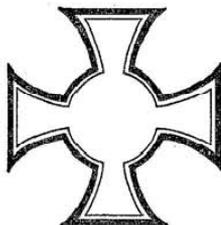


EDWIN P. HOYT

# GUERRILLA

COLONEL VON LETTOW-VORBECK AND

GERMANY'S EAST AFRICAN EMPIRE



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## Contents

1	Victory or Defeat?	1
2	Upward the Course of Empire	12
3	Von Lettow Goes to War	44
4	Triumph at Tanga	59
5	Victory!	77
6	A "German David" Fights	105
7	"The Fatherland Is Proud of Its Sons"	114
8	The Small War	138
9	Resupply, Guerilla Style	157
10	Much Ado About Bukoba	182
11	The South Africans Arrive	201
13	Orderly Retreat	241
14	The Long, Long Trek Begins	278
15	The Obsessions of General Smuts	295
16	Roughing It on the Rufiji	310
17	They Called It Self-Help	330
18	The Great East African Battle	353
19	Guerilla Column	369
20	In the Bush	391
21	The Great Circle Course	409
22	The End of the Troop	441
	Annotated Bibliography	447

GUERRILLA

## Victory or Defeat?

On November 11, 1918, General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck of the Imperial German Army's strangest military unit was camped with his handful of German officers and hundreds of black soldiers around the town of Kasama, deep inside the border of British Northern Rhodesia. He was planning a strike against the town of Fife, where the British maintained a large supply depot. Von Lettow-Vorbeck needed those supplies. With virtually no physical assistance from the homeland, he had been fighting the British enemy for more than four years; fighting, and winning in the sense that he remained unconquered and unbowed. He had tied up hundreds of thousands of Britain's South African and Rhodesian forces that might otherwise have been sent to fight in France. He had kept the British raj in all Africa off balance and worried lest he bring about a rebellion of their native blacks. Further, he had conducted the most successful campaign in the history of modern warfare. At five

o'clock on the morning of November 11, he was sitting with his troops, listening to reports that Captain Spangenberg had taken control of Kasama, and making plans to move on against Fife.

He had no idea that morning that his Kaiser and the imperial German government had come to the end of their rope, and that a delegation of the empire's military and political leaders had entered a railway carriage in the forest of Compiègne and was just then signing a document of armistice that would bring to an end the long European war, and to defeat this leader in Germany's African colonies who had no intention of ever giving up.

On November 12 General von Lettow-Vorbeck moved up to Kasama on an inspection trip and found that Captain Spangenberg had matters well under control. The captain produced for his commander a most civilized dinner of British canned meat, vegetables, and strawberries from the British district commissioner's garden, and a bottle of English beer, all of which von Lettow consumed while sitting in comfort at the district commissioner's dining table. He told Captain Spangenberg he was ready to move on, and that after they had taken

Fife they should have a much stronger Schutztruppe or military column, with new guns and ammunition wrested from the enemy to use against him. They were accustomed to such change; in their guerilla war they had used every available sort of weapon—French, English, Portuguese, even the naval guns from the cruiser Koenigsberg, which had been blockaded early in the war in the delta of the Rufiji River.

That day, just a few miles north of Kasama, a large unit of the King's African Rifles was pursuing the German column, but that was nothing new. The African Rifles had been pursuing von Lettow for a long time and they had not got him yet. On November 12 two companies of the German force held off the British, without much effort. At Kasama, von Lettow was enrapt in the difficulties of his next decision. He had plenty of guns, ammunition and supplies and could expect to get more at Fife in a few days. He could move into the Congo-Zambesi watershed and destroy the Belgian copper-mining industry around Katanga or move on toward Portuguese Angola in West Africa. He might even reach the Atlantic, having started on the shore of the In-

dian Ocean for years before. He was completely unafraid of the prospects, for he had proved over those four years his ability to survive with enemies all around him. It was not beyond his dreams that he could throw the whole, Allied war machine out of kilter. He had already done a good job on the British effort, and there were the French and the Italians to consider. While von Lettow-Vorbeck thought over all this, night fell, and before long he slept, a man with a clear conscience.

On the morning of November 13, von Lettow was ready to move. He set out by bicycle to make personal contact with a forward unit that was moving along the Chambezi River. Suddenly he heard another bicycle behind him and then a hail. It was Captain Erich Muller, who had been chasing him from Kasama with an important message. Earlier that day Captain Franz Koehl's detachment had captured a British motorcyclist carrying dispatches from Major General J. L. van Deventer, the commander of the African Rifles, to the force that was so lamely pursuing von Lettow-Vorbeck's Schutztruppe. In the rider's briefcase, among other

papers, was a cable, sent from the closest telegraphic communication point by messenger:

Send following to General von Lettow-Vorbeck under white flag. The prime minister of England has announced that an armistice was signed at 5 hours on Nov 11th and that hostilities on all fronts cease at 11 hours on Nov 11th. I am ordering my troops to cease hostilities forthwith unless attacked and of course conclude that you will do the same. Conditions of armistice will be forwarded you immediately I receive them. Meanwhile I suggest that you remain in your present vicinity in order to facilitate communication. General van Deventer.

General von Lettow-Vorbeck could scarcely believe what he read. Germany defeated? For four years the war had been fought on Belgian and French territory. On the eastern front the Russians had collapsed. To be sure, in newspapers captured as he went through the British towns, the colonel had read of the collapse of Bulgaria, and that recently the Allies seemed to have been advancing rapidly. But the trench war in Europe had seen-sawed before. If there was an armistice, it seemed most likely that it would have to favor Germany.

His enemy's message had been vague about the positions of the forces. He would wait to hear from Germany.

The general got back on his bicycle and resumed his ride toward his advance guard on the bank of the Chambezi. If the war had indeed ended, the troops would hold there on the north bank until the word and instructions came from Berlin. If the war had not ended, they would cross the river and continue to drive the British before them. He arrived at detachment headquarters at eight o'clock that night, had a quick meal, conferred with his officers, and went to bed in Captain Spangenberg's tent. He was awakened in the middle of the night by another message, this one more informative and compelling:

. . . clause seventeen of the armistice signed by the German government provides for unconditional surrender of all German forces operating in East Africa within one month . . .

My conditions are: First, hand over all Allied prisoners in your hands, Europeans and natives to the nearest body of British troops forthwith. Second, that you bring your force to Abercorn with-

out delay, as Abercorn is the nearest place at which I can supply you with food. [Abercorn was an English supply post farther north in Northern Rhodesia.] Third, that you hand over all arms and ammunition to my representative at Abercorn. I will, however, allow you and your officers and European ranks to retain their personal weapons for the present in consideration of the gallant fight you have made, provided that you bring your force to Abercorn without delay. General van Deventer.

General von Lettow-Vorbeck read these words with emotions flooding through his head. He was winning this war in Africa; he knew it, and he knew his enemies knew it. Never before had he been so well supplied, nor had the future looked as bright as now. He could not predict the future, but he had no more intention of giving up now than he had four years earlier, when Governor Schnee had wanted to surrender East Africa to the British and he had stopped Schnee cold. The talk about supplying his men with food was not impressive; von Lettow knew that his enemies, and not he, were short of supplies. From all that he had heard over the years, and admittedly it was not much, the in-

dications had been that the war would go on for a long time, but that Germany was holding her own, even with the Americans in the field. His black soldiers, the Askaris, were as loyal as ever; more so: they were now used to von Lettow's hard discipline, and accepted it because he drove himself as hard as he drove any man. To be sure, the numbers of the Germans decreased month after month—sickness, wounds, and the inevitable "killed in action." But he had once determined to fight to the end. What he must discover was whether or not this really was the end, or perhaps some sort of English trick. The van Deventer telegram at midnight had come from Salisbury, that was all he really knew.

Early the next morning, von Lettow got back on his bicycle and rode the forty miles to the Chambezi Rubber Factory, which he reached at eight in the morning. There he knew he would find H. Croad, a retired provincial commissioner for the British government, and a man whose reputation indicated that von Lettow could believe what he was told. Croad was also a local magistrate, so he would be likely to know the news.

Commissioner Croad met the general civilly enough and indicated that he had even more news about the war in Europe. The armistice had indeed been signed, the fighting had indeed ended, and there was peace in France for the first time in four years. In Germany things were not going so well. The High Seas Fleet had mutinied and rebellion had broken out in many of the towns and cities of Germany. As if that were not indication enough of the end, Kaiser Wilhelm II had abdicated on November 10, the day before the signing of the armistice.

This thunderous news confirmed the sense of shock and desolation that had begun to overpower von Lettow-Vorbeck, but he still had doubts. It seemed unbelievable that the Kaiser would abdicate without naming a successor: that would mean the end of the German empire and the destruction of the whole system of government.

What were the conditions that General van Deventer proposed? the German commander asked.

Commissioner Croad replied that it was his understanding the military authorities had called for unconditional surrender. Von Lettow pondered that

remark. "Unconditional surrender." It meant surrender without conditions.

Von Lettow sat down and scribbled off a message to the Kaiser, stating that General van Deventer had informed him officially of a state of armistice that meant he must surrender unconditionally, and that he had complied. He signed it Lettow, and handed it to the Englishman. If the Kaiser had not abdicated, as von Lettow believed, and this was a trick, perhaps there would be some reaction. He was still torn; Croad's manner was sincere, and the things he said had the ring of truth to them. But the concept that Germany had surrendered was too overwhelming to be acceptable.

Croad sat down and in a neat, clerical hand wrote on the bottom of von Lettow's message that it had been written in his presence there at Chambezi that morning. Von Lettow shook hands and got back on his bicycle. Croad said he would forward the message to the British authorities but that was all he could do; he had no way of sending anything directly to the Kaiser.

With that understanding, von Lettow rode back to Kasama, wondering as he went what he would

do and what he would tell his troops when he reached Kasama. He knew that in all this commotion even the lowliest Askari had heard the rumor. Now he would have to settle the matter. He had indicated by this telegram to the Kaiser that he would comply with the British demands. But perhaps some miracle would occur in the next few hours. As he rode the long forty miles back, General von Lettow-Vorbeck let his mind roam over the events of the four years just past. He was now forty-nine years old; he had been forty-five that January in 1914 when he had landed in Dar es Salaam.

It had been a long, lonely four years.

## Upward the Course of Empire

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck was every inch the Prussian officer that day he stepped off the German mail steamer in Dar es Salaam harbor and prepared to call on his superior officer, Governor Dr. Heinrich Schnee. He was in civilian clothing, but a military man would have recognized him immediately from his bearing. His hair was cropped short in the Prussian manner and his brown skin lay close against the bones of his face. His blue eyes sparkled as he smiled, but an observer would also get the impression that his baritone voice could be raised in military German that would give goose-pimples to an erring soldier. He was the archetype of the Junker officer. There was no wonder about that phenomenon; his father had been a German general and he expected to be a general himself, quite soon if the world situation continued to be as shaky as it had been in the last two years.

Von Lettow was obviously being groomed for high military office. His career had been a compendium of experience: General Staff, the regular army, regimental officer in Southwest Africa, the Boxer Rebellion, even command of a Seebataillon (Marines) at Wilhelmshaven to give him confidence in dealing with the navy. As it happened, in this period between wars when the German Empire was expanding rapidly in an effort to match the power and prestige of the Kaiser's British cousins, von Lettow's experience had been heavily laced with overseas and colonial assignments. This one, to German East Africa, was given him because the General Staff felt that the defense force there was inadequate and needed a strong disciplinarian to whip it into shape.

Von Lettow had just that reputation; when in uniform he was a terror to his subordinates. Out of uniform it was as if he were a different human being, as one young company officer of the command learned. This young fellow could hardly have been twenty-one years old; he was pink-cheeked and scarcely out of cadet school. One day in January, bored by the dullness of his assignment with a field

company of the Schutztruppe (Colonial force) he decided to have some fun. His unit, which consisted almost entirely of black soldiers (Askaris) was stationed near the border with British East Africa on the shoulder of Mount Kilimanjaro. The post was dusty and dull and there was nothing particular to do once the troops had been routed out in the morning, fed, drilled and given work assignments. On the afternoon of the day in question the young lieutenant decided to go into Moshi, the nearest town, and drink a few beers. He did not bother to ask his company commander as he had duty that day, and the answer would have been no.

On the road into town, the young lieutenant overtook a man who was ambling along, chewing on a stick of sugar cane. They got into conversation. The lieutenant's new acquaintance was a civilian, and at least twenty years older. He had a ready smile and a pleasant air, although there was something about him that kept the lieutenant from asking too many questions. But he did instill confidence, and somehow the young lieutenant found himself telling the older man about the dull life on the frontier, and how he was so bored that this af-

ternoon he was taking French leave just to get a little fresh air.

"I hope the new commander, von Lettow, doesn't hear about it," he said. "They say he's a real bastard."

The older man laughed understandingly.

Just then they turned a corner and came upon two other officers of the Schutztruppe, both of them outranking the young lieutenant. The two stiffened and threw precise salutes to the civilian. He returned them. Suddenly the young lieutenant had the most dreadful feeling that he had betrayed himself into the hands of the enemy. He turned red as the setting sun, stopped cold, braced himself at attention and saluted.

"At ease," said the civilian. He smiled, and the young lieutenant came to life again. "What you said," the civilian told him, "was said to a comrade. No comrade would inform the commander, certainly."

So one young officer learned a lesson in discipline and at the same time gained an overwhelming respect and admiration for his commander.

The General Staff officer who had posted von Lettow to East Africa at this particular time may have been a genius, for there was no man in the entire German military establishment who had the experience or the deep interest in colonial defense problems to match that of this particular officer. He had lived abroad enough of his life to have respect for men, no matter their color or their culture. And he had gained a particular affection for Africa in his early thirties during that 1904 posting to Southwest Africa where he had been adjutant to Lieutenant General von Trotha. In the German army at that period an adjutant was a combination aide, chief of personal staff, and line officer. During von Lettow's tour, the native Africans had risen against the German colonials and attempted to take the country back. Von Lettow saw firsthand how a small band of highly motivated men (the Germans called them fanatics, but he knew better) could keep a much larger, much better organized, modern military force at bay and actually run rings around them. He saw it happen. The Africans knew the country; they knew how to find water in the desert where there seemed to be no water. They

knew how to move more swiftly through the brush than the trackers could follow on horseback, weighted down with their heavy equipment. They knew how to meld into the environment and make use of every natural feature.

While von Lettow's fellow officers cursed the Africans for pigheaded and futile resistance, the younger von Lettow learned from his enemies. He went out alone to observe how they moved in the countryside. He learned from the handful of loyal troops some of the secrets of the bush. He became familiar enough with the land that he was given the task of hunting down the enemy's master tracker, a hunter named Cornelius. Von Lettow followed on a merry chase. At least it was a chase until the Africans doubled back and ambushed von Lettow's force, and the adjutant was wounded in the breast and eye, so severely that he had to be sent to South Africa for treatment and recuperation. There, too, von Lettow acquired experience. He came to know the Boers of South Africa—originally Dutch—who had settled in the south of the continent and made Africa their home.

This understanding would be more valuable to von Lettow than he knew at the time. By the time von Lettow returned to Europe, he was without doubt the best-versed officer in the Kaiser's forces on the subject of guerilla warfare, and the nature of the African environment. From the Hereros and the Hottentots he had learned that invincible spirit was more important than any physical equipment, and that an army could fight successfully with the most primitive weapons if fighting in a primitive environment. He had also learned respect for the blacks as fighters.

Colonel von Lettow wasted no time when he was assigned to command the defense forces of German East Africa, and when the young lieutenant encountered him on the road to Moshi the commander was on his first inspection trip. After paying his respects to the governor and settling into a house, von Lettow had headed up-country. His first voyage was by ship to Tanga, the small port north of Dar es Salaam. From there he went overland to Usambara, where he encountered Captain Tom von Prince, who had been von Lettow's classmate at the German military academy in Kassel. He was de-

lighted; if trouble came, although von Prince was now a retired farmer, that sort of talent would be invaluable.

The journey to investigate his command was long and so difficult it had to be made in stages. Only two real railroads existed in German East Africa; one running from Tanga to New Moshi, roughly paralleling the border with German East Africa, through the Pare hills and along the Pangani River to Kilimanjaro. It was here that von Lettow encountered his young lieutenant and added a paragraph to his legend. The second railroad, much more satisfactory, ran from Dar es Salaam through the broad belly of the colony to the port of Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika. Thus, if the Germans had adequate river craft, they had access by rail and water to Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. When von Lettow traveled by rail it was in style, in a private railroad car. Sometimes he could go by road in a military limousine. Sometimes he could travel by horse, and sometimes in the rough bush country he went on foot. He was, however, determined to see every outpost of his fourteen military companies, if it took him a year. As he traveled he

made notes and considered various defensive and offensive possibilities. His command ranged from the marshes of the Rufiji River delta to the snow-capped peak of Kilimanjaro, which rises more than eighteen thousand feet into the air, and the jungle, high plateaus, and desert that lay between.

The new commander visited many of the planters, went shooting, spent evenings feasting and drinking, and kept observing the telephone connections, the telegraph connections, and the conditions of the roads. He kept running into retired military and naval men, and these encounters always pleased him because of the potential. Their knowledge of the terrain could be invaluable in time of war.

Everywhere he went he inspected the troops and their black noncommissioned officers and German officers. He found the military men well trained by and large, but the police force, which augmented the military and was supposed to be part of it in time of crisis, he found almost totally disorganized. He was particularly interested in discovering the capabilities of his troops as marksmen, and not very pleased with the perfor-

mance he observed in the field. They needed practice. More, they needed new weapons, for most of the Askaris were armed with the old model 71 Mauser single-shot rifle, which had been designed in the days of the Franco-Prussian wars. That model gave off an enormous boom and a cloud of black smoke whenever fired, and its accuracy was questionable when compared to the modern weapons of 1914. As soon as von Lettow returned to Dar es Salaam from his first leg of the journey, he wrote Berlin, pleading for modern rifles for his command; only three of the Schutztruppe companies had the modern weapons then.

By April he had visited much of the North Country. Then, on a trip west, he fell into a hole and injured his knee and had to suspend his tour until it healed. Back in the capital of the colony, he took advantage of his enforced physical inactivity to make plans and to hold discussions about colonial defense with Governor Schnee.

It was very quickly apparent that the two men held diametrically opposite views on almost everything of importance.

Governor Schnee was one of the most enlightened of the German colonial administrators, sociologically speaking. He undertook an educational program for the eight million blacks. Of course it was on a small scale, but he oversaw the operation of a thousand schools to teach the blacks reading and writing and some trades. The German educational program for Africans was the most advanced on the continent; the British did not attain its like until a quarter of a century after the war.

Governor Schnee also oversaw the development of an institute of tropical biology and agriculture that was the best in the continent by far. The coffee plantations flourished, the railroad reached Lake Tanganyika, the colony was profitable, and its five thousand German residents were happy. The eight million blacks seemed happy too, as long as they were left fairly well alone to farm and live the old village life.

The governor adhered to an old idea, established in the Congo Act of 1885, when all European nations competing for colonies in Africa piously promised one another that in case of war the African colonies would all remain neutral, provided

everyone agreed. The words sounded fine, but the practice of warfare would make them ridiculous. Yet on this premise Governor Schnee built his castle of government, and most of the planters up-country, who wanted nothing to disturb the tranquility of their pleasant lives, agreed with him.

Governor Schnee had informed Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck of his policy very early in their relationship. Von Lettow listened courteously; the governor was his superior while they were in East Africa; the military man could go over his head only by a direct appeal to the war office in Berlin, and that would create all sorts of administrative confusion between the army and the colonial office and enmity that no aspiring officer could abide. So Lettow (as he called himself to his equals) had held his tongue and made his plans and completed his surveys as smoothly as possible. In this interim period as he nursed his knee, he did, however, write the governor a memorandum that indicated some of what he had discovered and something of what he felt.

It seemed doubtful, he said, that the colony could seriously consider a defensive role in the event of war. Before the Central Railroad had been

built to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, there probably had been no alternative, and German East Africa would not have been of much value to an enemy. But the railroad so vastly improved the communications of all Central and South Africa that it had changed the strategic picture, and now the colony would be more valuable to England. Further, because of the existence of the railroad, the colony would be of far more use to the Fatherland in case of war than anyone had previously envisaged. The Admiralty, as everyone knew, planned a war against enemy merchant shipping if the worst came. Dar es Salaam and the waters of the Rufiji River would be excellent shelter for the German cruisers that could be expected to wage a campaign of attrition against the foe. The Schutztruppe, given the terrain and more modern equipment, could tie down thousands of enemy troops.

Von Lettow addressed himself to the concept of neutrality. Presuming for a moment that it could be achieved, he said, it would not be neutrality at all, but a parody of it, giving every advantage to the enemy. If the enemy was England, and everyone presumed that would be so, then by pledging neu-

trality in Africa, the Germans would make it possible for the British to strip their continent of African soldiers. It would have to be presumed that except as shelter for warships, East Africa would be cut off from the homeland. The unfortunate position of Germany, whose vessels must run a gamut north or south of the British Isles to reach the open sea, made that much sure. But the British had no such limitation, and they could ship men and materials freely from Africa to Europe. Neutrality, then, could not serve any purpose except that of the British, and von Lettow thought that was hardly what Berlin would want when the chips were down.

Governor Schnee did not agree, and since he was in effect commander in chief of the colonial force, von Lettow said no more but went back into the bush to continue his study of the terrain and his forces.

June 1914 came, and with it the assassination of Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand. For weeks the cables hummed, carrying the speculations of governments and the press. Was war inevitable? And if so, what of the policy of neutrality? Dr. Schnee thought he had solved all those problems.

In June, when the difficulties began, he held a number of private conversations with Norman King, the British consul. King helpfully informed his government, and in a quiet way Whitehall was encouraging. To be sure, the consul said, it would be best if all Africa were to remain neutral in any conflict. Perhaps it could be arranged even if the signatories to the pact of 1885 could not all be brought together on the issue. Perhaps if the Germans agreed not to allow German warships to use East African waters, and made sure that the self-defense corps was not used for anything but internal police activity, then England might be inclined to let things alone.

In July, Governor Schnee and Consul King had exhausted the possibilities, and what was needed were answers from London. So Consul King packed his suitcase and on July 24 took ship to the British protectorate of Zanzibar, where he would have untroubled use of the best communications facilities to London. He spent several days there exchanging messages and came back to Dar es Salaam to inform the governor that while London would not make any promises in writing, the British government would be inclined to honor German East Afri-

can professions of neutrality and to behave accordingly if the neutrality were strictly observed. Governor Schnee, reading the glum news from Europe on July 28, was delighted and told his advisory council that he had arranged for a gentleman's agreement that would preserve East Africa from the rigors of a war that seemed inevitable.

Governor Schnee was so firmly convinced that this was the way of salvation for East Africa that he asked the German colonial minister in Berlin to invoke that clause of the Congo Act with the other signatories before it was too late.

The governor then called a meeting of his council on July 28 to inform them of the happy course of events. All they had to do, he said, was refrain from any military activity against the British. One of the councilors looked pointedly out of the window of the chamber. Down in the harbor lay the light cruiser Koenigsberg. Captain Max Loeff was preparing to go to sea. Just two days before Loeff had had a real shock; the young British consul King had been a guest at the German officers' club and had had the gall to ask Loeff what he would do in case of war. King had been speaking of war with

Russia as it turned out, but war with Russia almost certainly meant war with England, Russia's ally. So any way one put it, the question was impertinent, and showed the vast arrogance of the British to Captain Looff.

As Looff had said afterwards, he was under no strain about what he would do in case of war. His course had been mapped out a long time before in the Admiralty's war plan. He would go to sea, and conduct *la guerre du tours* as the French called it; he would raid enemy merchant shipping as hard and as long as possible.

From the council chamber Governor Schnee could see the Koenigsberg as well and he was under no delusions about her wartime task, nor of his chances of changing Max Looff's course. Dr. Solf, the minister of colonies, had made it quite clear that Schnee could not count on any sympathy with his efforts from either the army or the navy.

Governor Schnee's official plans still called for him to sail in the Koenigsberg to all the German ports along the East African coast and show the flag. A special colonial exhibition of products and I educational and cultural progress was opening

throughout the colony, and the coming of the warship to Tanga, Lindi, Bagamoyo, Kilwa, Sadani, and Sudi Bay was part of the plan. But Captain Looff no longer paid much attention to the plan; he was now drawing up lists of the supplies he would need to get to sea and stay there as long as possible when the rupture came. That was the point on which Governor Schnee counted. He would be glad to have the Koenigsberg go to sea, and stay as far away from East Africa as she could get. That would take care of the naval problem, for the Koenigsberg was the single naval vessel on the sea in this region. The other minor naval forces manned river steamers on Lake Tanganyika, and their purpose was simply to preserve order since the lake was shared by the Belgian Congo and British Northern Rhodesia.

But what of the Schutztruppe, a councilor inquired? It was well known in the colony that Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck had been sent here to bring the military up to a higher level of efficiency. Why otherwise would Berlin send a highly trained officer?

That was true, said Governor Schnee, but the council must remember that as governor he was actually commander of the force, and in time of crisis he intended to invoke that authority. They could leave Colonel von Lettow to him. He had just dispatched a telegram to the colonel, who was at Kilo-sa, two hundred miles up the railroad line from Dar es Salaam, ordering the colonel to return to the capital for vital consultation.

There were two kinds of time in colonial East Africa. One was the sort of time that existed at Dar es Salaam, slower than that of Berlin by far, but still regulated by Europeans. The other was the time of Africa, regulated by the sun and age-old custom. The telegram from the governor found Colonel von Lettow, but not for three days. He received it on the first of August, and it was followed in rapid-fire order by telegrams from otheil. The kaiser announced to his military commander in East Africa the general mobilization of all German forces. The Secretary of State for Colonies, Dr. Solf, informed him that a settlement might be reached. On the wireless he heard an English broadcast from nearby British East Africa announcing Eng-

land's mobilization. Then it was a day before he was able to catch the next train heading toward the coast, and he did not arrive in Dar es Salaam until August 3.

The German community was restless. Captain Loeff had sailed on the last day of July. In the absence of the colonel, Loeff had done a good job; he had made arrangements for harbor defense, turning over command to Captain Zimmer of the marine survey ship *Moewe*, which was unarmed and could not be expected to play any useful role in the war. Then Loeff had sailed out through the channel that had been blasted through the coral reef, out past the Makatumba Light, and out to sea to await the expected announcement and then to begin war on his country's enemies.

The port was in good hands, but the rest of Dar es Salaam squirmed with confusion. The governor's policy of nonresistance had aroused considerable resentment among elements of the German population. For Schnee it had been one long argument after another from the moment his decision was made known. Matters were complicated on August 1, when the war came, because Dar es Salaam had

been filling up with foreign visitors in advance of the colonial expedition. Now they rushed to the waterfront to secure transportation out, but there was no transportation save the Arab dhows. Soon most of these were hired to take Englishmen and neutrals to Zanzibar, fifty miles away in the Indian Ocean.

When Colonel von Lettow arrived, he walked from the station to the waterfront, amazed and then amused to see the foreigners flocking about, selling off their belongings on the docks, clustering together like a herd of wildebeest, and making as much noise as a herd in danger. His orderly remarked that these certainly did not behave like the white people he had come to respect. And they were not all whites, by any means. East Africa was full of Indian traders and merchants who carried British passports, and they were scurrying I along with the Swedes and Americans and Swiss to get out.

Dar es Salaam knew very little about what was happening. The cable to Europe ran by way of Zanzibar, and when the mobilization had come the British had disconnected the cable.

So the information in the German East African capital was a combination of rumor and news from foreign radio broadcasts. Colonel von Lettow had left the backcountry confused, and what he found did not give him much comfort.

The colonel wandered about the city that afternoon looking over the preparations that had been made for defense, which were not many, given Governor Schnee's attitude. When evening came, he got on his bicycle and rode to the governor's mansion for the conference. As he was shown into Schnee's study he saw that the tension of the past few days had done badly by his civilian chief. Schnee was disheveled and nervous. He thrust a telegram into von Lettow's hand. It was a dispatch from the British news agency Reuter, announcing that a state of war existed between Germany and France and Russia, and that England would be going to war immediately. It was dated August 2, and it had come to the governor by hand, carried from Zanzibar by the captain of a dhow.

Von Lettow was not surprised, nor was he upset. He told the governor he would immediately send telegrams to all his forces in the field, inform-

ing them and putting them on standby. The governor protested. What was the reason for this action? The colony's only hope for survival was to pledge its nonbelligerence to England. Schnee related the series of conversations he had had with Consul King and the results of King's trip to Zanzibar.

Von Lettow suggested that the best thing he could do for Germany would be to cut the British railroad that ran through Africa from the ocean at Mombasa to Nairobi. The governor flatly refused to listen to talk of military action. He ordered von Lettow to move his troops out of Dar es Salaam. His purpose was obviously then to declare the capital of the colony an open city. He threatened to relieve von Lettow of command, and theoretically he could do so although von Lettow would have the right of protest to the War Ministry, and eventually the cabinet would then have had to decide. But with communications cut off from Germany there could be no such legalistic solution. The matter had to be resolved another way, and at the moment von Lettow was in no position to take action. He must first get his forces into position. He suggested that he assemble his troops at New Moshi on the flank

of Kilimanjaro. The governor saw immediately that this action would put von Lettow in position to carry out the military mission he had been describing, so Schnee refused permission. Von Lettow was to take his troops away from the capital, but inland, and far from an frontier. This, said the governor, was a direct order.

The following day was August 4, 1914. Following his orders to the letter, Colonel von Lettow marched the garrison of Dar es Salaam from its barracks into the big square in the center of the city, hauled down the flag, and marched out of the city. Colonel von Lettow rode at the head of the column, and behind his guard came the band, playing "Deutschland über alles." The people of the town, whites and blacks, stood along the line of march, the blacks giggling and talking, the whites silent and some of them obviously angry that the garrison was being disbanded. What now would protect them from the English?

Von Lettow knew what would protect them: he would. He marched his troops for twenty miles, to the town of Pugu where there was water. He bi-

vousacked there on the plain and began to assemble his forces.

In terms of armies they were not very grand forces. The Schutztruppe consisted of 216 officers and 2,540 black Askari. They were scattered across the colony. Von Lettow requisitioned the telegraph station at Pugu and sent messages to his two largest units to join him there. His heart was filled with rebellion, but his head was that of a disciplined German officer, and he sat and waited.

Meanwhile Captain Looff had struck the first blow of East Africa's war. When he left harbor in the 360-foot cruiser *Koenigsberg*, he first ran the gauntlet of the British cruisers *Pegasus* and *Astraea*, which were roaming the waters off East Africa, just waiting for war to begin so they could bottle up the cruiser and destroy German shipping in Dar es Salaam. Looff lost them (by moving into a rain squall) before the announcement of war was made. When he came out, he headed for action. On August 6 Looff captured the English Steamer *City of Winchester*.

As Colonel von Lettow sat in Pugu and waited for developments, Captain Zimmer, whose presence

had apparently been forgotten by the nervous governor, made what preparations he could for the defense of the harbor. The final ship to come in was the big white steamer Feldmarschall, carrying a cargo of civilian supplies from Germany—the last the colonists would see for many months. Zimmer got the supplies out of the ship in record time, for no one knew when the British might show up to destroy the port.

Governor Schnee sat in his office and talked neutrality. There was a large floating dock in the city, and since it could accommodate men of war, the governor ordered it sunk in the middle of the sea channel. That meant the Koenigsberg would have some serious difficulties if Captain Looff decided to come back into Dar es Salaam. Schnee also sent instructions to all his officials in Tanga, Bagamoyo, and all the other towns. If the enemy approached, the police were to be withdrawn. The area commanding officer of police was to remain and negotiate with the enemy for an open-city commitment. At the ports the police were to be withdrawn immediately to the interior so they

would not arouse friction in case of enemy movement.

But Consul King's conversations with Governor Schnee had not come to the attention of the British Admiralty, and on August 7, the cruisers *Astraea* and *Pegasus* came into the shipping roads outside Dar es Salaam harbor looking for the elusive *Koenigsberg*. The war was definitely "on" for the British navy. When they found no warships, they began shelling the radio tower. Governor Schnee sent a demolition squad to blow up the tower for them. Then he panicked at the sound of gunfire and ordered a white flag raised over the Government House. The British commander sent a message ordering an official from shore to come to the ships. Schnee sent Captain Berndt, the harbor master, to tell the British that Dar es Salaam would not be defended and must be regarded as an open city. The British demanded that the Germans destroy all radio apparatus on shore and on the ships, refrain from all warlike acts, clear the harbor of all goods useful to an enemy, consider all ships in harbor as British prizes, and promise not to raise the floating dock. Governor Schnee agreed, then hurried aboard

a special train and fled to Morogoro in the interior, leaving Geheimrat Methner, the chief of police of Dar es Salaam, as the only official in the city. The policemen were sent up to Pugu to join von Lettow.

Police Chief Methner did as he was told. He called in all the sailors from the ships and persuaded them to sign articles of neutrality. German East Africa was giving up the fight before it began, it seemed.

But Governor Schnee knew he had gone too far, and when he passed through Pugu on his way to his refuge point, he did not say a word to von Lettow about the white flag and the dealings with the enemy. He did not tell von Lettow that he had also arranged for a similar truce at Tanga, the port 150 miles north of Dar es Salaam. And Schnee did not know that even as the British strutted around the streets of Dar es Salaam as though they owned the place, the Admiralty in London was repudiating these agreements. Germany and England were at war, and there would be no "open cities," no neutral colonies.

On August 8, at Pugu, Colonel von Lettow heard the fire from the British warships on the ra-

dio tower. Soon, from the city came Lieutenant Moritz Horn, of the *Moewe*, marching his men to Kigoma, where they would take over the small steamer *Hedwig von Wissmann* and make a warship of her. They were not going to be bound by Governor Schnee's neutrality.

When the governor came speeding through Pugu, von Lettow reported that he had heard of a projected British landing on the coast and asked for permission to fight. To his great surprise, Governor Schnee offered no objection, but hurried on to Morogoro. The report was false, but the next day von Lettow met two of Schnee's officials, who were coming up from Dar es Salaam to join the governor, and (they showed him the document that the chief of police had signed, putting the city in the hands of the enemy with no promises at all. Von Lettow marched his men to Dar es Salaam. As he approached from the hills, he could see the two British warships in his harbor, and he hurried on, hoping to get there in time to save the place. He sent his most trusted officer, Captain Tafel, on ahead to announce to whatever authority remained in the

capital that von Lettow was taking over authority for the city.

Tafel arrived and gave the message to District Commissioner Kausch. In the room was Chief Methner, who immediately went out and telephoned Governor Schnee. Schnee rejected von Lettow's assumption of authority and reiterated his order that Dar es Salaam was to be given up to the enemy. While this discussion was taking place at Government House, the British cruisers sailed away. They had their signed document, and there were no troops in evidence to contest their power. So they went back to hunting for the Koenigsberg.

Colonel von Lettow remained in Dar es Salaam for twenty-four hours, his conscience as a loyal German struggling with his conscience as a disciplined professional officer. In the end his anger and his need to fight the war against the enemy triumphed, and he disregarded the governor's orders. He would strike the enemy.

Von Lettow had been in touch with Captain von Prince, the retired officer and farmer who lived in the north. Von Prince had raised a volunteer force of Germans and blacks and was itching to get into

a fight with the British. Von Lettow sent him a telegram authorizing him to attack the British in the Kilimanjaro area. Tom von Prince needed no more. He hated the British with an intensity that came from his own life: he was half British himself, for his father had been superintendent of police on the island of Mauritius, where he married the daughter of a German missionary. Tom Prince, as he was known in those days, had gone to British schools and until he was fifteen worshipped all the proper British heroes. But in 1880 his mother and father died and he was sent to live with his German relatives, where the German side of his character was nurtured. He attended the Ritter Akademie, a famous school in its day. At the end of schooling he tried to get a commission in the British army and was turned down.

He went to the military academy at Kassel, where he met von Lettow, and there Prince became more German than most full-blooded Germans. After school he went adventuring to Africa, gained a reputation as Bwana Sakharani (The Man Who Is Drunk with Fighting) and earned the emblem of German nobility, a von before his name. In

1900, at the age of thirty-one, he retired to farming at Usambara.

When von Lettow had begun visiting the troops of the Schutztruppe in early 1914 he had spent a few days with his old friend von Prince and they had talked philosophically about the future. Von Prince had quite agreed with von Lettow that if there was a war it was the duty of the Germans in East Africa to make life as difficult as possible for the British in Africa, and thus to help the fatherland. Since that time, von Prince had let the commander know that his views had not changed, and just recently he had asked to be allowed to attack. Now he was overjoyed at being chosen to lead the first German foray against the English.

## Von Lettow Goes to War

On August 8, Colonel von Lettow telegraphed his friend Captain von Prince that he had permission to take his volunteers into battle against the British in the Kilimanjaro area. "Destroy stations and railway lines," he said. "Cut telegraph wires; confuse the enemy."

He also told von Prince to forget about the Congo Act (Governor Schnee had just reminded von Prince of its implications in another message) and join the Schutztruppe forces in the north. Von Lettow had learned that the British were sending Indian troops to Mombasa, and if he could destroy the Uganda railway and telegraph lines, he could strike a blow against his enemy.

Thus did Governor Schnee's insistence on neutrality fall by the wayside, little by little. Von Lettow had been ordered not to move in force, and he obeyed that order, although unwillingly. But he was already subverting the governor in this first action.

Von Prince moved his Europeans and blacks up to New Moshi. It was more a safari than a war column. Most of the Europeans were wealthy farmers who lived like dukes on their estates with hordes of black retainers. On this march the Europeans were attended by their personal servants, who did the cooking and made camp. They broke off their patrols to go hunting for game. They moved with an enormous train of supplies, which included ample stocks of Moselle and Rhine wines. At night they sat down to enormous dinners of game and wine, and then climbed sleepily into the tents their men had set up, and snored beneath the mosquito nets. But on August 15, assisted by two troops of the regular Schutztruppe, they attacked Taveta, where there were about two dozen British troops guarding the railway station and telegraph office. The British fired a few volleys and retreated, and the Germans took over the little town on the spur line of the Uganda Railway. Von Lettow had struck his first blow for his Kaiser.

On August 17, Captain von Chappuis telephoned von Lettow about an incident near Bagamoyo. A British auxiliary cruiser had sent a boat to

shore to destroy the telegraph station there. But the big news was that the British were moving in the north, and so von Lettow decided to march his troops to Korogwe and Moshi to be prepared for action. The road was so rough that he had to leave two automobiles behind, and it took his force a good two weeks to reach the border. For the next two months the German forces along the border played a sort of tag with the British. Both sides were hampered by abominable maps, which mislocated many points of the terrain, so sometimes their forays were comedies of error. Von Lettow's men wanted to make an attempt on the British main-line railroad station at Voi, but because the maps were wrong they arrived late and found that the British had reinforced the position from Mombasa. The German thrust was beaten back and several of von Lettow's young officers were taken prisoner in the mixed-up action. But the Germans had their victories, too. Near Tsavo they established a fortified position, and when the Punjabi troops attacked they found the Germans had established such effective fields of fire that they could not get through with a bayonet charge.

What von Lettow really wanted to do was stage an attack on Mombasa. But to move in this country, with the railroads running only east and west, was monumentally difficult. Von Lettow said that the supply of a single company and the effort to move it north required the same effort as moving a whole division along European terrain. Yet what von Lettow had envisaged as his major role in this war was already materializing. The British reaction to the attacks along the Uganda line in the Kilimanjaro area had been to rush troops to reinforce. By the first of September they had two battalions of the King's African Rifles brought down from the northern frontiers to guard the rail stations. Two armored trains had been brought in to patrol the line and prevent attacks. After the Taveta attack, the Committee of Imperial Defense in London had authorized the dispatch of four thousand Indian troops to East Africa under Brigadier James Marshall Stewart and the first of these troops went ashore at Mombasa on September 1. So by mid-month, the English already had twice as many troops massed in British East Africa as von Lettow had in his entire force, which was still disposed

throughout the German East African colony. His purpose had been to draw the enemy to him, and he had succeeded admirably without carrying out a major action.

He had plans for such an action though. Governor Schnee would have been appalled to learn that von Lettow and Captain Looff had been in touch and had made tentative plans for an attack on Mombasa. If von Lettow could take the largest city on the coast he would indeed have disturbed the British enemy mightily. And that was the way he was thinking in September, in spite of the odds.

But Captain Max Looff's fortunes had taken him into quite a different direction. After capturing the City of Winchester and giving London a dreadful scare (because she carried the best of Ceylon's latest tea crop) Captain Looff searched unsuccessfully for more enemy ships, and had then taken refuge in the Rufiji River delta, at a point where he had two good escape routes in case the enemy found him. It was his plan to come in and out, terrorizing the East African coast and stopping the flow of British sea traffic in the area.

He learned from that vantage point that the British port of Zanzibar was housing a British cruiser just then. On September 11 he entered the Zanzibar harbor, found the British cruiser Pegasus there, sank her and another smaller British ship, and scurried back into the Rufiji delta. But if he had ever thought seriously of joining von Lettow in an attack on Mombasa, by mid-October Captain Looff was not thinking that way anymore. He had been discovered in the Rufiji River, and the British were about to launch a siege. Once again, Captain Looff had put his efforts to the best use of the fatherland, for the Koenigsberg in her brief active career had cast fear and misery into the hearts of British shippers, and at this point an armada was descending on the Rufiji to try to rout her out. So Captain Looff was tying up a large share of the British naval might with his one small cruiser.

Meanwhile Colonel von Lettow had authorized an attack on the British on Lake Victoria, which was partly inside German East Africa, partly in Uganda, and partly in British East Africa. The Germans had ports at Bukoba and Muanza, the British a port at Kisumu, the terminus of the

Uganda Railway. The Germans could seal off rail traffic if they could capture and hold Kisumu, and they could also control the traffic on the lake. The German naval presence on the lake consisted of one old tugboat, the Muanza, which was armed with two one-pound pom-pom guns and two machine guns. Early in September six hundred of von Lettow's troops marched into East Africa and occupied the village of Kisii, forty miles south of Kisumu. The British immediately dispatched a relief force aboard a steamboat, the Winifred, but it was driven off by the Muanza. Later the ships met again, but they never engaged in the expected duel. British forces coming overland had relieved the area, and the six hundred German troops, who had been armed with those old model-71 rifles with their black powder cartridges, were as ineffectual in battle as von Lettow had predicted in his protests to Berlin. Every time an Askari fired his rifle the British knew precisely where he was and retaliated with fire from their smokeless cartridges. The Germans could not match that sort of fire power and had to withdraw, although they fought valiantly.

The German force lost twenty-five percent of its officers in the battle.

All during September and October the German troops and British forces faced one another across the border in the north. Occasionally the Germans would make a foray into English territory, but they would soon be back, without much visible result. Occasionally the British would cross the line, but the story was the same. It was a skirmish here and a skirmish there, but no real plan of action. Von Lettow could do nothing unless he could achieve some sort of surprise or enlist some unusual force such as the Koenigsberg. But once the ship was caught up in the Rufiji, von Lettow had no hope for the wherewithal to launch a decisive German drive. The British had all the cards; they controlled the Suez Canal, and they had colonies all across Africa. They could also enlist the aid of the French and the Belgians. Colonel von Lettow could not expect supply from Germany. His communications with the outside world were cut off and he had to rely on British broadcasts for most of his information. But he did have some other weapons, including an excellent system of native espionage inside the British

lines. Thus he was able to know pretty well what plans his enemies had to attack him, in time to act.

Late in October, Brigadier Stewart's Indian Expeditionary Forces were concentrated north of Kilimanjaro and planning a drive on von Lettow's major positions near Moshi. This move was to be coordinated with another Indian Expeditionary Force, under Major General Arthur Aitken. This second force consisted of two units, eight thousand troops in all. General Aitken led the whole, Brigadier Michael Tighe commanded the Imperial Service Brigade of four thousand, and Brigadier Richard Wapshare commanded the Thirty-seventh Bangalore Brigade. These two forces were going to land at Tanga from the sea, while Brigadier Stewart drove down from Kilimanjaro, and they were to catch von Lettow in a vise and break his force into tiny pieces. No one could possibly expect von Lettow, with less than three thousand men, including his irregulars like Tom von Prince, to stand up against twelve thousand Imperial troops of the British Indian Army.

By October 31, the British plan was complete. By that day, also, Colonel von Lettow knew precise-

ly what the British were up to, for his agents in Mombasa could chronicle the meetings of the staff officers, so close were they to the source.

The staff said it would be "a piece of cake." The Germans had only four hundred troops at Tanga. Governor Schnee had remained consistent in his order that the cities of German East Africa respect the neutrality he had demanded. It might well be, the intelligence officers said, that Tanga would not see any fighting at all, and that it would be only a landing exercise.

But in recent days a change had come over the cities of German East Africa. Despite von Lettow's disgust, Governor Schnee had indeed kept white flags flying above the government buildings and Makatumbe Light, showing that Dar es Salaam was still acting as an open city. But on October 21, in the heat of the search for the precise whereabouts of the Koenigsberg, the British cruiser Chatham pulled up two miles off Makatumbe Light and dropped anchor. The officers on the bridge turned telescopes on the light and saw no white flags. (The Germans said later that the white flags were clearly visible.) Perhaps the British did not see the flags

because they had intelligence that the Koenigsberg was not in the Rufiji at the moment, but was in Dar es Salaam.

The countryside between the light and the harbor was flat, but it was filled with mangrove swamp, and even though the captain of the Chatham sent his men into the mastheads to observe, all they could see were the masts of three ships. One of these could very easily be the cruiser that had sunk the Pegasus. Her old captain, Drury-Lowe, was aboard the Chatham and he was certain the Koenigsberg was inside that harbor. He would have his new command avenge the old. He ordered the ship's six-inch guns to fire one round, and sent up a flag calling for the Germans to send a boat. At the end of twenty minutes he began bombarding the town. A boat appeared flying a white flag and the Germans protested the attack. The British were most insensitive about it and in Dar es Salaam Governor Schnee lost most of the support of the civilian German population for his scheme to keep German East Africa out of the war. Von Lettow had just about won the war of confidence in the colony. If he needed more ammunition to convince the

German population that it was useless to expect mercy from the English, the proposed attack on Tanga did the trick.

The British operation was regarded as so simple by General Aitken that he did not think it worthwhile to make a reconnaissance of the beach at Tanga. Nor did he believe it particularly important to maintain secrecy, although one staff officer suggested that if the Germans suspected anything, it would take them only thirty hours to bring troops by rail from New Moshi to Tanga.

Then there was the question of the troops. As a few discerning British officers knew, von Lettow-Vorbeck's Schutztruppe consisted of highly motivated German officers (their casualty figures were certainly proof of that). The British forces consisted of what must have been the dregs of the Indian army. The Ninety-eighth Infantry Regiment had not fought in thirty years, nor had the Sixty-third Palamacottah Light Infantry Battalion. The Kashmir Rifles were soldiers, and so were the Royal North Lancashires, but the latter was only a battalion and the Thirteenth Rajputs also were so incompetent

that one officer said he trembled to consider what might happen if they got into action.

This officer went to General Aitken with his fears. The general was not amused by the temerity of a junior officer's questioning his lordly decisions. "The Indian Army will make short work of a lot of niggers," he said.

At that moment, the "niggers" and their commander were making careful preparations to surprise the general. In mid-October Colonel von Lettow had become convinced that the British planned a major drive on Tanga. Captured letters from careless correspondents had spoken of ten thousand troops coming to assault the Germans in East Africa. Von Lettow could see only one place where such an assault could come: Tanga. He went down and drove over every road in the area in an automobile, conferred with Captain Adler, the commander of the Seventeenth Field Company of the Schutztruppe, and also with District Commissioner Auracher, who was head of the police in addition to his other duties. Von Lettow was thoroughly disgusted when Auracher told him that Governor Schnee, informed of the impending attack, had in-

sisted that Auracher still regard Tanga as an "open city." Von Lettow had quite enough of Governor Schnee by that time. He told the district commissioner to ignore the order. Auracher said he could not, because of his official position. Von Lettow reminded the commissioner that he was also a reserve officer in the German army and that this position in time of war was more important than his civilian job. He told the commissioner he would be absolved of all responsibility for ignoring the governor's orders, and then told him to move the troops into Tanga.

The governor soon had word and tried to stop the movement. Why, he asked, was von Lettow moving troops?

"Use of Tanga lodgings seemed advisable in view of healthy climate," said von Lettow.

Governor Schnee did not even know that his leg was being pulled. He wired back approving the movement of troops into the healthy climate, as long as Commissioner Auracher retained all executive power. Since von Lettow had Auracher in his pocket at this point, he saw no objection at all to letting the commissioner continue to be commis-

sioner. So the troop movement began, and as the British ponderously discussed the ease with which the German threat would forever be eliminated, von Lettow's slender forces from Kilimanjaro began to move too.

## Triumph at Tanga

The trouble with the British operation at Tanga, from London's point of view, was that no one in authority took it seriously enough to wonder if the best plan had been laid by the best people at the best time. Tanga was in one way a riposte by the British in answer to one of von Lettow's unpublicized moves, an abortive thrust at Mombasa that fell apart when the Koenigsberg failed to appear to give sea support to the mission. Von Lettow thought so little of it that he did not even mention it in his autobiography *Heia Safari*. But Mombasa was thoroughly frightened, and the district commissioner asked for action to put an end to the German threat. Of course everyone in power in British Africa and London agreed. But the problem was how to do it, and in the how-to department, Lord Kitchener in London was far more concerned with getting Empire troops into France to replace the cream of the British army, which had been mauled so badly in Belgium. So it was agreed that

India would send its second-line troops to East Africa to do a second-line job.

Some Englishmen who knew the area and the people involved warned against underestimating the enemy. Norman King, the former British consul, turned up almost immediately in India to confer with General Aitken and his staff. But they were not much interested when this civilian began telling them their business; what a tartar von Lettow-Vorbeck would be; how well equipped and trained at least part of his force was; how the terrain and the people would make a capture difficult.

London already had its mind made up about East Africa. The German rule, as everyone knew, was harsh. But what everyone did not know was the black reaction to it; the civilians who dreamed of education got more in German Africa than anywhere else; von Lettow's Askaris were supremely loyal to the discipline of their system. And it must be said that old Africa hands were brainwashed by all the talk of atrocities and the wickedness of the Hun. In London a member of the Imperial Defence Committee suggested that if the blacks had half a chance they would rise up and desert to the Eng-

lish, after murdering all the Germans in sight, including wives and children.

When a request for the use of General Aitken's force was received by Kitchener, he approved it absentmindedly, and even gave Aitken a temporary promotion to major general to go with the responsibility. Those in the know in Whitehall knew that the Bangalore Brigade was the worst-disciplined in the Indian army, and the Imperial Service Brigade was the sweepings from around the native states. Also, although it would have been most unpatriotic to say it, Major General Aitken was not a strictly first-class officer, a fact he emphasized immediately by refusing to listen to anyone on the subject of operational difficulties.

Former Consul King did not give up his efforts to inform the military about Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck, for whom King had gained a reluctant respect in those months at Dar es Salaam, as he saw von Lettow whipping the Schutztruppe into shape. King had been long enough in Africa to respect the abilities of the blacks to move in their own environment, and with von Lettow's field experience

and his knowledge of tactics, King expected him to be a very difficult antagonist.

But even if London was not concerned enough about the three thousand German soldiers in Africa, London was concerned about the overall effort. The Koenigsberg was still at large. The little cruiser Emden was raising havoc among British ships throughout the Indian Ocean. She had just bombarded Madras, and that did give the British a start. Kitchener and the others of the War Cabinet agreed that the East African ports must be secured without delay, and if it seemed wasteful to send an expedition, still it was essential. Tanga was the first in a series of steps to accomplish this. After Tanga was taken, Aitken's force would move up the northern railroad to the Kilimanjaro area and wipe out that troublesome New Moshi installation for good. The troops could then sweep southward from the interior, invest the German port of Kigoma on the Central Railway, and then sweep back along the rail line to Dar es Salaam. That done, perhaps naval units and ships would be needed to move along the coast south through Lindi and the other towns,

to the Mozambique border (Portuguese East Africa). It was all inevitable, or so it seemed.

The India office had given General Aitken his final marching orders. He was to bring all of East Africa under British authority.

In the conferences at Mombasa General Aitken was determinedly upbeat. His most intelligent staff officer was Captain R. Meinertzhagen, who knew Africa well. All the way across the ocean from India Meinertzhagen had kept telling Aitken that the Germans had the best colonial troops in the world. He had mentioned the lack of training of the Indian troops, the language difficulties (there were half a dozen different languages within the command), the lack of experience in bush warfare, the obsolete rifles of most of the troops (on a par with the German model 71s), the lack of field telephones and other modern equipment.

That was all right, said General Aitken. He was only going out to fight a bunch of blacks and he would have everything in hand by Christmas. Von Lettow would be dead or a captive, and the German threat would be dissolved. "Our troops are magnificent," said the general.

At Mombasa General Aitken completed plans for the Tanga landing while his Indian troops sweated in their transports out at sea. Captain F. W. Caulfield of the Royal Navy, commander of H.M.S. Fox, would provide the firepower for the force, not that much firepower was demanded; the Germans were expected to give up immediately. Brigadier Stewart was there, and Aitken told him to be ready to strike in the west at Longido, a mountain post northwest of Kilimanjaro.

Nobody seemed to know much about the German enemy, or to care. The main force was said to be at Moshi, and there were not supposed to be many troops anywhere else. Tanga, the intelligence men said, was totally unoccupied because of the orders of Governor Schnee. Captain Meinertzhagen again suggested in a memo to his commander that it would not be much of a trick for von Lettow to move his men down by rail. General Aitken did not bother to read the memo. Lieutenant Colonel B. R. Graham, an old Africa hand who commanded a battalion of the King's African Rifles, suggested that General Aitken might wish to use a contingent from Graham's force to scout and cover the landings,

since they knew the terrain and the enemy. No thanks, said General Aitken, he would not need the Africans; his Indians were superb.

As far as Tanga's layout was concerned, nobody seemed very well informed. The charts were short of symbols. It was known that the channel moved through reefs and islands and was flanked by jungle. There was a quay, and behind it several buildings and a railroad shop. The importance, of course, was that it was a deep-water port, and it was a railhead. There were several hundred Europeans there.

Someone brought up the political situation, and Governor Schnee's "truces." The navy had never heard of them, Captain Caulfield said, but if they were going to attack Tanga, then the people must be notified that the truces had been repudiated.

The staff officers complained that this would destroy the element of surprise. Too bad, said Caulfield; the laws of war were more important. If there was a truce, or the Germans had good reason to believe there was a truce, Caulfield was not going to fire on anyone. It had to be clearly understood that the truces were off. General Aitken agreed; the ele-

ment of surprise was totally unimportant in this case, he said. There just wasn't anything to worry about.

British security was absolutely abominable. Back at Tanga, Colonel von Lettow received a succession of British East African newspapers that alluded to the coming investment of Tanga. He intercepted wireless messages in the clear from the Belgian Congo that referred to the invasion. German citizens of Mombasa, free on parole, wrote to relatives in Tanga who passed the word to von Lettow. So as of mid-October he could scarcely have had more information about the coming attack than he did. While the general and his aides were discussing the matter at Mombasa, Colonel von Lettow was driving around in his automobile, surveying the defenses and making his plans. The only thing he didn't know was the order of landing.

The general had decided that the Fox would go in first and find a suitable landing place. The Imperial Service Brigade would make the first landing, take Tanga, and set up positions. The Bangalore Brigade would then land at leisure and begin to move along the railroad, and eventually would

make contact with Stewart's force at New Moshi, the end of the line. The Germans would be enveloped, overwhelmed, and killed or captured to the last man.

That was the scenario. Most of the actors knew nothing about it; they were the hot, sick, Indian troops jammed aboard the transports. Their leaders, having just come back from Mombasa, decided that instead of giving the Indians a "blow" by landing for a few days to recover from the long sea journey, they would keep them aboard ship and hurry on now to Tanga. This was done in the name of "secrecy." Not, of course, that it made any difference. "From reliable information received," read General Aitken's battle order, "it appears improbable that the enemy will actively oppose our landing."

H.M.S. Fox was supposed to be accompanied by a smaller warship on this mission, but it turned out to be an old tub left over from the Boer days that broke down and had to abandon the task. No one cared. It was all going to be so easy that a few guns more or less made no difference.

The convoy headed toward Tanga, just in sight of land, as if the general wished to prove that the matter of surprise was immaterial. As the ships moved along, those aboard could see columns of smoke rising up from the shore; Colonel von Lettow's jungle wireless system was in action and he knew precisely where they were, hour by hour.

Fifteen miles east of Tanga the convoy hove to, at dawn on November 2. Four tugs came up, towing barges from Zanzibar. The barges carried two thousand African load-carriers, or porters. No self-respecting European army ever traveled in Africa without somebody to carry the luggage, and the Indians, who used a slightly different system of "bearers" back home, certainly could not be expected to behave in a lesser manner than the Europeans when abroad. So the carriers had come and the war could go on.

The commander of the H.M.S. Fox decided that the harbor must be swept for mines. No one had heard of any German mine layers about, nor of any German mines that had ever been brought into East Africa. But in a proper landing the harbor of the enemy was always swept for mines, and Cap-

tain Caulfield was a stickler for detail. The tug Helmuth was assigned the task. Almost immediately there was action—the Helmuth encountered a sunken object that tangled in the sweep. It was a tense moment until the seamen discovered the object was a log. In a few minutes the Helmuth was moving in again and made another contact; it was another log as it turned out, and then the incident was repeated. However, the Helmuth did see some real action. The tug moved in close to shore and a trigger-happy machine gunner from von Lettow's force opened up, thoroughly frightening the men of the tug before an officer stopped the shooting.

Meanwhile the Fox had headed inshore so that Captain Caulfield could satisfy the rules by announcing to the highest German authority that all deals were off. She flew a white flag and made her way up the channel without incident, entering the harbor early that morning. Captain Caulfield moved her in near the quay, anchored, and sent a message to the German District Commissioner to come on board for conversation.

The message reached District Commissioner Auracher, who saw that he would be damned if he

did (by Governor Schnee) and damned if he didn't (by Colonel von Lettow). He went to the ship, where Captain Caulfield told him of the refusal of the British to make any deals and, if any deals had been made, their refusal to honor them. Caulfield demanded the surrender of the town, which, he said, had already officially been surrendered by Governor Schnee. If Auracher did not give up, said Caulfield, the town would be bombarded.

And, asked the British officer, what about mines in the harbor?

Since H.M.S. Fox had come through the approaches and into the heart of the harbor without incident, that question might have struck Commissioner Auracher as a bit odd. But he was too much the civil servant to laugh at the English captain.

Besides, he was not then inclined to laugh. Through a mistake in interpretation, he was informed not that if he did not surrender the town would be bombed, but that if he did not tell the captain all about the mines, he, Auracher, would be shot. Since there was nothing to tell about mines that did not exist, this was a poser. Under the cir-

cumstances Commissioner Auracher held his composure very well.

He pointedly referred to Governor Schnee's deal with the British navy to make all East African cities open cities, and because of it, he said, Tanga had no defenses at all. How could the captain justify such a bombardment?

Captain Caulfield felt that Commissioner Auracher was holding out on him, and his suspicions were greater when Auracher said he had no authority to surrender Tanga to anyone. He would have to consult higher authority, he said. Caulfield assumed, as Auracher hoped, that the commissioner was going to be in touch with Governor Schnee. But as soon as Auracher was down in his boat and had rowed ashore, he hurried to the telegraph office and sent a message to von Lettow at Moshi that the enemy had arrived. He then called his aides together and sent them out to warn the public that a bombardment was imminent, and he prepared to put on his uniform as a lieutenant in the German army reserve. (In fact, the warning was a second warning. When Auracher had been summoned to the warship, he had sent out word that the town

was to be evacuated because the British were coming.) He also sent word to Captain Tafel of the Schutztruppe, whose company was camped on the outskirts of Tanga, enjoying the healthful climate. He signed the letters on his desk, all of which referred to routine administrative matters. He wrote a telegram to Governor Schnee announcing his temporary resignation from the civil service in order to serve his country as a soldier. He ordered the white flag lowered from the mast over the Government Building and the red, white, and black flag of Imperial Germany raised instead. Then he went home and put on his uniform. When he had adjusted the last button, he went out of the house, locked the door, got on his bicycle and rode out to join Captain Tafel.

Tafel had also sent a message to Colonel von Lettow. "Enemy has demanded surrender," it said. "Refused. We expect to be bombarded."

But Captain Caulfield decided against carrying out his threat, even after he had waited an hour and a half for. District Commissioner Auracher and the official had not reappeared. He had seen the German flag go up on the Government Building and

that gave him a clue that matters were not going quite as expected. But as the Fox sat there in the muddy green water, the waves lapping at her sides, and the sun rose higher in the tropical sky above the palm trees, the only sounds to be heard were the rustling of the wind and the calls of many birds. Tanga was as deserted as if the plague had struck down every inhabitant. In peacetime twenty thousand blacks lived there, with seven hundred Indians, Arabs, and other ethnic groups, and nearly six hundred Germans. But not a figure moved on the quay. Not a door slid open on the row of warehouses. Not a dog barked. It was eerie.

Captain Caulfield upped anchor and held the ship in the harbor with her engines. He sent a message to General Aitken, explaining all he had done. He waited an hour and sent another message that he was leaving, then he went out to sea to rejoin the convoy.

When the captain got to the meeting place, the ships were standing by and the minesweepers were sweeping. Apparently he did not think much of the job that was being done, because he left the Fox and boarded one of the tugs to take charge. The en-

counter with Commissioner Auracher, somewhat confused because the English did not have a German interpreter along, had convinced him that the whole area was alive with mines.

After several hours of not finding any mines, Captain Caulfield boarded the flagship and conferred with General Aitken. They were both nervous because it was too quiet. The captain distrusted the harbor and he persuaded the general to land at an alternative spot on the beach a mile away, on the far side of a headland, out of sight of the town.

General Aitken was an officer with a sense of history. Perhaps he had read a good deal of Napoleon; in any event he obviously felt that the deeds of these days should be commemorated in ringing language. "The town of Tanga is to be seized tonight," he said in his final order.

The order reached the transports and they moved in to the beach, or they began to do so. The convoy's shipmasters were not used to this sort of activity, and the merchant ships carrying the supplies and the transports carrying the troops got thoroughly confused and out of line. Captain Caulfield had to lay off minesweeping and sort them out.

Meanwhile, the officer of the deck of the Fox thought he saw German troops marching along near the shore and gave the alarm. It was near dusk, the shadows were deep and no one was quite sure what he saw. They fired one round of six-inch ammunition at the beach, and nothing happened. There was no one on the beach.

The landings were supposed to take place in early afternoon, but that proved impossible. The sun set and the transports were still out of position. As darkness fell the Indian troops began clambering down the landing nets into the barges that would take them to shore. The assault was to hit near a red house on the southern side of the headland called Ras Kasone. The order to the troops was to land, scale the low bluff they would find in front of them, then advance across the cocoa plantations and seize Tanga before dawn. The tugs towed the transports in toward shore and the men climbed down. Two of the transports came too close to the reef, their barges stranded, and a German machine gun on the bluff opened up on the Indian soldiers as they sat crammed in their landing craft. The Fox then began firing on the machine

gun, and the Germans moved it. The Indians waded ashore through the thick mangrove swamp. They were sloshing and slipping and falling into the water, wetting guns and powder. It was 9:30 that night before the troops got ashore, two companies of them, and they found themselves, a tiny portion of the force, facing an unknown enemy. By midnight more troops had landed, and just before the sun rose Brigadier Tighe of the Imperial Service Brigade was able to order the soldiers to move forward against Tanga. The general's brave words about capturing Tanga before dawn could not be matched by deeds, but at least Tighe could come close. Aboard his headquarters ship, General Aitken grumbled and fumed at the delays, but just before the sun came up he had word that Brigadier Tighe and his staff were ashore. Now the triumph was at hand.

## Victory!

Incredible as it may seem, the British had now given the Germans nearly twenty-four hours warning about their intentions and still they had not gone into action. But the Germans had moved as swiftly as possible given the difficulties of terrain and transportation. When Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck received the telegram from Lieutenant Aurracher of the Reserves, he began issuing orders. Captain Baumstarck with two companies of Askaris was not far from Tanga, and von Lettow ordered him to march immediately. His other forces were scattered around the Kilimanjaro area, where most of them faced British troops; it was not so easy to disengage them or move them. Also, it was 270 miles from New Moshi over the railroad. But von Lettow set out to overtake his enemies. As he came down the railroad he had messages from Tanga.

The British had landed 2,000 men, one urgent message read later on the morning of November 3. The German troops were coming as quickly as they

could move. Not that it was so fast—a company of 150 Askaris plus their 150 porters, plus the machine guns and rifles and packs, filled seven carriages of a train. The tiny engines could haul no more, and there were only eight engines on the line. So to move the von Lettow force the railroad men were working around the clock. That first troop train had set out almost as soon as von Lettow had Auracher's telegram. As for the commander, he was the last to leave, a shepherd making sure that his flock moved on safely and satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, the British force had tried to make its capture. Those

I poor Indian troops, after weeks at sea, sick and exhausted, struggled through shoulder-deep water to reach the shore and collapsed on the beach. Their commander had unerringly chosen one of the worst spots in the area for the landing. But as far as that was concerned, the whole Tanga region was no picnic-ground. It was five degrees south of the equator, hot all year round, damp, and laden with malarial mosquitos. The swamp was full of leeches and watersnakes, and the mosquitos were so thick that they rose in clouds. The tsetse

flies were nearly as thick inland, and wild bees nested in the thorn bushes. By dawn, when Brigadier Tighe was urging his men forward, they were wet and frightened and already sick of this war. But their officers pushed them ahead.

Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Stewart of the Thirteenth Rajputs led men of half a battalion and two machine guns along a narrow lane that ran toward Tanga. This patrol moved forward to the outskirts of Tanga, where it ran into the troops of Captain Tafel, that one company that had been assigned to defend Tanga until von Lettow and his major force could arrive. The German troops held their fire until the Indians reached a point where the ground dipped into a ditch, two hundred yards east of the railway, and then, as the patrol moved into the trap, swept it with bursts of machine-gun fire. Immediately, the porters, who were well behind the soldiers, threw down their loads and ran.

The main force then came up to try to extricate the Indians and moved to the left to attempt to flank the German force, but the brush was so thick the officers could not see ahead to deploy their men, so three officers climbed a little knoll. They

were spotted by a machine-gunner, who shot all three of them dead. One platoon leader tried to rush the machine-gun position with a section of Indian volunteers. The attempt failed and the entire unit was wiped out.

The British officers tried vainly to rally the men to a new effort. The Indians stayed put and fired.

The Askaris went into counterattack, led by Lieutenant von Ruckteschell.

"Blow, trumpeter, blow!" he shouted at his bugler.

The bugler blew, the Askaris stood up and with much-shouting and many blasts on the bugle, the force moved through the thick bush. The Rajputs heard them coming, but they could see nothing. All they knew was that troops were approaching quickly on both flanks and from their rear. They took to one corner, broke and ran. The scouting party went with them, and soon they were far from the edge of the town, hastening back to the bivouac area on shore, which seemed to offer protection. A dozen British officers were lost, killed as they stood up and faced the enemy, trying to rally the frightened Indians behind them.

Captain Tafel's force soon stopped, seeing that the enemy was routed, and moved to protected positions. But there would be no second effort just now. The Indians were completely demoralized, and their British officers were beginning to lose the misplaced faith they had built up on the basis of past reputation alone. Brigadier Tighe sent a message to General Aitken, explaining the failure: the Indians had been outnumbered by "2,500 German rifles." But Captain Meinertzhagen, who observed the whole action, said, "From what I saw it was more like 250 with four machine guns."

Back at the bivouac, the brigadier counted casualties. The force had lost three hundred men, most of them officers and noncommissioned officers.

The action ended for the day, but the Rajputs were so nervous that when one soldier accidentally fired his rifle, a hundred men rose up and ran to the beach to hide. It took the officers an hour to persuade the frightened men to return to their bivouac area.

Meanwhile, Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck had hustled the last unit of the Schutztruppe into its

train, swung aboard himself, and was hurrying as fast as the little engine would taken them to reach Tanga. He arrived at three o'clock on the morning of November 4. He did not wait for the train to get into the station, which might have been captured by the enemy. Instead he stopped the train three miles west of the city, and the soldiers got down. Von Lettow took his bicycle off the train and blackened his face so no rays of the moon would identify him. His olive gray cotton uniform blended into the colors of the brush, so there was no giveaway there. With two staff officers he rode into Tanga. The town was completely deserted. He found no signs of life—nothing but the gleam of the moon along the streets, reflected on the white siding of the European houses. They rode silently to the harbor. It was deserted, but across the water, a mile away, the lights of the transports blazed down on a noisy scene: the enemy was unloading supplies. If only he had some field guns to fire on this busy scene; but although he had sent for his "artillery" (two ancient field pieces), it had not arrived from Moshi.

They took the lane that led to Ras Kasone, left their bicycles at the government hospital, and

moved down toward the beach on foot. As they looked across the water in the moonlight, they saw the cruiser Fox close offshore. Actually, they were within the English lines, but they did not know it, and the sentries were not in evidence. They found out only as they approached the hospital to retrieve their bicycles. They were challenged by a strange voice speaking a strange language. It was Urdu, but von Lettow did not know that. "Stambuli!" he snapped in his most authoritative parade-ground voice. He heard crashing through the brush, and saw nothing more. The Indian sentry had fled.

Von Lettow returned to the headquarters of Captain Baumstarck's Seventeenth Field Company. The Sixth Field Company was in a forward position near the railroad station. Von Lettow went back to the main position with the Sixth Field Company, which was closer to the enemy. Just before dawn sporadic firing began between outposts of the two sides. Von Lettow ordered Baumstarck to come up with his men, and he moved the Sixth Company from its spot near the railroad station to a position on the eastern edge of the native town. Behind him were the thirty-foot banks of the steep railroad gul-

ley; it was unlikely that an enemy would try to launch a flanking movement there. His Sixth Company was the apple of his eye; these were his best marksmen and they had the new German army rifles.

Baumstarck, with his old model 71s, was moved to the railroad shops, from which point he would defend the town. His force had been augmented by the Sixteenth Field Company and a miscellaneous group of soldiers from smaller units. At the rear, von Lettow set up the reserves under his own command. The force was led by Captain von Prince, and he had his two companies of Europeans, plus the Thirteenth Field Company, which had already been in battle in the Kilimanjaro area. Altogether, von Lettow had mustered about one thousand men for this fight against eight thousand enemy troops. But von Lettow was a determined man. In fact, he had just made the most important decision of his military career. When he had arrived at Tanga he'd found a telegram from Governor Schnee waiting for him.

"You are forbidden to subject Tanga and the defenseless subjects I of the town to the rigors of war.

Even should the enemy land in force, there must be no resistance. Tanga must be saved from bombardment."

Since the beginning, von Lettow had considered the governor's attitude to be foolish and downright un-German. He had never wavered in his view that the proper occupation for everyone in the colonies was to carry the fight against the enemy, creating more difficulties for England and making her colonies a liability instead of an asset. But von Lettow had been torn until now by his loyalty to the German system and to the discipline which he had always accepted. Berlin said he was supposed to be subject to the will of the governor, and for weeks he had let it be so, although inside he resisted every move Schnee made to placate the enemy. But now the moment of decision had come. He could either let the English walk into Tanga, knowing from Aueracher that they had rejected Schnee's program of neutrality and would occupy German East Africa, or he could fight. To fight meant to disobey a direct order from his superior. So be it. He would fight.

He knew very well what would happen if he lost this battle. "My method of waging active war had

met with disapproval," he said, writing of it later. Had he failed, Schnee would have made a public disavowal of him, that much was obvious. Also a failure would sap the morale of his troops. Facing those two difficulties he would find it impossible to continue. The British would move north along the Usambara Railroad, using Tanga for a base of operations in the drive to clean out the whole northern section of German East Africa. With the railroad closed, even if von Lettow and his men escaped, they would have nowhere to go but south, and half the country would be lost without another engagement. Governor Schnee would have triumphed for the moment, until the English came down on him, and by then it would be too late for von Lettow to continue the struggle.

"To gain all, we must risk all," he said cheerfully, and he prepared for the battle.

Although the staff officers who had participated in the debacle of November 3 realized that the Indian force they directed was neither trained nor morally equipped for what was to come, General Aitken remained convinced that he commanded a superior fighting force. He had a positively "Colonel

Blimp" attitude toward the British and Indian military institutions as compared to all others. When defeated in argument about the qualities of the Germans and the Askaris he retreated to grumbling about "niggers" and "hum" and the superiority of the Indians, as if that somehow changed the equation.

The fighting of November 3 had ended by ten o'clock that morning. The red house that had been a marker became a field hospital and the three hundred dead and wounded were taken there. General Aitken came ashore and set up headquarters in a European house at the northern tip of Ras Kasone. He radiated enthusiasm and confidence. What had happened on the first day was a mere slip, and nothing to worry about. All would be well and Tanga safely in hand on November 4.

Brigadier Tighe reported on the events of the day to General Aitken. He had lost heavily in officers and men; in one battalion five of the twelve officers had been killed; he had also lost the only intelligence officer in the force who knew anything at all about Tanga.

Given that information, General Aitken had decided that he would use most of his force, although he had not intended to commit so many men. Brigadier Wapshare's Bangalore Brigade would be landed, and the one all-British Battalion of North Lancashires would cover the fight since they were the best trained troops of the lot.

So the unloading continued, and this was what Colonel von Lettow had seen in the middle of the night. The problems of unloading were enormous because the force had been loaded with no real thought to disembarking, and every bit of equipment seemed to be in the wrong place. So furious was General Aitken at the errors and delays that he never thought to ask Brigadier Tighe what he was doing about the enemy, or to order a plan of reconnaissance. Neither did anyone else. So as night came and the Germans arrived from the northwest, the British knew virtually nothing about this new disposition.

General Aitken decided that night that he would take personal command of the troop action on November 4. It would all be just like it was on the parade ground at Simla. The troops would advance in

line. One flank would move next to the shore, the middle body would be in the middle, and the other flank would move inland around the Germans, who were supposedly waiting for annihilation these last twenty hours.

Early in the morning, von Lettow asked about the field pieces from New Moshi and the Fourth and Ninth Field companies, which should have arrived. They had not, but were expected at any time.

The delay made von Lettow a little nervous, for without them he had only about eight hundred men. He had counted at least six thousand enemy and knew there must be more than that. The British also had the guns of the cruiser Fox. He had rather expected a morning action, the Tanga climate being what it was and the African sun doing what it did. But there was no action in the morning.

Von Lettow had put his men in the line very early that morning, warning them that they probably would have a long wait. As the sun rose in the sky it became hotter and by ten o'clock the Germans and the Askaris were sweating and reaching for their canteens. The officers warned them to save the water so they climbed palm trees and knocked

down the young coconuts, split them, and drank the milk. The officers opened bottles of wine requisitioned that morning from the cellar of the Hotel Deutscher Kaiser. From his forward command post von Lettow could see the transports, and at ten-thirty they were still unloading. (General Aitken believed in big breakfasts for his men before they went into action.) As the day's heat increased and the wine took its effect, the officers fought off drowsiness. It was hot, hot, hot.

Finally, General Aitken was ready for his field exercise in the book's best fashion. He had decided to employ all of the eightthousand-man force. The British troops of the North Lancashire regiment would lead the way, rather than guard the rear. The general had at last been convinced that these were the best trained men. The better troops of the 101st Grenadiers would be on their flank, with the shaky Rajputs of the Sixty-third Light Palamacottah Infantry in between. The Sixty-third Rajputs, it was hoped, would not panic this day as they had the day before, and the same prayer might have been said for the Thirteenth Rajputs, the Ninety-eighth Infantry, and the Sixty-first Pioneers, who were all

assigned to come up. The Gwalior Infantry Regiment would be left behind on the beach to protect the stores.

The Indians ought to have known better even if their officers did not, but by noon most of them had emptied their canteens, and the discomfort was intense. They were supposed to move through the line of brush, cocoa palms, sisal, thorn and the heavy vegetation of a rubber forest. The assault took off at a few minutes after noon, and Askaris brought the word to von Lettow. Two hours later the British had moved only a few hundred yards. Men were beginning to collapse from the heat. A few scattered shots had been fired by patrols, but there had been no general action.

At three o'clock, General Aitken's force had moved up six hundred yards, and a scout reported to von Lettow: "The enemy is ready."

Von Lettow had given the orders: hold fire until the troops are clearly in view. The men of the Second Royal North Lancashire Regiment came into sight, moving ahead steadily as they had been ordered. The German line erupted in fire, and where the old model 71s were in use clouds of smoke ob-

scured the defenses. Even had they not, it was quickly apparent that the Germans had an enormous advantage in knowledge of terrain and foliage. The machine guns had laid out fields of fire. They used them. The observers were well placed with their field telephones. The snipers were up in the baobab trees with their modern rifles, instructed to find the British officers and leave the enlisted men to the troops on the ground. "Wahindi ni wadudu" shouted the Askaris—the mortal insult: "Indians are insects."

The two British brigades came up along a one-thousand-yard front. But while von Lettow had expected to have to undergo shelling from the guns of the cruiser Fox, General Aitken had decided he did not need the naval support and shelling might destroy valuable buildings that he could use when he converted the town into a base for the movement north and west.

Brigadier Wapshare's troops moved through a field of corn, the stalks nearly eight feet high, their vision never clear ahead. The German snipers, high above the baobab trees, sighted and fired and men

fell. The Lancashire men in the van moved through to open ground.

There was nothing to protect them until they reached the railroad I gulch. The Sixth Field Company opened fire, here and there the old 71s sent up clouds of smoke. Von Lettow had worried at the beginning of his stay in Africa about the old 71s, and once remarked that they might be an enemy secret weapon. But this day, the fact was that they were enormously effective as propaganda for the ferocity of the Askaris. The Indians of the Sixty-third Light Palamacottah Infantry threw down their guns rather than advance into this wall of smoke, and fled back to the beach. The Lancashiremen advanced doggedly across the flat ground, trying to find cover behind small bushes and rocks. From the baobab trees the snipers looked down and sought out officers who led the advance, leaving their dead and wounded scattered on the ground.

On the right, the Thirteenth Rajputs and the Sixty-first Pioneers panicked but the Gurkhas of the Kashmir Rifles used guns and then their deadly short swords, the kukris, to slash their way to the northern end of Tanga. There they joined elements

of the Lancashire regiment in surrounding the customs house, capturing the Hotel Deutscher Kaiser, and hauling down the German flag to replace it with the Union Jack.

For a time the British troops seemed to be gaining the momentum they needed. The Indians and the Lancashiremen formed assault teams and moved down the streets of the European town. But black riflemen kept popping up in the windows, shooting and then ducking. The German machine guns moved along the rooftops. And finally, as the British had occupied a number of office buildings in the center of town at about four o'clock, von Lettow sent his shock troops, Captain Prince and his European volunteers, with their own machine guns, to drive the British back. Building by building they recaptured the town, until the Lancashiremen were holding only one small section.

At headquarters beside the railroad station Colonel von Lettow chain-smoked cigarettes and worried. The right side of his line had weakened against the Lancashiremen. Captain Baumstarck threw in two of his companies but these were the rawest recruits in the Schutztruppe, and some of

them panicked and ran when they came under heavy fire. The German officers cursed their men and then deliberately exposed themselves to enemy fire to shame them. Captain Alexander von Hammerstein grew so angry as he saw his Askaris fleeing that he threw a beer bottle at one of them. Somehow this struck the black soldiers as very funny, and the flight stopped and the Askaris began to return to the line. The situation was still serious. Von Lettow had no more reserves, the two last companies had not arrived in time, and the British 101st Grenadiers threatened the right flank. If they were able to link up with the Lancashiremen and launch a new attack on the German rear from the town, the battle might be lost to General Aitken.

Von Lettow saw then that he must again "risk all" if defeat was to be avoided. The Sixty-third Palamacottah Light Infantry's flight to the beach had left a gaping hole in the left of the British line. Von Lettow ordered his Thirteenth Field Company, on the British right, to swing around cross the field and hit the British left. Just before four-thirty that afternoon, the men of the Thirteenth Field Company moved, got their machine guns into position,

and began to traverse the line of the 101st Grenadiers. Four machine guns in all came into play, and within fifteen minutes they had caused so many casualties that the battalion was down to company strength. Just then, the long-delayed Fourth Field Company arrived from the west and added its weight to the German line. Von Lettow had enough troops to envelop the British left, flank, and rear.

While all this was going on, von Lettow was pacing back and forth in his command post, smoking nervously. The British intelligence officer Captain Meinertzhagen had come up to see how the Lancashiremen were doing and had hidden in a house near the station. He saw this tall, balding officer moving about and fired two shots at him. Both missed, and von Lettow survived an attack that might have ended the war in East Africa right then.

On the left Brigadier Wapshare ordered a withdrawal, and then General Aitken ordered a general withdrawal. The Germans began moving ahead using their bayonets and the Indian troops fled before them, running for the beach. The British officers tried vainly to stem this onrushing tide but the

panic was complete. Captain Meinertzhagen was purple with frustration and rage. He saw half a dozen Indians hiding behind the brush and ordered them to stand and fight. One of them aimed his rifle at Meinertzhagen, who shot him dead.

The British troops ran into an unheralded and completely unknown natural trap. They were scurrying back for the beach when suddenly they disturbed a hive of wild African bees. These furious bees were given a wide berth by Africans, who knew that one sting could lay a man low. Many of the troops were stung so badly that their faces and arms swelled up to become unrecognizable. One officer who was lying unconscious on the field was stung into consciousness and thus survived. The bees were not particular: they attacked the German machine gunners, too, and they had to retreat. But the British troops were more completely in the line of fire, and they took the brunt of the action. Later the intelligence officers

I would surmise that this episode was a clever German plot, that set

I wires had been tripped to disturb the hive, but it was not true. All that von Lettow might have claimed was "Gott mit uns."

The fighting slowed down in the bee zone but continued until sunset, when the British somehow managed to throw up a solid defense line.

Von Lettow was delighted. Many of his Askaris had captured English rifles, so some of the old 71s could be discarded.

General Aitken was furious, and then stunned, and then furious again. He called on the cruiser Fox, belatedly, to shell the town (but avoid the railroad). During the next half hour the Fox put more than one hundred rounds of 6-inch and 4.7-inch shells into the area. Their shooting was terrible; they hit the hospital, which was housing German and English wounded, but most of the shells fell within the British lines and killed and wounded scores of Indian troops. There was not the slightest possibility of getting them to move back and fight after all these experiences, so reluctantly the Lancashire troops abandoned their position in the heart of Tanga and withdrew. They had to move

through the lines of the Germans, and the cost to them was enormous.

At this point, one of the Askari buglers thought he had heard an order to move back to the morning camp outside Tanga and he began to sound the retreat. The British thought it was the call to charge, and while Meinertzhagen, who knew the German calls, told Aitken and his staff what had happened, Aitken was too stunned to take advantage of the error. Meinertzhagen and a few others were allowed to go toward Tanga. They went into the town and found it deserted again, but Aitken refused to move his troops up. He seemed interested only in getting away from the scene of this debacle. That night the British force fell back on Ras Kasone.

Von Lettow, who had been on the far side of the battle when the mistake was made and the bugles pulled the men back, discovered the error and ordered the men back into the line, but it was early morning before the Germans could all reassemble in the positions they had gained. Tanga sat all night long, deserted, available to the British if they had only moved forward. They did not. Perhaps General Aitken finally knew that the Indian troops

he had under his command could not possibly move back into battle.

At six in the morning on November 5 Colonel von Lettow was back in Tanga and his troops were in firm control of the town. In the heat of Africa it did not take long for bodies to begin to stink, and the aftermath of battle was already all too apparent to the nose. The streets were literally strewn with dead and wounded. The Indians cried out in languages the Germans did not understand, but von Lettow ordered his doctors and medical orderlies to work as fast as they could, and they moved among Germans, British, Indians, and Askaris with no regard for color or uniform.

Von Lettow went down to a point near the shore and watched the British milling about while the ships' boats moved back and forth with no apparent aim. Von Lettow still did not know the extent of his victory: he had caused 817 casualties in this force of 8,000, and he was still holding every inch of ground behind the landing place.

The training of the Indian troops had not included retreat to the ships, and when it was ordered by General Aitken it was a ragged business.

Von Lettow thought of attacking again, but General Aitken showed his first real initiative in protecting his force on the narrow beach. He sent radio messages to the effect that the British would launch a new attack. It seemed quite likely to von Lettow, who saw all those thousands of men and all that equipment on the beach. The Lancashire troops were sent forward to make a feint attack and then withdraw. The British were waiting nervously for high tide, which would come in mid-afternoon. When it came, it was accompanied by a heavy downpour that obscured the water from the bush and so von Lettow did not know that his enemies were evacuating, not planning another attack. By five o'clock in the afternoon nearly all the Indians were aboard the ships and the Royal Lancashire troops were ordered to come along. They very nearly mutinied, particularly when they were ordered to leave their machine guns and ammunition ashore because of the shortage of time and boats.

Once the troops were aboard, General Aitken sent Captain Meinertzhagen back to shore under a flag of truce to arrange for the treatment of the British wounded and evacuation to the ships if possi-

ble. While he waited at the hospital for a reply from von Lettow, the captain watched a handful of Askaris amuse themselves by practicing sharpshooting on the Fox. And he met a German doctor who gave him several drinks of brandy. Captain von Hammerstein appeared with von Lettow's approval of the removal of the British troops, which the Germans had no facilities to house. Von Lettow agreed to a truce. He would release the British wounded if the officers would each agree that they would not serve again in the war against Germany. As for the men, the government must be responsible for that aspect. Several of the British officers came ashore and the Germans of von Lettow's staff invited them to dinner. They had soup, fish, steak, brandy, and German wines. Meinertzhagen and von Hammerstein exchanged addresses for postwar meeting, and von Hammerstein gave his enemy a photograph of himself, autographed. It was a real party. At the end of it, however, von Hammerstein took the Englishmen back to the beach and issued a warning. Von Lettow had told him to tell General Aitken that the German field pieces had now arrived, and if the

British transports lingered in the harbor, the German guns would fire on them.

General Aitken lost no time in moving out. Fox led the way, and several hours later the convoy anchored in Manza Bay north of Tanga, out of range of the German guns. The assault on Tanga was over. It had been an absolutely stunning British defeat and a total German victory.

The final score, totaled by the British, was eight hundred British soldiers dead, five hundred wounded, and several hundred missing. The losses did not include the African carriers brought from Zanzibar, who suffered in the rout of the first attack. The Germans lost fifteen Europeans and fifty-four Askaris. The greatest loss to von Lettow was Captain Tom von Prince, who was killed on the street in Tanga as he rallied his men. But in exchange for this blow, the Germans had acquired sixteen machine guns, hundreds of rifles, six hundred thousand rounds of ammunition, food and other stores, and coats and blankets enough to last them for the rest of the war.

As for the British war effort, Lord Kitchener was furious when he learned the details of the opera-

tion. General Aitken was reduced in rank to colonel, retired, and put on half pay for the remainder of the war. Kitchener would not allow any decorations for the troops who had participated, though many, particularly among the Lancashiremen, deserved them. (This policy was later changed.) The Indian troops lost face and they were a long time regaining it, although the Gurkhas and many of the 101st Grenadiers had fought bravely throughout.

The British withheld all news of the battle, and so the Germans at home knew nothing. But the Germans in the colony who had been divided in support of von Lettow's warlike ambitions and Governor Schnee's faint hopes for peace now rallied to von Lettow. The governor's authority was undermined; he could no longer hope to hold von Lettow in check. War had come to German East Africa for certain, and the Germans were winning it.

## A "German David" Fights

Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck's victory at Tanga was sweet, and it was made even sweeter when he learned that his men northwest of Kilimanjaro at Longido had also dealt the enemy a blow. At that fateful conference in Mombasa in October, General Aitken had laid the plan for the simultaneous operation in the northwest by Brigadier Stewart's force. The intelligence reports, which were most inaccurate, indicated that there were two hundred German and about two hundred Askari troops stationed here. The fact was that there were eighty-six Germans and six hundred Askaris. They were divided into three Askari companies under Major Kraut and one company of European volunteers.

Actually, von Lettow was a very lucky commander. Learning on November 2 that the British convoy was standing off Tanga harbor, von Lettow had sent a message to Major Kraut ordering him to move up to Moshi and then to take the train for Tanga as soon as possible, to join what was ob-

viously going to be a major engagement. But the wire between Moshi and Longido had broken down, and Major Kraut did not get the telegram. Had he received it on time, he would have obeyed orders and Longido would have fallen to the British without a shot.

As it was, the British marched on November 3 with fifteen hundred troops, followed by muleteers bringing a hundred animals carrying water across the dry plateau.

The Germans held a strong position on the ridge at Longido, and the British came up at night. But in the morning, as the Germans knew very well, the mist lay heavy over the mountain, and then the Germans caught their enemies, who could not see to go either forward or backward. The Germans attacked them and inflicted many casualties. The Indians—Punjabis this time—showed no fear and counterattacked, preventing a complete rout, but the fighting had caused the one hundred mules to stampede and run off down the mountain, leaving the British force with no more water than each man carried in his canteen.

Mist disappeared and the hot sun came up, getting hotter every hour as it beat down on the British troops on the slope of the mountain. Their officers debated and decided they must retreat, but they must also wait for darkness or they might be wiped out. The thirsty men settled down. But Major Kraut's force would not let them be. The Askaris and Europeans attacked again, and the superior British force fended them off. The Germans attacked a third time, and again were repelled, but as darkness came the British pulled out and stumbled down the mountain. Some of the carriers panicked, dropped their loads, and ran toward the hills. The soldiers moved on leaving equipment scattered behind them. At dawn on November 4, the force was back in camp inside British East Africa, having accomplished nothing except to supply the Germans with more arms and to incur some casualties.

Von Lettow headed back for Moshi as the British ships sailed away, and he soon learned of the second victory in the mountains. Tanga, of course, was the triumph as far as the public was concerned, but to the colonel it was equally important that he had managed to defeat his enemies along

the frontier with so small a force. It proved all that he had contended about the abilities of a small, well-organized and well-trained force of men who could move rapidly to keep a far larger enemy army off balance. There no longer should be any argument against this plan from Governor Schnee, and von Lettow should have his way. This change became apparent as the troop trains moved up the Ungabara railroad, and were greeted with flowers and cheers and farm goods at every hamlet.

The German victory would have been even more enjoyable had von Lettow known precisely how much he had embarrassed the British. General Aitken left Tanga knowing it was a disaster, but he did not envisage how unsympathetic Lord Kitchener would be. Aitken made many excuses to London. He overstated the number of German troops enormously, and he suggested that the Germans were so strong that the British must go on the defensive. Aitken was summoned home in disgrace, but the policy he had engendered was put into effect. So von Lettow, with his twenty-five hundred Askaris and his handful of German volunteers, had forced a British army of more than ten thousand

men to stand back. It was a policy that appealed enormously to Brigadier Wapshare, who was promoted to take Aitken's place and given the rank of major general. Wapshare was another "Colonel Blimp." He liked to drink and eat and live a life surrounded by servants. He detested physical exertion and so did not go into the field any more than was absolutely necessary. Consequently he knew virtually nothing about infantry tactics, and nothing at all about infantry tactics in the African bush. In fact, in Mombasa, "Wappy," as they called the general, was known as the biggest fool in the army.

One day after taking command, Wappy got into a ricksha, which was the usual public conveyance in Mombasa in those days. When he sat down, swagger stick in hand, the Swahili boy who was going to carry this two-hundred-fifty pound load turned.

"Wapi? Jur —Where do you want to go? Up the hill?"

The general heard the words as Wappy, Jew! and his face turned beet-red. He half raised himself in the seat and struck at the ricksha boy with his swagger stick. The boy jumped and fled, the rick-

sha tipped over, and Wappy, the commander of His British Majesty's Imperial Forces in East Africa, went rolling in the dust.

Mombasa did not have much confidence in General Wapshare, but then Mombasa had grown cynical about the whole British performance. One of the young civil servants with a wicked sense of humor composed a poem in honor of the Tanga operation, and within a matter of hours it was being passed around in the Mombasa and even Nairobi clubs.

Steaming down to Tanga  
Over the briny main,  
See our Major-General  
And his brilliant train.  
Three Brigade Commanders  
Colonels, staff galore;  
Majors count for little,  
Captains they ignore.  
Earnestly they study  
Each his little book  
Which, compiled in Simla,  
Tells him where to look.

Local knowledge needed?  
Native scouts of use?  
For so quaint a notion

There is small excuse.  
See them shortly landing  
At the chosen spot,  
Find the local climate  
Just a trifle hot.  
Foes unsympathetic,  
Maxims on them train  
Careful first by signal  
Range to ascertain.

Ping, ping, go the bullets  
Crash! explode the shells,  
Major-General's worried  
Thinks it's just as well  
Not to move too rashly  
While he's in the dark.  
What's the strength opposing?  
Orders re-embark.

Back to old Mombasa  
Steams "B" Force again.  
Are these generals ruffled?  
Not the smallest grain.  
Martial regulations  
Inform us day by day.  
They may have fozzled Tanga  
But they've taken B.E.A.

The initials referred to British East Africa,  
whose citizens, white and black, had suddenly de-

veloped an enormous respect for Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and his black Askari troops. Also, the British military men, if they counted their equipment losses, had to be worrying about the unwilling replacement of the old model-71 Mausers for the Germans by the Modern British Enfield rifles to augment their own Maxims and modern Mausers. Given the performance of the British Expeditionary Force and the general disregard for General Wapshare's abilities, the people of British East Africa looked upon the war with total gloom. Lord Kitchener, who was not used to sharing his thoughts with inferior officers and people in out-of-the-way places, did not bother to tell anyone in East Africa that he thought the whole area of no strategic significance whatsoever. Kitchener's views would have upset von Lettow, who did not know them either, although he did know that the importance of German East Africa to Germany was only moral and now propagandistic. And in that sense, German East Africa was very important. The blacks of the whole continent soon heard that von Lettow with his handful of men had routed the British lions, and the impact was enormous. Von Lettow just now

held all the cards, and in this game he was assisted by the reputation he had made at Tanga. General Wapshare stood absolutely in awe of the German commander. He could not understand how von Lettow had managed to get down to Tanga in time, and to take the right actions, and he soon gave up trying to understand. Captain Meinertzhagen, who had little use for his own superiors (and apparently with good reason), wrote in his diary that after Tanga, the mention of von Lettow's name to General Wapshare "sends him into a shivering fit of apprehension."

## "The Fatherland Is Proud of Its Sons"

For two weeks the East African front was relatively quiet. The Royal Navy had searched for the cruiser Koenigsberg and found her in the Rufiji River delta on November 1, but finding the warship and destroying her were two different matters. London sent airplanes, ships, and men to do the job. But the airplane, a rickety "hydroplane," crashed and the pilot was captured by Captain Loaf's men. And the British ships were not enough to take the Koenigsberg.

The defeat of the landing force at Tanga and the survival of Koenigsberg in the delta were matters of extreme embarrassment for the British in the fall of 1914. Rear Admiral Herbert King-Hall, commander of the cruiser force stationed at the Cape of Good Hope, was told in no uncertain terms that it was time to secure the destruction of the cruiser and the surrender of the colony. Here was a classic case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand

was doing. Admiral King-Hall believed he had already secured the surrender of the colony by that early agreement with Governor Schnee. He still thought so, even as General Aitken's men were marching on Tanga and Commander Caulfield was announcing to District Commissioner Auracher that all previous agreements were off. The admiral did not understand what London was up to, nor that after Tanga, Colonel von Lettow had repudiated the surrender and seized military power from the stubborn Governor Schnee.

Schnee was giving in by inches. All his moves had to be buttressed by conditions, but von Lettow was having his way. He decided that troops must be moved into Dar es Salaam to protect the capital and largest city from a British attack such as the one launched against Tanga. To defend the capital von Lettow chose Major General Kurt Wahle of the Saxony army. To an outsider this might have seemed odd or even amazing; von Lettow-Vorbeck was not even a full colonel at this time, but a lieutenant colonel, and the general was a good four ranks above him, a retired officer who had the bad luck to be visiting his son at the time of the Dar es Salaam

exhibition. The general had made the plans long before; his son was a settler in East Africa and they had not seen each other for several years. He had been caught here by the war with no chance of returning to Germany, and he had offered his services to von Lettow, who first used him as Inspector of Lines of Communication. In fact, the general secured and strengthened von Lettow's lines of supply, and made such operations as the rapid Moshi-Tanga transit possible. Now, in mid-November, von Lettow was asking General Wahle to take over the lines of defense of Dar es Salaam. At first Governor Schnee fidgeted, but von Lettow pointed out that the British had not let any agreement bind them in the Tanga invasion attempt, and reluctantly the governor assented (probably because von Lettow was going to send General Wahle in anyway). The two field guns that had come down from Moshi to Tanga were moved to Dar es Salaam, and the general moved in, ready to meet fire with fire.

He was just in time. His troops had hardly swept out the barracks when the British arrived on November 28.

Admiral King-Hall had been fretting under the prods of London for action, so he had decided to make a grand show of taking over Dar es Salaam, which would have the additional virtue of cutting off any assistance that Captain Looff's beleaguered Koenigsberg might expect from the colony's largest port. He would supervise this action himself, he told London. So he had boarded the old battleship Goliath and brought along Commander Caulfield in the Fox, accompanied by the armed tugs Helmuth and Adjutant, both German vessels that had been unlucky enough to be in Zanzibar at the start of the war and were seized by the British.

Under the agreement that Governor Schnee's administrator had made with the British on that first meeting, the British had the right to send a boat into harbor from time to time to check on the compliance of the Germans with the non-belligerence promise. The purpose was to assure that the merchant ships were not being used to harbor enemies, and that the Koenigsberg was not being secretly supplied. The agreement said that the British could send one armed pinnace, or its equivalent, into the harbor under a white flag. The

armada came up and stood off the harbor. Admiral King-Hall authorized not one but three armed pinnaces to enter, and they did, followed by the Helmuth and the Adjutant. As they came in, the civil authorities, who were still operating under Governor Schnee's old instructions, obediently raised the white flag of surrender. The British entered the harbor, approached the German East Africa Line steamers Feldmarschall and Koenig, and stopped alongside. The armed British sailors went aboard. They announced to the captains that they knew they had been supplying the Koenigsberg (which was true, as far as they were able) and this must stop. They blew up the engines of both ships, and took off a number of the ships' crewmen, whom they loaded into barges and towed off behind the Helmuth and the Adjutant. They headed back through the narrow mouth of the harbor then, to take their prisoners to the flotilla.

The activities of the British had been observed by Captain von Kornatzky's defense forces. General Wahle, who had responded to Colonel von Lettow's orders, had joined in the colonel's exasperation over what von Lettow called "this endless screw." He had

ordered von Kornatzky to defend, and that meant to use his guns. The sight of British boats taking German sailors prisoner was too much; von Kornatzky opened fire. The pinnaces scurried for the cover of the flotilla. The slower tugs, with their barges, were hit harder. One of the pinnaces was hit eight times on the way out, and the tug Hel-muth was so badly holed that her captain was not sure he could keep her afloat.

Admiral King-Hall decided that if that was how the Germans wanted it, they could have a dose of war. He ordered the Goliath to open up with her big twelve-inch guns, and at one-thirty she began firing. For three and a half hours the battleship poured 305-mm shells into the town and the ships anchored in the harbor. The town was badly damaged, many buildings were holed, and the streets were filled with shell holes. The Feldmarschall and the Koenig were hit repeatedly. Neither ship sank, but with their engines destroyed and their hulls damaged as they were, it would be a long time before either could be of much use.

The admiral's orders and the resultant bombardment did for Dar es Salaam what von Lettow

had hoped. Before that moment there were still believers who expressed the hope that the governor's peace policies would triumph over the colonel's war policy. But one of the shells struck Government House just at luncheon time District Officer Methner, the governor's personal representative who supervised the "truce," had just risen from the table with his wine glass held high to make a toast. Then came the shell. He looked out the window.

"To Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck—and victory," said the acting governor. And the table rang with the responses. There were very few pacifists left in Dar es Salaam on that afternoon of November 28. At his headquarters in New Moshi, Colonel von Lettow could not have been more pleased.

The war fever was still rising in Dar es Salaam two days later when the British came back. They arrived once more under a white flag, Admiral King-Hall trying to revive the spirit of non-belligerence. He thought he had taught the people of Dar es Salaam a good lesson for their temerity in firing on British vessels. The warships came up and made signals for the Germans to come out in a boat and parley. But General Wahle was having no more of

that; he had his orders from von Lettow and they were clear. Besides, District Officer Methner was not there to talk to the British if they had asked for him. He had gone off to join von Lettow as a reserve officer. So the British, angry at the rebuff, opened fire again on the town. They smashed the casino. They wrecked the bank. They destroyed the brewing vats of the town's only brewery. They blasted the soda-water works and they wrecked the furniture in the governor's palace, a fact that could be ascertained by looking through the holes in the walls. Dar es Salaam, once the token of German "surrender" as ordered by Governor Schnee, was now a fighting city.

In the north, after the triumphal journey from Tanga, which pleased von Lettow as much as it did any of his men, the commander and his principal aides sat down to plan for the coming months. They did not know what they faced in terms of British involvement, but they could expect that with the enormous resources of the British in Africa, and with Britain's obvious mastery of the seas, they were in for a siege. How could they survive? That was the big question. With General Wahle's expert

assistance, von Lettow had made of the Schutztruppe a tight organization; but there were plenty of problems for the colonel's attention. He was not going to be able to secure any field guns, it seemed, unless he captured them from his enemies.

New Moshi had certain advantages as a headquarters. Von Lettow could be in telephonic communication with Tanga, Taveta, East Kili-manjaro, West Kilimanjaro, Longido, and Arusha, all important to his defense of the colony. In some parts of the area he could also use automobiles and other vehicles, but the roads were few. The British, on their side of the border, had far better transportation facilities, but in German East Africa, except for the two east-west railroads and the lakes, the Schutztruppe would have to operate on foot.

Here on the shoulder of Mount Kilimanjaro, Colonel von Lettow began to perfect a military technique unmatched in modern times, even by the celebrated Che Guevara, the master guerilla of the 1960s. Captain Meinertzhagen, who had seen the Schutztruppe briefly before the war began, had warned his superiors that there were no better

fighting men in the world than these African Germans, and that on their own ground they might be unbeatable. His superiors, grounded in the school of white superiority, scoffed, and Captain Meinerzhagen subsided into silence, confining his feelings to the pages of the diary he kept so illegally and so successfully as to lend later a living quality to the British side of the war.

Colonel von Lettow was far more prosaic. In describing the out-standing exploits of his troops he used such phrases as "it was interesting that . . .", when, far more than interesting, the exploits were at least remarkable.

After the Tanga debacle the British went immediately on the de-fensive. Colonel von Lettow mapped out his course of attack in the north, while the British fumbled. East Africa was divided into three military commands. Brigadier Stewart took charge at Nairobi, and Brigadier Wilfrid Malleson took over the area that included the Uganda railroad north of Kilimanjaro. This was von Lettow's target.

One of the first moves, and an important test of the Schutztruppe's capacities, was a patrol for two

hundred kilometers against the Uganda railroad, the Schutztruppe moving on foot, learning to live on short rations of water for days at a time. They moved fast and they were ready to fight at any time.

But from the beginning, von Lettow's supply problems were prodigious. When the British needed supplies they were brought up by truck or railroad. When von Lettow needed supplies in New Moshi they had to come in by a caravan of African carriers. For example, that fall, a caravan was sent to the shore of Lake Victoria for rice that had been transported along the lake. Six hundred carriers made the journey under the direction of Supply Captain Feilke. Each man had one kilogram of ration for himself and he carried twenty-five kilograms for the Schutztruppe. The journey took thirty days, and much of the rice.

At New Moshi, they lived very much off the land. Headquarters and the officers' quarters were located in European houses. But the provisions were rice, wheat flour, bananas, pineapples, some European fruits that grew at the high altitude, and potato flour. Salt, sugar, and other necessities had to be brought from the coast, up across the Mid-

land railroad. Then they were taken by carriers to the Northern Railroad. During the early months of the war, eight thousand carriers were so employed, supplying the Schutztruppe headquarters.

The Schutztruppe was surrounded by friends among the planters of the region, who were glad to share their produce and supplies with the German officers. Von Lettow could count on a good meal wherever he went. And there were plenty of luxuries just then. The Germans, in fact, were overwhelmed with hospitality from their civilian supporters, and the blacks too lived well. The morale of the Schutztruppe, after Tanga, soared into the clouds. And out of this period came the Schutztruppe's motto:

Frisch ist das Herz,  
strass ist der Mut;  
Schlapp ist allein der Tropenhut.  
(Light is the heart, strong is the spirit;  
Soft alone is the campaign hat.)

Except for a few skirmishes along the frontier posts, December was a quiet month. The Germans and the Askaris occupied themselves with hunting various game: dwarf antelope, bushbuck, waterbuck, wild pig, lesser kudu, and many others. Co-

lonel von Lettow himself came across a lion that suddenly appeared from the bush only fifteen steps away from him. He dropped to his knees and took a shot at the lion, but the animal disappeared silently into the bush. It was a close call.

Christmas 1914 was a nostalgic time for the Germans. They went to services at the Mission church in New Moshi, and then dined splendidly on delicacies from the fatherland, local game, and good German wines.

They were still almost entirely cut off from Germany; what little news they had was usually gleaned from enemy radio broadcasts and newspapers either captured or sent surreptitiously by Germans still walking about in the towns of British East Africa. Captain Meinertz-hagen proved to be something of a thorn in the German side in spite of his lowly rank. He was placed in charge of intelligence for all of the British colony, and this assignment included counterintelligence. He rounded up a number of Germans in Mombasa and declared them spies. Two of them were shot.

The patrols surged back and forth. The Germans cut the Uganda railroad, and the British

drove them back to their own side of the border when they ran short of ammunition. The colonel sent his men down into the forest near the Uмба River, and this so disturbed the British that they decided they must make a major effort, particularly after five thousand British and African inhabitants fled northward from the region to escape. The Germans were occupying British territory and this would never do. For once the British were in the same fix as the Germans: there were no roads in the area and Brigadier Tighe had to employ five thousand carriers to support the eighteen hundred troops he sent in to clear out the Germans. At the end of December action was imminent. The British drove the German force back, crossed the Uмба River, and occupied the town of Jasin. This German center was the location of a coco palm plantation of the German East Africa Company. The company also grew sisal here and had been an important exporter to the German rope trade before the war.

Colonel von Lettow moved down to Jasin himself to supervise the rout of the enemy from German East African territory. The British had been in control of Jasin for about a month by the time von

Let- tow was organized for his move. He had not been in a hurry. He knew that these troops were totally unused to the climate of equatorial Africa, and they must be suffering. Jasin lay on the sea, and January was the hottest month. The humidity was nearly unbearable for the unacclimated. At Jasin von Lettow learned that his enemies were indeed suffering from the heat and the humidity. Scouts reported that the enemy's pack animals were sick and many had died. The troops were in not much better condition, nor were the carriers.

Malaria, some of it contracted at Tanga, had begun to take its toll within three weeks.

After reconnoitering, Colonel von Lettow sent back word to New Moshi. He wanted nine field companies to come down, and on January 17 they arrived at a point eleven kilometers south of Jasin. They brought with them two field pieces and placed them in the scrub. The attack was scheduled for the morning of January 18.

The Germans brought up their troops late in the afternoon. It was not the sort of orderly procession that Europeans would have expected. First came the troops, and then the carriers, and behind

came the camp followers. The Askaris were used to bringing their women with them to war. After the battle the women would cook for them, bind up their wounds, and give them comfort. The Arab troops, of which there was one company, segregated for the sensible reasons of food and religious activity, usually traveled with its own entourage, which consisted of young boys. Colonel von Lettow had no moral scruples about the Arab habits; one of his great qualities was an ability to take the African precisely as he found him, without any transfer of European mores. But on this occasion, the colonel had decided that the trek through the bush would be too hard for the young boys and had ordered that they be left back at New Moshi. The Arab company had complied sullenly with the orders from the officers, but on the march the leaders of the Arab Askaris had conferred and that night they demanded their discharge from the service on grounds of discrimination. The German officers told them to be quiet and prepare to fight next day or they would be shot.

Major Kepler, with two companies, was on the right of the German position. Captain Adler and his

two companies were on the left, opposite Jasin town. Northwest was the Arab company, and next to it Captain Otto with the Ninth Company faced on the high road that led to Jasin Behind were the company of European volunteers, three companies of Askaris, and two field guns. They were to move out at daybreak and march on Jasin.

As the light began to come up, Major Kepler's unit fired the first shots, and a few minutes later Captain Otto's company moved into action.

Going through the dense sisal jungle was hard. But the jungle also gave cover to the advancing German troops against the strong fire put out by the Kashmir Rifles, who held a stone house that had been converted to a virtual fortress two hundred meters from the German starting point. The 101st Grenadiers held a plantation house nearby, and these were the focal points for the assault.

In all, the British were relatively weak in Jasin, apparently not expecting so strong a reaction from von Lettow. But the colonel, knowing that if the British took his seacoast they would have another chance to crack Tanga and control the Northern Railway, had not hesitated to send force, and now

he did not hesitate to commit it. But there was another reason for the British weakness; uninformed about the territory, they had sent the Indians into one of the most difficult places in East Africa, and the illnesses had taken their toll, so that the British effectives amounted to about four companies.

The Germans moved forward in three columns through the sisal. In the fort, Colonel Rajbir Singh of the Kashmir Rifles posted his men and his machine guns so they traversed the broad front with fire. He ordered fire in volleys, and as the Germans came the front ranks began to fall. One of the first to be hit was von Lettow's aide, Captain von Hammerstein. He took a bullet in the belly and fell into the grass. Walking beside him, von Lettow was hit in the hand. He put a bandage on the wound and continued to direct the battle.

The German officers led their Askaris forward into dense fire from the Indian troops. Soon two of von Lettow's company commanders were down, and the assault wavered for a moment. But von Lettow spurred them on, and junior officers took over the two companies.

Von Lettow sent two companies to surround the fort, and warned them to stay out of sight until they were in position. From the west, the Arab company was supposed to lead the assault that would break through, but the sullen Arabs, when urged into battle, fired their rifles in the air and then turned to run and escape the battle and von Lettow's hateful discipline. They did not get far. Behind them the Askari companies leveled their rifles, and shot down the defaulting Arabs as they came through. Von Lettow was not going to allow his force to disintegrate bit by bit.

Without the Arabs the assault trembled and slowed again. But the move to surround the British forward position had been accomplished brilliantly. The fort and the plantation house were cut off from the rest of the British by the Sigi River, which had to be forded. Every time a British soldier moved into the water, the Germans shot him down. One Indian sergeant swam across several times to scout the German force for his commander. Lance Corporal Ombasha did the same for von Lettow until he was hit. Von Lettow followed around to inspect

this aspect of the battle, and on the river bank got another bullet through his felt campaign hat.

By noon, the battle seemed almost a stalemate. The Germans crashed through the defenses of the plantation house and seized that strong point, but the stone house stood. Von Lettow had the two 75-mm field pieces brought up, but the German builders of the stone house had been thorough, and the huge stones withstood the battering of the guns.

Von Lettow committed his reserves, company by company, but still Colonel Rajbir Singh held out in the fort. There was no chance for the British to reinforce him from the other side of the Sigi; the German fire was too intense and too accurate. But the Germans could not crack that little fortress.

Finally, von Lettow committed the European volunteer company, his last reserves. They did not manage to overpower the fort.

During the morning the plantation's little railroad had been employed by the Germans to move their dead and wounded back from the battle line toward Tanga. Now the line was used to bring ammunition up from the rear. By afternoon, drinking water became a problem. The fetid water of the Sigi

was deadly, and the Germans were in short supply. But so were their enemies, and the Germans and the Askaris at least could find coconuts to quench their thirst.

Three times the British tried to break across the Sigi, and three times the Germans threw them back. As at Tanga, the German employment of machine guns was masterful; they used interlocking fields of fire to the best advantage and the King's African Rifles troops in this assault fell back with heavy casualties.

By late afternoon it still seemed that stalemate could be the only result until the British brought up the reinforcements they were known to have in the north. The civilian plantation workers kept the little railroad going, moving wounded out and supplies up, but the troops were stalled. Some of von Lettow's officers began to suggest that they might have overreacted and that perhaps they should draw back. Von Lettow permitted that sort of discussion, but he did not let it sway his decisions.

From fragments of conversation among the British, von Lettow gathered that his enemies were in worse shape than he was, bottled up in the fortress

with virtually no water, and no chance of getting it. He decided against withdrawal; he was sure the sun would do the work for him if he and his men held out.

Night came, and in the darkness the blacks were able to climb some of the coconut trees and bring down more nuts. But it was a miserable night for the men of the Schutztruppe, slapping mosquitos, their tongues dry with thirst.

The situation of the Indians in the fort was even worse.

As dawn came, the quiet of the jungle was punctuated by the popping of rifle fire. The field guns began firing again. Then, suddenly, above the little fort the battered Union Jack, which had flown bravely all day and all night, suddenly dipped and came sliding down the flagpole, and up went a white flag. Under this protection the shooting stopped, and soon out from the fort staggered an officer, his khaki uniform stained with blood and dust, and behind him came a straggling file of Indian soldiers and British officers, their faces gaunt with thirst and pain. Colonel Rajbir Singh was dead, and the force was commanded by Captain

Hanson The resources of the British force were at an end; they had run out of water and ammunition.

Colonel von Lettow was a generous victor. He paraded the Indian troops and congratulated them on their brave defense. The seven hundred corpses rotting in the sun attested to it. Then he called in Captain Hanson and his second in command, Captain Turner, re-turned their weapons, and gave them parole if they would agree not to fight again against him.

Meanwhile the British had gathered a relief force, which Brigadier Tighe had dispatched late the night before. The troops arrived in mid-morning, to be greeted by heavy German fire across the Sigi. They drew back; with the garrison fallen and the strong points in the hands of the Germans, there was absolutely no point in trying to renew the action.

So Colonel von Lettow had won another victory against his British enemies. It was underlined that day when a runner came in from Tanga and handed Colonel von Lettow a message; it was from the kaiser himself, a radiogram that had finally made its way to the colonel. The kaiser praised von

Lettow and the troops for the remarkable victory at Tanga. "The Fatherland is proud of its sons," said Wilhelm. And already, as Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck read those words, he knew that the Fatherland was going to be prouder still.

## The Small War

The victory at Jasin was a costly one for Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and the Schutztruppe, no matter how much it did for their morale and how much it did to the morale of the British. It was the very nature of this war that a hard-fought battle was more destructive to the Germans, win or lose, than to the British. This fight had cost von Lettow his aide, five of his other regular officers, and the services of the Arab company. There were also many wounded and killed among the Askaris. It had also cost him two hundred thousand rounds of ammunition and had virtually wiped out the supplies secured at Tanga.

It was disappointing to von Lettow also that the enemy refused to rise to the bait and send an enormous military force to East Africa, thus depriving the western front in Europe of several thousand British troops. But Lord Kitchener was a wise commander and he seemed to see what von Lettow

was up to much more clearly than did his field commanders in Africa. And in a way, Colonel von Lettow was the victim of his own success. Lord Kitchener got the impression that the German force in Africa was stronger than the British force (it was then about a quarter the size of the British) and issued stern orders to General Wapshare to stop going on the offensive and to concentrate his forces for the defense of British East Africa. Kitchener warned his troops off, just as von Lettow was assessing the high cost of victory and deciding that he could at best make three more such attempts unless he got reinforcements.

Since battles were so costly, von Lettow also decided then that there would be no more of them as far as he was concerned, but that he would undertake a campaign of guerilla warfare to keep the enemy off base, striking occasionally in one place and then moving to another. He would revert to the original plan he had attempted to carry out before Governor Schnee stopped him. He would concentrate on the Uganda railroad, which skirted along the German border north of Mount Kilimanjaro, within a three-day march from his bases. If he were

successful at this harassment, the British would have to close down the railroad, which would leave the whole interior without supply, or bring in a large force to try to stop von Lettow's depredations. So it was another way to achieve that same end— costing the enemy heavily, while employing only a slender force.

To carry out this campaign, Colonel von Lettow reorganized the Schutztruppe from company strength down to smaller self-contained units. From now on it was going to be a knapsack war as far as the Germans were concerned. The small patrols consisted of only three or four men. The larger striking forces were approximately platoon strength—perhaps thirty rifles and two machine guns. A striking force could not travel through the forest and across the desert with huge amounts of supplies borne on the backs of carriers, so the soldiers carried what they could and moved fast.

One factor that limited all concerned was the nature of the land itself. North of Kilimanjaro on the east the countryside was dry steppe, covered with thornbush and spindly trees. This area was hot, dried by searing winds, and the home of the

dreaded tsetse fly, which brought sickness and death to men and animals alike. On the west was the mountain chain, topped by Meruberg and its foothills. Game roamed these lands, but they were hot and dry for men, and military activity was as difficult as it could be anywhere in Africa. The hills were steep and rugged. Much of the land was covered with volcanic rubble that rolled beneath the feet of the men and of the horses and mules a few were lucky enough to ride.

The British had the advantage. Their line of transport was still superior, and their communication with Nairobi also superior to German communication to Tanga. It was comparatively easy for the British to get munitions and supplies into their posts in the Kilimanjaro area, but extremely difficult for von Lettow's men. So they captured British supplies and used these to further their raids. In February and March German patrols began raiding the railroad, blowing up bridges, culverts, and water tanks. They cut the telegraph lines repeatedly; a small raiding party pulled down two or three miles of line, the British sent a force out to repair it, and in a few days the raiders were back. Von Lettow's

men laid mines to trap the locomotives, hoping to destroy enough to force the British to bring in more from Europe. But this Uganda railroad was an important line and the British had a thousand trains to run across it, so the few dozen that the Germans destroyed did not matter much. What von Lettow had done by mid-spring, however, was disrupt the service on the line. Nearly every train carried troops to protect the cars from the raiders. In the hundred-mile zone that von Lettow attacked the speed was cut down to fifteen miles an hour so that the locomotive engineers could see and stop for obstructions. Night runs were soon abandoned because of the danger of attack from a Schutztruppe unit.

One patrol ran into two companies of Indian infantry but managed to accomplish its mission and return, although on the way back they encountered a herd of elephants. Wild animals could be as dangerous as the enemy; rhinoceros were particularly cantankerous when disturbed and the patrols tried to give them a wide berth. But the Germans and their Askaris had far less trouble than the British. The King's African Rifles were manned largely by

blacks, who knew what they were about in the Kilimanjaro country, but for the most part the Indian troops were confused and unfamiliar with the land.

On long marches a patrol might consist of one or two German officers, three or four Askaris, and five or six carriers. They usually marched early in the morning, lay low during the heat of the day, and then marched again at night.

From time to time von Lettow accompanied a patrol into the bush. On one he set off with sergeants Klein, Zissman and Gerke on a six-day march to destroy a locomotive. When they reached the track of the Uganda railroad they found that the British had brought up a patrol, so they had to wait for nightfall. They produced an electric detonator, placed the charge, and then waited for the train to come up. The locomotive came, the light growing bigger and bigger as it approached the German forward position, close to the usual stop of the train. The Germans had moved back with their long electric wire and the detonator. They had pushed the carriers back farther so they would not be seen, or, equally important, become frightened and run away when the charge blew.

The train kept coming, and the engineer blew a sharp blast on the whistle. This was Sergeant Gerke's cue. He pushed down the plunger and all hell broke loose. Flames from the engine rose high in the air. The wagons crashed together and cries rose from the wreckage. The one hundred troops this train carried would not arrive at their destination. The patrol had done its job.

Just then, Colonel von Lettow had a sinking feeling and went to the rear to investigate. The carriers had fled in fright, and the water bags were lying on the ground, nearly all the water spilled out. Soon the enemy would be reorganized and searching for them. There was no time to waste. They must move out. The Germans headed away from the point of the explosion toward what they hoped were their lines. They were guided by the Southern Cross but after traveling for several hours felt they must have gone in circles, for suddenly they were greeted by a sharp crack—a shot.

Sergeant Klein fell wounded. Where had the shot come from? Sergeants Zissman and Gerke and the two Askaris who remained with them searched the bush but found nothing. Finally von

Lettow solved the mystery. Klein was carrying a revolver in his pocket. He had tripped and fallen, and it had discharged, shooting him in the leg.

Now they faced a six-day march, without water, carrying a wounded comrade. They fashioned a litter from an Askari tent-half, the Askaris shouldered the heavy burden, and they set off.

They plodded across steppe that was little more than desert, searching constantly for water. Finally Sergeant Zissman saw a wooded peak ahead, and declared that there was water on its slope. The Askaris put down their burden and went through the bush to the mountain to find the water, while the Europeans stood guard over their comrade.

Von Lettow began to orient himself. This mountain, he decided, must be Kassigao, and if so their lines lay eighty kilometers on the other side. The trip around the mountain must be a one-hundred kilometer march. The Askaris returned with a tiny bit of water, and that was all they were to have. They began to march, resting by day, moving at night. No water, no fruit trees that might sustain them. But finally, they made it back—just another incident in what von Lettow called "the little war."

The actual attack on the railroad had taken no more than five minutes.

"Train-busting" was a favorite form of attack. Another was the surprise raid on the enemy encampments along the line, which were established to prevent just such strikes on the trains. In these raids von Lettow showed how cleverly he used the meager resources available to him. One of his problems was a shortage of ammunition for the modern rifles. He had plenty for the old model 71s, but their black powder gave away the position of the firing Askaris and made them marked men. Except at night. Von Lettow sent the raiding forces out at night with the old model 71s. The Askaris moved like leopards through the brush to the edges of the enemy compound, and the British and the Indians never suspected they were there until the firing began. Then came a shout *Raus! Feuer!* and the old model 71s began to crack, their smoke vanishing into the night without a trace. The Indian troops panicked, the wounded began to shout and scream, and the Askaris delivered another round or two. Then they were gone back into the night, leaving another line camp confused and demoralized.

The British labored hard to offset the damage. In the yards at Nairobi the engineers constructed two armored trains, the locomotives protected underneath by sheet steel. The railroad cars were protected by four-inch sheet steel with gunports cut in the sides. To cut down weight so the trains would run at all, they had to sacrifice body and roof, so the troops rode along under the blazing sun to meet the enemy. When it was not the Germans the enemy was nature. The armored trains cost dearly in terms of time and the health of the troops, and they never seemed to be at the right place at the right time. The Germans continued to strike the railroad and destroy troop trains and supply trains at will.

The British tried to counteract the mining of the tracks by pushing freight cars ahead of the engines. It worked for mining, but not for the sort of explosive devices that were usually used, as on the raid von Lettow accompanied. Even in the mining, the Germans and the Askaris were quick to respond to the British change. They fitted pressure mines with delayed action fuses, so that the forward freight car escaped unhurt and the charge blew beneath the locomotive, just as planned. The frustrated British

put two cars ahead, and the Germans responded with a longer fuse. The British put their locomotives in the middle of the trains, and the locomotives could scarcely pull their loads.

The British countered by establishing a force called the East African Mounted Rifles, whose mission was to harry the German raiding patrols.

The Rifles were effective, sometimes. Their ranks were filled with Africans as skilled in bush warfare as the German Askaris. But the constant pressure of the Germans had the effect von Lettow desired: he sapped the British morale enormously. Europeans demanded reinforcement of British East Africa to drive the Germans away. Kitchener flatly refused to divert troops from the western front for so minor a purpose. The Europeans began to lose heart. Some went back to farming and said they would sit out the war. Some went home to England to join the forces there and fight in France. Although the African Mounted Rifles had been organized with great fanfare to drive away the Germans, in a few months the force fell from five hundred to two hundred fifty men.

In January 1915, Lord Kitchener did listen to the pleas of the East Africans at least enough to send a mission to Nairobi to discover what could be done. But the leader of the mission was his older brother, Colonel H. E. C. Kitchener, another Colonel Blimp. His political assistant, Lord Cranworth, knew a great deal about Africa, but the colonel was not listening. He went wandering about, listening to complaints, apparently taking exhaustive notes, and then stowing them somewhere, never to have them see light again. He went to Zanzibar, which had no problems, and bought curios, including a common walking stick made of rhinoceros horn, three crude ebony elephants, two imitation ivory elephants' heads, and some "jewels" that turned out to be glass, and came back to Nairobi exulting over his "bargains." He sent a report to the War Office that was just as valuable: nothing could be done, nothing needed to be done, and the King's African Rifles were not much of an outfit, he said.

Von Lettow would have rejoiced if he could have heard that. He said the Rifles were the best troops the British had against him, and if Colonel Kit-

chener's opinion were acted on, the Rifles might be ignored and perhaps even disbanded.

When the colonel's report reached London it was an effective agent for von Lettow, if an unwitting one. Official circles believed what the War Lord's brother had said, and not the alternative view, suggested by Lord Cranworth, that the King's African Rifles were the best unit in the land. Because of the difficulties of transport even for England, Colonel Kitchener and Lord Cranworth were instructed to remain in East Africa. The colonel went off to the far end of the Uganda railroad where nothing ever happened and was put in command of the troops. Lord Cranworth, a more adventurous type, joined a group of irregulars organized by Berkeley Cole, a friend of his who had settled in East Africa. This troop, called Cole's Scouts, proved to be completely amateur, with each scout refusing to take any orders he did not like. The result was confusion so complete that within a few months, after one disastrous engagement against von Lettow's Askaris, the scouts were disbanded.

Von Lettow could not have been luckier than to have against him so disorganized a British political

and military machine. Sir Henry Belfield, the governor of British East Africa, spent the first three months of the war fishing at Mombasa, although his capital was at Nairobi. In the winter of 1914-15 he returned to Nairobi, looked around, and went back to Mombasa to go fishing again. It was months before General Wapshare's anguished cries brought him back to the capital.

Von Lettow's political situation was not much better. Governor Schnee still wanted peace at almost any price and he had allied himself with Captain Max Looff of the *Koenigsberg*, hoping thus to wrest military control from von Lettow's hands. The *Koenigsberg* was trapped in the Rufiji delta in what appeared to be a stalemate. The British did not have the naval force to capture the ship with its ten-inch guns. The Germans could not get out since all the channels were blocked by British warships. Von Lettow had gone on record with the governor and Looff as opposing waste of any further time trying to preserve the cruiser. He wanted the men and the guns and ammunition for his defense force. Looff, of course, much preferred to fight at sea and kept hoping that something would break.

Admiral von Spee was still at sea with the German East Asia Cruiser Squadron. It was possible no more—that von Spee could bring his five ships around to East Africa, drive off the British, and allow Looff to go a-raiding, which was his assigned task. Governor Schnee's hopes were more subtle. He wanted Looff to stay ashore in East Africa, where by the old rules he would be senior military officer present, undercutting von Lettow. Schnee so proposed to Berlin, in a message to the Colonial Ministry. The minister, who had been reading the Berlin newspapers and had seen that von Lettow was already lionized as one of Germany's major war heroes, did not even reply to the message, so ridiculous did it appear from the German capital. Schnee sat in Morogoro, fretting about every report of von Lettow's war activity. He waited for Berlin to act—to preserve the governor's authority over this outrageous miscreant who defied all the rules of civilized colonial conduct.

The first half of 1915 was invaluable to Colonel von Lettow. It was as if the British had ordained for him a basic training program in guerilla warfare. The Uganda railroad provided an exciting challenge,

and the success of an operation was proved by the destruction of a railroad locomotive, or the destruction of a British camp. After a few months, von Lettow was quite satisfied with the progress. His officers and men, he said, had developed fine reservoirs of self-reliance and enterprise. The motto of the Schutztruppe indicated their high spirits, and by this time officers and men were wearing the broad-brimmed felt hats with an air of careless authority. The romantics among them wore crossed cartridge belts over their shoulders and sported a pistol or two. If the discipline of the early days had been Prussian, such was no longer the case. Men did not go out into the bush in twos and threes, starve and crack with thirst together, fight the enemy, treat one another's blisters and wounds, and retain either a military posture meant for a barracks, or even remain I conscious of the color line. Whites and blacks worked together perfectly, and after the fatal rebellion of the Arab company at Tanga there was no more friction in the ranks. A wounded Askari got precisely the same degree of care that was lavished on a wounded officer. To von Lettow

every man was a precious instrument, and the feeling spread through the whole Schutztruppe.

As spring wore on the raids on the railroad became more efficient and more productive. General Wapshare, whose performance had not impressed the war chiefs in London, was transferred to Mesopotamia, where nothing was happening, and Brigadier Tighe, said to be a real fighting man, succeeded to the command in East Africa. Wapshare went off to Mombasa to catch his ship, and was fortunate that the Schutztruppe had planned no raid on the line that day. But Tighe, moving the other way to Nairobi, was riding a train that von Lettow ambushed. The Askaris came down like wolves on the line, blew it up according to schedule, just as the engine whistled its warnings around a curve, and then opened up with their machine guns and rifles on the tangled wreckage of the backed-up carriages. General Tighe's private car was spattered with rifle bullets. He seized his swagger stick, the only weapon available on short notice, and dashed out to run around the train in the darkness, swearing a blue streak and vowing vengeance on the "cheeky Germans." But true to the form they had

perfected, the Germans, having blown up the train and spattered the wreckage with fire, had moved out swiftly, and when British reinforcements arrived there was absolutely no sign of them.

Tighe was more than a little annoyed when von Lettow stepped up the guerilla activity in April. One of the larger and more ambitious raiding parties blew up one bridge that put the line out of action for four days, and brought work trains up from both ends, tying up an impressive number of workmen and Indian soldiers. The general ordered more troops to patrol the four hundred miles of the line, but even in those particular one hundred miles on which the Germans concentrated, the British command could not guard everything all the time, and the raiders came and went, leaving their damage behind. The Indian troops were almost ineffectual. One company was completely routed by "enemy" which turned out to be an angry cow rhino and her calf. When another sentry was attacked and eaten by a lion, morale in the Indian contingent fell to a disastrous low. All the Indians wanted was to go home.

Thus the guarding was not effective, and the counteraction was also made mostly ineffectual by the shortage of trained troops. The North Lancashire Regiment, which had fought valiantly at Tanga (to very little recognition because Lord Kitchener was furious at the failure) bore the heaviest load. At one time or another every single member of the unit was in the hospital, suffering either from wounds or malaria or dysentery. But how could General Tighe do anything but use them? The Indians had become thoroughly impossible; the Thirteenth Rajputs, put into the defense line, insisted on military protocol as practiced at home in India. Each soldier was entitled to five bearers—two to carry ammunition, one to carry his rifle and equipment, and two more to carry his bedding, rations, personal equipment, and to cook for him and serve him. Of course the bearers also had to eat, so the entourage of any Indian unit was enormous and unwieldy to the extreme.

All in all, the early months of 1915 were most satisfactory for Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck. Except for the problems of supply, his was an excellent war.

## Resupply, Guerilla Style

The Koenigsberg, Captain Loeff informed Berlin, had only one chance of escaping unaided from the Rufiji delta. That was to make a run through one of the channels unknown to the blockading British, but this could be done only during the high tides of the spring of 1915. To make the breakout, Captain Loeff would need a new supply of good German coal.

When that message reached Berlin in the winter of 1914-15, the Naval General Staff considered the options. There was no chance of von Spee's helping anyone; after a brilliant victory over the British at Coronel, his squadron had been destroyed at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December. In the beginning, "raiders" had done well, but by February 1915, the British had closed off the North Sea to all but the luckiest German captains. During one week in February, twenty German blockade runners were taken as British prizes. But this was the only way

the Germans could possibly help Captain Looff. The navy proposed to send a blockade runner loaded with supplies to East Africa, and while giving Looff what he needed the supply ship would also bring ammunition, modern rifles and supplies for the Schutztruppe.

The German Admiralty chose for this voyage the six-thousand-ton freighter *Rubens*, which had been captured in a German port at the outbreak of the war. The fact that she had been of British registry might be an advantage. Some deck officer, recognizing her lines, might let her pass unchallenged. But if there were a challenge she would have complete papers identifying her as the Danish freighter *Kronborg*. Since Denmark was neutral in the war, the ship could expect to be allowed to go on her way, unless the boarding officers began prying too much.

The Admiralty chose a captain of long merchant experience, Lieu-tenant Carl Christiansen, who looked and sounded very much like a Dane. For the purposes of Admiralty communications the ship was known as *Sperrbrecher A*, or Blockade Runner A.

The fitting out and loading were done at top speed. She was loaded with sixteen hundred tons of Westphalian coal for the Koenigsberg plus twelve hundred tons to get her to Africa and back again. She had one thousand rounds of ammunition for von Lettow's old field guns, several thousand rounds for the 37-mm guns, machine guns, and old rifles, and two new 60-mm guns with ammunition. There were canned provisions for both the Koenigsberg and von Lettow's force, and eighteen hundred rifles of the standard model 1898, plus three million rounds of rifle ammunition for the '98s.

On February 17 Captain Christiansen was called up from Wilhelmshaven, where the ship lay loaded, to Berlin for last-minute instructions. That night, filled with patriotic obligation as to the importance of his mission, Christiansen took the fast train back to the port, and at dawn was aboard ship, ready to head out to sea. It was a typical North Sea winter day—gray clouds overhead, a strong wind blowing from the west, and occasional squalls. For security reasons the ship's name had been painted out and the new one not painted in. Captain Christiansen headed into the Sognefjord,

which was in Danish waters. When he reached the limit of German water he stopped, and sailors broke out white paint to inscribe the name Kronborg on the blockade-runner's black stern. Her documentation, carefully forged in Berlin, bore out all the facts the Admiralty had contrived: she was sailing with a mixed cargo from Copenhagen to the La Plata River in South America. As long as the inspectors stayed away from her cargo all would be well, but if they began to poke into those boxes of "dried fish" they would soon discover what sort of fish a Mauser was.

Once the paint was dried with a blowtorch, Captain Christiansen jauntily went back to his bridge and set a course to the northwest that would take him up around the tip of Scotland and then out into the Atlantic, where the ship should be safe from prying eyes.

The weather was foul, so stormy that the ship lost part of her deckload on the night of February 22. Captain Christiansen wanted to go north almost as far as the ice cap, but the loss of the deckload warned him, and he turned south, heading much closer to the Scottish shore than he had

wished. The dreadful weather worked for him however, and on the night of February 23-24 the ship ran through the blockade line off the Shetland Islands. The weather seemed to grow worse rather than better, the seas broke completely over the decks, and visibility was nearly zero. But heading south and west, the blockade-runner had a following sea, and she was making thirteen knots, which was as much as any British auxiliary cruiser in the area. She traveled fast and on March 6 reached the Cape Verde Islands, off West Africa. Here Captain Christiansen could heave a sigh of relief; there was no chance that he was being followed. He took the ship a hundred miles west of the normal Cape Verde-Cape of Good Hope sea-lane. No one bothered him, and he saw only one ship, a British merchantman bound for Mombasa. The British ship hailed, Captain Christiansen identified himself as Danish, and the British ship accepted what he said and did not even report on the contact.

The blockade-runner passed down around the Cape of Good Hope and came up through the Mozambique Channel. She passed a big ship one night and Captain Christiansen had the feeling she was a

British auxiliary cruiser, but the crew of the other ship were not alert, the blockade-runner was traveling without lights and so slowly as they passed that Christiansen hoped her bow wave was imperceptible. Apparently it was, for the other ship went on and was soon lost in darkness.

But the blockade-runner could not escape trouble, and she was forced to bring it on herself. The instructions about landing had been left vague; on approach to the German East African coast, Captain Christiansen was to "get in touch with higher authority." Since the only authority in the area was Captain Loeff, this meant Christiansen had to call up the Koenigsberg, and the British, blockading offshore, were listening for any calls to that ship.

As Captain Christiansen came up through the Mozambique Channel he ordered his radio officer to break the radio silence under which she had sailed so far and to make contact with the Koenigsberg. The messages, of course, were sent in code, but even if the enemy could not read the code, they could recognize its particular groupings as German. A French monitoring station on Madagascar picked

up the messages and within a matter of hours the word was transmitted to Admiral King-Hall, whose flagship lay off the Rufiji River in wait for the Koenigsberg. It did not take prescience for the British to gather that the ship calling the Koenigsberg must have some purpose in mind that would be of more than passing interest. When Koenigsberg answered and the messages began to come thickly, the British took new precautions. Some ship was making contact by radio and probably would try to do more. The admiral could expect that Captain Looff would warn the other ship against trying to run the Rufiji blockade. But where then would this other ship go? Admiral King-Hall suspected that the transmissions came from a supply ship of some sort. Now he must find it and destroy it.

Nobody had told Captain Christiansen that the Koenigsberg was bottled up in the Rufiji River. Captain Looff told him now, and also informed him that he must be prepared to deliver Looff's supplies or von Lettow's supplies on short notice but that it was most unlikely the two sets could be delivered simultaneously. This new development created many problems for Christiansen, and they were

amplified by his own need to stop somewhere soon and transfer his reserve coal supplies to his own bunkers.

On the night of April 7 the blockade-runner passed the Cormoran Islands, and Captain Christiansen began consulting his charts, looking for a deserted island or atoll where he might transfer supplies and coal. He was lucky to have aboard an experienced East African pilot named Abels, who suggested that the Aldabra Islands should be almost totally deserted. On April 9 the ship arrived there. Captain Christiansen was surprised and not very happy when a small boat put out from shore as he anchored near the shore, and a man in an old shirt, trousers, and a straw hat came up to wave at them. The man came aboard. He was a mulatto caretaker for a French tortoise-hunting company. Twice each year a boat came for the tortoiseshell gleaned by the hundred native divers who worked for this man. Christiansen was pleased to learn that the boat had left two weeks earlier and that no visitors were expected for nearly six months.

The captain's concern was replaced by joviality, and he christened the mulatto Robinson, because

his hat was so much like Robinson Crusoe's. He asked Robinson to pilot them through the reef. Robinson was aghast. This big ship could never get through the channel, he said; it would strike the bottom. But the pilot Abels knew a thing or two about these waters and he said the blockade-runner could make it nicely. They put out the boat, and a seaman stood in the bow and sounded the lead. They went in at high water and anchored in the la-agoon in fifteen fathoms of water so clear that the next morning the captain could see his anchor lying on the seabed.

In two days the captain and his men shifted the cargo and moved coal from reserves into the ship's bunkers. Meanwhile Captain Looff had decided that to simplify matters the ship should go into Tanga. There she would unload all she had for Colonel von Lettow. At the same time, the Koenigsberg, which had more good coal than Captain Looff had ever before admitted, would make a break out of the Rufiji through the secret channel, steam south, and then call the supply ship to her.

So on April 13 the blockade-runner steamed north past Pemba Island (British) and then south

through the channel that carried ships safely through the reefs off the East African coast. That night she turned into the Kilulu Channel, a narrow waterway known only to East African pilots. Abels remembered it well. That night Kronborg passed close by a British warship, but she remained unseen, and on the morning of April 14 she lay off Manza Bay, just two miles north of the entrance to Tanga harbor. Suddenly the lookouts reported a ship coming up fast from the south, unmindful of the cloud of smoke she was sending up. In a few minutes the lookouts reported three smokestacks and a heavy bow wave, which indicated at least twenty knots. Captain Christiansen knew then that he was face to face with a British warship, undoubtedly a cruiser.

What Captain Christiansen did not know was that Admiral King-Hall was party to his messages to and from the Koenigsberg. The British had just broken the German naval code, and London had been informing the admiral of the plans. As Captain Christiansen headed into Manza Bay, Admiral King-Hall knew why he was coming and knew pre-

cisely when—he would try to slip into the bay just after dawn.

All seemed to be going according to plan until that smoke appeared. The pilot boat was coming out just as Christiansen saw the smoke. He had two choices. He could stop and pick up the pilot and go into Tanga. This would work only if the harbor was mined, and he had no way of knowing—indeed he rather suspected the harbor was not mined, which was correct. The other choice was to dash away from the pilot boat into the bay and possibly find safety in shallow water, where the British could not reach him.

From the British point of view capture seemed almost childishly easy just at that moment. Up came the cruiser *Hyacinth*, boiling along, confident that in a few minutes she would have her guns trained on the blockade-runner. But just then the *Hyacinth's* starboard engine sprang an enormous oil leak and seized up solid, and she slowed to less than half speed. The blockade-runner got behind the trees of the landspit at Ras Kasone, and from there the men of the ship could watch the tall masts of the British cruiser on the other side of the

peninsula. Captain Christiansen dashed for the shore so swiftly that he had to ignore a European coming out in an outrigger canoe paddled by several blacks, although he could see from the khaki uniform that the man must be a member of the Schutztruppe. There was no time to exchange advice; Christiansen had to get that boat inshore so that even if he was sunk the cargo could be salvaged.

He took her into the north end of the bay, where there was a shallow anchorage, so shallow in fact that at low water the blockade-runner could expect to have only one meter of water under her keel. There Christiansen ordered the engines stopped and the anchor run out. As the chain rattled, he stepped off his bridge toward the radio shack; he intended to send a message to Captain Loeff, telling him of the predicament.

Just then the Hyacinth opened fire. The first salvo was way off, the shells plopping into the water and sending their geysers up seventy-five yards away, but Captain Christiansen was under no delusions. The British were too close; from their

mastheads they would be able to see the blockade-runner.

His fears proved precisely correct on the second salvo, which sent several shells into the ship. One smashed into the bow through the forecastle but did no harm except to crew's quarters. The second struck the hull on the starboard side, smashed the plating, and started a fire in the forward coal bunker, too close to the rifle ammunition stored behind the bulkhead in No. 2 hatch, and the larger munitions stored just aft of the bunker above the coal. The fire sent up an enormous cloud of smoke, which made the damage look worse than it actually was. But Captain Christiansen saw that a repeat performance might be fatal. He decided to scuttle the ship and let the sea water prevent further fires. So the ventilators and the sea cocks were all opened, and the black gang was ordered to abandon their posts and come on deck.

The water went pouring into the ship and in a few minutes the fire was out. Now the chance of the ship blowing up was lessened. But the British continued to fire 150-mm shells that tore into the blockade-runner and started new fires. A number

of men were wounded by shrapnel, although none seriously, for the British were firing armor-piercing ammunition that exploded deep inside the ship. Captain Christiansen ordered all men off the ship, and went to his cabin to pick up some papers and his revolver. Just as he stepped inside the cabin door a shell hit the cabin. The explosion blew the space apart, the papers disappeared, as did the revolver on the table. But Captain Christiansen was completely unhurt.

The captain went back on deck and down into a boat. He had scarcely made the shore when the British cruiser appeared in the entrance to the bay, firing her starboard guns at the ship and her port guns at the boats and the men on shore. The boats were hit (luckily after the men had clambered out), and the cruiser bombarded the shore for several minutes as the crewmen ran far inland to escape. The British admiral probably would have put ashore a landing party but he had too much respect for Colonel von Lettow's Schutztruppe, so the cruiser stayed offshore and continued to blast the ship. A landing would undoubtedly have been strongly contested, for in the last months von Let-

tow had built up the Tanga force. It was now commanded by Lieutenant Kempner, the former secretary of state of the colony, who had deserted Governor Schnee to take up his reserve commission.

Not a man was lost from the blockade-runner, although several were wounded, including Captain Christiansen, who was hit as he ran inland to escape the British bombardment. At noon the British decided not to land on shore, but to send boats to the blockade-runner to be sure their three hours of heavy shelling had really destroyed her. She was burning steadily, her funnel had been shot away, and she looked every inch a wreck. But the admiral said be sure, so the boats were lowered. They headed in toward the ship, but suddenly from both banks came a hail of machine-gun fire, and the men in the boats began dropping. The Hyacinth turned her guns on the shore and fired many rounds, but could not find the machine guns. The boats backed off, then came in again, and were again raked with heavy German fire, and more men were killed and wounded. Finally they turned back. They had come close enough to see that the blockade-runner was sunk, and the burning superstruc-

ture indicated that she must be wrecked as well. Satisfied with that, the admiral ordered the ship to take in the boats, and soon she steamed away.

Max Looff was a very canny officer, and when after all this spate of messages the blockade-runner went suddenly silent, it did not take him long to deduce that she had been sunk or captured. He suspected that the British had broken the naval code, and he set a trap for Admiral King-Hall. He fabricated a message to a nonexistent second blockade-runner, reporting that the Germans had sown mines in Manza Bay so the second ship should avoid that harbor, and he set a place and a time. Then he sent runners to Tanga, to report to Lieutenant Kempner, who obligingly set out a number of gasoline drums at anchor in Manza Bay. Actually, Looff planned better than he knew, because when the British saw the "mines" they made no further attempt to check on the status of the *hilschiffe*, as she was known. And, when the *Hyacinth* turned up at the time and place established for the new rendezvous, Looff knew that the code was no longer safe.

Captain Christiansen was taken in hand by Colonel von Lettow's men and brought to the government hospital outside Tanga with the other wounded. He was patched up and immediately insisted on going back to his ship to see what could be salvaged. When he saw the vessel his heart sank, for she was completely wrecked—the bridge was torn up, the smokestack was beyond repair, and the mainmast had fallen. No wonder; the British had put at least eighty shells into the ship, and could be pardoned for believing they had destroyed her completely. But below decks, the cargo was surprisingly intact. True, some of the munitions were ruined by seawater, but the rifles were all intact and so was some of the ammunition. Even the shells which had been wet had value. When they got ashore von Lettow ordered the Askaris to take them apart, salvage the good powder, and make new shells. It was painstaking labor, but the Germans and the blacks by this time were masters of improvisation.

There were uniforms, and a thousand other items useful for warfare. There were wines and liquors. Of course much of this material was below

water, but von Lettow found divers and carriers who worked day and night to get the material up and out of the sunken ship before the British finally got around to poking their noses into Manza Bay.

Captain Schade, von Lettow's port officer at Tanga, managed the unloading, with Pilot Abels's assistance. In one day they brought up 293 rifles, 375,000 cartridges, one field gun, four machine guns, 100 cases of 105-mm shells, destined for the Koenigsberg's guns, 150 cases of 88-mm shells, for von Lettow, and forty tents for the troops.

Day after day the salvage continued, and at the end of it Colonel von Lettow had almost as successful a resupply as if the RubensKronborg had never sunk on her blockade-running mission. The Koenigsberg was not so lucky, for one of the principal needs could not be met under the circumstances: the coal she must have was wet and thus useless. But most of the other supplies destined for the cruiser got through on the heads of carriers who made the trek to Dar es Salaam and then the Rufiji delta.

It was several weeks before Admiral King-Hall got around to coming back to Manza Bay. He had

waited for his minesweepers from South Africa. When they came they moved in cautiously and swept up the first of the fifty-gallon drums. Then Admiral King-Hall knew that he had been the victim of deception and he was prepared for the bad news that someone had very thoroughly stripped the sunken blockade-runner of everything that could be considered valuable. This unhappy word was transmitted to London, and there the authorities looked upon the matter with considerable criticism. Captain Looff had done a good job indeed with his offhand thought that a few old drums might slow the enemy down.

So Colonel von Lettow now had eighteen hundred new Mauser rifles, four and a half million rounds of ammunition, a number of small field guns and machine guns, including the armament of the blockade-runner, medical supplies, food, clothing, and two hundred new tents. He also had recruits—the crew of the blockade-runner, who had no way of getting back to Germany and so now joined the Schutztruppe.

Von Lettow also wanted the men of the Koenigsberg. He was certain that the ship could never

escape the British, and 320 new recruits, the ten 105-mm 4-inch guns, radios, machine guns, rifles, and all the equipment of a cruiser would help his fighting force a great deal. He proposed that Captain Looff give up the ship and join the land war. But Looff was determined to continue to be a sailor, not a soldier. He refused.

In a way, Captain Looff was doing precisely what Colonel von Lettow wished to do. The existence of the *Koenigsberg* troubled the British Admiralty in London so much that the decision was made to sink her at all costs. The costs, as it turned out, threatened to be enormous. The British brought in airplanes, as noted. They brought in the mighty old battleship *Goliath* and by mid-spring they had two dozen warships tied up, although Admiral King-Hall kept telling London that there was urgent business to be accomplished elsewhere than along the Rufiji. It took Admiral King-Hall several weeks even to find the *Koenigsberg*. She was cleverly concealed from the air searches by branches and other camouflage, and Captain Looff moved her frequently within the many arms of the delta. But eventually a British scout made a daring

mission into the area and managed even to get aboard the vessel, by posing as the relative of a black African who had been pressed into temporary service as a stoker.

Admiral King-Hall probed and fretted and then in May he was deprived of most of his fleet by crisis at the Dardanelles. At this time, an intelligence report indicated that the *Koenigsberg* was looking suspiciously as though she was getting ready for sea.

The fact was that Captain Looff was hardly in a position to go anywhere. The coal he needed had never come through. After his refusal to abandon the cruiser, Colonel von Lettow had radioed Berlin with one of his new wireless sets, and asked that the crew of the ship be assigned to him as the best use of men and materiel. The high command agreed to the point of ordering Captain Looff to send a hundred crewmen ashore, and this left Looff so short of men that he could scarcely have conducted a campaign. Further, the long months in the delta were taking their toll; most of the crew was infected with malaria, and the attacks laid a man low for a

week at least. Even with the new medical supplies there was no real cure for that problem.

Having deprived Admiral King-Hall of his modern cruisers, the Admiralty sent him a pair of shallow draft monitors, heavily armored ships that were supposed to get up the Rufiji and shell the Koenigsberg into submission. The monitors came over from England, and when they arrived in African waters, Admiral King-Hall's staff began the slow task of planning the attack.

Meanwhile Colonel von Lettow was building up his military force. He captured enough horses from the British to create a second mounted company of Askaris and Europeans, which gave his patrols an increased mobility. They harried the British all along the line. One day Captain Koehl and the Austrian Lieutenant Freiherr von Unterrichter combined their companies to attack an Indian unit that had ventured too close. The Germans struck hard, killing twenty men and capturing machine guns and seventy thousand rounds of ammunition. -

As it was from the beginning, even with the help from the blockade-runner's cargo, supply was an enormous problem, because while the British

brought their war materiel from England, the Germans had to make or find everything there in Africa. Von Lettow was immensely impressed by the willingness of the average civilian, black and white, to work for this war effort. The women spun homespun for uniforms. Shoemakers took buffalo hides and made boots and shoes for the soldiers. A shoe factory was opened at Tanga, after von Lettow insisted that he must have boots for his men. He started a brewery to make beer for the Askaris and a distillery at Morogoro that turned out rum and something vaguely like whiskey. The makers of homespun needed dyes, and it was discovered that the root of the Ndaa tree yielded a brownish-yellow dye that soon became the common color of the German military force's uniforms.

Von Lettow had two staff cars, but obtaining parts and fuel for them was always a problem. Tires for autos were made by kneading the gum of the rubber tree onto rope. Fuel was made from coconuts, and it ran the cars well enough, although the effort was enormous. Soon the people of East Africa were making soap and candles and other products in the fashion of pioneers. The Amani Biological In-

stitute, which was already famous for its attack on tropical pests and disease, turned to making an artificial quinine for treatment and suppression of malaria. At Dar es Salaam a gunpowder factory was opened and many of the wet cartridges from the blockade-runner and other sources were delivered there for transformation. Local farmers grew tobacco, and at Morogoro a factory was set up to make cigars and cigarettes, which were military staples.

In the beginning, von Lettow had asked for Governor Schnee's co-operation in providing these resources, and as long as the governor thought they were for the general population he agreed. But when the military needed something special the governor always dragged his heels. By the summer of 1915 the disagreement between von Lettow and the civilian governor had become chronic and, to von Lettow's mind, a serious hindrance to his conduct of military operations against the enemy.

The arrival of those eighteen hundred new rifles had made it possible for von Lettow to step up his recruiting among the Europeans and Africans of the colony, and by summer he had increased the force to three thousand Europeans and eleven

thousand Askaris. His constant depredations of the British railroad line in the north kept German-African morale high, and conversely, pushed British and British-African morale down to a new low. By June the rumor was circulating in Nairobi and Mombasa that von Lettow was planning an invasion of the north and capture of Mombasa. The British governor became so upset that he communicated with the district officer, and soon the Town Guards were assigned to dig fortifications around the harbor. The governor also appealed to General Tighe to do something.

General Tighe fumed and fretted and worried about his enemy. Finally he decided he had to do something. But what?

## Much Ado About Bukoba

General Tighe was enormously upset about what he saw as the growing threat of the Germans under Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck. Like General Wapshare before him, Tighe began to flinch when von Lettow's name was mentioned. Captain Meinertzhagen, who was any-thing but the unflappable Dane his name indicated, implied in his diaries that Tighe was twice as valuable to the German cause as even that great commander "Wappy," particularly after Tighe began drinking heavily. A combination of frustration and worry seemed to have led the general to the bottle, and soon he was suffering from gout and liver ailments, and, during a boat trip along Lake Victoria, what Meinertzhagen described as something very much like delirium tremens. The general became convinced that the lake steamer was traveling backward, and when Meinertzhagen assured him of the contrary, the general pulled rank on him. Also on this trip, Tighe

smelled smoke, and when he was told that it came from the galley, the general decided he was being bilked and that the ship was afire. It took more than a little tact to keep him from sabotaging the voyage.

London had ordered the general to remain on the defensive, and this also frustrated him. It made him the butt of wicked humor in Nairobi, a colony that Governor Belfield ran more in the fashion of a Portuguese fief than a British colony. In Nairobi everything was form; the members of the clubs conducted solemn debates to decide if volunteers coming in from the outside were suitable material for membership. The governor agonized over his social lists, and Mein-ertzhagen, for one, believed the governor was also lining his pockets at the expense of the Crown and the public and undercutting the war effort.

When von Lettow got a whiff of these petty British intrigues he was delighted, but they still did not represent what he so dearly wanted—a major British commitment to war in East Africa that would drain British resources throughout the continent and Europe.

By June 1915, more reinforcements had been sent to the British force, although nothing like the number von Lettow hoped for. The Second Rhodesian Regiment arrived in March and the Twenty-fifth Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers came in April. Hundreds of volunteers trickled in from other countries that were not involved in the war, but whose British sympathizers wanted to "get into it." So by June, General Tighe had ten thousand troops under his command, plus the armed Africans, who came to several thousand more. Von Lettow was particularly respectful of the bands of Masai tribesmen the British organized and armed in the area east of Lake Victoria. But the British were not sophisticated enough to use them properly.

Pressed by some of his staff officers, General Tighe sought permission to strike at least one blow at the Germans. He had been obeying the order to be defensive, and occasionally sending out counterpatrols. Once in a while they'd trap a German patrol on its way to blowing up a segment of the Uganda rail line or hitting some troop concentration on the railroad. Now London agreed to one strike only.

The point Tighe and his staff chose was the port of Bukoba, on the western shore of Lake Victoria. This was a long way from von Lettow's headquarters at New Moshi, and his center of attention in the Kilimanjaro area. Bukoba was lightly defended and reinforceable only by water from Muanza on the eastern shore, or by a long trek overland from Kigoma on the northeast shore of Lake Tanganyika. Bukoba did not connect with the central rail line and roads were virtually nonexistent on the German side. The British, however, could launch an attack and get reinforcements from Kisumu, which was the western railhead of the Uganda railroad. All together the project seemed so undemanding and liable to success that London approved, after two months of wrangling about it. The command at Nairobi added that the Germans had a major radio station at Bukoba, and if this were knocked out Colonel von Lettow would completely lose radio contact with Berlin.

Brigadier Stewart was assigned to lead the attack on Bukoba. On June 21 he assembled a force of two thousand men, mostly from the Fusiliers (who were a sort of British Foreign Legion), the

King's African Rifles, the Lancashire regiment, and the Twenty-ninth Punjabis, all of whom had fought more or less successfully at other times. These were the best troops that the British could put in the field.

The Germans had roughly fifteen hundred troops in this region, but not many at Bukoba. The Askari force, with a handful of German officers, had to patrol the whole area around Lake Victoria. If the British brought a large force and surprised the German garrison, perhaps the capture of Bukoba could succeed in a matter of hours, with relatively little fighting.

The plan foresaw just such an outcome. Brigadier Stewart's men were to come in by ship to a landing point three miles north of Bukoba, and then without waiting, to attack the town. The whole operation would be carried out at night.

The flotilla of ships had been assembled quickly, and not all the captains were sure of their ground. So they came in with lights blazing. Three volunteers had been assigned to land a small boat and kill the German sentry who patrolled the area at the chosen landing place. They got into the boat

and rowed for shore, but as they reached it, half a dozen German rockets lit up the sky and the invasion flotilla below. Having seen the invaders, the Germans in Bukoba sent runners out to all the surrounding country, and troops began moving toward the town.

Brigadier Stewart then delayed the assault until daylight, and when the British force landed, it did so at the most inaccessible place in the area—at the foot of a three-hundred-foot cliff that took almost mountaineering skill to scale. The Germans considered the place so difficult that they did not even defend it, so the British landed without being fired upon. But by the time the Fusiliers and the Lancashire regiment reached the top, the Germans had established a skirmish line that ran inland about two miles to a hill that overlooked Bukoba.

The British had the advantage of field guns and a number of machine guns. The Germans had machine guns and a pair of 75-mm field guns. The British outnumbered them about two to one, but the Germans had the advantage of the terrain and their familiarity with it. The British began to drive forward very slowly, as the Germans and Askaris

contested the ground. The British concentrated on the two 75-mm field guns and by mid-afternoon had knocked them out of operation. But the Germans moved back through the tree clumps and by dusk they still kept the British a mile outside Bukoba.

The British had not expected the battle to take so long. They had made arrangements to feed the troops, but somehow the food never got ashore. So the soldiers spent the night in the open, fanned by the chill wind and wet by the heavy dew of the lake country. It was so cold that most of the men could not sleep.

During the night the Germans moved back to defensive positions in the town and got one of the 75-mm guns working again. The British launched the assault the next morning, covered by an artillery barrage, but the Germans fought back with machine gunners and snipers as their major defense force. The ships moved into the bay and began firing all the guns they had. After this barrage was laid down, the British began to move forward. Once more the Germans lost their single field piece, and as the pressure grew they moved out of the

town into the banana forest to the south. The British went into the town, found the fort in the center where the Imperial Eagle flag was flying, and hauled it down. They ran up the Union Jack and began looking for the wireless station. They placed charges at the foot of the two-hundred-foot aerial and destroyed the sending station. And then they looted the town, with the permission of their British commander. They robbed shops and raped women and murdered any who resisted. All afternoon the town was overrun by drunken soldiers, some of them dressed in ladies' hats and underclothes and German officers' helmets. That evening some of the drunks sobered up when the troops on duty blew up the German arsenal. They captured about sixty rifles and some ammunition and took them back to their ships. They were the old-style black-powder guns and of little use. They captured the disabled field gun, but dropped it in the lake while trying to load it aboard a ship. They captured a parrot, who had only one message: "Ach, du schwein!" Perhaps his German owner had trained him for just such an occasion. Then the drunks were loaded aboard the ships and went back to British territory, carrying

their twenty-five wounded and seven dead. The Germans lost fifteen men in this action, as well as the radio station. They also lost control of Bukoba, which was later invested by Belgian troops. By any standards the confrontation was not much more important than one of von Lettow's patrol actions. The importance of the radio station had been overestimated by the British. No matter how many messages von Lettow might receive from Germany, he knew well that he could not expect much actual help.

Not that he seemed to need it that summer of 1915. Von Lettow launched one patrol after another against the British in the Kilimanjaro area. One day in July the German force moved up to the road that led to the village of Voi, which was about two days' march from the German headquarters in the New Moshi area. They took over a high point called Mbuyun about ten miles east of Taveta. The British decided they would dislodge the Germans from this place because it commanded the Voi-Taveta road north of Kilimanjaro. It was a marvelous point for ambush, and von Lettow stationed some eight

hundred troops there with machine guns to await British supply efforts.

Brigadier Malleon, who was in charge of the area, was fretting as much as any officer about the continued inactivity of his force and the vexing raids of the German patrols, which kept the Kilimanjaro area in a constant state of tension. He planned an attack with a much larger force to drive the Germans out, even though he was warned that von Lettow could put at least two thousand reinforcements into the area in less than twenty-four hours. Malleon did not believe it, so he sent his troops out in the afternoon and they bivouacked a few miles from the hill that night. Next morning when they prepared the attack, they discovered that von Lettow had been warned and that he'd reinforced the position that night with troops from all around the area. It had been simple enough: there was a message brought in by runner, and then von Lettow got on the telephone at his headquarters in the railroad station at New Moshi.

The British attacked on the morning of July 14, using the King's African Rifles and a Punjab battalion in front. Several other companies were sup-

posed to circle wide around the German right flank and attack from the rear, cutting off the position while the frontal troops stormed it. The British had two effective small field guns in the circling forces and they gained a brief advantage. But in the front, the King's African Rifles and the Punjab regiment got nowhere. Once again the Geuiians made most effective use of the cover of the land, and had their machine guns fixed to traverse the whole area the attackers must cross. The British never made the hill, and early in the afternoon the flanking force was ordered back because the front was moving backward. The Germans followed them out for about a half mile and then stopped. The British retreated and from Nairobi announced a "successful operation," although they had suffered ten percent casualties and had not achieved any part of what they set out to do. Colonel von Lettow was very pleased with the performance of his Askaris, and he decided to extend his area of operations. By capturing the hill south of Voi called Kasigaw, he could provide maximum security for his patrols along another thirty miles of the Uganda railroad. So he sent a large patrol—forty men. It made a surprise

attack, and the position was held by the Germans. By this time, if Brigadier Malleson was not worried, General Tighe was more than a little concerned. He warned London of a German buildup of forces. This last was certainly true. Von Lettow conducted a continuing campaign of recruitment among the blacks, and every little success brought more support from the black community of the German colony. Some of his boldest raids were designed to show the blacks just how powerful the Schutztruppe had become, in order to enlist their relatives.

This summer there were troops available for shipment to British East Africa, if they were willing to be employed. At the beginning of the war, the Boers of British South Africa and Rhodesia had been of two minds. In fact a group of them rebelled against the British. But the rebellion was put down, and when the British, with Boer troops, captured German Southwest Africa, it seemed likely that they would come north to try to take East Africa as well. Colonel von Lettow would welcome nothing more. One reason for the stepped-up German raids on the railroad was the observation that the British

were extending the line in the Voi area into Kili-manjaro country, and von Lettow assumed that the only possible reason could be the British decision to bring in thousands of troops and make this a major battleground. Spies in Nairobi that summer said that General Louis Botha was coming up from South Africa with fifteen thousand troops to strengthen Tighe's hand. That was precisely what von Lettow wanted. He felt it necessary to encourage the British in this enterprise, so he mounted ever more offensives against the rail line.

Lieutenant Freiherr von Grote led several amazing patrols. The most daring, however, was a raid into the Bura Hills to the darn from which the British received water. They pretended they were an advance guard of Boers looking over the area for General Botha, and they were able to capture the British guard and blow up the pumps. One of the Germans was wounded on the way back and the others were captured. General Tighe wanted to have them all shot as spies, but London intervened, and the Germans of this patrol spent the rest of the war in a prison camp.

These daring raids were indications of the remarkable state of morale that von Lettow induced in his men. He himself was fearless, and when directing a raid or an engagement he walked about without dodging the bullets that pinged about him.

The Askaris suffered an enormous fright one day, when the first airplanes they had ever seen were brought in by the British as a new way of patrolling the long stretches of rail lines. When the British bombed New Moshi (more as an act of defiance than for any tactical value) the Askaris ran into the hills crying that the wrath of God was raining on their heads. Von Lettow told his officers to turn machine guns on the aircraft, and they shot one of them down. When the Askaris saw that the "instrument of God" was made of balsa wood and painted cloth, they lost their fear. Von Lettow found the employment of aircraft against him exciting, because it was another indication that the British were becoming upset and preparing to commit the force he wanted.

In British East Africa morale fell to new lows. Governor Belfield seemed to share Governor Schnee's opposition to the war in Africa, and that

attitude accounted for his general discourtesy to the military. The public openly sneered at his war policies and agitated for universal conscription within the colony. London, seeing all the fuss, began to take a more serious view of the war, and of Colonel von Lettow's potential power to disrupt British rule in the whole continent. When Intelligence Officer Meinertzhagen estimated (wrongly) that von Lettow's force began to rival the British commitment, the Imperial War Committee took another look at the war in East Africa.

The real change in the British position came with a new attitude in South Africa, marshaled by General Botha, who was also the Boer premier of the government. He counseled total commitment to the war effort, with the South African force undertaking to drive the Germans off the continent. He was backed by his principal assistant, Jan Christiaan Smuts. The two of them mounted a campaign and by summer's end had a commitment from the Boers to raise a force of twenty thousand men for that purpose. The army was assembled, and command was given to General Sir Horace Smith-

Dorrien, a regular British officer who had commanded the British Second Army in France.

In November 1915, the Imperial Defence Committee authorized a new expeditionary force and General Smith-Dorrien was given orders. Colonel von Lettow could not have asked for more. Smith-Dorrien wanted a European-style campaign, with all trucks, tanks, heavy equipment and permanent installations. He drew up a multi-milliondollar plan that showed absolutely no understanding of the African scene. When Lord Kitchener, who had served in Africa, saw the plan, he was furious. Smith-Dorrien came very close to not going at all. But the committee overruled Lord Kitchener's objections that it was stupid to mount so heavy an offensive; it would draw so much from the European front in this critical period. So von Lettow's finest hopes were realized.

General Smith-Dorrien, with his grand plan, sailed from England on December 18, 1915. Unfortunately, from von Lettow's point of view, Smith-Dorrien contracted pneumonia on the voyage and had to be invalided home almost immediately after arriving in South Africa. The British had not

wanted a Boer in command, having some lingering doubts about South African loyalties, but there was no time to start all over again. General-Premier Botha was approached, but he was campaigning for office, and so he passed the buck to Lieutenant General Jan Christiaan Smuts. From von Lettow's perch this was not so good a development. Smuts knew as much about Africa and African fighting as any European—he was not a European in fact, but an African himself, and this gave him advantages that were not at all attractive from the German point of view. For another reason entirely, Jan Christiaan Smuts's appointment was not welcomed in London either. He was not a Sandhurst man, but one whose experience in warfare had been gained in the African bush, and the professionals out from England regarded him and his staff as amateurs.

Colonel von Lettow felt it was important to encourage the enemy: ". . . in that the South Africans should really come, and in the greatest strength possible, and thus be diverted from other and more important theatres of war. With the greatest energy, therefore, we continued our enterprises against the Uganda Railway."

In December the patrols of destruction continued around Kilimanjaro. Lieutenant von Ruckteschell led several most successful ones, much to the annoyance of the British. But by far the worst annoyance was caused by von Lettow's capture of Oldorobo Mountain and the establishment there on the high ground of a strong defensive position. The reason was plain: the British were building that military railroad and a water pipeline alongside, across the Serengeti Plain from Voi, toward the frontier. This was to be the launching point for the British invasion of German East Africa. But the construction was halted at Oldorobo Mountain, because the Germans looked down on the line and controlled movement there.

In December it was apparent to von Lettow that something big was coming. Mombasa was the key. German agents at the Indian Ocean port city sent word of an arriving stream of troopships, carrying men, trucks, field guns, ammunition, and horses and mules. They spread through the colony wherever camps existed or could easily be established. They were the reinforcements General Tighe had been requesting for so long. Their coming gave

General Tighe new hope, and also the itch to do something to pave the way for General Smuts, who would be on hand within a few weeks. He cast his eye on the situation on the Serengeti Plain and decided the best thing he could do would be to drive the Germans back across their border, and complete the rail line and waterway. That was what he decided to do.

## The South Africans Arrive

The distance from the town of Voi on the Uganda Railroad in British East Africa to the town of Taveta on the border with German East Africa was a distance of about sixty miles as the crow flies, and it was between these two towns that General Tighe was building the military railroad. Once Taveta was reached, it was no trick at all to pass through the gap between Mount Kilimanjaro and the Kale Mountains. A strong force could take the town of Kahe on the German side, and would then be astride the Northern Railroad that connected Tanga to New Moshi, and was, in fact, von Lettow's lifeline.

In the haste to build the road, the British engineers had skirted all the hills and declivities that would hold up construction, and so the road curved around like a coiled snake. But until the construction was halted by the German capture of Taveta and then Oldorobo Mountain, the road was proceeding according to plan. It would have been an

adequate route for the British force to reach the edge of German East Africa, and then could bring resupply after they moved in to invest the territory. Tighe figured that with the troops at hand, the Germans could be rolled up and the colony captured in a matter of a few weeks.

With the South African reinforcements pouring in at Mombasa and reaching out to Nairobi and every point of the territory, it seemed a shame not to use them to further the war aim, even before General Smuts arrived. So General Tighe planned the capture of the Oldorobo position and then of Taveta a few miles beyond, driving the Germans back beyond their own border and paving the way for completion of the road so that Smuts would be able to move very quickly.

The Boer troops came in exuding confidence. The story they had heard in South Africa was that up here in the northeast the war was being fought between "a bunch of coolies and a gang of Kaffirs." The sureness of their sense of white superiority told them that they would clear the place out in a few weeks, and they went around promising the colon-

ists just that. Some believed. Those who knew did not.

From the south also came more airplanes, and their observers estimated that the German position on Mount Oldorobo was manned by about three hundred blacks and a few officers. With so many troops available in January, General Tighe could easily bring up a force of six or seven thousand men, and they should have easy going. Tighe proposed this offensive to the War Office in London, and London agreed. It would indeed be useful to have the way cleared into German East Africa for the railroad and then General Smuts's army.

General Tighe assigned the operation to Brigadier Malleon. He gave the brigadier a force of six thousand men with eighteen field guns and about forty machine guns. The troops were a mixture of the new South African Mounted Brigade, and the First East African Brigade, which consisted of British, Rhodesian, and Indian troops.

It did not take much of Colonel von Lettow's military genius to arrive at the conclusion that January that something was afoot. The constant buzzing of the airplanes overhead, the number of

mounted patrols that skirted the hills on the north of Mount Oldorobo, and the buildup of troops at Voi, reported by the patrols, told the German commander that an attack was imminent.

His greatest problem at Oldorobo was water.

Lieutenant Count Matuschka, an expert with the divining rod in his many years as a colonist, tried to find water on the mountain. But he did not find enough to go very far. The water problem, as usual, bothered von Lettow more than the enemy.

The greatest problem of the British was something new to the East African war—the violent racism of the South African Boers, who objected, it seemed, even to fighting in the same war with the Masai, the Indians, and the black soldiers of the King's African Rifles. But this was overcome in part in the minds of the high command because the Boers were ferocious fighters. They also had among themselves a better reason for fighting than the British knew: many of them were looking forward to the establishment of East Africa as a South African colony, just as they intended to keep German Southwest Africa, now that they had captured that colony.

But the South Africans, like the English before them at Tanga, made the serious mistake of underestimating their enemy. On paper it all looked so easy: drive those three hundred Germans and blacks off the hill, and then move to Taveta, where the Germans could not have had more than another six hundred men. Then it was all theirs, the railroad could be finished and the campaign to mop up could begin.

The force defending Oldorobo was called the Schultz detachment. Schultz's men had been busy constructing dummy trenches down below, while the troops were three hundred meters above the plain, safely ensconced on a hill with a beautiful view of the approaches. Further, von Lettow had wind of the approaching attack, and by the time the British arrived there were twelve hundred fifty German troops on Oldorobo, not three hundred.

General Tighe told Brigadier Malleson to go ahead and on the morning of February 3, 1916, the Boers and the Englishmen and the Indians marched to Oldorobo's flanks. The Boers were to assault from the side, while the East African brigade held the front to keep the Germans from

breaking away. The guns, brought up from Voi, zeroed in on the line of trenches that had been so carefully noted by the observation planes. They were neat, curving trenches, built the way trenches ought to be. The trouble was, the British soon learned, the trenches were empty and the Germans, with their dreadful machine guns, were scattered in clumps of bush and trees along the hill-side, virtually invisible to the British enemy.

Major Kraut was in charge of the German defense effort. He watched from the hillside as the British guns tore up one trench after another, yielding nothing but dirt and rubble. The Germans, who had only two field pieces on the mountain and a limited supply of ammunition, did not reply or in any way give away their dispositions. The British officers peering through their glasses finally discovered that they had been duped, and that the shells fired in such profusion had been a total waste of time, effort and war materiel. Back at headquarters, Colonel von Lettow was delighted. This was the sort of war he hoped to force on the enemy for a long time.

The assault was delayed for nine days while the British tried to decide what to do. Finally they came to the conclusion that if they were to give General Smuts the present of Oldorobo Mountain and Tave-ta, they must go in with guns and bayonets. Even this solemn information did not seem to bother the South Africans in their arrogant innocence. They were eager to get going.

When the assault began all the British troops moved. On the mountain, three hundred meters above them, Major Kraut ordered his men to hold their fire, and not even the field guns spoke up. But when the British line reached a point a thousand yards from the mountain slope the field guns fired and the machine guns began to clatter. Men fell, and others saw and stopped. As usual, the German fields of fire were well planned, and there was no way through. The East African Brigade began to move back, covered by the field guns and the machine guns of the Lancashire regiment, which had done this before at Tanga.

The South Africans on the flank boasted all the way to the bottom of the mountain. Then they had to begin climbing up and cutting brush, maneuvers

that were new to their sort of fighting. The Germans unleashed the field guns on them in well-placed patterns. Men fell. The machine guns traversed the slope, and more men fell. From the top Major Kraut gave the order for a bayonet charge, and down the mountain came three hundred screaming Askaris, firing their rifles and then plunging bayonets into the breasts of the South Africans. These were the Kaffirs for whom they had so much contempt. The line broke, the South Africans turned and fled, leaving their machine guns behind them and their weapons on the field. Most made it back to the safety of the lines protected by the North Lancashire regiment, but not all. They were saved by the "coolies" of the 130th Baluchistan Regiment, who moved into the gap and forced the Askaris back to their hillside. But the general offensive had been thrown into confusion and there was no way it could be rescued, so the order to retreat was given, and the British six thousand, or what was left of them, moved back, leaving the field to the defense force of about one sixth their number. The Baluchis brought back some of the bodies. The South Africans rescued more, and helped their wounded to

reach the lines. But when the day was over, the British had gone away, the Germans buried seventy Boer bodies, and many others, black, Indian, and European.

Eleven days later General Smuts arrived, to be greeted with news of the failure. He came with a plan of battle and the same opinion that the German Askaris were far inferior to his own Boer troops—two misconceptions that were to cost the Allies dearly in the years to come. He was chastened immediately by the dreadful defeat of his forces at Oldorobo: The South Africans had lost in that single engagement half as many men in dead and wounded as in the entire campaign that brought them control of German Southwest Africa the year before. They were not used to this sort of defeat.

Because of that, perhaps Smuts could be forgiven his tendency to keep to his own plan, without too much attention to the advice of members of General Tighe's staff. The British, after all, had not been notably successful in the first year and a half of the war. Quite to the contrary, an examination of the records showed. He was certain that he could

surround and capture von Lettow's force within six months, and he went on record with such a prediction to London. He planned to invade German East Africa with two powerful columns. General Tighe, who now took a subordinate position, would drive through the Taveta Gap with fifteen thousand men. It seemed apparent that to meet this threat von Lettow would have to bring all his force together to defend the corridor.

While von Lettow turned north and east, Brigadier Stewart, with four thousand men, would circle around to Longido, an extinct volcano northwest of Kilimanjaro, then hurry down to New Moshi and flank the Germans. Von Lettow would awaken from his preoccupation with the Taveta Gap to find himself surrounded and cut off, and he would surrender. It was as simple as that.

And it was also precisely the sort of war von Lettow had been waiting for the British to bring to him. He did not make the mistakes of his enemies. He had the highest respect for General Smuts, whom he had watched in victory over the British during the Boer War. He knew that the Boers, even if they had shown so badly on Oldorobo Mountain,

were essentially what he was himself, "Africa-wise," and that when they overcame their insolence and unfamiliarity with the countryside, would prove to be far more formidable enemies than the British or the Indians. From the outset of 1916, von Lettow recognized the changing nature of the war with the infusion of British might. The enemy could be expected to have armor, armored cars and perhaps tanks. They would have many field guns. They would have good communications, and supplies rolling up behind them at all times. They would have, in other words, an enormous juggernaut that would be aimed to crush him, and it would be mobile enough to send arms around to the flanks. But what they would not have was his own extreme mobility. No armored cars, no tanks, no trucks to speak of, few heavy guns but a force of highly trained, highly motivated, healthy, strong men who were willing to fight on the move. From 1914, von Lettow had been planning how to fight the powerful modern force he expected to see against him, and now he had the chance to prove his plans.

Already, in February, von Lettow had taken the care to create what was essentially going to be a

guerilla organization. The great Kilimanjaro was spotted by his force's encampments, but the British aircraft circled around day after day and did not see them. Patrol after patrol came back from the region to report nothing but rock, dense bush, and heavy forest, and not a single Askari stirring, nor any road or track that might indicate where they lay.

As far as meeting the enemy was concerned, von Lettow had made all the preparations possible by the time of the Oldorobo battle. He could do no more than wait and react, and hope that his problems of supply would not prove insoluble.

Just then, von Lettow's attention was diverted by new difficulties with Governor Schnee. The governor had grown restless at Morogoro and had moved his capital to Tabora, which was even farther away from any military activity, safe on the Central Railroad line, about halfway from Dar es Salaam to Lake Tanganyika. From there he sniped at von Lettow, and wrote to Berlin, hoping that higher authority would restore to him the power over the whole colony that he had lost with his refusal to prosecute the war. By the first of the year, 1916,

most of the Europeans in German East Africa had deserted the Schnee camp and joined the von Lettow camp. With the announcement that the South Africans were sending a powerful force to British East Africa, which was not long in coming to Dar es Salaam and the other towns, Schnee's credibility suffered another blow, and so finally, in that January 1916 the governor decided he had best make his peace with von Lettow and support the war effort. For the change he chose the kaiser's birthday, January 21. He went down to Dar es Salaam from Tabora for the ceremony at the Government House. There he made a speech, for the first time publicly congratulating von Lettow on his defense of the colony and his string of victories.

Smoking his pipe upcountry in New Moshi, where he was sorting through intelligence reports on the movements of the enemy, von Lettow read with mild amusement the copy of the speech that Schnee sent him. That was fine, he told his staff, but he hoped that when the British got going, the governor's new enthusiasm for the war in East Africa would continue to increase. He had little time to worry about politicians, and if Schnee would simply

cease obstructing the supply effort that was all he might ask. Just then, at the end of January, he was expecting the British to move any time, and certainly within six weeks, for with calendrical precision in the beginning of April East Africa could expect the beginning of the rains that gave life to the plain, but in the process turned the red dust into mud, and the dry canyons into raging streams. If the British were to attack before summer, they would have to move soon.

On March 8, Smuts began the new war with his thirty thousand troops, backed by every sort of modern support against von Lettow's force of six thousand in the Kilimanjaro area. Brigadier Jacobus van Deventer, an old hand from the Boer War, headed out with the South African Mounted Brigade to a mountain which overlooked the fifteen-mile gap between Kilimanjaro and the Para Mountains. Von Lettow's forward outposts saw them coming, saw the dust of the horses' hooves as they swept past Oldorobo. So, as von Lettow suspected, General Smuts was not going to be caught by that same tactic again. No more frontal assault; the

British assault would be much more massive and complex. It was just as he had expected.

Given this warning, von Lettow pulled back his troops. Major Kraut left the mountain and moved out through Taveta, and then back along the rail line. Soon Taveta was completely deserted. Van Deventer's horsemen, making a wide patrol, came up on Mount Olorobo, and found no Germans there. All that remained was an abandoned field-telephone line, which had connected the major's command post with von Lettow's headquarters in New Moshi. The tall poles, twenty feet high (to protect the line from marauding giraffes), stood mute, and the line swayed a little in the breeze. The place was silent, dead.

Two days earlier, Brigadier Stewart had gone off to Longido, to bring his force south around the base of Kilimanjaro to cut the Germans off. But the going was hot and hard, and von Lettow's Askaris were there in small bands to set ambushes, fell trees across the track, and harry the advancing troops. They were helped by a sudden rainfall that turned the trail into a quagmire. Brigadier Stewart was so afraid he might be cut off by floods that he

sent his engineers back to repair the roads behind, and thus he slowed his column. Stewart was also out of communication with headquarters for forty-eight crucial hours because of "bushmanship." Unlike the Germans, he was not aware that roving giraffes loved to knock down wires, and his low hanging telephone wires had been cut by a herd. So Brigadier Stewart, who was supposed to be in position to ambush von Lettow from the rear on March 8, was running four days late.

General Tighe was drunk again. He was supposed to move forward swiftly with his fifteen thousand men to take Oldorobo Mountain and Taveta, but he could not pull himself together until March 10, and when he reached Taveta without any opposition at all, it was apparent that he could have come in two days earlier. Von Lettow had fled. The British had made an enormous circle around to the north and committed sixteen thousand men in the south; they had suffered a number of casualties from snipers and traps, and the Germans had gone like ghosts, losing scarcely a man.

Back at New Moshi, von Lettow had called his commanders together for a talk about a sort of war-

fare entirely new to them. They faced an overwhelming force, he told them, and from now on, as long as the war lasted and the British advanced, they could expect no victories. Their purpose was to inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy, and to do this they must give up territory, and under no circumstances risk envelopment. Hit and run was the order. They were to fight and slink away like jackals in the night, to avoid being killed or captured, to preserve their weapons, and to move to fight another time. So saying, von Lettow had dispatched the five companies that harried the column of Brigadier Stewart and added more to his miseries and delay than the British histories indicate.

On March 10, the British discovered that von Lettow had withdrawn to new positions. Major Kraut's force had set up on a hill called Reata. If he'd had the proper artillery, it would have been a formidable position, but there again, von Lettow had almost nothing "proper" and the Schutztruppe's task was to do without such "necessities" and still survive against a vastly superior

force. Nothing in the rule book that the British were using provided for this sort of warfare.

Captain Schultz and Lieutenant Stemmermann's detachments were placed alongside the road between Moshi and Narangu. About a thousand Askaris were assigned to this task.

It was a tremulously thin line, and only a commander as sure of his men as was von Lettow would have undertaken so risky a defensive position along a twenty-kilometer front. Von Lettow knew precisely how vulnerable it was, he knew his men would probably have to retreat southward suddenly, but his faith in the force he had trained allowed him to take such an enormous risk.

General Smuts, who had heard one tale of the initially terrifying effect the airplanes had on the Askaris, decided to launch an air attack. He sent half a dozen planes up to scout and drop fifty-pound bombs on the German shallow positions—shallow because there was no time to do more than dig in temporarily. Smuts did not know the sequel to the Askari tale.

The blacks saw the planes come in and drop their bombs, but they were not dismayed. Instead

they made jokes about birds laying eggs, and they cheered as bombs landed harmlessly in the brush below. General Smuts had hoped that the "natives" would panic. He still had things to learn about the Askaris of East Africa.

Smuts estimated this time that with von Lettow strung out as he was, here was a chance to strike a decisive blow. But from the outset, the British general was beset with troubles, most of them British. Brigadier Malleson suddenly gave up command of his troops in the field, and rushed off toward Nairobi in a staff car, complaining that he was ill. His brigade had been chosen to lead an assault on the thin black line along the Latema-Reata position. General Tighe now took personal charge of the troops, and this added to the confusion.

On the morning of March 11, the British began an advance, with the 130th Baluchis, the Second Rhodesians and the Third King's African Rifles in the van. They moved forward in a long skirmish line until they were a thousand yards from the German positions. This was the distance at which the fire of the Maxim machine guns became effective, and as the troops came up the thorn bush began to sprout

flame and men dropped. The whole advance stalled, and British soldiers hugged the ground and scrambled for little bits of protection. Nothing could move until the artillery was brought up from the rear and began blasting holes in the German defense. When the shells began coming around, the machine gunners picked up their Maxims and moved back.

Von Lettow once again had chosen his defense line to take every advantage of the terrain. The attackers had to come up the hill through thorn and bush as high as a man's head. Above, on the hill side, the Askaris could see the movements in the brush and lay down a barrage. Sharpshooters high in the trees had an even better view. The British moved forward but had to stop and dig in once again, not halfway up. The Baluchi regiment, which had been assigned to take the high point at Late-ma, had to dig in along the slope and fight just to hold on.

The Rhodesians and the King's African Rifles were given the Reata height, and they went charging up the hill with bayonets. It was mid-afternoon by this time, and the sun was beating down fierce-

ly. The British attacked, shouting. They were met by shouting Askaris, who counterattacked and drove the enemy back down the hill to the bottom. The battle surged on the hillside, but by nightfall the Kraut detachment was still in control of Reata.

So the honors of the day went to von Lettow and his small force. But honors were not meaningful in this sort of war—survival was. As night fell, the German position was less tenable than it had been the day before. General van Deventer was moving up from Taveta to Moshi with his horsemen, and they threatened Kraut's rear. Von Lettow, who watched them come through field glasses from his command post, decided he must launch a counterattack or move back.

That night the decision was made for him. Brigadier Percival Scot Beves sent three South African battalions against the hills that night. The Germans slaughtered them; the British just did not seem to understand the machine gun, it seemed, and they came on almost like sheep to the killing pen, and fell before the Maxims. Two battalions were committed and exhausted, and Beves threw in his reserves, but still the South Africans could not gain

the summit. The Germans harried them all the way down as the South Africans retreated, carrying their wounded. Then, suddenly, the German fire stopped and a handful of British troops reached the tops of both hills. The German force was gone, having melted off into the night, in answer to von Lettow's order to Major Kraut that it was time to retreat. They must avoid the cutoff by van Deventer, and then Stewart's force, which was coming on still around Kilimanjaro.

While the South Africans talked about "victory," von Lettow moved down a little ways toward Tanga. If this was enemy "victory," it was just the sort he liked: many casualties to the enemy, much loss of materiel, few casualties to the Germans. "I do not think it impossible to give at least one of his detachments a thorough beating," von Lettow had said modestly before the battle. He had done better, he had given two detachments a thorough working over on those hills, and in that night attack, the destruction was so grisly that General Smuts himself had ordered the South Africans to withdraw from the hills.

Von Lettow moved Kraut's detachment down to New Steglitz and the railroad station at Kahe, fifteen miles south of Moshi. At the latter point the Kraut force regrouped, and replacements came up for the forty Askaris and officers killed in the last few days' fighting.

General Smuts was in a fiery temper. The real reason, of course, was that his trap had failed. Assessing the failure, he gave less credence to von Lettow's reading of his plan than to the difficulties of the British troops, which he blamed on two officers, brigadiers Malleson and Stewart. The latter on the day of the Latema-Reata battle was still twenty miles from Moshi, and averaging five miles a day. Stewart was more the victim of the East African terrain and climate than of timidity. His men became exhausted trying to drive through the bush in the heat. Even the oxen that drew the supply wagons fell down and lay on the ground, unable to get up. Stewart changed to night marches to avoid the heat, and these were even slower. The maps with which he had been provided to inch his way through the game trails proved to be totally inaccurate. The early coming of the rains assisted the

small force of Germans who moved ahead of the column, destroying bridges and setting roadblocks. The Germans and the Askaris sat on the hillsides along the trail and fired down on the British as they came up. The British column stopped, and field guns were brought out to fire back at the Askaris. They disappeared into the bush, only to reappear again a few hours later and repeat the process. Every encounter had the earmarks of a British "victory" but each little fight delayed the column and cost the Germans virtually nothing. Responding to Smuts's furious messages, Brigadier Stewart managed to force his men forward into Moshi on March 14, where they were attacked by a charge of horsemen. The forces exchanged fire and some men were killed and wounded before the opponents discovered they belonged to the same army: the attackers were men of van Deventer's mounted column.

Then came a stormy confrontation between Smuts and Stewart, at the end of which Stewart was relieved of command and sent back to England along with Malleon, both suffering from as much prejudice as Smuts could arouse in London. Tighe

was also relieved and sent back to India with a medal. General Smuts, apparently not having learned anything from the failure of this attempt at envelopment, began to lay plans for a repeat performance.

Moshi was deserted. The women and children had been sent down the railroad to Wilhelmstal before von Lettow's troops had moved out. Only a handful of neutrals and a few Boers remained in the town. Von Lettow had no intention of fighting his way down the rail line. He would hold the British up here for a few days while the bulk of his troops moved on south across the Masai country to Kondoalrangi, which would be the staging point for his new campaign. From Kahe von Lettow sent the word by telephone and telegraph to all his outposts north of the Central Railroad line. They were to move back under pressure, fight and fall back, and then assemble at Kondoalrangi for the coming year's campaign. In the interim they would have the rainy season, which would begin in earnest in a few days. The British would be unable to move ox carts and trucks and armored cars through the heavy

mud, so there would be time. And time was what von Lettow was counting on.

Von Lettow had achieved a great deal since the end of 1915. He had forced the British to bring in the heavy reinforcements that would drain the western front, and this in spite of Lord Kitchener's intuitive understanding of what von Lettow was up to, and Kitchener's resistance almost all the way against the Imperial War Committee. Von Lettow had brought Smuts into German East Africa where he wanted him, in the difficult Kilimanjaro area. Now he was prepared to sacrifice the whole northern section of the country and the northern rail line and base future operations on the Central Railroad that ran from Dar es Salaam to Tabora.

Just now, in mid-March, von Lettow was camped in a plantation manager's bungalow, where he slept on a couch with the dining room tablecloth for a sheet. All day long he watched the clouds above Kilimanjaro and waited for the British move as he planned for the next year. There was just a little more to be done here in the north, and then he would move.

The Second Stage

In many ways the twelve-month period that was about to end with the coming of the rains in the spring of 1916 had been most satisfactory, given the conditions under which Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck had been entrusted to defend the colony and carry the war against the enemy. Governor Schnee had been brought to some semblance of reality during the year, largely by British intransigence. The recruiting among the blacks had gone well and continued to go well. The supplies from the wrecked blockade-runner had come at the right time. The destruction of the cruiser Koenigsberg had brought von Lettow a new and valuable fighting force capable of action on water and on land.

The former qualification was useful because von Lettow did have a major defense responsibility far to the west on Lake Tanganyika, which runs down the border of what was German East Africa. There was also responsibility on Lake Victoria Ny nza, Lake Nyasa, and Lake Kivu. After the end of Koenigsberg, von Lettow had twenty-four naval officers and 559 noncommissioned officers and enlisted men. They came from the cruiser, from the old survey ship Moewe, and from a naval vessel called the

Planet, which had been trapped off Mozambique by the outbreak of the war and chose to come to East Africa instead of trying to fight its way to the South seas. He also had the officers and crew of the blockade-runner and about thirty naval reserve officers who had settled in East Africa plus 325 reservists who had been caught aboard various steamships by the outbreak of the war and had somehow made their way to the colony.

The British controlled Lake Nyasa in the south, and there was not much to be done about that, nor was it vitally important, because the lake did not seriously impinge on the situation of German East Africa. The Germans controlled little Lake Kivu in the Ruanda Urundi region with a single motorboat commanded by Lieutenant Wunderlich of the crew of the *Moewe*. The British were superior in force on Lake Victoria Nyanza, and there was not much von Lettow could do about that either, but he did need to maintain freedom of movement on that lake for defense purposes. That involved what was primarily a dynamic defense, movement about when necessary, and it was achieved by the salvage of the old steamer *Muanza*, which the British thought they

had destroyed in the early months of 1915. The salvaged ship was used only at night to move supplies for von Lettow's men, and kept in service until this campaign. Now she was no longer needed since von Lettow was moving south away from Lake Victoria Nyanza, and her capture that year by the British was a matter of no strategic importance. But Lake Tanganyika was something else again. Colonel von Lettow had to be prepared to sacrifice the whole lake country, including Tanganyika, but as long as possible he wanted it defended. Commander Zimmer, the former captain of the *Moewe*, was in charge of the defense of Lake Tanganyika, and his force ruled the lake because it had the two biggest ships there: the one-hundred-ton *Hedwig von Wissmann* and the six-hundred-ton *Graf Goetzen*. These vessels were armed with guns taken from various ships that were in East African harbors when the war began. The ten big 105-mm guns of the *Koenigsberg* had been salvaged and moved to various places. Five of them now defended Dar es Salaam against any more of those British incursions; two were at Tanga; two were on Lake

Tanganyika for shore defense; and one was at Muanza on Lake Victoria Nyanza.

From the Koenigsberg, von Lettow had secured a competent force to defend the city of Dar es Salaam under Captain Looff, who was given that responsibility, and a new military company for the land fighting, the Koenigsberg Company, consisting of one hundred twenty seamen and fifteen Askaris to lead them and teach them the ways of the bush. They were led by Lieutenant George Koch, who had been first officer of the Koenigsberg.

Colonel von Lettow sat in his plantation headquarters and waited for the word that would announce the ending moments of the year's campaign. He had a message from the south that was more than welcome: Several months earlier, von Lettow, Schnee and Captain Looff had sent a combined message to Berlin, asking for more supplies. It had gone by a devious route, carried by a loyal German of Latvian descent who had a Russian passport and thus had been able to get to Portuguese East Africa, and from there through neutral Portugal, then across Spain and France to Switzerland and then to Berlin.

Von Lettow had asked for gun carriages for the guns of the *Koenigsberg* (they had been fixed to fire from pedestals aboard the ship). Not long after the first blockade-runner had set out a second had been in the works, and early in 1916 this ship, the *Marie*, successfully ran the blockade and headed for Lindi, the southernmost port of German East Africa, very nearly on the Mozambique border. On March 17 she had arrived, laying a mine field behind her in Sudi Bay. She was well equipped for the task at hand. The naval engineers had set aboard her a double pontoon bridge so the porters could form an endless chain between land and sea. In four days they were able to strip the ship of fifteen hundred tons of military and civilian cargo. Just hours after the last load was taken off the ship, the British arrived, shelled the ship and the shore, and then went away confident that they had destroyed her and prevented the landing of her cargo.

So as Colonel von Lettow prepared for the last battle of the season, he knew that needed supplies were already on their way to his new headquarters, and that he could be ready for the start of the second round in the summer.

After the relief of Brigadier Stewart, his force was given to Brigadier S. H. Sheppard. General Smuts wanted to push ahead down the railroad to Tanga, and on March 18 the advance began. This time, Smuts was certain he would corner von Lettow at Tanga, and all would be over but the cheering in London.

For two days the British artillery "softened up" the German position. The shells fell all around the plantation buildings and smashed some of them. They rattled the windows in the headquarters building and sometimes made it hard to hear the jangling of the field tele-phones that kept bringing von Lettow advice on the activities of the enemy. Up from Lindi came ammunition for one of the 105-mm (four-inch) guns of the Koenigsberg, which had been brought up for the defense of Kahe. Other guns were on their way to the Central Railroad for delivery to the new headquarters. They included four field howitzers and two mountain guns, but these would not play a role in this last action before the rains came.

Major Fischer and five companies were moving back from the Moshi area. The Rothert detachment

was already on its way from Arusha to Kondoa-Irangi. With the four thousand men at his disposal, von Lettow had no thought of overpowering the force that was seven times as great as his own. Defense was the plan.

On March 20 the British moved the First Division, which was Stewart's old unit of four thousand men, now augmented, and von Lettow apparently made the mistake of believing this was a much smaller unit, so he attacked near a place called Store, after its Indian storekeeper, whose name was unpronounceable. The Askaris came in with bayonets, and were hard hit by British machine gunners who were dug in. It was a reversal of the past, except that after a mauling, instead of blundering on, von Lettow ordered a quick retreat. It was not and had never been his plan to try to stop the enemy in a confrontation of force. But the British had some surprises in store for them. Following his usual form, General Smuts sent van Deventer's cavalry around the left flank of the Germans to rope them in. That is what was supposed to happen. But the cavalry came below Kahe station at sunrise on March 21 to find they were up against the Pangani

River, which was nearing flood stage so early in the season because of the rains that had troubled Stewart the week before. The river was sixty feet wide, and the Germans had destroyed the bridge, so the troopers had to swim for it.

When they reached the opposite bank and were forming up to move, the Koenigsberg four-inch gun, stationed four miles away, began to fire on this position, and threw it into confusion. Then from the bushy hill behind came a fusillade of rifle and machine gun fire, which slowed them down more. The attacking force was only a company, not more than two hundred men, and there was no hope that it could stop these one thousand riders, but the Germans withdrew in orderly fashion, and warned von Lettow behind them. Van Deventer began to move toward Kisangire station, fifteen miles south of Kahe. This was a real threat, and as soon as von Lettow learned of it, he prepared to move. But meanwhile, he had the British on his front to contend with, and they needed some attention.

General Smuts assumed that von Lettow was going to fight right straight down the railroad to Tanga (which was a definite misapprehension) and

his hope was to smash forward at Kahe, bring van Deventer around behind, and then close the trap, at which time von Lettow was supposed to put his hands in the air and surrender. So the First Division was ordered to smash straight through the front at Kahe and another unit of the Second Division was to go around to the right and double the flanking movement. But General Smuts counted without von Lettow's knowledge of the countryside once again. Why had he chosen this particular point for defense otherwise? He knew very well that the whole area was surrounded by particularly dense and vicious thorn bush. It was, in fact, so thick and so dense that the Hankers on the right could not move through it; they could scarcely see ten feet ahead of them. They were stopped cold before they ever reached the German line.

On the broad front, the British had come down a flat plain between two branches of the Pangani, across a mile of open ground, flanked by these two rivers that were full of crocodiles, a fact the German intelligence had made clear to the British. Only along the banks was there thick brush, and here, on the far sides, the German snipers lurked and

fired accurately at the British artillery observers and the troops. The troops were soon pinned down and the artillery observers could not get up to observe, and so the guns never did range in on the German positions. Although the lightweight artillery carriages ordered for the Koenigsberg guns had not arrived from Lindi, von Lettow had contrived a mount for the Koenigsberg gun that was still trainable. After the departure of van Deventer's force toward the south, the gun had been turned around, and now it was trained on the open ground and the troop concentrations that inched forward.

The British troops no longer wilted under fire. The Baluchis were particularly fearless and willing to take casualties. They lost a great many men to the German machine guns. At one point, a brave British machine-gun unit managed to wipe out the crew of the far-right German gun, but before the troops could take advantage of it, the Askaris came up, took over the gun again, wiped out the British gun crew, and removed the danger.

The fight continued all afternoon. By dusk it was apparent that the British could get nowhere.

They dug in for the night in this uncertain ground, and waited.

But they waited in vain. For that night, Colonel von Lettow moved his whole force out silently, and made a forced march to Kisangire station to intercept van Deventer's cavalry, which was expected to be coming around through the thick bush that morning. The Germans got to the station at sunrise on the morning of March 22 and prepared to resist a cavalry attack. Van Deventer never did arrive. He was called back by Smuts finally, and even that message did not reach him because communications were lost in the thick bush. He was lost.

Smuts awoke on the morning of March 22 and ordered the troops to take Kahe that day. It was no problem. At the plantation all they found were some wires and the remnants of von Lettow's excellent kitchen. In the brush, one unit of scouts discovered the campsite of the last of the rear guard, with porridge still hot beside the fire. The Askaris had been told to stay until the last of the troops was gone, and then move out, and so disciplined were they that they moved without even having their breakfast.

So once again General Smuts had carried out the proper book sort of military maneuver, and had found himself at the end of it with an empty bag. One could scarcely say that the results left Colonel von Lettow laughing; he was not that sort of man, and the war he was conducting was far too serious a matter for such levity. But he did have a deep sense of satisfaction as he rested the troops at Kisingire. That day, he heard the sounds of thunder over Kilimanjaro, and the rains began to come down with a vengeance. He turned the force toward Arusha and then southwest into the Masai steppe. The first phase of the real war was definitely over. The British would not move now, could not, except to go down the railroad and occupy the land between Moshi and Tanga. Von Lettow's six thousand men in the north had completely outmaneuvered the forty-five thousand British and had bought themselves three months of time for regrouping and preparation for the next phase.

The cost had not been inconsiderable. One of von Lettow's most trusted officers, Major Fischer, had reportedly committed suicide, de-pressed because of his inability to stop the Stewart force from

rounding Longido and approaching Moshi. Von Lettow had lost many valuable officers and several hundred wounded and killed Askaris. He had had a close call himself one night during the battle known as Latema Nek. He had been riding forward on his bicycle, as he liked to do, since it was swift and silent, and the bicycle was shot out from under him. But he had not even been wounded on this occasion, and the incident had become, on both sides of the lines, part of the growing legend of this super-soldier. He was pictured as the "soulless Hun" by his enemies, who embroidered the Fischer story until they had von Lettow handing the major his own pistol and telling him to commit suicide. It was said that he had personally ordered the shooting of the Arab company at Tanga and that he frequently shot Askaris who did not respond promptly enough to his orders. He was also given credit for masterful plots, only part of which was deserved. It was true that he had planned the retreat down the railroad to take full advantage of the thorn bush and this had in a way been the determining factor in what must be called his victory over Smuts. But he had never thought of gathering up hives of bees at Tan-

ga and arranging trip wires so the British would release them and bring the hordes on themselves. Nevertheless, every young South African who came up from the veldt was initiated into the lore of von Lettow- Vorbeck with that tale. He was, by the middle of 1916, a living legend, and in the British camp staff officers were wondering aloud why General Smuts was letting von Lettow dictate all the terms of the war. Smuts was cut badly enough by the charges that he felt it necessary to respond to them in a dispatch to London. His next move, he said, would be to launch simultaneous attacks from various points ranging from the Congo on the west to Taveta on the east, and then drive to wherever von Lettow had holed up, and next time, to capture him for sure.

That would be the second phase of the war in East Africa. It would begin just as soon as the scouring rains came to an end.

## Orderly Retreat

Colonel von Lettow did not let the railroad to Tanga go by default. When the rains came down, and the troops moved out toward Kondoa-Irangi, von Lettow stayed on for several days, laying out the plans of retreat along the railroad for Major Kraut, whose force was chosen to do the job in such a fashion as to make the greatest difficulties for General Smuts. Then, with a small group that needed only twenty carriers to bring the equipment, von Lettow set out by car through the rain for the south. The journey was almost more than he had bargained for. Now he faced the same natural obstacles that had stopped the British. The headquarters group struggled through the muck, sometimes up to their waists, the staff cars pushed and pulled by the carriers. They had 140 miles to go from the Northern Railroad Line to the Central Line. They marched from four o'clock in the morning until nightfall, and it seemed they made almost no

headway through the muck. He had planned to go all the way by car, but that proved totally impossible, for the cars became bogged down completely, and the men shifted to horseback. They reached Tulliani to find that a shallow stream that was supposed to be easily fordable had become a raging river, and had even torn away the wagon bridge that morning. They had to get across and they could not wait; the colonel had urgent business in the south and he insisted upon pushing on. They felled a tree three feet thick to bridge the stream, but its top branches would not hold on the other side. The current caught it and swept it along, butt end first, and it went down the river with the speed of a sapling.

Von Lettow's adjutant, Lieutenant Muller, volunteered to swim the torrent but a third of the way out he was forced back and landed downstream from his companions, exhausted. Captain Tafel and several black carriers stumbled across, holding onto one another and fighting the current, but then no one could throw a line to them. They were stalled, it seemed, until the river dropped. But that afternoon the carriers found a local black who

knew of another ford farther downstream. They continued on then, until they reached the narrow-gauge railway or tramway that connected with the Central Line. From that point on they rode, except when they were flying off around the curves taken too fast, and had to get up and lift their little tram back onto the rail line. Two days later von Lettow reached Kimamba on the rail line and there stripped off his filthy uniform and donned the clothes of an ordinary Askari, which he got from the regimental store at the outpost.

There at Kimamba von Lettow had a not altogether welcome surprise. Governor Schnee had the wind up again. He had heard on the British radio the electrifying news of the grand victories General Smuts was winning in the northern part of the colony. Schnee had come to demand an accounting from von Lettow for the "disaster" of Kilimanjaro. What, demanded the governor, was von Lettow about to do now to assure the safety and well-being of the people of the colony?

Von Lettow must have suppressed a desire to pick the governor up by the scruff of the neck and throw him out of his presence. He contented him-

self, however, with giving the governor a sharp lecture on military strategy and advising him to hurry back to Tabora, where he might be needed. (The implication was clear that he was not needed with the troops.) The commander also warned the governor that at any time he might be forced to sacrifice any position in the colony, including Tabora, and that the governor had better be prepared to move on short notice. To where? asked Governor Schnee. To the von Lettow command if necessary, said the commander (and that Schnee did not relish at all).

Von Lettow had little time even to be brusque with a politician, for General Smuts had decided to throw caution out the window and continue his attack during the rainy season, buttressed by misinformation from northern Boer settlers that in the south, around Kondoa-Irangi, the rains were not so bad. So he reorganized his forces, and gave van Deventer ten thousand men in what was now called the new Second Division. They marched south from Arusha on April 4, 1916. From the beginning they were harried by the rains, which seemed to fall just as hard no matter how far south they went, and by von Lettow's rear guard patrols, which had been left

behind for just such a purpose. The cavalry suffered the worst. This was the land of the tsetse fly, and after four days the twelve-hundred-man mounted force was down to a thousand, and by April 16, when the force reached the edge of Kondoa-Irangi, there were only six hundred fifty men still mounted. Six hundred horses had died from sleeping sickness. The cavalry moved into position to attack Kondor-Irangi, and then discovered that the Germans had vanished once more, burning the place behind them. The British infantry did not arrive until April 30, and then the full extent of the disaster became known. The infantry and engineers had lost most of their animals too. Dysentery and malaria had taken enormous tolls of the men—almost all of the force was affected—and only three thousand of the original ten thousand men ever made Kondoa-Irangi. Once again von Lettow had let Africa do his work for him. General Smuts was mired in the center of enemy country.

The British looked desperately for evidences of success. At one point the company led by Captain Paul Rothert was holding a hill that commanded the only water available in the Lolkisale area, on

the way to Kondoa. The mounted brigade attacked in force, and, after a brisk fight, wounded Captain Rothert. Some of the Askaris surrendered the position, although many of them fled over the hill and into the woods to fight again, as ordered by von Lettow. The British claimed this was a great victory: for the first time, they said, the Germans had suffered a real defeat. They forgot they had said that at Moshi, at Taveta, at Latema Reata, at Kahe But the British had to be forgiven; theirs was a miserable and thankless task, and some, like Captain Meinerzhagen, saw clearly what von Lettow was doing to Smuts. But one could not tell the Boer general that and expect to remain within the command.

The British were now in unfriendly territory—in every sense of the word. The mud stuck to their boots so firmly that some men abandoned boots entirely and went along African-style. But then there were leeches that got into their breeches. Wild animals prowled and growled at night, keeping them from sleep. The horses and mules sickened and died by the score every day. Mosquitos came out in enormous swarms at dusk, and buzzed around the tents and the fires all night long. The

supply department could never catch up, and the men were on emergency rations, which meant about a quarter of the usual. They ate fresh fruits and nuts and corn when they passed by a village farm. But the fresh fruits added to their dysentery, and there was no way they could cook the corn because the continual rain doused the fires and kept the wood of the bush so damp it would scarcely burn.

As an adventure in survival and bravery, the British march to Kondoa was magnificent. As a military move, it was the most costly that Smuts had yet made.

And yet, by accident, it brought about the first serious defeat that von Lettow was to suffer. Von Lettow had recognized a threat in van Deventer's crazy penetration of the south during this season, and knowing that Smuts was most unlikely to move along the railroad corridor in this weather, he brought back much of the force in between to make an attack on the overextended and nearly exhausted van Deventer brigade. Troops from the supply bases along the Central Railroad had been moved down to Kondoa, along with two more of the

guns from the Koenigsberg. Von Lettow was planning to attack on May 10. The troops in position, on May 9 von Lettow got on his bicycle and made the rounds of the positions. He scouted the enemy, and saw that all was well. He had brought up about three thousand men, and so far as he could estimate, he had at least as many as van Deventer had in the field. He could never ask for more than that.

But on the night of May 9, Lieutenant Colonel von Bock's company, always trustworthy, had gone out on patrol to test the enemy defense for the coming battle. Von Lettow, having issued his orders for the next day, had gone back into the hills to the headquarters camp to get a little rest. He was too tired to eat, but he drank a cup of coffee laced with rum, and soon fell fast asleep. There was nothing more that he could do. The action on the next day would tell the tale of the column. The signs were that the action would go very well. Van Deventer's men were sick, and the general himself was so contemptuous of the black Askaris that he had not even bothered to have them dig in. Instead, they were simply grouped in companies around their fires, waiting for their officers to tell them what to

do. The next day, from prepared positions, the German companies intended to drive in on them. Von Bock's probe that night was simply to test the British positions and make sure they remained unchanged.

But in moving forward, the Germans aroused the pickets outside the British camp, and a stray rifle bullet killed Lieutenant Colonel von Bock. His second in command was an ambitious young officer, Captain Kornatzky. He moved ahead, as he was expected to do, but when he found that the British position was extremely soft, instead of moving back to report, he decided he could gain glory by biting off a big piece of the British line that night, and he moved in to flank the enemy and drive them back to the German lines.

Around midnight, von Lettow was awakened by his aide, Lieutenant Wunderlich, who saw flashes and heard shooting in the direction of the British camp. This should not be; the only activity ordered that night was von Bock's patrol. But it continued. Von Lettow considered the problem: there was no sane way he could order up the rest of the force, if he had wanted to do so. The von Bock company

had run into trouble, and they would have to fight it out.

Captain Kornatzky had decided to drive straight on into Kondoa and take that place, then present it next morning to von Lettow with a gesture. The British might have been asleep but they did not panic this time. Moving into the town, Kornatzky's men ran straight into the changing of the guard, and a firelight developed. There were charges and countercharges and hand-to-hand fighting—in which Captain Kornatzky was killed, apparently by Captain Meinertzhagen. By daybreak the German company was withdrawing under the direction of Captain Friedrich Lincke. They had lost about fifty men, and more were wounded. Von Lettow was wounded slightly as he moved toward the front, by a splinter from a British artillery piece. The defeat of the von Bock detachment was not critical, strategically, except that it caused von Lettow to call off the attack planned for the next morning. According to Meinertzhagen, the German attack would probably have been successful if it had gone according to plan. Von Lettow backed away, kept his troops ringed about the enemy in the hills, and waited.

Africa, the tsetse fly, and the anopheles mosquito were doing his work; the British garrison grew weaker every day.

The British, of course, claimed another victory. This one, said Meinertzhagen, with a fine disregard for the past, was the first "great victory." If so, it could not be proven by the end results. General Smuts had sent van Deventer down to capture von Lettow and the Central Railway. Van Deventer was paralyzed in Kondoa-Irangi and Smuts would not give him any reinforcements. The grand drive of ten thousand troops had come to nothing except to gain another piece of territory, with the German guerillas all around. Van Deventer was down to about fifteen hundred active troops, which meant he had suffered eighty-five percent casualties, besides losing most of his transport and horses. The Germans had lost perhaps a hundred men in the whole move from Arusha down to Kondoa. If that was a British victory, Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck could use a hundred more just like it. For as the British press was saying in 1916, von Lettow could never hope to "win" this war, and his situation in the spring of 1916 was "desperate." General Smuts,

with thirty-five thousand men, was astride the Northern Railroad and would soon move down to the coast. General van Deventer, at Kondoa, would be able to move toward the Central Railroad just as soon as Smuts sent him troops and supplies—if the manpower held out, and if the British wanted to commit it, they had plenty of manpower. But from the outset of the war von Lettow's situation had been desperate—"impossible," said Governor Schnee—and von Lettow had learned to live with the tensions and uncertainty. The year 1916 was no different from the beginning<sup>o</sup> he had insufficient troops and supplies, he was under attack by superior forces, and his one hope was to keep on the move, keep the enemy chasing him, and keep those thousands of British soldiers employed.

Late in May von Lettow assessed his situation. The Belgians, allied to the British, were launching an attack from the west aimed at Tabora, Governor Schnee's temporary capital. A small British force was beginning an attack from Nyasaland that would come up toward the Central Railroad from the south. Even the uncertain Portuguese, who had decided the Allies were going to win and so had de-

clared war on Germany in March 1916, had tried to send an expeditionary force over the Rovuma River from Mozambique. They had completely botched the operation (von Lettow's small garrison had captured or killed them all), but the potential for mischief from that quarter remained. And then, of course, General Smuts was sitting up at Moshi, just waiting to move with his enormous force, and van Deventer was in the heartland of von Lettow's territory. He might have wiped van Deventer out just then, and he knew it. He had intercepted a telegram from van Deventer to Smuts in which the field commander outlined his troubles: a thousand men down with wounds and illness, few hospital supplies, inadequate food for the troops, lack of military supplies and transport. If von Lettow wanted to commit most of his force in the area just then, he could wipe out the enemy before Smuts could send aid. But Smuts would act, and the dangers in terms of heavy casualties were great. Von Lettow had to remind himself constantly of his mission, and not allow prospects of quick but perhaps meaningless victories to divert him.

Considering his prospects, knowing that he faced at least a four-pronged assault in the next few weeks, Colonel von Lettow turned to his map. If he left the Masai steppe and marched east and south, he could stay in countryside that was perfectly suited to guerilla warfare: plenty of mountain, bush, and forest to duck into for protection, plenty of produce and food for the troops to take from the land, and an enormous land area in which to move about. If he could move into the Mahenge country, he could survive for years perhaps. It would be almost impossible for the enemy to surround him, for there were few roads and no railroads at all south of the Central Line. To be sure, the British could bring supplies up along Lake Nyasa, but once they reached the east bank, either the British must build roads or rely on carts and carriers, just as the Germans would. All the technical advances of modern warfare could be reduced to von Lettow's own dimensions. The British would always have the advantage of numbers and weapons and supplies, but von Lettow could make it so difficult for them to receive these that he could possibly succeed in his self-appointed mission. This course had been in the

back of his mind from the beginning, so it was no new idea; with the multiple attack, events were simply being advanced in the timetable.

The British continued to think of railroads, towns, and ports as the factors that would lead to their victory. General Smuts was indeed preparing to drive on Tanga. He expected to be there by the end of June, and to have von Lettow surrounded and surrendered or dead by the end of the year.

The spring rains ended early. On May 21, 1916, General Smuts launched the drive down the Northern Railroad that was promised to bring von Lettow to bay. The British expected him to move his main force up north for the defense of Tanga, and there Smuts would surround him and capture him. Even by this time, the British seemed to have no inkling that von Lettow had planned the guerilla campaign. Major Kraut, with two thousand Askaris, was in charge of the complete defense of the northern area. He was not expected to win any battles. He understood completely that he and his men were expendable, although von Lettow did not want them expended. "Don't get yourself captured" was the commander's last advice to his lieutenant. It was a

cogent remark; both men knew General Smuts, their enemy, and his tactics. Sure enough, when the drive began, Smuts sent one column along the right flank, into the Pare range, a middle column directly down the Northern Railroad, and an even larger column on the German left along the crocodile-infested Pangani River. So by all the rules Major Kraut was boxed in and all the British had to do was keep going and they would capture him.

But that was all on paper. The British advance on both flanks was hindered by the blown bridges and tree blocks laid across the roads by the retreating Askaris. The roads ran out all too soon, and then the troops had to build roads so that the wagons and trucks could come up behind with their supplies. That meant moving boulders, chopping trees, filling holes, all done in the heat and dust of the daytime, while at night the mosquitos played around the camps.

Malaria was the killer. Nearly every man came down with malaria, and it might simply put him low for a few days, or it might kill him, or it might bring complications: weakness from loss of weight, heart attack, and insanity The British suffered

more than the Germans from malaria largely because of their uniform; the shorts and long stockings left a large expanse of skin for attack, and the short-sleeved shirts, open at the neck, gave more. The Germans dressed like the Africans, in high-necked uniforms, long-sleeved shirts, and puttees, so that only their hands and heads were exposed, and these were the least likely points of mosquito attack. The bush was alive with bugs and snakes and animals, most of the former two venomous in one way or another. The giraffes knocked down the low British telephone lines and elephants knocked down the poles. Lions frightened the troops at night. And ahead, always, was the Kraut detachment, moving back slowly, causing all the pain and trouble possible, firing with the single Koenigsberg gun given Kraut, which he had mounted on a railroad car, and moving back as he retreated, firing all the way to keep the British advance slower. The Askaris sniped from trees and then scurried on to snipe again. Occasionally they laid an ambush, but these had to be carefully planned, because they took too many men and brought danger of capture. It was enough to knock down a few British soldiers

every day, keep them advancing at slow speed, and let Africa take its toll.

Where opportunity offered, the Askaris did lay in ambush. It was always the same. The machine guns were the key and they were placed with the usual attention to fields of fire. There was no question that the Germans in Africa (as well as in France) were the masters of the machine gun; the British never seemed to get the idea themselves. Their guns were carried by pack animal or wagon. When the Germans set an ambush they brought their gun up in a wooden frame, extended the tripod legs, and set up the field of fire, which might mean chopping away the brush for two hundred yards. The gun was concealed by a log or an earthen emplacement. When the British arrived, the machine gun crew opened fire, cleared the area, snapped up the tripod legs, moved the gun into its frame so the hot barrel would not burn the carriers, and were off to a new position before the British could get their Vickers gun off the mule or out of the wagon and set it up. By the time the British machine gunners opened fire, there was nothing in front to fire at, and when they overran the German

position all that remained was a scattering of spent shell casings.

The British force moved like a juggernaut. Smuts was in a hurry, for he believed that if he were spry enough he would capture von Lettow that much faster. The troops were driven to move fifteen and twenty miles a day, and remarkably, they did so, until May 30, when Major Kraut set an expert trap for them at Buiko, on the Pangani River.

The terrain was perfectly suited for the German purpose, because the three British columns here were forced together. The river turned east in the foothills of the Pare range, and the railroad also ran through this narrow pass. It was conceivable, but not very practical, that the left flank force could go out around the mountain. So Brigadier Sheppard, the commander of the main, or Pangani force, was to make a frontal assault, end with a bayonet charge, and drive the enemy out of this threatening position. If Major Kraut had been able to read Smuts's orders, they might have amused him a little. He had prepared a very satisfactory ambush. The Koenigsberg gun was moved back behind the pass, and artillery observers were on the slopes of

both sides of the pass, with their field telephones, giving the gunners the range. They could see the whole British column as it came, including the supply wagons far in the rear. They did not waste shells on troops who could drop off the sides of the road, but concentrated on the wagons, creating confusion and stopping the whole train. Sheppard was ordered to take the hill position and he sent the Rhodesians in to do it. They saw nothing until they came to the thousand-yard point from the German positions, and then the scrub and the hill-side erupted in fire, and the Rhodesians scurried for cover. Meanwhile, as the firing began, the Koenigsberg gun was already being moved back along the rail line, and Major Kraut was evacuating his command post. The rear guard continued to fire at the British, keeping their heads down. Then the riflemen peppered the road and roadsides as the gunners folded up their guns. Then they were gone, just as the British came charging forward with bayonets. They did not even make the charge; for some reason that was not explained, General Smuts ordered the action broken off. But he did not

need to; Major Kraut was already moving back along the rail line and the river.

The British would have been able to supply their force by using the railroad, if the Germans had not torn up every tie and every piece of track and destroyed them thoroughly as they moved toward Tanga. They blew the trestles and the bridges, and undermined the roadway. The British had to continue to use wagons and trucks, and the going was painfully slow.

Major Kraut had his options, and at this point he decided to cut away from the railroad at Korogwe, where the narrow-gauge railroad joined the Northern Line to the Central Line. In this way, Kraut could hope to join von Lettow in the south, and thus save all the men, guns, and supplies that otherwise would be sacrificed at Tanga. Perhaps at Tanga Kraut could get away, but the going down to Dar es Salaam would be much easier for the enemy, and his chances of fighting back to the middle of the Masai steppe seemed less than optimum. So it was south, and he made the plans to head in that direction.

General Smuts sensed that Major Kraut might do just that, and he was hoping once more to hurry down and turn Kraut (as he had failed to do so far) and drive a force between Kraut and von Lettow.

So Major Kraut headed south, again destroying the tracks of the narrow-gauge railroad behind him, laying ambushes, blowing up bridges, and moving always the way he wanted to go. The British followed, constantly trying to get ahead and outflank the Germans, and never succeeding. Major Kraut set one ambush after another. The technique was always the same, and it was almost always effective. The British tried bringing up field guns and pulverizing the villages where these stands were made, and they did kill some Askaris that way, but not many. Not nearly so many men as they lost themselves to the blistering fire of the Maxim machine guns. It got so that one of the British officers began to refer to the ambushes as "the usual trap."

In a way it seems odd that General Smuts still did not understand what Colonel von Lettow was up to. One would think that Smuts's own career as a guerilla fighter in the Boer War (where he was a dashing commander of cavalry first of all) would

have given him insight into the German commander's mind. But von Lettow could not have asked for a more bookish soldier. Smuts's maneuvers were straight out of von Clausewitz; attack, flank, and conquer. He kept believing that he could somehow bring von Lettow to bay by starting at one specific position and bringing his army along in columns. He felt that he could and must conquer von Lettow in the field, and this attitude put Smuts completely in von Lettow's capable guerilla hands. The Schutztruppe commander was like a hunter playing several rhinoceroses at once; the animals were extremely dangerous but their one move was to charge. As long as von Lettow could keep Smuts on the road, moving that enormous army across the East African countryside on terrible roads, or no roads at all, losing equipment and men to the terrain and climate, von Lettow was master of the situation, and doing precisely what he had set out to do: make the British enemy expend an enormous effort; at the same time staying out of their hands.

Smuts's professional subordinates alternated between despair and admiration for their commander. In many ways he ran the army like a cava-

lry troop; if he wanted them to push forward one day, he came up front himself and issued the orders. They were always obeyed with alacrity. But moving the troops by fits and starts did not win a campaign, and Smuts was becoming badly entangled in von Lettow's web.

Somehow the South African general got the idea that von Lettow was on the skids, and that his Askaris had lost their will to fight. Far from that, von Lettow was just then, in the third week of July, moving his main force up from Kondoa-Irangi to Dodoma, where the troops boarded trains that took them along the Central Line to Morogoro. Then they marched north to meet Major Kraut's withdrawing force and protect it from a flank attack.

The next two weeks saw repetition of the past: Smuts came charging big down to Morogoro, which gave him control of the Central Rail-road, but von Lettow disappeared ahead of him, and moved south into the Rufiji River country. The British were exasperated, but they still did not get the idea. Captain Meinertzhagen probably knew more about von Lettow than any other man in Smuts's force, but Meinertzhagen was still blinded by British feelings of

military superiority. He believed that Smuts and the commanders before him had simply missed the many opportunities to win a decisive victory over the Germans. He did not realize that von Lettow, recognizing the British ability to always bring in more force, had never intended to fight a decisive battle, and that von Lettow's apparent massing of forces at Taveta and afterwards had been an enormously skillful baiting of the enemy. Only when von Lettow's subordinates rushed in without his knowledge—as Captain Kornatzky had done fatally at Kondoa—had von Lettow been drawn into an attack, and that had involved only the forward element of his Kondoa force, and the losses had not been serious. So the assessment of British officers who saw "lost opportunities" was illusory.

The German retreat south was anything but easy, but von Lettow had expected that; Africa was a cruel country. At one point Kraut's porters began to drop from typhus. He left hundreds of them at Handeni to greet the British (like a time bomb) when he evacuated that town just before Brigadier Sheppard's men rushed in. Just south of Handeni, the hurrying British thought they had trapped

Kraut, particularly since he must be suffering from the shortage of carriers. So they walked straight into a trap at Kangata. The Maxim machine guns did their usual deadly work and the South Africans lost two hundred men before reinforcements could be brought up. By that time, Kraut's gunners had vanished into the bush once more. Kraut was doing just fine.

As von Lettow moved north, Major Kraut approached the Nguru Mountains, and Smuts tried hard to stop him by the usual end-around, before the Germans could get into this difficult country of hills and valleys. Smuts had sent a flying column out to the left to flank the Germans while the main force attacked a German position twelve miles below Kangata. The Germans had to stop once in a while and fight an action just so the carriers could get some rest; but Kraut had an ability almost as great as von Lettow's of knowing exactly where to stop and how long to stay. In this case, the Germans were holed up in a bridgehead on the Luikigura River. The position looked again like a chance for the British to roll up the line on the left, keeping

Kraut involved at the bridgehead, and then capture the whole German force with a flanking movement.

The British decided to use a new weapon that had recently joined the Smuts force: the armored car. Major Sir John Willoughby, another South African hero of the rebellious years, had organized this force of armored cars powered by fifty-horsepower Rolls-Royce engines. In 1916 terms fifty-horsepower seemed prodigious, but these steel-plated vehicles with heavy turrets and machine guns weighed seven thousand pounds (as opposed to the average truck's one thousand pounds) and, as the British were too soon to learn, they were underpowered.

Major Willoughby led his armored cars in the frontal assault on Kraut's bridgehead. Kraut knew they were coming—his scouts had spotted the armor days before—and he had prepared a frontal trench that was three times as wide as the usual trench. It was in effect a tank trap, although Kraut did not know the term, since both the tank and the armored car were completely new weapons. In this attack the armored cars lumbered up the road, looking totally invincible, machine guns firing upon

the German positions as they came, and then they came to the trench. The first car slammed on its brakes and stopped at the forward edge of the trench. As it stopped, a German field-gun shell hit the radiator, and that car was out of action. The other cars came up, and the crews piled out and under fire filled the trench. They moved ahead then, cut a path through the Germans, and made a spearhead for the infantry. The flanking force performed faultlessly, coming around behind the Germans and even engaging them in a bayonet action. But the Germans got away again. Major Kraut had not one but two exit routes, and when the British closed off his exit directly south, the Askaris faded into the mountains and were lost in the forest, to come out again south of the British force. This particular action was the best indication yet of the maneuvering superiority of a force of men unencumbered with wagons, mules, trucks, and armored cars, who had to rely on human footpower and had learned to do so.

The more heavy equipment the British brought into the campaign, the more difficult Smuts's movements became. After Luikigura, the general

had to call a halt to rest the troops. He should have noticed then that the Englishmen were in dreadful shape, the Indians were worse off, the South Africans were exhausted, and only the King's African Rifles—the black troops—were unaffected by the heat and the difficult terrain. Smuts's racism, like that of most of his countrymen, was so intense that he could not conceive of conditions under which black men would be more effective soldiers than whites and Orientals. The evidence was before him, but he ignored it, and thus gave von Lettow still another advantage.

For the German force was in excellent shape, physically and in terms of morale. When von Lettow came marching up through Morogoro on his way to meet Kraut, the troops swung along briskly, singing and shouting to the people of the town, and the civilians were impressed, as they should have been. Von Lettow's force had suffered casualties and would suffer more, but there was not the slightest hint of surrender in their movements.

Smuts stopped at Msiha, a bowl in the Nguru mountain country whose single advantage was that it was flat enough to pitch tents. When Major

Kraut's scouts discovered that the enemy was going to camp, they reported to von Lettow, who sent two of the Koenigsberg four-inch guns up onto the slope of Mount Kanga. It took the gunners a day or two to get the range, and then they peppered the British camp morning, noon, and night. The British brought up their own guns, but they did not have the range to reach the Koenigsberg guns. The British brought in a whole Royal Flying Squadron, with eight clumsy biplanes designed for no-one-knew-what. But they could carry bombs and they did. Their pilots went out bravely to sixthousand-foot Mount Kanga and bombed. But the Askaris had so cleverly camouflaged the Koenigsberg guns that the British pilots never found them. They dropped their bombs by sheer guesswork and never hurt any Germans or Askaris at all.

The Koenigsberg guns were proving enormously useful. Nine of them remained, the one having been sacrificed on the Northern Railroad, and blown up by the Germans when it was impossible to move it off its fixed track. Five were concentrated at Dar es Salaam, but the others were moved around the colony as von Lettow needed them. As usual, von Let-

tow found ways of employing them that had never been envisaged by the Krupp works. In the Nguru Mountains, the guns were sunk into deep pits, which were laced over with tree branches. They fired almost like howitzers, with a high, looping trajectory that brought the shells pointing almost straight down, and created enormous craters. They were not fired at specific targets, but at the whole camp area, and for some reason the guns seemed to track the hospital, so that after two weeks the British moved it completely out of the area.

The beginning of August found General Smuts right where von Lettow wanted him, mired deep in the East African bush, and three hundred miles from Taveta, the railhead for resupply. There was only one road in and out of Msiha. In one direction it led ultimately to the Northern Railroad. About ten miles south of Msiha, it led to von Lettow's headquarters, and ahead was Morogoro and the control of the Central Railroad line that cut the colony in half between the Indian Ocean and Lake Tanganyika. In any ordinary war, the control of the Northern Railroad, the Central Railroad, and the Indian Ocean beyond would almost certainly mean victory.

General Smuts was still fighting an ordinary war. He was going to capture Morogoro, and by the usual method of envelopment. After the Central Railroad fell into British hands, what was there left for von Lettow to do but surrender?

Von Lettow, meanwhile, had been poking around on his bicycle in the area south of the railroad, to find the best routes for his withdrawal, the best points for ambushes, the best manner in which to throw his enemies into more confusion. Even on the lower levels they still did not understand the sort of warfare he was waging. The British camps were alive with talk about the coming end; they claimed every advance to be an enormous victory, and every time the Askaris retreated from some position they'd "fled." The British, according to the British press at home, had scored one "rout" after another. The Germans were "outwitted" time and again by the wily fox hunter from South Africa. But as usual, the fox was still at large.

In July, three British warships went cautiously into the bay, and shelled Tanga unmercifully, just as if there were any troops there. They landed even more cautiously, remembering what had happened

at the battle in 1914, and found the place absolutely deserted except for Indian tradesmen and Africans. Here was another "great victory." Von Lettow's men were there, in the bush outside the town. They remained, watching, and reported back to "The Commandant," as he was now called throughout East Africa.

Once von Lettow's pressure against General van Deventer at Kon-doa-Irangi was reduced, the British decided to move. The long rest had brought many of the troops back to health and had also brought reinforcements. Van Deventer split his force into five columns and started for the Central Railroad. The Germans left behind by von Lettow went ahead of them, stopping, usually at the waterholes, to lay an ambush, and then moving on. On July 31 the British reached Dodoma, to find a white flag flying above the railroad station and virtually no one there but a German official who "officially" surrendered the place, and the usual combination of Africans and Indians.

Smuts resumed his move southward, with the usual flourishes of encirclement. He never seemed to learn. Von Lettow moved back, Commander

Schoenfeld of the Koenigsberg managing the two big guns, and made ready to disappear into the south, toward the Rufiji country. One of the guns was placed on the Central Railroad, and used to harry van Deventer's troops as they made their way toward Morogoro, where they hoped to link up with Smuts.

Von Lettow's force did not escape altogether from the difficulties of Africa. By and large, the Askaris were immune to the usual diseases, or at least some that struck hard at the westerners. But no one was immune to typhus, and during the campaign along the railroad, Captain Klinghardt came down with it. But throughout the campaign, the Germans and the Askaris never suffered the way the enemy did. They had the advantage of speed, mobility, and acclimatization, which the enemy never achieved.

Those attributes came into play again on the Smuts march down toward Morogoro, where he again expected to achieve his final en-circlement and the end of the war in East Africa. General Sheppard started an encircling move from the northern position, but his trucks and even his bul-

lock carts bogged down. The Germans harried them so that they could only water the animals at night, and the terrain was so rugged that halfway along Sheppard saw that he would never succeed in turning von Lettow's flank, and decided to withdraw.

A South African brigade under Brigadier Enslin was sent around the Uluguru Mountains to try to encircle von Lettow from the other side. They took a page from the von Lettow book, cut back on rations, and left all heavy equipment behind. They might have achieved something, but von Lettow was ever on the watch, roving around all sides of his front on his bicycle, and he saw the dust cloud that meant many men on many horses. He let them complete the encirclement, and sent the men at the forward posts, who had been posted for just such an action, off into the bush. Then he set a trap near Kisaki with a strong force. The British came around, saw that the German rear was unguarded, and went off guard themselves. The German and Askari contingent left to deal with the column let it go through, then fell on the British rear and decimated the brigade, which finally fled. Fifteen South Africans were taken prisoner.

The British command threatened to become unraveled over this incident. Tempers worn thin by constant defeat—which the senior officers recognized if the public did not—erupted, and charges were thrown by the British against the Boers and the Boers against the British and the Indians. Captain Meinertzhagen was the most intelligent observer among them, and he predicted after this fiasco that von Lettow would still be leading them a merry chase when the war ended.

That was not the sort of statement anyone could make to Smuts, nor would it have been acceptable in London, where Smuts's cables indicated that the British were winning battle after battle against a brilliant and powerful foe. Von Lettow-Vorbeck's name had already become a legend in Germany and it was nearly a legend elsewhere, for by this time the world realized that if all the claims of British victory had been true, von Lettow would have been finished

But the news was deceptive. Van Deventer reached the Central Railroad and then pushed down toward Dar es Salaam. He reached Kilosa on August 22. This was just fifty miles from Morogoro,

which was Smuts's target. On August 25 von Lettow evacuated Morogoro, and next day from the hills above watched the British enter. As usual, the Germans had followed a scorched-earth policy, particularly in regard to the railroad, destroying ties, rails, and even the roadbed, burning bridges, blowing culverts, and wrecking the rolling stock they left behind.

General Smuts came triumphantly into Morogoro and then discovered that his bird had flown again, and that this time he had taken enormous amounts of supplies with him on the heads of carriers.

Smuts hardly paused. "Getting" von Lettow had become a crusade that devoured him. Now, he told himself, with the quarry fleeing into the bush, where there were no cities to assist him, the task should be easier than before.

## The Long, Long Trek Begins

In terms of traditional warfare, by August 1916 Colonel von Lettow- Vorbeck was washed up. He had lost both the railroads that would have made supply easy. The port of Tanga was in enemy hands. As von Lettow had retreated to Morogoro, the British had besieged Dar es Salaam, the capital and largest city as well as the most important port.

After the destruction of the Koenigsberg by the monitors in the Rufiji River delta, von Lettow had entrusted Captain Looff with the defense of Dar es Salaam, but in the last few months he had taken away three of Looff's five four-inch guns, one by one, for use in the bush and on the railroads. By August Looff had only two of the guns. They had been in use all spring and summer, for on twenty-eight separate occasions the British had brought up their cruisers and lesser ships and from outside the harbor had sent literally thousands of shells into the city. The guns of the Koenigsberg were their

major targets. The British sent observation planes buzzing around the city to spot them, but they never seemed to be able to coordinate observation with firing. Most of the British shells seemed to strike the palm forests around Dar es Salaam. The Germans, whose morale was higher than ever in view of von Lettow's continued fight against overwhelming forces, began to make jokes about the British shelling. Every time the guns spoke, was the story at the Dar es Salaam club, the gourmets rubbed their hands because that night they knew hearts of palm salad would be on the menu.

By August, von Lettow had realized that Dar es Salaam was really undefensible, particularly once the Central Railroad fell to the enemy. He ordered most of the Askaris and their German officers, navy as well as army, to prepare to join him on the long trek he would be taking into the southern bush country. By August, then, a single cruiser could have entered the harbor, landed its marines, and seized the capital of the colony, no matter how hard Captain Looff might fight. Fortunately for the Germans, the British did not know this, and Looff had put so many suspicious-looking objects into the

bay and the harbor that the British were certain Dar es Salaam was as deadly as a cobra's nest from land or sea.

Captain Looff had given command of the guns of the Koenigsberg to Lieutenant Richard Wenig, a tall blond youth who had lost his left leg in the last fight of the Koenigsberg, but who was now moving about so successfully on the new leg given him in the hospital that most did not know of his affliction. He cheerfully predicted that at some point, he would be off in the bush riding a horse for the rest of the campaign, and directing his beloved guns against the enemy.

At the moment the two guns remaining in his charge were hidden on a hill behind Dar es Salaam, and when the British approached they fired on the ships.

On August 16, at four o'clock in the morning, Captain Looff was awakened by his aide, who announced that five ships were entering the harbor. They could only be enemy, and as they came in the look-outs saw that their decks were dark with men. The British were about to land.

Lieutenant Wenig needed no orders to open fire; his first shots went short but soon he had the range and began to score hits. The British replied, and by the time the sun came up the town and harbor were wreathed in smoke. The British raised an observation balloon, and the fat sausage rose rapidly to tower above its cruiser, while the men in the basket directed the ships' gunfire. The woods around the Koenigsberg guns were soon torn up by gunfire—plenty of salad for tonight. The hillside was dry from the summer sun, and blazed up. The planter's bungalow behind the hills was hit and burned fiercely, with no one to spare the time to put out the fire. The rain of sand that fell on the Koenigsberg guns was so heavy that the gunners had to stop occasionally and wash out the barrels to prevent sand damage.

As the light brightened, Lieutenant Wenig climbed up the hill to see how well his gunners had shot. One steamer was listing heavily, and moving out to sea. Two smaller ships were approaching her as if to offer help. Another steamer had lost her smokestack. Most heartening to Wenig was the realization that the ships had stopped their advance to

the beach and were turning. Apparently the invasion had been repelled.

Lieutenant Wenig came back down the hill, to speak to the men of his gun. Suddenly there was an enormous explosion and he was picked up and thrown fifteen feet into a gulch, where he lit on a thorn bush, not very comfortably, which broke his fall. A British shell had struck the gun squarely, destroying it and killing the crew.

Lieutenant Wenig moved up to the gun to look at it. It was wrecked, no doubt about it, but the gun was still pointed toward the harbor, and it had just been loaded when it was hit and the whole carriage smashed. He pulled the firing lanyard, the gun spoke one more time and then collapsed on its recoil, the destruction complete.

That last shell very nearly struck one of the cruisers, and the near miss persuaded the commander of the expedition that he must soften up those guns. For another two hours the British cruisers lay in the harbor and bombarded the hillside. They did not hit the remaining gun.

That was good news, but that very day Captain Looff had bad news that showed the future more

clearly than the repulse of the British sea invasion. For weeks, General Smuts's troops had been moving down the coastal road. After Tanga was declared secure, they took Pangani, then Sadani, and finally assaulted Bagamoyo on the coast a few miles above Dar es Salaam. All the way down they had been resisted by von Lettow's rear guard, which had been left behind for that purpose.

With the fall of Dodoma, von Lettow had written off the whole North Country, including Dar es Salaam, but the place still had to be defended as part of the strategy of tying down British power. It was working marvelously, as the abortive and expensive British landing attempt of August 16 indicated. But Captain Looff knew, with the word from Morogoro and Bagamoyo, that the end was very near. Captain Bock von Wulfingen and Captain von Bodecker had fallen at Bagamoyo. Lieutenant Friedrich, of the crew of the *Koenigsberg*, had taken one of the guns up for coastal defense in the north. He and the gun had both gone down at Bagamoyo too.

Following the aborted landing of August 16, the British showed a fine respect for the defenses of Dar es Salaam, even as von Lettow was summoning

the defenders to join him on the trek. For the next two weeks the British prepared for a major assault on the German colonial capital. They sent observation planes spiraling above the city, circling and diving like boxers to escape the nonexistent anti-aircraft guns. Down from Bagamoyo came a force of two thousand men by land, and they were supported by a squadron of warships that steamed along the shore, in sight of the troops marching south, to give them fire support if necessary. There was no opposition. The defenders had already moved out to join von Lettow in the south. The British troops suffered, but from thirst and the heat.

On September 1, Captain Looff began the last defense of the indefensible city. He was following orders to make it as difficult as possible for the British, which was not easy since he now had one Koenigsberg gun and 125 men, twenty-five of whom were sick in the hospital.

As the British advanced cautiously on September 3, Captain Looff gave Lieutenant Wenig his new orders: he was to fire two shots from the Koenigsberg gun, then move the gun, fire two more shots and move it again. All afternoon and evening Wenig

had the gun fired sporadically, hoping to give the impression of a number of guns in a number of positions. That night Captain Loeff had the searchlights manned (they had come from his own and other ships) and he stationed men at various high points to signal meaninglessly with lanterns, as if the defenders were in touch with some superior relieving force.

On September 4, the British began to advance, eight companies of United Kingdom and Indian troops. They were met by two platoons of Askaris, whose orders were to fire a few rounds, fall back, and when they reached the outskirts of the city, to skirt around but not go inside. The defense would then end, and they would march off to join von Lettow in the south.

On that same day, fifteen British warships approached Dar es Salaam harbor. They plastered the port and the city beyond with everything possible, not sparing the government hospital or any other building. After an hour, the commander, Rear Admiral Charlton, who had replaced Admiral King-Hall, sent in a ship flying a white flag, bearing an

ultimatum for the "military governor" of Dar es Salaam:

"You have accomplished admirable things and you have defended yourselves valiantly," said the note. "We now demand that you surrender under pain of seeing your city bombarded and destroyed. We guarantee the lives of the population on condition that the surrender include all armed forces and all war materials. . . ."

The deputy district commissioner went out to accept the ultimatum for the Germans. He was still there only because he was too ill to travel with the others to the interior. He accepted the terms, and the British began to come ashore. They took the surrender of all the armed forces, which amounted to the sick and wounded in the hospital. They found no war materials. The Koenigsberg gun had been moved out and all able-bodied men were gone. Captain Looff watched the enemy come from a vantage point on the hill behind the city. The British marched in and captured 370 noncombatant Germans, and 80 hospital patients.

The city was in remarkably good shape for a place that had under-gone so much bombing. The

railroad station was wrecked, partly by the British, partly by the retreating Germans. The governor's palace had received a great deal of attention from the British warships and it was in ruins. There were half a dozen ships sunk in the harbor, so the port would not be immediately usable to the British.

But once again, according to the British press, the British had scored an important victory. On paper their control of East Africa was commanding: they had Tanga, Dar es Salaam, both railroads, the whole coastline down to the southeastern corner. And the Belgians had captured Tabora, Governor Schnee's last capital, and Schnee had gone to join von Lettow for protection. The only thing they did not have, once again, was the gray fox who kept leading them on, and he was already moving to make life harder for the British enemy.

At the end of August, von Lettow stopped off in the mountains. While he was there, up with a front line unit, as was his habit, he saw a small man in British khaki with a neat, red Vandyke beard and a big campaign hat of the sort the Boers wore. He recognized the figure as that of his enemy, General

Smuts, and he had him within rifle sight but he did not shoot; he felt it would be unsporting. That was the sort of war that would yet be fought in 1916, when the words "honor" and "chivalry" still had meaning. When the story got to the British through a captured Askari, they accepted it at face value, although some of the British officers thought von Lettow a fool for it. And the von Lettow legend grew.

Von Lettow just then had barely recovered from an attack of blackwater fever, and when he slowed his retreat, some thought his health was the cause. But there was another, more vital reason: the need to re-cement relations with the blacks of this region and to secure his own sources of supply.

Von Lettow's force still numbered some ten thousand Askaris and Germans in three major areas. He had about five thousand men under his direct control just then, with another fifteen hundred in the south ready to join him. General Wahle, who had been fighting rear-guard actions in the west, was now coming down to join up. They would need plenty of food. During the past months, von Lettow had built up supplies in many godowns around Kisaki. But the native tribes there had not

been properly indoctrinated about the war; they really knew nothing at all about events and they were not willing to become involved. To get carriers took some doing. Further, a herd of two thousand cattle had been brought down from the northern grasslands ahead of the von Lettow force, and they were exhausted. They needed rest before they could move on. The supply force needed time to move ox-carts and mule trains with supplies, because once this area was left there would be no more dumps, and von Lettow would indeed have to live completely off the land unless he could transfer these supplies to get them within reasonable distance for his future needs.

General Smuts, as usual, predicted that the next move would be the last. On the eve of the capture of Dar es Salaam he said that he expected to move down to the Rufiji River delta in the fall, and there to corner von Lettow. By that time, he was sure, the Askaris would have begun to desert the Germans; after all, what was there to fight for after all the cities and everything important were gone? The British had even come across a dump of shells

brought by the blockade-runners for the Koenigsberg guns and had blown them up.

If what von Lettow had been doing before was irregular warfare by the normal standard, what was to come after the retreat below the rail line was something entirely new to the British—guerilla warfare conducted in the unmapped countryside. Von Lettow proposed nothing less than to become a bandit. His course would have been understood far more by Americans or Australians, and it should have been clearly understood by General Smuts of all people, who had done exactly the same things. But somehow the idea of the Germans being able to maintain the loyalty of black Africans under such conditions seemed to be beyond the imagination of the British.

At Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, and in the hill missions beyond, the women and children of the officers and men of the Schutztruppe said tearful goodbyes to their men and prepared to live apart from them, under British rule. The missionaries, the women, and the German civilians now went to the cities and towns. A handful of German nurses elected to accompany the German field force on

what they were told would be an almost intolerable mission. In the final partings at the mission in Mge-ta, in the mountains above Morogoro, they could tell that already. Von Lettow had been working himself to the bone. He rode everywhere along the troop line, making sure that his men had all they needed and were ready to move on. He told them then that for the next few weeks they would have to stand and fight more often than in the past; the reason for this change was to give the carriers and the supply force a chance to get well ahead of the column, which would be traveling with the British on its heels.

The military picture had changed drastically. The British now had committed eighty thousand troops to German East Africa, with all the necessary supplies and support. And that was just the army involvement. The Royal Navy was also deeply involved, expending hundreds of thousands of pounds and committing scores of ships and thousands of men to the task of defeating a handful.

Lake Tanganyika became a battleground in the winter of 1915-16. Until January of that year, the Germans enjoyed total su-periority on the lake. The

Hedwig von Wissmann and the smaller Kingani could move along the western or Belgian coast of the lake at will. But at the end of 1915 the Belgians began building a fifteenhundred-ton steamer that would be christened the Baron Dhanis.

Captain Zimmer, the chief of von Lettow's navy on the lake, decided he would find and destroy this vessel before she was launched. He sat in his office in Kigoma and interrogated his agents, looked at his maps, and concluded that construction of the ship must be underway in the Lukuyu River, which emptied into the lake a few miles below Albertville, the Belgian port city. In December, he traced the course of the building by foolishly unguarded messages sent from the Congo to Brussels. He sent an agent on a dangerous mission inside the river mouth to observe, and the messenger came back with a report that a keel had been laid. But what was not reported was the existence of two powerful motorboats.

These boats had been brought in by the British to clear the lake. They were forty feet long and only seven feet wide, sleek and fast, and they could make fifteen knots, which made them faster than

any of the German boats. Each carried a forty-seven-mm gun and a machine gun. They were named, with Belgian daintiness, Mimi and Toutou. They had been brought in from England to Cape Town, to Livingston, Rhodesia, by rail, and then forced through the Congo jungle by an army of soldiers, engineers, and carriers, who cut down the jungle, built two hundred bridges, and hauled the boats in by steam tractor. Captain Zimmer had traced the expedition all the way, through his agents, but nobody had ever told him what all this com-motion was about.

On the day after Christmas, the Germans sent the Kingani to destroy the shipyard. The ship stopped in the bay after making a reconnaissance, and was attacked by the two motorboats. The Kingani carried only one gun, a pom-pom mounted on the foredeck, and she was no match for these hornets. In eleven minutes the fight was over and the German ship was captured. The Belgians repaired her, renamed her Fifi, and sent her to sail the lake and fight the Germans. In short order the British began to dominate the lake. The Hedwig von Wissmann was soon sunk by a flotilla of British war

vessels, and the Germans then had only the big Graf Goetzen, with one of Koenigsberg's guns on her deck. When von Lettow began to make his trek south, he ordered that gun brought to him, so it was removed and a false gun made of wood was substituted. That summer of 1916 the British brought airplanes to the lake region and began bombing Kogoma, and in July the handwriting was on the wall. Von Lettow had no more use for a lake force, and he needed the men to join his guerilla movement in the south. The Graf Goetzen was filled with concrete and scuttled, and so were all the other vessels except the Wami, a small lake steamer. The German navy men took her south to the mouth of the 'River Malagarasi and scuttled her, then went off into the bush, eventually to join von Lettow. The war was now concentrated entirely in one section of the colony.

## The Obsessions of General Smuts

In the autumn of 1916 the effective German fighting force in East Africa consisted of eleven hundred Germans, seventy-three hundred black Askaris, sixteen field guns, seventy-three machine guns, and the four remaining four-inch guns of the Koenigsberg. Von Lettow was now operating in the southeastern section of the colony, but not as far as the coastline, for this had been occupied by the British.

After Captain Zimmer had landed at the mouth of the Malagarasi, he had joined General Wahle and fought the rear-guard action along the Central Railroad from the west. But when the British captured the railroad, Zimmer and Wahle had moved south and into the mountains southwest of the Rufiji delta, and for all practical purposes had joined up with von Lettow.

Commandant von Lettow seemed to have nothing favoring him these days, but that was illusory;

he had one superior weapon: he could tell almost precisely what General Smuts was going to do.

Smuts never changed, in spite of the advice from his staff. It was always encircle, encircle, encircle. Von Lettow, the master of the terrain, had only to keep from being surrounded and he could go on indefinitely.

So in September 1916, von Lettow played his enemy as a fisherman plays a trout. His various detachments were sent on missions to draw the enemy this way and that, but to keep him in this particular area so that the carriers and the cattle could be moved ever farther out of British reach.

The Uluguru mountain range, crossed by the Uluguru River, ran some fifty miles south of Morogoro, past the town of Kisaki to a point at the south at Panagani Schnellen. For years the Ulugurus had been the mountain retreat of the Germans of East Africa, the place the women and children came to during the hot months to escape the muggy oven of Dar es Salaam. Von Lettow concentrated his defenses here. On the west, the British were pressing toward Mahenge, but General Northey's column, which had started at Lake Nyasa, was now supplied

by a line one hundred fifty miles long. Smuts reassured the general that it was now only a matter of time; he said von Lettow did not intend to or could not retire farther east. As usual, Smuts was right, but drew the wrong implications. Von Lettow had no intention of going east. He was already looking south, past the border. He would invade Mozambique and fight there. That possibility had not yet occurred to General Smuts, who was still looking at maps as though the international borders were real lines of separation. To von Lettow, Mozambique represented supply from the fertile plain and fighting room. Slowly, fighting every few hours, the Germans moved south through the big trees and orderly undergrowth of the Ulugurus. General Smuts was going to surround them again, and for this purpose he had sent his First Division south around the left side of the Germans, and General Brits's Third Division to make frontal and right flank approaches.

Captain Stemmermann was entrusted with left flank defense, and he used one of the Koenigsberg guns to slow the British down. He also had a pair of howitzers, which helped. The Askaris retreated,

stopped, dug in, fought, and then melted away again into the hills in their frustrating fashion. On one occasion, Captain Stemmermann left a note inside a champagne bottle for his enemies, telling them the precise time that the Germans had moved out of their position.

On September 4, Captain Stemmermann reached a position that was ideal for defense under his circumstances. The Koenigsberg gun was placed on a hill high above a small valley. A smaller hill stood between, and here the Germans stationed their artillery observers and machine gun crews. The British had to come up the small hill, and the Koenigsberg gun made it impossible. A British patrol managed to destroy the artillery observation position, but the Askaris moved to another. They held the little ridge, and then fell back down the valley and up to the next ridge, the British panting after them. The British flanked and charged the Koenigsberg gun position and captured it, but of course the Koenigsberg gun and the Askaris had left hours earlier.

The British attacked on the west and down the middle as well. This time, it was not hard for von

Lettow to guess that the strongest attack would be on the west, because the terrain there was easiest. The center drive, the hammer blow that Smuts always tried to use, consisted of a mounted brigade that tried to force its way through the mountain center, and failed as usual. The terrain and the climate again caused the British as much difficulty as the Germans ever gave them. They were heading toward Mlali, which in a way was unfortunate, because although the British did not know it, they were headed straight toward one of von Lettow's ammunition dumps. Detachment Otto, as von Lettow termed Captain Otto's force, was defending and moving back with the usual entrapments and rear-guard action. After thoroughly confusing the First Division on the left, Captain Stemmermann made a night march to join a stronger force, and the British lost contact there. But in the center they pursued until, just outside Mlali, they were treated to an enormous fireworks display as the Germans touched off their ammunition dump. Here were six hundred thousand kilograms of precious war material, most of it transported by carrier from the two blockade-runners. Von Lettow could not have

avoided a shudder as he gave the orders to blow it up rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy. Of course when General Smuts had the word, it once more reinforced his obsessive conviction — for that is what his feelings had become—that any moment now the campaign could be ended if only he could get a force behind von Lettow.

Certainly General Brits was trying to do just that. On September 7 his main force reached the southern foothills of the Ulugurus. The First Division, having lost contact with the Germans, was still two days away on the left, and the center force was lost in the mountains —quite literally; its radio communications with General Brits had broken down and the cavalrymen were not quite sure where they were.

Von Lettow set up one of his typical bivouacks on the Mgeta River, outside the town of Kisaki. The town had a fort, but von Lettow wanted total mobility. He knew the British were coming at him in three columns and were supposed to converge here at the end of the Ulugurus and catch him. If necessary he wanted to move south, fast, and that did not include manning a fort and trying to defend it.

Von Lettow's troops were on both sides of the river, Captain Otto's force was on the north bank, and Captain Tafel's reinforced company was on the east bank. The brigade of Brigadier P. S. Beves moved against Otto; that of Brigadier Enslin against Tafel. Beves moved up, ran into the hail of fire that the German machine guns could always give from fixed positions, and had to stop and dig in. Beves was able to move only to the rear. The mountains, with German snipers, were on his left, the river was on his right, and the Germans were ahead of him. Eventually, under heavy fire, he retreated.

Brigadier Enslin's advance along the east bank took his force through a rubber plantation, which made it impossible to keep column order. The brigade broke down into patrol units of three and four men, but one of them scouted the Otto force when the men heard the firing. Enslin saw a chance to get behind the Otto force, cross the river, and then charge in like the Light Brigade, and smash the Germans good and hard. He had been itching to do just this for months.

The British approached the Mgeta River quietly, to swim their troops across, and reassemble on the

other side for their charge. They never thought that von Lettow might have reserve units posted further back (although he always did have in such situations, being an extremely careful commander). The troopers were so bemused with their charge that they did not sense the Germans coming until too late. The Askaris burst among them with fixed bayonets and the Enslin brigade broke up, trying to scatter in the tangle of the rubber forest. Many were killed, some were captured, and the rest ran off to the rear to try to reorganize.

All this time, von Lettow had been keeping careful track of the movements of the British cavalry unit struggling down through the center of the mountains, and he knew on the day of the battle at the Mgeta that the British were just ten miles north. But they might as well have been a hundred miles away, for there was a tall mountain between.

After the Brits thrust was scattered, von Lettow sent Captain Tafel north, with five companies of Askaris, one of the largest forces he had mounted in a long time. Again this was part of von Lettow's calculated plan to stall the British and gain time for his supply train.

Tafel set an ambush at a most likely spot. His force was on a hillside, overlooking a valley filled with elephant grass that reached above the horses' heads. The valley had no water. The British column came down the hill on the other side, got well into the valley, and then the German machine guns began to fire.

The British were not really prepared for the series of bayonet charges the Askaris now launched from their strong position. The heat, the machine guns, and the bayonets took their toll. Half the men of the British force were wounded, and four of their officers and twenty-six men were killed that afternoon. It was not possible to withdraw in the daylight—the Germans had them too well covered—so they lay in the elephant grass, seeking the cover they could find or dig for themselves, and resisted the Germans and the Askaris as best they could. At night, when a message came from Brits to withdraw because the whole effort had failed, the troops of the middle force managed to drag themselves away in the darkness, and the Germans and Askaris were too wise to pursue. That defeat—and no one even tried to call this encounter a British victory—

put an end to Smuts's activity for the next few weeks.

After the debacle around Kisaki, even Smuts had to be convinced that his fighting men were not the equal of the Germans and the Askaris. The evidence was by this time indisputable. The North Lancashire regiment, for example, had been in the East African action since that dreadful Tanga mess. The battalion had come to Tanga at 900 men. It was down to 345, and that included replacements along the line. The Twenty-fifth Fusiliers from South Africa—Boers—had come in at 1,200 strong and now numbered 200. The Ninth South African Infantry had started at 1,135 and now numbered 120 men. Even staff officers of experience in Africa were out on their feet; Captain Meinertzhagen had to be invalided back to England after this last battle.

The Indians were very bad; virtually every one of them was sick. They had malaria, dysentery, and pneumonia contracted in the mountains. They had blackwater fever and smallpox, the plague, typhus, typhoid, and meningitis.

The British had brought in sixty thousand transport animals, and more than fifty-nine thousand of them had died on the long marches, from tsetse fly fever, thirst, and exhaustion. They had brought hundreds of wagons and hundreds of motor vehicles, and almost all of them were out of action. Von Lettow did not have access to the logistical reports of his enemies, but he knew; anyone who could see and smell in East Africa knew, for the British army left behind it trails of bones and moldering corpses, and pieces of heavy equipment, belts, and shoes—all sorts of wreckage.

After Kisaki there was a sort of rebellion within the Smuts staff. The medical officers insisted on surveying the troops, and as a result twelve thousand South Africans were sent home "unfit" for further duty. Most of these were replaced by the normal shipment of reinforcements from England, proving that Smuts's racism was still blinding him. But wiser heads at least persuaded him to reinvigorate the King's African Rifles, and more black soldiers trained for the war ahead. More Indians were brought to fight and wither in this climate, but a battalion of Nigerians was also brought in. Against

the British will it seemed, some sound judgment must have been prevailing for them to bring in Africans from the hot, central part of the continent; they could stand the climate and fight in it. Smuts would never admit that the black soldier in East Africa was twice the man that the white South African was, but it was true, von Lettow knew, and he could bless the Anglo-Saxon stupidity that kept racial prejudice to the fore, and thus made the German task so much easier. As of October 1916, had von Lettow surrendered, as he was asked to do, he still could have been proud of one of the great accomplishments of warfare—the tying down of a hundred thousand men, dozens of ships, and millions of pounds in equipment by a force that had never numbered more than three thousand Germans and eleven thousand Africans.

"What Smuts saves on the battlefield, he loses in hospital, for it is Africa and its climate we are really fighting, not the Germans," Meinertzhagen wrote in one of his last entries in his diary from these days.

Facing his own desperate situation, Smuts extended the reasoning to make himself believe von

Lettow must be equally badly off, which was not true at all. The Germans were, as they said, "salted"—they had nearly all been in East Africa long enough to acquire immunities to some of the diseases, and a care in such matters as water that the Englishmen and South Africans from temperate climates did not understand. The Askaris were as much at home as any man could be; this was their country. So when Smuts said he thought the Germans must be worse off than himself, he again showed his basic misunderstanding of the war he was fighting and the enemy he faced.

On this basis (and his biographers suggest that he had come to feel a Dostoevskian love for von Lettow as well as a much-earned respect) Smuts wrote von Lettow and asked him to surrender. The biographers' suggestion is rather contradicted by the manner in which Smuts did this: he wrote Governor Schnee, not von Lettow. He must have known that Schnee would be most susceptible to such a request, hating the war as he had from the outset. Perhaps Smuts hoped that Schnee would be able to regain some of his previous power and force the issue. Certainly, had Smuts truly been seeking an

accommodation with von Lettow, he should have known his man well enough to know that he would have to address him directly, and not through an intermediary for whom von Lettow had little respect. As it was von Lettow heard quickly enough about the letter and he read it as a sign of Smuts's weakness. It is true Smuts had come to the end of his resources, just as von Lettow suspected.

When von Lettow flatly refused to consider the Smuts invitation, Governor Schnee had no recourse but to refuse the offer. General Smuts had hoped, but his hopes and the reasoning on which they were founded were baseless. Von Lettow was succeeding so admirably in his task that surrender was the last thing on his mind. The German commander had more than earned the decoration the kaiser had bestowed on him that year, the *Pour Le Write*, Germany's highest military honor. Von Lettow had already done as much to harm the British military effort as a real army elsewhere, and that service was even more valuable since he had done it with virtually no assistance from the Fatherland, and none at all after the second blockade-runner had made her way to East Africa.

General Smuts, then, was forced to put his mind once again to the manner in which he could bring a quick end to the conflict. It seemed that it must end soon. Von Lettow had been deprived of every civ-ilized resource of the colony and three-quarters of the territory. He could not go on, if one examined the odds by any sensible standards. So the next step was to persuade London to send in fresh troops and fresh supplies and commit more guns and ammunition and newer weapons to the struggle. That way von Lettow must be brought to bay within a matter of weeks. Smuts would move on to the Rufiji and there he would overcome von Lettow, surround him, and force the capture. So saying, Smuts began to plan. The obsession was unending.

## Roughing It on the Rufiji

The British spent the period from October 1916 until January 1917 in German East Africa trying to rebuild and reorganize destroyed facilities so they might move smoothly. General Smuts knew that the rain would come again in March or early April, and that if he wished to make a move into the Rufiji delta before summer it must be soon. The delta was notoriously mosquito-infested and unhealthy, and never more so than in the period just after the end of the spring rains. But Smuts remained confident that by the time the rains came the campaign would be over.

South Africans, Englishmen, and Indians went home, and they were replaced by South Africans, Indians, and Englishmen with a smattering of blacks.

Brigadier van Deventer was at Kilosa and Brigadier Northey was at Lupembe. They waited and were resupplied. They were told that their mission

would be to stop General Wahle's column from linking up with von Lettow in the Rufiji delta.

Smuts then planned his own next move. He would land a force by sea at Kilwa, and outflank von Lettow with a new sort of maneuver. At least von Lettow could not see the dust from horses that way.

The Kilwa force was to be led by Brigadier Han-nyington, who had come into the campaign at Mge-ta. His force consisted of Englishmen, two battalions of the King's African Rifles, and two battalions of Indians. They landed at Kilwa without incident and began building a road to Kilwa Kisiwani, fifteen miles south.

Of course Commandant von Lettow learned almost immediately of this maneuver from his outposts in the area, and he quickly saw that Smuts was up to his old tricks. This time von Lettow decided to move fast. He drove his herd of cattle across the Rufiji and sent them into the hinterland to join the others that had gone before. He made ready to move on Kibata and Kilwa to attack the British before the flanking movement could get started.

Smuts's conviction that if he could corner von Lettow he would finish the war was an extremely doubtful assumption, given the ideas von Lettow had instilled in all his subordinate commanders. They were all instructed to fight on, no matter what. He sent five hundred men under Major Stimmer to cross the Rovuma River into Mozambique and investigate the conditions of the land on the east side of Lake Nyasa in Portuguese territory, as the stores were beginning to come to an end, and the real guerilla period was beginning. That meant his detachments would often be out of touch. He warned every commander that he might have to fight alone.

Lack of salt was a problem for all of them, but the Askaris usually solved it by capturing salt from their enemies. Wheat flour was almost nonexistent, and potato flour as well. Early in the war, before the first blockade-runner had arrived, von Lettow had pushed his medical men into finding malaria treatments. A supply of cinchona bark from Peru had come in at some point, and this was boiled and the resultant liquid, called "Lettow-schnapps," was the unpleasant but essential result. The Germans

drank it (most of the blacks did not seem to need it) and hated it, but it suppressed their malaria.

Not long after the fall of Dar es Salaam, von Lettow appointed Captain Looff commander of the south, and sent him to the area west of Lindi to organize all the forces there and keep the southern part of the colony free, so that the Rufiji force could pass through into Mozambique when the time came. Looff had two companies, both of them made up of naval troops from the Koenigsberg, and they had an area to police that was as big as Bavaria. There was more than one reason for this alignment of forces: von Lettow sensed in Looff a rival for command, and an adherent of Governor Schnee's. He knew that Schnee would like nothing better than to see von Lettow replaced. This feeling might have been suppressed by, the governor, particularly after the British in a nice gesture came out under flag of truce one January day and announced to the Germans that von Lettow had just won the Pour le Merite. The Germans had no way of knowing this since their long-distance radios were long gone. But von Lettow was determined not to run any chance

of trouble, so he kept Looff and Schnee far apart, and the Koenigsberg men together, out of trouble.

Until the fall of Morogoro, the German officers, like their British counterparts, had done well by themselves. The old stereotypical image of the Englishman in the heart of darkest Africa, sitting at a table with a cloth, eating dinner served by blacks and quaffing his wine and after-dinner port was no myth. Until Morogoro, the German officers had canned foods from home, pates, sausages, and pickles, and champagne and wines from all over Europe, laid down in German cellars before war. The brewery at Dar es Salaam had turned out a fine German-style beer before one of the British cruisers plastered it with shells and destroyed the fermenting vats. But after Morogoro, the finer things of civilized European life disappeared. The champagnes were drunk up and the canned foods were finished.

Before the first of the year, 1917, von Lettow and his men in the Rufiji delta were eating off the land. They shot elephant for meat, and hippopotamus for fat. The blacks ate both, but von Lettow did not like any part of the hippo but the tongue. He

was a student of fungi, so he kept the camp supplied with mushrooms, but he also branched out in his botanical efforts, not always so successfully. He learned from the blacks how to distill a form of salt from a Rufiji plant, solving that problem, but he also thought it would be possible to make flour from various plants and roots, and his officers claimed he "poisoned" them several times. Lack of bread was a serious problem, for the Germans had grown up in a society in which one must have potatoes and bread, and if one could not have potatoes then one must have more bread. The Schutztruppe officers in the Rufiji had no bread at all. They adjusted, largely because there was no shortage of protein, which they really needed to keep going. The Rufiji delta was a game park in effect, absolutely teeming with every sort of animal life. Half a dozen lions might visit the encampments at night, usually looking for a mule or an ox, although sentries had to be on their guard against the old beasts, who were not above taking a man.

During these months the Germans and the Askaris were really for the first time "in camp" just as their enemies were. The officers hunted and

played cards at night, and drank if they had anything to drink. The Askaris hunted, and their women cooked, and they lived an almost familial life. They even raced beetles for amusement.

But as far as von Lettow was concerned, the apparent inactivity was illusory, and existed only in this area where he wanted to keep Smuts's attention focused. All the while he was sending supplies further into the interior, to be stored in secret dumps for his future use. Train after train of carriers went south and west toward the Mozambique border, and small groups of Askaris were forever coming and going, bringing the news of General Wahle, Major Kraut, Captain Looff, and the other units and area commanders who were far afield from headquarters.

In this stationary situation, Governor Schnee became a nuisance again. He had learned not to try to interfere with von Lettow's military direction of the war, but he insisted his gubernatorial powers over civil affairs remained intact. Thus he tried to control von Lettow's movement of supplies or use of any civil government equipment. Von Lettow and his officers had to sign chits for everything they

took, and occasionally the civil authorities became completely obnoxious, on the governor's orders: he told his administrators to demand cash for everything. On one occasion a civil servant tried to stop von Lettow from shipping troops and goods across the Rufiji River by ferry, and the commandant took out his pistol and held it to the official's head until he changed his mind. There is no doubt but what he would have blown the man's head off if he had thought it necessary. Schnee had already written a whole series of devastating reports about von Lettow's refusal to obey his orders and the dreadful state to which the military commandant had reduced the colony because of his refusal to surrender. For Schnee's own safety he was lucky he had not been able to escape and get back to Berlin. There, if the kaiser had caught wind of his activity and his talk, he most likely would have been shot. If the German public had learned of his opinions, he might have been hanged from a lamppost. Schnee was singularly blind to the effectiveness of von Lettow's war, and had not the slightest understanding of the reactions in Germany. As the war ground on, and Germany suffered reverses, von

Lettow became an ever greater hero at home. He was Hercules, he was David overcoming Goliath, he was Germany's knight in shining armor in Africa just as Baron von Richthofen was her knight of the sky. So Schnee continued his irritating and downright divisive ways, and during the Rufiji period wrote at least one more scathing report about von Lettow's constant insubordination. But it would be a long time in delivery, for except for the most wily agent, who might sneak through the British lines into South Africa and then make his way to Holland or Portugal and then to Germany, there was no direct communication with the homeland.

Von Lettow had to be glad personally for the weeks of respite during the campaign. He was suffering from vivax, or recurrent, malaria, and he was down to skin and bone, as yellow of skin as a Shanghai merchant. His feet were infected, from constant attack by chiggers and sand flies, which burrowed under the skin, laid eggs, and created festering sores that had to be cut out. His feet were so sore that he limped constantly, and the medical officers had to do several minor operations on his toes. He had lost his glasses in the bush one day,

and now that Dar es Salaam was in enemy hands so was his prescription and so was the optician, so he had to do without. He could see the enemy, but his worsening farsightedness made reading maps truly difficult.

Von Lettow's rest was short, for the British threat at Kilwa must be met before it could do any damage. The Schultz detachment in the mountains down by Kibata could not handle the task alone, so he took reinforcements down, with several hundred carriers, bringing one of the Koenigsberg guns and a field howitzer. He had two thousand Askaris with him and they dragged the heavy gun through the bush, cutting their way when necessary, fording streams, and carrying the heavy long tube over fallen logs and gulleys. When they reached a point on the mountainside above Kibata they stopped and placed the gun to fire on the enemy positions below. The British had sent out a number of units to Kibata; they were to stage from that point when the time came and cut von Lettow off before he could go south. But it was von Lettow who did the cutting. He sent one company around behind Kibata, and this unit cut the road north of the Matandu River.

When the company behind Kibata was in position, the Koenigsberg gun began firing on the camp below. The British black soldiers, new to the East African field and totally unfamiliar with those big guns, began to panic and ran straight across in front of the German positions, to be slaughtered by the machine gunners.

The company across the Kilwa road ambushed British reinforcements who tried to come up to help at Kibata.

The British moved with everything they had in the area, but the Germans and the Askaris kept to the mountaintops, and for two weeks harried the British so steadily that finally von Lettow moved all of his troops out of the other areas of the Rufiji delta, whereupon they withdrew and cleared the way for more movement of supplies south and west. The British made much of the fact that von Lettow did not take Tabata. It never seemed to have been von Lettow's plan to take Tabata, but to stop the British from using the area as a staging point for a new encirclement, and this he had certainly done. But von Lettow also had some surprises, because the Nigerians and the Gold Coast Regiment began to fight

bravely and intelligently as soon as they became acclimated. These were Africans, and they knew almost as well as the Askaris the methods of African warfare. Again von Lettow was very fortunate that the British system played into his hands. They continued their racist ways, and never did put full trust in their African troops.

But as the casualty lists mounted for the British (German figures showed they were four hundred in two weeks; the British figures were about half that), Smuts reinforced the area. A King's African Rifles battalion came in from the north, bringing field artillery. A new commander replaced Brigadier Hannyington, an Irishman named Henry de Courcy O'Grady, who loved fighting even if he did not know much about Africa and underrated von Lettow, as had so many before. O'Grady launched an attack in mid-December, another of those typical flanking movements which was supposed to get around behind the Germans on the hills in front of Kibata and drive them away, and perhaps even capture those guns.

But of course, von Lettow always prepared for flanking attacks, and this time, with his troops on

the heights, the field guns could be swiveled around to fire on the flankers, and, as usual, the machine gunners had laid their interlocking fields of fire. The Gold Coast Regiment, new to the scene, did not know about the German Maxims, and had to learn the hard way, which they did in a six-hour battle, most of the time pinned down on the slopes. At the end of the day, they retired in the gathering dusk, having lost half their officers and a fifth of their men.

Von Lettow did suffer one serious blow at Kibata. The British brought in a weapon completely unknown to him, the Mills bomb, or hand grenade, which had made its appearance earlier on the Western Front, but had never been seen in Africa. One night a British attack, conducted by the Baluchistan regiment, surprised the Askaris, and when they rose to attack with bayonet, they were mowed down by the grenadiers. They lost forty officers and men in that engagement, and learned something new. It would not happen again, von Lettow said.

At the end of December, Smuts was feeling a little desperate. The rains would come so soon, and he was so far from wiping out the German threat. It

would take time to bring enough troops to Kibata to surround von Lettow and bring him to bay. But at least the British were resupplied by this time, and Smuts could deal with other elements of the German force that were separated from von Lettow's main army.

When the main force moved down into the Rufiji country, von Lettow had left behind to guard the rear Captain Otto's company, augmented to one thousand rifles. They faced British units totaling about sixty-five hundred troops, and Smuts planned a new encircling movement to cut them off. Three columns would drive south, and it was expected that Otto would move ahead of them in the usual German fashion. But a fourth column would make a wide sweep around to the east, and then turn southwest. This would cut off Otto and force his surrender. The four columns would then combine and march down to close the ring around von Lettow at Kibata.

The operation was launched on New Year's Day, 1917. Otto picked up his machine guns and moved south, sniping and setting machine gun traps. The Germans unleashed a new weapon of their own:

one of the seamen from the first blockade-runner was a naval ordnance man, and he devised land mines from various explosives, including some of the new Mills bombs that the Germans captured from the advancing force. He even packed discarded cans with explosives and then buried them with trip wires in the paths. The results on this particular front were spectacular enough to receive official British recognition as a cause of the slowness of their advance. But of course the British had such overwhelming might that no matter how many were killed or wounded, the columns came on, and the Otto force scurried ahead of them.

This time the British did indeed surround the German force, and it looked as though Force Otto was all finished. But von Lettow had trained his officers and his Askaris for just such an emergency. Captain Otto saw what had happened and gave the order: the Askaris were to scatter and make their way to the prearranged rendezvous, the banks of the Rufiji. The British came on, confident that they had their lesser fox this time, but when they met, the fox again had slipped through, and there was no one there. An Indian battalion mistook a band of

Nigerians for Askaris and opened fire on them, but the real Askaris got away once more, to meet Captain Otto at the Rufiji River crossing. They all crossed, and Captain Otto blew up the bridge behind them. The British came to the north bank and stared across. They brought up boats, and the Germans sniped at them from the other side and opened fire with machine guns if they got too close. A hippopotamus destroyed one boatful of Nigerians, who were thrown into the water to consider the problem of crocodiles. A major effort brought the British troops ashore, under massed gunfire. They hauled up the boats, gathered the wounded and made ready to move up the bank. By the time they got there, the Germans and the Askaris were on their way to join up with von Lettow.

Meanwhile, Smuts had ordered a simultaneous offensive against General Wahle in the southwest. The intent was to keep Wahle from linking up with von Lettow, which he showed no indication of doing, since he had been told to stay in the Mahenge area and harry the enemy. The British had two major forces in the area, Brigadier Northey's troops south of Iringa, and General van Deventer's

division, at Iringa. On Christmas Day they had both set out, not knowing quite where the Germans were, but trying to get between them and the east, so they could not rush off and join von Lettow at Tabata. Smuts believed this to be the von Lettow plan.

Again it was the old policy of encirclement, and again it failed, although the British as always outnumbered the Germans by four or five to one. Most of the time the British in both Northey and van Deventer's commands failed to find the enemy. When they did find him, he fired and ran away. Van Deventer worked out what should have been a perfect plan, and it was executed perfectly by his subordinates. They closed in from the northwest and northeast, and the Germans moved south, where another brigade had been placed first, just to make sure they got there, across the German path, in time. But as the nutcracker began to squeeze, the Germans evaporated through the holes in the perfect plan and vanished into the forest. When the north and eastern columns met, they found they had no one to talk to but each other. Captain Friedrich Lincke's company had gone away again.

Growing more frantic every day as the rainy season approached, Smuts decided to send a major force to Kibata to take von Lettow.

On January 7, the force arrived and started operations with an artillery barrage against the mountaintops, where the von Lettow force was ensconced. Thousands of troops followed up and began occupying German positions on the hills and then on the mountainsides above. But they did not meet any Germans except snipers. And at the end of a week of constant, stirring, positive advance, they discovered that von Lettow had flown, had joined up with Captain Otto forty miles northwest of Kibata, and had escaped once more. Just then, General Smuts received orders from President Botha. He had been appointed to represent South Africa at the Imperial Conference in London, which was to decide the future of the British Imperial war plans. Command of the British East African Expeditionary Force was given to Major General Reginald Hoskins, who was then in command of Smuts's First Division.

When von Lettow learned of the change of command he sent a letter through the British lines

to express his esteem and appreciation for the manner in which Smuts had conducted the war. The terms "Hun" and "Boches" were flaunted about a good deal by the English officers and troops, and tales of terrible cruelty by both sides had been common all during the war. But the fact was that von Lettow on his part and Smuts on his did their best to restrain the more enthusiastic of their supporters, who, in the case of the Africans, sometimes thought it was proper not only to kill your enemies but to eat them as well. British prisoners, held by the Germans at Dar es Salaam, were sometimes ridiculed, and sometimes made to do manual work under black guards, which to the whites was a dreadful insult, and sometimes the Askari guards made them pick up horse manure with their bare hands. But these were as much fancied wrongs as real ones; generally speaking there was a good deal of chivalry on both sides in the war, for which the two commanders were certainly responsible.

What von Lettow did not say was that he had another reason for gratitude to General Smuts: that was Smuts's unchanging strategy and unchanging tactics. He knew that the British would always try

to encircle him, and knowing that he had always been able to escape the traps. That was indeed something to be grateful for.

## They Called It Self-Help

Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck was watching the ants. Years later he told biographer Leonard Mosley that, as a student of Africa, he knew that the ants could be counted on to tell him when the rains were coming. During the struggle for Kibata the rain had come down fiercely, but for only about five days, and he could not believe the rainy season to be that early and that brief. The December rain was an oddity, he decided. So he watched the ants, for he knew that in the Rufiji delta the ants migrated on the eve of the rains; they moved back to high ground lest they be drowned in the spring down-pour. These were the soldier ants that were given wide berth by every African animal. They marched in solid columns, and nothing stopped them in their path. A wounded animal would be eaten until its skeleton shone in the moonlight. The army ants were the scourge of the forest floor, and when they moved the animal world grew nervous. Late in Jan-

uary this year-1917—the ants began to move. It was earlier than usual. They formed columns sometimes six feet wide and a mile long, and they headed southward. When they came to a field of corn, they spread out across the field and devoured every ear. Then the column narrowed once more and the ants moved on, seeking the high ground where they would burrow and make their nests until the change of seasons.

When the ants had gone, the von Lettow column made ready to move in their wake. Von Lettow gave one last order: all the women and children, white and black, who had somehow managed to escape the internment to which von Lettow had earlier consigned them were now to be left behind. There was no way, he explained to his aides, that the Schutztruppe could support or protect non-combatants. They simply had to be left out of danger, and here in the north, where they could be sure of food and medical attention.

Some of the officers who had smuggled their wives and lovers into camp were very unhappy with this decision, as were the wives and lovers. They protested at a meeting at the hospital at Kungiolu,

and Governor Schnee, seeing an opportunity to embarrass his enemy, went on record agreeing that von Lettow had an obligation to take along anyone who wanted to go with him. Schnee had already left his English wife in Tabora as surety for the conduct of German prisoners of war. This gesture could hardly be explained save in terms of the governor's constant effort to put an end to von Lettow's military campaign. But the effort failed, because one young nurse made an impassioned speech, in which she indicated that Schnee and all others who opposed the continuation of the war, or the abandonment of the women, were traitors to the German cause. And so the European women were left behind. Not so the African women. They absolutely insisted on accompanying their men into battle, as they had for generations. Not even von Lettow's discipline could overcome that insistence, so he accepted with good grace and let the women move along with the carriers.

From England in January came propaganda reports that the German force in East Africa must soon surrender because it was being squashed into an ever-narrowing circle of land. The reports and

the undeniable truths of the map also affected Berlin, and even the kaiser expected the colony to be lost and von Lettow to be forced to surrender any day. But by the time the kaiser's telegram of condolences on a future surrender reached the Germans in East Africa, von Lettow was gone, deep into the bush, and his enemies did not even know exactly where he was. What they did know was that he was somewhere on the other side of a ninety-mile stretch of plain that was almost entirely inundated. Not a bridge remained in place across this expanse, due to the combined efforts of nature and the German fighting force.

The Germans had cut their force to the bone by African standards. Von Lettow had only three carriers and a cook. His officers' servants were cut back to five servants each, which by African standards of that day was about a third of the usual. The grain ration for the troops was enormously important, for the blacks' food was primarily corn meal. But rations had to be cut as the supply dwindled, and it was a measure of the Askaris' loyalty to their tall, thin commander that they accepted the cuts and did not desert en masse. Some did desert, of

course, just as some Nigerians and some of the Gold Coast Blacks deserted the British. But the German Askaris were by far the most loyal of the African troops as well as the most effective, and it all went back to von Lettow's brand of discipline, which bound himself and his German officers as much as his black soldiers.

When General Smuts appeared in London and confidently told the War Office that in East Africa he had done the job and it was all over but the shouting, the War Office believed. Poor General Hoskins had to start picking up the pieces. London expected Hoskins to report a total victory in the next few weeks, but nothing could have been further from the truth. In May, when he had not done what London thought he ought to have done by then, he was recalled, and the command was given to General van Deventer. This created problems, because General van Deventer was a Boer through and through and he was resented by many of the British members of the staff he inherited. Nor could von Lettow complain about the appointment as far as he was concerned. The Smuts staff was completely demoralized, and van Deventer could not

even talk to the Englishmen. His staff meetings had to be conducted through an Afrikaans-English interpreter.

As the rains ended in May, von Lettow was much occupied with problems of logistics. Getting bread—making bread—for the Europeans was a constant problem. He was short of medical supplies, short of everything but the will to go on fighting the enemy. That never flagged.

When Hoskins had taken over from Smuts, he had set the wheels in motion for supply of the British. A large base was established at Lindi, very nearly on the Mozambique border, and this was to be the center of the operations that would put an end to von Lettow's career. But if the British were to go after von Lettow in the deep bush of this region, with virtually no roads, they must take some pages from the German book. The British command ordered employment of thousands of carriers, and practically abandoned the old system of supply that was based on European methods and that had been so dreadfully costly in terms of dead animals and wrecked wagons.

By the time van Deventer took charge, the basic plan had been formulated. Von Lettow would be completely surrounded this time, and the forces would move in on him like the walls of an expanding and contracting room, until they had him hemmed into a space beyond which there was no maneuvering and he would have to give up. The First Division, under Brigadier Hannyington, was now called the Kilwa Force. It was to move south. The Lindi force was to move west, and by September these two armies were to surround von Lettow. But this time Brigadier Northey's column was on the west and that would effectively prevent any escape in that direction. On the east was the Indian Ocean, an effective barrier. And on the south was the Mozambique border; if the Germans moved south they would be out of East Africa altogether.

On paper the plan could not fail. But what the British forgot was that von Lettow did not care a fig for the maintenance of forms. If the British said he was losing the war, that was fine as long as he kept on fighting. If they said that for him to move into Portuguese territory was a sign of total defeat, that was fine as long as they had to keep all those

troops searching for him. By the British rules, von Lettow's days had to be numbered, and it was only those who did not see much sense in the British rules who could foresee what von Lettow now would do.

At first the operations were conducted around Kilwa, in territory that was more or less familiar to the British. In July the British launched one operation against Captain Eberhard von Lieberman's company, which was entrusted with the rear guard here. He had a thousand men.

The British had more new weapons, the most deadly of which was the Stokes mortar, which fired a high-powered shell high in the air, and whose capability was more than half a dozen shells per minute. These weapons were light, they demanded the attention of only two men, and they were extremely effective because of the high trajectory.

The major engagement of the summer months came at Narungombe in July. This place was about forty miles southwest of Kilwa, and it was here that the maps ended. As one British officer remarked ruefully, with the maps they had, they might as well have had maps of Switzerland with African

place names. This area, and that south of it, were the "forgotten lands" of German East Africa. Here the tribes were wild, and even the Germans had not really forced their ways on them. Years before, this area had been the scene of a major rebellion called the Maji-Maji uprising, which had been quelled ruthlessly and which had left a residue of feeling that enabled the British to secure guides in this region to supplement the almost useless maps.

The guides were useful at least in helping the British find waterholes, without which they would perish. Indeed, it was in the matter of waterholes that the battle of Narungombe developed. Captain von Lieberman and Lieutenant Goering held positions that controlled several waterholes. The Germans had two small field guns and forty-eight Maxim machine guns. They were dug in along the British line of advance, having made maximum use of the terrain, and their camouflage was so good that from the air, or even from the hills, the British scouts could not pick out the positions.

The main force was on a rise, with thornbush so dense as to be really impenetrable on the left, and a stinking, dangerous swamp on the right.

Down the center a quarter-mile strip ran to the hill and the waterholes. The Germans were on top and they had stripped the land in front of them of cover and linked up their fields of machine gun fire.

The British sent a force straight into the teeth of those guns, with the usual flanking columns. The left column became hopelessly tangled in the bush and stopped. The right Hankers became mired in the swamp and stopped, cowering in the papyrus thickets, trying to escape the waves of machine gun fire. The frontal assault was supposed to be covered by mortars, but the mortar crews were new and they did not quite understand their weapons. In this particular case they made the mistake of underestimating the range, so when the Gold Coast Regiment blacks attacked frontally, they were hit by the German machine guns and plastered by their own mortars. The attack began in the morning. By noon nearly all the regiment's white officers were dead or wounded. The black noncommissioned officers took over platoons and companies and fought bravely, but the disorganization continued and by late afternoon the attack was in a shambles. The Germans counterattacked with rifle and bayonet.

The King's African Rifles, against whom they attacked, were early over-whelmed but managed to hold on and launch their own attack, whereupon the Germans moved back. Next morning the British force of about two thousand remaining men attacked again, but this time they found the Germans had once more slipped away. Captain Lieberman had followed von Lettow's orders: he had held the position, had cost the British six hundred casualties, or about a quarter of their attacking force, and had gotten off with few casualties of his own.

In this instance, von Lettow was not pleased. He had sent an order to Lieberman that he was coming with reinforcements and that Lieberman was to hold on. Whether Lieberman failed to get the order, or felt quite rightly that the British would attack again the next morning, is not known, but the German unit commander had left the field. It was one of the few times that von Lettow criticized one of his officers for following the tactics he had used so successfully himself, and it probably reflected von Lettow's condition: he was weak and irritable from a bout with malaria.

Von Lettow began moving through the unmapped country to the southeast. A flurry of action was being experienced by the British in the northwest also, where a disaffected Schutztruppe officer named Captain Max Wintgens was conducting his own war against the British. This German effort tied up some twenty-five hundred British troops, and led them on a chase to the Central Railroad, where they disrupted traffic, and then moved to the Northern Railroad, where they burned the Kahe railroad station. Finally the force was exhausted and it surrendered in October.

But this excursion, while keeping the British off-balance in the northwest part of the colony, played no real role in the struggle between von Lettow and the British. Von Lettow, in fact, rather resented Wintgens and wrote in *Heia Safari* that it was regrettable that Wintgens had separated himself from the main force to go off on his own. That attitude was understandable; no commander wants his troops striking out on their own wars, and von Lettow was having serious difficulty in the south trying to keep the Schutztruppe together as a fighting force, under increasingly difficult conditions.

The Germans prided themselves on their prompt and excellent treatment of their wounded, and even now, with a greatly diminished column, von Lettow still had half a dozen doctors. But medicines were in extremely short supply and growing scarcer, and at about this time the column began to run out of such necessities as bandages. They learned from the Askaris the use of certain leaves that had medicinal properties, and although sterility was sacrificed, there was no particular increase in infection.

Von Lettow was always the first to test new methods. The troop was growing short of shoes, so he removed his own and marched for three weeks barefoot. He found that his feet soon hardened, and he could walk over hot stones and sticks without pain. Only the thornbush gave trouble, for there was no way to prevent the sharp thorns from piercing soft flesh, and the thornbush spikes were just poisonous enough to create festering sores.

One reason that von Lettow had so disapproved of Captain Wint-gens's wild chase was his growing concern over the fragmentation of the defense force. Von Lettow was in constant argument with Governor Schnee, who, now that he had been forced into

the bush to save himself from the British, decided that he was a military expert. The matter might have become intolerable except for occasional indications from Berlin that von Lettow had the confidence of the kaiser. No one gave Schnee the Pour le Merite. And in the fall of 1917 came the announcement that von Lettow had been promoted to Major General. This was good for his ego, and it facilitated his dealing with Schnee and with Captain Loeff, who until that point had technically outranked von Lettow.

When Loeff was sent off to the south to take over the region there, many old Africa hands had wondered if he could possibly make it. For he had to traverse the most difficult terrain in the colony, where even the blacks might not always be friendly. But in this Loeff had the services of Major Schlobach, an old African hunter who knew what he was doing and saved the naval officer much embarrassment and possibly disaster. Major Schlobach introduced Loeff and his Koenigsberg sailors to hippo meat and other jungle delicacies, and as they ran out of civilized supplies they came to relish some of these.

Captain Looff traveled down to the land south of the Memkuru River. He was to operate as far west as the Ungoni country and as far east as Lindi. But of course Lindi was held by the British, who had made it a major operational base for their southern adventures. After Looff crossed the Memkuru he made contact with Lieutenant Hinrichs, late of the *Koenigsberg*, who had taken one of the first detachments to this area to keep the Portuguese at bay. They had come to a standoff. The Portuguese held the heights above the plateau of Makonde, while the Germans held the valley below, which included the water supply. With the coming of Captain Looff, Hinrichs's force could cut the Portuguese off completely from water and drive them out of the area. That would give the Germans a solid front to the south. The British were off to his left. Captain Looff had to guard against any attempt from either side to link up with the other. Looff set up headquarters at a plantation in the Lindi district and waited.

That autumn of 1916, von Lettow had sent reinforcements down to Looff. Major Kraut came in from the west with three companies. He also was

given one of the Koenigsberg guns, and a detachment of gunners under Captain Rothe. In this force was also Lieutenant Methner, the governor's civil counselor, who had been left behind at Dar es Salaam much earlier in the war to treat with the British. He had come about as far as one could and still remain in East Africa. The Rothe gun was the second for Loeff; he also had Lieutenant Wenig and his gun.

Loeff drove the Portuguese back across the Rovuma River, which separated the two colonies, and captured enough supplies doing it to feed his men for several weeks: sausages, sardines, corned beef, flour, and sugar—all foods that even the Europeans now considered great delicacies.

The defeat of the Portuguese that winter had brought the British to increase their movement west of Lindi, and Captain Loeff moved in closer to the port to counter it. He established headquarters at Mrovoueka plantation, only twelve miles from Lindi. There was a little difficulty that winter that was indicative of some of the troubles that von Lettow was facing in this fourth year of the war. Captain Rothe marched north on what was really a fo-

raging expedition, and he took one of the Koenigsberg guns with him. Von Lettow had specifically forbidden such forays because he was trying to keep the fertile region here as a granary for his future needs. But discipline was not what it had been with the Schutztruppe, except among the men immediately under command of von Lettow. Too many foreign elements had been interjected, not the least of which was Captain Looff, whose strategic concepts were quite different from von Lettow's. It was hard to explain to a naval officer, it seemed, why it was important just to keep the German military force in action, even if no battles were fought. That was quite odd, because it was the land equivalent of a philosophy that Looff knew very well and that he had been part of in the navy—the concept of the "fleet in being," whose existence tied up the British Home Fleet; and the cruiser war, in which individual cruisers set out through vast waters to sink enemy ships and terrorize whole continents. Looff had accepted this at sea (although he had not done particularly well at it), but on land he wanted action, fighting, and glory. He was not an easy man

for von Lettow to control, particularly from long distance.

In the winter and spring of 1917 Looff hung around the Lindi perimeter giving the British fits. The British brought in airplanes and attacked the Looff plantation headquarters with bombs. Looff replied by using the Koenigsberg gun left to him to harass Lindi. He fired only two or three shells a day, but they were fired every day, and Brigadier O'Grady, in charge of Lindi, became quite exasperated. The British naval force that was stationed at Lindi under Admiral Charlton, and the British army under Brigadier O'Grady, quarreled over the gun: it should never have been allowed to escape from the ship, said the army; the guns should all have been captured by the army by now, said the navy. Von Lettow would have been delighted had he been privy to the staff quarrels, all because a few hundred Germans and Askaris were out there in the bush shooting a four-inch cannon at the town.

So exasperated were the British that they finally decided that spring that Looff had to be dealt with. And they made plans to deal with him

As cities go, Lindi was not large, even for East Africa. Its title of "largest port in the south" was truthful enough, but it did not say much. Lindi consisted of a white stone fort and a dozen two-story stucco or concrete buildings, shops below, residences above, with red tile or corrugated iron roofs. Most of these were located on two streets that intersected. The rest of the town was African—large ex-panses of grassy land strewn with thatched mud huts and punctuated by palm trees, mangoes, and pawpaws.

A general attack on the Germans was planned for May 19, 1917. Admiral Charlton promised one thousand men from the ships to add to the two Indian regiments Brigadier O'Grady had to commit. It began with an aerial attack by the British planes with their fifty- pound bombs. These bombs did very little damage; they very nearly had to land on an Askari to damage him, but they still frightened the blacks who were new to the game. After the bombing, the British fired a number of rounds in the general direction of Loeff's plantation, across the baobabs and the burnt grass, and then the infantry moved out. The Indians led, and the naval

contingent followed. The Indians were used to the bush by now, but there was nothing to see since the Germans simply moved back and out of the way as the British came along. By mid-afternoon the naval contingent was footsore, thirsty, and very tired. From time to time, if the Germans thought they had something to shoot at, they fired the Koenigsberg gun, but troops even in concentrations were not very satisfactory targets, certainly nothing like the ammunition ship they had gotten one day, blowing the British supply system to the devil for a month. As the sun fell low in the sky, the exhausted sailors and their tired Indian companions straggled back to Lindi, having accomplished precisely nothing.

This bloodless "victory" made Captain Looff overconfident. He decided that he would attack Lindi and maybe even capture it. He sent Lieutenant Hinrichs and his men to do the job. If he had been as competent and calculating as General von Lettow he would never have tried, at least not in the manner he did. The British had ringed Lindi with barbed wire entanglements, a sort of warfare new to the Askaris. If the German force had possessed a

number of field guns the barbed wire might have been destroyed, but all they had were the Koenigsberg gun (much too large for the task, and without the right sort of ammunition), and a number of mortars captured from the Portuguese (and the German naval officers did not know how to employ these properly). The mortars, properly used, could have done the job, but they were not thus used. The Askaris found themselves making a bayonet charge against wire that tangled them up and made them very satisfactory targets for the British machine gunners. After more than three years, the British had learned how to use the machine gun, and they showed that at Lindi. The defense was one of the most effective of the East African war, and disastrous to Captain Loeff's men. Lt. Hinrichs was desperately wounded and lost to the campaign, and scores of Askaris were killed, captured, or wounded.

At this time von Lettow was consolidating his forces, for they had indeed become strung out over the lower half of East Africa, through no fault of anyone's. General Wahle had come from the west to the Mahenge plain and remained there as ordered,

but it was now time for him to move up. He came to the Lindi area and arrived just after Captain Looff's abortive attack. Even had Looff not made the error, General Wahle so far outranked him that it was obvious Wahle would become senior officer, and when that was added to von Lettow's known dislike for Looff, there was no question about it.

The arrival of Wahle and the reinforcement of the Lindi garrison by the British signaled a summer of constant skirmishing. Brigadier O'Grady decided to capture the Koenigsberg gun that caused him so many sleepless nights, and when his intelligence agents located the gun at the village of Mingogo, not far from the Lukulei River, O'Grady decided to go after it. He assembled an infantry force and loaded it aboard barges that were pulled by motorboats. For hours the soldiers of the Twenty-fifth Fusiliers sat in their barges as the boat operators searched their way up the Lukulei, and the gunboat H.M.S. Thistle came along to give artillery support. But the noise of the motorboats and the churning of the Thistle warned the Germans, and they were on the banks of the Lukulei when the Fusiliers landed.

Meanwhile, the British sent another column to flank the Germans. This force of King's African Rifles, a battalion strong, came down from the north against the Koenigsberg gun.

The Germans let the British through, and they marched up-country for several miles, and straight into an ambush laid by Captain Looff. They were surrounded, and very nearly wiped out in five days of fighting.

The northern column arrived late—the river expedition set out on June 9 and the northern column did not reach the area until June 12. By the time they came it was all over. The Koenigsberg gun was gone, and the Germans too. The expedition limped back to Lindi. The major effect of this operation was the virtual destruction of the Twenty-fifth Fusiliers, now down from the original twelve hundred to one-tenth that number. It was a very frustrating time for a British force whose former commander had assured the War Office that the Germans would have to give up six months before.

## The Great East African Battle

Since Morogoro, von Lettow had been awaiting the day that he would move south. During the summer and early autumn of 1917, the German forces moved closer together in the Lindi-Kilwa area. The British word for it was "driven," and this was true in the sense that the tens of thousands of British troops committed to the East African campaign were closing in on the force of the Schutztruppe, which by now was under eight thousand officers and men.

By fall there were two German forces in the field: von Lettow's, about one hundred miles south of Kilwa, and Wahle's, only a few miles farther, in the Lindi district. Slowly, the British were beginning to learn some African tricks, and the most upsetting of them to von Lettow was the practice of making small raids by night on his granary villages. These raids cut into his supply system and made him realize it would not be long before he would

have to move out of the circle in which he was being pushed.

This British policy was the most effective yet devised, but it was impossible to convince the War Office that attrition was a substitute for military victory, and Smuts had given the British leaders entirely the wrong impression about events in East Africa, so the pressure was on van Deventer to "do something" and that meant something spectacular.

Early in October, General Wahle's intelligence agents warned him that the British were planning a major attack on his position. Wahle then had about two thousand officers and men and Brigadier Beves, the British commander, had more than twice as many men at his disposal.

Wahle telephoned von Lettow and asked for help. Von Lettow just then was assessing the strength of his enemies. They held the whole coastline. General van Deventer had learned during the past two years that mere strength was not enough, and now he had cut his force into several elements. Brigadier Beves controlled what was called the Han force (after Brigadier Hannyington, who had been invalided home). Brigadier O'Grady commanded the

Lin force. And von Lettow had observed that the British had at last begun to use more black troops than white, the most sensible decision they had yet made. The replacements were Nigerian, Kenyan and West Indian soldiers, who were used to heat and jungle conditions. These were the two southern forces. In the north Brigadier Edwards commanded a force of South Africans, British, and Nigerians.

Off in the west was Brigadier Northey, with his Rhodesians. The word was out that they were now ready to begin the great squeeze. Von Lettow knew it was time to be moving south, but before he went he wanted to have one last fling at the enemy, under conditions that might punish him. Brigadier Beves's movement seemed to give him the chance.

Von Lettow judged that opportunity largely through his knowledge of the character of the brigadier: he was a brave soldier, very brave, too brave for his own good. There were times when bravery became stupidity, and von Lettow counted on just this quality in Beves.

Von Lettow alerted his troops, and on October 10 began a forced march across the Likangara Mountains, which separated his force from Wahle's.

As he came he learned about the enemy. Beves, it seemed, had managed to put together six thousand men for this assault, and unlike Smuts, von Lettow was certain that Beves's plan would be to drive frontally against the Germans, knowing his superiority, and smash them straight on. Von Lettow might have moved around behind Beves to try to flank him, but he rejected this plan because of the vastly superior strength of the British facing Wahle. If von Lettow went around, Wahle might be defeated before he could get there, and thus the whole adventure would have come to disaster, Wahle would be lost, and von Lettow again surrounded.

Wahle's troops were ranged in a semicircle before Mahiwa on the Lukulei River. By the time von Lettow arrived on October 15, Beves had placed his force opposite, on a larger semicircle that overlapped the German lines. The British charged, and were repulsed, and charged again into the deadly Maxim machine guns. Each time they were thrown back they returned. Their casualties were heavy, but by sheer weight of numbers they threatened the German line. Then, on October 16, von Lettow

reached the Narunju River, Njendedi River, and finally Mahiwa River, where his thousand rifles steadied the Wahle line. There was no retreat. The Germans stayed and slugged it out, and wave after wave of British troops broke on the point of those machine guns. The British advanced with bayonets, and the Askaris met them with bayonets. The field in some areas was actually slippery with blood. One historian spoke of the battle in hyperbole that perhaps indicated the state of excitement of the moment: "British and German trenches became ankle-deep rivers of lumpy blood from impaling and disembowelling contests. . . ." If that sounds a little more than overdone, even the official history was almost as hysterical, and that word probably sums up the mental states of both armies. For months they had been sparring. The British had been frustrated so repeatedly that when they saw their enemy actually stand and fight instead of slipping away through the bush, they could not contain themselves. As for the Germans, the Askaris were always ready for bayonet work, and among the German officers was the feeling that their days were numbered. Even General von Lettow behaved in a

manner quite spectacular for him: he took off his usual costume—cotton shirt open at the neck, cotton trousers and awkward shoes, these days made of hippopotamus and antelope—and put on his full regimental uniform—high collar, spike helmet, and medals. He came forward into the trenches, which he always did, and deliberately exposed himself to the enemy.

Writing about the battle later in his book *Heia Safari*, von Lettow was his usual laconic self, but that was in 1919, shortly after his re-turn to Germany. By 1925 he had expanded the whole story in *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (My Memoirs of East Africa).

He told there how he had marched with five companies and two mountain artillery guns over the mountains from Likangara to Mnacho, marching steadily through the night to arrive at daybreak. The track was narrow and treacherous, the cliff-sides were steep, so steep that the column threatened to disintegrate. They had enormous difficulty with the field guns; they stuck in the trail and Askaris had to help the carriers bring them on behind the column. It was only through the heroic ef-

forts of Cavalry Sergeant Sabbath that the guns came up at all. As they neared Mahiwa they could hear the sounds of guns and machine guns that indicated a battle in progress. The noise and confusion began to reign. Von Lettow lost his map and message case. He roamed about, drinking coffee in the trenches with Lieutenant von Ruckteschell, and moving over to the Goering detachment to make himself apparent. Goering was engaged in a duel with the Nigerians, who had two field pieces, a great advantage.

Heroism was common, as it always was where the Schutztruppe fought. Captain Goering and several others managed to scout the Nigerians in the bush, and as a result his force and von Ruckteschell's managed to capture one hundred fifty thousand cartridges and one of the Nigerian guns with its ammunition. This was indeed great good fortune, because the Germans were by this time almost bereft of artillery; one by one the Koenigsberg guns had fallen along the wayside, and besides, they had nearly run out of ammunition for them.

Von Lettow could remember well the tactics used by General Beves at Reata in the spring of 1916, when his men had come charging up that hill to destruction; he was certain that Beves would do it again. With that observation von Lettow disposed of the reasoning behind a decision that was completely out of character for him in this war. He estimated that Beves would throw unit after unit against the German front, and for three days, Beves did just that until October 18.

A British relief force was already on the way, led by Brigadier O'Grady, but they could not penetrate the artillery fire. The Germans were using everything they had, including a Koenigsberg gun down to its last shells, and a quick-firing field piece captured from the British. Von Lettow himself led one ambush against the Nigerians that very nearly knocked them out of the battle altogether. Finally O'Grady did make contact, and the Nigerians were able to escape the trap through a narrow breach opened by the relieving force.

Whole British companies were destroyed. The Twenty-fifth Fusiliers, down to 120, now went down to 50. On the evening of October 18 the slaughter

ended. The British had lost at least 1,500 men, and perhaps 2,000, the records were never very clear about this. The Germans had lost far fewer men: von Lettow's count put it at 14 Germans, 81 Askaris killed; 55 Germans and 367 Askaris wounded. That was not an inconsiderable loss, in view of the slimming ranks of the German force. But the Germans had also gained war materiel at a time when it was vital: the Nigerian gun and its ammunition, nine machine guns, and 300,000 rounds of ammunition.

Useful as all this was, it was not enough for von Lettow to continue fighting as he had been recently. The costs were too high, and his force was dwindling rapidly, just as the British were building theirs up for a new attempt to entrap him.

After the Mahiwa battle, von Lettow took stock. He had only 1,200,000 pounds of provisions, which for the size of the Schutztruppe then meant a month and a half of supply. Just to make sure, he went to the supply dump at Chiwata and discovered that his estimates were far too high; the rats and insects had been at his dump, and half his

supplies were gone. So he had enough provision for only three weeks.

That discovery called for heroic action of a sort quite different from that of battle. It was made imperative when his company commanders reported on the state of the arms of the men. In the last battles and against the Portuguese, the Askaris had acquired hundreds of British and Portuguese rifles. Many of them had discarded the old 1871 rifles then. But of the four hundred thousand rounds of rifle ammunition that von Lettow had in store, more than half were cartridges for the 1871 rifles. As far as the ammunition for the captured rifles was concerned, it totaled about twenty cartridges per man, and that was not enough to conduct more than a few skirmishes. In effect, von Lettow's battle force consisted of only about fifteen hundred men with the 1871 rifles.

For several months, von Lettow had been contemplating the day when he would cross the Rovuma River into Portuguese Mozambique to carry on his lonely war.

Assessing the result of Mahiwa, he saw that the time was coming. He had moved south to fight this

battle, and was within striking distance of the Rovuma.

Within the German force, the reaction to the battle of Mahiwa also helped hasten the decision. His surgeons were appalled at the loss of life and limb, and began talking about the futility of continuing the struggle. In that sort of talk they always found a ready ear when Governor Schnee was about. Just then Schnee was back in the Kilwa area, but he sent the governor of Chiwata province, in which von Lettow was just then staying, to argue for surrender. Von Lettow and Schnee were on more unfriendly terms than usual just then, because a few weeks before von Lettow had decreed those cuts in the personal staffs of the Germans, and the governor had been forced to cut his staff and servants to forty-six, which he regarded as disgraceful. Von Lettow for weeks had been hoping that the governor would somehow disappear. He could not wish Schnee into the hands of the British for the propaganda value of such a change would be bad for the German morale.

Von Lettow heard the argument that he had listened to so many times before, and his answer was

the same one he had always given. As long as the Fatherland was fighting the British, it was his responsibility as a German soldier to carry the battle in any way that he could. So far he had tied up hundreds of thousands of British troops, and there was no reason to believe that he could not continue to involve hundreds of thousands more.

There the argument ended, but it was apparent that most of the civilians and some of the military men in East Africa had now reverted to the governor's point of view. The British had conducted themselves well in Dar es Salaam and in other towns, and the propaganda had been shrewd: life could be much more pleasant if only the Schutztruppe would stop fighting. That way the British could declare the area pacified, and military restrictions could be eliminated. Indeed, if things went well, conditions almost like those of peace could be brought to East Africa.

By this time, von Lettow had enough information to realize that the trend of the war in Europe did not favor Germany any longer. The lightning strikes at Belgium and France had failed and Germany had never been able to resurrect the jugger-

naut. The war at sea had gone for the British, and although there had been great hope for the U-boat campaign, by the fall of 1917 it was not faring well. The British had too many destroyers and aircraft to locate and trap the submarines. Most important, the entrance of the United States into the war in the spring of 1917 was being fully felt. The Americans had sent troops to France, which strengthened the Allied hand enormously. Americans were sending all the war equipment that they could produce to the British and French, and this meant thousands of guns and thousands of tons of food and millions of cartridges, to say nothing of airplanes and tanks and trucks.

Von Lettow was looking into a future that no one could predict.

He expected Germany to have continued presence in Africa somehow, and he felt that his conduct of the war would make a difference in the manner in which Germans were regarded by the Africans. So the argument that Germany was losing the war anyhow did not change his mind in the slightest degree. He would fight on.

The force with which he would fight had to be streamlined. Food was important, but equally important was medicine, and the medical stores were down to one month's supply of quinine products. So, taking out his pencil, von Lettow estimated the logistics and came up with a figure of two hundred German officers, seventeen hundred Askaris, and three thousand carriers. The last would not remain with the troop, but would drop off dozen by dozen as their supplies were exhausted, thus ceasing to be a burden to the fast-moving force. In the end, von Lettow estimated, there would be no carriers at all, and his men would have to be self-sufficient. For months he had been pushing them in this direction; telling his officers to learn from the Askaris what medicines to make from what plants, how to make rough shoes from animal skins, how to survive in the African bush with little but native implements. Soon they would have to begin practicing what he had preached.

It was also time for such a change, although von Lettow did not dwell on this aspect. Many of his officers had become openly rebellious, spurred by the governor, and these had best be left behind. So

in late October and the first days of November, von Lettow pruned his force. A thousand-plus sick and wounded were the first to be cut off. Five hundred Germans and six hundred Askaris would stay at the hospital at Nambindinga. They would be commanded by Captain Looff.

When Looff learned of this decision he was furious, for he had intended to stay on in the fight. But it was apparent that von Lettow would not keep him; the general wanted no possible source of conflict in so small an organization, and so Looff had to go.

He was left on the trail at the hospital with a sorry column of men in rags, men on litters, men half-naked, for the Schutztruppe had commandeered all the best in shoes and uniforms and equipment.

In the second week of November, the column was on the march southward, to cross the Rovuma. There it would be augmented by the one-thousand-man force of Captain Tafel, who had been fighting a rear-guard action in the west. One of the final acts at Mahiwa was to destroy the last of the Koenigsberg guns. The ammunition was virtually ex-

hausted, and the gun was too heavy to be lugged through the difficult country they would traverse. Lieutenant Wenig, in spite of his artificial leg, managed to persuade von Lettow that his gunnery experience was important enough to let him remain with the column. They did have those British and Portuguese mountain guns. Perhaps they would acquire more.

## Guerilla Column

The Schutztruppe moved into a new phase with this move on November 7. From now on the column would live entirely off the land and what it might capture from the enemy. Von Lettow was still wearing shoes he had made himself, and he joked with his officers that he could not tell left foot from right by looking down. In fact, he said, he was sure he was wearing two left shoes.

The experiments with untanned leather had not been too successful, so the word went out that everything of leather that they could capture from the enemy would be turned into shoes. Saddles, mail bags, and leather coats all went into the shoes.

The force marched south, with a few diversions. The British sent some units to harry them, but the Askaris put back a rear guard and that was not a problem. More difficult was a demand by Governor Schnee, who had insisted on accompanying the column with his forty-six retainers and one hun-

dred carriers. The governor was as arrogant as ever. He demanded that von Lettow send a unit to a certain village to punish a rebellious tribe that was involved in headhunting and cannibalism.

Von Lettow acceded, although he was by now vastly uninterested in the maintenance of a colonial rule that he knew had already crumbled beyond repair.

Von Lettow led his column. Behind came the Askaris in company units, with their German officers. Behind the companies came the wives, or bibis, carrying the pots for their men, and their babies on the hip. Behind all of these came the carriers, and at the very rear the guard of Askaris who kept the British at bay.

By military standards the column had some of the aspects of a bad dream. How did one maintain security, when each night the camp was full of grunting piglets and the dawn was shattered by the crowing of a dozen cocks? General von Lettow issued a stern order that cocks were forbidden to crow before nine o'clock in the morning— before he realized what he was saying.

Many things had to be done differently now. The officers had to do their own washing. A man who was too sick to keep up with the column was carried along until they neared a British post, and there he was left to be "captured" and taken up to Dar es Salaam to join the others who had retired to a British prison camp.

As von Lettow's troops went forward, he gave orders that mines were to be laid behind them, and that became one of the tasks of Lieutenant Wenig. He and his armorers from the Koenigsberg constructed rude land mines from the remaining shells for the guns, and from British Mills grenades and ammunition captured for guns that no longer existed. They used the trigger mechanisms from abandoned rifles to fire the mines, but these were not very sensitive. They did do enough damage to keep the British a little off balance, which was what they were supposed to do.

At Nambindinga, the British moved in slowly, not sure this time that they might not be facing another German force ready to stand and fight, and perhaps to win as the Germans had done at Mahiwa. They approached the camp on November 18.

The scouts came in first and saw the Germans and Askaris waiting for them peacefully and patiently. Then the fresh new troops of the Cape Corps came in, their new uniforms shining and their leather gleaming. One officer went dashing about waving a revolver and demanding of everyone in sight where General von Lettow was. What a plum it would be for his career to be the man to capture that elusive fox! But the sick men in the hospital began to laugh, and finally even the British officer realized that the fox had gotten away once again.

At that moment the fox and his troops were approaching Kitangara, a point to which von Lettow had earlier dispatched ten days' supply for the column. Each day more carriers dropped off the trail, and if the British came up behind, they had at least a little information about the progress of von Lettow. It did not help them much. He kept forging ahead, his rear guard dropping concealed charges in the trail, and the British never quite caught up.

Since Morogoro, the Germans were almost completely in the dark about the situation of the war in Europe. Nor did they know what was happening anywhere but within their own column.

That sort of ignorance could be painful, and it could even be fatal, as it was for Captain Tafel, who had marched hard and long to meet von Lettow at the Rovuma. Tafel came to a point very near Nambindinga just after the Looff force had moved out of there to surrender in the north. Tafel then headed for the Rovuma, and when he did not find von Lettow, he decided there was no further point in resistance. He was out of supplies, he suspected that the British had captured von Lettow already, and he was being chased by Brigadier Northey's troops. So Tafel surrendered on November 26 with more than fifteen hundred men. Only half a dozen officers and twenty Askaris refused to surrender and headed off into the bush. They found von Lettow less than a week later.

What difference the Tafel contingent would have made to the Schutztruppe at this point is conjectural. Von Lettow certainly would not have been pleased to find them without supplies, since his own supply situation was so perilous. Nor would the larger force automatically have been more effective in the sort of warfare that von Lettow proposed to wage from this point on.

Two days before Tafel's surrender, von Lettow had reached the banks of the Rovuma. Across the expanse of water lay a whole new adventure. Mozambique was rich farming country, and von Lettow hoped to find all the provisions he would need.

His experiences with the Portuguese had not brought him any great respect for their military organization, and he also expected to resupply the German column's arms and ammunition from Portuguese military stores.

At the Rovuma, von Lettow hoped to rid himself of the burdensome (and also quarrelsome) presence of Governor Schnee and his entourage of bureaucrats. But Schnee insisted on coming along rather than going back to be captured and lose whatever powers remained to him. Schnee was quite right as it turned out, for the next month the British declared a protectorate over German East Africa, which effectively made it a part of their East African holdings. Schnee would have been at best an uncomfortable civilian internee with no powers at all.

The governor had dreams of paying the column's way with paper money he had printed up in the past few months. Early in the campaign the

Germans had used gold coins, but the gold supply had run out long since and the paper was Schnee's promise (scarcely believed by anyone) that eventually the currency would be redeemed by the German government in gold. Now he had fourteen carriers borne down by these loads of paper, and as they passed von Lettow while crossing the river he made a silent vow to burn the whole mess one day.

Governor Schnee might not have been quite so troublesome had he known how the wind blew in Berlin. There von Lettow was the hero of East Africa, and the governor's name was scarcely mentioned. His constant complaints to the colonial office had given him more of a bad reputation than a good one. Berlin was enormously impressed with von Lettow's stubborn refusal to yield. This sort of example was sorely needed in Germany; as the war dragged on, coffee became unobtainable, food was sharply rationed, and the word ersatz came to mean something dreadfully inferior, which had virtually no resemblance to the thing it replaced.

In the fall of 1917 the Imperial High Command pondered the public demand that some help be given the hero of East Africa. Most of the blockade-

runners were being taken by the British. The idea of sending a submarine was so complicated that it was discarded. Although U-boats were called submarines, they could remain under water for only relatively short periods of time, and the voyage to East Africa was impossible. But the Germans had been having considerable success with Count von Zeppelin's lighter-than-air craft, and the count was sure that one of his zeppelins, L-59, could indeed reach East Africa and deliver a small payload of supplies. The amount was really small by supply standards: fifty tons. But if that shipment could reach von Lettow, the propaganda value would be enormous.

So a zeppelin was sent in November, as von Lettow was crossing the Rovuma. He had no way of knowing anything about it because the last German radio receiving station had been disassembled a few days earlier. Where he was going it did not matter what the news from Germany was. He expected nothing from home; he was prepared to fight on for months, even years, with no help whatever.

The story of the L-59's adventure is an interesting tale of the war in the air and of successes and

failures in propaganda (she was persuaded to turn back by a British faked message) but it has nothing to do with the von Lettow-Vorbeck story, and the men of the column never learned of the existence of the L-59 until after their return to Germany. As far as von Lettow was concerned he was alone, but he was prepared to do his duty until the end. Had the British realized how little this German general expected, they might not have been quite so chivalrous as they were that fall. The kaiser had sent von Lettow a note as soon as he learned through an African agent that the general was still fighting.

. . . According to the latest news there seemed to be no way out of their desperate situation and the merciless hounding-down seemed to be drawing to its end. We receive instead the joyous news that the strength of the band of heroes is unbroken, that they uphold the German flag on the Black Continent, firmly hoping for the victory of German arms in Europe. Only a corps inspired by unre-served trust in their leader and a commander of General von Lettow-Vorbeck's energy are capable of such an accomplishment, which fills us with pride and admiration. . . ."

The British were meticulous. They intercepted the message, and as they had informed von Lettow of his promotion to general officer, they now informed him under flag of truce of the kaiser's admiration. The news redoubled von Lettow's determination never to give up.

As the column crossed the Rovuma all concerned knew that they had come to a major change in their lives. The black Askaris knew no more about this territory than did the Germans. The maps were less useful here than any maps had been in German East Africa, and the blacks they would meet could not be expected to be friendly, while every white hand would be turned against them. But in von Lettow's book, the former was a far more important matter than the latter, and he refused to worry about such problems. Whatever his worries would be, those of the British would be ten times as great, for after three years of battle the British had still not adapted their military organization to meet African conditions. Mozambique had fewer roads than German East Africa by far. The absence of any heavy artillery would let the Germans travel far faster than their ene-mies.

Once across the Rovuma, von Lettow learned almost immediately from his scouts that he faced a Portuguese military camp. This was part of the force assembled by Major General Francisco Gil, the commander of troops in Mozambique. General Gil's men had neither the training nor the inclination to stand up against Askari bayonets, and this had been proved earlier on the other side of the Rovuma, when Captain Looff's small force had virtually paralyzed the Portuguese army and eventually frightened them back across the Rovuma.

Here at Ngomano, the Portuguese had about fifteen hundred troops and a large supply of stores, mostly British. Von Lettow's men came in, and in his own words, they were wicked of temper and looking for trouble. The trek had been long and hard, the Askaris and the officers were tired and short-tempered, and the whites had prickly heat. They were looking for a fight.

Less than a mile from the crossing point, said the scouts, was the enemy camp. The German troop crossed, scarcely wetting themselves in the process, so shallow was the Rovuma at this season of the year. They had crossed just upstream of the

Lugenda River. Von Lettow sent Captain von Ruckteschell's detachment west against the Portuguese camp in a frontal attack. Von Lettow independently, as he often did, went off into the bush to scout the place as the detachment moved forward. What he saw pleased him mightily—many troops, in good condition, and evidence of plenty of supplies.

While von Ruckteschell launched the frontal attack, Captain Koehn detachment moved around to the south, taking a page from the British book, to flank the enemy. Lieutenant Wenig and his mountain gun were also brought into action against the earthworks of the fortress. So on came the Germans, with Wenig following instructions and firing as rapidly as his men could load, fire, eject, and reload. The object was to keep the Portuguese off balance and create the impression of more than one field piece. He succeeded admirably, and the Portuguese, whose training had not prepared them for such ferocity, kept their heads down as the Askaris advanced, firing rapidly.

From the rear now came the other force, and the two converged on the position, shouting and shrieking as they came. The Portuguese were phys-

ically overwhelmed. As the German troops approached the fort, the black smoke from their old 1871 rifles cast a pall over the Portuguese positions and added to the confusion. Then the Askaris came over the earthworks with bayonets, and for the next two hours virtually ran amok inside the Portuguese camp. When the fighting was over,, only about six hundred of the fifteen hundred Portuguese and black troops survived. It was not one of the Schutztruppe's more chivalrous days, but one in which the African nature of the organization triumphed over the "civilized" European way. Von Lettow was a little chagrined but there was not much he could do about it, and he knew that; for weeks the Askaris' emotional tensions had been building. Before they crossed the Rovuma they lied given von Lettow a new nickname that signified their resentments: "the shroud- maker." Now, victorious, they looted the camp and raped the women of the Portuguese Askaris. The carriers, seeing what was happening, joined in on the attack on the Portuguese stores, and soon the Portuguese survivors were in there digging right with them, smashing the doors to warehouses, pulling forth cases of jam and

canned foods, opening some, tasting, throwing them aside and going to the next.

As von Lettow saw them wasting provisions, he began running from one band to another barking orders, but it was no use. The moment he left they were back at it again like a band of monkeys—prying, tearing, pulling, chattering, and completely out of control. It was hours before von Lettow and his German officers could restore order.

When they did they began to examine the papers in the camp The Portuguese had just arrived the day before, and that was one reason they were caught napping, in the process of building up the earthen works around the fort. Their orders, ironically, had been to send out patrols and at any cost to stop the Germans from crossing the Rovuma.

That afternoon, the Askaris and carriers and their captives labored long into the dusk, burying the dead. There was no recourse; the African sun gave them only hours before the putrefication would become so serious as to drive them out of camp. The next day one hundred fifty Portuguese were released after promising they would not fight again. Among the Portuguese blacks, three hundred were

taken on as extra carriers, and they were needed because the Germans had not a carrier to spare for the new loot. And the loot was enormous. For the first time anyone who wanted to rid himself of his 1871 rifle could have a new one, and most of the men did want them. The Germans also captured six machine guns and thirty horses. No one expected the horses to last long, but while they lived they would be helpful pack animals. The small number of machine guns in relation to the number of troops was another example of the inferiority of most armies to the German army, and another indication that if they met the Portuguese again the results would likely be the same. For the first time since Morogoro, von Lettow could feel secure about his supplies.

For the next few weeks, the von Lettow force occupied this fort and built up the earthworks. From here they launched raids on various other Portuguese military camps within a range of fifty miles. They captured more guns, more ammunition and more stores, including tobacco, which was enormously prized by the Europeans in the troop.

One reason for sticking close here for a time was von Lettow's health. He was suffering from malaria again and on the march south he had gone barefoot part of the time in order to impress his men. The chiggers had gotten to his feet and the sand flies had given him that three-day fever that was their hallmark. In addition, he and the others were afflicted with boflies, which laid eggs under the skin and created new infections. The surgeons were busy day after day cutting and daubing wounds with disinfectant.

There was another reason for the halt at Ngomano von Lettow was less than pleased at the way his column had moved in the march to the Rovuma. These troops, after all, had come from half a dozen units, and some of them von Lettow had not seen for a year. The discipline was not what it should be, and that sad fact was certainly emphasized by the "rape of Ngomano." So von Lettow began a training program. The marches against the enemy were not just for the collection of supplies, but to harden the troops and get them back into order again. And it was not just the troops. The women and children of the Askaris had to learn the

tempo of the new sort of march. The Portuguese carriers had to be taught German words and phrases, and above all German ways.

Also, here was a golden opportunity to toughen up the troop for the days ahead. Before, with the enemy on three sides of him, von Lettow had not felt like conducting training exercises, and particularly after Mahiwa, when he discovered that he had only half the stores he had expected, he had been forced to keep on the move. But now there was time.

In the training the blacks were taught to march for two hours then halt for half an hour, then go on for two more. A day's march thus consumed seven hours, and the troop could move fifteen to twenty miles in that time, sometimes more.

Von Lettow now broke the troop into three columns. First in each came the attack unit, second was the field hospital group, and behind came the group of Askaris, with a day's march between each column. Each column had its fighting company, armed with rifles and machine guns, its own supplies of ammunition and medicines, and each European had his own kit, carried along with his col-

umn. The Askaris marched along smartly, standing up straight, rifles over their shoulders, but holding them by the barrel with the butt out behind, as was the Schutztruppe tradition. They walked along singing and chattering (always when they approached the enemy position this noisiness was a problem). Along with them marched children of various ages, the adolescents clothed in cast-off bits of Askari uniforms, their belongings in bundles on their heads. But in spite of all this noise and small talk, the Askaris were alert to the slightest noise or movement in the bush around them. Just as military in bearing and alert were the machine-gun carriers, the Wanjamwezi and Wazukuma tribesmen, who prided themselves on this work, and carried the heavy frames of the machine guns with a will. In a matter of moments they could have the guns set up on the ground and the ammunition supply ready for firing. They were as much a part of the Schutztruppe as the gunners themselves.

The carriers were laden with the column's food, luggage, and bedding, as well as the wounded, who were brought on litters. The average load was sixty to eighty pounds, which they carried on their

heads. They were the backbone of the force. In Africa, the columns could never have moved without them.

Hunting was a constant exercise. Every day each column sent out its hunters to replenish the supply of meat, for without time or facilities for preservation, the men had best eat an animal on the day of the kill. When they camped, rather than bivouacked, four Askaris and von Lettow's "boy," Serubili, immediately put up the posts and stringers for a grass hut, and in an hour they had made von Lettow a camp. At night the Askaris gathered around their fires and cooked the meat the hunters had shot that day, then sat around the fire telling stories and singing until darkness became complete, when the fires were lowered and the camp slept.

These conditions could exist, of course, only when the enemy was not near. At Ngomano life became extremely burdensome for the general, because he could not escape the constant meddling and nagging of Governor Schnee. Eventually von Lettow became so disenchanted with the governor that he managed to move him off in a column far

away from the headquarters troop, and at last got some peace of mind.

Once again, with the crossing of the Rovuma River, the British crowed that they had finally defeated von Lettow and that German East Africa was now in safe hands. It was not true that the British now had control of all East Africa, for the fact was that as long as von Lettow was loose he could raid Rhodesia, South Africa, the Congo, and Nyasaland. King George V sent a cable of congratulations to General van Deventer, but the old Africa hands in the British force knew very well that the struggle was far from over. Von Lettow had already shown that he had no intention of giving up. Indeed, at just about this time, General van Deventer called again on von Lettow to surrender (because Tafel had done so). The German commander chose to read this as an admission of British impotence to move against him, as had certainly been the case with an exhausted Smuts a year earlier.

Once again the timing of war action would be governed by the rains. Between the end of the year and March, General van Deventer had to make his move, and this time he was farther away from the

Germans than the British had been since the disastrous defeat at Tanga.

After a few days, the supplies at Ngomano began to run low, and von Lettow decided to push on. He moved slowly, searching the countryside for provisions. The pattern was set: the troop was to live like a pack of wild predators, sometimes going hungry, sometimes feasting themselves. Any resemblance between this guerilla life and the sort of warfare the British expected was slight, and the British did not understand it at all.

On Christmas Eve, 1917, the troop was camped at Chirumba, which was the center of a Portuguese plantation grouping. With the sentimentality of the Germans at such times, von Lettow's officers decided to give him a surprise. They scoured the area to find clean sheets and the best bed. They put together mosquito nets to make one that was completely bug-proof for a change. They escorted the commander to this palatial room on Christmas Eve and the next day they feasted him on real coffee, pork roast, wine, and cigars.

The rains came here in December, so the British were far away and stayed there. During the

rains the troop stayed in the comparative comfort of the plantation complex, the Germans with real roofs over their heads.

It was what von Lettow's biographer, Leonard Mosley, referred to as a period when "the careless raptures of an interlude snatched from the rigours of war" held them.

Then, in the second week of January, the halcyon period came to an end.

## In the Bush

The first evidence of British activity came in December. An Indian cavalry unit crossed the Rovuma in the first week of the month and became involved in a firefight with von Lettow's rear guard. It was the usual engagement of the German forces, a few rifle shots, an ambush, and withdrawal. It meant very little, except to remind von Lettow that his enemies were still there, not far away, and that they would soon enough be moving.

By December the British had accepted the sad fact (to them) that in spite of many promises and much information about Portuguese intentions to stop von Lettow at the Rovuma, the fox was once more loose, and this time in totally unmapped country. General van Deventer thought von Lettow might simply have been employing a skir-mish to pick up a few supplies and then come back into East Africa. He did not understand how fully von Lettow was committed to a survival campaign that

must last until the end of the European war. So van Deventer wasted the efforts of three full battalions of King's African Rifles—his best troops—in preventing the Germans from doing something they had no intention of doing. They were stationed at key points along the Rovuma, to prevent von Lettow from recrossing the river.

Thinking he knew his enemy, van Deventer also put twice as many troops along the shores of Lake Nyasa, to keep the Germans out of Nyasaland.

Finally, van Deventer's major force was at Lindi, which was an impossibly long way from the Rovuma region, where von Lettow was operating. So the British made arrangements with the Portuguese to start a buildup of troops at the port of Porto Amelia, about two hundred miles south of the Rovuma, on the Indian Ocean. Van Deventer also did something that should have been done years earlier: he sent the South Africans home and he built up the King's African Rifles. The British at last realized that if they were to fight the German Askaris successfully, they would have to employ the people of Africa who knew what they were doing. In a few months, said van Deventer, he ought to be able to

squeeze von Lettow in a vise, one side of which would come from Nyasaland, the other from Porto Amelia. No one in Britain seemed to pay much attention to the anomaly: King, field marshals, generals, and politicians were all congratulating van Deventer on his "magnificent victory" in pushing the Germans out of East Africa. Nobody seemed concerned with the enormous expenditure of men and materiel that was still occurring and must continue for months to come.

In mid-January 1918, the British troops along the Rovuma were withdrawn to Porto Amelia. From here van Deventer planned to launch his major offensive. The major headquarters for the British effort now were located at Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and in this Portuguese city. Most of the South Africans and European soldiers were shipped home at this time, and what remained in East Africa was a force made up largely of blacks, Nigerians, Gold Coast troops, and the King's African Rifles, which had been brought up to thirty thou. sand men. So now the British outnumbered the Germans in the field by more than twenty to one. On paper, the difference is enormous, but in fact, the very size of the

British establishment operating in trackless jungle was a disadvantage, because the large columns demanded thousands of porters.

Nor was Porto Amelia the sort of jumping-off place the British command would have preferred. The natural harbor was excellent, but the Portuguese refinements were not. The port city was on one side of the harbor, and the road into the interior was on the other, eight miles away. The supplies brought in by ship had to be moved by Arab dhow across the harbor and landed on a sandy beach. If an onshore wind sprang up the unloading would have to stop because the surf made it impossible to bring in the dhows.

In December van Deventer had sent the first elements to Porto Amelia, in the cargo ship *Salamis*. She set out from Lindi along the badly charted coast, and before the day was over she struck a reef and was stuck tight. The captain tried to back her off. She did not budge. He tried to kedge her off, with no more success. He waited for the high tide, but she did not move. A pair of whaling ships, heading for the Antarctic, stopped off to help, but they could not get the *Salamis* off the reef. Another

transport was brought down and the men of the expeditionary force were moved from the stranded ship on board the transport, under very difficult conditions, with the lighters threatening to strand themselves at any time. The *Salamis* was left on the reef with most of the expedition's stores for a week until larger vessels could be brought down to pull the lightened transport off. The expeditionary force was taken back to Lindi, and split among two ships, re-supplied as well as possible, and sent down to Porto Amelia.

When the troops arrived they were dismayed. The "city" consisted of a short pier, a row of shops and buildings, and a few houses with corrugated roofs. The rest was pure African—mud huts, grass roofs and mud ruts for streets. It made Lindi look like a European metropolis. The only properly built house in the city was the governor's "mansion," which was an ordinary two story house built of concrete.

There were no sanitary facilities in the town, the flies were every-where, and the warehouses had the smell of rot and decaying fruit. The troops were

moved well outside town to avoid the contamination, and they set up a tent city.

It was the second week of January before "Pamforce," as the British called it, was settled in Porto Amelia. They soon discovered that although their maps showed that a motor road cut into the interior, it had not been used for many years for motor traffic and would have to be rebuilt. So General van Deventer's hopes for a quick victory to please the London authorities were set back more than a little.

But if van Deventer could not reach his enemy, at least he did find von Lettow and the troop at Chirumba by use of air observation planes. Soon a plane came slowly over the German camp, low, and in spite of rifle fire from the ground, dropped a load of leaflets in Swahili addressed to the Askaris. This was a shrewd propaganda paper, and showed a considerable knowledge of the state of affairs in the von Lettow camp. For several months the Askaris had been getting their pay in Governor Schnee's paper rupees. The British leaflet questioned the paper rupee's value. The Askaris, deep inside Portuguese territory that they did not know at all, and

many of them bereft of women and families, were beginning to be good subjects for propaganda.

"If you have heard that the war in Europe is winging towards its end, and that Germany will soon have victory, let me give you an answer . . . The Germans with whom you are fighting know nothing—how can they know, when they are driven into the bush, living like wild animals, without forts, without ships, without warships, without even a telegraph line?"

The leaflets then called on the Askaris to desert and cross the Rovuma and surrender to the British.

The leaflets threatened to be extremely effective, as von Lettow was aware: many of his German officers and more of the Askaris were sick of a war they saw they could never win. Few of them shared von Lettow's understanding that every day they tied up more than fifty thousand British soldiers, dozens of ships, hundreds—even thousands—of trucks and other vehicles in Nairobi, Tanga, Dar es Salaam, Lindi, and Porto Amelia. In addition, South Africa had become a supply point for the British, who had to bring materials up for the Nyasa force. So a few hundred Germans and blacks were creat-

ing an enormous diversion, and they were costing the German government nothing at all. It could continue only as long as one man had the will, however, and when those leaflets fell, that same night a number of Askaris slid through the bush from the camp and were not seen again by the Germans.

Von Lettow knew then, in the middle of January, that his only way of keeping the loyalty of the Askaris and keeping the column moving was to keep moving physically and keep winning loot that would divert the men from their troubles.

He knew that in the southwest, from Lake Nya-sa, the British had posted two battalions of the King's African Rifles, because the Goering detachment had met them in several skirmishes between Luam-bala and the Lugenda River basin. He also had to watch out for the troops coming up from the south.

So it was time to move. Von Lettow led the column out from Chirumba. The supplies of food found there had largely been exhausted, and their livelihood once more depended on the hunters, who started out about three hours ahead of the column

each morning, hoping to greet the arriving troops with plenty of meat when they reached the point of camp.

To keep spirits up, von Lettow encouraged singing, particularly of the Schutztruppe marching song, "Heia Safari."

We're on our way, we're winning,  
We're following our colonel,  
The troops are marching,  
The troops are marching.  
We're on the way, we're winning.

Von Lettow did everything in his power to encourage this view. It was not always easy; too often his officers felt the bite of the von Lettow tongue. His uncertain health made him irritable, and the presence of Governor Schnee was a constant problem for him, because the governor had never stopped his sniping, his questioning, and his hope that he somehow would seize power over the Schutztruppe and take it back to East Africa to surrender. At one point the governor announced that when they returned to Germany he would see

to it that von Lettow was court-martialed for insubordination— another indication of just how little the Germans knew of feelings and activities in the war. Indeed what they did learn was largely gained from a short range radio receiver they had managed to bring along, and their news came largely from British broadcasts. Schnee seemed impervious to the obvious signs: von Lettow had received Germany's highest medal; von Lettow had been promoted to major general; and von Lettow was the recipient of messages from the kaiser.

One day, after this particular threat, von Lettow's temper completely deserted him and he unloaded his feelings on the governor. Since they had moved out of German territory, he reminded Schnee, the governor had absolutely no authority and was traveling with the column on sufferance. The implication was clear that it would not take much more abuse for the general to decide that Schnee's presence was not only unnecessary, but negative, and . . .

The governor seemed for the moment to get the message, and the complaints quieted down. They were not so noticeable, either, once the general as-

signed Schnee to the Wahle, or last column, which meant there was two days' marching time between himself and his nemesis. This move became more significant when the three columns changed directions. For a few days the land had been fertile and full of game. But soon enough they came into land where game was scarce, and von Lettow saw that it would not support three columns moving in the same direction. So General Wahle cut off with one column to head west and face the Nyasaland enemy if it came to that. Captain Franz Koehl was chosen to lead the second column eastward, and Schnee was reassigned to that group. Von Lettow continued southward. The idea was that one column ought to reach an area where game was again thick, and then the other two columns could be brought along to join.

So infertile was the area through which von Lettow marched that he again gathered mushrooms and other fungi to expand their meager diet. He did not tell them that his pickings had practically no food value. They filled the belly, and perhaps that would give him time to find more food.

The entire troop was now showing signs of the long march and the months of living in the deep bush. Wounds did not heal properly, the men did not have their old recuperative powers, and what had been the hard slimness of good health was transformed in the thinness of semi-starvation. Von Lettow was having dreadful trouble with his feet, and finally lost several toenails as the surgeon's only solution to the chigger bites.

After the columns were split off, von Lettow marched on south, sending out scouts to try to keep track of the British enemy. He was sure that van Deventer would soon launch a nutcracker movement from east and west. With British forces thus split, he might find a chance to strike a blow as strong as the one he had given the British at Mahiwa. That in turn should force them to bring even more troops and military strength into the area.

Through January, February, and March the Schutztruppe marched on. Von Lettow's column covered twenty-five hundred miles, penetrating deep into Mozambique. The skirmishes with the Portuguese came seldom, when they did come. Of-

ten the Germans had only to fire a few shots and the enemy ran away, sometimes leaving valuable supplies behind.

The British had adopted a new strategy of cutting their force into many small columns, and this proved confusing to von Lettow. But he managed, even with his three columns, to keep informed about their whereabouts.

In April, as the British began to move, von Lettow's various forces had several encounters with small units. Captain KoehPs column ambushed a force of South Africans and cut them off from the water supply to their camp. The siege lasted four days, and at the end of it the thirsty South Africans drank up a supply of liquor they were carrying, just before the Askaris launched a bayonet attack. The Askaris came charging into camp, to discover a thoroughly limp enemy force, much the worse for liquor.

But not all the encounters had such elements of humor. There was, of course, very little humor in their situation. The Germans suffered greatly with blackwater fever, which resulted in many deaths among the officers. The Askaris suffered from sto-

mach cramps caused by insufficiently cooked manioc, which they were using instead of wheat and corn. Many of them died too, and finally von Lettow decided that as the British were coming close, the sick and wounded would have to be left behind for them to care for. He had no doubts that the British would behave in a humanitarian fashion; they always had.

So von Lettow moved south, keeping his central column halfway between Nyasaland and the Indian Ocean. The first move had taken them across the Lugenda River. The next headquarters had been at Nanungu. Here he learned of a major fight between Captain Koehl's column and the British coming from Porto Amelia. The place was Medo, about a hundred miles inland from the port city, and it began with a British soldier blowing himself to kingdom come when he stepped on a landmine made from a Koenigsberg shell. The fight was more difficult than many, however, because here the Askaris encountered King's African Rifles, blacks who knew the ways of Africa as well as they did. Of course, von Lettow had never intended that Koehl should stand his ground against eight thousand British

coming from the East. After a long day of attacking the Askaris slipped away, as was their habit, into the bush and disappeared, leaving the British with many dead and a hundred sorely wounded men, for whom a field hospital had to be organized.

In May, the British began pressing hard from both directions. Von Lettow cast his strength sometimes with one of the detachments and then sometimes with the other. At the time of Koehl's encounter at Medo, von Lettow had been supporting Wahle in a fight. A few weeks later, the Germans encountered the British again and retreated to a good defensive position at Korogwe.

This territory was wonderful land for a major ambush, which von Lettow was itching to make so he could stop one of the British columns cold. North of the confluence of the Luri and Malma rivers was a bowl-shaped landscape dominated by two mountain crags, one called Koroma and the other Timbani. As always, von Lettow roamed nervously throughout the area his troops occupied, and one day from the top of Koroma he saw the campfires of his enemies. From the number of plumes of smoke he could estimate that it was a large force. This

force was Brigadier Edwards's column of King's African Rifles, and they were preparing for an attack on Koehl's column. Von Lettow saw opportunity to surprise the British, but first he had to get Koehl out of the danger zone. He sent a message to the captain by runner and field telephone and prepared his own column to march and drive the British back toward the Kimbani mountain range. The mountains were so steep it was conceivable he might trap them in some blind valley. Koehl got the message and immediately began to move out of the way. But at that moment Governor Schnee got the idea that he was a military commander and must command. So he countermanded von Lettow's order, stepped to the head of the column, and after a few hours' march insisted that they camp in a nice comfortable spot. There the British descended upon them.

Von Lettow became aware of this disaster just after he returned to his own headquarters to begin moving out. He had stepped into his tent when suddenly he heard the unmistakable "crump-crump" of British field mortars. Just then an orderly came up to report that the telephone line to

Koehl's detachment was out, and it did not take von Lettow a second to realize that for some reason Koehl had been trapped by the British.

Von Lettow had hoped to move around the enemy and drive them toward the mountains, but now he had no choice but to go straight in to rescue his column, and he did.

He was able to extricate Koehl and most of his column, but the casualties to the Koehl detachment were heavy. The Askaris, as usual, gave as well as they got, but they suffered two hundred casualties and lost seventy thousand rounds of needed ammunition, which they had to abandon along with all of Koehl's supplies. There seemed to be one ray of light: Governor Schnee, the cause of the disaster, was missing. As it turned out, the governor had managed to sneak off, leaving his staff and everything he owned in the panic. A German noncommissioned officer found him quaking in the bush, and led him into von Lettow's camp. For a few hours, at least, Schnee was cowed, and wisely kept away from von Lettow, whom he could hear fuming at the world in general about the destruction by a

fool of a very sensible plan to inflict damage on the enemy.

The next day, to rub it in a little, von Lettow went to the hut where Schnee was lying and presented him with an old pair of socks that Mrs. Schnee had knitted for him at the beginning of the war, and some sarcastic remarks about leadership.

One thing was certain in von Lettow's mind. The governor was not going to be allowed to continue as a nuisance. To underline that decision, he found the non-essential papers that the governor had insisted the headquarters column carry. Principal among these was an enormous pile of those Schnee-manufactured rupee notes, which the governor had insisted be given out in exchange for goods and services rather than simple requisitions, which the German government could be expected to honor after the war. Von Lettow personally watched these papers being piled up on a mountainside, and personally lit the match that destroyed them. The action told Governor Schnee what the commander wanted to tell him.

## The Great Circle Course

After the battle at the foot of the mountain, the British drew off to lick their wounds, and von Lettow continued to head south, between the jaws of the vise staying just out of range. He was searching for food and ammunition. The pursuit was growing hotter, but von Lettow met it in the old way. Rear-guard units were set up behind each column, and flanking patrols guarded them on east and west. Sometimes, on the plains, the Askaris set fire to the elephant grass and put a wall of smoke and flame between themselves and their pursuers. The British had great trouble with this technique; it prevented them from moving rapidly with their armored cars and trucks. Von Lettow's old habit of sticking to the deep bush and following game trails made the pursuit even more difficult, which was just what the German leader wanted. Von Lettow's original doctrine had never lagged: tie up the British in Africa. Once in a while, probably because of pressure

from his officers and men to "win," von Lettow had been drawn into pitched battles. Almost invariably these were too costly, whether he "won" or "lost," but they were essential in another way, because if the British got the idea he would never stand and fight, they might reduce the number of troops deployed against him. So it was always, from beginning, a tightrope walk for von Lettow. The conditions now were most difficult. They continued to trudge on through unknown country, where even the maps they occasionally captured from the Portuguese were not much help. Game was scarce. They had lost many supplies in the battle below the mountain because of Governor Schnee's pigheadedness, and the only saving grace as far as von Lettow was concerned was the end of the paper money and the fact that Schnee had lost his entire kit, down to his shaving equipment. But von Lettow, in spite of all difficulties and his own wretched health, was the strongest man in the troop and he was everywhere, cajoling, snapping, encouraging, patting the children on the heads and scowling at his officers. All the while he was moving south, drawing the British further and further from their

supply bases and creating difficulties that meant more carriers, more demands for support from the base forces.

At this time, June 1918, there were no fewer than six British units chasing von Lettow, the smallest of them consisting of three battalions. Each of these forces was larger than von Lettow's own. Each of them had greater problems of supply, medical treatment, and move-ment. Von Lettow helped make it that way by now abandoning his wounded and prisoners so the enemy had to stop and treat with that new problem.

The Germans had several advantages in Portuguese territory. One was the rugged and unknown nature of the land, which helped the pursued more than the pursuer. Another was the timidity and disorganization of the Portuguese military establishment, which fell before the Germans like wheat before the scythe. A third was the welcome accorded the Germans by the blacks of Mozambique. For if German policy had always been strict with the blacks of Africa, and British policy had been careless and racist, Portuguese policy was notable for sheer cruelty to what the Portuguese considered

an inferior people. The blacks greeted British and Germans, without much distinction, as conquering heroes. It meant much more to the Germans, because it meant food when they needed it, and direction, and porters when a capture brought them a new supply to be carried.

By mid-June the British lines were so badly extended that the chase was beginning to seem fruitless. It took the carriers twenty days to go from a supply base on the Rovuma to the front line and back. Each porter needed about three pounds of corn and fat each day to keep his strength up to carry his sixty-pound load. The British supply officers found that the porters were consuming the total weight of their load, and if their rations were cut back so they did not, they fell ill and either died or had to be brought back, which was even more costly. The British had to maintain carrier hospitals at all their bases, in addition to hospitals for the black troops and the white officers. In his study of the British campaign in Africa, Charles Miller reported that they buried twenty-six thousand porters in the Portuguese adventure.

The British troops, with all their supply bases, were probably worse off than the Germans, because their porters ate up most of the supplies and sometimes could not find the British units at all. So the British columns were reduced to buying, bartering for, and forcefully taking food from the blacks of Mozambique. Those same villagers had eagerly assisted the Germans weeks, days, or hours before, and had little or nothing to spare, so the British insistence on supply did not always sit well.

All the while von Lettow marched. With his toughest and strongest troops at the point and the end of his main body, he destroyed the Portuguese and fought off his trailers.

Back in May, von Lettow had captured a map which showed a place called Alto Molocue, which was a major administrative center near the border of Mozambique and Quelimane districts. Turning to avoid one of the troublesome British columns, von Lettow marched his force across a mountain and swooped down into the valley. The Portuguese had heard him coming and had fled, but here was something welcome, for a change. Of all things, the force found a herd of swine, and for the first time in

months all the Germans feasted on pork, while one of the volunteers, a planter, made sausages for the future.

From Alto Molocue southward, the land was more fertile and the climate more temperate. Their latitude was 16 degrees south, and the climate could be compared to the Sudan. They recruited a new army of porters to carry the seven-hundred-fifty thousand pounds of foodstuffs captured in the valley, and again they moved south, this time seeking ammunition.

From the blacks in the region von Lettow learned that the Portuguese were supposed to have a major arsenal at Kokosani. But that place was not shown on their maps, and the native Africans were vague about any point outside their own territory. "Many days' march" was the typical information.

Finally, by accident, they found what they were seeking. They had just crossed the Likungo River, and moved to the Namacurra River. When they crossed this river, they were at the town of Namacurra, or Kokosani—the place of many soldiers and many supplies. Von Lettow split his column, sent

Captain Erich Muller, his point man, around one side, and moved in directly on the camp with the main column. By the time he arrived, Muller had routed the Portuguese, and the Germans took possession of what was really a factory town. They captured two field pieces, but only a handful of shells for those guns, and no rifle ammunition. They captured a river steamer that had just come up the river as they were taking the town, and a British doctor with a load of medical supplies, including quinine. The German medical problems were solved for months.

But still no ammunition was unearthed. Von Lettow knew there must be ammunition somewhere near, for this had been a railhead for supplies brought up the Namacurra River from the seaport of Guilimane.

Questioning various Europeans, including several Portuguese women left behind by the troops, von Lettow discovered that there was a railhead down the river, and that the ammunition dump was there. It was guarded by British troops.

Von Lettow sent a column forward to strike, taking two field guns forward. Muller led the force,

divided it in two with a gun on each side, and thus advanced on the enemy in a two-pronged drive. The two field pieces, firing rapidly, made the British and Portuguese believe they faced a force at least four times as large as it really was, and they fled when the Askaris charged with their bayonets. They fled into the Namacurra River, where most of them drowned or were eaten by crocodiles. The Germans lost nine men and suffered fourteen other casualties, three Germans and eleven Askaris wounded. The British-Portuguese toll was 209 known dead (including more than a hundred bodies recovered from the river), and 540 taken prisoner.

Here was the ammunition the troop needed—so much the Germans could not find enough carriers to take it all with them. There were seven heavy machine guns and three light machine guns, and all the ammunition that went with them. There was an abundance of European food and liquor, which had been stocked for the Portuguese and British officers. The Germans settled down to a full twenty-four hours of orgy, approved by von Lettow, but heartily disapproved by Governor Schnee, who wandered about among the carousers, taking

notes. But on the second day, von Lettow ordered the rest of the liquor dumped into the river. They burned the food they could not carry and moved on.

The German force had now achieved a "second wind." Probably the revival of spirits coincided with the desertion of the homesick and war-weary, who had been dropping off along the route south.

Whatever the exact reason, the Schutztruppe was singing again. Namacurra had produced 350 new rifles, and nearly every man now had the piece he wanted.

The British were now strung out across Mozambique. Their original supply line from Porto Amelia was 170 miles long, and so the British had adopted the Portuguese ports of Mozambique and Queli-mane as new supply points. But just now they were halfway between pot and kettle, and the confusion gave von Lettow a few days' res-pite.

The British enemy was trying all sorts of new techniques to entrap von Lettow. They established riding schools and taught the infantrymen to ride, then used them as mounted patrolmen on short patrols deep into the bush. They often found the

Germans, or what they thought was the German column, only to discover that they had run across another of von Lettow's ambush groups.

Von Lettow moved slowly, and waited. The British, he learned from scouts and spies, were advancing in force southward and must be trying to drive him to the coast. He had successfully avoided this entrapment in German East Africa, never lingering at Tanga or Lindi, and scarcely halting at Dar es Salaam. Once more he was determined to avoid the trap; his security lay in maintaining four escape routes around him, and through those he could always expect to dissolve the force if necessary and move off to re-form. By July 1918, the men of the Schutztruppe were the most self-sufficient guerilla fighters in the history of modern warfare. For nine months they had lived entirely off the land, or from supplies captured from their enemies. Just now they suffered from a glut of supply, if anything.

The information that reached von Lettow that July was that two major forces of British troops were moving purposefully toward Quel-imane, which they expected him to attack because it was so juicy a plum. They hoped to find him there, and

then to badger him into surrender. One force was coming down from Porto Amelia, and the other, which had been Brigadier Northey's until he was promoted to governor of British East Africa that summer, was coming from the Nyasa region. They were moving like the arms of a V, to catch him at the point.

It was a tribute to von Lettow's mastery of the bush and his constant awareness of the behavior of the enemy that he now tried, and accomplished, a trick so daring as to be almost magical. He decided to move up north again, between the two columns. If by chance the British discovered him and launched attacks from both sides, it would be a very difficult situation, but von Lettow had handled just such situations at least three times during the campaign already. His solution when "trapped" was to break the troop into company units (and smaller units, if necessary), and let the Askaris melt into the woods to re-form at another place. One of the best comparisons of von Lettow's method was with a Colonial American force: the Green Mountain Boys, of Vermont, who after the fall of Fort Ticonderoga to the British, escaped across Lake Champlain

and into the valley that leads to the town of Castleton. When ambushed there by the superior British force chasing them, the Americans took full advantage of their knowledge of the terrain and slipped off in ones and twos into the brush, to join up again in the south and leave the British with a pyrrhic victory. So it was in Africa, von Lettow showing again and again the mastery of terrain and guerilla technique that had already made him legendary.

For the march north, von Lettow abandoned the single column. Again he ordered the formation of three columns, but this time they would move through the countryside side by side, with the flank columns always able to warn the main column of the approach of any enemies. Thus the troop marched north, not south, as the British hurried toward Quelimane.

The British now had seven separate columns marching on Quelimane. Von Lettow passed between two of them and the British never knew they had been within rifleshot of their quarry. For two weeks the British lost contact with the Germans. Then they stopped to search in the south.

Quite by accident, a relief column of King's African Rifles, headed by Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Dickinson, ran into the forward elements of the Schutztruppe, and a firefight began which lasted for fifteen hours, with neither side seeing much of the other. Von Lettow was all over the area in his usual fashion. He moved up to scout an enemy detachment and found it on one side of a ridge. One of the British black soldiers came up to the ridge top as von Lettow was creeping up, and he flung himself into a little gully where he could not be seen. But he landed in a patch of a weed called cow-itch, a sort of nettle that brought out an immediate rash where it touched the skin, and then spread as the victim scratched. Von Lettow let out a yell, and this was heard by the enemy troops. They came hustling down the ridge line, and he burrowed down into the cow-itch, clamping his lips. They went on by, and he pulled himself free, and shakily made his way back to his own lines, scratching all the way. When he got back the surgeon found him covered from head to toe with a nasty red rash. But at least von Lettow was back among the German troops.

Colonel Dickinson, the British commander, was not so lucky. A detachment led by Lieutenant Boell trapped the colonel in his command post, with his field telephone in hand. Boell let Dickinson report that he, his adjutant, and his chief medical officer were prisoners, and then cut the line. The prisoners were taken back to von Lettow's command post, where the general sat itching, but taking calls and messages from runners and directing every step of the battle. He spoke kindly but curtly to Colonel Dickinson, saying something about the misfortunes of war, and then the colonel was led away, not really knowing to whom he had been talking. When he learned that the tall, thin, preoccupied man was the famous General von Lettow-Vorbeck, he insisted on being taken back to shake von Lettow's hand and congratulate him on the brilliant campaign he had been waging for four years. It came out then that Colonel Dickinson knew whereof he spoke; he had been fighting von Lettow almost continuously for all that time.

The colonel then went off with a junior officer to his captivity, still shaking his head and muttering about what a splendid man von Lettow was. The

von Lettow legend had transcended the propaganda with which the British nurtured their troops and their people. Since the march through Belgium the Germans had been depicted in England and the other Allied countries as akin to the wild hordes of Genghis Khan, who had swept to the borders of Europe half a dozen centuries earlier. By and large the soldiers believed this propaganda, some British officers refusing even to speak to captured Germans. But after four years the Schutztruppe had the begrudging respect of all who knew what had happened in Africa.

This attitude was fortified these days by the manner in which the Germans treated prisoners. They had far too many prisoners for their liking. They dealt with the enemy Askaris in a simple enough manner, obliging a few to enlist for a time as porters, although this was never very satisfactory because they needed constant watching. Most of the black soldiers were disarmed and released to find their way home or back to their units. But the officers, the British, and the Indians were a different matter. It would have been murder to send them into the bush, so von Lettow kept them with

the columns. They had their own messes, but they were given rations on the level of the Germans. They shared plenty and they shared hunger over the weeks. During this period, much of von Lettow's reminiscences of the war dealt with stories about food, which seemed far more important then than nearly three-quarters of a century later—anecdotes about food, wry comments about food. But of course food was the key; the Schutztruppe had really never suffered except during the march south through Mozambique, when they lacked guns and ammunition, but food had been an eternal worry of the general's.

Again in August they were fortunate. They crossed the swollen waters of the Likungo River (with the British and Portuguese forces always nearby). They were now moving into territory where the dialect of the local blacks was more or less understandable to the Askaris. Captain Muller's striking force learned of a Portuguese detachment passing by on the search for them. Muller marched north to a sisal plantation and factory, and there engaged three Portuguese companies. When the Askaris charged with bayonets, the Portuguese fled,

leaving one hundred thousand rounds of ammunition, a large number of rifles, and two field guns as loot.

On August 24 von Lettow crossed the Likungo himself. Now, heading into the danger of ambush, the force marched by twos, in six to eight parallel columns. That way there would be no flanking; the force was like a large block moving forward. The Muller detachment was always out in front fanning across the whole line of march, checking for the enemy. If an enemy column was seen moving on the right, the force moved left, and then right again when it had passed. On August 28, the Muller detachment encountered a British column from Brigadier Hawthorn's force. Hawthorn had replaced Northey, and this particular column was a straggler that had lost its way. Otherwise the Germans might have escaped across the Rovuma before being discovered.

At this time, the German morale was higher than it had ever been. German Askaris who had been captured by the British and turned into soldiers of the king or porters demanded to be re-

enrolled in the Schutztruppe. Porters asked to be taken on as soldiers so they could fight.

The fight with the British in the Namirruue Valley lasted several days and it had been responsible for a new surge of morale because the victory had been almost total; almost all of Hawthorn's straggling column had been wiped out. Also, the Germans now had some British mortars again, which were extremely useful in mountain country. With the destruction of the Hawthorn unit, the way was clear for von Lettow to move to the Rovuma and Lake Nyasa.

General van Deventer was still in the dark about the Schutztruppe's strength, condition, and position, and sending out runners under white flags, he made contact with one patrol that brought a message to von Lettow asking for an exchange of wounded and sick prisoners. The British also asked for the right to supply British prisoners with food. Von Lettow smelled a trap. The British so outnumbered him (seventeen thousand soldiers in the field just then against his two thousand) and in their new dispositions they could encircle him much more easily than in the past. Van Deventer asked

that von Lettow stipulate a place where the supplies could be handed over. Von Lettow ignored the request and marched on.

From the Namirru von Lettow moved on slowly. The British were trying every possible weapon in this impossible country, and one day von Lettow found himself beset by a detachment of British troops on motorcycles. The principle was sound but the training was not, and these troops got separated into two patrols and ended up in a firelight with each other, while the Germans marched away.

There were a few other skirmishes with small units of British troops, but nothing serious. Von Lettow still had to make his decision. If he turned left, and headed into Nyasaland, he would "occupy" a British colony, and the temptation, for propaganda purposes, was very great. But to do so would be extremely dangerous; the British would be fighting on "home turf," where they knew the country and he did not, and it could make all the difference. Reluctantly he decided to move almost due north instead, cross the Rovuma, and reenter German East Africa, moving as if he were heading toward Tabora on the Central Railroad Line.

General van Deventer had been congratulated not so many months before for driving the Germans out of East Africa and his staff had resolved that they would not come back. Here was von Lettow, about to do just what his enemies hated most. If he could capture Tabora, he could make them look even more foolish, and the supplies he might find at that center would undoubtedly lengthen the war once more. Von Lettow marched north and did not worry that his enemies knew it. He still had freedom of movement, but the British were again faced with the great dilemma: what was he going to do? Assuming that he was heading for Tabora (which was the most important possible objective in the west), General van Deventer must move his troops painfully out of Mozambique to Lake Nyasa for transport by steamer up through Lake Tanganyika to Kigoma, the railhead, and then to Tabora over the rail line, and from Porto Amelia up to Dar es Salaam, then across the railroad to Tabora, and if necessary, down from Nairobi, through the Kili-manjaro gap and south to Tabora. All that expense of building up the Portuguese bases was more

money down the drain, and another triumph for von Lettow's campaign of attrition against England.

On July 25 the Germans ambushed a Gold Coast regiment column, using one of their British trench mortars, which performed nobly. The British force was nearly wiped out and only a few stragglers escaped, but Lieutenant von Ruckteschell was wounded in the leg. This was the sort of reverse attrition over which von Lettow had no control. One by one his most competent officers were falling in the field, either from wounds or disease. For example, Lieutenant Schaefer, who had fought with the main column since the earliest days, was laid low by blackwater fever, and when he knew he could no longer accompany the troop, he had stayed back in one of the camps of wounded and, sick left for the British to pick up. He knew he would never survive the journey to Dar es Salaam. This sort of tragedy was von Lettow's constant companion; if he was serving his royal master by carrying on the war, he was well aware of the cost. All of them, including himself, had to be regarded as expendable for the glory of Germany, and that rationale and his determination to fight had to serve him.

Every three or four days on the march north, the Schutztruppe encountered the enemy. They captured trucks and other heavy equipment, but they were of very little use, because their safety lay in the bush, where the vehicles could not go. They suffered casualties: ". .. Captain Kruger died today from fever . . . Lieutenant Otto wounded in the chest . . . Sergeant Major Nordenholz, shot through the head . . . Captain Poppe severely wounded. . . ."

Week by week their fortunes went up and down. The British were becoming, finally, bush-wise.

Lieutenant Colonel George Giffard was never far behind the German troop, and it became noticeable. On August 25, the Germans captured forty thousand rounds of ammunition and two light machine guns, plus hand grenades and other supplies. On August 30, near the village of Lioma, von Lettow was attacked by Giffard's "Kartucol," and was very nearly surrounded. That day von Lettow lost fifty thousand rounds of ammunition and many of the stores he had captured five days earlier. Every day it was more apparent that the British were increasing the pace of the chase. And the German losses continued: Lieutenant Hauter . . .

Lieutenant Besch . . . artery severed, left to die . . . Lieutenant Schroetter and Navy Lieu-tenant Freund killed . . . Sergeant Major Bolles killed, Sergeant Major Huttig, wounded, captured . . . Sergeant Major Thurmann killed. The Schutztruppe now was hurt—not as badly as the British hoped and believed—but hurt. Von Lettow had come in with two thousand officers and troops and he was down to sixteen hundred. This was hardly comparable to the enormous losses of the British, but they had no manpower problems, and every man of the two thousand had been handpicked. As each German fell, von Lettow knew.

It was time now for von Lettow to make the move that would trigger the British reaction. He assembled all his wounded and his prisoners, including Colonel Dickinson's medical officer, whom he left in charge of the primitive "hospital." He divided the Schutztruppe into four columns. The Muller detachment was told to be on watch for the enemy coming from Lioma. The Goering detachment was to move north. Captain Poppe was to take another detachment separately. After his wound, Poppe had insisted on staying with his detachment, and

his men had agreed. He was carried in a litter. After making a feint to fool the British, Captain Muller's detachment headed northeast. Von Lettow would go on with von Ruckteschell's detachment, which was the main force.

As they marched, they suffered. Spanish influenza had been laying Europe low that summer of 1918, and it finally made its way into darkest Africa in September. Von Lettow's troop was attacked by the disease. Half the men and carriers were affected. The Askaris were suffering from smallpox. An outbreak of spinal meningitis threatened the troop.

Hearing of this from his perch with General Wahle's column, Governor Schnee, on September 20, once more demanded that von Lettow surrender to the enemy. Otherwise, wrote the governor, he would hold von Lettow personally responsible on return to Germany for the deaths of all the sick.

If the officers of the troop had needed a tonic, these words from the greatest nuisance in their life must have served the purpose. Von Lettow rejected Schnee's letter out of hand, and the troop marched

on, in spite of the fact that they had more than two hundred serious cases of Spanish "flu" among them and virtually no man in the troop could have passed a routine physical examination.

On September 28, General von Lettow and his ragged troop crossed the Rovuma River. They shot eight hippos and that night celebrated their return to East Africa with a feast. In the next few days they marched through the Angoni district, a fertile area that produced fruit and grain. But it was also the homeland of a large number of their carriers, who had been recruited in 1914, and who had not seen families or friends for four long years. Many carriers deserted here, including one of von Lettow's own, but he could not bring himself to blame them. Besides, coming back into the fertile land, they now were able to round up cattle and drive them with them. They no longer needed so many carriers.

When the British became quite certain that von Lettow was heading toward the Rovuma, they panicked. As he had expected, they jumped to the conclusion that he was moving on Tabora. The wires buzzed, the steamers sped to Porto Amelia

and Mozambique, the bugles called the troops back south and east, and the British began to amass a new army to defend the entire central portion of the colony from the tattered force they had "destroyed" so many times. Van Deventer, whose headquarters was at Dar es Salaam, began building the forces everywhere. The force in British and German East Africa was impressive. Von Lettow said that for every one of his troops, the British had at least one staff officer at Nairobi, and if that was an exaggeration it probably was not a great one. Nairobi, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Tabora, Tanga, Lindi, Morogoro, Porto Amelia, Quelimane, Mozambique—they all had their British headquarters, and the fingers extended down into Rhodesia and South Africa, as the supplies came up. Von Lettow had indeed disrupted the British raj in Africa more than he had ever dreamed. As October began, the British were rushing about like those wild bees at Tanga. Even the Belgians were put on the alert to prepare to send a new expeditionary force across Lake Tanganyika. Every town in East Africa was filled with garrison troops pushed out to defend the places against the dreaded von Lettow.

In October von Lettow's column marched along Lake Nyasa, although never quite on the shore. Patrols reached the lake from time to time, to check that no landing force was being moved against them, but the column went on up the inside about sixty miles from the lake. They came to the town of Songea, which would have been useful as a replenishment point for shoes and other hard-to-get stores, as the British had a supply depot there. But von Lettow let it go. It was more important to keep moving, keep the British guessing. Every pitched battle would drain him. Any fighting must be on his terms, and an open assault on a garrisoned town did not fit the pattern.

In mid-October, von Lettow reached the top of the lake. As far as the enemy could ascertain he was still heading for Tabora, which was almost directly north of him, three hundred miles away. The advance on Tabora, as it was known to the British, had once more focused the world's attention on von Lettow and the German army in East Africa, all the more so because the Germans on the Western Front were suffering sorely, and it seemed apparent the war there would end soon. Many people the

world over were completely surprised to learn that the German force they thought had been "destroyed" in the summer of 1917 was still a force.

Von Lettow did not know of the propaganda value of his latest move, nor that its impact was largely blunted by the increasing signs of collapse of the German economy and ability of the army to supply the troops on the Western Front. He did know that he intended to keep on going. Once more, with the return to East Africa, the Schutztruppe had gotten a new lease on life. If it was actually a case of men continuing on courage alone, that courage was sustaining them, and the climate and the food helped. But the sick and the wounded were still to be dealt with, and they would make it more difficult for von Lettow to maneuver. And maneuverability would become very important when they reached terrain with more roads and waterways.

In mid-October, General Wahle said he had gone as far as he could go. He was confined to a litter and he felt that he had become a liability to the force. He was an old man, a retired general before the war began, and he had served nobly for four

years. So General Wahle was left behind on October 17, with the other sick and wounded, and the column moved on.

The column moved again, and found a British supply depot at Mbozi. After a brief firefight, the Askaris charged, took the town, and found that they had captured hundreds of pounds of real coffee and salt—two luxuries they had seen little of in the past year.

At this point, von Lettow decided to move into British Rhodesia. He would twist the lion's tail there for a time, and then who knew? He might head for the West African coast. To be sure, the Schutztruppe was dwindling week after week, but every time someone—either Governor Schnee or the British—suggested that it was finished, von Lettow proved the opposite. He had weapons, he had ammunition, he had food. He did need shoes and uniforms, but these could be taken from the enemy and adapted. As long as he could capture his supplies, and keep his men together, there was no reason he could not continue.

At Mbozi, von Lettow learned about the condition of Rhodesia. There were no troops in the coun-

try, the British command never dreaming that von Lettow would ever break back through East Africa and threaten them in their back yard. Only a few Rhodesian police guarded the whole eastern half of the colony. There was one garrison in the north, on the shore of Lake Tanganyika at Abercorn, but his scouts reported there would be no difficulty in capturing that place.

What interested von Lettow among the bits of intelligence his patrols brought back was the news that the town of Fife had been made into a supply depot for the lines of carriers who moved between Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika. Here the British had deposited many tons of food and other supplies. Fife would then open up the whole of Northern Rhodesia to his assault. So he decided to attack Fife.

As von Lettow prepared to move out, he learned that the British, sensing the danger, were rushing every available member of the Rhodesian police force to Fife. So he sped the column along on a forced march and they met there, on a wide plain, in the thornbush and elephant grass. It was there that the trench mortar blew up, leaving them with

only the one Portuguese mountain gun, while the Rhodesian police had several field pieces. It was there that von Lettow was rapped between the lines while making one of his celebrated forays of reconnaissance, and held down for an hour before he could wriggle back to his own lines. After that hour, von Lettow decided he would have to withdraw and regroup. He also heard that the town of Kasama was equally well stocked with supplies, and his scouts reported that it was surrounded by swamps and water, and that it could be defended against anything less than a regimental attack. On November 9, Kasama was taken easily, and the Askaris entered for an orgy of feasting on the supplies. On that day, von Lettow's troops were in possession of key points that reached from Kasama to the River Chambezi, and Rhodesia was wide open to them because van Deventer's forces were far away to the northeast. In von Lettow's opinion his situation was better than it had been since the days in the Rufiji delta. He was planning his future moves, particularly that night when his officers gave him the new surprise, and he dined like a gentleman at the district commissioner's table. Then came the cable-

gram from the British War Office about the armistice.

## The End of the Troop

Until almost the end General von Lettow-Vorbeck hoped that the telegrams from the British had been ruses, and that somehow lightning would strike and he would hear from the Kaiser that he was to continue fighting. But nothing of the sort happened, so, sadly, he began the march back from Kasama to Abercorn, where the British were sending one of their columns to meet him. Van Deventer indicated that the British would supply von Lettow there after his men laid down their arms, but the fact was that the British column was half starved, and von Lettow had to supply the British.

Somehow, the British got it all wrong, as they were so capable of doing. Instead of being humble because von Lettow had beaten them right and left, they were jubilant and arrogant. Von Lettow gave his statement of surrender to Major E. B. Hawkins of the King's African Rifles, who had been chasing von Lettow so unsuccessfully, and he accepted it

and made of it one of the battalion's treasures. It was just as if the British had won the war!

There was difficulty at Abercorn, because many of the Askaris, with simple logic, could not see why they were quitting when they were winning. Von Lettow was tempted, but his whole *raison d'être* had vanished once he was convinced that the war in Europe was over. The officers were well treated by the British, but they still had not learned about racism, and they treated the Askaris badly. Von Lettow nearly had another rebellion on his hands against the surrender. Major Kraut came up with a plan to raid the British armory, seize the camp, and start the war all over again. Von Lettow was again tempted, because of the particularly pigheaded behavior of General van Deventer and his officers in their treatment of the black troops.

Governor Schnee ran about giving advice, most of it bad. The officers and men were taken to Kigoma on the lake and there they parted, the officers to go to Dar es Salaam. They arrived in December. For a few weeks von Lettow and his senior officers were quartered in a house in the internment camp,

and then on January 17, 1919, they sailed for Germany.

When von Lettow returned, one of the first things he did was marry the fiancée he had left in Germany more than four years earlier, Margarethe Wallrath. He became involved in politics, under the urgings of Field Marshal von Hindenburg and was the leader of an army attempt to seize power. It failed, he was court-martialed, convicted, deprived of his rank, and imprisoned. But in those strange times in Germany he was not disgraced, and he later served in the Reichstag until he got sick of the dishonesty of politics and retired.

Governor Schnee soon enough learned that he had best not try to settle any accounts with a national hero of the prestige of General von Lettow-Vorbeck. He kept his mouth shut about the war, and confined himself to a long campaign to try to secure the colonies again. When Hitler came to power, Schnee became one of his most ardent Nazis, and eventually secured for himself a post as administrator of colonies, which would have put him in charge of all colonies, if Germany had won World War II.

Schnee died in 1949, unlamented. Von Lettow lived on well into his nineties. He made a trip or two to Africa, but German East Africa was Tanganyika, and nothing was the same. A few of the old Askaris came to Dar es Salaam and they traded stories. He went back to Germany and occasionally saw a few of the surviving officers of the Schutztruppe, but except for the memories of those heroic days there was not much to talk about. As the years passed, new generations did not even know that once the Germans had controlled vast sections of Africa. Nor could they understand what had happened in Africa between 1914 and 1918.

In Africa, however, the Germans left a mark that the British could never eradicate. As the blacks came to social and political maturity, they realized that the German colonialization had been the most reasonable of all, and the mark of the Schutztruppe, an equality never felt before in Africa, was burned deep into the souls of the Askaris, the carriers, and all the people they knew. The British did not learn between two wars about racism, and at the end of World War II they were surprised

to find out that, one after the other, the colonies rejected them. So much for the lessons of the past.

Von Lettow's exploits are largely forgotten and certainly receive very little note in the history of World War I, and not enough note in the history of Africa. As far as the war was concerned, he did more than he had ever expected to do. His force never numbered more than three thousand Europeans and eleven thousand Askaris, but the British often thought there were four times as many troops, and with good reason. As for the British, von Lettow said they had tied up half a million men in fighting him. The British put the figure under two hundred thousand, but von Lettow's figure is more nearly correct when one includes headquarters and supply groups. If one took the whole effort, from the attention of the War Cabinet of Britain to the hundreds of thousands of porters involved in transporting British goods for British troops, the figure would be much higher. And if one attempted to estimate the cost to Britain of maintaining the enormous force that chased von Lettow all over Africa and never did catch him, the figure would be in the billions of pounds.

So von Lettow went to his grave knowing that he had served king and country as well as any soldier ever served. His exploits in the African bush have come down to students of warfare as the greatest single guerilla operation in history, and the most successful. For serious students the story of the Schutztruppe is a handbook for irregulars that is as good in the 1980s as it was seventy years before.

## Annotated Bibliography

The story of Lt. Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (as he was when World War I began) has fascinated me ever since the days when I was doing research for *The Germans Who Never Lost*, back in the 1960s. That book was the study of Captain Max Looff and the light cruiser *Koenigsberg*. In studying the various accounts and the naval records, it was inevitable that I would come across the von Lettow story, in part because after the wrecking of the *Koenigsberg*, Captain Looff and his crew joined the German East African Colonial Defense Corps in the field.

It was interesting to discover how different were the points of view I came across. In doing the Looff book, I found von Lettow to be Prussian, correct, shrewd, but above all harsh and intractable, stubborn and even insubordinate. That was because I was guided by the navy and by records such as those of Dr. Schnee. In rereading my *The Germans Who Never Lost*, it became quite clear to me that I

had gotten off the track as far as von Lettow was concerned, in my basic interest in the Koenigsberg, her captain, and her crew.

I am delighted now to set the record straight as far as I am personally concerned. Not that von Lettow needs it; in his own *Heia Safari*, and the derivative *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika*, the one title taken from the song of the *Schutztruppe* and the other being von Lettow's more formal *My Memoirs of East Africa*, he has told the whole story. Further, he has had an excellent biographer in Leonard Mosley, whose *Duel for Kilimanjaro* has gone into other accounts, and expanded on some of von Lettow's later reflections. Mr. Mosley was fortunate to be able to talk with von Lettow before he died, for which I envy him. I have had to rely entirely on published accounts, and some of the unpublished research I did for the *Koenigsberg* book, which dealt with the *Schutztruppe*.

It is interesting to see the various accounts from British and South African and German points of view. One fine book from the purely English point of view is *German East*, the story of the First World War in East Africa, by Brian Gardner, pub-

lished by Macrae Smith (London, 1963). Mr. Gardner's book is unashamedly British, but he does have a fine regard for von Lettow, as did most of the officers who met the Germans in the field. Richard Meinertzhagen's *Army Diary 1899-1926* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1960) is most interesting for that author's firsthand experiences with the *Schutztruppe* and von Lettow; he admired both as only an enemy can. *The Official History of the Great War—Military Operations, East Africa* (London: HMSO, 1941) is another important source for the British position and especially for the British reporting of statistics, which often disagreed seriously with those reported by the Germans, and particularly with von Lettow's records. Generally speaking, when von Lettow was present, I have tended to accept the von Lettow version rather than the British, which was compiled after the fact, and at a greatly removed distance. Also, no real accounting was ever made by the British of the costs of the operations against German East Africa, and it seems unlikely that anyone could ever do it now. What is obvious from a very elementary knowledge of military logistics is that the East African operation was expen-

sive to Britain out of all proportion to its value, and that is precisely what von Lettow set out to make it.

My interest in von Lettow has been sharpened over the years also by various studies I have made of irregular forces in action. Several years ago I wrote two little books, *Carlson's Raiders* and *Merrill's Marauders*, for one paperback house (now defunct). They were eventually published by Pinnacle Books in 1980. Colonel Carlson and General Merrill were notable men because they, like Brigadier Orde Wingate, thought outside normal military channels. Carlson, in particular, had been a student of the Chinese Communist guerillas and for several months lived and fought against the Japanese with the Eighth Route Army. Carlson was well aware of the von Lettow story.

In recent years it has become popular to hold up the late Che Guevara of Argentina and Cuba as the *ne plus ultra* of guerilla leaders, and his little book on guerilla warfare is much quoted. But there are at least two other guerillas who could give him cards and win: Aguinaldo, the leader of the Filipino Insurrectionists, and von Lettow-Vorbeck. For what it is worth, my opinion is that von Lettow was the

most successful guerilla leader in world history, and that his record has never even been approached by any others, in terms of impact on his enemies, in terms of survival in the field with no sources of supply for months on end, in terms of managing a racially mixed fighting force with enormous skill, in terms of sheer courage and heroism, and finally in terms of superb generalship that kept his enemies almost constantly guessing.

A very British view of the East African campaign, but nonetheless valuable, is Charles Miller's *Battle for the Bundu* (New York: Macmillan, 1974). Other books that I found necessary and valuable follow.

*Der Krieg zur See 1914-18*, Kreuzerkrieg Bd. 2 Bearbeitet von C. Raeder, Kontreadmiral (this was Admiral Raeder of World War II fame). Berlin: Verlag von E. S. Milder & Sohn, 1923.

Valuable for the official navy line.

*Heia Safari, Deutschlands Kampf in Ostafrika*, General von Lettow-Vorbeck. Leipzig: Hafe & Kohler, 1920.

This is von Lettow's own story, made from his wartime notes.

*Deutsch-Ostafrika in Weltkrieg*, H. Schnee. Leipzig: Verlag Queele & Meyer, 1919.

This is Governor Schnee's personal apologia, and on second reading I was not much impressed by the reasoning, or the fact that he toned down much of his criticism of von Lettow when he got back to Germany and for the first time realized that he had been interfering all this while with a national hero.

*With the Nigerians in German East Africa*, W. D. Downes. London: Methuen and Co., 1919.

The more or less unvarnished story of the not-very-glorious Nigerian effort.

*Um OstAfrika*, Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe. Dresden: Verlag E. Beutelspacher & Co., 1925.

It gives a glimpse of life in the colony.

Kreuzerfahrt and Buschkampf, mit SMS Koenigsberg im Deutsch Ostafrika, Max Looff. Berlin: Anton Bertinetti, 1929.

Max Looff's own story, also toned down considerably in criticism of von Lettow and does not really bring out the alliance between Looff and Schnee aimed at bringing von Lettow out of control.

*SMS Koenigsberg in Monsun and Pori*, Richard Wenig. Berlin: Safari Verlag, undated.

This is an excellent account by Koenigsberg's Wenig, who lost a leg in the defense of his ship and then went on with an artificial leg to fight the most grueling actions of the campaign on land as von Lettow's chief of artillery.

*Marineblau and khaki, der Heldenkampf des Kreuzers Koenigsberg*, Peter Eckart. Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung, 1939.

A not-very-inspiring account of the Koenigsberg and von Lettow's adventures by a crew member of the cruiser.

*L'Aventure du Koenigsberg, Août 1914—Juillet 1915*, E. Keble Chatterton. Paris: Payot, 1932.

This was published in English first in England by the prominent writer on naval affairs, but I happened to find only a French copy. Useful for a British view of the Koenigsberg adventure, with some sidelights on the land campaign.

*Durch! Mit Kriegsmateriel zu Lettow-Vorbeck*, Carl Christiansen: Stuttgart: Verlag fur Volkskinst, 1918.

This is Captain Christiansen's account of his blockade-running and his later adventures with the

Schutztruppe until he was sent off to carry a message back to Germany.

*Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch*, Josef Viera. Stuttgart: Loewest Verlag, 1943.

Another useful but not very distinguished account of the East African campaign.

The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign, Sir Hugh Clifford. London: John Murray, 1920.

Just what it says. Often it is hard to relate this account to von Lettow's war.

*Marching on Tanga*, F. Brett Young. Privately printed.

An account by a South African officer of the early days (after the first Tanga battle) of the war against von Lettow. Not very useful except to give a feeling for the difficulties the British found in the bush.

*Kenya Chronicles*, Lord Cranworth. London: Macmillan, 1939.

Useful for his account of the mission he shared with Lord Kitchener's brother and the view of the general myopia of the British high military command as far as East Africa was concerned.

*Sketches of the East Africa Campaign*, R. V. Dolbey. London: John Murray, 1918.

Another British account for comparison.

*General Smuts' Campaign in East Africa*, J. H. V. Crowe. London: John Murray, 1918.

A rosy view of a dark story.

*Mit Lettow Vorbeck durch Afrika*, Dr. Ludwig Deppe. Berlin: Verlag August Scherl, 1919.

One of the doctors tells his story of the Schutztruppe.

