



# The Lake Tanganyika Expedition 1914-1917

A Primary Source Chronology

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DATE

Report Spicer-Simson, Kalemie  
(ADM 137/268 M02081; ADM 123/142, p248)  
Secret and Confidential NAE 50/1916 I have the honour to report that the Belgian Authorities have this day handed over the control of the Belgian division of the Allied flotilla in Lake T entirely to me.

1 Jan 1916 (Sat)  
British occupy  
Yaunde.

This is, doubtless, due to the success in capturing an enemy vessel on 26 ultimo.

I hope and believe that this will put an end to some of the jealousies that have existed here, for Lient Goor Belgian State Marine who is in command of the Belgian vessels, is both anxious and willing to be put under my orders.

I am informed, however, that Maj Stinghambert, who is in command here, was of opinion that since we were operating from Belgian Territory, the Belgian flotilla should act independently.

Maj Stinghambert has been invalided and has handed his charge over to Capitaine Cmdt De Clerck, and this officer called on me yesterday evening, and desired me to consider the whole Allied flotilla as under my orders, if I were willing to take the added responsibility.

I replied that I was willing to do so, subject to the approval of the British Govt, but that pending such approval, I would take general command of the Allied Flotilla without holding myself responsible for the state of the Belgian ships.

These vessels are well enough equipped, but their engines, and in the case of the *Vengeur* the boilers, are in a very bad state.

My staff is not sufficient to undertake the repair and maintenance of these vessels, especially as we now have an extra ship HMS *Fifi*.

The *Chemins de Fer aux Grands Lacs Africains* has well equipped workshops and several European boilermakers and engine fitters at Kabalo (24 hours by rail from here) and could undertake most of the work required, but when I suggested employing them I was informed that the railway had not been mobilised, and the men were not *des militaires* therefore it rested with the Railway Company whether we were allowed to employ them or not.

Apparently the local authorities are afraid of the Railway Company because this represents very powerful political and financial interest in Belgium. They, therefore, dare not requisition the workmen, and when a request for their services is put forward, the Company always manage to find that there was much work to be done on the line or for the rolling stock, and the men cannot be spared.

I was told this privately by an officer of some standing who requested me not to mention either his name or rank.