

About the German ship Graf von Götzen on Lake Tanganyika during the First World War



10.5 cm gun 1) from [the cruiser SMS Königsberg](#), here mounted on the gunboat Graf von Götzen; the photograph was taken in mid-October 1915 at Uvira on Lake Tanganyika. From Source 1

The person on the right in the picture is stated to be Vizesteuermann [2\) Edel](#), from SMS MÖWE, who served on both KINGANI, HEDWIG VON WISSMANN and GRAF VON GÖTZEN, three German vessels which sailed on Lake Tanganyika.

The name Edel does not appear in Korvettenkapitän Gustav Zimmer's (commander of SMS MÖWE) list of the original crew members of SMS MÖWE, see Source 2.



Lieutenant Commander's room.
Fra Colonial Image Archive
(University of Frankfurt am Main).



Ships from the Deutsche-Ost-Afrika Linie, 1904,
after a painting by Willy Stöwer.
From a postcard seen on the Internet.

Another source - *Tanganjikasee - A Gunboat War in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1914-1916* (Source 2) - states that Vizesteuermann Edel belonged to the naval reserve.

Together with three reserve officers - Kapitänleutnant Jantzen, Oberleutnant zur See Siebel and Leutnant zur See Ungerer - and 40 men (Marinereservemannschaften, all serving on vessels of Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie 3) - Vizesteuermann Edel was sent to Lake Tanganyika to reinforce the Abteilung Seagull.

department seagull

Abteilung Möwe essentially consisted of the approx. 100 crew members from the survey ship Möwe, which was sunk by the Germans in Dar-es-Saalam in early August 1914. The force was subsequently sent to Lake Tanganyika, where it formed a significant part of the German forces, which also included a number of native police soldiers. The division was first designated "Marine Expeditionskorps" and then "Abteilung Möwe". The department brought 2 pcs. 8.8 cm L/30 guns (with 400 shots) and 4 pcs. 3.7 cm revolver guns from MÖWE. (See more in Source 3.)

Source 3 mentions that on 1 February 1915 Vizesteuermann Edel was the leader of a landing commando that captured some supplies left behind by Belgian porters after a German fire attack...

"... On that date (February 1, 1915), Zimmer accompanied a raid by the Hedwig. During that raid, the HEDWIG disbursed a Belgian column with a single 3.7 cm shell. Zimmer ordered a landing party of eight sailors led by Vizesteuermann Edel to retrieve the loads that had been dropped. This appears to have been a trap as the landing party was attacked by an estimated 100 Belgian askaris as the Germans attempted to escape with the supplies. As two German sailors rowed the captured supplies to the HEDWIG, the remaining seven sailors held off the Belgian attack supported by a revolver gun from the HEDWIG. The HEDWIG only had four men aboard at the time of the ambush ..."

Count of Idols



COUNT OF IDOLS, circa 1916.

From a Belgian postcard.

From the sources it appears that the 10.5 cm gun from SMS KÖNIGSBERG was mounted on GRAF VON GÖTZEN from mid-August 1915 to 18 May 1916.

In the novel *Eine Frage der Zeit* by Alex Capus (Source 4) it is mentioned that the cannon was subsequently replaced by a dummy.

The cannon - the real one or the dummy one - can be seen in the bow of the ship.

GRAF VON GÖTZEN was built in Germany in 1913 and then packed in approx. 5,000 boxes, that was it

sailed to Dar-es-Salaam in German East Africa, from where it was transported by rail to Lake Tanganyika.

Under the direction of foreman Anton Rüter, who together with two German shipyard workers - the riveter Rudolf Teilmann and the journeyman Hermann Wendt - accompanied the ship to Africa, the ship was now reassembled, to finally be ready for use at the beginning of June 1915.

The story of GRAF VON GÖTZEN is, among other things, referred to in Source 5. Here it should only be mentioned that the Germans themselves sank the ship in 1916 before the withdrawal from Lake Tanganyika. In the spring of 1927, the ship was raised by the English authorities and put into service during the summer of the same year, now under the name S/S LIEMBA. The ship still sails under this name, but now with the designation M/V (Motor Vessel).

In the early 1990s, the company Rådgivende Skibssingeniører Ole Steen Knudsen A/S, Århus - under the auspices of Danida - was asked to assess whether it would be worthwhile to repair the ship. Although it was initially believed that it would be better to give Tanzania a new ship, it turned out that it could well be done to refurbish the ship, which - usually DKK 26 million. - was ready in 1993.

A very interesting account of a voyage with M/V LIEMBA in 2007 can be found in Source 9.

Sources

1. A post by Helen Bachaus in the Great War Forum.
2. Report SMS MÖWE about the time from 08.12.1913 to the outbreak of war at sea captain aD (traditional association of former protection and police troops).
3. Tanganyikasee - A Gunboat War in Deutsch-East Africa 1914-1916 by Dennis L. Bishop and Holger Dobold (By Jingo). Here, i.a. photographs of the various vessels used on Lake Tanganyika.
4. *Eine Frage der Zeit* by Alex Capus, Albrecht Knaus Verlag, Munich 2007. An account of the German host workers' experiences in East Africa.
5. When COUNT GÖTZEN went on safari in boxes - gunboats of the Schutztruppe dominated Lake Tanganyika at Theo Obernauth (traditional association of former Schutztruppe and police troops).
6. COUNT GÖTZEN, the indestructible ship of Wilhelm Raddatz (traditional association of former protection and police troops).
7. Rehabilitation of ferries for Lake Victoria, Tanzania (OSK-Ship Tec A/S).
8. MV LIEMBA (Wikipedia).
9. The endless journey of the "LIEMBA" of Michael Stührenberg (GEO Magazine No. 4/07).

To note:

1) The cannon is designated *10.5 cm Schnellladekanone* (originally *Schnellfeuerkanone*), abbreviated *10.5 cm SK Se* German Guns of World War One in South Africa (South African Military History Journal, Vol 3, No 2).

2) The rank *Vizesteuermann der Reserve* denoted a non-commissioned officer of the reserve, with the rank of *Vize-Feldwebel* (Sergeant Major), but uniformed as a deck officer (corresponding to a Danish officer of the B line (1974)), including an officer's cap, and an officer's saber (with portepee) . See *Kaiserliche Marine 1914-1918* (The Imperial German Army pre-1914, Mick O'Shea)

3) It is not reported on which ship Vizesteuermann Edel served; general information about Deutsche-Ost-Afrika-Linie can be found i.a. here: *Deutsche-Ost-Afrika-Linie* by Dieter Engel (Thomas Kraft) and German East Africa Line (The Ship List).