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978-1-107-04848-5 - Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance

Eric T. Jennings

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Free French Africa in World War II

The African Resistance

General de Gaulle's Free French may have been headquartered in London, but their base lay in Brazzaville. This book shows compellingly that the movement drew its strength from 1940 to 1943 from fighting men, resources, and operations in French Equatorial Africa and Cameroon. Territorially, Free France spanned from the Libyan border with Chad down to the Congo River, and to the scattered tiny French territories of the South Pacific and India. Eric T. Jennings tells the story of an improbable French military and institutional rebirth through Central Africa. *Free French Africa in World War II* provides a unique look at the long forgotten role Gaullist Africa played to help the Allied cause.

Eric T. Jennings is professor of history at Victoria College at the University of Toronto. His books include *Vichy in the Tropics*, *Curing the Colonizers*, and *Imperial Heights*, as well as an edited volume with Jacques Cantier entitled *L'Empire colonial sous Vichy*. Jennings has received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grants; the Alf Andrew Heggoy, Jean-François Coste, and Fetkann book prizes; and the Palmes académiques.

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Archival Abbreviations

ADN	Archives diplomatiques de Nantes
AFCF	Archives de la Fraternité des Capucins de France, Paris
AMB	Archives municipales de Brazzaville
AMC	Archives du Mémorial de Caen
AML	Archives du Mémorial du Maréchal Leclerc, Paris
ANC	Archives nationales de la République du Congo, Brazzaville
ANCMR	Archives nationales du Cameroun, Yaoundé
ANF	Archives nationales de France, Paris
ANOM	Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence
ANS	Archives nationales du Sénégal, Dakar
AOL	Archives de l’Ordre de la Libération, Paris
BD	Bodleian Archives, Oxford
CHETOM	Centre d’histoire et d’études des troupes d’outre-mer, Fréjus
CMA	Archives of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Colorado Springs
CSE	Archives de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, Chevilly-Larue
FCDG	Archives de la Fondation Charles de Gaulle, Paris
FLK	Museum Folkwang Archives, Essen
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland
NAUK	National Archives of the United Kingdom, London
SHD	Service historique de la défense, Vincennes
SSCSC	Smith College, Sophia Smith Collection, Northampton, Massachusetts

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Glossary

Bataillon de marche: Basic military unit in Free French Africa (abbreviated to B.M.).

Carlton Gardens: General de Gaulle's headquarters in London.

Chicotte or Chicote: A whip made of hippopotamus hide, widely used in the colonial era in the Belgian and French Congo.

Corvée: A form of statute labor imposed on colonial subjects.

The Cross of Lorraine: Symbol of de Gaulle's Free French and Fighting French movements.

D.B.: Division blindée, or armoured division.

D.F.L.: Division française libre, or Free French division.

FEA: French Equatorial Africa, a federation that included the colonies of Chad, Oubangui-Chari, Moyen-Congo, and Gabon, and whose capital was Brazzaville.

F.F.I.: Forces françaises de l'Intérieur. The makeshift Gaullist army born of the resistance in mainland France.

Free France/Fighting France: General de Gaulle's movement changed names in 1942, becoming "Fighting France" although many sources continued to speak of the "Free French."

Maquis: Rural guerrilla units of the Resistance in World War II France, comprised at first of men who avoided labor conscription in Germany.

Prestations/Prestataires: A form of statute labor imposed on colonial subjects.

RTST: Régiment des Tirailleurs Sénégalais du Tchad (military unit hailing from Chad, but not "Senegalese," contrary to what its name suggests).

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Glossary

Tirailleur: French term from the colonial era used to designate an African soldier.

Place Names in the Colonial Era and Today

Fort-Archambault = modern-day Sahr, Chad

Fort-Lamy = modern-day N'Djamena, Chad

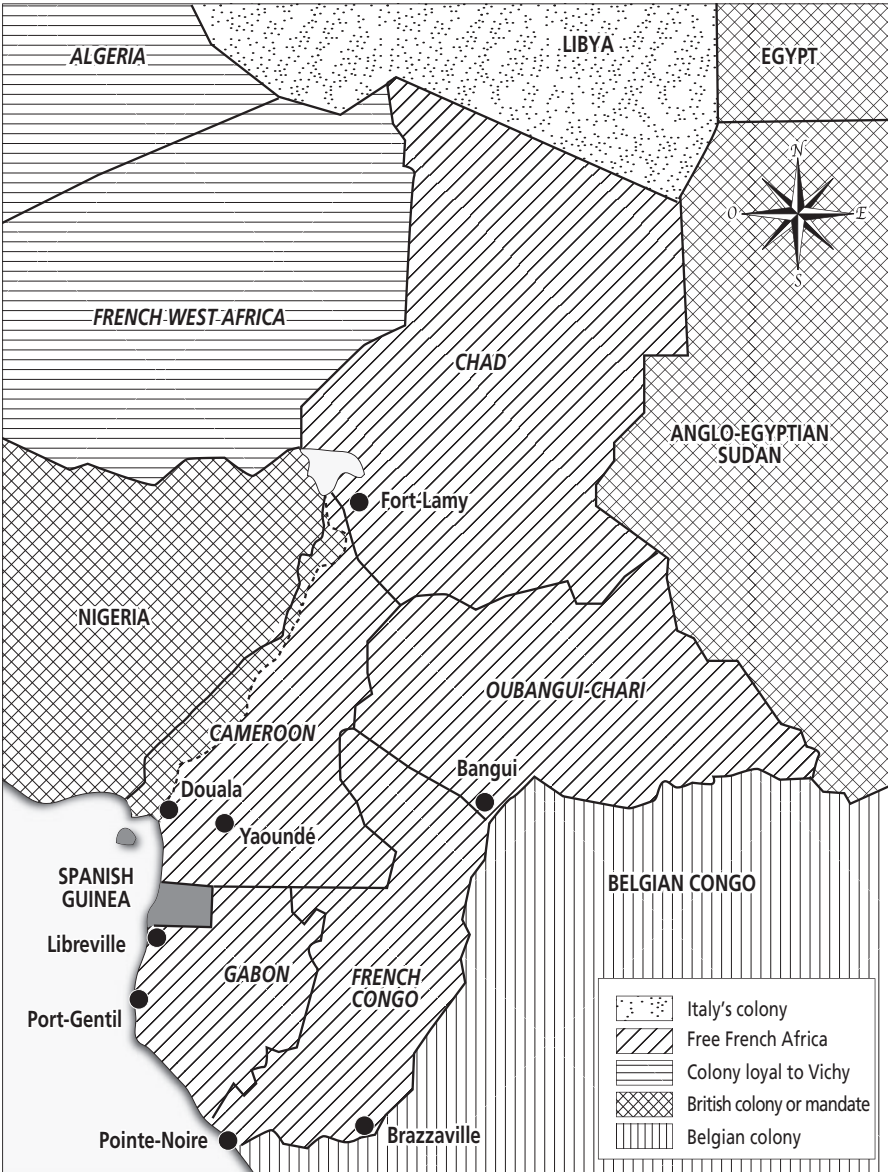
Fort-Rousset = modern-day Owando, Republic of Congo

Leopoldville = modern-day Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Oubangui-Chari = modern-day Central African Republic (previously known also as Centrafrique)



MAP 1. Free French Africa in World War II



MAP 2. Free French Africa and its neighbors