

Our 'B' Company was detailed to help repair the railway which the Germans had blown up in places. This job we carried on for some time and then I suppose to give us a rest we were detailed for blockhouse duty for a couple weeks. A most monotonous occupation for the eight occupants, one of whom always had to be on the look-out for the enemy, especially as there was a story that the Germans had a camel corps in the desert. Our blockhouse started a real flap: For fun we signalled, using flags, that we had sighted an enemy patrol. We took no further notice until we suddenly had frantic signals wanting to know more about our report. There was quite a row and I think that is why our company was put back on railway repairs. We were to help two companies of railway artisans who had lately been sent up to join the Kaff Rifles - they were known as G and H companies.

After a time the troops required were moved on to the next siding, Garibib, in preparation for the attack on the Aus German base, the first town one sees after Luderitz. The fight that was expected at Aus did not materialise as the Germans had moved on leaving only a small party to watch our movements. In Aus Nek we found the bodies of De Million, the chief scout, and three Totty scouts who had been shot, hanging from a tree. Some of the Kaff Rifles remained in Aus on garrison duty but our 'B' company moved on as far as Jackal water before returning to Luderitz. Other companies were on various duties, Block house, garrison etc and our 'B' carried on with railway work until we returned from Jackal water on our way home as the Germans had left the Southern part and the fighting was now up towards the North, Swakopmund. However, before carrying on with our homeward journey there are a few things which in my hurry to get on with the story of my later life I have overlooked.

To hold up our advance and supplies the Germans blew up part of the railway line by placing a stick of dynamite between each pair of rails. Sir George Farrer, who had fought with the Kaff Rifles during the Anglo Boer War, I believe had an interest in the Railway probably on account of the diamonds which we now know are to be found between Luderitz and the Orange River mouth by the thousands. That is why our 'B' company, commanded by old Bob Anderson, a friend of Sir George, was detailed to assist with the repairing of the line. Sir George, I might mention, often called to see us, wearing a Kaff Rifles uniform, black buttons etc and, as he was chief supply officer, was able now and again to give us some extra rations to help in our hard work. We assisted the two Railway companies I have mentioned. The first thing to do was lift the damaged rails and saw off the bad ends. To do this bolts on the sleepers had to be loosened and with brooms the chairs on the sleepers cleaned of sand so that the rail could be relaid. It was rather a tedious and tiring job. The Germans had unbeknown to us laid a couple of home made mines along the embankment and it was not until one of our chaps, Whatmore, trod on one and was killed, and the engineers then detected and unearthed a few more. It was a crude affair, just a box filled with all sorts of bits of iron and a fuse under the lid which exploded the dynamite when trodden on. Sir George Farrer was killed the day we left for Luderitz - his rail trolley left the rails.

Now we were on our way home and as the train travelled coastwise we picked up various detachments of our Unit. Our company was not too happy when the train gathered speed as we knew that some of the rails were not too well bolted. However, we arrived safely at Luderitz.

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