

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 105

“The Action of a Lunatic”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Imagine a country three times the size of Germany, mostly covered by dense bush, with no roads and only two railways, and either sweltering under a tropical sun or swept by torrential rain which makes the friable soil impassable to wheeled traffic; a country with occasional wide and swampy areas interspersed with arid areas where water is often more precious than gold; in which man rots with malaria and suffers torments from insect pests; in which animals die wholesale from the ravages of the tse-tse fly; where crocodiles and lions seize unwary porters, giraffes destroy telegraph lines, elephants damage tracks, hippopotami attack boats, rhinoceroses charge troops on the march, and bees put whole battalions to flight. Such was German East Africa in 1914-18.

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Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 105. The Action of a Lunatic.

Today, we are going to turn our attention to the last remaining German colony in Africa, which is also Germany's largest and most populous colonial territory. It will be the location of the most sustained colonial conflict. But before we get into that, let's take a look into the history of this region.

Archeological evidence suggests that Zanzibar has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years, with some evidence of human habitation even earlier than that. Because of the archipelago's location, its pleasant climate, and its inviting anchorages, it became a haven for seafarers, and particularly merchants in search of exotic goods. Traders from the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, and India were all visiting the islands by the first century. Arab traders began settling on the islands and intermarrying with the indigenous Africans by the eleventh century, bringing Islam to the islands, and also to East Africa.

The coastal regions of East Africa from Somaliland south to Mozambique became involved in trade with Zanzibar, and later came to be dominated by Zanzibar. Islam was introduced into East Africa, and with so many different ethnic groups coming together, the Swahili language emerged as the common tongue of trade and commerce. Swahili is a Bantu language, Bantu being a major language group across the Congo and southern Africa, but it also has a huge number of Arabic and Persian loan words, a testimony to the history of the region, which is sometimes called the Swahili Coast.

The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama was the first modern European to visit Zanzibar in 1498, as part of his historic first voyage from Europe to India by sea. Five years later, the Portuguese sea captain Lourenço Marques, who will later get a port named after him in Mozambique, demanded that the rulers of Zanzibar pay tribute to the King of Portugal. This begins a two-century period of Portuguese domination of the archipelago, although the extent of Portuguese rule is uncertain. Whether you can call Zanzibar a Portuguese “colony,” or whether you regard the Portuguese as running a protection racket, whereby they visited Zanzibar every once in a while and demanded money in exchange for leaving without breaking anything, well, that’s a dispute in which reasonable minds might differ.

But either way, the inhabitants of Zanzibar got sick of this after a while, and in 1698 they invited the Sultan of Oman, whose ships were regularly trading with Zanzibar, to evict the Portuguese and rule Zanzibar himself. The Omanis, who had recently evicted the Portuguese from their own country, were happy to oblige, and the Sultan of Oman ruled Zanzibar until 1856, when the Omani Sultan died and split his realm between two of his sons, granting the elder rule over Oman proper, and the younger rule over Zanzibar as an independent sultanate.

The Sultan of Zanzibar also controlled much of the Swahili Coast, including the principal port cities of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, and traders from Zanzibar roamed throughout East Africa. Zanzibar traded in ivory from the mainland, and in spices, especially cloves, which were grown on plantations on the islands. But the slave trade made up the largest share of the Zanzibar economy.

I talked about the exploits of the British physician, missionary, and explorer David Livingstone, he of the famous “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” moment, back in episode 19. It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that Europeans penetrated into the Great Lakes region of East Africa. One motive was to resolve the geographical mysteries of the Nile and Congo Rivers. Another was the slave trade. Europeans themselves had only given up the slave trade a few decades earlier; now they sought to end what was by this time often called the “Arab” slave trade. It was not conducted predominantly by Arabs, though Arabs were definitely part of the ruling elite in Zanzibar and East Africa.

In any case, Arabs and the other Middle Eastern peoples had been taking East Africans as slaves long before Europeans got into the game on the other side of the continent. This trade was still

going on in the late 19th century, after the Europeans had quit their own habit. And at the center of this trade was Zanzibar. Slave traders would come from Zanzibar or through Zanzibar and onto the mainland, where they would trade for slaves with the locals or take slaves themselves. Arabs were among these slave traders, but most of them were African and most were Muslim. Islamic law prohibited enslaving a free Muslim, so the slavers traveled into the interior of the continent in search of Africans who practiced traditional African religions, because they were fair game.

Slaves were taken to Zanzibar, where they were sold in slave markets or put to work locally. The spice plantations that were the other part of Zanzibar's wealth were worked by African slaves. The others would be sent north, to Somalia, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire. Men worked on plantations. Women were used as domestic labor. And there was sexual slavery of both genders, to be sure.

About 50,000 slaves were sold each year during this period. These were the survivors. Livingstone estimated 80,000 additional Africans died each year en route, before they ever reached the slave markets.

In our time, there are hundreds of thousands of people living in the Middle East who are descendants of black Africans who came to the region originally as slaves. Hard facts about their numbers and their social conditions are hard to come by, even today. But their numbers seem low, considering how many slaves were sent to the region in the days of the slave trade. It appears this is because slaves were customarily treated harshly and had short life expectancies, and also because they were typically not permitted to marry among themselves or have children, and there were taboos against Arabs intermarrying with Africans.

Even with the limited information available, the picture looks pretty ugly. Europeans, recently repented slavers themselves, turned their attention to ending this "Arab" slave trade that was really more of a Zanzibar slave trade. The British gradually built trade and economic links with Zanzibar, while also pressuring the Sultan to cut off the trade in humans. They finally succeeded in getting the Sultan to formally outlaw the slave trade in 1876, although black market slave trading continued for some time afterward.

You'll recall that ending this residual slave trade was one of the stated goals of the Berlin Conference of 1884. Even as that conference was getting under way, a German adventurer named Carl Peters was in East Africa. Peters was the son of a Lutheran minister who had lived in London for a while and acquainted himself with British methods of colonization. After he returned to Germany, he organized the Society for German Colonization, in the style of the East India Company. The Society funded Peters and two friends, who traveled to East Africa in 1884.

The British were rapidly closing in on control of all East Africa by this time, but whereas they were trying to maintain good relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar, Peters and his companions traveled inland, having heard that the climate in the Great Lakes region was more welcoming to

Europeans, and that the local soil would support European-style agriculture. He brought along pre-printed treaty forms and in classic colonialist tradition, wandered as far inland as Lake Tanganyika, persuading local African leaders to sign X's on his treaty forms in exchange for some cloth and beads.

In Berlin, Otto von Bismarck, who was trying to maintain good relations with both Britain and the Zanzibar Sultan, regarded Peters as a nuisance. But when Peters presented him with a colonial property already packaged and tied up in a nice bow, the Iron Chancellor could not resist the temptation. Peters' company got a secret Imperial charter while the Berlin Conference was still going on, and which was announced the day after the conference ended. The British had bigger fish to fry and were content to allow the Germans a portion of East Africa, including the port of Dar es Salaam, so long as they got the port of Mombasa and points north for themselves. A straight line was drawn across the map of East Africa, from the coast to Lake Victoria, delineating the German and British territories. It includes a jog around Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain on the continent, to make sure it stayed on the German side of the line, as there was already a German mission set up there.

There's a story that claims that jog in the border is there because Queen Victoria gave Kilimanjaro as a wedding present to her grandson, the future Kaiser Wilhelm II. That makes for a fun story, but there's no evidence to back it up.

Either way, the British were satisfied with the arrangement, but the Sultan of Zanzibar still protested the German assertion of authority over what he regarded as *his* territory. When Bismarck asked Peters "What can we do then about Zanzibar?" Peters pointed out that the Sultan of Zanzibar lived in a lovely palace overlooking the harbor. That was all Bismarck needed to hear. On August 7, 1885, five German warships appeared in the harbor, their guns trained on the Palace. One of the German ships hosted the 12-year old half-German son of the Sultan's sister, who could have been a plausible replacement sultan, if need be. Now, Your Majesty, about that protest. Are you *sure* you don't want to withdraw it?

The Sultan gave in, and German East Africa became an established fact. In 1890, the Germans would formally consent when the British asserted a protectorate over Zanzibar. That was part of the deal in the Heligoland-Zanzibar treaty that we discussed in episode 103.

German East Africa was the most important of the German colonial possessions, with a land area triple that of the German Empire and a population over seven million. There were two revolts during the period of German rule. The first was in 1888, shortly after the Sultan of Zanzibar ceded control. Carl Peters was ruling with a heavy hand, and by "heavy hand" I mean he had a habit of taking a local girl as a sex slave, and then when her boyfriend protested, murdering the boyfriend and burning down his entire village. After witnessing this a few times, the Africans got tired of it and rose up in revolt. The revolt required soldiers from Germany plus Royal Navy assistance to put down. Afterward, the German government took direct rule of the territory.

A second rebellion broke out in 1905, just as the one in Southwest Africa was dying down. This revolt was sparked by German demands for a cotton quota from every African community. You won't be surprised if I tell you that Carl Peters' dreams of intensive agriculture in German East Africa proved over-optimistic. So the Germans tried instead to force African subsistence farmers to dedicate a portion of their land and labor to growing cotton for the Germans. This made poor people even poorer, hence the revolt. The Germans lacked the soldiers to put down the rebellion by force of arms, and having been burned by the costs of putting down the revolt in Southwest Africa, chose to fight this one more economically; in other words, sending soldiers across the land to burn African crops until famine brought the rebellion to a sputtering halt. It took two years, and most of the quarter of a million Africans who starved to death during this time had had nothing to do with the rebellion in the first place, but there you are.

[music: *Lachrymosa*]

And that brings us up to the Great War. Relations had always been cordial between the British and Germans in East Africa. The Europeans on either side of that border preferred to focus on governing their own territories and keeping the Africans in them under control, and tended to regard intra-European conflicts as an unwelcome distraction. As for the Africans, to them the straight-line border that the Europeans had drawn was arbitrary. Africans on either side of the line were similar in language, culture, and outlook. In many cases, the line drawn by the Europeans had separated families and clans, and the folks on either side of the border were often related to each other. So there was no cross-border enmity among Africans, either.

German East Africa had at the outbreak of the Great War a military force of about 200 German officers commanding about 2,500 African soldiers, known as *askari*, which is just the Swahili word for soldier. This force was used predominantly for local security. Across the border, British East Africa had a comparably-sized force, known as the King's African Rifles.

German East Africa also had an Imperial Navy cruiser assigned to it, SMS *Königsberg*, which had just recently arrived. I mentioned *Königsberg* back in episode 94 and said I was going to discuss her exploits when we got to Africa, and now here we are in Africa, so let's do this thing.

Königsberg had been on maneuvers in the Indian Ocean when the Austrian ultimatum dropped in July 1914. Her captain returned at once to Dar es Salaam for coal and then left the port on July 31, in order to avoid being blockaded. That was good thinking, because the British Cape Squadron, consisting of the three cruisers *Hyacinth*, *Pegasus*, and *Astraea*, had already arrived with the intention of blockading or sinking *Königsberg* if and when war was declared.

When *Königsberg* left port, the British ships followed, but they were older ships. *Königsberg* used her superior speed to evade them and position herself at the southern end of the Red Sea, where she could prey on British shipping on its way to or from the Suez Canal. On August 6, the day after Britain declared war on Germany, *Königsberg* began her career as a commerce raider with a bang, capturing and scuttling the British freighter *City of Winchester*. *City of Winchester*

had cost £400,000 to build, which is about US\$40,000,000 in today's currency, and it was so new that the paint hadn't dried yet. She had been carrying a cargo of tea, bound for England; the cargo itself was worth north of £100,000. Now she and her cargo were on the bottom of the Indian Ocean, a significant economic hit to Britain less than 48 hours into the war. Her capture helped spark the panic about Germans raiding British shipping that we saw in episode 94.

The Governor of German East Africa was the 43-year old lawyer and Foreign Office civil servant, Heinrich Schnee. Having been informed by the Admiralty even before the war began that the German Navy would *not* be protecting his territory, he made some diplomatic efforts to assert the neutrality of German East Africa, relying on the agreements made at the Berlin Conference to keep the Congo basin open to free trade. He also declared Dar es Salaam an open port.

After the war, Germany would use these gestures as a basis for an argument that German East Africa should be restored to her, and that seizing the territory amounted to a breach of the treaty agreements. But it has to be said that Schnee and his administration also took steps inconsistent with his claimed neutral status. Things like mobilizing the *Schutztruppe*, the colonial army, operating a wireless station in Dar es Salaam that communicated with *Königsberg*, and sending out colliers to refuel her. After the sinking of *City of Winchester*, just a day into the war, the British were already not buying it, and if they couldn't take their revenge on *Königsberg* directly, well, then they would shell Dar es Salaam's train station and wireless station to prevent their military use, which they did on August 7. Schnee was furious and denounced the British for violating international law, which was a little disingenuous, given what *he* was up to. And it's worth noting that as a lawyer and a Foreign Office professional, Schnee surely knew exactly what international law allowed and what it forbade.

The *Schutztruppe* of German East Africa were under the command of the 44-year old Prussian military officer Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Lettow-Vorbeck had previously fought the Herero during their uprising in Southwest Africa a decade ago, where he had lost his left eye, and he had been appointed commander-in-chief of the East African *Schutztruppe* just a few months before the war. Officially, Lettow-Vorbeck answered to the governor, Schnee, but in practice the two men spent a lot of time screaming at each other. Lettow-Vorbeck had no patience with Schnee's pussy-footing. Once it was war, he was in it to win it, and the story that follows is going to be at lot more about Lettow-Vorbeck than it's going to be about Schnee.

Remember how I said the Germans were lured here by reports that there were places in East Africa where the climate and soil would be inviting for Europeans and European-style agriculture? Well, it turned out there weren't many of these places, but the ones that did exist were mostly in the region where they drew the border line between German and British East Africa. Consequently, most of the German and British settlers in East Africa live near that line, and they're basically neighbors. They had gotten on pretty well until the war broke out, and it

was a little disconcerting to both settler communities that they were now taking up arms against each other.

Anyway, both colonies had rail lines that ran inland from the coast near this border and roughly parallel to it. The German line went as far as Kilimanjaro; the British line went all the way to Lake Victoria. It had been built by the British government at great expense to open up the Great Lakes region. The cost was so great and the benefit so dubious that critics of the project referred to it as “The Lunatic Line,” a name that sort of stuck. Indian laborers were imported to build it; afterward, many opted to stay in Africa, which is the beginning of the Indian community in East Africa that exists even in our day.

The Lunatic Line did not generate the hoped-for development in the Great Lakes region, but it did become a popular route for rich white guys who wanted to go on an African safari. The rich white guy who started this safari craze was Theodore Roosevelt, who used the rail line to get to his own African safari, the one we talked about in episode 53. I’m tempted to make a joke right here about Theodore Roosevelt riding the Lunatic Line, but that’s like fishing in a barrel, so let’s just move on.

Lettow-Vorbeck saw in these two rail lines a vulnerability and an opportunity. He rallied German settlers, recruiting them into his force. About 2,000 answered the call. His first military action was to assemble a force at Moshi, in the shadow of Kilimanjaro, and advance across the border to take and hold the town of Taveta, to protect the German rail line and cut off the British Lunatic Line. The surprised British defenders were driven off, and Lettow-Vorbeck ordered the hilly region fortified, judging that a small force, properly dug in, would be very difficult to evict. And he was quite right about that.

This action makes Lettow-Vorbeck the only German commander of the Great War to successfully take and hold British territory. He would build a stronghold at Taveta and use it as a base to launch raids on the Lunatic Line.

Meanwhile, out in the Indian Ocean, things were not going so well for *Königsberg*. After her initial spectacular raid, shipping in the region tapered off to nothing. She could not find any ships to raid. That’s bad, not only because it tarnishes your war record, but because *Königsberg* needs food for her crew and coal for her boilers, and no merchant ships to prey upon means none of either. Dar es Salaam was able to slip a few small ships out to sea to rendezvous with *Königsberg* and deliver coal, but she was barely getting along, and she needed maintenance work.

The situation got worse when *Emden* arrived in the Eastern Indian Ocean. *Emden*’s spectacular successes in the east were depriving *Königsberg* of opportunities in the west. But her captain came up with a daring plan. On September 3, *Königsberg* slipped into the Rufiji River delta, about 200 kilometers south of Dar es Salaam. The German Navy had only recently surveyed the channels, meaning that the crew of *Königsberg* knows how to navigate them and the British

Royal Navy don't. The region is swampy and thick with mangrove trees. *Königsberg* was carefully hidden, camouflaged, and spotters were stationed on the coastline to watch for any British incursion. Telegraph wires were strung so the ship could be notified at once in the event of a sighting.

Small coastal steamers slipped back and forth between Dar es Salaam and the Rufiji Delta to replenish *Königsberg*'s coal stocks. As the German steamers sneaked back and forth, they observed the British cruiser HMS *Pegasus* on patrol, and from her patrol pattern they deduced that the ship was stopping at Zanzibar City every Sunday to coal. *Königsberg*'s captain decided that before beginning repair work on his ship, he would take it to Zanzibar and surprise *Pegasus* in port.

The result was the Battle of Zanzibar on Sunday, September 20, 1914, a very one-sided engagement in which the very new and very modern *Königsberg* shelled the much older *Pegasus* from beyond the range of *Pegasus*' guns. *Pegasus* had been caught totally by surprise. Her boilers were cold and she was unable to maneuver or close range with the German ship. As a result, she was sunk in a matter of minutes. Thirty-nine British sailors were killed and 55 wounded. *Königsberg* suffered no losses, apart from about 250 gun shells, which were not going to be easy to replace.

The British were unable to pursue and didn't know where *Königsberg* had come from, or where she had gotten to after she left Zanzibar, but after six weeks of not having seen or heard from the German cruiser, any doubts the British may have had about whether she was still intact and in fighting condition were now dispelled. Clearly, German East Africa was a threat, and something needed to be done about it.

Königsberg returned to her hiding place in the Rufiji Delta. Unfortunately for her crew, one of the ship's engines had failed during the raid on Zanzibar, a sure sign that maintenance and repairs could not be put off any longer. Since it wasn't safe for *Königsberg* to simply dock at Dar es Salaam for repairs, engine parts had to be carried overland to her Rufiji Delta hiding place by African porters. Some small German coastal boats helped out by bringing in coal and supplies.

The British, meanwhile, had brought in more cruisers and were maintaining an ever-expanding and ever more vigilant search for the ship. On October 19, the British light cruiser *Chatham* caught one of these German coastal boats, boarded her, and searched her. They discovered charts that clued them in that *Königsberg* was hiding in the Rufiji Delta. A blockade was set up, but no Royal Navy ship dared enter the delta for fear of running aground. They tried shelling the delta from out at sea, but that proved futile. The British brought in airplanes. But the airplanes of this era were not well-suited for tropical conditions. Their engines tended to overheat, and the wooden frames began to come apart as the tropical heat melted the glue that held them together. In spite of these handicaps though, the British were able to locate *Königsberg*, which then had to move farther inland to stay out of range of the British guns.

While the Royal Navy was working the problem of what to do about *Königsberg*, the War Office in London was working the problem of plucking the thorn from its side that was German East Africa. Recall that it's autumn of 1914. In Europe, the Race to the Sea is ongoing, and no British soldiers can be spared for a campaign in East Africa. So how about Indian soldiers?

You already know that Indian troops were being sent to France at this time. They were dubbed the Indian Expeditionary Force. Now that became Force "A." Indian Expeditionary Forces "B" and "C" were organized, much smaller units of about 8,000 and 4,000 soldiers, respectively, and plans were drawn up to use them to seize control of German East Africa.

The British plan went like this: Remember that German rail line that runs close to and parallel to the border with British East Africa? It runs through the region where most of the German settlers live, so if you take control of that area, it was thought, that would be all that was necessary to subdue the whole territory.

So the plan was to land Force "B" at Tanga, the German-controlled port on the coast, then march it up the rail line to Kilimanjaro. The Kilimanjaro region was where the Germans had attacked into British East Africa, so it was judged likely that that was where most of their fighting force could be found.

Force "C," which numbered 4,000, was sent first by ship from India to Mombasa, and then up the Lunatic Line to the Kilimanjaro region, where they would attack the Germans overland at the same time Force "B" was landing at Tanga. Force "C" would presumably tie down the German troops at Kilimanjaro and prevent them from redeploying down the rail line to help defend Tanga. After Force "B" secured Tanga, it could march up the rail line to link up with Force "C" and capture the strategic rail line, subduing German settler territory.

Force "C" crossed the Indian Ocean first, and got into position while Force "B" made the trip. Force "B" was commanded by the 53-year old Major General Arthur Aitken. The Indian units assembled into Force "B" had little experience working together, and Aitken and the other senior officers in command had not so much as met all their units before they boarded their transports. Very much an *ad hoc* military force, stitched together from the forces available and subject to the demands of the Western Front.

These Indian soldiers had many of the same problems as the Indian soldiers on the Western Front, including lack of artillery and machine guns, and lack of training on the few heavy weapons they did have. Before they left India, one senior officer expressed the view that "this campaign will either be a walk-over or a tragedy."

The voyage from India to Africa took two weeks. The ships were overcrowded, and the soldiers had not had proper medical screenings prior to embarkation, and there were serious outbreaks of disease en route, not to mention seasickness. Aitken was concerned that news of his invasion force had leaked to the Germans, so he opted to land his troops at Tanga at once, rather than stop

over at Mombasa and give the soldiers time to recuperate from the rigors of the sea voyage. This will prove to be a serious misjudgment.

In fact, the Germans had no idea that Force “B” was coming, but on November 2, when the convoy’s escort, the cruiser HMS *Fox* appeared at Tanga, that was a pretty strong hint. The fourteen transports were kept farther out to sea, out of sight of Tanga, or so they believed, but the Germans spotted them anyway and they knew that a landing in force was imminent.

But the captain of *Fox* insisted on a parley first. The Royal Navy was still operating under the “open port” declaration that Schnee had made at the beginning of the war, and they deemed they were obligated to give Tanga the opportunity to surrender. So *Fox* went into the Tanga harbor and the highest ranking German colonial official in the town, a Dr. Auracher, was invited on board and offered the opportunity to surrender the town. Dr. Auracher told the British that he would have to consult with his superiors before giving an answer. They gave him one hour. Before he left, the British captain asked him if the harbor was mined. Dr. Auracher refused to answer the question, which the British took as a “yes,” though in fact it was not mined.

As soon as Dr. Auracher was back in town, he sent a telegram to General Lettow-Vorbeck who was up at Moshi, near Kilimanjaro. Dr. Auracher informed him that an invasion of Tanga was imminent. Lettow-Vorbeck rushed a thousand soldiers down the rail line to Tanga at once to meet them.

When the hour passed without a reply, *Fox* left the harbor. It took until late that night before the first soldiers embarked for the shore, landing at the harbor and at points nearby. The operation was poorly organized, with front-line and support units jumbled together. It took until the morning of the 4th, some 36 hours after the operation began, to get all the troops ashore, and Aitken ordered them to advance at once, without proper organization and, crucially, without proper rest. Aitken was unconcerned with those details. He expected to be able to march right into Tanga against little or no opposition.

And he was wrong about that. The Germans were well-rested, in position, armed with machine guns, and defending terrain they knew well. The Indian soldiers had not been trained on how to use machine guns, nor were they trained on what to do when they came under machine gun fire. And they were advancing through unfamiliar terrain into a town they did not know in a country they had never seen before. They often panicked when they came under heavy fire, or when their officers fell, or, in at least one case, when they were attacked by aggressive African bees.

The battle of Tanga could have been much worse for the British, all things considered, but as their line crumbled, a German *askari* bugler mistakenly sounded the order to withdraw. In the time it took Lettow-Vorbeck to rescind this order and get his troops moving forward again, the British had escaped.

Still, the British suffered over 800 casualties, about 10% of their force, to the Germans' 125. When the British withdrew, they left behind eight machine guns, nearly 500 rifles, hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition, as well as uniforms, blankets, telephone gear, and a lot of other things that would sustain Lettow-Vorbeck and his soldiers for years to come. Best of all, the German officers and the *askari* soldiers had defeated a force eight times their size, an army sent by the world's largest empire. Similarly, the attack by Force "C" in the Kilimanjaro region was also beaten back, despite a four-to-one British advantage on that front.

The morale boost was huge. African soldiers had gone toe-to-toe with the British Empire and prevailed against the odds, and the British effort to neutralize the Germans in East Africa had failed. Lettow-Vorbeck and his *askari* would fight on, and *Königsberg* would remain a threat. The War Office in London felt forced to take control of the war in East Africa away from the colonial officials in India, because they recognized this was not going to be a quick victory. The Germans in East Africa would fight on, longer than the Germans in Europe, in fact, and they would be drawing badly needed British resources away from the Western Front for years to come.

We'll continue this story in future episodes, but we'll have to stop there for today. Thank you for listening. I'd also like to say "thank you" to Sander for making a donation, and thanks to Randy for being a patron of the podcast. If you have a few bucks to spare and you want to help out, go to the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com, and click on the PayPal button for a one-time contribution or the Patreon button to become a patron. And of course, I invite all of you to leave a rating and review at iTunes, to post comments and tweet and like and all that good social media stuff.

And I hope you'll join me next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we look at the next phase of the ongoing naval war between Britain and Germany. Spoiler alert: something big is about to go down. And I mean that in the most literal sense. Breaking the Blockade, next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The official British military history of the Great War describes the Battle of Tanga as "one of the most notable failures in British military history." One British official went even further and wrote that "to land a large force without reconnaissance to see whether any of the enemy were about appears the action of a lunatic." After the war, Aitken would be exonerated of personal responsibility for the failure of the operation, but even so, his reputation never recovered. He died in 1924, at the age of 62.

[music: Closing War Theme]

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