

not of much use to us except the piano which we were later to exchange for half a dozen tins of condensed milk and bully beef.

There were still a few of the German rear-guard knocking about among the sand dunes so we had to keep a good lookout. With us were the Imperial Light Horse, commonly known as the I.L.H. who were mounted. Luderitz depended on distilled water as there was no fresh water available and that is what we had to live on: one water bottle per man per day. Quite a lot of water was brought from Cape Town by the various ships. Our kit had to be loaded onto ox waggons and brought out to Kohlmans.

One day we heard quite a bit of rifle fire going on and so we all had to "sand to". We heard later that an I.L.H. patrol had come across a patrol of Germans and they were fired on. Unfortunately the I.L.H. had two men killed, the brothers Winslow, well-known tennis players. In rounding a sand dune the first boy was shot and in going to help his brother he too was killed. They are both buried in Luderitz. At Kohlmanskop we saw a lot of mounds of sand but took no notice until we spotted some of the Kimberley Regiment chaps who were next to us examining these piles and we then learned that they were looking for diamonds. There were quite a lot but very small and I do not think of much value.

We were now in the leading post and looking ahead one saw nothing but sand and sand dunes but not a blade of grass. It was here that we experienced our first sand storm and a funny thing is that the dust seems to be only up to about three or four feet which means that when the storm came one stood up to eat a meal or else ate sand. It is these heavy winds that cause the sand to drift so that one day there is a sand dune here and gone tomorrow elsewhere. After a few weeks here we moved on to a siding called Grasplaats and not a blade of grass. The railway passed through this siding on to several other halting spots and eventually to Aus which is 100 miles inland and here one strikes the first vegetation and fresh water. Our big job at Grasplaats was to clear the railway line each morning to enable the train to pull in and land various items for the war. There was no accommodation or tents and so we scrounged around and each group built themselves shanties out of bits of tin, hessian and any item that might be of use. A proper little shanty town - looked very much like the approach to Kimberley in the old days.

A certain number of men had to be available each morning to do the sand shifting. Instead of the R.S.A. keeping a proper roster of duty men he just paraded the whole regiment each morning and the last ten in each company were for sand duty. The normal way would be to detail the companies in turn and the result was - it being such heavy work - that the chaps were ready dressed at six in the morning ready to rush onto parade as soon as R.S.M. Paget ("Pull-through" for he was a thin 6ft 6in) blew his whistle. Then there would be a rush and pushing. Some days there was as much as a hundred yards to clear, others very little.

Our first bit of excitement was when the old German Biplane flew over us on a reconnaissance flight. We were to see more of him later. As there were still a few Germans about we were one day taken out among the sand dunes to take up positions to take any Germans who might be driven onto us by the I.L.H. who had gone on a long circling patrol. They had a few coloured scouts out with them and tension mounted when one of these came riding hell for leather through our position and shouted when we asked him what the

trouble/