

# CHANGING HISTORY: WORLD WAR I & NAMIBIA



**TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION**

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**Publisher:**

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**Published: November 2015**

**ISBN: 978-99916-902-2-3**

**The publication of this teacher's guidebook was made possible by funding by the Embassy of Germany in Namibia.**

**The development of the "Changing History" exhibition was sponsored by the British High Commission in Namibia.**



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Windhoek



British  
High Commission  
Windhoek

# Contents

## **Panel 1: Germany's African Colonies & Namibia in the Context of World War One**

Germany's African Colonies  
Namibia as a Communications Hub  
South Africa United?  
The German Defences  
A Timeline: World War One & the Campaign in Namibia

## **Panel 2: The Early Months of the War in Namibia**

Battle of Sandfontein  
The Boer Rebellion  
Attacking the Coastal Towns  
Logistical Challenges  
New Military Technology in Africa

## **Panel 3. Death and Thirst in the Desert**

Rocks, Sand and Thorn Bushes  
Significant Battles  
The German Surrender  
The POW Camp at Aus

## **Panel 4. African Involvement in the War**

Abraham Morris  
The Battle of Naulila  
The Intelligence Service and Scouts  
The Baster Unit and the Battle of Sam Khubis  
The Cameroon Connection  
Drivers and Labourers

## **Panel 5. How World War One Changed Namibian History**

Fixing Borders  
Death of a King  
Exposing Genocide  
Fifth Province or International Mandate  
Settling South Africans  
Diamonds in the Desert  
Memorial Traces

**\*Food for Thought – What do you think ?**

**\*A Quick World War One Quiz**

# Introduction

The mobile exhibition has been designed as an educational exhibition to compliment the Namibian school curriculum. The exhibition is particularly relevant for Grade 8 History students dealing with Theme 5 on the curriculum which covers the transition from German to South African rule in Namibia. The exhibition will enable groups of learners to be provided with a 'guided tour'. The Museums Association of Namibia is working with members of the History Society at the University of Namibia who will travel with the exhibition and provide the guided tour for learners.

The Teachers' Guide provides additional information and additional images to complement that contained in the mobile exhibition panels themselves. The exhibition itself consists of five banner walls. Two additional sections of loose photographs are included which can be mounted on a wall or passed around. One of these sections consists of five questions that can be answered by learners after they have viewed the exhibition. The second section consists of three 'discussion points' that use images to encourage group discussion on three issues raised by the exhibition.

The five banner walls are divided into themes. The first panel provides a brief explanation of the reason why a war that started with an assassination (in what is today the county of Bosnia-Herzegovina) spread as far as Namibia! The exhibition also provides a brief overview of the main events of the war on panels two and three. However, it is panels four and five that give our exhibition its unique perspective.

World War One has been described as a 'White Man's War'. However, panel four of our exhibition gives some examples of the ways in which Africans were directly involved in the war. If you visit Outjo you can find a monument commemorating the Battle of Naulila. This was one of the deadliest battles that took place in the campaign. It took place in southern Angola on 18th December, 1914.

The battle took place after a German officer was killed by Portuguese forces and a German force crossed the border into Angola in retaliation. The attack destroyed six Portuguese forts along the border, including Naulila. A monument at Outjo commemorates the nine German soldiers that died in the battle. We know that 69 Portuguese soldiers also died in the battle. However, we also know that there were 800 local black askari troops in the Portuguese forces. We know that some of these troops were deployed as snipers in the branches of the Baobab trees around Fort Naulila, but we have not yet been able to find any figures giving the black casualties in the battle.

The man who is on the banner which advertises the exhibition is Abraham Morris. Morris was the son of a Scottish father and a Bondelswarts mother. He fought as a guerrilla leader in southern Namibia during the 1904-1908 war and then went into exile in the Northern Cape. When the South African forces invaded in 1914 he joined them as a scout responsible for reconnaissance and intelligence.

Ironically, Morris would be killed in 1922 leading Bondelswarts resistance to new South African taxes and would receive a glowing obituary in the Cape Times from his former commanding officer. We know that there were at least 30 Herero soldiers who were also recruited to provide intelligence. Perhaps most importantly of all there were over 33,000 black labourers who supplied the South African forces and repaired railway tracks that had been destroyed by the retreating German forces. In other words, the South African victory was dependent on black labour who supplied not only the ammunition for the guns, but even the water that the troops drank!

The other panel which provides an alternative perspective on the campaign is Panel 5. In this panel we try to show some of the ways in which the surrender of the small German forces (Schutztruppe) in Namibia changed our history. Two of the most significant points can be highlighted here.

Firstly, the fact that South African troops conquered Namibia had a strong influence on the fact that they obtained control of the territory in the peace settlement. If the German forces had been defeated by an Australian invasion things might have been different. And remember that Australian troops were used in the failed attack on Turkey at Gallipoli, so it is not such a far fetched idea !

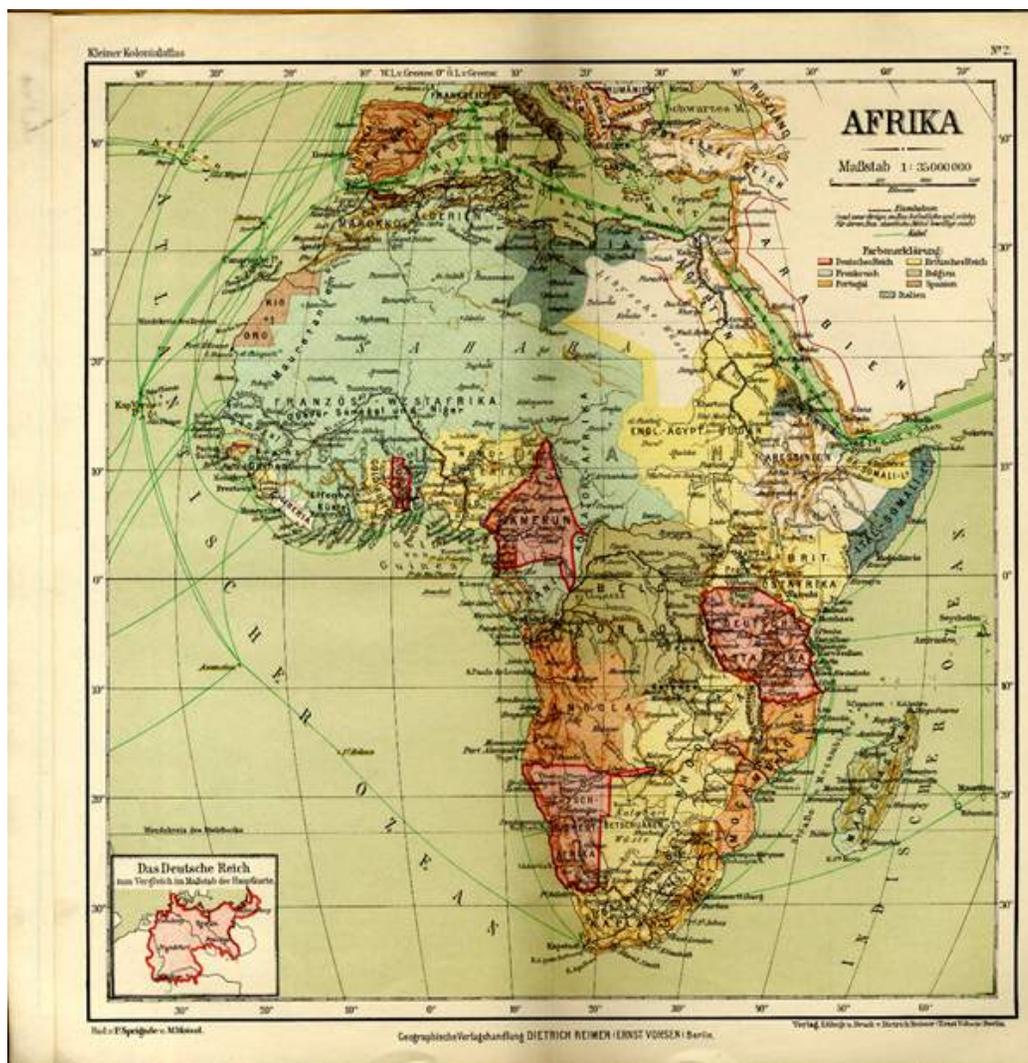
Secondly, the fact that German rule in Namibia ended as a result of the war meant it was also part of the post-war settlement. It was because of this context that the international community became involved in monitoring South African rule in Namibia. First the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations played a significant role in preventing South Africa swallowing Namibia as a Fifth Province. The title of our mobile exhibition, 'Changing History', makes the point that World War One changed the course of Namibian history forever.

# Panel 1: Germany's African Colonies & Namibia in the Context of World War 1

After the creation of Germany in 1871 the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, sought to assert its identity as a new world power. One aspect of this project was the acquisition of colonies following the Berlin Conference of 1884. German South West Africa (Namibia today) was the African colony that attracted the greatest number of German settlers. Its location in Southern Africa and importance to Germany's international communications network made it an important strategic target when World War One broke out.

## Germany's African Colonies

When war broke out in August, 1914 Germany's African colonies consisted of Cameroon and Togo in West Africa, German East Africa (covering modern day Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi) and German South West Africa (Namibia). Namibia was the colony with the largest settler population, but, in 1914, this was still less than 15,000.



*A Map of German Colonies. The red areas on the map show the extent of Germany's African colonies when World War One started.*

**Question:**

**Look at the map and find where Germany had colonies in Africa. The former colonies are now six independent African countries. Can you name them ? [Burundi, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Togo]**

## Namibia as a Communications Hub

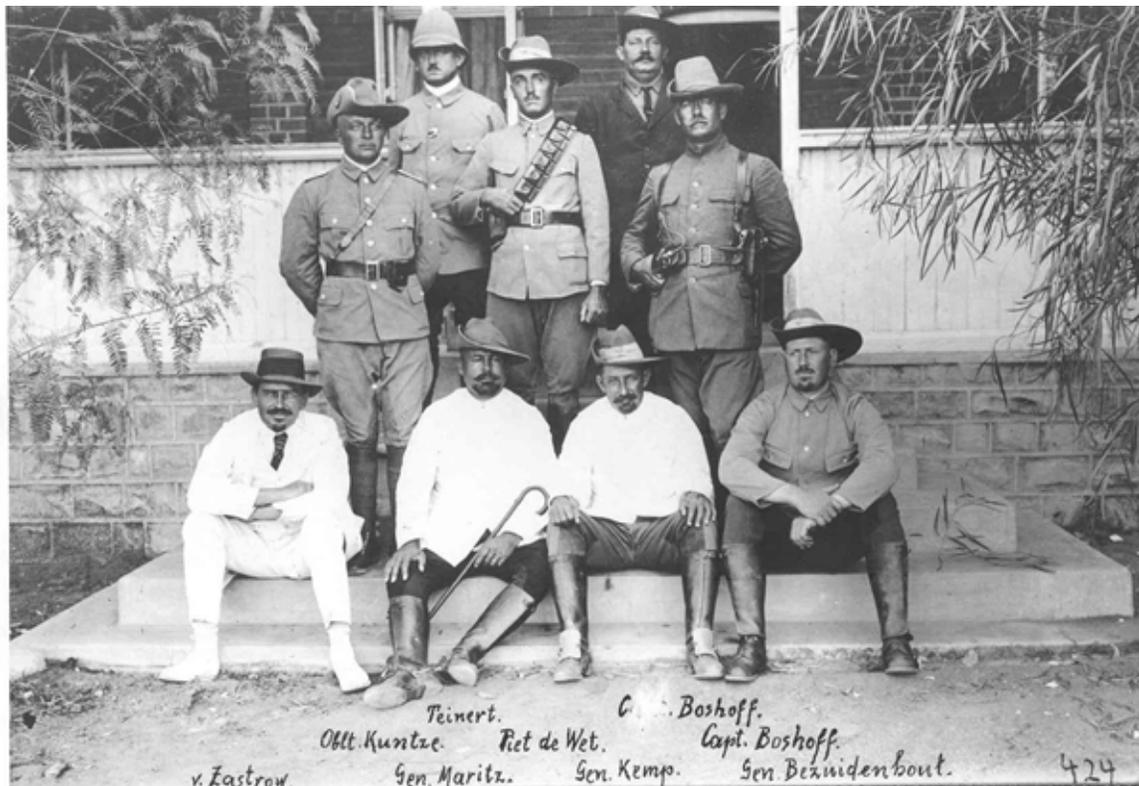
The wireless station in Windhoek had masts that were over 100 metres high. On a clear day, the masts could pick up signals directly from Berlin. Even when the weather was poor the station was able to receive signals that were forwarded from a station in Germany's West African colony of Togo. The wireless stations were considered dangerous as they had the capacity to transmit messages to German warships in the South Atlantic. Ships might also obtain fresh supplies from the coastal ports of Swakopmund and Lüderitz.



*A rare photograph of the huge German wireless masts in Windhoek (Ditsong National Museum of Military History).*

## South Africa United?

The Union of South Africa had been constructed by uniting Britain's colonies at the Cape and Natal with the former Boer Republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The Union of 1910 came only six years after the end of the 'South African War' of 1899-1902 which had seen a fierce conflict. Many people, both black and white, living in the new nation of South Africa were angry at the loss of their independence and inclusion within the British Empire. Yet when World War One broke out, the South African Prime Minister, Louis Botha, quickly committed the Union of South Africa to fighting on the British side and sought to use the war to unite the white population.



*Senior South African army officers travelled to German South West Africa to secure support for a rebellion. A large German weapons depot at Keetmanshoop suggests that it was hoped that the planned rebellion would obtain substantial support (NAN424)*

**Question:**

**Why do you think that some South Africans wanted to rebel against their Government and to support the Germans ?**



Figure 1: South African Railways and Harbours Magazine, January 1915, 48.

*The campaign to conquer German South West Africa was seen as an opportunity to build unity between Afrikaners and English-speakers within the new Union of South Africa (South African Railways and Harbours Magazine)*

**Question:**  
What do you think the railway tracks symbolise in the cartoon? What is the Old Man carrying and what do you think he represents?

# The German Defences

The German colonial army in the colony (the Schutztruppe) was small with 2000 permanent forces and 6000 reservists. The South Africans would assemble an armed force that would number around 50,000. However the German forces believed that the invading force would face a huge logistical challenge. The harsh landscape would make movement difficult whilst supply lines by sea or over land would be extensive. The Germans also actively sought to destabilize the Union by encouraging veteran Boer guerrilla fighters who plotted a rebellion against the new Government.

## A Timeline: World War One & the Campaign in Namibia

### Events in Namibia

07th August, 1914:	South Africa offered to assist Great Britain in the war.
08th August, 1914:	The German governor initiated general mobilization in the colony
10th August, 1914:	South African government agreed to a request by the British Government to take control of the harbour towns (Swakopmund and Luderitz) and their wireless stations
14th September, 1914:	HMS Armadale Castle, an armed cruiser bombards Swakopmund.
16th September, 1914:	German attack on the police station at Nakob
19th September, 1914:	South African forces occupy Lüderitz
21st September, 1914:	German military post at Schuckmannsburg occupied. Caprivi (today Zambezi Region) is administered by North Rhodesia (today Zambia).
26th September, 1914:	German victory at Battle of Sandfontein in southern Namibia.
19th October, 1914:	Death of Dr Schultze-Jena at Fort Cuamato
31st October, 1914:	German forces attack and destroy Fort Cuangar
12th November, 1914:	Oberstleutnant Joachim von Heydebreck, the commander of the Schutztruppe in Namibia dies after an accident during the testing of a rifle grenade.
18th December, 1914:	German forces attack and destroy Fort Naulila
15th January, 1914:	South African troops from Walvis Bay occupy Swakopmund.
20th March, 1914:	Battle of Pforte-Jakkalswater-Riet
26th April, 1915:	Battle of Trekkopjes
27th April, 1915:	Battle of Gibeon.
8th May, 1915:	German and Baster forces clash at Sam Khubis
12th May, 1915:	Windhoek surrenders to General Botha's motorised column.
1st July, 1915:	Battle of Otavifontein
9th July, 1915:	Surrender of German forces at Khorab.

## Events in Europe

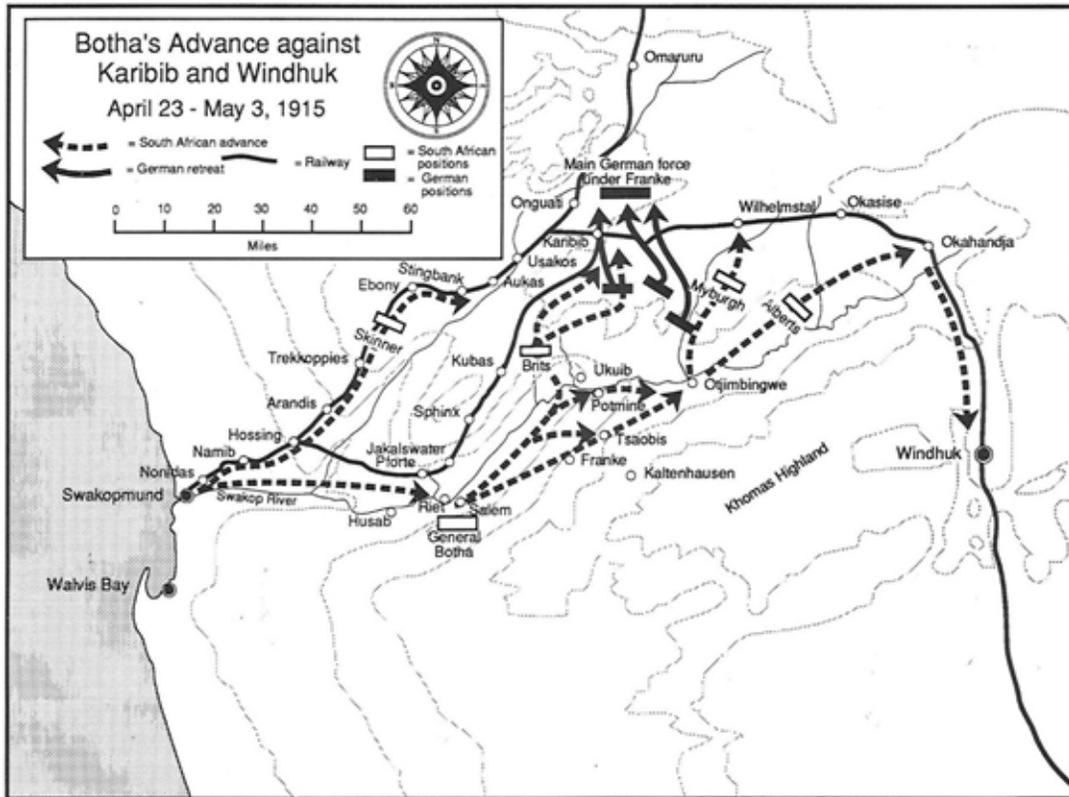
- 28th June, 1914: Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria sparks the start of World War One.
- 3rd August, 1914: Germany invades Belgium.
- 4th August, 1914: Britain and its Empire declares war on Germany.
- 23rd August, 1914: Germany invades France.
- 26th August, 1914: Germany defeats Russian Army at Battle of Tannenburg.
- 18th October, 1914: First Battle of Ypres. War in Europe on 'The Western Front' gets bogged down in mud and trench warfare.
- 29th October, 1914: Turkey joins the war on the German side.
- 19th January, 1915: First Zeppelin raid on London.
- 25th April, 1915: Allied troops launch unsuccessful attack on Gallipoli in Turkey.
- 5th August, 1915: Germans capture Warsaw from the Russians.
- 1st July, 1916: Start of the Battle of the Somme
- 6th April, 1917: USA declares war on Germany
- 3rd March, 1918: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ends Russian participation in the war.
- 4th November, 1918: War-weary German navy sailors and workers mutiny and seize power in Kiel. This leads to revolutionary movements all over Germany
- 9th November, 1918: The Republic is proclaimed in Berlin
- 10th November, 1918: The Emperor Wilhelm II fled to the Netherlands.
- 11th November, 1918: Germany signs an Armistice marking the end of the war.
- 28th July, 1919: Treaty of Versailles signed, including provision that Germany will lose its overseas colonies.



L'Ange, 1991

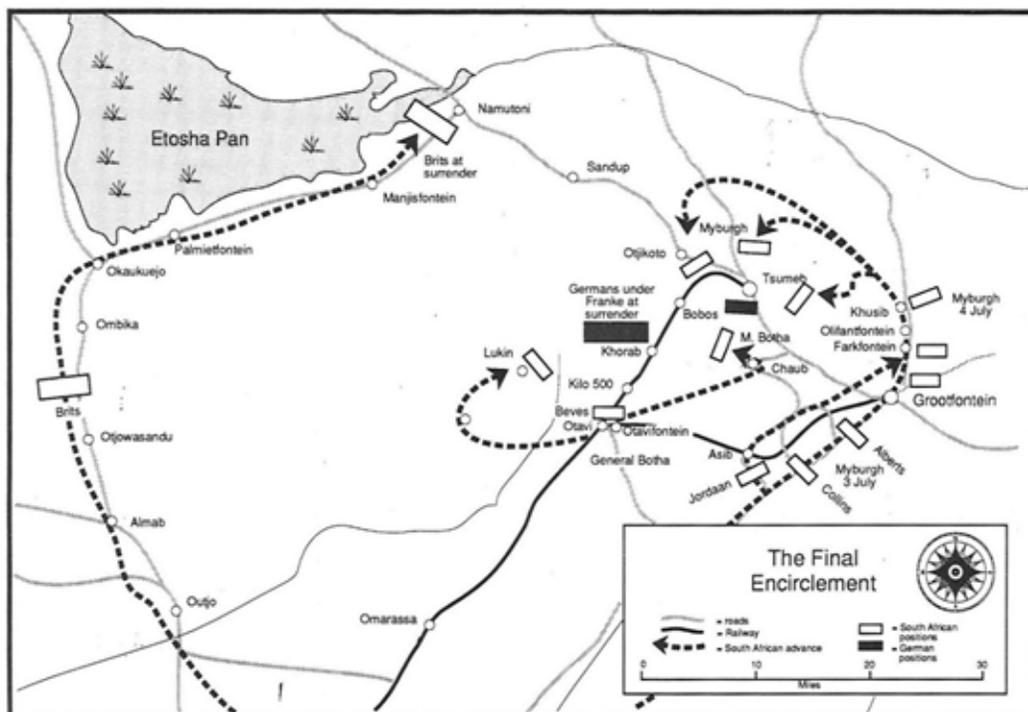
Question:

How is the railway line in southern Namibia today different to the way it was in February, 1915 ?



L'Ange, 1991: 243

Question:  
Why do you think General Botha's forces cut across country to Okahandja?



L'Ange, 1991: 314

Question:  
Why do you think the South African forces circled to the north of the German forces near Tsumeb?

## Panel 2: The Early Months of the War in Namibia

The South African Prime Minister expressed his willingness to support the war effort immediately after Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August, 1914. The British Government commended this willingness to provide a '... great and urgent Imperial service'. However in the first few months there was little success.

The presence of German warships in the Southern Atlantic made a sea landing risky. The first significant military crossing of the Orange River by South African forces led to a humiliating defeat at Sandfontein. German forces also successfully drove Portuguese forces out of Southern Angola (see Panel 4). Furthermore the Germans hoped that there would be significant resistance to the war within South Africa's armed forces and, indeed, thousands of troops and several senior officers rebelled, hoping to resurrect the spirit of the Boer Republics.

The rising was a major distraction from October, 1914 to February, 1915 when it was finally suppressed. After the destruction of the German fleet at the Battle of the Falklands seaborne landings were possible, but the Germans still hoped that the harsh conditions in the Namib Desert and the long South African supply lines would make it impossible for the South African forces to advance inland. Meanwhile early German successes on the 'Western Front' in Europe gave the German commander, Lt-Col. von Heydebreck, hope that Germany would win the war before the numerically superior South African forces could capture Namibia.



*Lt-Col. Joachim von Heydebreck, the experienced commander of the German Schutztruppe in Namibia was killed in an accident shortly after the victory at Sandfontein (NAN 2467)*

## Battle of Sandfontein

South African troops were landed at Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape as part of an initial plan for a three pronged invasion of Namibia. The harsh, dry conditions in southern Namibia meant that the water holes at Sandfontein were of strategic importance. An advance column led by Colonel Grant was sent to occupy them. However, the troops were surrounded by a larger German force. A fierce fire fight left 67 of the 300 South African troops killed or wounded. The survivors were forced to surrender, an important morale boosting early victory for the German forces.



*South African troops, captured at the Battle of Sandfontein, march to the railway station in Windhoek (NAN1576) Note the Nama huts behind the station as it was one of the areas where black people lived in Windhoek in those days.*



*Colonel Grant, the wounded commanding officer of the South African troops at Sandfontein, being removed on a stretcher (NAN2463)*

## The Boer Rebellion

The 1899-1902 'South African War' was a bitter struggle against the incorporation of the Transvaal and Orange Free State within the British Empire. A decade later, General Koos De La Rey, one of the charismatic guerilla leaders was influenced by an Afrikaner prophet to take up arms again against British rule. De la Rey was accidentally killed at a police road block on 15th September, 1914. However, the rebellion continued. General Beyers, the Commandant-General of the whole Union Defence Force, was amongst those that resigned their commission to join the rebellion.

Officers, including 'Mannie' Maritz (who had been put in command of one of the three forces being assembled to invade Namibia) attempted to gain German support to fuel a rebellion. Most troops stayed loyal to General Botha and defeats at the Battles of Upington and Mushroom Valley broke the rebellion. However, the rebellion did delay the invasion of Namibia. Operations lasted from October, 1914 to February, 1915. Indeed, more South Africans died fighting the rebels inside their own country than would die in the whole campaign in Namibia. The defeat of the rebellion and the subsequent military victory in Namibia was seen, by some, as an opportunity for nation-building and reconciliation within South Africa's white population. Senator Viljoen proclaimed, enthusiastically, "In the wilds of Damaraland a new South African nation has been born".



*The attack on the small police station at Nakop on 16th September, 1914 was presented as an attempt by German forces to 'invade' South Africa (NAN 8819)*

## Attacking the Coastal Towns

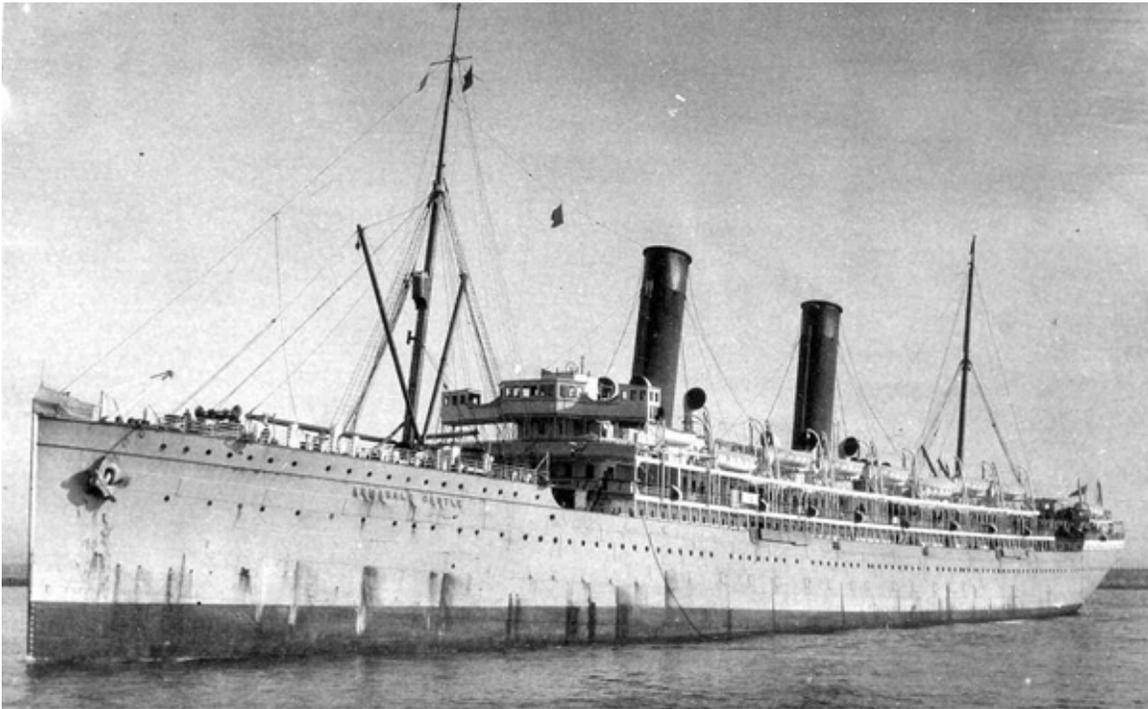
The HMS Armadale Castle with eight 4.7 inch guns shelled the coastal town of Swakopmund on 14th September, 1914. The ship's log records that the town's wireless station was destroyed at 3.25pm in the afternoon. The town was shelled on a number of other days by the cruiser and by the South African warship, the Kinfauns Castle. The shelling was used to justify a retaliatory attack on the British seaside resort of Scarborough.

After the destruction of the German fleet in the South Atlantic and the suppression of the rebellion it was safer to send more troops and supplies to Walvis Bay and Lüderitz. By February, 1915 the South African forces were ready to start their advance inland. The Prime Minister, General Botha, himself arrived to take command.



*The Customs House at Swakopmund was one of the buildings destroyed during the naval bombardment (NAN5252)*

**Question:**  
What has the Old Imperial Customs House been turned into today?



*HMS Armadale Castle, the armed cruiser that bombarded Swakopmund ([http://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-08-HMS\\_ArmadaleCastle.htm](http://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-08-HMS_ArmadaleCastle.htm))*



*A cartoon in a South African newspaper celebrates the landing of a second force in the South African controlled port of Walvis Bay (RDM, 12th January, 1915)*

**Question:**

**Why do you think the South African forces landed in Walvis Bay, rather than Swakopmund ?**

## Logistical Challenges

The success of the South African campaign in Namibia would be dependent on their ability to supply their forces in the field. For example one ship, SS Monarch, carried 4,000 horses and 750,000 gallons of water to Lüderitz. In an impressive feat of engineering the South African railway network was rapidly extended to the northern Cape and by June, 1915 connected, at Kalkfontein (Karasburg) to the line in Namibia.



*Schutztruppe blow up the railway line in Southern Namibia*



*Destroyed Railway tracks at Aus (Ditsong National Museum of Military History)*



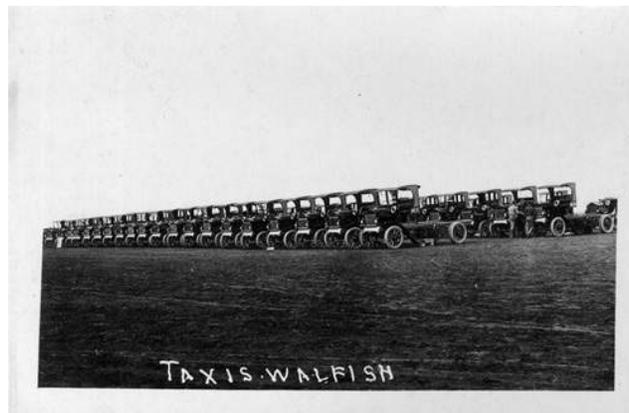
*Epako Railway bridge destroyed by German forces (NAN5626 - Cape Archives Ag 13973)*



*A locomotive crosses the Orange River in 1915. (NAN 8857)*



*Thousands of horses were transported through Walvis Bay for the campaign. This one was called 'Ligman'! (NAN6179)*



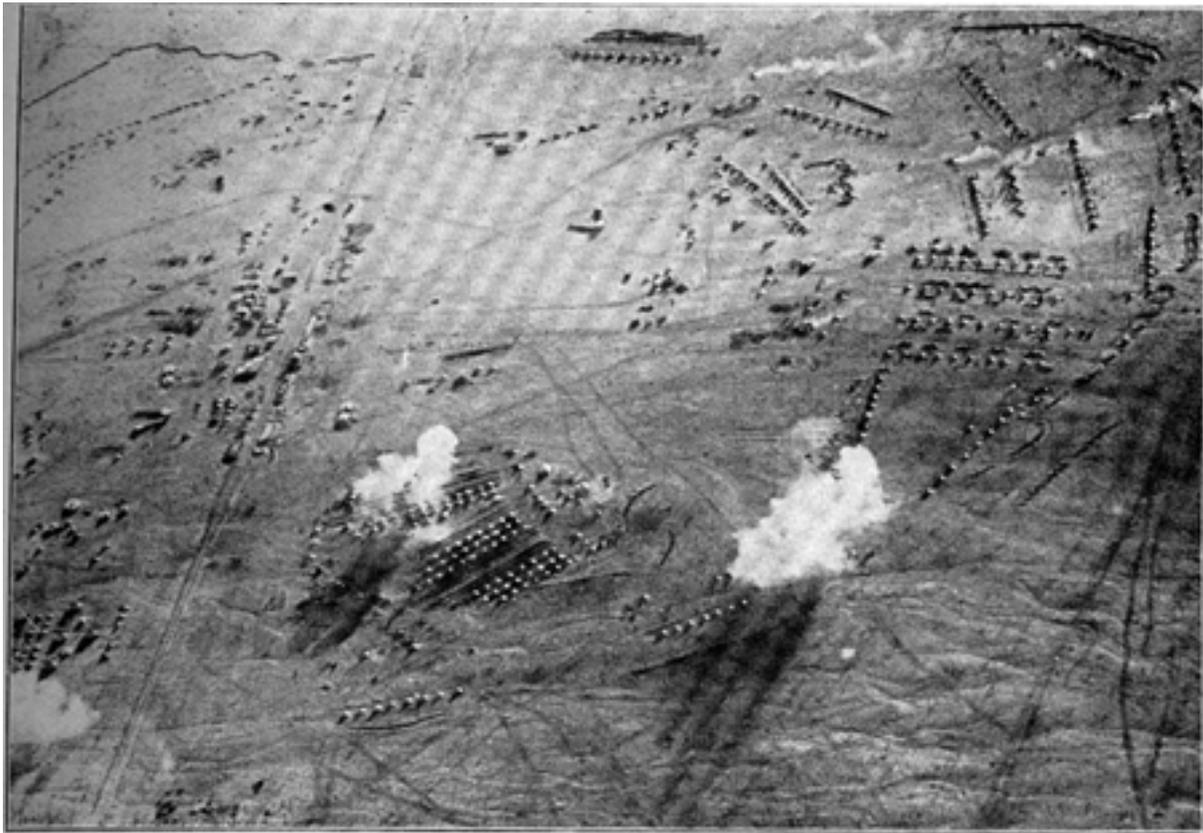
*Hundreds of motor vehicles were also imported to help carry the troops, although they struggled with the Namibian sand. Most operations involved soldiers mounted on horses or camels. (NAN8304)*



*The Germans had 500 men in their Camel Corps, (NAN 209).*

## New Military Technology in Africa

The war provided the opportunity to deploy some new forms of military technology in Africa. Both sides had just a handful of planes when war broke out and, initially, had to drop bombs by hand. The first South African plane actually only joined the operation on 26th May, 1915 when it landed at Karibib. However this might be viewed as the birth of the South African Air Force ! The airplanes caused few casualties, but were able to provide important intelligence information. The appearance of the planes also led to the development of the first anti-aircraft guns. Armoured vehicles were also used in battle for the first time in southern Africa.



*Aerial reconnaissance. Bombs exploding after being dropped on the South African camp at Tschaukaib (70km inland from Lüderitz on 6th December, 1914 (NAN28254)*

**Question:**

What role did aeroplanes play in the military campaign in Namibia? How important do you think they were?



*One of the handful of German planes. A German pilot poses with local women. (D962)*



*Armoured vehicles with mounted machine guns used in the Battle of Trekkopjes on 26th April, 1915 (Museum Africa)*



*Possibly the first time an ant-aircraft gun was used in Africa (Museum Africa)*



*Anti-aircraft gun 'Skinny Liz' at the Military Museum in Kimberley. (Goodman Gwasira)*

# Panel 3. Death and Thirst in the Desert

The Union Defence Force (UDF) of South Africa had more weapons and more soldiers. Once they overcame the logistical challenges and the landscape, victory was inevitable. A series of small battles and skirmishes punctuated the gradual retreat of the German forces inland and northwards. Finally cornered near Tsumeb the Schutztruppe were forced to surrender. It was a significant victory at a time when the World War seemed to be going in favor of Germany and her allies. The German troops spent the rest of the war at a prison camp at Aus.

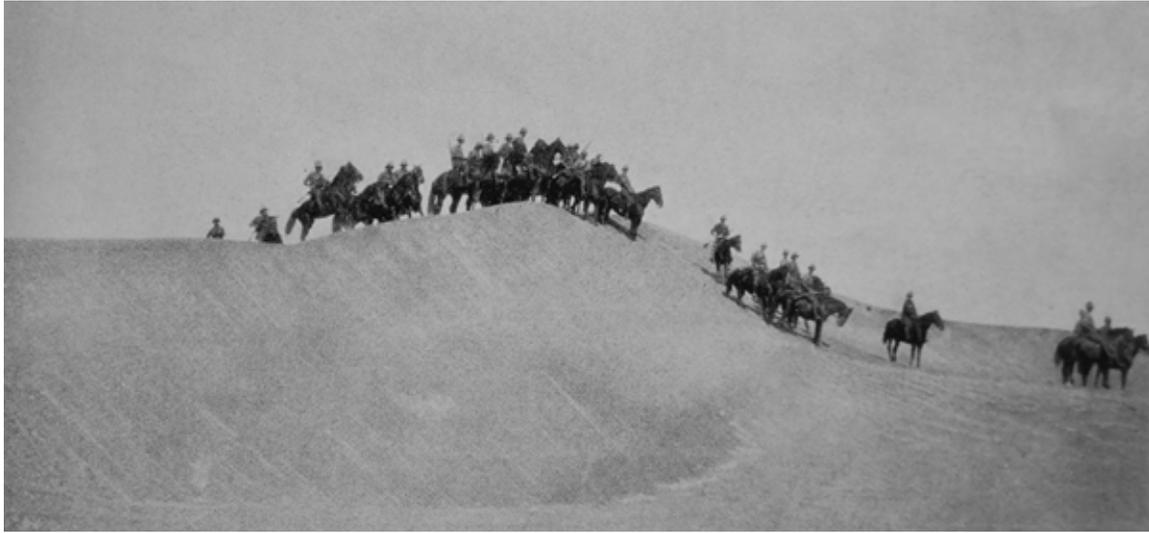
## Rocks, Sand and Thorn Bushes

The success of the South African campaign was due to the speed with which their mounted columns were able to cross the dry landscape. The German forces repeatedly had to retreat to avoid being outflanked. Thirst and exhaustion were constant companions.

*“All this living among the rocks, sand and thorn bushes and sleeping on the bare ground under the stars behind our saddles has reduced our clothing to shreds. Nobody shaves, we have no soap; our clothes are stiff with dried animal blood and we look and are the most desperate lot of ruffians on any battlefield” (Fredrick Addison, diarist)*



*The railway line at Trekkopje passed through an harsh and empty landscape (Commonwealth War Graves Commission ©Mike St. Maur Sheil)*



*Mounted South African troops crossing the dunes as they advance from the coast (Ditsong National Museum of Military History)*



*Hundreds of horses died during the campaign from heat, exhaustion, thirst and hunger (NAN2476)*

**Question:**

**Do you think camels, armoured cars, horses or trains were the most useful form of transport in Namibia during the war ?**

## Significant Battles

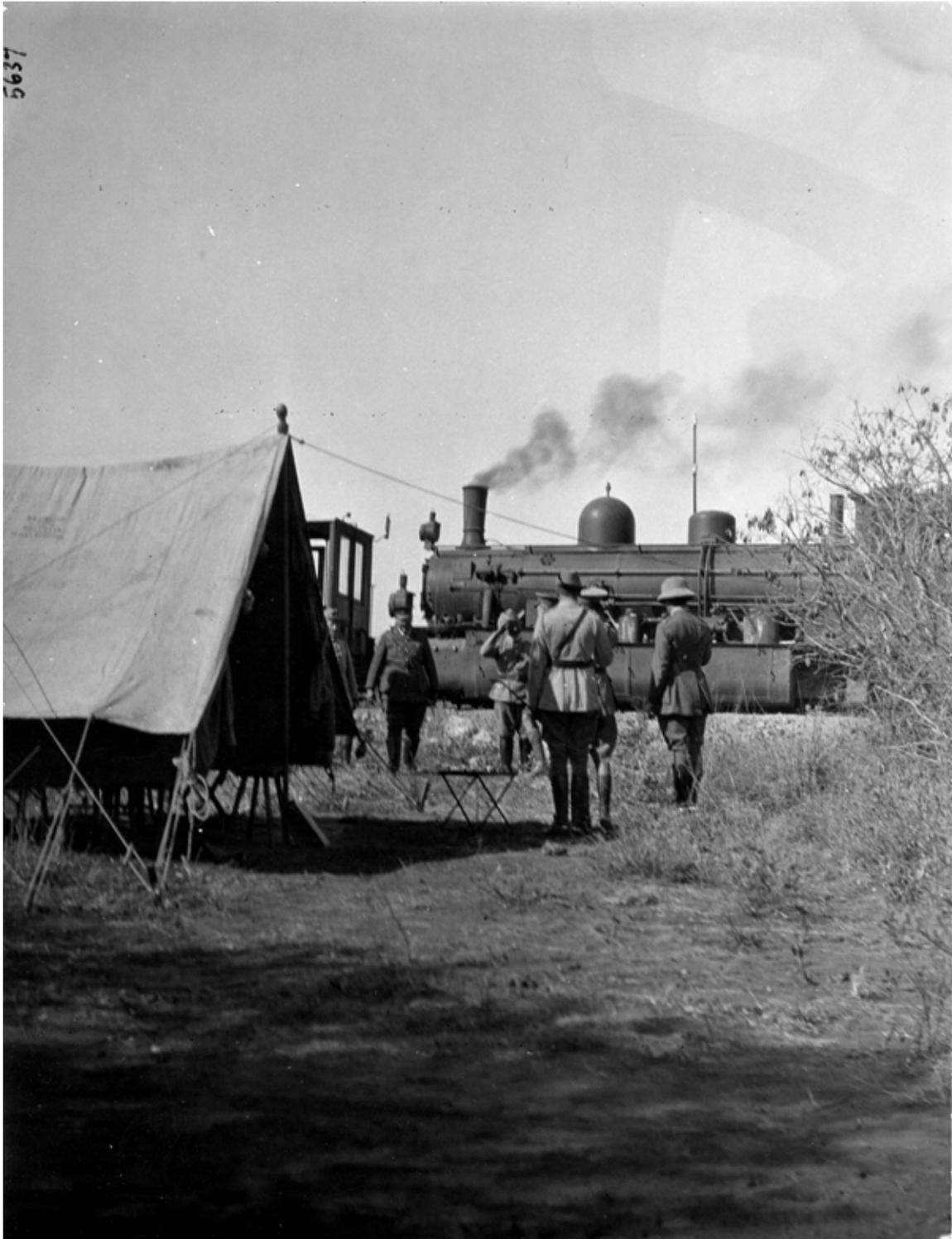
After the early German victory at Sandfontein, the German forces suffered a number of defeats. The most significant battles were at Pforte, Jakkalswater and Riet, the Battle of Trekkopje, the Battle of Gibeon and at Otavifontein (shortly before the surrender).

## The German Surrender

The final surrender took place beside the railway line that had played such a significant role in the campaign. The German delegation arrived by train and Governor Seitz and 4,740 soldiers surrendered. The speed of the South African advance made it impossible for the German forces to follow a plan to reach the Kavango River and head east to try and join their colleagues in German East Africa.



*General Louis Botha, Governor Theodor Seitz and Commander Viktor Franke signing the Khorab Peace Treaty on 9th July 1915 (NAN273)*



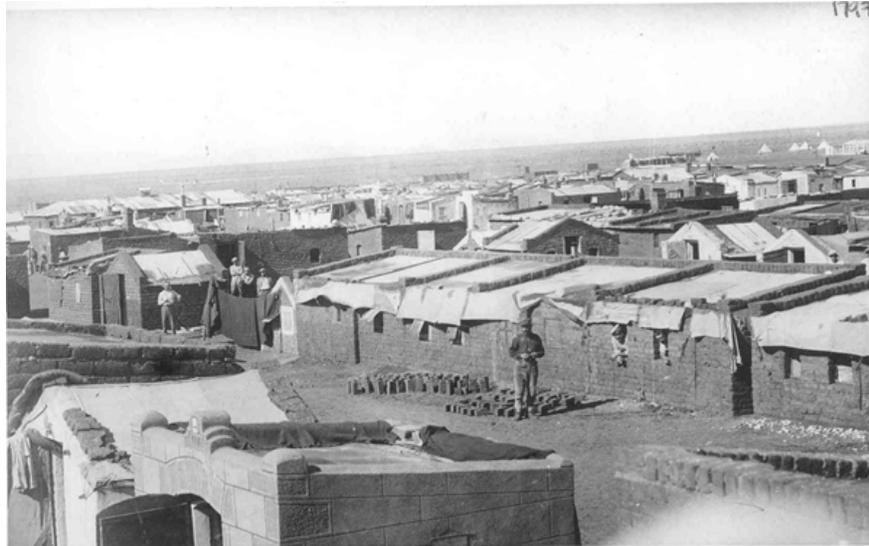
*Governor Seitz arrives at Kilo 500 on the railway line to sign the surrender agreement (NAN5637)*



*The Germans troops were able to throw a number of heavy artillery pieces into Lake Otjikoto to prevent their capture. However, thirty-seven field guns were captured at Otavifontein. (NAN5667-)*

## The POW Camp at Aus

The Prisoner-of-War Camp established at Aus had 1,552 prisoners. Whilst they had survived the war one more twist of fate awaited. The graveyard at Aus bears witness that the 'Spanish Influenza' epidemic of 1918 killed 67 prisoners and 60 guards. The camp started in tents, but the German prisoners made brick buildings. The last German POWs were repatriated to Germany in 1920.



*A view of the Aus POW camp showing the extensive constructions built by the residents (NAN1797)*



*The fading ruins of the camps can still be seen at Aus.*

512

LIST OF PERSONS  
REPATRIATED  
FROM THE  
Union of South Africa  
AND  
South West Africa.

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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA,  
TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 2.

# Protectorate of South-West Africa.

## REPATRIATION.

### List of Persons Repatriated under Class "A" (Military).

A.		Name.		Rank.
Name.	Rank.	Name.		Rank.
Abraham, F. W. ...	Sergt.-Major	Barth, Karl ...	...	—
Abraham, P. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Barton, P. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Abrszewski, J. ...	Sergeant	Bauch, M. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Adam, E. I. ...	Sergt.-Major	Baschke, J. A. ...	...	Sergeant
Adam, P. K. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Bauer, A. ...	...	Corporal
Adler, H. J. ...	Private	Bauer, — ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Adler, H. P. ...	Corporal	Bauer, C. ...	...	Sergeant
Ahberg, R. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Bauer, C., Mrs. ...	...	—
Ahlert, K. F. ...	Sergt.-Major	Baumeister, H. J. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Albin, A. H. V. ...	Sergt.-Major	Baumgartner, F. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Albrecht, F. K. ...	Sergeant	Bauscher, F. W. ...	...	Corporal
Albrecht, O. A. K. ...	Sergeant	Beck, Valentin, & family	...	—
Allendorf, W. G. H. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Beck, W. H. F. ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Althoff, F. F. ...	Private	Becker, B. ...	...	Corporal
Alwin, F. ...	Corporal	Becker, F. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Amann, G. J. ...	Sergeant	Becker, F. J. W. ...	...	Corporal
Anasker, G. E. K. ...	Sergeant	Becker, G. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Anderson, C. G. ...	Corporal	Becker, H. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Andres, A. G. ...	Sergt.-Major	Beer, C. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Andrzejewski, M. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Behr, G. E. ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Anhalt, A. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Behr, O. ...	...	Corporal
Anstel, P. F. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Belkner, H. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Anton, K. ...	Corporal	Bellack, F. C. ...	...	Private
Arle, A. ...	Corporal	Bendix, E. K. G. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Arndt, G. F. ...	Sergt.-Major	Benek, A. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Arndt, Mrs. & 2 children	—	Benkau, K. H. ...	...	Corporal
Ascher, W. H. E. ...	Lance-Corpl.	Benner, M. ...	...	Private
Attensberger, — ...	Lance-Corpl.	Bensch, A. ...	...	Corporal
Aulenbacher, K. ...	Corporal	Bentz, A. G. ...	...	Corporal
		Bergert, W. K. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Berinski, W. E. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Berkner, C. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Berlin, — ...	...	Captain
		Berner, — ...	...	Prov. Insp.
		Berner, Mrs., & 2 children	...	—
		Bernhard, E. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Berthel, C. V. ...	...	Sergt.-Major
		Bervald, C. ...	...	Corporal
		Betz, K. ...	...	Corporal
		Beuke, W. F. ...	...	Sergeant
		Beutel, R. M. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Bever, M. F. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Beyer, B. ...	...	Corporal
		Biallek, I. ...	...	Sergeant
		Bich, K. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Biermann, E. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
		Binick, A. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.

#### B.

Bach, A. J. ...	...	Sergeant
Baczyk, J. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Bader, A. ...	...	Private
Baech, — ...	...	Ordn. Sec.
Ballnus, O. ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Ballnuss, — ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Balsliemke, — ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Banduhn, A. F. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Banisch, G. F. W. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Bartel, H. Barthel ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Bartelt, P. F. W. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Bartels, A. ...	...	Lance-Corpl.
Barth, E. ...	...	Sergt.-Major
Barth, P. J. ...	...	Sergeant

*The front cover page and an extract from a list of Germans who were deported from Namibia at the end of the war.*

## Panel 4. African Involvement in the War

The campaign that ended German rule over Namibia has been represented as a 'White Man's War'. In German East Africa thousands of locally recruited black troops helped General von Vorbeck resist for the entire war. The German reluctance to recruit black troops in Namibia was one of the reasons resistance was shorter. However the South African success would have been impossible without the labour of thousands of black Africans, local knowledge was vital to intelligence operations and there were even a few black Africans who fought (on both sides) in the campaign.

### Abraham Morris

Abraham Morris, was the leader of one of the Gaminun (Bondelswarts) guerilla units that had fought against the German Schutztruppe during the 1903-1908 war of anti-colonial resistance. Morris had a Gaminun mother and a Scottish father. Evading capture he had crossed the border into exile in the Cape Colony. Morris's detailed knowledge of the landscape led him to be recruited to the Intelligence Service. He reportedly warned the commanders before the battle of Sandfontein that they could easily be trapped, but his advice was ignored. Morris reportedly asked "... why do they sit down round the water-hole, waiting like a lot of Namaqua partridges for the Germans to come and catch us?"

Abraham Morris returned to Namibia again after the war and led protests by the Bondelswarts for the return of their traditional land and against a tax on their dogs (used for hunting). A warrant for his arrest was issued for entering the territory with his livestock without the correct permit. The new South African air force was sent to bomb Morris and the community at Garuchas in 1922. It is estimated that over 100 people died and Morris himself was hunted down and killed by his former army comrades on 29th May, 1922 in the |Haib River gorge.



*A rare photograph of Abraham Morris in South African Army uniform. His former officers praised his bravery when he was killed in the so-called 'Bondelswarts Rising' of 1922 (NAN 17697)*

Question:

Why do you think Abraham Morris volunteered to act as a guide for the South African invasion of Namibia ?

## The Battle of Naulila

Black troops were directly involved in the one major battle of the campaign that took place in Angola. Portugal sent reinforcements to the southern border of Angola when war broke out in August, including 800 black askaris. Dr Schultze-Jena was sent to negotiate. However he and three of his group were killed in a clash at the Portuguese fort at Cuamato on 19th October, 1914. One of those killed was a black policeman. Two of his colleagues were also wounded, but escaped to report the incident to the German authorities.

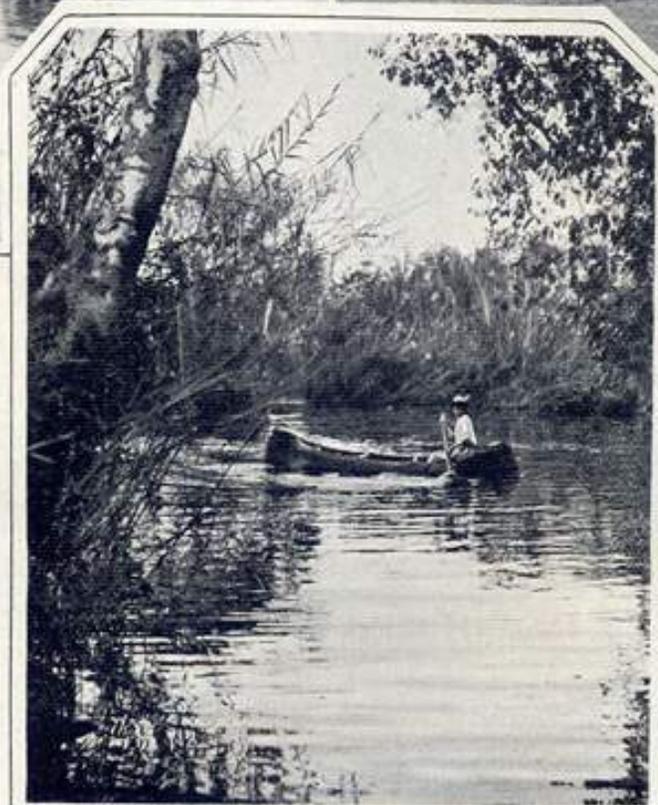
Reprisal operations included an attack on Fort Cuangar across the border from the current Kavango West Region of Namibia in which 8 Portuguese and 14 African troops were killed on 31st October, 1914. A larger force of 600 led by Major Franke attacked the fort at Naulila on 18th December. It was reported that they suffered casualties from askari snipers positioned in the large Baobab trees around the fort, but took the fort with the loss of 12 men. One of those fighting on the Portuguese side, 'Vita' Tom, later moved to Namibia and became an important leader within the Himba community in, what is now, the Kunene Region of Namibia.

It was reported that 69 Portuguese soldiers and 12 German soldiers were killed in the Battle of Naulila with many more wounded. However casualty figures would certainly be higher if askari casualties had been accurately recorded. The loss of life was greater than in any other battle in the campaign. Fort Bunya, Shambyu, Dirico and Mucusso were also destroyed.



Fort Cuangar which was one of six Portuguese forts destroyed in reprisal for the death of Dr Schultze-Jena and his men. ([http://www.momentosdehistoria.com/MH\\_05\\_01\\_Exercito.htm](http://www.momentosdehistoria.com/MH_05_01_Exercito.htm))

## NO SUL D'ANGOLA



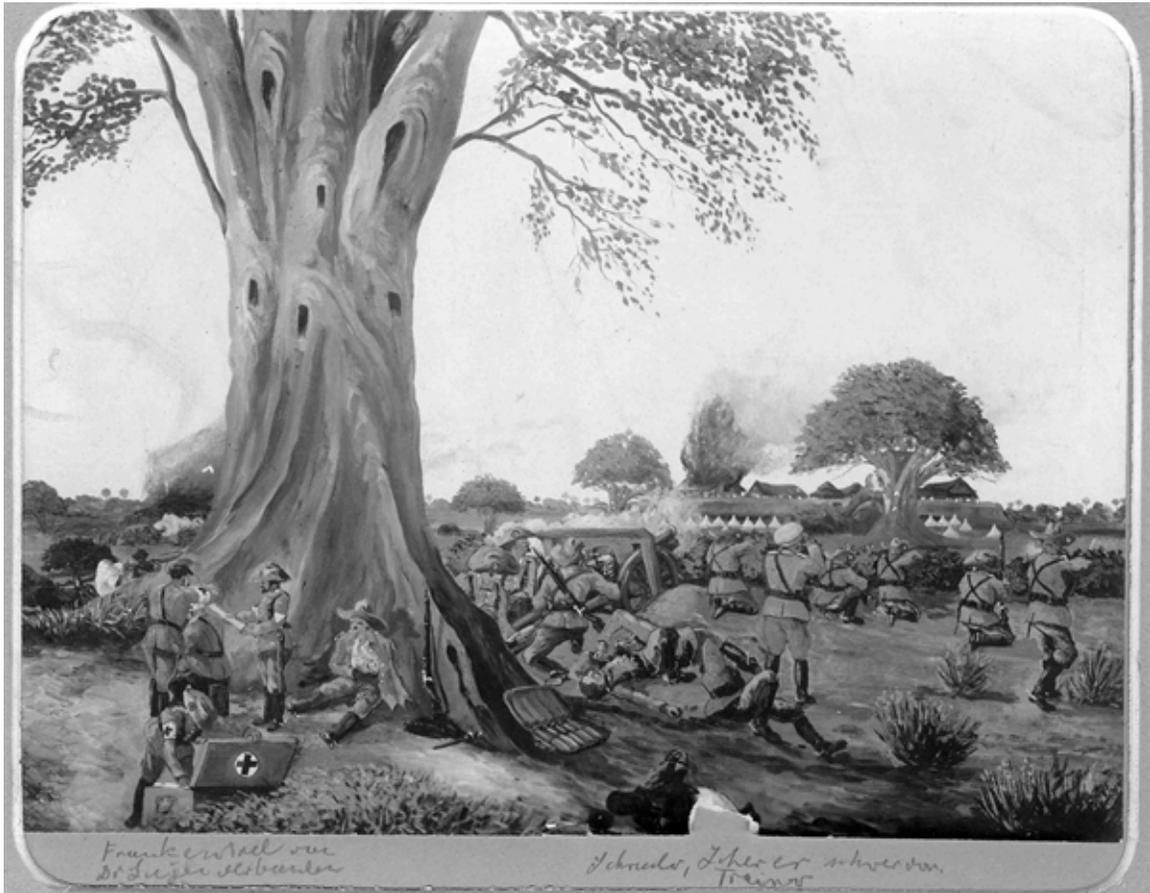
Ainda se fala de Naulila com a comoção causada pela perda de vidas que ali sofremos e com os impacientes desejos de uma desforra. A retirada dos alemães para o seu território não significa, para muitos, uma desistência, mas a resolução de se prepararem melhor para fazer frente aos contingentes portugueses que chegaram dias depois do campo abandonado pelos nossos inimigos.

Agora também é ali a quadra em que o inverno mais se

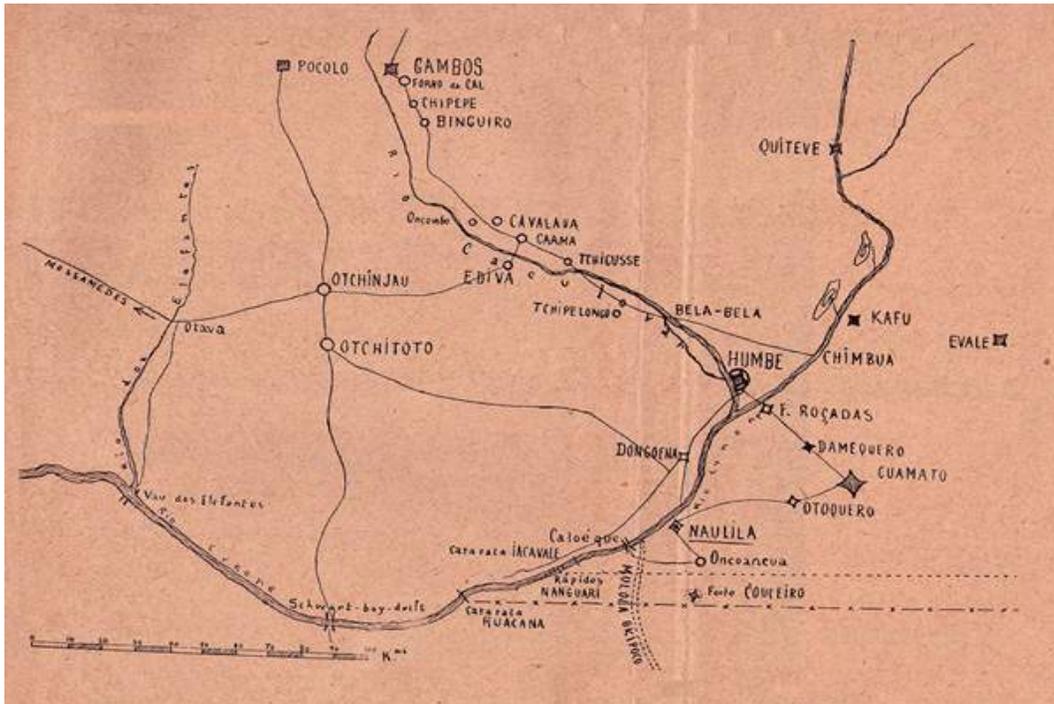
sente, e por conseguinte o tempo não é próprio para operações. Nesta previsão, as nossas tropas continuam a organizar uma valente defesa, requisitando o seu comando do ministério das colônias tudo o que para ela se torna de primeira necessidade. Assim se não atrazem as remessas e, quando voltem os alemães, não lutemos outra vez com faltas de que, da primeira, sofremos tristes consequências que não devemos esquecer.



1. O tenente Aragão dando banho aos cavalos no rio Cunene junto ao Capelongo.—2. Chana do Mufilo (campo do silêncio), local onde estão depositadas as ossadas dos militares mortos em 1907 e onde o capitão Martins de Lima deu a carga conhecida por campo de Mufilo.—3. O tenente Aragão n'um dongo passando o Lu ssuco (vau onde os cuanhama passam para as raias).  
4. Auxiliares cuanhama recebem carne em pagamento de serviço prestado a um destacamento comandado pelo tenente Aragão, o glorioso comandante dos dragões de Mossamedes, morto no combate de Naulila.



Reproduction of a painting showing the Major Franke's assault on Fort Naulila (Artist unknown, NAN 19731)



Map showing the Portuguese forts at Cuamato and Naulila in Southern Angola. ([http://www.momentosdehistoria.com/MH\\_05\\_01\\_Exercito.htm](http://www.momentosdehistoria.com/MH_05_01_Exercito.htm))

Question:

If you travel south from the fort at Naulila which will be the first town in Namibia that you reach ? [Ruacana, Onesi, Outapi or Tsandi]

## **The Intelligence Service and Scouts**

One legacy of the earlier local resistance to German military rule was that there was a significant Nama and Herero community living in exile in South Africa at the start of the war. Apart from Abraham Morris there is evidence that a number of these men were employed by the South African army as scouts to help them locate water holes and to carry out reconnaissance on German positions.

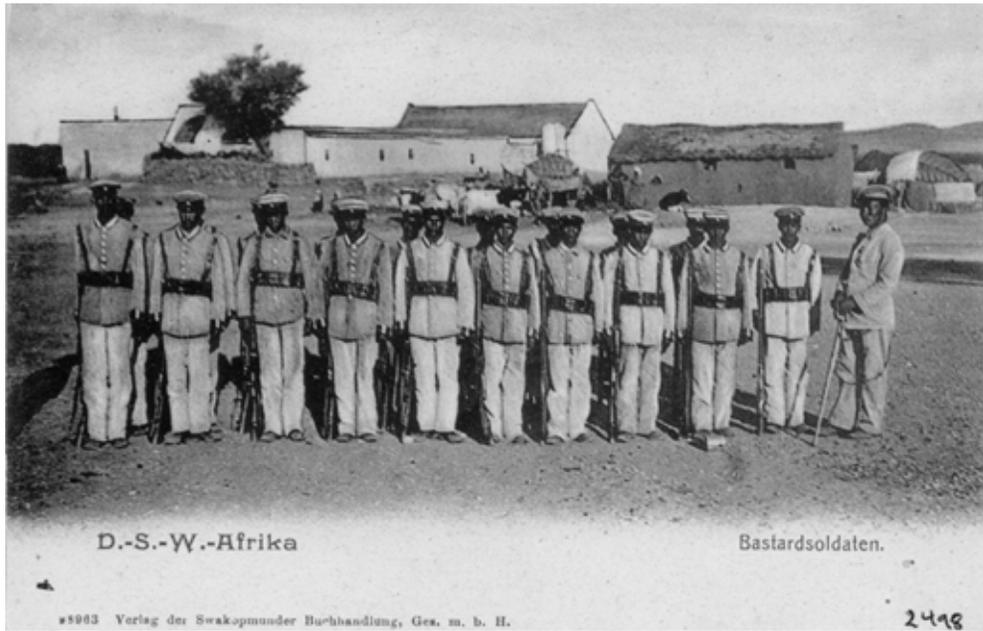
One officer, Captain Murray, claimed that the Union Intelligence Section employed 30 Herero soldiers as scouts. It was dangerous work. When the South African forces rode into Aus on 1st April, 2015 they found three Nama scouts who had been captured and hung. Unfortunately, to date, it has not been possible to locate details of their names or the location of their graves.

## **The Baster Unit and the Battle of Sam Khubis**

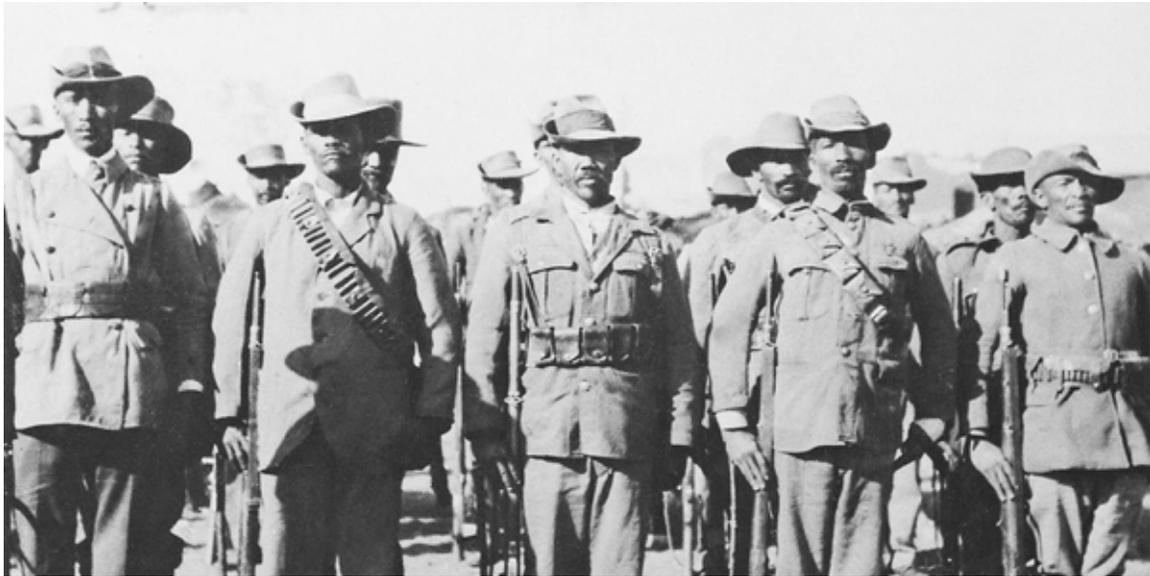
After the 1903-1908 war of anti-colonial resistance the German administration was reluctant to recruit local communities into the Schutztruppe. However a unit of troops from the Baster community of Rehoboth that had seen action during the conflict at Ohamakari and other battles remained in the Schutztruppe. In 1914 the unit contained around 150 men.

The treaty of 15th September, 1885 between the Basters and Germans clearly indicated that they would not be asked to take up arms against foreign forces. When General Botha landed at Walvis Bay the Baster leader, Kaptein Cornelius van Wyk, secretly travelled to the coast for negotiations. The community complained that the Germans had confiscated their ox wagons to use for the war effort and were asking the Baster troops to help them to guard the South African prisoners against their will. On 17th April, 2015 Baster troops left their posts and returned to Rehoboth.

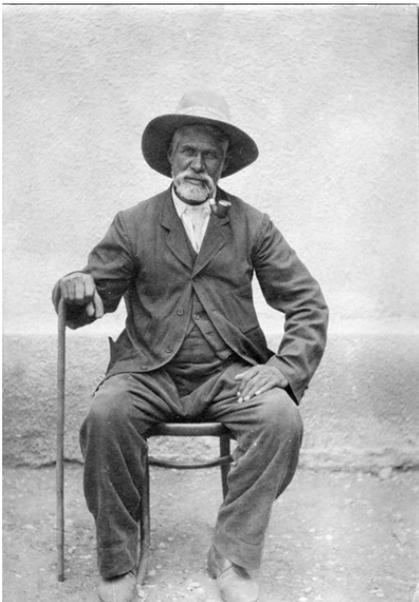
The Basters assembled a force of around 300 men. The troops fortified a defensive position around a water well at Sam Khubis and refused to comply with German demands that they should surrender their weapons. Three companies of German troops and two large artillery pieces were diverted to attack Sam Khubis on 8th May, but were unable to capture the position. As ammunition ran low the Basters prayed for divine intervention. After the German defeat at the Battle of Gibeon on 27th April it was increasingly possible that the German force would be surrounded, so they retreated. The Baster community gather at Sam Khubis every year to commemorate this event.



*A twenty strong Baster unit on parade in German uniforms (NAN 2498)*



*Soldiers from the Baster forces with their rifles and bandoliers (NAN)*



*Cornelius van Wyk, the leader of the Rehoboth Basters, who led the resistance to German forces at Sam Khubis (NAN 3600)*

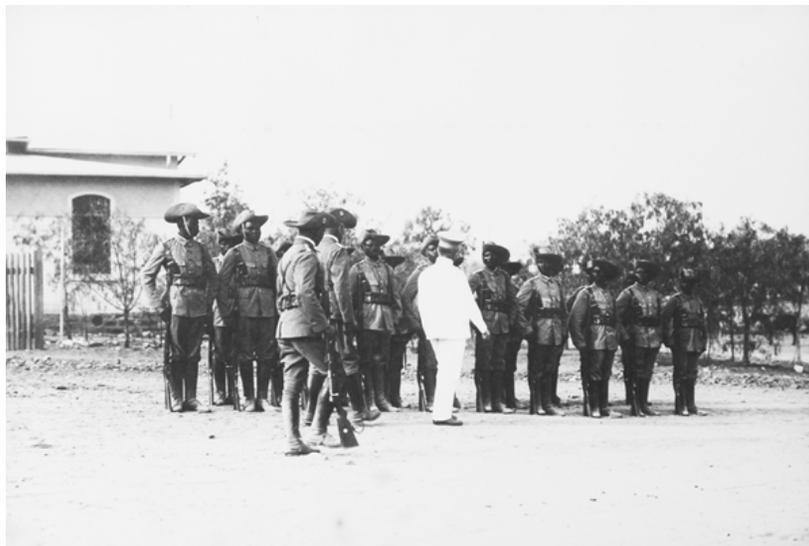
**Question:**  
Why do you think that a unit of troops from Rehoboth had been serving in the German army before 1915 ?

## The Cameroon Connection

When war broke out the Schutztruppe included a unit of 26 soldiers from the German colony of the Cameroons. At the end of the war the men were interned in the POW camp at Aus with the other German soldiers. One of them, 'Omarubonga' wrote to the authorities to lobby for their release. He explained that the territory of their traditional leader, 'Yola', had been divided when the border was formed between the British and Germany (between what is now Nigeria and Cameroons). The men on the German side had been recruited into the army. When they resisted they were sent with their families to Namibia. The South Africans decided that they had been forcefully conscripted and arranged for their eventual repatriation to West Africa.



*A poor quality photograph showing the Cameroon Unit of the Schutztruppe riding oxen through Windhoek. Mobility was crucial in the campaign and the shortage of horses presented a real challenge to German forces. (NAN 20072)*



*A German Officer inspects some members of the Cameroonian unit on parade (NAN 8794)*

**Question:**  
How did black troops from West Africa end up serving in the German Schutztruppe in Namibia ?

## Drivers and Labourers

In military terms the South African victory was due to its ability to cross the territory with speed and significantly outnumber the German forces. However, the ability to cross the landscape was dependent on them receiving adequate water, food and ammunition. It was reported that this impressive logistical operation was conducted by a black labour force of 33,556 men who had been recruited in South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho. It was black workers who repaired the railway track destroyed by the Germans and extended Namibia's railway network to link it to South Africa's.



*The rapid repair of railway lines sabotaged by retreating German forces and the extension of the line to connect with the South African network was accomplished by an effective force of black rail workers (NAN 5657)*



*General Botha steps off a train whilst black workers, responsible for unloading supplies, stand at attention (NAN 5689)*



*A medical unit with black members poses next to their ambulance. It has been claimed, but not proven, that the medical unit established by Mahatma Gandhi also took part in the campaign (NAN8844)*



*The extended supply lines relied on the drivers of the ox wagons. In the early stages of the campaign even water, imported from Cape Town, had to be carried to the frontlines. (NAN 28234)*

# Panel 5. How World War One Changed Namibian History

Millions of soldiers died in the mud and trenches of World War One. The casualties in the campaign to defeat the German Schutztruppe in Namibia numbered a few hundred on each side. However, the consequences of the German defeat were enormous. World War One changed Namibian history. The German defeat led to a South African occupation that would last for seventy-five years with all the political, economic and cultural consequences that resulted.

## Fixing Borders

In the late nineteenth century Portugal faced a financial crisis. Britain and Germany signed secret agreements in 1898 and 1913 to divide Portugal's colonies between them. Germany wanted to acquire southern Angola. The Governor of German South West Africa, Theodor Leutwein, said, in 1894, "an intersection of any Ovambo tribe by the boundary is unadvantageous and has to be done away with". However, after Portugal joined the British to fight against Germany when war broke out in 1914 the possibility of major changes to colonial borders ended and Namibia's borders remained, largely, as they are today.

## Death of a King

Whilst Namibia had been a German colony since 1884 when World War One broke out it still only effectively controlled regions in the south and centre of the colony (where commercial farms were being established). Traditional authorities still controlled northern Namibia. After the South African occupation they sent officials to the north to ask the Ovambo kings to encourage migrant labour. *Ohamba* (King) Mandume ya Ndemufayo was the ruler of the most powerful Ovambo Kingdom. Oukwanyama straddled the border. The Portuguese complained that *Ohamba* Mandume regularly crossed the border to discipline his subjects. A South African military expedition was sent to the north to assert their authority. It is believed that *Ohamba* Mandume committed suicide to avoid capture on 6th February, 1917. The South Africans abolished the kingship and started a process of disarmament.

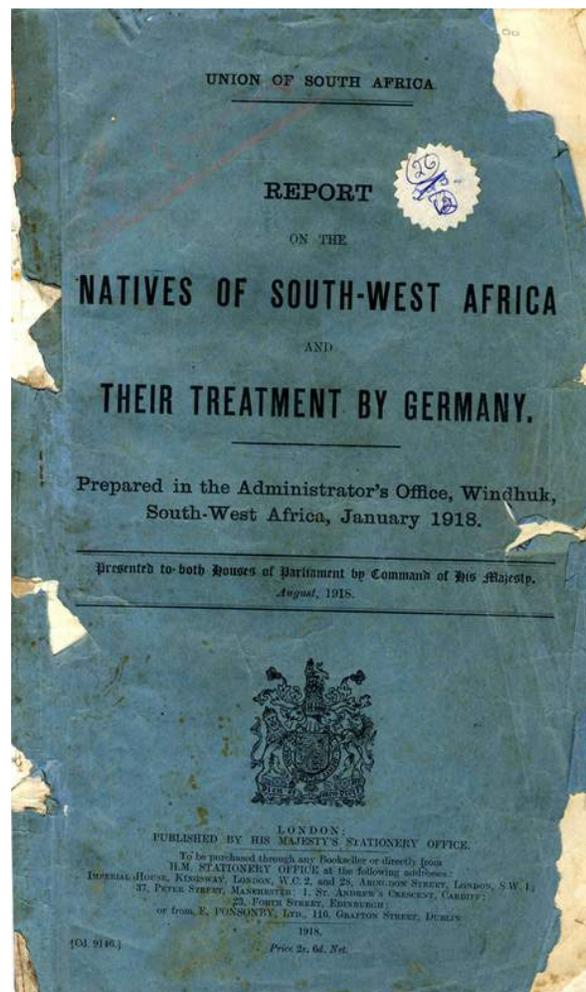


*Group with Chief Mandume and escort*

King, or 'Ohamba' Mandume ya Ndemufayo (NAN 0987)

# Exposing Genocide

Major T. O'Reilly was the Military Magistrate appointed for Omaruru District after the German surrender. He was tasked with writing a report about the treatment of the indigenous population under German rule. The 1918 report (which became known as 'The Blue Book') was based on statements collected from local people and is a rare example of a colonial power recording African voices detailing colonial atrocities. The British Government used the report in negotiations to argue that the colony should not be returned to Germany at the end of the war. However the report was also used later to support claims that Germany had pursued a campaign of genocide against Herero and Nama communities in Namibia during the colonial



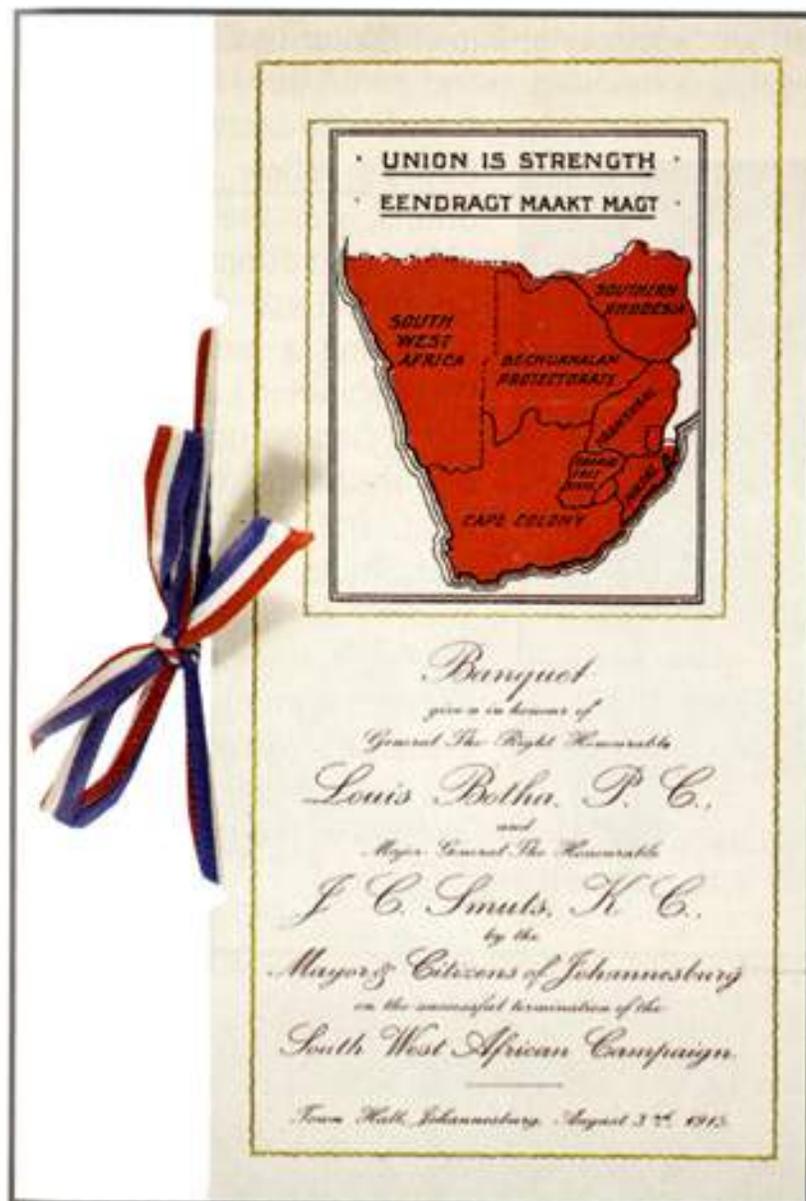
*The front cover of 'The Blue Book'.*

Question:  
Why do you think that the British conducted an investigation into alleged German war crimes in Namibia ?

## Fifth Province or International Mandate

The 'Union' of South Africa with four provinces had only been created in 1910, four years before the start of World War One. The new South African Government had ambitions to expand its territory and hoped that the conquest of German South West Africa would enable it to create a fifth province. English and, later, Afrikaans, replaced German as the language of education and administration.

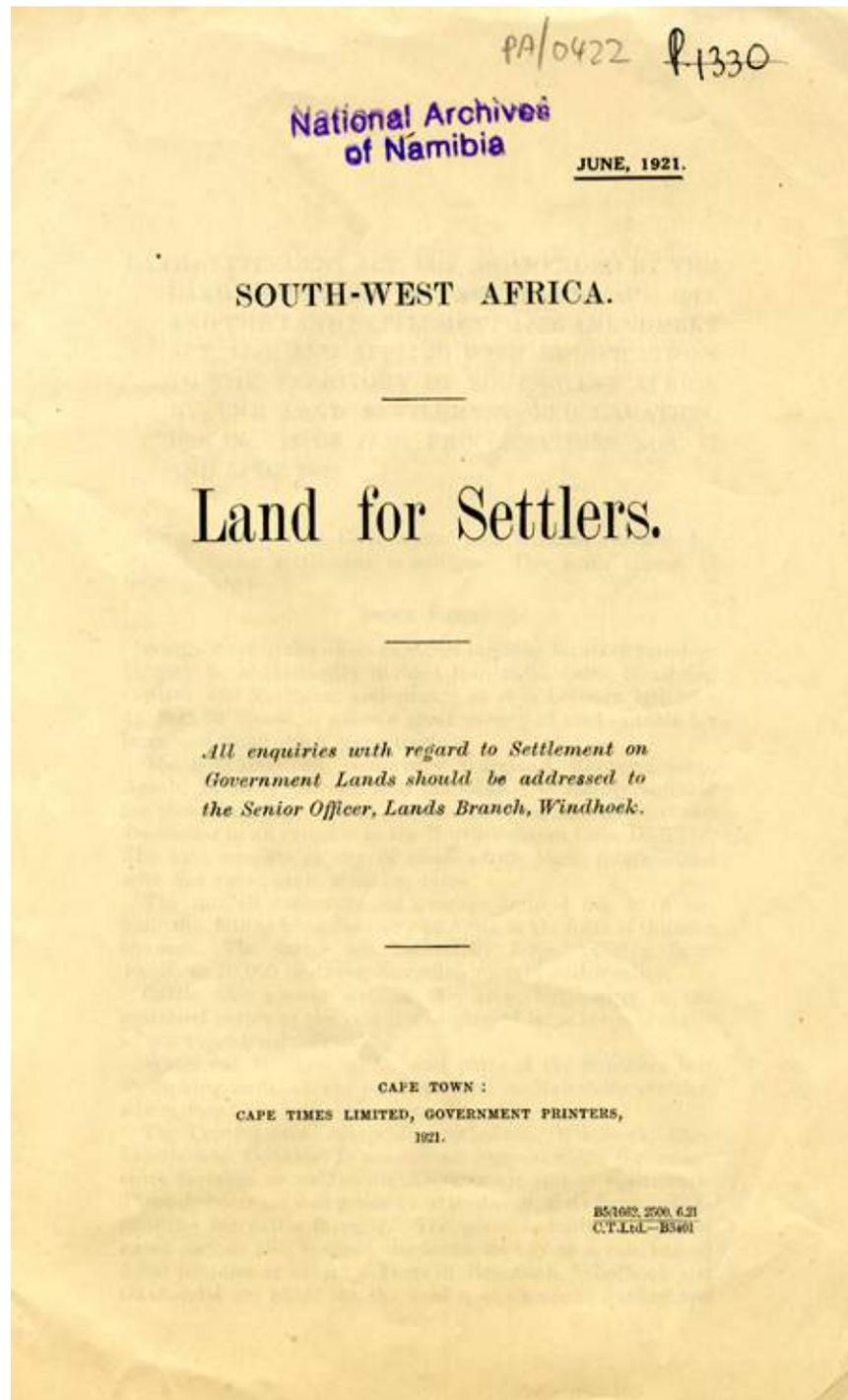
However at the end of the war an international organization, the League of Nations, was set up and South Africa was given the mandate to administer Namibia until it was ready for independence. In 1945 the League of Nations was replaced by the United Nations, but the international community continued to monitor South Africa's activities in Namibia and resist South African efforts to incorporate Namibia as a Fifth Province.



A menu card celebrating the end of the campaign in German South West Africa and reflecting the incorporation of the German colony into the Union of South Africa.

## Settling South Africans

After the surrender of the German Schutztruppe many local communities believed that the land which had been confiscated from them ten years previously (during the 1904-1908 war of anti-colonial resistance) would be returned. It was reported that many Nama and Herero families were returning to their traditional land. Indeed at the end of World War One many German settlers were deported, although most were later allowed to return. However the South African Government quickly introduced a 'Land Settlement Programme'. The programme gave financial support to white settlers who wished to establish farms in the new territory. Rapid migration took place during the 1920s as people sought to take advantage of this new opportunity.



'Land for Settlers': A land settlement programme of 1921, (NAN).

## Diamonds in the Desert

Diamonds were discovered in the Namib Desert in 1908. By 1910 a diamond 'rush' had led to the establishment of 63 German companies that were prospecting and mining diamonds. After the South African occupation of the territory the assets of the diamond companies were confiscated and "Consolidated Diamond Mines" (CDM) established.



*Namibian diamonds being sorted by CDM workers. CDM became one of the most powerful diamond mining companies in the world (NAN 4120)*

## Memorial Traces

Namibia, like many other Commonwealth countries, erected a 'Cross of Sacrifice' to remember those who died in the war. Graveyards near the sites of the major battles also contain the graves of those who died on both sides. However, perhaps as part of the effort to achieve post-war reconciliation between German-speakers and the new South African settlers it is noticeable that no victory monument or statue of General Botha were erected. Largely forgotten memorials to the war include a memorial to those who died at the Battle of Naulila and regimental badges that were marked out with stones in the desert by bored troops.



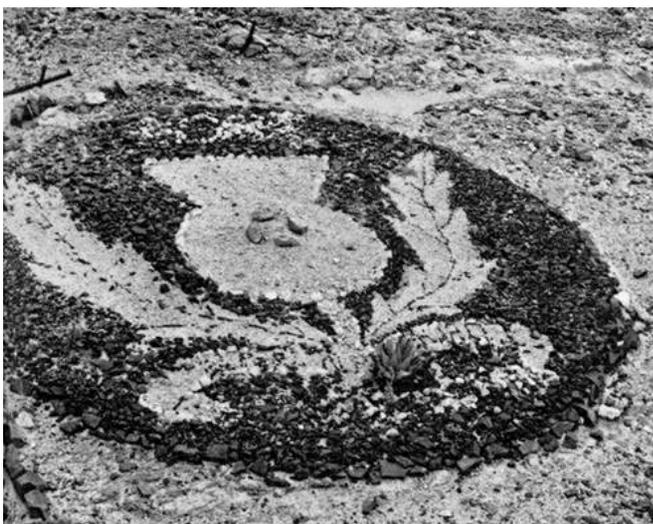
*The Inauguration of the Cross of Sacrifice in 1931 (Commonwealth War Graves Commission).*



*Trekkopje Cemetery. One of the small battle site graveyards that serve as a reminder of the campaign (Commonwealth War Graves Commission ©Mike St. Maur Sheil)*



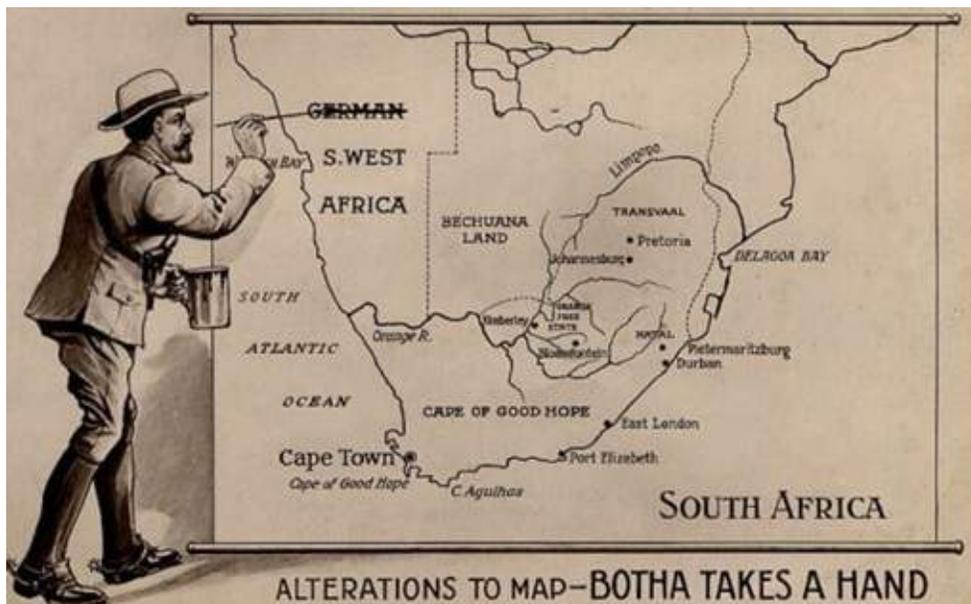
*Outjo Monument, (NAN 10376).*



*Bored South African soldiers used rocks to outline the insignia of their regiments in the desert.*



*A small inconspicuous monument marks the spot where the German forces surrendered. A day that changed Namibian history forever.*



*A contemporary cartoon sums up the impact of World War One on Namibia as it passed from German to South African control.*

# Food for Thought – What do you think ?



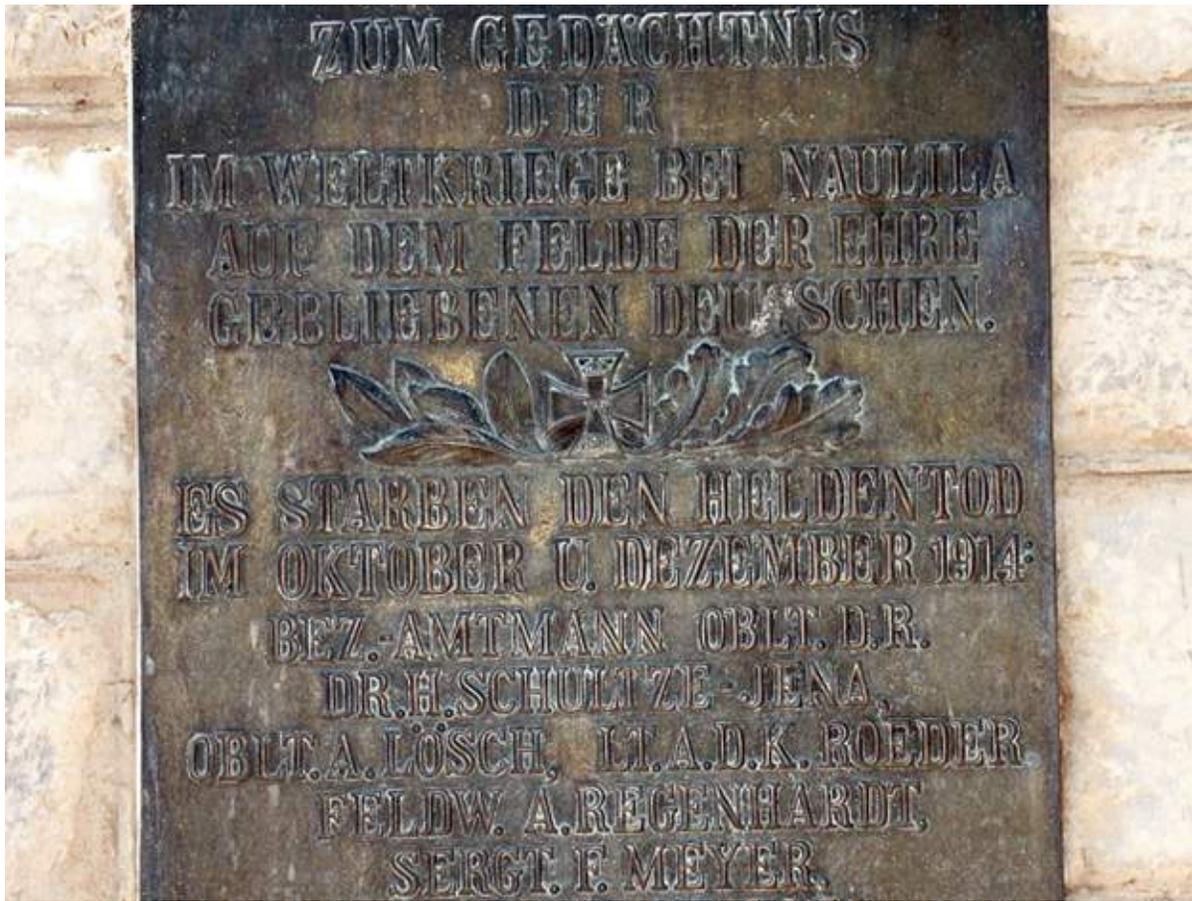
The top photograph shows the powerful German radio station in Windhoek.

The photograph below shows some ruins in Pioneers Park (Extension One).

Do you think these are some remains of the station ?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



The plaque on a war memorial at Outjo commemorates the German soldiers who died during the First World War fighting in southern Angola.

Do you think memorials should remain unchanged because of their historical significance ?

Can war memorials be used as sites of reconciliation between former enemies ?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Do you think this large gun is the same one that is on display in a museum in Kimberley in South Africa ?

What do you think was the special purpose that this gun was used for ?

Look at the man kneeling down on the right of the photograph. What do you think the piece of equipment next to him was used for ?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# A Quick World War One Quiz

Who can be the first one in your group to find the correct answers to the following five questions ?

All the answers can be found in the exhibition somewhere.

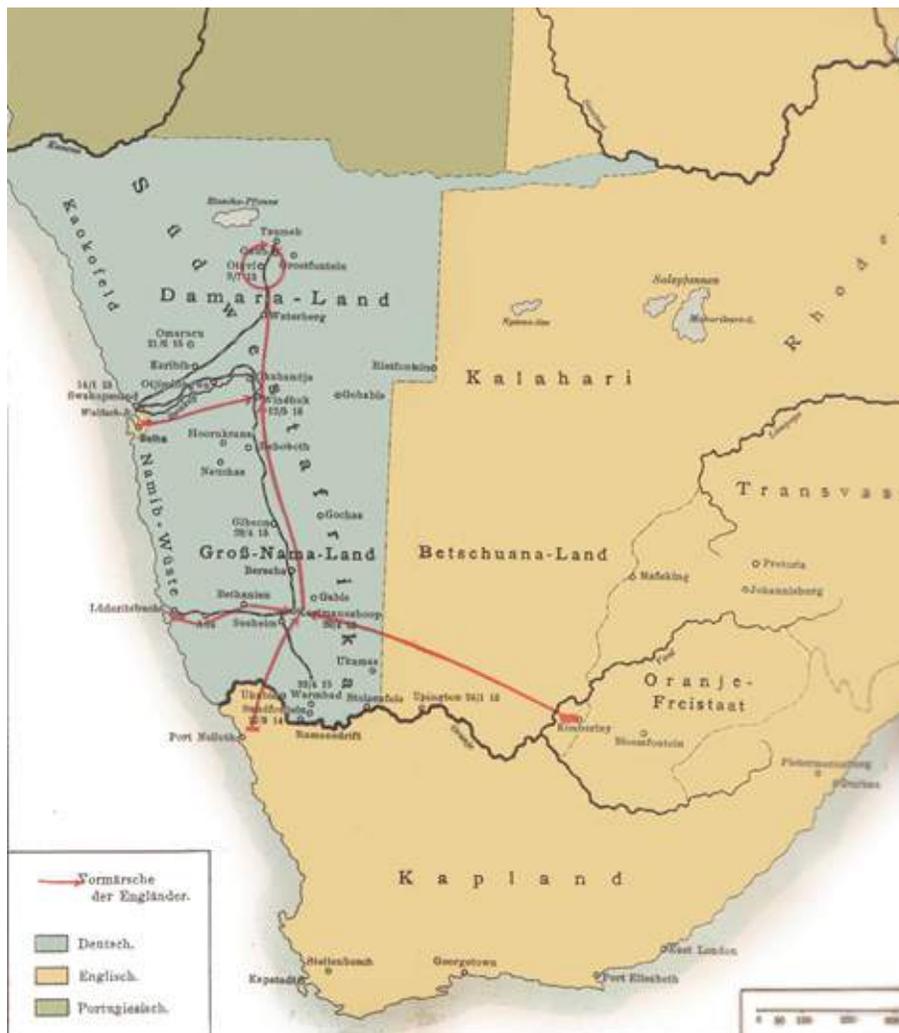
1. Abraham Morris was a leader in which community in Namibia ?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the name of the first big battle that took place on Namibian soil during World War One (and who won ?)



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where did this unit of black soldiers that served in the German Schutztruppe in Namibia in World War One come from ?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Look at the photograph showing the unveiling of the 'Cross of Sacrifice' in 1931 and then look at a photograph of the same site today. What do you think was added to the monument in later years and why?





Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The bottom photograph on this page shows some of the black troops who served in the Portuguese army in southern Angola. Can you name one battle of World War One that they fought in?



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

# A Worker Reads History

## – Berthold Brecht

Who built the seven gates of Thebes?  
The books are filled with names of kings.  
Was it the kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone?

And Babylon, so many times destroyed.  
Who built the city up each time? In which of Lima's houses,  
That city glittering with gold, lived those who built it?

In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished  
Where did the masons go?

Imperial Rome is full of arcs of triumph. Who reared them up? Over whom  
Did the Caesars triumph? Byzantium lives in song.

Were all her dwellings palaces? And even in Atlantis of the legend  
The night the seas rushed in,  
The drowning men still bellowed for their slaves.

Young Alexander conquered India.  
He alone?  
Caesar beat the Gauls.  
Was there not even a cook in his army?

Phillip of Spain wept as his fleet  
was sunk and destroyed. Were there no other tears?  
Frederick the Great triumphed in the Seven Years War.  
Who triumphed with him?

Each page a victory  
At whose expense the victory ball?  
Every ten years a great man,  
Who paid the piper?

So many particulars.  
So many questions.





Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Windhoek



British  
High Commission  
Windhoek

ISBN: 978-99916-902-2-3