

## 2 Making Askari Ways of War

*Military Training and Socialization*

AROUND 1895 the Swahili poet Mbaraka bin Shomari wrote a poem honoring the sitting governor of German East Africa, Friedrich von Schele. In keeping with the conventions of Kiswahili epic poetry, after some thirty stanzas of praising Schele's nobility, generosity, and wealth, bin Shomari called attention to the military might that underwrote the governor's authority:

Bullets and gunpowder fill up the houses.  
Even in the ammunition belts they are placed in a special way.  
All the soldiers assemble if the trumpet sounds.<sup>1</sup>

The poet's description of Schele's military strength identifies obvious markers such as munitions stores. In addition, however, these lines communicate the poet's impression of another highly visible component of the governor's authority—his ability to efficiently and quickly mobilize his troops and equipment in the face of perceived threats. Stockpiled bullets, gunpowder, and ammunition belts visibly conveyed colonial military strength, but being able to assemble soldiers at the sound of a trumpet conveyed a different kind of mastery. Backed by such performances of soldierly discipline, colonial authorities communicated their vision of mastery to audiences across German East Africa. But how did the Schutztruppe organization create disciplined soldiers out of men who came from such disparate geographic locations, linguistic backgrounds, and cultural contexts? What was the “glue” that tied these

soldiers to each other, to their officers, and to the Schutztruppe for the three decades of its existence?<sup>2</sup> To answer these questions, this chapter undertakes a close reading of the set of practices that socialized and trained recruits to become soldiers. Military training in German East Africa should be understood as a multidirectional educative process.<sup>3</sup> German officers and NCOs (German and African) laid the contours of a training regime for their African recruits. Within that regime, diverse groups of recruits contributed distinct military cultural practices to the ongoing development of an effective Schutztruppe way of war. Through these intersecting and fluid processes, askari developed the professional sensibilities and skills necessary for advancement in the Schutztruppe, laying the basis for their claims to respectability within colonial society. The askari's dedication to the Schutztruppe sprang not from some organic loyalty to the German Empire, but instead from their sense that Schutztruppe officers and NCOs were capable patrons and leaders who could help the askari become big men as they climbed the military ranks.

#### MAKING ASKARI: TRAINING AS SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

After the initial conquest of the coastal region (1889–91), the Schutztruppe began establishing military outposts (maboma) throughout German East Africa. Conquest of the territory took the next fifteen years.<sup>4</sup> German colonial officers and administrators used these outposts and the military forces assigned to them to cultivate an illusion of military control over the colony by practicing rituals that proclaimed military dominance. Through the German-designed training regimen, askari acted out the German vision of a powerful colonial state. Given the colonial government's inherent legitimacy problems, that vision took the shape of a "martial paradigm" that "displayed an idealized model of organization . . . [that] tended to aid in the imposition of social control on civilian society—whether enforced or voluntary—in a wide variety of contexts."<sup>5</sup> Prussia's central role in the development of European martial paradigms in the 1800s shaped colonial officers' visions of the colonial state as a machine, even if local realities hardly measured up to such ideals.<sup>6</sup> Colonial rule in German East Africa was in fact a hodgepodge of ad hoc local arrangements with friendly leaders and itinerant administrative practices, reinforced with the threat of military force.

Military training was central to the socialization processes that ultimately bonded askari to the Schutztruppe organization, their fellow soldiers, and their officers, contributing to the making of a colonial military culture. This military culture included constant reinforcement of discipline and combat readiness, construction of a professional ethos, performance of rituals (drill, ceremony, customs, and courtesies), and maintenance of soldiers' morale.<sup>7</sup> A mixture of practical military considerations and more nebulous concerns about cultivating esprit de corps underwrote German officers' obsession with training their troops in drill, proper uniform wear, and following the Schutztruppe's organizational and operational rules. To create well-trained and disciplined units, they had to convince their recruits to conform to German specifications for good order and conformity.

But creating the conditions for outstanding battlefield performance through training was only part of what Schutztruppe officers had in mind when they exercised their soldiers each day. In addition, German officers wanted each askari to feel confident that he would be successful against any enemy, regardless of numerical superiority, as long as he followed his officers' orders and trusted in the Schutztruppe training regimen.<sup>8</sup> In other words, Schutztruppe officers wanted their African soldiers to feel militarily competent, and preferably superior, in combat situations in which they seemed to be at a disadvantage because of numerical weakness, lack of familiarity with local surroundings, and a range of other concerns.<sup>9</sup> They believed that by cultivating an abiding confidence in German leadership alongside faith in rigorous training and technological superiority, the askari would be prepared to confront any military challenge they faced. Punishment, including in some cases extreme physical violence, reminded the wayward or faint of heart to refocus their attention on these fundamental organizing principles.

Schutztruppe officers' diaries and memoirs routinely emphasized the importance of military training and just as routinely expressed disappointment in askari military skills during these sessions. Philipp Correck, a Schutztruppe lieutenant stationed in the southern highlands during the 1905–7 Maji Maji war, peppered his diary with descriptions of simply "dismal" early-morning training sessions with his askari, comparing them to "[new] recruits in their first days."<sup>10</sup> Such negative portrayals of the askari, even in the midst of an ongoing war, fit uncomfortably with other descriptions of the askari—often by the

same authors—that instead described the askari as soldiers who showed remarkable skill and resolve under fire.

This disconnect might be explained in different ways. First, soldiers' willingness to conform to training demands could be motivated by the kind of reinforcement they got from their officers. Lieutenant Correck's askari gave him the Kiswahili nickname *Bwana Moto*, "Mr. Fiery Temper," based on his outward behavior, and especially his predilection for beating askari and porters with a hide whip (*kiboko*) and sometimes with his fists.<sup>11</sup> Correck complained in his diary that his "paw [*Pfote*]" still hurt four days after punching one of his askari during a morning training session.<sup>12</sup> Such behavior among Schutztruppe officers and NCOs was not uncommon, and any number of explanations might account for it, including the accepted use of such methods in German military culture more generally, the stress of being deployed in an unfamiliar environment during wartime, sadistic tendencies, and frustration with being unable to properly communicate with their troops, given significant language differences.<sup>13</sup> Under such conditions, soldiers likely performed their duties more out of fear than dedication to Schutztruppe ideals or training principles.

By contrast, soldiers who perceived the worth of their training through officers' encouraging comments and gestures, or through combat experiences that proved the benefits of training, might be more inclined to treat *Exerzierplatz* activities as preparation for combat.<sup>14</sup> General Lettow-Vorbeck, for example, apparently garnered the respect of many askari who marched with him during World War I. His leadership style included positively reinforcing his troops with verbal encouragement, rest time, and when possible, new supplies, food, and drink.<sup>15</sup> That most of these rewards came from plundering villagers' supplies and requisitioning their livestock made little difference to weary and malnourished soldiers with superiority complexes whose way of war had long relied on expropriating goods from civilians both in peace and war.<sup>16</sup> In fact, as we have seen, these practices had been the norm during East African warfare even before the Germans' arrival. From most askari's perspectives, a commander's willingness to take such action showed a requisite toughness that equated to effective leadership.<sup>17</sup> Soldiers were far more likely to cooperate with inspections, drill, and parades if their officers took care of them, whether in terms of survival needs or preserving their status vis-à-vis colonized East Africans.

The Schutztruppe's numerous violent military expeditions in the first fifteen years of the German occupation of Tanzania may also have contributed to lackluster drilling sessions.<sup>18</sup> Often enough, the askari's everyday experiences brought them face to face with the real thing, so playing at war while in garrison paled in comparison to their combat experiences. Not surprisingly, the value of their repetitive training came through most clearly in combat situations that taxed them to the limits of their mental and physical endurance.<sup>19</sup>

The training process generated emotional bonds between soldiers and the Schutztruppe organization, increasing the likelihood that men could depend on each other, and on their officers, during crisis moments.<sup>20</sup> Askari were expected to wear their uniforms properly, march in good order, and comport themselves appropriately while standing in formation partly because their officers also believed such activities would reinforce the troops' discipline and obedience as they prepared for war.<sup>21</sup> They believed that drill and ceremony would lead their soldiers to bond emotionally with the Schutztruppe organization—the stuff of esprit.<sup>22</sup> Askari abilities to apply what they learned from drill, target practice, and field exercises undergirded their abilities to fight under physically and mentally stressful conditions.

In addition, the skills they practiced on the Exerzierplätze helped them perform the “military show” that reinforced German claims to authority across the colony by enacting a vision of military discipline and concentration of force that was distinct from anything that had existed in Tanzania before the German conquest.<sup>23</sup> While tedious and physically exhausting, hours of Exerzierplatz training nonetheless shaped askari experiences off the training field, where they had opportunities to execute the skills they had learned in training. In these situations, askari experienced meaningful—maybe even ecstatic—feelings of purpose, belonging, and organizational identification that infused their hardships with value. In their marching songs, and in conversations with their superiors, they often expressed affection for the distant kaiser. They did so not because of loyalty to the German Empire per se, but because for them, the kaiser was the ultimate patron, the one who made their aspirations to becoming big men possible.<sup>24</sup> “Anyone who could do so much for his soldiers,” they thought, “must really be a good emperor.”<sup>25</sup> Training thus contributed to the development of vertical and horizontal ties to the Schutztruppe organization through

their officer-patrons, who backed their claims to status as respectable men, and through their fellow askari, their comrades-in-arms.

### TRAINING PRACTICES: INTERACTIONS AND COLLISIONS

The military sensibilities that German and African men brought with them to the training grounds interacted, but sometimes collided, to produce new social and cultural relations within the Schutztruppe, and new modes of communicating with those inside and outside the Schutztruppe. Thinking about military training as a distinct form of socialization and identity formation within colonial culture helps us better understand how colonial soldiers related to each other, to their officers, and to diverse populations of colonial subjects. It helps explain what held colonial armies together.

German assumptions about what made a good soldier sometimes differed from the soldierly values askari brought with them from the disparate African military cultures they had previously known. German officers and NCOs had much to learn about fighting in East Africa, as well as how to best manage their African troops in ways that would encourage them to remain with the Schutztruppe. Before World War I, mutinies among askari happened very rarely. When they did, it was generally because of an inability or unwillingness of officers to treat the askari in accordance with their understanding of social and military hierarchies and prestige.<sup>26</sup> Much more was at stake in the colonial military training regime than the ability to execute maneuvers or fire accurately on command. In significant ways, military training also communicated expectations back and forth between German officers and askari so that both sides had working assumptions, and perhaps sometimes “working misunderstandings,” about their roles in the Schutztruppe.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the training methods used in the Schutztruppe originated in nineteenth-century German military training philosophies and practices. Most German Schutztruppe members came from the Prussian army, with a significant minority also coming from Bavaria, Saxony, and Baden-Württemberg.<sup>28</sup> Notoriously harsh in terms of discipline, the nineteenth-century Prussian military relied on constant repetitive training to foster combat effectiveness. According to one military historian, “it took a year to teach an infantryman the basics of using his weapon and marching with his platoon.”<sup>29</sup> The recruits received “very

elementary and very repetitious” training that involved “learning to march in step, to load and fire a [firearm], and to perform platoon or company maneuvers.”<sup>30</sup> Officers believed that such training, though tedious, would help prepare infantrymen to quickly assess situations, to respond to battlefield circumstances appropriately under stress, and to “elevate” in them a “soldierly spirit.”<sup>31</sup> After 1815 the Prussian general staff developed war games as a way of testing “operational features and possibilities.”<sup>32</sup> Such war games later featured prominently in Schutztruppe training methods in East Africa.

Germany’s nineteenth-century military history had a significant impact on how junior officers, some of whom became Schutztruppe officers, developed their abilities to lead troops in combat. Particularly after the Franco-Prussian War, the concept of *Auftragstaktik* (mission tactics) fostered expectations that junior officers should be able to confidently lead troops without specific direction from superiors. According to Isabel Hull, mission tactics “encouraged risk taking and excess, and it promised to forgive mistakes (‘wrong expedients’) taken in that spirit.”<sup>33</sup> Officers who later served in colonial armies benefited from the German military’s encouragement of mission tactics, since it gave them great latitude to act in the interest of securing colonial objectives. With usually no more than two or three German officers at each Schutztruppe station—and stations sited at great distances from Schutztruppe headquarters, in Dar es Salaam—officers in East Africa had to be able to decide how and when to use military force in their districts without supervision or oversight. For similar reasons, they also entrusted small unit operations and expeditions to their senior askari, especially their Sudanese soldiers. *Auftragstaktik* thus encouraged independent action in the field. The excessive violence of the conquest and consolidation of authority in German East Africa must partly be attributed to the premium placed on officers’ and NCOs’ abilities to decisively plan and execute operations without supervision or prior approval.

German officers assigned to the Schutztruppe underwent some preparation before they traveled to their posts in East Africa, but it was hardly systematic, especially in the early years. They read the recollections of fellow officers with previous postings in Africa to gain perspective on how to fight “small wars” against African armies, as well as how to prepare for life in East Africa more generally.<sup>34</sup> They may also have studied what they could of other colonial armies in Africa.<sup>35</sup> In fact, in

1909, with international political tensions steadily building, the *Reichskolonialamt* went so far as to encourage Schutztruppe officers traveling home on leave to route their travel through “the neighboring colonies of foreign powers for the purpose of studying the local military relationships and dispositions.”<sup>36</sup> Although officers had to pay for such travels out of their own pockets, the *Kommando der Schutztruppen* agreed to grant them leave extensions so they could work up any materials gathered on such a trip.<sup>37</sup> Literary treatments of colonial wars fought in very different contexts also influenced Schutztruppe officers’ assessments of local conditions once they arrived in East Africa. Some officers appear to have used parts James Fenimore Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*, a series of novels set in eighteenth-century North America, as makeshift field manuals for life on the march.<sup>38</sup> Some studied Kiswahili at the Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin before they departed for East Africa, with some gaining fluency in the regional lingua franca over time.<sup>39</sup> Others merely muddled through, learning to communicate with their troops and other employees in a mixture of German and Kiswahili. Lieutenant Philipp Correck, for example, began learning Kiswahili on the voyage to East Africa but complained throughout his deployment of his inability to master it despite expending “all his energies” on it.<sup>40</sup> Officers who made the effort to learn Kiswahili were rewarded with better insight into their troops’ lives, as well as the ability to recognize some of the subtleties of Kiswahili wordplay and East African nicknaming practices, which frequently mocked Europeans.

Between 1889 and 1892 the Schutztruppe included soldiers from Egypt/Sudan, Somalia, Portuguese East Africa, and the coastal hinterland of Dar es Salaam.<sup>41</sup> In the early years of the Schutztruppe (Wissmanntruppe), officers managed the polyglot army’s substantial language difficulties by segregating soldiers from the different geographic regions into separate units and by using interpreters, including “Turks” from the Egyptian army and German officers who spoke Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili.<sup>42</sup> The layers of translation that characterized these early years proved quite challenging to the goal of assembling an army, as one officer noted in his memoir:

For the Arabic-speaking Sudanese we had plenty of translators, who spoke very good French, a few of whom even spoke German, for the Zulus, however, only one translator was to be found, whose only other language was Portuguese, which only



[Wissmanntruppe founder] Wissmann [and two other lieutenants] understood. In addition the translator, José, a half-caste, soon showed himself to be a dark gentleman [i.e., untrustworthy], and the Zulus disproportionately preferred to communicate with us directly through sign language than through that person.<sup>43</sup>

As German officers tried to find ways to surmount linguistic obstacles to training and command, the Shangaan (“Zulu”) recruits refused to cooperate with this particular solution to communication problems by refusing to simply allow a translator to speak for them.<sup>44</sup> In this way, they interpreted their new social situation in German East Africa through the colonial politics of their homeland. Eventually the Schutztruppe settled on giving commands in German, with most other communications taking place in Kiswahili. Schutztruppe officers who attended the Berlin-based Seminar for Oriental Languages learned to translate common commands into Kiswahili so that they could begin using some of them upon arrival in Dar es Salaam.<sup>45</sup> In 1911 the Schutztruppe published a phrasebook offering translations of words and phrases from German to Kiswahili.<sup>46</sup> The degree to which the phrasebook was disseminated among German personnel is unclear, but at the very least its printing in 1911 showed that a corpus of translations from German to Kiswahili had been collected over time.

Askari communicated among themselves first in their mother tongues and later in Kiswahili. Egyptian-Arabic phrases were used in certain contexts, as during sentry duty when soldiers placed at specific intervals called out to each other to prove they were awake, alive, and at their posts.<sup>47</sup> Songs were sung in different languages, including Arabic, Kinyamwezi, and Kiswahili, and mixtures of all three.<sup>48</sup> Senior askari responsible for leading training sessions also developed a vocabulary of German commands and insults. The German word *Schwein*, overheard from German officers and NCOs, appeared to be a favorite way for senior askari to denigrate junior askari (as well as enemy captives).<sup>49</sup> In using German military commands as well as German insults toward junior troops, senior askari expressed their identification with the German officers and NCOs whom they heard using these words each day. Yet African soldiers’ vocalizations of these words and phrases also formed the basis for their later usage in everyday life around the military stations.<sup>50</sup> Some askari even learned to speak enough German to receive monetary awards from the *Kommando der Schutztruppen*.<sup>51</sup> Thus although the

Schutztruppe's first few years presented formidable language challenges, by the mid-1890s officers and troops had found common ground for day-to-day communication through a mixture of German and primarily Kiswahili, with sprinklings of other languages interspersed as well.

After the Schutztruppe's rapid assembly, in 1889, and the final defeat of the coastal rebellion, in 1891, the army opened up recruitment to a wider pool of volunteers. Normally, askari volunteers reported to the *Rekrutendepot* in Dar es Salaam for training, which lasted three months (see fig. 2). Stations in the interior also sometimes accepted recruits to fill manpower needs when senior askari retired, although authority to do so varied with the colonial government's fiscal status.<sup>52</sup> As colonial rule progressed, soldiers were also sometimes recruited on short notice from areas where concentrations of ex-askari lived. In 1896, for instance, a Prussian army lieutenant and geographer raised a unit of ex-soldiers from the coastal town of Bagamoyo to accompany him on a research expedition to Irangi.<sup>53</sup> Recruits underwent a medical exam, and if they passed, they were accepted into training and outfitted with a uniform. After the askari received their uniform components, they were expected to maintain and keep track of every item, and their NCOs were supposed to ensure that all askari in fact possessed the items they had been issued.<sup>54</sup> Periodic inspections helped reinforce the soldiers' responsibility for looking after their gear. After this initial training, officers sent them out to individual units stationed around the colony to fill each post's personnel needs. At their new stations, the recruits continued to train regularly under command of a German officer or NCO. Senior askari also worked separately with brand new recruits. Schutztruppe military training in German East Africa closely resembled Prussian rank-and-file training in Germany and was based on Prussian infantry drill regulations issued in 1888 and 1906.<sup>55</sup> Training sessions, where askari practiced military bearing, shooting, and individual and group marching, began first thing in the morning.<sup>56</sup> Soldiers awoke to a bugle playing reveille at five-thirty. Two-hour training sessions then took place on the station's Exerzierplatz. The Kiswahili phrase used by askari for these "exercises" was *kucheza tabur*.<sup>57</sup> Although it is glossed as "to drill," the phrase is actually an interesting combination of the Kiswahili word "to play" and a Turkish word for "battalion." A literal translation would be "to play battalion," again evoking the multilayered history of the Schutztruppe.



FIGURE 2. This photo shows an askari standing at the gate of the boma for the Schutztruppe's Fifth Company in Dar es Salaam, which also served as the colony's recruitment reception station, or *Rekrutendepot*. The askari looks into the boma courtyard. Although the askari is in uniform, he is not wearing boots, highlighting a common way in which askari undermined Schutztruppe ideas of military order. On either side of the boma gate are two placards listing the names of German officers and NCOs who died in action, and two carved wooden "Swahili" doors. The right side of the photo also shows an askari's guard box, painted in bold stripes in the German imperial colors black, white, and red. The photo captures the mixture of influences visible at the Schutztruppe maboma, as well as their role as nodes of security for the colonial state. *Used with permission of the Photo Archive of the German Colonial Society, University Library, Frankfurt am Main.*

Morning training sessions were followed by a midday break that coincided with the hottest hours of the day. During this time, askari rested, ate, and took care of mandatory tasks like cleaning their weapons (see fig. 3).<sup>58</sup> Afterward, askari worked around the station, making repairs, building new structures, and keeping things tidy.<sup>59</sup> They also assisted with colonial administrative and disciplinary duties, delivering messages and summonses, escorting officials between stations and on expeditions, acting as witnesses or ceremonial representatives in judicial proceedings, and guarding prisoners and chain-gang laborers. During military expeditions, commanders kept up training regimens, with overnight campsites serving as temporary Exerzierplätze until they received orders to construct a new permanent post, or until the company marched on to its next site.<sup>60</sup> In these ways, askari received constant reminders of Schutztruppe order and discipline, whether in garrison or on the march.



FIGURE 3. Taken at Ujiji station in 1912, this photograph shows three junior askari cleaning their rifles. When in garrison, such duties consumed part of each soldier's day. Note the variations in how the three soldiers wear their uniforms. For example, none are wearing their leg wraps, or puttees, and the one in the center is not wearing boots. All three wear fezzes, but these show no uniformity, suggesting a degree of choice in uniform wear, or perhaps the unavailability of uniform parts at different times. Rank chevrons are visible on the sleeves of the askari on the left and in the center. Insignia designating achievement in marksmanship decorate the sleeves of the askari on the left and the right. Uniforms thus communicated considerable information about those who wore them. *Used with permission of the Photo Archive of the German Colonial Society, University Library, Frankfurt am Main.*

In addition to the repetitive training modes used to instill obedience and familiarity with battlefield skills in its African soldiers, Schutztruppe officers used war games to prepare their askari for a range of armed combat contingencies with East African armies. The Schutztruppe handbook for field exercises (*Felddienstübungen*), published in 1910, documents twenty-seven different kinds of war games that officers might use in training their African troops. Using these scenarios, officers trained askari in a variety of potential military confrontations, including attacking units while on the march, attacking fortified field positions, and conducting battles of retreat.<sup>61</sup> Most of the exercise scenario texts began with a variation on the phrase “The colony is in rebellion.”<sup>62</sup> To add realism to the elaborate war game scenarios, officers sometimes had small contingents of “dependable, long-serving” askari

costume themselves and perform the roles of East African military enemies against the khaki-clad active askari.<sup>63</sup> In 1906 the settler newspaper *Usambara Post* reported on plans to employ African sailors and senior students of the government school at Tanga to “fight” the local askari unit, using firearms loaded with blanks.<sup>64</sup> Askari sometimes also played the roles of ruga-ruga auxiliaries to help units practice incorporating them into regular tactics.<sup>65</sup> These exercises were supposed to sharpen askari’s abilities to fight against enemies who practiced styles of warfare Schutztruppe officers considered dangerous, even if judged primitive by their standards.<sup>66</sup>

Most exercises incorporated “the numerically stronger, but poorly armed native as the enemy,” and the different scenarios focused on “divergent” tactics from those used in Germany, suggesting that the Felddienstübungen had at least as much to do with helping officers imagine East African warfare as it did with finding ways to train askari for combat.<sup>67</sup> Indigenous practices of warfare specifically identified in the Felddienstübungen included “surprise engagement at close range and the cautious employment of open order.”<sup>68</sup> To counter these styles of warfare, field exercise training objectives sought to anticipate and undermine indigenous armies’ few possible advantages, which usually stemmed from the relative simplicity of their weapons and tactics. Soldiers in East African armies typically used old muzzleloading guns, spears, or bows and arrows. They used camouflage and concealment to hinder detection and to mask movement, fleeing into hiding when necessary. They also used numerical advantage to overwhelm their better-armed opponents and force them to engage in close combat. The Schutztruppe tried to train their askari to anticipate all these possibilities in combat against East African armies. They also practiced reacting to sudden alarms signaling surprise attacks or fires, and they were judged on their abilities to respond with “extreme speed” to unpredictable deadly threats.<sup>69</sup> Askari companies periodically received regular inspections of their proficiency in reacting properly during such exercises.<sup>70</sup>

As in most militaries, physical training also featured prominently in daily training regimens. Askari companies undertook “practice marches” for several days to test their endurance, as well as marches for “exploratory purposes” to help familiarize soldiers with “terrain, routes, water, and provisioning” conditions in the areas they traversed.<sup>71</sup> This

kind of practical knowledge, it was thought, would contribute to successful expeditions and column maneuvers in the future. In one such instance, in July 1904 a company commander planned to have part of his company complete a “battle-like” firing exercise with live ammunition and targets on their return from a five-day, 160-kilometer practice march from Dar es Salaam to Kisiju and back.<sup>72</sup> Coincidentally, the firing exercise soon became a real demonstration of colonial firepower when the company passed through the Rufiji delta district. Some time earlier, uncooperative local inhabitants murdered a police-askari who had recently been dispatched from Dar es Salaam to Rufiji District. Although the unit appears not to have been directly involved in arresting the alleged guilty parties, its nearby simultaneous display of firepower and sharpshooting attracted many “curious and interested” African observers. Germans in Dar es Salaam, clearly worried about the proximity of this minor rebellion to the colonial capital, hoped this military show would “cure them of their childish insubordination.”<sup>73</sup> The unit returned to Dar es Salaam twelve days after its initial departure to great celebration.<sup>74</sup> This example certainly illustrates how training prepared askari for the physical and emotional demands of military confrontation. Schutztruppe exercises also served wider communicative purposes for the colonial state by reminding local populations of its intent and ability to use force on short notice.<sup>75</sup>

German officers used other methods for physical training as well. They erected gymnastic and other training equipment on some stations. Three-dimensional military training structures helped soldiers simulate combat activities such as scaling walls or buildings and crossing rivers or other narrow spaces in single file, helping soldiers build physical endurance too.<sup>76</sup> Askari trained on these apparatuses with varying degrees of enthusiasm.<sup>77</sup> German officers’ gymnastic exercises reminded some askari of monkeys, dampening their eagerness to participate.<sup>78</sup> Although they seemed to enjoy exercises involving jumping, their efforts on the high bar appeared to one officer “awkward.”<sup>79</sup> While it is difficult to know much about the askari’s thoughts on these forms of training, it is tempting to imagine that they perceived such activities as trivialities having little to do with what they would face in war. In this respect, practice marches probably made much more sense to the troops.

Askari also received training in a range of military skills fundamental to effective military operations. All askari learned to shoot the

Mauser M/71, a single-shot .450-caliber rifle that used black-powder cartridges famous for giving off clouds of black smoke and betraying soldiers' locations. Askari regularly undertook strictly monitored target practice, with sharpshooters receiving special recognition and insignia.<sup>80</sup> Specialists also learned how to maintain and fire the Schutztruppe's machine guns, and a still smaller group of specialists, some of whom were children, learned how to operate the heliograph for field communications. At any given time some twenty askari also served in the *Musikkapelle* (band) based in Dar es Salaam, which performed on special occasions such as the kaiser's birthday.<sup>81</sup> Individual askari also served as company buglers and drummers. In addition, askari also carried out many of the day-to-day tasks that enabled colonial governance, including tax collection, vaccination campaigns, and providing escorts for European travelers.<sup>82</sup> Askari were indispensable to the colonial state as colonial intermediaries as well as soldiers (see chapter 5).

Askari did not, however, accept their orders wholesale, despite potentially harsh consequences for noncompliance. Rather, they identified with some aspects of German military culture but simply tolerated others in order to avoid punishment. Ali Kalikilima's narrative of his time as a young recruit reveals something of the experience of Schutztruppe military training. His narrative intertwines remembered feelings of admiration for the Germans and feelings that their disciplinary harshness was excessive:

Training lasted many months. We were taught how to march properly, how to handle a variety of weapons and most importantly, how to be fearless. The training was so intense that at times when I fell down to sleep I often wondered whether I'd made a wise choice [in joining the Schutztruppe]. Our instructors were ruthless and cruel. It seemed they did not know how to speak. It intrigued me that it was necessary for all orders to be shouted. The smallest mistake was punished with hard labour, not only for the culprit, but for all of us.<sup>83</sup>

For Ali, training imparted more than valuable combat skills. It also instilled a strong sense that his instructors had in fact made him "fearless" by putting him and his fellow-recruits through a strange, exhausting, and life-altering experience. He respected his leaders even if he did not like them.<sup>84</sup> Fear of disciplinary action for moral or technical

failure during combat also should not be discounted as a key factor in keeping askari on task. Such was the basis of the working relationship at the heart of the Schutztruppe's ability to operate effectively as an expeditionary force.

Throughout the Schutztruppe's existence, officers frequently commented on what they perceived to be substandard shooting skills among their troops.<sup>85</sup> As we have seen, Schutztruppe officers and askari also had different ideas of what it meant to possess and use a firearm. In late-nineteenth-century East Africa among Nyamwezi men, for example, owning a firearm visibly illustrated that its owner either had the means to purchase the weapon or that the weapon had been bestowed on him by a wealthy and powerful patron.<sup>86</sup> Either way, ownership of the weapon meant at least as much, and perhaps more, than actual shooting ability. Ali's specific fear that he would not be able to handle his weapon properly in combat mirrors similar feelings experienced by soldiers in other wartime contexts and should in part be attributed to generalized nervousness about the great unknown of impending battle.<sup>87</sup> Yet Ali recalled with great pride the moment in his pre-askari youth when his wealthy slave-raiding father initiated him in "the art of shooting with a muzzle-loader gun."<sup>88</sup> Some askari gave themselves nicknames related to "weapons-craft," such as Powder, Flint, or Bullet, which they kept throughout their Schutztruppe enlistment period.<sup>89</sup> Schutztruppe officers' recurring observations that individual askari lacked shooting skills should perhaps be interpreted in this light. Interestingly, officers complained far less about askari units' abilities to fire salvos, where individual accuracy mattered less, suggesting that small-unit firing discipline in combat situations actually met their standards much of the time, even when results during target practice disappointed.<sup>90</sup>

Recruits expressed their willingness to adhere to the rules and norms of their new organization, and thus also at least their nominal acceptance of colonial civilizationist ideals, in different ways. For example, their experiences of receiving pay changed over the course of the Schutztruppe's existence, reflecting an increasing engagement with the German colonial state's vision of modernity. In the Schutztruppe's early days askari received their wages in goods. Schutztruppe officers meticulously recorded these payments in individual soldier paybooks—a complicated and time-consuming affair. Later, the askari became salaried employees who received their regular pay in cash,



simplifying the process. The paybooks also recorded information about individual recruitment history, campaign participation, decorations, punishments, achievements in target practice, and family status.<sup>91</sup> In effect, the paybooks provided European Schutztruppe personnel with a summary of each askari's professional life history, enabling them to quickly fit soldiers into units after transfers, to measure progress toward specific training and behavioral goals, to monitor health, and to manage inheritances for soldiers who died while on duty. Officers also corresponded with each other about askari when they transferred them between posts, noting their health statuses, shooting histories, special skills or qualities, and the equipment they had been issued.<sup>92</sup>

Another means by which Schutztruppe military training transformed askari into colonial agents was to inculcate in them new understandings of time and order. In coastal East Africa, time is reckoned on a twelve-hour cycle, beginning with six o'clock in the morning. Seven o'clock in the morning is thus "hour one [*saa moja*]," eight o'clock is "hour two [*saa mbili*]," and so on until six o'clock in the evening, when the cycle begins again. This practice of reckoning time spread to other parts of Tanzania via the caravan trade routes. In rural areas, where "life and production" were tied to daylight hours and seasonal changes, this way of measuring time prevailed.<sup>93</sup> With the establishment and expansion of colonial rule, askari were expected to structure their days using European concepts of "industrial time," eschewing the old ways of telling time.<sup>94</sup> Sudanese soldiers likely had longer experience with European time concepts, but for other recruits, this sort of change probably required some adjustment. Such new ordering practices influenced how askari interacted with their superiors as well as colonial subjects. As they conducted their duties, their ability to operate in both modes helped transmit knowledge between the colonial state and its subjects.

The Schutztruppe also attempted to instill German ideals of order in their African soldiers by insisting on specific measures for managing health and hygiene. Staff doctors and officers monitored the health of askari companies and offered treatment for illnesses in boma infirmaries (*Lazarette*) or, if the troops were on campaign or expedition, in field hospitals. Askari at some locations took quinine to "cure" malaria, and they also served as test subjects for different quinine dosages.<sup>95</sup> Doctors studied sick soldiers to assess transmission, progression, and treatment of specific diseases, including malaria, relapsing fever,

sleeping sickness, and dysentery.<sup>96</sup> Soldiers were given specific guidelines for constructing and maintaining latrines in the maboma as well as in field encampments.<sup>97</sup> Askari also assisted Schutztruppe medical personnel with large-scale vaccination efforts, which further associated them with colonial projects.<sup>98</sup>

Treatment protocols for infirmary personnel were interwoven with Schutztruppe disciplinary practices as well, making askari responsible for certain aspects of their own health. Soldiers admitted to infirmaries for treatment of “self-inflicted” illnesses were subject to deductions from their pay. According to a 1904 Schutztruppe directive, illnesses falling into this category included “sexually transmitted diseases, diseases related to the use of alcohol, opium, hemp, or other intoxicating stimulants, injuries received in brawls, and self-inflicted wounds.”<sup>99</sup> In 1910 a revision to the 1904 document allowed that “sexually transmitted diseases should only be characterized as self-inflicted if the man does not report [himself] sick directly after infection. If the sick notice happens promptly, there will be no punishment or reduction in pay.”<sup>100</sup> Officials likely realized that efforts to arrest the spread of diseases around the colonial centers, which included physical examinations of women identified as prostitutes, had largely failed.<sup>101</sup> For one thing, women who underwent successful treatment for sexually transmitted diseases often returned to sex work following their recovery, risking reexposure.<sup>102</sup> In addition, colonial authorities apparently released from “control” any woman who could prove she intended to marry—an interesting elevation of European gendered marriage ideals over public health concerns.<sup>103</sup> And in light of the relatively recent Schutztruppe experience of being militarily unprepared in the face of the Maji Maji war in 1905, it made little practical sense to continue punishing askari for contracting these diseases. In shifting to punishing soldiers who failed to seek treatment, colonial officials gave them the opportunity to demonstrate personal responsibility for their own health and safety, and to place faith in the efficacy of colonial medicine—another marker of their engagement with colonial values.

Another signature way that askari performed their roles as Schutztruppe members and colonial agents was by adhering to rules of proper uniform wear. Uniforms serve vital purposes within military organizations. Up close, the insignia and rank placed on a uniform archives the wearer’s rank, accomplishments, and skills, and thereby transmits

information about experience, status, and authority to fellow soldiers.<sup>104</sup> Uniforms also produced new postures and bodily practices in young men unaccustomed to wearing the elaborate layers of clothing, insignia, headgear, puttees (leg wraps), and boots issued to each Schutztruppe askari.<sup>105</sup> By accepting these sartorial practices, askari recruits made their first steps toward full Schutztruppe membership.

In Kiswahili, the German word *Uniform* translated to “askari clothes” (*nguo za askari*), so that this linguistic signifier denoted the fusion between the men’s identities as soldiers and outward expressions of those identities, as well as the distinctiveness of the clothing ensemble.<sup>106</sup> One scholar contends that “wearing a uniform properly—understanding and obeying rules about the uniform-in-practice and turning the garments into communicative statements—is more important than the items of clothing and decoration themselves.”<sup>107</sup> Particular items of clothing could in fact be quite important, since cloth and specialized clothing items had intrinsic value as currency, prestige goods, and practical pieces in East African cultures. A number of colonial employees and local leaders wore uniforms or uniform-like clothing in their day-to-day lives. But only the askari could legitimately demonstrate membership in the Schutztruppe, the most potent arm of German colonial administration, by wearing uniforms according to the organization’s specialized rules and regulations. Photographic evidence shows that askari also sometimes altered or combined their uniforms with elements drawn from East African clothing practices.<sup>108</sup> But on the whole, uniforms set the askari apart from most other East Africans, whom they and their superiors referred to as *washenzi*, or barbarians. These distancing practices provided a psychological buffer for the askari as they waged war against Schutztruppe enemies. They also confirmed and reinforced individual askari’s sense of belonging to the dominant military and political actor in the territory and thus their claims to status as big men.

For the thousands of East Africans who were not part of the Schutztruppe, uniforms reinforced the idea that the askari were part of a larger whole, or cogs in a machine. That is, uniforms created the impression of there being many more askari than there actually were, that they were interchangeable with each other, and thus that any one of them might be as dangerous as the next. By massing together large numbers of uniformed soldiers, armies appeared large and formidable, producing lack of confidence and fear in their military opponents. A government’s

ability to assemble a uniformed army sent unspoken but quite clear messages about its strength, because such an undertaking required substantial economic and human resources. These messages would not have been lost on East Africans, whose notions of “wealth in people” informed their decision-making processes at every socioeconomic level, from households to larger polities. In addition, as literary scholar Paul Fussell astutely observes, “The uniform . . . assures its audience that the wearer *has* a job, one likely not to be merely temporary and one extorting a degree of respect for being associated with a successful enterprise. The uniform attaches one to success.”<sup>109</sup> In German East Africa, the wearing of uniforms by those most directly associated with the colonial state conveyed permanence, authority, and status in ways that stood out from the vast majority of East Africans living with colonialism. Askari and other colonial employees found “success” through their attachments to the colonial state, and in wearing uniforms that represented those attachments, they helped disseminate a message about the potential benefits of cooperation with the colonial state.

Like soldiers everywhere though, the askari did not always meet their officers’ expectations of fastidiousness in uniform wear. The official German-Swahili military language guide for East Africa provides insights into the everyday struggles that characterized relationships between German officers and African soldiers. A number of entries suggest officers’ everyday recurring frustrations with askari deficiencies in properly wearing their uniforms, and how to maintain complete uniform sets. For example, an entry for “leg wraps [*Beinwickel*]” is followed by a series of German phrases with their Kiswahili translations, including “wrap your leg wraps around,” “wrap your leg wraps tighter,” and “where are your leg wraps?” For “trousers [*Hosen*],” we find “your trousers [*siruali*] are torn,” and for “tunic [*Rock*],” “your coat [*koti*] is torn,” “pull your coat down,” “hang your coat up there.”<sup>110</sup> Phrase books, of course, cannot be taken as definitive examples of how officers addressed their askari. Still, they give some indication of German obsessions with proper uniform wear on the one hand and askari non-compliance, apathy, or misunderstanding on the other.

Uniforms also sometimes undermined askari abilities to accomplish their goals, because their distinctiveness marked them as potential targets of violence against colonial figures and their local allies. Uniforms announced a soldier’s arrival from afar, giving people opportunity to flee,

or to plan acts of resistance and self-defense. In one of many examples, East Africans living around Kilimanjaro in 1904 saw askari tax collectors approaching from a distance and fled into hiding, refusing to return until they were sure the askari had departed.<sup>111</sup> Not only did the askari wear distinct uniforms, they also carried weapons and printed documents with striking visual markings recognizable to literate and non-literate alike. The black, white, and red of the German imperial flag, as well as the eagle insignia, appeared on summons documents (*Schaurizettel*) issued by colonial authorities to order people to attend the judicial hearings known as *mashauri*. The flags also flew over every boma and accompanied officials on expeditions and tours. The intended political symbolism would not have been missed by anyone with even a minimal history of interaction with the colonial government. Indeed, it appears that nonaskari sometimes stole uniform parts if opportunities to do so arose, raising the possibility that outsiders might have tried to impersonate askari.<sup>112</sup> One uniform item that may have been especially compelling was the identification tag (*Erkennungsmarke*), a metal plate that the askari were supposed to always wear on a lanyard under their tunics. A 1908 missive from Dar es Salaam to all police-askari units reminded commanders of this rule and also warned them that “the usual keeping of these by women and boys [was] not allowed and punishable.” Askari who lost their identification tags “through their own fault” had to pay a fine of half a rupee.<sup>113</sup> Uniforms and other visible trappings of the state helped cement the soldiers’ place in colonial practices of power, differentiating them from nearly everyone else in the colony. At the same time, *nguo ya askari* served as a common symbol around which the soldiers began to identify with each other across their differences in origins, languages, and military traditions.

Belonging to the *Schutztruppe* meant conforming to a set of rules and expectations disseminated by the headquarters in Dar es Salaam and enforced by officers and NCOs at their stations. Disobedience or failure to comply with regulations could result in harsh punishments. These punishments included extra duty, confinement with or without chain-gang labor, flogging, fines, dismissal from the *Schutztruppe*, or some combination thereof.<sup>114</sup> The highest-ranking officer at each station or outpost was authorized to give out these punishments as he saw fit. Floggings—usually twenty-five lashes with a *kiboko*—were administered by the senior African askari on site in front of the entire unit,

and indeed, the whole boma or campaign community.<sup>115</sup> Askari received the hamsa ishirini, as it was known in Kiswahili, for many types of offenses. Officers' diaries provide examples of askari being flogged for such infractions as sleeping or inattention while on watch duty, stealing goods from local populations, and negligence or abuse against a child.<sup>116</sup> In keeping with their reputations for stoicism, Sudanese soldiers reportedly received their lashes "without batting an eyelash."<sup>117</sup> They set the example for other soldiers, "who [made] an effort to do as the Sudanese and not express any pain."<sup>118</sup> Particularly egregious offenses could result in the death penalty, but such judgments had to receive the colonial governor's approval. Officially, death penalty cases were divided into "not purely military crimes," punishable by hanging, and "military crimes," punishable by close-range gunshot to the head or heart, although little evidence has survived to show how often executions of askari occurred.<sup>119</sup> In one 1894 case, a "crazed" senior askari was hung after shooting an NCO, but it appears that such cases were quite rare.<sup>120</sup> As with floggings, executions were carried out by senior African soldiers. "Naturally whites are absolutely excluded from this duty," wrote Wissmann in a book meant to prepare Schutztruppe personnel for African postings.<sup>121</sup> In theory, by making senior African troops responsible for disciplinary violence, German personnel created the appearance of being above the fray, or as neutral adjudicators in cases against their askari.

In fact, German officers also rendered unsanctioned violent punishments against their soldiers, often the manifestation of an intense rage that seemingly came out of nowhere. This is not to discount the presence of violent disciplinary practices as part of normal military practices at the time, especially within the Prussian army. Still, we might also interpret this behavior as part of a syndrome referred to in German East Africa as *Tropenkoller* (tropical madness) and elsewhere as tropical neurasthenia. The syndrome was a set of psychological afflictions experienced and reported by white Europeans living and working in tropical Africa for extended periods. Medical experts of the age explained the maladies as features of the supposed degenerative processes that occurred in white Europeans' mental and physical health during long-term exposure to tropical environments, with its combined stresses of hot and humid weather, long marches, consumption of intoxicants, and pervasive fear of being surrounded or ambushed by

hostile peoples.<sup>122</sup> Recent scholars have also argued that the notion of tropical neurasthenia reflected contemporary “social anxieties” about “white masculinity and racial robustness [that] made it ripe for export to the colonial setting” from its North American and European ideological origins.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, as Anna Crozier argues for British East Africa, ideas about tropical neurasthenia served as a “rational means of filtering, regulating, and managing the behavior of . . . colonial personnel.”<sup>124</sup> The combination of official and unofficial disciplinary actions officers and NCOs took against underperforming askari was constitutive of the everyday violence of the soldiers’ work lives. Perhaps we can also read these actions as reflective of the complex mechanisms by which colonial officials’ perceptions that their masculinity and racial superiority were under siege influenced their behaviors against even their most trusted African agents.

Physical forms of punishment made wayward soldiers’ infractions visible to fellow soldiers and to the boma communities. The Schutztruppe also reserved the right to punish their troops by taking deductions from their pay—a less visible, but nonetheless consequential means by which to remind them of their positions as military subordinates and clients to their superiors. For example, soldiers serving “middle or strict” detention lost their monthly pay for the duration of their sentence. Instead, they received a much reduced, but rank-appropriate, “detainee payment,” out of which they had to cover their own subsistence.<sup>125</sup> Soldiers sentenced to dismissal from the Schutztruppe and awaiting confirmation of the judgment from superiors were detained in prison and assigned to chain gangs. They received no pay but instead only the same provisions as other chain-gang members.<sup>126</sup> In some cases, “legal” wives or children received small allowances while the askari served out their sentences, helping them weather the decrease in household income. Still, the combination of detainment with diminished pay added additional humiliation to the experience for askari, since it temporarily placed them in the same socioeconomic category as average chain-gang prisoners. Many of these prisoners ended up on chain gangs for failing to pay taxes, suggesting that they were cash poor and living at subsistence level. Thus embedded in the Schutztruppe punishment process was an effort to remind askari of the value of remaining in good standing with their officer-patrons if they wanted to retain their socioeconomic status as local big men.

On the other hand, Schutztruppe headquarters staff members continued to tweak disciplinary regulations throughout the organization's existence.<sup>127</sup> This suggests that the askari, metropolitan critics of German militarism abroad, or other concerned colonizers such as staff doctors, influenced Schutztruppe leadership to remind subordinates and civilian authorities that any punishments rendered needed to be proportional to the infractions committed and that they needed to be administered by appropriate personnel.<sup>128</sup> In fact, in 1913 Schutztruppe headquarters sternly admonished traveling civilian officials that they had no authority to administer punishment to askari and that failure to heed this warning would result in them losing the privilege of askari guards for protection during travel. A clear disdain for civil servants' failure to understand askari motivations emerges from the 1913 Schutztruppe circular: "Worst of all, in one case a European let his head of porters perform the flogging of a police-askari. Europeans, who so clearly lack any feeling for the position of the askari, should never again have askari as escorts. The askari has a very fine sense of the belittling of his status that such treatment inflicts on him."<sup>129</sup> In short, punishment existed to keep askari in line, but the privilege of disciplining askari belonged almost exclusively to members of the Schutztruppe. In this way, officers sought to maintain askari status vis-à-vis others, including African and European colonial employees.<sup>130</sup>

#### MARTIAL RACES, LEADERSHIP, AND SOLDIERING

As previous chapters have illustrated, African Schutztruppe recruits contributed skill sets and military traditions to the making of an askari way of war. In recruiting the initial contingent of askari from Egypt ("Sudanese"), Portuguese East Africa ("Zulus") and assorted East African ("Abyssinians" and "Swahili") and Red Sea ("Somali") locations, Wissmann and his officers drew on the DOAG's practical knowledge, experiences from previous African travels, as well as prevailing martial race stereotypes regarding potentially cooperative and portable military populations. Sudanese soldiers dominated the senior askari ranks because of their proven experience in the Anglo-Egyptian army, their military seniority, and their age. Very quickly, they gained reputations as dedicated and unflappable leaders. Yet quite early in the Schutztruppe's history, officers judged the Sudanese troops as best suited to garrison duty, sentry duty, and drill instruction. These tasks did not



require great physical exertion, sensory skills, or tracking acumen, but they did require attentiveness, knowledge of procedures and rules, patience, and gravitas.<sup>131</sup> Although most Sudanese soldiers received fire-arms training during their Egyptian service, they reportedly did not measure up to German standards for firing discipline and accuracy.<sup>132</sup> Schutztruppe officers came to overlook these flaws, however, because in their estimation the Sudanese soldiers embodied the exemplary qualities of loyalty, bravery, and stoicism they held in such high esteem. British prohibitions against German recruitment in Egypt after 1895 meant that Sudanese recruits who died, retired, or returned to Egypt could not be replaced.<sup>133</sup> This political fact reinforced German officers' enshrinement of these soldiers' status at the top of the Schutztruppe's martial races hierarchy. They thus became the soldierly models for later cohorts of new recruits drawn from within German East Africa.

In Schutztruppe eyes then, by 1900 essentially two categories of askari—Sudanese and non-Sudanese—existed. Calls from budget-conscious administrators back in Germany to get rid of the “expensive” Sudanese soldiers in favor of men recruited locally in German East Africa met strong opposition from colonial administrators on the ground, who insisted that the Sudanese soldier was “on average consistently a better soldier than the local native.”<sup>134</sup> Despite Schutztruppe officers' early representations of Sudanese soldiers as best suited to garrison duties, they routinely led flying columns, organized and carried out small patrols, and established and managed outposts without direct supervision. Most descriptions of the roles Sudanese soldiers played emphasized their leadership qualities, which are best explained by their relative age and experience in European-style armies vis-à-vis younger askari recruited from other regions and contexts.

In contrast, most other recruits to the Wissmanntruppe were younger and had little or no experience of fighting in European-led armies. Shangaan soldiers, who had more in common with East Africans than the Sudanese linguistically, developed skills as patrol leaders and spies.<sup>135</sup> Only a few of these soldiers remained with the Schutztruppe after 1895, with one (Effendi Plantan) eventually achieving the African officer's rank of effendi.<sup>136</sup> In 1906 only two soldiers with that rank were still in service.<sup>137</sup> Later, Nyamwezi, Sukuma, and Manyema soldiers brought sensibilities garnered from the caravan trade and the standing armies of Mirambo and Nyungu to the Schutztruppe. Over

time, these soldiers received promotions and began occupying the askari-NCO ranks (ombasha, shaush, beshaush, sol) alongside the remaining Sudanese soldiers.<sup>138</sup> The polyglot heterogeneity of the *Wissmanntruppe* eventually became submerged in a *Schutztruppe* ethos that celebrated the achievement of creating the kind of homogeneity that made it a formidable army. At the same time, *Schutztruppe* members of all ranks continued to acknowledge difference in significant ways that ultimately reinforced certain qualities as desirable for askari. Pay and privilege differentials between soldiers spoke volumes about which askari the Germans valued most. A combination of factors, including overall seniority and existing payment agreements with the Egyptian colonial army, ensured that the Sudanese soldiers received the highest pay of all askari. Still, their higher rates of pay also communicated to other soldiers that their Sudanese superiors were soldierly models worthy of emulation. On the other hand, rank-and-file soldiers commanded a range of indispensable practical skills the *Schutztruppe* needed for success in its way of war. As these soldiers moved up the ranks, they reshaped and expanded the image of the model soldier to include not just the calm resolve and discipline of the Sudanese, but also the creativity, energy, and resourcefulness of the Nyamwezi troops.

Here again, considering groups of East African men who ultimately did not become part of the *Schutztruppe* suggests the qualities *Schutztruppe* officers valued in new recruits. In the 1911 official history of the *Schutztruppe*, Major Ernst Nigmann noted that neither the Maasai nor the Hehe, whose young men purportedly held the martial life in high esteem, had proven suitable for long-term service in the *Schutztruppe*. The Maasai, according to Nigmann, were “mushy,” “flaccid,” and usually “had to be let go [from the *Schutztruppe*] before their time [ended].” The Hehe, for their part, supposedly suffered terribly from homesickness when sent outside their “lovely, cool” southern highland home, Nigmann asserted.<sup>139</sup> The gendered and sexualized overtones in Nigmann’s descriptions of the Maasai and the Hehe tell us far more about *Schutztruppe* officers’ visions of who made good askari than they do about any objective realities regarding Maasai and Hehe abilities as soldiers. Indeed, Nigmann’s description of these groups smacks of defensiveness in the face of these men’s reluctance to join the *Schutztruppe* for reasons that emanated from their own martial histories and gendered understandings of soldiering. Moreover, significant parts of

Maasai and Hehe populations experienced terrible socioeconomic disruption caused in part by Schutztruppe-driven violence in the 1890s, followed by colonial political interventions that forced major changes in their societies.<sup>140</sup> Nigmann's attribution of feminine, unmanly, or childish traits, such as softness and emotional fragility, to these groups should be seen in this light.

His descriptions reveal hallmark Schutztruppe ideals, including physical tautness, emotional toughness, and stoic resolve. "Zulu" soldiers, on the other hand, had exemplified some of these hallmarks, but they lacked the calm effectiveness of the Sudanese, to whom they were incessantly compared. As Tom von Prince put it in his memoir, "Zulus were more warlike, [the] Sudanese more soldierly."<sup>141</sup> Through these discursive processes, Schutztruppe officers reified the martial race hierarchy and delineated the masculine qualities they desired in their troops. For the most part, these processes reflected German conceits and insecurities about their own history of soldierly masculinity, coupled with defensive rationales for why certain men seemed not to measure up.<sup>142</sup>

But the discursive making of Schutztruppe masculinities could not have existed without askari participation.<sup>143</sup> They brought a range of sensibilities, aptitudes, and qualities with them that German officials attempted to alter through training and socialization processes, but which could work only if the soldiers cooperated (see chapter 1). Available evidence suggests that the askari conformed much of the time, but they also had their own ways of living within and testing the strictures of military life. In addition, the Schutztruppe's practical manpower needs throughout the 1890s changed its recruitment patterns, necessitating continual adjustments to the discursive hierarchy to reflect the fluid mixture of African soldiers who actually comprised the Schutztruppe. Perhaps even more important, the Schutztruppe's combat experiences between 1890 and 1918 both reinforced and challenged how officers and askari saw themselves vis-à-vis their battlefield opponents and forced the Schutztruppe to reconsider and adjust its methods in the face of failure. The next chapter explores how askari experiences during three periods of warfare between 1890 and 1918 reflected their training, socialization, and aspirations, as well as the conditions under which some askari opted out of continuing to fight for the Germans.