

the German fort at Mora in February 1916. The German commander, Von Raben surrendered, marking the defeat of Germany in Cameroon.

As the Allies gained control of Cameroon, they started preparing an administration to replace that of the Germans. The following paragraphs examine the participation of the people of Cameroon in the war.

The participation of the people of Cameroon in the war

The various tribal groups in Cameroon that were either allies or enemies of the Germans before 1914, found themselves fighting either for the Germans or for the Allies. Groups like the Bali and the Bamum supported the Germans (the Bamum changed side in 1915, declaring support for the Allies). The Allies won support from the groups that had been enemies to the Germans like the Duala, the Bakweri and the Bulu. As the Allies were about to win the war, more groups supported them.

Below are some of the ways in which the indigenes of Cameroon participated in the war either on the German side or on the Allied side:

- 1) Providing food and shelter to the party they were supporting.
- 2) Carrying or transporting war supplies like food and ammunition for the troops.
- 3) Fighting as soldiers on either side - implying that during battles, indigenes were killing indigenes on the enemy side.
- 4) Acting as scouts, guides and interpreters to enable troops to situate and attack their enemies.
- 5) Carrying out the sabotage of facilities. For example, destroying bridges after crossing them or planting bombs on roads to be used by enemies.
- 6) Providing information that would enable each fighting party locate or situate its enemy.
- 7) Obstructing the enemy party from making use of their land or any available resource like water.

Why the Germans resisted the Allies for long

To the surprise of many, the Germans who were outnumbered by the Allies by a ratio of 10:1 were defeated after eighteen months of intense fighting. Below are some reasons to explain why the Germans were not easily defeated by the Allies, in spite of the latter's advantages:

- 1) German forces defending Cameroon knew the terrain better than the Allied forces. This was partly as a result of the fact that they had fought against Cameroon tribal groups that had opposed German rule.
- 2) The German forces were also in well-fortified positions and could defend themselves better than the Allies who were invading.
- 3) From the beginning of fighting, the German command was unified under Zimmermann unlike the Allies whose command was first divided under Dobell and Aymerich.
- 4) The German commander knew that the Allies greatly outnumbered his forces and made use of any resource or opportunity at his disposal.
- 5) Some tribal groups like the Bali and the Bamum assisted the Germans with fighting men and with other resources.
- 6) Germans in Cameroon who were non-soldiers had military skills and assisted the German war effort in their own way.