Kenyan servicemen to the war. The "East Africa Army Benevolent Fund" was formed in 1945 and was controlled by a board comprised of civilian and service members from all territories in East Africa. Established by Trust deed, it was "similar to the Army Benevolent Fund which was instituted in the United Kingdom in 1944." Its object was to "give financial aid and support to approved charities which will benefit persons normally resident in East Africa who are serving or who have served in Her Majesty’s Army, or their dependants living in East Africa." Grants from the "East Africa Army Benevolent Fund," T. Neil wrote, "are not made to individuals but only to approved charitable organizations." Since it was formed, the Fund survived largely on funds from private subscriptions and the surplus of disbanded war-time units, and nothing from the government. By 3rd June, 1952, "the fund had distributed over

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[British pounds] 17,000 for the "building of memorial homes and hostels and for the provision of bursaries for the education of the children of ex-askaris." There were furthermore, plans to use the funds for charities "which come within the terms of the Trust Deed ... and [already aid had been made] to the British Legion Bulletin, Boy Scout and Brownie Packs, British Legion Hostels, Kenya African Rifles, Memorial Clock tower at Zomba and Welfare Services for serving askari wives."  

Conclusion.

Thus African population participated in the war on two fronts, in the frontlines, and at home. As young men marched to the battle-field to serve as askaris, their relatives back in the colony aided the government by donating funds for war-related projects, producing food and cash crops, and by giving the government moral support. This aspect of African support of the war has most often been relegated to the sidelines by scholars examining the Africa and the Second World War, yet it was just as important to the realization of the Allied victory as was the role of the askaris.

243 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
CHAPTER EIGHT

ASKARIS IN MILITARY CAMPAIGNS.

We were the bravest.\footnote{Maura Oyiro, Veteran of the war; served with the East African Pioneers and the East African Engineers from 3\textsuperscript{rd} November, 1939 to 31\textsuperscript{st} December, 1945; saw battle in Abyssinia, Madagascar, and South East Asia; winner of Africa Star Medal, (Interviewed on 5\textsuperscript{th} December, 2000).}

One man dying called his bwana [his officer] and asked him to send a special message to his home; he was very badly wounded; but he insisted repeatedly that the message should be properly understood that ‘he had died a man’s death’.\footnote{Capt. F. E. V. Ross, Welfare Officer, AAPC [EA], quoting a dying askari at Abu}

Introduction.

This chapter examines askaris’ participation in battles and campaigns of the Second World War. Describing the campaigns in a chronological manner, the chapter begins by examining askaris’ participation in the Eastern Africa Campaign, which revolved around northern and northeastern Kenya, Italian Somaliland, Abyssinia, and Eritrea; moves to askaris in Madagascar; then to North Africa and the Middle East; and culminates with a detailed narrative of askaris fighting in South East Asia, particularly Burma. Using archival, newspaper, and oral accounts, the chapter focuses largely on the decisive battles, while explaining how askaris participated in them. The chapter describes how askaris’ involvement in the war began at the very beginning of the active phase of the war in Eastern Africa in 1940, how askaris moved to other campaigns, and how their involvement ended with the official end of the war in 1945. An analysis of most of the relevant accounts of the war – oral testimonies, archival sources, newspapers, and memoirs and semi-official sources – demonstrates that askaris generally acquitted themselves well, and the outcome of the war was in no small measure due to their sterling
role, a fact which military and government authorities acknowledged by awarding *askaris* numerous medals and commendations.

**The Eastern Africa Campaign.**

The Kenya Colony officially joined the war on Sunday, September 3, 1939. Following the declaration of war by Britain against Germany, the Colonial Governor, H.E. Sir R. Brooke-Popham put the country in a state of war by declaring that “a state of war exists between Britain and Germany as from 11 o’clock, British Summer time today.” Echoing the Imperial Government Communiqué, that “Hitler may only be stopped by force,” the Governor placed the King’s African Rifles, the Kenya Police, the King’s African Rifles Reserve of Officers, and the Kings African Rifles (Kenya) Reserve Forces into war footing. Major-General Dickinson who was the General Officer Commanding the East African Forces immediately began organizing the various Kenyan military contingents, which included the *askaris* for war. The kinds of action taken by the government were simply based on the straightforward implementation of precautionary arrangements, which the government had been preparing in anticipation of the war.

Indeed, already by 23rd August, 1939, that is even before the formal outbreak of hostilities, the NFD was already “on the alert,” following instructions from the Chief Secretary. Civilian population at Moyale and Mandera were “ordered to stand by, ready

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for evacuation." Civilians in Moyale who had no reason to stay were advised to leave for Isiolo. Important papers and cash were transferred from Moyale to Isiolo. By August 26th, 1939, arrangements were made to withdraw police outposts in Marsabit District and for the demolition of Garissa pontoon. Prices of goods in NFD were fixed. In the last week of August, the government "evacuated ... surplus personnel and government property from Wajir," and also sent away "all Indian and Arab women ... and some goods from shops removed from Wajir to Isiolo." Families of KAR and policemen also moved from Marsabit to Isiolo. The airstrips at Garissa, Bura and Balambala were also obstructed with logs of wood and stones and markings on airstrips were also covered up. In effect, then, by the time Kenya officially entered the Second World War on September 3rd, 1939, NFD had been virtually in a state of war. The Kenyan colonial administration had been going on with military preparations, though it cautiously sought to maintain a policy of rapprochement towards Italy, trying to avoid any action that could give Italy the excuse to join the war on Germany's side. In one telegram to the Officer-in-Charge of NFD, for example, the Chief Secretary, while ordering "the adoption of precautionary stage against Germany and Italy," also cautioned him that "no action should be taken that could be considered provocative to Italy."7

Thus with all these preparations, the only thing that had remained had been an official declaration of war, and which was done that day. Subsequently, the War Office took control of all East African military units. When the telegram on the outbreak of the war arrived in NFD, all the District Commissioners and District Officers of Wajir, Marsabit

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5 "History of the War in NFD," (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
6 Ibid.
and Garissa left their stations with all government personnel. The state of war brought confusion and panic in NFD, marked by looting in Moyale and Mandera, for instance. The District Commissioner of Moyale, in his panic to leave his station, detoured to Arbajahan, and he did not arrive in Isiolo until September 5, 1939, and by then new directives were in operation. In Nyanza, the outbreak of the war was marked by the decision of the administration to post a guard consisting of 15 Europeans and 72 native special constables and commanded by Commandant Dansie to keep watch on tunnels and viaducts above Fort Ternan in Nyanza. Some of the constables were blue-uniformed agricultural scouts sworn in as special constables. A convoy of 18 lorries, which had left Nyanza on 1st September, 1939, was on its way to Nairobi. Led by Mr. E. Livesay, the convoy also had 56 askaris for the Army Service Corps, mostly drivers and drivers' mates.\(^7\) Enemy aliens had already been interned. Three days later, on 4th September, 1939, 150 pioneers left Nyanza for Nairobi. These askaris joined the rest of the army, which by this time was close to 20,000 strong. According to General Sir. William Platt, when the war began in 1939, "the total number of troops in East Africa was about 20,000 of whom 13,000 were infantry; there was no artillery, practically no engineers and only 200 tradesmen in the services. There were very few men to work as signals and about 400 men employed as dressers in hospitals."\(^8\)

But the expected confrontation between Britain and Italy did not immediately materialize; Italy did not join the Axis, and it would not do so for almost another ten months. While most of the early preparations – the movements and evacuations taking

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\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
place especially in NFD – were based on the prevailing thinking that Italy would join the war on the side of the Axis, when Italy did not do so as had been expected, the level of threat expected from her side receded, and the movement and deployment of troops in NFD were scaled down. In most cases the troops went back to their stations. By 5th September, 1939, the government ordered the civil administrators to go back to Moyale and Mandera, and indeed on 9th September, 1939, the Officer-in-Charge of NFD “left Isiolo with one company KAR to re-occupy Moyale.”10 This company belonged to the 5th KAR. On the 15th September, 1939, another company of the 5th KAR re-occupied Mandera. The re-occupation of police posts in the Frontier was completed by September 13th and 14th, 1939. In Nyanza Province, “orders were received to cease further recruiting for the Pioneers”11 on 6th September, 1939. The Kenya Defence Force guard patrol and road blocks which had been taken to the border area with Tanganyika were withdrawn. The Fort Ternan guard was also withdrawn on 9th September, 1939. S. H. Fazan, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, went on to address a full baraza of Central Kavirondo chiefs and people at Maseno, where the people were thanked for the “readiness with which they had come forward” and where the Provincial Commissioner publicly voiced his hope that they would “come forward with equal readiness again if recruiting should be revived.”12 By 11th September, conditions in the colony, at least in Nyanza, “had begun to return to normal.”13 The most immediate concern for the colony was now not the war but “production of food crops, especially food crops and other crops

9 East African Standard, January 3, 1944.
10 “History of the War in NFD,” (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11)
11 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1939, KNA, PC/NYZ/1/1/34).
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
likely to be needed in wartime." The effect of the non-appearance of Italy in the war early on can be gauged from various comments of colonial officials. S. H. Fazan, for his part, jokingly observed that:

It must be remembered that the local plans were formulated, on the instructions from headquarters, on the assumption that Italy would come in against us and when that contingency did not occur, we felt that, if our plans seemed to be over elaborate, the blame for that must rest with the opposing team for not entering an appearance.  

From mid September 1939 to the first months of 1940, very little serious military activity was going on in the colony. Many colonial officers had little to report on the military front during this period. The main problems in NFD, according to Gerald Reece, the Officer-in-Charge of NFD, were “food shortages” and “thuggery” and “shiftas” [bandits]. NFD border with southwest Abyssinia and in particular with Maji, Bako, Gardulla, Tertulli, and Yeballo were inundated “by bands of Abyssinian rebels, patriots and robbers.” The KAR spent much of its time not in actual battles, but in skirmishes aimed at “the banda or to clear out an Italian outpost,” and then coming back “to their starting point instead of pushing on to the north and the east.” The askaris who were in NFD spent most of their time trying to reinforce their defences in the NFD, especially in Moyale, Marsabit, Mega, and Wajir, and also expanding and training its forces. Much of the situation in the NFD oscillated around fortification of positions, construction of roads, and a general surveillance of Italian troop movements – some NFD government officials

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 Information Officer, article entitled, “The KAR: Article I,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41); The Director of Medical Services for the Colony reported that there was “little of importance to record” during this period. (Director of Medical Services, Medical Department History of War, March to May, 1940, History of War, 1939-44, BY/49/28).]
even believed that relations between the colony and Italy would not deteriorate to a point where war would ensue.

The administration was guardedly optimistic in its prognosis of relations with Italy. There were reasons for this. The Italian officials at the border with NFD were generally perceived by local Kenyan colonial officials as friendly and carefree. “Italian frontier officials,” Gerald Reece of NFD reported, “were invariably friendly and courteous. They clearly indicated that they did not want to go to war with us, for though they considered their forces in Abyssinia [which they always said totaled 150,000] were more than adequate to deal with our Kenya and South African troops, it was obvious that all progress in Italian East Africa would suffer a severe reverse by war." And even if Italy decided to join the war and attacked the Kenya Colony, Kenya’s colonial officials believed that they could easily defeat the Italians whose forces they believed were not all that formidable. “From the very beginning,” one colonial official stated, “it was thought that Italian East Africa cut off from reinforcements and supplies, was incapable of a prolonged offensive.” General Dickinson, the GOC, East Africa, believed that three mobile columns moving from Moyale and the others east and west of Lake Turkana would have little problem dealing with the Italians in Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland.

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18 Gerald Reece, Officer-in-Charge, NFD, “History of War, NFD, Period 1st December, 1939 to 28th February, 1939,” (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11. See also in the same document, a report of a decision by the Italian government to make an installment of [British pounds] 3,500 of debts “due to British traders for cattle supplied during their invasion of Abyssinia, probably further convincing the NFD officials that war might not be inevitable. Surveillance by government official nevertheless told a different story; there was evidence, for instance, that Italian troops were doing field training in the Melbana-Gomo area, north-west of Moyale. There were rumors that Germany would occupy Jubaland and that Italy was making claims to Kenyan territories all the way to Tana River, including Wajir and Moyale, but these were generally dismissed as mere rumors.
In May of 1940, the tension at NFD deteriorated quite dramatically. Many in the Kenyan colonial government now felt that Italy would join the Axis and war would come onto the very doorsteps of Kenya. From May to beginning of June, 1940, “nothing much happened except that everybody knew it would,” one official asserted. European soldiers offered bets on when, and not if, the war would begin – bets started with the month, then the week, and then the day war would officially break out. Thus by May, 1940, the military authorities were pressing for the release from civil employment of more medical officers to the army, even though the civil medical department itself was also facing a shortage of medical personnel. Arrangements were made “to release the medical officer stationed in the Northern Frontier District for military duty as the medical authorities had to a large extent assumed control of this area.” The forces, led by the 5KAR, also began training, “daily gaining valuable experience of campaigning under conditions which demand from them their best qualities of disciplined endurance and cheerfulness.” The training for the KAR during the lull in the confrontation between Britain and Italy, also involved “becoming fully acquainted with new phases of war in Africa, of bombing from the air, for one thing, and cooperation with strange new arms of the fighting service, such as the armored car and army cooperation aircraft,” which were expected from Ghanaian and Nigerian African forces, that is the West African Frontier Force [WAFF], and the South African forces under General Jan Christian Smuts.

20 Information Officer, article entitled, “The KAR: Article II,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
21 Ibid.
22 Director of Medical Services, Medical Department History of War, March to May, 1940, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).
23 Information Officer, article entitled, “The KAR: Article I,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
24 Ibid.
On June 10, 1940, Italy finally joined the war on the side of the Axis, and the Kenya colony was generally not caught by surprise. The new Governor of Kenya, H.E. Sir Henry Monck-Mason Moore released a proclamation declaring that, “war has broken out between Great Britain and Italy.”

A total blackout was enforced. The main road in the Northern Frontier District was closed. In spite of the optimism in some Kenya government circles, war had finally come to Kenya and Kenyan men were required to join in the fighting. The outcome of the war “would be difficult to foretell,” and Governor Henry Moore would write that nobody knew “what the future had in store for us.” When the war broke out, Italians began their attacks largely by air. On 13th October 1940, 3 Italian planes dropped ‘personnel’ bombs on an empty shamba near Kiunga and on 20th October 1940, 15 bombs were dropped over Malindi. These “caused only superficial damage and no casualties,” but people were terrified. Raids and looting followed. On the 5th November, 1940, the Italians raided Kiunga, taking some prisoners away after some opposition by the villagers. When the British patrol, “HMKS Lindi” arrived the raids were over, but not before causing a lot of panic. “The women and children of non-local government servants with cash and records were evacuated from Lamu and Kipini under great difficulties; by porters between Witu and Malindi.”

The Mudir of Kiunga, close to the Italian border was withdrawn to Faza, given the heavy

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25 Kenya Proclamation, Rules and Regulations, 1940, Proclamation No. 59, (War: a Declaration, 1939-42, KNA, AG/16/406). The following year, Governor Moore would make declarations of war on Rumania, Hungary and Finland on 8th December, 1941, and on Japan on 8th December, 1941. (War: a Declaration, 1939-42, KNA, AG/16/406).

26 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).

27 (Coast Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53; see also an account of the outbreak of the war in “The KAR: Article II,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).

28 (Coast Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/COAST/2/1/53).
rains in the area, which made it impossible to patrol the area north of Tana. After these raids, all the villages along the coast from the border to Wange were deserted, the inhabitants taking refuge in Kiwaiyu, Ndau, Kizingitini, Faza and Lamu. A patrol of the KAR and Arab company under Lieutenant Henfrey successfully evacuated practically all the food supplies left behind in the abandoned villages. Although Mombasa was not bombed, there were “two alerts” which caused panic and led to a decision by the government to commence reconnaissance. Troops also patrolled Lamu and northwards. There was a general alertness by local people, and on one occasion, the villagers at Manga disarmed and arrested 4 Italian airmen whose plane had been brought down there. The Coast Provincial Commissioner eventually held barazas at Lamu and Faza on 11th and 12th December, 1940, respectively, and thanked the men for their support. By the end of the year, the general coastal area was described as “calm.” The local communities were said to have taken the “advent of the Italy calmly ... expressions of loyalty were voiced and money subscribed to War Funds.”

But the skirmishes at the Kenyan coast – around Malindi, Lamu, Mombasa, and Vanga – were generally a small fore-taste of what was going on in the NFD – where fighting was fiercest.

In the first place, once Italy formally joined the Axis, “the news ... spread rapidly through the NFD district and there was considerable speculation among the tribesmen [sic] as to the extent they would be affected.” The news of the outbreak of British-Italian war “came over wireless on the evening of June 10, 1940,” and was followed by a message in rapid succession that in Moyale, “ASP Carter had been taken prisoner by the

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29 Ibid.
Immediately, thereafter, the government closed the main road in the Northern Frontier District. The military took over patrol of posts such as Wajir and Buna from the police and the “police can best help the military by acting as guides and interpreters to patrols and by moving amongst the native population and gathering news and instilling confidence.”

Residents of Wajir were moved to Garba Tulla, others to Isiolo. Most of these activities fell in place smoothly because they had been prepared in advance, as the colonial government had for sometime anticipated Italy to join the war against her. “The news,” one official wrote, “did not come wholly [sic] as a surprise to tribemen who were well aware of Italian boasts nor to the administration since it was well known that relations between the Government of Great Britain and Italy had been rapidly deteriorating.”

When the war broke out, the military had only two battalions of the 21st Brigade at Garissa and Bura, and the 22nd Brigade [KAR] at Isiolo, Wajir and Moyale. The 5th Battalion KAR with Brigade Headquarters had moved from Isiolo to Wajir on 2nd May. One Company of 1/1st KAR was at Moyale, and the 1/6th KAR at Isiolo. The rest of the 22nd Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Fowkes, was at Wajir. But there was an "urgent task," Governor Moore wrote, "to rapidly expand our local forces." The Royal West African Frontier Force had arrived between June and August, 1940, and provided an "excellent test of the emergency medical arrangements as [they] arrived with a

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30 "Notes on Isiolo District as affected by the Northern Frontier Campaign, June 1940 - February, 1941, (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11).
31 Ibid.
32 2nd East African Divisional Headquarters to 2nd and 4th Brigades, letter dated 23rd July, 1940, (War Correspondence, 1940-44, KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/5).
33 "Notes on Isiolo District as affected by the Northern Frontier Campaign, June 1940 - February, 1941, (Political Records, 1927-61, KNA, DC/ISO/3/8/11)."
considerable number of sick. Over a period of 48 hours, 274 patients were admitted to
hospital, and about a further 50 transported direct from ship to ambulance train.

Evacuation to other trains and to Shimo La Tewa hospital proceeded simultaneously.\textsuperscript{35}

The Southern Rhodesia Air Force had arrived in Isiolo in June, 1940, and had been
followed by units of South African Air Force, consisting mainly of Army Cooperation
Flights. No 11 (SAAF) Bomber Squadron (Fairey Battles) was based on Archers Post
from August, 1940 to February 1941 and carried out sorties against the Italians from that
landing ground. From August, 1940, an Army Cooperation Flight (Hartebeestes – SAAF)
was based at Garba Tulla. In July 1940, the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} Gold Coast Battalions and the
Gold Coast Light Battery – the Gold Coast contingents were popularly known as “Gor
Gos” – arrived in Isiolo and moved shortly afterwards to Wajir under Brigadier Richards.
The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gold Coast Regiment arriving later in July proceeded to Marsabit and at the
beginning of September the 1\textsuperscript{st} South African Brigade with Brigadier Pienaar, DSO in
Command, arrived in the frontier and proceeded to Habaswein, camping in the old bed of
the Uaso at ‘Korei,’ about 8 miles west of Habaswein Bridge. In November, 1940, the
South African Brigade moved to Wajir. The 1\textsuperscript{st} South African Division under Major
General Brink DSO was in Isiolo in the Range Camp at the end of November, 1940 and
in Marsabit at the end of the year. A Divisional Headquarters was established in Nanyuki,
under the Command of Major-General Godwin-Austin, in August. This Division
comprised of the 1\textsuperscript{st} SA Brigade, the Gold Coast Brigade and the 22\textsuperscript{nd} East African
Brigade. This Division was soon renamed the 12\textsuperscript{th} [African] Division when a South
African Division arrived in the country in November, 1940. By the end of October, 1940,

\textsuperscript{34} (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
various military units operating in NFD included the 22 EA Infantry Brigade. Major R. G. Robertson-Glasgow was in Command of 1/6 KAR while Major Hurt commanded 5KAR. Major R. G. Robertson commanded all the troops in the area north west of Marsabit. Major Robertson was later relieved by Major Hurt and the 5KAR. There were also the irregulars under the Command of Capt. Buchanan [before the mutiny] and Capt. Currie. This was in a nutshell, the East African force, which would fight against the Italians.

Initial fighting in NFD generally consisted of aerial skirmishes and intermittent forays into each other’s territories. The Italians bombed Wajir on the 10th of June, 1940 and skirmishes took place at Moyale. The East African Forces launched their most serious counter-attack on June 17th on El Wak, “set the place on fire, captured stores and war materials and brought back the Italian flag.” On 28th June, Italians launched an intense artillery bombardment of Moyale, lasting for an hour. Three days later, on July 1st, an Italian contingent of 1,000 men again attacked Moyale, but the attack petered out. The Kenyan military sent reinforcements to assist the Company of 1st KAR, which at that time was the only one defending Moyale. The KAR also sent askaris “to Buna and also occupied Fannanyatta just south of Moyale” on the same day July 1st, 1940. But in spite of further reinforcements, on 9th July, 1940, the Italians seemed to be having an upper hand as they went on more bombing expeditions on other Kenyan towns, including Garissa, Wajir, and Buna. The East African troops in NFD suffered from lack of cover,

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35 Director of Medical Services, Medical Department History of War, June to August, 1940, (History of War, 1939-44, KNA, BY/49/28).
36 “The KAR: Article II,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41). This was the time that Capt. David Henderson (who later defended
except for "a bit of forest for miles ... [and the Italians] bombed them nearly every day and machine gunned quite frequently." During one bombing raid on Wajir, an Italian aircraft dropped bombs on a petrol dump, exploding it and killing 4 KAR askaris and wounding 18. More Italian bombs fell on Wajir and Muddo Gashi on 6th July, 1940. By July, 10th, 1940, the Italians were clearly having an upper hand on askaris and other combatants. The Company Commander, Drummond, was killed in these bombings. Four more askaris were killed and 7 seven wounded at Moyale. Commenting on the Italian attacks on Moyale, one official commented that:

Moyale was practically surrounded and the garrison was cut off from their water supply. Withdrawal was ordered and this took place on the night of 14/15th July, 1940.38

The Italian forays thus culminated in the Italian capture of Moyale on July, 15, 1940. The public became "despondent." In their counter-attack, KAR under the command of Major MacNab had made an indecisive run on El Wak on 18th June, 1940, which failed. Further countermeasures by the KAR were foiled by a "mutiny by the Abyssinian Venti Cuinque Brigade who had to be disarmed ... many of them subsequently escaped and joined the Abyssinians."39 In fact, Major MacNab's contingent was waylaid on its back from El Wak and was "heavily attacked."40 It seemed that Italian successes would not be temporary; they were seemingly in Kenya to stay. A counter-attack by the government forces on Dobel on 29-31st July, 1940 also failed. Consisting of the KAR, the Nigerians

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37 "The KAR: Article II," written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
39 "History of the War, 1st June 1940 to 31st August, 1940," (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
“with the ‘Reckies’ and the guns, the Kenyan colonial forces were on July 29th sent up to clear the Italians out of Korindili, a small group of hills about 19 miles north of Buna. The force did not find much at Korindili, so it moved on to Dobel. The ensuing battle with the Italians was described as “hot while it lasted and the Nigerians suffered heavy casualties. There was some hand to hand fighting and also daring cooperation work by the SAAF, bombing and machine-gunning the Italian positions.”41 As it turned out, the Italians “proved too strong to be thrown out of Dobel and on 2nd August, 1940, the 2nd Brigade (KAR) was forced to withdraw first to Buna. There was a lot of fighting in Buna. On one day the Italians subjected “Buna … to four attacks when well over a hundred bombs were dropped.”42 With the rains due and … with the prospects of threatening raids by banda now installed at Korindili, it was decided to withdraw from Buna.”43

Only the 1st Battalion remained at Buna, sending out excursions to Korindili and fighting the Italians in outlying areas in an attempt to cover up the withdrawal of other forces. At one such skirmish, “Captain David Henderson got a bullet through his hat.”44 Although the Italians did not know that the main force of the KAR had already left Buna, ultimately they came to know about it when the 1st Battalion followed suit on the night of 29th and 30th August, 1940, evacuating from the area. From Buna, government troops moved to Wajir, described as the “key to possession of the whole area.”45

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41 “The KAR: Article II,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
As one body of Italian troops carried out fighting in Moyale and other border towns, another body was fighting Kenyan troops on the bank of River Omo, Abyssinia, in June, 1940. It is not very clear from available records how fighting started on the River Omo. Although the government directed its officers to write about the war in their areas of jurisdictions, these officers failed to provide a comprehensive picture of how the war proceeded. *Askaris' own recollections during interviews are also not very coherent – often *askaris don't remember place names. Most often, available government records consist of snap-shots of isolated action, focusing on selected units rather than on the campaign as a whole. With these limited records, one can surmise that the battles around River Omo probably began when Kenya troops launched an attack on Italian troops in the area in the hope of drawing the attention of Italian forces from the besieged towns of Moyale. In July, the Italians were reportedly on the River Omo, near Kalam where they had constructed a bridge. A group of Merille, armed by Italians, attacked and occupied Namaramput on 13\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940. When Kenya troops tried to counter-attack Kalam, they were ambushed from reeds bordering the River Omo, forcing them to retreat. In August, another Kenyan counter-attack on Namaramput was momentarily successful but had to retreat in the face of more heavily armed and bigger Italian re-enforcement from Kallam. Many men died during these attacks and counter-attacks,\textsuperscript{46} but not much exists on the exact number of casualties. In November, 1940, a patrol of 2/4 KAR from Loruth was ambushed in the Lomogol with the loss of all the African soldiers – 24 *askaris, 5 Turkana scouts, and 2 Military Truck drivers. Lt. Littlehales who was in charge of the operation

\textsuperscript{46} “Raids and Border Incidents on the Borders of Kenya,” Raids and Border Incidents, 1930-58, KNA, DC/ISO/2/5/4).
was wounded and captured.

The Italian successes at Moyale led to disenchantment, fear, and panic in Kenya and Britain. There were public complaints about military preparations and conduct of fighting. The withdrawal of government forces from Moyale in particular provoked an outburst by newspapers against the military, and which, pushed on the defensive, candidly admitted that in fact their forces were no longer in Moyale. The public, which "for years had believed in the invincibility of the Empire to which they belonged,"\textsuperscript{47} began to reassess their assumptions about the British, as the Italian stock rose in their eyes (This picture would of course change later in the war, but not before initial Italian victories lowered, at least temporarily, British prestige in the eyes of the people). The \textit{East African Standard}'s London correspondent questioned in a telegram why the military evacuated Moyale "especially in view of large numbers troops."\textsuperscript{48} \textit{The Kenya Times} newspapers argued that it was a mistake to "underestimate the importance of these frontier operations which apart from further operations which Italians may plan have effect raising their prestige."\textsuperscript{49} A \textit{Herald} editorial column demanded "from War Office or Eden complete survey progress war Africa to date" while suggesting that the military was treating the public "too off-hand."\textsuperscript{50} \textit{The Times} editorialized that the withdrawal of troops from Moyale was "unwise" because it "underestimates" the effect on morale.\textsuperscript{51}

These criticisms pricked the military and one military officer demanded that newspapers

\textsuperscript{47} "Notes on the War-Effort of the NDD Tribesmen," (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{East African Standard} dated 16\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Kenya Times}, 16\textsuperscript{th} July, 1940.
should check with the military first before publishing their stories and critiques because
their criticisms hurt morale. The Attorney General complained about “a bad impression
given by the official reports of the battle of Moyale.”52 One officer, on the other hand,
tried to spin the withdrawal of East African Forces from Moyale as a tactical strategy,
which was aimed at saving their small force of 150 men who were facing a strong force
of 6 Italian battalions. “This representation of the battle of Moyale in the press,” the
official claimed, “had been very largely deliberate, and designed to mislead the Italians,
in which object had been very successful, since there seemed no other reason why the
Italians, at least 6 battalions strong, should not have pressed home their advantage against
a company of 150 strong.”53 In general, the relationship between the authorities and
reporters would be rocky throughout the war. Although they needed each other in their
work, they lived side by side in state of uneasiness, only tolerating each other. The
military allowed one East African Standard reporter, George Kinnear, to embed with East
African forces, and cover the war from the front for its Kenyan readers, but the loathing
and mistrust between the press and the authorities was never very far under the surface.
When George Kinnear filed a report on the Somaliland campaign, for instance, the
military dismissed it as “long-winded.”54

In the meantime, the Italians were continuing with the campaign, relying largely on their
air-force. Some of their aircrafts dropped small seven-pound anti-personnel bombs

50 Herald 17th July, 1940.
51 The Times, 18th July, 1940.
52 Extract from minutes of staff Meeting of 24th July, 1940, (Military Communiqués, 1940-41,KNA,
CS/1/10/35).
53Ibid.
54 (Military Communiqués, 1940-41, CS/1/10/35).
indiscriminately in the bush near Garissa. Early in the morning of the 21st September, 1940, Italian warplanes bombed Isiolo and killed 2 civilians and injured 5, damaging the wall of Somali Hotel in the trading center. According to official reports, this was the only time in the war that an air-raid on Isiolo would cause loss of life and damage to property. The government counter-measures against these attacks were ineffectual, described by one official as "light-hearted daring and bravado."55 Much of the government aerial counter-attack was led by SAAF, whose aircrafts, the "Hawker ‘Harts’," were very old. The "Hurricanes," another SAAF aircraft, were not brought to the front in NFD, reserved for the defence of Nairobi and Mombasa rather than "for the part of the world which was subject to enemy attack."56 Later on SAAF replaced the "Harts" with "Hartebeestes," a slightly faster biplane with only slightly enhanced reliability. It was these "antiquated machines," an official pointed out, that the government expected "our pilots ... now to face the Italian aerial attacks which were about to begin."57 But the SAAF was in luck. In the first place, the Italians "elected to use the three-engine Caproni aircraft which had approximately the same speed as the ‘Hartebeestes’ and were poorly armored."58 Secondly, although Italians managed to scare the Kenyan administration into evacuating many posts on the border with Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland, they did not inflict a lot of damage on the East African forces. In most cases, the bombing raids ended without causing much damage or any casualties. "It was apparent, "one official observed, that the "enemy were attempting to destroy open patches of ground which might be used as

55 (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
advanced aerodromes by our heavy bombers.” When one Italian aircraft flew “very low” over the Garissa District Commissioners residence, it made no “attempt to destroy it.” In all, Italian aircrafts raided Garissa about twelve times and caused little damage.

During the whole operation in NFD, one official writes, “the 2nd Brigade suffered very few casualties. The only military officer killed as already mentioned was Captain Drummond and the heaviest air-raid casualties were in the first attack of the war on Wajir when five Africans, running for cover, were caught by a bomb and all were killed.”

These ineffectual Italian air-raids provided the KAR and their allied forces with a window for a counter-attack. As Italian raids continued, the Kenyan military had already sent in more reinforcements to wage counter-raids, and there were now feelings of hope that with “the increasing number of troops who have arrived in the District … in good time the Italians will be driven from the Frontier.” A local Boran prophet, Guyo Kiti, fortified local hopes with his predictions that the government would lose Moyale only temporarily and that after many battles, the KAR would “drive the Italians out of the NFD and will advance into Abyssinia … that the British will rule in Abyssinia for some years and then hand over the country to another nation of tall men” did much to buoy the hopes of many civilians in NFD.

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59 Ibid.
60 (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11; in fact, the first of the Italian bombing of Garissa started on 21st June, 1941. “A number of 70 lb. bombs were also dropped in the township area and did only a little damage to the roof of the Police Sgt. Major’s house.” (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
61 “The KAR: Article II,” written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41]).
The reinforcements and movements of the KAR and other East African forces in NFD went side by side with infrastructural preparations – construction of roads and airstrips for use by the military, showing why the Italians had good reasons to try to destroy Kenya’s infrastructure. By 20th August, 1940, the 28th Road Construction Unit, a Durban (South Africa) Unit, had already completed the construction of a forty mile stretch of hard surface road from Isiolo to Garba Tulla. The Isiolo-Archers Post road was also hard-surfaced. The askaris serving with the East African Pioneers had also upgraded the Isiolo-Wajir road, though the road would be washed away by the rains since it was “too expensive to maintain.”64 The military also constructed airstrips for its Air Force. Mandera was the main landing ground and, after the battle for NFD, at least three more air-strips would be built at El Wak, Derkale and Ramu for the subsequent campaigns in Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia.

As these reinforcements were made, the government forces once again split into three columns to fight a multi-pronged battle against the Italians; one arm fought the Italians in Kenya while another arm invaded Ethiopia, and another Italian Somaliland. The fighting in the NFD was generally a fast and decisive one, driving the Italians out within a short time. On the 19th October, 1940, a force consisting of a detachment of the 3rd (Abyssinian) Irregulars, and 1 platoon of the 1/6th KAR attacked Dukana, and after encounters with enemy banda patrols, captured some equipment, and wounded 8 men. The following day the Italians counter-attacked, but were ambushed and 5 of them were killed. The British government side lost 1 man killed and 1 wounded. In October, the

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
Italians bombed the pontoon bridge, “blew up a dump of gelignite and injured three persons one of whom was a European who received a machine gun bullet in the arm.”

In their counter-attack, the SAAF employed two “Fury” fighters alongside the “Hartebeestes.” On one occasion the “Fury” brought down one Italian Caproni and its Italian crew were captured. This forced the Italians to bring in their “Savoia Aircraft for the first and only time to deliver a well-executed and lightning raid on the landing ground [in Garissa]. They destroyed one aircraft and one lorry and caused some considerable discomfort to the Officer and personnel of a RWAFF company who were exercising on the aerodromes.”

At the end of October, two Companies of Ethiopian Irregulars under Capts. Currie and Buchanan arrived. KAR occupied Kalacha and North Horr. These companies were later amalgamated under Capt. Currie after Capt. Buchanan’s Company mutinied and he was forced to leave. The newly united Company, now under Capt. Currie, proceeded to occupy Karsa, Derati, Balessa and the Hurri Hills. On the last day of November, the 2nd South African Infantry and a Brigade, consisting of Natal Mounted Infantry and the 1st and 2nd Field Force Battalions, took over control of Marsabit.

The first major critical and significant counter-attack by Kenyan forces was in El Wak on 16th December, 1940. Organized by 3 South African and 2 Gold Coast Battalions, armed with artillery, the counter-attack ended with 99 men killed and 44 captured, including 21 Italians. Also 13 guns, 4 machine guns and 15,000 rounds of ammunition were also captured. Government victory over the Italians, which forced the Italians to retreat to Juba [except at Afmadu], was quite significant in the sense that it was arguably the first

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65 (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
66 Ibid.
time that British forces scored a decisive victory in the Eastern Africa Theater. It boosted
government morale, and set the stage for more subsequent successful counter-attacks that
government forces would launch from then on. The success of the British counter-attack
"produced a marked effect on the tribesmen, especially those whose previous policy was
to sit on the fence."\(^\text{67}\) Some banda activity was seen at the end of the year, but the
determined advance of the South Africans removed their menace almost completely.\(^\text{68}\)
Apart from El Wak, British forces also re-occupied Moyale, which was evacuated by the
Italians on hearing about the fall of Mega. Leading the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) South African Division (2\(^{\text{nd}}\)
and 6\(^{\text{th}}\) South African Infantry Brigades, and 5\(^{\text{th}}\) Brigade, which consisted of 1\(^{\text{st}}\) South
African Irish Regiment, the 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) Transvaal Scottish Regiment and the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) Regiment
Botha), Maj. General George Brink attacked El Yibo and El Sardu with artillery and
aircrafts on 18\(^{\text{th}}\) January, 1941. The 1\(^{\text{st}}\) South African Division battered the Italians and
forced them to evacuate El Yibo and El Sardu; the casualties on the British side were
only 1 Irregular killed and 3 wounded and 1 European wounded. The South African
contingent itself did not suffer "even one single casualty."\(^\text{69}\)

It was during one of these attacks that one unidentified African soldier displayed true
character and displayed "true bravery." Running to his machine gun, "he was hit from an
armored car. He got up and ran on. Another burst knocked him to his knees. He got up
and crawled forward. It was only when the rest of the drum cut him to pieces that he was

\(^\text{67}\) "History of the War, NFD, 1\(^{\text{st}}\) December 1940 to 28\(^{\text{th}}\) February, 1941," History of War, 1939-49, KNA,
PC/NFD/4/1/11).
\(^\text{68}\) (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
\(^\text{69}\) Ibid.
stopped.” At the end of the month, advanced Division HQ was moved to Dukana and Marsabit District was cleared of the Italians. Between 10th and 16th February, 1941, the South African forces continued pushing forward, crossing the frontier and taking El Gumu, Hobok, Gorai, El Dima, Banno and Kunchurro in quick succession. The government forces also occupied Gorai with very few casualties. The fall of El Yibo, which is 12 miles from Ethiopian-Kenya border, and of El Sardu, which is a few miles north west of El Yibo, was quite significant to the Eastern Africa Campaign, not only because they greatly helped to minimize banditry that often diverted government military forces from the main task of fighting the war, but also because the waterholes there provided the military with water. In this war, “with water valued like liquid gold, the control of waterholes means the control of territory, and neither side can advance without securing wells along the line of advance. It is like a grim game of hopscotch in which each hope must land you at a waterhole which your opponent may be occupying.” With the fall of El Yibo and El Sardu, the Kenyan colonial military operations were greatly enhanced.

When government forces drove out the Italians from northern Kenyan territories by March 1941, they were now able to turn their full gaze on Italian occupied territories of Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. The East African forces were no longer being diverted by the situation within the Kenyan colony; they could now afford to pay full attention to driving the Italians out of the Eastern African Theater. Government operations against Italy were greatly enhanced early on 27th January, 1941, when Emperor Haile Selassie

managed to sneak into Abyssinia from Khartoum in Sudan, leading Abyssinian forces against the Italians. Advancing from Wajir and Garissa, the Kenyan contingent consisting of the 12th and 11th [African] Divisions entered Italian Somaliland towards the end of January 1941. The 1st South African Division, under General Brink, advanced into Gorai, El Gumu and Hobok in February, 1941. Moving from Marsabit, the 1st South African Division also advanced into south and southwest Ethiopia at the same time. On the 16th February, 1941, the 1st South African Division [3rd Transvaal Scottish and the 1st South African Irish] also captured Mega – 1,000 prisoners of war, 500 of them Europeans [Italians], were captured together with seven guns and “a vast quantity of materials of all sorts.”72 The government forces, as already mentioned, had captured El Wak, enabling the government forces to go on and successfully occupy many towns within Italian Somaliland and in the NFD itself. Despite what was described as “great difficulties presented by the terrain and torrential rains,”73 the Kenyan forces also went on to occupy Kalam on 24th March, 1941, and Maji on 23rd April, 1941.

Yet, although the South Africans were intimately involved in fighting in the NFD, their role in defeating the Italians has generally been downplayed by Kenyan military officers while emphasizing the role of the KAR. This also goes for reminiscences by askaris themselves, who also tend to stress their role in the war to the exclusion of others.

Captain J. K. R. Thorp, the Marsabit District Commissioner, claims that South Africa’s military effort has been “vastly exaggerated” and that South Africa’s press made these

71 The East African Standard, undated.
72 Captain J. K. R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, “War Comes to Marsabit: Some Persona Notes,” (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December 1941, KNA, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
“exaggerations” for “propaganda purposes.” The real heroes of this front were “the drivers of road machinery, transport drivers and dispatch riders.” Although South African’s military exploits and the moving of their Division from Mega via Dukana were magnificent and “must have played a large part in making the Italians withdraw as rapidly as the did,” J. K. R. Thorp adds that, it was the drivers who were the real heroes of the Campaign in NFD. “What those people went through in the way of hardship, cheerful and ‘ungrumbling,’ had to be seen to be believed. No praise is too high for them.” Without “us, the government would not have driven the Italians from northern Kenya. Only the Gor Gos [Gold Coast] could rival us in courage and strength.” “We were the bravest!”

Thus by the end of February 1941, “practically the whole of NFD had been cleared of the enemy and life on the whole reverted to normal.” By all accounts, the advance of the Kenyan forces from NFD to Abyssinia, fighting under the command of General Sir Alan Cunningham was lightning. The historic town of Amba Alagi fell to the British forces in May 1941, and the African askaris in the army who at this time numbered 39,000 were rightly given the credit for the progress. “The main brunt of the East African Campaign,” Governor Moore averred, “has been borne by native troops with a handful of white

74 Captain J. K. R. Thorp, Marsabit District Commissioner, “War Comes to Marsabit: Some Persona Notes,” (Political Records: War with Italy, May 1940-December 1941, DC/MBT/7/1/5).
75 Ibid.
76 No. G. 818, Pte. Amos Mukolo Madawo, served in the war for six years and seventy-three days, from 20th November, 1939 to 31st January, 1946, veteran of three campaigns, and winner of four meals, including “Africa Star,” (Interviewed on 4th December, 2000); Regimental No. G2772, Pte. Ochanda Amweny, who was interviewed 29th November, 2000, also made the same observation.
77 Maura Oyiro, Veteran of the war; served with the East African Pioneers and the East African Engineers from 3rd November, 1939 to 31st December, 1945; saw battle in Abyssinia, Madagascar, and South East Asia; winner of Africa Star Medal, (Interviewed
officers. Casualties have fortunately been small. Following the successful outcome of the operations in the NFD, a significant portion of Kenya forces was deployed in mopping up operations and many people even thought the war was over. Throughout the period after the successful counter-attack in NFD, East African military and administrative authorities were mainly pre-occupied with law and order matters.

In the meantime, the KAR and other British Allied forces were fighting with Italians in Italian Somaliland. The 10th KAR detachment occupied Kalacha, Garba Bor and Ferroli. This led to the fall of Kismayu on 11th February, 1941, according to a glowing headline in the East African Standard. Mogadishu fell even earlier to the East and West African troops on the evening of February 2nd, 1941. A special Military Administrator for Italian Somaliland was appointed and the Officer-in-Charge was specifically barred from participating in the affairs of Italian Somaliland because of sensitive geo-political reasons. Italian Somaliland was an independent colony and if the government extended the jurisdiction of the Officer-in-Charge of NFD to Italian Somaliland, it could easily have been accused of annexing the territory – the very thing Hitler had been accused of and sparking the war. An envoy of Emperor Haile Sellasie also warned the Kenyan military that if “you have a hand in the administration, it might give the Emperor an excuse for considering this area [Italian Somaliland] to be under Ethiopian

on 5th December, 2000).
78 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
79 In fact, a detachment of KAR and the police would replace “C” Company and continue with the functions of law and order in the area. See: Various reports on raids and counter-raids between the Merille [Gelubba], Boran, Sakuye, Gurreh, and Somali, for example, and others in the NFD, and efforts by the authorities to quell them. The “C” Company, 1st Northern Rhodesia Regiment under the command of Captain W.S.G. Wilkinson was stationed at Illirit, on the eastern shores of Lake Turkana, on the second half of 1941 to maintain watch on the Merille [Gelubba].
administration" and this could lead to problems in the relation between the British
government and the Emperor. Thus the Officer-in-Charge of NFD was only allowed
“occasionally to cross the boundary a short way into Somalia in cases of necessity” and
not to take over the administration of Italian Somaliland altogether.

In Abyssinia the war was also proceeding rapidly. Within a very short time, goes
government accounts, many Italians were taken prisoners and the number of refugees
increased. Many of these prisoners were brought for internment in Kenya. A Prisoners of
War Camp was opened at Isiolo with 400 inmates. By May 1941, the Isiolo Prisoners of
War Camp had 1,000 occupants. By September 1941, the number of African Prisoners
of War at the camp stood at 1,500. In July, 1941, a large group of 135 men, 123 women
and 124 Italian children were moved from Ethiopia to a camp in Nyeri, Kenya. The arrest
of many Italian prisoners of war and their families took place after some of the most
memorable and decisive battles of the Eastern Africa Campaign. Addis Ababa fell on 5th
April, 1941, and a month later, the Emperor returned to the capital. In these battles the
government captured some important towns in Abyssinia: two KAR companies captured
Mt. Fike on May 2, 1941. Bubissa was also captured a few days later. Strengthened by a
South African battalion, the KAR also went on to cross Dadaba on May 12, 1941. During
these battles, one Natal Regiment captured 19 guns, and a large number of machine guns.
The Dadaba battles was one of the most important battles south of Addis Adaba,
according to the East African Standard, opening the way for government forces

80 Lieut-Col. R. Y. Thorne, GS01 to Lieut-Col. Reece, Senior Political Officer, Isiolo, latter dated 29th
October, 1941, (Secret and Confidential Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1)
81 Ibid.
consisting mainly of South Africans and the KAR to move to Sciasciamanna on May 14, 1941. In the meantime, various forces made a major drive to link up at Dalle: a Gold Coast Brigade and KAR force was coming from Neghelli, a South African force was coming from Sciasciamanna, and a KAR force was moving from Yavello. These concerted moves by the government forced the Italians to flee southwards, with government forces in hot pursuit. On May 19, 1941, the government captured Colitu. The government also captured Billate. Soddu was the next town to fall to the government forces after a spectacular hand-to-hand fighting involving askaris fighting with machetes. When the "Italians tried to counter-attack with tanks, they were defeated through sheer display of courage by individual askaris who were facing about 7 to 8 tanks." Thus the Italians continued to flee south, preparing the stage for the battle known popularly as the Battle of the Lakes, and capture of the famous town of Amba Alagi on May 20, 1941.

The Italian resistance was almost over. According to the East African Standard, of Friday, September 26th, 1941, the Battle for the Lakes – Algato and Sciala – was fought mainly on the Omo River and when government forces captured a strategic portion of the river in June, 1941, it would only be a matter of time before the Italians were defeated and totally surrendered. The importance of the battle of River Omo to the defeat of the Italians can be gleaned from further reports by George Kinnear, the East African Standard reporter. The battle marked a major watershed in the whole of the Eastern Africa Campaign. According to Kinnear, the battle of River Omo was the "last phase in the great battle of the Lakes in southern Abyssinia, [it] was the final stage before Gimma

82 "History of the War, NFD, 1st March 1941 to 31st May, 1941," (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/4/1/11).
was occupied and Italian resistance collapsed.”83 Another important fact about the battle for River Omo was that, apart from the earliest stages of the battles when a South African battalion was involved in the capture of Sciascia Manna and then went on only as far north as Dalle, the infantry employed in this fight were exclusively African – the KAR and Nigerians.

The *East African Standard*, in its commentaries to the home audience, provided detailed rendition of the latest battles of the East African Campaign, which were fought in Abyssinia. Small skirmishes had already taken place on River Omo at the beginning of British-Italian hostilities, and now the government forces, consisting mainly of Nigerian Brigade, the KAR, and the SAAF, had captured major cities in Abyssinia, including the historic town of Amba Alaga. From June 1941, the *East African Standard* reported, these government forces organized two battles on the Omo River to force the Italians to surrender, one at Omo Bottego and another on the Upper Omo opposite the village called Abalti which stands at the very edge of the escarpment wall on the far side of the Omo about 1,500 ft above the river 8 miles or so away on the road that leads to Gimma. The Kenyan forces chose these areas carefully to side-step the Italians who had been expecting an attack from the government to come any time either by way of a place popularly known as Abyssinian Crossing, where there used to be a ford. The other place the Italians were expecting government forces to cross the River Omo was further up stream near Bridge Hill, the area between the Abyssinian Crossing and the new high-level bridge. Not surprisingly, the Italians manned these two places heavily. “Having decided, therefore, where the Italians thought we were going to land, the Brigade

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83 *East African Standard*, Friday, September 26, 1941.
Commander made up his mind that at all costs we must cross somewhere else.”

That somewhere else was the area further right of Bridge Hill, a place the Italians neglected to defend because “the river was fast flowing and the banks were precipitous.” It was there that the military deployed a Nigerian battalion. Having been pushed by government forces in the battles leading up to the River Omo and across the river, the Italians were determined to make their stand, desperately trying to prevent government forces from crossing. After crossing this precipitous part of the river, one Nigerian battalion took charge of the bridgehead of the Bridge Hill, while a KAR battalion crossed the river and lay in wait eight miles away from the river. A third KAR battalion tried to cross the river, but was unable to do so because of the length of time required to build a deccaville track bridge and get the KAR across. No motor transport and no artillery could be got over the bridge. The attempt to capture the bridgehead alerted the main body of an Italian force on the Abyssinian Crossing, 1½ miles downstream. George Kinnear writes that "it did not look promising for the government side, with one battalion lying 8 miles across the river, one battalion on the bridgehead, and another unable to cross over. The Nigerian battalion was also exhausted by the battle for the bridgehead, which they had launched at dawn and now it was getting dark. But there was one company of the battalion that had not “been tried hard and was still fit to fight.”

Thus Kenya's colonial forces pressed on with their advantage and the following morning attacked Italians forces on the Abyssinian Crossing. By this time, other companies of the KAR had joined the attack. The arrival of additional KAR companies exerted further

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84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
pressure on the Italians, but the Italians did not give up easily. In many places along the river bank and on top of the escarpment, Italian gunners would hold fire until the KAR and Nigerian battalions were not more than a 100 yards away. “Then they blazed off the whole belt of ammunition but the Nigerians and the KAR responded with bayonet charges.”87 The KAR and Nigerians would surge forward shouting and even singing. Several skirmishes were fought on the Abyssinian Crossing and many men were killed and captured. Although the exact figure of casualties are not provided in Kinear’s report, he alludes to the fact over 1,000 Italian prisoners were captured during fighting for the crossing. By the end of the second day of fighting, Kenya government forces had captured 2,800 Italian prisoners. Desperate, the Italians tried to blow up the bridge, but were foiled. Abyssinian Crossing was captured, and thereafter Abalti village fell to KAR and Nigerian forces. After foiling the Italian attempt at blowing up the Abyssinian Crossing, more government forces crossed the river and they “were hurrying long the Gimma road.”88

The other battle on the River Omo took place on Omo Bottego, a strategic footbridge on the river. Although the Italians were in charge of this place, they were by May, 1941, quite nervous, often spraying the area around it constantly with heavy shellfire and machinegun bursts anytime they thought somebody or something was on the bridge. It reached a point where the whole confrontation focused on taking the bridge; gallant attempts costing life were made to get to the bridge while “our artillery laid down a

86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
barrage and pounded the enemy gun positions and machine gun posts behind it." In the ensuing bombardment, the fire became so heavy for the Italians, enabling the Nigerian battalions to weather Italian defenses and to move down into the river valley, though the rest of the 2nd Battalion remained on top of the escarpment, still looking for other places to cross the river. Many plans were hatched, for instance, that "a rope might be fired across at the end of a grenade, but that would not work." Ropes were tied to assault boats but the drag was too great. It was impossible to swim. There had been nothing for it but laboriously to learn the technique of the assault boat. The boatmen from Lagos and more from Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa did valiantly, but without success. The government forces had thus only two realistic ways of crossing the river: to repair the bridge, which the Italians tried to destroy but only managed to damage slightly after crossing to their side, or to look for an alternative gorge, the best place at which to get a footing. The East African Engineers therefore "made the most strenuous efforts to get a start made on repairs and some of them, attempted to swim across with a rope, one of them popping up, stark naked, in front of a demoralized Italian machine gun crew. Thereafter, the enemy began to pay more attention to the bridge and all hopes of crossing there had to be given up."  

After a quick examination of the river, a spot was selected below the bridge for another attempt. It was to be made by "assault boats," unwieldy crafts, which had been used on the Juba and then transported all the way through Somaliland and Abyssinia for jobs like the Omo. But at this time in June, the Omo was flooded; on several occasions the attempt

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89 The East African Standard, Wednesday, 19th September, 1941.
90 Ibid.
to cross failed and many *askaris* bailed out of the boats to save their lives. Many boats were wrecked and out of the six boats that began trying to cross the river, “only two were seaworthy at the end of the day.” The diligent practice paid off eventually and by this means, “two platoons of Nigerians and two platoons of the KAR got across the river on June 2nd during the afternoon and the evening.” They settled down for the evening, and at exactly a quarter to six the following day, a coordinated attack began, consisting of SAAF pummeling the Italians with heavy bomb and machine gun raids, and the KAR moving up the steep slopes on the Italian side of the Omo River. Making an outflanking movement, the KAR came behind the Italian guns. The Nigerian battalion, still positioned on the opposite side of the Italians, recorded the movements of the KAR by monitoring a pre-arranged signal, a mirror flashing in the sun to indicate their position to the Nigerians. The Nigerians were thus able to begin their attack on the Italians at precisely the time the KAR reached behind the Italians. The flank march of the KAR involved 12 miles and a climb of 1,000 ft. They found Italian positions heavily manned: the whole of the Italian position was five miles deep. The Italians fought back heavily, but the KAR had one major advantage, they had taken the Italians by surprise. The KAR managed to capture an Italian gun, though it was not until evening that they were able to push in their attack on the flank and the rear of the Italian position. The KAR were thus successful in their mission. “The battalion had swooped down on the enemy gun positions from the rear and the flank after 12 miles march. One gun position was taken almost without halting, and with an élan in keeping with the traditions of the Regiment. The enemy gunners, taken by surprise fought irresolutely. Whole batteries were taken at

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91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
the point of the bayonet and a great many prisoners fell to the KAR. Local counter-attacks launched to try to save the guns availed nothing. The KAR would not be denied.”94 In the meantime, the Nigerians had cleared the Italians from the banks of River Omo and had enabled the Engineers to commence their reconnaissance for the construction of a pontoon ferry. Fighting went on well till dark, with Italians throwing everything into the battle - machineguns, grenades, and there was hand-to-hand combat with bayonets in the bush. At one point in the night, “a platoon of the KAR had found itself completely surrounded by the enemy as the last light gave out, fought on and in the morning found that all their attackers had surrendered. The Italians did not like fighting in the dark. Nor did we for that part of the matter especially when, to make things worse, even the wireless died on us and nobody knew what was happening.”95 By the following morning, the Nigerians and the KAR were in complete possession of the battlefield. The Nigerians killed 35 soldiers and took 400 prisoners. George Kinnear sums up his view of the battle for the Omo River.

And so the Omo Bottego was ours in the thick bush, in the unpleasant valley of the Omo, on the far slopes after the laborious crossing the battle had been fought with skill and spirit reflecting the greatest credit on the native troops from East and West Africa. It was probably the toughest job the Nigerians and the KAR were given in the whole of the Campaign and they did it well.96

The defeat of the Italians at the battle of the Lakes opened the way to Gimma; Italian resistance dwindled and the government occupied the area. By mid November 1941, the KAR and their allies were fighting at the last Italian strong-hold at Gondar. The collapse of Gondar on 27th November 1941 marked the end of the campaign in Abyssinia and

93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
Easern Africa as a whole. With the rapid collapse of the "Italian resistance in Eritrea, Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland," Governor Henry Moore observed at a baraza in Nyanza Province, "the menace of the Italians has been removed from our border and the Emperor of Abyssinia has been restored to his throne. This I think has rightly been welcomed as a symbol of what this Empire is fighting for." The military situation in the region altered overnight, Governor Moore recalled, and "thanks to our geographical position we now find ourselves not only a reception area for large numbers of refugees and prisoners-of-war, but also as a potential source of supply for our forces in the Middle East and elsewhere." Many askaris were given awards for courage and gallantry they displayed, and during such times, "the Governor [wished] the fullest possible publicity to be given to these awards at barazas."*99

Once the British forces had defeated the Italians in the Eastern Africa Theater, askaris were deployed mostly for guard and security duties. The askaris were employed to

96 Ibid.
97 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
98 Ibid.
99 (Military Awards, 1941-46, PC/NZA/3/4/5. Several archival files contain information on awards given to these soldiers in recognition of their performance in northern Kenya, Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The Loyal Service Badge was given only "to persons invalided as the result of disablement attributable to military service ... injuries received or disease contracted whilst in the Army other than in cases were the injury or disease is due to the individual's own fault or misconduct." (Chief Secretary to Governors' Conference, letter dated 23rd October, 1942, Medals and Decorations: Loyal Service, 1945-56, KNA, AH/4/55; See also R. J. C. Howes, for Chief Secretary, in a letter dated 9th March, 1944, reiterating the official policy of the government to "award Loyal Service Badges in all cases where the person concerned [whether European, Asian or African] ... "). Many Kenyans earned such awards. Writing on September 14, 1943, R.J.C. Howes, the Acting Chief Secretary to Governors' Conference, informed various Provincial Commissioners in Kenya that he was enclosing for their information "further citations for awards to Kenya native military personnel in the East African Campaign." (Military Awards, 1941-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/5). This circular was later signed by the Chief Secretary himself on 24th September, 1943, and forwarded to the Information Officer, Nairobi, with the directive that the "His Excellency the Governor [wished] the fullest possible publicity to be given to these awards at Barazas" (Military Awards, 1941-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/5). Kenya native military personnel were given awards for their role "in the East African Campaign." (RJS Howes, for Chief Secretary to Governors' Conference, Circular to all Provincial Commissioners, dated 14th July, 1943, Discharge Medals, 1944-45, KNA, DC/TAMB/1/9/9).
control “brigandage,” given the large number of rifles circulating in Abyssinia and especially in the Ogaden area where “it is very easy at the present time to get a rifle.”

The administration was very concerned about the proliferation of arms in the area and many regulations were enacted to deal with it. The Officer-in-Charge of NFD was angry with those perpetrating lawlessness and with criminals in NFD instead of appreciating the defeat of the Italians because of the fact that “most of these people have been either in Abyssinia or Italian Somaliland [or have some connection with those countries] and know full well what would be the consequence if they behaved in that way in Italian or Abyssinian territory.” Because of the “danger of sending out askaris in twos and three to deal with crime anywhere near the frontier,” patrols generally consisted of large numbers of askaris. The soldiers were thus in charge of maintaining security. Wireless facilities for easy and fast communication were established. The soldiers also guarded mostly the Italian soldiers and their local allies who had been captured in the war for control of the Eastern Africa region. In the words of Governor Moore, the presence of British troops “ceased to be in active operational theater of war … and both in Abyssinia itself and in occupied enemy territories generally, [and turned to] the maintenance of law and order … for many months to come.” Italian civilians were also detained under the “Arrest and Detention of Suspected Persons Under the Defence Regulations.” Haji Yusuf was detained on 26th March, 1941 for “being an Italian

100 Officer-in-Charge, NFD, to the District Commissioners and the police, letter dated 2nd April, (Secret and Confidential Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1).
101 On 19th August, 1942, for instance, the Officer-in-Charge, NFD, issued a circular reminding its officers to seize “unlicensed firearms.” (Secret and Confidential Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1).
102 NFD Office to all District Commissioners, Confidential and Urgent Circular dated 18th May, 1943, (Secret and Confidential Correspondence, 1932-46, KNA, PC/GRSSA/2/15/1).
103 Ibid.
104 The East African Standard, Wednesday, 19th November, 1941.
herdsman and suspected of having anti-British influence on tribesmen." These internees included 135 men, 123 women and 124 Italian children who arrived in Kenya in July, 1941 and taken directly to a camp in Nyeri. Wives of Italian banda ["bandits"] including Batula Mohamed, Hawa Loho, Hawa Abdille, Ajabu Aden, and Faduma Yako were also detained and their guards were the askari. When the Italians Baroncini Giuseppe, Bellati Adriano, Rufini Corrado, Dogliani Cesare, and Gugole Augusto were arrested at Derkale on 8th July, 1942, they were taken to Isiolo camp by Cpl. Daro Geldo.

The prisoners included Kenyan soldiers arrested and imprisoned for various offences and for participating in a mutiny in Ethiopia. One major mutiny occurred after the war in Ethiopia, even though not much is known about it. The government tended to censor information about mutinies because it did not want people to realize that not everybody unquestioningly supported the war, and hence blowing the lid open on some of the grievances that askaris had regarding their place in the army and the way the war was being conducted. Major H. M. Grant, The District Commissioner of Moyale, for instance, only informed the Isiolo District commissioner that driver Duncan Mbewe Mwenyelawe, one of the mutineers, was under arrest for taking part in a "mutiny in Ethiopia and subsequently escaped," and said nothing else.

While working as guards and generally involved in non-combat work in the Eastern Africa Theater, many askaris found time to tour and entertain. The askaris thus had the opportunity to travel and see different places they had hitherto only been hearing about.

\[105\] (Military Correspondence, 1941-46, KNA, DC/MLE/2/12/7).
Whereas at home in Kenya “we were seeing Somalis walking here and there ... trading in
cattle, ... we could not talk about their country as we did not know it,” wrote soldier-
clerk John Ogola Sana, a Luo from North Ugenya and serving with the East African
Forces at “Mogadiscio [sic].”\textsuperscript{107} But now they could see their country. The writer thus
proceeded to describe Somali, a country, which, he said, “consists of sand.” The name of
the country that was once known as “Italian Somaliland” has “died down,” wrote John
Ogola Sana in two articles he dispatched to the colony from the war front in Somaliland.
Drunkenness was the most common problem for \textit{askaris} during the war, apparently the
only way of whiling away time. Drunkenness inevitably led to fighting and brawling, and
to death of many \textit{askaris}. It is probable that the majority of \textit{askari} casualties in the
Eastern Africa Theater were caused by non-combat incidents, away from the battlefront
rather than in battle.

Some \textit{askaris} used their free time to visit brothels, and there were a number of \textit{askaris}
who died in a fracas “between Africans, Abyssinians, Somalis and Ethiopian
prostitutes.”\textsuperscript{108} During a special commemoration at the Ngong’ War Cemetery for \textit{askaris}
who died in the war, it was revealed that “180 soldiers and one nursing sister ... gave
their lives in the East African Campaign” and were interned at the ceremony.\textsuperscript{109} But
nevertheless, there is no clear figure on British and African casualties in the Eastern
African Campaign and it is also difficult to determine how many were killed on the

\textsuperscript{106} Major H. M. Grant, Moyale District Commissioner to Isiolo District Commissioner, letter dated 11\textsuperscript{th}
August, 1942, (Military Correspondence, 1941-46, KNA, DC/MLE/2/12/7).
\textsuperscript{107} “News From Somalia,” (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
\textsuperscript{108} Accountant-General to the War Pensions Officer, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} November, 1943, (Pensions and
Gratuities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{The East African Standard}, 18\textsuperscript{th} December, 1942; See also \textit{The East African Standard}, 16\textsuperscript{th} December,
1942.
battlefield, and away from the battlefield. Governor Henry Moore only writes that in this campaign, "fortunately, the casualties ... were few."\textsuperscript{110} Kevin K. Brown asserts that "East African fatalities numbered only 1,935, spread among the territories of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Sudan and Somaliland;"\textsuperscript{111} the number Kenyan askaris among this figure is difficult to state. Although the government used to publish the list of casualties, this was done periodically to "avoid giving information to the enemy, but next-of-kin are informed immediately of any casualty occurring among members of His Majesty's Forces."\textsuperscript{112} The number of casualties among East African Forces were often reported as low without the actual figures given. What is clear is that among the casualties were those who met their death away from battlefield. 

Askaris like Mungai Kichoya, a Private with the EAASC, "visited a brothel" in Somaliland Protectorate, and was "murdered by Somalis."\textsuperscript{113} Enosi Semakula, presumably a Ugandan, died in Somaliland as a result of "foul play."\textsuperscript{114} Wamwoya Ngara, a driver with the EAASC, was found dead in a "native well" on 8\textsuperscript{th} October, 1943 at Giggiga, Abyssinia. An inquiry into Wamwoya Ngara’s death found that he had earlier in the day been "arrested by the Native Civil Police, had tried to escape and whilst running away had accidentally fallen into the well."\textsuperscript{115} Cleofas N. Ogada, a driver with the EAASC, died from injuries sustained in a road accident on 31\textsuperscript{st} October, 1943 at Giggiga. Sawe Kipkoia, a mess servant with the KAR, died on 1\textsuperscript{st} October, 1943, and an

\textsuperscript{110} (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
\textsuperscript{112} (\textit{East African Standard}, July 24, 1940).
\textsuperscript{113} War Pensions Officer to the East African Governments, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} May, 1944, Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
\textsuperscript{114} (War Pensions Officer, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} November, 1943, Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, ACW/28/120).
inquiry into his death alleged that, after securing a “short pass” and proceeding to Giggiga, he had returned back to the camp “drunk.” Sawe Kipkoia was reportedly so drunk that he was “swearing and making himself unpleasant in a boastful manner in the presence of a British officer. The latter evidently lost his temper and ‘slapped’ the deceased in the face, causing some bleeding; subsequently, the deceased was taken to the guard-tent, and visited by the Medical Officer, who found little wrong with him on that occasion. Later, however, he was taken to hospital, where he died on the 1st October, 1943 … the cause of death being certified as ‘traumatic peritonitis.’” Abiero Layi, a personal servant in the KAR, was shot dead on 2nd January, 1944. Abiero allegedly “endeavored to break into a European’s house and was shot by one of the occupants [the son of the house, the two other occupants being a mother and daughter] in legitimate defence.”116 Most askaris met their death away from the battle-field, succumbing mostly to diseases and accidents.117 They were mostly the casualties suffered by Kenyan forces in the Eastern Africa Campaign as the government moved its focus to other areas of conflict.

Madagascar.

The narrative of the campaign in Madagascar is also based on newspaper accounts, as askaris’ accounts have tended to be muddled up because of old age and the time that has passed since the end of the war. According to the East African Standard,118 fighting in

115 (War Pensions Officer, letter dated 30th December, 1943, Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, ACW/28/120).
116 (War Pensions Officer, letter dated 1st March, 1944, Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, ACW/28/120).
118 East African Standard, May 6, 1942.
Madagascar was the briefest and shortest for the KAR and their Allies. The East African forces, which consisted of 22 KAR Brigade [1/1 KAR, 5 KAR, and 1/6 KAR] invaded Madagascar to take over the island from Monsieur Annet, the Governor-General, whose administration supported the French Vichy government, and was therefore on the side of the Axis in the war [Monsieur Annet had been the Vichy Governor of Ivory Coast before his transfer to Madagascar in 1941]. The Japanese had already achieved stunning victories in Malaya and Singapore, and were driving back Allied forces in Burma; they appeared to be gaining supremacy on the Indian Ocean and left unchecked, they could gain a foothold in Madagascar, and even invade the East African mainland itself. The Allied forces wanted to prevent that from happening. Madagascar, which is an island one thousand miles long and three hundred and sixty miles in width, is the fourth largest island in the world. Strategically situated in the Indian Ocean, it literally controls the route to the Far East, and its occupation by the Vichy government had given the Axis a strategic foothold in an area where they could easily launch attacks on eastern and southern Africa, and jeopardize Allied troop movements on the Indian Ocean, and operations in the Far East. The island is only 950 miles from Durban, South Africa. The government invasion was therefore calculated to end the risks posed by the Axis forces which were in charge of Madagascar. The government and the Allies were particularly worried that the Japanese might decided to occupy Madagascar and capture Diego Suarez; doing so would enable the Japanese forces to control the "southern gateway to the Indian Ocean ... their fleet would be able to menace Allied shipping from the Cape to the Suez, the Persian Gulf, India and Australia while our supply lines to China and Russia and to the Middle East would be seriously threatened."119 The island was considered very

119 Ibid.
strategic for military as well as economic reasons.

The specific aim of the British forces was to capture Antananarivo, the capital, and more particularly, Diego Suarez, a strongly fortified naval base on the island. Diego Suarez was a major naval base, heavily fortified and it had four basins for naval craft. It had a "magnificent harbor," almost completely land-locked, and could give anchorage and complete shelter to a large fleet. Submarines and other small craft could use it as a refueling base. The operation to capture Madagascar was given logically to the navy and the army, and some commandos were also involved. Rear-Admiral Cyprett commanded the naval forces off the island, and General Sturgess, the army. The East African military contingent to Madagascar consisted of 22 KAR Brigade, led by Brig. W. A. Dimoline, and within the 22 KAR were the 1/1 KAR, 5th KAR Battalion, and 1/6 KAR, which Governor Henry Moore, during a farewell speech, described as "particularly our own" because you come from the tribe which are known to be courageous in war.\textsuperscript{120} During their departure, the Governor reminded the Kenyan contingent [particularly the 5th Battalion, which he mentioned by name] that their performance and behavior would reflect not only on the "honor of your tribes but of us all."\textsuperscript{121} The Governor implored the men to "do your uttermost to see that we may never be ashamed. Return to us with even greater honor. We will keep in close touch with you and will see that you get news of your home and that news of you reaches your homes ... May God have you all in His keeping."\textsuperscript{122} The trip from Mombasa to Madagascar as most veterans recall took three days.

\textsuperscript{120} (Speeches by HE: The Governor, GH/2/5/13).
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
Compared to other campaigns in Africa particularly in North Africa and Abyssinia, the fighting in Madagascar was a quick one. According to the 1936 census, there were about 23,000 French officials and traders and about 14,000 other Europeans, Indians, Chinese and Africans. The military force was small and generally ineffective. Most of the French Vichy troops were at Diego Suarez, consisting of 1,600 European men, 3,700 colonial troops mainly from Senegal, and 4,400 men in the local police force. In total, the French had about 15,000 troops in the whole island, massed mostly in the northern areas of the island. By 5th May, 1942, the *East African Standard* was able to report that the British operations in the island were moving satisfactorily, and the British forces were encountering little opposition. The Vichy Government in France tried to rally their troops; Marshall Petain and Admiral Jean Francois Darlan tried to send messages to their French forces to resist the British invasion, but the British War Office and the Admiralty countered this with their own message urging the French authorities to defect to the British side. By May 5, 1942, the British forces had, according to the *East African Standard* newspaper, "captured a battery and are now advancing across the ten miles isthmus from Courier Bay to the strongly fortified naval base of Diego Suarez."\(^{123}\) By May 6, the British forces were reported to be "very close to their objectives – the naval base of Diego Suarez and the naval dockyard of Antsirane on the southern shore of the harbor."\(^{124}\) The major problem for the troops was not really the resistance of the French forces, though Vichy Governor-General Annet had declared that they would offer stiff resistance, but rather, the "stifling heat." Even so, British casualties were light. An initial

\(^{122}\) Ibid.

\(^{123}\) *(East African Standard, May 6, 1942).*
assault on Antsirane, which was done at dawn did not succeed, repulsed by French forces which had put up a surprisingly strong resistance. This prompted General Sturgess to "take appropriate action" the following night to capture Antsirane. From there, the army launched a dawn attack on Diego Suarez, and which surrendered quickly. The Commander of French forces, Colonel Plest, was injured. By May 7, 1942, the East African Standard reported that Diego Suarez had fallen to British forces, two days after the British forces landed in the island. Winston Churchill, in a report to the House of Commons, said that the invasion and capture of Diego Suarez had caused around 1,000 casualties on the British side, though the figure would be revised considerably to the lower side.

Even though the French forces had lost Diego Suarez, and most of their 15,000 which were in the northern part of the island, Governor-General Annet vowed that "all other points on the island would be defended with the same resolution." On June 22, 1942, a small British force rushed to Mayote in the Comoros to intercept a Vichy French merchantman which was reported to be sheltering there. Ten days later a British force landed on the Comoros and occupied it. The free movement of the forces which were still loyal to the Vichy Administration in the island demonstrated to the Allies the need to strengthen their control. In September, 1942, operations were renewed in Madagascar with "a view to the effective occupation of the whole of the island so as to prevent any part of it being used by the Axis powers." The objective was to seize control of key areas in west coast of the island which "could be used by the enemy sub-marines ...

124 Ibid.
125 (East African Standard, May 9, 1942).
against our shipping in the Mozambique Channel." As a result the forces were sent to Majunga, Morandava and Nosy Be. These were subsequently captured with very little casualties. On September 10, 1942, the British forces occupied Majunga after only three hours of fighting. Writing from the frontline with the forces in Madagascar, George Kinnear, the correspondent for the East African standard reported that, "British forces ... began to land shortly after midnight [September 10, 1942], and the fight for the town began as dawn was breaking. By half past eight this morning all firing had ceased. Three hours of fighting had sufficed to give the United Nations control of this important port on the west coast of Madagascar, three hundred miles southwest of Diego Suarez, the best port on the French side of the vital Mozambique Channel." Colonel Martin, the Officer Commanding French troops was injured by a bullet in the right arm, and was captured by a British lieutenant. The French troops then surrendered to a British colonel, who was commanding the British troops, but the Governor-General rallied his troops and vowed to continue with the resistance.

Based in Antananarive, the Vichy Governor-General's resistance heightened the resolve of British troops which were waging a military campaign to dislodge him and occupy the capital. The campaign to capture Antananarive would not be an easy one. Governor-General Annet vowed not to surrender. The road from Majunga to Antananarive was 360 miles long. It was very narrow, yet it was the best road in the whole island. Being the main city in the island, Antananarive was naturally the most heavily defended. "Apart from its military defence, the city is located on a 4,000 ft plateau, the road rising to that

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126 East African Standard, September 12, 1942.  
127 Ibid.
height in twenty six miles over a number of gradients past paddy fields, prairies and isolated villages." At one meeting between the East African Force and the French, the "French plenipotentiaries refused to accept our terms and operations are continuing," a communiqué from the East African Command read. The first objective of the British forces was the Kamor Bridge, which was 90 miles inland, and this was captured without much opposition as had been the case with other main towns. A strong military force went on to occupy Tamatave, another principal port in the island. Like other places fighting was brief and virtually bloodless. An envoy was sent to secure peaceful surrender of the French Forces in the town, was fired on, and "after a few shells had been directed at the defences by His Majesty's ships, however, the town surrendered." The main obstacle that the British forces were encountering were "the numerous road obstructions which are being encountered," slowing down the troops and causing delays. As they fell back, the French troops were also destroying bridges and the askaris were now compelled to repair the roads and bridges, besides fighting. Given the hot temperature of the island this was not an easy task. The East African Standard correspondent reports as follows:

an idea of the labor involved in this hot, tinder-dry country can be gained when I tell you that these road and bridge blocks are being encountered at the rate of at last three or four per mile. But the tin helmeted infantry and field companies are working with a will. The head of the column is now well beyond here and we are advancing steadily though the pace is entirely dependent on the time taken to remove these muscle-stretching obstructions.

After occupying Tamatave, the British troops decided to attack Antananarive from

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128 Ibid.
129 East African Standard, September 15, 1942.
130 East African Standard, September 19, 1942.
131 Ibid.
several fronts; including from Majunga, and Tamatave, in the east of the capital. By 20th September, 1942, the British troops captured Anlazobe and were within 90 miles of the capital. By September 23, 1942, the British troops were reported to be outside the capital Antananarive. Their movements were hampered by "the usual extensive road obstructions," and the French troops were putting up a stiffer resistance than usual; some fifteen miles from the capital, as French troops maintained a constant barrage artillery fire against the advancing British columns. One British column was approaching from the northwest, and captured Mahitsy village; another one from the east captured Brickaville; another one was coming from Majunga, trying to approach the capital from the north. The whole road from Diego Surarez to Majunga was in the hands of the British forces. By September 23, 1942, the East African troops had entered the capital Antananarive. The time was exactly 5 pm. After addressing a farewell message to the French forces, Governor-General Annet fled the capital and moved south of the island. The Commanding Officer of the East African troops, General Sir William Platt announced that his troops were in charge of the island. From the capital, the British forces moved outwards to make contacts with troops advancing from Brickaville whose landing elements had already reached and occupied Moramanga. When the East African troops staged a glittering march-past at Antananaive on October 3, 1942, with General Sir William Platt present, it was a clear sign that the campaign in Madagascar was clearly coming to an end, though the troops continued with action in some areas in the south, where Governor-General Annet continued with his resistance. It was five months since the campaign had begun; the casualties were very light, actual fighting minimal. After the successful conclusion to the Campaign in Madagascar, the Governor of Kenya, in an

133 Ibid.
undated address, said that he would like to be associated with the “message of congratulation sent by the Prime Minister to Lieutenant-General Sir William Platt and all ranks under his command and to the naval units concerned on the successful conclusion of the Campaign in Madagascar.” On November 6, 1942, the last shots of the Madagascar Campaign were fired when Ambalavao fell to the East African Forces. This was done with very little fighting. "It would be wrong to call it a campaign and worse still to suggest that it has been a war," wrote George Kinnear. The agreement ending the campaign was "signed in the village 'pub' here in the early hours of this morning" by an East African Brigadier and Captain Fauche, the French emissary. "In ordinary circumstances there should be very little justification, if any, for further descriptions of battles." The Free French forces subsequently appointed General Legentilhomme as the new High Commissioner for Madagascar on November 11, 1942.

Part of the reason why the French forces were generally surrendering easily was the Allied propaganda. Although French troops were being urged by their own government to stand up and fight, the East African Forces were also broadcasting messages trying to assure the French that the island would not be taken from them. The French were told that they would be in charge of the island even after the war. The French were told that the island would be given all types of economic assistance and benefits that were accorded to "French territories, which had already identified themselves with the Allied

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134 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
135 East African Standard, November 17, 1942.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
cause." Member of the civil and military organizations who declared their intention to cooperate with the United Nations would have their salaries and pensions provided." African troops also claimed during interviews that they waged the campaign with bravery. Some of these claims are vouched for by reports in newspapers. According to George Kinnear, one soldier with the Kenya Battalion of the KAR captured "a gun single-handed" during the battle for Ambositra, more stoutly defended even than Mahitsy. Fighting was generally brief and casualties were few. Several men on the French side were killed, and eight hundred men were taken prisoners, including a Brigade Commander and his staff. On the East African side, the number of casualties was considerably lower. Kevin K. Brown writes that total casualties for 22 EA Brigade were four officers and 23 askari killed, and a further seven British and 75 Africans wounded. According to Timothy Parsons, only 43 men were killed in the entire operation in Madagascar. Most of the dead askaris were victims of murders and suicides rather than actual military operations. Among the casualties was Muchoki Karaba, a storekeeper with the East Africa Ordinance. He enlisted on the 1st April, 1942. He was found murdered at Majunga by "a person or persons unknown" on 13th October 1942. Mboya Oliech, a private with the KAR, committed suicide in Madagascar on 19th November, 1942, by shooting himself. Ochar Oranga, a private with the KAR, was found dead in Majunga on

138 *East African Standard*, May 9, 1942.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
16th September, 1942, with multiple wounds to the body. Private Mutoke Kore’s demise was really bizarre. Enlisted on 17th June, 1942 and serving with the EAAMC in Madagascar, he was “under the influence of drink” when he asked for a lift from a passing military lorry. The day was 11th June, 1943, when the accident happened. The driver of the lorry would later report that while he was reversing the lorry, Private Mutoke Kore fell off because he was “playing around in and running from side to side of the lorry … he was taken to hospital at Tananarive where he died without regaining consciousness.”\(143\)

Many askaris who fought in Madagascar recall that the journey from Mombasa to Madagascar gave them their first opportunity to travel by ship. In an article, one official wrote that the "greatest source of enjoyment on board ships crossing to Madagascar" were the baths. Askaris refused to sit down in the baths, but stood up two or three at a time and splashed for all they were worth until they realized that splashing meant flooding and flooding meant fatigues."\(144\) Dolphins "escorted us in, to the great delight of the askaris who were pleased to see firm land again."\(145\) Askaris who fought in Madagascar claim that their country was far better and richer than Madagascar. This view was also shared by George Kinnear, the East African Standard correspondent, and who, wrote in one report that, "evidence of the poverty of the people struck one at glance. Their clothes and their persons were dirty; their children half-naked; their market places ill-supplied. The dark, noise-some shops and eating-houses were opened the day I was

\(142\) (War Pensions Office to the East Africa Governments to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 15th March, 1943, Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, ACW/28/119).

\(143\) (War Pensions Office to the East Africa Governments to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 12th October, 1943, Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, ACW/28/119).
there; their shelves were empty. They have been almost empty for many months except for locally made goods such as straw hats of the conventional Panama shako [?] universal in Madagascar, sandals, tobacco, dried fish, soap, sweets and candles. Among these poor stocks a few, fly-brown cheap goods – such as ... cuff links or combs - marked made in Germany or 'Made in Japan' represented the outside world. They offered a striking commentary upon the futility of Vichy's collaboration policy so far as it reflects the lives of the 3,500,000 people of Madagascar.\textsuperscript{146}

Like after the campaign of Abyssinia, the soldiers who participated in the Madagascar Campaign spent much of their time listening to radio broadcasts and looking for places of entertainment. In fact, just as there were special radio broadcasts for Kenyan soldiers in the Eastern African Theater and the other theaters where they were involved in military campaigns, there was a special war broadcast for the askaris in Madagascar. It was in Madagascar that East African troops reportedly met British private soldiers for the first time. There was an immediate camaraderie. The British and the askaris were "soon in their friendliest of terms and groups could be seen sitting down over tea and biscuits, or showing off at arms drill to each other or competing at songs and dances – Highs and Flings and bagpipes followed by African songs."\textsuperscript{147} At their first meeting, the askaris were in their "mettle, so that the changing of guard was a sight to see."\textsuperscript{148} Some of the askaris had unforgettable experience with the Royal Air Force. "A number of the askaris have recently been taken for trips in RAF air-crafts and have not ceased to boast to their

\textsuperscript{144} East African Standard, July 1, 1942.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} East African Standard, October 12, 1942.
\textsuperscript{147} East African Standard, July 1, 1942.
comrades of their experiences." When not touring with the RAF, the askaris were spending time training in jungle warfare, preparing for the South East Asia Campaign. In these training sessions, the men went through "special courses in the forests and jungle of this enormous island ..." 

North Africa and the Middle East.

The askaris who participated in fighting in North Africa and the Middle East were mostly the East African Pioneers and EAMLS, who were now serving under African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (AAPC). This came about when Allied forces found themselves under considerable threat from the Axis. When Italy joined the war, they proceeded to invade Egypt from their base in Libya, but were beaten back by British forces in 1941. But after chasing the Italians back into Libya, the fortunes of the British suffered dramatically in 1942. General Erwin Rommel who was commanding the Afrika Korps forces came to the rescue of the Italians, drove the British out of Libya and captured Tobruk. In the meantime, German and Italian forces were occupying Yugoslavia, Greece, and the island of Crete, while the Japanese were fighting determinedly in the Pacific. Under intense attack and suffering heavy casualties, the Allies turned to her East African colonies for laborers, where military labor units already conveniently existed. It was as a result of this that the East African Pioneers and EAMLS were merged into one overall continental labor unit, the AAPC, and deployed in North Africa and the Middle East. The functions of the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps in North Africa and the Middle East were mainly the transportation of food, ammunition, and other war materials. They also maintained

148 Ibid.
149 East African Standard, June 4, 1943.
the infrastructure, building and repairing roads and bridges. They were part of the 8th Army. From most of the interviews held with the *askaris*, it is quite obvious that the main event that *askaris* remember from their experience in North Africa and the Middle was a horrendous bombing at Abu Haggag Railway Station on 27\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942. Other than that, their work was support service. The bombing at Abu Haggag caused many injuries and death, as “much as sand.”\textsuperscript{151} Known in various reports simply as the Abu Haggag incident, the bombing of *askaris* mainly involved 4 Companies of the Pioneer Corps, but it was the 1808 Company, composed mainly of soldiers from Nyanza Province and commanded by Major Humphrey Moore, which suffered the most casualties. Various official accounts of the incident, which were sent to the administration and the public in Nyanza – the province most affected by the incident, allow for a reconstruction of the incident.

The accounts of the Abu Haggag can be relied upon because they are varied and are marked as “secret” and are therefore full of details that one would never find in most other official government documents. To a large extent, such documents cannot be regarded as necessarily reliable, but the account is quite detailed and contains information that can help in understanding how the Abu Haggag incident occurred, and generally how *askaris* experienced the battlefield in North Africa and the Middle East. The bombing occurred at a local railway station in the town of Abu Haggag. On that evening of June 27\textsuperscript{th}, 1942, the official account goes, four companies of the East African Pioneers were waiting on the platform of Abu Haggag station. They were waiting for an engine to drive

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
the last train and take them out of the town that evening, but the engine was late and the men began the process of settling down to sleep. Some men would sleep under the train but would "constantly clear out; others were in trucks; others were just lying around anywhere close."\textsuperscript{152} The men could not be allowed to move or linger far away from the station as the engine they were waiting for "would have to leave quickly."\textsuperscript{153} The men were therefore sleeping close to the train. But near 1am, a German plane came over and then "a whole lot of nasty things happened."\textsuperscript{154} The plane dropped bombs, the first one fell between the train and some trucks on the siding. The trucks were loaded with barrels, "which had seemed to be tar barrels, but contained petrol." Burning petrol shot over three trucks of the train. Three more bombs followed causing horrendous damage, injuries and death. According to a military report, most of the injuries and death were caused by the second bomb. "Most of the wounded casualties were caused by the second which caught the men who were running to try and get clear."\textsuperscript{155} The 15 yards between the siding and the main line became a furnace. The fire caught the three trucks full of petrol, trapping the men inside. Humphrey Moore tried to approach the men trapped inside these trucks from outside but was driven back.

At this point the military account credits the men and their officers for bravery and gallantry, which saved the lives of many men. Moore, Worrrel, Peachy and the Sergeant-in-Charge, whose name is not mentioned, are "specially mentioned."\textsuperscript{156} The "bravery of

\textsuperscript{151} Nuera Opiyo to Alfred Omedo, in a letter informing the latter about the death his brother Odongo Omedo, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
\textsuperscript{152} Military account of the incident in a report to S. H. Fazan, dated July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
the Africans, wounded and unwounded, amazed people on the station who had been in air-raids in England."

Most of the wounded men bore their injuries bravely like "real men," one veteran recalls. "There was no moaning," the military records in their account. Many men on the verge of death were more concerned with how they would be remembered; they wanted to be remembered for dying "a man's death." "Wounded men called you over - 'please can I have a pillow' - and someone put a great coat under his head; 'listen to this bwana' - a man was breathing with a hole in his chest - he was bandaged up a bit and told 'well don't breathe so hard and loudly, and you'll be alright' and he is alright; one man dying called his bwana and asked him to send a special message to his home; he was very badly wounded; but he insisted repeatedly that the message should be properly understood that 'he had died a man's death.'"

Humphrey Moore instructed his men to disperse and lay down, but not to run away, if the plane came back again. The plane could cause more damage if they stayed close to each other, but if they went far away "the engine may come in five minutes or in five hours; I can never collect you again when the engine arrives." The men acted according to instructions when the plane came to bomb them a second time. "The men spread out and lay down - the 'whole bloody army did exactly what I told them when I least expected it' ... some smaller bombs were dropped but there were no casualties." The nightmare

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157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
160 Capt. F. E. V. Ross, Welfare Officer, AAPC [EA], letter dated July, 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97); the same letter can be found in the military report to S. H. Fazan, dated July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
161 The military account of the incident in a report to S. H. Fazan, dated July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
162 Ibid.
ended at 3 am when the engine arrived. The burned carriage was hauled out of the way. "No axle was broken by the grace of God."\textsuperscript{163} At 3:30 am, the train left with all except a few. Major Humphrey Moore, The Officer Commanding 1808 Company, remained in charge of the dead, some wounded, and details. Those who remained were expecting to be put in the bag. There were jitters all around. At one point at 5:30 am the men heard what they thought was a German tank approaching, but fortunately, "it was a signals lorry ... and one officer was sent off with it to get help."\textsuperscript{164}

The following morning the full enormity of damage and death was revealed. On the one side of the party was an "empty road, and on the other side smoldering trucks." More wounded men were found and a few stragglers came in. Most of the deaths were instantaneous, but about three men died in the night. One died on the way to the hospital, and about three "have died since."\textsuperscript{165} The wounded were made as comfortable as possible and behaved very well. Liyunya Mulala was the only askari who was described as "down," following a loss of a leg and an arm. He "was the only who was 'down' at the hospital and thought that he would be no use to anyone ... he was more cheerful after we had told him that the government would give him a leg and an arm and that there was a mzungu [white man] in the Air force and bombing Germany with no legs at all."\textsuperscript{166} In total, the military claims that the bombing killed 38 men, but askaris claim in letters home that more men died. Nuera Omeda wrote that about "40 people died in the same moment ... [and] ... many people were not counted but dead bodies were many as much

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{166} Major Humphrey Moore to S. H. Fazan, 1\textsuperscript{st} November, 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
Fazan was thus forced to come out and dispute askari claims that, “casualties are being concealed” and to reassure the public. In some documents, it would be reported that, “about 60 men were killed and 30 wounded.”

In general, the men behaved very well and very bravely and their story was told in Nyanza, where most of the casualty came from. Major Humphrey-Moore asserted that he was “amazed” by the courage of the men and would “never forget the courage of the wounded.” Their deportment, discipline and courage “amazed people at the station who had been in air-raids in England.” During the bombing, S. H. Fazan observes, the men “bore themselves very bravely … and that we have good reason to be proud of them.” What had happened to the Pioneers the previous night was “bloody murder.” The men, mostly from Nyanza Province and mostly recruited by Fazan himself, demonstrated their soldierliness under fire by their “steadiness … and the fortitude of the wounded and dying has been highly praised … the relatives should be informed about this.” Ongaro was mentioned as one of the soldiers who exhibited themselves highly during a bombing incident in North Africa. Injured by a shrapnel, he was sent to the hospital just in case his wound was infected, but the following day, he came back to camp, “and insisted on going to work next day, which incidentally consisted in moving

167 Nueva Omeda to Alfred Omedo, letter undated, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
169 (Major Oliver’s report, War Casualties, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
170 Major Humphrey Moore to S. H. Fazan, 1st November, 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
172 S.H. Fazan, Nyanza Provinical Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 23rd September, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
173 F. E. V. Ross, Lieutenant, Welfare Officer, AAPC, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
174 S. H. Fazan to District Commissioners in Nyanza Province, letter dated 23rd September, 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
camp as the South African people to whom we are attached would stay no longer in the Rest camp, about 800 yards from us."\textsuperscript{175}

The bodies of the more than forty men killed during the bombing – two bodies were still burning – were collected by the fit men "put in a common grave, together with the ashes of another AOR," 30 yards North of NAAFI tent. A service was held at the graveside by an African rank after the officers had saluted the dead. The burial of the men in a common grave was contrary to African customs but in a war situation many such customs were laid aside. Men were forced to change some of their attitudes towards previously cherished customs and practices completely, or to suspend them at least for the duration of the war. Those of the askaris, whose customs abhorred mass burial in one grave, adapted to change brought about by the war by agreeing to the burial of their comrades in a common grave. F. E. V. Ross writes that the surviving African men were "at least ... content and proud that everything was properly done for the dead. Their comment was - 'it could not have been better done.'\textsuperscript{176} Among the dead and presumably among the ones who were buried in the common grave were Omwa Yogo and Omoro Olela, two men from Sakwa.\textsuperscript{177} Another casualty was Namakumi Kwangoto [alias Manyuni], who died on 27\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, a day after the bombing.\textsuperscript{178} Mwaneli Musiko Makabwe died from his injuries two days after the bombing, that is according to an undated letter, which askari Ilario Omuya Mwandala wrote to Namukhula Mbaka, a relative of the deceased.\textsuperscript{179} The

\textsuperscript{175} Major H. E. Humphrey-Moore, undated letter, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
\textsuperscript{176} F. E. V. Ross, Lieutenant, Welfare, AAPC, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
\textsuperscript{177} Okumu Ouma, AAPC [EA] to Omoro Olela and Chief Elija Bonyo, undated letter, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
\textsuperscript{178} Jacob Watako Musumba [55 Group, Pioneer Corps [EA] to Kwangoto Lumu, informing the latter about Namakumi’s death in an undated latter, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
\textsuperscript{179} Ilario Omuya Mwandala to Namukhula Mbaka, letter undated, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
bodies of some men like Sgt. Shithreswa Onyango were never traced and it is not possible to state whether the military did anything to trace them. The military’s main comment about Sgt. Shithreswa Onyango’s disappearance was that it was assumed that “in the circumstances ... he is no longer on earth.”¹⁸⁰ The body of Wamunyolo Omurai was also not recovered and was declared dead in October, 1942, four months after the bombing.

At about 10 am an ambulance and other transport arrived and took the surviving men away to Fuka and El Daba. Men who were seriously injured and could not continue serving in the army were released; men like Marwa Babere, Owana Omonda, Linuya Mulala, Matiro Oketh and Mbadi Gwara. The men never forgot the Abu Haggag incident and throughout the war the men would often come to Abu Haggag to tend the graves of their comrades and pay their homage to those of their own who lost their lives fighting in the war. During one visit to the mass grave of their men, Major Humphrey Moore and his men requested the Directorate of Pioneers and Labor “to have the spot tidied up and fenced and a simple but permanent cross erected.”¹⁸¹ The following year, 1944, Major Humphrey Moore and his men again made their “annual pilgrimage” to Abu Haggag and tended the graves of their men.¹⁸² The bell of Abu Haggag “where most of the casualties were sustained” was taken by Capt. F.E.V. Ross and was transferred to Nyanza Province to mark the death of the men who were serving with the AAPC [EA], most of them from Nyanza Province.

But not every *askari* who lost his life in North Africa and the Middle East did so in the frontline. Some *askari* deaths occurred in isolated accidents. Many *askaris* were killed by land mines in Tobruk. Kuoro Wanyancha and Nelson Kore, who were serving with the EAASC as drivers, were killed by exploding land mines. Kato Wankadi was killed by a land mine in Tobruk on 3rd August, 1943. Not being on duty on this day, he was walking in an area the military described as “clearly defined minefield” and was killed as the result of the explosion of a land mine.”\(^{183}\) Strangely, the administration would blame him for his death. He had been warned [with his platoon on parade] on several occasions against trespassing in that area. “Not on duty, to blame,”\(^{184}\) a report on his death concluded curtly. Many *askaris* also died from alcohol poisoning and suicides. Yosamu Gwaza, a Private with the EAA Pioneers, died in Beirut on 2nd November, 1943 due to “alcoholic poisoning” which caused “acute heart failure and acute cerebral oedema.”\(^{185}\) While serving in the Middle East, Willibard Kashumba “bayoneted a comrade on guard duty and afterwards committed suicide by cutting his throat” on 13th November, 1943.\(^{186}\) Private Aloise Lukas of the EAAPC committed suicide while under arrest. Enlisted on the 8th January, 1942, he was transferred to the East African Army Pioneer Corps and had served in the middle East. On the 5th May, 1943, “he was placed under close arrest and housed in the Camp guard Room. His body was found in a disused latrine on the 19th May in advanced state of decomposition: the body was hanging by a rope attached to a

\(^{182}\) Ibid.
\(^{184}\) Ibid.
\(^{185}\) Ibid.
beam in the roof.”\textsuperscript{187} The deaths from alcohol and brawling suggest that many askaris were involved in many other activities other than fighting.

Many askaris were also captured as POWS. Although the number of Kenyan prisoners who were captured during the war is not known, there are some estimates for those captured in North Africa and the Middle East. A report from the Office of the Conference of East African Governors refers to “32 African Prisoners of War … who have recently arrived in the Middle East.”\textsuperscript{188} In the battles in the Western desert in 1942, two hundred and thirty Tanganyika askaris were captured by their enemies. One of the captives was a Kenyan from Central Province. Kaggia Kwagano was his name; he came from Gaichangini Location, Fort Hall District, and his chief was Joseph Kang’ethe. According to R. G. Turnbull, the Chief Secretary, Kaggia Kwagano was among prisoners of war “who have been recovered from their internment camp in Europe and are at present in a camp in the United Kingdom in a holding and transit camp.”\textsuperscript{189} In spite of their incarceration, the men were described as being “in good spirits and health,” understandably “anxious that their families, with whom they have not been in touch for a considerable time, should be informed that they are alive and well.”\textsuperscript{190} One of the captives who was sent to the Middle East was Pte. Nikolaus Ochieng’, an ex-POW and a member of the 1823 Company APC/East Africa. During the repatriation of the POWS, there was confusion in the colonial office over whether Nikolaus Ochieng’ came from

\textsuperscript{187} War Pensions Office to the East Africa Governments to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} March, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).
\textsuperscript{188} A. Malyn, for Chief Secretary to the Conference of East African Governors, letter dated 1\textsuperscript{st} August, 1945, (Prisoners of War, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/6/35).
\textsuperscript{189} R. G. Turnbull, Chief Secretary to Central Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} October, 1944, (Prisoners of War, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/6/35).
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
Suna, Migori, Kenya or Tanganyika, a further sign of disorganization bedeviling the military at least during this period. During their campaign in north Africa and the middle East, one thing that stuck in the minds of the askaris were the European prisoners, an experience which was totally new to the men.

When the askaris who were serving with the African auxiliary Pioneer Corps arrived back in Mombasa on leave, they remarked about the "enormous numbers of Italian and German prisoners taken during the recent offensive in Libya."¹⁹¹ The askaris also regaled their listeners with stories about "strange sights they had seen when on leave in Cairo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Damascus and many other places in the Middle East, most of them familiar place names to Christian Africans."¹⁹² Askaris were learning that black or white, all men were human. It was also in the Middle East that askaris like Bildad Kaggia had their epiphany; for the first time, for instance, Kaggia learned about the injustices of colonialism, discrimination in the army on pay, promotion, and also that he could order and command a European to do things for him [Kaggia was by then a Warrant Officer]. One European soldier observed during his service with the East African Pioneers that he had grown to respect African soldiers. "These East Africans" he was reported as saying, "deserve the highest praise."¹⁹³ He had never seen askaris before, and when he did, he found them "pretty awkward" at first, but "lately it has occurred to me that perhaps they thought the same about me."¹⁹⁴ It was a time of great self-awareness for European soldiers and askaris.

¹⁹² Ibid.
¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
African servicemen who served in the North African and Middle East African realized their objectives when they defeated the Germans and Italians and drove them out of the area. The turning point of the war was the famous battle of Alamein when the Allied forces commanded by General Montgomery finally broke through General Rommel's fences. The askaris' sacrifices were not in vain and the government marked their success by holding prayers. A Day of Thanksgiving was held on 16th May, 1943, in Kenya, with Governor Henry Moore leading government dignitaries for service at the Cathedral of the Highlands, Nairobi, and the Chief Secretary, G. M. Rennie, leading another group for Thanksgiving prayers at St. Andrews Church. Victory in North Africa and the Middle East was described as "very special to Kenya as it may be regarded as a victorious end of a dispute which began on Kenya's doorstep, when the Italians crossed our northern border, opposed by something like two men and a boy."195 During the service the government reminded Kenyans to double their war effort as the war was not over yet. The victory in North Africa and the Middle East was "a milestone; and milestones are not only for recording how far we have come, but for reminding us how far we still have to go."196 By October 1945, some of the Pioneers were still serving with the African Pioneer Corps in the Middle East and Levant, based at Palestine. They were commanded by Col. W. Ralph-Hodges of Tanganyika, and among its officers were Major T. G. Ragg of Kenya, Lieut. C. J. MacIiwaine of Tanganyika, and Capt. Rev. A. Lacasse, who had been a Chaplain at Tabora before joining the war. Many askaris received various awards and were decorated for their sterling duty in North Africa and the Middle East. CSM Rajabu

196 Ibid.
Musere, Sgt. Onyango Okelo and Pte. Micah Mbatia Korenelio were specifically mentioned in a rare dispatch by the military. "Hawa waifuato," the dispatch in Kiswahili stated, "walitajwa kwa kukumbuka ushujaa wao ba uhodari wao, kati ya mwanzo wa mwezi wa Mei na tarehe 22nd Oktoba 1942 kataika Mashariki ya Kati yaani Middle East, walipokuwa wakitumikia dola katika jeshi la 'African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (East Africa) [These men were lauded by the government for their courage and exemplary bravery since the beginning of May to 22nd October, 1942, while serving with the AAPC in the Middle East]."197

South East Asia.

According to the East African Standard, the decision to send askaris to South-East Asia was made by Gen. Sir William Platt, believing that askaris "could fight and beat the Japanese and that East African could provide and maintain a division."198 News about the presence of askaris in South East Asia began to appear in local Kenyan newspapers on a regular basis from September, 1943, but, in fact, askaris had already served there for some time. Although the East African Standard newspaper reported on September 8, 1943, that East African troops had just been dispatched to India and Ceylon, some askaris had already been serving in Ceylon for two years by September, 1943.199 Nevertheless, after Gen. Sir Platt's pronouncement, the new batch of troops arrived at their various points of destination on October 8, 1943, and was received by Admiral Sir. Geoffrey Layton, the Commander-in-Chief of Ceylon [later in January 1945, Lieut-Gen. H. G. de R. Wetherall would take over from him as Commander-in-Chief in Ceylon].

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197 Medals and Decorations, 1942-47, AH/4/54).
convoy of askars left for Ceylon on October 21, 1943.

Askaris served in many capacities in this area. There were the East African engineers whose task was mainly road and bridge construction. An artillery unit also went to Ceylon, reportedly "eager to meet the Japanese." These forces were organized into the 11th East African Division, and which was put under the command of Maj-General W. A. Dimoline. While in Ceylon, the troops spent their time in general combat training against the Japanese in Burma. Ceylon with its masses of palm trees and dense foliage underneath was generally seen as the perfect training ground. When Gen. Sir Platt visited the troops in February, 1944, he stressed the value of the area for training, and he had consequently "received good reports of the training given to soldiers in this country from all officers to whom he had spoken on the subject of Ceylon."

It has been pointed out by most commentators and askaris that the war in the South East Asia campaign was the fiercest and most ferocious of the whole campaign. This fact has been noted by numerous commentators and ex-askaris like Warahiu Itote [General China] in his autobiography, Mau Mau General. Why was this case? According to Governor Henry Moore, the stakes were quite high in South-East Asia. Due to their early successes, Governor Moore argued, the Japanese had “gained for themselves and denied to us important sources of raw materials such as rubber, oil, and tin” and had

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200 East African Standard, October 22, 1943. Immediately after arriving in Ceylon, the East African Engineers went to the southern part of the island to construct roads. Their next program was the construction of the new headquarters for the Supreme Commander and for No.11 Army Group, a job which they shared with the East African General Transport Companies.
201 East African Standard, February 19, 1944.
“temporarily made the Allied supply position much more difficult, while the resultant threat to Australia, India and our shipping routes in the Indian Ocean has to be squarely faced.” These factors “enormously increased the importance of the role assigned to the East African territories as a source of supply to the Middle East and [made] it imperative that here in Kenya all our activities are directed in accordance with well coordinated plans,” and a lot of hope was placed on the shoulders of Allied soldiers like askaris to ensure the removal of the Japanese from those territories. The stakes were raised further by the images that preceded askaris and the Japanese before the battlefield. These stereotypical images were fanned by various propaganda networks that followed askaris and Japanese throughout the South-East Asia Campaign, influencing the way the combatants perceived each other. African soldiers in this area were bombarded with an image of the Japanese as a ferocious, cruel, and violent fighter, making them believe that the only way of fighting the Japanese was fighting to death. These images influenced their mental approach to the battle. The Japanese soldier was reputed as a sly, determined and savage fighter; if you did not kill him he would kill you. On the other hand, the Japanese were told that African soldiers were brutal cannibals; he killed and ate you up. Although many East African soldiers lived in open savannah countryside, the Japanese had been made to believe that Africans lived in highly forested jungles, and were natural jungle fighters. Later the Japanese would learn otherwise; ”many Africans do not come from real jungle country at all and they have to learn the ways of the bush.

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202 (Speeches by HE: The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
203 Ibid.
the same as everybody else. A diary of one Japanese killed at Arakan in Burma showed that the Japanese had come around to see African soldiers purely as determined soldiers rather than merely as cannibals. "The enemy soldiers," went the diary, "are not from Britain, but are from Africa. Because of their belief they are not afraid to die. They have an excellent physique, and are very brave so fighting against their soldiers is somewhat troublesome." Many Japanese soldiers started focusing on European soldiers instead of African soldiers during battles, killing them; many European soldiers started hiding their identities by painting or covering their faces with black mud or "black boot polish for no one wanted to stick out."

After several encounters, the askaris would also learned that, "the early propaganda presenting him [the Japanese] as a monster or bogey was unbalanced. He is a human being who can be killed and he suffers from disease like everybody else. He is not something about which to be scared. But nobody has underestimated him. He is universally regarded as a good soldier well led by a trained officer and benefiting from good administration." Fighting between the Japanese and Africans was often bloody because of this conflicting misunderstanding of their character and reputation. One veteran recalls that when they met the Japanese they would often fight to the death because they believed that the Japanese were dangerous men. Felling a Japanese soldier was not enough – one had to make sure that he was actually "dead" by bayoneting his

208 Ibid. [?]
heart. A report in the *Askari magazine* about a savage fight between one Japanese and Americans instilled the same idea of making sure that a Japanese lying on the battlefield was actually dead. In that report, one Japanese was reported to have killed nine Americans because he pretended to be badly wounded.


[When Americans fought against the Japanese at Guadalcanal, they witnessed many things, including when one day one Japanese killed nine American soldiers while hiding in a bush. That Japanese pretended to be dead, and once he was sure they were not see him, he began shooting them one by one until he killed nine American soldiers. Therefore make sure that a Japanese soldier is really dead.]

Besides contending with the imbedded image of the Japanese as a ruthless fighter, *askaris* learned to adapt to jungle warfare just like other Allied soldiers. According George Kinnear, the *askari* learned the hard a way that the "Burma jungle is vastly different from the average African bush and, misunderstood, it can be a relentless enemy: understood and appreciated it is the soldier's best friend. There is a strangeness about the jungle – a feeling about closed – and when one steep hill is climbed there is another beyond and another. It is much more difficult to carry out compass marches here than in Africa.

When you leave the protection of the jungle you do so abruptly, suddenly, right into open paddy fields where man feels a naked, exposed steady target and needs every soldierly

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209 Ex-Sergeant Aloyce Onyango Opondo, who joined the army on 2nd November, 1939, and served until 31st January, 1946. An infantryman, Ex-Sergeant Aloyce onyango Opondo served with 7KAR, 24KAR [Abyssinia], and 11KAR [Burma], and was winner of several medals, including Africa Star, 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, Defence Medal, and War Medal. Interviewed on 12th January, 2001.

210 *Askari Magazine* 7th July, 1943.
quality."\textsuperscript{211} Compared to the fighting in Abyssinia, where many Allied soldiers traveled by lorries and with more trucks bringing camp beds and other belongings, in South-East Asia, they had to do without them and only the askaris appeared to have been able to adapt well. The Allied soldiers did not have the luxury of lorries and trucks, and had to "learn to make do with a groundsheet, blanket and mosquito net. You have to learn to travel light and be prepared to carry all your own kit," wrote George Kinnear, bigotedly observing that, "Africans particularly are qualified here in that connection; they seemingly are able to carry the heaviest load. That plus their cheerful outlook and tough physique for long marches are among the most valuable qualities for fighting in Burma."\textsuperscript{212}

Ferocious battles were waged in Burma because both the Allies and the Japanese regarded the control of Burma as indispensable to their campaign. The Japanese saw Burma as a buffer for keeping the Allies away from China and also as a platform for offensive action against India. The Allies saw it as a region where the northeast frontier of India is protected and through which an indispensable corridor to China could be driven. Burma was also rich in resources. After several months of fighting, the Allied forces scored a resounding victory when the 14th Army defeated a Japanese force at Arakan in Burma in March, 1944. But the Japanese began a second round of campaign which they saw as an integral part of their defense of the vast perimeter stretching from the borders of Tibet through Malava, Sumatra, Java, and across Marshall Islands and Carolines, against the increasing presence of the American forces, the British and their

\textsuperscript{211} George Kinnear, Correspondent, \textit{East African Standard}, June 17, 1944.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
Allies. The Japanese also hoped that fighting in Burma would divert the attention and strength of the Allies from India and lessen the pressure felt by their forces.

In this campaign, *askaris* engaged in memorable battles on three fronts: Arakan road; the Central Area, embracing the Imphal-Kohima; and the Myitkyina, the latter place witnessed engagements by American and American-trained Chinese troops under Gen. Joe Sitwell. The 11th Division was the main unit in which many *askaris* fought, and captured Chindwin in August, 1944. In fact one of the most recently created African led platoon – the result of Gen. Sir William Platt's intent to at least give Africans some command of their own units and increase morale – participated in a strategic battle on the road to Chindwin in August, 1944, and it was successful in realizing its objective. A contingent of *askaris* who were with the 14th Army fought and wrested the road to Sittaung, giving the 14th Army the control of "another long stretch of the Chindwin, and the mopping up of the Japanese in the Kapaw Valley east of Tamu."\(^{213}\) The 14th Army was commanded by Gen. Sir William J. Slim. Stories are told of how one platoon, commanded by Warrant Officer Ndata Ngumi, assaulted a strategic hill on the Sittaung road which was under the control of Japanese force armed with machine guns.

The hill overlooked the only road to Chindwin. Without hesitation, Warrant Officer Ndata Ngumi's platoon attacked the hill and wrested it from the Japanese. The *askaris* killed 140 Japanese in that battle. At another battle that became famously known as the Jambo Hill Battle, Corporal Malakwen, assisted by a grenadier and a gunner were "advancing round a flank of an enemy position when they came under heavy machine
gun fire. The Japanese were firing from a position we had not previously located and machine guns were supported by rifle fire. It was only 60 yards from the objective and every moment was precious. The aforementioned Africans immediately coped with the situation, bringing accurate light machine gun fire and grenades into action, they silenced the Japanese gun and enabled the attack to go on. By so promptly taking action and by so efficiently appreciating the situation they undoubtedly prevented many casualties in the ranks of the two platoons which were advancing over the crest fifty yards away. On September 4, 1944, the 14th Army occupied Sittaung, and the process of crossing the Chindwin River – one askari described the Chindwin as a very, slow-moving river, as "big as the ocean" in Mombasa – began.

The fighting at Chindwin was difficult because of the terrain. It was hard enough fighting the formidable Japanese, but the askaris also needed to adapt to the environment, an area, which the Japanese were already familiar with. So the Japanese were already at an advantage. The Japanese had also reinforced the area by building bunkers and fox-holes, virtually invisible to men on the ground, let alone those in the air. Many times the Japanese would hide on tree branches, one askari veteran recalled during an interview, and you will only noticed them too late. "Many of our men died in Burma at the hands of the Japanese because the Japanese would adeptly hide among the tree branches, jumping us from any direction, firing and then disappearing just as they came," recalled Ex-Cpl. Thomas Alfred Oluoch Odawa, an askari who served in Madagascar and Burma. Another veteran added that, "we could not fall asleep because the Japanese constantly harassed us

\[213\] Ibid.
\[214\] Ibid.
and we were afraid that if we fell asleep they would kill us." There were numerous swamps, massed foliages, and the hills rising up at sharp angles at Chindwin. As elsewhere in the Asian Theater, the askaris traveled light, with few clothes and no blanket. They carried everything because their vehicles could not travel up the steeply-rising track, knowing "full well that when the ridge is overcome there is another right behind." In the words of the East African Standard, "fighting among these precipitous and interminable ridges is like forcing a way along a gigantic saw with the teeth against you." The terrain at places like Arakan were "cut up into deep valleys with precipitous slopes crowned with razor-back ridges the whole clothed with a veritable blanket of bamboo so thick that the stems had to be parted with the hands." In spite of these difficulties, the askaris were able to conduct themselves with honor. General Sir William Slim, the Commander of the 14th Army, was himself aware of this fact, going to the extent of visiting the askaris and congratulating them for their courage and superb performance. During one visit with the 11th Division, Gen. Sir Slim observed that the askaris "have made an exceedingly promising entry into this theatre. They have shown an unquestionable superiority in close fighting over the Japanese. I am impressed by their discipline and their smartness and above all by their cheerfulness in the most difficult climatic conditions in one of the worst jungle areas in the world." In one area, which the East African Standard's correspondence did not identify at first for security reasons, but later as the road from Tamu to Kalembo, the askaris fought for one full week. "It was

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216 Perot Owiti Awoor, an electrician with EAE. He reported that he was conscripted into the army by force, serving from October, 1942, to 9th May, 1945. Interviewed on 12th January, 2001.
217 East African Standard, October 21, 1944.
218 Ibid.
219 East African Standard, August 9, 1945.
220 East African Standard, November 11, 1944.
not only the fiercest clash yet fought against the Japanese, but I should think it ranks as
the stubbornest fought in any theater in which African troops have been engaged since
1940." The askaris were successful in this battle, killing two dozen Japanese out of
about 100 who were thought to be in the area.

By the beginning of November, 1944, the askaris in the 11th East African Division were
involved in fighting for Kalemyo, an important Japanese supply base which was only
sixteen miles from Kalewa, the gateway to the whole of Bruma. Fighting on two fronts,
one from Kabaw and Kale valleys, the askaris converged on Kalemyo with guns and
artillery. By November 16, the askaris had occupied Kalemyo. In the meantime West
African Forces captured Arakan. These troops then continued with the push to Chindwin.
Together with the 5th Indian Division, the two branches of 11th East African Division
went on around Chindwin river, capturing Paluzaa on the west bank, and some areas to
the north-east of Kalemyo. By November 20, 1944, the 11th East African Division had
captured two Burmase villages, Indianggyi and Indianggale. The objective of the askaris
was Kalewa. By December 12, 1944, the askaris were reported to be only 500 yards from
Shwegyn, which was only five miles from Kalewa. On December 5, 1944, the East
African Standard splashed a major headline to its readers in Kenya that the 11th Division
had captured Kalewa. Situated on the banks of Chindwin River, Kalewa was arguably the
entre port of Burma, and its fall was a major loss to the Japanese troops. "By the capture
of Kalewa, an important port on the Chindwin River," George Kinnear of the East
African Standard reported, "East African troops who advanced on the Japanese
stronghold from both the west and the north have scored their first big victory over the

221 Ibid.
After the capture of Kalewa, the askaris began attacking the Japanese at Myittha Gorge, hoping to make an advance towards Mandalay. By January 24, 1945, the askaris had marched to the northern oil-fields of Burma, 250 miles away from Kalemyo. From there, the battle duty took the askaris to Seipyu. On March 24, 1945, the Japanese tried a counter-attack on the East African forces who were based at Letse, and the ensuing battle was described by George Kinnear as one of the bloodiest in the Burma Campaign. It failed.

In April 1945, the askaris and their compatriots serving in the 14th Army began their march to Rangoon, the capital of Burma. By April 30, 1945, the 14th Army, marching swiftly, according to the *East African Standard* report, was only 36 miles from Rangoon. The askaris were part of this "historic drive." Over several hundred miles of the Southern Mandalay-Rangoon road, 25% of all the transport trucks were driven by the askaris. The askari drivers transported men and supplies, often getting "through on schedule without losing a single vehicle." On May 5, 1945, the *East African Standard* carried a report that Rangoon had fallen and that it marked the end of the campaign in Burma. The war in South-East Asia took a major turn with the news of the end of the war in Europe. Allied forces were naturally delighted but the Japanese were demoralized by the news. The news of V-E was splashed all over the world and "there was not a man in the 14th Army who was not deeply emotionally stirred by the news of the war's end in Europe." Morale was generally high in South East Asia. One soldier commented in a letter that, "our

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enemies no longer hold the power they had and they have no hope of defeating us.\textsuperscript{225}

When Japanese surrendered in August, 1945, after the Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they surely no longer had power over the askaris. The war was over. Many askaris were thereafter either repatriated back to East Africa or redeployed to guard duty in Burma and India. By the end of 1945, 9,000 askaris had gone back to East Africa, while 40,000 remained behind in South East Asia.

Many askaris lost their lives in South East Asia. In fact this was the theater that claimed the biggest number of lives among askaris during the entire war. Accidents, diseases claimed just as many deaths as the battlefield, but it appears that most askaris lost their lives in combat in South East Asia. The majority of soldiers died in action and one monument stands as a special epitaph to the lives that askaris lost during this campaign. The Rangoon War Memorial commemorates by name “the 27,000 officers and men of the commonwealth Land Forces who perished during the campaign in Burma and Assam and to whom the fortune of war denied the rites of burial or cremation to their faith.”\textsuperscript{226}

Built by the Imperial War Graves Commission to the design of Mr. J. Brown and standing in the Taukkyan War Cemetery about 20 miles to the north of Rangoon, it bears the remains of around 733 askaris. Besides, there is the Rangoon War Cemetery, which contains the bodies of 8 askaris. These men included 43 East African scouts, 41 men from the East African Service Corps, 8 from EAAMC, 2 from the East African Army Ordinance Corps, 11 from the EAEME, 13 from the APC (EA), 2 from the EAMLs, and

\textsuperscript{225} Extracts from African Mail, Confidential, May, 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
\textsuperscript{226} (Rangoon War Memorial, 1958, KNA, ACW/25/38). The epitaph to this men reads that, “1939-1945, HERE ARE RECORDED THE NAMES OF TWENTY-SEVEN THOUSAND SOLDIERS OF MANY RACES UNITED IN SERVICE TO THE BRITISH CROWN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN BURMA
1 East African salvage Corps. The West African forces lost 1,608 men to the campaign. The number of casualties among East African soldiers throughout the Second World War was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Africans</th>
<th>Asians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed in Action</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1,388</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died from wounds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died POW</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died diseases</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6,872</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died accidents</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2,298</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behind the battle lines, askaris also whiled away time by playing games, sports, singing, entertaining themselves generally. But lack of knowledge of the local languages was a major handicap for askaris seeking entertainment. Askaris who lived near towns "enjoy the local cinemas but only mobile cinema vans can bring amusement to most of the camps." The KAR band would also entertain the men with music. In Colombo, the askaris reportedly discovered the "arrack, a local liquor made from the fermented juice of the coconut to which toddy spirit from the flowers of the palm had been added – a potent and enlivening drink indeed." Askaris in Colombo [Ceylon] would organize parties to drink arrack and listen to music by Paul Robeson Society of Ceylon, though they did not like that type of music very much. But one day an invitation came from the society "for the purpose of entertaining the African troops on the assumption that way down in Kavirondo and in the depths of Nyasaland and among the denizens of Kampala and Tanganyika, the Africans gathered round the village pump and sang the negro

AND ASSAM BUT TO WHOM THE FORTUNE OF WAR DENIED THE CUSTOMARY RITES ACCORDED TO THEIR COMRADES IN DEATH.” (Rangoon War Memorial, 1958, ACW/25/38).

227 Ibid.
230 East African Standard, June 17, 1944.
melodies which are popular in the cotton fields of the southern States of America."  
George Kinnear went on to describe the evening as follows: “The concert became one of the highlights of in the Colombo party program ... A program of music to be interspersed with spirituals, was to open with one of Mendelssohn's well-known compositions ... [and then] ... a conjurer appeared. He competed for popularity with a famous troupe of dancers from Kandy, men and women – but mainly men – who presented to the astonished but critical askari examples of the old traditional dances of the Singhalese. The dancers, who are trained from childhood, wore the ancient and colorful costumes associated for generations with their art and their rhythmic display was superb. The music was provided by drums and the jingling bangles and bells of the dancers. In Ceylon the dancers like the fishermen are a separate group of caste. There is a strong and exclusive union of Kandy Dancers and it was because of the generosity of the Paul Robeson Society, who paid all the expenses, that the native troupe had the opportunity of enjoying so unique an experience ... The Africans were particularly impressed by one solo dancer whose dance began with a rigid kneeling pose, hands raised and closed, so still that they began to wonder whether he was man or image. Then the music – the notes of a single drum – broke the silence and the rhythm quickened into a wild whirl which caused the greatest excitement among the African audience, themselves no mean exponents of the dancing art.” Then came the turn of the askaris to return the compliment, which, according to Kinnear, was an “Akamba dance [in shorts and bare backs] an affair of stamping and singing which the European and Singhalese audience observed politely but with little

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231 Ibid.
232 Ibid.
understanding." In March 1944, a famous Lancashire comedian, George Formby visited the East African troops and entertained them with a special show. Visits to the local zoos were also common and when askaris saw the bears, red Gibbon apes and tame elephants, many were "shaken ... even now they have not recovered from their meeting with tame elephants and the popular theory is that the animals are given a mysterious and most effective dawa [medicine]" to make them tame. While deployed in India, the askaris also listened to radio broadcasts; there were two Swahili broadcasts every week. Some of these programs included an old veteran, dispensing advice on morality, values and behavior befitting a soldier. RSM Khamis bin Juma was his name, an old soldier whom the military hired to present radio broadcasts to askaris in South East Asia. Some programs dealt with life at home in Kenya.

The askaris noticed many differences in the lifestyles of Kenya and South East Asia, creating significant implications for the way the askaris would look at Indian immigrants living in Kenya once they came back to the colony after the war. One askari noted that the education system in India was better than Kenya because “schools in India are to be found everywhere,” and so “small children … can read and write at an early age.” An Ameru undergoing a course at the Medical Training Depot stated that, “he has learnt to behave like a decent soldier and to lead a clean life, and speaks highly of the course, especially the English lessons.” In Ceylon, many askaris were flabbergasted by how the traffic lights worked, an indictment on the way the colony had sequestered its

\[233\] Ibid.
\[234\] Ibid.
\[235\] Extracts from African Mail, Confidential, May, 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
\[236\] Ibid.
colonials in the rural areas, away from modernity. Africans "were unused to traffic lights in East Africa and in Ceylon had been flummoxed by the green amber and red lights and had not always inclined to pay particular attention to them," reported Gen. Sir. Platt, while adding that in general, askaris "had adapted themselves extraordinarily well."237 But in other anecdotes, askari veterans noted that the standard of life in Kenya was far higher than Asia, though Asia was greener and more fertile. While fighting in Asia, many veterans could not hide their dismay and disbelief at a racist system in Kenya that placed Kenyans at the bottom of the rank in their own country while Asians who were poorer in their own region enjoyed a higher status than Kenyan colonials in Kenya.238 The caste system, they observed, had consigned some Asians to a servile status, working "as domestic servants, coolies, gardeners, rickshaw boys, rubber collectors and tea pickers, shop assistants and municipal employees, Public Works Department, and almost every other form of laborers ..."239 Asians should not have "been enjoying in our country yet they were poorer than us," explained Zacharia Ochieng Adiwa, an askari who served with the EAASC in Burma.240 Dangerous seeds against the colonial system were planted at these moments because that was when people tended to compare and contrast life in different colonial settings. Questions about the colonial system were posed and critiques were made of the way various races lived, setting possibilities of questioning the colonial system altogether. Besides theoretical analysis of the colonial system, askaris inevitably found themselves facing real, practical problems in the army and at the war front.

Towards the end of the war, in particular, some soldiers in South East Asia did not want


239 *East African Standard*, April 26, 1944.
to leave for home. In a letter, one soldier reveals that, “all those who joined the army in 1939 have now been discharged but that some have refused to return to their homes. Among those he states there are 170 Baganda and some Wakamba.” On the other hand, some askaris mutinied because of delays by the government to transport back to Kenya after the war.

According to archival documents the mutiny occurred on 10th August, 1945, and the mutineers were reportedly led by L/Corp. Owenga Ayila, Jason Ouko, Soti Yube, and Kiheya Ogonge. As usual, government reports are economical with information on mutinies, making a comprehensive analysis of the mutiny [the motives and the course] difficult. Major E.G. Russell, an advocate for Owenga Ayila, who was now incarcerated in Kisumu, also complained in a letter to the Superintendent of Prisons about lack of documents on the mutiny. P.L.P. Foster Sutton, The Attorney General, only described the mutiny as “an exceptionally bad case” and did not give more detail. The only detailed information available is the appeal, which was lodged by Major E.G. Russell for the release of L/Corp. Owenga Ayila, and which reveals that L/Corp. Owenga was involved in a mutiny in Colombo, Ceylon on 10th August, 1945 at a time when there was a lot of “clamor for demobilization” and was sentenced to 10 years hard labor. The heavy sentence, the appeal shows, was intended to “serve as a deterrent and a warning to the

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local native troops” rather than a true reflection of the nature of the offence. The mutiny occurred due to the fact that the war was coming to an end and there was little activity at the war front. There was restlessness and “a general clamor for demobilization by all troops.”

Due to their sterling display, it was only natural that askaris would agitate for promotion. They were growing in confidence and in their ability to articulate their interests. The question of promotion had always been a major bone of contention in the army, and grew in tempo as the war was coming to an end. Many askaris felt that their ranks did not always rise in tandem with their abilities, skills, courage, and experience, and they were not happy about it. Askaris continued to demand commission and promotion. As already alluded to in preceding chapters, their grievances and demands found their ways on the floor of the Legislative Council in 1945, when Eliud Mathu demanded to know whether askaris were entitled to commission and to promotion to higher ranks. In its response the government revealed that there had been some moves, but short-lived, to award askaris commission and command. After years of protracted campaigns and complaints by the askaris, General Sir. William Platt recommended in 1942 the creation of a special rank of Warrant Officer. His recommendation stated that, “selected Africans be given Warrant Officer rank and permitted to command Infantry platoons.” But the recommendation was not effected until 1944 when some distinguished and experienced askaris were promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer and given command of their own platoons for

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246 Ibid.
the first time in the history of the KAR. The number of African Warrant Officers were limited to four per Infantry Brigade. Two years later, in September 1944, the policy of promoting Africans to Warrant Officer was extended to "other arms," another sign that the government was coming round to the idea of recognizing that Kenya Africans were just as capable of commanding troops as deporting themselves well in battle. It was done slowly and grudgingly.

In fact, in its response to a question by Eliud Mathu, the first African to be nominated to the Legislative Council, the government admitted that the "question of the grant of commissions to Africans has been considered by this Command on more than one occasion." Clearly on the defensive, the government tried to justify its reluctance to promote Africans to higher ranks and award them commission by arguing that, although "gallantry which the African soldier has displayed in the Abyssinian and Madagascar campaigns, and in the war against Japanese" is a crucial criterion for awarding promotions in the army, nevertheless, "rank cannot be based on gallantry alone. The final test must be one of ability which embraces not only personal gallantry but also power of leadership combined with tactical, administrative and technical aptitude." Thus by the time the war ended, the highest ranking position that an African could ever hope to rise to was Warrant Officer, approved in 1942, in line with the recommendation of General Sir. William Platt, then the G.O.C. in C, the East Africa Command.

Nevertheless, by the end of the war, askaris had bagged several awards for their gallantry in the campaign. Among these was Cpl. Office Selemani, who was even mentioned in the *East African Standard* and was also awarded the DCM for his gallantry. "Although sick and having been excused participation in the attack on Dick Hill, [Cpl. Office Selemani] obtained his company commander's permission to lead his section as usual. He was suffering from boils on his back, but persuaded his officer to allow him to go into action wearing no webbing equipment. When the main enemy positions was encountered, Cpl. Office Selemani led his section with great courage and, although wounded by a grenade, carried on. His platoon's attack was pinned down twice, and he was wounded again, but he organized his section and controlled their fire extremely well. When the company returned to its firm base he insisted on remaining with his section after his wounds ad been dressed, and the following day, when he was being evacuated by stretcher, again showed great initiative. The stretcher-bearers, believing that they had heard enemy movements, dropped their stretcher cases and sought cover, but Cpl. Office took over the situation and soon had the party under way again." Cpl. Kuma Mukiinga was also awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry during the battle at Dick Hill. When his platoon commander and sergeant were injured, Cpl. Kuma Mukiinga took "command of the platoon and though himself twice wounded remained in action, leading the platoon with great gallantry. In the words of the citation, his steadfast leadership and gallant bearing in very trying circumstances was [sic] an inspiration to his men and to all who saw him." In total, thirteen citations and awards were made on this day. One askari, Cpl. Malakwen who had taken a leading role in the fighting at the Jambo Hill,

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249 Ibid.
Sittaung Road, was in fact decorated by the Viceroy to India, Lord Wavell, during an "imposing ceremony on the Imphal Plain in the presence of the Supreme Allied Commander, Admiral Mountbatten." Lord Wavell later recalled on the day of the ceremony that, "there was no more soldierly figure on parade than this single representative of the 11th East African Division." It was significant that during the war, the MBE was given to 4 men, BEM to 7 soldiers, DCM to 36 men, and MM to 79, but it is not clear whether the recipients of the awards were all from Kenya or from other East and Central African territories. Many more men received war medals, with *askaris* from Nyanza Province alone receiving 44,750 medals, which was the number of men from Nyanza who served in the army during the war. It was a tribute to these men that although they faced many problems in the army, including racism, they were able to win a lot of medals in recognition of their role in the war. In the words of one officer, making a comment after the defeat of Italy from the Eastern Africa Theater, "when it comes to fighting and winning wars in the desert places of the African Empire it is the African *askari* who counts, and his rifle and his bayonet, his cheerful good nature, his capacity for hard living in the field and his ability to stick it ... these things ... made the KAR in the past and in the ultimate reckoning they are the things that count in the new army of today."
Conclusion.

This chapter has examined the role and experiences of the *askari* in combat and the campaigns of the Second World War. It narrates how the battles progressed, and how *askaris* participated in them. The view among *askaris* is that they were closely involved in some of major and toughest campaigns of the war. In July, 1940, the Italians had invaded the Northern District Frontier, and the *askaris* were involved in driving them out. On February 25, 1941, the *askaris* occupied Mogadishu and on April 6, 1941, the *askari* captured Addis Ababa. By 27\textsuperscript{th} November, 1941, the *askaris* had captured Gondar. The following year, September 1942, the 22 [East African] Brigade landed at Tamate in Madagascar. By September 23, 1942, the KAR had passed through Tananarive, and on November 6, 1942, the campaign in Madagascar came to an end with the signing of the Armistice at Ambalavao. With the war basically over in Madagascar, the East African forces were more visible in North Africa and Middle East, where their role was generally to transport supplies and men. In the meantime, other *askaris* were fighting in South East Asia. Fighting as part of the 14th Army, the *askaris* were involved in the drive that led to the fall of Rangoon in May, 1945. The war was all but over. When the Americans dropped bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered, and the war came to an end – an event which was marked in Kenya on 17\textsuperscript{th} August, 1945. The V-J Day which was marked with a big parade in Nairobi was as much about the Allied victory as it was a testament to the role of the *askaris* in it.
CHAPTER NINE

LIFE IN THE ARMY.

Among the shells and bullets there had been no pride, no air of superiority from our European comrades-in-arms. We drank the same tea, used the same water and lavatories, and shared the same jokes. There were no racial insults, no references to 'niggers,' 'baboons' and so on. The white heat of battle had blistered all that away and left only our common humanity and our common fate, either death or survival.¹

Introduction.

This chapter examines aspects of how askaris lived in the army, and how military service transformed them. Military service during the war put a lot of strain on askaris, and many of them responded to the tension, violence, and to their new military experiences in ways that changed their attitude and outlook to life, their families, comrades, and the colonial system. The colony was itself worried about the impact of army life on their askaris, and the colonial administration tried to limit any damaging impact on askaris by imposing control on askaris, taking charge of their welfare, their relationships with their families, and their future plans. This chapter is also about the simple things of life in the army – types of food, what askaris used to think about while in the army, how they entertained themselves.

A New Way of Life.

The question of whether it was advisable to recruit askaris and deploy them for military service during the war, and how war would transform askaris was a major subject within colonial circles. These discourses were characterized by mixed reviews about the likely

¹ Waruhiu Itoe [General China], “Mau Mau General,” p. 27.
impact of the war on *askaris*, and how that impact would percolate and be felt within the colonial society as a whole. Some colonial officials were apprehensive about the transforming power of military experience and opposed the drafting of Africans into the war, fearing that the war would influence Africans in the "wrong" direction. Such administrators argued that, in the first place, the war was not an African war. To them, the war was about image, status, about prestige, and it was degrading to draft an African to fight their war for them. Secondly, there were those colonial officials who opposed the mobilization of Africans into the war because it would involve the training and teaching of Africans to use modern weapons. Such training might be counterproductive in the long run because it could create the belief that it was all right to kill a white man. Once an African learned to hate and kill the white man, the security that white men had enjoyed in the colony would dissipate. The appetite for killing white men, it was feared, would not stop after the war. Instead, it was argued, Africans would use their weapons and training and knowledge to kill and throw Europeans out of the colony. On the other hand, there were those like C. H. Williams, a District Officer in the Central Kavirondo District of Nyanza Province, who believed that the war would not significantly transform *askaris*' attitude to Europeans and the colony as a whole. After a talk with many Luo chiefs, C. H. Williams argued, as we have already seen, that the general consensus was that, "the great majority of the Luo military personnel when demobilized will be content to return to the home circle and lead the normal life of a Jaluo in his reserve. I personally do not think that the Luo are likely to return with an unduly high opinion of their importance with the result that discontent might spread throughout the reserve."² C. H. Williams argued that it

would be "possible that during the travels they [askaris] have fraternized with European and Indian troops and have perhaps mixed with the women of the countries they have visited with the result that some of their ideas will have of necessity undergone a change.\(^3\) Williams believed that any change in askaris' world-view would not "lead to a deterioration of character; in fact, by contact with our cheerful 'Tommies' from home and the magnificent picked troops from India such as the Punjabs, Sikhs, and Gurkhas I see no reason why they should not have gained something invaluable towards their outlook in life. It seems as a general rule that an askari has a high regard for the white man as a result of working for and fighting with him in trying conditions."\(^4\) Thus C. H. Williams concluded that although some war-time experiences might foster change in askaris, it would not necessarily be detrimental to the colonial system and to life in the rural areas generally.

This view was similarly shared by Capt. Hislop, the Kericho District Commissioner, who in a document submitted to the Nyanza Provincial Administration contended that the "Kipsigis discharged from the service have so far been reabsorbed into tribal life."\(^5\) In many ways, the latter views were influential and common within government circles, therapeutic for a government obsessed with maintaining the status quo in the colony. Policy papers were developed and schemes initiated within and outside of the military, designed to keep the askari in his place once the war was over, and the askari was back in the colony. Whether or not these views were true and would work out, they were

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\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) "Post-War Employment of Africans: Precis of Memorandum from District Commissioners and others, Nyanza Province, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358)."
taking place far away from the actual environment where the *askari* was fighting and winning the war on behalf of the colony. For it was obvious to one veteran that life would be different when "I could not proceed with my education because of lack of fees. I was in Standard 6 at CMS in Kisumu, and so when I could not proceed with my education, I went to our Chief, Amoth Owira, and who gave me a letter to take to Maseno Depot. So I left school for the army."\(^6\)

At recruiting and holding centers like Maseno the newly arrived recruits were immediately ordered to "fallen" – to "fall in," that is, to stand in line. "Even if you knew a recruit at the depot ... you were not allowed to go and greet him."\(^7\) After joining the army, a roll call was taken, and the recruits were immediately fed. Everything was done in an orderly fashion, "even when taking our meals in the army," one recruit recalled. Marching was a routine activity in the army. "You marched to the latrine, you marched to the mess, you marched to the barracks."\(^8\) At the military depots the soldiers began learning the basic etiquette and mannerisms of army life. They learned basic training, designed to make them fit into the military system. The uniforms and kit issued – a blanket, shirts, belt, a pair of shorts, vests, jersey/pullover, great coat, socks, sandals/boots, cups and mugs – enhanced the transformation, setting them apart from civilians. The food given to the *askaris* was also different. The government was often determined to provide what it called "balanced diet" to the men, a tricky issue because Africans came from different backgrounds and their diets were different. "The Uganda

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\(^6\) KAR Regimental No. G.3503, Petro Ogola Mbinga, who served in the war from 26\(^{th}\) September, 1941 to 24\(^{th}\) March, 1946. Interviewed on 14\(^{th}\) December, 2000.

\(^7\) Ndege Odude, who joined Catholic Church while serving in the army, and was baptized Joseph. He joined the army at Boro, Siaya, on 13\(^{th}\) March, 1941 up to 28\(^{th}\) February, 1946. 29\(^{th}\) November, 2000.
tribesman subsists on a diet of banana meal flour, his counterpart in Kenya eats maize meal as a basic diet and the peoples of Tanganyika have rice as their main food. To this they add a little meat, a few fresh vegetables and some sugar and fruit. But nevertheless the army was able to develop a "scientifically balanced diet" for its askaris, and which was variously described by askaris as “good.” The askaris in the SEAC spoke "very highly of the food ... and mention[ed] especially the meat, rice, wheat flour and sweet potatoes." Thus the first thing one noticed changing in the askari was his physique, his appearance.

When a recruit joined military service, a report in the East African Standard asserted, his body underwent changes before it stabilized. "When an East African native comes into the army he experiences for the first time a scientifically balanced diet ... the newly recruited native, rather a fat young man, when he first experiences army food, loses weight for a short while. Then, as he gets used to his new foods, starts to gain weight and eventually over a period of a few weeks becomes more healthy and vigorous than he has been before." According to the Army Supply Department, "balanced and regular diet has improved the physique of the African by leaps and bounds. His height increases surprisingly during his first few months of Army life, so does his stamina and staying power. Whereas a good African pioneer, who has been in the Army for some time is able to shift some 3½ tons a day, rising on occasion to a peak of 5½ to 6 tons, a new recruit

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8 Andrea Oduor Pangla, interviewed on 14th December, 2000).
10 Confidential "Extracts from African Mail, May 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
can only shift 1½ to 2 tons in the same period."12 Among the new experiences was the idea that life in the army had taught askaris to develop a partiality to tea "as much as his English brother-in-arms."13 The askari, the report continued, "does not like coffee very much most likely because he has not yet learned how to brew it properly. He drinks both beverages without milk, very highly sweetened, but has no prejudice against milk in his tea."14 Whereas "in the past he [askaris] used to take snuff or smoke either a pipe and 'kali' or strong, locally produced cigarettes he now prefers milder cigarettes of the European variety."15 During a trip to the Middle East, African chiefs like Amoth Owira of Alego, Kasina Ndoo of Kitui, Belele Masanja of Nera, Tanganyika, Abdel Shangali of Machame, Tanganyika, Enosi Ejoki of Teso, Uganda, and the Katikiro of Buganda [name?] observed that the rations given to the askaris "were excellent" and that "there was a marked improvement in the physique amongst their tribesmen."16 Wearing a uniform of RSM, Chief Kasina Ndoo who had served with the 1/3 and 2/6 KAR in the First World War was impressed by the good health of his men. The chiefs were also surprised to find that British and African soldiers wore the same type of clothing. It was generally believed that army food was better than home food. When he learned that sick askaris would be discharged before convalescing, Lt. Col. A. J. Knott directed that they should stay until fully recovered because "they receive better attention, food, etc., in the army than in their own homes."17 All askaris generally agreed that the food was better but the cost they were required to pay for it – their lives – was beyond anything they had

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 East African Standard, March 17, 1943.
imagined when they signed up. They were well taken care of and when many of them fell sick due to malaria in South-East Asia, "we were taken to hospitals where were well taken care of."\textsuperscript{18}

But at the same time askaris admitted that army life was hard. Although many askaris joined the army thinking that it was going to be just a job like any other, they discovered that life was fraught with danger, as they were advised to have their "eyes and ears open, to be alert."\textsuperscript{19} Thus when Pte. Shibia Ndunde turned up for mobilization, he deserted after only three months in the army.\textsuperscript{20} There were many such cases. Stories are told of the length at which some men would go to try to get discharged: splashing their eyes with lemon juice to make them appear infected; smearing their genitals with pepper on the eve of a medical check up; claiming that they had serious sexual diseases; trying to inhale pepper in order to appear infected with respiratory diseases. Other men tried to get discharged on family grounds. Such ruses worked for a while, but lost their novelty after Medical Officers "wisened up." With that, the askari realized that it was time to adjust to army life: to get used to army food, to odd waking and sleeping hours, to a new doctrine of survival and death, to forging new friendships and new relationships.

Once the askaris had been registered, inoculated against diseases, given their Force numbers, and deployed into their units, their units trained them and prepared them for

\textsuperscript{18} Joseph Ndege Odude, Interviewed on 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 2000.
\textsuperscript{19} Alex Owendo Nyiero, Interviewed on 20\textsuperscript{th} December, 2000.
\textsuperscript{20} The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner was thus forced to notify the District Commissioner of North Kivuondo to look for Pte. Shibia Ndunde. "He enlisted in the KAR reserve at Mombasa on 20\textsuperscript{th} February, and completed training three months later. He has not yet reported in accordance with his mobilization orders. Please trace him." (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the District Commissioner of North Kivuondo, letter dated 6th November, 1939, Desertions, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/87).
war. The Kenya Information Officer described his experience with a KAR detachment in NFD, and noted that the KAR was gaining valuable experience through their stationing in the NFD. As the government waited for the situation in the NFD to be clear, the askaris were exposed to constant training. They learned how to "move long distances by motor transport, and in addition to the old Lewis there are now the intricacies of Vickers and Brens and mortars and anti-tank guns to be mastered and fitted into the organization of the battalion." During a training session in NFD, askaris gained "... the most valuable experience of campaigning under conditions which demand from them their best qualities of disciplined endurance and cheerfulness. They are also having the opportunity of becoming fully acquainted with new phases of war in Africa, of bombing from the air, for one thing, and cooperation with strange new arms of the fighting service, such as the armored car and army cooperation aircraft."  

One key aspect of army life that many askaris were obsessed with during the war was "manliness." Once askaris joined the army, no matter how they joined the army, they were generally keen on fighting courageously because the army and the society they came from largely glorified courage and manliness. In virtually all traditions of African communities in Kenya, men [and in particular warriors] were expected by their traditions to manifest qualities of toughness, strength, bravery, courage, and honor. In short, warriors were supposed to be fearless. They were supposed to be soldierly. The army equally admired and promoted qualities of manliness and courage, and during the war,

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21 Information Officer, "The KAR - I", dated 6th December, 1940, (History of the War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, NA, AH/4/41).
22 Ibid.
23 One book that deals with this question in a different, but relevant context is: Gerald Linderman,
there were numerous instances where the army singled out *askaris* for commendation for demonstrating such qualities. Even the army system of recruitment and deployment encouraged these qualities; "martial" or "warlike" communities were given preference during recruitment for the KAR. In a farewell address to a contingent of the Pioneers, who were leaving East Africa for the first time, the Governor urged the men to be "courageous," "disciplined," "smart," and "cheerful." As the first East African natives to go beyond East Africa, the Governor told them, "those who will see you will judge all East African natives by you. They will see you at work, perhaps under fire; they will see you off duty. They will judge your fellow tribesmen by the way you behave. They will take note of your smartness, your discipline, your courage and cheerfulness and as they see you so will they judge your brothers in East Africa." Various propaganda media encouraged *askaris* to be courageous and manly. The *Askari* magazine had a permanent feature column on "*Hadithi ya Ushujaa* [Stories of Courage]." Songs were composed at home in praise of men who enlisted in the army, and those who served in the KAR in particular enjoyed high social currency at home. In the past, said Ex-sergeant Johaness Mutula Ogaye and Ex-Cpl. Thomas Alfred Oluoch Odawa, an *askari* was a man with a name. "*Tij askari machon en ejt nying, ne in ng 'at ma ojwing*. Ne in gi ujusi. *Wuod ng 'ane ka ng 'ane en askari* [in the past an *askari* was a man who enjoyed respect. You had a name unlike these days. You were a strong man. You had talent. Even your parents

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Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in American Civil War (New York: Free Press, 1987). In this book, Gerald Linderman identifies ideas that motivated American Civil War soldiers, and one of them was "manliness" - a psychological factor that motivated soldiers and defined how they approached the battle-field. "Manly" soldiers were defined by their ability to be courageous in the battle-field. Although the experiences of American civil war soldiers and *askaris* were different, their attitudes to war were defined by a desire to demonstrate courage in the battle-field.

24 Governor's Speech to AAFC, delivered at Nanyuki and Nyeri on 16th and 19th October, 1941, (Speeches by HE The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13); Kenya Information Office Special Communiqué No. 726, 16th June, 1942, (Speeches by HE the Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
were respected because people would proudly say, ‘the son of so and so is a soldier.”25

On the other side of the scale, those who avoided service in the military during the war were derided and despised. Whenever they met a man who was evading military service, Luo girls would break out into a song, ridiculing cowards:

Soloist: *Orano Nyodero, Lady opimo rinda, kamis odong’ e duka* [The scrawny daughter of Odero, the lady who visited a tailor’s shop, to be measured for a dress, and forgot her petty-coat at the tailor’s shop]

Chorus: *Eee Orano Nyodero* [Eee the scrawny daughter of Odero].

Soloist: *Orano Nyodero, Lady opimo rinda odong’ e duka* [The scrawny daughter of Odero, the Lady’s dress is at the tailor’s shop].

Chorus: *Eee bodi luongo* [Eee bodi is calling].26

Songs like these ones forced men to demonstrate courage by joining the army, and facing the enemy. During a conversation with one askari, Suleiman, the Deputy Director of Education and Welfare observed that Suleiman's eyes lit up with happiness and pride while reminiscing about the "old days of the KAR, of the last war and of the war today ... he knew how grandly the men of East Africa were fighting the Japanese; how nobly they were enduring the foul conditions of endless mud, endless rain, endless bush, endless heat, and he was proud of their courage and their fortitude.”27 During enlistment into the army, many men who got deployed into less prestigious units like the Pioneers at the very least demanded to be issued with rifles – something which they were initially not given – because of their belief that soldiers had to wield a rifle. A soldier without a rifle was not a

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26 Anthony Owang’ Opondo, Interviewed 11th December, 2000. Bodi was a type of dance in 1943.
soldier.

The KAR was thus popular with recruits because those who joined automatically enjoyed the right to bear arms. The Pioneers and the EAAMLS, AAC, and the Pioneers were often the butt of social jokes, with civilians taunting them as *jo-Apida* (mere laborers). The Pioneers was often rocked by strikes, desertions, and mutinies over lack of rifles and other grievances. When the first group of newly recruited members of the Pioneers at Ahero learned that they would not have weapons, many quit the unit and went back home. Soldiers from Nyanza rioted when they discovered that they were being deployed in units such as the East African Military Labor Service instead of units where they had hoped to prove their manliness by owning rifles. For many *askaris*, KAR was the premier unit in the forces, and East Africa "has always been proud of the KAR." On ceremonial occasions the KAR would be "on view, Trooping the Color on the King’s Birthday or swinging behind their band through the streets of Nairobi on a route march ... their smartness was a byword ... no battalions in the East Africa Force have a better record than the KAR." Many *askaris* used to reject service in any unit other than the KAR, forcing the government often "to try to impress upon the soldiers the fact that although they "are joining a non-fighting unit, their work is of great importance and is contributing equally to the war effort as that of other branches of the service." Such government assurances were to no avail with *askaris*, and the pressure exacted by them

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28 Information Officer, article entitled, "The KAR: Article I," written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
29 (History of War, 1939-48, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/61).
30 Information Officer, article entitled, "The KAR: Article I," written on 6th December, 1940, (History of War between France, Britain and Germany, 1940-41, KNA, AH/4/41).
31 Ibid.
32 The Secretariat, Circular to all Provincial Commissioners, dated 18th March, 1942, (Maseno Recruiting
was instrumental in forcing the government to agree to issuing all members of various military labor units with rifles, thus giving all *askaris* a feeling of courage, manliness and prestige in their society. In 1943, some NCOS also managed to convince General Sir William Platt, the General Officer Commanding East African Command, to take up their request to wear East African shoulder titles, as well as hat badges.\(^{33}\)

Recognition of *askaris*’ military efforts also came in many ways – mention in dispatches, award of badges, medals, and promotion. East African Force Badge was awarded to the men who saw action in the East African Theater.\(^{34}\) General Service Star was given to the men who were in Palestine. Other medals were the 1939-45 Star for six months consecutive service in any of all the areas of war, Africa Star [service from 10th June, 1940 to 27\(^{th}\) November, 1941 in Kenya, Abyssinia, The Somalilands, North of Kenya Frontier], Burma Star [12 months of service East of Brahma Putra], Defence Medal [Abyssinia, The Somalilands, Eritrea, Madagascar, India, Ceylon, Mauritius, and Seychelles], and War Medal [Having completed twenty eight days of service consecutive and full time anywhere and everywhere]. Loyal Service Badge was awarded to soldiers who incurred injuries in the war. One government circular shows just how high the bar for qualifying for the award was. One had to be injured or disabled in tasks connected to the war in order to qualify. "Persons invalided [sic] as the result of disablement attributable to military service,"\(^{35}\) the circular goes, were the only ones entitled to the Loyal Service Badge. The fact that one had to be injured or "invalided" to qualify for the

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\(^{33}\) *East African Standard*, July 1, 1943.

\(^{34}\) (War Medals Distribution in Kenya, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/11/16

\(^{35}\) Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference, Circular dated 23\(^{rd}\) October, 1942, (Medals and
award shows just how the men were expected to demonstrate manly and soldierly qualities during the war because that was the only way one was ever going to qualify for such an award.

The ideas of courage, manliness, of facing danger and death went hand in hand. Fighting and facing death was a clear demonstration of the fact that an askari was a courageous man. The constant, daily dalliance with death in the army produced a common, proud Luo saying about KAR, that is, Keya chuny min oaye, which literally translates into, "A KAR man, what hope does his mother have in his life." Death was always a price to pay for virtues of manliness – a quality often actively encouraged by the army. Men felt proud when they fought like "real soldiers" and when the army recognized their efforts. In all government commendations and mentions, emphasis was placed on soldierly and manly qualities – coolness under fire, courage, and exemplary bravery. Private Kimi arap Yano, a Marakwet member of 5KAR was awarded the "East African Force Badge" for "gallantry in action at Bubissa on 11th May, 1941." When fighting broke out the commendation showed, Kimi arap Yano "took his Bren gun ahead of his company up to within 70 yards of an enemy gun position and subjected the enemy gun position to heavy fire. He kept up his fire during an enemy-counter attack by tanks which were within 200 yards and only left his position to withdraw when ordered to do so." L/Cpl. Farah Isak was awarded the East African Force Badge for displaying soldierly qualities on several occasions during the war. Because of his "coolness and determination" he drove off the

36 Pte. Kimi arap Yano, a Marakwet and a member of 5KAR was awarded the "East African Force Badge" for "gallantry in action at Bubissa on 11th May, 1941." (The Secretariat to all Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 14th July, 1943, [Discharge Medals, 1944-45, DC/TAMB/1/9/9]).
opposition during a battle at Merca on 13th March, 1941. On the 6th April, 1941, L/Cpl/ Farah Isak was awarded the Military Medal for continuously gallant services. His citation asserted that, "at Uaso on 3rd April, 1941, having crossed the river, the section commanded by this NCO came under heavy MMG fire from two flanks simultaneously. With great resolution he pressed on until he reached a good fire position, then returning fire on to the left flank of the enemy position, silenced the gun and captured the crew. Since the commencement of the war this NCO has been conspicuous for his courage and disregard of his own personal safety on every occasion he has been under fire, thereby setting a splendid example to his section." 38

More government recognition of askaris' role in the war came in the form of war memorials, monuments, and buildings commemorating the role of the men in the war. The "War Memorial Fund" was established to collect money for the building of a memorial for the men who gave their lives during the war. The function of a war memorial, in the words of one person, "is an expression of universal and unblemished public feeling ... it is a silent and beautiful reminder of sacrifices and its is a place for occasions of solemn remembrance." 39 The famous Rangoon War Memorial commemorates the Allied War soldiers who gave up their lives in service of the Allies: 733 East African men who were killed in the war. 40

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
40 The Rangoon Memorial commemorates the sacrifice of 15 East African Artillery, 49 East African Engineers, 7 East African Corps of Signals, 484 East African Rifles, 71 Northern Rhodesian Regiment, 2 Kenya Regiment, 43 East African Scouts, 27 East African Army Service Corps, 8 East Army Medical Corps, 2 East African Army Ordinance, 9 East African Army Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, 13 African Pioneer Corps (EA), 2 East African Labor Service Corps, and 1 East African Salvage Corps] (Rangoon War Memorial, 1958, ACW/25/38). A further 12 men were buried at the Rangoon War
Askaris also noticed that the army treated injuries or death sustained in the course of battles differently from non-combat situations. The army deferred to askaris who were injured or killed in battle, and invariably rewarded and compensated them well, but became stingy when it came to dealing with askaris who got injured or killed at home while on leave, while entertaining themselves with drinks, or in a fight, anywhere away from the battle-field. In fact, the army invariably penalized askaris who were injured or killed way from the battlefield. Those who were not on duty when they got injured or killed suffered more severe penalty than those injured or killed while on duty. When Kasaja Lwezaro Kyoto drowned, for instance, his gratuity was reduced by 20%, from Kshs.600 to Kshs.480, because "the man was not on duty and was bathing contrary to standing orders, and apparently to the instructions of Guard Commander who had refused permission for the man to bathe contrary to orders. It seems, however, that he was one of about 12 Africans who went into the swimming baths together, this one was unfortunate and was drowned."\(^{41}\) The same fate befell Ngati wa Layu, a member of KAR since 24\(^{th}\) February, 1943. Ngati wa Layu died on 17\(^{th}\) August, 1943, hardly six months after joining the army. When a Court of Enquiry deliberated over Ngati wa Layu's death, it found that he had died "from injuries sustained in a drunken brawl in his home location."\(^{42}\) The Pensions Assessment Board declared that Ngati wa Layu was “not on duty” at the time of death, “was “to blame,” and subsequently found that there was no

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Cemetery. (Rangoon War Memorial, 1958, KNA, ACW/25/38).

\(^{41}\) (Accountant-General to War Pensions Officer, letter dated 9\(^{th}\) November, 1943, Pensions and Gratuties, 1943-44, ACW/28/120).

\(^{42}\) War Pensions Officer to Accountant-General, letter dated 11\(^{th}\) November, 1943, Pensions and Gratutities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
"justification for any award." Private Sefu Mohamed joined the army on 14th May, 1943, and died on the 4th October, 1943, of "syphilitic encephalitis, medically certified to have existed before enlistment." Coming to a judgment over whether Private Sefu Mohamed's family should be compensated, the Pensions Assessment Board declared that, "under the Ministry of Pensions Regulations, venereal disease and its effects are not compensatable, and accordingly there is no case for an award." Standards for evaluating these cases differed from case to case because different officers dealt with them. A standardized, proper scheme for evaluating culpability and awards did not exist, injecting bitterness and anger among askaris towards the government. Another askari who died of a venereal disease while serving with the military during the war was L/Cpl. Hune Nyamhenela, serving with the East Africa Corps of the Military Police, which he joined on 2nd April, 1941. He was diagnosed with a venereal disease, and was undergoing treatment at a hospital when he died on the 28th August, 1942, and the cause of death was listed as "poisoning by narcotic drug," probably a pain killer. The army ruled his death "on duty - not to blame," and his family was denied full compensation. Kato Wankadi, a driver, enlisted in the army on the 7th April, 1942, and died on 3rd August, 1943. A Court of Enquiry found Kato Wanakadi responsible for his own death, writing that "whilst in the Tobruk area, he, when not on duty, walked into a clearly defined minefield, and was killed as the result of the explosion of a land mine. The resultant Court of Enquiry found that he had been warned [with his platoon on parade] on several occasions.

43 Ibid.
44 War Pensions Officer to Accountant-General, letter dated 30th November, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, ACW/28/120).
45 Ibid.
against trespassing in that area, and the verdict of the Officer Commanding Troops was "not on duty, and to blame." The War Pensions Officer further added that in his opinion, Kato Wankadi "did not appreciate his danger, and whether or not his action was due to ignorance or bravado he paid the penalty with his own life." Kuoro Wanyancha was also another askari who was killed by a mine at Tobruk on 12th August, 1940. He had joined the army two years earlier, on 30th October, 1941. The Court of Enquiry found that Kuoro Wanyancha was blown up by a mine after walking "into a clearly defined mine-field ... the Pensions Assessment Board suggests a reduction of at least 20% be made from any gratuity awarded." Tito Mugoya, a lorry driver, was penalized for causing a road accident and was held "responsible for much loss of life and suffering and I think a reduction of not less than 20% should be made." Because of arbitrarily varying standards of awards, the family of Abdi Mohamed, a cyclist with the EAASC almost lost out on compensation when he was "murdered by a person or persons unknown, and that the cause of death was castration and other injuries." The General Officer Commanding East Africa Force tried to heap the blame on Abdi Mohamed, accusing him of being "addicted to breaking bounds," but the Pensions Assessment Board intervened because the "area of Belet-Uen [where Abdi Mohamed was murdered] was a dangerous one after

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47 War Pensions Officer to Accountant-General, letter dated 12th November, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
49 War Pensions Officer to Accountant-General, letter dated 12th November, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
52 Ibid.
dark ...[and thus] recommended ... the full gratuity of shs.600 be paid in this case."53

In the course of their service, askaris knew that they had to show that they were brave and that they did not fear death. The good standard of medical care offered by the military went a long way in emboldening askaris to face danger and even death. The majority of veterans still remember with pride the high standard of medical care offered to them when they fell sick or got injured. Askaris are in total agreement with the fact that medical services in the army were the best they had ever had. They were vaccinated against diseases and were well taken care of whenever they fell sick. In his reports on life in Somalia John Ogola thanked the government for taking "pains to knock off the diseases which are trying to attack us."54 Whenever askaris fell sick or got injured, they were taken to the best army hospital and given very good care by the best doctors, and their families were informed about it. Men who were discharged from the army on account of a newly discovered disease were first treated before going home because the government stated that it was important that, "African ex-servicemen should receive free medical treatment from the Civil Authorities whether their ailments were a direct cause of their military service or otherwise."55 Those injured in the battle-field were given immediate necessary medical attention and then ferried to a more equipped and advanced army hospital. At the biggest and oldest base hospital, No. 1 Hospital, patients were provided with "games, papers, cigarettes, sweets and other comforts, and [from 1941] a ..

53 Ibid.
54 ("News From Somalia," Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, PC/NZA/2/5/17). "We are quite healthy in this country, only that we are homesick." ("News From Somalia," Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
55 Minutes of a Meeting to Discuss the Repatriation and Disposal of Disabled Askaris held on Monday, 27th September, 1943, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
wireless installation with loud speakers in every ward by means of which the sick can hear programs in all languages from Nairobi, the English and foreign programs from Europe as well as gramophone records and talks such as is being made now from the microphone."\textsuperscript{56} Many of the medical cases were related to injuries, and war-related psychological and mental trauma which often led to drunkenness, suicide and mental breakdown, while others were related to sexually transmitted diseases. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases often caused disagreements between military authorities and civil administrators with each blaming the other of not doing enough to control infections. Even \textit{askaris} chimed in with their own perspectives. While \textit{askaris} like John Ogola Sana admitted that they would some times get infected while away fighting, the army tended to believe that most of the infections occurred when \textit{askaris} were on leave at home, while the civilian administration tended to blame the army.\textsuperscript{57}

The number of soldiers who died of war related injuries and those who perished from natural ailments are difficult to come by. Official documents available as already seen are quite sketchy. Anthony Clayton and Donald C. Savage suggest that throughout the war, that is from September, 1939 to October, 1945, 1,388 Africans were killed in action, 128 died from wounds, 20 died in prison, 1,232 died from accidents, 6,872 died from diseases, while 2,298 were wounded.\textsuperscript{58} Most of other official documents only speak to government attempts at providing more medical treatment facilities rather than the

\textsuperscript{56} Governor's speech at opening of Wireless Ceremony, No. 1 general Hospital, Nairobi, 17\textsuperscript{th} September, 1941, (Speeches by HE The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).

\textsuperscript{57} Quoting a Senior Medical Officer, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner claimed that, "there is no evidence of any marked increase in the incidence of the disease amongst the men examined in the province for various purposes during the year." (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).

number of those treated. Nevertheless the Medical Department was always complaining about congestion. At various army and other government hospitals, the askaris were treated and looked after properly, but congestion dogged them wherever they went. In Kakamega, the Medical Officer in charge observed that in the last six months, they had been receiving, on a daily average, 183.42 in-patients at the Native hospital. These included "daily numbers of repatriated ex-soldiers who are urgently in need of hospital treatment." Since there were only 120 beds, this steady stream of patients led to "gross overcrowding." Based on information he had, Brigadier R. P. Cormack, the Director of Medical Service, estimated that the number of injured and sick injuries who would require medical treatment would reach 7,000 by the end of the war.

Injured askaris were often given some monetary compensation based on financial arrangements made when they enlisted, but the mode of calculating awards was very subjective, dependent on the officer calculating it. At first, it appears, that when the government came up with the idea of financial compensation for war injuries, it only had the Civil Defence Force – civilians, that is – in mind. The Bill entitled "Statutory Rules and Orders, 1939 No. 1143, Personal Injuries [Civilians] Scheme, was published in 1939, and dealt with compensations for civilians. The first bill made provisions for a financial arrangement, gratuity, and a pension scheme for civilians injured while serving with the Control and Report Centers [including messengers]; First-Aid Parties, First-Aid Posts,

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59 Minutes of meeting to discuss the Repatriation and Discharge of Disabled Askaris, 27th September, 1943, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
60 Medical Officer-in-Charge, Kakamega, to the Acting Senior Medical Officer of Health, Nyanza Province, letter dated 3rd August, 1944, (Post-War Development, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/2/1/161).
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
Ambulances and Casualty; Rescue Services; Decontamination services; Gas Detection services; Respiratory Distribution services; Auxiliary Fire services; and Demolition of Dangerous Building services.\(^{63}\) This scheme was made with the assumption that Italy would not join the war on the Axis side, and would not threaten British presence in Kenya. When Italy joined the war formally in 1940, the government decided to extend the scheme to other members of the Civil Defence Forces, for instance telephone operators, realizing that the existing financial compensation scheme would be inadequate.

In 1940, the Chief Secretary wrote to the Attorney General and asked him to draft a bill "to make provision for personal war injuries sustained by ARP and other personnel engaged in emergency duties."\(^{64}\) The bills also made provisions for dependants of Civil Defence workers injured or killed or who succumbed to a war injury. Such dependants were entitled to a pension from the government. On 8\(^{th}\) May, 1941, the Government published an amendment to a law entitled "Non-European Officer's Pension Ordinance, 1932." The amendment, according to the government, was "to make clear that, for the purpose of the Pensions Law, a non-European Officer who is killed by enemy action when travelling to and from the colony is to be regarded as killed on duty."\(^{65}\) Financial awards were made to families of deceased African army officers. If the deceased officer left a widow, the document stated, a pension was to be made to his widow, if unmarried and of good character at a rate not exceeding ten-sixtieths of his pensionable emoluments at the date of the injury or a [British pounds]10 a year, whichever be the greater, and also

\(^{64}\) Chief Secretary to Attorney General, letter dated 18\(^{th}\) June, 1940, (Compensation for War Injuries, 1940-43, AG/25/67).
\(^{65}\) (The Non-European Officers in War Service 1940-41, KNA, AG/37/35).
a gratuity not exceeding twenty shillings multiplied by the total number of their years, starting from their ages at the time of their father's death and ending with fifteen years, to each child alive at the date of the father's death, and a gratuity not exceeding [British pounds]15 to any posthumous child.\textsuperscript{66} It provided that gratuity "so granted shall not in the aggregate be less than [British pounds]10 nor more than [British pounds] 60. If the wife of the officer was dead and had left children behind "who would have been eligible for gratuity if a pension had been granted to the widow, gratuities of twice the amount of the gratuities for which they would have been eligible in such circumstances."\textsuperscript{67} If on the other hand, the officer "does not leave a widow, and if his mother was wholly [sic] or mainly dependent on him for her support, a pension to the mother, while of good character and without adequate means of support, at a rate not exceeding the rate of the pension which might have been granted to his widow ... provided that if the mother is a widow at the time of the grant of the pension and subsequently remarries such pension shall cease as from the date of remarriage ... and if the mother is not a widow and it appears that the deceased's father is in position to support her, such pension shall cease from such date as the Governor in Council may determine."\textsuperscript{68}

When Kutuba Masuiki was shot to death by a European officer for trying to steal a sack of coffee beans, the government ruled his death "not on duty - accidentally killed by bullet from revolver fired by ..." and his family was paid nothing "especially so in view of the act that there is no wife or child."\textsuperscript{69} After the deaths of Mutoko Mwendando, Wambua

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Accountant-General to the East African Governments, Report dated 21\textsuperscript{st} August, 1943, (Pensions and
Landu, and Kinyere Ndambuki, on 5\textsuperscript{th} January, 1943, in the C. R. S. hospital, Kismayu, which was ruled "the result of alcoholic poisoning," no award was made to their families because "the next-of-kin in each case is stated to be a brother, it is doubtful whether an award is justified, except on grounds of policy."\textsuperscript{70} Following the death of Petro Kahuko, caused by blackwater fever, meningitis and labor pneumonia on 30\textsuperscript{th} March, 1943, in a prison hospital, the War Pensions Officer recommended that his family be given nothing because his next-of-kin was a brother. "In view of the relationship of the next-of-kin," the War Pensions Officer wrote, "I do not think a reduced award is indicated, and I would recommend to his Excellency accordingly."\textsuperscript{71} The War Pensions Officer's decision to reduce Petro Kahuko's death gratuity was opposed by the Accountant-General, who observed that although there must have been a large measure of misconduct leading to his conviction ... there is no indication that the illness which resulted in his death was due to any irregular action on his part, and the question arises as to whether an award may be made. I am inclined to the view that as he was still in the Army and his death was not directly due to his crime, for which he was receiving his punishment, the full award might be paid."\textsuperscript{72}

While in hospital, injured or disabled \textit{askaris} were given equipment that would make their rehabilitation easy, all at the expense of the government. Since their disability had come in the course of performing their duties, the army picked up the tab for any

\textsuperscript{70} A Report to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} May, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).

\textsuperscript{71} War Pensions Officer, letter dated 21\textsuperscript{st} September, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).

\textsuperscript{72} Accountant-General to the War Pensions Officer, letter dated 8\textsuperscript{th} September, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).
equipment they were given, and for any subsequent repairs. The only problem is that it was not clear how long or how frequently the army would pay for such equipment. An injured askari was required to get approval from the government first before taking his medical appliance for repair. After his injury, for instance, Pte. Absalom Nyawara Nyangoda was "fitted with a pair of surgical boots on 23\textsuperscript{rd} May, 1945 at the rehabilitation center."\textsuperscript{73} After repairs by the Bata Company, Pte. Absalom Nyawara Nyangoda was required to foot the Kshs. 12.60 bill, a hefty amount of money then. When he asked the District Commissioner to pay the bill on his behalf, the District Commissioner sought help from C. F. Atkins, the Officer-in-Charge of Native Civilian Rehabilitation Center, writing that, "I have no funds from which to make such payments, and should be glad to know if you will meet the bill or whether the ex-askari should pay himself."\textsuperscript{74} Luckily for Pte. Absalom Nyawara Nyangoda, the Medical Officer informed A. F. Atkins that, "every patient who is supplied with a surgical appliance at Government expense is informed that any future repairs or replacements that may be necessary will be carried out at this center free of charge."\textsuperscript{75} After recovery, soldiers who had government medical equipment were required to hand them back.

Thus one sees that the army was trying to provide adequate medical care and compensation to the askaris who were injured or who became sick. If askaris appeared brave and courageous in the battlefield, it was not just because their traditions glorified

\textsuperscript{73} C. F. Atkins, Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to the Officer-in-Charge, Native Civilian Rehabilitation Center, letter dated 30\textsuperscript{th} October, 1945, (Wounded Soldiers, 1944-51, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/67).
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Medical Officer of Health Nairobi, to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} November, 1945, (Wounded Soldiers, 1944-51, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/67).
these values, but also because of the high level of medical care. As already noted elsewhere, when one askari was fatally injured during the bombing at Abu Haggag on June 27th, 1942, his comments before succumbing to death suggested that he was more concerned how he died than with death itself. He wanted his family to know that he had "died a manly death." Although he was badly wounded, he insisted repeatedly that the message should be properly understood that "he had died a man's death." Military accounts of the Abu Haggad incident shows that the men and their officers exhibited themselves to the highest levels of bravery and gallantry. The "bravery of the Africans, wounded and unwounded, amazed people on the station who had been in air-raids in England." Most of the wounded men bore their injuries bravely like "real men," one veteran recalls. "There was no moaning," the military records in their account. Many men on the verge of death were more concerned with how they would be remembered; they wanted to be remembered for dying "a man's death." At virtually every place the askaris went during the war, they were generally concerned with portraying an image of unflinching bravery and courage. In Abyssinia, North Africa, the Middle East, Madagascar, and southeast Asia there are reports of gallantry, bravery, and courage on the part of askaris.

The emphasis on courage and fearlessness in the battlefield and in the face of death changed askaris' religious beliefs and rituals. In war situations, many soldiers reflect on

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76 Capt. F. E. V. Ross, Welfare Officer, AAPC [EA], letter dated July, 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/97; the same letter can be found in the military report to S.H. Fazan, dated July, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
77 Ibid.
78 The military account of the incident in a report to S. H. Fazan, dated July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/129).
79 Ibid.
their spirituality. The fact that *askaris* who held high the concepts of manliness and soldierliness also placed their survival in God rather than in their physical abilities may seem like a contradiction, but in retrospect, it is a contradiction that does not seem to have bothered the *askari* very much. It only looks strange from the present, a modern detached position, but not to the men themselves, who faced danger during the war, and who had been brought up in traditional thought systems, which placed a high premium on manliness as well as in God. Placing one's fate in God's hands, it was believed, could make a huge difference in life or death. Very few *askaris* ever wondered or stopped to reflect on why brave and courageous men would need to turn to God for protection against harm if all they needed was manliness and soldierliness to survive. In most of their communities, this apparent contradiction had long been reconciled; it was quite normal in the traditional set up for courageous men to consult the oracles and the ancestors for advice, blessings, and protection on the eve of battle. Many communities had spiritual/military diviners, leaders who consulted the spirits, urging for advice and victory. It was therefore not out of the ordinary during the Second World War for *askaris* to seek spiritual intervention. From a close interrogation of African customs and religious beliefs, one therefore notices that *askaris'* religiosity and emphasis on manliness and soldierliness went hand in hand; there was no contradiction in the men's beliefs in fighting courageously while at the same time placing their fate in God's hands. On the eve of battles of the Second World War, many men prayed to God and asked for his protection.

Regular religious meetings, prayer sessions, and religious commemorations during the
war undoubtedly reinforced religious feelings. The army made provisions for religious services, with Saturdays and Sundays being clearly days for attending formal church service. Many men were undoubtedly religious during the war, and regularly attended prayers. The government provided African religious ministers to pray and worship with the men. A Maragoli askari in India observed that the army seemed to have provided African pastors for all denominations, except his own, "that there are no padres from the Friends African Mission to visit them."\textsuperscript{81} Ndege Odude joined the Catholic Church, and was baptized Joseph while serving with the army during the war. During the burial of the men killed at Abu Haggag, an African minister led the prayers. When Pte. Onono Atieno died of cerebral menengitis at Number 1 Hospital, Nairobi, and his property inspected, the army found "1 leather purse, 1 book Bama za Musafiri [Adventures of a Traveler], and 1 book Kitap Lamo [Prayer Book]."\textsuperscript{82} After Omanu Aderu was killed in battle, his possessions were collected and inspected, and the army found that his possessions contained "1 Religious Medallion."\textsuperscript{83} One document on the religious denominations of the 40 victims of the Abu Haggag shows that 15 were Christians, 1 was a Muslim, 2 pagans [sic], and the remaining unknown.\textsuperscript{84} Most askaris – Christians, Muslims, non-Christians, non-Muslims – had amulets and other traditional paraphernalia which they believed were sacred and contained magical powers and that could afford protection.

Even Christians and Muslims had them, said one veteran. One askari said that had it not

\textsuperscript{81} Confidential "Extracts from African Mail, May 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
\textsuperscript{82} Officer-in-Charge, Military Records, to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} Match, 1941, (Death Gratuities, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/71).
\textsuperscript{83} Office of Military Records to the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 5\textsuperscript{th} January, 1942, (Death of soldiers, 1941-42, DC/KSM/1/22/71).
\textsuperscript{84} Director of Pioneers, to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 17\textsuperscript{th} February, 1943, (War Casualties, PC/NZA/2/3/97).
been for God, he would have died in Abyssinia. Religious ceremonies like the Memorial Service, which was held at the Nairobi War Cemetery on 16th December, 1942, reinforced religious feelings. Whenever the army scored a victory, the army and civil administration attributed it to God. After the Allied victory in North Africa in 1943, a day of "Thanks for Victory" was marked in Kenya. In September, 1943, as always every year, the government planned to observe the National Day of Prayer and Dedication, and arrangements were made to "enable the national response to be as widespread as possible, and leaders of the churches have made plans to hold special services in churches of all denominations throughout the country." There were prayers all over the Colony and in the army on 3rd September, 1943; it was the Remembrance Day, the fourth anniversary of Britain's entry into the war.

Service in the war changed the way the men viewed life and death. Obviously, a detailed analysis of religious and spiritual beliefs of Africans is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is clear is that various African communities had different approaches and attitudes to life and death and to the way they handled and dealt with dead bodies. The Agikuyu and the Kalenjin traditionally did not handle or touch dead bodies. The seriously ill in these communities were taken care of in the homestead, but the terminally ill were taken to the forest and left to die because it was a taboo in these communities to touch a dead body. Other communities on the other hand took care of the terminally ill, and interred the corpses after elaborate ceremonies. Once a dead body was buried, the Luo and the Abaluya, for example, generally refrained from interfering with the burial area. The fear

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86 The East African Standard, 12th August, 1943.
of evil spirits in these communities was very strong, and many members of these communities tried to appease the dead because they believed that the spirit of the dead was capable of coming back and rewarding or punishing the living. The coming of Christianity and Islam among most Kenyan communities reinforced these feelings. It was believed that life was sacred, and bodies of the dead needed to be treated well. Every person had a right to proper treatment and care in life and death.

The transformation of *askaris*’ religious beliefs about the dead was reflected in the way they dealt with the dead during the war. For the most part, even *askaris* whose communities traditionally did not bury the dead were required to handle and generally deal with the injured and the dead with extreme care. After death, an *askari* was buried properly, and his possessions were collected. The administrative officials in his area were informed and asked to notify the next of kin, giving them the government’s condolences. His possessions were passed over to his relatives at the same time. The clearest indication yet of such changes was in the way *askaris* generally treated the dead. To start with, most *askaris* no longer feared the dead upon noticing that other troops, most notably the medical personnel, were handling dead bodies without incurring any wrath from the dead. By the end of the war, African troops in South East Asia were complaining of discrimination in the way the government and the military differently handled the African, and the European dead. The East African Command even reported that it had received information from the War Office to the effect that, "many African personnel have noted that European graves are concentrated into cemeteries while their own are not and they are conscious of a difference in treatment. Opinions have been expressed that
East and West African graves should be concentrated where possible in a similar manner to those of Europeans. But the problem was how to reconcile all the different African customs on death so that askaris could be buried at a common cemetery like their European counterparts. A short term policy was written, which stated that, bodies of dead askaris, which were buried in theaters outside of East Africa would be exhumed and reburied properly in a common cemetery, while those which were buried in East Africa would be left as they were out fear of offending the local communities. In the face of popular demand by askaris for proper burial facilities for their dead comrades, the easiest thing for the army and the government to do under these conflicting circumstances was to emphasize that all the dead would be treated well. Wherever these soldiers were buried, the government made an attempt at ensuring that the graves were well kept.

Moreover, when several askaris died at Abu Haggag on 27th June, 1942, the askaris agreed to have them dead buried in one grave, a very unusual thing. As already demonstrated elsewhere in this chapter and other chapters, the army treated the dead with the respect that they deserved as soldiers. The bodies of the dead men, according to Lieut. F. E. V. Ross, were handled and buried "decently." All the ranks, including the officers, saluted. "A service was [then] held at the grave side by an African rank after the officers had saluted the dead." The graveyard, north of the NAAFI tent was filled in and railed off by barbed wire. When Capt. Humphrey Moore asked for a cross to be placed on the

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89 Ibid.
grave, the *askaris* collected and built 39 crosses. Although the act of burying the men in a mass grave was against the *askaris’* beliefs and attitudes about death and how to handle bodies of the dead, the suddenness of the attack, the large number of casualties, and the need to evacuate the place as soon as possible for the sake of putting the remaining *askaris* out of danger meant that *askaris* had to transform their beliefs in line with the exigencies of the moment. War situations unlike other normal situations required drastic sacrifices in material and spiritual terms. The surviving Africans believed that they did their best for their dead comrades-in-arms. "The Africans who were last at Abu Haggag Station are content and proud that everything was properly done for the dead. Their comment was – ‘it could not have been better done.’"91

After burying the dead and evacuating, the surviving members of the unit never forgot their comrades buried at Abu Haggag. Not only did they demand that the government take a lead in protecting the grave site, but they also took note of the exact location of the burial site, and they often visited it during and after the war. Throughout the war the men would come to Abu Haggag to tend the graves of their comrades and pay their homage to those of their own who lost their lives fighting in the war. During one visit to the mass grave of their men, Major Humphrey Moore and his men requested the Directorate of Pioneers and Labor “to have the spot tidied up and fenced and a simple but permanent cross erected.”92 The following year, 1944, Major Humphrey Moore and his men again made their “annual pilgrimage” to Abu Haggag and tended the graves of their men. The

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90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
bell of Abu Haggag "where most of the casualties were sustained" was taken by Capt. F.E.V. Ross and was transferred to Nyanza Province to mark the death of the men who were serving with the AAPC [EA], most of them from Nyanza Province.  

As the war changed the askari, the ordinary civilian back at home remained relatively unchanged by these experiences. When a proposal was made that "the bodies of those who have died in action and are interred outside the bounds of demarcated cemeteries should be exhumed and re-interred in central cemeteries," the government sought the opinion of local their communities, and found that civilians were against it. E. R. st. A. Davies, the Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference, observed that when the East African governments consulted various ethnic communities in East African about transferring the body of askaris who had died and had been away from home, these communities preferred that they should not be disturbed. These communities did not want to disturb the corpses for various reasons; communities that did not have traditions of burying the dead believed that corpses were unclean and as a result did not want to associate with them; communities that had long standing funerary rites and traditions opposed the move because they did not want to disturb the spirit of the dead. All these communities thus felt that the "graves of all East and West Africa natives of all religions should be left in their original sites as it was against tribal custom to move their dead. Graves so left were, if possible, to be marked and protected, but where this was not possible location was to be noted carefully and the actual grave obliterated to prevent

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93 Ibid.
94 Major WG. Evans, H.Qs, EAC, to Various Government Officials, 20th September, 1941, (War Graves, 1931-42, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/60)
The moving of bodies from their original burial grounds to any place was "repugnant to all African communities, whether Christian, Mohamedan or pagan [sic]." The difficulty of reconciling conflicting African customs forced the military to withdraw its proposal to "disturb the bodies of African or Indian dead."

This decision apparently did not apply to bodies of soldiers buried outside of the Kenya colony. There are a number of cases where the military transferred bodies of soldiers from where they were killed and initially buried, back to their final resting places in the colony. There is a high likelihood that this was done without consulting African communities, for fear of offending them, but askaris must have known because they were most likely involved in the exhumation and re-burial of bodies. Unlike traditional members of their communities who would have protested, it appears that askaris no longer subscribed to such customs while serving in the army. Their ideas had changed due to the war.

93 E. R. St. A. Davies, the Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference, to the Chief Secretaries of East and Central African territories, letter dated 10th December, 1945, (War Graves, 1943-56, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/61).
94 Ibid.
95 The Chief Secretary to all Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 31st October, 1941, (War Graves, 1931-42, PC/NYZ/3/4/60). By 1949, after realizing that bodies of dead askaris buried in East Africa could not be moved from their burial sites to a central burial ground where they could be taken care of, the government decided to remove all grave site markings, and let the graves disappear. Hence markings on a common burial ground at Kisumu Township were removed because it was not "possible to maintain the servicemen's graves up to the standard of the Imperial War Graves Commission if they remain in that position ..." (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the District Commissioners, letter dated 22nd December, 1949, War Graves, 1943-56, PC/NYZ/3/4/61). Although the administration in Nyanza Province preferred that the common grave be built somewhere near the province, it was ready to support the location of the grave at any other place "if the men were not mainly Nyanza men." (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the District Commissioners, letter dated 22nd December, 1949, War Graves, 1943-56, PC/NYZ/3/4/61). Gilgil was ultimately chosen as the place for burials.
Leisure Time in the Army.

Service in the army was not about fighting all the time, even though it was the most important thing. Many *askaris* spent their free time trying to improve their level of education. In a letter, one *askari* spoke "very highly of the English lessons in his unit."\(^{98}\) In fact many soldiers recommended that their relatives should "learn as much English as possible."\(^{99}\) Arithmetic was also suggested as a useful subject which should be pursued during the war. Many *askaris* pursued training and skills during the war. By the middle of the war, the *East African Standard* observed that *askaris* were pursuing educational training opportunities, and there were "for example, many men who had received elementary medical training such as dressers. These could contribute towards a better state of tribal hygiene and the simple treatment of everyday ills and render first aid in more serious cases prior to the patients' removal for skilled medical treatment.

Carpenters, stonemasons, blacksmiths and tinsmiths, for example, could perhaps be absorbed with benefit into tribal life and assist in making many improvements to living conditions."\(^{100}\) *Askaris* were also receiving training as drivers, telephone and telegraphic operators, signalers, and a host of other skills. The six years of service in the army and sojourn in foreign land, George Kinnear noted, had left a mark on the *askari*. "His outlook had broadened"\(^{101}\) and "his self-esteem had grown."\(^{102}\)

Besides pursuing educational opportunities, the army provided men with time to broaden their minds and gain new experiences by touring and seeing new places, entertaining

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98 Confidential "Extracts from African Mail, May 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
99 Ibid.
100 *The East African Standard*, Thursday, May 4, 1943.
101 George Kinnear, Correspondent, *East African Standard*, July 9, 1945,
themselves with music, dance, and in-door and out-door games. The Central Kavirondo District Commissioner urged civilians in his area to contribute funds so that the army could buy "ngoma na ajua na vitu vingine pia ... [music drums and board games and other things]." The askaris listened to radio broadcasts; home news and greeting sessions were quite popular. Films were shown, dealing with war and sacrifice for their moral and educational value. A film entitled Good and Bad Askari dealt with the theme of how an askari should behave while on leave. In 1944, the Office of Nyanza Province reported that Chief Yona Orao had helped Sgt. Heaney of the Public Relations, East Africa Command, to get special shots to form "part of a film being made for our troops in the South East Asia Command ... [showing] thatching, ploughing, shooting with bow and arrows, etc." Story-telling was a form of entertainment. Literate askaris read various monthly newsletters containing news about war and their homes, and interpreted them for others. Magazines like the Askari carried news, "Hadithi [Stories]," "Salamu za Wasomaji [Greetings to Readers]," "Salamu Jaluo [Greetings to Luos];" a column "'Askari Mzee Anashauru [An Old Askari Advices] column," which offered advice and words of wisdom to askaris; and a sports page. Sports competition between various companies, battalions, brigades or different military units were organized during the war for entertainment. One veteran remembers that soldiers were allowed to entertain themselves by singing, playing ngoma, and dancing. During festivals like Christmas, celebrations and entertainment went into high gear. Gifts and presents were collected under funds drives like the ""Overseas Troops Christmas Funds" and dispatched to

103 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Chiefs in Central Kavirondo District, letter dated 9th September, 1944, (Military Funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
104 Office of Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated
askaris, demonstrating that people at home had not forgotten their askaris. "We are learning from troops on leave," the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner remarked at one time, "how much the gifts [were] appreciated." The value of entertainment, gifts and presents was that they motivated askaris. They were also therapeutic – they provided respite from the rigors and demands that war made on them.

Touring and traveling was a favorite past-time of the askaris, and after traveling many askaris generally came to feel proud of their land, believing that their country was better than most of the places they visited during the war. Askaris ridiculed Italian Somaliland, Abyssinia, Madagascar, North Africa, and the Middle East as hot and sandy and very dry. After a trip in Somaliland one Christmas Day in 1941, John Ogola Sana, a soldier-clerk from North Ugenya, and who was based in Mogadishu in 1941 and 1942, reported that, whereas at home in Kenya “we were seeing Somalis walking here and there … trading in cattle, … we could not talk about their country as we did not know it … [but now he found that the country] … consists of sand … There are no forests. There are no rivers. There are no many farms or gardens. The trees which are in Somali are not very big trees. They are shrubs with thorns. The only river which runs through Somalia is River Juba. Drinking water is not easily obtainable as it is in our country. It is by the flood of this river that farmers manage to carry on with their farming by means of irrigation. This water makes the plant grow just as other kinds of plants. The only animal which is very useful in this country is the camel. The camel can go on a very long journey without

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3rd November, 1944, (Cinema and War, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/15/159).
eating or drinking, but the only food and water which it ate and drunk before commencement of his journey."  

During his travels, Ogola Sana also learned that, "there is a distinction between whites also. There are Italians who came from Europe. There are also some people who are borne of Italian and Somali prostitutes. These people also call themselves Italians, but in fact they are not Italians. They are half-casts [sic]."

John Ogola Sana believed that Somalis were poorer than Kenyans in many respects because they "do not like to dig ... they prefer looking after their cattle instead of digging." The main Somalia town of Mogadishu "was not properly organized by the Italians as the English have done in Nairobi, Kisumu and other towns in Kenya. The streets are narrow and very dirty ... when one enters into a Somali house one thinks that one has entered into the market of flies. Mogadisu [sic] is a very hot town." Many askaris who served in North Africa and the Middle East made visits to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and other Biblical places in the Middle East. Askaris found South East Asia generally hot and humid. Suleiman remembered it as a place where there was "the foul condition of endless mud, endless rain, endless heat."

It was most often during such walkabouts and tours in the towns that askaris indulged in drinking and visiting brothels, getting infected with diseases. Many askaris were victims of muggings, murders, over-drinking, and suicides at drinking places. When an autopsy was conducted on the bodies of Mutoko Mwendando, Wambua Landu, and Kinyere

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107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
Ndambuki, it was found that "each man died on 5th January, 1943, in the C. R. S. Hospital, Kismayu, the result of alcoholic poisoning." Some askaris also complained about the lack of "snuff," and they in fact wrote home "asking for quantities of snuff which they can sell to their comrades." Sexual liaisons with women in towns at such times were quite common. John Ogola Sana appeared to acknowledge these reports when he noted in his report that, "we hear that you say that we are not proper men because of this disease ... [but] ... we are very well protected by our government." Some veterans claim that they know of men who disappeared in Abyssinia and Somaliland after marrying into the local communities. Pte. Mungai Kichoya of the EAASC, was "murdered by Somalis" after visiting "a brothel" in Somaliland Protectorate, and Ezra Kakonge "was shot dead in a brothel" in Addis Ababa on 3rd July, 1941. John Ogola Sana defended such liaisons on grounds that, "we are just with our full bodies as we had before" and that the government was taking good care of them with good medical attention for those infected, "so you may not be annoyed too much on this." Many askaris died in fights and brawls after drinking. Abdi Mohamed was murdered on the 10th March, 1941, his genitals were mutilated, and his body was found lying in a river at Belet-Uen. When an inquest into the death of driver Erizimasi Mayanja was held, one European Officer reported that he "noticed a distinct smell of alcohol when he examined

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111 A Report to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 18th May, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).
112 Confidential "Extracts from African Mail, May 1945, (African Mail, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
113 "News From Somalia," (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
114 Chief Secretary, Entebbe, letter dated 21st August, 1843, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).
115 "News From Somalia," (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
Another witnesses reported that Erizimasi Mayanja had been driving his motor vehicle "at an excessive speed." Another activity that askaris indulged in during their spare-time was letter writing. For askaris, letter writing was not just a past-time activity for whiling away time during lulls in battle, it was their only way of getting to know what was happening at home. It was usually the askari's best way of communicating with people at home, and they often endeavored to learn how to write. Having stayed for a long time without receiving a letter from home, L/Cpl. Mawinda Wangwe suspected that something was wrong. When he approached the authorities, he "stated that he has received no news from his home since June, 1944, and is anxious as he thinks something must have happened to his family." News about home came via many agencies, but letters were cherished more because they were a first hand account of what was happening at home. Days when letters arrived at military camps were characterized by a lot of expectation. The roar of a vehicle or the silhouette of a ship from home sparked excitement among askaris, each hoping that he would be able to receive letters and know what was happening at home. John Ogola Sana described letters in his two articles as "friends, fathers, mothers, sisters and our wives whom we left home." Many askaris like John Ogola complained about loneliness in Somalia, and there were even those who thought that their relatives had forgotten about them, if they did not receive letters from home. "Although we are happy," John Ogola Sana wrote, "the only thing that disappoints us is that we do not get letters from you, and

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117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Officer-in-Charge, 37 EA, South East Asia Command, letter dated 23rd March, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave of Askaris, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/111.)
this has made us think that you have forgotten us."¹²¹ During a visit to Ceylon, Gen. Sir. William Platt also noted that, "the most important ... [thing] ... was ... they wanted news of their homes and families, their cattle and goats."¹²² News from home helped in "cheering up African troops, keeping up their spirit and maintaining their fighting morale."¹²³

To help men like John Ogola Sana receive regular news from home and cope with their loneliness, the government started a letter-writing scheme. The scheme, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner would recall later, was started because "complaints ... began to reach us that African ranks were worried at the lack of news from home."¹²⁴ Families were required by the administration particularly in Nyanza to write letters, and letter writers [scribes] were employed by the government and put at the disposal of families of askaris. These letter writers would travel from village to village, and baraza to baraza writing letters on behalf of illiterate families, who had askari relatives at the war front. At the beginning, the prognosis of the scheme was not positive at all. Families were not writing as many letters as expected, as most of them were either illiterate or distrustful of the scheme. Women asserted during interviews that they could not engage the services of letter writers while others said that they could not share personal and private details with people outside of the family. Women found "letter writing a pain and a grief."¹²⁵ Letter writing was also a new phenomenon, and many people at home were not familiar with

¹²⁰ "News From Somalia," (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
¹²¹ Ibid.
¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 16th June, 1942, (Post Office Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
¹²⁵ Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, Circular dated, "Letters to Serving Soldiers, letter dated 16th
things like stamps and envelopes and the idea of writing addresses on top of the envelope. On not a few occasions in Nyanza, families were warned that they "must not post unstamped letters and expect them to reach their destination." There were also suspicions that the letter writing scheme was a ploy by the government to know what people were "saying about" the war and the government.

These suspicions prompted the government to hold demonstrations on how to write letters at public barazas, meetings, cinema shows, and explained over the radio, how letters were supposed to be written and posted, often with mixed result. The government helped the scheme along by commencing "free postage scheme" — giving free stamps to relatives who had written letters to askaris. Askaris also helped establish the scheme by threatening to withhold remittances if families did not write back to acknowledge money received. The government also introduced a policy that whenever families went to pick up remittance money they were expected to write a letter there and then, at least to notify the sender that they had received the money. Letter-writers were employed full-time, and bicycles were bought to facilitate the travels of letter-writers in the rural areas. The number of letters written increased with the amount of money paid out through the Family Remittance Scheme. By the end of 1941, the government paid out [British pounds] 47,403 to families in Nyanza. In 1942, the amount paid out to families had jumped to [British pounds] 86,397. In one instance, the administration received "255

126 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 25th June, 1942, (Military Funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
127 (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
letters written in five days.\textsuperscript{128} More letter writers were employed to cope with the unexpected upsurge in the number of letters being written by relatives of askaris. By June, 1942, the Family Remittance Officer in Nyanza worried that at the rate that letters were written, "a rate of a thousand letters per month will very soon be reached" and he was wondering if there should be a cap on the number of letters collected especially for the free postage scheme.\textsuperscript{129} Trying to make the families chip in to the cost of the scheme by buying stamps for extra letters, the Nyanza Provincial Administration decided at the beginning of the second half of 1942, to reduce the number of stamps given out to one per a family, hoping that the urge to write letters had been permanently stimulated.\textsuperscript{130}

The new surge in letter writing was felt in some places and not in others. In Kericho District, the District Commissioner complained of the fact that the local Kipsigis had not mastered the mechanics of letter writing. The Kipsigis, the District Commissioner wrote, "are very largely illiterate and would have no paper and envelopes to write letters 'there and then' and hand them back to the Family Remittance Officer. I believe the stamps would almost be entirely wasted."\textsuperscript{131} The Kericho District Commissioner also wrote that he did not believe that any one among the Kipsigis to be able to "exceed one letter per month."\textsuperscript{132} But while some parts of Kenya grappled with the intricacies of letter writing

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{128} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 16\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, (Post Office Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{129} Family Remittance Officer to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 13\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, (Post Office Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{130} "The Welfare Fund will stand one twenty cents stamp to any native who hands a letter to Family Remittance Officer for posting to a serving soldier but will only do this in respect of one letter per person." (Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 25\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, Military Funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
\textsuperscript{131} Kericho District Commissioner to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, (Post Office Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\end{footnotesize}
in some places the scheme was so successful that the government decided to increase the number of letter writers. In 1942, the Nyanza Provincial Administration decided to hire more letter writers since the "reports received to date indicate that the service is performing a very useful function, but that the population which each scribe is required to serve is far too big."\textsuperscript{133} This was undoubtedly true because the scribes were most often expected to serve more than 50,000 people.

As the askaris traveled out of the continent, the administration decided to apply the scheme only to askaris "serving in the Middle East and overseas."\textsuperscript{134} Although a number of askaris were still serving in Ethiopia and Somaliland, the government felt that they probably had better and easier chances of traveling home and meeting their families than askaris who were serving in the Middle East and other places overseas, and whose interest in home news were considered more urgent. The only trouble would be how local administrators would tell whether a local askari was serving within Africa or overseas, but nevertheless the problem was resolved in due course. By the end of July, 1942, the pattern of letter writing was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nyanza</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Kavirondo:</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kavirondo:</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kavirondo:</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kericho District:</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>5,400.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rift Valley</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elgeyo District:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nandi District:</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baringo District:</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Suk:</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{133} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38).
\textsuperscript{134} Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 25\textsuperscript{th} June, 1942, (Military Funds, 1942-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/147).
Total: 545.

Central Province:
Nyeri District: 600
Kiambu District: 400
Fort Hall: 700
Embu District: 100
Meru District: 300
Machakos District: 1,200
Kitui District: 1,000
Nairobi District: 500
Total: 4,800

Coast Province:
Digo District: 25
Kilifi District: 70
Tana River District: 20
Lamu District: 20
Voi District: 60
Total: 195

Extra Provincial Districts:
Maasai District: 20
Northern Frontier District: 20
Turkana District: 20
Total: 60

GRAND TOTAL: 11,000.\(^{135}\)

By August, 1942, the Family Remittance Officer observed that letters were arriving at his office at the rate of 4,000 a month, and that "I can foresee that at least 6,000 letter forms will be needed for distribution by me every month."\(^{136}\) In places like Central Kavirondo, the scheme had been taken up with "great enthusiasm," leading to complaints about "the shortage of forms"\(^{137}\) for writing letters. By the end of August, 1942, the Welfare Officer of the East African Forces was sending the Nyanza Provincial Administration "10,000 forms ... for the free letter scheme for serving African soldiers" on a monthly basis.\(^{138}\)

\(^{135}\) W. N. Dolton, for Director Education to Secretaries to all Missions and Principals of Government and Primary Schools, letter dated 29\(^{th}\) July 1942, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).

\(^{136}\) The Nyanza Province Family Remittance Officer to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 17\(^{th}\) August, 1942, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).

\(^{137}\) Ibid.

\(^{138}\) Welfare Officer, the East African Forces, to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\(^{th}\)
3rd September, 1942, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner also noted that the "Letters for stamping under the Nyanza Province War Welfare Scheme are still arriving in excessively large numbers." On 19th October, 1942, the Family Remittance Officer noted that in his last safari in Central Kavirondo, one clerk wrote seven hundred letters, and that "although over 700 letters were written by the one clerk supplied there was enough work for at least four clerks." In October, 1943, the Alego clerk was able to write 294 letters on regular paper, and estimated that once he received the letter forms, he would be able to write 1,000 letters a month.

As a sign of the success and growing confidence in the letter writing scheme, many askaris and their families begun putting much information in the letters. Many times families of askaris found that they could not fit everything they wanted to write in the letter forms; the letter forms were now too small to accommodate everything they wanted to write about. M. A. Archer, the Family Remittance Officer of Nyanza Province, observed that during his tour of Alego in Central Kavirondo, Chief Amoth Owira, the chief of the area, had "brought to my notice several times that the present form as issued by you, for the writing of letters to askaris and lately for askari writing home, is far too small." After a trip to visit with the AAPC in North Africa, Chief Amoth Owira found that "this subject was mentioned by nearly every group of Pioneers to whom he

August, 1942, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
139 The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to his District Commissioner, letter dated 3rd September, 1942, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
140 The Nyanza Province Family Remittance Officer to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 19th October, 1942, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
142 M. A. Archer, the Nyanza Province Family Remittance Officer to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner,
spoke."\textsuperscript{143} The administration complained that \textit{askaris} were getting "prone to write long and rambling letters in their own language to District Commissioners from which it is a matter of some time and labor to extract the point with which the enquiry is concerned. It is true that some of these letters are written by Company officers on behalf of the soldier, but it is often difficult to gather even from these the true nature of the enquiry."\textsuperscript{144} While arguing that the "semi-literate has a very large handwriting, and fills the single page of the form with a few lines,"\textsuperscript{145} The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner K. L. Hunter nonetheless recommended that the letter-form should be made bigger, instead of allowing paper and envelope. By early 1944, the Nyanza Provincial Administration was asking for twenty thousand letter forms per month.\textsuperscript{146}

Started during the war, the letter writing scheme enabled \textit{askaris} to receive news from home and for families to know about their men who were fighting at the war front. These letters were of course censored, partly to prevent leakage of sensitive military information, and interference with the morale of troops. By reading and censoring letters, the administration managed most of the time to intrude into the inner thoughts of the civilians and the \textit{askaris}, getting to know their moods and attitudes, and taking remedial measures on time if they threatened colonial peace and stability.\textsuperscript{147} Censorship of letters

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} H. L. G. Gurney, Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference, to the Chief Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya, letter dated 24\textsuperscript{th} June, 1943, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{145} K. L. Hunter, The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Welfare officer, East African Command HQ, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} April, 1943, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{146} See, for instance, Hutchinson, for the Acting Information Officer's letter to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, in which he writes that "a few days ago a telegram was received from the Family Remittance Officer in Kisumu, for an issue of 20,000 [letters]," letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} January, 1944, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{147} See: "Extracts from African Mail, May, 1945," (African Mail, 1945, PC/NZA/2/2/89, where the
caused alarm among askaris and their relatives. After many askaris were killed at Abu Haggag, Pte. Okumu Ouma decided to inform the relatives of the askaris who had died, but he was careful to warn the relatives not to inform anybody, not even the government. Informing the people of Sakwa about the death of Omwa Yogo and Erasito Arinda, Joseph Okumu Ouma went on to write that, "I know you home people you are very bad people when someone tells you something, then you goes [sic] on asking government, who is against the spread of such news. And should government come to know who is spreading such news, they usually take the arrest of the person and is put in jail. Should you receive this letter do not take it as I am telling you lies; it is quite true. And you should inform Migaya son of Osuru without fail. It is true that Omoro Olele has died without exaggeration. I, Joseph Okumu Ouma, who has told you this, and should you spread this government shall have to arrest me. Because they have not released this news. You should better inform Yogo Ouma strongly that his son has died, Arinda Amolo who belongs to Owaki [Kowak] Clan has also died."¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in spite of censorship, letters were the next best means of communication, in the absence of opportunities to go home on a regular basis.

Letters dealt with numerous subjects – joy and sadness, families, marriages, deaths, properties. Most letters dealt with domestic matters, though the administration often found difficulty trying to understand some of these matters. Pte Alois Arika was most

¹⁴⁸ Joseph Okumu Ouma to Julius Omoro, letter [no month or date], 1942, (War Casualties, KNA, DC/NZA/2/3/97).
certainly thrilled to receive a letter from his wife, K. Opiyo. Although the letter informed Alois Arika that his "jaherana" – his darling, K. Opiyo was "eri abet mangima matin nono ... gik manene imiyo Ogola Otono sabunde ayudo ... [I am generally fine and well ...the things you gave Ogola Otono, I have received them]," he was shocked by the bad news that followed.

Shs7. ok ayudo apenje to okwera ni nene otiyo godo e yo kod pien mar geng’o bende ok ayudo to ne anene kode moro to kora akia me en to chalo kod manene iwacho to koro akia nikeh otama ni nene omaye e yo kendo gik manene ikone [ikowone] kod Nelson bende ok aneno koro wuon N.O. nobiro Nairobi kuno penjo go gigi ka inene to ipenj anena ka nonyiso wuon.

[I did not receive the shs. 7. I asked him and he said he used the money on the way home. I also did not receive the blanket. I saw him with one, it looks like the one you described, but I don’t know ... because he says he was robbed of some of the things. Also the things you say you him to give Nelson, Nelson did not receive them, so Nelson’s father will come to Nairobi to ask about them. When you see him, you ask him].

In this letter it is also revealed that many askaris were thinking about their future occupations. Alois Arika had already sought advice from his wife, and who told him that:

ohala ma aneno iwacho ok aneno to inyalo kowo shs ni ng’ato to ngiewo ni rwedhi to iaye ing’iewoni kwer koro diber moloyo

[the business you were talking about ... you can send money and somebody can buy some bulls and a plough, and that is the best type of business for somebody who works away from home].

Askari Opiyo Nyasuna also received letters from his sister Okuto Auma and it was generally a demand for money, among a litany of complaints. Sergeant Naftali Otuoma Akeng’o would not have been thrilled by the letter he received from his sister in January,

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149 K. Opiyo to Alois Arika, letter dated 10th July, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).
150 Ibid.
151 Okuto Auma to Apiyo Nyasuna, letter dated 23rd June, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).
1943, informing him that, "Rosilida ema opondo go otieno mit odhi thurgi gilewni odhi go duto ... [Rosilida has absconded from home and gone back to her family with all her belongings]."\textsuperscript{152}

But it was not just *askaris* receiving letters; they were themselves also writing letters home, to their families, local administrators, to military officers, often making inquiries and giving advice. The subject of *askaris’* letters demonstrate that as they served in the war, *askaris’* minds were never far from home. They were always making inquiries about family remittance, and whether their relatives were receiving it. After the death of his brother "to whom I made out Family Remittance," Pte. Kakwia Ndeme wrote in a letter that, "my wife Muindi Mumbingui ... is destitute, her hut has fallen down and she has no one to rebuild it for her. Would it be possible for the District Commissioner to instruct the chief or headman to give her every assistance. The Family Remittance is now being made in favor of my wife."\textsuperscript{153} Pte. Nangulu Pepo’s letter was about the fact that although he sent shs.10 to his father, Pepo Luvumbi, every month, "on the understanding that [my] wife is to be given a home and kept supplied with clothes etc when necessary ... [she, that is, the wife], Mwaka Katsawe ... writes and says she is receiving no support from his [sic] father-in-law and has no place to live. Would you please instruct Pepo to see that [my] wife has a place to live and to carry out his side of the agreement."\textsuperscript{154} In his letter to the administration, Lance Corporal M’Mboroki M’Raiboni complained to the Army that his brother, M’Ruito M’Raibuni "has sold my cattle and when my mother told him not to do

\textsuperscript{152} Letter to Sergeant Naftali Otuoma Akeng’o, letter dated 7\textsuperscript{th} January 1943, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/87).
\textsuperscript{153} Pte. Kakwia Ndeme, letter dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} April, 1944, (Personnel Affairs and African Soldiers, 1942-45, KNA, AH/22/55).
\textsuperscript{154} Pte. Nangulu Pepo, letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} March, 1944, (Personnel Affairs and African Soldiers, 1942-45,
so, he threatened her with violence. He is unemployed and causing trouble at my home."\textsuperscript{155}

In an especially illuminating extract from African mails, the civil administrators noted that *askaris* displayed interest in their personal and communal affairs – education, land, taxes, bride price, their future in the colony. One administrator noted that a Mugikuyu *askari* had written to the LNC "complaining of the bride price. He states that his father-in-law now demands 90 goats worth Kshs. 1,800, a fattened sheep worth Kshs.100/- and other small items amounting in all to Kshs.2,000. He blames the LNCs at Kiambu, Fort Hall and Nyeri for not altering this state of affairs, and points out that a young man cannot afford Kshs.2,000. He goes on to say that after a few months the couple will be penniless and the girl will return to the father who will then blame her for marrying a poor man, regardless of the fact that the bride-groom had already surrendered up Kshs.2,000. The result, the writer states, is that young men and girls drift into the towns and live on the proceeds of prostitution."\textsuperscript{156} Some letters dealt with applications for leave, explaining why leave should be granted, alternatively urging the administration to investigate an event at home.

By 1942, the military was complaining that "the stream of personal letters from serving *askaris* requesting the District Commissioners to investigate their family affairs has now reached flood proportions. They are based largely on gossip brought by returning

\textsuperscript{155} M'Mboroki M'Raiboni, letter dated 26\textsuperscript{th} June, 1944, (Personnel Affairs and African Soldiers, 1942-45, KNA, AH/22/55).
\textsuperscript{156} "Extracts from African Mail," May, 1945, (African Mail, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
comrades from leave, and are passed straight to the Native Authority if in Swahili, or if in English, a brief translation is made by the Native Authority Clerk, and then sent direct o the chief.\textsuperscript{157} In their letters, askaris also urged their communities to make investments. Writers were even proposing "investments ... in some cases firms in their own territory, such as Uganda Bus Co., others the POSB, and in one case, a L/Cpl. At Jeanes School, has written to the selected Unit Investment Trust Co., Johannesburg, asking for particulars of their investments."\textsuperscript{158} In these letters, the askaris exhibited a keen interest in the education system, comparing it to the system prevailing where they were serving. After looking at the Indian education system, an askari concluded that the Indian system was better because "small children in India can read and write at an early age as schools in India are found everywhere."\textsuperscript{159} One Mkamba wrote letters urging his "relatives to save money for education and the building of more schools in their territory. Another Mkamba in India Command states that fellow tribesmen in his unit are subscribing Kshs.2/- a month towards building a large school in Kambaland after the war."\textsuperscript{160} A Kipsigis soldier also wrote home, "speaking highly of the English lessons in his unit ... others recommend their relatives to learn as much English as possible."\textsuperscript{161} A Meru soldier undergoing a course at the Medical Training Depot also asserted that he had "learned to behave like a decent soldier and to lead a clean life and speaks highly of the courses, especially the English lessons."\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{157} Lt. Col. HA. Case, AAG HQRS. 2nd Echelon, EA Command, quoting Musoma District Commissioner, in a letter to the Military Liaison Officer, HQ Command, letter dated 17\textsuperscript{th} October 1942, (Personnel Affairs and African Soldiers, 1942-45, KNA, AH/22/55).
\textsuperscript{158} "Extracts from African Mail," May, 1945, (African Mail, KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/89).
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
Everywhere, one notices an increasing interest among *askaris* in the welfare of their people in the colony. A Kipsigis soldier wrote home and rebuked his "friends for allowing their country to be cut up like the Wakikuyu [sic], and states he has heard people are not allowed to cultivate their gardens this year." Writing from "somewhere" in South East Asia, a Maragoli noted in a letter home, that he had heard that "the government had decided to move the Maragoli to another district before the *askaris* return to their homes ... he suspects Chief Agoi to come to some agreement with the authorities on this matter." An Omogusi *askari* claimed in a letter that he heard that girls in his home area "are being made to pay poll-tax." Another *askari* from the Teso, who was in the India Command, reported that he "had heard that the chiefs have suggested to the LNC that leave for the *askaris* should be prevented. This, he thinks was done, as he calls it "for ulterior motives."  

In a sign that *askaris* were gaining in confidence in relation to the colonial system, one *askari*, Clerk Alfayo Nying'uro, audaciously demanded a transfer or discharge to take care of his "mother suffering loneliness in our village since my father's death of last year ... My father died on 17th December, 1944. Surely you can feel yourself sir if it had been you, what would you feel for that if your parent asked you for such pity and sympathy?" Quoting from his communal custom to bolster his case, Clerk Alfayo Nying'uro went further:

162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Alfayo Nying'uro, 3 [EA] Inf. W/S Coy. EAEME, South East Asia Command, to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 27th August, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave, 1945,
surely you know very well that according to our native customs I should not stay out for a long time for there are some native laws or customs that can not be dealt without my presence. And so, this is what is happening now. I am sure she has awaited for at least seven months for my arrival to finish off the customs. I should close now by quoting my evidence thus: my father has lately died, and hence we are in great distress, unfortunately my father had not lived for long enough to put by a provision for his widow and children. As I am the eldest son the family naturally looks to me for support. Remember me in reply to the Welfare Officers please. To finish with, I did not mean to leave the army until my time of discharge was on the fixed date and year was over. I should be by Xmas home if you feel that it might be a suitable time according to your opinion or choice only.\footnote{168}

Other means of communication among askaris were postcards which carried news about the colony.\footnote{169}

Leave.

Letters helped askaris keep in touch with their families, but leave was better – it enabled askaris to visit their families. After staying away from their families for a long time, many men always looked forward to going home on leave. The issue of leave is important in understanding askaris’ wartime experience because it reveals what askaris used to do during leave time, and hence, issues that were important to them during the war. Leave was a welcome relief from the daily rigors of army life. It was also a time to complete some unfinished businesses like marrying, paying dowry, putting up a cottage.

\footnote{\textit{KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).}}

\footnote{Ibid.}

\footnote{Major F. H. Crittenden, East Africa Command, to the Governors Conference, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} June, 1944, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21). But one official felt that although postcards were being used for troops from West Africa, the idea was not necessary if the letter writing scheme was working. Postcards also did not carry all that large amount of information to make them useful. (H. L. G. Gurney, Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya, letter dated 23\textsuperscript{rd} June, 1944, Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21). Postcards would also create the impression among some families that after sending a postcard, that it was no longer necessary to write letters. Opposing the idea of writing postcards, the K.L. Hunter argued that, "there would be a likelihood of the wrong alternative being crossed out, and a totally wrong impression conveyed to the askari." (K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 28\textsuperscript{th} July, 1944).}
Although the government tried to keep askaris in touch with their families through letters and other mass media, askaris considered leave as an important opportunity to see their families and to rest. Leave was an integral aspect of war-time experience. Ex-askaris unanimously agreed during interviews that after serving for a period of time they were often looking forward to going back home on leave. John Ogola Sana, in his two articles, complained about loneliness in Somalia, and about the fact that their families were not communicating with them. To such men leave was the only panacea to loneliness and being away from their families. By the end of 1940, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed that "we were beginning to see the arrival of leave parties of South African and other soldiers in the province and the establishment of a small Red Cross Convalescent hospital at Kericho."\(^{170}\)

Leave was usually for fourteen days, and many askaris complained that fourteen days were not enough to deal with domestic responsibilities. Indeed, many askaris with domestic problems at home often did not wait for the time for leave to arrive, but requested, and in some cases, demanded, to be allowed to go home and attend to their problems immediately. Most of the domestic problems that prompted askaris to seek permission to go home were illness in the family, death, a broken marriage, damage to one's house, leaving one's wife without shelter – in a nutshell, domestic and family problems. In some communities, askaris were obliged by custom to participate in some rituals. Luo askaris were routinely given permission to go home and build or repair their houses and sleep in them for at least one day, according to their customs. Clerk Alfayo

\(^{170}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1940, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/5).
Nying’uro cited customary law while applying for leave to go home and take care of his mother who was suffering from loneliness after the death of his father. When Lance Corp. Paulo Ominde, 3rd KAR heard that his house had burned down and his wife did not have a place to sleep in, he reportedly made "a fuss," demanding to go home and repair it. Dorina, the wife of Pte. Jacobo Apodo also requested the army for the "presence of [her husband] for a few days to arrange to rebuild" his house which had been burned down by fire. Company Sergeant Major Rabuoch Marau, a very respected and senior askari also demanded permission to go home when he heard that there was trouble at home, caused by a Mr Awino Nyango, "living in the village of Rabuoch without permission, and is causing hardship to the lady, Aloo, the mother of Rabuoch, and secondly ... that Awino Nyango caused the death of the child of Rabuoch." CSM Rabuoch'e case was apparently so serious that the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo himself was asked to go to Rabuoch's home and personally investigate the problem.

Besides the usual fourteen days leave, other applications for leave were dealt with on case by case merit, and on a day-to-day basis, creating many grounds for disenchantment within the army. Once an askari applied for leave, the administration would send word to the chief to investigate or make inquiries with the askari's next-of-kin or with a legal representative, invariably a resident in the same area as the askari himself, who many

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171 Officer Commanding "C" Company, 3rd Bn. KAR, to the District Commissioner of Kisumu, letter dated 30th November, 1939, (Recruitment, 1933-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/12).
172 District Commissioner, Central Kavirondo, in letter to Officer Commanding 5th KAR, Nanyuki, dated 11th December, 1939, (Recruitment, 1933-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/12).
173 Office of Central Kavirondo District to DDEW HQ, EAC, letter dated 17th May, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).
times were themselves accused by askaris for some infraction, and were thus subjects of
inquiries.\textsuperscript{174} Many times the chief's word sealed the fate of an askari's application. In
some cases where a house had been burnt down and destroyed, the men concerned were
asked to send money for the hiring of repairman instead of going home themselves to
rectify the matter, but on other occasions the affected askari men were given leave to
attend to their problems personally. Some times the local chiefs took the initiative and
requested the army to give an askari leave, as in the case of Cpl. Simugwe Odero. Chief
Amoth Owira of Alego sent F. Olo Odero, the brother of Cpl. Simugwe Odero, with a
letter to the District Commissioner, asking that Cpl. Simugwe Odero be given leave
because his child had died, and his presence during the burial was required according to
customs\textsuperscript{175}.

In some cases where ordinarily an askari would ask for permission to go home, they
would instead ask the administration to directly intervene on their behalf, fearing to go
home themselves. By 1942, the military complained that, "the stream of personal letters
from serving askaris requesting the District Commissioners to investigate their family
affairs has now reached flood proportions.\textsuperscript{176} Another official complained against leave
that was given especially to sick askaris, arguing that living conditions at home were not
conducive for recovery. Military authorities were opposed to the grant of sick leave to
Africans on the grounds that "they receive better attention, food, etc., in the army than in

\textsuperscript{174} E. M. Hyde-Clarke, Chief Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya, to the Chief Secretary to the Governors'
Conference, letter dated 11\textsuperscript{th} August, 1943, (Post Office and Agencies, 1942-47, KNA, PC/NZA/2/15/21).
\textsuperscript{175} Chief Amoth Owira to Central Kavirodno District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th}
August, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave of Askaris, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/111).
\textsuperscript{176} Lt. Col. H. A. Case, AAG HQRS. 2nd Echelon, EA Command, quoting Musoma District Commissioner,
their own homes."¹⁷⁷ But such complaints did not deter askaris from applying for leave. An Iteso askari, serving in the SEAC, noted in a letter that he had heard that "the chiefs have suggested to the LNC that leave for askaris should be prevented ... this he thinks, was done, as he calls it, 'for ulterior motives.'"¹⁷⁸ When he heard that his wife had left him, Lance Cpl. Okinda went to his Unit commander, and asked him to ask the Kavirondo District Commissioner to intervene. "He states that due to his present separation from his family due to military service his wife has deserted him and he therefore wishes to recover the 'bride price' of 3 cows, 4 goats and the sum of kshs. 40/- paid to his father-in-law on the occasion of L/Cpl. Okinda's marriage."¹⁷⁹ After several deaths at his homestead, Ishmael Mujuka Sidera wrote to his brother Indikula Okinda who was then in the army, told him that many people had died at home, and advised him not come home even on a regular leave. "Watulo has died, together with Obiero wife of Okwako, and Wabuala daughter of Diang' a ... our home is in mess. So many people have died; we are in big trouble. Someone has planted a bad medicine in the boma, we don't know whether we will all die. What I can inform you is that you must not try to come because it is a charm that is killing us. All that money you sent us has been spent on this tragedy. I trouble very much, I brought a number of witch doctors. I have no strength now because many people died. Do not mind about all that money, but I want you to send me some more because I do not know who will die again. Remember how we died many people. Now I am sad and have nothing to say. You go on with the work, we do not know

¹⁷⁹ The Officer in-Charge, I/C Administration, Pay Services, EA Command, to Kisumu District Commissioner, letter dated 10th April, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA,
yet the result of this accident. That is all because I have no strength to tell you everything. I will let you know the result in future."\textsuperscript{180}

Once a decision had been reached to give an askari leave, they were expected to follow very strict guidelines issued by the military. Since the askaris would be away, where they would not be under immediate, direct jurisdiction of the military, the army tried to maintain control over them by issuing passes containing strict regulations on how to go on leave, forms to sign and documents to carry showing how long they would be on leave, what to do and how to behave while on leave. A film dealing with the behavior of askaris on leave was shown to askaris in attempt to reinforce expected behavior. The film was titled \textit{Good and Bad Askari on Leave}. A typical document that the askaris were supposed to carry with them at all times contained information on their names, army registration number, units, details about their villages, names of headman and chief, and the duration of their leave, that is from the date the leave began and when the leave ended.\textsuperscript{181} Upon reaching home, the askari was required to report to the District Commissioners of their districts "in order that particulars of commencement of leave may be entered on the Leave Card. The date of commencement of leave will be the day following that of arrival at the home address and will be fixed by the District Commissioner after assessing the number of days taken to travel from District Headquarters to the individual's home."\textsuperscript{182} Then the askaris reported to the chiefs, a new

\textsuperscript{180} Ishmael Mijuka Sidera to his brother Indikula Okinda, letter dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} January, 1940, (Recruitment, 1933-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/12).

\textsuperscript{181} See: Copy of typical leave document (print from DC/KSM/1/22/50)

\textsuperscript{182} (East African Command General Routine Orders, No. 200, Nairobi 12\textsuperscript{th} October, 1942).
rule introduced to curb the habit of some askaris hiding in the village without the knowledge of the chief, and sometimes even deserting the army.

While on leave, many askaris undertook certain tasks like building a house or marrying, reporting back to the army only after accomplishing these tasks. Pte. Joseph Obiero applied to the government for an extension of his leave by seven days to enable him "kumaliza harusi yake [finishing his wedding]." When there was a bumper harvest, many askaris would try "getting in the harvest and not even the inducement of money will make them leave this work." Money was awash in the village when askaris were on leave. In 1941 alone, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner estimated that "military family remittances, and pay brought home by troops on leave and Military Labor Service Corp men taking their discharge [brought] [British pounds]100,000" to the province alone." The Governor of the Colony asserted that "owing to military remittances and the amount of native stock and produce sold, there is more money in circulation than usual." The Soldiers on leave inundated the Provincial Commissioner's Office in 1944 with inquiries about "unpaid allotments or remittances and the volume of work in the Provincial set up precluded satisfaction in many instances." The Provincial Commissioner's office dealing with askaris on leave was thereafter split into two to make it easier to serve and attend to the needs of the askaris. By the end of the war, when the Nyanza Provincial Administration presented its Annual report it estimated that "wages

183 Chief Absalom Okode to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, in a letter dated 20th September, 1945, recommending that Pte. Joseph Obiero's leave be extended, (Family Affairs and Leave, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).
185 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1941, KNA, PC/NZA/1/136).
186 East African Standard, Wednesday, 19th November, 1941.
and leave pay of *askaris* on leave ... was considerable," though it had no means of calculating how much it was.

On a number of occasions these *askaris* were accused of arrogance, as others committed crimes at home while on leave. One corporal was accused of "making wild statements against his Chief, and was sentenced by Nyahera Native Tribunal to pay a "fine of 36/- or one month detention and fine of Ks.15/-, or 3 weeks detention respectively." According to another report, a group of six *askaris*, while on leave, "forced the driver of a taxi to take them from Yala to Butere" and were consequently arrested and "three were sentenced to 4 months hard labor and the other three to 2 months." The report lamented how pitiful it was "that a few *askaris* should endanger the good name of the army by behaving badly when on leave." According to the same news report, Achieng Odoya was "committed to the Supreme Court to be tried for the murder of his relative, Charles Danda." Pte. Simbiri Juba of KAR died on 30th September, 1943 from injuries incurred in a brawl with another civilian while on leave. But it was not only the African troops who misbehaved while on leave; there are a number of reports on European troops as well, including a rape incident involving four European soldiers at Londiani one Saturday, September, 1943.

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187 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/39).
188 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 945, KNA, PC/ZA/1/1/40).
189 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner's Office, letter to the Officer Commanding "B" Group, EAASC, dated 2nd February, 1940, (Recruitment, 1933-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/12).
190 News letter No. 11: From Central Kavirondo, April, 1944, (Monthly Newsletter, KNA, DC/KSM/1/28/57).
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
194 John Murphy, District Commissioner of Kisumu/Londiani to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner,
For the most part, the civil administration was always complaining about the behavior of *askaris* on leave. *Askaris* were often accused of drinking and fighting and generally misbehaving. Amolo Nyingar, a driver with the EAMLS, was given a leave extension in order to "complete a criminal case."¹⁹⁵ There were also those *askaris* who were suspected of extending leave or of deserting the army and who became "big headed" and refused to be apprehended by their local chiefs. The refusal by *askaris* to be arrested by chiefs led to debate within the colonial administration whether chiefs had "the power of arresting a native whom they suspect of being a military deserter or of overstaying their leave."¹⁹⁶

The Chiefs were thereafter ordered that "if they find anybody in their location whom they suspect of having deserted or of overstaying his leave, to order such person to report forthwith to you, a lawful order under Section 8(e) of the Native Authority Ordinance, 1937. If such a person fails to obey such order the chief can have him arrested and brought before you. The chiefs however should make careful inquiry to make sure that they have good grounds for their suspicions before taking such action."¹⁹⁷

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¹⁹⁵ Kano Location Chief to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 23rd August, 1943, (Runaway Soldiers' Wives, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/94).
¹⁹⁶ Nyanza Provincial commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 3rd January, 1941, (Desertions, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/87. See also: (KAR and Pioneers, Desertion, 1940-42, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/23).
¹⁹⁷ Nyanza Provincial commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 3rd January, 1941, (Desertions, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/87).
It had long been known that civilian men took advantage of *askaris' absence and "stole *askaris' wives;" but with the increasing number of *askaris at home on leave, a new phenomenon was emerging, and this was that *askaris were taking other men's wives – civilians' and *askaris'. C. H. Williams, the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo District, likened the tendency among *askaris of taking other *askaris' wives to "cannibalism."

"A new form of complaint has been made recently," C. H. Williams observed, "in that *askaris away from the districts have complained that *askaris on leave have also been stealing their wives. I know the majority of you will agree with me that this is most reprehensible. It reminds me of cannibalism."  

Some *askaris were accused of rowdiness and drunkenness, and the government was always trying to rectify the image. In a report on the work of the "East Africa Mobile Propaganda Unit," the Director explained how his unit had helped rectify the bad image of *askaris at home. The cinemas sought to demonstrate that an *askari "at his best is a fine man, a person of character and essential decency." He was an epitome of "smartness, cheerfulness, friendliness and helpfulness, animated by a proper but not boastful pride. The pride, in short, of those who know their job and do it without fuss or bragging."

But the Central Kavirondo Medical Officer of Health accused *askaris on leave of using corruption and "intimidation" at local medical health centers to obtain sick sheets in order to illegally extend their leave on medical grounds. The army believed that *askaris often got

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199 "The East Africa Mobile Propaganda Unit," (Cinema and War, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZ/3/15/159).
200 *The East African Standard*, 3rd November, 1944.
201 Ibid.
202 Central Kavirondo District Medical Officer of Health to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 24th April, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/137).
infected with venereal diseases while on leave, and warned them about it.\textsuperscript{203}

Some \textit{askaris} on leave were accused of concealing or selling army property and then reporting it stolen. Others stole presents given to them by fellow \textit{askaris} to take to [the giver's] relatives when they traveled home on leave. After Cpl. Japheth Oroka Ezekiel Abuor gave his friend Pte. Abok Olwaya gifts to take home to his [Abuor's] family – shoes, table cloth, towel, pieces of soap and a blanket, he later on wrote to his brother Yohana Okira, and to his dismay, his brother wrote back to say that Pte. Abok Olwaya did not hand them any presents. When Cpl. Japheth Oroka Ezekiel Abuor confronted Pte. Abok Olwaya about the presents, the only answer he got was that, "the things had been stolen in the Details Camp, Nairobi … [but] … Japheth Oroka Ezekiel Abuor did not consider the story was true. So when he came home on leave in July he went along with his \textit{muruka} [headman] to Abok's home; Abok was wearing the shoes himself and the towel and table cloth were found in his house."\textsuperscript{204} In another case, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner alleged that Pte. Omolo reported to him that his coat, mosquito net and one blanket had been stolen, but since the thief had not been apprehended, he found it "difficult to decide on the rights and wrongs of these reports, as it is easy for \textit{askaris} on leave to sell or conceal their kit and then say it was stolen."\textsuperscript{205} Pte Owino Oguom was

\textsuperscript{203} See for instance, a disagreement between the army and Nyanza Provincial Administration over venereal disease infection, with the army claiming that \textit{askaris} got infected with venereal diseases while on leave, while the Nyanza Provincial Office, quoting their Senior Medical Officer, argued that, "there is no evidence of any marked increase in the incidence of the disease amongst the men examined in the province for various purposes during the year." (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1943, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/38; attempts to control it in: Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/39).

\textsuperscript{204} News letter no. 14: From Central Kavirondo, July, 1944, (Monthly Newsletter, KNA, DC/KSM/1/28/57).

\textsuperscript{205} Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Officer Commanding "D" Coy, 3/6 KAR, letter dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} June, 1943, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/137).
another askari who landed in trouble over destroyed army property while on leave, though he was later acquitted.\textsuperscript{206}

By far the most common violation was overstaying one's leave. Many askaris admit that they would overstay their leave to "enjoy life at home," while others pointed out that they often over-stayed their leave at home because they did not know when they would see their families, relatives and friends again. "We might never see our parents and relatives again," one askari chimed during an interview, to the agreement of his fellow ex-combatants.\textsuperscript{207} Askaris used different strategies to extend leave. The common strategy was to submit a claim that a house needed an urgent repair, after discovering that the administration often easily granted leave extension to those whose houses needed repairs. The Officer Commanding EAMLS discovered this fact in 1943, writing that, "the incidence of requests for extension of leave for askaris on the grounds that they have to reconstruct a hut or on a similar reasons is greatly increased. I am of the opinion that the news has spread that if they apply to their District commissioners for extension on the grounds of having to build, the possibilities of getting his extension are fairly good. All these men are given 20 days leave at their home. It is suggested that the time is sufficient for any buildings they have to do."\textsuperscript{208} Soon after askaris who applied for permission to extend their leave so that they could "repair their houses" discovered that the rules had become tighter. In Central Kavirondo, R. S. Winser disclosed that before approving any

\textsuperscript{206} See: Capt. W.J. Mason to the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 23\textsuperscript{rd} April, 1945, referring to the acquittal of Pte. Owino Oguom, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).

\textsuperscript{207} Group interview with Lucas Omondi Odhiambo, Okombo Othuok, and Boniface Anyango Ngayuwa, and Johaness Okech Odek, Interviewed on 14\textsuperscript{th} December, 2000.

\textsuperscript{208} Officer-Commanding, EAMLS to District Commissioners, letter dated 17\textsuperscript{th} August, 1943, (Runaway Soldiers' Wives, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/94).
leave, an askari applicant had to "bring in a letter from his chief confirming his story. If he has a substantial amount of money he pays for the work to be done except in the case of his wife's hut ... if the next of kin is a male he is told to get him to do it ... in the case of a man building a hut for his wife however native customs demands that he must build himself and sleep for one night with his wife in the new hut." Pte Olenyo was one of the first to fall victim of the tightened rules. Although Chief Absalom Okode and village headman Benjamin Ndiege recommended that Pte. Olenyo be granted 14 days to "finish his hut for his wife," the administration decided that "14 days [were] excessive ... could you extend his leave for days?" it recommended. To a large extent, the administration tried to adjudicate over applications for leave extensions liberally. R. S. Winser, of the Central Kavirondo District, talked about "doing an askari a good turn." Askaris' applications for extension of leave in Central Kavirondo were rarely turned down, but they never were able to get full number of days applied for either. Twenty days leave extensions were invariably reduced to fourteen days; fourteen days to seven.

Another tactic for extending leave was by feigning illness. One askari, Okello, sent his brother Mboya Aywa to Chief Amoth of Alego so that he could inform the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo that he could not report back to his base because he "was sick," putting Chief Amoth in a quandary because Chief Amoth had no way of

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210 Ibid.
211 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to the Officer Commanding 91st Ind. Garn Coy., KAR, letter dated 23rd August, 1943, (Runaway Soldiers' Wives, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/94).
verifying that Okello was really sick. A letter from any medical attendant from any of the several health offices in the district would have sufficed to confirm this case, instead of a letter from Chief Amoth, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner complained. But although the military and the civil administration often demanded evidence from askaris who claimed that they over-stayed their leave due to illness, it was not always easy to produce such evidence. And even if there was evidence, there was no fool-proof way of certifying that documents produced as evidence of an askari's sickness were genuine. For one, many askaris did not go to government hospitals for treatment, but preferred "daktari ya kienyeji" – traditional medicine men – to diagnose and treat their ailments, and many askaris were most likely hesitant to produce evidence of making such visits. During a dispute between the Central Kavirondo District Medical Officer of Health, and the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner over the extended leave of Signaler Nyadero Nyakako, the difficulty of verifying documents produced by askaris showing that they extended their leave because they were honestly sick at home came out very clearly. Askaris who fell seriously sick on leave and visited a government doctor were often ordered to a local military details camp for admission to a hospital. Such cases were easy to verify, but cases of askaris who were only mildly or modestly sick but not in a position to resume full duty were dicey, difficult to prove. That is why the Central Kavirondo District Medical Officer of Health pointed out to the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner that Nyadero Nyakako did not necessarily have "to have been

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212 Central Kavirondo District Commissioner’s Office, letter to The Officer Commanding HQ Company, KAR, Nanyuki, letter dated 16th January, 1940, (Recruitment, 1933-40, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/12).
213 Central Kavirondo District Medical Officer of Health to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 24th April, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/137)
seriously ill to make him three months overdue to return from leave."\textsuperscript{214}

Many askaris continued with their propensity to overstaying leave, though the exact number of those who did so at any one given time is not easy to come by. In 1945, Ongere Okelo overstayed leave and could not produce evidence of treatment or remember where he was treated. "The above named," an Officer with the 71 Field Mark Coy., EAE, wrote, referring to Ongere Okelo, "states that he was admitted to the dispensary while on leave, which he does not know its name situated in the location of Chief Opiyo Manyala."\textsuperscript{215} After an investigation of the case, the Central District Commissioners Office informed Ongere Okelo's officers that "there is no dispensary in the location of the chief referred to" and concluded correctly that it could "not understand how a man can live in a place for two months without learning its name."\textsuperscript{216} Cpl. Sefania Ragot of Asembo Ramba started his leave quite well on 25\textsuperscript{th} December, 1945. After a while, he wrote a letter to the Officer Commanding Details, Kisumu, requesting extension of leave because "whilst at home I began building a small room for myself and accidentally I fell down from the roof that my left thigh right up to my waist got injured and I beg mostly to state that I am sick at home ... The Native Dispensary is about five miles from my home. So I am unable to get there, except my stepfather has carried this duty of bringing me some medical stuffs for treatment. Could this reach your notice that I may be granted with a substantial day for treatment after which time I shall have to report

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{215} (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).
\textsuperscript{216} Office of Central Kavirondo District to 71 Field Mark, EAE, letter dated 4\textsuperscript{th} June, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).
at a convenient time and as soon as the patient cured."\textsuperscript{217}

The problem in the case of Sefania Ragot was that after his officers had ordered that he should be transported to Kisumu for treatment, he could not be found. Chief Absalom Okode was caught in between, with the administration demanding that he ensures that Sefania Ragot appears before the Kisumu District Commissioner "mara moja [at once]" and Sefania Ragot who could not be found. By 3\textsuperscript{rd} March, 1944 R. S. Winser was still sending memos to Chief Absalom Okode, "tuma askari huyu nimetaja jina lake hapa juu [Sefania Ragot] na barua yangu kuwa mara moja sana. Nataka wewe kufika mbele yangu bila kuchelwa [ensure that this askari appears before me with this letter immediately]."\textsuperscript{218}

After several letters plaintively trying to explain to the administration that he could not find Sefania Ragot, an harassed Chief Absalom Okode suggested that perhaps Sefania Ragot had either left the area, was in hiding, had gone back to work, or "labda amebadilisha jina [perhaps he has changed his name]."\textsuperscript{219} What happened after is not clear; it just goes to show how sometimes these issues could cause friction between the army and the civil administration. Sgt. Odinga Ogola went on leave to Alego Masumbi on 28\textsuperscript{th} December, 1945 and although his leave was supposed to end on 25\textsuperscript{th} January, 1946, he overstayed his leave until 6\textsuperscript{th} March, 1946. Asked to give an explanation why he was late by forty days, he said that, "chicken pox – or small pox – had broken out in his village, and so his native doctor [Kalaudiyo Atieno] did not allow him to return to the

\textsuperscript{217} Cpl. Sefania Ragot, Ramba, Asembo Bay, to Officer commanding, Details Office, Kisumu, letter dated 14\textsuperscript{th} January, 1944, (Reminders, 194344, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/48).
\textsuperscript{218} R. S. Winser, for District commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Absalom Okode, letter dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} March, 1944, (Reminders, 1943-44, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/48).
\textsuperscript{219} (Chief Absalom Okode to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 19\textsuperscript{th} April, 1944).
battalion until this season was over."\textsuperscript{220}

Strict guidelines on leave were subsequently issued to deal with the problem of \textit{ad hoc} leave extension by the \textit{askaris}. Leave documents were supposed to help authorities distinguish between \textit{askaris} on genuine leave, those officially discharged, and deserters. The Registrar of Natives for instance advised the District Commissioner, who had found some recruits without letters of discharge, that he should query "these direct with me, and if no reports of desertion are received I will advise you to sign them off."\textsuperscript{221} Warrants of arrest were often issued for \textit{askaris} who overstayed their leave. Thus while on leave, Cleophas Sudhe visited the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner's Office to request his employer, Lt. Wathen, requesting for money back to his station since his leave was over.\textsuperscript{222} To avoid arrest, Joseph Obiero went to his Chief Absalom Okode, and the chief sent a letter to the District Commissioner, stating that "\textit{askari huyu anaomba yakwamba aongeewe siku 7 ili apate kumaliza harusi yake} [this \textit{askari} requests for seven more days so that he can complete his wedding]."\textsuperscript{223} Most \textit{askaris} thus spent leave dealing with domestic issues.

\textbf{Imprisonment.}

Prison experiences altered the way \textit{askaris} perceived themselves and the colonial state. \textit{Askaris} dealt with prison in different capacities and different levels: as prisoners, and as

\textsuperscript{220} Officer-in-Charge, "D" Coy, 6KAR, to the Kisumu District Commissioner, letter date 18\textsuperscript{th} March, 1946, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/5).
\textsuperscript{221} Registrar of Natives to North Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1941, (Depot: Registration of Natives, KNA, PC/NZA/2/3/28).
\textsuperscript{222} Telegram dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} June, 1943, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/137).
\textsuperscript{223} Chief Absalom Okode to District Commissioner, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} September, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).
guards. *Askaris* were imprisoned during the war due to offences committed in the army or due to offences committed at home while on leave. These included Karani Okore, a driver with the army who was put under house arrest "for refusing to drill with his comrades ... as a driver he evidently considered himself exempt from drill." Karani Okore shot himself while under arrest on 11th December, 1941 at Giggiga. Hassani Ramazani, a driver with the EAASC, was shot to death on 12th September, 1941, in an escape attempt from prison, where he was awaiting a Court Martial, "for the murder of one European and four Africans, and the attempted murder of two Europeans and five Africans ... as he tried to escape on a previous occasion, his guards had strict orders to prevent his escape should he so attempt to do so the second time." *Askaris* who mutinied were often given severe sentences. Grievances that often led to these mutinies are shrouded in a lot of secrecy and even confidential documents reveal very little about them. One can only guess that the grievances must have been serious enough to prompt *askaris* into open rebellion, hence also the severity of the sentences aimed at achieving deterrence. While most other slight grievances that led to friction in the army are well known, those that are more serious and that pertain to mutinies are not easy to discern.

The army most of the time kept a tight lid on information on grievances that led to mutinies. The officers concerned in units where mutinies occurred often did not reveal much, probably fearing implicating themselves and incurring disciplinary action that would taint their future careers.

Most of the available documents on mutinies and mutineers tend only to show the names

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225 The Accountant General, letter dated 24th September, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA,
of the mutineers, their units, when and where the mutiny occurred, and the sentence
given, with very little said about actual court martial proceedings. Thus when it comes to
driver Duncan Mbewe Mwenyelawe, who was involved in a mutiny in Ethiopia, all that
is known is that he was charged for taking "part in a meeting" which subsequently led to
a mutiny.226 After sentencing, Duncan Mbewe Mwenyelawe tried to escape from military
authorities but was again arrested somewhere in Kenya, and taken to Isiolo where he was
held. Little else is said about Duncan Mbewe Mwenyelawe. Petro Kahuka, a driver with
the EAASC, was another askari who was jailed for mutiny. Had it not been for the fact
that he died while serving a prison sentence for mutiny, perhaps nothing would have been
known about the mutiny he was involved in. While calculating the amount of gratuity
that was due to the family of Driver Petro Kahuka, the Accountant-General only noted
that, "after joining the EAASC in January, 1941, Petro Kahuka was jailed on 16th
September, 1942 by the army under the 'Army Act to five years' imprisonment for
mutiny ... after serving some six months of his sentence in the Nairobi Civil Prison, he
died of Blackwater Fever, Meningitis and Labor pneumonia."227 Apart from this
information, little else as far as how and why the mutiny happened and where it happened
are, as is usual with mutinies in the King's African Rifles during the war, obscured in
mystery.

The East African Standard carried reports of mutinies in the army during the war from
time to time, though the reports do not have enough information for detailed

226 Moyale District Commissioner to Isiolo District Commissioner letter dated 11th August, 1942, (Military
Correspondence, 1941-46, KNA, DC/ML/2/127).
227 Accountant-General to the War Pensions Officer, letter dated 8th September, 1943, (Pensions and
reconstruction of the mutinies. In one such report, the *East African Standard* reported about an "alleged mutiny."²²⁸ About fifty Somalis belonging to a "unit" [which is not identified] of the East African Command," the report goes, "are appearing before Court Martial in Nairobi this week on a charge of mutiny in that they have combined among themselves to resist the authority of and offered violence to their superior officers at Moshi on October 24, 1944."²²⁹ The report goes to state that the accused were represented by Mr. Black Malcolmson. The report carries one crucial detail, though, to the effect that the "trouble originated the previous day when, it is alleged, over fifty Somalis refused to sign their Pay Books when ordered to do so and last week they were charged with mutiny in that they combined to refuse to obey an order."²³⁰ But much more is known about the mutiny of soldiers in Ceylon on 10th August, 1945, as already noted in previous chapters. To recapitulate, the soldiers were reportedly led by L/Corp. Owenga Ayila, Jason Ouko, Soti Yube, and Kiheyia Ongone.²³¹ As usual, nevertheless, government reports are economical with information on the mutiny, making a comprehensive analysis of the reasons that drove the *askaris* into mutiny difficult. Major E. G. Russell, an advocate for Owenga Ayila who was now incarcerated in Kisumu, also complained in a letter to the Superintendent of Prisons about lack of documents on the mutiny.²³² P. L. P. Foster Sutton, The Attorney General, only described the mutiny as "an exceptionally bad case" and did not give more detail.²³³ The only detailed information

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²²⁸ (East African Standard, December 12, 1944).
²²⁹ Ibid.
²³⁰ Ibid.
²³³ P. L. P. Foster Sutton, the Attorney General, to Major E.G. Russell, letter dated 25th September, 1946,
available is in the appeal by Major E. G. Russell for the release of L/Corp. Owenga Ayila, which reveals that L/Corp. Owenga was involved in a mutiny in Colombo, Ceylon on 10th August, 1945 at a time when there was a lot of “clamor for demobilization” and was sentenced to 10 years hard labor. The heavy sentence, the appeal shows, was intended to “serve as a deterrent and a warning to the local native troops” rather than a true reflection of the nature of the offence.234 The mutiny occurred due to the fact that the war was coming to an end and there was little activity at the war front. There was restlessness and “a general clamor for demobilization by all troops.”235

Other Kenyan askaris served in prison as Prisoners of War. A brief report from the Office of the Conference of East African Governors was to the effect that there were “32 African Prisoners of War … who have recently arrived in the Middle East.”236 Another brief archival report relates to the capture of two hundred and thirty Tanganyika askaris by the Germans during battles in the Western desert in 1942. It has already been pointed out that one of the captives was a Kenyan from Central Province. Kaggia Kwagano was his name; he came from Gaichangini Location, Fort Hall District, and his chief was Joseph Kang’ethe. According to R. G. Turnbull, the Chief Secretary, Kaggia Kwagano was among prisoners of war “who have been recovered from their internment camp in Europe and are at present in a camp in the United Kingdom in a holding and transit camp.”237 In spite of their incarceration, the men were described as being “in good spirits

235 Ibid.
236 A. Malyn, for Chief Secretary to the Conference of East African Governors, letter dated 1st August, 1945, (Prisoners of War, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/6/35).
237 R. G. Turnbull, Chief Secretary to Central Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 18th October, 1944,
and health," understandably "anxious that their families, with whom they have not been in touch for a considerable time, should be informed that they are alive and well."\textsuperscript{238} A more detailed narrative of the capture of the askaris is found in the \textit{East African Standard}, a rare find, but even this report is bedeviled by a number of omissions: there is no information on their number of askaris in prison; the report only refers to them as a "group" of East African Pioneers, most of them from Tanganyika, who were captured by Germans at Tobruk in June 1942, and who after their capture were transported to Italy. A later report in the \textit{East African Standard} identified them as members of 1823 Company who were captured at Tobruk in June, 1942.

After spending some time in Italy, the \textit{East African Standard} reports, the prisoners, "glad to see the last of Italy,"\textsuperscript{239} were transported to a prison camp in Germany where they remained for eight days, and from there to France. Here the askaris were subjected to hunger and a hard labor regimen. The food was bad and the damp cold of European winter made life unbearable. Many askari POWS were forced to work in public places, sweeping, digging, repairing. After spending ten months in France the askaris had learned to speak a few words of French, and often they would ask the French for help: food, cigarettes, and clothing. The \textit{East African Standard} reports that, "in no case ... when the askaris appealed for help to French people were they refused, though the civilians knew they were risking their own lives by opening their doors."\textsuperscript{240} The prisoners were kept behind barbed wire the whole time and were closely guarded at a camp – this is most

\footnotesize{(Prisoners of War, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/2/6/35).}
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{239} \textit{East African Standard}, November 4, 1944.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
probably at Chartres. Some of the men who now included South Africans and fifty-five East Africans were moved to Bayonne and put to work repairing camouflage nets, while another group remained at Camp Chartres. The camp at Chartres was a mixed one, with United Kingdom, American and African troops in one section; in another, separated from them by a high barrier, were Russian prisoners."\textsuperscript{241} Many \textit{askaris} were surprised to see that Germans treated Russian prisoners worse than \textit{askaris}, and these were lessons they would take with them back to their country. The Russian prison camp was "a great deal worse than that of the East Africans."\textsuperscript{242} Then one day the \textit{askaris} escaped to freedom, thanks to a fortuitous raid on the Bayonne and Chartres camp by the Royal Air Force. The Germans who did not have enough transport simply abandoned the prisoners at Bayonne, who were freed by the Free French Army; the fifty-three prisoners were then taken to Marseilles where they were shipped to Naples and then to Alexandria.

The prisoners at Chartres also escaped during the bombing. Sergeant Lutengano who was working at a local aerodrome managed to take advantage of the bombing to make his way out of sight of his captors, his leg wounded by a bomb splinter. Other escapees were Cpl. Malaja, Lance Cpl. Kitako, Lance Cpl. Ibahim Rashidi, Pte. Cosmas, Pte. Makala, Pte. Musembi Kimuli, and Pte. Mkona Chande, who escaped under different circumstances. Lance Cpl. Ibrahim Rashidi and Pte. Musembi Kimuli escaped from a train while being transported by a train from Belgium to Germany; as the train stopped at a station, "they scrambled out and ran to an orchard where they hid for six days, living on a diet of

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
apples. They were found by Americans and taken by air to England.” Pte. Kokamya Mwubuki, Pte. Mageka Jenga, and Pte. Sakama Papasa were being taken from Chartres to Paris by their captors when the Allies entered the capital and the men were put into a train to take them to Germany, but they also managed to escape to freedom. After getting treatment for their wounds at a hospital in Orleans, the freed *askaris* were subsequently taken to a reception camp in the countryside in England where they also learned that a group of ex-*askari* POWs were living at the Victoria League Hospital, London. While in London, the *askaris* were taken care of by a permanent staff of East African soldiers, commanded by a British officer. Their interpreter was Sgt. Bildad Kaggia, formerly an employee at the District Commissioner’s Office in Murang’a, and who would later become a well-known Kenya politician. In the *East African Standard* report, the *askaris* were full of praise of the French and the British, but one is left with a nagging suspicion that the *askaris* did not relate their experiences in full, probably out of a desire not to hurt the feelings of their hosts.

Asked about food in the camp, the *askaris* said that "although the prison food was poor, they were greatly helped by the Red Cross parcels, which they received regularly. All the men were emphatic in their praise of the French civilian population who did everything in their power to help them.” About their view of England, the *askaris* were reportedly "delighted to be in England," obviously as one would expect of those who had been in captivity. But one becomes suspicious when one *askari* noted the "quietness and bravery" of the British; "... they do not quarrel among themselves or fight when they have drank

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244 *East African Standard*, November 4, 1944.
beer.\textsuperscript{245} The \textit{askaris} found the weather in England too cold, but, they added, that the country was beautiful and "the food was the best they had had for a long time."\textsuperscript{246} The only major complaint of the \textit{askaris} was the lack of news from home and while in England they eagerly watched the Post Office "for letters from home. They have been out of touch with their relatives and friends for many months, and are hoping that they will soon hear of what is happening to their families, now that it is known they have reached England."\textsuperscript{247} After three months of stay in England, fifteen of the \textit{askaris} of the 1823 Company who were captured at Tobruk were brought to the Middle East in December, 1944, to await further arrangements to proceed to their homes in Tanganyika. They were surprised and thrilled to find the other fifty-two men at the Depot in the Middle East, men who, like them, had been held at various prison camps in France. The government later found itself in confusion because some of the convalescing \textit{askaris} claimed countries of origin that were different from what was on record. Most government records were not up to date on this score. Pte. Nikolaus Ochieng', an ex-POW and a member of the 1823 Company APC/East Africa was one of those freed from prison and moved to the Middle East; but his release was hampered by the lack of detailed information on his enlistment.\textsuperscript{248} There was confusion in the colonial office over whether Pte. Nikolaus Ochieng' was from Suna, Migori, Kenya or Tanganyika, a further sign that the military had not succeeded in dealing with much of the disorganization that characterized its handling of \textit{askari} affairs early in the war. The ordeal of some of the captives who were now resting at depot in the Middle East nevertheless came to an end in January 1945.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{East African Standard}, December 15, 1944.
\textsuperscript{247} \textit{East African Standard}, November 4, 1944.
\textsuperscript{248} A. Malyn, for Chief Secretary to the Conference of East African Governors, letter dated 1\textsuperscript{st} August,
Sixty-seven men of the East African Pioneer Company finally arrived home, after spending two years in captivity. Arriving in Mombasa by ship, the *askaris* were received by the Commander of Coast Sub-Area on behalf of the General-Officer Commanding East Africa, to the tune of music played by the Settlers Band, which had been provided for their reception by the Liwali of the Coast. Wearing the Africa Star – some of them with the 8th Army clasp – on battle dress which had been issued to ward of the chills of an English winter, they bore the "East Africa" shoulder titles and the red stripes of four years service on their arms.\(^{249}\) Eight of the men were too sick to participate in the reception and were immediately taken to the hospital.

But just as there were those *askaris* who were imprisoned as Prisoners of War (POWs) and those who got jailed for various crimes, there were instances where roles were reversed, where some *askaris* were employed to guard enemy prisoners. It was a new experience for *askaris* to guard prisoners, especially European prisoners of war because this was really the first time they were seeing Europeans in a powerless situation. The work of *askaris* as guards began immediately the war broke out, when they were sent out to round up European "enemy aliens." The arrest and internment of "enemy aliens" in the NFD was completed by early September, 1939. *Askaris* guarded German and Italian missionaries who were held in camps to prevent them from "helping the enemy," and also guarded refugees from surrounding territories at places like Garba Tulla, a major internment Camp for refugees from NFD and Abyssinia during the war. By November, 1942, some *askaris* were guarding 1,500 Polish refugees at Kaimosi. An Internment

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Camp was established at Kabete for white POWS, and POW Camp was opened at Isiolo in 1940 with about 400 POWS. One African askari, Cpl. Daro Geldo, was put in charge of escorting Baroncini Giuseppe, Bellati Adriano, Rufini Corrado, Dogliani Cesare, and Gudole Augusto, Italian prisoners arrested near Derkale on 8th July, 1942, to Isiolo. By May, 1941, there were 1,000 POWS at Isiolo Camp. Italian POWS were employed on various projects, such as on mines, and in some cases they took over work from Indian fundis [craftsmen], and “have proved first-class craftsmen.”250 While working at firms such as Macaldar Mines, Ramba mines, North Kavirondo Mines in Kakamega, and in farms, Italian Prisoners “would occasionally be asked in for a meal”251 by Europeans who lived around.

The tribulations of European POW’s lowered the status and prestige of whites in the eyes of askaris. W. S. Gulloch, the Acting Commissioner of Police complained that, “the Italian Prisoners-of-War in this colony … by their mode of life … have lost almost all their prestige among the natives.”252 Between March and May, 1941, many Italian army deserters “came over to our forces”253 and askaris who saw them surrendering and giving up no doubt lost some respect for them. Askaris must have looked at themselves as better soldiers than Italian deserters. After the defeat of the Italians in Italian Somaliland and

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250 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37). See also file on: (Prisoners of War, 1944-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/6/33), dealing with the employment of mostly Italian Prisoners of War at firms [Macaldar Mines, Ramba mines, North Kavirondo Mines in Kakamega] and farms, where they would occasionally be asked in for a meal. (See also: Military: General instructions [Prisoners of War], 1942-46, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/155).

251 (Military: General instructions [Prisoners of War], 1942-46, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/155). A curious incident was to involve some Italian Prisoners of War. Early in February 1943, six Italian prisoners escaped from the Prisoners-of-War Camp and fled to Mount Kenya. They spent eight days on Point Batian, as Kenyan guards frantically searched for them. At Point Lenana they planted the Italian flag.

252 W. S. Gulloch, Acting Commissioner of Police, letter to the Chief Secretary, dated 16th October, 1945, (Administration: Missions and Missionary Bodies, 1945-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/515).
Abyssinia, John Ogola Sana described surrendering Italian soldiers as looking like "goats" and "antelopes," their pride gone. "The Italians who depended on Mussolini are now gnashing their teeth just like goats. Their pride which they had before the war is now fading way. They now look like an antelope who has taken refuge in a lion's lair. The Italian government had died away in Somalia." Using Luo proverbs and sayings, John Ogola Sana described the Italian defeat as an "act of eating liver." "There is a Luo saying, " John Ogola Sana wrote, that "he who wants to eat the liver of the cow eats it' ... The Italians are now eating the liver which they wanted to eat." Another saying that John Ogola Sana employed to describe the Italian situation after their defeat in Italian Somaliland was: "eating too much killed a mosquito' ... it is now killing the Italians who could not satisfy themselves with what they had." Askaris felt empowered, seeing, guarding, and controlling the movement and freedom of Europeans, even though the Europeans they dealt with were only prisoners. But this was the first time for something like this to happen to askaris. It was revealing and liberating at the same time because the act of guarding European prisoners of war further exposed the vulnerability of the white man – that they were men, human beings, people, just like askaris. Askaris saw and witnessed differences between European internees and POWS at close range and on a regular basis, differences in their diets, political differences for instance between German and German-Jewish internees, and between German and Italian POWS. Askaris realized that whites, like Africans, come from different nations, and observe different customs. When a POW Camp was to be built at Kabete, the Commissioner of Police pointed to

253 Officer-in-Charge of NFD, "History of the War in NFD, Period 1st March, 1941 to 31st May, 1941," (History of War, 1939-49, KNA, PC/NFD/1/11)
254 "News From Somalia," (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17)
255 Ibid.
these differences when he suggested that German-Jewish internees should not be housed in the same place with Italian internees. "There is a strong likelihood of friction and probably fighting owing to their completely opposed political views, and moreover the question of the cooking of their food would present some difficulties. Both races have different methods of preparing food ..."  

The incarceration of European internees and POWS afforded *askaris* the opportunity to think about their position vis-a-vis the colonial system in Kenya, which promoted and reified the interests of whites and other races above the interests of indigenous majority. This process of change was helped along by the government in its propaganda work, which was based on a policy of teaching "the African to regard Germans and Italians as enemies and to distrust them in every way," as the Germans, on the other hand, "instilled anti-British propaganda into African Prisoners-of-War with a view to causing trouble."  

Guard duty transformed the *askaris* almost the same way that imprisonment transformed African Prisoners-of-War. The severity of life as a POW was obviously incomparable to guard duty, but they affected and transformed the *askari* in ways they would never have imagined at the beginning of the war. When Gulloch heard that German and Italian missionaries might be permitted to return to the colony, he opposed it, claiming that the Germans and Italians had taught Africans to hate the British, and their presence in the colony would further foment African hatred of the British and destabilize the colony.

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256 Ibid.
257 Commissioner of Police, letter to Chief Secretary, dated 19th August, 1940, (European Prisoners of War, 1940, KNA, BY/49/31).
258 W. S. Gulloch, Acting Commissioner of Police, letter to the Chief Secretary, dated 16th October, 1945, (Administration: Missions and Missionary Bodies, 1945-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/515).
German "ambitions in this continent had not ceased to exist."\textsuperscript{259} The return of Italian missionary personnel to Meru was at first opposed on the ground that they were corrupt and "had done little apparent good, made little headway with the people, and has [sic] all a long been the focus of opposition in the tribe."\textsuperscript{260}

\textbf{Relations in the army: Discrimination.}

One of the most topical issues in works dealing with colonial armies is racial relations between colonial soldiers and their officers, who usually are from the ruling strata. After a careful analysis of sources, it appears that racism was an enduring problem for most askaris serving in the war. Askaris’ contribution to the war appears only to have had a marginal impact on their relations with white soldiers in the army. In spite of intermittent expressions of respects by European officers towards askaris, few European officers were ready to tackle racial structures that bound the askari at the lower stratum of the colonial army. Discrimination in the army thus remained an enduring point of discussion among ex-askaris even today. The white heat of battle, to use Waruhiu Itote’s words, forced many ordinary European soldiers to recognize the humanity of the askaris, and to respect them, but it did not lead them to re-examine their long-held prejudices against black soldiers or the assumptions upon which the colonial system was based. Askaris remember many incidents of fist-fights between European soldiers and askaris. One fight involved an askari who was identified by informants as Ouko, and a European officer at a mess, when the officer slapped Ouko for refusing to stand in line with others to be served food.

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{260} G. B. Norman, for Acting Coast Provincial Commissioner, to Chief Secretary, letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} October, 1945, (Administration: Missions and Missionary Bodies, 1945-46, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/515).
“He gave Ouko a very hard slap, and Ouko slapped him back!”

Raphael Pius Oondo, who was in the EAEC during the war, and after the war worked as a teacher [he retired as a headmaster of a primary school], similarly recalled fights between European officers and Nyasaland askaris, particularly on the ship, on their way back from South East Asia. Although the askaris sacrificed much in a war that had little to do with their welfare, askaris were always treated differently. During the war, individual Europeans expressed admiration and respect for the askari. Among the shells and bullets, Waruhiu Itote writes, "there had been no pride, no air of superiority from our European comrades-in-arms. We drank the same tea, used the same water and lavatories, and shared the same jokes. There were no racial insults, no references to 'niggers,' 'baboons' and so on. The white heat of battle had blistered all that away and left only our common humanity and our common fate, either death or survival." But these individual acts of friendship and comradeship between askaris and other white soldiers did not obliterate structures of racism that governed life in the army. A small number of European officers like Brigadier H. H. Dempsey and General William J. Slim expressed admiration and respect for askaris after watching them fight with courage and enduring difficult situations without complaining, and even protested against the refusal by the government to pay askaris a pension, but their efforts were unproductive. In 1945 and 1946, these European officers tried to agitate for the introduction of a pension system for askaris, but in the end, these kinds of humane gestures were not going to succeed in the face of an

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262 Regimental No. 256006 Raphael Pius Oondo, Interviewed on 5th December, 2000.
263 Waruhiu Itote, "Mau Mau" General, p.27.
institutionalized system of racism that under-girded life in the army and the colony as a whole.

Many askaris felt that the army did not give them the kind of respect they felt they deserved. In spite of fighting and sacrificing for the defense of the colony, they were still subject to mistreatment by an institution, which reflected a colonial system whose ideology and philosophy were based on racism. Immediately upon enlisting, life in the army quickly revealed some of the humiliating absurdities of color discrimination. The food, pay, sleeping arrangements, promotions were all based on one's race; one's qualifications and ability did not really matter. As already seen in the terms of recruitment (Chapter Five), salaries and benefits in the army were based on race, with whites earning more followed by Asians, Arabs, and then Africans. In his autobiography, Bildad Kaggia talks about how he discovered that whites earned more pay than blacks after a conversation with an African-American officer while serving in the Middle East. In his autobiography, General China, Waruhiu Itote talks self-consciously about the fact that askaris and Europeans often did everything together, yet, when it came to salaries and other benefits, askaris were paid less. Askaris’ war narratives are filled with bitterness over this point.

Although askaris in general praised the level of medical care in the army, they were not blind to the fact that the African injured and the sick were taken to separate medical units from whites. The biggest and oldest hospital that catered for Blacks, Coloreds, and

265 Waruhiu Itote, “Mau Mau” General, p. 23.
Asians was the No.1 General Hospital. It was "once the only Base hospital for Cape Coloreds, Asiatics and Africans. The Africans include Nigerians, Gold Coast, South Africans, Nyasaland, Rhodesian and East African natives as well as Abyssinian, and Somali prisoners of war." Burial places were also separate at least until *askaris* noticed, and complained about it. The government only changed its policy over separate burial grounds when the War Office reported to the East Africa Command that it had received reports from the South East Asia Command that, "many African personnel have noted that European graves are concentrated into cemeteries while their own are not and they are conscious of a difference in treatment." 

Although *askaris* in general complained about racial discrimination in the army, there were some military units that felt it even more. The Pioneers in particular had never been treated as a fully-fledged unit of the military, with equal rights and privileges. It was not until the end of 1939 that the Pioneers were recognized as combatants, but even then, their earnings were often less than what other *askari* units earned. The social status of the Pioneers was also lower than other units, particularly the KAR. The living conditions and quarters of the Pioneers in Mombasa were horrible, and drew "many adverse criticism." Even the government admitted that only the 1st Battalion of the Pioneers had better living conditions; the rest were treated very badly. Sleeping quarters for African guards at the soon to be built POW Camp at Kabete were separate from those of

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267 Governor's speech at opening of Wireless Ceremony, No. 1 general Hospital, Nairobi, 17th September, 1941, (Speeches by HE The Governor, KNA, GH/2/5/13).
269 (Publicity and Broadcasting, 1939-50, KNA, PC/NZA/2/5/17).
European guards. Life in the army was quite frustrating for the majority of askaris who believed in merit and qualification. Many veterans of the war argue that they in fact had better relationship with South African soldiers than with British and other whites living in Kenya. While serving in Mogadishu, for instance, John Ogola Sana noticed that racial underpinnings of life in Kenya hardly mattered in Italian Somaliland. "The Italians mix themselves with Somalis in ... buildings which is to say that a Somali lives in the same flat that an Italian lives ... [and] ... there were even children of mixed marriages between Somalis and Italians ... they are called half-castes."  

The case of L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila shows that the judicial system treated askaris differently as well. Whenever the askaris appeared before a Court Martial, they were always treated harshly, under the guise of sending a warning to other askaris. As already mentioned, L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila, Jason Oko, Soti Yube, and Kiheya Oonge were involved in a mutiny in Ceylon in August 1945, and L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila was sentenced to 10 years with hard labor. Owenga Ayila was only about 25 years old at the time, and as his lawyer, Major E. G. Russell, observed, he seems only to have been given such a heavy sentence "to serve as a deterrent and a warning to the local native troops." Such a sentence was heavy considering the offence, the time it was committed, and in comparison to the way the military often treated other similar cases particularly involving European soldiers. Writes Major E. G. Russell:

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270 Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, letter dated 31st July, 1940, (European Prisoners of War, 1940, KNA, BY/49/31).  
271 Alex Ochieng’ Onyango, and Alex Ombulo Chweya, interviewed on 24th January, 2001.  
274 Ibid.
My memory goes back to a very similar situation with white troops in France after the Armistice in the former war. For similar 'crimes' exemplary sentences were imposed but later were either expunged or at least materially reduced when the subsequent conduct was satisfactory.²⁷⁵

But the government refused to expunge or reduce L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila’s sentence. The case of L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila came up again in January, 1947, in a letter by Maj. Gen. W. A. Dimoline, HQ, EA, when he pleaded with the government to release L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila from prison. The long imprisonment was not serving any purpose except embittering L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila, and exposing him to hardcore criminals with likely future detrimental consequences to society. "In general," Maj.Gen. W. A. Dimoline's letter started, "I feel that a long term of imprisonment in a civil prison for offences of this sort may harm the future of an ex-askari rather than teach him a lesson, and that in most cases, although exemplary sentences of this nature doubtless served their purpose well at the time when they were imposed, they have lost a great deal of their meaning ... I am reluctant to interfere in matters which are of course entirely in the discretion of the Military authorities, but I believe it to be the policy of the military that prisoners sentenced during the war for military offences should have their sentences given sympathetic consideration in review."²⁷⁶ By refusing to release a young man such as L/Cpl. Owenga Ayila from prison, the government was saying that it was determined to hold him as an example of what could be done to anybody who dared challenge the colonial system. The harshness of the sentence Owenga Ayila was subjected to in spite of his service to the military underlines the determination of the colonial government to

²⁷⁵ Ibid.
maintain the status quo in the colony, a situation that meant that Africans would continue
to be treated as third class subjects.

Eliud Mathu’s question about the practice of discrimination against *askaris* in the army
[which has already been discussed in the previous chapters] also shows that *askaris* were
for a long time not entitled to commissions or promotion to the level of European
officers. It was only after a long struggle that the army agreed to commission *askaris* as
Warrant Officers, but even then, the full acceptance of *askaris* as equals of European
military officers did not come until independence. It was not until 1942 that the
government started appointing qualified *askaris* in the KAR as Warrant Officers, and it
was not until a month after the war, in September 1945, that the position was opened to
*askaris* in other units. Racism was thus a major problem for *askaris*, and they often
complained about its effects on them in the army. Although *askaris* were able to forge
respectful relationship with soldiers from other races, the institutionalization of racism in
the army meant that such relationships were often scrappy and short-lived.

**Conclusion.**

The experience of the men in the war had a profound effect on how they perceived
themselves, their place in society, and their relationships with members of other races in a
race-conscious Kenyan society. During the war, military service and fighting in various
theaters placed *askaris* in situations of life and death. Men who for the most part had
never been out of their immediate environment where everything was familiar left their
homes and families behind, and served the army far away from home, in an institution
with drastically different rules, values, and ethos. Army life demanded a drastic transformation in the way the men lived. The army as an institution was different from what most of the soldiers had ever experienced in the past. It was highly authoritarian, structured and hierarchized, and service in such a stratified organization brought with it a new set of rules, norms, values, and relationships, which soldiers were required to imbibe to conform to and to live up to the expectation of their organization. The army brought about a completely new and different environment; it was different from what the men were used to. The *askaris* were required to adjust to the rigors and discipline of a uniformed career. They were expected to think and prepare to kill or to be killed any time. War brought a drastic change in soldiers’ lifestyle, and learning to eat new food, wear new clothes, sleeping in a new way, forging new relationships, and watching their friends die or survive were daily aspects of the new rituals of army life. Food, clothing, bedding, and the way the men were ordinarily used to relating to one another and to their society at large drastically changed. By adjusting and learning to lead a new way of life, *askaris* became transformed in ways that were very different from the way their civilian relations who remained back at home had been. *Askaris* tried to ensure that this change would not be detrimental to their family and social relationships by constantly sending money home, writing letters, and visiting home while on leave.
CHAPTER TEN

THE END OF THE WAR, AND THE RETURN OF VICTORIOUS ASKARIS.

Many others wanted to become soldiers and could not. Why not? – production, etc, etc. This equally applied to Europeans as Africans. These persons who had to stay at home may not have had physical danger in Africa but they had hardships and no experiences such as you have had. No uniforms, no travel, no excitements and no fat pay rolls for them. Thus all have contributed to winning war and now in peace - civilian and soldier are one again.¹

When we came back home, the British dumped us, and forgot about us. We are suffering.²

Introduction.

In August 1945 the Second World War came to an end abruptly. After the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese government surrendered, though some Japanese soldiers refused to give up arms, and continued with determined, but intermittent rear-guard actions in the South-East Asia Theater. Askaris were thrilled by the victory and particularly by their role in it. They looked forward to coming back home as a victorious army.³ The askaris had been at the center of the Allied struggle against the Axis, and given their fully-fledged commitment to the Allied Army and contribution to the defense of "freedom, liberty, and self-determination" during the war, it was not surprising that many were expecting the government to take care of them. Yet virtually nothing has been written on how Kenyan askaris came back home, were demobilized, and what happened to them afterwards in the colony. Most existing works on post-World

¹ "Suggested Subjects for Articles to be read to African troops awaiting discharge either while still with their units or at Dispersal Centers," (Propaganda for Africans, KNA, CS/1/10/44).
² Albinus Ligare Ogango, Interviewed on 4th December, 2000.
War II experience have tended to concentrate on why African soldiers turned against the colonial establishment after the war, creating some of the conditions which led to the fall of colonialism in Africa and elsewhere, but most often they do not investigate and explain how this happened. They have often merely assumed that *askaris* turned against colonial powers because of some lack of political rights in the colony, but they have not done much to validate this assumption or explore other possible reasons that caused the bad blood between these erstwhile allies. This chapter tries to deal with this question by exploring some of *askaris'* experiences after demobilization and resettlement. It examines how *askaris* went back home after the war, and tried to settle down. It is argued that economic factors were at the bottom of all, if not most, of *askaris'* grievances with the British colonial administration in Kenya. Contrary to much that has been written, it appears from available data that lack of rights and freedom in the colony was not the main reason behind *askaris'* bitterness, important though these ideals were. Rather, it is argued that what angered *askaris* more than anything was the lack of regular sources of income, pension, jobs, land — material things they assumed the government would make readily available in reciprocation for the sweat and blood *askaris* unreservedly shed during the war. Even though the government tried to provide *askaris* with some help, the government attached so many conditions to those offers that few *askaris* qualified, and those who qualified largely found them inconsequential in making their lives better. Disgusted by the way the government handled their affairs, *askaris* resorted to complaining, and holding meetings [meetings which included World War I veterans], and it was only a matter of time before they formed organizations to articulate their grievances.
Contradictory Expectations, Discordant Voices.

Even before the end of the war, grounds for conflict between askaris and the colonial administration in the future were being laid. Askaris and the colonial administration appear to have developed divergent and conflicting views of the roles that each expected the other to play in the post-war colony. There was discordance in the way the government and the askari perceived each other's role in the post-war Kenyan society. To a large extent during the war, many askaris expected the post-war Kenya to favor them by creating better opportunities and wealth for them. Askaris thus often made anxious inquiries with the colonial regime about its post-war plans for them. After a meeting with askaris in Burma, Archdeacon Beecher reported to the Civil Administration that the askaris were anxious because they "did not know what re-absorption plans were being made for them."4 Letters that askaris wrote home dealt with employment opportunities and occupations they hoped to pursue after the war with government support. There were inquiries about "investments ... in some cases firms in their own territory, such as Uganda Bus Co., others the POSB, and in one case, a L/Cpl. Jeanes School, has written to the selected Unit Investment Trust Co., Johannesburg, asking for particulars of their investments."5 "Jaduon [Sir]" Christoper Oluko's letter to Cpt. E. E. V. Ross, the Welfare Officer of Nyanza Province begun,

\[\text{onego iyie ikonyaa kuom wachni eri ... nahero konyo kuom}\\ \text{Iweny, chakre 30/12/40. Nyaka sani bende aseko kawo Nursing}\\ \text{Orderly Course, mi koro an Grade II [N.O. Class II]. To nyocha}\\ \text{ayudo tuo mar kor [Chronic Bronchitis] mi otimna Medical}\\ \text{Board Category E [Discharge from the army]. Koro arito mana}\\ \text{yudo discharge kende, to abiro e raia. Kuom yie ni, inyalo}\]

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In June, 1944, J. M. Obando Opiyo of Asembo wrote to Major E. E. V. Ross telling him that he had been discharged from the army, and "now I am in need of a job." When African chiefs visited the troops in South-East Asia, they found that the askaris were immensely concerned about the Indian stranglehold on trade in the reserves, a fact that was reported in the *East African Standard* of November 2, 1945. Many askaris even recommended that the government stop further immigration of Indians to Kenya. An Akamba chief who had just returned from South-East Asia "went as far as to ask that the Kenya Government should compel Indians here already to return to India and should prohibit further Indian immigration" to give Africans opportunity to participate in trade. Askaris were talking about education, comparing Indian education and African education and concluding that, "small children in India can read and write at an early age as schools in India are found everywhere." Thus the Akamba started advising "their relatives to save money for education and the building of more schools in their territory. One Mkamba in India Command states that fellow tribesmen in his unit are subscribing

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6 Christopher Oluko Damba to Captain E. E. V. Ross, Nyanza Province Welfare Officer, letter dated 27th June, 1944, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
8 *East African Standard*, November 2, 1945.
Kshs.2/- a month towards building a large school in Kambaland after the war.\textsuperscript{10} A Kipsigis soldier also wrote home, "speaking highly of the English lessons in his unit ... others recommend their relatives to learn as much English as possible."\textsuperscript{11} Everywhere, one notices an increasing interest among askaris in the welfare of their people in the colony. A Kipsigis soldier wrote home and rebuked his "friends for allowing their country to be cut up like the Wakikuyu, and states he has heard people are not allowed to cultivate their gardens this year."\textsuperscript{12} Writing from "somewhere" in South East Asia, a Maragoli noted in a letter home that he heard that "the government had decided to move the Maragoli to another district before the askaris return to their homes ... he suspects Chief Agoi to come to some agreement with the authorities on this matter."\textsuperscript{13} An Omogusi askari claimed in a letter that he heard that girls in his home area "are being made to pay poll-tax."\textsuperscript{14}

What this means is that during the war and as it came to an end, askaris were making their plans and expected the government to create conditions that would not only help them actualize those plans, but also bring about an improvement to their material well-being. They had gone out, fought and conquered. At the very least, they expected the government to treat them differently from the way it treated other Africans in the colony who had remained at home while they suffered abroad. They wanted the government to ear-mark special jobs for them, to allocate them seats at various local government administrative bodies, to give them better pay, free education, exemption from taxes,

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
opportunities to conduct businesses. They wanted the government to create enabling conditions in the reserve for *askaris* to conduct business.\textsuperscript{15} The *askaris*’ view of their special place in society was not all that unexpected having been serving as part of victorious army that had rid the world of a danger. To say the least, *askaris* were proud of themselves. Not only had they fought courageously and demonstrated their manliness, they had come away from the battlefield victorious. On coming back home therefore *askaris* expected to be received as heroes and to be rewarded, but these hopes were soon dashed because the government had a different view of the role *askaris* would play in the post-colonial Kenya.

As the war was coming to an end, the government had made other plans for the *askaris*, informed largely by results of debates which had been going on in the colony over whether *askaris* would agree to live under conditions that prevailed before the war. Commissions on "Demobilization," "Re-Absorption of *Askaris* into their Communities," on "Discharge," and on "Post-War Government Plans" sought to facilitate *askaris’* peaceful return to a colony which did not want to change. In most colonial reports and informal discussions, the government appeared, not so much concerned with rewarding the *askari*, but with preserving the colony. The colonial government generally believed that *askaris* would easily return to their rural homes if they were paid their gratuities promptly and if they were given training in some skills that they would need to earn a living after the war. In the past the government had worried about how military experience would change the *askaris*, and indeed, as already noted, there were colonial

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
officials who had opposed the recruitment of Africans into the war for this very reason. Such colonial officials had worried about the impact of Axis propaganda on the *askaris*, the indignity of Africans serving in their war, the training of Africans in the instruments of modern warfare, and above all, on whether *askaris* would agree to live under a colonial system that still relegated them to third class citizenship even after they had traveled and experienced a different world. There had been trepidation over how *askaris* would react to conditions in the colony that did not provide them with the standard of living they had grown accustomed to while serving in the army. But as already noted in previous chapters, the colonial government had already come to the conclusion that as long as conditions were made to meet *askaris' needs, the colony would survive after all. In the words of J. H. Flynn, a District Officer in Nyanza Province, "plans must be made in order ...to prevent his [*askari*] becoming a focus of social and political unrest as a result of a disillusionment."\(^{16}\)

The government’s prognostication about the amenability of the returning *askari* was buoyed by the fact that most of the *askaris* who had already returned had not been "much of a problem." By March, 1944, the government had discharged a total of 18,000 African soldiers, and 800 European men, 14 European women and 600 Asians, and the Africans were generally viewed as complaisant and governable. C. H. Williams, a government official in the Central Kavirondo District of Nyanza Province, for instance, had held discussions with many chiefs in Luoland and the general consensus was that, "the great

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majority of the Luo military personnel when demobilized will be content to return to the home circle and lead the normal life of an Jaluo in his reserve. I personally do not think that the Luo are likely to return with an unduly high opinion of their importance with the result that discontent might spread throughout the reserve."

Capt. Hislop, the Kericho District Commissioner submitted a document to the Nyanza Provincial Administration which contended that the "Kipsigis discharged from the service have so far been reabsorbed into tribal life." In his dispatches to the *East African Standard*, George Kinnear argued that government worries about the impact of the war on the *askaris* were unnecessarily exaggerated. There was no doubt that the "six years of war and periods of stay will leave marks on him," but, added George Kinnear, "he still is and will, I think, remain essentially African." Kinnear even claimed that many *askaris* did not have a clear idea of what they wanted after the war, and the few who did, wanted "first ... to go back home and sit down or perhaps till their holdings, then when finance and other urges compel them they will look for work. Not all want to return to their pre-war type of employment. The majority somehow want to improve their condition. They suspect it will not be possible to maintain the present standards of income, but they do not know how hard the unsympathetic world will probably be for men who have developed tastes for better cigarettes, and a wide variety of good food. They have seen indigenous peoples of Ceylon and India busy at infinite variety of jobs too. They have seen the advantage of education and crave for it for themselves and their children." Kinnear believed that *askaris'* problems and concerns were mundane and there was no need for the government

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18 "Post-War Employment of Africans: Precis of Memorandum from District Commissioners and others, Nyanza Province, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
to panic, as long as conditions would be created to accommodate askaris' simple and ordinary needs. The solution appeared quite simple, in the government view. In spite of incidents and difficulties "which have arisen from time to time, the African is as cheerful as ever and that is always key to his mind. He is a well-disciplined, self-respecting, smart, workmanlike soldier." C. H. Williams believed that there were some things that might foster change in the askaris, but he did not think that that change would necessarily be detrimental to the colonial system and to life in the rural areas generally.

The views of officials like Williams, Flynn, and Capt. Hislop found their ways into government commissions, which reflected a strong desire, determination, and eagerness by all government officials to ensure that the status quo in the colony prevailed. The intention of these various commissions was not so much about rewarding and thanking the askaris in their own right, but the peaceful return of the askaris without destabilizing the colony, to keep the askaris in their place once they were back to the colony. In many of these government reports on the returning askaris, it was felt that the specter of an arrogant, rude and demanding askari could be controlled if demobilization was handled properly, and if specific steps were taken to satisfy his needs. The theme of fear is evident, mixed with hopes that if the askaris were handled dexterously and just right, they might be guided successfully back into the social landscape, burnishing any rough edges that otherwise might interfere with the status quo. Thus from the beginning, the government was planning demobilization, how to repatriate and guide the askaris back to their society without causing disaffection that might later come back to haunt the colony.

20 Ibid.
Plans for Demobilization and Resettlement of Askaris.

The process of demobilization can be said to have started right from the moment the war began. Even as the government recruited soldiers and worried about how the war would affect the soldier, and about what to do with them once the war ended, it was already laying down plans on how to smoothen their re-absorption into the society. This process arguably began in 1940, when the Member for the Coast in the Legislative Council posed a question in the Legislative Council on post-war developments, particularly on the employment of British soldiers, when he asked whether the government was "yet considering the post-war problems that will arise regarding the re-employment of discharged officers and men of the King's African Rifles, the Kenya Regiment and other units? If so, will they state how they propose to deal with such problems? And will they give an assurance that no British national who has served in the Forces will be prevented from resuming his old job or taking up a new one by the fact that the job is filled by the national of some non-British state?"22 The Government, it appears, did not reply to the Member for Coast for quite a while,23 but secret communication between the Attorney-General and the Chief Secretary over this question shows that government officials had been discussing post-war plans at informal levels for some time. In fact, the Government's initial reply [but later withheld] to the Member for Coast stated that the government had not as yet laid down any plans for "regarding the re-employment of discharged officers of the KAR, Kenya Regiment and other units. Government is at

21 Ibid.
22 Member for the Coast, Legislative Council, Question No.32, dated 6th September, 1940, (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
23 East African Standard, 21st April, 1941.
present concentrating on the effort to win the war."\textsuperscript{24} But the question awoke the government.

A month or so later the government formed a committee to prepare a scheme "for the vocational training of demobilized personnel."\textsuperscript{25} Formed by the Governor on 4\textsuperscript{th} November, 1940, members of the Committee "On Vocational training of Men and Women Serving with the Forces in East Africa, Upon Demobilization," were the Director of Education [Chairman], the General Manager of Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbors Administration, B. F. Macdona, E. A. Vasey, Mrs. C. M. Taylor, M. F. Hill, and G. L. H. Dusart. At first the mandate of the committee was on European military personnel, particularly British soldiers, but it spawned another question about the government forming a "similar committee to consider the African problem."\textsuperscript{26} The Attorney-General wondered whether the committee would be of any practical help to African soldiers given the fact that, he argued, "demobilized askaris ..., I presume, [to] be ordinary agricultural laborers who went out of their reserves to work on a month to month or ticket to ticket basis when money was required for their Hut Tax and the most that we could do would be to direct that they should be allowed to do another month’s work for their last employer ... If all the askaris are prepared to do agricultural work when they return to civil life, I doubt whether we will have too much of a problem to face."\textsuperscript{27} But it was becoming quite clear that any post-war demobilization plans that did not consider the welfare of the African soldiers would not work, and thus another

\textsuperscript{24} Attorney-General, answer to the Member for Coast, LEGCO, answer dated 10\textsuperscript{th} September, 1940, (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
\textsuperscript{25} (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
committee was formed "to consider what steps can be taken by the Government to absorb in the economic structure of the colony such British subjects of all races now serving in the East Africa Forces as may desire to obtain employment here on demobilization, special attention being given to the provision of adequate safeguards to ensure that persons ordinarily resident in the colony who were in civil employment at the outbreak of war were given suitable opportunities of re-employment." The Chairman of this committee was the Commissioner of Lands and Settlement, and the other members were H. R. Montgomery, Lady Sidney Farrar, S. V. Cooke, J. B. Pandya, D. Henower, S. P. Kruger, and H. S. Potter as Secretary.

It was this second committee rather than the first one that would be of relevance to the interests of the *askari*, since it spawned the formation of a Sub-Committee to deliberate over one specific aspect of African soldiers' re-absorption into their societies, and that was: "Post-War Employment of Africans." Members of the Sub-Committee were A. T. Lacey, as the Chairman [he was also the Director of Education], and other members were H. F. Bargman, K. A. Brown, T. C. Colchester, S. V. Cooke, H. R. Montgomery, J. G. Nisbet, F. C. Smith, and J. W. M. Williams. In most subsequent reports, the committee increasingly found itself dealing more frequently with what increasingly became popularly known as "Post-War Employment of Africans." While the main Committee was charged with the task of looking into steps which could "be taken by Government to

26 Attorney-General to Chief Secretary, letter dated 25th November, 1940, (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
27 Ibid.
28 G. M. Rennie, Chief Secretary, circular Notice No.498, dated 30th May, 1941, (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
29 T. C. Colchester, Secretary, Committee on Post-War Employment of Africans to the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, letter dated 30th July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/174).
absorb in the economic structure of the colony such British subjects of all races now serving in the East Africa Forces,”

The Sub-Committee, which at times met under the Chairmanship of H. R. Montgomery, was required to make "consideration of the African side of the problem and I should be grateful if you would invite the District Commissioners, of your province, African Chiefs, Local Native Councils, etc., to submit their views." Special attention was given to the views of the Agikuyu, Luo and Akamba who "dominate the numbers of Africans employed by the military and ask that the District Commissioners of the Districts concerned should especially be invited to give their views on how these districts will absorb demobilized and unemployed Africans after the war." The committee also wanted specific information on whether or not returning Askaris would be willing to return back to the land, and practice agriculture, and whether there were any specific measures the government could take to encourage them to do so.

As already noted, government administrators were generally confident of reabsorbing askaris back to their rural communities as long as conditions were prepared for that purpose, and they said so in their recommendations to the Committee on Post-War Employment of Africans. The meetings of the Committee were often attended by representatives of the British Legion like Col. Modera, Tannahill, Genowar and Boddy, presumably askaris' representatives on the Committee, and by the Chairman and

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30 Ibid.
31 "Report of the Sub-Committee on the Post-War employment of Africans, April, 1943," (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
Secretary of the Post-War Employment Committee, Hon. C. E. Mortimer and Mr. Potter, respectively. Reflecting the views of most colonial officials, the Committee generally did not find any reason to believe that the *askari* would not wish to rejoin his reserve as long as conditions were made attractive and up to the standard he had gotten used to during his days in the army. The Director of Manpower, who was the Chair of the Committee on Post-War Employment was of the opinion that "the great majority of African personnel discharged from His Majesty's Forces would desire to return to their homes and that he could arrange for repatriation to their home districts if necessary." 34 By April, 1943, when the Committee or sub-Committee on "Post-War Employment of Africans" submitted its report, its membership had somewhat changed. A. T. Lacey was the chairman, and other members were H. F. Bargman, K. A. Brown, T. C. Colchester, S. V. Cooke, H. R. Montgomery, J. G. Nisbet, F. C. Smith, and J. W. M. Williams. The Committee’s report took the stance that *askaris* would easily re-join their communities, and conditions should be made suitable for them in the reserves to do so. The report generally reflected the views that have already been examined. The colonial system would survive; it would not be challenged by the returning *askaris*.

To facilitate *askaris*' peaceful return, the Committee decided to divide *askaris* into three categories: "true African agriculturists [who] would be readily absorbed into agriculture and would present no appreciable problem, so far as his future employment was concerned," and the non-agriculturists, particularly the skilled and semi-skilled *askaris*

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32 T.C. Colchester, Secretary, Committee on Post-War Employment of Africans to the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza, letter dated 30th July, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/174).
33 Ibid.
like technicians, welders, who would require wage-earning employment. According to Timothy Parsons, in his book, the *African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of African Military Service in the Kings African Rifles, 1902-1964*, the colonial government decided, for the purpose of demobilization and resettlement of the *askari*, to divide the *askaris* into those who would have interests in their homes and in their land unit, those who would be partly urbanized and who still retained some roots in his land unit, and those who had become wholly detached from his land unit. Arising from this plan, the Committee recommended policies that would enhance proper utilization of the land to cater for the interests of *askaris* who were attached to the land. It also recommended that during demobilization, the first preference be given to the oldest and longest serving *askaris* as well as to those who expressed the wish to go back to the land. The second and third groups of partially-urbanized and fully-urbanized *askaris* would be demobilized last, when conditions were suitable for their demobilization. To equip the returning partly urbanized and fully-urbanized *askaris* who did not wish to return to the land, and who planned to seek employment outside of his land, the committee recommended training opportunities.

**Education and training.**

As a result of reports of these committees, government officials began to plan for the training of returning *askaris*. It was realized that the demobilization agenda would not

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34 Minutes of a Meeting on "Provision of Employment for Persons Discharged from His Majesty's Forces," 22nd July, 1941, (On Demobilization: Employment and After War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
35 Proceedings of a Conference held at Nairobi on Tuesday, 16th November, 1943, to Discuss the Demobilization and Re-absorption of Army Personnel, 27th September, 1943, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
succeed if askaris were not trained and if they were not imbued with knowledge and skills that would be relevant to a Post-War Colony. Many of the askaris were young – some had gone straight from school to the army without acquiring adequate training skills or acquiring adequate education. For their training, the government chose the premier education facility for askaris during the war – the Jeanes School, Kabete, home to the Army Education Corps. Major Selwood had been the Commandant of the school since its inception. Formed in April, 1942, the Army Education Corps was designed to impart knowledge and skills that serving askaris would later need to survive after the war. Better educated askaris were often taken to Kabete for training in education, became instructors in the army, and after the war, joined the education system as teachers. Most of these AEC instructors were Standard VI school leavers, village school headmasters and agricultural demonstrators. After qualifying, these instructors were deployed with military units where their main duty was to teach askaris, and help them acquire skills that would be relevant for their survival after the war. These institutions taught basic literacy, writing and reading, hygiene, art and craft.

The askari instructors from Kabete provided askaris with opportunities for voluntary education that they would otherwise not have had before or after the war. By 1945, the number of instructors posted by the Army Education Corps to the 11th Division in the South-East Asia, for example, were 3 officers and 50 askari instructors, and many more were working and helping train askaris, who were fighting in other theaters of the war. In the Middle East, the educational work of the instructors was quite popular and the army

institutionalized further the teaching and training offered by establishing the Colonial Wing of the Middle East Training Center, where "the African is taught not only to be a good clerk, but [and many have the foresight to prefer it] a good farmer." As a result of this training, many askaris would excitingly point out to their compatriots at home of the need to be literate. After undergoing training, many askaris in turn urged their kinsfolk at home to construct schools and take their children to school. Gen. Platt quoted one letter in which an askaris had remarked in English that, "I am very glad that people in the Army are being given free education. I have much pleasure in thanking his Majesty's Government very much indeed for having taught us to read and write. Many people who were formerly unable to write are now able to write their own letters. I would like to know who the man was who first introduced the present educational system into the KAR so that I may congratulate him and thank him in my own poor, foolish way." Through these skills and knowledge, the government hoped to make askaris competitive for the job market after the war.

By November, 1945, the Principal Dispersal Officer had received 5,000 questions from askaris, and 90% of them were on askaris "asking for training of some sort – although it was doubtful whether in all cases they meant training as opposed to direct employment." Most askaris aspired for commercial or trade skills. During a visit at the Maseno Depot in December, 1944, Capt. A. F. Sagar, Welfare Officer, GHQ ME to East African troops, was quoted as saying "how interested the troops up there are to hear any

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38 Ibid.
39 Principal Dispersal Officer, quoted in East African Standard of November 2, 1945.
news of post-war plans.\textsuperscript{40} Besides aspiring for training for opportunities, askaris, as the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed in 1945, also "have shown a great desire to enter the retail and transport trade, and very considerable sums have been collected by small groups who have combined with the avowed purpose of forming Trading Companies.\textsuperscript{41} Soldiers were making inquiries with the government over economic opportunities. One askari wrote to the administration for a permit to erect a business building, but the government was often cynical of how well the askaris were organized for these undertakings. These included Company Sergeant Major Odipo Ogondo of Southern Signals, and who, as the war was coming to an end, wrote to the government and explained his commercial plans to the government as follows:

At home there is a place and quite a big town where people seem to be lacking of things for sale. These people travel a long distance or journey to the Indian shops [dukas]. As a point is we should suffer a lot if no one to make a shopping near us. I now ask you to your responsibility would put me forward as to build a shop in which I can put things for issue, and as according to my dear countrymen will be pleased.

The place is situated in Alego, Ng'iya sokoni. I wish to have the a/m building built in that place. If you or my District Commissioner can build it on his own charge, I will be grateful in paying for the cost. As I am serving in the army my step-father Meka Asindi can be in charge of it while my absence.

Sir, trusting this will meet with your kind approval and activities. Any amount charged for same I will have to pay.
Your obedient and diligent servant,
CSM Odipo Ogondo.\textsuperscript{42}

Company Sergeant Major Odipo Ogondo’s application unleashed several correspondences with the government, many of them disappointing; the government did

\textsuperscript{40} F. E. V. Ross, of the Office of Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, to Patrick F. W. Williams, Director of Training, The Secretariat, 7\textsuperscript{th} December, 1944, (Military Training, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/126).
\textsuperscript{41} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40).
\textsuperscript{42} Company Sergeant Major Odipo Ogondo to Welfare Officer, letter dated 6\textsuperscript{th} March, 1945, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, DC/KSM/1/22/138.
not appear to be in a position to help CSM Odipo largely because he was himself not very clear about what his plans were. When the Welfare Officer of Southern [L of C] Area Signals talked to CSM Odipo Ogondo, he found that he:

appeared a little vague first of all he required a house and not a shop, but later said that a two roomed house was what he wanted, one room to live in and one room as a shop. I also asked him if he had the necessary cash to pay for the building and stocking of the shop, and in this he said that he would pay whatever it cost in monthly installments.\textsuperscript{43}

The Welfare Officer concluded that it was "hardly likely that government would do this, but if there is some way in which help could be given to him I feel that he would be extremely grateful and I will communicate your decision on its arrival."\textsuperscript{44} The District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo was equally lukewarm to CSM Odipo Ogondo's plans. Turning down the proposal, the District Commissioner wrote that, "in the first place, there is no organization for building houses for askaris. Secondly it is unlikely that he would get a license for some time. Thirdly, the monthly payments suggested would be out of the question."\textsuperscript{45}

But these setbacks did not deter askaris from applying for business opportunities. On 25\textsuperscript{th} April, 1945, Samson Muche submitted an application to the government for a permit to build a shop in Bondo market,\textsuperscript{46} but T. J. F. Gavaghan, the District Officer turned it down. Gavaghan described Samson Muche's proposal as "excellent," but he went on to add that although he did "not want to discourage his [Samuel Muche's] enthusiasm ... I

\textsuperscript{43} Welfare Officer, Southern [L of C] Area Signals to District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo District, letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} March, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} Office of Central Kavirondo District to Officer Commanding, Southern [L of C], Signals, letter dated 19\textsuperscript{th} May, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).
am unable to undertake building operation for private individuals. This man is advised to save his money so that after the war he can undertake his own building arrangements."\textsuperscript{47}

When in 1944, the Nyanza Provincial Administration decided to set aside [British pounds]1,000 to be "utilized in opening up block fields at various points in the Province, and for pit swing timber where it is available"\textsuperscript{48} for askaris to buy and put up modern housing at their homes and at business places, Lance Cpl. Gabriel J. Thuma immediately made an inquiry from the Acting Provincial Commissioner, about "the cost of a 3 room house in permanent material."\textsuperscript{49} Indeed, the Nyanza brick-making scheme attracted many applications from askaris seeking to build private houses and business premises. In line with their ambition to participate in businesses, askaris like D.K. Karuoya were demanding that Asians be barred from business activities in the rural areas so that Africans could take their places. In his letter to the editor of the \textit{East African Standard}, Karuoya wrote that,

\begin{quote}
I understand that Indians were allowed to build their shops in Native Reserves in order to distribute the native communities such as food stuffs and clothes, the justification for this being that there were no natives in the above mentioned areas. Among the present generation, there are many natives who are able to construct shop and supply other native with everything they like as well. A considerable number of natives have been complaining several times that they do not see the reason why Indians are still trading in their reserves. It will be highly appreciated if the government would have a member of its staff investigate this matter and if Indians be returned to the big towns and carry on with their trades there. It is obvious that many
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{46} Samson Muche to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 24\textsuperscript{th} April, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).

\textsuperscript{47} T. J. F. Gavaghan, for Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, to Officer Commanding, 28[EA] Inf. Bde. LAD., EAEME, South East Asia Command, letter dated 18\textsuperscript{th} May, 1945, (Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/138).

\textsuperscript{48} Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, letter dated 16\textsuperscript{th} March, 1944, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).

\textsuperscript{49} Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to the Officer Commanding, "B" Company 4th U, Bn. KAR, South East Asia Command, letter dated 14\textsuperscript{th} June, 1944, (Institutions and Associations, 1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
natives of this country will earnestly desire this matter to be considered and approved by our government. 50

Many *askaris* as already noted, complained about the presence of Indian traders in the reserve and urged the government to remove them because they were denying Africans opportunities to pursue commerce and earn a living.

Many were also applying for jobs and training opportunities so as to be marketable and competitive for the job-market after the war. By 1946, there are many cases where *askaris* were being admitted either to the African Central Employment Training Bureau or to more specialized training schools where they were taught and equipped with skills for employment. There were schools for *askaris* who wanted further training in clerical work, signals, and education. When Wilson Gare, a Signaler in the Army, decided to train in education, he was told that when the time for discharge arrived, and if he wanted a job, he would need to apply to the District Commissioner. 51 Karlus Oyengo who described himself as just a regular soldier applied for a vacancy to train "in any Carpentry Course ... I took my education somewhere in North Kavirondo where I studied a bit of these things and also I was in the army for approximately five years and thirty three days if you wish to see me I will be pleased to attend at your office at any time that suits you." 52 As part of its demobilization plans, the government sent out summons to Fredrick Ogola and Musa Oluga of Chianda, Asembo, Nashon Julu of Kadimo, Alexander Odhiambo of North Ugenya, Sabuloni Wanyama of Luambwa, Samia, Thomas Okello of Ogada Mission, Kisumu, and Charles Onjala of Alego to report to the Ex-Soldiers' Training School,

Kabete, where they would be trained in carpentry as Carpentry Instructors. After submitting his application for training, Wellington Anam Okelo was directed to report to the District Commissioner to collect his admission letter for training at the African Central Employment Bureau. Similar summons went out for Okoth Ogutu, Opetu Adachi and Oriyo Okoko, among many other partly-urbanized and fully-urbanized askaris.\textsuperscript{53} Sgt. Odera, who was a clerk in the army, was summoned to report for training to become an African Agricultural Instructor. Schools like the ones at Jeannes School, Kabete, were designed to help askaris acquire skills for their survival after the war.

\textbf{Post Office Money Savings Scheme.}

Another important aspect of preparations for demobilization was the establishment of the Post Office Money Savings Scheme. Although the origin and objective of this scheme have already been discussed, its failures merit another look because of the way they compounded askaris’ problems after the war, and defined their attitude to the government. It is a classic case of a well-intentioned post-war scheme, but which just could not succeed in facilitating demobilization and resettlement of askaris. Established early in the war to encourage askaris to place their money at the disposal of the government while saving it for future use after the war, it demonstrates how far-reaching government demobilization plans were. Money saved with the Post Office Savings Bank was designed to help askaris pay for their needs after the war, but it was also designed to provide the government with ready funds. Thus when the project was first discussed, K.

\textsuperscript{52} Karilus Oyengo to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} May, 1946, (Applications for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/100).

\textsuperscript{53} Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} July, 1946, (Applications for Discharged African Soldiers, 1944-48, KNA, DC/KSM/1/17/100).
L. Hunter advised that "no reference be made to the fact that such savings would be lent to Great Britain for war purposes as such information would in my opinion cause many who would otherwise invest, to hold their savings."\(^{54}\) But the main reason was that the government wanted to ensure that the askaris did not squander their war-time earnings otherwise they would become a bother to the government after the war. The government hoped that by saving money with the Post Office, askaris would be encouraged to develop thrift, deterring them from squandering all their money at once without making use of it in some far-lasting useful projects.

Worried that askaris might squander all their money, the government, in 1940, started urging askaris to save money and only withdraw it in bits. Newspapers, pamphlets, radio and films were used to encourage askaris to save their earnings, telling them that money saved earned interest, and that it would not get lost or stolen like when they "buried it in a hole instead of saving it in a bank."\(^{55}\) Pamphlets on savings in Central Kavirondo District, for example, were produced in Dholuo, "drawing attention to the advantages of banking these surpluses which will earn interest as opposed to the fact that if kept and buried it often gets lost or stolen and moreover does not increase as it would if safely deposited."\(^{56}\) Another pamphlet, issued by the Kenya War Savings Committee advised askaris and civilians "that because of the war it is important not to waste anything ... it is also important not to waste money,"\(^{57}\) that "one way of wasting money is to buy things you don't really want, just because you have money to spend. The best thing to do is to let the

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\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.
Post Office take care of your money." But the project did not take off as quickly as was expected. By early 1941, one officer in Nyanza was reporting that the change of the local people's attitude to the idea of savings was "fair," even after intensive propaganda, sometimes in local languages. To compel people to get used to the idea of saving money with the Post Office Money Savings Scheme, the chiefs in Central Kavirondo recommended that gratuities to war widows should be paid directly into a savings account with the Post Office. The project improved when the askari, realizing that the money they used to send home through the Family Remittance Program was being received, began to develop trust in it. The increasing amount of money dispatched home through the Family Remittance Fund demonstrated that, the "native soldier is becoming convinced that it is both safe and reasonably speedy to remit money through military channels, and that the government is looking after the welfare of his dependants." When the Sub-Committee on "Post-War Employment of Africans" submitted its report in April, 1943, it noted that "in less than three years of the war, the number of African depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank rose from 12,924 to 16,039, an increase of 25%." One District Commissioner estimated that [British pounds] 3,500 came into his District every month. A "witness from the motor transport branch of the Army Service Corps reckons that 50% of his men transmit their wages and this is supported by a witness from the Heavy Repair Shops which employ 500 Africans."

57 "Pamphlet by Kenya War Savings Committee," Post Office Savings Bank, 1942-51, (KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/75),
58 Ibid.
60 (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1942, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/37).
61 "Report of the Sub-Committee on the Post-War employment of Africans, April, 1943," (On Demobilization: Employment and after War, 1940-45, KNA, AG/16/97).
62 Ibid.
Around this time, the government also directed the Army Paymaster to save the balance of *askaris'* monthly salaries with the Post Office Bank. In the past the Paymaster would keep the balance of *askaris's* pay and would give it to them when they were proceeding home on leave or on discharge, but the emerging view of most other government officials was that there had not been a clear policy on how to "deal with the pay left in the hands of the soldier after his remittance has been met."\(^\text{63}\) By saving the remainder of *askaris'* monthly salaries with the Post Office Savings Scheme, the army was hoping that it would further accustom the *askaris* to the savings system, while making their earnings available to the government. By the beginning of 1944, there were already references to the existence of savings accounts at the Post Office opened on behalf of depositors, with the Officer Commanding East Africa Pay Corps acting as trustee. The same sources also made references to money in these savings accounts as being deposited with the Postmaster. "A Scheme has now been prepared and agreed upon with the Postal Authorities," one official stated, "whereby East African Native Ranks can have the undrawn portion of their pay, or part of it, deposited in their own Post Office Savings Account by the Officer Commanding, East Africa Pay Corps."\(^\text{64}\) Amounts deposited or withdrawn would not be less than ten shillings, the report noted. Interest was 2½ percent per annum. The government pursued other strategies to popularize the scheme. In 1944, the Army also decided that the *askaris* would only be allowed to make their family remittances or allotments out of their savings, compelling *askaris* to save with the Post

\(^{63}\) R.A. Wilkinson, for Chief Secretary, Circular to the Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference, letter dated 20\(^{\text{th}}\) December, 1945, (Post Office Savings Bank, 1942-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/75).

\(^{64}\) The Secretariat, Circular to Provincial Commissioners, for a Provincial Commissioners' Meeting, Circular dated 1\(^{\text{st}}\) March, 1944, (Post Office Savings Bank, 1942-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/75).
Office. It would be "understood that the savings so authorized would be held by his
District Commissioner at the disposal of the soldier." The amount that the soldier
authorized to be deducted as savings was to be noted in the soldier's pay book and the
amounts would be recovered from the soldier's account in the Pay Office and the total
sums would be handed over at the end of each month to the Post Office Authorities on
behalf of the District Commissioners. If a soldier wanted to remit money home, he would
remit or allot from his savings held by the District Commissioner. This scheme
essentially linked the askaris' pay with the Post Office, the District Commissioner's
Office, and ultimately, with the askaris' family. The District Commissioner would have
authority to hold savings at the disposal of the askari but the Post Office would in fact
have the custody of the funds. The Postmaster also kept track of the accounts of savings
and credit interest as may be approved.

The only major problem with the scheme was administration, as it was seen as over-
burdening an already over-stretched civil administration, though this may not have been
as serious in the government eye as the concern that "the gratuity should not be
squandered. Gratuities to 200,000 African soldiers may well amount to [British
pounds]1,000,000 of British taxpayers' money, and from every point of view it seems
important to control expenditure in the African's best interests." The colonial
government wanted to ensure that the askaris had enough savings to see them through the
process of demobilization and settlement in the colony instead of becoming a nuisance.

65 Brigadier C.N. Bednall, East Africa Command, HQ to Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference,
letter dated 23rd March, 1944, (Post Office Savings Bank, 1942-51, KNA, PC/NZA/2/19/75).
66 Circular from Governors' Conference Office, letter dated 21st January, 1944, (War Gratuities, 1928-47,
KNA, CA/12/3).
On the other hand the *askaris* seemed to view the Post Office Savings Bank more like an irritating detour of an eagerly awaited savings. After getting out of the army, *askaris* began a big run for their money in the bank, and all the intentions that the government had of encouraging thrift and savings among *askaris* quickly disappeared. Of the [British pounds] 2,097,037 deposited in 1945 in Nyanza Province, for instance, *askaris* withdrew out a total of 614,745.83\(^{67}\) within a short time of their arrival. Between 1937 and 1945, the Postmaster-General reported that there "were only ten requests for cash have been made ... [but] in the last seven weeks ten demands totaling Kshs.16,000 have been made."\(^{68}\) The District Commissioner of South Kavirondo noted afterwards in a letter that "since writing the above a further Kshs.6,000 has been withdrawn." Although civilians were also using the bank, it was quite clear to the South Kavirondo District Commissioner that the "majority of ex-soldiers are withdrawing large sums from their accounts even if they do not close them."\(^{69}\) Although the Postmaster tried to quell rumors to the effect that ex-*askaris* in South Nyanza Province were "cashing their Post Office Savings Accounts as fast as they can get to a Post Office," and that, "out of the first 80 savings bank books given out in this district to ex-soldiers 61 accounts have already been closed,"\(^{70}\) he was forced to concede the fact that the rate at which *askaris* in South Nyanza were withdrawing their savings was unusually high. Whereas the true picture in South Nyanza "was that only 15 books had been closed out of 80 books," the Postmaster General contended, he went on to agree that South Kavirondo was one district where "the percentage of books closed in ... [after withdrawing all their money] is very much higher.

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\(^{67}\) (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40).

\(^{68}\) District Commissioner of South Kavirondo to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 27\(^{th}\) December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).

\(^{69}\) Ibid.

\(^{70}\) Ibid.
than in any other district of Kenya and Uganda." In spite of the fact the demobilization process was slow, with only 207 coming in December, 1945, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner observed, those *askaris* who had already been discharged were making "far too many queries about pay [and] … it seems to be a waste of time to open these accounts." The point then is that the government was hoping to use the Post Office Bank Savings Scheme to facilitate *askaris* demobilization, and peaceful resettlement, but as will be shown in this chapter, this plan failed. After demobilization, *askaris* immediately began to withdraw their savings, and within a short time they became destitute. Within a short time, they would start wondering where government rewards were.

**Celebrating Victory and Remembering the *Askaris***

The government also tried to facilitate *askaris* acquiescence to the colonial system by taking elaborate steps to remember and celebrate their role in the war. *Askaris’* role in the war was commemorated by the government in different ways. The irony of these commemorations was that they reinforced the belief prevalent among the *askaris* that the government would take care of them. When the government announced for instance, that it would provide bursaries to children of *askaris* killed in the war, many surviving *askaris* saw that as yet another proof that the government would not abandon them after the war. The most common and frequent methods of remembering *askaris* and recognizing their roles were simple words of praise and compliments for the work well done. Many *askaris*

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70 D. Cormac, for Postmaster General to the Information Officer, letter dated 8th December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
71 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioner of South Kavirondo, letter dated 21st December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
recall that army officials used to laud their courage and skills during the war. Askaris who won awards were mentioned in newspapers. On February 5, 1942, the War Office published a special tribute to African troops in the *East African Standard*. Captain Margesson, British Secretary of State for War, replying to a question by Mr. Creech-Jones, the Labor Member or Shipley, thanked African soldiers for their "excellent service throughout the Abyssinian Campaign." Once askaris began to participate in actual battles, the army began to award them medals and badges, besides the usual words of commendation. After the success of Allied operations in North Africa, a Thanksgiving Day was held throughout the United Nations, including Kenya. Victory was attributed to God.

By March, 1945, when it was already clear to the Kenyan administration that the war was going very well for the Allied forces, Major-General J. B. Hawkins, the General Officer, Southern Area informed the Chief Secretary that "I feel that it is very necessary that preparations be made to celebrate the event suitably." Having received confirmation from Major-General J. B. Hawkins, that there was indeed a high likelihood for cessation of "hostilities in Europe,” the Chief Secretary directed all Provincial Commissioners to get ready to celebrate "P [Peace] Day" by holding a religious celebration. Arrangements for celebrations were to be made by the Provincial Commissioners, working together with local military officers. In Nyanza, plans were made to celebrate the day by

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72 Ibid.
73 *East African Standard*, 5th February, 1942.
74 Major-General J.B. Hawkins, General Officer Commanding, Southern Area, to The Chief Secretary, letter dated 19th February, 1945, (Commendations for Service in War, 1940-48, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/51).
75 The Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 6th March, 1945, (Commendations for Service in War, 1940-48, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/51).
publicly "roasting six oxen and I have been deputized to raise the animals." There would be an inter-denominational church service, music, a March Past, decoration of the town [Kisumu], raising of flagstaffs. The day would be a two-day holiday everywhere. These arrangements went hand in hand with broadcasts to Africans that the war was still going on in Japan, and they should continue to support the war by not relaxing their effort. By April, the "P Day" was also known as "V Day" – Victory Day. This day was ultimately commemorated on 8th June, 1945. On August 17, 1945, Kenyans celebrated the V-J Day with major parades in various parts of Kenya including Nairobi. The government also began commemorating the role of askaris in specific battles by issuing them with badges and medals. By July 1945, the government revealed that it had awarded 4 M.B.'s, 7 B.E.M's, 36 D.C.Ms, and 79 M.M to askaris who had given outstanding service to the army during the war besides many other medals. By 1950, the Commissioner of Social Welfare had distributed 10,000 medals to askaris.

As the end of the war approached, and the Allies grew confident of achieving victory, the government began thinking about constructing more permanent remembrance of askaris' role in the war. Monuments and memorials were to be constructed. Already headstones were being built to mark burial places of fallen askaris. After the war, the government held discussions with local African leadership on the internment of the bodies of askaris who were buried away from the colony, and as a result of this discussion, it was decided that as far as it was practicable, "graves of East and West African natives of all religions

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should be left in their original sites as it was against tribal custom to move the dead."[77]

But outside of the colony, steps were taken to give askaris proper burial. While the moving of dead bodies was repugnant to many Africans' customs, it was decided that bodies of askaris' which were buried outside of the colony would be collected and buried, and a list of their names inscribed on "A Roll of Honor," made out under the military units they served in during the war. The "Roll of Honor" was inscribed with the following words, "In Memory of the Men of ... District Who Gave their Lives in the 1939-45 War," and were to be translated into various languages. The "Roll of Honor" in Nyanza was translated into Dholuo, "Kuom Paro Jogo Ma Central Nyanza ma Noruendo Ngimagi Elweny Mar 1939 nyaka 1945 [In Remembrance of those who lost their lives in the War of 1939-45]."[78] Wherever the askaris were buried, whether in Kenya or outside, their graves were tended carefully. Askaris who were killed during the bombing of Abu Haggag in 1942 were buried at a place, which one officer at the Nyanza Provincial Office described as "one spot in the Middle East which has special significance to all East African troops, and amongst them most of all to men from Nyanza, as a memorial of their part in the Western Desert Campaigns – that is, the desert railway station of Abu Haggag."[79] The askaris who were killed in the conflict were buried with full honors, and their burial place was a sacred place to men who served with them in the same unit, always visiting and making sure that it was well kept. The Abu Haggag Bell was also brought to Nyanza Province, engraved at a cost of shs.1,004/26 [part of the money also paid for the Rolls of Honor in memory of casualties from Nyanza], and hung in the

[77] Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioners, letter dated 21st December, 1945, (Tombstone and Monuments, 1941-49, KNA, DC/KMGA/1/3/8).
[78] (Kenya War Fund, 1947-57, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/148).
Nyanza Provincial Commissioner's Office as a temporary commemoration as a more permanent memorial was still being planned. On 16th December, 1942, a memorial service was held at Ngong' Cemetery for reburial of South African soldiers, and "Kenya men resting there ... Africans and a Jew." The Imperial War Graves Commission endeavored to do the same for casualties of World War I and World War II. In a letter to the Commissioner of Lands, Mines, and Survey, who was also in charge of maintaining the graves, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner informed him that all war graves were in good condition. Cemeteries were constructed at Gilgil, Nanyuki, and Kisumu largely for European soldiers, though there were about 40 "native veterans" buried at the Kisumu African Cemetery.

But there were a lot of discussion on a project of remembrance that transcended mere national celebrations and construction of well-tended and beautiful burial sites. Even the askaris themselves chipped in with their own thoughts. There were discussions on whether the memorial should be national or local, whether one main memorial should be constructed at the capital or whether each region should have its own memorials. There were those who wanted a simple monument that stood as a reminder of the role and sacrifices in the war and there were those who thought that merely putting up memorials would not be good enough to commemorate askaris' sacrifices. A memorial, some argued, should have a more functional role in the colony, otherwise it would be forgotten.

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80 East African Standard, 18th December, 1942.
82 E. A. Griffin, Chief Administrative Officer, Imperial War Graves Commission to the Chief Secretary, Kenya, letter dated 14th November, 1949, (War Graves, 1943-56, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/61).
and left to rot; a building in the memory of askaris could, for instance, also serve as a library where people read and did other things, and also reflected on the significance of those that the building commemorated. By September, 1946, the Kenya War Memorial Fund was launched, and its raison d'être to provide practical assistance to askaris instead of merely remembering them by building monuments. Plans were discussed to raise [British pounds]250,000 for the fund to be fully and properly functional. It was felt that the Fund would exist for "at least fifteen years ... to gain the full benefits of the regularly renewed public support, and in which to execute all the projects." According to the organizer of the Fund, once the fund became operational, preferences for help would be given to "descendants of members of the Forces or of the civil organizations established for carrying on the war who were either of Kenya origin or served with the East African Forces or civil organizations between 1939 and 1945."

And that brought up the idea of paying school fees for children of deceased askaris. By paying fees for the children of ex-soldiers and of members of war-related civil organizations, the Fund would "enable the African community to understand and appreciate the duty and privilege this Fund represents. Their own fathers and sons bore the brunt of the personal sacrifices which war demanded and though the African is unaccustomed to giving to a cause from which he sees no immediate return, there is so much in his scheme of ultimate benefit to him and his children that the nature of the

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83 "Meeting of the Conference of East African Governors," Nairobi 7th-9th June, 1945, (Commissions, Committees, and Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).
84 The East African Standard, 11th November, 1946.
85 The East African Standard, 28th September, 1946.
memorial to which he is asked to subscribe ought not to be difficult to explain." The second function of the Fund was the "erection of an extension of the Coryndon Museum to be called the Kenya War Memorial Museum, and if funds permit, the trustees may give financial assistance to other museums established or to be established throughout the colony." The third function of the Kenya War Memorial Fund "will be used for the erection in Kenya of permanent memorials in such form and at such places, as may be agreed in consultation with local communities."  

By the end of November, 1946, the government had collected Kshs. 211,525. By 1947, the Kenya War Memorial Fund had collected [British pounds] 22,500, according to Stewart-Modera, the Acting Chairman of the Management Committee of the Kenya Memorial Fund. In Nyanza Province, the administration managed to collect Kshs. 947/50 by 26th January, 1948. By 25th August, 1948, the Fund in Nyanza Province stood at [British pounds] 2,741, that was equivalent to Kshs. 54,842.06. After 1946, the Fund provided children of askaris who were killed in the war with bursaries. A nominal roll of the askaris who died in active service was prepared, and dispatched to the District Headquarters to help determine the children of deceased askaris who would earn bursaries. Alongside the government pledge of free education through the Bursary Fund, the British Legion also "voted a sum of [British pounds] 2,000 for the provision of bursaries for secondary education to those children who have shown by their performance
in primary education that they are worth training."\textsuperscript{90} The East Africa Benevolent Fund was also involved in providing education to children of \textit{askaris}. Not much was known about this Fund until 1952, when the Secretariat urged Provincial Administration to do a "suitable publicity in all districts." By this time, the administration had decided not to use the War Memorial Fund for bursary purposes, and so alternative funds were used. The East Africa Benevolent Fund had already disbursed [British pounds] 17,000 "for the building of memorial homes and hostels and for the provisions of bursaries for the education of the children of ex-\textit{askaris}."\textsuperscript{91} It was through this scheme that children like Felogo Anyango, daughter of \textit{askari} Hezron Okwaro Bugo managed to go to school.

But other applicants were not successful. The children of \textit{askari} Alfred Oburo Wanyango who died at home on 30\textsuperscript{th} January, 1944, came forward to apply for the free bursary scheme, but were told that their father died at home, and that therefore the military was not responsible for his death. Alfred Oburo Wanyango was not on the list of casualties whose children could apply for bursary, and he was never even paid a death gratuity.\textsuperscript{92} The children of Karilus Ogutu were informed that they did not qualify for fee bursary because there "is no record of this man having been killed on active service, but even if he was, the claim cannot be allowed, as it was not made before 1st January, 1948."\textsuperscript{93}

When the family of Karilus Ogutu argued that he died at home of war wounds, the administration claimed that he had only received a "trivial flesh wound" and he would not

\textsuperscript{90} C. H. Thornley, Acting Attorney-General to Government Officers, letter dated 18th August, 1947, (Education of Children of \textit{Askaris} who died in Active Service, 1947-60, KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/59).
\textsuperscript{91} T. Neil, for Deputy Chief Secretary, the Secretariat, Circular dated 3\textsuperscript{rd} June, 1952, (War Memorials, 1951-58, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/64).
\textsuperscript{92} (Education of Children of \textit{Askaris} who died in Active Service, 1947-60, KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/59).
\textsuperscript{93} K. J. A. Hunt, for District Commissioner, to the Education Secretary, Kisumu, letter dated 5\textsuperscript{th} October, 1948, (Education of Children of \textit{Askaris} who died in Active Service, 1947-60, KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/59).
have died from it, and so "I regret his children are not eligible for free education."

As a result of the new resolution that barred applications for free education after January, 1948, the number of applications for bursary decreased. In 1948, there was only one application in Central Kavirondo District while in 1949 there was no application at all. Realizing that many children were being denied education simply because they did not submit their applications before January, 1948, the Memorial Fund Committee, which administered the bursary fund introduced a new resolution in 1951, to the effect that it was "willing to consider applications from the children of Africans who served with the East African Forces during the 1939-45 war who desire financial assistance towards the cost of school or post-school education. Preference will be given to those who died in action." Some applications were no doubt approved after many frustrations.

But besides providing a bursary for children of dead *askaris*, the government also used funds from the Kenya War Memorial Fund to build what were then referred to as "visual memorials." Each district was allocated "a percentage of the money raised in that district for the purpose of erecting visible memorials of the following types – statues, drinking fountains, obelisks, shrines, gates or archways ... and that each visible memorial should have associated with it, in some way, the names of the fallen from that district, through the medium of either a roll of honor or a book of remembrance." In Nyanza, there was Kshs.54,989/78 for that purpose, and each district had made a decision about how to use

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94 Ibid.
95 E. W. Goodbody, Central Kavirondo District Commissioner to Nyanza Province Senior Education Officer, letter dated 23rd January, 1950, (Education of Children of *Askaris* who died in Active Service, 1947-60, KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/59).
96 J. H. Butter, for Chief Native Commissioner to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 29th January, 1951, (Education of Children of *Askaris* who died in Active Service, 1947-60, KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/59).
the fund. The money was considered insufficient for bursary, and so the money already collected, [British pounds]2,741 "would be devoted to the erection of visible memorial or memorials." Visible monuments were constructed in various parts of the colony. The War Memorial Fund released Kshs. 9,186/50, which was used to construct the pavilion and grandstand at Kisii Sports Stadium in 1957. Proceeds from the Fund were also used to build an "annexe to the African District Council Hall and on the inscribed brass, Rolls of Honor which cover part of the all of the council." At the national level, the plan by a Mrs. Hughes, the architect of the Theater of the Kenya Cultural Center to build a visible war memorial "in the foyer" of her Theater was effected. In January, 1956, the East Africa War Memorial was opened at the Ngong' Cemetery, and ex-askaris were invited to attend. Ten ex-askaris from Nyanza attended the ceremony.

The Process of Demobilization.

As has already been mentioned, Government Post-War Plans, which are sometimes alternatively known as Demobilization plans began early in the war, but actively took an urgent pace in the second half of 1944. Committees were formed to deal with such things as "Post-War Employment," "Post-War Development," and "Demobilization." Among their recommendations for demobilization was the decision that the army and the government and various departments within them would be in charge of different tasks in

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97 "Report of the War Memorial Study Group," (Kenya War Memorial Suggestions, KNA, PC/LAMU/2/11/2).
98 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, "Minutes of a Meeting of a Provincial Committee to Consider the use to be made of Funds collected for the Purpose of a War Memorial," letter dated 25th August, 1948, (Kenya War Fund, 1947-57, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/148).
connection with demobilization and re-absorption of *askaris* into their communities. The army was given the task of overseeing the actual process of demobilization – the office would be under Col. E. L. Brooke-Anderson, the Civil Director of Demobilization, and the Civil Government was going to be in charge of dispersal, training, and rehabilitation. P. E. Williams was the Director of Training. The Committees also outlined the actual procedure of demobilization and dispersal. During a meeting of the territorial Governors on 7th-9th June, 1945, the colonies in East and Central African decided that having arrived from the battle-field, the *askaris* would move to Nairobi, “where the Pay and Records Offices were situated and where documentation was completed. On completion of their documentation, *askaris* would be sent to their respective District Commissioners for final discharge, and would then proceed to their homes.”¹⁰¹ By this time, the *askaris* would already have been informed of the amount of pay and gratuity to expect at the District Commissioner's Office [Post Office Savings Bank], and that they would receive clothing and money on their journeys home. Although originally the army had intended to demobilize men at the Collection and Dispersal points near their homes, it was realized that this would be too costly. Instead, the government decided that to save "time and overheard," the men would be demobilized by units at their district headquarters.¹⁰²

All *askaris* were to be demobilized through Nairobi, including *askaris* from other territories. The main discharge depot for all *askaris* was the African Discharge Wing of the General Base Depot at Lang'ata. Preference during discharge was to be given to old *askaris* and those who joined the war from the very beginning and had served for a long

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¹⁰¹ “Meeting of the Conference of East African Governors,” Nairobi 7th-9th June, 1945, (Commissions, Committees, and Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).
time because those were the most likely "to go home and have a rest." Men with the longest record of service were also going to be demobilized first because the administration, following the advice of S. H. Fazan, believed that once these men went home, they would "be a stabilizing factor for the younger soldiers who followed. It would also mean that the younger soldiers would be demobilized when more had been done to find them something to do." It was also decided that compassionate leave be granted to askaris who joined the war at the age of 18 and had served for at least three years, as long as "they had the necessary educational qualifications, that is, such releases to be selective and not automatic." Machinery was put in place for askaris proceeding to hospitals and for disciplinary cases, as the askaris moved to the District Commissioners' Offices.

Besides the main Demobilization and Dispersal Headquarter, there would also be other discharge centers at Athi River, Nyali Transit Camp, No.1 General Hospital, Nairobi, Jinja, Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka and Lilongwe, catering to small groups. The main Depot of the various arms, for instance, Medical Units, Artillery, and Signals also helped with discharge. In all, there were twelve different army centers involved in the discharge of askaris. From here, the demobilized askaris would then travel to their District Headquarters.

There were to be three traveling officers to supervise demobilization and three more officers to assist units in their documentation. African Warrant Officers and NCO's were also trained and detailed to help in documentation of the askaris. The army promised that

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102 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
the *askaris* would be conducted to their District Commissioners by the NCOs of their units, and that the army's responsibility to the men would not end until the men were "delivered to their District Commissioners"\(^{106}\) Promising that they would prepare the documents of *askaris* who were being demobilized from the army, the General Officer Commanding the East African Troops said that arrangements were in place to begin demobilization in August, 1945. The number of *askaris* being demobilized was planned to be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From the second half of August to end of October: 12,300</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of November: 6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of January, 1946: 12,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of March: 14,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of April: 8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of May: 3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of June: 2,700</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This meant that the military would be able to demobilize 59,000 *askaris* leaving 173,000 to be demobilized thereafter.\(^{107}\) By the end of August 29, 1945, it was reported in the *East African Standard* that *askaris* were leaving the African Discharge Wing of the General Base Depot, Lang'ata at the rate of 500 per week, and there were plans to accelerate the process by increasing the number of *askaris* getting discharged. At another meeting of the Governors, the military promised to step up demobilization "to a maximum of 6,000 Africans per week which should complete demobilization by August, 1946."\(^{108}\)

The cost of demobilization and rehabilitation was [British pounds]1,593,352.20 for all the

\(^{105}\) "Meeting of the Conference of East African Governors," Nairobi 7\(^{th}\)-9\(^{th}\) June, 1945, (Commissions, Committees, and Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).

\(^{106}\) Ibid.

\(^{107}\) Ibid.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.
East African territories, and there were disagreements between the government and the military over which arm of the government would be responsible for the cost of demobilization, training, and rehabilitation. At one point, the government even suggested that the British government should meet the cost of demobilization and rehabilitation. The British government was asked to meet "the full cost of direct demobilization expenditure and rehabilitation costs as being part of the cost of the war which colonial funds cannot meet." Should it agree, the British government would pay [British pounds]355,807, while the East African territories would meet [British pounds]456,958.10, and the Colonial Development and Welfare would meet [British pounds]780,487.10. The colonial treasury had earlier in May, 1945, promised to meet fifty percent of the capital and recurrent costs of rehabilitation measures, which included the treatment of men disabled in the war, those suffering from tuberculosis, and the direct demobilization expenditure. The Colonial Development and Welfare Department was expected to meet the costs of training the men. But then during the meeting, the Treasury Department was asked to increase the amount it was going to dispense in meeting rehabilitation, treatment, and direct demobilization from fifty percent to a hundred percent. That was why it then turned to the British government for help. What all this means was that the government was not well prepared financially to meet the cost of demobilization and rehabilitation. This lack of funds and preparations would be felt by the askaris in their pockets as they arrived home from the war.

As they headed home, askaris were followed by government propaganda, which urged them to go home and settle peacefully. A tool for recruitment and mobilization of the
population to line behind the government in the war, propaganda became handy as the war came to an end. The new function of propaganda was defined very clearly by the Chief Information Officer, as "increasingly devoted to Africans on subjects affecting their ordinary peace time existence – health, farming methods, soil conservation, and so on. Such propaganda should be planned, and I should be grateful if the departments of government responsible for social services, that is, Medical, Agricultural, Veterinary, Education and Forestry, might be directed to furnish this office with general instructions at regular intervals." The magazine Kwetu Kenya, which had a good reputation as a reliable source of valuable information on the home front, was by mid. 1945, including "propaganda articles" for askaris awaiting demobilization. A good soldier was one who was obedient, respectful, hard-working, one who believed in the virtues of the colonial state. The askaris were urged by the government to respect authority and promote stability. In the words of one officer, the askari was told to aspire towards achieving "the potentiality of the finer type of African soldier as a member or even leader of his community, and especially in village social development, after the war." Standards for the "finer type of askari" were set and askaris were urged to emulate him.

Those askaris who demanded special recognition were told through government media that they were not the only ones who fought for the defense of the country against the Axis Powers. Remember, as already noted, askaris were admonished that, "hundreds of thousands have been soldiers as well as you. Many others wanted to become soldiers and

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109 (Chief Information Officer to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 3rd October, 1945, Propaganda for Africans, CS/1/10/44).

110 Information Officer's letter entitled, "Propaganda for African troops awaiting Discharge," to the chief Secretary, letter dated 3rd July, 1945, (Propaganda for Africans, KNA, CS/1/10/44).
could not. Why not? – production, etc, etc. This equally applied to Europeans as
Africans. These persons who had to stay at home may not have had physical danger in
Africa but they had hardships and no experiences such as you have had. No uniforms, no
travel, no excitement and no fat pay rolls for them. Thus all have contributed to winning
war and now in peace – civilian and soldier are one again.\footnote{112} With the war coming to an
end, the government culled what it called the "new angle of propaganda," which it
defined in terms of "achieving harmony, unity and understanding between the African
serviceman and his civilian brother."\footnote{113} Anything that was likely to threaten this harmony
was assuaged by propaganda that emphasized the interdependence of both civilians and
askaris for the victory.

Both African civilians and askaris were impressed with notions of their roles and
importance to the war. The civilian was told "not just what the soldier at his best is like
but how the army has helped and depends upon civilian production ... of his duty toward
the askari who is fighting his battles; how news of home in letters helps morale; how to
write letters or, if illiterate to get them written."\footnote{114} Askaris were told that there were
different types of war in the world and the war against the Axis was just one of them.
There were other enemies of peace and the askaris needed to fight these enemies of peace
and progress, "malnutrition ... disease ... poverty ... laziness."\footnote{115} The askaris were then

\footnote{111} Alan Dickinson, Director, East Africa Mobile Propaganda Unit, in a letter dated 10\textsuperscript{th} November, 1944,
(Cinema and War, 1944-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/15/159).
\footnote{112} "Suggested Subjects for Articles to be read to African troops awaiting discharge either while still with
their units or at Dispersal Centers," (Propaganda for Africans, KNA, CS/1/10/44).
\footnote{113} A Report on "Interpreting Army and Civilian Africans to Each Other," in \textit{The East African Standard},
Friday, November 3, 1944.
\footnote{114} Ibid.
\footnote{115} "Suggested Subjects for Articles to be read to African troops awaiting discharge either while still with
their units or at Dispersal Centers," (Propaganda for Africans, KNA, CS/1/10/44)
told that, "you have made a valuable contribution to winning the war. Winning the war was a means to an end, that is, a safe world, progress, peace, etc. What can you contribute to your world and to peace?"

Working towards harmony and prosperity meant that the askari had to help the civilian whom he left at home. "You may find that his [civilian's] ways are no longer your ways but they were your ways and the way you used to live. If you have got new ideas, if you are now literate, etc, etc, you cannot despise him. Perhaps with your wider experience you can help him and may be he can help you. A traveler picks up good and bad habits, pass on the good discard the bad and pick up any of the good you have forgotten."

Propaganda was also fashioned to prevailing regional social, economic and political conditions. Among the Maasai, for instance, propaganda dealt with meat production, the need "to improve their land so as to carry as many cattle as possible and to improve their stock by better methods of husbandry and gradually to prevent periodical famine."

The Beginning of Askaris' Problems.

Although the government had tried to institutionalize a system of demobilization and resettlement of askaris, augmented with propaganda whose objective was to encourage askaris to accept the status quo and obediently take up their assigned place in the Post-War World, the system was fraught with problems. For one, the system was new; in spite of government's long-standing policy of preparing for the arrival and resettlement of askari after the war, the plans were generally not implemented until after the war was

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116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
over. Policies which had been in operation for the discharge of *askaris* in the course of the war – for the discharge of those who fell sick, got injured, or were court martialed, and those with urgent family problems – were shelved once the Committee on Demobilization submitted its report. A new policy, which was less understood, came to effect. Whereas in the past sick or injured *askaris* used to be discharged at the Recruitment and Holding Centers, the new policy required the administration to discharge *askaris* at district headquarters. Many times the district headquarters found that they did not have adequate documents for the discharge of *askaris*. Having been used to a system that had been in operation since the beginning of the war, it took time for the administrators to understand the new system. According to the old system which had been in use since 1939, discharged *askaris* particularly the injured and sick *askaris* were released either to the main hospital in Nairobi for more specialized treatment, if they were seriously injured or sick, or dispatched to an hospital in their home areas for further convalescence, if their condition was not very bad or if an initial medical problem had been stabilized. Permanently disabled soldiers without legs and arms were sent to the "Nairobi Rehabilitation Center and then go to their homes in the reserve."  

These guidelines were refined from time to time. At one meeting in 1943, for instance, it was decided for the benefit of injured or sick *askaris*, that, "convalescence homes should be attached to all dispersal centers and that if necessary the Nairobi Rehabilitation center should be enlarged to accommodate the type of casualty with which it deals at

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118 A. N. Bailward, Officer-in-Charge, Maasai, letter entitled, "Propaganda for African troops awaiting Discharge," to the Information Officer, letter dated 20th June, 1945, (Propaganda for Africans, KNA, CS/1/10/44).  
119 (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
present."\textsuperscript{120} It was also decided that, "African ex-service men should receive free medical
treatment by the Civil Authorities whether their ailments were a direct cause of their
military service or otherwise."\textsuperscript{121} Thus when Okoth Muranda was diagnosed with
"contagious leprosy;" Sakani Chegero with "T.B. at elbow joint;" Senjena Ndegwa with
"pulmonary T.B;" Murage Kamunyu with "chronic synovitis on the right knee;" and
Chemboi Chelagat with "psychopathic state," they were all, with the exception of
Chemboi Chelagat, dispatched to hospitals in their home areas "for further treatment and
discharge to their homes."\textsuperscript{122} After receiving treatment at the main government hospital,
Pte. Odhiambo Onjere, who had been suffering from "peripheral neuritis following
relapsing fever," was released to "out-patient hospital treatment and I should be glad if
you will arrange for this with the Medical Officer-in-Charge of the nearest hospital."\textsuperscript{123}
The government also tried to make sure that discharged *askaris* received a thorough
medical check before release. Coming back from far places where they were exposed to
different types of disease environments, these soldiers were examined to ensure that they
did not go back to their homes carrying foreign pathogens. From the hospital, the
recovered *askaris* joined the rest of ordinary discharged *askaris* at discharge centers.
According to the old system of discharge in operation during the war, ordinary
discharged *askaris* passed through the East Africa Transit Base, Nairobi, and from there
they were transported to depots near their homes. That is to say, recruitment and holding
centers, which were used for recruitment, were also being used for discharging of *askaris*

\textsuperscript{120} "Minutes of a Meeting to Discuss the Repatriation and Disposal of Disabled *Askaris,* " held on Monday,
27\textsuperscript{th} September, 1943, (Discharged and Injured soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Officer-in-Charge of Repatriates, to District Commissioners, letter dated 9\textsuperscript{th} September, 1944,
(Repatriation, 1944-45, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/56).
\textsuperscript{123} Accountant-General to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 12\textsuperscript{th} December,
1944, (War Pensions and Gratuities, 1941-46, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/28).
from the army. Maseno Depot for instance served as a discharge center in western Nyanza environ. That was the last dispersal point for askaris going home.

But everything changed with the end of the war when the government changed the process of demobilization. At first the government had thought about demobilizing askaris through existing procedure which would culminate with the askaris joining the civilian world through the depots. A decision to maintain the existing procedure would have made sense. It was through depots that askaris had first got registered into the army, and most of their registration documents were kept at the depots [some district headquarters also kept copies of registration documents, but it is not clear how widespread that policy was]. Although the old process of discharge involved many government departments [the Department of Information and Department of Education involved in propaganda and training, the East African Pay Corps which arranged pay and emoluments due to the askaris, the East African Military Records which prepared records, and the Discharge Office coordinating them, not to mention the civil administrators], it had largely succeeded because of many reasons. First, because the number of askaris being discharged during the war was largely small. Second, the administrators had also become used to the system. Third, documents were also easily retrievable at the depots. But with the end of the war, the government came up with a new policy of demobilization and discharge from the army which local administrators were unused to. The new policy was spelt out in various government documents such as Government Circular Letter No.18, "Procedure of Discharge for African Ranks."

Demobilizing askaris were assembled in Nairobi, mostly at the African Discharge Wing
of the General Base Depot at Langata. But how did this system operate?

According to a Release Scheme in operation, the _askaris_ were to be placed in service groups according to their date of enlistment, each group covering a period of two months, their release done gradually as already shown elsewhere in this chapter. Exceptions to this rule were regular _askaris_ whose term of service had not expired or who had re-enlisted, and also those whose services were considered "operationally vital" for a specified period. While awaiting discharge, the _askaris_ were given a crash-course on "a variety of practical handicrafts to ensure that when they return to the reserves they will have a useful job to which they can turn their hands."\(^{124}\) Promulgated by the Principal Civil Dispersal Center, the new policy on demobilization provided an "Index Card in triplicate for each discharged man, one side showing his military number, registration number, name of chief and headman, and particulars as given on his discharge certificate, and the reverse side the date on which he is discharged, together with particulars of his Last Pay Certificate, clothing, gratuity, medals and leave pay. In addition, for those who are disabled a space for pension entitlement is left."\(^{125}\) One copy of the card was left at the headquarters of Demobilization and Re-absorption Offices, one sent to the District Commissioner's Office of the man concerned, and one sent to the Labor Office for use in the proposed Employment Bureau. The document also shows that the government would pay gratuities and distribute medals after the war. From Nairobi, _askaris_, leaving mostly in batches of five hundred a week, were released from the army and sent to the District Commissioner's Offices where they were paid their accumulated credits of Army pay,

\(^{124}\) _East African Standard_, August 29, 1945.
leave bonus, overseas service grants and ration allowance. Their gratuities and clothing grants were held for them at the Post Office Savings Bank. It was from their District Headquarters that the askaris went home.

The District Commissioners who were by now expecting the askaris were advised to guard against fraud especially given the fact that some askaris who had long deserted the army were now reporting to District Discharge Centers and making claims for gratuities. Some regular askaris were altering the amount of money they were entitled to on their Pay Certificates, making the figure higher. Any askari who claimed that his documents were lost was told to wait until a new copy was sent to the District Commissioner's office. 126 One document entitled, "Maseno Depot – Demobilization Section" shows that during demobilization, askaris were asked if they wanted to continue with serving in the army, and if their answers were in the affirmative they were "informed to be back in depot within one month and six days and that if they do so, their re-engagement will date from the date of discharge, that is, they will get their full pay for the 1 month and 6 days." 127 Men who wished to re-engage in other units were passed over to the Officer-in-Charge of the Depot, for provisional approval after examination by the Medical Officer, and after ensuring that there were vacancies in those units. "If so approved, they will be advised to report back within one month and six days but, if not re-enrolled in the military Labor Service, the enrolment will not be antedated, that they will not get their

126 Ibid.
127 "Maseno Depot -Demobilization Section," (List of Names and Recruits Sent to Maseno, 1941, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/161).
pay for the 1 month and six days."¹²⁸ Those who decided to quit the army and to go back to civilian life were taken to the Family Remittance Section, where their remittance payment was explained and they were now allowed to go home. Many askaris initially went back to civilian life, but after encountering various problems, including joblessness and inability to fit into their society, majority sought to rejoin the army.¹²⁹

The problem with this plan was that it was too new, and the civil and army administrators were hardly able to cope up with at short notice. The process of discharging and repatriating soldiers thus became long and complex, and delays were common. Immediately the war ended, there was a deluge of askaris demanding to go home; the Records Office and Pay Office were unable to cope, there were delays, and which askaris protested against. The askaris serving in the EAMLS were the most affected because of their large number; they made almost a half of the total number of askaris serving in the war. Given the fact that most were not very educated, their documents were not well kept. Many had lost their Pay Books, and others had books that presented "unusual difficulties."¹³⁰ By December, 1945, K. L. Hunter, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, noted that the process of demobilization in his province was "still fairly slow with only 207 coming out in December, 1945."¹³¹ Askaris reacted to these delays differently. Some askaris tried to speed up their discharge by claiming that they needed to go home early because of urgent family problems which required their presence.¹³² Although it is

¹²⁸ Ibid.
¹²⁹ Ibid.
¹³⁰ "Meeting of the Conference of East African Governors," Nairobi 7th-9th June, 1945, (Commissions, Committees, and Conferences, KNA, CS/2/2/6).
¹³¹ Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to District Commissioner of South Kavirondo, letter dated 21st December, 1945, (Banks, 1930-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/145).
¹³² (Family Affairs and Leave of Askaris; 1945, KNA, DC/KSM1/22/111).
difficult to quantify the number of applications for early discharge, one cannot fail to notice the coincidence of such applications with the end of the war. Many askaris were anxious to go home. Injured or disabled soldiers rejected treatment and demanded discharge. The Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation Center estimated that "90% of the patients seen at No.1 General Hospital refuse further hospital treatment. They want to go home. When advised to enter hospital for further treatment they usually answer that they will go home first and will attend their district hospital later if they become worse." On the other hand, one askari noted that all those who "joined the army in 1939 have now been discharged but that some have refused to return to their homes. Among these he states are 170 Baganda and some Wakamba."

In many cases askaris became angry and even rioted after waiting for a long time to be discharged from the army. The whole tenor of Clerk Alfayo Nying'u ro's letter is that of frustration with the army. After the death of his father, Clerk Alfayo Nying'u ro had hoped to go home and participate in communal funeral rituals, given the fact that he was the eldest son and his presence was required at home for these rituals to be undertaken. By the end of August, Alfayo Nying'u ro was still in the army, and when he could not take it anymore, he burst forth: "mother [is] suffering loneliness in our village since my father's death of last year ... My father died on 17th December, 1944 ... surely you can feel yourself sir if it had been you, what would you feel for that if your parent asked you for

132 Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation Center, Circular dated 29th May, 1944, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
such pity and sympathy."\textsuperscript{135} On 10\textsuperscript{th} August, 1945, as noted elsewhere, Jason Ookoo, Soti Yube, Kiheya Ongone and Owenga Ayila led a mutiny in Colombo in Ceylon when "little activity was on foot and there was a general clamor for demobilization by all troops."\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Askaris} were idle and restless.

Because the Records Office and Pay Office were unable to cope with the huge number of \textit{askaris} demanding to go home, the first group of \textit{askaris} who did not have proper documentation were in most cases sent home without pay. Many EAMLS \textit{askaris} were forced to go home without pay either because their documents had not yet arrived at the Central Discharge Center, or at the District Headquarters. To be sure, these kinds of problems were not new, but they were certainly magnified by the time the war came to an end. As early as February, 1940, Okwa Oyieyo was discharged from the army on medical grounds, but when the time came to be paid, the officer in charge of records reported that Okwa Oyieyo could not be paid his dues because "pay affairs have not, as yet, been settled. As soon as the amount due to [him] is known I shall send the same to you to be given over to [him]."\textsuperscript{137} When Wanyama, a driver with the EAASC, was discharged from the army, he too had to be discharged while "any money due to him" was still being processed.\textsuperscript{138} By the middle of the war, delays that inundated payment of gratuity to

\textsuperscript{135} Clerk Alfayo Nying'uro, 3 [EA] Inf. W/S Coy. EAEME, South East Asia Command, to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirono, letter dated 27\textsuperscript{th} August, 1945, (Family Affairs and Leave, 1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/110).

\textsuperscript{136} Major E. G. Russell to the Superintendent of Police, HM Prison, Kisumu, letter dated 12\textsuperscript{th} September, 1946, (Court Martial and Review of Cases, KNA, AH/4/48).

\textsuperscript{137} Captain, Officer-in-Charge, Territorial Record Office, the King's African Rifles, to the Central Kavirono District Commissioner, letter dated 23\textsuperscript{rd} February, 1940, (Military Recruitment, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/18).

\textsuperscript{138} Lt. Col., Officer Commanding, Military Training Depot and T.C., EAASC., to the Officer Commanding, the East Africa Pay Corps, letter dated 13\textsuperscript{th} March, 1942, (Discharges: Soldiers, 1934-42, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/27).
discharged soldiers continued dogging the army and the civil administration. During a meeting on 27th September, 1943, Captain A. L. Ganniclift, Officer Commanding, Discharge Section, East African Transit Base, enumerated the causes of some of the delays in discharging soldiers. These, he wrote, "included lost pass books, incomplete pay books, in the cases of men from overseas, the period which elapsed before relevant orders were received, and occasional congestion at the Pay Corps." These delays led to askaris suffering extreme difficulties and frustrations at home.

The horrible condition of life of some of the first batch of discharged askari was a good pointer to the kind of life awaiting demobilized soldiers. Once discharged askaris had been paid their gratuities, they were often left to their own devises. Many askaris became destitute fairly soon after discharge, askaris like Julius Malenga. Discharged from the army on medical grounds, his situation was so bad that the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo was actually compelled to tell the Officers-in-Charge of Pay to expedite Malenga's gratuities because he was "... almost destitute ..." Ogonyo Asweto's case was different but no less traumatic. When he got discharged from the army on medical grounds, he was overpaid by Kshs. 14/66. When the administration discovered its mistake, it ordered Chief Elijah Bonyo of Sakwa to "chukua hizo shillings alafu rudisha hapa ofisini kwa upesi pamoja na hii barua [get all the money from him and bring it back here together with this letter]." The District Commissioner did not clarify what would happen if Ogonyo Asweto had already used the money, but the usual mode

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139 "Minutes of a Meeting to discuss the Repatriation and Disposal of Disabled Askaris" held on 27th September, 1943, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
140 District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Base Details Camp, Nairobi, letter undated, (Discharges: Soldiers, 1934-42, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/27).
of recovering such funds was through compelling the debtor to work for the government on a project for a specific duration. When Ogonyo Asweto received the District Commissioner's summons to refund the overpayment, even though the mistake was not his and there is no knowing whether or not he could even tell he had been overpaid, he informed the District Commissioner through a letter that he would "pay his debts when he will receive his Family Remittance Amount." Rabilo Thosi was also discharged from the army while owing a debt of Kshs.4/-, and was ordered to "afike hapa pamoja na barua hii mbele yangu kwa mara moja [he must report here with this letter immediately]." A. R. Ogola Nundu also left the army with an extra Kshs.7/32 and the local administration was directed to "please contact him, and endeavor to recover the sum of Kshs.7/32 and remit it to East Africa Pay Corps direct." On the other hand Karilus Ogutu would have been happy to know that although he was discharged from the army without money, it had finally arrived, some Kshs.331/07. The trouble was that nobody could find Karilus Ogutu, prompting the government to issue summons for him to be located.

By the end of the war, the situation had not improved. Due to the fact that many askaris continued to experience delays in receiving their discharge gratuities for different

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141 District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Chief Elijah Bonyo, letter dated 5th May, 1942, (Discharges: Soldiers, 1934-42, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/27).
144 J. H. Gordon, Captain, Officer-in-Charge, discharges Section to the Officer Commanding, Central Civil Records, Maseno Depot, letter dated 27th May, 1942, (Discharges: Soldiers, 1934-42, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/27).
reasons, the government decided to compile a list of names of those who had not yet been paid their terminal benefits two years after the war. During a meeting between some officials in the Office of the Governors' Conference, it emerged that Col. Vero, the Command Paymaster, and Major Assail, the Acting Director of Demobilization, had "collected details from all six territories of the payments still outstanding to individual ex-soldiers and when this information had been collected into one list, he hoped he would be able to trace a large number of those men still unpaid." These delays compelled the War Department, through Col. Vero, the Command Paymaster, to assure the Civil Administration that although some askaris had not collected their emoluments in two years [italics mine], the government "has no intention of repudiating claims from ex-askaris and that the refund of the present balances remaining unclaimed -- after a period of two years was not to be considered as a time bar payments." This list was then published as a booklet entitled, "Unclaimed Emoluments: Kenya" in 1949. It contained the names of askaris who had not been traced and whose money remained uncollected, and the government vowed to make "every endeavor to clear all unclaimed emoluments." This booklet contained names of at least 954 askaris, meaning that although the government had done a good job of paying out the money due to askaris, a significant number continued to suffer delays.

Several soldiers who were present during interviews question the accuracy of this government document, pointing out that they never received any money, and their names

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146 P. E. Tennent, for Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference to the Chief Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya, letter dated 12th November, 1947, (War Gratuities, 1928-47, KNA, CA/12/3).
147 Minutes of a Conference held at C.P.O. ... to Discuss Clearance of ... Askari Gratuities, 3rd November, 1947, (War Gratuities, 1928-47, KNA, CA/12/3).
are not in this booklet. They also claim that for the most part, of those whose money was processed after a long delay, the money was often too little, too late, arriving when *askaris* were already either dead or neck-deep in debt. Cases of *askaris* dying before receiving their pay or becoming impoverished by too many debts while waiting for their pay were not uncommon after the war. Some *askaris* continued to borrow to pay off a debt in anticipation of their allowance, and which, when it arrived, often ended up being less than what had been expected. *Askaris* lost face after incurring too many debts and many became extremely bitter with the government. After waiting for his gratuity, Okidi Ogoda was shocked that after undergoing medical examination with the Medical Board of the Pensions Assessment Board, it assessed his "war disability ... at nil," and stopped his temporary allowance of Kshs.21/- per quarter with effect from 13th January, 1946. The same Medical Board also discontinued Romanus Obute Aguda's allowance after finding that "the aggravation of his disability by war no longer persists."149 Warera Siuli was also consigned to an uncertain future when the Medical Board assessed his disability at nil, and "the temporary allowance of Kshs.21/- per quarter therefore ceases after the 25th August, 1945."150 But that was just the beginning of *askaris'* complaints.

The Problem of Pay: Gratuity or Pension?

It is arguably difficult to come across any work dealing with Post-war *askaris* that does not mention or allude to *askaris'* grievances over pay. Most works, which are based on interviews with *askaris*, point to the ever-present *askari* anger over what they term as the

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149 Accountant-General to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 30th May, 1945, (War Pensions and Gratuities, 1941-46, DC/KSM/1/36/28).
colonial government's betrayal over their pay. During interviews which were held with askaris for materials for this work, askaris often argued that the British government went away with their money, and many wondered whether anything could be done to recover it. Askaris almost unanimously believe that when they joined the war, they were promised a pension, but when the war came to an end, the government reneged. Very few askaris were diplomatic with their complaints. Many askaris accused the British government of "stealing our money." Others asserted that they had heard that the British government remitted their money through the Kenyatta and Moi Governments, and that "they [corrupt people in the government] ate it!" In the middle of a unanimous claim by askaris to the effect that the government owes them money, what exactly is the truth? As the British government has largely remained mum over askaris' claims, how valid are these claims? Is there any legitimacy in claims and accusations of betrayal that the askaris have lodged at the door of the British government? Did the British colonial administration make some promises and which they failed to fulfill when the war came to an end? What exactly happened? If the British government promised askaris some reward during recruitment, what exactly were those rewards? Were askaris promised money? What happened to askaris' pay? These questions have to a large extent influenced the way askaris recall the war, their attitude to the British colonial administration, and their experiences after the war. It would be an understatement to say only that askaris are very bitter with the British government, often accusing it of taking advantage of them and then after they had fought and died and made the colony safe, they

were consigned to the periphery of the colonial state. But this question is quite complicated, and needs a historical analysis for any illumination to be achieved.

Although most of *askaris' claims* are based on oral testimonies with little documentary evidence of their own to support their claims, when one looks at government documents and government behavior during the war, it is not too difficult to believe *askaris' claims.* *Askaris' often repeated claim* that during the war they were promised material rewards like land, jobs, training, regular pay in the form of pension, and this can easily believed because at the beginning of the war the government was desperate for men, and often made promises that sometimes were hard to keep. During the war, the government was often quite generous with *askaris.* Generous financial compensations were regularly given to disabled soldiers and to families of *askaris* killed in war. Most of the time, payments were made promptly. When Sgt. Okello Oyori was medically discharged from the army in 1940, he was paid Kshs.500 and "he now applies for Hut Tax exemption."153

Two months later, in May 1940, Sgt. Okello was paid a further shs.100, with a promise of "possibly an additional bonus as shown in the attached application form."154 Pte.

Onyango Ochien was paid kshs.180 as a discharge gratuity in 1940 "in respect of service" of only a few months in the army. When Nyapalo Olango was discharged from the army, the Accountant-General paid him "shs.240/- and a pension at the rate of shs.21 per

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152 Lawrende Nyadudu Okumu, and Johannes Ohanya Mahulo, Interviewed on 13th December, 2000; Anthony Owang’ Opondo and Martín Auma Aringo, Interviewed on 11th December, 2000.
153 J.W. Howard for District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Officer-in-Charge, Territorial Record Office, 13th March, 1940, (Gratuity Applications, 152-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/219).
154 Officer-in-Charge, Territorial Record Office, KAR to the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, letter dated 30th May, 1940, (Gratuity Applications, 152-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/219).
quarter" — meaning Nyapalo Olang'o was getting around Kshs. 84 per a year. The
government made a lot of concessions to *askaris* at the beginning of the war and
whenever they were discharged, they were often paid quite well. They were also
exempted from paying Hut Tax. They received quarterly financial emolument, amounting
to a kind of pension. By 8th May, 1941, the Government decided to amend the Non-
European Officer's Pension Ordinance, 1932, which, among other issues, provided that,
"for the purpose of the Pensions Law, a non-European Officer who is killed by enemy
action when travelling to and from the colony is to be regarded as killed on duty." This
regulation was officially gazetted on 13th May, 1941. Financial awards were made to
families of deceased African army officers. If the deceased officer left a widow, the
document stated, a pension was to be made to his widow, if unmarried and of good
character at a rate not exceeding ten-sixtieths of his pensionable emoluments at the date
of the injury or a [British pounds] 10 a year, whichever be the greater, and also a gratuity
not exceeding twenty shillings multiplied by the total number of their years, starting from
their ages at the time of their father's death and ending with fifteen years, to each child
alive at the date of the father's death, and a gratuity not exceeding [British pounds] 15 to
any posthumous child." It also provided that gratuity "so granted shall not in the
aggregate be less than [British pounds] 10 nor more than [British pounds] 60 ... if the
wife of the officer was dead and had left children behind "who would have been eligible
for gratuity if a pension had been granted to the widow, gratuities of twice the amount of

155 K. L. Hunter, District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Officer Commanding, Military Prison,
letter dated 28th November, 1940, (Gratuity Applications, 152-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/219)
156 (The Non-European Officers in War Service 1940-41, KNA, AG/37/35.
157 Ibid.
the gratuities for which they would have been eligible in such circumstances. 158 If on the other hand, the officer "does not leave a widow, and if his mother was wholly or mainly dependent on him for her support, a pension to the mother, while of good character and without adequate means of support, at a rate not exceeding the rate of the pension which might have been granted to his widow . . . provided that if the mother is a widow at the time of the grant of the pension and subsequently remarries such pension shall cease as from the date of remarriage . . . and if the mother is not a widow and it appears that the deceased's father is in position to support her, such pension shall cease from such date as the Governor in Council may determine." 159

The government also exempted widows from paying taxes. According to one government report, entitled, "Exemption of War Widows from Native Hut Tax," dated 20th February, 1940, the government stated that war widows were exempted from paying hut tax. To avoid ambiguity," the document further asserted the provision would be in force until the woman remarried or bore a child with another man. 160 In fact, the original King's African Rifles Ordinance of 1923 provided all askaris with an "exemption from tax for one hut or for exemption from Poll Tax for life," but as a result of "discussions between the East African Governors and the Secretary of State in 1930-32, it was decided that this exemption from tax should be replaced by the payment of a further gratuity of Kshs.150/- if the soldier had served for nine years or Kshs.200 if he had served for twelve years or more years. For soldiers who enlisted between 1st April, 1931, and the 9th October, 1931,

158 Ibid.  
159 Ibid.  
160 G. Beresford Stooke, for Chief Secretary, to all Provincial commissioners, letter dated 20th February, 1940, (Native Hut and Poll Tax, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/15/7).
a pension of Kshs.15/- a year was payable in lieu of the exemption from tax or the second gratuity."\footnote{J. E. S. Lamb, for Chief Secretary of Kenya, to the Chief Secretary to the Governors Conference, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} October, 1945, (KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).} By the end of 1941, the number of askaris discharged from the war due to medical reasons and who were therefore eligible for discharge allowance, was 1,432.\footnote{Major, Officer-in-Charge, EA Military Records, to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 15th December, 1941, (Medals and Decorations; Loyal Service, 1945-56, KNA, AH/4/55).} This figure was expected to rise to 7,000 by the end of the war, according to Brigadier MaComick, the Director of Medical Services.

The Pensions and Gratuities (African Personnel) Ordinance of 1941 was further amended and read as one with the Pensions and Gratuities (African Personnel) Regulations, 1942. Although the amendment made references to pensions, most discharged askaris were being given a gratuity on a quarterly basis rather than monthly basis as would be the case with pension. In April 1945 the Ordinance was amended as "His Majesty's Pensions and Gratuities (African military Personnel) Regulations, 1945" – significantly, as the war was coming to an end, and this time providing several additional clauses. One clause dealt with the matter of amount of pay. It affirmed the practice of paying askaris lower gratuity than British personnel of equivalent rank.\footnote{Lieut. R. L. K. Allen, AAG., East Africa Command HQ., in his recommendation to the committee had proposed that the government should review askaris' gratuity by using either, '[a] a proportion [say 1/4 or 1/3 of the amount paid to the equivalent British rank ... [or b] a basic minimum gratuity, the equivalent of two months pay at existing rates, according to the rank held by the individual at the date of discharge, with an addition of Kshs.1 for each month's service, soldiers who have served for six months or less will be entitled to the basic minimum only ... [or c] fixed minimum rates according to rank, e.g. Pte. or equivalent rank kshs.56/-, Cpl. or equivalent rank Kshs.96/-." (Lieut. R. L. K. Allen, AAG., East Africa Command} It claimed that an askaris would not mind a race-based pay scale as long as his African counterparts earned the same as he did. "It is our opinion," R.L.K. Allen had observed on behalf of the army, "that the African is not interested in the relation his gratuity bears to the equivalent British rank, but rather in the
relation it bears to the gratuity paid to this senior [or junior] rank, taking into account their existing rates of pay."\textsuperscript{164} The Office of the Governor's Conference argued that the idea of paying African soldiers must not be based on British army. "It would be desirable," the Office of the Governor's Conference argued, that "if possible to avoid the British army gratuity rates as the basis of calculation. Such a basis might be attractive to the War Office, both for its simplicity and because it was adopted after the last war. But it would lead to anomalies, would be difficult to defend politically and would have no reality for the African soldier."\textsuperscript{165} S. O. V. Hodges, the Provincial Commissioner of Coast Province, also argued that, "gratuities for Africans should not be related to the African terms of service and should not be calculated on the British Army gratuity scales."\textsuperscript{166} Instead of using British army standards, the Office of the Governor's Conference proposed that, "it would be preferable that the gratuity should be related to actual basic pay of WS rank held at discharge, with an additional element representing length of service; in other words, so many months plus so much for each completed month of war service. These amounts would no doubt be fixed so as to bear roughly the same relation to pay as gratuities to British personnel would bear to their rates of their pay, but the basis of calculation would be the African's own pay."\textsuperscript{167} African and Somali soldiers' pay was thus not only less than what the European soldier earned, but also less than what was paid.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Circular from Governors' Conference Office, letter dated 21\textsuperscript{st} January, 1944, (War Gratuities, 1928-47, KNA, CA/12/3).
\textsuperscript{166} S. O. V. Hodges, Coast Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} February, 1944, (War Gratuities, 1928-47, KNA, CA/12/3).
\textsuperscript{167} Circular from Governors' Conference Office, letter dated 21\textsuperscript{st} January, 1944, (War Gratuities, 1928-47, CA/12/3).
to "Mauritians, Seychellois, Asians, and non-Europeans of that type ..." Askaris were being denied their right simply because of racism and colonial politics.

Thus on the basis of the amended KAR Ordinance [Section 84], askaris' gratuities would be calculated on the basis of service of 9, 12, and 18 years respectively. The Office of the Governor's Conference noted that it was "necessary that these war gratuities should bear some relation to service gratuities already prescribed which are Kshs.150 for all soldiers irrespective of rank after 9 years service, Kshs.180-600 according to rank after 12 years, and Kshs.270-900/- after 18 years service. It would not be inconsistent with these service rates to provide war gratuities equivalent to 2 months pay plus Kshs1/- for each month of war service, which would give a private with 5 years war service a gratuity of Kshs.116/-, and a corporal with 3 years war service Kshs.132/-. Gratuities should probably be limited to those who have enlisted for the duration of the war plus one year." According to a copy of the circular published on 5th December, 1945, European military personnel earned higher gratuity rates, followed by Asians, Mauritians and Seychellois, and Africans at the bottom of the scale. It was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Kenya shillings per month</th>
<th>Africans (other units)</th>
<th>Africans (EAMLS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pte.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7/50</td>
<td>3/50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cpl.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>same as above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>s.a.a</td>
<td>4/50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/Sgt.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>s.a.a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO II and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO Pl. Comd.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>s.a.a</td>
<td>5/50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOI</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>s.a.a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4/50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[170] (Gratuity Applications, 1952-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/12/219)
To qualify for the gratuity, one must have served for a certain period of time, according to the new amendment, which provided for, *inter alia*, "minimum period of service which will qualify a soldier for war gratuity ... The AAG., East Africa Command favors the award of a basic gratuity to soldiers whose service may be restricted to a period of weeks by demobilization or sickness, or by release for reasons not connected with inefficiency or crime, but considers that an award *should not* be made to those found unlikely to be efficient and discharged on that ground. No difficulty is envisaged in drafting a suitable [proposal] to cover these circumstances."¹⁷¹ But this was not the end of the amendment. The amendment rejected the idea of pay increase for *askaris* serving in certain places abroad because places like "Madagascar and Ceylon and Egypt are, in some ways, all the same to the African, and the expiation allowance paid in Ceylon is a very small contribution to the increased 'cost of living' there as compared with East Africa. On the other hand, if troops outside the Command are the last for discharge, as may well happen, the knowledge of giving an increased gratuity might become palliative. The point requires discussion."¹⁷²

Another clause in the revised ordinance created an Appeals Tribunal Board. According to the Chief Secretary, the newly created Appeals Tribunal Board would listen to appeals if the beneficiary was not satisfied by the awards made by the Pensions Assessment Board. The members of the Appeals Tribunal were to be the Chief Native Commissioner, a Medical Officer, a member of the Legislative Council representing African interests,

¹⁷² Ibid.
which the Chief Secretary argued, could do a much better job dealing with African
appeals than the British system that others had wanted applied to askaris’ cases. The
Appeals Tribunal had full powers to "vary any award in either direction (but not to
decrease it unless the appellant has had a chance of being heard) [parenthesis in the
text]."\(^{173}\) The appeals could be made by the beneficiary or his family, or by a local
official, sympathetic to the suffering of a disabled askari or the suffering of the family of
an askari killed at war, or even by the Pensions Assessment Board itself. Rarely was the
askari or his family present during such appeals; though they were allowed to make an
appearance, often they were unable to do so. At the end of the day, this Appeals Tribunal
Board depended on the sympathy and whim, on the caprices, of the colonial officials
rather than on the merits of the cases before it. If a sympathetic colonial official did not
make an appeal or did not to intervene on behalf of an askari or his family or did not
advise them to do so, it is doubtful that askaris and their families ever appealed on their
own initiative. Although in theory the Appeals Tribunal Board was required to provide
askaris with "traveling expenses" and "fees for medical attendance," not many askaris,
and the families of deceased askaris, took advantage of the existence of the Board.

In addition to the creation of the Appeals Tribunals Board, the new and latest
amendment, which was introduced to the Pensions Assessment Board in April, 1945,
gave the Board the power to reduce pensions if an askari "refuses or neglects to receive
such treatment the Board may, if it considers that such refusal or neglect is unreasonable,
reduce any pension or temporary allowance which has been awarded in respect of any

\(^{173}\) Clerk to the Executive Council, Government Notice, "His Majesty's Forces Pensions Ordinance, 1941,
disability under the provisions of these regulations by such an amount, not exceeding one
half of such pension or temporary allowance as it may think fit."174 The Board enjoyed a
lot of power. It had power to suggest "approved treatment, ... a course of medical,
surgical or rehabilitative treatment which it is certified that a person should receive in
consequence of any disability in respect of which an award under the provisions of these
regulations may be or has been made."175 The Board also had the right to decide place for
treatment, that is an approved medical institution for the purpose of treatment, and
finally, the amendment also gave the Board the power to consider that any misconduct
"that may, in the opinion of the Board, renders it necessary for any treatment that [the
person] is receiving to be discontinued, may be treated as a refusal of such person to
receive the treatment."176 But paradoxically, the report contained the word "Pension," and
it is important to take note of the word, since askaris were not earning what one can
describe as a pension.

When the revised ordinance was published, there was uproar even among civil
authorities. Some colonial officials felt that regulations for the compensation of British
soldiers should be examined and possibly even applied to disabled African soldiers with a
view to "the question of to what extent the English regulations about Tribunals should be
applied to Africans." Realizing that there were complaints about the fact that the army
was giving low awards to askaris, the Chief Secretary wrote to the Chief Native
Commissioner, defending the system in place as being quite effective. Neither he either
nor the Pensions Assessment Board had ever received any appeals from relatives of

174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
askaris; they assumed that the recipients of awards were satisfied and that was why they never appealed. "I do not remember any appeal coming directly from the beneficiary. Military records refer cases in which death or disability has taken place to the Pensions Assessment Board. If the issue is clear-cut, they make an award, if not, they refer the matter to this office for the Governor's decision explaining that the issue is doubtful and that they are not in a position to make an award according to the regulations laid down for their guidance and making recommendations whether an award should be made; that is, in practice, the Pensions Board more or less appeal against their own decision." 177 The Chief Secretary also defended the system by arguing that the offices dealing with awards of gratuities had done so generously. "Great generosity and the minimum attention is paid to those twin gods of the pension world: aggravation and attributability." 178 The Chief Secretary gave the example of where "a soldier goes overseas and dies we normally award a death gratuity to his dependants although the death may have been quite disconnected with war service and no award would be payable under the Pensions Regulations. The reason for this is that the man's relations in the reserve cannot be expected to understand the finer points of the rule of attributability. They merely know that their son or husband went off to a far country in the King's Service and did not come back." 179 The Chief Secretary went on to claim that in most cases the government never withheld death gratuity except in the "cases of the grossest misconduct ... [giving the example of having] paid death gratuities in cases in which the soldier was killed in a drunken brawl in a brothel, it being argued that, if he ha not gone overseas in the King's

176 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
service, the occasion for him going to the brothel would not have arisen ... in another case a soldier was killed while trying to break into the house of a local inhabitant in Burma in order to rape his wife. No award was made in this case. The Chief Secretary however missed to mention the fact that in most cases, the awards were not made as generously as he claimed. There were many instances, already cited, where soldiers were killed or injured and their awards were denied or drastically reduced. The Chief Secretary also did not examine why in most cases the relatives of askaris never made any appeals to the Pensions Assessment Board, even though theoretically they were allowed to do so. It is even doubtful whether the askaris and their families knew that they could make appeals against awards.

Yet even though the government was clearly paying askaris who had been discharged a gratuity, the confusing thing about the prevailing policy on pay was not just the fact that askaris were earning less than other soldiers, but also the continuing earnest discussion by the government over whether askaris should earn a pension after the war. It always looked as if the government was intent on paying askaris a pension. Many askaris believed that these discussions would lead to a pension. The parallel debate about gratuity versus pension was conducted throughout the war even as the government paid gratuity to its askaris. This undoubtedly created expectations in the minds of the askaris, and those who became aware of such on-going debate probably assumed that there was going to be a pension after the war. Government documents on gratuities were indeed often entitled pension. The body which dealt with askaris' gratuity was known as the Pensions

179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.
Assessment Board, and the amendments which were published in April 1945 were in a
government report entitled, "His Majesty's Pensions and Gratuities (African military
Personnel) Regulations, 1945. In one of his proposals to the Committee on Post-War
Development, Joel Omino recommended that, "disabled soldiers should be given pension
to live on for the rest of their lives. Dependants of those who have lost their lives in the
active service should also be compensated adequately."\(^{181}\) By 1945, one government
official candidly admitted that government debate on pension had not been resolved. The
question of pensions and gratuities to demobilized askari, Brigadier H. H. Dempsey of
the Officer of the General Commanding, East Africa HQ Command, stated in one report,
"has had a long and troubled history."\(^{182}\) As far back as 1930, Brigadier H. H. Dempsey,
writes, the "proposal to grant African ranks a pension in lieu of the gratuity was put
before the Secretary of State but did not meet with his approval."\(^{183}\) Tracing the evolution
of this discourse, Brigadier Dempsey noted that after a few years, new terms came into
effect in 1932, and under the conditions of Para 84[1] of the King's African Rifles
Ordinance No. 48 of 1932, every soldier enlisted after January 1, 1933, was, after
continuous good service extending for a period of 8 or 12 years, granted a gratuity
ranging from [British pounds] 4 to [British pounds] 45 in lieu of pension.\(^{184}\) When the
Second World War broke out, new instructions were spelt out in the Secretary of States'
telegram to East African Governments, No.489, dated 9\(^{th}\) December, 1939, and which
instructed that, "pensions and gratuities and the cost of the Chief Political Liaison Officer

\(^{181}\) Joel Omino, "A Memorandum on Post-War Employment of Africans," (Institutions and Associations,
1942-45, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/358).
\(^{182}\) H. H. Dempsey, Brigadier-in-Charge for Lieutenant General, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief,
East Africa Command to Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference, letter dated 18\(^{th}\) June, 1945, (KAR:
Proposals for Long Service 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6/).
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
\(^{184}\) Ibid.
and staff should continue to be paid by the East African Governments." And citing the need for Africans to develop thrift, the Chief secretary to the Governors' Conference often suggested that askaris should be paid their dues in the form of pension because the advantages of a pension scheme are that, "it would prevent the dissipation of large gratuities representing the entire superannuation benefits of their military duty at the same time would make available the immediate limited funds required to build or to rebuild and furnish a house or better lines to buy a farm or trade implements, and so forth."  

As the government continued to procrastinate on whether or not to pay soldiers pensions by the time the war was coming to an end, H. H. Dempsey and a group of European soldiers meeting in Nairobi on 9th May, 1945, decided to send in their proposal "in the interests of the African soldier." While acknowledging the fact that "the question of pensions for African soldiers is one for the East African governments to decide," this group of European soldiers sent out a proposal "in the interest of the African soldier" for the "consideration of your Governments with the recommendation that if any Pensions System is introduced, it should follow the basic principles that is operative in the British army." Some of the European soldiers wanted African soldiers to be treated equally with their British counterparts. According to Brigadier Dempsey, "a large number of ex-

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185 Ibid.  
186 Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference, letter dated 21st July, 1945, (KAR: Proposals for Long Service 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6/).  
188 Ibid.
KAR officers were represent, under the chairmanship of Maj-General E. B. Hawkins.\textsuperscript{189}

A resolution was passed, and "unanimously approved and forwarded to the HQ," to the effect that:

\begin{quote}
proposed by Lt. Col. Fitzgerald [83 KAR] and seconded by Col. Case [late Commander Southern Brigade [KAR], that we should record our opinion that in principle all service gratuities should be converted into pensions for life in all territories where East African troops are recruited, and that the Governors' Conference be asked to press for the acceptance of this principle in all territories concerned. Such pensions be granted after 18 years service. A soldier should be eligible for pension if he should be boarded out of the army after serving 12 years if he has already engaged. Gratuities should continue to be granted after 9 years service. Disability compensation to be paid as at present.\textsuperscript{190}
\end{quote}

In a sign of camaraderie, sympathy, and respect that had developed between European and African soldiers, European soldiers like Brigadier H. H. Dempsey were thus agitating for pensions on behalf of African soldiers. Another senior military official, Sir William J. Slim also wrote to the Governor, Sir, Philip Mitchell, urging the government to pay askaris a pension because:

\begin{quote}
during the time I was commanding the Fourteenth Army and Allied Land Forces South East Asia, I was several times approached by officers serving with the East and West African troops in Burma on the subject of pensions for regular African soldiers. I understand that all they at present receive on discharge is a comparatively small gratuity after long service. I hope you will forgive me if, as a Commander who has had many thousands of African troops under him in a most arduous campaign, I suggest that the granting of a pension to regular African soldiers for long and faithful service should be considered. Apart from the fact that the excellent services rendered to the Empire by these men, especially by those who served outside Africa, deserves recognition, there are, I think, many reasons why a small population of pensioned native soldiers would be as good and stabilizing an influence in Africa as it has been in India. I am addressing this letter to other East and West African Governors, and feeling as I do considerable admiration and gratitude to the African soldier, the best I can do for him is to ask you to give this matter the most favorable
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
consideration you can.\textsuperscript{191}

Because of his "considerable admiration and gratitude to the African soldier," General Slim wrote, "the least [that he could] do for him is to ask you to give this matter [pension] the most favorable consideration you can."\textsuperscript{192} Even the Chief Secretary to the Governors' Conference appeared to have generally accepted the recommendation of the European military officers, when he asserted in a letter entitled, "Long Service Pensions for African Soldiers," that the government "recognizes in principle the justification for the view that East African legislation should be changed so as to make it possible to reward long service in the King's African Rifles by pension, rather than, as at present, by gratuity only."\textsuperscript{193} But there was nothing tangible in terms of pension for askaris who would be demobilized after the war. The only thing that was certain was that the government would continue giving pension only to some askaris who had served for eighteen years or more. The Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference observed that after eighteen years of service, an askari was eligible for "alternatives of either a pension or a gratuity and annuity in lieu of pension, the option to be discussed at the time of the soldiers' discharge after eighteen years of service ... because, as in the case of pensionable officers of Colonial Governments, part-commutation of pension into cash gratuity ... enable[d] the discharged soldier to reinstate and reestablish himself in civilian life, while retaining the assurance of annual financial support thereafter."\textsuperscript{194} Many askaris who served for the six years duration of the war were thus left out of the provision on pension.

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Chief Secretary to the Governor's Conference, letter dated 21\textsuperscript{st} July, 1945, (KAR: Proposals for Long Service 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6/).
These debates went on side-by-side with the prevailing policy of paying *askaris* gratuities — gratuities for disability, and for discharge. By the time of demobilization, the government had only been paying *askaris* gratuity and not a pension, though the government kept referring to those payments as pensions. The Chief Secretary to the Governors Conference observed in one document in July, 1945, that, "as far as I know, no Africans are granted pensions though under the Government staff Provident Fund, enacted in 1944, benefits can be paid in the form of annuities."\(^{195}\) African soldiers contributed 7½% of their pay to Government Staff Provident Fund and they were paid it back as gratuity once they retired from the army. The Kenya Government suggested that there should be some "compensating increase in pay in order that the actual cash drawings each month may not be reduced."\(^{196}\) Such a contribution scheme would have been very difficult because *askaris's* salaries were small to start with.

Outside of Kenya, different territories had different payment plans. Northern Rhodesian African soldiers enjoyed a very comprehensive pensions scheme without contributing anything, though the government was thinking "that a contributory system might be introduced later."\(^{197}\) Nyasaland's system was more or less similar to that of Kenya — *askaris* earned a gratuity rather than a pension, and the government was thinking of adopting the Northern Rhodesian system. Tanganyika did not have a pensions system and it was not intending to have one. What the Government of Tanganyika wanted was for the whole question to be deferred "until the question of the future administrative and

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\(^{194}\) Ibid.

\(^{195}\) Ibid.

\(^{196}\) R. G. Turnbull, Chief Secretary, to the Chief Secretary to Governors' Conference, letter dated 10\(^{th}\) September, (KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).
financial control of the KAR has been decided."\textsuperscript{195} Such different and diverse pension schemes could easily have been the reason behind the way the Kenya government dithered over a pensions scheme for \textit{askaris}. In the words of J. F. G. Troughton, the Kenya government had not come to a firm and conclusive proposal because "conditions regarding superannuation benefits for Africans vary in the different territories and it therefore might be better to leave the matter to F.S.S."\textsuperscript{199} Another probable reason behind the delay in instituting a pension scheme for \textit{askaris} was that the government always wanted to make sure that the pay scale and pension scheme for its employees were the same. This meant that as long as other government employees earned less or did not have a pension scheme, African \textit{askaris} would have to make do with the prevailing pay scheme, though there appear to have been cases where some employees enjoyed privileges that \textit{askaris} did not have. In the words of Troughton again, any pensions for African soldiers in the KAR must be linked with the "question of pensions for African police and prison warders. Soldiers in the KAR, Police and Prison Warders were on similar rates of pay before the war and were eligible for not dissimilar gratuities on discharge. Any variation in the terms of service of one of these categories would be bound to give rise to demands for similar treatment by the others."\textsuperscript{200} The government did not want to single out the \textit{askaris} for privileges out of fear of raising their status and a sense of superiority, which would probably make them difficult to control. The \textit{askaris} were therefore forced to suffer the conditions of other government employers, serving

\textsuperscript{197} Proceedings of a Joint Civil and Military Committee Held at Command Headquarters on the 12th and 13\textsuperscript{th} September, 1946," (KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).
\textsuperscript{198} N. H. Vicars-Harris, Acting Chief Secretary to the Tanganyika Government, to the Chief Secretary, the Governors' Conference, letter dated August, 1946, (KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).
\textsuperscript{199} J. F. G. Troughton, for the Chief Secretary, to the Chief Secretary, the Governors' Conference, letter dated 27\textsuperscript{th} May, 1946, KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, AH/4/6).
under the same terms of service with other employees of the government, even though their conditions of service were often far more demanding and dangerous.

On 13th September, 1946 an important meeting of Financial and Administrative Secretaries of various territories was held to discuss the pensions scheme and how it could be made to work particularly in territories that did not have it for the benefit of the askaris. The issue was not really whether pensions should be introduced. The territories had already had a meeting in 1945, and had come to a consensus on the desirability of the scheme, and the only problem at that time was the question of harmonization of the scheme. The scheme varied so much in various territories that the various Administrative and Financial Secretaries had decided to defer their decision until Financial Secretaries of the various territories met first. But even at this present meeting there does not appear to have been any progress since 1945. During the meeting, it was being suggested that the most suitable method of dealing with the pension question would be either by having the "administrative and financial control of the KAR ... revert[ing] to the East African Governments, by the admission of the African soldiers of the Northern Brigade to membership of the Kenya Government Staff Provident Fund, and of the Southern Brigade to the Tanganyika Government Governments' Provident Fund," or by having the "administrative and financial control of the KAR [remain] with the War Office, the enactment of War Office regulations on the lines of the Kenya Government Staff Provident Fund Ordinance"201 These suggestions were not going to help askaris who needed a decision immediately.

200 Ibid.
201 "Proceedings of a Joint Civil and Military Committee Held at Command Headquarters on the 12th and
By 1946 the government was still dithering over an issue that askaris were becoming very bitter about. The various proposals, as the meeting itself found out, "raised a number of complex issues on which there was considerable difference of opinion amongst the territories." There was, for instance, the same old question of whether askaris should be paid a gratuity or pension, and if so, should they or should they not contribute to the fund that would pay them the gratuity or pension at the end of their service. That is, should askaris contribute to the gratuity or pension scheme to be eligible for the scheme after retirement, or should the askaris be automatically eligible for gratuity or pension, even if they did not contribute anything to it. And the various territories, as has been noted, had different schemes. So the meeting of 1946 did not come up with anything beneficial to askaris. If anything, Tanganyika territory which did not even have pension scheme in the first place, was still even now against the scheme of "granting of pensions to Africans... [and] favored a contributory system." The Government Provident Fund scheme that Tanganyika had applied only to officers earning shs.60 and above.

Ultimately, the meeting came back to what it should have done much earlier, which was that each territory should adopt its own system, in conformity "with that approved for police in their employment. Gratuities or a Provident Fund, as at present applied or to be applied in the near future in all territories." The meeting also mooted a future commission to comprehensively deal with the subject of pension or gratuity for African askaris, but in the meantime, the various East African governments resolved on applying

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202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
the existing schemes for African Police and Prison Warders to paying African *askaris*.

It was not until June 1956 that the government published the most comprehensive
document on War Pensions. But by then – by the time the Commission made its report
nine years later – it would be too late for many African servicemen who served in the
Second World War. The government had spent much of the early 1950’s fighting the
Mau Mau, and had paid little attention to the grievances of *askaris*. When the
Commission published its report in June, 1956, many *askaris* had already died from
different causes while those still alive had grown very bitter with the government. And
even then, the Pensions scheme dealt mostly with soldiers on permanent and pensionable
terms of employment rather than *askaris* who served only for the duration of the World
War. There was no reward as *askaris* had expected, and the question that should be asked
is whether the government deliberately lied to *askaris* to entice them into military service.
When the government was desperate for manpower, it appears to have eagerly promised
anything to *askaris*, but after the war, it refused or was unable to fulfill its promises.
These promises that were made to *askaris* during the war, and the debates that followed
in government circles created a vast amount of confusion in the minds of *askaris*. From
the way these payments were made, it is plausible to suggest that the government,
realizing that the men were asking for rewards and particularly, pension, deliberately
engaged in a disinformation by willfully misleading the *askaris* into believing that what
they were being paid was a pension when it was only a gratuity. Why, for instance, did
the government keep referring to these payments as pension yet after a while it stopped
remitting payments to the *askaris*. Pensions are often made for life, yet these government
payments did not last more than a year at best. There is moreover no evidence that the
government ever tried to clarify the issue of payment to askaris, yet it was one of the
most serious issues in the minds of askaris and their families. During interviews, not a
single askari remembers any form of clarification from the government over pension. As
will be seen in the next portion of this essay, the government started avoiding askaris
when the latter started seeking meetings with it, refusing to attend askari meetings by
raising frivolous excuses.

And even the payment of gratuity – the only form of financial award that askaris were
receiving after the war – was characterized by numerous problems, further inflaming the
askaris. Discharge gratuities were subject to subjective interpretations by colonial
officials in charge of determining how much an askari should earn. In theory, whenever
an askari was discharged from the army, either because of illness or injury or after the
end of the war, or for any reason the army did not hold him responsible for, the askari
was supposed to be awarded either a full gratuity of Kshs. 600 or a monthly pay of
Kshs.6/75 over a short period of time. In cases where an askari left the army under duress
or was discharged under a cloud of suspicion or under an unfavorable circumstance, he
was penalized and his gratuity or pension was reduced by some percentage depending on
the gravity of the circumstances surrounding his departure from the army. But although
there were guidelines on how awards could be made, they were at the end of the day,
mostly subjectively done – based often on the personal inclination of the officials dealing
with them, hence the diversity of awards from one case to another even where
circumstances around discharges were strikingly similar. Many award documents show
that as the war came to an end, the amount of awards given to askaris were also considerably going down. Many askaris were missing on their full compensation. Askaris injured in war were often dismayed to find that the government had unilaterally decided to reduce their compensation. Wives of deceased askaris claimed that although their askari husbands died during service, they, as their widows, did not receive full compensation. Although there was supposed to be room for appeal through the Appeal Tribunals Board, many illiterate wives and relatives did not know about them, and even if they did, they did not know how to lodge appeals. And once the Board made a ruling it was almost a foregone conclusion that it would carry the day whether or not an askari or his family appealed. Most appeals came from surviving askaris themselves – families of deceased askaris almost always never appealed against biased ruling on discharge amounts either out of ignorance or out of fear of the colonial system.

Many families also did not have the relevant information that would enable them make a successful appeal. When Kutuba Masiki, Gachanga Mokumu, and Muthani Chungo were killed in the war, their families were given nothing. The government simply stated in their service sheets, "no award."\(^{205}\) The family of Odhiambo Ored, who died in service, was paid only Kshs. 47/75.\(^{206}\) Another document shows that the families of Katzula Odimbo, Odero Odipo, Ochanda Oweya, Okelo Oluwe, Nyambna Azieke, Ogola Okumba, Auko Arika, Obunya Odhiambo, and Warewe Okelo were each paid Kshs.128, and only the family of Otieno Ochola received more – Kshs.240. But on the other hand,

\(^{205}\) Chief Secretary to the Accountant General, letter dated 29\(^{th}\) October, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-44, KNA, ACW/28/120).
\(^{206}\) Central Kavirondo District Commissioner informing the War Office: Expenditure that he had paid the next of kin the money, letter undated, (Death Gratuities, 1942, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/21).
the family of Adel Owino who died from a fracture of the skull after a road accident, and whose death was judged as "not on duty" was paid the full gratuity of Kshs.600. How the government calculated awards just did not make sense. The family of Kipkemei arap Maritim, who was also killed by a grenade explosion on 8th October, 1941, which he was "playing with under the impression that it was dud," also won a full compensation of Kshs.600. Take another case – that of Pte. Raphael Balau of the EAASC, who enlisted on 19th March, 1941, and died on the 14th July, 1942 in a tank trap near Amiriya. His death was ruled accidental drowning, but then he was said to have died while taking a bath against orders, and whilst having absented himself without leave from his working party. At first the court of inquiry into the death reduced his award by 50%, to Kshs.300, then the Pensions Assessment Board increased it to Kshs.400. On the other hand, when Sefu Mohamed died on 4th October, 1943, of "syphilitic encephalitis," no compensation was given because "under the Ministry of Pensions Regulations, venereal disease, and its effects are not compensatable, and accordingly there is no award."207 Thus although Sefu Mohamed died while in the army and having offered his contribution to the government, when he died, his ailment was dismissed as something that had occurred before enlistment. The question is: how then did the army fail to diagnose the venereal ailment at the time Sehu enlisted if it really existed prior to his enlistment? Sehu Mohamed's family's right to pension and gratuity was thus thwarted, and what he or his family would have earned was forwarded as "debit to the War Contribution."208 But then, the family of Pte. Salimu Tingetinge of the EAASC, a private who joined service on 29th December, 1940, and committed suicide on 31st January, 1942 "by hanging in a latrine near Native

Reception Hospital, in which hospital he had been receiving treatment for a chest condition of pneumonia," was paid his full gratuity of Kshs.600!

The varying nature of these awards prompted one colonial officer to ask the War Pensions Officer to explain how he often made awards. The Pensions Officer was particularly put to task why he had recommended different awards for Shalwa Gunda and Adireya Lisse. Both had committed suicide, yet the awards given were different. In his defense, the War Pensions Officer argued that the differences in awards given were based on "motive and state of mind" at the time of death.\(^{209}\) In Shalwa Gunda's case, the War Pensions Officer talked about "mental instability by reason of hysteria; moreover, he was serving overseas in the Middle East at the time of his death ... [but in Adireya's case] no evidence was forthcoming to show the state of his mind, and that his service throughout was in Kenya and that he was not subject to the stresses and strains of service in the field, i.e., mental disturbances attributable or aggravated by war service.\(^{210}\) Perhaps it would have been fairer if equal awards were made in such kinds of cases to avoid complaints. Families of askaris did not care about the manner of death; all they cared about was the fact their sons had died, and for that, the government should have at the very least given them full compensation.

Many such biased cases existed in the military after the Second World War. To make matters even worse, the government used to reduce gratuity or even stop it altogether if it

\(^{208}\) Ibid.

\(^{209}\) War Pensions Officer to the East African Governments, letter dated 7\(^{th}\) December, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1943-1944, KNA, ACW/28/120).
discovered that the next of kin of a deceased askari was not the wife or mother. It did not matter that the next of kin was somebody chosen by the askari when he was enlisting in the army. After the death of Mutoko Mwendando, Wambua Landu, and Kinyere Ndambuki on 5th January, 1943, in the C. R. S. hospital, Kismayu, "the result of alcoholic poisoning," one official noted that their families would not win any award. "In view of the fact that the next-of-kin in each case is stated to be a brother," the officer observed, "it is doubtful whether an award is justified, except on grounds of policy." When Mutsiya Ndunge was killed by an assailant on 8th August, 1943 while on leave, and although the assailant was committed to stand trial, Mutsiya Ndunge's family was denied compensation. Reason? "There was no military liability, the deceased having been on leave at the date of his death" and his next of kin was a "brother." Where a brother or father was listed as the next of kin there was often very little chance of awards. In other words, the military was using western family structures and values to make decisions on African family settings that affected askaris. Where the next of kin of an askari was listed as wife and children, the family would often be awarded some compensation, often irrespective of the circumstances surrounding death. Even if an askari died from self-induced causes, the fact that his next of kin was a wife and children would lead the officers concerned to offer some award, but if the askaris' next of kin was listed as brother or father, no award would be made no matter how mitigating the circumstances were. When Kutuba Masuiki was shot to death by a European officer for trying to steal a sack of coffee beans, the government ruled his death "not on duty – accidentally killed by

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211 A Report to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 8th May, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA, ACW/28/119).
bullet from revolver fired by ...[name not given]" and his family was paid nothing
"especially so in view of the act that there is no wife or child." Following the death of
Petro Kahuko, caused by blackwater fever, menengitis and labor pneumonia on 30th
March, 1943, in a prison hospital, the War Pensions Officer recommended that his family
be given nothing in view of the relationship of the next-of-kin," who was a brother, and
thus, the War Pensions Officer wrote, "I do not think a reduced award is indicated, and I
would recommend to his Excellency accordingly." But
Indeed, it reached a point where, when an askari was killed in war, many relatives would
come forward as heirs, even if they were not listed as the immediate next of kin, hoping
to cash in on unclear and uncertain government guidelines. There were a number of
instances, R. G. Turnbull noted, "in which askaris had named as heirs persons who were
not the true heirs according to native law and custom, with the result that there had been
two claimants to arrears of pay and other property left by the deceased askari." But
instead of investigating why many claimants were coming forward as heirs, Turnbull
directed the Provincial Administration to ensure that "askaris ... name the next-of-kin in
place of the heir, with details for proper identification, and that the arrears of pay and
other valuable property should be handed to the District Commissioners for disposal
according to native custom, as is one in case of death gratuities." But the native custom

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212 War Pensions Officer to the East African Governments, letter dated 31st December, 1943, (Pensions and
Gratuities, 1943-1944, KNA, ACW/28/120).
213 Accountant-General to the East African Governments, Report dated 21st August, 1943, (Pensions and
214 War Pensions Officer, letter dated 21st September, 1943, (Pensions and Gratuities, 1942-43, KNA,
ACW/28/119).
215 R. G. Turnbull, for Chief Secretary, to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 9th August, 1944,
(Personnel Affairs and African Soldiers, 1942-45, KNA, AH/22/55).
216 Ibid.
that was supposedly being followed was basically not being applied uniformly. Where an askari named a next of kin who conformed to Western culture, the administration followed the askaris' choice, but if it did not, the administration more often than not reduced or denied awards, or arbitrarily nominated an heir in a manner that only made sense within the administrators' own Western customs. The amount of awards given under these subjective conditions were so small that at one point even the Provincial Commissioners stepped in and complained, and J. H. Troughton, taking note of "your views and those of the other Provincial Commissioners on the subject of disability awards to African members of the Armed Forces have been carefully considered," admitted that "certain of the awards are inadequate."217

To add to the anguish and grievances of those askaris who were not earning anything after the war, many askaris who joined service about 1932, and had extended their service at the end of the war had reached the point when they had served for eighteen years, and were now starting to earn their pension, as the rest of the askari cohort who served only for the duration of the war received nothing. Many askaris who were left out did not understand what was going on. At the beginning of 1950, Joana Saba Odima of Samia Location began receiving his pension. In a letter to the Chief of Samia, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, for instance, instructed Joana Saba Odima "kupiga ripoti afisti hii mara moja kupokea pesa zake za pension [report here immediately for your pension]."218 On the other hand, some askaris earned pension for only a short duration

217 J. H. Toughton, for Chief Secretary, to Provincial Commissioners, letter dated 3rd April, 1943, (Gratuity Applications, 1952-58, KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/219).
and after that the money stopped coming. Pte Were Odindo's pension had been Kshs. 21, and in accordance with the "Revised East Africa War Pensions Regulations [African], his pension was increased to Kshs. 36. According to Account-General's calculations, the government now owed Pte. Were Odindo 77/33, which he was paid in bits – in the form of a pension. Once the full sum was paid, he would get nothing.\textsuperscript{219} Pte. Njiri Mband's pension was also increased from Kshs. 30 to Kshs. 36 with effect from 7\textsuperscript{th} February, 1945 to 6\textsuperscript{th} August, 1945. After deducting the amount he had already earned, the Accountant General showed that the government now owed Pte. Njiri Mband only a mere Kshs. 12. Wasala Owaka's pension was increased from Kshs. 18 to Kshs. 36, and the government now owed him Kshs. 38/70, which he was refunded in small payments – leading to more confusion over why some askaris were receiving pension, why others were not, and why some would receive it only for a short duration. Indeed, at the time this research was being done, there were some askaris who reported that they had received about kshs. 6,000 just a few months earlier [in the year 2000]. Although the recipients of the money knew that it was from the army, they did not know what it was for, whether they would continue to receive it or whether it would stop coming like the first one. The recipients of the belated pay from the army were the envy of askaris who did not receive anything. These long delays in paying askaris had the effect of making some askaris grateful for receiving the long awaited pay, while others who did not receive anything bitterly cursed the army, the present government, and the British colonial administration.

There are many askaris who have died without receiving their pay. When the Pensions

\textsuperscript{219} Accountant General to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} January, 1950, (Miscellaneous: Forms for East African Pensions, 1949, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/53).
Review Board summoned Mwawaka Mwashumbe to review his situation, it was found that he had died of pulmonary tuberculosis. Mwaliko Mwasi had also died by the time word came to his village in September, 1949 to appear before the Pensions Board.  

Samuel Moses Mwamburi would have been pleased to learn that the Pensions Board had finally awarded him shs. 2,824.10, but unfortunately, by then he was dead. Although his estate was paid shs.2725.43 one can easily imagine how much Samuel Moses Mwamburi had suffered at home after the war as the government delayed with his money. Mwawaka Mwashumbe's estate was also paid shs.1111.30, which included shs.600 death gratuity – but by then the money was not really useful to him as an individual: he was dead. Similarly, Mwaliko Mwasi was awarded a pension kshs.45 per quarter for life, but one wonders how the money would be useful to him now that he was dead.

Invalid or disabled soldiers fared even worse after the war. After recovering from their injuries, they often were required to appear before a Medical Assessment Board, and which more often than not, discontinued gratuities, sending many askaris to a bleak and uncertain life. To be sure, and as has already been discussed, the government tried to help injured and sick askaris, by for instance, giving them treatment before discharge, but one would argue that that was the duty of the government anyway. Once the askari left a government medical facility, it appears as if the government also forgot about them completely. The askaris were often left to their fate, though some individual administrators were compassionate and tried to provide assistance where they could – but it was never enough given the lack of institutionalized structures to support it on a

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221 Ibid.
consistent basis. After getting a one-time gratuity, disabled askaris were often left to their fate. Considering the age of some of these young men who were disabled by the war, it is quite clear that their future would go to waste, and the amount of money they were paid was not enough to compensate them for their injuries or sustain them. One wonders how the colonial government expected these disabled askaris to survive after they had exhausted their gratuities. Cpl. Njina Owich was a member of the East African Engineers. He enlisted in the army on 1st September, 1939 and was seriously injured in battle, leading to his discharge from the army on 15th February, 1944, because he was "physically unfit for any form of military service." Although his character was described as "very good" there is no evidence that he received any gratuity, and that even if he received it, that it would be enough to sustain his needs in future. After recovering from his injuries, Odongo Osango appeared before the Medical Board for examination and gratuity assessment. Sadly, "his disability has now been assessed at nil. The temporary allowance at Kshs.21 per quarter therefore ceases after 19th November, 1945." Although disabled soldiers were repatriated to hospitals near their homes for further treatment, the nature of treatment they received was often inadequate, though in some cases the mistake was the askaris' and who often would anxiously demand to go home even if they were very sick and needed further treatment. Hence the complaint by the Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation Center that "there is a lack of continuity of treatment between military hospitals and civil hospitals." The Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation Center estimated that "90% of the patients seen at No.1 General

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222 (Repatriation, 1944-1945, KNA, DC/KSM/1/22/56).
223 Accountant General to Central Kavirondo District Commissioner, letter dated 17th February, 1945, (War Pensions and Gratuities, 1941-46, KNA, DC/KSM/1/36/28).
Hospital refuse further hospital treatment. They want to go home. When advised to enter hospital for further treatment they usually answer that they will go home first and will attend their district hospital later if they become worse. This lack of continuity is particularly unfortunate in case of ambulant cases or those recommended by the Medical Board as 'needing further outpatient treatment.'

There was often congestion at local hospitals, with askaris competing for limited space with civilians, while the No.1 Hospital, which dealt with serious medical problems plus post-trauma cases, lay idle. During the first six months of 1944, for instance, there had been "a decrease in the numbers admitted directly from the military hospital and an increase in the proportion admitted from their districts on the recommendation of medical boards. This means in effect that there is an interval of many months between the cessation of treatment in the military hospitals and its recommencement in the rehabilitation center." Bit it is not clear whether the army ever tried to make a follow up on the fate of disabled soldiers; what seems clear from the circular of the Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation was that after some time in the villages, many askaris went back to Rehabilitation centers for treatment. After being repatriated to their home medical facilities, there is very little evidence that the army ever tried to contact the askaris or the hospitals where they were receiving treatment. Most of the time, it appears, askaris were sent to hospitals and were left at the hands of the local administration who were in all probability not likely to empathize with the askaris in the same way that an

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224 Medical Officer-in-Charge of Rehabilitation Center, Circular dated 29th May, 1944, (Discharged and Injured Soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
army doctor who had served with them in the war would. Not a single askari confirmed during this fieldwork that an army officer ever visited them to see how they were doing after being injured and disabled in the war. Only the Medical Board came to examine them, just for the sake of deciding whether an askari should continue earning a disability gratuity, and not to see how they were doing. At the local hospitals, there was congestion and askaris competed with civilians for limited bed-space in hospitals. Even before the end of the war, there was already congestion at the Native Hospital in Kakamega in 1944.

Askaris who were went to local hospitals found it difficult to get treatment because of lack of space.227 During the first six months of 1944, the Medical Officer of Health of North Kavirondo revealed that Kakamega Native Hospital hospital had been receiving "a daily average of 183.42 in-patients ... As the hospital has only 120 beds it is apparent that there is a gross over-crowding ... We have done our best to reduce our numbers without any obvious success ... [and] we are now receiving daily numbers of repatriated ex-soldiers who are urgently in need of hospital treatment. I view of the urgency of the matter I shall be grateful if you would persuade the responsible authorities to give hospital buildings precedence over other buildings."228

Another complaint that the askaris have is that they bore the brunt of the fighting by virtue of the fact that they served on the frontline, and they believe that they are entitled to compensation because of it. The majority of the soldiers in Abyssinia were askaris, one askari pointed out. Another pointed out that askaris formed the bulk of the Allied

227 Medical Officer of Health, North Kavirondo District, letter to Acting Senior Medical Officer, Nyanza Province, letter dated 3rd August 1944, (Post-War Development, 1944, KNA, PC/NZA/2/1/161).
forces in Madagascar, North Africa, the Middle East and the South East Asia. Majority of
the war casualties were askaris. Although there is no clear number of African casualties,
Brigadier Cormack estimated that the number would be around 7,000.\textsuperscript{229} Other
government documents put the number of East African casualties during the war at 7,301,
which appears considerably less than the actual number of those who died in the war.\textsuperscript{230}
But what is not in doubt is that more askaris were injured or killed than soldiers from
other races serving with them in the same units during the war. By the end of December,
1941, the number of injured askaris was 1,474 compared to 12 British Officers –
invalided out, 17 British Officers who quit on account of ill health, 164 BNCO's
discharged medically unfit, 65 Asians discharged medically unfit, and that number "is
increasing daily."\textsuperscript{231} Given the number of askari casualties, askaris argue, it was only fair
for the government to at least reward them in recognition of their sacrifices. But the
government did not do anything for them in that regard.

Arriving home and looking for jobs.

From the District Commissioners' Offices, the askari arrived home, and often found their
families expecting them. By September 1945, the men began arriving home but the
number "did not attain appreciable figures until the last month of the year."\textsuperscript{232} By
December, 1945, the number of returnees in Nyanza Province were as follows:

\begin{align*}
\text{North Kavirondo:} & \quad 2,383 \\
\text{Central Kavirondo:} & \quad 3,848
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{229} "Minutes of a Meeting held at Medical Headquarters on 3\textsuperscript{rd} November, 1943, to Discuss the Repatriation
and Disposal of Disabled Askaris," (Discharged and Injured soldiers, 1943-44, KNA, BY/49/17).
\textsuperscript{230} Timothy Parsons, \textit{The African Rank-and-File}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{231} Major, Officer-in-Charge, EA Military Records, to the Chief Secretary, letter dated 15\textsuperscript{th} December,
\textsuperscript{232} (Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1945, KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/40).
Immediately the *askaris* arrived home, the status of Tribal Police [T. P, as they were commonly known] went down. *Askaris* looked down on Tribal Police who resented him for that. In spite of government propaganda about the need to obey authority, various District Commissioners observed that the behavior of the returning *askaris* was only "satisfactory." Although the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner claimed that, "the behavior of the demobilized men in the reserves has been exemplary" he admitted that the reputation of the "Tribal Policeman" had gone down because of "the increased numbers of demobilized soldiers in the reserves, who generally speaking, simply ignore him. Whenever it is necessary to control ex-soldiers at pay outs or on similar occasions it is necessary to employ Kenya Police."

Within a short time of arriving home, *askaris* began to make withdrawals from the Post Office Savings Bank, a point which demonstrated financial need on the part of many returnees. As already noted, out of the [British pounds]2,097,037 deposited in 1945 in Nyanza Province, withdrawals totaling [British pounds] 614,745.83 were made. Ex-*askaris* in South Kavirondo were reported to be cashing their Post Office Savings accounts as fast as they can get to a Post Office, and closing their accounts. After spending their money, many *askaris* joined the ranks of the jobless. Many applications from suffering and jobless *askaris* began flooding local District Commissioners' offices and the Office of the Civil Director of Demobilization. *Askaris* like Patrick Lock had as

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233 Ibid.
234 Ibid.
235 Ibid.
236 Ibid.
237 Ibid.
early as January 1944 already written letters inquiring about jobs, and when the Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner assured him that the government was "preparing detailed plans for assisting ex-servicemen personnel ... and I am confident that you will find no trouble in carrying out your desires if you make your requests to your officers about the time of your discharge from the army," Patrick Lock immediately requested a letter of guarantee – a recommendation certificate "which I will always carry with me everywhere I go ... the certificate should be that my desires will be considered on my discharge day ... and on my discharge day I will show my very certificate to my officers ... the reason why being that my discharge from the army may take place when you will be no longer at Kisumu." After the war, Lance Cpl. Absalom Ochieng' Ogwang' of North Ugenya, Siaya, also applied for a job with the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo, stating that:

serikali ... kama mutu anataka kasi lasima aulise District Commissioner. Nawa hivo nilikuandikita barua kusudi unite kwa kazi. Kasi yenyewe ni kama hii mimi ni mechanic pamoja na driver kasi hiyo mbili nataka uni ulisie kwa Motor Mart, Nakuru avu Motor Mart, Kitale ana kwa bwana wa masamba. ata ukiwesa kuni saidi kaw Public Works Department ... pali popote kasi ya driver.

[The government said if an askari needs a job, he should send an application to the District Commissioner. I therefore wrote you a letter hoping that you would get me a job. The job I am looking for is that of a mechanic or driver. I would like to request you to submit my application to Motor Mart, Nakuru or Motor Mart, Kitale, or at a settler farm. Even if you can get me a job with at the Public Works Department ... or anywhere a driver is required].

237 Ibid.
Lance Corporal Abasalom Ochieng'Ogwang' was nevertheless advised to submit his application with the Central Employment Bureau. By this time many *askaris* were pleading with the administration for jobs. "Bwana District Commissioner," Leonardus Odhiambo wrote:

"nakuomba tafadhali mimi ni Vehicle/Mechanic Class 1A niliotoka jesheni. Na sasa nakuomba kuako kasi ukiwesa kuni patia kwako ama kwa Roadways ama katika sambani yoyote upande ya Kitale. Kama unawesa tafadhali uniletewa habari."

[Sir, District Commissioner, I am requesting you please. I am a Vehicle/Mechanic Class 1A. I was in the army. And now, I am requesting that you help me get a job either at your office or at Roadways or at a settler's farm those sides of Kitale. If you can please let me know].\(^{241}\)

The most popular work among *askari* job-seekers was clerical. Robert Ogutu was a clerk with the Prisons Department, and when he joined the army, he was employed as a clerk. He served for four and a half years, earning Kshs.110 per month by the time he was discharged. After the war, he applied for a clerical position in the District Commissioners' Office. While some government officers found Robert Ogutu quite promising, others found him too expensive. Paul Ogola also applied "for a post as a clerk in your Department if any vacancy exists. I was educated at St. Mary's Yala School, Yala, after which I joined the H.M. Forces as a clerk in the EAASC. During my service in the army, I have been qualified as a 1st Class Clerk and discharged with the rank of Sergeant."\(^{242}\)

But there was no vacancy, according to J. A. Gardner, of the District Commissioner's Office. James Randiki also submitted his application while waiting for discharge from the army. Given the fact that he had served in the army for three years, as a Nursing Orderly


Class II for one year, and was at the time of the application working at the Military Hospital and European Sick Bay [Tororo, Uganda] as a Laboratory Assistant, James Randiki's application met with favorable approval at the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner's Office. Randiki was thus advised to report to the Civil Disposal Officer in Kisumu upon leaving the army. Another successful applicant was Sergeant Franklin Daniel Onyango. Writing in immaculate handwriting, Sgt. Franklin Daniel Onyango revealed in his application that he wanted a job as a "Farm Manager through you. I have been in the army serving under the East Africa Army Education Corps as an Educational Instructor Class I. Now I am at Discharge wing, Lang'ata, waiting for release, which I hope will be class 'A.' I was educated at Maseno School and went as far as Junior Secondary Certificate, and I was playing for Maseno first XI as a center half, and even in the army I have been playing very well. I am a Jaluo of Alego Locaion, Central Kavirondo ... Sir, if the particular job is not available then you can fix me to any possible post." 243 Sgt. Franklin Daniel Onyango was directed to report to the Revenue Officer "who would like to see you after your release." 244

There is no way of knowing how many applications for jobs succeeded, and how many failed, but what happened to unsuccessful applicants is clear. At first, they turned to self-employment at home, cultivating their land, trying to invest in some little businesses, and looking for employment locally. A significant number of askaris are known to have started working as watchmen – guarding homes, business premises. When the

government began looking for askaris to issue them with their medals, it often found
them working as watchmen. These included Athman bin Mohamed Faza who was
working with "the Preventive Service," Customs Department, Mombasa.²⁴⁵ Auma Amei
was also working as a watchman with Customs Department, Mombasa, when the
government traced him and gave him his "African Star Medal." Ali Dhaidho was working
as a forest guard when he was arrested and given a one month's imprisonment for theft.²⁴⁶

Some askaris tried to submit appeals for help to the Pensions Review Board. Although
they were not sure they had any money left in the army, they were hoping that a review
of their service might unearth some money from the army that would ameliorate their
conditions. They believed that they had nothing to lose if the government agreed to make
any inquiries. While it is not possible to determine statistically how many claims were
denied or approved, these kinds of appeals demonstrate that askaris were desperate; when
an application was based purely on the basis of trying one's luck, that is a sign of
desperation. That was the situation in Taita District when one day the District
Commissioner decided to travel, looking for "anyone [who] was still suffering hardship
because they were still unable to work owing to their illness and yet were not getting
allowances."²⁴⁷ Askari David Wakalo Joshua Mwazo tried his luck with an application to
the Board, even though he had come to believe that the Pensions Assessment Board was
corrupt, and that that was why askaris were suffering. When he applied for a review of
his pensions case and was turned down, an angry David Wakato wrote as follows:

²⁴⁵ (War Medals Distribution in Kenya, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/11/16).
²⁴⁶ Tana River District Commissioner to Lamu District Commissioner, letter dated 12th March, 1950, (War
Medals Distribution in Kenya, KNA, DC/LAMU/2/11/16).
I remember having written to you recently having heard from my father that you wanted him at your office on my behalf but you never told him anything. You wrote to Senior Medical Officer, C/O Nairobi City Council about the same thing in which you asked him if I wanted to appeal of my pension of which I said yes. As regards the appeal pension held at the District Commissioner's Office, Nairobi on the 20th August, they read the following statements to me, I was discharged from the Army with ill health and that I was awarded temporary pension which stopped in January, 1947 and asked me if I had anything to say. I said I still feel pain in my chest, right side, the side involved through military service and that I should like my pension to continue, they dismissed the case by saying that I had no ground of appeal and they said that it was I who raised the appeal. I think it is the Military Authority or rather the War Office which wanted the pension people to be paid some thing as regards their pension or the question to be looked into, probably they were improperly pensioned, how did they again say that I appealed for since I recovered [British pounds] 4 as a result of the Civil Medical Board held on me in October, 1946. I never said anything nor did I grumble knowing that I accepted what I was given by the government. Until you sent for my father, I would not have said anything. So I thought the authority concerned wanted something for the pension people.248

Michael Richard, who contracted pulmonary tuberculosis during the war and was unable to work was however more successful in his appeal. He was awarded Kshs.67/50 per quarter for life, and a temporary increase in cost of living of shs.5, with effect from 7th June, 1949. These were the kinds of awards that caused confusion in the period after the war, where some askaris were awarded pension for life while others were given absolutely nothing. Besides a pension, Michael Richard was also awarded a gratuity of shs.750. But Michael Richard would die from pulmonary tuberculosis on 30th June, 1950, hardly a year after he was awarded pension for life. Ex-askari Anunga Ochieng' was also given a quarterly pension of shs.36 for life, which was increased due to the high cost of living to shs.45. After award of gratuity and pensions, Anunga Ochieng' was paid

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248 (David Wakalo Joshua Mwazo, to Taita District Commission letter dated 6th
shs. 302. But, as already noted, some summons to *askaris* to appear before the Pensions Review Board came too late, after they had died.

To really appreciate how *askaris* faced difficulties and frustrations after the war, particularly in chasing their gratuities and pensions, one needs to follow the case of M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson. In August, 1949, the Pensions Board declared that "No Award" would be given to M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson.²⁴⁹ At the time he appeared before Pensions Board, M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson was getting a monthly pay of shs. 32. An *askari* who joined the military on 23rd September, 1943, M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson was discharged from the army on 14th June, 1946; he was by "then physically unfit, twenty percent simple mania."²⁵⁰ The question then is, why did the Pensions Board turn down M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson appeal for pension after determining that he was mentally incompetent? On 18th April, 1950, M. Joseph Lawrence Zaidlerson wrote to the District Commissioner wondering why the Pensions Board had turned down his appeal. Given Zaidlerson's manic state, his letter is almost illegible. P. E. Walters, the Taita District Commissioner complained that Zaidlerson's letters were "unintelligible" because he "is obviously mentally unbalanced."²⁵¹ Walters therefore decided to summon Zaidlerson to appear before him because he could not understand the contents of his letters and he wanted him to explain his objective, telling him that "ni upuzi kuandika

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barua ndefu ambayo sikufahamu ni afadhali uje hapa mwenyewe na utowe safua zako [it is bothersome for you to write me a long letter which I cannot understand. It would be better for you to come here and tell me your problem]." The exchanges between P. E. Walters and askari Zaidlerson went on for many months, and many letters were exchanged, with Zaidlerson writing at least five long letters without receiving any favorable resolution to his grievance.

Articulating grievances.

When one looks closely at what the askaris were saying and doing during and just about the end of the war, one notices a very clear distinction between what the askaris wanted while serving in the army, and what they wanted after the war. During the war and slightly immediately after the war, askaris were mainly concerned with their welfare. In fact one notices that during the war most of their questions oscillated around basic amenities like clothes, books, cigarettes, letters, and life at home. As the war was coming to an end, askaris' interests moved to survival after the war, jobs, skills, besides the usual concern about their families, land, livestock, houses. After the war and demobilization, askaris' major concern particularly after exhausting their gratuities, was how they could make the government award them pension and other possible financial rewards.

In various interviews, the askaris' discussions invariably turned to pension and other financial compensation they believe the government owes them. As their grievances morphed into bitterness, askaris tried different strategies to compel the government to

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fulfil its obligations to them. They increasingly talked about government promises during the war. When asked to define what they were promised while enlisting for the war, they generally argued that they could not do so because they did not want to press the government to explain what the rewards would be. It is very important to understand that in most cases, the askaris were not in a position to negotiate, to ask the government to state clearly the terms of recruitment and what they would get at the end of the war. They were colonial soldiers. Many of them were young men straight from school or from rural areas, and who in most cases were "fearful of the white man." Other askaris did not press the government to succinctly state how it would reward them after the war because they did not want to appear to be taking advantage of the government at its time of need. They naively trusted the government to come up with the "something" that would be satisfactory to both sides. They understood that "something" as a sort of thank you for the help given and received. Abel M. Aaron's letter, asking to meet the African Pensions Appeal Board so that it could review his pensions case, was entitled "Barua ya Kudai Zawadi ya Vita [Letter of Demand for the Rewards of the War"

253 In his report to the Post-War Re-absorption of Africans on August, 1942, the Central Kavirondo District Commissioner had argued that when it came to helping and rewarding Africans, and "everything is equal ... in my opinion a man who has been prepared to risk so much to help the government of his country should be given preference."254 Should there be a shortage of land, the District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo suggested that the government should find no "difficulty in finding them [askaris] plots of land within their

254 District Commissioner of Central Kavirondo to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 25th August, 1942, (KNA, DC/KSM/1/1/174).
own reserve on which to live, room must be found for them on any unalienated crown
Land."\textsuperscript{255} And this was exactly what the askaris were saying. Even civilians were coming
forward to demand their rewards for helping win the war. In 1947, John Richard Opola
Malla, a civilian, claimed that he was the one who helped the government achieve victory
in the war, and he was ready to receive his reward. According to John Richard Opola
Malla, one day the Governor came to a meeting in Nyanza, and advised everyone present
to pray for a successful outcome of the war. A few days later, John Richard Opola had a
dream, that he should sacrifice "ng'ombe dume nyeusi ile nakwisha kutowa mapumbo
yake tena pembe yake moj nasimamam juu na moja anagalia chini, na wakati hiyo mimi
nili kaa Nairobi Workshop ... Basi bwana mimi naulisa majibu yangu pamoja na zawadi
kama naveskana,"\textsuperscript{256} a letter which was translated by a North Kavirondo District Officer
as follows: "soon after words he had a dream in which he was told to slaughter a black ox
with one horn sticking up an the other bent downwards and that if this was done it would
be a strong help to the happy issue of the struggle. So a few weeks later he and number of
others having found a bull answering to this description killed it and feasted on it. He
now looks for a reward for his part in bringing about victory for the allied case."\textsuperscript{257} But
like most askaris, John Richard Opola Malla was disappointed by the reply he received
from the government. "He has been told," the District Officer in North Kavirondo wrote,
"that victory is its own reward and that he should not look for any other."\textsuperscript{258} Letting the
government decide what it would give askaris as a reward was a major blunder on the
part of the askaris, but given the climate of recruitment, there is very little askaris would

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{256} John Richard Opola Malla to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 20\textsuperscript{th} January, 1947,
(Commendations for Service in War, 1940-48, KNA, PC/NYZ/3/4/51)
have done to demand a formal agreement with the government. Leaving matters in
suspense without clear guidelines and statements about what to expect after the war was a
recipe for bitterness. And that is exactly what happened after the war.

_Askaris_ tried to liaise with various government organizations to pressure the government
into considering them for pensions. _Askaris_ made appeals for help, for jobs; review of
their war service and payment of any money due to them, but not much was done besides
the usual reviews by the Pensions Assessment Board – whose system of determining
awards had already caused a lot of outcry. It was then that _askaris_ demands began to take
an openly defiant stance against the government, their grievances taking political
undertones. By 1950 these _askaris_ had formed organizations to articulate their grievances
particularly in areas dealing with gratuities, salary arrears, employment, and status of the
ex-soldiers. The organization, the Ex-KAR Organization, had branches all over the
country. In Nyanza, the branch was known as the Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization, and
whose Chairman was Regimental Sergeant Major J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara. The Headquarter
of the Nyanza Ex-soldiers Organization was at Ndori Junction, Asembo Location. In their
meetings, these soldiers brought forward some of the issues bothering them: lack of
government attention to ex-soldiers; the fact that the government was not doing anything
towards paying them their arrears; how to ensure that Government Welfare Officers
served the ex-soldiers better. The ex-soldiers also wanted certain professions reserved for
them, for example, the Reserve Police, instead of giving all the posts to the police only.
They demanded that members of their organization be given special consideration during

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257 District Officer, North Kavirondo District to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 10th
the election of the members of the Native Tribunals and Local Native Councils.\textsuperscript{259} Since it was only the government with the power to resolve these demands, it only made sense that government officers should be invited to attend askari\textquotesingle meetings. But the government never sent representatives to the meeting, adding insult to injury as far as the askaris were concerned. When the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza failed to attend one such meeting of the Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization at Ndori in Asembo Location, which was held on 13\textsuperscript{th} May, 1949, RSM J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara informed him in another invitation letter that the members were "so sorry for not being able to learn the reason of your inability to attend their meeting held on 13\textsuperscript{th} May 1949, as was requested in my letter dated 2nd March, 1949."\textsuperscript{260} The Organization therefore called another meeting to be attended by a government representative because they felt that their grievances could only be resolved by the government. This meeting was scheduled for 23\textsuperscript{rd} September, 1950, at 10:00am. The Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza was told that he was "requested together with four of your District Commissioners, and the District Welfare Officer, to attend this meeting to help and give some instructions in the matters."\textsuperscript{261} The agenda of the meeting were set out as:

1. Minutes of last meeting.
2. To consider why due attention are not being paid to ex-soldiers by the government.
3. To consider the duties of Welfare Officers towards ex-soldiers affairs.
4. To consider the none [sic] grant of arrears due to ex-soldiers.
5. To ask for post of Reserve Police for military soldiers, other than police.

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{259} RSM J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara, Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization, to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 24\textsuperscript{th} August, 1950, (Institutions and Associations, 1949-1950, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/314).
\textsuperscript{260} (RSM J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara, Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization, to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 5\textsuperscript{th} August, 1950, (Institutions and Associations, 1949-1950, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/314).
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.
The letter concluded that, "your presence in this meeting will be of the great help to the members of the organization." In his response to the invitation to attend the meeting of the Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, while acknowledging the invitation, regretted "that I am not able to agree to your request but I would advise you that I am prepared to meet a deputation led by yourself to discuss the subjects at any time on appointment either prior to or subsequent to the meeting." This letter apparently did not reach the Ex-Soldiers Organization in time, and J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara penned off another letter, reminding the Provincial Commissioner that he had not "received any reply to my letter ... although I take it that your received it. However, I have to inform you that the meeting will begin at 10am on 23rd September 1950 at Ndori Junction, Asembo Location ... and your attendance will be greatly appreciated." The Nyanza Provincial Commissioner then informed J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara that he had indeed received the letter and replied to it, and that he wanted the organization to send him a deputation to discuss their grievances instead of inviting him to the meeting.

The failure by the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to attend meetings of the Ex-soldiers Organization frustrated members of the organization and they were even more determined that he should attend them and explain why ex-soldiers were not being looked after by the government. Without the presence of any government official such meetings were not going to make any progress in dealing with problems of the ex-askaris;

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262 Ibid.
members of the organization felt that their deliberations could only be meaningful if
government officials met them face to face. It also seems that officials of the Ex-soldiers
Organization did not want to meet Nyanza Provincial Commissioner privately by sending
a deputation to him because they did not want to be in a situation where they could be
coerced into making agreements that their members might complain about later. One
veteran soldier also mentioned that Africans tended to avoid private meetings with
government official out of fear of getting arrested. Thus a month after the failure of the
Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to attend askaris’ meeting of 23rd September, 1950, the
organization scheduled another one for 28th October, 1950, and asked the Provincial
Commissioner to attend, but the Provincial Commissioner refused to attend, citing,
"previous commitments."265 Determined to meet the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner,
the askaris tried to arrange another meeting for 20th January, 1951. The agenda of the
meeting shows that ex-soldiers grievances had expanded. Not only did they want more
information on their arrears and better service from the government Welfare Officers,
they also wanted their families exempted from paying fees; "sufficient pension" rather
than "nominal pension" to be given to old and disabled askaris [it appears this was for
those who had served for eighteen years in the army]; consideration be given for the
payment of gratuity to soldiers who deserted the army; and that pictures of ex-soldiers be
shown "periodically." The agenda of their meeting included the following:

1. Ex-soldiers hostels
2. Ex-soldiers family may be exempted from all kinds of school
   fees that will be a sort of temptation to the public which will

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264 RSM J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara, Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization to Nyanza Provincial
Commissioner, letter dated 16th September, 1950, (Institutions and Associations, 1949-1950, KNA,
PC/NZA/3/1/314).
265 Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, to RSM J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara, Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers
Organization, letter dated 19th August, 1950, (Institutions and Associations, 1949-1950, KNA,
PC/NZA/3/1/314).
persuade the public to offer their men for next war.
3. Ex-soldiers families and children may be given pensions not nominally but sufficient pension if a soldier gives his life in the battle.
4. Ex-soldier - if [he] loses any limb in the battle and becomes unable to work, may be [given] sufficient pension. Ex-soldier [when he] becomes old, he may be given a pension but not a bonus.
5. Gratuity to deserted soldiers to be considered by the government.
6. War pictures of ex-soldiers to be shown periodically if possible.
7. Other matters arising.\textsuperscript{266}

Some of the issues arising may not have made sense to the government but they did make a lot of sense to the \textit{askaris}. Many army deserters for instance might be dismissed as not having any basis for asking for pension from the government, but when one considers the fact all \textit{askaris} were required by the army to contribute some percentage of their income towards a gratuity which they would get back after discharge, one realizes that when these \textit{askaris} deserted the army for one reason or another, they left their money with the government. They never received any information regarding the money they saved while serving with the army. Some \textit{askaris} deserted the army after serving for a considerable time, for one year, for instance. Others deserted after serving for two or more years. These men never received their money, and they wanted the government to meet them and tell them something about it. Another issue that may not make sense was the free education scheme. Although the scheme was only limited to the children of soldiers who died while serving with the army in the war, it was never extended to families of \textit{askaris} who were disabled and could not make any meaningful or gainful income and pay fees for their children. It never made much sense not to extend the Free Education Scheme to

\textsuperscript{266} (RSM J. S. P. O. Ogara, Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Organization, to Nyanza Provincial Commissioner, letter dated 30\textsuperscript{th} November, 1950, (Institutions and Associations, 1949-1950, KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/314).
families of soldiers who were permanently disabled by the war, and these were the kinds of grievances the men wanted the government to attend to. Yet again, as usual, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner refused to attend the Ex-soldiers Organization slated for January, 1951. This led to suspicion. Having avoided ex-soldiers meetings that he had been invited to on many occasions, it was not too hard for the ex-soldiers to imagine that perhaps there was something that the government official was trying to hide. Although these *askaris* had been in high demand during the war, now it seemed that their interests were not important to the government, which now avoided meeting them as much as possible. These ex-soldiers felt that the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner was unfair in refusing to attend or send a representative to their meetings.

In the mean time, the elections for the members of the Native Tribunal, the Native Appeals Tribunal, and the Local Native Council, were scheduled to be held the following year in 1951, and the Ex-soldiers Organization wished to inform the Provincial commissioner that it would be its "great pleasure, if an opportunity can be accorded them in this respect."\(^{267}\) Whenever there were local activities, the organization felt that it should be given special attention at least in recognition of their role in the Second World War. In one letter, J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara informed the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner to at least ensure that there was "impartial considerations of the same appointments to be thought for some members of its own to become members of the Native Appeals Tribunals, etc."\(^{268}\) The Ex-Soldiers Organization also informed the Provincial


\(^{268}\) Ibid.
Commissioner that although its chairman had written to the President of the Local Native Council and had asked him to consider the "names of those of the organization wishes [sic] to be listed for candidates for the same election," the organization had not received any reply.\textsuperscript{269} The Ex-Soldiers therefore urged the Provincial Commissioner to "try your level best to make an effort on behalf [of] this organization, and have their requests put to the District Commissioners of the Districts in Nyanza, to have our case considered in the forthcoming elections."\textsuperscript{270} Yet again the interests of the organization were thwarted by the Provincial Commissioner, who argued that "representations in the Local Native Councils or Native Tribunals, etc., are not permitted on the basis of representing any particular interest. The appointments are made of persons who are considered most likely to represent the interests of the community at large."\textsuperscript{271} Instead of a special position being reserved for them, the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner advised members of the organization to "popularize themselves with the people of their area and so obtain their support in standing as candidates. As I have stated in my opening paragraph, representation is not in regard to any particular organization or interest, and therefore, I regret that I cannot give any special direction in regard to ex-soldiers organization."\textsuperscript{272}

But pressure was bearing on the government from within and without the colony. A meeting of the British Empire Service League Conference was held in Ottawa, Canada, [1949? or 1950?] and many issues were raised over the welfare of the African soldier. After hearing a resolution from the Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association, the

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{271} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
Kenyan Chapter of the British Legion sent a letter to the government on 17th January, 1950, asking if there was "any information ... in regard to the provision of long service pensions for *askaris* of the King's African Rifles." The response from the government and the military was very disappointing: nothing was being done. Perhaps in response to these grievances, various government agencies tried to prove that they "have not completely forgotten their brothers overseas" by establishing charitable organizations like the "East Africa Army Benevolent Fund." Established in 1945, the Fund was controlled by a Board comprised of civilian and service member from all territories in East Africa. But very few *askaris* were aware of this fund's existence. Soldiers were not told until five years after the Fund had been established way back in 1945, that it existed, and that "it is similar to the Army Benevolent Fund which was instituted in the United Kingdom in 1944." The objective of the fund was not exactly what the *askaris* needed given the fact that it gave "financial aid and support to approved charities which will benefit persons normally resident in East Africa who are serving or who have served in Her Majesty's Army, or their dependants living in East Africa." Since it was founded, it had "distributed over [British pounds]17,000 for the building of memorial homes and hostels and for the provisions of bursaries for the education of the children of

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272 Ibid.
273 The Secretary, British Legion [Kenya], letter to the Chief Secretary, Nairobi, (KAR: Proposals for Pensions for Long Service, 1945-54, KNA, AH/4/6).
274 Ruth to "My Dear Harold, c/o Chief Secretary, letter on "East African Christmas Fund," dated 4th October, 1952, (War Memorials, 1951-58, KNA, PC/NZ/3/4/64)
275 T. Neil, of the Secretariat observed that, "it appears that many African ex-servicemen are unaware of the existence and aims of the above mentioned Fund [that is the East Africa Army Fund], and it is considered that this omission should be rectified by suitable publicity in all districts." (T. Neil, for Deputy Chief Secretary, the Secretariat, Circular dated 3rd June, 1952, (War Memorials, 1951-58, KNA, PC/NZ/3/4/64).
276 Ibid.
ex-askaris." It was revealed that there were "still funds available for the assistance of charities which come within the terms of the Trust Deed. Recent examples of the Board's activities are aid to the British Legion Bulletin, Boy Scout and Brownie Packs, British Legion Hostels, Kenya African Rifles, Memorial Clock tower at Zomba and Welfare Services for serving askaris' wives." These were hardly the kinds of objectives that would interest askaris whose problems were of personal and family nature.

Askari's increasingly volatile complaints were overshadowed in the 1950's by the outbreak of the Mau Mau War broke, but after the war, the askaris continued to raise their complaints. In 1960, one askari wrote to the government as follows:

I wish to refer to my various correspondence terminating with my letter dated 30th January, 1959, in which I explained my position to you in detail. These letters were all addressed to your Permanent Secretary and I am sure they are in the file in your Ministry.

I am most grateful for your assistance in arranging for the payment of shs.200/- but since then this was the only amount paid to me in a lump sum. I was also paid shs.30 per month by the British Council but this had cease for the last five months now. I also was being paid a sum f shs.62/50 by the Municipal Welfare Officer, this also been stopped for the last 1 months or so. My present War Pension as you know is only shs.12 but this was being augmented by the above two other sources making a total of shs.112/50 which was helping me a long way towards the cost of living. Now that I am only paid shs.12/- it is not even enough to pay for a monthly Water bill. I shall now be pleased if you will kindly increase my pension to a reasons [sic] figure so as to enable me and my family a bare living [sic] only.

It is unfortunate that Government considers that shs.12/- per month is enough to enable me and my family to live on. I am a very old man now and cannot do any work to earn my living and it is a high time that Government should now help me. I am told that I own a piece of land, this is not so, the land in question belongs to Government and it was merely allocated to the ex-

277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
servicemen of 1914 war. This piece of land is undeveloped and there is no revenue from it. The house in which I live is a temporary [?] which I live with my family. I therefore request that you kindly consider my case and sympathetically on the lines explained above and increase my present rate of pension accordingly.  

When Jama Abdi visited the District Officer, Mombasa, over this matter, he "rebuked and drove me out of his office without malice [sic]. I told him to listen that the matter with which to discuss with him was purely of the nature of an interview ... He declined and repeated that I do not wish to see your face anymore in this office. I am quite astonished at his attitude and before embarking on this to higher authority would like an explanation. He continued to shout to his clerk to fetch a police constable to put me in clinck. I am a resident for a long time at the Coast Province and I am recognized as one of the Somali headman."  

After independence, a number of ex-soldiers unions emerged to articulate grievances of ex-*askaris* like Jama Abid. The Ex-Kings African Rifles Association was taken over by African veterans who changed the name of the Association to Kenya Ex-servicemen Old Comrades Association. It is not clear whether this was the same organization as J. F. C. Ngunjiri's Kenya Ex-Servicemen Union. The office of President seemed to imply that they were different associations. In a letter to the Coast Provincial Commissioner, R. St. John Matthews stated that, "while the Kenya Ex-Servicemen Union and the KAR and East African Forces [Kenya] Old Comrades Association are registered under the

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Societies Act, the Kenya Ex-Servicemen Old Comrades Association is not. One of these organizations, the Kenya Ex-Servicemen Union now tried to articulate the grievances of the soldiers. It was registered in 1964. Its officials tried to organize ex-World War I and World War II veterans together and fight for their rights. One of the plans of the Association was "meet widows of the Ex-Servicemen and their children, who would be required to register and give their late fathers' names." It also intended to tell the "ex-servicemen of their ... Union's Registration acceptance and also how to recover their compensation."

The objectives and plans of the Union immediately roused negative reaction from the government. H. D. Dent, the Army Secretary, immediately cautioned the union on its objective on "... how to recover their 'compensation' that gives rise to apprehension. It is believed in this Ministry that ex-servicemen of the two World Wars have received from the British Government all the gratuities, etc., to which they were legally entitled – however meager these awards may perhaps seem by the standards of 1964. It is to be hoped that the Union will not go rousing false hopes that will only lead to disappointment and ill will." J. D. Adamba, the Permanent Secretary also warned the Union that as far as the Kenyatta government was concerned, "the British government has made it clear that British considers that all gratuities, pensions, etc., have been finally settled. While it is of course open to your union to press for better terms, it would be very wrong and irresponsible to arouse hopes that large sums of compensation are due and will be paid to

283 Ibid.
ex-servicemen." From that time onwards it was difficult for the Union to work, even to hold meetings and publicize itself. When the Union tried to hold a meeting in Coast Province, one official of the Coast Regional Government warned its officials that, "you must obtain a permit to hold a public meeting here. I regret that I am unable to assist you in any way, but I presume your local members will be willing to assist you with publicity, provided you obtain the necessary permit, beforehand." But the Union was not deterred. Its officials did tour the country seeking to meet "our supporters, who were former members of the British Legion, which later on was called the African Section." As the organization continued to develop, its Secretary-General, J. F. C. Ngunjiri, decided to ask all the forty-one District Commissioners, who, during the First and Second World Wars "acted as the chairmen of KAR and East Africa Forces Old Comrades Association," in the country to provide his office with "a copy of ex-askaris, as it may appear in your file, and thus 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars, ... amount paid to each ex-askaris, both those who are dead and those are alife [sic] ... any amounts due to ex-askaris, and the amount paid out through District treasury, ... any information that would lead us to the building which was set up by the British Legion, and then transferred to KAR and East African Forces Old Comrades Association, and the preset occupants." J. F. C. Ngunjiri also warned the new African government that, "all matters concerning ex-

284 H. D. Dent, Army Secretary, to Civil Secretary, Coast Region, letter dated 7th April, 1964, (War Crises, 1942-48, KNA, CA/12/160).
288 J.F.C. Ngunjiri, Secretary-General, the Kenya Ex-Servicemen Union, City Mansion Office, Nairobi, to the Forty-One District Commissioners, letter dated 19th January, 1965, (War Crises, 1942-48, KNA, CA/12/160).
askaris who serviced in the said wars, should pass through this office."\(^{289}\)

In 1965, another Union, the National Ex-Servicemen Union of Kenya, emerged and began to recruit membership. Its President was J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara, formerly the Chairman of Nyanza Ex-Soldiers Association. The Union operated mainly from Kisumu, though it had an office in Nairobi. To articulate its cause effectively, it sought to broaden its base by electing national officials. In September, 1965, J. S. P. Okeyo Ogara invited James Kitonga and Ex-Sgt. Edward I. Masamuli, to be, respectively, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Voi-Taita District, and to "call your meeting and consider your own Committee Members Selection and forward us the names as soon as possible at the Basar, Koinange Street, PO. Box 13111, Nairobi, Kenya ..."\(^{290}\) James Kitonga and Edward Masamuli were also told that they would be in charge of the six districts in Coast Province, and that registration materials for the province would be sent forward to them. The union also planned to open branches elsewhere in the country. The National Ex-Servicemen union of Kenya does not seem to have been as recognized or to have been as well known as the Kenya Armed Forces Old Comrades Association. It was this letter Union that seemed to have been able to articulate much of the grievances of the ex-askaris.

Through the work of the Kenya Armed Forces Old Comrades Association, the

\(^{289}\) Ibid.
government was forced to agree to help the "really destitute ex-askaris."[291] With assistance from the government, it appears that the association was able to give some financial aid to "genuinely destitute ex-soldiers or their widows." Due to limited funds, the association paid limited amount of fees to children of some ex-soldiers. It also meted out benevolence fund "for the genuinely destitute and is limited to a maximum of about shs.200. This sum can only be exceeded where undue distress can be proved."[292] The distress is still there among askaris even today. Askaris problems are still as acute today as they were more than fifty years ago. There are many askaris out there, suffering and destitute. Although they gave their today for the colony's tomorrow, they appear not only to have lost their today, but their tomorrow as well.

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[292] Ibid.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

'For your tomorrow, we gave our today:' The Experience of Kenya African Soldiers in the Second World War" has been about Kenya's askaris military service and experience in the Second World War. In order to examine the experience of Kenya African soldiers in the Second World War, it began with an analysis of the coming of the war to Kenya and the colonial government's preparation for the war, setting the context for the mobilization of Kenya African manpower for the war effort. In view of the threat posed to Kenya's northern and northeastern borders by Italian colonial governments in Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland, it was pointed out, the colonial government of Kenya began its preparations for war by issuing special orders pertaining to the economy, division of the country into security/military zones, and recruitment exercise. But war did not materialize on Kenya's borders for the first ten months of the outbreak of the war in Europe. Even so, there was a lot of tension and small-scale flare-ups at Kenya's northern and northeastern border, which kept the government on edge. When the war finally broke out in East Africa, the government immediately put its war preparations into action. Rationing of fuel, for instance, was already underway. Citizens of countries deemed hostile to the Allied Forces were rounded up and placed in internment camps. Propaganda policies were implemented, the objective being to win public support, maintain morale in the colony while urging the public to support the war by contributing funds, working hard on economic production, turning up in large numbers for enlistment into His Majesty's military forces. In fact, the recruitment of Kenya African soldiers was already underway,
and those who were already serving in the army were immediately deployed to the war-front as new recruits were sought.

In arguably more detail than most studies which have so far been conducted on colonial African soldiers in the Second World War, "For your tomorrow, we gave our today: The Experience of Kenya African Soldiers in the Second World War," analyzed the motives of askaris who served in the Second World War, doing so largely from the soldiers' own perspectives. The letters that the askaris wrote while serving in the war and what they said during interviews were given priority in trying to understand why they fought in a war that was ostensibly a foreign war. Other sources were also examined. Many askaris were interviewed and their reasons for serving in the war given weight without trying to second-guess or question them the way some studies have tried to do elsewhere.

After a detailed examination of oral testimonies, archival materials, and newspapers, it was difficult to avoid concluding that most askaris were generally conscious of why they went to war, and what they expected to gain from it. There were some ignorant askaris in the war to be sure, who were generally few, but even so, they tried to interpret the war in terms that made sense to themselves and their society. Majority of askaris were fully conscious of what they were doing, why they wanted to join the army. There were indeed many askaris who went even as far as writing application letters for vacancies in the military during the war. The average askari was always trying to make sense of the war by appropriating and interpreting its meaning and significance to fit his values, his hopes
for the future, and his materials needs. These were hardly the kinds of men who were
supposedly "ignorant," or "uninformed," or "unaware" about the issues germane to the
war as some works tend to have it. Many soldiers joined the colonial army fully aware of
what they hoped to achieve. A significant number of askaris enlisted in the war out of
conviction, that is, out of a simple but strong desire to help the British government. They
were the loyalists, a phalanx of men who have often been left out of most studies because
their act of helping the colonial hegemony often sits uncomfortably with the ideology and
political taste of some of the scholars who have dealt with their experiences. Among the
askaris one also finds those for whom military service was a strategic maneuver to win
freedom at home. The ideals that the Allies touted as their reasons for going to war struck
home with them; they took action by joining their colonial masters in the war, fighting as
brothers-in-arms, waging war together, hoping that the Allied powers would reciprocate
the support they were giving them by overturning repressive colonial policies after the
war, creating conditions that would be conducive for the attainment and enjoyment of the
ideals that had prompted them to go to war. For them, the act of joining the war was a
calculated attempt at strategically using the war to win rights in the Kenya colony. There
were also a good number of men who interpreted their military service during the war in
economic terms, as a means of employment and accumulating wealth with which to
improve their station in life. And like many soldiers today, Kenyan askaris of the Second
World War also hoped that the army would provide them with opportunities to get away
from home and sample things that ordinarily would not be available locally. At the end of
their service in the war they expected their social status to rise by virtue of the money
they would have accumulated and brought home, the experiences gleaned by traveling
and touring far places, the qualities of courage and bravery demonstrated against the 
enemy on the battle-field. Indeed, for many askaris, the war provided a rare opportunity 
for the reassertion and reaffirmation of certain values, which had been banned under 
colonialism, values like courage and manliness. Although most studies have tended to 
suggest that askaris were ignorant about why they went to war, this work contends that 
the opposite was largely the case.

Although scholars like Timothy Parsons have counseled against examining the motives 
of askaris in the Second World War, claiming that it is an effort that is largely wasteful 
and unproductive, the experience of askaris in the Second World War demonstrates that 
it is in fact productive and important. Soldiers' motives in war are often key to 
documenting, interpreting, and understanding their military experiences, and the 
character of war. Motives determine how and why men fight wars, and, to a large extent, 
even the ultimate outcome of the wars themselves. Kenya askaris' motives were indelibly 
connected to their wartime experience, to a large extent determining their attitudes, 
behavior and conduct in the army during the war. Even after demobilization, askaris' 
behavior and demeanor at home, and attitude to colonial authorities were determined to 
no less degree by why they had joined service in the first place, and whether or not they 
had managed to realize their objectives and aspirations. Without underscoring the 
motives of Kenyan askaris who served in the Second World War, it would not have been 
possible to understand their post-war experiences, particularly their bitterness with the 
colonial government, and the subsequent independent governments of Kenya under 
President Jomo Kenyatta, and his successor, Daniel arap Moi. It is for these reasons that
this work gives significant space to the voices of the men who served in the war, an opportunity for the men to be heard, to voice the social, economic, and political issues that prompted them to offer their services to a colonial power which sought their support and received it at a time it was probably most vulnerable to internal challenges and social disorder.

The question of motives constituted only one aspect of this work. As part of the experience of the askaris, this work also discussed the actual process of enlistment of askaris, their training, and subsequent deployment to various military units where they received further training in their specialties. It analyzed the physical, medical, social, economic and political factors that the army often examined during recruitment exercises. It examined life in the army in the very first few days and weeks of recruits formally enlisting, documenting some of the drastic changes askaris were made to undergo. Some of these experiences have been examined and documented within the context of life at Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, and Maseno Military School, and also within a specific military unit, the PANYAKO – Pioneers Corp. The history of Maseno Recruiting and Holding Depot, and Maseno Military School, and of PANYAKO is a major contribution to hitherto unknown aspect of Kenya’s military history.

Towards a further examination of askaris’ military experience during the war, there is an examination of the experience of Kenyan soldiers during combat in theaters far away from Kenya, in places like Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Madagascar, North Africa and the Middle East, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma, among many places in South East Asia. It is
often difficult to describe events in the heat of battles because tensions and emotions involved make it next to impossible for combatants to recollect and recreate their experiences in any lucid and logical fashion. Many askaris who were available for interview were very advanced in age, and in no position to remember details that often times are necessary for a complete, comprehensive reconstruction of combat situations. Askaris were often mixing up place names, some times names of their units, at times, names of their commanders. Even so, an attempt was made to document events surrounding actual combat by comparing askaris’ own recollections with other sources particulalry from the East African Standard, bringing out important activities that the soldiers only hazily remember performing prior to, and in, actual engagements. Through askaris's recollections and excerpts from relevant newspapers and archival documents, it was possible to provide some detailed description of some combat, providing a sense of how soldiers deported themselves at the battlefront and after.

This work also analyzed life in the army during the war. It was noted that while serving with the army, askaris used much of their free time thinking about home, and preparing for life after the war. Askaris were often involved in writing a lot of letters home and demanding that their relatives write back. Others used their spare time to learn skills and trade. Others indulged in various entertainment activities, in sporting events, music, and dance. Askaris used opportunities provided by the army to enhance their skills and knowledge in anticipation of life after demobilization, learning how to read and write, taking exams in their areas of specialization in the hope of promotion and better jobs after the war. Some askaris were imprisoned by colonial authorities for various crimes, while
some others were captured and imprisoned by the Axis; their experiences as prisoners are documented. The war inevitably impacted on relations between soldiers and their families. The war affected families left by the askaris at home as much as it affected askaris at war, but the experiences of askaris' families were outside of the scope of this work. Attention to the impact of the war has thus been restricted to its effect on askaris, and how the askaris responded or articulated those experiences. Virtually all soldiers talked about how they missed home and their families, a view supported by archival documents and newspapers. Many askaris were also complaining about the state of their homes, about money not being received or being misused by relatives at home, properties destroyed, or about family members misbehaving. Life at home often affected the way askaris served and experienced the war. Many times askaris had quarrels with the army and civil administration, especially when there was an illness in the family, when a wife absconded from the homestead, where a brother who was supposed to look after the homestead went away to look for work at an urban center or a colonialist/settler farm. Where a senior family member fell ill, was seriously injured or killed, askaris sometimes demanded permission to come back home on temporary leave to straighten matters. At the end of the war, the askaris were demobilized and sent home.

As with the case when they joined to serve in the war, the experiences of the returning askaris are also documented. There is a detailed examination of the contested and emotive question of pay, particularly whether askaris were entitled to pension or gratuity or both, whether askaris were promised some reward for their service during the war as askaris have almost unanimously asserted, and the colonial government has denied. It is
argued that at the beginning, most *askaris* left the army in most cases without any problem, though some *askaris* voiced complaints about their pay and the colonial system. But after the war, *askaris* left for home without rewards of any kind, material or political. Barring mutinies by *askaris* angry at delays with demobilization, the demobilization process was quiet and peaceful, largely because at the time the *askaris* had the money to spend. Many *askaris* were looking forward to going home and seeing their families first, while hoping ultimately hoping to invest in some economic activity. But this dream never materialized; it was shattered fairly soon after *askaris* arrived home. It was at this point that many *askaris* started demanding compensation for their service in the war. Many soldiers began to accuse the government of tricking them into offering their services without proper compensation. There was a lot of talk about exploitation, about promises, which the government made but failed to keep. *Askaris* talked about the fact that there was supposed to be land set aside for them, but there was no land. There were supposed to be jobs and regular sources of income, but there were no jobs or regular sources of income. There was no pension or compensation of whatever kind. *Askaris* began demanding meetings with senior government representatives to "discuss compensation," as R. S. M. Okeyo Ogara put it in one letter to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner. Dispatched back to their homes without compensation or proper means of support or even promises of a new political dispensation, *askaris* became extremely disillusioned with the British government, and disillusionment quickly coalesced into bitterness. Within five years, many bitter ex-World War II veterans were forming associations to articulate their interests to the government, after initially joining the African Section of the British Legion, and quitting after discovering that the British Legion was merely
another extension of a colonial system which had largely remained obdurate and blind to
the suffering of askaris who had sacrificed their blood during the war. Even today askaris
still bitterly recount their sense of betrayal at the hands of a colonial administration,
which they served diligently and unflaggingly, and which ditched them after securing
victory. Although askaris were generally happy and optimistic while serving in the war,
their bitter altercations with the government after the war has tended to override any other
experiences they have had during the war. Much of the literature dealing with the askaris
have tended to highlight their post-war attitude and disposition against the government
even though these were more of a result of how the askaris were treated by the
government after the war than by any particular, unique war-time experiences. Most
askaris quietly smarted over their grievances at home, but some small groups took steps
to join anti-colonial movements in Kenya in reaction to the government's betrayal of their
welfare; they wanted to get even. After serving in the war conscientiously, they felt used
and dumped by an opportunistic and exploitative government, which no longer perceived
them as useful in the defense of the Empire.

The trajectory of most studies that have been undertaken on the experience of African
soldiers in the Second World War have almost always ended up being about how the
soldiers were betrayed by their colonial administration after making a lot of sacrifices in
defence of their colonies. The betrayal did not end with colonial powers, but continued
even after African countries achieved independence. In fact, many African soldiers
largely perceive their governments as being in collusion with former colonial powers to
frustrate their rightful quest for compensation for their military service during the Second
World War. The experience of Kenyan *askaris* in the Second World War has similarly been characterized by anger and bitterness particularly towards the colonial regime in Kenya, and to some extent, the governments of President Jomo Kenyatta, and his successor, Daniel arap Moi. There is regret about post-war treatment, but there is also pride at the way the *askaris* conducted themselves in the war. There is ambivalence. There is a sense in which the *askaris* are proud of how they fought in the war with courage and manliness, how they gave their all in a war that was generally characterized as having noble human ideals. But there is also regret at what has become of their fate after helping the British and her Allies win the war; the bitterness runs deep, the sense of betrayal palpitates in every conversation with the *askaris*. The *askaris* gave “their today” for a “better tomorrow,” but the government betrayed them after securing victory and managing to protect itself from the Axis.
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APPENDIX A
Sample of Questions for Askari Interviews

i) Personal Background.
   When and where were you born?
   What was your father’s profession?
   Was your mother an only wife or did she have co-wives?
   How many kids were you in your family?
   How many boys and girls?
   Were you the eldest or were there other kids older than you?

ii) When the war broke out.
   Where were you when the war broke out?
   What were you doing?
   In case students (name of school, level of education)
   In case of employees (place of work, job description, name of supervisor, etc)

iii) Knowledge about the war.
   How did you know about the war?
   Who told you about the war?
   What were people saying about the war?
   What was your opinion about what they were saying?

iv) Making the decision to join the war.
   How exactly did you come to the decision to join the war?
   What were you doing at the time?
   Why did you join the war?
   What was the reaction of your family and friends?
   Were you married? What did your wife think about your decision to join the war?

v) Joining the war.
   Where did you enlist for the war?
   Who were with you? Your chiefs, friends, parents, family members?
   Did you join voluntarily or were you forced to join?
   Which unit did you join, and what was your service number?
   What did the recruiting officers tell you when joined the military?
   What were your terms of enlistment?
   How much was your pay?
   Were there any benefits you were going to get during and after service?

v) Training.
   Which unit did you join?
   How and where were you trained?
   How long did the training take?
   Did the training adequately prepare you for military service?
vi) **Deployment.**
Where exactly were you deployed?
How many were you in your unit?
Which other units were with you?
Who were your officers?
Who were your African officers, if any?
What role did you play in the war?
Which battles did you fight in?
What was your impression of the battles?
Did you win any medals? Do you know of anybody who earned a medal?

vii) **Life in the Army.**
How different was life from ordinary life?
Did you make any friends?
What was the relation between you and your officers?
How did African and European officers relate to one another?
What or whom did you see during the war that you still remember?
What did you do in your spare time?
Did you improve on your education?
How did you keep in touch with your family?
Did you ever go back home during the war?
Did you have any problems while serving in the war?
Were you ever sick or injured during the war?
How and where did you receive medical care?
Did you save any money?
What was army life like?

viii) **The end of the war and demobilization.**
Where were you when the war ended?
Did you and your unit celebrate the end of the war? How?
When did you come back home?
What plans did you have when you came back home?
Were you given any gratuity or pension?
Were you given everything you were promised during the war?
Did you realize your goals in the war? Was the war worth it?
What lasting impressions did the war leave on you?
Did you have any problems when you came back home?
What kinds of work did *askaris* perform after the war?
Did you join any organization after the war? If so, which ones, and why?
After the war, how did *askaris* try to fit in the society?
What kinds of problems do *askaris* have today?
What are your fellow *askaris* doing today?
### APPENDIX B
**Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbr.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAG</td>
<td>Assistant Adjutant General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPC</td>
<td>African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>African Service Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bde</td>
<td>Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNCO</td>
<td>British Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Central Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Central Africa Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Civil Dispersal Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Central Investigation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Colonial Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAST</td>
<td>Coast Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CnC</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNC</td>
<td>Chief Native Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Chief Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Company Sergeant Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDMI</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Military Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>District Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWO</td>
<td>District Welfare Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAA</td>
<td>East Africa Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAE</td>
<td>East Africa Army Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAEM</td>
<td>East Africa Army Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAEP</td>
<td>East Africa Army Educational Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAMC</td>
<td>East Africa Army Medical Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAAOC</td>
<td>East Africa Army Ordinance Corps</td>
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<td>EAAPC</td>
<td>East Africa Army Pay Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAAPC</td>
<td>East Africa Army Pioneer Corps</td>
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<td>EAR</td>
<td>East Africa Rifles</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAAS</td>
<td>East Africa Army Signals</td>
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<td>EAASC</td>
<td>East Africa Service Corps</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>East Africa Command</td>
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<td>EAEP</td>
<td>East Africa Educational Publishers</td>
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<td>EAGC</td>
<td>East Africa Governors’ Conference</td>
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<td>EAMLS</td>
<td>East Africa Military Labor Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAMP</td>
<td>East Africa Mobile Propaganda Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAMT</td>
<td>East Africa Military Training Depot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRO</td>
<td>Family Remittance Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>Government House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOC</td>
<td>General Officer Commanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRSSA</td>
<td>Garissa District</td>
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<tr>
<td>HM Forces</td>
<td>His Majesty's Forces</td>
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<td>HNU</td>
<td>Home News Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>Information Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>Isiolo District</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAR</td>
<td>King's African Rifles</td>
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<td>KDF</td>
<td>Kenya Defence Force</td>
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<td>KIO</td>
<td>Kenya Information Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIOMC</td>
<td>Kenya Information Office Mobile Cinema</td>
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<tr>
<td>KML</td>
<td>Kenya Military Labor</td>
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<td>KNA</td>
<td>Kenya National Archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>Kenya Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRNVR</td>
<td>Kenya Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRRO</td>
<td>King's African Rifles Reserve Force</td>
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<td>KSM</td>
<td>Kisumu District</td>
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<tr>
<td>KWEO</td>
<td>Kenya Women's Emergency Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGCO</td>
<td>Legislative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNC</td>
<td>Local Native Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBT</td>
<td>Marsabit District</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHN</td>
<td>Mobile Home News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>Military Labor Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Military Medal</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATD</td>
<td>Native Artisans Training Depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non Commissioned Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFD</td>
<td>Northern Frontier District</td>
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<td>NYZ</td>
<td>Nyanza Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZA</td>
<td>Nyanza Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Officer Commanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCEAG</td>
<td>Office of the Conference of East African Governors</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Provincial Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Post Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>POWS</td>
<td>Prisoners of War</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pte.</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
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<td>RCM</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Royal Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSM</td>
<td>Regimental Sergeant Major</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.a.a</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAAF</td>
<td>South Africa Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEAC</td>
<td>South East Asia Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Signals Training Camp and Depot</td>
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<td>WAFF</td>
<td>West African Frontier Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>War Office</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C
Maps

Source: Marina and David Ottaway, Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution
THE SECOND WORLD WAR: ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, 1941

THE CAMPAIGN IN NORTH AFRICA

THE INDIAN OCEAN, SHOWING EAST AFRICA, THE HORN OF AFRICA, MADAGASCAR, AND BURMA.